Poster of Agamennone at Teatro Greco in Syracuse, directed by Ettore Romagnoli (1914).
Agamemnon
in Performance
458 BC to AD 2004

Edited by
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and
OLIVER TAPLIN

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In memory of Inga-Stina Ewbank, 1932–2004
Acknowledgements

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We warmly thank all those who attended our ‘Agamemnon in Performance: 458 BC–AD 2001’ Conference at Wadham College, Oxford, 20–22 September 2001, and especially the speakers, many of whose papers form the basis of this volume. It is with much sadness that we have to record the recent death of one of those speakers, Professor Inga-Stina Ewbank, whose chapter we are proud to include here and to whose memory this volume is dedicated.

We especially wish to thank the following for their help and support in various ways, both with the conference and the book: Robert Davis, Barbara Goward, Dave Gowen, Isobel Hurst, Michelle Paull, Kathleen Riley, Richard Seaford, Alessandro Schiesaro, Francesca Schironi, Kirsti Simonsuuri, Avery Willis and Ruth Winter. At Oxford University Press, we thank Hilary O’Shea for her continued support and enthusiasm for our project; we are very grateful to Tom Chandler, our copy-editor, for all his invaluable help and sound advice; and yet again we thank Barbara Hird for her work on our index. Last but by no means least, we thank our current colleagues at the Archive, Peter Brown, Amanda Wrigley, and Chris Weaver, for all their great patience and unstinting effort with this volume.
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Note on Nomenclature, Spelling and Texts

Our policy has been to use the names as they appear in the text/programme/publicity for modern adaptations/versions of the ancient plays, when known. But with the names and characters of the ancient plays and their abbreviations, we have adopted the traditional spellings, broadly in line with the practice of the third edition of the Oxford Classical Dictionary.

When referring to the ancient authors in the original language, we have used the most recent edition published in the Oxford Classical Texts series.

All websites and email addresses were valid, unless otherwise indicated, at the time that this volume went to press at the end of 2004.
Introduction:

Agamemnons in Performance

Pantelis Michelakis

8 November 1816. The Emperor read out to us the Agamemnon of Aeschylus which he strongly admired for its extreme force combined with great simplicity. We were struck above all by the amplification of horror which characterises the theatrical productions of the father of tragedy. And yet there, one could observe that initial spark to which our beautiful modern light is linked.¹

This brief extract from the Memorial of Saint Helena, a work in eight volumes providing a day-by-day account of the last eighteen months of Napoleon’s life, is striking for a number of reasons. There is an unmistakable echo of the judgement of Aeschylus as forceful and simple to be found in Aristophanes’ Frogs, as well as an allusion to Clytemnestra’s beacon speech (A. Ag. 281—316) intertwined in the vocabulary of the Enlightenment with its celebration of progress.² But perhaps nothing is more fascinating than the very image of Aeschylus’ Agamemnon recited by one of the greatest political and military leaders of nineteenth-century Europe, in front of an audience of a few faithful companions, some four thousand miles off the shores of Europe, in the South Atlantic. The exiled Napoleon would not have failed to notice the profound irony of his impersonation of the various characters in a drama of power and fall so similar to his own. But this recitation is fascinating for yet another reason which can easily be missed today. Aeschylus’ Agamemnon,

I am grateful to my co-editors as well as Pat Easterling, Helene Foley, Charles Martindale, Kostas Valakas, and Vanda Zajko for their helpful comments on earlier versions of this piece. I am also thankful to audiences in Bristol, Chapel Hill, London, and Oxford for stimulating discussions, and to Tim Duff, Ioulia Pipinia, Chris Weaver, and Amanda Wrigley for their generous help with practical issues including the gathering of out-of-print material.

¹ ‘L’Empereur nous a lu l’Agamemnon d’Eschyle, dont il a fort admiré l’extrême force, jointe à la grande simplicité. Nous étions frappés surtout de la gradation de terreur qui caractérise les productions de ce père de la tragédie. Et c’est pourtant là, faisait-on observer, l’étincelle première à la quelle se rattache notre belle lumière moderne.’ Quoted in Nosttrand (1934), 14. All translations are my own unless otherwise stated.

² Allusions to the beacon speech are common in 19th-cent. literature. See Macintosh, Ch. 8, text to notes 16 and 69.
which had recently been discovered by the Romantics, was yet to capture the modern stage and imagination.

It seems self-evident that a volume whose subject of inquiry starts in the year 458 BC can only make sense with reference to the first play of Aeschylus' *Oresteia* trilogy. After all, this is a play which in the last fifty years alone has been the subject of more translations, commentaries, literary studies, adaptations, and performances than any other play by Aeschylus, and most plays by Sophocles and Euripides. In introducing this volume, however, I will not so much provide an account of the popularity of Aeschylus' play on the modern stage. Rather, I will address a number of questions that bear on the larger methodological and historiographical issues that the title of the volume raises. When did Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* become so important, and why? How has it been used? Why do we choose to speak regularly of the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus' *Oresteia* and hardly ever of the *Agamemnon* of Seneca, for instance, or even the *Agamemnon* of Homer's *Iliad*? The aim of this volume is to draw attention to the ways in which we think about one of the most canonical of Greek plays, the purposes this play might have served in the past, and what we might have taken for granted or forgotten in our fascination with it.

**WHOSE AGAMEMNON?**

How valid is a discussion of 'Agamemnon in performance' outside the *Oresteia*? Without denying the central importance of Aeschylus' trilogy for virtually any contemporary reading of 'Agamemnon' as a play or as a character, we need to remember that the practice of reading the three plays of the *Oresteia* as a complete and unified whole is a modern one. Its genesis can be traced back to the German Romantics at the turn of the nineteenth century (see Ewans and Macintosh, Chapters 6 and 8). It was only half a century later, in 1856, that the entire *Oresteia* had its first modern staging, in an adaptation by the French novelist and dramatist Alexandre Dumas the Elder. Before the early nineteenth century, Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* was read, studied, translated, and edited independently from the *Libation Bearers* and the *Eumenides*. There is perhaps one notable exception that shows ignorance rather than interest in the trilogy. As Ewbank shows in Chapter 3, the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus that Renaissance Europe saw printed for the first time in the first half of the sixteenth century was a text which, based on an

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3 The two massive commentaries by Fraenkel (1950) and Bollack and Judet de La Combe (1981–2; 1992) are suggestive of the special attention that the play has received in the last few decades.

4 On this, see, among others, Méautis (1917); Nostrand (1934); F.M.P. (1957); Matheson (1965); Melchinger (1974); Flashar (1991); Bierl (1996); Chioles (1993) and (1998); Decreus (2000).

5 Dumas (1865), 397–467, first published and performed in Paris in 1856. See Bonnéric (1986), 328–38 and for further bibliography Reed (1933) and Munro (1985).
Agamemnons in Performance

incomplete manuscript, ended up merging a truncated version of the *Agamemnon* with the *Libation Bearers.*

Going back to ancient Rome, Seneca himself engaged with the actions depicted only in the *Agamemnon* and the Electra scenes of the *Libation Bearers.* Not even the Athenian dramatists of the second half of the fifth century thought of Aeschylus' *Oresteia* as a single and indivisible entity (see Easterling and Hall, Chapters 2 and 4). As far as we can tell from the *Electra* of Sophocles and Euripides, the *Libation Bearers* was thought of as a play different from, and more suitable for imitation than, the *Agamemnon.* And of course, the group of plays with which Aeschylus entered the competition in 458 BC was not a trilogy but a tetralogy, consisting of three tragic plays followed by a satyr drama. Even in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, numerous productions of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* have been productions of the play alone, and not the trilogy. *Agamemnon* has also been performed in conjunction with other ancient plays, such as Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis* and Sophocles' *Electra.*

The 1930 festival of ancient drama at Syracuse, and more recently the 1992 *Clytemnestra Project* at Minneapolis (on which see Foley, Chapter 17), are just two examples of such productions. *Agamemnon* has also been adapted and performed as a part of larger theatrical spectacles, which include not only the other two plays of the *Oresteia* but also other ancient or modern plays, as in the case of Gerhart Hauptmann's tetralogy *Die Atriden* in the 1940s and more recently John Barton's *The Greeks* (1981) and Ariane Mnouchkine's *Les Atrides* (1990–3; on which see Judet de La Combe, Chapter 15). And finally, Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* has been embedded within modern theatrical scripts as a play within a play, as in the production of *The Whiners* which was performed in Israel in 2000.

The narrative context of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon,* then, has not always been the *Oresteia.* Nor has 'Agamemnon' always meant Aeschylus' *Agamemnon.* The *Agamemnon* par excellence of neoclassical theatre, and of the Renaissance, was that of Seneca, not Aeschylus. The interest in Seneca's dramatic work may have dimmed in the last two centuries, but it was *his* version of the *Agamemnon* that was regularly translated, adapted, and parodied for most of the three preceding centuries, from Elizabethan London to post-revolutionary Paris (see Ewbank and Hall, 3 and 4). Seneca himself engaged with a dramatic tradition which perceived the killing of Agamemnon by Clytemnestra and Aegisthus as inextricably linked with their punishment—in a way that Aeschylus' play, with its abrupt end, did not. The titles of surviving and lost plays on the subject, from the fifth century BC to

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6 That was the *Agamemnon* of the early printed editions which, through its translation into Latin by Saint-Ravy, found some readers also in the late 16th and early 17th cent.; see further Ewbank, Ch. 3.

7 The satyr play of the tetralogy was called *Proteus* and seems to have dealt with part of Menelaus' return journey to Sparta. The fragments are translated in Smyth (1957) and discussed in Sutton (1984).

8 Details for these productions and adaptations can be found in the appendix to this volume.
Hellenistic times and Republican and Augustan Rome, illustrate how the emphasis could and did shift away from Agamemnon and on to other characters: Orestes, Electra, or Iphigenia in Sophocles and Euripides; Aegisthus in Livius Andronicus; Clytemnestra in Accius; and so on. Similarly, the very first modern plays on the death of Agamemnon were not based on Aeschylus, but on versions of the story which were neither dramatic nor, necessarily, ancient. Hans Sachs’ Dien mörderisch königin Clitimestra (The Murderous Queen Clytemnestra), performed in Humanist Nuremberg in 1554, drew heavily on the medieval reworking of Ovid’s Metamorphoses in Boccaccio’s De claris mulieribus (Famous Women). Likewise Thomas Heywood’s four Ages, performed in London in the 1610s, drew on John Lydgate’s late medieval Troy Book and on William Caxton’s Recuyell of the Histories of Troy (see Ewbank, Chapter 3).

Before 458 BC, ‘Agamemnon’ was not a dramatic text at all. It was the name of a mythological character, known not only for his unheroic death, but also for his deeds as leader of the Greek army in Troy. This Agamemnon of epic and lyric poetry and of archaic iconography did not end with Aeschylus. Nelson fought Napoleon in the 1790s from a gunship called ‘Agamemnon’, just as the American forces in Iraq fought in Spring 2003 with one of their tanks nicknamed by its crew after the Greek leader; wars of the future have also been imagined in science fiction films as being conducted from spaceships named after Agamemnon (e.g. TV series Babylon 5). Such examples testify to the persistent use of the word ‘Agamemnon’ in contexts different from, although not incompatible with, those we associate with the theatre of Aeschylus and Seneca.

WHAT PERFORMANCE?

Just as the conceptualizations of the word ‘Agamemnon’ have changed profoundly across linguistic, cultural, and generic boundaries, so have the different modes of performance and the perception of them. In recent decades performance and performance-related issues have become increasingly important in various fields of research. In theatre studies, the concept of performance has helped focus attention on the interaction between performers and spectators in their encounter with a dramatic text. This is a useful way of thinking about Agamemnon on stage, not least because it foregrounds the transient and complex nature of our encounter with it in the public space of the theatre. The concept of performance

9 See Hall, Ch. 4, as well as Tarrant (1976), 8–18 and (1978), e.g. 215–17 and 249–50.
10 Other sources acknowledged in the herald’s introduction to the play include Homer, Virgil and Dictys of Crete. See further Skrine (1995), Flood (1995) and, on the performance of Sachs’s plays, Beare (1983), lxxxviii–xcii with bibliography.
11 The early literary and artistic sources on Agamemnon as a mythological figure are discussed by Gantz (1993), where the relevant bibliography is also to be found.
encompasses both drama, with its associations with printed texts that threaten to transform it into a sub-genre of literature, and theatre, which by itself might be seen as the subject of a historical discipline preoccupied with the material conditions of the stage.

Performance, like theatricality, has also become a mode of doing and knowing central to debates in the social sciences and in literary criticism. It has been used to stress the modes of self-presentation which are intrinsic to all forms of social interaction. Moreover, it has been used to underline the complex and interactive nature of all types of ‘reading’, be it of printed, visual or aural texts. These various applications of the concept of performance have an important role to play in the ways in which we can think about the subject of this volume. Not only do they prompt reflection on the relation between theatre performance and other interpretative practices through which we engage with Graeco-Roman theatre, such as those associated with textual and literary criticism, literature, philosophy, historiography, and the visual arts. They also reaffirm the importance, and indeed the centrality, of theatre performance in cultural debates about the relevance of the classical past and, especially classical theatre, for the present.

To work on Graeco-Roman tragedy in performance is to encounter immediately the issues of time and history. The title of the volume highlights its time-span in a way which might seem at best ambitious and at worst self-defeating. How many ways are there to link the past and the present, the date of the first performance of Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon* and the moment of the composition of the present volume? It may be tempting to think of the present project as an opportunity to collect the facts and to tell the performance history of ‘Agamemnon’ in a linear fashion, from the beginning. But should such an account be a history of continuity or change? Progress or decline? Should it hope to become the definitive history of the subject or simply a story? Should it focus on specific events and individuals, or on the diverse ways in which they might have been organized to acquire meaning, value, and authority?

One of the assumptions that the present volume seeks to challenge is that the reception of Graeco-Roman drama in antiquity is somehow independent of the reception of the subject in the modern world; that the ancient and modern processes of canonization of Aeschylus’ and Seneca’s plays on or off stage should be the subject of different inquiries. This is not to say that what we call the Classical Tradition should be seen as uniform, coherent, and necessarily enlightened. The interrelations between Aeschylus and Seneca, antiquity and modernity, translation and adaptation, theatre performance and politics, cannot be reduced to a chronologically sequential narrative, nor can their configurations by individuals, cultural and institutional frameworks, or historical periods exhaust their meanings. Epic and lyric ‘Agamemnons’ were being performed in festivals long before

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and long after the first performance of Aeschylus' play. Similarly, to engage with the 'Agamemnons' of the past cannot leave the future of this past unaffected. The popularity that Graeco-Roman drama enjoys on the contemporary stage can explain the timing of the present volume but cannot determine its directions. Likewise, the work of Byzantine scribes and medieval novelists made possible the early modern theatre productions of 'Agamemnon', but could not necessitate, or even anticipate, their emergence.

Issues of time are central to any dramatic narrative about the death of Agamemnon. The death of the king, husband, and father marks the present of the dramatic action as a moment of violent transition and rupture posing a threat to stability and order. In all dramatic versions of the story, the characters experience this event and seek to make sense of it (to explain, justify, or condemn it), not in isolation but in its relation to the past and the future. The murder at the centre of the drama acquires different meanings according to the standpoints from which it is viewed: the banquet of Thyestes, the sacrifice of Iphigenia, Agamemnon's return with the captive Cassandra, Clytemnestra's affair with Aegisthus, or the prospect of Orestes' return and restoration of order. As a drama of domestic and political struggle, Agamemnon has never ceased to function as a site for competing definitions of time and history. It has been acted out as the drama of the transition from aristocracy to democracy, from monarchy to tyranny, from matriarchy to patriarchy, from the archaic to the classical, from lawlessness to order, and from the primitive to the modern. It has functioned as a drama of evolution and progress but also as a drama of nostalgia, vindication, or regeneration of what is lost.

We have chosen to organize the papers of this volume in four sections: foundation texts, the move to modernity, translation, and the international stage. There are a number of other categories that could have formed the basis of our discussion and with which we engage to some extent: for example gender, ethnicity, post-colonialism, popular culture, genre, and the classical canon. Here I will look at only a few of the issues that our selected categories raise.

AUTHORSHIP

The search for foundation texts is first of all concerned with the different sources that one chooses to remember or to forget, the different sources which shape our perception of the subject as well as our own personal or collective identities. It is also concerned with the assumptions we make about the nature of these sources and the ways we decide to relate to them. Do we think of sources in terms of texts or authors? Readers or spectators? Individual texts, traditions, or rhetorical tropes?

14 One could include here representations of Agamemnon in the epic Cycle (Iliad, Odyssey, as well as Little Iliad, Sack of Troy, and Returns, of which only summaries and fragments survive) and in Stesichorus' choral lyric poems on the Trojan War and its aftermath, of which only fragments and indirect references of later writers survive: see further n. 11 above.
In terms of influence, allusion, or interaction? I will only consider one of these issues here, that of authorship, and more specifically the opposition between Aeschylus and Seneca.

One of Aeschylus' distinctive features, to which *Agamemnon* owes its great success in the last two centuries, is what the ancient critics called his onkos, his 'bigness', greatness, or grandeur. One thinks of the recent wave of ambitious productions of the *Oresteia* by directors such as Peter Hall, Peter Stein, Karolos Koun, Ariane Mnouchkine, and Silviu Purcarete, some of which are discussed in this volume (see Chapters 10, 15, 16, 17, by Walton, Taplin, Judet de La Combe, Bierl, Foley); or the monumental sets and imposing costumes of the *Agamemnon* in late nineteenth- and twentieth-century productions of the play across Europe and North America celebrating Aeschylus' theatrical genius;¹⁵ or Goethe's and Wagner's Romantic admiration for the sublime language of the father of tragedy (see Chapters 6 and 8, by Ewans and Macintosh). Yet, as Easterling argues in Chapter 2, 'bigness' was one of the most distinct features attributed to Aeschylus also in antiquity. In the work of his ancient biographers and commentators, bigness was associated with pretty much every aspect of his plays from language to characters and stage. However, being 'big' has not always benefited Aeschylus. In Aristophanes' *Frogs* Aeschylus' 'bigness' is a weapon wielded against him on account of his bombastic language, crude characters, and dramatic excess. Although some of his plays were probably performed after his death, there is no evidence that *Agamemnon* was preferred to, say, *Libation Bearers*. If we really want to find a classic 'Agamemnon' which the Athenians thought worth performing on a regular basis in the fifth century, we need to forget the dramatist whose plays suffered so badly with the passage of time, and turn instead to Homer, a non-dramatic poet, whose work was immortalized in festival after festival.¹⁶

Aristophanes was not alone in seeing Aeschylus' 'bigness' as a problem for his stage popularity. Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century neoclassicism also saw Aeschylus' 'bigness' as crude, naïve and completely out of proportion. Arguably, the best-known critic of Aeschylus in the eighteenth century is Winckelmann, who played a vital role in consolidating the view that the *Agamemnon* was an impenetrable and exaggerated play (see Ewans, Chapter 6).¹⁷ But this idea was far from novel or surprising. The first edition of Pierre Brumoy's *Théâtre des Grecs* in 1730, the most widely translated and read edition of the Greek dramatists in the eighteenth century, included only a summary of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*. The father of tragedy was 'mounted on walking sticks rather than on cothurns' and his

¹⁵ Notable examples include the 1900 *Agamemnon* in Cambridge, England; the 1930 *Agamenon* in Syracuse, Italy; the 1936 *Oresteia* in Berlin, Germany; and the 1967 *The House of Atreus* in Minneapolis, USA.

¹⁶ For the status of Homer in 5th-cent. Athens and for performances of his *Iliad* and *Odyssey* by rhapsodes at the festival of the Panathenaea see e.g. P. Murray (1996).

¹⁷ This is not to say that other versions of *Agamemnon* met with disapproval: for Winckelmann's praise of James Thomson's *Agamemnon* see Hall and Macintosh (2005), Ch. 4.
work suffered from ‘extreme simplicity’.18 Similarly the French dramatist and theatre critic Jean-François La Harpe condemned Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon* as ‘a cold and atrocious piece’, and rejected Clytemnestra for her intolerable and revolting wickedness. ‘She is neither in love, nor jealous, nor ambitious. She just wants to kill her husband and she does. That’s the play!’19 Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon* was deemed unperformable. It was primitive, obscure, unbalanced, unnatural, with too much lyric, too little action, and a highly unsatisfactory ending.

As far as the modern performance history of *Agamemnon* is concerned, Seneca was not Aeschylus’ successor but his predecessor. Seneca was also one of the victims of the Romantic and post-Romantic reinvention of Aeschylus’ theatrical genius. Since the beginning of the nineteenth century, Seneca’s tragedies have been condemned by both the world of Classics and the world of theatre as the product of an author writing for listeners rather than viewers.20 The issue of recitation has been at the heart of a debate stigmatizing Seneca for lack of dramatic originality and for an excessive adherence to declamatory rhetoric (see further Hall, Chapter 4). Of course Shakespeare could not have known that Seneca’s *Agamemnon* would find itself caught up in such a debate, and it is difficult to imagine how such a consideration would have profited his engagement with his Roman source in *Hamlet*, or, say, *Macbeth*.21

What is equally interesting, however, is the prevalence of the term ‘Senecan’ in studies of dramatic language and technique, and more generally in connection with the idea of the Graeco-Roman antiquity, in Renaissance and neoclassical tragedy. It is really striking, though, how little impact this intensive examination of Seneca’s early modern reception has made on the classical community and on modern theatre. And yet, one could go a step further and argue that the adjective ‘Senecan’ can represent a mode of thinking about the *Agamemnon* which is central not only to the numerous adaptations of the subject in Renaissance and neoclassical drama and opera, but also to Latin and even Greek plays before Seneca. We can say this because, as Hall argues in Chapter 4, we can already see the tendency to correct the moral and narrative framework of Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon* in fifth-century Athens. The centrality to the death of Agamemnon of Orestes’ revenge, and the redefinition of Clytemnestra not as a victimizer but as a victim of Aegisthus and her passions, are evident in the work of Sophocles and Euripides. Seneca’s *Agamemnon* does not stand at the beginning of this trope but

18 ‘Montée sur des échasses plutôt que sur des cothurnes'; ‘extrême simplicité’, quoted in Matheson (1965), 6 and 189 n. 21 respectively.

19 La Harpe (1840), 1. 84: ‘*Agamemnon* est une pièce froidement atroce... Quant [au caractère] de Clytemnestre, il me semble qu’on n’y peut rien tolérer: elle est d’une atrocité qui révolte... elle n’est ni amoureuse, ni jalousie, ni ambitieuse. Seulement elle veut tuer son mari et le tue. Voilà la pièce!’

20 Notable exceptions from the world of theatre include Jean Anouilh, Antonin Artaud, and Peter Brook: Citti and Neri (2001), 81–148. For an overview of the debate about Seneca and the stage see Fitch (2000).

21 See Ewbank, Ch. 3, and Miola (1992) with further bibliography.
at its centre, providing the best available example of a type of narrative at the opposite end of the spectrum from that of Aeschylus (see Fig. 1.1). The concept of the ‘Senecan tradition’ may do little to restore Seneca’s creative ‘genius’, but it nonetheless exposes the rigidity of the conceptual and institutional boundaries within which he has been confined in the last two centuries, and rehabilitates him as Aeschylus’ most serious contender in Western theatre.

MODERNITY

The longest-lived modern festival of ancient drama was inaugurated in Sicily in 1914. The play chosen by the National Institute of Ancient Drama (Istituto Nazionale del Dramma Antico or INDA), to be performed in the Greek theatre of Syracuse for the first time since antiquity, was Aeschylus’ Agamemnon. At first sight, the poster of the production (see the frontispiece to this volume) appears thematically unrelated to the play. The Clytemnestra or the Orestes that featured on posters of subsequent productions of the Oresteia in Syracuse have a much more organic link with Duilio Cambellotti’s costumes and stage sets, the
trademark of the festival for the first thirty years of its existence. And yet, the coloured pictorial poster of the 1914 *Agamemnon* was a visual manifesto for the newly established festival, a programmatic statement marking the departure of the festival from the advertisement practices and aesthetic principles of commercial theatre. Until the 1910s the posters of Greek and Roman drama productions were largely traditional, letterpress only, announcements in the manner of theatres which specialized in conventional drama. In the first poster of the new Syracuse festival, on the other hand, the innocuous, naturalistic, tourist-view scene of the ancient theatre is framed by Art Nouveau lettering, tripod and frame. The composition celebrates the unanimity of classical antiquity and the modern world through the harmonic coexistence between naturalism and modern art, culture and entertainment, tradition and modernity.

*Agamemnon* has been seen variously as a paradigm of pre-modern Western culture, a mirror of modernity, and a vision of postmodernity. It has served as a reflection on the appeal, but also on the disintegration and the reconstitution, of some of the most central tenets of modernity such as the ideals of progress, reason, and rationality. In 1797, Népomucène Lemercier’s *Agamemnon* was performed in Paris, featuring an Aegisthus modelled on the French revolutionaries during the Reign of Terror. Half a century later, Victor Hugo in his inaugural lecture to the French Academy would explicitly compare Lemercier’s Aegisthus with Danton, one of the most infamous actors on the political stage of the French Revolution. But Hugo would also criticize Lemercier for using ‘the naïve and simple crimes of a primitive era’ as a mirror for those ‘of a decrepit and corrupt civilization’. Hugo assumed that Lemercier’s model was (or rather should have been) the Aeschylean *Agamemnon* of a primitive but noble antiquity. Yet Lemercier, who drew on Seneca rather than on Aeschylus, was more interested in the analogies between past and present than on the differences used to justify Hugo’s concept of decadence.

Another adaptation of Seneca’s *Agamemnon*, which problematized the principles of rationality and subjectivity posited by the Enlightenment, was composed by the Italian poet and dramatist Vittorio Alfieri in the years immediately before the Revolution. Alfieri used the political ambitions of Aegisthus, the violent and tortuous emotions of Clytemnestra and the limitations of Agamemnon’s humanity to expose the problematic nature of both despotism and enlightened monarchy, and to stress the inability of reason to prevail over the rhetoric of necessity.

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22 The posters of INDA have been collected in Giliberti (1994a). On the production of the *Agamemnon* and the early years of the festival see Giliberti (1994b) and Amoroso (1997).

23 See Haill (1998), 28. As far as productions of Greek drama are concerned, early examples of pictorial posters include those of the *Oresteia* directed by Hans Oberländer in 1900, reproduced in Flashar (1991), Fig. 4, and the *Agamemnon* performed at Harvard in 1906 (copies of this poster are held at Harvard University).

24 ‘Quelle étrange idée de donner pour miroir aux attentats d’une civilisation décrépite et corrompue les crimes naïfs et simples d’une époque primitive’, Hugo (1841).
Agamemnon, like the treatise *On Tyranny* which Alfieri completed immediately before embarking on the play in 1777, served as a critique of contemporary political systems in a style matched by more recent productions of Aeschylus, which likewise have sought to challenge the enlightened values of democracy and progress. It is no coincidence that Alfieri’s version of *Agamemnon* was to become very influential in the nineteenth century, both in Italy and, through its translations, across Europe (French: 1802; English: 1815; German: 1822; see also Hall and Macintosh, Chapters 4 and 8).

No other aspect of Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon* exemplifies the wide range of uses to which the play has lent itself both as a myth and as a critique of the modern search of origins and idea of the self, as does Clytemnestra’s killing of Agamemnon: from anthropology to history, and from psychoanalysis to feminism, the death of Agamemnon has haunted the Western imagination’s pursuit of its past and identity. Johann Bachofen’s *Das Mutterrecht* (first published in 1861), Friedrich Engels’ *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (in the preface to the 1891 edition), Melanie Klein’s ‘Some Reflections on the *Oresteia*’ (first edition 1963), and Hélène Cixous’s *Sorties* (1975) provide some of the most powerful readings of Agamemnon’s death which the avant-garde of succeeding generations of theatre practitioners could not ignore.

Another powerful scene of the play to which this volume returns again and again is that of Cassandra, beginning with Easterling’s account of its functions in antiquity and concluding with Rehm’s discussion of the marginalization of the Trojan prophetess in recent performances of the play. From Goethe to Wagner, Victor Hugo, Oscar Wilde, and Virginia Woolf, the last two centuries have followed ancient, as well as Renaissance and neoclassical readers, in using Cassandra to reflect on the paradoxical power and inadequacy of language, time, and knowledge and on the shifting boundaries of gender and ethnicity. It is not difficult to see why the scene, with its unsettling and destabilizing combination of speech and song, silences and inarticulate cries, immobility and violent action, puts the limits of language, meaning, and logic to the test, breaking down and reassembling as spectacle the tensions and contradictions which structure modernity. Throughout the nineteenth century, for instance, the scene of Cassandra served as a site for the encounter between literature and material culture, high art and low entertainment, text and image, highlighting the multiplicity of voices which both structure and threaten the myth of the unanimity of classical antiquity and the modern world (see Ewans, Macintosh, and Prins).

Another pair of concepts which, like those of Aeschylus and Seneca, or antiquity and modernity, are useful for thinking about shifting and conflicting definitions of 'Agamemnon' are translation and adaptation. The distinction between the two terms may look straightforward, but their respective qualities are far from fixed or mutually exclusive. It is often assumed that accuracy and faithfulness should be high on the agenda of the translator, who sets himself or herself the task of reproducing the impact that a fixed text had on its original audience. Adaptation, on the other hand, can operate across stylistic and generic boundaries, for its aim is to update and modernize a text which time threatens with oblivion, incomprehensibility or irrelevance. Yet the boundaries between adaptation and translation are not always clear, even if they adhere to values which, one might think, set them apart from each other.

The first English vernacular translation of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, by Robert Potter, appeared in the 1770s and was in unrhymed iambic pentameters. The first complete French translation of Aeschylus, by Le Franc de Pompignan, also from the 1770s, divided the play in acts and scenes. Similar strategies to update and modernize Aeschylus' text survived well into the twentieth and twenty-first century. We still debate the role of stage directions in translations, and the relative merits and exact boundaries between literal, poetic and performance translations (see Walton, Chapter 10). It was the difficult language of Aeschylus' text which made it a target for criticism and parody in Aristophanes and which was responsible for its virtual neglect before the 1770s. But it was also Aeschylus' difficult language that became central to his rebirth. From Goethe to Browning, Virginia Woolf, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Tony Harrison, and Ted Hughes, Aeschylus' language has been the ultimate challenge for translators, poets, scholars, performers, and composers alike, holding in itself the key to the play's meaning and power (see Prins, Walton, Fusillo, and Taplin, this volume).

The emergence of translation studies in recent decades has helped consolidate translation as a powerful tool and metaphor for interpretation. Any act of engaging with a text, whether solitary reading, performance, visual representation, or musical composition, can be seen as operating through the principles of interpretation and equivalence. The applicability of this widened definition of translation to the relation between text and stage can be seen, for instance, in the articulation of the lines of the characters by actors or through costumes, stage sets, props, music, and lights (see Hardwick, Chapter 11).

27 See Walton, Ch. 10, as well as Stoker (1993) and Brower (1974).
28 Le Franc de Pompignan (1770) on which see Delcourt (1925), 185–8, and Matheson (1965), 7–8.
An example of straightforward equivalence between page and stage, which nonetheless illustrates succinctly the complex and enabling power of the translation process, is the identity of the weapon with which Clytemnestra kills Agamemnon and Cassandra. On Renaissance and neoclassical stages the murder weapon is consistently a dagger. Verisimilitude necessitates the use of a realistic, small weapon that can easily be hidden. Pictorial representations of Agamemnon’s death from this period tend to follow this convention even when they are not related to the stage: see Figs. 5.1, 5.2 and 8.1, this volume. It is in the last century and a half, when issues of authenticity and archaeological accuracy have become so prominent, that paradoxically Clytemnestra’s weapon has turned into a symbol for the fears, needs, and desires projected onto its holder. Under the influence of psychoanalysis, Clytemnestra’s weapon became a phallic sword, illustrating the threat that her emancipated or androgynous character poses to patriarchal order.29 Under the influence of ritual, feminist, or Marxist critical readings, it turned into a primitive, barbaric tool, an emblem of the pre-patriarchal world associated with the mother principle (see Fig. of Melina Mercouri in Koun’s 1980 Oresteia on last page of this volume).30 In productions where the Agamemnon becomes a modern bourgeois drama or psychological thriller the weapon has been visualized as a kitchen knife.31 But Clytemnestra’s most favoured weapon in modern productions of Agamemnon is the axe (e.g. Fig. 1.3; cf. 1.1, 7.2). However, even when this axe is inspired by representations of the weapon in ancient vase-paintings, it is certainly not the domestic, emergency tool that it was in antiquity.32 In fact, in antiquity too, it is difficult to imagine that vase-painters were not tempted to blur the boundaries between realism and symbolism: the size of the axe provided a perfect yardstick for measuring the monstrosity of Clytemnestra’s crime.33

It is not accidental that recent productions of the Oresteia such as that by Ariane Mnouchkine have sought to strip Clytemnestra’s weapon of its symbolic associations. By reverting to the neoclassical dagger, they have tried to bring Clytemnestra back from the world of male fantasy to the reality of gender politics. Of course Aeschylus’ text is tantalizingly inconclusive on the issue of

29 See, for instance, the sword carried by Clytemnestra on the poster and programme of the 1906 Agamemnon in Harvard, or, more recently the sword used in the 1994 revival of Stein’s Oresteia in Moscow: Uhlig (1994), 25. One of the most striking examples of this Clytemnestra is John Collier’s second painting on the subject which was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1914 and which is now in the City Museum and Art Gallery, Worcester (reproduced at www.artmagick.com).

30 See also the weapon used by Martha Graham in her Clytemnestra, first performed in 1958: pictures in Leatherman (1966).


32 Garvie (1986), 289–90 with bibliography.

33 See Fig. 2.1 where the axe breaks the frame of the composition both literally and figuratively. For other examples see Prag (1985), plates 3, 11.c and 12.a and Hall, Ch. 4.
Figure 1.2. W. B. Richmond's 'An Audience in Athens during the representation of the Agamemnon' (1884).
Figure 1.3. John Collier's 'Clytemnestra' (1882).
the weapon. Although no director today would be prepared to stage Clytemnestra standing empty-handed above the corpses of Agamemnon and Cassandra, we have to entertain the possibility that for Aeschylus’ audience the impact of the tableau might have been powerful enough even without the weapon. Translation for the stage often involves engagement not only with the theatrical script but also with what we perceive as its silences and gaps.

Translation can become an issue to fight and even to die for. The Oresteia of the newly founded Royal Theatre of Greece in 1903 stands out as one of the most important productions of the trilogy at the turn of the twentieth century, famous for triggering a riot which resulted in the death of a young demonstrator and the wounding of several others. The riot was not about the Western aesthetic of the production, which included a neoclassical venue replicating the social hierarchies of the proscenium architecture, period costumes from Berlin, and financial backing from the Danish King of Greece, George I. It was not even about the source text on which the production was based, a German version of the Oresteia by the classicist Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff which had been translated into modern Greek. Rather, it was about the issue of whether the language in which the play was rendered should be the popular, spoken Greek of the time; the archaising, purified compromise between modern Greek and ancient called ‘katharevousa’; or Aeschylus’ original. At a time when the continuity between ancient and modern Greece was constructed with the help of European Philhellenism—strikingly obvious in the body of the production as in the body of the nation—the search for national identity was persistently and myopically debated through issues which obscured the wider cultural and political processes involved in the shaping of modern Greek identity.

STAGING THE NATION

As a founding narrative of Western theatre and culture, central to debates about what we now call history, sociology, and gender, Agamemnon has been persistently associated with the idea of the nation. Theatre performances and adaptations of Agamemnon have served as platforms for the display of the continuous progress and homogeneous nature of the nation. For example, the Oresteia which was performed during the Berlin Olympics of 1936 has often been singled out as the product of the ideological apparatus which celebrated the triumph of a nation

34 See Garvie (1986) 289–90 with bibliography. For the Victorian painter William Richmond, the tableau did not have to be visualized at all to produce its powerful impact. ‘An Audience in Athens during the representation of the Agamemnon’ (see Fig. 1.2), which was exhibited at the Royal Academy of Arts in 1885, provides a study of the scene by focusing exclusively on the responses it generates in its audience. In an act of multiple (mis)identifications we are invited to watch an ‘Athenian’ audience watching us in the position from which the actor playing Clytemnestra would watch his audience.

35 Puchner (1999), 20–1 and Sideris (1976), 194–9 with further bibliography.
Agamemnons in Performance

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(and a race) in its upward struggle for perfection.\textsuperscript{36} Theatre performances of the Agamemnon have also acted out the utopian union of the nation with popular sentiment. The 1914 Agamemnon which inaugurated the theatre festival of the National Institute of Ancient Drama at Syracuse turned a marginalized and impoverished Sicily into a privileged site for the production and consumption of Greek drama as national heritage. It was for similar reasons that Agamemnon was chosen to inaugurate the National Theatre of Greece in 1932 in a double bill with a modern Greek comedy commissioned for the occasion.\textsuperscript{37}

On the other hand, theatre productions of the Agamemnon can be seen as rejecting the totalizing rhetoric of national ideology in favour of the concept of the nation as a lived reality, full of unresolved conflicts and subject to unpredictable change. The 1870s saw not only the première of Wagner’s German Oresteia, the opera \textit{Ring of the Niebelung}, in Bayreuth (on which see Ewans, Chapter 6), but also a French Oresteia, called \textit{Les Erinnyes}, written and produced in Paris by Charles Leconte de Lisle. The Franco-Prussian war of 1870–1 was fought not only on the battlefield but also on the stage. \textit{Les Erinnyes} was a dark, pessimistic adaptation of the Oresteia reflecting the soul-searching that French society had plunged into after the humiliating defeat of 1871.\textsuperscript{38} The Agamemnon has often been performed at such historical junctures, and the implications of its disturbing plot of political and social upheaval for the world outside the theatre cannot have escaped the attention of its audiences: one thinks not only of Népomucène Lemercier’s adaptation of the Agamemnon performed in Paris in the aftermath of the French Revolution discussed above, but also Sergéy Tanéev’s opera \textit{Oresteia} revived in Moscow during the season of the October Revolution (on which see Trubotchkin, Chapter 14), or Gerhard Hauptmann’s \textit{Agamemnons Tod}, which was broadcast on Berlin radio in 1946.

A discussion of the Agamemnon in the context of national culture cannot ignore the issues of cultural difference and resistance. As Foley argues in Chapter 17, the twentieth-century performance reception of the Agamemnon in the USA encompasses not only the college and university productions with which Agamemnon was introduced to the nation, and canonical adaptations such as Eugene O’Neill’s \textit{Mourning Becomes Electra} and Martha Graham’s \textit{Clytemnestra} with which it

\textsuperscript{36} Flashar (1991), 164–7 and, in connection with the 1900 production of the Oresteia by Hans Oberländer, Birrl (1996), 28–9. On the role of theatre in Nazi Germany, see the contributions by Parze and Schüllke in Berghaus (1996), with photographs from two productions of the Oresteia directed by Lothar Müthel (Berlin 1936; illustration 8.1) and Hans Meissner (Frankfurt 1941; illustration 9.1).

\textsuperscript{37} The comedy, written by the playwright and novelist Grigoris Xenopoulos, was entitled \textit{Divine Dream (Theios Oneiros)}. On this production of Agamemnon see, for instance, Kanakis (1999), 24–7, Puchner (1984), and Solomos (1992), 22–4.

\textsuperscript{38} First performed and published in 1873. Modern edition: Pich (1977), 154–220. For a useful overview of bibliography and reviews see DiOrio (1972). See also Edgard (1974), 612–21 and Bonnèric (1986), 308–27. The aftershocks of the Franco-Prussian war were felt at least until the 1900s, to judge from the subsequent revivals of \textit{Les Erinnyes} in the newly restored Roman theatre of Orange in Southern France in competition with the revivals of Wagner’s \textit{Ring} in Bayreuth.
captured the public imagination; but also alternative, avant-garde performances rewriting the play from the cultural margins. One could include here both Andrei Serban's experimental *Agamemnon* in the 1970s and more recent transvestite performances such as *Klytemnestra: the Nightingale of Argos* by Ethyl Eichelberger.

Productions of the *Agamemnon* and the *Oresteia* have been hosted in great national institutions such as the British National Theatre on London's South Bank and the ancient Greek theatre of Epidaurus. The first non-Greek production to be performed in front of an audience in Epidaurus was Peter Hall's *Oresteia*, sanctioned as the product of the land of Shakespeare. Yet productions of the *Agamemnon* and the *Oresteia* have also been associated with famous avant-garde venues such as the Schaubühne in Berlin and the old munitions factory of Cartoucherie on the outskirts of Paris. As Judet de La Combe shows in Chapter 15, Ariane Mnouchkine's *Les Atrides* belongs to a theatrical, cultural, and intellectual milieu which is both Western and distinctively French; but this did not prevent it from drawing on Asian theatre traditions and feminist politics to put forward a vision of history and agency which resists the hegemonic discourses of Western patriarchal and nationalist ideology. In Peter Stein's 1980 production of the *Oresteia*, discussed by Bierl in Chapter 16, *Agamemnon* concludes with the Chorus removing the corpses of Agamemnon and Cassandra from the stage and washing away their blood. In this metatheatrical moment the Chorus, who take off their jackets and become actors in their post-performance routine of cleaning up the stage, not only remove from the performance space the signs of atrocity and violence that have just taken place. They also erase from their memory the crimes that have changed the moral universe they inhabit. Stein turns the end of the *Agamemnon* into a bitter reflection on the history of twentieth-century Germany, and Western democracies in general, dramatizing the unwillingness of the people to remember the past and to learn from it. Pasolini, on the other hand, in his *Notes for an African Oresteia* sought to de-westernize the power-struggles of the *Oresteia* by exploring the encounter between modern democracy and tribal culture in the post-colonial context of the newly-born nations of Africa (see Fusillo, Chapter 12).

**CONCLUSION**

Performance texts are transient and irrecoverable. On the one hand, the elusiveness and disparateness of theatre performance call for the development of analytical methods for the collection and documentation of sources. On the other hand, the word ‘sources’ with its ‘false premise of authentic origin’ raises

40 On the use of Cartoucherie for Mnouchkine's *Les Atrides* see Lallias (1992) and on the use of Schaubühne for Stein's *Oresteia* see Fischer-Lichte (2004), 344–5.
methodological and historiographical issues that one cannot afford to ignore.\textsuperscript{41} This volume concludes with a listing of productions that can be seen as both a body of raw material awaiting analysis and a tool for interpretation, a map to be read in conjunction with other attempts in this volume to make sense of ‘Agamemnon in performance’. Although the validity or usefulness of the listing is far too obvious to be denied, any assumption that it is neutral should certainly be challenged. This is not only to say that the listing is inevitably provisional and incomplete, with unavoidable oversights and mistakes. Like the other contributions to this volume, it privileges certain ways for thinking about its subject to the exclusion of others: it adopts a strictly chronological order, confines itself to a relatively limited period of time, and favours, say, directors and actors over spectators, national and linguistic categories over ethnic or cultural ones, theatre over other performing arts, and so on. However, its organizing principles should not divert attention from what this listing has to offer. It sets the parameters of a field of research that opens up the disciplinary boundaries of the Classical Tradition, creating a whole new range of interpretative possibilities and contributing to the ongoing re-formation of the classical canon. Its chronological and geographical spread, and its emphasis on the commercial stage as well as on education and on avant-garde theatre provide fascinating insights into the diverse contexts in which Graeco-Roman antiquity, and especially tragedy, has acquired its meanings.

The volume seeks to address not only students of Graeco-Roman drama but all those interested in the encounter between classical antiquity and the modern world. As far as its disciplinary identity is concerned, the contributors are a diverse group in terms of age, gender, academic affiliation, and geographical base. Two-thirds are classicists (though with different methodological allegiances), whereas the rest are based in departments of Comparative Literature, Theatre Studies, and English. This is a volume that, like the conference from which it originated, brings together scholars from both the Anglo-American world and from continental Europe. The lack of contributions from other continents, from outside the academic community, or with other methodological and thematic orientations is the result of editorial limitations and choices. A comprehensive presentation of the performance history of Agamemnon is beyond the scope of the present volume. This is not only because of the evident restrictions of scale; I have tried to show that a master-narrative which aims at a total and unified understanding of the subject raises more questions than it purports to answer. A more productive path of inquiry is to reflect on and juxtapose a selective body of competing conceptualizations of ‘Agamemnon’ across temporal, generic and textual boundaries. At the same time, rather than searching for a transhistorical

\textsuperscript{41} For a concise and perceptive analysis of the issues that historiography and positivism raise for theatre studies, see Reinelt in Reinelt and Roach (1992), 293–8 (quotation from p. 293).
and universal truth, I have sought to emphasize the plural and provisional nature of the micro-narratives from which the larger pictures of the subject that we paint are inevitably made. Performance reception is an area of study which is still in its infancy, and not only in the field of Classics. We hope that this volume will play a small part in demonstrating how important a role this type of reception has to have in the continuous (re)production of the classical past.
SECTION I
IN SEARCH OF THE SOURCES
My topic is the reception of *Agamemnon* in Greek in the long period of continuous theatrical tradition from the time of its first showing at Athens in 458 BC to the end of pagan antiquity. Familiar enough territory, one might think—at least to the extent that everyone recognizes the play (along with *Libation Bearers* and *Eumenides*) as seminal for the development of Attic drama; but mysterious in many respects, largely because our evidence is so patchy. For a start, we have no actual record of a specific revival of the play during that long period (c.800 years?). But it is inconceivable that revivals never happened in some form or another, and this mismatch may be a good starting point for thinking about methodology.

Luckily there has been an encouraging shift in recent years towards a fairly catholic view of reception history, and this has made the task less daunting. Scholars no longer so easily take it for granted that anything generated in post-classical theatre is likely to have been artistically inferior or in some way decadent, and there is a generally friendlier approach to such dramatic media as solo singing by *tragoidoi*, pantomime, and even mime. There is a greater interest, too, in the processes whereby 'classic' works were appropriated, or transformed, to become part—at many different levels—of the cultural heritage. I dare say it has been made easier for us to think about the whole phenomenon of reception in a more flexible way because of changes that have been going on in other disciplines, where a 'bottom-up' approach has been transforming the nature of research.

A recent example is the preface to Jonathan Rose's book *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes*, which traces a shift in attitudes on the part of scholars over the last twenty years. Rose quotes a comment by a fellow-historian in 1980 to

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1 For the 5th-cent. evidence see Bain (1977). From the 4th cent. onwards, as the practice of reviving old tragedies became more regularly established, the norm seems to have been to put on single plays, and the patchily surviving inscriptions along with Aristotle's *Poetics* strongly suggest that Euripides was the most popular choice among the classic tragedians. But whether or not *Agamemnon* was often performed in anything like its original form after the 5th cent., it evidently continued to have the prestige of a classic.

2 See e.g. Gentili (1979); Caso and Slater (1995); Easterling (1992, 1997b); E. Hall (1999b, 2002); Taplin (1993, 1999); Le Guen (1997, 2001); Moretti (2001); R. Hunter (2002); Lada-Richards (2003b).
the effect that historians 'want to penetrate the mental world of ordinary persons as well as philosophers, but they keep running into the vast silence that has swallowed up most of mankind’s thinking', but as Rose goes on to note, 'in the 1980s and 1990s scholars in the emerging discipline of "book history" invented the research methods and tapped the archival resources that allowed them to penetrate this mystery. Common readers disclosed their experiences in memoirs and diaries, school records, social surveys, and interviews, library registers, letters to newspaper editors (published or, more revealingly, unpublished), fan mail...'.

This sounds a little like the sort of thing epigraphers and papyrologists have been doing for years... We aren't of course going to find anything like such a wide range of evidence for the reception of Agamemnon among the inscriptions, papyri and graffiti of antiquity, but for the bigger picture of theatre history we are certainly in touch with more material, and with more varied discussion of it, than our predecessors, as a comparison of the two most recent Lustrum reviews by Richard Green makes clear: Volume 37 covers only nine years (1987–95), but without any change in the style of the entries, it is twice the length of Volume 31, which covered sixteen. So it makes sense to begin with a brief glance at the types of evidence available if one wants to assess the standing of Agamemnon as a classic at any period of Graeco-Roman antiquity. The question is how far the play enters cultural traditions and contributes to the shaping of them.

The most obvious category is, first, documentary and literary sources: inscriptions, papyri, and medieval manuscripts, making reference—explicit or implicit—to performance, remarks by ancient writers (scholars, historians, biographers) on the impact, significance, popularity or lack of it, of anything (including other performance media) that might be relatable to Aeschylus’ play. Then there is, secondly, intertextual evidence: at the most obvious level quotations in other authors, particularly other dramatists; and (more fundamentally significant) signs of imitation and allusion in surviving works, as well as hints from works that are largely lost. Thirdly, vase-paintings and other visual evidence may also help us to arrive at a sense of the popularity of a particular myth and may sometimes even give clues about its dramatization. Agamemnon is poorly represented by contrast with especially Libation Bearers; the implications of this need to be considered (cf. pp. 33–4 below). Here is a small selection of samples.

**DOCUMENTARY AND LITERARY SOURCES**

The strongest piece of prima facie evidence for the status of the play is of course the survival of Agamemnon along with Libations Bearers and Eumenides in the

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3 Rose (2001), preface, 1, quoting Darnton (1990), 212. It is interesting that Rose picks up working-class access to Greek culture in the 20th cent. through Gilbert Murray’s translations of tragedy (80–1).

4 A new instalment covering the period from 1996 onwards will soon be ready to go to press.
Agamemnon for the Ancients

manuscript tradition. Less important than the answer (or answers) to the question of why it survived to be one of the seven Aeschylean plays transmitted from late antiquity into the Byzantine world and beyond is the mere fact that it did survive, that it never disappeared from the continuous tradition. It clearly did not fall into the category of popular student's texts like Prometheus, Seven against Thebes, or Persians, and this made its transmission more vulnerable in the later period, but the very fact of survival implies some degree of multifunctionality: along with the rest of its trilogy, Agamemnon was clearly used. What sort of uses was it put to?

We can tell from the fact that there are surviving marginal scholia that the play was read and studied enough to be the object of ancient commentary, and its richness in unusual vocabulary evidently interested lexicographers, but there were other Aeschylean texts to choose from, after all, and the claim of Agamemnon can't have rested on scholarly grounds alone. There must have been a continuing awareness of the play's importance in theatrical terms, and I want to use a passage in the surviving hypothesis to the play as a starting point. This is the tip of an iceberg, of course, a tiny survivor from what must have been a much more extensive history of discussion of the play, but it is largely because Agamemnon has survived in a continuing manuscript tradition that we have even this:

Agamemnon on his departure for Troy made a compact with Clytemnestra that if he sacked Troy he would send a beacon signal that very day. So Clytemnestra hired a watchman to keep a lookout. And he saw it and reported it, and she herself sends for a group of elders to give them the news of the beacon; these constitute the chorus. When they have heard the news they sing a paean of thanksgiving. Soon afterwards Talthybius arrives and gives an account of the voyage. Agamemnon arrives in a chariot, and a second chariot followed it, with the booty and Cassandra. Agamemnon enters the house with Clytemnestra, but before going into the palace, Cassandra prophesies her own and Agamemnon's deaths and Orestes' killing of his mother, and rushes in as one about to die, having thrown off her garlands. This part of the play is admired for its power to arouse ekplexis (amazement/terror) and pity in full measure. Aeschylus in his own distinctive way (iōtos) has Agamemnon murdered on stage (?), but having passed over the death of Cassandra in silence, he showed her corpse, and he has created a scene in which Aegisthus

5 It is bad luck that out of the five medieval MSS used by scholars in establishing the text of Agamemnon three, including the earliest (M, 10th cent.), have large lacunae. But Tzetzes and Eustathius had access to the text, and it was imitated by the author of Christus Patiens (see n. 22 below).

6 For the scholia see Smith (1976). These are sparse by comparison with those for (say) Seven against Thebes, and in any case fragmentary (cf. n. 5 above), but the testimonia, including many citations in the lexicographers, especially Hesychius, make clear that there must have been a substantial body of scholarship on the play in antiquity. Scholia on other works occasionally include more detailed discussions of particular passages than have survived in the MSS of Ag., e.g. schol. on Soph. OC 934, discussing Ag. 53–4. A rare surviving scholion on Ag. (22) deals with imagined performance: 'There has to be a short pause, and then [the Watchman] must cry out, having seen the beacon.' For ancient scholarship on Aeschylus see Wartelle (1971).

7 For this and related terms in the tragic scholia see Meijering (1987), 226–30.
and Clytemnestra each claim responsibility for the murder on a single count, Clytemnestra for the murder of Iphigeneia, and Aegisthus for the sufferings of his father Thyestes at the hands of Atreus.¹⁸

There are several details to pick up here; the two chariots, for example, as Oliver Taplin has suggested very persuasively,⁹ probably give us a glimpse of a Hellenistic production in which the display of Agamemnon’s spoils and retinue was more prominent than in the original (there are parallels, e.g., in the treatment of Euripides’ Orestes in later times¹⁰—but perhaps not necessarily to be taken as a sign of ‘decadence’?). What interests me particularly, though, is the next section, on Cassandra. It is this scene, and not the carpet scene, we might note, that is singled out for its remarkable power, and I take it that what we are dealing with here is a sense of what happens in the theatre, not just the response of detached readers. ‘Throwing off the garlands’ is one clue, and ‘rushes in’ (sc. ‘to the palace’) looks like another (ῥίψας τὰ στέμματα, εἰσόηδος). Then there is ekplexis: can we put this more precisely into a theatrical context? A passage from the scholia on Eumenides and a couple more from the scholia on Sophocles’ Ajax may be relevant here.

The first scholion (1a/b) on Eumenides sets the scene at the opening of the play, the oracular shrine with the Pythian prophetess coming forward to make prayers: ‘But unexpectedly seeing the Furies sleeping in a circle around Orestes, she reports everything to the spectators, not because she is describing things inside the stage-building (τὰ όπο τὴν οἰκήν) [sc. for the sake of it—for this would be ‘modern’ (νεωτερικόν) and Euripidean—but because of ekplexis (ἠπὶ τῆς ἐκπλήξεως) giving an account, very artistically (φιλοτέχνως), of what frightened her’.¹¹ Here the ekplexis belongs to the stage figure, but its effect is presumably conveyed to the spectators.

At Ajax 346 the text makes clear that a tableau is displayed showing Ajax among the slaughtered cattle. The scholion reads:

An ekkuklema is used here so that Ajax may be shown in the midst of cattle. For these things too bring the spectator to ekplexis, things that are more pathetic when they are actually seen. He is shown with a sword, covered in blood and sitting in the middle of the cattle.¹²

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¹⁸ For the text see e.g. West (1990a), 189–90.
¹⁰ Schol. on Or. 57, with Taplin (1977), 76–7 and Falkner (2002), 359.
¹¹ For the Greek text see Smith (1976), 42. Meijering (1987), 195–6 discusses this passage in an interesting section on oikonomia: ‘It is owing to her fright and agitation that the priestess speaks to the world at large, which gives actors a good opportunity for passionate drama. The novelty introduced by Euripides is that his characters tell us quite steadily and composedly... about the background of the story.’ A great deal has been written about the staging of the Delphic scenes in Eumenides (see esp. Taplin (1977), 362–76; A. L. Brown (1982); West (1990b) 264–71), but this scholion does not seem to have attracted much attention, despite reading like a fragment of an ancient debate on Aeschylean dramaturgy.
¹² For the Greek text of the Ajax scholia see Christodoulou (1977). Falkner (2002), 354–5 discusses these notes in relation to ekplexis; see also n. 16 below.
At 815, the beginning of Ajax's suicide speech, which culminates in his falling on his sword on stage, the scholion raises the question of the unusualness of this device.

Such things are rare among the ancients. For their normal practice is to report events through messengers. What then is the reason? Aeschylus in *Thracian Women* has used a messenger to report the death of Ajax, and perhaps therefore he <Sophocles> showed the action to the spectators in the desire not to follow in the other's footsteps. Or rather because he wanted to create *ekplexis*. It isn't appropriate or just to criticize an ancient writer at random...

There was evidently nothing wrong with *ekplexis*: rather, it was something the ancient theatregoer might expect to get out of a fine dramatic sequence, not just from gratuitous spectacle, and in the *hypothesis* it is certainly assumed to be something that *Agamemnon* had to offer. The text goes on to single out as distinctive the way in which Aeschylus deals with the deaths of Agamemnon and Cassandra. I take it that 'on stage' (ἐπὶ οἰκηνής) is an awkwardly condensed way of saying that he has the death of Agamemnon enacted (through his cries), then passes over Cassandra's death without any reference in the text to her killing, but still shows both corpses. This evidently interested the author, perhaps because Aeschylus' use of the unseen victim's cries had been new in its time and later proved to be highly influential. The debate about what should be shown to audiences certainly seems to have attracted critical attention. When we find Clytemnestra at Sophocles, *Electra* 1415–16 and Polymester at Euripides, *Hecuba* 1035–7 actually quoting *Agamemnon* (as does Cyclops in a parody of the tragic manner, *Cyclops* 663) we surely get the sense that the scene in *Agamemnon* was perceived as a paradigm case (see pp. 30–1 below for details).

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13 Aristotle uses the term favourably of effects in tragedy at *Poetics* 1454a4, 1455a17; cf. Lucas (1968) on 1455a17 and Russell (1964) on 'Longinus' 15.2.

14 This is not likely to convince all readers (see Hall, this volume, pp. 57–8), but I think it is better than assuming with Taplin (1977), 326 n. that the 'atrocious writer of the hypothesis to Ag.' meant to say that Agamemnon was killed in view of the audience. See further note 16 below.


16 There are frequent traces of a scholarly discussion in antiquity about what should and should not be shown and on the different ways of representing shocking events to the audience—by cries from inside the skene or by messengers' reports; cf. the scholia on *Eum.* and *Ajax* quoted above and especially schol. Soph. *El.* 1404, the murder of Clytemnestra ('Messengers customarily report the things that have happened inside to those outside. But here, so as not to waste time in the play, he has not written in this way. For it is the suffering of Electra that is being represented. So here the spectator hears her shouting while Clytemnestra is being murdered.... The scene is free from vulgar display, but it has been made no less vivid through her shouting', trans. Falkner (2002), 355). The exegetic scholion on Homer, *Iliad* 6.58–9 refers to the same debate: on the inappropriateness of representing 'inhumane' behaviour, the text notes that the tragic dramatists 'hide people doing such things in the stage buildings (ἐν ταῖς οἰκηναίς) and either by voices heard (φωναῖς ποιούμεναι, i.e. heard at the time), or through messengers later, they make clear what has been done'. Cf. schol. on Eur. *Hec.* 484; Philostratus *VA* 6.11 on Aeschylus' innovations: he devised dying inside the stage building (τοῦ ἐν τοῖς οἰκήναις παθονόμενοι) so as not to kill in full view (ἐν φωνών). In general cf. Aristotle, *Poetics* 1453b11–11 and Horace, *Ars Poetica* 179–88, with the discussion by Brink (1971) ad loc. (1. 244–5); also Meijering (1987), Ch. 1.
What this deadpan hypothesis, composed long after the time of Aeschylus and his fifth-century successors, seems to point to is the play’s classic status as a theatrical model. N. J. Lowe has recently characterized such classics as ‘canonical exemplars at the source and centre of the genre or tradition’, enshrining a way of doing things ‘which, while perhaps obsolete in practice, is still perceived as a mainstream, orthodox, accepted way to proceed’.¹⁷ This is a helpful reminder that straight full-scale revival is very far from being the crucial criterion of a play’s influence, particularly when it is one of three units in a trilogy, and trilogies have gone out of fashion.

But the plays of the Oresteia, along with Seven against Thebes in particular, must have contributed decisively to the continuing prestige of their author long after he was felt to be old-fashioned. We can see this implied in the evaluative remarks on Aeschylus that crop up in the ancient biographical tradition, rubbing shoulders with all sorts of tall tales—the eagle dropping a tortoise on his head, women having miscarriages after seeing the Furies on stage in Eumenides, and so on. Scholars have been deeply sceptical of pretty well anything in the ancient Lives and have convincingly shown that the strongest influence on the way Aeschylus is characterized by the biographers comes from Aristophanes’ Frogs, but what I find interesting is the possibility that there are signs here of gradual adjustment to Aeschylus’ continuing classic status. Perhaps things that start off in Aristophanes as jokes begin to mean differently over time as they are filtered by the reception process? (I am assuming, of course, that the ancient Life, like many ancient scholia, represents the end product of a long and complex process of information-gathering from different, often overlapping, sources, entailing in the process much excerpting and boiling down.)

This adjustment certainly seems to be happening with remarks about Aeschylus’ bigness. As Taplin has pointed out, what Aristophanes makes fun of is the ‘mass and monstrosity’ of his words, his ‘bombastic and monstrous language’,¹⁸ and this sort of phrasing certainly crops up in passages in the Life (teratôdes ‘monstrous’, for example, in §7). But it is associated more respectfully now with other aspects of his art (e.g. in §5: he is noted for big stories, big stage figures, big effects, and ‘big’ means grand, weighty, serious, dignified, stunning).¹⁹ In the case of stage effects it’s perfectly obvious that Aeschylus is credited with innovations that came later, such as high boots (§14), but this is precisely what I am arguing, that the way the ‘bigness’ of Aeschylus is evaluated is gradually adjusted over time and associated with a new aesthetic. All sorts of late writers, some of them very far from being undiscerning readers, use the same kind of language about

¹⁸ Taplin (1977), 42–3. There are many relevant passages in Frogs, e.g. 818–29, 923–6 (on which see Michelakis (2002), 40), 1056–61; cf. also Clouds 1366–7.
¹⁹ The Greek words are àdôpos for his ‘grand’ style, with its long compound words, metaphors, etc.; òvûkos, the ‘volume’, ‘dignity’ conveyed by such devices; ëpôs, ‘weight’, given to his characters by their heroic grandeur.
him: Aeschylus is noted for his big thinking (*megalophrosune*), big voice and big style.\(^{20}\) By Phocion's time he can be simply identified as 'Aeschylus the one with the biggest—grandest—voice'.\(^{21}\)

There may be another example of this changing evaluation in §7 of the Life:

'For this reason one could find many outstanding illustrations of his striking dramatic contrivances but few aphorisms or pathetic scenes or other effects calculated to produce tears' (trans. Lefkowitz, 1981). These 'aphorisms' (*gnōmai*) and 'pathetic scenes' (if that is the right translation of *sumpatheiai*) were of course something greatly admired in later tragedy, particularly the aphorisms that make Euripides by far the most often quoted tragedian in later antiquity (as in Clement of Alexandria, the Menandrian monostichs, and most of all Stobaeus). In Aristophanes, Aeschylus objects to the clever-clever Euripides and his capacity to give smart lines to his immoral characters—and the Life duly echoes the point in §5:

>'He thought... that cunning ingenuity and sententiousness were foreign to tragedy (τὸ δὲ πανοὐργόν κομψοπρεπές τε καὶ γνωμολογικὸν ἀλλότριον τῆς τραγῳδίας ὑγόμενον')'. But there is nothing disparaging about the phrasing on *gnōmai* in §7, and it may be the scarcity in Aeschylus of gnomic sayings (in Euripidean style, viz. in quotable simple language and iambic trimeters) that accounts for his seeming (from our vantage point) to attract less notice in later times. Against this impression we should balance the fact that there are several passages in the *Christus Patiens* that take lines from *Agamemnon* as their models.\(^{22}\)

Finally on §7, we might look at the notorious phrase *teratodes* and consider what that might mean in its context: 'He used his visual effects and plots more to effect *ekplexin teratode* than to deceive his audience.'\(^{23}\) If it means something more like 'having the quality of an uncanny or supernatural phenomenon' than 'monstrous, scary', which perhaps carries the implication 'grotesque' or 'sensational', then we can see signs of adjustment here too. Would the admired 'ecpleptic' Cassandra scene, for example, achieve a 'teras-like' *ekplexis* in bringing the spectators into contact with something beyond their normal experience? As when with her clairvoyant powers she sees past and future events as if they were happening now: the children of Thyestes holding their own flesh in their hands (1095–7), or the murder weapon and the killing of Agamemnon (1125–8)?

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\(^{20}\) As in Dio Chrysostom 52.4; for his voice cf. e.g. Himerius, *Or.* 8.4; St Basil, *Epist.* 74.2, who describes Aeschylus' capacity to 'set forth a mighty disaster' and lament it *συμφωναῖς μέγεθος ἐναργίας διαθέμενον, μεγαλοφωνοῖς ὁδύματο*.\(^{21}\)

\(^{21}\) τῶν τραγῳδῶν Ἁλήθην τῶν μεγαλοφωνότατον (Bibl. 101b4).

\(^{22}\) The following passages are clearly modelled on verses of *Ag.: Chr. Pat.* 39 (≈763–5), 65–6 (≈611–12), 71–3 (≈587–9), 75 (≈593), 79–82 (≈594–7), 1457–64 (≈1485–92), with perhaps a hint of *Ag.* 785 at 1462.

\(^{23}\) Aristotle in *Poetics* (1453b9) uses *teratodes* in a context discussing the two main ways of eliciting a response of fear from audiences: plot structure and spectacle. Both have their place, but spectacle aimed merely at producing thrills is incompatible with tragedy; cf. Lucas (1968) ad loc.
INTERTEXTUAL EVIDENCE

Turning briefly now to the intertextual evidence, what do we find in the surviving sources to suggest that *Agamemnon*, as it were, entered the cultural bloodstream, particularly in terms of theatrical tradition and practice?

There are all sorts of ways in which a paradigmatic play's formative presence can manifest itself. Quotation is the most obvious—and some of the language of *Agamemnon* seems to have turned almost into catch phrases: the thirsty dust (495, cf. Soph. *Ant.* 246–7, 429); Helen as sacker of cities (*heleptolis* 690, cf. Eur. *IA* 1476, 1511); the mattock of Zeus (cf. Soph. fr. *727R*, from the lost play *Chryses*, evidently parodied by Aristophanes at *Birds* 1240); 'a bitter end of marriage rites' (745, cf. Eur. *Med.* 1388). But echoes like these may be fairly free-floating; it is more interesting to see how in the linguistic texture of Euripidean 'remakes' of Aeschylus, *IA* for example, reformulations of famous phrases will point up crucially ironic difference—as when Agamemnon’s 'yoke-strap (Λέπαδνον) of necessity' (218) becomes the more prosaic 'bonds of necessity' (ἀναγκής ζέωματα, *IA* 443), and the more ‘modern’ phrasing underlines the differently problematic nature of necessity for these people in this play. In Aeschylus the words belong to the Chorus, recalling Agamemnon’s action in terms of the shocking initiative that he reluctantly takes (he ‘puts on’ the yoke-strap), but in *IA* it is Agamemnon himself, faced with the arrival of Iphigeneia and Clytemnestra, who uses the image to express his desperate perplexity, and the deeply confusing nature of the situation is brought out by the rest of the verse: ἐς οὖν ἀνάγκης ζεώματα ἐμπεπτώκαμεν, ‘into what bonds of necessity have we fallen’, with the verb acknowledging his helplessness, and in the next two lines he glosses it with the comment that 'daemon', the unspecifiable power that controls human lives, is cleverer than any clever designs of his own.24

I have already mentioned quotations of Agamemnon’s death-cries, clinching the echo of the paradigmatic murder scene. It is worth taking a closer look at the way the quotations are handled. In Sophocles’ *Electra* the scene surrounding Clytemnestra’s off-stage death is clearly meant to evoke her own killing of Agamemnon in Aeschylus, but when at 1415 she quotes Agamemnon’s ‘Ah, I am struck’ (ὡμοί πέπληγμαι *Ag*. 1344) she is answered in the second half of the verse by Electra (addressing Orestes) ‘Strike again, if you have the strength!’, (παῖσοι, εἰ σθένεις, διπλήν). Clytemnestra’s despairing ‘Ah! Again’ (1416 ὡμοί μάλ’ αὐθείς = *Ag*. 1345) is once more capped by Electra, wishing the same fate on Aegisthus. In *Agamemnon* the victim had two full verses to himself, and the responses were made by the troubled Chorus; here the interaction between on- and off-stage action is more drastic, with Electra, as has often been noticed, ...

24 There is much more to be said about the intertextual resonances of this scene, e.g. the further reference (noted by Fraenkel ad loc.) to *Ag*. 218 at *IA* 511–12.
'stage-managing' the killing, and pointedly cutting Clytemnestra's lines in half. In *Hecuba* there is an equally bold reworking of the model: the victim is blinded, not killed, and will very soon appear onstage singing a frenzied lyric (1056 ff); his words echo Agamemnon's less exactly, but their arrangement makes the evocation of *Agamemnon* unmistakable: ὄμοι, τυφλοῦμαι φέγγος ὀμμάτων τάλας (1035) 'Ah, I am blinded, cruelly (bereft) of the light of my eyes!'  

At the level of plot, *Agamemnon* does something which turns out to be hugely influential, as Lowe has pointed out, by turning into drama the *Odyssey* 's seminal story of a failed nostos—the counter-example to that of Odysseus—and in doing so it provides a model for how tragedy can explore so many of its favourite questions, revolving around the house, the family, the return, and the possibilities that this brings with it of integration or disintegration; and of course the deeply problematic issues of revenge. Aeschylus' great stage figures, too, need to be taken into account: when we look at *Women of Trachis* against the background of *Agamemnon*, the role of Deianeira, 'husband-slayer', trying to win back, not destroy, her man, the play is enriched by the scenic and linguistic echoes of Clytemnestra. Should we be seeing the Iole-scene as a sort of gloss on Cassandra, one wonders? Clytemnestra could turn up as Medea, too, of course, and when we find records of lost plays called *Agamemnon* or *Clytemnestra* it is hard to imagine that they were able to ignore the great prototype completely.

But Cassandra needs to be taken into account, too, following the cue of the hypothesis, with its insistence on the significance of her scene. Many readers of Sophocles have found Antigone's kommos and farewell (*Ant.* 806–943) poignantly evocative of Cassandra, giving the same sense of imminent death, of distance and lack of communication between the central figure and the chorus; and just as Clytemnestra may lie behind a Deianeira or a Medea so Cassandra can inform the Antigone scene, particularly because as a musical performance the scene offered some of the same scope for the virtuoso singer. Then there is Cassandra rediviva in *Trojan Women*, in a remarkable scene (308–461), which closes with her farewell, chanted in trochaic tetrameters (from 444 onwards): Cassandra has already had her chance in the amazing wedding song (308–40) to make the maximum musical impact. The themes are

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25 Collard (1991), 185, rightly sees a specific gesture towards Ag. here; the parody of tragic phrasing at *Cyclops* 663, 665 seems also to evoke the famous paradigm case. For another passage in *Hec.* cf. 944–9 with Collard's note.  
29 See Mastronarde (2002), 27–8, 312.  
30 See *TrGF*: DID A 2b 71 Agel (Lenaea, 419); DID Polemaeus of Ephesus (1st cent. BC? at the Romaia, Magnesia on the Maeander) *Klutaimestra*; adesp. 5c(?) Kassandra. The lost text that it would be particularly interesting to recover is Ion of Chios' *Agamemnon*, on which see Tarrant (1976) 10–11. See further Hall, this volume, p. 57.  
31 Ewans (1999), 230–3 has an interesting discussion of the theatrical aspects of the scene and its comparability with the Cassandra scene in *Agamemnon*.  

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like and not like those of Aeschylus’ Cassandra: the setting at Troy, and her interaction with Hecuba and Talthybius, create a different context for the mismatch between her interlocutors’ and the audience’s understanding of her prophecies, but the essential logic of the scene owes much to Aeschylus. At 355–64 she has sketched some Aeschylean details that she will not elaborate; at 448–50 she makes a vivid forecast of the shameful treatment her corpse will receive (cf. Ag. 176–7), but the climax of her stage action comes at 451–4, the throwing off of the priestess’s garlands, in an unmistakable echo of the Aeschylean prototype. How are we supposed to read these lines?

Farewell you garlands of the god I loved so dearly, mystic marks of honour. I have already left those festivals I once so delighted in. Go, I tear you from my flesh and give you, while my body is still untainted, to the swift winds to carry away for you, O lord of prophecy. (trans. Barlow, 1986)

Unlike Aeschylus’ Cassandra she expresses no bitterness towards Apollo. The emphasis is all on her past ecstasies of devotion, on her virgin body, the contact of the garlands with her flesh, their floating back to her beloved lord. The scene has been carefully prepared for back at 256–8 when Talthybius has told Hecuba that Agamemnon loves ‘Phoebus’ virgin’ and Hecuba has cried out, evoking Agamemnon, ‘Child! throw off your sacred branches and fillets!’ What new sort of emphasis is this? Fraenkel on Ag.1267 contrasts the Aeschylean Cassandra’s ‘coarse turn of phrase’ (‘τ’ ἐς φθόνον, ‘go to hell’, as she flings off the fillets), with Euripides’ version at 453 (‘τ’ ἄρ’ ἐμοὶ χρωτός), which ‘softens down the original... and, while elaborating it, makes it more sentimental’. This is a helpful reminder that stylistic changes can give helpful clues to the intertextual effects; but perhaps there are also signs here of a real change of sensibility, opening up the possibility of a more erotically-centred style of performance, well suited to the repertoires of tragōidoi in later times.

Finally a brief glimpse at an enigmatic, much later Cassandra: a fragment of what could be a Hector tragedy, or perhaps a free-standing scene, a sequence for a tragōidios as Cassandra, with the backing of a chorus and a couple of speakers: Priam and Deiphobus. This is a papyrus fragment of 35 lines, the last 16 poorly preserved, which in its metrical structure, mixing iambic trimeters and lyric elements, especially dochmiacs, recalls the exchange between Cassandra and the Chorus in Agamemnon (1072–1177). But there is a new feature here, the word

32 μαυρίτσα... στέφη, as Fraenkel notes on Agamemnon 1265, should probably be translated ‘bands’ or ‘fillets’, being worn round the neck of the priestess. On the scene as a whole see Papadopoulou (2000).

33 For a vignette of Cassandra with perhaps a hint of the same tone, cf. Eur. IA 757–61. The surviving fragments of Alexandros unfortunately give few clues as to how Cassandra was presented in that play. In Philostratus the Elder’s account of a Cassandra picture (Imagines 2.10) the throwing off of fillets is prominent, but here combined with the murder scene and Cassandra’s concern for Agamemnon (see 35–6).

'song' (ὠδη), which occurs at intervals in the text, laid out in such a way that it is
best interpreted as 'musical directions to the actor playing Cassandra to improvise
sung preludes to the words he had to memorise'.35 The subject matter is some kind
of replay of Iliad 22 and the duel of Hector and Achilles, but we can't be sure whether
Cassandra is prophesying, giving an eyewitness account, or offering a clairvoyant
response on the model of Agamemnon.36 Some of the lines certainly suggest that
Cassandra is in her familiar role as the prophetess whose words are not understood,
e.g. 13–14, Cassandra 'Ah! Ah! What is it I see?' Deiphobus: 'Greater than a riddle to
me are the words you uttered' (cf. Ag. 1112–13); and the puzzlement may come
from the fact that while Deiphobus has just emerged from the palace, Cassandra has
'seen' him on the battlefield (this may also be implied by the fragmentary ll. 17–19,
evoking the famous scene at Iliad 22.226–99, where Athena disguises herself as
Deiphobus in order to beguile Hector).

This tantalizing passage illustrates very well the importance of the great soloist
(backed by musicians, and other speakers), and it reminds us that we should not
automatically think whole tragedy when we find fragments like this. The more the
musical resources of the solo tragic performer were admired, the more scope there
was for artistic development to meet changing needs, giving audiences the sense of
being in touch with something valuable and recognizable as 'tragic' without
needing to be an antiquarian reconstruction of an old masterpiece. One could
imagine a singer drawing on his personal repertoire to create Cassandra in musical
terms that would suit this dramatic situation. Just like seeing a pantomime dancer
performing as Orestes, hearing a tragōidis singing Cassandra, even in a newly
composed text, could give an audience an experience of contact with what
Aeschylus meant to the culture.37

VISUAL EVIDENCE

Artistic evidence in relation to the reception of a particular play is notoriously
hard to evaluate, even when there is plenty that looks as though it might be
relevant. Of course there must always have been a significant distance between any
given dramatic performance and a vase-painter's imagination of a particular
mythological situation,38 but sometimes, at least, visual motifs will help to
throw light on the theatrical impact of a play. For example, many vase-paintings

36 Gentili (1979), 67–70 argues plausibly for the last of these options.
37 Another late evocation of Cassandra, Lycophron's Alexandra, while studiously avoiding overt
quotation and imitation, must equally rely on the continuing classic status of Agamemnon. See Hurst
Lycophron and the author of TrGF 649 were using Cassandra and her prophecies to explore ways of
achieving enargeia while dealing with unseen events, a topic of great interest, of course, to Hellenistic
writers.
38 For recent approaches to this question see J. R. Green (1991), Taplin (1993), Giuliani (1996).
show Orestes and Electra at Agamemnon's tomb, or Orestes at Delphi, and it is hard to avoid seeing these as having some bearing, close or distant, on the reception of *Libation Bearers* and *Eumenides*. For *Agamemnon*, disappointingly, there is very little that can be associated with the play in this way. The famous Boston krater by the Dokimasia painter, showing Aegisthus killing Agamemnon, trapped in a net-like robe, and Clytemnestra rushing in with an axe, is thought by most experts to be earlier than 458, and nothing surviving from a later date looks really close to Aeschylus' version of events (cf. Hall, this volume, pp. 58–9). We should be careful, though, to avoid treating the absence of significant visual evidence as 'proof' that the play was never re-staged after the time of Aeschylus. Admittedly when the revival of old plays was the responsibility of leading actors, who (so far as we know) included single plays, not trilogies, in their repertoires, *Agamemnon* may not have been as popular a candidate for revival as either *Libation Bearers* or *Eumenides*, but the patchiness of the surviving record makes arguments from silence extremely shaky.

The case of Cassandra will illustrate the methodological difficulties. If we did not happen to have a cup by the Marlay Painter (ARV 1280.64 = Ferrara T 264, c.430 [435?], Fig. 2.1) showing on its inside a scene in which Clytemnestra threatens the suppliant Cassandra with an axe, against the background of an altar and a tipped-over tripod, it would have been easy to claim that the death of Cassandra was never represented in art after the *Oresteia*. Two considerations may affect our understanding of its statistical significance here. First, there is the scarcity of scenes showing female deaths, and particularly one woman killing another, in Greek vase-painting, by contrast with the large numbers portraying helpless women threatened by male violence. Second, Cassandra often appears on vases, but almost always in scenes showing Ajax son of Oileus assaulting her as she takes refuge at a statue of Athena (the goddess, or her statue, often figure, too). The fact that the Marlay Painter used a version of this episode, showing Ajax, Cassandra and the statue, on the same vase (LIMC s.v. Aias II, 75) may be relevant: perhaps as a rule the artistically most interesting scene in Cassandra's story was her role as the (often unclad) victim of violent assault, but here her story was being seen in a new perspective. It is also worth noting that the detail in the Marlay Painter's rendering of the death scene, with Cassandra begging for mercy

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39 Cf. n. 1–2 above and *ThGFL* I (Didascalie).
40 'This is one of the best-known scenes, the only classic one of the death of Kassandra. She sinks on one knee before the altar of Apollo, whose laurel waves behind the head of his doomed priestess. Klytaimestra jumps at her, overturning the sacred tripod, swinging her huge double axe down on the suppliant upturned face of the girl. This finely balanced, emotional picture may be inspired to some degree, though distantly, by the *Oresteia*... (Vermeule (1966), 19).
41 The killing of Clytemnestra by Orestes is much less common than the scene of Orestes and Electra at the tomb, for example.
42 See O. Touchefeu s.v. Aias II in *LIMC* 1.1 336–51.
at the altar with the tripod overturned, matches scenes of Orestes at Delphi which were produced in Athens about the same time.⁴³

Despite the uncertainties associated with almost every piece of surviving evidence that we have surveyed, I hope the reader will at least have been left in no doubt of the generative power of this play for subsequent Greek culture. My final sample is from an *ekphrasis*, which can hardly count as artistic evidence, since the

background here is literary and not necessarily artistic at all, except in the most
general sense of an imaginary scene ‘pictured’ in the visual style of later antiquity.
This is Philostratus the Elder’s account of the deaths of Agamemnon and Cas-
sandra (Imagines 2.10, cf. Hall, this volume, p. 53). The scene is the banqueting
hall where Agamemnon and his men, and Cassandra, are killed, evoking the
account of the murderous feast in Odyssey 11, but it is hard to read the description
of Cassandra’s death without catching an echo of Agamemnon:
The most prominent place in the scene is occupied by Agamemnon... but even more
striking in its pathos is the figure of Cassandra,—the way Clytemnestra, her eyes crazed,
her hair flying, her arm savagely raised, stands over her with the axe, and the way Cassandra
herself, tenderly and in a state of inspiration, has tried to throw herself upon Agamemnon
as she hurls her fillets from her and as it were casts about him the protection of her
prophetic art; and as the axe is now poised above her, she turns her eyes toward it and utters
so pathetic a cry that even Agamemnon, with the remnant of life that is in him, pities her,
hearing her cry; for he will recount it to Odysseus in Hades in the concourse of souls.

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'Striking too short at Greeks':

The Transmission of Agamemnon to the English Renaissance Stage

Inga-Stina Ewbank

Hamlet

'... Roasted in wrath and fire
And thus o'ersized with coagulate gore,
With eyes like carbuncles, the hellish Pyrrhus
Old grandsire Priam seeks.'
So proceed you.

Polonius

Fore God, my lord, well spoken, with good accent and good discretion.

First Player

'Anon he finds him
Striking too short at Greeks. His antique sword,
Rebellious to his arm, lies where it falls,
Repugnant to command...''

There are a number of reasons, different but interrelated, why the impotence of Priam 's striking too short at Greeks' serves me for an index to the quest this paper proposes to pursue. The first is a general one. It seems to image a long-held axiom of English Renaissance scholarship that, when the playwrights wielded their antique sword, it struck too short at Greeks and lay where it fell, that is on Roman Seneca. His plays, Thomas Nashe complained in 1589, had become a storehouse for would-be playwrights with little or no Latin, who read 'English Seneca... by candlelight'. 'Let bloud line by line and page by page', Seneca 'will afford you whole Hamlets, I should say handfulls of tragical speaches'.2 This axiom is no longer so unquestioned,3 and in the last couple of decades a few

1 Hamlet, 2.2.452–62. Shakespeare quotations in this paper are from the edition of Wells and Taylor (1988). Aeschylus in English translation is quoted from either Grene and Lattimore (1991), or Fagles (1987).
3 As late as 1985 Gordon Braden could open his book Renaissance Tragedy and the Senecan Tradition with the statement that ‘the generally insufficient knowledge of or even interest in Greek tragedy on the part of Renaissance dramatists is hard to deny’ (p. 1). Cf. also the heatedly pro-Senecan introductory
scholars have argued for Shakespeare's knowledge of some Greek tragedy at first hand. My concern here is to ask if a Greek *Agamemnon* enters into early modern English drama—and if, then how; if not, then why not.

This prompts the second reason, which is textual: the Shakespearean lines are a microcosm of the difficulty of disentangling sources of and influences on texts. The 'passionate speech' about Pyrrhus' slaughter of Priam which Hamlet so admires, and which both he and the First Player know by heart, and Polonius soon finds 'too long', was of course not quoted from an existing play but written by Shakespeare in imitation of the kind of tragic style he had himself abandoned. It is the kind generally referred to as 'Senecan', though in fact Shakespeare's immediate sources here were Book 2 of the *Aeneid* and Marlowe's play *Dido, Queen of Carthage* (which in its turn drew on Virgil, Ovid, Seneca, and others). What Shakespeare took, he remoulded, to make it stylistically different from the rest of *Hamlet* but thematically relevant in a play about sons avenging fathers. Like the author's alter ego in Malcolm Bradbury's last novel he could have said: 'I never steal. I simply inter-textualise.' And intertexts move promiscuously on the Elizabethan and Jacobean stage; the eclectic richness of texts is part of the strength of its drama; and, when originals have been mediated through layers of classical and native texts, apparent likenesses can be deceptive. Parallel hunting can come to be a little too much like Fluellen's extended insistence that Harry of Monmouth is like Alexander the Great of Macedon—and it is worth remembering that Fluellen declares the Duke of Exeter 'as magnanimous as Agamemnon' in the same breath as he finds Pistol 'as valiant a man as Mark Antony'.

But—and this is the third, and contextual, reason—Hamlet also tells us that the play from which the speech is supposed to be taken was 'caviare to the general', a box office failure; and, though the First Player is made to recite from it, the play which his troupe actually puts on before the court of Elsinore is 'The Murder of Gonzago', a Renaissance play of poison and sexual/political intrigue—in that sense like the play of *Hamlet*, which of course was a box office success. The *Hamlet* play that Nashe referred to must have been the (lost) *Ur-Hamlet*; Shakespeare's remake, for the Globe Theatre, still owes much to Seneca—and possibly also to the *Oresteia*—but had found a language and form that appealed to 'the general'. Neoclassical drama in the period was not even 'caviare' but closet drama, like the plays written by members of the Sidney–Pembroke circle, or at most it was school essay in Joost Daalder's 1982 edition of Jasper Heywood's translation of *Thyestes*: 'Indisputably, Seneca was the only classical tragedian whose works were in common circulation—any speculation about the influence of Greek tragic drama as distinct from his is beside the point' (p. xxy).

4 See particularly E. Jones (1977), chs. 3 and 4. Louise Schleiner's article (1990) on Latinized Greek drama in connection with *Hamlet* is very important in drawing attention to the Latin translations of Greek drama available in 16th- and early 17th-cent. England and in emphasizing the common practice of reading Greek authors in Latin versions. Her argument is accepted by Kerrigan (1996), 173–4.

5 Bradbury (2000), 162. 6 Cf. n. 48, below. 7 *Henry V*, 4.7.10–48; 3.6.6–15.

8 See e.g. Miola (1992), esp. 32–67.

9 See e.g. the Introduction to Kastner and Charlton (1921), on neo-Senecan closet drama.
and university drama, in Latin or English, for select audiences—like the (lost) *Agamemnon* and *Ulysses* acted at court by 'the Earle of Oxenford his boyes' on 27 December 1584. When classical myth and legend appeared on the public stage, it had been translated not only verbally but theatrically, transmitted through the conventions of that stage. Shakespeare both absorbed and inspired those conventions. He seems to have had an uncanny ability to internalize such external pressures on his creativity, unlike John Webster who gives vent to his frustration in his Preface to *The White Devil*—a play first performed in 1612 at the Red Bull in Clerkenwell, which was known as a citizens' theatre and a cut below the Globe, let alone Blackfriars. If, Webster writes, a man should 'present to such an auditor, the most sententious tragedy that ever was written, observing all the critical laws, as height of style, and gravity of person', and if he were to 'enrich it with the sententious Chorus, and... the passionate and weighty Nuntius', yet after all this, 'the breath that comes from the uncapable multitude is able to poison it'. That 'breath' was clearly a breath of life to Shakespeare, but was it 'poison' to Greek tragedy? The fourth and final reason why Priam's impotence is a pointer to my quest, although Agamemnon does not figure in the passage, is exactly that he does not figure. Searching for Agamemnon, I have become curiously conscious of his quality of absence. Quite literally so in the Latin translation by Jean Sanravius, or Saint-Ravy, of six Aeschylus tragedies, published by Ludwig Lucius in Basel in 1555, which appears to have been the version of Aeschylus commonly read by humanists on the Continent and in England. It was based on Adrien Turnèbe's Greek edition (Paris, 1552) which perpetuated the form of the *Oresteia*, deriving from an incomplete manuscript, of the *editio princeps*, the Aldine edition of 1518. In this version, the *Oresteia* is two tragedies, *Agamemnon* and *Eumenides*, with *Agamemnon* and *Libation Bearers* compacted into one play. A large number of lines (311—1066 and 1160—1673, i.e. the end) are missing from *Agamemnon*. It means that the character of Agamemnon never appears at all in Saint-Ravy's Latin *Agamemnon*, although he is listed in the 'Personae fabulae' and his arrival and death referred to in the 'Argumentum' which precedes the play (and which seems to me to suggest that Saint-Ravy had read his Seneca). It means that only Cassandra alights from the 'vehiculum' and that the reader is suddenly thrust

12 *Aeschylis poetae Vetustissimi Tragoediae sex... Basilicae... per Lvdovicum Lucium*.
14 The first edition of Aeschylus (in Greek) to include the full *Agamemnon* was P. Victorius's (Geneva, 1557).
15 Cf. the 'Argumentum': 'Agamemnon uerò vehiculò ueniit: sequabatur uero ipsum aliud vehiculum, in quo erat praeda, & Cassandra. Ipse uerò ingreditur primò cum Clytemnestra' (Saint-Ravy (1555), 124). In the text, the speech about the light from beacon to beacon is followed by three lines from the Chorus, whereupon Cassandra cries out: 'O to totoae, popae, da, à Apollo Apollo' (p. 135).
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from her foreshortened dialogue with the Chorus to the appearance of Orestes asking 'Quam rem video?' (p. 139). As Louise Schleiner points out, we can be fairly certain that Ben Jonson read this *Agamemnon*—it was in the dual-language, Greek–Latin, anthology of *Poetae Graeci veteres, tragici, comici, lyrici, epigrammatarii ...*, edited by P. de La Rivièrè and published in Geneva in 1614, which was in his library.16 And, as Saint-Ravy's was the most widely available edition of Aeschylus, other playwrights, including Shakespeare, may have had access to it. If so, they would think of *Agamemnon* as a play without its eponymous hero, a play rushing towards Orestes' revenge.

Nor does *Agamemnon* figure very prominently in much of the classical material on which the Elizabethan–Jacobean imagination commonly fed. In Aeneas' narration of the sack of Troy in Book 2 of the *Aeneid*, *Agamemnon* is mentioned only in passing, as one of the Greek warriors bursting like a hurricane into Troy. In his rare appearances in the favourite Elizabethan text, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, *Agamemnon* is never at the centre of a story, not even at the sacrifice of Iphigenia (where he is not even mentioned). Though the *Odyssey* opens on Zeus' recall of the murder of *Agamemnon*, it is Aegisthus, the murderer, who is the subject of his address to the immortals; and when, in Book 11, Odysseus meets *Agamemnon* among the dead souls, the focus is on Clytemnestra as a contrast to wise and faithful Penelope. As *Agamemnon* describes the killing of himself and Cassandra, the horrors of the scene and the treachery and callousness of Clytemnestra come to support a misogynistic argument: 'in the depth of her villainy, she has branded not herself alone but the whole of her sex and every honest woman for all time to come.'17 In English literature Clytemnestra is one of the archetypal Bad Women.18 This tradition died hard. In the early nineteenth century John Galt, otherwise known as a chronicler of Scottish provincial life, was to write a series of short tragedies, one of them an *Agamemnon*, which he refers to in his Preface as being on 'a gross and detestable topic'. With only the three characters (plus a confidante), it concentrates on the murder, which Clytemnestra justifies in a long speech of strikingly feminist assertion:

... Our serving sex,
Made for the use of free imperial man,
Must shut themselves in frozen chastity,
Like simple bulbs that winter in the soil,
Till the ingerming season come again.

16 Schleiner (1990), 31. See also McPherson (1974), 57. As McPherson points out, Jonson is likely to have owned more books than those that have been identified so far: he had a habit of selling his books; and many (possibly even all that he possessed at the time) perished in the fire in his lodgings in 1623. The point is that, through him or someone else, Shakespeare may well have had access to a Saint-Ravy Aeschylus before the turn of the century.


18 She may well, e.g., be behind Tamora, the barbaric and lascivious Queen of the Goths in *Titus Andronicus*, whose lack of pity even of another woman (Lavinia) recalls the Euripidean and Senecan confrontations of Clytemnestra and Electra.
The same thought—a challenge to any double standard of sexual morality—made Clytemnestra particularly disturbing to the early seventeenth-century mind. Thomas Heywood, in his 1609 poem *Troia Britannica*, has a note on Clytemnestra’s adultery in which he cites Ovid’s *Ars Amatoria* and *Remedia Amoris* as support for the argument that Agamemnon, because of his sexual exploits during the Trojan War, is really to be blamed for what Clytemnestra did.20 The wife who murdered him stirred the imagination more than he, the victim, did. So, too—as will become apparent when we turn to the drama of the period—did her adulterous lover.

Though Seneca’s tragedies were translated individually and also available in Thomas Newton’s edition of *Seneca His Tenne Tragedies* (1581), and though they were, in Nashe’s words, ‘let bloud line by line’, none of the major playwrights wrote an *Agamemnon* play.21 Assuming that his audience knew something of Agamemnon enables Marlowe, in *The Jew of Malta*, to give a snide and ominous meaning to Barabas’ mention of having ‘one sole daughter, whom I hold as dear | As Agamemnon did his Iphigen’;22 but, apart from this, even passing references to him are very scarce in the drama of the period. He appears of course as a character in Shakespeare’s *Troilus and Cressida*, where, much as in the *Iliad*, he is the great leader of an army and a thousand ships, in charge but not the chief actor, not a

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19 Galt (1812), iv (Preface) and 110. See further Macintosh in this volume, pp. 144—5.
20 T. Heywood (1609), 412 (endnote to Canto 15): in Christopher Wase’s translation of Sophocles’ *Electra* (1649) the list of ‘The Persons of the Interlude’ describes Clytemnestra as ‘the unnatural Spouse of Agamemnon, who conspir’d against him’.
21 In arguing for ‘concrete theatrical similarities’ between the appearance of Orestes and Pylades at the libation in Saint-Ravy’s *Agamemnon* and that of Hamlet and Horatio in the graveyard scene in *Hamlet* (an argument I would be happier with if the truncated abruptness of the Saint-Ravy text did not make the entry of Orestes more confusing than theatrically striking), Louise Schleiner (1990) makes much of the entries in Henslowe’s diary, in May and June 1599, recording payments in connection with ‘A Boocke called orestes fures’ and a ‘tragedie of Agamemnone’. She takes these to refer to two plays, based on Saint-Ravy’s two-part *Oresteia*. I doubt the validity of this argument, on two grounds: (i) Henslowe is not very particular about titles, and the ‘orestes fures’, in earnest of which he paid Dekker five shillings on 2 May, and which is not mentioned again in the diary, could well be the same play as the *Agamemnon* which is mentioned three times: a payment, ‘in earneste’, of thirty shillings to Dekker and Chettle on 26 May, a ‘fulle payment’ of three pounds and five shillings on 30 May, and a fee for licensing the play on 3 June. (See the edition of *Henslowe’s Diary* by Foakes and Rickert (1968), 119, 121). And (ii), as Chettle was co-author of this lost *Agamemnon* (but not mentioned as author of the ‘orestes’ play), one might have expected some kind of Orestian echo or trace in his unaided play about a son avenging his father’s death, *The Tragedy of Hoffman* (1602); but in this singularly bloody play, in which plot is everything and Hoffman simply aims to kill as many as possible in as ingenious ways as possible, the only classical gesture is to Seneca’s *Agamemnon* and *Thyestes*. After his first murder, Hoffman exults: ‘He was the prologue to a Tragedy, | That if my destinies deny me not, | Shall passe those of Thyestes, Tereus, | Iocasta, or Duke lasons jealous wife’ (Chettle (1951), II. 390–3).
22 *The Jew of Malta*, 1.1.135–6. By the end of Act 3 Barabas has poisoned Abigail and all the nuns in the convent she has entered, with a mess of rice-porridge.
character to compel the imagination. His epithets in Shakespeare’s plays are ‘great’, ‘high and mighty’, ‘most imperious’ and so on; but in a play so sceptical in its presentation of both sides in the war, the values which these epithets may represent are also constantly being undercut. Thersites—to whom the whole business is just ‘wars and lechery’—sums him up in the end as ‘an honest fellow enough, and one that loves quails [i.e. whores], but he has not so much brain as ear-wax’ (5.1.48—49). If Agamemnon had figured in Hamlet’s Pyrrhus speech, it might have been sympathetically—after all, in Seneca’s Troades, which Shakespeare draws on elsewhere in Hamlet, Agamemnon upbraids Pyrrhus with the murder of Priam—but it might also have been as another figure of terror, like Pyrrhus. Like so much English literature of the time, this passage is pro-Trojan and anti-Greek—a sentiment natural in a culture that liked to play with, and indeed to take seriously, the myth of its descent from a Trojan refugee (Brute) and of London as Troynovant. In the emblem literature of the time, Agamemnon is the lion-king, not the ‘proud lion’ of Cassandra’s vision in Aeschylus’ Agamemnon but an emblem of ‘furor et rabies’. Geoffrey Whitney’s Choice of Emblemes (1586) presents him against a background of burning Troy, wielding his sword and holding his shield engraved with a lion and with a verse to spell out its meaning: ‘Mannes terror this, to feare them that behoulde: | Which shielde is borne by Agamemnon bolde’. He is a tyrant, representative of ‘The crewel kinges, that are inflam’d with ire’ (see Fig. 3.1).

Gathering, then, the threads that run from Hamlet’s favourite passage, they remain intertwined strands in a quest for the transmission of the tragedy of Agamemnon into the Elizabethan—Jacobean theatre. There is no doubt that playwrights knew Seneca’s Agamemnon—many of them, including Shakespeare, in Latin as well as in translation. Translation is never a merely linguistic matter; and, for all their attempts at faithfulness, the Tudor translators of Seneca inevitably adapt their versions to sixteenth-century English modes of thought. To take just one example, John Studley, the translator of Agamemnon, clearly felt that Seneca’s ending was too abrupt, even though his own fourteeners more than doubled the single line shared by Clytemnestra and Cassandra in the original:

Clytemnestra: Furiosa, morere.
Cassandra: Veniet et vobis furor.

Cly: Go to, prepare thy selfe to dye thou frantique raging wight.
Cass: The fransy fits of fury fell on you shall also light.26

23 When Shakespeare deals with the Trojan War in The Rape of Lucrece (ll. 1366–1568), where Lucrece looks at a painting and ‘weeps Troy’s painted woes, there is no mention of Agamemnon; the sufferings of Hecuba and other Trojans, and the perfidy of Sinon, are to the fore.
25 Whitney’s Choice of Emblemes ed. H. Green (1866), 45.
26 Studley’s translation was first published in 1566; it is quoted here from the Tudor Translations edition of Seneca His Tenne Tragedies (Seneca, 1927), 2. 139.
Furor & rabies.

The crowell kingses, that are inflami'de with ire:
With fier, and sworde, their furous mindes suffice:
And oft to shewe, what chiefeke they desire,
Within their shields, they dreadefull shapes deceite:
Some Grifhins fierce, some ramping Lions beare,
Some Tygers fell, or Dragons like to weare.

All which bewarey, their inward bloodie thoughte,
Suche one, behoulde, kinge AGAMEMNON was:
Who had in shield, a ramping Lion wroughte:
And eke this verfe, was grauen in the braile:
"Mannes terror this, to feare them that behoulde:
Which shield is borne, by AGAMEMNON braile."

Dum furor in corfa efl, currensci sede fuerors:
Difficiles aditum impenem omnin habet.

Figure 3.1. Emblem of Agamemnon (1586).
So he added a speech by Euribates, of more than seventy lines, in which, within the framework of the myth, the play's action is moralized in the terms of his own culture. He laments the adding to Tantalus' pains by the 'guiltless blood' which Thyestes has inspired Aegisthus and Clytemnestra to shed; he reads Agamemnon's fate as the turning of fortune's wheel and the fall of a prince: 'Loe here how fickle fortune gives but bytle fading joy'; he describes the grief 'throughout Micænes land' ('Deprived of theyr Prynce, they feare the bloudy Tyrantes hand') and how nobly Cassandra went to her execution as to a 'brydale bed'; and while he briefly hints that Orestes 'shall revenge his fathers death', he concludes with a lament to suggest that this (somewhat like the Wars of the Roses) is the tragedy of a nation: 'So after all these bloudy byroyle, Greece never shall be free: | But bloud for bloud, and death by turnes, the after age shall see.'

On the few occasions when the story of Agamemnon was translated into performance, the adaptation was more radical, as we may see in Thomas Heywood's four Ages—The Golden, Brazen, Silver, and Iron Age—which were huge successes at the Red Bull during Shakespeare's last few years in the London theatre (c.1609–1613). These Ages were an enterprise aiming even more ambitiously, and at greater length, than John Barton's Tantalus, to put all Greek myth on stage, beginning in The Golden Age with 'The Lives of Jupiter and Saturn' and ending with the death of everyone except Ulysses at the end of The Iron Age—which Age had gone down so well as to prompt a Second Part (like a kind of Godfather Two). Not driven by a Shakespearean, or Bartonesque, urge to work out an idea or a theme, Heywood simply packs everything in to provide entertainment for a popular London audience; and so the entire story of Agamemnon's return and murder occupies just one Act in the Second Part of The Iron Age. In the next Act Orestes, having just killed Aegisthus, confronts his mother in a scene which clearly owes more to the closet scene in Hamlet than to any classical model. When Clytemnestra pleads innocence, Orestes asks Heaven or Hell for a sign, and the Ghost of Agamemnon enters, 'poynting to his wounds: and then to Egistus and the Queen'. Like Gertrude, Clytemnestra does not see the Ghost ('See what? thy former murder makes thee mad', she tells her son); and like Gertrude she is asked by her son to compare husband and lover ('Look here upon this picture, and on this'):

Clitemnestra: Thou a Sonne?  
Orestes: The name I am asham'd of: oh Agamemnon,  
    How sacred is thy name and memory!  
    Whose acts shall fill all forraigne Chronicles  
    With admiration, and most happy hee  
    That can with greatest Art booke thy deeds! (p. 422)

Agamemnon and the English Renaissance Stage

With the inveterate meta-theatricality of Jacobean playwrights, Heywood may well be remembering Cassius’ question after the murder of Caesar: ‘How many ages hence | Shall this our lofty scene be acted over, | In states unborn and accents yet unknown!’28 He is undoubtedly nudging us to admire his own ‘forraigne Chronicle’, although its ‘booking’ of the ‘deeds’ of Agamemnon is minimal. All Agamemnon does in this play is to enter ceremonially (without a Cassandra), attend a banquet where, we are told, he ‘cuts off all banquet Ceremonies | To hasten his bed-pleasures’ (p. 410) and, once in bed with Clytemnestra and ‘arm’d for pleasure’ (p. 412), get murdered by her and Aegisthus (who has been hiding ‘in the chamber behind the Bed-curtaines’). Heywood, it seems, has struck very short at Greeks by getting his story-line from narrative sources—Lydgate’s Troy Book and Caxton’s Recuyell29—and dramatizing it by fitting it to models from the contemporary English stage.30 These include a death-speech by Agamemnon, backed by a stage direction for thunder, which might have come from any Jacobean Italianate Revenge tragedy (such as Webster’s The White Devil, also a Red Bull play):

AGAMEMNON: Treason, murder, Treason:
This showes, we Princes are no more then men.
Thankes Ioue, ’tis fit when Monarches fall by Treason,
Thuder to all the world, should show some reason.
(he dies) (p. 412)

But not all ‘booking’ of Agamemnon was so innocent of classical antecedents. Another Red Bull play performed a few years later,31 The True Tragedy of Herod and Antipater by Gervase Markham and William Sampson, makes use of a telescoped Agamemnon. The villain, Antipater, bastard son of Herod, is working himself up to get rid of everyone who stands in his way to become king, and to do so by deeds ‘[w]hereat the Sunne may not go backe, as once it did | At Atreus tyrannie’. (Obviously he has Seneca’s Thyestes in mind.) When he calls on Furies to come and possess him, this produces a ‘Dumbe Shew’:

Musique: and enter Egestus and Clitemnestra dancing a Curranto, which is broken off by the sound of Trumpets: then, enter Agamemnon, and divers Noblemen in Triumph: Egestus

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28 Julius Caesar, 3.1.112–14.
29 As in the Troy Book the murder of Agamemnon (and all the other evils in Argos) are instigated by Cethus (in Lydgate, Oettes), avenging his brother Palamides. See Lydgate’s Troy Book, ed. Henry Bergen (1906–35), Part 4, 800 ff (Book V, 952 ff). For Caxton, see Sommer (1894).
30 The same could be said of John Pickering’s Horestes (printed 1567), a quite Agamemnon-less play which, in the hybrid tradition of an earlier generation of English drama, tellingly titles itself as A Newe Enterlude of Vice concerning the History of Horestes with the cruel reverntment of his Fathers death upon his one naturall Mother. See the edition in Axton (1982).
31 The true Tragedy of Herod and Antipater was published in 1622, its title page describing it as having been ‘of late, divers times publiquely Acted (with great Applause) at the Red Bull, by the Company of his Maiesties Revels’, but the Revels company was performing at the Red Bull as early as 1619, and the play could even have been inherited from Queen Anne’s Men (see Bentley (1941–68), 5. 735). In any case at some point it obviously shared the Red Bull repertoire with the second part of The Iron Age.
whispers with Clitemnestra, and delivers her a sleeveless shirt; then slips aside: Clitemnestra embraces Agamemnon, he dismisses his Trainee; she offers him the shirt, he offers to put it on, and being intangled, Egystus and shee kills him; then departs, leaving at Antipaters feete two Scroowes of paper. (C3r)

The Agamemnon story plays no further part in this play of Jewish (pseudo)history. The dumb show functions as a kind of psychological trope: it has the intended effect of inspiring to evil. A modern equivalent would be the effect some maintain can be produced from watching a brutal film like Quentin Tarantino’s *Reservoir Dogs* (1992). For the audience in the Red Bull, there is plenty of entertainment value: the ‘curranto’ (to show what a lascivious life Clitemnestra and Egystus were leading), the triumphal procession of Agamemnon’s return, the straitjacket murder. An un-literary audience who had seen Heywood’s *Iron Age* would soon recognize the characters in the dumb show (no doubt wearing the same costumes as in Heywood’s play). But the authors strike beyond Heywood. The writing in the two scrolls which are handed from one level of the dramatic fiction to another comes straight from Seneca’s *Agamemnon*:

What haue they left? thus Clitemestra writes:
*Per scelera semper sceleribus tutum est iter;*
Fond is the stay of sinne; sinne safest way to sinne;
*Egystus leaues this axiome;*
*Nec regna scotium ferre, nec tedae sciant.*
None, or alone; Kings can indure no Riuals,
I understand you well; and so will worke;

The plot is laid. Parts must be playd. (C3v)

Adorning the text with Senecan tags, often picked up from florilegia of various kinds rather than directly from Seneca, was of course a favourite device of playwrights. Clytemnestra’s assertion that the safe way to crime is through more crime, was one of the most popular tags, presumably because it articulated the basic structural principle of most Jacobean tragedy, both in terms of action and—as long as *scelus* is translated as ‘sin’, with its inevitable outcome of retribution—of morality. Versions of this *sententia* crop up in numerous plays, including several of Shakespeare’s. Aegisthus’ line (here with a meaningless ‘scotium’ for ‘socium’) which in Seneca draws jealousy (of Cassandra) and usurpation into one (‘Nor throne nor bed can brook a partnership’: Loeb) is translated purely politically by Antipater: ‘None or alone; Kings can indure no Riuals’. But the point—and the

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32 Most famously Macbeth’s ‘Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill’ (*Macbeth*, 3.2.56), and his ‘I am in blood | Stepped in so far that, should I wade no more, | Returning were as tedious as go o’er’ (3.4.135–37), but see also Richard III, 4.2.63–4: ‘I am in | So far in blood that sin will pluck on sin’.

33 By feminizing kingship, Studley’s translation emphasizes the jealousy: ‘A Queenes estate cannot abyde her peere with her to raygne, | In jelous wedlocke wil not her companion sustayne’ (*Tenne Tragedies*, II.112).
reason why I have dwelt on this somewhat bizarre play—is that the two scrolls so clearly embody the two themes which the Renaissance English theatre seemed to find it could derive from the tragedy of Agamemnon: the adultery of Clytemnestra and the political ambition of Aegisthus.34 The tragic components of a Greek Agamemnon, his hubris in walking on the red tapestries, his sacrifice of Iphigenia, the blood-guilt of the House of Atreus, the pathos of Cassandra—these simply do not enter in. The action is shorn of a past, focused on a present of concupiscence and ambition in which Agamemnon is a victim.

We cannot lay all that at Seneca's feet, since his Agamemnon, opening with the Ghost of Thyestes, throws the emphasis from the beginning on the chain of guilt and revenge in the House of Atreus, and since he has Cassandra at the end hasten to join her dead Trojan people, to tell them that Agamemnon has met with retribution: 'ut paria fata Troicis lueret malis' (so that he might meet doom equal to Troy's woes).35 On the other hand, through the Ghost's speech emphasis is also thrown on Aegisthus as the agent of the action; and it is really his and Clytemnestra's play, with their adulterous liaison the subject of her very first speech in the play. Unlike Aeschylus, Seneca has no dialogue between Agamemnon and Clytemnestra; the dramatic centre lies not, as in Aeschylus, in the arrival of Agamemnon and, later, the exhibition of his ensnared and stabbed body, but in the dialogue between Clytemnestra and Aegisthus in which he tries to persuade her of the necessity of the murder. She, in her swaying between 'amor iugalis' (L. 239) and the desire to kill Agamemnon, is by far the more complex, and therefore interesting, creation. In her resistance to Aegisthus it is she who picks up the Ghost's horror at the perverted family relationships he and Aegisthus represent—'versa natura est retro; | avo parentem,... patri virum, | natis nepotes miscui' (ll. 34—6: Nature has been confounded; father with grandsire, ... husband with father, grandsons with sons, have I confused)—and (as Electra is also later to do)36 throws it at Aegisthus, who is both son (natus) and grandson (nepos) of Thyestes. The House, then, is a twisted and terrible force in Seneca's play; but the larger context of the city—a world where ordinary human beings live and suffer, so keenly represented by Aeschylus' watchman and by the interacting chorus of old men of Argos—is not there; it cannot be evoked by Seneca's varied, detached and contemplative choruses. If we must join a blame culture in the matter of the Elizabethan—Jacobean theatre striking too short at Greeks, then Seneca's responsibility here lies in losing—as he was historically bound to do—the whole social and religious dimension whereby Aeschylus' Agamemnon relates to its audience.

34 Those two are the reference points assumed, e.g. in John Marston's The Malcontent (c.1603) when Malevole confronts the ambitious Mendoza with his adulterous liaison with the Duchess Aurelia: '... didst ever hear of one Egistus?... he was a filthy incontinent fleshmonger, such a one as thou art.' He then adds, 'Orestes, beware Orestes!' See G. K. Hunter's Revels edition of the play (1975), 1.5.8–13.


36 See lines 984—85: 'ambiguum suis, | idem sororis natus et patris nepos'.
and occasion; and in replacing it with a handful of driven characters, who articulate their drives in superb formulations—and who deserve a better fate than being reduced to Markham and Sampson's dumb show.

Nor can we say that the 'booking' of Agamemnon in *Herod and Antipater* is simply conditioned by the taste of the most popular London stages, since there is a contemporary example to make matters more complex. Thomas Goffe's *The Tragedie of Orestes* was written some time between 1613 and 1618 and performed at Oxford by the students of Christ Church, where Goffe himself was proceeding from a BA (1613) to an MA (1616), to a BD (1623). He had been a King's Scholar at Westminster and, before he left Oxford to become the rector of a parish in Surrey, he enjoyed a reputation in the University as 'an admired Poet and Orator' and took a lively part in the dramatic activities of his college. Christ Church had a continuous tradition of amateur acting and was also the academic home, in the 1570s and 80s, of several writers of Latin university plays (such as William Gager's *Oedipus*), as well as of George Peele who, before he went to London to write for the professional stage, made a translation into English of one of Euripides' *Iphigenia* plays (most likely *Iphigenia in Aulis*), of which unfortunately neither text (apart from commendatory verses) nor performance record have survived. One might have expected, then, that Goffe's *Orestes* would be a learned effort, especially as he invokes Euripides in his Prologue:

We heere present for to reuieue a tale,  
Which once in Athens great Eurypedes  
In better phrase at such a meeting told  
The learnt Athenians with much applause.

In fact there is virtually no Euripides, either his *Electra* or his *Orestes*, in this play, and what Goffe has mainly read by candlelight is not Seneca but Shakespeare and other contemporary English playwrights. Not only that, but the strong influence of a play like *Macbeth* which had not yet appeared in print, suggests that this young scholar was familiar with drama in performance on the London stage. Agamemnon appears only in two scenes, both in Act 1, though his ghost will later, like Hamlet’s father’s, pass across the stage ‘all wounded’ to deliver a long speech ending ‘Thinke on me, and revenge’ (4.8). Alive, he enters ‘as from warre’ in the first scene; in the next Aegisthus soliloquizes on his own unwillingness to

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39 See Goffe (1633). Though none of his plays was published before his death in 1629, Goffe had a considerable reputation as a playwright. *Orestes* was reissued in his *Three Excellent Tragedies* (1656). It is interesting that Goffe, such a pilferer, was himself later seen as a source for pilferers. See ‘A Satyr in Answer to the Satyr against Man by T.L. of Wadham Colledge [sic]’, in Anon. (1688), 80, where five ‘great Win’ are overheard culling ‘from the Plays | of Goff and Settle, and great Poet-Bays’.
40 The earliest text of *Macbeth* is in the First Folio of 1623.
give up ‘the sweet pleasure of incestuous sheets’; in scene 4 Aegisthus and
Clitemnestra become like the Macbaths: he invokes the ‘sable wings’ of Night
and Clitemnestra ‘unsexes’ herself, and together they stab Agamemnon in his
bed—not once, but a ritualized one stab (as in Marston’s Antonio’s Revenge)
for each of his sexual misdemeanours, which gives Agamemnon time to plead for his
life before he resigns himself in lines that are probably not meant to be parodic:

Alas this coming home hath had small ioy,
Argos hath worser foes than ever Troy. (B4r)

The rest of the play is given over to Orestes’ revenge, delayed like Hamlet’s
because, despite his ‘prophetic soule’ (3.3), he can’t be sure who killed his father,
and like Hamlet he castigates himself for showing less emotion than ‘a player once
upon a stage’ (3.5). After giving out that he and Pylades are dead (their joint
suicide by leaping from a high cliff is reported in an imitation of Edgar’s Dover
Cliff speech in King Lear) and meditating on his father’s skull, Hamlet-fashion, he
finds assurance in a Macbeth-like visit to an Enchantress and three witches who
produce, to the accompaniment of ‘Infernall Musique’, a dumb show of Aegisthus
and Clytemnestra ‘with their bloody daggers’ killing Agamemnon (3.6). So now he
knows, and his revenge on them is particularly gruesome: tied up, they have to
watch Orestes stab the child which the delayed revenge has given them time to
produce, and are made to drink the young boy’s blood before being themselves
stabbed. Orestes then goes mad, and he and Pylades kill each other with rapiers
and ‘fall downe dead, embracing each others [sic]’ (I3r).

It will be obvious that this play does not so much ‘reuiue’ Euripides, or Seneca,
as turn the ‘tale’ of the House of Atreus into a kind of palimpsest of Jacobean
popular drama, with an emphasis on Clytemnestra’s concupiscence. Her argu-
ment for murdering Agamemnon is more comical than tragical:

Could the old drybon’d dotard euer dreame
Now he had drawn forth all his strength abroad,
He could be welcome to lye bedred here
And supple his numbe ioynts in my fresh armes? (B3v)

It is difficult to believe that the students of Christ Church did not receive this play
as a parody—when listening, for example, to Cassandra’s couplet in reaction to
this ‘Orestes furens’: ‘O braue, O braue, hee’s mad as well as I. | I’me glad my
madnes hath got companie’ (5.4). But the play was published, posthumously, in
1633 and was reprinted in Three Excellent Tragedies by Goffe in 1656—at much
the same time as James Compton, Third Earl of Northampton, made a new
translation of Seneca’s Agamemnon which still remains in manuscript in the British
Library,41 and as Thomas Stanley published a new Latin translation of the

41 Bl. Add. MS 60277. A draft of the same is in Add. NS 60276. Apart from leaving out all but
one of the choruses, this is a complete translation, in undistinguished iambic pentameters. The
closing exchange between Clytemnestra and Cassandra (cf. p. 42, above) reads: ‘Clyt. In fury die,
tragedies of Aeschylus.\textsuperscript{42} Do we then have an absolute gulf between performed drama, on the one hand, and a classical tradition on the other?

Yes and no. Yes on the immediate evidence of the Agamemnon plays in the theatre; no, if we prod that evidence a bit more. We don't have to prod very much to realize that both Heywood and Goffe—a popular and a university playwright—saw \textit{Hamlet} as an Orestes play (and of course it has often been pointed out how similar the story Shakespeare found in \textit{Saxo Grammaticus} was to the story of Agamemnon, Clytemnestra, Aegisthus, and Orestes). But it is also obvious that what they borrowed—or inter-textualized—from \textit{Hamlet} was not the whole story but scenes, moments, relationships, which they then happily merged with other material. Shakespeare himself did much the same with his sources, only much better. Emrys Jones has written more wisely than anyone else on how 'Shakespeare's use of Seneca (and of other authors) may be more oblique and audacious than is often supposed—more a matter of glancingly rapid effects than of a laborious working out of correspondencies'.\textsuperscript{43} Of the 'other authors' he has also argued convincingly for Shakespeare absorbing from Euripides' \textit{Hecuba} an overall dramatic rhythm which he applied in \textit{Titus Andronicus}, and from \textit{Iphigenia in Aulis} a structure of dialogue (between Agamemnon and Menelaus) which is echoed in the quarrel and reconciliation between Brutus and Cassius in \textit{Julius Caesar}.\textsuperscript{44} Insights like these support me when, in reading Saint-Ravy's Latin \textit{Agamemnon}, and indeed other Greek drama, I sometimes feel that Shakespeare has been here. They are moments of ordinary, concrete humanity and natural feelings (of a kind never found in Seneca), such as Orestes' Nurse (in what ought rightly to be \textit{Libation Bearers}) remembering what it was like looking after him as a baby, having to wash his nappies as well as feeding him, 'fasciarum | Lavatrix, nutritorq.'\textsuperscript{45} She may not have 'influenced' the Nurse in \textit{Romeo and Juliet}, but she springs from a similar sense of drama being rooted in the particulars of life even when these have no apparent connection with plot or action. There are moments of poignant specificity, like Clytemnestra's plea that Orestes have pity 'before this breast | where many a time, a drowsing baby, you would feed | and with soft gums sucked in the milk that made you strong'.\textsuperscript{46} In \textit{Iphigenia in Aulis} Clytemnestra

\textsuperscript{42} This is a Greek edition with a Latin translation and commentary by Stanley (who is highly critical of the efforts of Saint-Ravy: see Mund-Dopchie (1984), 104 ff); it was published under two different titles, \textit{Aeschyli Quae extant} and \textit{Aeschyli Tragoedia septem}, both in London, in 1663.

\textsuperscript{43} See Emrys Jones (1977), 272.

\textsuperscript{44} See Emrys Jones (1977), chs 3 and 4.

\textsuperscript{45} Saint-Ravy (1555), 165.

\textsuperscript{46} Lattimore, in Grene and Lattimore (1991), 36. In Saint-Ravy (1555), 170: 'Abstine o fili: hanc reverere fili | Mammam, ad hoc diu quiescens simul | Gingivis mulxisti bonum ad alendum lac.' In Caxton's \textit{Recuyell} Orestes brutally cuts off Clytemnestra's 'pappes' (Sommer (1894), 685).
recalls how Agamemnon married her against her will, killed her first husband, and 'grabbed my baby from my breast and broke its head | On the hard ground'. Together with the Medea references which Diana Purkiss has also discussed, these passages have surely gone into the matrix of Shakespeare's imagination, to come out—merged and re-created—in Lady Macbeth's lines:

I have given suck, and know
How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me.
I would, while it was smiling in my face,
Have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums
And dashed his brains out, had I so sworn
As you have done to this.

There are moments of perception, as of the water which cannot wash off blood in Libation Bearers: 'All the streams of the world, | all channels run into one | to cleanse a man's red hands will swell the bloody tide'; and there are moments of confrontation, as when Clytemnestra is reported, in Sophocles' Electra, as saying to Electra: 'are you the only one whose father is dead? | Is there no one else of human kind in mourning?' with its pre-echo of Gertrude to Hamlet mourning his father: 'Thou know'st 'tis common . . . Why seems it so particular with thee?' These are such 'glancingly rapid effects' as Emrys Jones writes of, and I would hesitate to call them 'parallels' or 'sources'. Nor would I dare insist on the objective validity of my own growing sense that Shakespeare learned from the Aeschylean chorus, with its intimate (and totally un-Senecan) connection with the house and the city, something about achieving—as he so often does—the effect of the state of the nation being conveyed through ordinary folk. I am thinking not only of the Old Man in Macbeth, 2.4, but of whole scenes of a choric nature: for example, the citizens in Richard III, 2.3, wondering, on the death of King Edward IV, what is going to happen to their country—'Truly the hearts of men are full of fear' (1.38). Some of their fears are expressed, the Arden editor tells us, through an echo of lines in Thyestes, spoken by the eponymous hero after he has feasted on his sons, which simply confirms

49 Macbeth, 1.7.54–59.
50 Fagles (1987), ll. 71–3; cf. Saint-Ravy (1555), 140, Choephoroi, 72–4, and Macbeth, 2.2.58–61: 'Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood | Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather | The multitudinous seas incarnadine, | Making the green one red.' Cf. also Lattimore in Grene and Lattimore (1991), ll. 73–5: 'All the world's waters running in a single drift | may try to wash blood from the hand | of the stained man; they only bring new blood guilt on.' It is possible that Fagles' version, consciously or unconsciously, remembers Macbeth; such inverted echoes, natural to translators with Shakespeare in their bloodstream, are traps for parallel-passage hunters. Even Loeb translations occasionally sound deceptively Shakespearean. Editors of Macbeth have suggested other classical parallels: Sophocles, Oedipus Tyrannus, 1227; Catullus, In Gellium; Seneca, Phaedra, 715–18 and Hercules Furens, 1323–29. I would hesitate to claim any one passage as the single 'source' of Shakespeare's lines, but think it possible that the Aeschylean lines had entered the matrix of Shakespeare's imagination.
51 Grene in Grene and Lattimore (1991), 58.
52 Hamlet, 1.2.68–75.
the eclecticism of Shakespeare’s inter-textualizing. We need to know more about the part played by Greek texts in Elizabethan and Jacobean literary culture, but evidence seems to mount up that some form of first-hand contact with Aeschylus has left traces in Shakespeare’s dramatic imagination. I would not go so far as Louise Schleiner does when, in her learned enthusiasm, she repeatedly asserts that ‘Shakespeare brought forth full-fledged tragedy in the Greek spirit’.54 We cannot forget that Greek and Shakespearean tragedy are rooted in, and ultimately understandable through, utterly different performance conditions, different forms of communication between the poet-dramatist and his public; and Shakespeare was not Aeschylus, nor was meant to be.

But the quest for Agamemnon has not been in vain if it has suggested that for some at least of the lesser dramatists of the Elizabethan-Jacobean theatre there was a live connection with the Greeks, a mediation through Shakespeare. Perhaps we should call it transmigration rather than transmission, and perhaps the more appropriate image for dealing with the Agamemnons of a Heywood, a Markham or a Goffe is not Priam striking too short at Greeks but Feste’s admonition to Malvolio to ‘fear to kill a woodcock, lest thou dispossess the soul of thy grandam’.55

54 See Schleiner (1990), 30, 36, and 45. 55 Twelfth Night, 4.2.59–60.
4

Aeschylus' Clytemnestra versus her Senecan Tradition

Edith Hall

CLYTEMNESTRA'S GAUNTLET

An unknown Etrurian sculptor in the second century AD decorated an alabaster urn with a scene in which Clytemnestra takes the principal role in the murder of Agamemnon (Fig. 4.1). It is an unremarkable art work in both design and execution, but it has a peculiar significance that only a diachronic process of reflection on the figure of Clytemnestra can reveal. For this is the sole certain ancient visual illustration of the murder of Agamemnon to post-date Aeschylus' *Oresteia* which makes Clytemnestra the primary agent in her husband's slaughter.¹

Literary versions which make her both mastermind and the executor of the crime are also rare, one exception being Philostratus' even later *Cassandra*, an ecphrasis of a painting written in about 300 AD (*Imagines* 2.10, see further Easterling, this volume, pp. 35–6). Philostratus' semi-crazed Clytemnestra, her hair streaming, is visualized assaulting Cassandra with an axe still warm from Agamemnon's body (2.10.4). It is striking, however, that even here, in a detailed description of Agamemnon's return which self-consciously harks back to classical Athenian tragedy, no mention whatsoever is made of Iphigenia.²

Clytemnestra dominates the Aeschylean play named after her husband. She is a murderer, an androgyne, a liar, an orator, and executor of a palace coup. She is also an avenging mother. Of all the characters she has the most powerful speeches and

This chapter has improved considerably as a result of the discussions following its delivery as a paper at the Universities of Chicago, Glasgow, London, New York, Princeton, and the Center for Mediterranean Studies at Columbia University. I am grateful particularly to Alex Garvie, Clemente Marconi, Andy Ford, Helene Foley, Glenn Most, and Shadi Bartsch. Comments on the typescript from Pat Easterling and all three of my co-editors have also proved indispensable.

¹ The urn is now in the Florence Archaeological Museum (Knoepfler (1993), fig. 75 = *LIMC* 'Agamemnon' no. 96). Two Erinyes flank Clytemnestra while she attacks Agamemnon. He is seated and his upper body has a piece of fabric thrown over it. Aegisthus, most unusually, is not depicted.

² Another exception is the Christian Dracontius' poem *Orestis Tragoedia*, on which see further below, p. 68.
the most confrontational scenes. Her impact was swift: when the legal speechwriter Antiphon composed the case for the prosecution in the mid-fifth-century trial of a woman accused of murdering her husband (a trial which would have been held, like the trial depicted in Eumenides, at the court of the Areopagus), he invoked a parallel with Clytemnestra (Antiphon 1.17). Antiphon thus implied that his own client (the accused’s stepson) was an Orestes-figure, a young man protecting the patriarchal interests of all male citizens against murderous, rapacious, and insubordinate womenfolk, whether wives, mothers, or stepmothers.

This chapter is interested in the difference between Aeschylus’ Clytemnestra, as presented in Agamemnon, and the Clytemnestras who followed her. Aeschylus’ Clytemnestra is a daughter-avenging woman with a mind that deliberates like a man’s, a female who slaughters two people, without help from her lover, before gloating, spattered with blood, over their corpses; she is a queen whose personal authority can quell mutinous citizens, even threatened stasis, and who ends the play directing her lover to join her in assuming political mastery (kratos) of all Argos. She represents a challenge to patriarchy unparalleled in Greek tragedy, even
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by Medea, who does not aspire to political power. From the middle of the nineteenth century social theorists already recognized that nothing less than the violent subversion of rule by men is at stake in Aeschylus’ Argos; Winnington-Ingram, decades before modern feminism, identified the corrosive effect of Clytemnestra’s jealousy of Agamemnon’s status as a man. More recently Zeitlin’s structuralist analysis showed the importance to the configuration of Clytemnestra of the Amazonian archetype and its fundamental threat to patriarchy.3 In consequence there now exist several detailed and illuminating scholarly studies of the uniqueness of the Aeschylean Clytemnestra, written in the light of the late twentieth-century feminist revolution.4

These have appeared in tandem with the rehabilitation of Clytemnestra as a mother rather than an erotic figure in the drama and other literature of recent decades. As Helene Foley shows in this volume, feminist authors have read Clytemnestra’s criminality as a response to unbearable patriarchal oppression. An important example is Dacia Maraini in her I sogni di Clitemnestra (1979), first performed in English as The Dreams of Clytemnestra in 1989.5 In one of the rare stage adaptations of the whole Oresteia by a female author, Marina Carr’s affecting Ariel, first performed at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin on 2 October 2002, the relationships between the Clytemnestra-figure (Frances Fermoy) and her four children, dead and alive, are at the psychological centre of the action.6

From the perspective of this chapter the most salient passage in Aeschylus’ play is the climactic ‘stand-off’ between Clytemnestra and the chorus. She looms over the corpses of her husband and his captive priestess, and the chorus banish her from Argos. She rages against their double standard in passing sentence on her for husband-murder when they did no such thing to a daughter-murdering king. She incarnates Calchas’ prophetic description of the Wrath which would be the legacy of the sacrifice to Artemis (a sacrifice that would be οὐ δεισήρορα—he who conquers me by force can rule. But if god ordains the opposite, you will learn, though late in the day, 

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5 The performance by the City Troupe, an off-Broadway theatre company in New York City, was directed by Greg Johnson; Clytemnestra was played by Carmen de Lavallade. The English translation, by Vode, is available in Maraini (1994), 177–315.
how to control yourselves' (1422–5). Clytemnestra is asking for no favours: she offers to fight physically for the rule of Argos on equal terms with its men.

Ever since 458 BC this Clytemnestra has (unsurprisingly) exerted a huge influence, even surfacing in Byzantine texts at a date when Aeschylean Greek was little read: Procopius makes his power-crazed Empress Theodora allude to Clytemnestra’s sinister speech ‘There is the sea...’, ἐστιν θάλασσα, at a moment of political crisis (History of the Wars 1.24.33–7). Yet this chapter will argue that much of the Aeschylean Clytemnestra’s influence has been of a negative kind, exerted not through imitation but through reactions against her authority. These reactions, from antiquity onwards, have been instrumental in generating many morally improved but dramatically downgraded, ‘effeminized’ Clytemnestras, whose motive of erotic interest in Aegisthus has assumed far greater significance than it possessed in the first play of Aeschylus’ trilogy. Psychoanalytical shorthand might define this as the substitution of a Clytemnestra driven by her clitoris for a Clytemnestra driven by her womb.

For most of the last two and a half millennia the version of Clytemnestra which has been dominant in the public consciousness has not been Aeschylus’ matriarch at all. That Clytemnestra was not rehabilitated until the revival of interest in staging Greek plays, traceable to Lewis Campbell’s circle in south-eastern Scotland in the 1870s, when actors once again breathed solemn life into Aeschylus’ authentically epicene, horrifically powerful, womb-driven Clytemnestra (see Macintosh, this volume). The intervening centuries staged their Clytemnestra in the eviscerated form in which she appears in Latin poetry, in particular the anodyne and sexy wife in book 2 of Ovid’s Ars Amatoria and the emotionally unstable adulteress of the Senecan Agamemnon. This chapter aims to discuss some performed realizations of Clytemnestra’s involvement in the murder of Agamemnon from Aeschylus’ ancient imitators until the end of the eighteenth century, the point at which the influence of Senecan drama on European theatre began to wane.

**DOWNSIZING CLYTEMNESTRA: FROM ION OF CHIOS TO OVID**

In Chapter 2 of this volume, Pat Easterling discussed some of the ancient sources for the reception of Aeschylus’ Agamemnon, especially his seminal conception of the clairvoyant Cassandra. Cassandra was apparently more palatable than the other female role in Agamemnon. The evidence for the way Clytemnestra was

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7 See the discussion of Ure (1951), 202–3. It is interesting that Agamemnon and Prometheus Bound are the only two Aeschylean plays used in the Christian drama Christus Patiens: see Wartelle (1971), 359–60 and n. 1.
8 See also Macintosh (1997), 289–90; Hall and Macintosh (2005), ch. 4.
received in antiquity suggests that she was soon widely replaced by a less domineering character, of a type perhaps implied by the more sympathetic woman in Sophocles’ *Electra* or Euripides’ *Electra* and *Iphigenia in Aulis*. This different conception of Clytemnestra may have been invented by Aeschylus himself (in his lost *Iphigenia*) or by Ion of Chios a generation later. Between Ion’s first competition (in 452 or 449) and his death (before 421), he wrote a tragic *Agamemnon*. It was sufficiently famous for Didymus to write a commentary upon it in Alexandria in the first century BC (*Athen. Deipn. 11.468d*). Like Sophocles in *Electra*, Ion may well have returned to those Homeric accounts of Agamemnon’s death in which Aegisthus played the leading role, at a banquet, deciding against Aeschylus’ spousal slaughter in the bathroom.9

The picture of the murder of Agamemnon offered by the surviving hypothesis to *Agamemnon*, to which my attention was first drawn by Pat Easterling (who quotes a substantial portion of it above, pp. 25–6), does not exactly square with the version in the Aeschylean text. The hypothesis claims that ‘Aeschylus has Agamemnon murdered in a distinctive way on stage’ (ἰδεῖς δὲ Ἄισχυλος τὸν Ἀγαμήμονα ἐπὶ σκηνῆς ἀναμείσθαι ποιεῖ, 15–16). The earlier part of this summary has contained at least one piece of information which Taplin has plausibly argued probably derives from Hellenistic performance practices—the two chariots.10 The theatre contemporary with the hypothesis writer may have played up the display of Agamemnon’s booty, as performances of Accius’ Roman tragedy on the theme certainly did by the mid-first century BC (see below). But this does not solve the problem presented by the language used to summarize the death of Agamemnon, whom Aeschylus ‘has murdered in a distinctive way on stage’. What can this mean? It is frustrating that this hypothesis does not specify the murderer, especially since it is, I think, to stretch the meaning to make ‘on stage’ (ἐπὶ σκηνῆς) mean ‘with his death cries heard on stage’.

The ‘distinctive way’ suggests the confining textile or robe which appears in so many versions of the murder of Agamemnon. It is a remote possibility that the spectacular taste of the Hellenistic theatre could have produced (mimed?) enactments of this exciting scene (as Ewbank’s chapter shows, above pp. 45–7, mimes of the murder were popular enough in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries). The author of the hypothesis might conceivably be responding to contemporary theatrical taste, which enjoyed the representation of violent and sensational

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9 This is argued by the editor of Ion of Chios, A. von Blumenthal, in his edition of 1939. Ion’s death by 421 is fixed by a reference in Aristophanes’ *Peace* (832–5), which was certainly produced that year. Hyginus (117) and Servius Auctus on Virgil, *Aen*. 11.268–9 preserve yet another version where Agamemnon was killed while offering a sacrifice. The *Agamemnon* of Ion (or of Aeschylus, or even another unidentifiable tragedian) may have been produced at the Lenaeai in 419, of which no further evidence survives than the three first letters of the name (tr. fr. adesp. 1 TgrF). On the other hand, the play could have been an *Agave*.

actions more than fifth-century audiences had enjoyed them. But it is more likely that the writer of the hypothesis had no experience of Aeschylus’ play in performance. He could have seen two chariots in another play on the same theme—Ion’s Agamemnon included a reference to horse-related luxury (ἵππικον χλίδος, fr. 3 TgrF)—but have produced the ‘gross error’ concerning the murder in Agamemnon through a misunderstanding of fifth-century theatre conventions, as Taplin suspected. In this case the hypothesis-writer’s confusion might result from a difficulty, born of ignorance of the play in performance, in understanding that Cassandra can actually see through walls—that her commentary on the death of Agamemnon is clairvoyant rather than empirically observed.

These are speculative waters. Yet seeing the hypothesis’ strange account of the murder as resulting from an inexperience of the play in performance might illuminate the absence from the ancient Greek world of certainly identified depictions, which post-date the Oresteia, of the murder of Agamemnon. This absence becomes conspicuous by comparison with the numerous vase-paintings depicting scenes from both the Libation Bearers and the Eumenides—illustrations of the tomb of Agamemnon, the recognition of Electra and Orestes, the death of Aegisthus, and Orestes with Erinyes. There are, in contrast, only two possible representations (besides the late Etrurian alabaster with which this chapter began) of the murder of Agamemnon as presented by Aeschylus. Both are doubtful and in neither does Clytemnestra act alone.

There is the Dokimasia painter’s brilliant kalyx-krater in Boston, which Vermeule argues is a response to the Oresteia (although most scholars date it to 470–460 b.c.). On this vase Aegisthus is unambivalently portrayed as the killer; Clytemnestra, although running in to help with an axe, is ‘no more than an enthusiastic if not very useful supporter’. If this represents the Oresteia, then the painter (like many dramatists subsequently) modified the Aeschylean version to make Clytemnestra less important. There is one other possible candidate in a fragmentary Lucanian crater of about 400 b.c. (see Fig. 4.2), on which the faces, especially the eyes and the wrinkles, suggest the effect created by theatrical masks. Here a woman, not in the first flush

11 The possibility that some ancient audiences actually saw Agamemnon being killed was at least envisaged by Verrall, whose response to the hypothesis was to remark circumspectly that ‘our knowledge of ancient scenery is not such as to warrant any positive assertion on details of this kind’ (Verrall (1889), lvi–lvi), and who did not deserve the opprobrium heaped on his head by subsequent scholars as a result.
12 Taplin (1977), 304.
13 In the Louvre there is one imperial sculpture from Volterra (2nd-cent. AD alabaster urn), on which Aegisthus and Clytemnestra simultaneously attack Agamemnon, who is seated and draped in fabric, while a mysterious young man enters at the side. This looks as though it could be related to Pacuvius’ lost tragedy Dulorestes (on which see below).
14 See Prag (1985); Knoepfler (1993); Trendall and Webster (1971), 40–9. Oliver Taplin points out to me that there is a striking depiction of Orestes about to slay Clytemnestra, who is showing her breast to him, on a red-figured neck-amphora from Paestum, in Trendall (1987), 183–4, no. 418 and pl. 129a. On the popularity of the scenes from the later two plays, see also Dyer (1967).
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Figure 4.2. Unnamed woman assists in the assault on a seated man (c.400 BC).

of youth, appears to be holding in her left hand the greaves of the mature, bearded, seated man; her right hand seems to be on his head. The left hand of a third party is visibly pressing the seated man’s head down, probably in preparation for striking a blow with his (?) other hand. If this image represents Clytemnestra and Agamemnon, which seems likely, then she is certainly not attacking her husband single-handedly as she claims in Aeschylus’ Agamemnon.17

Could the dearth of illustrations of Aeschylus’ Agamemnon be connected with the absence of evidence for any revival of this play, either on its own or as part of the trilogy? Can we discount the possibility that the other two plays were often performed without Agamemnon? Could it be relevant that in Frogs, when asked to recite the prologue of what is termed the Oresteia, Aeschylus offers the opening lines not of Agamemnon but of Libation Bearers (1124, 1128)?18 Playwrights subsequent to Aeschylus graphically tamed the Clytemnestra of the Agamemnon, and not just because this play was so good that it ‘seems to have been regarded as an unapproachable model’.19 These playwrights had other, more ideological reasons, and they found two suggestive details already lurking in Libation Bearers.

17 Fig. 37 in Knoepfler (1993), 55; the fragment is not included in LIMC. For a full discussion see Cambitoglou and Chamay (1997), 14–17. On the 4th-cent. kylix by the Marlay painter in whose interior appears an illustration of Clytemnestra killing her with an axe at an ornate altar (Ferrara T.264 (2482)), see above, Easterling, Ch. 2.

18 This is not to deny that there are allusions to the text of Agamemnon in Frogs, above all at 1284–92, which is built round some lines of the opening chorus (Ag. 108–11).

19 Pearson (1917), 1. 219, in the context of his excellent discussion of Sophocles’ fragmentary Iphigenia.
One was a tender, sexualized side to Clytemnestra, who can openly and sincerely call Aegisthus ‘beloved’ (895), and whose motives are now presented as including sexual passion (ἔρως, 597). The other was the tempting possibility that Agamemnon was actually killed by Aegisthus.

Aegisthus, when depicted as Agamemnon’s murderer, invariably uses a sword. Clytemnestra, on the other hand, was always predominantly associated with the ‘manslaying axe’ which she so memorably demands in Libation Bearers when she realizes she is in mortal danger (889). Peleus was the nickname acquired by a tragic actor called Demetrios (perhaps as early as the fifth or fourth century BC) on account of a role connected with ‘the death of Agamemnon’. Libation Bearers thus dominated the tradition, rather than Agamemnon, where the clear implication is that she kills him with a sword (1262–3, 1528). In Libation Bearers Clytemnestra calls for an axe, and Orestes call the murder weapon Aegisthus’ sword (1011). It therefore has to be faced that Libation Bearers, acted without Agamemnon (or arguably even immediately after it), actually implies that Clytemnestra was neither the sole nor the primary agent in the murder of her husband. If we only had Libation Bearers, we would think that Aegisthus killed Agamemnon with a sword, assisted by the axe-armed Clytemnestra.

It is important to appreciate the challenge that the Clytemnestra of Agamemnon must have presented to ancient audiences. In my view it is likely that by the fourth century, at least, the first play was often dropped from performances of Libation Bearers and Eumenides, whether separately or together, and, moreover, that it was ideologically virtually impossible to perform Aeschylus’ Agamemnon (or any imitation with a similarly androgynous, autonomous, proactive, amoral, and politically triumphant queen) in isolation, without the other two plays of the trilogy. These are actually required if Clytemnestra is to be punished for her insurrection, and formally subordinated, thus (as Zeitlin’s classic article demonstrated) providing an aetiology not only for the court of the Areopagus but for the Athenians’ exclusion of women from the political sphere and for their system of civic and domestic patriarchy. There is no real parallel in Euripides’ Medea, in which the ancients could tolerate a rebel wife and filicidal mother escaping the end of her play unpunished: Medea does not install herself as tyrant of a Greek polis.

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20 There may, of course, be a sexual double entendre at Ag. 1654. But see the sensitive comment of Garvie (1986), 291, on Libation Bearers 893, where Clytemnestra, with obvious sincerity, apostrophizes the dead Aegisthus as φίλτρας Ἀλκιβίαδου βία: ‘The pathos of Clytemnestra’s words contrasts strikingly with Orestes’ tone... Unimpressive as we know him [Aegisthus] to be, he was still loved by Clytaemnestra. It is a side of her that hardly emerged in Ag.’


22 See above all the detailed and judicious appendix devoted to the murder weapon in Fraenkel (1950), 3. 806–9, with the important supplementary comments of C. W. Marshall (2001).

23 Zeitlin (1978). Hardwick (2002a) discusses some of the ideological implications for modern audiences of an Agamemnon performed without the two following tragedies, but nobody has paid much attention to the fact that the play’s ending must have been ideologically uncomfortable for an ancient audience—it leaves a murderous human female not only alive and unpunished but in political control of her polis—a situation without parallel in the Greek tragic corpus.
and anyway her access to the *mēchanē* puts a question mark over her mortal status, and therefore over the generic requirement that she be punished at all.

In the Roman world there are few signs of an *Agamemnon* with an Amazonian Clytemnestra of the Aeschylean type, although it would be good to know more about Pacuvius' *Dulorestes*, which apparently involved Orestes taking the role of a slave in the household of Aegisthus and Clytemnestra.\(^{24}\) The twelve surviving lines of Livius Andronicus' *Aegisthus* (late third century BC) include references to the division of the Trojan booty and to dolphins accompanying the voyage (2—6);\(^{25}\) in one fragment (7) the speaker forbids his listeners to discuss an unspecified subject within an unidentified woman's hearing, which looks likely to be Agamemnon talking about Cassandra. The most interesting fragment from our point of view is that which implies that the murder was performed at a banquet rather than in a bath: 'He seats himself upon the royal chair | And Clytemnestra is next to him; the third | Their daughters occupy' (9—10). One other fragment features an individual claiming *maiestas*, and the right to absolute obedience, while giving the order that a female is to be led away: 'You must endure the duty of obedience | To what my majesty demands. Lead you | This woman from the temple' (14). The speaker here, on the analogy of Seneca's *Agamemnon* 997, is likely to be Aegisthus. The evidence, such as it is, therefore points forward to the Clytemnestra of Seneca rather than backwards to the Clytemnestra of Aeschylus.

The most important Roman republican play on this theme was by Lucius Accius (acclaimed in Seneca's day as the greatest of all Roman tragedians), who must have written his influential *Clytemnestra* in the second half of the second century BC. *Clytemnestra* was sufficiently popular to be revived in the following century, at the gala staged to celebrate the opening of Pompey's theatre in 55 BC; Cicero complained of the spectacle 'of hundreds of mules' (*Fam.* 7.1.2), which suggests that the acting text of Accius' version demanded or at least permitted Agamemnon's entrance to be attended by a spectacular military procession. It is likely that Accius' Clytemnestra was no Argive termagant but a more 'feminine' figure, subsidiary to her lover. The fragments suggest that prominence was given to her fraught relationship with her love-rival Cassandra, who believed it to be her last day alive (fr. 243—6).\(^{26}\) The fragments are unhelpful on the identity of the principal architect of the murder of Agamemnon. Yet they do positively imply that Clytemnestra's sexual jealousy of Cassandra and Aegisthus' imposition of tyrannical rule were dimensions of Accius' interpretation of the story, while there is no evidence for a politicized Clytemnestra, a Clytemnestra acting alone, or the

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\(^{24}\) This tragedy seems to have included elaborate rhetoric; see Erasmo (2004), 34—5.

\(^{25}\) These and all subsequent references to Livius Andronicus and Accius are cited (with very slight alterations to the English translations) from Warmington (1935).

\(^{26}\) It is possible that the play is to be identified with Accius' *Aegisthus*, which included a speech in which a character spoke about the 'might of government', *vis imperi*, breaking men's fierce spirits (fr. 8—9), a remark that women are more easily hardened (*calient*) than men (fr. 10—11), and a reference to a man, presumably Orestes, whose 'hand is fouled and splattered by his mother's blood' (fr. 12). Accius also wrote an *Agamemnon's Children (Agamemnonidae)*.
daughter-avenging motive. I suspect, therefore, that the status to which Clytemnestra is certainly relegated in the fully surviving Latin versions by Ovid and by Seneca was already a standard feature of republican Roman theatre.

Sadly we know little about the tragedy *Clytemnestra* by the Ephesian poet Polemaios, performed at a festival at Magnesia on the Maeander in the first half of the first century BC, because it would have provided an important bridge between the Greek and the Roman worlds at a time when revivals of the old Roman tragedies were popular.\(^{27}\) By the last days of the Roman Republic, Agamemnon was a familiar mythical figure, and Edward Champlin has recently argued that this was essentially a result of widespread familiarity with stage plays. Agamemnon's presence in the Roman imagination made it easy for Pompeius Magnus to foster what in his opponent's hands turned out to be an unfortunate comparison between himself and Agamemnon; his notorious gala revival of Accius' *Clytemnestra* was part of this propaganda. Augustus, on the other hand, promoted a comparison between himself and Orestes: they were both young leaders who had avenged the murder of their fathers. They had also put down their fathers' insurgent wives, ensconced in love-nests with new swains: to Augustus' public, Cleopatra had thus become Clytemnestra.\(^{28}\) This equation may have made it more dangerous for poets to trifle with the Atridae.

Polemaios' Ephesian *Clytemnestra* may, however, have been more interested in sexual love than in Roman dynastic politics, and it may have been known by Ovid, whose version in the *Ars Amatoria* (2.387–408) presents us with the most eviscerated of all ancient Clytemnestras. Ovid's narrator is urging that people in love can become vindictive if they discover they have been betrayed, for example, Clytemnestra:

So long as Agamemnon was faithful,
Clytemnestra stayed chaste. It was her husband's crimes
Turned her to the bad. She'd heard how Chryses, sacerdotal
Fillet on head and laurel in hand, had failed
To win back his daughter. She'd heard the sad tale of abducted
Briseis, knew how shameful delay
Had prolonged the war. Yet all this was mere hearsay; Priam's daughter
Cassandra she'd seen, the conqueror shamefully caught
By his own captive. It was _then_ she welcomed Thyestes' son to
Her heart and bed, avenged her husband's ill deed.\(^{29}\)

This version makes no mention whatsoever of Iphigenia; moreover Clytemnestra, nearly a model matron, avoids sleeping with Aegisthus until an erotic tit-for-tat motive finally inspires her when Agamemnon returns to flaunt Cassandra

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\(^{27}\) A Magnesian inscription records the victory of an actor called Artemidorus, son of Artemidorus and grandson of Dioscorides, in the Romaia at Magnesia on the Maeander, some time in the first half of the 1st cent. BC; the play he performed was Polemaios' *Clytemnestra* (Stephanis (1988), 416 = Snell TgrF 1. 309, no. 155.1).

\(^{28}\) See Champlin (2003), esp. 308–10, 297–300.

\(^{29}\) Trans. P. Green (1982), 203.
Clytemnestra versus her Senecan Tradition

under her very nose. The revenge taken on Clytemnestra by this point in the male-authored tradition has really cut her down to size.

**AGAMEMNON IN IMPERIAL ROME**

Along with Ovid’s sexy heroine, the most influential Clytemnestra until 130 years ago was Seneca’s neurotic adulteress. The argument about whether or not the Senecan tragedies enjoyed staged performances in imperial Roman times has tended to obscure the Senecan *Agamemnon*’s significance—ideological as well as poetic and rhetorical—in performance history more generally. But before this significance can be fully appreciated, there is an unfashionable task to be undertaken. Few scholars currently want to be seen to be following in the footsteps of A. W. von Schlegel, who in 1817 first pronounced the Senecan tragic texts unperformable. But analysts of the Senecan *Agamemnon* must acknowledge that it presents a challenge to the notion of staged performance going beyond the standard tramlines of the Senecan controversy. Even the most ardent defender of the Senecan tragedies as theatrical playscripts, Dana Sutton, concedes that the staging problems presented by *Agamemnon* make it ‘without doubt Seneca’s least satisfactory play’.

Characters forget information of which they have previously been in possession, are unaware of the physical presence of significant characters, enter uncued, remain unidentified (neither the nurse nor the primary chorus of Argive females is textually identified at all), and ask characters who have been delivering significant speeches why they are so frighteningly silent. If any sense is to be made of the text, several characters are required, by those modern scholars who believe in original theatrical realization, to perform dumbshows (Aegisthus, for example, during the Thyestean ghost’s prologue). These problems, described in Otto Zwierlein’s monograph *Die Rezitationsdramen Senecas* in 1966, are acute in the first few ‘scenes’ and in the fourth Act, whose performative infelicities (if not impossibilities) result from an imperfect conflation of Greek models, in which scenes involving Cassandra have been crudely grafted on to a structure originally dominated by Electra, indeed probably by Sophocles’ *Electra*.

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30 von Schlegel (1817), 27–8.  
32 The worst problem is presented by the scene, unprecedented in ancient tragedy, in which Cassandra swoons, the chorus rush to her aid, but are distracted by the entrance of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra and forget Cassandra altogether. Agamemnon and Clytemnestra fail to notice Cassandra, and then Clytemnestra apparently exits without having spoken a single word after escorting her husband on stage. Agamemnon launches into a speech, and only then notices the swooning maiden and orders his henchmen to pick her up (775–90); see Tarrant (1976), 317–18. The problem of the two choruses (one of Argive women and one of Trojan captives) is similarly intractable, since the primary chorus is never even identified, and the secondary chorus’ exit is never cued.  
33 Zwierlein (1966), esp. 105–7; Tarrant (1976), 18. Sophocles’ *Electra* also had a profound influence on the long-suffering heroine of the Senecan *Octavia*; see Ladek (1909) and Whitman (1978), 53–4. The vengeful maternal ghost of Agrippina in that play is also at least reminiscent of *Eumenides*. 
In short, I doubt if this specific Senecan text, at any rate in the precise form in which it has been transmitted, was ever staged in mask and costume as a full-blown, continuous theatrical production. Yet this does not detract from the play’s status in performance history. Texts which are declaimed are also ‘performed’; texts which are widely read inform subsequent adaptations of the story they relate. Whatever form of public exposure Senecan tragedy first received, it was only the first step in a process intended to lead to their consumption by a widely dispersed readership. When Tiberius penalized Mamercus Aemilius Scaurus for writing a tragedy containing criticism of Agamemnon (Suetonius, Tiberius 61), it would have been easier to prevent theatrical production than either recitation or the circulation of the text. The graffito artist in ancient Pompeii who knew enough of Seneca’s Agamemnon to quote one of Cassandra’s clairvoyant lines (730, Idaea cerno nemora) could have found her words in a text, or heard them being declaimed; it was not necessary to have experienced them being delivered by a masked actor in costume to other masked actors in costume. There is clear evidence in Tacitus’ Dialogue on Orators for the public impact of recited tragedy in Nero’s time; the author is a dissident orator, Curitius Maternus, and the dialogue suggests that he has composed a tragedy on an Agamemnon-theme as well as a Medea and Cato. Seneca’s Agamemnon is also a salutary reminder of the extent that ancient non-theatrical declamation has informed the western dramatic tradition: Eurybates’ description of Agamemnon’s return after the storm (412–13) is informed by the declamatory treatment of Xerxes, and the sacrifice of Iphigenia was also a common theme in Latin display oratory.

Thinking about Senecan tragedy’s social and historical context also allows us to write a much fuller Roman imperial chapter in the performance history of Agamemnon. The perennial controversy about Senecan performance has tended to operate in misleading isolation from what we know about the variety of genres of ancient entertainment connected with tragedy, in all of which there survive traces of the ‘return of Agamemnon’ theme. For example, certain features in the Senecan messenger’s elaborate description of the storm may even have entered the narrative tradition because of their treatment in a type of performance not often discussed by classicists—a mechanical puppet-show, a five-act Nauplius, described in Hero of Alexandria’s technical treatise On Automata. Besides declamation and puppet-shows, moreover, tragic material could take the form of a sung recital by

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34 Tarrant (1985), 13–15. 35 CIL IV Suppl. 2.6698: idai cerno nemora.
36 See Zwielein (1966), 158 and n. 5. Tacitus’ evidence that tragedy could be a medium for the expression of contemporary political views has encouraged scholars to look for possible links between the historical events and personalities of Seneca’s time and the contents of his tragedies. See e.g. Slavitt (1992), xii–xv; Pratt (1983), 189–94. A specific case for the topicality of Agamemnon is made by Herzog (1928), 98–100, who perceives disguised references to Agrippina, Poppaea and Nero.
38 Hero, Peri Automatopoietikês ch. 22.3–6, par. 264 in the Teubner edn. of Wilhelm Schmidt (1899–1914); the material may have been taken from Philo of Byzantium (see Tarrant (1976), 21). For a more detailed discussion see C. W. Marshall (2003).
a masked performer (tragoeidus, tragicus cantor), a practice which is clearly attested
as late as the fifth century AD, or of a ballet to choral accompaniment (ancient
pantomime), or of a mixture of these elements. Philostratus tells of an itinerant
professional singer, whose repertoire of 'tragic arias' included Nero's own Oresteia
(Vit. Ap. 4.39), and that in the time of Herodes Atticus 'the affairs of the Pelopids'
were still standard topics dealt with in Pythian competitions in tragic singing (Vit.
Soph. 2.7). St Augustine describes a special class of actor whose speaking voice
supplemented specialist danced or sung performances, citing the example of an
actor who delivers Agamemnon's words 'in theatrical tales' (On the Sermon on the
Mount 2.2.5). Pantomimes became the route by which the largest proportion of
the citizens of the late Roman republic and centuries of the empire had access to
Greek tragedy. We know from Seneca himself, Apuleius, and Claudian that the
murder (οὐραγεία) of Agamemnon was a theme of the tragic dance; both Clytem-
nestra and Cassandra are named as figures in this genre.

Indeed, Seneca's drama, and therefore his conception of Clytemnestra, may
have had a widespread influence on these other types of ancient performance
based on Agamemnon themes, even if we do not go quite so far as to propose that
Senecan tragic speeches were themselves ever incorporated into a danced enter-
tainment. The Senecan text, moreover, survived when the puppet shows, tragic
arias, and pantomime libretti have been lost (the Church Fathers, who were
opposed to pagan tragic singing and pantomime, seem still to have had at least
some knowledge of Senecan tragedy). Moreover, since the fifteenth century, the
tragedy has exerted an incalculable subterranean influence. Its poetry and senten-
tiae are a presence in the European imagination from the first appearance of
Andreas Bellfortis' editio princeps of Seneca's tragedies in Ferrara in 1484, through
playwrights including May, Shakespeare, Kyd, and Webster, to Hofmannsthal's
Electra (see Ewbank, this volume). Almost throughout that entire period the
Senecan version also fundamentally affected the shape taken by Clytemnestra
in plays about the death of Agamemnon. This makes understanding Seneca's
presentation of Clytemnestra crucial to the argument in hand.

SENeca's Neurotic Adulteress

Ovid's humorous rewriting of Clytemnestra certainly informed Seneca's
more serious presentation of her character, as Tarrant demonstrates in his

39 Easterling (1997b); Sifakis (1967); E. Hall (2002); Jory (2002).
40 See Kelly (1979), 35.
41 See Sen. ad Lucil. 80.7; Apul. apol. 78; Claudian in Eutrop. 2.405; Wüst (1949), 847–50;
Kokolakis (1959).
42 See Weismann (1972), 38.
43 See Tarrant (1976), 180, 196, 228, comm. on Sen. Ag. II. 56, 115, and 299 respectively.
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Unlike Ovid, the Roman tragedian does not absolutely exclude Iphigenia from the argument. But his Clytemnestra remains, in comparison with Aeschylus' heroine, an apolitical character, a feature exaggerated by the replacement of the male chorus of Argive citizens with females uninterested in the constitutional ramifications of the domestic crisis they are witnessing. The opening lines delivered by Seneca's Clytemnestra set the agenda for her character delineation throughout the drama: she regrets, in a manner remote from Aeschylus' amoral heroine, the disappearance of good character, justice, propriety, pietas, fidelity, and decency (112–13). This could not be more in contrast with the Greek Clytemnestra's triumphalist opening wish for good news of victory brought by morning, 'born of Mother Night' (264–5). The state of mind of Seneca's queen is marked, however, not by anger, militancy, nor triumphalism, but by anguish and psychological fragmentation. She is also self-confessedly amorous; her dominant motives, it is stressed, are sexual passion for Aegisthus and sexual jealousy of Cassandra. Finally, she is psychologically frail; she is shown struggling with the immorality even of complicity in the killing of her husband.

In this first soliloquy Clytemnestra is depicted as wavering, asking her animus why its commitment to destroying Agamemnon is vacillating (quid fluctuaris? 109); she characterizes herself nowhere as a mother, but instead as a faithless wife beside herself with blind love (amore, 118) for Aegisthus. In her next attempt at self-analysis, her emotional register covers feelings quite unknown to her Aeschylean equivalent: fear of her husband (timor, 133), sexual desire (cupido, 135), and shame or sexual modesty (pudor, 138). In the subsequent, self-revelatory dialogue with the nurse, fifteen lines are indeed spent remembering Aulis, but only in a curiously detached manner after the nurse introduces the theme (158–73); Clytemnestra's concern is not personal loss, or even a sense of insult to her status as a mother and a woman, but, oddly, shame (162) that although she had a divine ancestry she could not prevent Iphigenia's murder. She is angry not because Agamemnon deceived and outraged the mother of his daughter, but because he deceived the high-status descendant of gods. Not only does Seneca cast a strange, inhuman light on Clytemnestra's experience of the loss of her daughter, but he gives several more lines in this speech, and more emotionally forceful ones, to detailing the effect of her husband's serial infidelities with young women in the camp at Troy—Chryseis and Briseis as well as Cassandra (174–91). The tortured psyche of this jealous, 'clitoral' Clytemnestra even considers suicide (199–200), still has emotional feelings for Agamemnon, and tries to persuade Aegisthus to rediscover moral innocence, and pre-emptively to repent (139–43).

Seneca's Clytemnestra, under emotional pressure from Aegisthus, is indeed involved in the murder of her husband according to Cassandra's account of the

44 Tarrant (1976), subject index s.v. ‘Ovid’, and passim.

45 As Shelton says in her discussion of this peculiar slant on the murder of Iphigenia (Shelton (1983), 181 n. 19), Clytemnestra is one of several Senecan characters who believe they have an inherited family image to maintain.
crime. Clytemnestra persuades Agamemnon to don the confining garment at his own victory banquet (897–900). Aegisthus strikes the first blow, but it fails to penetrate deep enough to cause death.46 Thereupon Clytemnestra strikes with her axe, partially decapitating Agamemnon, and together 'the son of Thyestes and the sister of Helen' complete their bloody task (897–907). Thus in Seneca's reading the leading agent in both the original plan for the murder, and its execution, is Aegisthus. It is Aegisthus, moreover, who is unquestionably in political charge at the end of the play, when Clytemnestra asks for his help in controlling both Electra and Cassandra, and it is he who has the command of the palace guard and the Argive dungeons.47 Yet she is by no means without a capacity for cruelty and violence, the relationship between the two lovers is to a certain extent co-dependent, and therefore at times the text itself seems locked in a struggle between different versions of Clytemnestra (Seneca certainly knew both Aeschylus and Ovid, as well as intervening plays).

One scholar has argued that the inconsistencies in her characterization are the result of her declamatory realization, which 'juxtaposes two rhetorical exercises — Clytemnestra violent, Clytemnestra insecure' in order 'to show both the criminality and the anxiety caused by the betrayal of marriage and parenthood'.48 But Stoicism may be as important to this issue as Roman rhetoric. Seneca was fundamentally interested in discovering the moral and psychological genealogy of any tragic situation, and excavating Clytemnestra's plight involved discovering contrasting dimensions of her character. His portrait involves a striking degree of the psychological 'interiority', achieved by intimate expression of private emotional impulses, so tempting to any Stoic psychoanalyst. But it is this very interiority, more than any other feature of her characterization, that puts most distance between her and her wary, defensive, closed-off, unspontaneous and ambiguous Aeschylean forerunner, whose every word seems calculated in terms of its public effect rather than in terms of the private unburdening of personal torment. Moreover, a Stoic realization of Clytemnestra would inevitably have to dramatize her struggle against vice and lust, and also to compare it with the experience of being buffeted by stormy water and raging fire, the favourite Stoic metaphorical substitutes for unreason and passion.49

But the alleged bipolarity in the Senecan Clytemnestra's portrayal has been overstated and is actually a result of scholarly expectations created solely by her

46 At this point the text draws on both the Homeric conception of the murder as orchestrated at a banquet by Aegisthus, and the Aeschylean notion of Aegisthus' inadequacy as a male: here and here alone Cassandra calls him semivir (890). The evisceration of Clytemnestra in this play has even led some translators to assume that the term semivir refers disparagingly to Clytemnestra, and her inability to strike deep enough to kill a man. See e.g. E. I. Harris (1904), 303 (interestingly, a female translator).
47 Several critics have tried to find strong reminders of the Iphigenia-motivation in the later parts of the play, for example in the imagery describing Agamemnon's death (e.g. Shelton (1983), 176), but their need to find Iphigenia where she is not speaks louder than the alleged textual echoes themselves.
49 Rosenmeyer (1989).
Aeschylean forebear. This can be the only explanation of the degree of disagree­ment about her expressed by modern Senecan scholars as eminent as Tarrant and Boyle. Tarrant's careful analysis (with which I agree) argues that the psychological reversals after line 239 are evidence that the hectoring figure of Aegisthus is in control and manipulating Clytemnestra.\textsuperscript{50} Boyle, however, thinks that Clytemnestra is performing a complicated, covert test of the resolve of her lover, whose 'strident rhetoric seems to betoken fear rather than "superiority"'.\textsuperscript{51} He would hardly have reacted to her thus if we had lost the Aeschylean \textit{Oresteia}. Seneca's Clytemnestra—defined above all by her neurosis and her adultery—is actually far more \textit{unlike} her famous Greek prototype than she is \textit{like} her.

**NEOCLASSICAL CLYTEMNESTRAS**

The Clytemnestras of Ovid's \textit{Ars Amatoria} and Seneca's \textit{Agamemnon} were implicated far more heavily than Aeschylus in the shape taken by Agamemnon plays in and after the Renaissance until the late Victorian era. The \textit{subterranean} influence of the Aeschylean tragedy must not be entirely disregarded (see Ewbank, Chapter 3). But the texts which underlay the English, German, French, and Italian dramas and operas on the theme before the nineteenth century, besides those by Ovid and Seneca, were medieval mythological compendia drawing on the Christian poem \textit{Orestis Tragoedia} by Blossius Aemilius Dracontius, which was probably composed in Carthage in the late fifth century AD. The prime motive of Dracontius' lascivious Clytemnestra is sexual feeling towards Aegisthus;\textsuperscript{52} this Latin epyllion was an important text in the creation of the Christian ethical perspective on the amorous medieval Clytemnestra, who usually manufactures the robe and persuades Agamemnon to put it on, while Aegisthus strikes the blows.

The texts ultimately drawing on Ovid, Seneca and/or Dracontius would certainly include Hans Sachs' Shrovetide morality play \textit{Die mördisch königin Clitimestra} (1554), the deeply Senecan \textit{Clytemneste} (1589) of Pierre Matthieu and the \textit{Agamemnon} of Sieur Arnauld of Provence (1642). Claude Boyer's \textit{Agamemnon}, first performed at the Théâtre Guénégaud in Paris on 12 March 1680, is a more original tragedy concerning Orestes' doomed love for Cassandra, but Clytemnestra remains her Senecan self, nervesly conducting an adulterous affair with the evil (although oddly absent) Égiste, and nursing her resentments about Briseis as well as Cassandra, which command more attention than the death of Iphigenia.\textsuperscript{53} The sexually driven Clytemnestra who had emerged in antiquity,

\textsuperscript{50} Tarrant (1976), 229 (note on line 302). \textsuperscript{51} Boyle (1983b), 225 n. 10.
\textsuperscript{52} See esp. lines 126–8 and 227–70 in the Budé edn. of Jean Bouquet (1995), and the Introduction to it, esp. 30–1. Dracontius was interested in the dominant women of tragedy; his secular poetry also included a \textit{Medea}. The \textit{Orestis Tragoedia} includes the delightful detail that Electra takes the rescued Orestes off to enrol him at university in Athens (284–90).
\textsuperscript{53} See Boyer (1680), 12.
in reaction against Aeschylus' matriarchal androgyne, became the canonical Clytemnestra of the sixteenth to early nineteenth centuries, the early modern and neoclassical Clytemnestra. For centuries the politicized, Amazonian Clytemnestra's advocacy—indeed symbolic incarnation—of the maternally transmitted kinship bond became irrelevant; along with the neurotic adulteress of the Senecan Agamemnon tradition, it was above all the victimized wife and mother in Euripides' Iphigenia in Aulis who provided the dominant source material for composers of libretti about the Atridae (see Chapters 5 and 7).

Seneca's queen, morally weaker than her men and secondary to the power struggle between them, found new resonances in the politicized but essentially moral theatre of the neoclassical period, which revelled in assassinations, dynastic struggles, battles over succession, coups d'états, and revolutions. Often coloured by the Clytemnestra of Sophocles' Electra, she was also inherently attractive to the creators of political allegory, a dominant force in the shaping of ancient tragedy for performance before the nineteenth century. The ideological taboos and imperatives of this era meant that the authoritative, bloodthirsty androgyne who emerged from Aeschylus' imagination in classical Athens could simply not have been tolerated on the public stage. One tragedy on the theme, dating from the first half of the eighteenth century, stands out as particularly important. In James Thomson's Agamemnon (first performed at Drury Lane in 1738), Clytemnestra's difference from the Aeschylean matriarch is at its most strikingly extreme.

In order to understand this influential eighteenth-century conception of Clytemnestra, Thomson's play needs to be seen in its historical context. By the mid-1730s, under George II, the Prime Minister Robert Walpole and his Whig administration had become intensely unpopular with the Opposition, which comprised many other Whigs as well as Tories. Early in 1737 Frederick, Prince of Wales, went officially into opposition, lending the anti-Walpole elements a new focus (he is represented by the young patriot Orestes in Thomson's Agamemnon). They believed that Walpole was exploiting George II's frequent absences, and Queen Caroline's loneliness, in order to undermine fundamental British liberties by systematic corruption.54

Thomson's Agamemnon is a blistering attack on Walpole, which uses the contemporary rumours that he had become far too close to the Queen. Thomson's Clytemnestra is almost wholly exculpated, partly a result of the death of Queen Caroline on 20 November 1737, in the winter prior to the tragedy's production. But Caroline had never been Thomson's real target, since she had remained popular well into her middle age. She bore her husband eight children, tolerated his affairs, and never lost his affection. Her only real mistake was to have left her 'Orestes', Frederick, behind in Hanover at the age of seven, an abandonment for which he never forgave her. Thomson's tragedy first established the Clytemnestra–Aegisthus–Agamemnon story as a theme fit for the eighteenth-century

54 See Hall and Macintosh (2005), ch. 4.
international stage, and his Clytemnestra is excluded from the planning and execution of the murder.

JAMES THOMSON'S WHITEWASHED CLYTEMNESTRA

This sympathetic but ineffectual Clytemnestra is broadly based on her Senecan prototype (she an emotionally vulnerable and erotically interesting figure), but is more innocent than in any other version; she refuses to condone or participate in the murder of her husband, and declines into near-insanity because of psychological pressure. This is the Clytemnestra beloved of the eighteenth century, a woman of little moral autonomy, caught between competing loyalties, and beset by a tendency to swoon. As the play opens she is quivering with anxiety because the beacon signal was seen some nights ago, and Agamemnon will return any minute. Through a summary of the plot of *Iphigenia in Aulis* supplied by her own old (Senecan) nurse (i.1), the audience learns how the afflicted queen suffered the loss of her daughter, and was abandoned by her husband to a 'soothing lover's power', the attentions of a skilful and charming swain. But the most important piece of information is that Clytemnestra nobly resisted his advances for many years. For at the heart of Thomson's conception of the Agamemnon story lies Nestor's version in the *Odyssey* where Agamemnon leaves Clytemnestra under the supervision of a bard. Aegisthus fails to seduce Clytemnestra, 'for she was of virtuous mind' (*φροσι ... αὐλήθαισι*, 3.266), until he removes the singer. Only then could Aegisthus lead her as a lover to his house, kill Agamemnon, subdue the people and rule for seven years in Mycene until Orestes avenged his father by killing them both (3.254–310). The bard in Thomson is Melisander, a sage from Athens (iv.v), the birthplace of what progressive people in the eighteenth century already regarded as the first true republic; Thomson's Clytemnestra stresses that she would never have departed from the road of virtue, whatever the pressure, had Melisander been present to protect her from Aegisthus' flattery (i.i).

Yet despite the absence of Aeschylus' Clytemnestra, Aeschylean poetry is certainly present: there are indisputable signs of the Greek *Agamemnon* in the watchman's description of the beacon relay (i.ii.), and in much of Cassandra's poetry, especially her lines in iv.iii about the song of the nightingale, the ghosts of Thyestes' children, and the offstage murder of Agamemnon. The Aeschylean input is fused with Senecan material including the whole first dialogue with the nurse and Clytemnestra's scenes with Egisthus. In the first of these she cites the distinctively Senecan motive of her pride in her descent from Jove, castigates the malign affect of 'debasing, thoughtless, blind blind love', fear, and shame, and fantasizes about fleeing into exile (i.iv). From Seneca Thomson has also absorbed the cynical manner in which his Egisthus plays on Clytemnestra's emotions in order to try to retrieve her loyalty and bolster her resolve. This is a challenge, however, because Thomson's Clytemnestra is so profoundly ashamed of herself,
and so in love with Agamemnon, that she fears she will not be able even to meet his gaze (i.iv): 'How shall I bear an injur'd husband's eye? | The fiercest fears not a look so dreadful | As does the man we wrong'.

In their final, third interview, their relationship descends into open conflict. She refuses to countenance the murder of Agamemnon. If Egisthus does not drop his murderous plan, she will expose him and commit suicide. Egisthus attempts to dissuade her, but, ultimately, it does not matter, since he has already organized the killings of both Agamemnon, who will be assassinated in the bath, and of Cassandra (v.i). Clytemnestra goes into psychological meltdown, incapable of intervention, and expresses a death-wish for all four of them — Agamemnon, Cassandra, herself, and Egisthus. When the back-scene opens at the climax, Egisthus stands crowing over the corpse, Electra throws herself upon it, and Clytemnestra enters, half-crazed. She drops into a dead faint after accusing Egisthus of destroying her 'happy family', her virtue and her honour (v.viii).

For Thomson's Clytemnestra is an unimpeachable mother. She has kept Orestes close, adores Electra, and is tortured by the thought that her besmirched sexual reputation might adversely affect her 'poor blameless children' (i.i). She would like also to have been an unimpeachable spouse: the reunion between Agamemnon and Clytemnestra could not be more different from the tense formality of Aeschylus. It begins with a passionate embrace, Agamemnon charging on to the stage demanding to know 'Where is my life! my love! my Clytemnestra! | O let me press thee to my fluttering soul' (n.ii). She tearfully reproaches him with Iphigenia's death and his prolonged absence.

The impact of this virtuous Clytemnestra must have been enhanced by its performance, with great emotive power, by an actress famous for her own respectable private life, Mary Anne Porter. She was particularly commended for the emotional effect she produced 'when Grief and Tenderness possessed her', and 'she subsided into the most affecting Softness'. What Porter's acting helped Thomson achieve was the transformation of an ancient tragedy into an excellent example of the popular eighteenth-century British genre of pathetic drama, dominated by a suffering, virtuous heroine, which went under the title 'She-tragedy'. 'She-tragedy' developed as the dramatists moved away from the heroic drama of the Restoration towards tragedy concentrating on the experiences of private individuals, usually women. This in turn evolved into 'sentimental' tragedy. Thomson's *Agamemnon* belongs to the wave of examples, between the late 1730s and the 1760s, of emotional and actable poetic tragedy that emphasized romantic love, and offered a nearly obligatory role for a traumatized mother, wife, sister, or daughter.

Authors wishing to adapt Greek tragic heroines to the eighteenth-century British stage were faced with almost insurmountable ideological problems. They could not countenance Aeschylus' Clytemnestra, any more than they

55 Victor (1761), 2. 56–8. 56 See Hall and Macintosh (2005), ch. 3.
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could deal with Euripides' Medea, Hecuba, or even Creusa. Like other eighteenth-century playwrights adapting Greek tragedy, therefore, Thomson intrusively emphasized his characters' virtue, regarded as necessary to the eliciting of sympathy. His tender Clytemnestra is engaged in a constant struggle with her desire to be virtuous, with her conscience, and with emotional vulnerability. She is a woman of whom audiences sharing an eighteenth-century notion of ideal, submissive femininity could approve. A perceptive theatrical critic of the later eighteenth century actually praised Thomson for diminishing the Aeschylean Clytemnestra's personal authority: 'the author has varied from the idea of Aeschylus; and, I think with great propriety... gives some shades of tenderness to this princess, and makes her yield with reluctance to the persuasions of Aegisthus.'57

The degree of Thomson's distance from Aeschylus, despite his knowledge of the Greek play, emerges not only in his whitewashing of Clytemnestra but in the concomitant redemption of Agamemnon. Thomson gives him the best speech in defence of the sacrifice of Iphigenia that has ever been given (i.ii): he could not put his duties as 'The Greek, the chief, the patriot, and the king' above his rights as a father. He says that Clytemnestra could not have continued to love him if he had proved so selfish and dishonourable. Agamemnon has never been so convincing, and the persuasive force is considerably heightened by his uxorial tenderness (he has had no affair with Cassandra). This is an Agamemnon as Patriot King, entirely reconfigured to fit the eighteenth-century British model of ideal male sensibility. He and Clytemnestra are both inherently virtuous human beings, on whose capacity for beneficent action have been placed intolerable strains. At the heart of the play Clytemnestra relents towards him, just before the arrival of Electra and Orestes (ii.iii), and parents and children together arrange themselves in a group embrace while they affirm their mutual regard. The Argive royal family, astonishingly, is rewritten as the new bourgeois ideal nuclear family of the mid-eighteenth century, destroyed by the malign ambition of a single politician.

**SENECAN CLYTEMNESTRAS AFTER THOMSON**

Thomson's *Agamemnon*, with its virtuous queen, was significant internationally. *Agamemnon* was translated into German at least three times in the mid-eighteenth century.58 It was particularly advocated by no less a dramatic and literary theorist than Gotthold Lessing, who not only praised the play in his treatise *Laocoon* (1766), but in 1756 had written a flattering introduction to a German prose translation of Thomson's tragedies, helping to make Thomson's reading of *Agamemnon* the one which shaped subsequent plays.59 It almost certainly lies behind

57 Davies (1784), 3. 418. 58 See J. Thomson (1750), (1756), and (1771). 59 Lessing, 'Vorrede' to J. Thomson (1756), 3–14.
Wilhelm von Humboldt's interest in translating the Aeschylean version into metrical German (Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, Leipzig 1816), and it was von Humboldt's translation that was used by Wagner (see further Ewans, Chapter 6).

Thomson's Whig *Agamemnon* play also certainly influenced Alfieri, whose twin verse tragedies *Agamemone* and *Oreste* became popular in Britain after they appeared in English translation in 1815. Thomson's version, unusually for an English-language tragedy in the eighteenth century, was also translated into French and performed in Paris in 1780; this revival probably lies behind Citizen Népomucène Lemercier's attraction to the political potential of the story. Lemercier's important adaptation was performed at the Théâtre de la République, late April (Floréal) 1797, then considered the finest theatre in Paris: it had been formed in 1792 after the Comédie Française was split by political differences, and the actors sympathetic to the Revolution joined actors from the Variétés Amusantes to form the new theatre of the new republic. Lemercier's *Clitemnestre* (played by Françoise Vestris) owes much to both Seneca and Thomson's conceptions: she is a devoted mother, fearful that Agamemnon, who has a filicidal record, may sacrifice Orestes (i.iii). She is vain and silly (not unlike popular stereotypes of Marie Antoinette), swooning and twittering her way throughout an ideologically charged vision of the vile assassination of the corrupt head of a decadent dynasty, fast becoming obsolete: Cassandre's closing speech, ultimately derived from her thrilling final words in Seneca *veniet et vobis furor* ('On you, as well, a madness is to come', 1012), assumes a contemporary political charge as she predicts that the fall of the tyrant assassins of Agamemnon is itself imminent (v.xi): *Fuyez tous le tyran qui commande en ce lieu*. Lemercier's exaggerated Égiste, played by Citizen François Talma himself, then the young thespian darling of the Revolution, is a demanding role. Palpably power-crazed, he subjects the defenceless Clitemnestre to psychological terrorism in order to coerce her into stabbing her husband (v.vi), before she succumbs to intense self-hatred (v.vii) (see also Michelakis' Introduction to this volume).

In the course of her two-millennial journey from Aeschylus to Lemercier, whose evil aristocratic Égiste completely dominates the dramatic action, Clytemnestra was therefore utterly transformed from chief player into pawn, commanding mastermind into exploited accessory and love interest. But Clytemnestra would be unlikely to let male authors have the last word. Shortly after Lemercier's politically charged neoclassical drama, a new, hilariously villainous, type of Clytemnestra began to emerge in burlesque versions of the story: less than a century later the Aeschylean Clytemnestra was finally to wreak her revenge on the Senecan tradition in serious drama, as well.

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60 The 1815 translation was by Charles Lloyd.  
62 A parody of Lemercier's *Agamemnon* of 1797, Desfontaines's *Cassandre-Agamemnon et Colombine-Cassandre*, was first performed on 2 December 1803 in Paris. Jane Davidson Reid also records two plays which may represent earlier comic versions of the Aeschylean or Senecan tragedies, but
ON THE SURFACE THIS COMPLICATED EXERCISE IN PERFORMANCE HISTORY HAS NOT BEEN ABOUT AESCHYLUS' CLYTENEOSTRA AT ALL. BUT THE ARGUMENT HAS BEEN THAT READING CLYTENEOSTRA DIACHRONICALLY CAN HELP US APPRECIATE THE UNIQUENESS AND POWER OF AESCHYLUS' CONCEPTION. REACTION AGAINST AN ARCHETYPE CAN REFLECT AN EVEN STRONGER FORM OF INFLUENCE THAN DIRECT IMITATION. THERE HAVE BEEN MANY CLYTENEOSTRAS SINCE THE ARCHETYPE IN AESCHYLUS' ORESTEIA, BUT UNTIL RELATIVELY RECENTLY THEY WERE ALL SO DIFFERENT FROM HER—SO MUCH MORE 'FEMININE', SO MUCH LESS DECISIVE, SO DEFINED BY THE RELATIONSHIP WITH AEGISTHUS, SO APOLITICAL, SO 'CLITORAL'—THAT THEY ACTUALLY SHARPEN THE FOCUS ON THE VERY AESCHYLEAN FEATURES WHICH HAVE BEEN SO SYSTEMATICALLY ERADICATED OR CHANGED. A CLEARER VISION OF AESCHYLUS' ACHIEVEMENT IN THE CREATION OF HIS CLYTENEOSTRA, WHO MUST HAVE BEEN OVERWHELMINGLY THREATENING TO HER ORIGINAL AUDIENCE, IS THUS MADE POSSIBLE BY REMINDING OURSELVES THAT IN HER AESCHYLEAN FORM THIS HEROINE HAS BEEN SCARCELY TOLERABLE ON THE STAGE OR IN THE PUBLIC IMAGINATION UNTIL—IN TERMS OF THE MANY CENTURIES INVOLVED IN THE RECEPTION OF CLASSICS—VERY RECENTLY: THE MANSLAYING AMAZON, WHO PRIORITIZED THE MOTHER–DAUGHTER RELATIONSHIP OVER THAT BETWEEN HUSBAND AND WIFE, SIMPLY COULD NOT BECOME RESONANT AGAIN UNTIL THE VERY LAST DECADES OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY, EXACTLY THE CHRONOLOGICAL POINT AT WHICH WOMEN'S RIGHTS AS BOTH POLITICAL AGENTS AND AS PARENTS FINALLY BEGAN TO BE DISCUSSED WITH GRAVITY. THE EROTIC, SENECAN CLYTENEOSTRA LINGERED ON, HOWEVER, IN SOME INFLUENTIAL QUARTERS: THERE IS NO MORE SENSUAL HUSBAND-SLAYER THAN CHRISTINE MANNON IN EUGENE O'NEILL'S 1931 MOURNING BECOMES ELECTRA (ON WHICH SEE FURTHER HELENE FOLEY, CHAPTER 17). THE MANNONS' NEW ENGLAND DORIC MANSION HAS SEEN NEITHER INFANTICIDE NOR POLITICAL POWER STRUGGLE: CHRISTINE PREFERENCES ADAM BRANT TO HER HUSBAND EZRA BECAUSE HE IS BETTER IN BED.

IN A PREVIOUS VOLUME PRODUCED BY THE ARCHIVE OF PERFORMANCES OF GREEK AND ROMAN DRAMA, MEDEA IN PERFORMANCE 1500–2000, IT WAS ARGUED THAT EURIPIDES' MEDEA SUFFERED A NOT DISSIMILAR FATE: DEPRIVED OF ALMOST ALL OF HER PREFIGURATIVELY 'FEMINIST' OPINIONS AND HARDLY EVER ALLOWED TO KILL HER CHILDREN IN COLD BLOOD, THE AUTHENTICALLY HORRIBLE EURIPIDEAN MEDEA WAS VIRTUALLY UNKNOWN TO THE PUBLIC WHICH I HAVE NOT YET BEEN ABLE TO CONSULT: BARTOLOMEO CORDAN'S OPERA BUFFA ARTANAGANAMENONE, LIBRETTO BY G. B. BUINI, PERFORMED IN VENICE IN SPRING 1731, AND AGAMENON E CLYTEMNESTRA, A COMEDY IN SPANISH OF ABOUT 1772 BY JUAN CRISTÓSTOMO FERIA CORDERO. AN ENGLISH CLYTENEOSTRA DEFUSED BY COMEDY SUBSEQUENTLY APPEARED IN BECKY SHARP'S VIRICIDAL CHARADE IN WILLIAM THACKERAY'S 1848 VANITY FAIR. THE 19TH-CENT. AGAMEMNON BURLESQUES INCLUDED THE FRENCH OPERETTA COMPOSER HERVÉ'S AGAMEMNON (1856); THE BRITISH EDWARD NOLAN'S AGAMEMNON AT HOME, FIRST PERFORMED AT ST JOHN'S COLLEGE, OXFORD, IN 1867, IN WHICH CLYTENEOSTRA IS A SAUCY TRANVESTITE ROLE. ALTHOUGH A WOMAN (JULIA MATHEWS) PLAYED CLYTENEOSTRA IN THE AGAMEMNON AND CASANDRA BY ROBERT REECE (1868), WHO SPECIALIZED IN TRANSLATING HERVÉ, THE SEXUAL BOND WITH AEGISTHUS WAS PRESENTED AS THE PRIMARY MOTIVE. FOR DETAILED DISCUSSION OF THESE BURLESQUE TREATMENTS, SEE MACINTOSH, CH. 8.
theatre until the beginning of the twentieth century. The authentic Aeschylean Clytemnestra was in similar retreat for well over two millennia. She only began to speak in a voice once again immediate and relevant when she could address a late nineteenth-century audience, even if their increasingly sympathetic response to her arguments was completely different from the revulsion and fear it is possible to imagine were felt by Aeschylus’ patriarchal contemporaries when confronted by his realization of their worst possible nightmares. And it was only as late as the twentieth century, shortly after women received the vote in the USA, that Henry Lister, author of a revisionist American *Clytemnestra* in 1923, could remotely expect to be taken seriously when he wrote:

The modern enfranchisement of women has... placed the sexes on an equal basis. In making Clytemnestra the heroine instead of the villain of the play the author asks the world, newly awakened to the rights of women, whether Clytemnestra was guilty or not guilty.

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Clytemnestra’s Ghost:

_The Aeschylean Legacy in Gluck’s Iphigenia Operas_

Susanna Phillippo

The story of Agamemnon and his murderous wife is a lynchpin of Gluck’s 1779 opera _Iphigénie en Tauride_, and in the earlier _Iphigénie en Aulide_ it hovers ominously over the on-stage events. As past or future history, the story plays a key role in the portrayal of these operas’ characters and in the themes which their present stories and struggles evoke. Gluck’s operas are not unique in this respect: a large number of eighteenth-century versions of the myth of Agamemnon’s daughter integrate her parents’ story into the characters’ wider struggles with the family history past, present and to come. Each adapting artist shapes the thematic role and impact of that story to serve their own individual designs. What part, if any, does the legacy of Aeschylus’ _Agamemnon_ (and its accompanying trilogy) play in this process?

Direct representation of Aeschylus’ _Agamemnon_—and the story it represents—on the eighteenth-century operatic stage is remarkably sparse. The century is ‘framed’ by two operas on the subject: _Cassandre_, by Toussaint (Thomas) Bertin de la Doué and François Bouvard, to a libretto by Joseph de La Grange-Chancel, first performed in Paris in June 1706;¹ and Niccolò Zingarelli’s _Clitennestra_ (libretto by F. Salfi; unpublished), at La Scala, Milan in December 1800.² Between 1706 and 1800 there is a yawning gap in terms of actual performance: in the interval, only Gluck’s rival Niccolo Piccini appears to have attempted an operatic version, with a _Clytemnestre_ which was composed and rehearsed in Paris in 1787 but never performed.³ Even this attempt comes late in the century; and the same is...

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¹ de La Grange-Chancel (1707) (libretto only). I am grateful to the Taylor Institution Library, University of Oxford, for supplying a copy of this text.
true of the clutch of other musical works dealing with the story, two ballets (Jean-Georges Noverre, *Der Tod Agamemnons/Der gerächte Agamemnon*, 1771, and *Il ritorno di Agamemnone*, Francesco Clerico, 1789), a lyric monodrama (*Agamemnone*: Francesco Mario Pagano, 1787) and a cantata for solo voice (*Clytemnestre*: Luigi Cherubini, 1794).4

Nor is the wider *Oresteia* trilogy much better represented. The revenge of Agamemnon’s children on their mother, whether as presented in Aeschylus’ *Libation Bearers* or in the Sophoclean and Euripidean *Electra* plays, is likewise transferred into operatic form only in the last quarter of the century, and only three times (in 1781, 1782, and 1787).5 On the other hand, representations of the stories of Iphigenia, both the ‘prequel’ to the events of *Agamemnon* (*Iphigenia in Aulis*) and the sequel to the *Oresteia* as a whole (*Iphigenia among the Taurians*), were enormously popular, and the story of Iphigenia’s parents plays a central role in many of these. Although of course deriving primarily from Euripides, the Iphigenia operas are also often marked by the legacy of Aeschylus’ play and trilogy. Both parts of Iphigenia’s story offer thematic perspectives concerning the cycles of wrongdoing and retribution involved in her family’s history, with which the themes and resonances of Aeschylus’ play and trilogy mesh very effectively. This is not to maintain that eighteenth-century librettists or composers necessarily themselves had, or intended their audiences to have, Aeschylus’ trilogy specifically in mind at the points where I posit a link (although in some cases this is possible). It is to suggest that images and themes which the eighteenth-century artists employ in their presentation of the stories of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra trace their ‘line of descent’ back to Aeschylus, so that aspects which are important in eighteenth-century portrayals of these characters and their story at times mirror aspects in Aeschylus’ trilogy, whether or not either artist or audience were conscious of the relationship in precisely those terms. To take an example where a ‘line of descent’ is more clearly traceable than usual, Jean Racine’s portrayal of Clytemnestra in his *Iphigenie* may be coloured by his (attested) reading of Aeschylus as well as of Euripides, so Gluck’s operatic refashioning of the French play would in this sense owe at least an indirect debt to the *Oresteia*.

The reasons why indirect use of Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon* trilogy dominates so heavily over direct adaptation in eighteenth-century opera are partly obvious, but

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5 1781: Christian Cannabich, *Elektra*, libretto by Dahlberg, Mannheim: 1782: Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne, *Electre*, libretto by Nicolas-François Guillard, Paris: 1787: Johann Christian Friedrich Haefner, *Elektra*, libretto by A. F. Ristell (based on Guillard’s version), Drottningholm (Reid (1993), 765). Reid also lists an ‘opéra-comique’ by Domenico Cimarosa in Naples in 1783, entitled *Oreste*; but this is more likely to have dealt with the Iphigenia in Tauris story, given the ‘comique’ specification and the fact that most other eighteenth-century works with this title (e.g. Handel’s 1723 *Oreste*) are based on the *IT* plot.
partly more elusive than might be assumed. To the average eighteenth-century reader as to his seventeenth-century counterpart, Aeschylus was a much less well-regarded (and much harder to read) author than Euripides or Sophocles, so it is understandable that most adapters chose to draw on Euripides rather than Aeschylus for the major framework of an adaptation. At the same time, Agamemnon and Clytemnestra's story was also presented in Seneca's Latin Agamemnon, linguistically much more accessible. So lack of direct operatic representation of the story cannot simply be put down to the difficulty of Aeschylus.

Secondly, both Iphigenia in Aulis and Iphigenia among the Taurians allowed much freer scope for the kind of 'up-beat' ending that was becoming the preferable option in eighteenth-century opera. This preference was determined partly by the performance conventions of the genre, which tended to end with a showpiece dance finale, and partly, especially as the century became increasingly coloured with the ideas of the Enlightenment, by a desire to take a more optimistic view of the way the universe was unfolding. The 1706 François-Joseph de La Grange-Chancel/Bouvard opera Cassandre, however, shows that even the Agamemnon story could in part be tuned to these preferences (Fig 5.1). Although the main story of the deaths of Agamemnon and Cassandra ends without amelioration, the whole story is presented at the outset through the filter of a rather extraordinary prologue, in which the god Apollo interrupts the laments of the personified rivers and other survivors of desolate Troy to announce that a son of Elector will survive to found the French empire, establishing a brilliant new Troy bearing Paris' name. Everyone instantly cheers up, and the main action is introduced as a tribute to the supremacy of love as instanced by Apollo's abiding affection for Cassandre. This consolation may have seemed a little distant by the time Cassandre staggers on stage in the final scene to die in Orestes's arms; but interestingly, while the opera was not an unqualified success, the final act is reported to have been especially well-received.6

The other obvious reasons for the eighteenth-century avoidance of Aeschylus' Agamemnon are the product of potential moral and political sensitivities over his direct handling of the story. There was clearly, in France at least, a certain cultural unease about direct representation of Clytemnestra's murder of her husband: Claude Boyer, in the 1680 Agamemnon on which La Grange-Chancel's libretto is based,7 absolves Clytemnestre of any actual intent to kill Agamemnon (she is manipulated by Égisthe to serve his own conspiracy against the king), and has her try to avert even the projected murder of Cassandre at the eleventh hour. Clytemnestre's guilt is also attenuated by having her yield to Égisthe's advances only in the belief that Agamemnon has perished in the wreck of the Greek fleet: here Boyer's attenuation was also followed by La Grange-Chancel. Similarly, Oreste's retributive matricide did not easily recommend itself to contemporary

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Figure 5.1. Frontispiece to opera-libretto (1707), showing the killing of Cassandra.
moral and aesthetic sensibilities. Following an earlier suggestion of Pierre Cor­neille, H. B Longepierre in his 1702 Electre has Oreste kill his mother by accident when she gets in the way of a blow meant for Égisthe; even among those presenting the story indirectly, there is at least one instance of this extenuated version being adopted, by the Italian Mattia Verazi in his 1764 libretto for Ifigenia in Tauride.

Yet this consideration of moral taste is not as straightforward as might appear. When La Grange-Chancel adapts Boyer’s play early in the eighteenth century, he reinstates the murder of her husband among Clytemnestre’s intentions (although admittedly not from the outset, and only when she is exacerbated by Agamemnon’s own intent to divorce her and marry his captive Cassandre). While Boyer’s Clytemnestre is the more psychologically consistent and convincing, La Grange-Chancel’s Clytemnestre is (despite intervals of conventional repentant virtue) an altogether more forceful creation, exploiting sinister presages at Agamemnon’s cenotaph to urge Cassandre’s death, and dedicating herself in the end full-bloodedly to revenge on her husband. Although in the final scene La Grange-Chancel is very vague about who actually commits the murder, Cassandre’s prophetic warnings to Agamemnon earlier in Act V (modelled on Boyer, v. i–ii, who in turn owes elements to Aeschylus as well as Seneca here) were explicit on the subject: ‘The Queen and her lover, inspired by fury, | Will cause you to fall under a thousand mortal blows’ (v. ii). Contrast Boyer’s version, where Cassandre in her visions remains entirely vague about the authors of Agamemnon’s death, and conjures up Clytemnestre’s violent demise and Oreste as a distracted outcast without clearly indicating the connections between these events. If anything, then, this eighteenth-century version takes a more (if not fully) robust approach to the morally problematic aspects of the Agamemnon story, deliberately altering the seventeenth-century source in order to do so.

As for the potential political sensitivity of Clytemnestra’s and Aegis­thus’ regicide, while this cannot be ruled out as a factor discouraging direct representation subsequent to 1706, it is rather striking that neither La Grange-Chancel nor his source Boyer shies away from the political dimension of their plot: rather the reverse. Boyer plays up the range of tensions arising from a lengthy female regency, a youthful and inexperienced heir (both aspects with clear resonances in seven­teenth-century French history), and an ambitious and experienced councillor (Égisthe) with his own agenda and supporters. While La Grange-Chancel tones some of this down, he too makes much play with Clytemnestre’s holding the

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8 Barnwell (1965), 49.
9 i. ii, iii. v. Cornwall (1996), xxiv. lx.
10 ‘to the Conspirators How I rejoice to see in you this noble anger! | How well it suits my fury! | The dearer the victim was to me | The more pleasure I shall have in piercing his heart. ENSEMBLE: Let us follow Fury, and Rage, | Let us immolate the Enemy who dares to outrage us’ (iv. v).
11 La Grange-Chancel is much more explicit in Cassandre’s visions about the matricide, and implies it much more clearly also in the final scene of his libretto.
balance of power between her would-be consort Égisthe and her son Oreste, and with the stirrings of discontent and rebellion at the prospect of Agamemnon’s making the foreigner Cassandre Mycenae’s queen. In both versions, Agamemnon’s death is the result of a conspiracy taking in wider parties as well as Égisthe and Clytemnestre.

While, then, this range of cultural factors no doubt played some part in influencing the eighteenth-century preference for treating so powerful a story indirectly rather than directly, as much weight should be given to the positive reasons for the popularity of the indirect strategy. The Agamemnon story functions particularly effectively as an ‘extra-dramatic perspective’, not only powerful in itself, but—characteristics which Aeschylus exploited to the full—predicated on a series of vivid and sinister past events in Agamemnon’s family, and the precursor to further such events, posing the cycle of wrongdoing and retribution as a potentially irresoluble problem, requiring resolution by some new approach. Approaching the story prospectively or retrospectively opened up resonant thematic possibilities regarding the power of the past over present and future, and the ways in which different people can choose to respond to that power. Such thematic possibilities had an obvious appeal during a period in European history when ideas challenging past structures and past patterns of thinking, rule, behaviour and belief were coming to the fore with particular urgency; and, at the same time, where that challenge might express itself in the desire to exact a penalty for past abuses. The Iphigenia in Aulis and Iphigenia in Tauris stories offered a longer perspective on the future or past cycle of events, and allowed Agamemnon’s murder and its aftermath to assume a crucial thematic role without the potential emotional and moral distractions involved in playing out the crime as a central part of the on-stage action. In the post-revolutionary world, by contrast, we find that the regicide is often the centre-stage focus (see Fig. 5.2 and Macintosh, Chapter 8).

In this chapter I want to apply these general considerations about the Agamemnon story in eighteenth-century opera to the century’s two most famous operatic portrayals of Agamemnon’s family, Gluck’s Iphigénie en Aulide (1774) and Iphigénie en Tauride (1779), exploring the ways in which the legacy of Aeschylus may have worked. One strand of this enquiry is concerned with

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12 In La Grange-Chancel’s and Boyer’s ‘direct’ versions, the dominant plot and thematic frameworks for the death of Agamemnon do deflect attention away from the idea of the power of the past: they comprise on the one hand the political complexities of Mycenae (as we have seen) and, above all, the threefold love-triangles involving Clytemnestre, Agamemnon, and Égisthe; Agamemnon, Clytemnestre, and Cassandre; and Cassandre, Agamemnon, and Oreste. In La Grange-Chancel, sexual jealousy of Cassandre is not Clytemnestre’s only motive, but it is her overriding one.

13 Libretti by, respectively, Marie-François le Blanc, Bailly du Roullet, and Nicolas-François Guillard (on a foundation laid by du Roullet). The translations are my own, unless otherwise stated. For simplicity’s sake, I shall refer to ‘Gluck’ even where the point turns on the wording of the libretto; in any case Gluck worked very closely with his librettists on the text, as his correspondence demonstrates (see below, pp. 94 n. 34, 97); cf. Sadie (1992), 2. 454–5.
‘process’: the complex creative patterns of direct and indirect transmission by which Aeschylus’ legacy operated. Since fifth-century tragedy itself frequently brought the ‘Agamemnon story’ into play as an extra-dramatic perspective, on at least some occasions with specific allusion to Aeschylus’ trilogy (see Easterling, Chapter 2), Aeschylus’ legacy may be transmitted indirectly through the influence of Euripides; this operates alongside similar indirect transmission of Euripides through the work of later European authors, and at times is enriched by direct contact with Aeschylus. The second strand of the enquiry looks at the effect of, and the possible reasons for, the way Gluck responds to and uses key Aeschylean elements.
In Gluck's *Iphigénie en Aulide*, the portrayal of Clytemnestre herself, as we shall see, draws inspiration in a number of ways from Aeschylus' forceful female protagonist, with that inspiration sometimes filtered through Euripides, sometimes operating more independently. Even in the quieter earlier stages of her role, her association with the impulse to vengeance comes through, and at the climax of her role she is presented as a powerful advocate for, even as a partner of, the forces of retribution operating in her husband's house: very much in line with the way Aeschylus' character presents herself. Following Euripidean cues, Gluck offsets this aspect of Clytemnestre's role with the forgiving outlook of Iphigénie herself, to create a dramatic and musical 'dialogue' between voices of retribution and reconciliation.

Explicit foreshadowing of the future in *Iphigénie en Aulide* centres on the climax of Clytemnestre's role: her farewell scene with her daughter, foreshadowing her revenge on her husband, followed by an extraordinary, musically programmatic recitative and aria in which she vividly evokes both her daughter's fate and the vengeance which she calls down upon the Greeks.

**IPHIGÉNIE**: Adieu, live on for Orestes my brother,
Upon this object so dear, reunite all your wishes;
May he be happier, may he be, alas!
Less fatal to his mother!
Do not accuse my father for the fate which pursues me.

**CLYTEMNESTRE**: He, by whom the knife, prepared by his own hands...

IPH: To preserve my life, what has he not attempted?
But from the anger of the gods who could shield me? (III. v)

[Cly: My daughter! I see her, beneath the inhuman blade
Which her barbarous father sharpened with his own hand...
A priest, surrounded by a cruel mob,
Dares to raise against her a criminal hand;
He tears open her breast...
And with curious eye, in her throbbing heart...
He consults the Gods.
Stop, bloodthirsty monsters! Tremble!
It is the pure blood of the sovereign of the heavens
With which you dare to crimson the earth!

(Aria)
Jupiter, hurl the thunderbolt, hurl, hurl the thunderbolt!
May the Greeks, crushed beneath your blows
Be reduced to powder,
In their blazing vessels! in their blazing vessels!
And you, Sun, and you, who, in this country,
Recognize the heir and true son of Atreus,
You, you, who did not dare to light up the feast of the father,
Draw back, draw back,
They have taught you this fatal road! (III. vi)
The whole passage derives very closely from the equivalent sequence in Racine's 1674 *Iphigénie* (the major, often verbatim, source for Gluck's libretto), v. iii. 1653–62 and v. iv. 1682–99. In their turn, Racine's lines are a complex fabric woven from a number of contributory threads. Euripidean material supplies the warp, as it were, but Aeschylean influence is also woven into the pattern. In the first instance, Racine's lines elaborate on the spirit as well as echo some of the words of Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulis* 1450–7. The points of departure for Racine's sequence comprise the loaded reference to Orestes' future ('raise Orestes here to manhood', 1450), Iphigenia's poignant request to her mother not to hate her husband (1454), and Clytemnestra's bitter response with its direct threat of vengeance and its allusive reference to Agamemnon's sinister lineage (1457: 'unworthy of [his father] Atreus', surely intended to strike the audience as ironic). Racine (and Gluck, whose libretto takes up this point verbatim) makes the Atreus reference more direct (1689–92), referring back to Clytemnestra's earlier thunderous denunciation of her husband in iv. iv, which opens:

> You do not belie your fatal race;
> Yes, you are of the blood of Atreus and Thyestes:
> Executioner of your daughter, now all that remains for you
> Is to make of her a horrible feast for her mother. (1249–52)

Racine and Gluck's reworking of these various elements also, however, bears the marks of the legacy of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*. This is almost certainly the case with the Racinian picture of the seaborne destruction which Clytemnestre wishes on the Greek fleet (1683–8). Racine had read *Agamemnon*, and Clytemnestre's imagery carries overtones of the storm wrecking the Greek fleet on its return from Troy, recounted by Aeschylus' herald at *Agamemnon* 650–60. Gluck's libretto takes the general idea from Racine and renders it more concisely but also with different imagery, stressing the hurling of divine thunderbolts and the flames which should fall on the ships.

Racine's redeployment of the storm motif in the climax of Clytemnestre's role serves a portrayal of her as avenger, and Gluck's adaptations, heightening this, cast her more explicitly still as avenging fury, in an almost literal sense. The opera text makes the storm allusion more of a direct, positive imprecation by Clytemnestre, as compared to her appeal to the sea in Racine ('Sea, will you not open up', 1684 ff); notice especially the transformation of Racine's phrases 'the pure blood

14 Racine is here influenced by Clytemnestre's explicitly threatening tirade in Jean Rotrou's 1640 *Iphigénie* (Rotrou (1641), iv. iv, p.79); Rotrou in turn drew inspiration from Clytemnestra's more veiled threats in Euripides (II 1173, 1179–84), with some probable help from Erasmus' influential Latin translation of 1506 and the French version by Thomas Sédilt (1549, itself heavily dependent on Erasmus).

15 His annotated copy of the 1663 edition of Aeschylus (by T. Stanley) survives, with notes on this play, although these only start at 1051.

16 Influence by the much more extensive storm recital at the equivalent point in Seneca's *Agamemnon* should not, however, be ruled out, e.g 1684 and 1686 cf. Seneca 499–500.
of the god who hurls the thunder. I hear the thunderbolt growl and feel the earth tremble (1697–8) into aggressive commands in Gluck: 'bloodthirsty monsters! Tremble!', 'Jupiter, hurl the thunderbolt!'). Gluck's score, in turn, dynamically figures both the storm and Clytemnestre's rage, using each as a metaphor for the other in an archetypal revenge aria, and identifying Clytemnestre's anger with the angry heavens she invokes.

Gluck's conception of Clytemnestre as avenging fury has strong affinities with her Aeschylean portrayal. Aeschylus' Clytemnestra regards herself as allied to divine powers in the pursuit of her husband (1432–3), and indeed at one point as the embodiment of the avenging fate that stalks Agamemnon's house (1500–4). So the manner in which Racine, and still more Gluck, work strong reference to the curse deriving from Atreus into the expression of Clytemnestre's thirst for retribution, suggests that this element too is linked to the prominence of the theme in Aeschylus' version (despite the undoubted importance of Seneca in transmitting this theme to the later tradition). It is also possible that Aeschylus' legacy is present indirectly in the general evocation of Clytemnestre's future actions and their consequences. Racine's 1654–61 and Gluck's 'Do not accuse my father... May he [Orestes] be, alas! | Less fatal to his mother' (cf. above, pp. 84–5) derive, as we have seen, from Euripides; but bearing in mind the possibility of ongoing familiarity of fifth-century Athenian audiences with Aeschylus' plays, it may have been specifically Aeschylus' picture of Clytemnestra's revenge which Euripides intended to evoke in Iphigenia in Aulis. There is at least one possible verbal connection between the Euripidean Clytemnestra's threat at 1455: 'Dread struggles (δευτος ἄγωνας) must that man undergo because of you' and her Aeschylean counterpart's triumphant entrance-speech describing her revenge as 'This struggle (άγων δ' )' (Agamemnon 1377).

Neither Racine nor Gluck has Clytemnestre voice such an explicit threat against Agamemnon as in Euripides, but the future is clearly signalled by the ironies underlying Iphigénie's references to Orestes and by the bitterness of Clytemnestre's response to the request not to reproach her husband. Gluck uses musical effects to impress these points still more strongly on the audience. Iphigénie's aria 'Adieu, live on for Orestes' is tenderly flowing (marked dolce and piano in the score) until she reaches the wincingly ironic 'less fatal to his mother' ('moins funeste à sa mere'), where the sweet vocal line is disrupted by a sudden chromatic note on 'funeste', backed up by the subito forte dynamic on the whole phrase. Meanwhile the threatening aggression of Clytemnestre's response is thrown into relief by the contrast between the serenity of Iphigénie's wishes for her family and the spikiness of her mother's recitative interjection 'He, by whom the

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17 The accompaniment uses stormy swift arpeggios of doubled semi-quavers (violins) and staccato quavers, in ascending then descending sequence, while the vocal line mirrors the restless up-and-down movement with an octave leap on the second 'hurl' each time.

18 There is evidence that his plays were (unusually) permitted reperformance at the city festivals after his death: Aristophanes' Acharnians 9–10 and the ancient Life 12. See further, Easterling, Ch. 2.
knife, prepared by his [own] hands', set forte and breaking the flow and tempo of Iphigénie's song. Iphigénie's last words before her mother's interjection in fact prepare for this, initiating a sense of agitation, as she seeks to forestall her mother's reaction, by the new dotted-quaver rhythm on 'do not accuse my father'—the words which most clearly reflect the future threat, and which Gluck's text has strengthened from Racine's original ('accuse' as opposed to 'reproach' (Iphigénie 1654)). Clytemnestre's aggression is further highlighted by the subsequent resumption of Iphigénie's song, forgiving words sung to a melody still more serenely flowing than before, set piano and with eleven successive notes of even length for the sequential descending phrases on 'Pour conserver mes jours que n'a-t-il point ten[ré?]' ('To preserve my life, what has he not attempted?').

Clearly Gluck seeks to heighten effects encountered in Racine through his musical setting. But Gluck also adapts and reorders Racine's material in an arrangement which strengthens Clytemnestre's ascent to revengeful fury: a key part of Gluck's strategy and an approach, as we have seen, with Aeschylean resonances. In Racine, Clytemnestre's 'retribution speech' (1679–99) begins with an outburst against the captive Eriphile (who in jealousy of Achille's love for Iphigénie had betrayed to the Greeks the eleventh-hour escape engineered by Agamemnon); switches this rage to a more fundamental target, the Greeks and her husband; and then modulates into horrified grief as she imagines what is now happening to her daughter, before claiming as ally the thunder which has begun to roll. The excision of Eriphile from Gluck's plot means that the focus of Clytemnestre's fury is more concentrated. In the opera libretto Clytemnestre begins the sequence with a stark evocation of Iphigénie's fate in dramatically expressive recitative, conjuring this as a vision before the horrified mother's eyes: 'My daughter! I see her, beneath the inhuman blade', transferring, in support of this, material from Clytemnestre's denunciation of Agamemnon earlier in Racine's play (1301–4), with a telling shift from future tense to present tense:

A priest... Dares to raise... a criminal hand;
He tears open her breast...
In her throbbing heart... He consults the Gods;

Racine's text is almost identical but has 'will raise... Will tear open... will consult'. The musical setting adds support, making 'He tears open her breast' a climax, a forceful series of high Fs ending on a diminished seventh leap down to G-sharp, and with a three-bar crescendo in the agitated syncopated accompaniment from piano to fortissimo.

Gluck's text also adds touches to the language calculated to heighten the sense of anger and outrage at the agents: compare 'the inhuman blade which her father sharpened with his own hand' (Gluck) with 'to the knives prepared by her father' (Racine 1695), and 'A priest... dares to raise against her' with 'A priest will raise against my daughter' (Racine 1301–2). Again the music works with the language, switching from piano to forte to accentuate 'father' and '[against] her a
criminal hand'. The rising tide of anger then takes up the Racinian Clytemnestre's command to stop (1696: 'Barbares, arrêtez!'), but expresses this again with more violence and more authority:

\begin{verbatim}
Stop, bloodthirsty monsters!
Tremble: it is the pure blood
Of the sovereign of the heavens
With which you dare to crimson the earth.
\end{verbatim}

The momentum of a 'rising tide' is supported by the furious semiquaver tremolo accompaniment, marked fortissimo; the sense of authority by the setting of 'Stop' and 'Tremble' at the top of Clytemnestre's register (rising to high G, doubled by two oboes in each case), and by the abrupt switch to all the accompanying instruments (except violas) doubling Clytemnestre's part on 'heavens, | with which you dare to crimson'. From here, there is an organic transition into the aria of imprecation 'Jupiter, hurl the thunderbolt' with the whole turning the more passive sense of alliance with the heavens expressed by Racine's Clytemnestre into a more active identification. Thus the new arrangement foregrounds Clytemnestre's vivid anger and fury mounting steadily to a climax: aided, naturally, by the \textit{da capo} structure of the aria, which repeats the aggressive 'Jupiter, hurl the thunderbolt ... in their blazing ships' after the stanza evoking the horrors of Atreus and the Thyestean feast.

In the musical sequence running from the farewell to Clytemnestre's imprecation, Gluck—inspired by Racine—encompasses a range of family history which stretches from the curse on Atreus to its outworking in the murder of Agamemnon and Orestes' retributive matricide. Within this stand the two figures of Iphigenie and her mother, the former urging the past (her father's actions) to be set aside, and praying for a future where the legendary cycle of retribution would be disrupted; the latter resisting this break with the past and allying herself, in forceful fury, to the fate that pursues her husband's house. As in her speech in Racine, Clytemnestre's aria widens the scope of retribution, allying her also to the divine vengeance that will later pursue all the Greeks. But more even than in Racine, Gluck's Clytemnestre in her aria casts herself as emissary of divine retribution. For those who know their Greek legends, she aligns herself with and gives voice to the forces that will not let the past die and will perpetuate the cycle of destruction; in this she is very much the sister of the Aeschylean Clytemnestra of (especially) \textit{Agamemnon} and \textit{Eumenides}.

How far, though, are these ideas presented through the opera more widely? Presentation of the characters in such a way as to evoke the shadow of their future was very much part of Racine's strategy in his play: clear echoes of the \textit{Iliad}, for instance, raise the spectre of Achille's fate at Troy.\textsuperscript{19} While such echoes are less

\textsuperscript{19} There is early and direct reference to Achille's choice of fates (220–6, 247–51 cf. \textit{Iliad} 9.410–16); Achille's confrontation with Agamemnon (iv. vi) is full of echoes of their quarrel in \textit{Iliad} 1, with all its consequences.
direct in Gluck, the general strategy with Achille is similar. To what extent does this work with the portrayal of Agamemnon, and of Clytemnestre outside the climax to her role which we have been considering?

Agamemnon's opening aria, 'Brilliant author of the light, will you without turning pale look upon the greatest of crimes?', strikingly opens his role with oblique reference to the crime of his father Atreus, in the version where the sun hid its face in horror at the murder and consumption of children by uncle and father respectively. Thus at the very outset Agamemnon's proposed sacrifice of Iphigenia is related to the family curse. Later on, in ii. vii, as Agamemnon sobers down from the angry resolve induced by Achille's defiance, he is depicted writhing under the lash of remorse. The scene is influenced in its outline by Racine (iv. viii–ix): Racine has Agamemnon, in his reflections, make unconsciously ironic reference to the future ('an intrepid mother. | Who will defend her blood against a homicide father', 1437–8). Gluck's text has no such reference to Clytemnestre, but the vivid evocation of the snake-haired furies with which the libretto elaborates Agamemnon's sense of remorse may be intended to allude to his future along with that of his whole family:

Inhuman father! do you not hear the cries of the Eumenides?
The air resounds with the terrible whistling of their murderous serpents,
Avengers of parricides, they begin your torments.

With this background, the intention may also have been to lend pointed proleptic force to Agamemnon's concluding appeal to Diane: 'You wish blood: spill my own!'

It is in the character of Clytemnestre, however, that implicit allusion is strongest. Gluck's libretto does in many ways attenuate Clytemnestre's role: an inevitable result of the heightened emphasis on the relationship between Iphigénie and Achille and the (probably consequent) decision to omit the confrontation involving Agamemnon, Clytemnestre and Iphigenia. Yet at the climaxes of her role, her individualized aggression is accentuated. One key defining characteristic of Aeschylus' Clytemnestra was the intense imagery of her language, and Racine distinguished Clytemnestre among his characters by giving her a vivid particularity of concrete imagery in her speeches rare within the idiom of later seventeenth-century French tragedy (perhaps responding directly to Aeschylus: the remarkable imagery with which Clytemnestra depicts her murder of her husband, at Agamemnon 1390–3, is one of the relatively few passages highlighted by Racine in his annotation of that play). Gluck retains—and indeed elaborates on—this in his final act, using verbal and musical imagery together. For example, 'Crushed (écrasés) beneath your blows | May the Greeks be reduced to dust (réduits en poudre) |

20 Patroclus, for instance, is brought into the picture, with an on-stage role calculated to conjure, through some poignant irony, associations with the Iliadic tale of his death and all that it meant for Achilles himself, including sealing the latter's own fate (ii. iii, especially in the original 1774 version of the opera).
In their *blazing (embrasé)* ships’ takes the vivid violence of Clytemnestre’s language in Racine up a notch or two: compare Gluck’s ‘écrases’ and ‘réduits en poudre’ with Racine’s ‘de ses vaisseaux brisés’ (‘with their broken ships’).

Gluck also develops Clytemnestre’s role on two earlier occasions, independently of Racine, reflecting her association with vengeance. First there is her aria in i. vi, where she believes Achille has deserted her daughter. In Racine, Clytemnestre advocated a proud and dignified exit; but in Gluck she goes much further, calling down divine retribution on the apparently faithless lover. The aria moves to its climax on ‘let the cry of vengeance ring out on all sides’; these words are repeated two-and-a-half times up to a pause on high G, and rendered still more climactic by an increase in momentum, force, and finally volume in the furious doubled semi-quaver accompaniment.

Secondly, there is Clytemnestre’s involvement in the ii. iv trio where Iphigénie attempts to assuage Achille’s fury against her father. In Racine this scene was played just between the two young lovers, but Gluck gives Clytemnestre a voice which, once again, articulates bitterness against her husband (‘Her father! and that cruel man wishes to pierce her breast!’). Musically, too, her part works in parallel to Achille’s voice (‘I no longer see anything in him but a perfidious assassin’) in answering Iphigénie’s pleas (‘He is my father’). As in the farewell ‘duet’, Iphigénie’s part is gentle, set piano and with a flowing accompaniment, whereas Clytemnestre’s and Achille’s responses are set forte, introduced (in the trio’s opening section) by a subito forte rising semiquaver quadruplet in the violins. This parallelism makes it at least very tempting to ‘hear’ Achille’s refrain ‘Dedicate to my rage | A faithless, inhuman creature’, which overlaps (first partially and then completely) with Clytemnestre’s prayer for sustained courage,21 as intended to resonate for the audience with what they know of Clytemnestre’s future. This possibility receives some support from the fact that the string part accompanying, then following, each reprise of the trio’s climactic ‘chorus’ employs the rapid descending minor arpeggios which will recur in the evocation of the storm in Clytemnestre’s revenge aria later. In any case, it is noteworthy that, introduced into an exchange where she had no part in the source, Clytemnestre musically takes the initiative. It is her response to Iphigénie, not Achille’s, that we hear first, despite what Iphigénie’s appeal leads us to expect: ‘He is my father, sir [Seigneur];’ and it is she who leads off the three-way invocation to heaven.

The relationship between Iphigénie and Achille does occupy the spotlight for most of Gluck’s opera, in a way that causes Clytemnestre’s role to be less prominent than in Racine (or Euripides). Consequently, reference to the future story of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra cannot resonate as frequently or as

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21 The trio’s ‘chorus’ opens with a mini-fugue with overlapping entries: ‘CLY: Heaven, sustain my courage, my only hope is in you! IRN: Heaven, avert the storm, dissolve my fear! ACH: Heaven, dedicate to my rage | A faithless, inhuman creature!’ before the voices unite on ‘O heaven, hear my prayer!’ and then repeat the words of their first entries this time simultaneously and with unison rhythm.
consistently as in the earlier plays, and at times fades from sight. This may be particularly so in the determinedly upbeat ending, which, at least in the version finally (and most widely) adopted after the opera’s partial revision in 1775, is configured to suit contemporary operatic taste and convention with a cheerful and elaborate final ballet, and loses much of the double edge that Racine had retained from Euripides (1791–6).22

Nonetheless, however muted, reference to the future story of Agamemnon and Clytemnestre is clearly present in Gluck’s opera. And his evocation of that story is, as argued here, connected in several intricate ways to Aeschylus. Like Aeschylus, too—although exploration of this aspect remains uneven in *Iphigénie en Aulide*—Gluck shapes his references to the story to engage with issues and patterns of retribution bound by a past which will colour the future. When Gluck does turn attention on to these issues, he, like the Greek dramatist, centres them on a powerful female personality who identifies herself with the superhuman forces of retributive justice. In Gluck’s case, he sets Clytemnestre’s voice against that of an Iphigénie who, though closely united to her mother, yet opposes her in this, calling for reconciliation. It is a conception of the relationship between Iphigenia and her mother which will recur in *Iphigénie en Tauride*.

Gluck’s *Iphigénie en Tauride* saw the light of day in 1779, but Gluck had been working on this from very shortly after *Iphigénie en Aulide* had appeared.23 This time the libretto, by Nicolas-François Guillard, building on foundations laid by du Roulet, derived from a more recent dramatic source, Guymond de la Touche’s highly successful and influential 1757 play *Iphigénie en Tauride*. The nexus of influences both direct and indirect is, however, much more complex than this. In the twenty-six years from 1756 to 1781, there are eight works (seven operas) on the *Iphigenia in Tauris* story, interlinked in various ways and all based essentially on three texts. First, there is a libretto by Marco Coltellini, set in 1756 by A. M. Mazzoni but more influentially by Tommaso Traetta (Venice, 1763);24 Gluck conducted this opera in Florence in 1767.25 Secondly, Guymond de la Touche’s play (1757), the source not only for Gluck’s libretto but also for that of Alphonse

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22 The ending in the original 1774 version of the opera perhaps had more of the Euripidean and Racinian ambivalence, notably in the remarkable closing chorus, leading out in what Jeremy Hayes describes as ‘a sinister war chorus... with stark, bare octaves and crude thumps on the bass drum, perhaps with a hint of irony’ (Sadie (1992), 2. 818). The piece is set, and ends the opera, in the minor key, which makes it tempting to hear irony in its references to warriors enjoying tranquil repose at the end of painful labours. Compare the end of the extant text of Euripides’ *Iphigenia in Aulis* (1627–9).

23 ‘The first known reference to Gluck’s setting (of *Iphigénie en Tauride*) is in a pro memoria he drafted... in 1775; two of his letters from that year make it clear that Roulet was at work on the libretto.’ Sadie (1992), 2. 819.


de Congé Dubreuil set by Niccolò Piccini (Paris, 1781). Finally, a libretto by Mattia Verazi, deriving (although much elaborated) from La Grange-Chancel’s 1699 Oreste et Pilade, and set three times (by G. Majo (Mannheim, 1764), C. Monza (Turin, 1766), and N. Jommelli (Naples, 1771)). Gluck’s opera has connections with all of the works in this nexus, and it is instructive at certain key points to compare his handling of the Agamemnon/Clytemnestra story with what happens at equivalent moments in these other works.

In Iphigénie en Tauride, the story of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra pervades much of the action, through Oreste’s entanglement with it. In Gluck as in Euripides, there are many explicit references to the family’s immediate murderous history, as well as a number of implicit connections made between the present characters and their situation on the one hand, and their parents’ history on the other. In both respects, Euripides’ influence, and the ‘chain reactions’ of influence between his various adapters, are again intertwined with the Aeschylean legacy.

Explicit references to the family history in the opera tend to concentrate in three areas: Iphigenia’s foreboding dream at the outset, the scene where she questions Oreste about her family, and Oreste’s persecution by the Furies. Despite the obvious dramatic attractions, by no means all seventeenth- and eighteenth-century adapters included the dream, so its inclusion is a deliberate choice. One thing to notice at the outset is that Gluck (1. i) makes the dream’s evocation of past history considerably more explicit than in his main sources: Euripides’ original relies on the symbolism of the collapsing palace, and Guymond, though a little more direct, evokes Agamemnon’s death in vaguely allusive terms (‘I flee: and the light of a dim and dark torch | Prevents me from seeing anything but a horrible tomb’, 1. ii). Gluck’s version conjures up the actual murder of Agamemnon by his wife, and presents a brief but vivid image of the kind of implacably murderous Clytemnestra associated with Aeschylus:

Before my eyes all at once my father appears,
Bleeding, pierced with wounds, and of an inhuman spectre
Fleeing the murderous rage.
This dreadful spectre was my mother!
She arms me with a blade and suddenly disappears.

Piccini was apparently set up to write a rival Iphigénie en Tauride, to Dubreuil’s libretto, at the same time as Gluck was composing his version, although Piccini’s piece wasn’t performed until 1781. Various versions of the events surrounding this famous controversy exist; of especial interest is the claim by Piccini’s librettist (mentioned in the avertissement to the libretto) that Gluck was given first refusal of his text and turned it down. See Ford (1972), 2–3 and 8 n. 12; Ford cites de Lajarte (1878).

M. P. McClymonds, entry on Verazi in Sadie (1992), 4. 931—2. La Grange-Chancel’s influential play omits it, for instance, as do the libretti by Còrellini and Verazi.

De la Touche (1784). Compare also the (still very generalized) Piccini version: ‘The authors of my days disfigured, bleeding, | Uttering painful and funereal cries. | Tombs, daggers, | Impious assassins, | Spectres, furies | surrounded them on all sides’ (1. i).
In particular, Gluck introduces a calculated variation on Guymond in making Clytemnestre the one who presses into Iphigénie's hand the sword with which to kill Oreste; in Guymond it is her father's shade who forces his daughter to kill. Musically, too, within another of Gluck's programmatic recitatives, Clytemnestre's insurgence is highlighted: first by the paring down of all accompaniment to tense phrases of three ascending crotchets, until we reach 'fleeing the murderous rage'; then by excited and muted tremolando underpinning 'This dreadful spectre was my' before an explosion into an exclamatory chord sequence (subito fortissimo/subito piano, reinforced by woodwind) on 'mother'. Clearly, Gluck intended a particular role for Iphigénie's mother within the opera's thematic economy: a role marked by implacable and murderous pursuit of both son and husband.

Again, the dream account has been adapted to emphasize the house of Agamemnon as an accursed object of divine retribution: 'The angry sunlight flees this place which it abhors'. Whether or not the motif of the accursed house had direct Aeschylean associations for the composer/librettist, it is a motif that links back through the tradition to the treatment of the theme in Agamemnon, especially in the linking of the curse to the specific physical location of Agamemnon's palace. Gluck then elaborates on the idea of the family curse in Iphigénie's first aria: 'O race of Pelops, race forever fatal/fated! | To his last descendants, heaven is still pursuing the crime of Tantalus!'. Recitative and aria together place the family curse at the top of the bill, as it were, weaving together both past and more recent crimes. From the outset, the power of the past over Iphigénie and her family is thus strongly evoked.

The second major incursion of the Agamemnon story into Iphigénie's role is in the 'questioning scene', where she discovers for the first time the full truth of her family's disasters during her long exile. The scene, of course, goes back to Euripides' Iphigenia among the Taurians, and as a crucial part of the action is included in some form by all adapting artists. The question-and-answer exploration of the fates of Iphigénie's parents has, however, been handled in various ways in different adaptations; Gluck's own choices, therefore, are worth exploring. Clearly libretto and score are designed to draw things out to heighten both the dramatic and the musical suspense, but the setting also strongly foregrounds the

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30 Tension is built up through the scoring, with the first crotchet played forte by the lower strings, the second and third piano and staccato by the violins.
31 Gluck's picture here again involves a clear shift in relation to Guymond, for whom Argos has far more positive associations: 'places so dear', 'the heart of nature and humanity', 'calm and liberty' (Guymond, i. ii).
32 Cf. Agamemnon 1087—92, 1186—93, 1217—22, 1309—11. Euripides' Iphigenia among the Taurians also makes play with the motif of the accursed family line (e.g. 186—202, 693—4, 812 ff, 895—9, 911—13), which may be among that play's links with the Oresteia and is probably part of Gluck's inspiration here; but Gluck's libretto gives more prominence to the physical locus of the curse than Euripides did.
33 The Coltellini libretto, for instance, privileges the suspense of the scene by having Oreste maintain a stubborn refusal to answer Ifigenia, with the odd result that although she is given reason for deep foreboding she never explicitly hears exactly what happened.
names of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra. With Agamemnon, Oreste's hesitations add to the lingering suspense, characterize his grief and shriveling from the past, and give the opportunity to hammer home his father's name as a leitmotif:

IPH: Speak, tell us of the fate of Agamemnon, of that of Greece!
Or: Agamemnon?—IPH: From whence arises the pain which weighs you down?
Or: Agamemnon...—IPH: I see your tears fall!
Or:... Beneath a parricide blade has fallen.34

Clytemnestra's name itself is not so much stressed, but libretto and setting lend particularly insistent emphasis to her murderous nature:

IPH: And what detestable monster dared raise hand against so great a King?
Or: In the name of the gods, do not question me.—IPH: In the name of the gods, speak.
Or: This abominable monster, it is...—IPH: Go on: you make me shudder.
Or: His wife!—IPH: Great Gods! Clytemnestra?—Or: She herself!—PRIESTESSES: Heaven!
IPH: And the supreme justice of the avenging Gods looked on this atrocious crime?

Compare Guimond's version, whose denunciation of Clytemnestra is less hyperbolic: 'a parricide hand... |... —IPH: Who was his assassin?—Or: His adulterous wife. | IPH: Clytemnestre?—Or: Love wove the web of this black mystery. | It armed her with a dagger.—IPH: O crime! Dreadful madness!' (n. iv); and Piccini's: 'Or: Unfortunate victim of an infamous conspiracy—Iph:... What! the proud assassin... Whose was the criminal hand?—Or: That of his adulterous wife.—IPH: Of Clytemnestre! o Heaven! what horrible mystery is this!' (iii. ii). As well as strengthening the characterization of Clytemnestra as a 'monster', notice how Gluck's version edits out all reference to Clytemnestra's acting with an accomplice and to the sexual motive for her crime.35 The Clytemnestra evoked by Gluck's libretto is a formidable killer who needs no accessory and whose guilt is not complicated by reference to adultery.

Moreover, the build-up of intensity in Gluck's musical accompaniment makes the revelation of Clytemnestra as the killer even more of a climax than the revelation of Agamemnon's death. The whole build-up to Oreste's revelation 'His wife!' is set piano, tension mounting with string tremolando through 'In the name of the Gods, do not question me!... speak!' and 'Go on, you make me

34 Compare what Gluck wrote to Guillard about the libretto here: 'This scene can become interesting in dialogue, and the word 'Agamemnon', which Orestes [sic] repeats three times, is interesting'. Letter to N. F. Guillard, from Vienna, 17 June 1778: Müller von Asow (1962), 132.
35 Compare Hall's chapter above. It is instructive also to compare the equivalent passage in La Grange-Chancel's 1699 Oreste et Pilade (a contributory source for many eighteenth-century works on this story). He too has some strong words for Clytemnestre and her crime: 'a parricide hand', 'Who is this monster?'; but goes on to spell out more fully the involvement of Aegisthus, who is the major instigator of a crime motivated by sexual misbehaviour: Clytemnestre was manipulated by her lover, who feared retribution, into believing (or pretending) that she was avenging Iphigénie's death (iii. vi). Verazi follows the same line on Clytemnestre's motives, while making her more responsible (iii. vii. p. xlvii).
shudder!'. There is then a sudden shift to forte crotchets for Iphigénie’s naming of her mother: ‘Great Gods! Clytemnestre?’; and, following Oreste’s confirmation (‘She herself!’), the chorus interjects for the first time in this scene, their single fortissimo note on ‘Heaven!’ touching off an exclamatory descending syncopated three-bar interlude from the strings, also fortissimo and marking up the tempo (Vivement, ‘with energy’, is the composer’s instruction in the score). What Clytemnestre did, and her role as a distinctive force within the family’s doom-laden history, is again at this key moment given heightened prominence.

Between these two points, the opera switches perspective from Iphigénie to her brother Oreste and his friend Pylade; what part does the story of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra play there? All adapters of the story represent Orestes’ haunting by his mother and her attendant Furies, but from different dramatic angles. A popular option was to have Orestes ‘act out’ his persecution by invisible forces, in a state of delusional frenzy. This path is taken in Oreste’s first on-stage appearances in La Grange-Chancel, Coltellini, Guymond, Verazi, and Piccini; Gluck, as we shall see, reserves this tactic for a later stage of the action. Coltellini, Verazi, and Piccini all choose to make Clytemnestra the central figure of Oreste’s delusions. She is a threatening and vengeful figure in all three, but most of all in Coltellini’s version. Oreste’s recitative and aria on this theme form the climax of his opera’s opening scene, employing full-blooded and detailed imagery, strongly reminiscent of the Oresteia, and establishing Clytemnestra as a forceful and highly dynamic figure:

... and preparing for me the fatal double axe is the dearest of hands.

(Aria)
What skilled murderess prepares death for me!...
my mother kills me, a mother pitiless,
since the ingrate is not satisfied with blood.
Ah, wild woman! Hasten the sharp wound; what gift is life if I got it from you?37

This is important, because Coltellini’s libretto as set by Tommaso Traetta38 has strong links with Gluck’s Iphigénie en Tauride. Gluck’s dramatic expedient of acting out Oreste’s madness in full, complete with chorus of Furies and the visible ghost of his mother, was almost certainly inspired by Coltellini. Both operatic scenes have a certain amount in common with the scenes between Clytemnestra’s ghost and the Furies in Aeschylus’ Eumenides, and Coltellini’s libretto may have specific verbal links with the Greek play (the scene’s choral opening: ‘Are you

36 Euripides takes this approach in Orestes (253–79); in Iphigenia among the Taurians, Orestes’ delusional seizure takes place off-stage and is presented in vivid third-party narrative: a strategy followed in part by La Grange-Chancel (i. ix) and by Guymond (i. iv).
37 The translation given here is by Barker (1995).
38 See above, p. 91. Subsequent quotations from the Coltellini opera are translated by the author from Traetta (1978).
sleeping, Oreste? Stir yourself, awake!’ looks very like an echo of Clytemnestra’s ghost chiding the Furies in *Eumenides* 94, 124, and 133).³⁹

Gluck’s Clytemnestra, though, is a more subtle player in this scene than in Coltellini. The chorus’s relentless fugue in Gluck pauses (and the musical texture thins out) to make way for her appearance before resuming with a vindictive ‘No mercy!’: the insistent, tensely scored refrain ‘He has killed his mother!’⁴⁰ justifies us in seeing Clytemnestre’s apparition as that of the leader of the hunt, urging on the chorus’s pursuit. While Coltellini’s chorus of Furies calls for vengeance directly in Clytemnestra’s name,⁴¹ however, Gluck’s does so most directly in the name of higher powers: ‘Let us avenge both nature and the angry Gods!’ In *Iphigénie en Aulide* we saw how it was as the ally of divine justice that Clytemnestre imagined herself in her desire for revenge; now in *Iphigénie en Tauride* we find her Furies casting themselves in the same light.

It may be for this reason that later on in the opera, Gluck, having taken care to accord a particular prominence to Clytemnestre in the first two acts, in turn reworks his sources to shift focus away from Clytemnestre onto the wider forces bound up with her cause. Thus when Gluck takes up the idea of Oreste’s delusionary visions for a later scene (III. iv, the *combat de générosité* between Oreste and Pylade as to which of them should die to let the other live), he removes any specific mention of Clytemnestre from her son’s vision of the forces of Hell.⁴² In Gluck, the anger of heaven (or hell, although the surrounding references—‘great Gods!’ at the end of Oreste’s recitative, and Pylade’s subsequent ‘O Gods! does your anger remain inflexible?’—link the infernal with the celestial powers) has been a theme and a battleground throughout the opera, from the opening storm sequence through Iphigénie’s account of her dream onwards. Clytemnestre is a combatant on this field, but not the only one: something suggested even at the start, in Iphigénie’s dream, where Clytemnestre armed her daughter against Oreste, but it was ‘un ascendant funeste’ (‘a fatal higher influence’) which forced the blade home. As the action develops beyond Act II, Gluck seems concerned to stress the wider struggle of the forces of retribution with the impetus for redemption.

Which brings us back to Iphigénie, and the other link between the Furies scenes in Coltellini and Gluck. There is an extraordinary moment at the end of the scene in Coltellini’s libretto where, on Ifigenia’s entrance, Oreste identifies her with his mother:

³⁹ It is not absolutely explicit in the Coltellini libretto that Clytemnestra’s ghost actually appears, so Gluck (who does make this explicit, III. iv) may have added this rare on-stage manifestation of Clytemnestra’s ghost for himself.

⁴⁰ Subito piano from forte each time, with a vicious sforzando in the orchestra on the first syllable of ‘mother’ (‘mère’).

⁴¹ ‘The grieving, angry, neglected shade of a mother slaughtered by you—hear, ungrateful wretch! how she begs for revenge’.

⁴² The earlier scene with Clytemnestre’s ghost has, however, already established a link in the audience’s mind between the Furies and Clytemnestre.
If: Unhappy youth!—Or: Ah me! what do I see? Ah! what horrid spectre as my executioner depicts in [her] face [my] angry mother!

Gluck retains this idea in his version, making it clear that the association is due to a striking physical resemblance:

Or: Have pity! Cruel Gods!
(catching sight of Iphigenie) My mother! Heaven!...
(aside) What [are these] features! what an astonishing likeness! (II. v)

Gluck conceived the moment as having a close psychological association with the Furies scene: he wrote to his librettist, 'on seeing Iphigenia, [Oreste] thinks he sees his mother. He must still be immersed in his dream [of the Eumenides] when he speaks the words: 'Ma mère! Ciel!' otherwise they would lose their effect.43 This type of identification of Iphigenie with her mother was an influential idea: Coltellini's more extensive treatment of Oreste's delusion was also picked up by Verazi in his libretto (I. iv): 'Alas, that face!... [Meeting Iphigenia, he takes a few steps backward, frightened] My mother!... Where shall I hide?... Yes, I see you, implacable ghost.'

Linking Iphigenia to Clytemnestra ties in to the reminders—a key, if usually implicit, part of Euripides' original play—that Iphigenia's sacrifice at Aulis motivated her mother's crime and so 'started' the cycle which is now drawing to its close in Tauris.44 In Aeschylus' Agamemnon, Clytemnestra regards her daughter as her supporter in, as well as justification for, the murder of Agamemnon, implicitly appealing to Iphigenia's bitterness against her father.45 In Euripides' Iphigenia among the Taurians, Iphigenia's own bitterness about the past does indeed at times touch her recollection of Agamemnon (e.g. 209–13, 360–71, 852–4, 856–64), although she stops well short of rejoicing at his death. In the earlier of these passages Iphigenia associates her reactions with her mother,46 and the associative link of Iphigenia with Clytemnestra is part of the texture of the play and story in various ways. Notably, there is Iphigenia's role as agent in the near-death of the man of her house: see, for example, 866–72, a passage all the more striking in that Iphigenia's words: 'Dread things I dared... barely did you escape the unholy fate

44 e.g. IT 548–65, 850–67, 924–7.
45 Agamemnon 1552–60. Compare also, within a speech which deliberately interfaces with the Oresteia (530–3 cf. Eumenides 658–61), Clytemnestra's words at Sophocles' Electra 546–8: 'Were not these things the thinking of a witless and evil father? | I think so... She who died would say so, certainly, if she might find a voice.'
46 209–13: 'Me as the first-born in her chamber Leda's ill-fated daughter bore, nurtured as a victim to be slaughtered by a father's misuse'. 364–8 (Iphigenia recalls her words to Agamemnon at Aulis): 'O father... even as you are killing me, my mother and the Argive women are singing the wedding song for me... but I am being destroyed by you.' The final line could also be translated 'we are being destroyed by you': first person plural used for singular is very common in Greek tragedy, but 'we' would not be out of place here and Euripides may have meant the audience to understand an actual plural.
of destruction, slaughtered at my hands’ (870–2; translation slightly altered from Kovacs) contradict what has previously been stated (622–4), that she was not to strike the fatal blow herself. Orestes elliptically refers to Iphigenia’s having served as motive for her mother’s crime (927). More generally, Iphigenia shows temporary flashes of a harder edge, in respects linked to her mother: her capacity for vengeful bitterness over the past is stressed (354–358, 531–535), and she declares that grief for the loss of her dearest blood relative will make her ruthless (348–350). Both Orestes and Iphigenia are bound to the past as represented by their parents, and when they resolve to break free it is in terms of those bonds that they declare their intent. Iphigenia explicitly renounces what might be termed her mother’s position:

I wish the very same thing that you do, both to set you free from [your] toils and to set upright the diseased house of our father(s), not indeed feeling anger at him who killed me; I wish it; for I would both release my hand from slaughtering you and save [our] house

(991–5; my translation)

Orestes responds to this in terms which set Iphigenia and her mother side-by-side only to stress his own present desire to break away from his past actions in support of his father’s vengeance: ‘I will not be your murderer as well as my mother’s!’ (1007). Euripides may, then, be said to be redepolying the strong Aeschylean link between Iphigenia and her mother’s attitude and crime, to create allusive but important associations between mother and daughter in his audience’s mind: a technique which many of the later writers adapt for themselves and use to a variety of ends.

In the later European tradition, Iphigenia is often idealized, but this does not prevent authors from making play with a ‘harder edge’ to their heroine, in a variety of ways which also seem designed to bring the shade of the aggressive Aeschylean Clytemnestra into the picture. Most striking in this respect are the versions of La Grange-Chancel, and of Verazi who follows him in his libretto. La Grange-Chancel’s Iphigénie elects herself her mother’s avenger (despite knowing that the latter killed her father) on an Oreste who has declared himself to be Clytemnestre’s killer without revealing his identity. Verazi elaborates on this even more dramatically, with imagery both verbal and visual which recollects the Oresteia (notice especially the vengeful ghost, and Iphigenia taking up an axe with which to strike Orestes):

Forgive me, beloved mother: you shall be avenged.
I already feel anger awakening in my breast and inflaming my heart.
Pierced through by this hand the traitor will fall at my feet . . .
(She imagines present the angry shade of Clytemnestra) Stop, cruel sight! . . .
Be silent, do not call me ungrateful, beloved shade. You shall be placated.
You shall have vengeance. (iv. viii, p. 50)

47 ‘Iph: Although unworthy of life, Clitemnestre in the tomb | Interests her daughter in punishing her executioner’ (iv. i); see also iv. vi.
Aeschylus in Gluck's Iphigenia Operas

I am killing a wicked man, by whose hand the woman who gave life to Iphigenia died betrayed... I am the Greek Iphigenia: saved by Clytemnestra on Aulis in order to punish the wicked author of her death...

Listen: if you ever find Orestes... tell him that you were present when (she takes up the sacred axe) our common mother was avenged on this guilty head (about to strike Orestes) (iii. iii, pp. 56–7)

By an intriguing twist, in Verazi's version Clytemnestra herself devised a stratagem to steal her daughter away from the sacrifice at Aulis (i. iii), and in these scenes it is almost as if she did so in order to appoint her daughter as her minister of retribution.48

In the Coltellini libretto, Ifigenia's rather different aggression is equally climactic: it is she who stabs the king, Thoas, at the end to prevent her brother's death. Although the link between this aggression and her mother is less directly evoked than in La Grange-Chancel and Verazi, the parallel though very different regicides of mother and daughter suggest that the link is there. Given the framing of the opera by Oreste's evocation of his murderous mother's shade in the opening scene, and this killing by Ifigenia's own hand at the end, and given the blurring of the two women's identities by Oreste that takes place in between (ii. iv–v), Coltellini's handling may aim at drawing a deliberate parallel and contrast between Clytemnestre's destructive violence, and Ifigenia's violence which protects and restores: certainly this last is the light in which the libretto presents her climactic killing:

Ifigenia: I feel a god who stirs me up, who fills me and makes me greater than myself. Let the guilty tremble at a great example of the eternal vengeance... Fall, tyrant...
Oreste & Piate: O bold stroke!—Chorus: O memorable daring!
Ifigenia:... Listen, you people: this is a decree of heaven, Like light its favour shows itself.
See, the clouds are chased away, see, the day is calm, the customary light returns...
Or, Pile. & Chorus: Let us follow the strong woman who has punished the guilty monster.

Guimond's play, on the other hand, Gluck's immediate source, has a much more consistently gentle Iphigénie, whose only echo of her mother is in the bitterness she expresses against Agamemnon in Act I. Even this bitterness is in fact, unlike in Euripides, itself a recoil against the destructive past, since in

48 Verazi, although he has other interests (particularly the tyrant Toante's machinations to marry Ifigenia and pack his fiancée Tomiri off as bride to Merodate, the barbarian ruler of rival Sarmatia), integrates Clytemnestra into a conflict of values between the faithlessness, autocracy and cruelty of the Toante/Merodate pairing and the loyalties and self-sacrifices of the Greek trio (helped by Tomiri). Within this pattern Clytemnestra's ghost is, like the attitude and conduct of the two evil kings, a force of arbitrary and pitiless authority, pursuing a son who killed her only by accident (!) while taking a just vengeance on his father's killer Aegisthus (i. ii, iii. iv). Ironically Ifigenie's loyalty to her mother almost leads to her being devoured by her mother's cause; equally ironically, her climactic declaration of herself to Oreste as her mother's avenger reveals her identity and saves them both.
Iphigénie’s vision it is her father who forces her hand to stab Oreste and continue the cycle of intrafamilial violence. So far from raising Clytemnestre’s spectre for her brother, as in Coltellini and Verazi, Guimond’s Iphigénie has an immediate beneficent effect on Oreste’s frenzy: ‘Oreste: I feel my fury grow calm in her presence’ (ii. iv; see also iii. i).49

Against this background, it is clear that Gluck has made his own choices for a particular calibration of Iphigénie’s role, drawing on ideas in his main source but also in other operatic versions from the same time period. He follows Guimond in the general gentleness of the heroine’s character, but departs from him to adapt the Coltellini/Verazi strand of the tradition in which an associative link is established between Iphigénie and her mother, in the latter’s relentless pursuit of Oreste. Gluck’s version is more subtle and allusive than the Italians’: Iphigénie is very little like her mother in personality, outlook, or action, but finds herself cast in her mother’s role: in her dream-vision, by her brother, and in the sacrifice she has to perform. The association is, as we have seen, prepared for the audience in the dream account in the opening scene, then confirmed by Oreste’s confusion of his sister with his mother, and brought to a head at the moment when Iphigénie’s sacrifice of Oreste is nearly carried through: as in Verazi, Iphigénie is seen standing over her brother with weapon poised to strike, when revelation breaks upon them instead. It is in part from this involuntary casting that Gluck’s Iphigénie has to break free in her struggle to resist and overcome the hold of the past.

As Iphigénie aligns herself against the forces of violence and retribution, at key moments (the opening, the first meeting with her brother, the sacrifice) she is both linked to her mother and seen to reverse her mother’s role of pursuing and persecuting her father or brother in revenge for the past. Iphigénie’s struggle, in this sense, against the past was set out from the opera’s opening. The dream sequence in i. i established the forces of retribution as bearing down on Iphigénie and her brother, but also presented Iphigénie’s own resistance to the destructive forces from the past. In her recitative, Iphigénie raises the spectre of her father’s crime at Aulis only to renounce bitterness over this: ‘I forgot, in those sweet moments, | Old cruelties, and fifteen years of misery.’ This is in direct contrast to her mother’s role in the vision: Iphigénie wishes to embrace her father and rushes towards his plaintive cry, Clytemnestre pursues him full of murderous rage. But there is also an interesting tension between the reconciliatory tenor of Iphigénie’s words and the music, which heavily stresses the negative phrase ‘fifteen years of misery’ (subito fortissimo on two sharply accented minims in the accompaniment). This tension suggests that Iphigénie’s inclination towards forgiveness is born out of struggle of mind and has overcome more hostile impulses. And despite her own attitude, Iphigénie finds herself armed by her mother to kill her brother. So we see from the outset of Gluck’s Iphigénie en Tauride that the heroine, just as in Iphigénie en Aulide, is aligned against the powerful impulses of retribu-

49 Deriving from La Grange-Chancel iii. vi: ‘How comes it that, on seeing her, my fury leaves me?’
tion; we also see that she has had to fight to keep herself on that side, and (from her mother’s intervention in the dream) that she will need to keep fighting.

Likewise, Iphigénie’s words in II. v immediately after Oreste has ‘seen’ her as his mother both identify her with his vision (‘I see all the horror with which my presence inspires you’) and insist on a different reality below the surface (‘But if your eyes could read... into the depths of my heart’). Her first action, following Oreste’s more lucid exclamation on the physical resemblance to his mother, again stands in opposition to that identity, ordering his release from his chains. At the moment of sacrifice, Oreste’s recollection of his sister’s parallel death at Aulis is precisely the trigger which causes Iphigénie to draw back and save him, whereas previously it was the trigger for their mother’s murder of their father. Once again, Gluck had a wide range of options for the mechanics by which Oreste’s identity would be revealed to Iphigénie (or vice versa); and this choice of his to arrange the recognition, so that Orestes’ mention of what Iphigenia suffered directly identifies him to her and thus saves him, is sufficiently independent of other contemporary versions to suggest that it is making a particular point.50

We saw above how Clytemnestre’s prominence in Gluck as a force of retribution gradually blended into a wider vision of those forces, taking in the divine powers until at the last heaven was finally seen to relent and commit itself to mercy and redemption: as the final chorus sings:

The Gods, [who] for long [have remained] angry
Have accomplished their oracles...
A purer day shines upon us! (iv. vii)

As Clytemnestre’s individual negative role recedes in prominence, so Iphigénie, shown as a positive mirror image of her mother (if initially also shadowed by the reflection), gradually takes on a more positive role in asserting herself against the demands of an apparently implacable heaven and thus the destructive forces of the past, in the shape both of her own family’s history and the savage traditional rite of Tauris. In Gluck’s opera it is noticeable that, as compared to Guymond, where she engages in spirited debate with Thoas about the rights and wrongs of the sacrifice from the outset, Iphigénie in the first two acts is largely passive and reactive in the face of her current situation, but becomes much more proactive thereafter. She starts to take the initiative in Act III (‘From the horrors of death I [shall] tear away one victim’, III. i). By Act IV she is prompted, if temporarily, to open rebellion against her priestly duty (iv. i). And although up until the crisis she wavers in a genuine dilemma between one view of an implacable divine will and her own humane instincts (for which she wishes to see divine sanction, iv. i), once Oreste’s identity has been revealed she firmly sets the past behind them.51

50 Cf. Aristotle’s Poetics: 1455a and 1455b.
51 ‘Or: What? You can love me? You do not shudder [at me]?—IPH: Ah! Let us leave that fatal memory there.’ As in Iphigénie’s aria bidding her mother forgive her father in Iphigénie en Aulide, the music here elides into a quasi-aria with a flowing, lyrical melody.
energetically asserts the heavens as on the side of salvation not destruction (iv. iii) and defies Thoas and his forces (iv. iv). The parallels and identifications between Iphigénie and Clytemnestre suggested throughout, support a view that, at the end, Iphigénie, hailed by Oreste as his saviour (‘[the one] to whom I owe my life’, iv. vii), should be seen as stepping forward to take her mother’s place, in a final and positive sense.52

The idea of the whole household and family of Agamemnon—including Iphigenia herself—requiring a kind of redemption as well as physical salvation was important in Euripides, and in different ways picked up by the later tradition. Iphigenia’s role in the *Iphigenia among the Taurians* story is to act as catalyst for this ‘redemption’, and that aspect of her role was increasingly stressed in the eighteenth century. Gluck, however, drawing on other contemporary versions, at the same time establishes an association of Iphigenia with her mother, to the end that she may be said to represent a struggle between the grip of the past and the forces of reconciliation and recreation: Clytemnestra’s ghost an agent of the cycle of retribution, her daughter linked to her but succeeding in breaking that cycle and helping to start a new world, presented in language with both religious and Enlightenment overtones (‘A purer day shines upon us’, etc.). It would probably stretch Gluck’s ideas too far to see Clytemnestra as sharing in the redemption which the house of Atreus achieves at the climax, but it may be accurate at least to see in his opera Clytemnestra’s daughter, presented as her heir, redeeming her mother’s crime by her role in enabling the final reconciliation.

Treating the story of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra as *exo tou dramatos* appears to have given Gluck, and many of his seventeenth- and eighteenth-century sources, the freedom to retain much of that story’s full original force and Aeschylean resonances, with dark overtones of sinister family history and, above all, with Clytemnestra as forceful, implacable female protagonist. Taking further cues from both Euripides and Aeschylus, Gluck and his contemporaries in a variety of ways offset Clytemnestra with her daughter, who in her turn becomes increasingly another strong female figure, linked to her mother but emerging as representative of different values. This combination of Euripides with Aeschylus, refracted through contemporary lenses, is sometimes worked out unevenly, as in Gluck’s *Iphigénie en Aulide*; but as a conception it is always effective, and often powerfully charged. Ten or fifteen years off from the onset of the French Revolution, Gluck found a role for the tale of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra within the stories of their offspring which highlighted the destructive and enslaving power of the past when it is allowed to dominate thought or action, either in retrogressive attitudes (to government or religion, for instance) or in the pursuit of retribution; and underlined the need to break free from that power. His Iphigenia

52 The original version of the pronouncement by the goddess Diane *ex machina* (see Croll (1973), 323–4, 341, 363) makes explicit the final departure of his mother’s ghost from Oreste’s life: ‘The Gods are satisfied at last. | Henceforward you will no longer hear the plaintive cries of your mother’ (Croll (1973), 323).
Aeschylus in Gluck's Iphigenia Operas

operas show the surest way to triumph as a generous and compassionate turning away from past wrongs (in contrast, say, to the vigorous physical resistance and sanctified violence of Coltellini's heroine). We should of course beware of crediting Gluck with anything resembling prophetic powers; yet his Iphigenia operas capture and convey a conflict crucial to the spirit of his times. His solution to that conflict is idealized; in opera Iphigenia's reconciling world view can win out and usher in a new world free of her mother's Furies. In the harsher world of political actuality, of course, the struggle to create a new world would find the power of the past and the furies it begets much harder to shake off.
SECTION II
THE MOVE TO MODERNITY
Agamemnon's Influence in Germany:

Goethe, Schiller, and Wagner

Michael Ewans

The influence of Greek art and literature on the German writers of the eighteenth and nineteenth century was so great that E. M. Butler could fairly term it a 'tyranny' in the title of her famous pioneering study. Aeschylus, however, made for a long time less impression than the other two great tragic poets. Winckelmann's verdict was enormously influential; he stated categorically that:

the fine arts have their youth as well as men; and the beginning of these arts seems to have been similar to the first attempts of plastic artists, where only the pompous and the amazing can please. This was the shape taken by Aeschylus' tragic muse, and his Agamemnon is much obscurer in parts, owing to his use of hyperboles, than anything Heraclitus has written (!).  

Goethe followed Winckelmann's preference for Sophocles and Euripides. On his Italian Journey he found the early fifth-century temple at Paestum 'altogether strange' to his sensibility, and when he read the Oresteia, his reaction was even more extreme: 'A primevally gigantic form, of monstrous shape, steps shockingly before us, and we must gather all our senses together to somehow manage to stand worthily in front of it.' Goethe did not doubt for a moment that the Oresteia was a masterpiece, and he found 'particularly marvellous' one of the striking features of Agamemnon—the texture of the choruses and the Cassandra scene, in which past, present, and future are interwoven. He describes this, using Aeschylus' own metaphor, as an Urteppich—literally, an ancient tapestry. However, he chose to stay firmly in Euripidean territory in his own explorations of Greek antiquity, from Iphigenie auf Tauris to the Helena sequence in Faust II.

With his rather more robust sensibility, Schiller did not hesitate to include some Aeschylus in the potent nexus of influences, which shaped his history plays. When Wallenstein suspects that the Emperor seeks his death, his metaphor may

2 Letter to von Humboldt, 1816; quoted at Nestle (1977), xi.
come from Jason’s quest for the Golden Fleece, but his consciousness of *paθει matheo* (the famous Aeschylean phrase, always rendered in the nineteenth century as ‘learning through suffering’) is straight *Agamemnon*, reshaped with a touch of Christian imagery:

It is his evil genius, and mine,
Punishing him through me, the tool of his ambition,
And I expect that vengeance is already
Whetting its blade to pierce my breast as well.
Let not the man who sows the dragon’s teeth
Hope for a joyful harvest. Every crime
Carries its own avenging angel with it,
The evil hopes that swell within its bosom.\(^4\)

Schiller subsequently equipped his Sicilian tragedy, *The Bride of Messina*, with a Greek-style chorus; this gave him a full opportunity to re-create in modern drama what he clearly regarded as the principal role of the Aeschylean chorus—predicting that murder will receive due retribution. Obsessed with Orestes’ deed, Schiller closed the third Act of his own tragedy—after brother has killed brother before the spectators’ eyes—with the following ode:

But woe upon the murderer, woe
Upon him who has sown the deathly seed!
One visage it wore before it was done,
Another is worn by the accomplished deed.
Bold is its visage, jaunty, smart
While feelings of vengeance rage in your heart;
But once it is done, it no more speaks
But stares at you with ashen cheeks.
Against Orestes the Furies hurled
The serpents of the underworld.
To matricide inciting the son.
Feigning justice with skill and art,
They lured him to betray his heart
Until the deathly deed was done,
But once the blow was dealt to the breast
That conceived and bore him and made him blest,
Lo, they turned
Against him himself
Monstrously.
And he recognized the dreaded virgins
Who overtake a slayer and seize him,
Who will never again release him,
Who will gnaw him with serpent fangs forever,

\(^4\) Aes. *Ag.* 178. I argue in Ewans (1975), 23–4 that it should be translated more neutrally as ‘learn from experience’.

\(^5\) Schiller, *Wallenstein’s Death* (1800) i. vii; as translated in Schiller (1979), 345.
It is not known which translations of Aeschylus Schiller had read, before he created the Wallenstein trilogy in the late 1790s. (He may not have used any; Schiller could read classical Greek.) Translations before 1800 tended to portray Aeschylus as a remote and obscure writer, chiefly because that was his place in Winckelmann’s widely adopted reading of fifth-century culture. The French Revolution and the conquests of Napoleon created a new political climate in the first two decades of the nineteenth century; this stimulated interest in the Greeks’ own struggle for independence, which Aeschylus had dramatized in *Persians*. However, an important opportunity to present Aeschylus to German readers in a less forbidding light was lost. The translation by von Humboldt, which evoked such a strong feeling of alien sensibility in Goethe when it appeared in 1816, was stilted, did less than justice to the plays, and succeeded all too well in von Humboldt’s professed aim of preserving a feeling of distance between the present and the long departed glories of classical Greece. It was outmoded even when it appeared; in the dramas of Kleist, who had committed suicide in 1811, and the poetry, dramatic fragments, and translations—including the notorious *Antigonae*—by Hölderlin (who was unable to write after 1806), new and more allusive German poetic and dramatic forms had appeared, which absolutely rejected Goethe’s quest for a ‘neoclassical’ clarity and laid the foundations of modernism.7 So when Aeschylus was next translated into German, in 1832, it was possible to translate *Agamemnon* in a way which did justice to the power and the complexity of the language.

Johan Gustav Droysen published his translation in 1832. In this new version, the trilogy profoundly influenced Richard Wagner, when he read it in 1847. He recalled in his autobiography that

> I could see the *Oresteia* with my mind’s eye, as though it were actually being performed; and its effect on me was indescribable. Nothing could equal the sublime emotion with which the *Agamemnon* inspired me, and to the last word of the *Eumenides* I remained in an atmosphere so far removed from the present day that I have never since been really able to reconcile myself with modern literature. My ideas about the whole significance of the drama and of the theatre were, without a doubt, moulded by these impressions.8

Nietzsche once declared: ‘never has an ancient work had as much influence as the *Oresteia* on Richard Wagner.’ However, that influence was not the result of a prolonged study of the ancient Greek language. Wagner claimed that when he

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6 Schiller (1803), translated in Schiller (1962), 80–1.
7 The aesthetic bases for this new approach may have been laid by the curious, but widely accepted theory of Klopstock, developed by Johann Heinrich Voss, that there was a close affinity between German and ancient Greek, which made this particular language specially capable of realizing for the modern audience even the obscure, allusive poetry of Aeschylus and Pindar. Cf. Silk and Stern (1981), 6–7.
8 R. Wagner (1911), 415.
began to study Greek at the Dresden Kreuzschule, between the ages of 9 and 14, 'no boy could have had greater enthusiasm for classical antiquity than myself'.\(^9\) But the young Wagner was primarily attracted to mythology. In his autobiography he candidly admitted that 'in the matter of the classics, I paid only just as much attention as was absolutely necessary to enable me to get a grasp of them; for I was stimulated by the desire to reproduce themselves to myself dramatically...In these circumstances it will be readily understood that the grammar of the languages seemed to me merely a tiresome obstacle'.\(^{10}\) He made some further attempts to study Greek, engaging a private tutor when he was 17; but in Paris, between 1839 and 1842, a classical scholar (Samuel Lehrs) wisely advised Wagner that he would need so much time to gain a thorough grounding in the Greek language that it would stand in the way of his work as a composer. Wagner acted on this advice, and the classical reading of his later years was done almost entirely in translation.\(^{11}\)

Wagner returned to Aeschylus many times right from the initial revelation, when he first read the *Oresteia* in 1847, to the last day of his life, when he recalled the portent of the eagles and the hare and said of Aeschylus, 'my admiration for him never ceases to grow'.\(^{12}\) He was a staunch advocate of Aeschylus, in a period and a place where performances of Aeschylus never took place. Under Wagner's influence, Nietzsche rewrote the history of Athenian tragedy, and argued decisively against Goethe's aversion to Aeschylus. In *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music*, Aeschylus is acknowledged as Sophocles' equal; in Wagner's diagnosis, which Nietzsche adopted, Aeschylus and Sophocles were equal masters, while Euripides was the decadent, influenced by the logic-chopping of the Sophists, who initiated the decline of Greek tragedy.\(^{13}\)

Most modern dramatists who have written under the influence of the Greeks have chosen either to adopt Greek mythological subject matter, or to imitate formal aspects of Greek tragedy. Grillparzer followed the first method in *The Golden Fleece*, while Schiller followed the second in *The Bride of Messina*. Wagner, who disliked both these works intensely,\(^{14}\) chose a third course. *The Nibelung's Ring* is not an attempt to imitate or re-create a Greek original, but a work of art that was designed to play the same role in German culture as that which Wagner, influenced by Droysen, felt the *Oresteia* had played in Athenian culture.

Wagner wrote three prose works about art and the future in 1848–9, under the influence of the *Oresteia*. In them, he contrasted the stage of his day, on which low-paid and lowly regarded professionals performed, with his idealistic vision of an

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10. R. Wagner (1911), 15.
14. R. Wagner (1892–9), 2. 146.
Athenian theatre in which the city's noblest minds gave their time to create performances, which were amateur in the best sense of the word. Greek tragedy was performed not as a vulgar evening's entertainment for a bourgeoisie and aristocracy, but at a religious festival for the edification of the entire citizen body, who took part both as audience and as actors. Inspired by this vision, Wagner imagined a new kind of music drama, in which the orchestra commented on the actions of the principal characters in a way analogous to the role of the chorus in Aeschylus.15

Droysen was later to become a distinguished ancient historian, and he was when he made his translation of Aeschylus (at the age of 22) a fanatical German nationalist, influenced both by his country's earlier struggles for freedom against Napoleon and by the growing military strength of his native Prussia. As a young scholar, he was greatly influenced by his Berlin teacher August Böckh, author of a major work on Athenian finances, and by Goethe's friend, the Göttngen philologist Fr A. Welcker; both placed Aeschylus primarily in the context of Athenian domestic party politics and conflicts with other states.16 As a consequence Droysen's reading of the trilogy, which he presented in his introduction, was almost exclusively centred on its alleged close relationship to Athenian politics and history. He pictured Aeschylus as a veteran of Marathon and Salamis, who wrote the Oresteia primarily to recall the men of Athens to old virtues and inspire them to new glories. Aeschylus on this reading was a conservative;17 his trilogy sounded a warning to his fellow countrymen in the face of the political challenges of the 450s—internally, the turmoil which had led to the murder of Ephialtes, and externally the threat which was to lead within a year to the battle of Tanagra. Droysen saw Aeschylus as gathering up into his works the spirit of his nation's struggle for freedom, preserving it for all time, and instructing his fellow-countrymen in the path to future wisdom.

This evoked powerful echoes for Wagner. He first read Aeschylus during his enforced exile in Switzerland, after he had narrowly avoided arrest for treason for his radical politics, and his active role in the failed 1847 insurrection in Dresden. He wanted to be a didaskalos—literally, a teacher—to his fellow-citizens, using the stage like Droysen's Aeschylus to place socio-political statements before the community of his countrymen.18 After clarifying this position through his

15 Ewans (1982), 47; cf. R. Wagner (1892—9), 2. 336, and diary entry of 29 September 1871 in C. Wagner (1978), 417—18, where Wagner referred to Siegfried's Funeral March as 'a Greek chorus sung, so to speak, by the orchestra'.
16 Cf. Nestle (1977), xix. It is of course true that in Eumenides, Aeschylus both praises the alliance with Argos and implores his fellow Athenians to avoid civil war; but the action of Agamemnon and Libation Bearers locates these political statements in the context of much wider aspects of society, human nature, and morality.
17 Cf. R. Wagner (1892—9), 1. 53.
18 Ibid. 1. 47—9. Aristophanes had famously made Aeschylus claim to be such a 'teacher' at Frogs 1054—5.
theoretical works, he soon began to compose the *Ring*—a trilogy based on myth, which was designed to dramatize such themes in the same manner as Aeschylus.

Droysen's translation had several great virtues—beauty where it is appropriate, a willingness to risk some obscurity where the original is itself obscure, and a true eloquence where that is needed—as in Cassandra's farewell to life:

Einmal noch sagen will ich letzten Spruch und Gram,  
Den eignen meinem; Dich beschwöre ich, Helios,  
Beim letzten Lichte, fordern müsse, wer mich rächt,  
Von meinen Feinden, meinen Mördern gleichen Tod,  
Wie mich, die Sklavin, ihre Hand behend erschlug!—  
O dieses Menschenleben!—wenn es glücklich ist,  
Ein schatten kann es wandeln; ist's voll Leid, so tilgt  
Ein feuchter Schwamm dies Bild hinweg; vergessen ist's;  
Und mehr denn jenes schmerzt mich dies vergessen sein!¹⁹

One more time I want to utter these last words and my own grief;  
I beseech you, Helios,  
At the last rays of light, must demand, he who avenges me,  
For my enemies, for my murderers the same death,  
As how their agile hand has slain me, the slave!—  
Alas this human life!—when they are happy,  
A shadow can transform them; when they suffer,  
One stroke of a wet sponge wipes this picture out: it is forgotten;  
And more than that it is this forgetting which causes me anguish!

He was also alert to the complex patterns of interrelated imagery in the *Oresteia*, and adopted the same German words where key phrases recur in the original.

However, Droysen retained one great bias in his translation, which ensured that Wagner read his Aeschylus with as moralistic a view as had Schiller. The Greek word *dike* is much closer to the idea of an appropriate recompense than to a Justice, which is morally right; nor is there any word in Aeschylean Greek which corresponds to the modern German concept of *Schuld*—guilt. However, in Droysen's Aeschylus the principal characters are unequivocally guilty of their actions, and suffer moral retribution for sin. The background of the internal political disputes at Athens that had culminated in the murder of Ephialtes led Droysen to suggest that 'in this trilogy Aeschylus composed as it were a solemn expiation for the bloodguilt (Blutschuld) weighing on the land';²⁰ and his version

¹⁹ Droysen (1832) [= Aes. Ag. 1321 ff.].  
²⁰ Droysen (1832), 34. It is possible but unlikely that Droysen was influenced towards this view of Aeschylus by the *Schicksaltragödien* ('tragedies of fate') popular in Germany between 1803 and 1820, in which typically a horrendous crime inside a family is uncovered and the guilty one punished. Droysen probably read the *Oresteia* in this way simply because of his own view of its historical context. However, if any modern German author influenced him, that author would most probably have been Schiller himself, whose rephrasing of Aeschylean thought, in *The Bride of Messina*, into exactly these terms was the inspiration for the *Schicksaltragödie* genre. (Droysen greatly admired Schiller; Nesde (1977), xvii.)
of *Agamemnon* over-translates almost every reference to crime and retribution. The man whose home ‘teems with riches | far beyond what’s best’ in a literal translation of *Agamemnon* 377–8, is for Droysen *Übermass schuldig*—‘guilty in his excess’. Hybris, the normal Greek word for wanton violence, is translated unequivocally as guilt, and its product is ‘guilty crime | which wakes up to breed new sins’ in Droysen’s version of the famous meditation at 758 ff. Similarly, his preferred rendering of *Dikē* is simply *Das Recht*, with all its implications of legal and moral rightness.

In Aeschylus, the royal house of Argos is not bound together by the notion of an accursed, doom-laden past, which condemns the heirs to inevitable, self-destructive violence. On the contrary, Thyestes’ curse: ‘so perish the whole race of the Pleisthenidai’ (*Agamemnon* 1602) gradually becomes ineffective as the trilogy unfolds. Droysen entirely missed this crucial point. In the interchange between Clytemnestra and the Elders over the bodies of Agamemnon and Cassandra, the *alastor* or spirit of vengeance in the house of Atreus (1501) becomes unequivocally in his translation ‘the never-forgetting Curse of vengeance for crimes of old’. Similarly at the end of the scene the ‘seed of vengeance’ planted in the house of Atreus has become *des Fluches Reis*, the offshoot of the curse. Blutschuld, blood-guilt is the theme of Droyens’s *Libation Bearers*; his *Oresteia* is the saga of a curse-ridden house, doomed to crime and punishment, guilt and expiation.

Wagner adopted this reading wholeheartedly as he developed *The Nibelung’s Ring*. Alberich’s curse and Wotan’s guilt, together with the attempt—and failure—of Siegfried to free himself from the doom on the Volsung race which had struck down his father, are at the centre of the final text for Wagner’s own trilogy. And his comments on the *Oresteia* give the same impression as Droyens’s; both men treat the cycle as if Aeschylus (like Goethe in *Iphigenie auf Tauris*) had traced a curse on the house right back to Tantalus and Pelops. There is no recognition that Aeschylus deliberately omitted Tantalus and Pelops from his version of the myth. He began *Agamemnon* with the sacrifice of Iphigenia, and even later on—in the visions of Cassandra—he takes the audience back only one generation, to the Banquet of Thyestes.

In 1848, Wagner’s prose sketch for the *Ring* had begun with Alberich’s theft of the Rhinegold from the depths of the river. In 1851, Wagner supplied that theft with a motif, not found in any of his sources. He invented the idea that the gold could be acquired only by renouncing love. Humiliated and rejected by the Rhinedaughters, Alberich does just that. Wagner then placed the god Wotan in a parallel position to the dwarf Alberich; in his version of the myth, Freia, the goddess of love, is also the keeper of the apples, which give the gods their immortality. Wotan is faced with the need to give her to the giants, in payment for the fortress of Valhalla which will give him security; but he too can only gain his power by renouncing love, and to do this will cost him his life. Wotan and

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22 Ibid. 95–6.
Alberich are faced with impossible choices, in which they must choose between two alternative courses of action which both have horrendous consequences. They must pursue power, but can only do so at the cost of renouncing love.

This situation is deeply indebted to *Agamemnon*; it is a romanticized nineteenth-century re-creation of Agamemnon's dilemma at Aulis. Agamemnon must sack Troy, as Zeus himself has sent the expedition, and it will result in a great gain in *time*—status and possessions—for the Atreidae (127 ff; NB 156); but he can only do so at the cost of sacrificing to Artemis his beautiful daughter, 'the glory of the house' (208). However, there is one very important difference between Agamemnon's tragic dilemma and Wotan's. In Aeschylus, the prophet Calchas fears that strife may break out inside the royal house, caused by 'a terrifying, treacherous house-guardian, an unforgetting Wrath which will avenge the child' (151 ff). Throughout the *Oresteia*, prophecies work conditionally; if *x* happens, *y* will inevitably follow; but *x* is a choice, which men and women may make under intense compulsion, but which they make freely. Only after Agamemnon has sacrificed Iphigenia is his death at Clytemnestra's hand inevitable; only after Cassandra and Agamemnon have been slaughtered will Orestes return to avenge their deaths (1279 ff).

Wagner read the *Oresteia* in a translation, which was blind to this important aspect of the ways in which human destinies take shape in Aeschylus. Nonetheless, in the first draft of *Das Rheingold*, when Erda, the earth goddess and Urwala (primeval prophetess), appears to Wotan and warns him not to keep the ring, her words are:

> A dark day is dawning for the gods;  
> Your noble race will end in shame,  
> If you do not surrender the ring!

This was later amended, and the Aeschylean if-clause disappeared. Erda sings:

> All that is, will perish.  
> A dark day  
> Dawns for the gods;  
> I advise you, yield up the ring!

In Wagner's final vision, the gods will be destroyed, whatever they do. Alberich cursed the ring, when Wotan seized it from him by force; and Alberich's curse will touch everyone who possesses the ring, for however short a time; so Erda's warning now foretells Wotan's destruction.

Wagner first shows the choice made by the lesser, more easily tempted Alberich, and then develops the parallel with the greater, central figure of Wotan; so too Aeschylus first introduced the theme of corruption when the Elders sing in the first *stasimon* (second choral ode) of the destruction of weaker men such as Paris. They 'trample on | the beauty of a sacred thing', and turn out when tested to have 'blackness deep ingrained' (370–1; 392). Aeschylus returns to this theme in the
second *stasimon*, where the context increasingly focuses around Agamemnon. Aeschylus' Elders explicitly disagree with popular opinion, and sing that wealth alone, without impiety, bears no hazards for its possessor (750 ff). Wagner, who was fiercely critical of the plutocracy of his own times, responded to Droysen's guilt-infected translation of the stanzas about tainted wealth (663–780).\(^2\) When Wotan broods on the events of *Das Rheingold*, in the second Act of *Die Walküre*, he is forced to accept that his power must come to an end, simply because it has become tainted by the touch of corruption:

\[
\begin{align*}
I & \text{ set hands on Alberich's ring;} \\
Greedily & \text{ I grasped the gold!} \\
& \text{ The curse that I fled} \\
& \text{ Has fastened on me;} \\
& \text{ I must forsake what I love,} \\
& \text{ Murder the man I cherish,} \\
& \text{ Deceive and betray} \\
& \text{ The one who trusts me!}
\end{align*}
\]

Wagner's tragic vision is more severe and pessimistic than Aeschylus'. Agamemnon was at least rewarded for the sacrifice of Iphigenia by the sack of Troy. By contrast Wotan wore the Ring for less than ten minutes in the closing scene of *Das Rheingold*, and gave it to the giants to pay for Valhalla in place of giving them Freia; but even this is enough to doom him.

One day in 1874, Cosima Wagner found her husband 'reading *Oedipus* in the evening after his work, comparing the translation with the text. "It is like a Persian carpet", he says, "a torrent of beauty—now vanished forever; we are barbarians". We then come to the *Oresteia*, the scene of Cassandra with the chorus, and Richard declares it to be the most perfect thing mortal art has ever produced.'\(^2^4\) This was not merely token admiration; Wagner had already composed a homage to Cassandra twenty years earlier, when he created *Die Walküre*. In Act 2, Sieglinde like Cassandra is thrown into the agonies of prophecy by the realization that this is the place and time at which she is to suffer punishment for sexual transgression. Like Aeschylus' prophetess, Sieglinde is first given insight into the hidden present. Cassandra sees Clytemnestra preparing a murder weapon, a net and a bath (1125 ff); Sieglinde sees Hunding preparing to slaughter her and Siegmund. (Both avengers are, in part, about to commit murder to avenge adultery.) From this she passes into the future, and she collapses under the pressure of a further vision; of Siegmund dead, his sword shattered and the hounds devouring his flesh. She is on stage, limp and mute, during the following scene between Siegmund and Brünnhilde; only when that is over does she complete the parallel with Cassandra,

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\(^2^4\) Diary entry of 18 November, 1874; C. Wagner (1978), 805.
by recalling, as she ‘moves uneasily in her dreams’, the sack and destruction of her house.  

Sieglinde is denied Cassandra’s true greatness—the closing phase of her scene with the Elders, in which she rises to a total acceptance of death (1290–1330). Cassandra’s heroic self-sacrifice is bestowed instead on Siegmund, who accepts unflinchingly in 2.3 the inevitability of his own imminent death.

In her last long speech, Cassandra prophesies the future course of the Oresteia, seeing clearly up to the end of Libation Bearers and hinting that Orestes’ matricide will resolve the cycle of violence; ‘He will return to put the coping-stone on all these kindred deeds of hate’ (1283). By her power of prophecy, Cassandra passes on to the Elders of Argos the strength of insight that later enables them to defy and undermine Clytemnestra in her moment of triumph, and threaten Aegisthus directly with the return of Orestes. In the same way Siegmund and Sieglinde pass on to Brünnhilde the strength of insight, which will enable her to defy Wotan and force him to accept his own future destruction by Siegfried. Siegmund’s absolute devotion to Sieglinde shocks Brünnhilde out of her virgin complacency into a deeper understanding of love; and the influence of Sieglinde in Act 3 is even greater. The powerful, soaring violin melody which accompanies Sieglinde’s response to Brünnhilde in Act 3 (Fig. 6.1), expressing the visionary assurance with which she realizes that her sufferings will bring renewed life, is not heard again until the closing moments of Die Götterdämmerung, where Brünnhilde has followed Sieglinde’s example and sacrificed herself, to return the Ring to the Rhinedaughters. Like Cassandra, Siegmund, who dies at the end of Act 2, and Sieglinde, who will die giving birth to Siegfried, ‘live on’; the pathos of their deaths, like hers, is transcended by the effect which their influence now, in the moments before they die, will have on the world to come. In Wagner’s re-creation of the Cassandra scene, Goethe’s admiration for the web that Aeschylus wove out of past, present, and future, sprang to life on the German stage.

Agamemnon: Speaking the Unspeakable

Margaret Reynolds

I have... slept with my brother.
It was late. He kissed me. He suggested it. I thought, ‘Why not? Why not?’
We took off our clothes. It was easy.
We’ve never told anybody. We don’t talk about it.

In the document that records the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa there is described an occasion when an un-named Indian woman applied for amnesty for her ‘apathy’. Her application argued that those appealing for amnesty on these grounds acknowledged that they
as individuals can and should be held accountable by history for our lack of necessary
action in times of crisis... in exercising apathy rather than commitment we allow
others to sacrifice their lives for the sake of our freedom and an increase in our standard
of living.1

Her application for amnesty was refused on the technical ground that it was not
something susceptible to legislation. Maybe that is true. But can there ever be
amnesty for apathy?

Apathy. A pathos—to be without feeling. If once this was a desirable state for
the Stoic philosophers, who aspired to rise above the exigencies and pressures of
emotion, of feeling, today it is a dirty word. In recent years we have all been
expected to feel. President Bush has told us that he is a ‘feeling guy’. Tony Blair is
lampooned for the long pauses in his speeches, designed to signify emotions that
are un-sayable. Beyond that, looking back over the last years, feeling has become
an emblem of what it is to be truly human. With Princess Diana, we were all
expected to wear our hearts on our sleeves. The assumption has become that it is
‘natural’ to feel, and ‘unnatural’ to be apathetic. So far has this notion gone that the
language of the media often speaks about apathy as something that can be done to
civic and personal responsibility. As if, as Jacqueline Rose has said, ‘you could only

1 Quoted in Rose (2000), 3. I am indebted to Professor Rose for her paper and for her discussion
of the intellectual’s role in speaking out the truth.
be *made* apathetic—a kind of double passive, [in] an act of grammatical bad faith which mimics or repeats the problem it is claiming to diagnose.'

For all the reservations one may have over the way that feeling has been trivialized by the 'huggy-kissy' trends of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, and for all the concomitant anxiety over the denial of responsibility in the media's assumption that we can be 'made' apathetic, I do believe that feeling is a key to a moral life. But it goes like this: feeling first, and then speaking. Rose points out that 'inhuman political structures depend... not just on the power of the oppressors and the silent complicity of the beneficiaries, but also on the numbers of the oppressed being struck with an inability to connect, or give themselves, to their cause'. She quotes the spokesperson for the Stellenbosch Presbytery of the Dutch Reformed Church: 'At the very time when we should have continued to speak out clearly for the truth and against injustice, we grew tired and gave up protesting.'

There are three problematic silences here: the quiet complicity of those who benefit; the inability of those who suffer to connect or to give themselves; the people who should have spoken out but gave up protesting. All of these testify—in their various qualitative silences—to the urgent requirement that we learn to speak the unspeakable. And this must be both in life and in art. For the one is so closely bound with the other that they cannot be separated. Good practice in art is essential training ground for life. As Philip Gourevitch writes in his book on Rwanda, 'All at once, as it seemed, something we could only have imagined was upon us—and we could still only imagine it. This is what fascinates me most in existence: the peculiar necessity of imagining what is, in fact, real.' Only when we can imagine the unspeakable, will we be able to speak it, and only by speaking it, will we be able to understand what is unimaginable.

In Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* the unspeakable is spoken all the time. Over and again the play recites all that is to do with breaking up, breaking down, transgression, taboo, desire and will, hope beyond sense, action beyond convention and law, imagination beyond the boundaries of common sense. The image and shape of transgression is framed by two pictures where the discrete wholeness of the body is torn asunder. The first comes early on with the Chorus's tale of the pregnant hare, disembowelled by the black bird and the white bird, her body shattered. And the second comes towards the end, when the Chorus reminds us of Thyestes, seizing the vessel that contains the remains of the sons he has eaten, and dashing it to the floor with the words: 'Just as this bowl shatters | So let the whole lineage of Atreus | Be shattered and spilt.'

The *Agamemnon*, to state the obvious, is a play about words. About words for things that are not seen, but rather are seen only through those words, for the

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2 Rose (2000), 3. 3 Rose (2000), 15. 4 Gourevitch (1999), 7. 5 T. Hughes (1999), 81 [= Aes. Ag.1598–1602]. All quotations from the *Agamemnon* are taken from this translation and are followed in brackets by the line references to the Greek text in the Oxford Classical Texts edition.
things themselves are not actually present in that they are known only either in memory, or in reported speech, or in an event that takes place off stage. And then—through its presentation of the two main female characters—it is about the perversion of words.

Clytemnestra—so much more than Agamemnon, the key figure in the Agamemnon—is portrayed as the very essence of transgression. She transgresses in her person which is more man than woman: 'Queen Clytemnestra—who wears | A man's heart in a woman’s body, | A man’s dreadful will in the scabbard of her body | Like a polished blade.' She transgresses also in her murderous action where she usurps the sexual part of the man: 'Then, at my leisure, choosing the best places | On his helpless body | I pushed the blade into him. Once, twice I placed the point for a third and final time | And drove the blade clean through him.' And, most importantly of all, she transgresses in her wilful manipulation of words and meaningful loving gestures: 'You heard me pronounce the words required by the moment. | The moment has passed. Those words are meaningless... Lies and embraces were simply my method.' The play ends with Clytemnestra's falsehood, 'Whatever word we speak, that is the law', and we know that this is not the end.

Cassandra too is a word figure though, unlike Clytemnestra, she speaks the truth. Actually at first, she does not speak at all, but only utters inarticulate cries: 'Apollo! | No! | O Earth! Earth! | No! No!'; which are incomprehensible to the Chorus, just as her true prophecies of what is about to happen are incomprehensible and disbelieved. In Cassandra's mouth, as in Clytemnestra's, the word is betrayed. Paradoxically in this perverted version of a world of words, only in death will Cassandra's voice be heard: 'And now Apollo, | Who gave me this one painful sparkle | Of his own huge blaze of foreknowledge, | Trips me up, in a twist of history, | Into this abattoir, pushes me sprawling | To vomit his gift | Here on these bloody floors— | My last gasp of the incredible. | This is where disbelief will finally desert me.'

Even the title of the play is a kind of lie. It is called Agamemnon. But Agamemnon appears only briefly. And in that appearance he is given only one grand speech, made on his first entrance, where he tells how Troy was taken, looks forward to a purged and reunited Greece, and declares his intentions to give thanks to the Gods. Once this is done, great Agamemnon, King of Kings disappears. He dwindles into an impatient man condescending to his wife: 'Your eulogies are like my absence | Too long, too much... Do not bend like a flattering Oriental | To drape my neck with flowery orations.' Then he shrivels into a woman beset with fears, 'This is not for me. My heart throbs | With

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foreboding.'

Yet through all these transgressions and betrayals of and in speech, there is one story told and retold to which we must listen. A story which might explain why the *Agamemnon* is named for Agamemnon, and why his figure—though so often absent—remains dominant in the many operatic versions of the story. This is the story of the sacrifice of Iphigenia. The Chorus tell us what happened in their first extended speech. In Aeschylus, Iphigenia gives herself freely and willingly, but there is a pornographic undertone that has been exploited in later versions. This is especially clear in Ted Hughes’s 1999 translation, where he adds in the ‘rough hands’ that tear off her silks, and with that the painful implication that this is an incestuous rape carried out by all the ‘fathers’ of Greece:

The prayers go up. Her father
Gives the signal. Iphigenia
Is hoisted off her feet by attendants—
They hold her over the improvised altar
Like a struggling calf.
The wind presses her long dress to her body
And flutters the skirt, and tugs at her tangled hair—
‘Daddy!’ she screams. ‘Daddy!’—
Her voice is snatched away by the boom of the surf.
Her father turns aside, with a word
She cannot hear. She chokes—
Hands are cramming a gag into her mouth.
They bind it there with a cord, like a horse’s bit.
Her lovely lips writhe at the curb.
So the cry that by chance
Might have cursed the house of Atreus
Is trapped inside her body,
Heaving her breasts.
Now rough hands rip off her silks
And the wind waltzes with them
Down across the beach, and over the surf.
Her eyes swivel in their tears.
She recognises her killers—
Men who had wept
To hear her sing in the home of Agamemnon
When wine was poured out for the high gods.
They clench their hearts hard
And avoid her eyes.
They stare at a masterpiece of perfect skin

14 T. Hughes (1999), 45 [= 932]. 15 Ibid. 47 [= 956-7].
Goose-pimpled in the cold.
Pity is like a butterfly in a fist
As the knuckles whiten.\(^\text{16}\)

In the *Agamemnon* Clytemnestra reminds us of this scene when she greets the day which brings the news of Troy’s downfall with: ‘This dawn is like a daughter to me— | More beautiful than hope dared to imagine.’\(^\text{17}\) The Chorus refer to it obliquely again (and especially in Hughes’s version), when they celebrate Agamemnon’s arrival: ‘You were thought to be mad. | And when you made sacrifices | To rid your fleet of a bothersome headwind | And cheer up a demoralised army | Some called it a monstrous act.’\(^\text{18}\) But it is in Clytemnestra’s lengthy exchange with the Chorus as she explains why she has killed Agamemnon that Iphigenia appears most insistently: ‘Where were they [the righteous public], and where were you | When this monster here | Butchered his own daughter on the block? | He found it easier | Than sacrificing one of his precious cattle | To butcher my daughter— | Like somebody else’s goat. | All to persuade the wind to shift a few points | And make some sailors happy, | He ripped my daughter’s throat and shook the blood out of her.’\(^\text{19}\)

Six times in this exchange Clytemnestra reminds us of the story. Six times she calls on Iphigenia’s name. Never mind that legend says that Iphigenia was saved. Six times here these events are told and retold and their shattering effect is always the same. As Cassandra says, foreseeing Agamemnon’s death, ‘Blood | Pours out of a body | That expected love.’\(^\text{20}\)

Iphigenia may be gagged, but we know that her unspeaking voice is the one that will resound through Aeschylus’ play and all its descendants, including those in the opera.

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**CHRISTOPH WILLIBALD GLUCK,**

*Iphigénie en Aulide* (1774)

Gluck’s 1774 opera *Iphigénie en Aulide* was written for the French court to a libretto by Marie-François le Blanc, Bailly du Roullet based on Racine’s version of Euripides’ play of the same name, which itself refers back to Aeschylus (see further Phillippo, Chapter 5). In spite of this complicated provenance the concerns and

\(^{16}\) Ibid. 15–16 [= 231–47].  
\(^{17}\) Ibid. 17 [= 265].  
\(^{18}\) Ibid. 39 [= 799–804].  
\(^{19}\) Ibid. 71 [= 1414–18].  
\(^{20}\) Ibid. 71–7 [= 1414–1530]; 53 [= (very loosely) 1102–3].
the methods that characterize the patterns of Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon* are still here in this late reworking.

In Act I, scene i, Agamemnon himself hesitates over the sacrifice, just as he does in Aeschylus. The action begins in Aulis where the Greek fleet is becalmed, and straight away we learn that Agamemnon already knows the solution to the problem. In his opening recitative he rehearses all the various positions that he could take: Yes, he will sacrifice his daughter for the sake of a legitimate war... ah but then he pities his girl... no he must carry on for the sake of honour, how dare anyone suggest that his strong arm will fail?... but can he really strike the darling of his heart? In this short passage, the music follows through each of these conflicting emotions. The piece begins with a simple cleanly struck chord as he utters the words ‘Diane impitoyable’ (‘Merciless, unpitying Diana’) on an imposing downward scale. His resolution is emphasized as that opening tune is repeated, and the musical phrase is cut across with the passage beginning ‘Non!’, all accompanied by short sharp supporting chords in the strings. Again this mood is broken by a more lyrical passage accompanied by broken chords from the harpsichord continuo as he sentimentally swears that ‘should it cost me my life, No one shall sacrifice... Ma fille, Iphigénie’. Finally, before he begins the aria addressed to Apollo ‘Brillant auteur de la lumière’ (‘Shining author of light’), Agamemnon returns to his theme of resolution addressed to Diana, but each one of these moods shall be revisited over and again in the opera that follows.21

*Music: Gluck, Iphigénie en Aulide, CD 1, Track 2. 1'27”*

Agamemnon’s vacillations may structure Gluck’s opera but, as in Aeschylus, the one image of Iphigénie’s sacrifice dominates in everyone’s imaginations. Calchas the priest envisages ‘Such cries, such weeping’; Achille, to whom Iphigénie is betrothed and who has sworn to rescue her, imagines what the scene of the proposed sacrifice will look like and argues with Iphigénie over Agamemnon: ‘a cruel monster’, ‘a barbarian’ he says; ‘my father’ says she. Iphigénie herself conjures up the pain she will suffer, and in two extraordinary extended scenes, first Agamemnon himself, and then Clytemnestre imagine what will happen in graphically disturbing terms: ‘Can they command a father | To take by his own hand to the altar | To bedeck with the fatal headband | The forehead of a victim | So doubly dear and tender?’ says Agamemnon. ‘My daughter’, says Clytemnestre, ‘I see her | Beneath the heartless steel | Sharpened by the very hand | Of her barbarous father | A priest, surrounded | By a cruel crowd | Dares upon her lay | A murderous hand. | He tears open her breast | And with questing eyes | Seeks the will of the Gods | In her quivering heart.’22

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21 All quotations for Gluck, *Iphigénie en Aulide* (Gluck, *LA*) are from the French libretto published with the Musifrance recording on the Erato label (Radio France—Erato Disques, 1990). The translations from the French are my own unless otherwise stated.

22 Gluck, *LA*, 43, 115 (= i iii, m vi).
it won't happen at all in this opera; but, all the same, this eighteenth-century Clytemnestra is turning into Aeschylus' vengeful Clytemnestra—a transformation made most obvious in her Act III aria 'Jupiter, lance la foudre'.

Otherwise, the conventions of the French court opera take over and the required happy ending that goes with that is delivered. In the final scenes of the opera we start—at last—on the scene of sacrifice down by the seashore. But then Diana appears to forgive all, moved 'by the piety of the daughter and the tears of her mother.' Achille and Iphigénie are married, there are dances and choruses, and a satisfactory resolution for all. Except that, in the original version, dropped only a year later, Gluck included a moment where Agamemnon, for once, becomes himself, King of Kings, Chief of the Greeks, leading the Chorus in a bizarre and original war song.

[Music: Gluck, Iphigénie en Aulide, CD 2, Track 32. 1'54'']

I was eleven. In my last two years of prep school. He was twenty-one. He was my teacher. I wouldn't let him bugger me. He tried. I was determined. When I did tell my parents years later, my mother said, 'I knew there was something wrong.' My father said, 'Did he penetrate you?' Then he said, 'Don't tell anybody.' We don't talk about it.

CHRISTOPH WILLIBALD GLUCK,  
IPHIGÉNIE EN TAURIDE (1779)

Some five years after Iphigénie en Aulide, Gluck turned again to classical sources for the same subject, though it is unclear whether he and his librettist had Racine, or Euripides, or even Aeschylus in mind—and they may have drawn on all three, as well as other versions of the legend (see further Phillippo, Chapter 5). This time his opera was created to a libretto by Nicolas-François Guillard. But much of what goes on in this new opera is directly traceable to innovations suggested by Gluck as he made, in Iphigénie en Tauride, the beginnings of an innovative method that looks forward to the conventions of modern opera.

Gone are the ballets and the congratulatory choruses. Everything is predicated upon the specific social or emotional situation being portrayed. This is an interior drama where it is music as much—even more than—words, that develop and flesh out character.

In Iphigénie en Tauride we meet Iphigénie again. She is not married, she has not been sacrificed, but instead she has been saved—as according to one version of the legend—by the intervention of Diana who transported her to the land of Tauris.

23 Ibid. 123 (= iii, ix).
where Iphigénie now serves as a priestess to the virgin Goddess of the moon. But
the Taurian king Thoas (a barbarian, not a Greek) has decreed that all strangers
landing on his shore should be sacrificed to the Goddess. Hitherto, though
reluctantly, Iphigénie has carried out his instructions. But then comes the day
when two young Greeks disembark at Tauris, and she finds herself strangely drawn
to them.

At this point in the opera we are asked to imagine two strange scenes. Neither
one is played out before our eyes. They are both imagined, or remembered, or
reported, or else we are asked to envisage them taking place off stage. The first of
these is—yet again—the sacrifice of Iphigénie by her father. And the second is the
imminent likely sacrifice of Oreste by his sister.

In a dream vision, made up of past, present, and future, Iphigénie remembers
her father: ‘I was about to enjoy his embrace | In those sweet moments I forgot | his
former harshness and fifteen years of misery’.

But then she has a vision of her
father pierced with wounds... and then again she imagines herself armed with a
sword and about to strike. Oreste... her own brother.

Later on in the opera Oreste too will have a nightmare. A nightmare where he
sees again the face of the mother he has murdered. At this very point he awakes to
see a woman to whom he is strangely attracted both sexually and emotionally,
a woman, moreover, who looks like his dead mother. It was, so the story goes,
Gluck himself who suggested that the entrance of Iphigénie should be the
culmination of Oreste’s nightmare scene (see also Phillippo, Chapter 5). This is
a transgression of taboo that goes beyond the boundaries of common sense. Sister
and brother, as father and daughter, as mother and son—all of this fated family are
bound in a compact of desire and destruction.

When in Gluck’s Iphigénie en Tauride Iphigénie discovers that the native
country of the two strangers is Greece and she questions them about Agamemnon,
and about the fate of Greece, Oreste begins the explanation. For it is he who has
landed on the shores of Tauris, along with his friend Pylade, sent to recover the
stolen idols of Diana in expiation for his crime of matricide. Oreste tells how
Agamemnon died, how Clytemnestre died, and then he lies, saying that Oreste
too is now dead. Iphigénie believes him.

In an aria which is so beautiful and musically persuasive that it has made it into
the chocolate box selections of mixed arias, Iphigénie considers her position. But
put this piece back into the context of the Agamemnon of Aeschylus and Euripides
and the key themes of transgression and utterance, and this aria is more powerful
still. ‘O malheureuse Iphigénie! | Ta famille est anéantie! | Vous n’avez plus de rois,
je n’ai plus de parents’ (‘O unhappy Iphigenia, your family, [country, nation,

24 Gluck, IT 51 (= i. i). All quotations for Gluck, Iphigénie en Tauride (Gluck, IT) are from the
French libretto published with Deutsche Grammophon’s recording on the Archiv label (Radio
tribe] is abolished, destroyed, gone... You—Greece, Mycenae—have no more kings, And I have no parents [relatives or kindred'].

In this one aria all my themes come together. All the conventional structures are broken down, transgressed, deleted: there is no law of the family and no law in the land. Everything is shattered. And what is the remedy? The only salve Iphigénie has to hand—to mouth rather—is her voice, the things that she can say, the things that she can get others to say. She may have been gagged during the sacrifice-memory scenes in Aeschylus, but now, in this version, she will speak out. 'Mélez', she says to the chorus of Priestesses, 'Mélez vos cris plaintifs à mes gémissements!' ('Blend your plaintive cries with my complaint'). And it's those cries, descending dramatically into the minor, then insisting four times on the same interval,—twice over, amplified and backed by the Chorus, so that they become a huge magnifying echo,—that allow the music to say what has not been said... to speak the unspeakable. My favourite interpreter of this role is Maria Callas (see Fig. 7.1); but then I like to think that this aria works for her because—disowned by her own family, having lived through a war in an occupied country, having found a kind of home in a foreign country—she knew what she was singing. She knew all too well the unspeakable she was speaking.

[Gluck: Iphigénie en Tauride, CD 1, Track 23. 4' 46"

But there are ways and ways of speaking the same thing even if it is hard to say. Now for a comic interlude.

JACQUES OFFENBACH, LA BELLE HÉLÈNE (1864)

Time: Antiquity. Place: Greece. Except that actually the time is the Belle Époque, and the place is Paris.

[Offenbach: La Belle Hélène. CD 1, Track 13. Fanfare 0' 15"

By the mid-nineteenth century the noble French tradition of Greek scholarship which began so seriously in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had descended to the stuff of contemporary jokes and parody. Offenbach's La Belle Hélène was first performed at the Théâtre des Variétés in Paris in 1864. It is, all the same, a mark of the significance and long-staying power of that tradition of Greek scholarship that it was even possible to present comic versions of Greek myths

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25 Gluck IT 81 (= ii. vi).
26 Ibid.
27 For a scholarly account of Callas's early years see Petsalis-Diomidis (2001).
Figure 7.1. Callas in the dressing-room at La Scala (1957).
and tragedies in popular theatres, and to know for sure that all their ironies would be understood.28

Offenbach takes us slightly further back in the story, to the abduction of Helen, but the key themes of shattered laws and bonds and the problem of language—spoken and not spoken—that I’ve traced through Gluck are still here. They’re softened, they’re joked about, but they are there.

In *La Belle Hélène* Oreste is a woman. The part of the avenging hero, matricide, sacrificial victim, the heroic victim of the tormenting Furies, becomes a role for a pretty young mezzo in tights who has an eye for other girls, and especially for his pretty aunt Hélène: ‘In the tavern in the labyrinth | tonight, I’ve eaten, old man | with the daughters of Corinth, | the very best in Greece. | Here are Parthenis and Leoena | who told me they wanted to meet you … And daddy really doesn’t mind, | because it’s Greece that’ll pay. | Here are Parthenis and Leoena, who told me they wanted to meet you.’29 All the *Agamemnon’s* suggestive implications of forbidden relations between family members—father and daughter, mother and son, brother and sister—are here reduced to a frisson of lesbian flirtation between aunt and nephew—or niece.

Similarly, words in this opera still betray and conceal, as they do in Aeschylus, but here it’s a joke. In Act I Hélène is worrying over the story of how Paris judged between the Goddesses and how he—for awarding the prize of the golden apple to Venus—was promised ‘the most beautiful woman in the world’. Well she knows that that is no one other than herself of course, and she’s already married, so what will happen next?

Paris arrives on the scene, disguised as a shepherd, at the moment when Agamemnon is about to announce another public contest. ‘Strong men, and brave, we have’, he says. ‘What we do not have, what we no longer have, are men of intellect. Greece has become stupid.’30 There follows a charade, based, so it is said, on the well known fact that the Emperor Napoleon III and Empress Eugénie loved to play party games and insisted that all their eminent guests join in. Without going into how this joke works, suffice to say that Achille and Ajax and all the heroes fail to guess the answer to the charade. Paris, however, manages it … the answer to the four clues is ‘locomotive’. The fact that he can come up with this answer demonstrates an especially astute discernment on his part given that, as Paris says, ‘Et c’est fort d’avoir trouvé ça quatre mille ans avant l’invention’ (‘And it’s brilliant to have found it four thousand years before railways were invented’).31

28 The French tradition of parodying classical tragedy was long-standing and dates back to at least the eighteenth century. For comparable nineteenth-century British classical burlesques, see Hall and Macintosh (2005).
29 Offenbach, *BH* 51. All quotations from *La Belle Hélène* (Offenbach, *BH*) are from the French libretto by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy, which is published together with EMI Records/Virgin Classics’s (Radio France) recording of the September/October 2000 production.
Paris has won the contest. He is the one who has control of the word. And, as Helen cries delightedly, he is ‘l’homme à la pomme’.\textsuperscript{32}

\textit{[Offenbach: La Belle Hélène. CD 1, Track 13. Fanfare 0’ 15’’]}

Said, but uttered in a code which is always ironic—because a knowing audience sets what it sees against what it knows—even operetta can hint at the darknesses that pattern the \textit{Agamemnon}. And make \textit{Agamemnon}.

Towards the end of Act III of \textit{La Belle Hélène} Agamemnon takes Menelaus to task. Menelaus has seen off Paris’ advances on his wife, and thus offended Venus, who had promised her to him. Now all Greece is suffering, says Agamemnon, as a result of Menelaus insisting upon putting his personal wishes before the needs of the body politic. He should give up Hélène after all and let her go off with Paris. ‘Quand les dieux commandent, ils commandent’, philosophizes Agamemnon, ‘Regarde, ma fille Iphigenie, je l’aime. Eh bien, si les dieux me la demanderaient, je leur dirais: “Vous y t’nez, v’la!”’ (‘When the gods command, they command. Look: I love my daughter Iphigenia. But if the Gods asked me for her, I’d tell them: “She’s yours, here she comes!”’).\textsuperscript{33}

Even in this light-hearted game of classical charades the key crime is not forgotten. Iphigenia’s name says more than it means. In Offenbach it is a tease for those in the know. But in the next opera Agamemnon’s name also says more than it means, means much more than it says. But this time it is no joke. It’s a threat, it’s an explanation, it’s a promise, it’s a mnemonic of pain.

\textbf{RICHARD STRAUSS, ELEKTRA (1909)}

\textit{[Strauss: Elektra. CD 1, Track 1. Opening chord…1…2…0’ 8’’]}

Many people complained about Richard Strauss’s \textit{Elektra}. They complained at the first performance in Dresden in 1909, they complained at the first performance at Covent Garden in 1910. The theatre critic Ernest Newman got into an acrimonious exchange with George Bernard Shaw over it. Newman said that the music was ‘ugly’ and ‘noisy’, while Shaw defended the opera, arguing that it was a portrait of ‘the passion that detests and must and finally can destroy evil’; it was this, he maintained, that made audiences ‘rejoice in its horror’.\textsuperscript{34}

Strauss had had the idea for the opera when he saw the poet Hugo von Hofmannsthal’s version of Sophocles’ play produced in 1905. Together they composed a new libretto for the opera (see Fig. 7.2). Newman was convinced that Strauss’s own ‘perversion’—this was the notorious composer of \textit{Salome}, an opera based on a text by Oscar Wilde—had led him astray: ‘If it were not for this

\textsuperscript{32} Offenbach, \textit{BH} 76 (= Act I).

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid. 131 (= Act III).

\textsuperscript{34} \textit{The Nation} vi.22, 26 February 1910, 843–4; ibid. vi.24, 12 March 1910, 914–15. For the Covent Garden reception, see Kennedy (1983) and Goldhill (2002), 108–77.
Figure 7.2. Cover of the first edition of the Hofmannsthal/Strauss *Elektra* (1908).
strain of coarseness and thoughtlessness in him, he would never have taken up so crude a perversion of the old Greek story as that of Hugo von Hofmannsthal... We don't need to wait for posterity to tell us that much of the music is as abominably ugly as it is noisy. Here a good deal of the talk about complexity is wide of the mark. The real term for it is incoherence, discontinuity of thinking.35

Newman was wrong, of course, and Shaw was right. 'Incoherence' and 'discontinuity', far from being terms of criticism, were at this very time being translated into concepts that would go on to mark the fragmentation and experimentation of Modernism. In the 'Decadence' of the \textit{fin de siècle}, as Linda Dowling has argued, the key image was an idea to do with language which privileged the parts over the whole.36

\textit{Elektra} is difficult, not so much because it is 'incoherent' or inadequately argued, but rather because it says too much, and not everyone wants to listen. Intriguingly, the central story that is repeated in Aeschylus, in Gluck's two versions, even in Offenbach, is not here. There is no reference to the sacrifice of Iphigenia. Even Clytemnestra does not mention her. But that is not to say that Iphigenia and the relevance of her experience is not present.

The opera opens with a bitonal chord in D minor. Listen to what it says.

\textit{[Strauss: Elektra. CD 1, Track 1. Opening chord... 1... 2... 0' 8'']}

Agamemnon.

\textit{[Strauss: Elektra. CD 1, Track 1... Opening chord... 1... 2... 0' 8'']}

In Strauss's opera we don't need to be told the story of Iphigenia because the language used here is not a language made of words, but of music. If, even in a joke, Offenbach only needed to refer glancingly back to the story, and could rely on his audience to take the hint, so Strauss certainly needs no plot summaries. The story folds in on itself, and comes out again in the layering clash of opposing chords, and the diverse sounds of a huge orchestral army, which yet resolve into all the nuances that make up Agamemnon's character, including all that he did in the past, and everything that he still represents. We don't need any more explanation. When we hear the motif again, we already remember it and can work it out—and it was Strauss himself who insisted on the repetition of Agamemnon's name in Elektra's first monologue.

\textit{[Strauss: Elektra. CD 1, Track 2. Out at 2' 11'']}

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35 \textit{The Nation} vi.22, 26 February 1910, 843–4.
36 Dowling (1986), 133, 135 quotes, for instance, Nietzsche in \textit{Der Fall Wagner} (1888), saying that the tendency of the Decadence was ever toward an 'anarchy of atoms'; and refers to Havelock Ellis in 'A Note on Paul Bourget' (1889) bringing the theories of Bourget to an English audience for the first time in 1889: 'A style of decadence is one in which the unity of the book is decomposed to give place to the independence of the page, in which the page is decomposed to give place to the independence of the phrase, and the phrase to give place to the independence of the word.'
Agamemnon: Speaking the Unspeakable

The musical shorthand that sketches in the emotional history of Strauss's characters is what patterns the opera. When Clytemnestra tells Elektra about her dream of Orestes' return, her music vacillates between two more bitonal chords, B minor and F minor, which lie symmetrically around Agamemnon's D minor. Without words, without necessarily even a return, but with the musical language of his motif, Agamemnon—not present—is the monumental centre of this drama. Towards the end of the opera, Aegisthus cries out for help: 'Can no one hear me?' he says. Balefully, Elektra replies, 'Agamemnon can hear you.'

And yet that paradox of presence in absence is one that goes right back to Agamemnon of Aeschylus.

It is a commonplace in the history of opera that the earliest 'inventors' of the form, the 'Camerata', an aristocratic circle meeting in Florence in the sixteenth century, based their 'new' practice on their idea of how they imagined the ancient Greek drama, and so came up with this melding of words and music. Hugo von Hofmannsthal really was using Greek drama, because Sophocles was his originating text, but behind Sophocles lies Aeschylus, and there are images here which refer back to Agamemnon.

Elektra, waiting, watching, cast out from the house, resembles the Watchman who opens the Oresteia. When the longed-for news arrives, says that Watchman, he will dance. Just as Elektra, in Strauss's opera, promises to dance when Orestes has carried out the revenge she desires. In his opening speech in Aeschylus, the Watchman looks forward to the events that will shortly transpire, and back to the events that precipitated them:

And then—what follows,  
Better not think about it.  
Only the foundations of this house  
Can tell that story. Yes,  
The tongue that could find  
The words for what follows—that tongue  
Would have to lift this house's foundations.  
Those who know too much, as I do, about this house,  
Let their tongue lie still—squashed flat.  
Under the foundations.

And in Strauss's Elektra, in a passage that recalls the Watchman's speech from Aeschylus, she digs among those very foundations, searching for the axe that was used to kill her father, for the axe that she will present to her brother as the appropriate weapon for carrying out the murder of his mother.

In fact, in Strauss's opera, Elektra forgets to give Orestes the axe, but what she does unearth is the old story—the story, buried and yet exhumed by the Watchman in Aeschylus' play—the story of how a father consumed his children. The reference is to Thyestes here—which is what Aeschylus' Watchman remembers—

37 Strauss, El. 111. All quotations from the Strauss Elektra are from the libretto by Hugo von Hofmannsthal, which is published together with the DECCA recording (Vienna 1967/1986).
38 Hughes (1999), 4–5 [= Aes. Ag. 36–9].
but this is also a reference back to Atreus, a father in a position of power, who betrayed innocence, and it applies equally to Agamemnon himself, a father in a position of power, who betrayed innocence. As Cassandra said, 'Blood|Pours out of a body | That expected love.' And finally in Strauss's *Elektra* another innocent is betrayed and consumed by power, albeit an absent power.

If the music can represent Agamemnon, then the music itself will destroy Elektra. We do not need the story of Iphigenia in the economy of Strauss's *Elektra* because Elektra takes her place, and she is sacrificed to, by, through Agamemnon's music. At the very end of the opera, as she dances herself to death, she says 'Can I not hear... the music? It comes from myself.' Which it does. Because this music is the symbol of her faithfulness, to Elektra's commitment to Agamemnon in keeping his memory alive. But this music also symbolizes our own long remembrance of all that went before and which still lies, alive, buried under the foundations of the house. As Elektra falls at the end of the opera, her sister Chrysothemis cries out another name, 'Oreste'. If we know our Aeschylus we also know that that is where the drama's going next. But 'Oreste' is not what the music says. The music still says, 'Agamemnon'.

*Elektra* ends in C major. It is a surprising resolution, and critics have condemned what they see as Strauss's sudden fit of conventionality. But the careful arrangement of keys is Strauss's musical language. However brief it might be—and this is only one chord—the return to the resolution of C Major suggests Strauss's awareness of the ways in which we need that long view, that sudden release of tension, which comes, however subliminally, with the return to the security of C major.

In his way, with his musical language, Strauss has done what the intellectual needs to do in the face of atrocity. This may be opera, it may be Greek tragedy, but that does not mean that the stories that are told there are not real. With the violence of conflicting keys and chords, with an extravagant musical vocabulary, this music looks squarely at pain, sees it, records it, makes it into a testimony and a shape and then—to some small extent, in so far as anything ever can—resolves it. It speaks the unspeakable and makes speech itself, not a salve, but a new process. It says what cannot otherwise be spoken. Above all, it says what cannot be spoken by those most qualified to speak.

They came into my cell in the middle of the night. He turned on the light. There were three of them. He said, 'Take off your clothes.' I said, 'No.' 'Well then,' he replied. He took out a knife... I've never told anyone. I can't talk about it.

In 2001 the Medical Foundation for Victims of Torture, set up by Helen Bamber, sent out a questionnaire to all its supporters and likely supporters. This asked respondents to rank, in order, what they believed the important work of the Foundation should be. High on the list came practical help. Very low on the list

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39 T. Hughes (1999), 53 [= (very loosely) 1102–3].
41 Kennedy (1983), 150 discusses this ending.
came the recording of their clients' experiences.\textsuperscript{42} The Foundation has since embarked on a campaign to challenge this attitude. It is, they argue, one of the biggest problems for survivors that their stories are often not told, because the sufferer wants to blot it out, or feels ashamed, or guilty, or afraid (I think of Iphigenia). Or else, even if their stories are told, they are not heeded, because people—even sympathetic people—can't cope, don't want to know, find it too hard to contemplate (I think of Aeschylus' Watchman or the Chorus). Or else, even if those stories are told, they are not believed. They are too horrific to be believable (I think of Cassandra). And that is why these stories have to be told. For the sake of the victims, so that they can let them go. And for our own sake, so that we can feel and then so that we can understand. There can be no amnesty for apathy.

But feeling begins with a kind of art. It begins with imagination. The novelist Ian McEwan has said, "It is hard to be cruel once you permit yourself to enter the mind of your victim. Imagining what it is like to be someone other than yourself is at the core of our humanity. It is the essence of compassion, and it is the beginning of morality."\textsuperscript{43}

In an essay entitled 'Writers, Intellectuals, Teachers' from Image Music Text Roland Barthes makes a point about the distinction between speech and writing and the paradox of how words on the wind last longer than words on the page:

Speech is irreversible: a word cannot be retracted, except precisely by saying that one retracts it. To cross out is here to add: if I want to erase what I have just said, I cannot do it without showing the eraser itself (I must say: 'or rather... ', 'I expressed myself badly... '); paradoxically, it is ephemeral speech which is indelible, not monumental writing. All that one can do in the case of a spoken utterance is to tack on another utterance.\textsuperscript{44}

By speaking about pain we cannot take it away. But we can add to what has happened. We can change the story by telling a different story. There is, in any case, never any one story. There are only many stories.

In the Agamemnon, the story of how a man in power consumed his children is repeated over and again. The same story is told in the operas that work off and around the Agamemnon. Even when that story is not there, as in Strauss's Elektra, it is still there in the silences, in the present absence. It is the silent unsaid void around which the opera is structured and into which Elektra herself eventually disappears. And that handing down of this story is, in itself, true to Aeschylus. In Agamemnon the Chorus refers to a 'family tree of crimes'. In the introduction to his translation of the play Louis MacNeice offers us a diagrammatic picture of that lineage.\textsuperscript{45} And it is that list, that succession, that ends another musical work, not

\textsuperscript{42} For information on the Medical Foundation and their work, contact them at 111 Isledon Road Islington, London, N7 7JW.


\textsuperscript{44} Barthes (1977), 190–1.

\textsuperscript{45} MacNeice (1936).
an opera this time, but a choral work premiered in 1919 by Darius Milhaud and based on the second part of the *Oresteia*, *Les Choéphores*.

**DARIUS MILHAUD, LES CHOÉPHORES (1919)**

[Darius Milhaud, Les Choéphores. Track 7. Conclusion. 0' 50'"

It is interesting that this is a piece for spoken voice, not sung. It is also interesting that it's the crime against Iphigenia that gets left out of the list; just as earlier Milhaud had avoided the sacrifice (intentionally or not) when he had composed for the last Act of the *Agamemnon* alone. The sacrifice is nonetheless still implied, even though it's not said. And why is it not said? Well... because Agamemnon's is the worst crime in that family tree.

My younger feminist self—as opposed to my more middle-aged feminist self—used to be outraged at the reason given for Orestes being let off the crime of killing his mother. All that stuff about the man as the seed and the woman as carrying case. Now, I do think that Orestes should be let off. Not for that reason, but because what he did with Clytemnestra was between consenting adults. She committed a crime; he sought revenge. Similarly what Clytemnestra did with Agamemnon was between consenting adults. He committed a crime; she sought revenge.

But what Agamemnon did with Iphigenia was not between adults. He is her father. He was responsible. She was betrayed. And she knew she was being betrayed. More than Atreus and Thyestes (though they too, in their different ways, consume innocence), Agamemnon has transgressed. At the centre of the 'family tree of crimes' is the worst one. More than those that come before, more than those that come after, this is the act which shatters the wholeness of the body, breaks the vessel of the integrated self, spills the blood from a body that expected love.

My mother said 'I knew there was something wrong.'

I suspect now that this is why Agamemnon himself has to fade out of *Agamemnon*. I suspect also that this is why Iphigenia and her painful story gets left out of the later operatic versions of the myth. By the beginning of the twentieth century attitudes to the crime against the child, and to the father’s exploitation, had changed so that they were no longer something to be tolerated. Earlier ages,

46 Milhaud's *Les Choéphores*, opus 24, was composed in 1915 (premiered 15 June 1919) and consisted of incidental music for all the choruses. His *Agamemnon*, opus 14 (1913–14, premiered 16 April 1927) is only based on the final scene of Aeschylus’ play and lasts for 12 minutes. His *Euménides*, opus 41 (1917–22, premiered 17 November 1927), by contrast, is a full operatic work. All three compositions used the libretti by Paul Claudel.

47 I am particularly thinking here of the political actions of Josephine Butler and her campaigners, whose work led to the establishment of the laws about the 'age of consent' in an effort to alleviate the prevalence of 19th-cent. child prostitution. But see also Marina Warner's account of the erasure of the incestuous father–daughter story of 'Donkeyskin' through the 19th cent. (Warner (1994), 319–52).
including Aeschylus' own, had recognized the pressures of political expediency in dealings between parents and children. These are no longer condoned in the same way, and we still live with the consequences—some trivial, some deadly serious—of that significant cultural and social change. Similarly, earlier ages, including Aeschylus' own, had recognized the political reasoning that might make incest acceptable, excusable, useful, even.

It started when I was seven.

Jacques Lacan says that 'incest is bad grammar'; it is nature without the word, 'abandoned to the law of [copulation]." But our ideas of what constitutes a taboo change all the time. In the later versions of the myth in opera, Iphigenia is left out, but a different kind of 'incest' is put in—as a frisson and a tease in Offenbach, as a psychological pathology in the 'quasi lesbian' incest scene between Elektra and Chrysothemis in Strauss. In the same way, our ideas of what constitutes a crime change all the time.

They came into my cell.

And those ideas should change. The examined life is the only life lived fully. And we must speak to understand, even if we have not learned to 'speak proper'.

When Barthes was considering the problems of speech (as opposed to writing) in 'Writers, Intellectuals, Teachers' from *Image Music Text*, he was especially anxious about what happens to teachers when they speak. As we all might be. He points out that the competent speaker puts himself on the side of the law, lays down the law, takes control of the relation between teacher and taught when we might want, ideally, to be more co-operative: 'The Law', he says, 'appears not in what is said but in the very fact of speech' (his italics). But the only alternative to acquiescing in that hierarchy of power is to make oneself into an incompetent speaker, to use strategies that dispel, disperse and disown power, to speak with qualifiers and reservations and hesitations. It is not really an alternative at all. Yet, in a way, it may be that such revisions and qualifications are always something that is actually necessary.

If, as Barthes says, speech can never be retracted, but only added to, then that desirable revision and qualification and examination happens all the time simply by the telling and retelling of the story. That is exactly what happens in the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus, and that is exactly what happens in the many retellings of the legend of Agamemnon, including all the operatic versions. And every time the story is retold, it changes the story. Layers it. Revises it. Makes us think again. Makes us feel again. Makes us responsible again. Places us in a moral position again, a moral position that may, perhaps should, change.

Faced with the problems of taboos and crimes, atrocities and difficult things, we cannot be without feeling. There is no amnesty for apathy. But in order to

understand we have to commit. And in order to commit, to take up a moral perspective, we have to feel. And in order to feel, we have to speak what may once have seemed unspeakable.

It was late. He pulled down the shoulder of my dress. He put his mouth to my breast. He suggested it. And I thought, 'Why not? Why not.'

We've never told anyone. We don't talk about it.
Aeschylus, the Romantic; Sophocles the mid-Victorian; Euripides the modernist. So goes the general assessment of the reception of the Greek tragedians in nineteenth-century Britain.¹ There is, of course, evidence in support of such a claim. The *Prometheus Bound*, attributed to Aeschylus, was the first translation of Aeschylus to appear in English and it becomes in a very real sense the central Greek text for the British Romantic period: Mary Shelley’s novel *Frankenstein, or, the Modern Prometheus* (1818) and Percy Bysshe Shelley’s verse drama *Prometheus Unbound* (1820) are but the first in a long line of early nineteenth-century engagements with the Titanic figure.² But whilst it may be true that Aeschylus’ presence is not especially evident on the stage in the mid-Victorian period (in marked contrast to the numerous staged versions of Sophocles and Euripides at that time), there is a strong case to be made for placing Aeschylus alongside Euripides at the forefront in the development of modern drama in the last quarter of the century.³ The *Prometheus* continued to fire poets and translators with enthusiasm throughout the century, but it was the *Agamemnon* that was the first Aeschylean tragedy to enjoy a performance history in nineteenth-century Britain. It was also, moreover, the first Greek play to which British theatre practitioners were attracted once they had discovered that Greek tragedy could indeed be made to work on the modern stage.

As late as 1870, Reginald S. Copleston (Fellow and lecturer of St Mary’s College, Oxford) introduces the Greekless reader to Greek tragedy in a popular series entitled *Ancient Classics for English Readers* as follows:

I am most grateful to Debbie Challis, Barbara Goward Isobel Hurst, Yopie Prins, Chris Stray and my fellow editors for their most helpful comments on this chapter.

² Thomas Morell’s English translation (together with a Latin translation) of *PB* appeared in a scholarly edition of the text in 1773. For the 19th-cent. reception of the play, see Dodds (1973), 26–44; and Hardwick (2000), 31–6.
³ For the links between Euripides and the New Drama, see Hall and Macintosh (2005), ch. 17.
In all this there is not much acting, not much that is really what we call dramatic: we have rather a series of *tableaux*, majestic, colossal, statuesque; dialogues or soliloquies intentionally stilted, in order that a certain distance and mystery may attach to them; while, giving tone to it all, and relieving the monotony of the long quiet speeches by comments such as a sensible spectator might be supposed to make, we have the stately dance and chant of the chorus. 4

Copleston's observations are of note not least because of their bold recycling of A. W. Schlegel's ideas on Greek tragedy as a series of 'statuesque' *tableaux*, with a chorus functioning as ideal spectator. In many ways, British scholarship on Greek tragedy had not progressed much over the fifty-five years since Schlegel's Vienna lectures were first translated into English in 1815. 5 And yet Copleston is also highlighting the very qualities—the 'certain distance and mystery'—that were to make Greek tragedy, and above all Aeschylean tragedy, such an important model to those intent on introducing formal innovations in the theatre in the next two decades. But whilst the Symbolists went on in the 1890s to replicate the very stylized aspects of Greek tragedy that Copleston is here uneasy about, there were equally experiments in the 1880s that may well have given Copleston cause to reconsider some aspects of the Schlegelian theory, and especially his own assertion that Greek tragedy has 'not much that is really what we call dramatic'. For exactly ten years after Copleston's pronouncements on Greek tragedy were published, and after he had left Oxford, his neighbouring college, Balliol, hosted the first production of an ancient play in the original language in Oxford since the Renaissance, when the *Agamemnon* was staged in the College dining hall in June. And henceforth Greek tragedy, and the *Agamemnon* in particular, were found to be far more 'dramatic' than Copleston and his contemporaries ever imagined.

The Oxford *Agamemnon* was not the first production of an ancient tragedy in nineteenth-century Britain—both the Prussian 'Mendelssohn Antigone' of 1845 and the French Medea of Ernest Legouvé of 1856 had been warmly received in Britain; indeed, the *Agamemnon* at Balliol was not even the first production of Aeschylus' tragedy that year—Professor Fleeming Jenkin had already mounted his own production in the vernacular in Edinburgh in May 1880. 6 The Oxford production, however, attracted wide attention when it was performed in London and Cambridge, as well as at Eton, Harrow, and Winchester; and it marked a turning point in the performance history of Greek tragedy in Victorian Britain, leading to regular productions of ancient plays both in the original language within schools and universities and in translation within the commercial theatre.

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4 Copleston (1870), 17.
5 Schlegel's lectures were translated by John Black (London 1815). The lectures were originally given in Vienna 1808.
There was clearly a confluence of factors both within and beyond the academy that determined the new vogue for ancient drama in the 1880s—the widening of the classical curriculum, the inclusion of women, as well as the broader developments within the professional theatre which allowed both for the power of the burlesque and fostered an interest in music drama.7 Other chapters in this volume provide us with a number of clues as to why it should have been the Agamemnon that featured so prominently from the 1880s onwards. At the time of huge advances in women’s emancipation and with the imminent emergence of the New Woman, it was perhaps inevitable that Aeschylus’ adulterous viricide, Clytemnestra (see Hall, Chapter 4), should come under intense scrutiny. Equally, as the first play in the only extant Greek trilogy, and being written by the ‘father’ of tragedy, the Agamemnon (as Michelakis shows here) may be considered an appropriate inaugurating play. Moreover as the opening play in the trilogy, it readily acquired representative status at a time when the trilogic form (as Ewans has shown with reference to Wagner’s Ring) was conducive to the enactment of evolutionary meliorism. In the age of the novel—in British publishing terms, in particular, the triple-decker novel—the transgenerational narrative enacted within the trilogy was of especial interest. A famous engraving of the Oxford Agamemnon depicting the final scene of conflict between the chorus and Aegisthus and Clytemnestra makes watching the Agamemnon an analogous experience to reading a novel in part-publication: the audience, as with the reader, is left hanging on tenterhooks, eagerly awaiting the next instalment of the narrative.8

There is, however, another allied reason as to why Agamemnon had become important at this time; and Copleston’s 1870 designation of Greek tragedy as ‘a series of tableaux’ is especially helpful here. In the essentially ‘viewing’ culture of Victorian Britain,9 the Agamemnon seems to have assumed particularly significant status. The Victorians followed the archaeological discoveries of the period with enormous interest. The Illustrated London News, which had reached a circulation of 140,000 copies per week by 1852, with at least three readers per copy,10 gave over large amounts of space to photographs and line drawings of archaeological sites; and throughout the 1870s there was extensive coverage of Schliemann’s excavations at Hissarlik and Mycenae. On 24 February 1877, in an account of the discovery of the so-called ‘Death Mask’ of Agamemnon at Mycenae, we detect a bizarre shift in register as the correspondent’s highbrow reportage gives way to mundane trivia, commenting that if Agamemnon’s ‘brother was like him, it is

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7 See Easterling (1999), 27–48; Stray (1998), 149–54; and more generally, Beard (2000), passim on changes in the classical curriculum; Hall and Macintosh (2005), ch. 15 for developments in the popular theatre.

8 The engraving from The Graphic no. 552 (26 June 1880), is reproduced in Hall and Macintosh (2005), ch. 15.

9 So Altick (1978); Flint (2000); Nead (2000).

10 See Altick (1989), 146. I am indebted to Debbie Challis for this reference.
little to be wondered that Helen should have preferred Paris.'11 With such a degree of domestication, it was not surprising that audiences in the theatre, like the readers of the ILN, should have felt involved in the events of the House of Atreus as they were unfolding in front of their eyes in tableauesque form.

_Agamemnon_ is a play, as Rehm points out in this volume, about 'seeing'; and at the heart of the tragedy is Cassandra, the seer whose visions are not shared or believed by others until too late, when they are vividly brought to life with the off-stage cries of the dying _Agamemnon_ and the chillingly ‘realistic’ recollection delivered by Clytemnestra as she stands over his dead body. The haunting visions of Cassandra which allow the audience to see as if through a veil—opaquely and proleptically— provided an intriguing and alluring paradox to many nineteenth-century readers, painters, and theatre practitioners. This was the case for both Goethe and Wagner, as Ewans has shown (Chapter 6). For Fleeming Jenkin, a direct contemporary of Copleston and the producer of the first _Agamemnon_ in Britain when he staged the play in Edinburgh in May 1880, the Cassandra scene marks the ascendancy of drama over lyrical performance:

We have no more long set speeches suitable simply for declamation, but an unparalleled dramatic scene... Warm flesh and blood had spoken on the stage—spoken with beauty and power—and in the whirl of emotion which the [fifth-century] audience felt they hailed the birth of a new art.12

Whilst Copleston had felt uneasy about the ‘stylized’ elements in Greek tragedy at a time when stage naturalism was the goal of most serious theatrical endeavour, Fleeming Jenkin’s insights, as he ‘imagines’ the play in performance, anticipate other developments in the wider European theatre in the 1890s. When the Symbolists strove to capture the hidden recesses of the mind and privileged silence as an expressive rather than embarrassingly implausible theatrical device, they may well have had the Cassandra scene in mind as their paradigm. But in terms of the nineteenth-century British reception of _Agamemnon_, we could say that it was the ‘discovery’ of this particular scene in performance that was to mark the ‘turn to modernity’. Copleston may have implied criticism with his phrase ‘series of tableaux’, but throughout the nineteenth century a hugely popular (and often deemed morally dubious) form of entertainment involved attendance at the theatre to watch ‘tableaux vivants’, in which well-known art-works were recreated on the stage. Though thoroughly popular, this tradition of enactment can be traced back at the very least to the high-cultural (although equally risqué) _poses plastiques_ of Emma Hamilton in the late eighteenth century, who had assumed likeness to certain sculptural and painterly figures with shockingly little sartorial aid.13 Even if the

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11 _ILN_, 24 Feb. 1887.
12 Fleeming Jenkin in Colvin and Ewing (1887), 1. 16.
13 For a genealogy for the _tableaux vivants_ that extends back to the ballet dancer, Marie Salli’s performance as the statue in Pygmalion at Covent Garden in 1773, see Hall and Macintosh (2005), ch. 2. For a fascinating account of the relationship between the ancient pantomime balletic tradition and the _tableaux vivants_, see Lada-Richards (2003a).
Agamemnon in Nineteenth-Century Britain

Agamemnon (adapted or in the Aeschylean version) was rarely seen on the stage for most of the century in Britain, it managed nonetheless to exert a visual fascination upon the 'viewing' culture within the iconographical, novelistic, and burlesque theatrical traditions, with certain 'tableaux' recurring again and again, especially those which are 'seen' but not shown. In an important sense, therefore, the stagings of Agamemnon at the end of the century owe as much to the artists who painted it—and in turn the low-brow (often risqué) theatrical tradition that fed off that iconographical tradition—as they did to the archaeological excavations of Schliemann and his discovery of material evidence of the House of Atreus.

AGAMEMNON AND THE GRAND TOUR

It is helpful to speak of Aeschylus as having been 'rediscovered' by the Romantics; and the process of that rediscovery was by no means confined in the early stages to the German-speaking world. Thomson, as we have seen in Hall's chapter, kept the mythological figure of Agamemnon in the forefront of the eighteenth-century European psyche; and Thomson's play in turn influenced Alfieri's highly popular Senecan Agamennone (1778), which was translated into English in 1815. But with Robert Potter's vernacular translation of The Complete Plays of Aeschylus in the following year, Aeschylus was at last brought to the Greekless reader au naturel (see further Hall and Walton, Chapters 4 and 10); and George Romney's charcoal drawings of Aeschylus which appeared from the 1780s onwards were one important response to Potter that continued to widen Aeschylus' appeal. And with the publication in 1793 of the engravings of Aeschylus' works by Romney's protégé, John Flaxman, the perception of the tragedian as a sublime, wild, and primeval artist was fixed. Schlegel, for one, was enthralled by Flaxman's engravings and his 1808 Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature in Vienna bear Flaxman's imprint, with Aeschylean linguistic ruggedness being considered to provide an analogue to Pheidias' rugged figures on the Parthenon. Just as Schlegel's views remained current and authoritative throughout the nineteenth century, so Flaxman's engravings remained in the European public eye, being regularly reprinted to accompany new translations of Aeschylus' works throughout the century.

However, the enthusiasm of the German Romantics for Aeschylus' work in general (see Ewans, Chapter 6) undoubtedly fuelled the passion felt by the second-wave of British Romantic poets for what were generally deemed the ancient tragedian's craggy, colossal works. Shelley's Hellas (1822) reworks Persians, but it

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14 The first complete translation in 1815 was by Charles Lloyd and forms the basis of Bowring's revised edition of the plays in 1876.
15 Thomas Morrell's translation of PB (1773) was the only English vernacular translation to precede Potter. Most of Romney's drawings are in the Liverpool Walker gallery.
also refashions the beacon speech from the *Agamemnon* in its paean to liberty.\(^{16}\) Whilst Shelley never ventured beyond Italy, for many other travellers of this generation the experience of ‘seeing’ ancient Greece, at a time when the Napoleonic Wars had necessitated a Grand Tour that extended eastwards beyond Italy, brought Homer and Aeschylus back to life in new arresting contexts. The impact of Byron’s sojourn in Greece and Asia Minor during 1809–11 on his creative and political development is well documented. Much less well known, but important to a study of the reception of Aeschylus’ tragedy, is the impact that the travels in Byron’s company had upon the Scottish writer, John Galt at this time. It was ‘seeing’ Agamemnon’s tomb at Mycenae that led Galt to write two verse tragedies, *Agamemnon* and *Clytemnestra*, based upon the *Agamemnon* and the *Libation Bearers* respectively.\(^{17}\) Although Galt later claimed that they ‘fell stillborn from the press’, when they were published in 1812 and met with little critical enthusiasm,\(^{18}\) his *Agamemnon* is of considerable interest because although it bears a Senecan frame, its content is truly Aeschylean.

The primacy of Galt’s *Clytemnestra* is determined in part by her superior status (Egisthus is no blood relation of Agamemnon, but is merely a slave), but above all by her assumption of the role of prime agent. Egisthus claims that he was bribed by her gifts and seduced by the lust of the rapacious Queen; and when it comes to finding a solution to the dilemma of Agamemnon’s return, Clytemnestra finds an answer from within:

Ha! is there here a demon, prompting me?
If we could kill the king—Tremendous thought.
My soul is curdled with the brave conceit!\(^{19}\)

For the nurse, Galt’s *Clytemnestra* is ‘sorceress’;\(^{20}\) she is manipulative, persuasive and the sole agent in a world of atomized individuals. Although the murder scene is Senecan in its banquet setting, the language of Galt’s *Clytemnestra* manages to outdo the words and sentiments of her Aeschylean example justifying her crime as the inevitable outcome of the subjugation of women:

Ay, play the man [to Egisthus], the lord of the creation,
And scorn the failing women for her sin.
’Tis but the sovereign element of males,
That nature honour’d with the sense of joy,
And privilege to range. Our serving sex,
Made for the use of free imperial man,
Must shut themselves in frozen chastity,
Like simple bulbs that winter in the soil,

\(^{16}\) Shelley (1822), 5–6, lines 54–75. For comment, see Jenkyns (1980), 101–2. Edith Hall kindly points out that lines 76–89 also rework the image of the eagles wheeling round their nest from the parodos of *Agamemnon*.

\(^{17}\) Galt (1812). For his travels, see Gordon (1972), 8–14. For his radical treatment of the myth, see Ewbank, Ch. 3, pp. 40–1.

\(^{18}\) Gordon (1972), 14.

\(^{19}\) Galt (1812), 73.

\(^{20}\) Ibid. 79.
'Till the ingerming season come again.
[to the dead Agamemnon] O it was meet that I your plant, at home,
Should spread my leaves and lift a flow'ry head,
Wives are not made of love's material. No:
We are but vessels, casting-moulds for men.—
While you lay glowing with your captive dames,
Or sacking towns to furnish wanton beds,
Thought you that nature slumber'd in my veins?
That only death or shameful degradation,
Could expiate the sin.—Learn ere you die,
That menial woman claims her half of love,
And wives deserted can assert the claim.21

As a voice from Wollstonecraft's circle vindicating the rights of women, Clytemnestra here gestures towards the Aeschylean paradigm—in her reference to the dormant bulbs and the spreading leaves (obliquely to her speech over Clytemnestra's corpse (A. Ag. 1387–92), and explicitly to her greeting of Agamemnon on his return (A. Ag. 966–7))—in order to subvert it for vituperative contemporary resonance. But it is, perhaps, in her ironic allusion to Apollo's notorious claim in the Eumenides with 'We are but vessels, casting-moulds for men' (cf. A. Eum. 658–66) that this 'modern' Clytemnestra is at her most subversive in her knowing appropriation of patriarchal terminology. Galt's version demonstrates Shelley's dictum in his Preface to Hellas that 'We are all Greeks', by translating the Agamemnon into a contemporary tragedy with a clear message about the need for urgent reform.

Even though Galt wrote no more 'Greek' plays after 1812, the formative experience of the Grand Tour was to inform him later in other ways. It is no doubt significant that he chose to send his sons to Reading School to be educated by his close friend, Dr Richard Valpy, whose considerable pedagogical reputation was based in large measure upon the success of his productions of Greek tragedies, which played to wide audiences of social dignitaries and classical scholars.22 Valpy's productions of ancient Greek plays from 1806 onwards were celebrated for numerous reasons: not least for the detail attached to their sets, which drew upon archaeological evidence from recent excavations in Greece and from the very recent arrival of the Parthenon Marbles in England.

From 1807 when the Marbles were first exhibited in the house of Lord Elgin, near Hyde Park Corner, and then later in 1817 when they were purchased for the nation and put on public display, the experience of 'seeing' ancient Greece which was formerly the preserve of those on the Grand Tour now became more widely available. In 1808, when the painter Benjamin Robert Haydon first saw the Marbles, he was so overwhelmed by the experience that he decided to study Greek. 'My heart beat! If I had seen nothing else I had beheld sufficient to keep

21 Ibid. 110. 22 Hall and Macintosh (2005), ch. 9.
me to nature for the rest of my life.'

Haydon went on to provide the most eloquent defence of the Marbles's artistic value to the nation as a whole some years later, and it was he who famously took Keats to see them in 1817. In 1834 Haydon began work upon a painting entitled 'Cassandra predicting the murder of Agamemnon on his arrival after ten years' absence at Mycenae', which was finally completed and exhibited at the Society of British Artists in 1835. Although the painting no longer exists, it is of interest here because of the circumstances behind its production. The model for Cassandra was most probably Caroline Norton, the daughter of the poet Thomas Sheridan and granddaughter of the playwright Richard Sheridan, and herself a poet of minor standing. What thrust this beautiful young woman into the public gaze was not her poetry, but her relationship with her abusive husband George Norton, who forced her to buy favours for him through establishing numerous associations, most notoriously with the Prime Minister himself, Lord Melbourne. By 'casting' Mrs Norton as Cassandra in the painting—rather than choosing for her the character of Clytemnestra—Haydon may well have been making a public statement in her support; and indeed there is even some suggestion in correspondence between Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning that Haydon and Norton may well have enjoyed some kind of intimacy when he was working on the painting.

And what makes the inference that the painting was intended as encoded support a real possibility is the fact that its completion was made possible by a commission from Lord Sutherland, whose wife remained Caroline Norton's staunchest ally when she met with public censure the following year. As Haydon's Cassandra, Mrs Norton is emphatically no adulteress; she is instead 'seer/poetess' and a victim of male oppression as Norton's 'political' concubine. As she 'predicts' the murder of this latterday Agamemnon, it may well be merely wishful thinking on Haydon's part; but it also ironically prefigures her own downfall at the hands of a murderous public opinion, when she met with a lawsuit alleging an adulterous affair between herself and the Prime Minister after her flight from her tyrannical husband the following year. Although the charges were thrown out of court, and although Melbourne's reputation survived the trial, Cassandra/Caroline's never did, despite the best efforts of Lady Sutherland to enable her to return to society. But her harsh experience was not entirely without some 'Oresteian' eventual compensation for it led directly to the first major piece of British legislation in the campaign for the emancipation of women, when both Caroline Norton and Haydon's close friend, Thomas Talfourd (himself a former pupil of Reading School and

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23 Haydon (1853), and in Webb (1982), 221.
24 Olney (1952), 49.
25 In 1835 he also painted a scene from the Libation Bearers: 'Orestes hesitating to murder Clytemnestra'; and in 1836, 'Cassandra predicting the death of Hector'.
himself a playwright) successfully campaigned for the introduction of the Infant Custody Bill in 1836.  

AGAMEMNON ON THE COMIC STAGE

In 1847–8 the novelist, William Makepeace Thackeray was once again to invoke Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* in a context of social scandal. Thackeray had been well versed (albeit with much grind) in the classics during his time at Charterhouse and Cambridge; and after a spell in Germany and acquaintance with Goethe, he developed not only a passion for German culture but a realization that its valorization of Greek culture might have a role in illuminating present British circumstances as well. He returned to England after a trip abroad in February 1845, at a time when the 'Mendelssohn Antigone' was playing to considerable acclaim at Covent Garden, and was shortly to be parodied by a burlesque version of the *Medea* by J. R. Planche entitled *Jason and the Golden Fleece*. The peerless Victorian tragedienne, Helen Faucit toured Britain and Ireland in the part of Antigone in the Mendelssohn production from 1845–8 (Charlotte Vandenhoff had only appeared in the role at Covent Garden); and in 1846 Faucit played Iphigenia in a much-acclaimed Dublin production of the *Iphigenia in Aulis*. Unlike most of her female colleagues in the acting profession, Faucit enjoyed an unsullied personal reputation; and her success in enacting self-sacrifice in the name of a higher cause in the characters of Antigone and Iphigenia cannot be separated from the perceived principles by which she conducted her life offstage.

That Thackeray should compare Becky Sharp, the ruthlessly ambitious heroine of his novel *Vanity Fair* (1847–8) to that other notoriously transgressive Greek tragic heroine, Clytemnestra, is of particular note. For it would now be obvious to his readers, that Greek tragedy could not only provide examples of women in extremis on account of male tyranny (so Antigone and Iphigenia); it could also (as with the *Medea* and now *Agamemnon*) highlight the dangers inherent in granting to women too much autonomy. At a time when the absence of the rights of women abandoned by their husbands was beginning to receive serious consideration in political circles, Thackeray offers his readers a cautionary example of what women may well get up to in their husbands' absence.

As Becky Sharp enacts Clytemnestra's murder of Agamemnon (with her own husband in the part of the returning Greek warrior) in the drawing-room theatricals at Lord Steyne's stately home in chapter 51 of his novel, the mid-Victorian reader is not deceived by the Georgian Regency setting. The final tableau of the charade—which is to contain all the syllables of the word 'AGAMEMNON'—opens with Agamemnon asleep on his couch caught in the light

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28 For Thackeray's life, see Taylor (1999); for Faucit's, see Carlyle (2000).
of his lamp, which irradiates his shield and casts his shadow ominously on the wall behind. The audience then witnesses the figure of Aegisthus 'steal in pale and on tiptoe'. The narrator asks of the figure behind the reluctant Aegisthus: 'What is that ghastly face looking out balefully after him from behind the arras?' Aegisthus raises his dagger to strike the sleeping warrior, but is unable to commit the deadly deed. At this point, the narrator informs us:

Clytemnestra glides swiftly into the room like an apparition—her arms bare and white,—her tawny hair floats down her shoulders,—her face is deadly pale,—and her eyes are lighted up with a smile so ghastly, that people quake as they look at her... Scornfully, she snatches the dagger out of Aegisthus's hand, and advances to the bed. You see it shining over head in the glimmer of the lamp, and—and the lamp goes out, with a groan, and all is dark.29

The audience of the charade is stunned and then rapturous, calling out for 'Manager! Clytemnestra!' To those familiar with the recent productions of Greek tragedy on the professional stage, the accomplished nature of Becky's performance is underlined by a clear and deliberately ironic allusion to the actress Helen Faucit in the woodcut by Thackeray himself entitled 'The Triumph of Clytemnestra' that accompanies the chapter. Becky's pose deliberately alludes to that unimpeachable tragedienne and at the same time deliberately subverts that affinity as Thackeray's curtseying anti-heroine still clutches the poignard she has just used to dispatch her husband in the preceding scene.30

This is not the only link made between Becky Sharp and Clytemnestra in the novel. When we consider the second woodcut, in chapter 67 entitled 'Becky's second appearance in the character of Clytemnestra' (Fig. 8.1), it becomes clear that Thackeray is deliberately putting his Clytemnestra within a well-known iconographical tradition. Thackeray's woodcut clearly alludes to Guérin's painting of 1817 (see Fig. 5.2);31 and we can also see that it is important to read the earlier charade in chapter 51 against the painting as well. Guérin's sleeping warrior is (like Thackeray's Agamemnon in the charade) caught in the light of the lamp in the distance behind the arras and surrounded by his shield and sword; his Clytemnestra approaches, bare-armed, dagger in hand, before the cowering figure of Aegisthus, who is either nervously pushing her forward or pointing with horror at the sleeping figure in the lamp-light. In the charade, Thackeray dispenses with any such ambiguity detectable in Guérin's painting: we follow his fearless Clytemnestra snatching the dagger and going beyond the moment captured in the painting, as we are allowed to witness the events right up to the point when the murder is committed. Thackeray's brief dumb-show here in chapter 51 of his novel can be

29 Thackeray (1983), 646.
30 Cf. The Greek Muse by Sir Frederick William Burton in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery (reproduced on the cover of Marshall (1998) ), which portrays Helen Faucit in the role of Antigone. Although she stands head-on by a tripod with a laurel wreath in hand, her costume and hairstyle are identical to Becky's in the woodcut in ch. 51.
Figure 8.1. Thackeray’s woodcut entitled ‘Becky’s second appearance in the character of Clytemnestra’ from Chapter LXVII of Vanity Fair (1847–1848).
considered pivotal in alluding both to the Senecan and Aeschylean versions: the first to enter the stage here (so Seneca) is Aegisthus; but when Aegisthus’ nerve fails him, the fearless Clytemnestra takes over from the enfeebled male (so Aeschylus, and indirectly, of course, Shakespeare’s Lady Macbeth).

When we turn, however, to the woodcut in chapter 67, we have an Aeschylean reading entirely with Becky as Clytemnestra alone behind the arras with an indistinct, but undoubtedly weapon-like, object in one hand and a wine glass in the other. This Clytemnestra is eavesdropping on a conversation between her old enemy, Dobbin, and Joss, her protector, who is seated next to the lighted lamp:

Jos clasped his hands, and cried,—’... He would do anything; only he must have time: they mustn’t say anything to Mrs Crawley:—she’d—she’d kill me if she knew it. You don’t know what a terrible woman she is,’ the poor wretch said. ‘... He must go now. Becky might come in.’ And Dobbin quitted him full of forebodings.

He never saw Jos more. Three months afterwards Joseph Sedley died at Aix-la-Chapelle.32

In Thackeray’s metatheatrical novel (with its evident debts to popular stage melodrama), we have no Cassandra to help us ‘see’ the off-stage murder: instead, we have the author, who was also the artist (indeed the only major Victorian novelist to do his own illustrations) to provide us with the nightmare vision that makes the inference of Becky’s guilt unequivocal. Here the commentary on the charade in the earlier chapter is absolutely appropriate: ‘her face is deadly pale,—and her eyes are lighted up with a smile so ghastly, that people quake as they look at her.’ This time, however, as Thackeray’s silence within the text makes clear, there are no people to ‘quake as they look at her’—only the readers, as we are shown the woodcut and its caption which are offered as the only unequivocal evidence of Becky’s guilt. The text, by contrast, only provides the reader with the teasing circumstantial evidence offered by the solicitor of the Insurance Company, who ‘swore it was the blackest case that ever had come before him’.33

The next significant comic Clytemnestra in Britain by the burlesque writer, Robert Reece is similarly sufficiently emboldened to attack her husband centre stage.34 As the English translator of Hervé’s Chilpéric, Reece may well have been aware of two French satirical lithographic engagements with Agamemnon by the distinguished engraver, Honoré Daumier. The first dated 1850, like Thackeray’s woodcut, deliberately alludes parodically to Guérin’s painting of the murderous Clytemnestra. Daumier’s comic Clytémnestre is armed with a vast needle which she is about to inject into the somnolent figure of Charivari (the title of the satirical journal to which he often contributed).35 Six years later, in his litho-

32 Thackeray (1983), 874.
34 St John’s College, Oxford had performed a burlesque by Edward Nolan, Agamemnon at Home; or, The Latest Particulars of that Little Affair at Mycenae the previous year, in which the tragedy is reduced rather feebly to a domestic farce. Clytemnestra here rejects Aegisthus, opting to stay instead with her newly returned husband.
35 The engraving is in the Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco and is reproduced at www.calliope.free-online.co.uk/iphig (last accessed 15/6/05).
graphic response to Hervé's burlesque operetta of Aeschylus' tragedy, Daumier takes Hervé comically to task for 'correcting' antiquity both in his Agamemnon and in his opera Chilpéric. and the lithograph depicts a terrifying Clytemnestra who openly murders her husband in full company.\textsuperscript{36} In Reece's own highly allusive burlesque version of Aeschylus' tragedy entitled Agamemnon and Cassandra; or, The Prophet and Loss of Troy\textsuperscript{3} for the Prince of Wales Theatre, Liverpool in 1868, Clytemnestra exceeds even her Aeschylean counterpart in her audacity. The ambitious husband-slayer is described by Reece in the list of dramatis personae as 'The original strong-minded woman, with only one weakness, viz for Aegisthus'—a clear allusion to the earlier burlesque of Alcestis of 1850 by Frank Talfourd, son of the playwright and MP Thomas Talfourd, whose subtitle 'The Original Strong-Minded Woman' prepared audiences for a non-compliant and assertive wife to Admetus.\textsuperscript{37} Reece also compares his heroine to those other murderously ambitious women of the world of theatre, 'the Queen in Hamlet and Lady Macbeth'.\textsuperscript{38} In Reece's sophisticated burlesque treatment of the myth, the paratragic allusions to Aeschylus, Seneca, and Shakespeare make for a rich intertextual extravaganza.

Stylized gestures abound and are deliberately held to provide near poses plastiques for the audience's delectation. One such scene is Agamemnon's arrival, in which the 'stage embrace' of the estranged husband and wife, is commented upon by the Choragus to the accompaniment of a drum roll. During the (Senecan) banquet, a Hamlet-esque dumb-show is enacted for the Queen, King and the adulterer Aegisthus. At the end of each scene in the play-within-the-play as the lights go down, Clytemnestra urges her reluctant paramour to creep over and stab his target. Reece's Cassandra 'sees' his trick all too well, even though she has a part to play as 'Moon' in the show. Finally the Choragus intervenes to stop the stealth-like Aegisthus in his tracks and the players reveal the 'truth' about life in Argos during Agamemnon's absence. Cassandra assumes control refusing to allow Aegisthus to kill her: 'Not in this scene, my friend,' she reminds him.\textsuperscript{39}

A bewildered Agamemnon, however, fails to 'know' the script and frustrates all attempts by the players to change the mythical order and avert the tragedy, only to find himself in the final scene of the play in the bathroom with the assembled company. The bath is placed in a recess at the back of the stage behind a curtain, and provides a hiding place for the cowering Aegisthus, until his plan is scotched by 'all-seeing' Cassandra, who ingeniously turns the hot taps upon his head. Clytemnestra draws the dagger to do the dastardly deed but is foiled at the final moment by the entire company before defiantly proclaiming:

\textsuperscript{36} The lithograph was published in Charivari, 11 December 1868 and is reproduced in Delteil (1906–30), vol. 28, no. 3679. I am indebted to Edith Hall for this reference.

\textsuperscript{37} Reece (1868). On Talfourd's burlesque of Alcestis, see Hall and Macintosh (2005), ch 15.

\textsuperscript{38} The twinning of Clytemnestra and Lady Macbeth is a commonplace of literary criticism around this time (see e.g. Copleston (1870), 131, 134, 158–9).

\textsuperscript{39} Reece (1868), 27.
Don't withhold your sentence;  
I'll never yield or know the least repentance.  
So, to your vengeance, only, pray go quick to it,  
I've said I meant to stick you, and I stick to it.40

With the King alive and Clytemnestra sent into banishment, Agamemnon explains at the end of the play:

'Tis true, the poet's mind is here o'erthrown,  
And puns inserted that were not his own.  
If that old Greek—half warrior half poet—  
Could see his play now, he would hardly know it.  
'Tis but a jest! and so we ask you thus  
Propitiate the shade of Aeschylus [indicates applause]  
That genius appeased—our wrong made right,  
We'll play the king again for many a night.41

This is indeed not Aeschylus at all by the end of the play, but with its metatheatrical play on 'viewing' both before and behind the arras, Reece's treatment is very much within the traditional nineteenth-century reception of the play. And in the prominence it grants to Cassandra, it shows embryonically the modernist recognition of the centrality of her role (see further Prins, Chapter 9).

**AGAMEMNON FROM PAGE TO STAGE**

If Reece did not offer Aeschylus pure and simple to his audience, that was something that his audience would have tolerated, if not always relished. As his burlesque amply demonstrates, there were plenty of 'known' versions upon which to draw—from Aeschylus to Seneca, Thomson to Alfieri. An earlier version of 1855 entitled *Clytemnestra* by Owen Meredith had shown a similarly creative multiplicity in its handling of the various sources of the myth. Owen Meredith was the pseudonym for Edward Robert Bulwer Lytton, who was son of the well-known playwright and novelist, Edward George Bulwer Lytton, and was to become the first Viceroy of India, a position he occupied from 1876–80. But as a younger man he had had serious ambitions to become a writer; and his intensely rich and intelligent *Clytemnestra* would suggest that he might well have become highly successful had this particular career not been strongly discouraged by his problematic and slightly insecure father. Indeed, Robert Lytton's engagement with the House of Atreus is in many ways an exploration of his own dysfunctional family circumstances, in which his parents' disastrous marriage and the alleged 'sacrifice' of his sister to his father's glory (Emily died, according to her mother, through overworking on translations that her father passed off as his own) tragically

40 Reece (1868), 35. 41 Ibid. 36.
replicated those of the ancient paradigm. If Lytton Senior was an overweening and ambitious Agamemnon, his wife was an Aeschylean Clytemnestra in claiming equality with her husband and by indulging in a public affair whilst Lytton was conducting research for a novel that was to become *The Last Days of Pompeii.*

Robert Lytton's version, however, is not simply of interest on a biographical level. It is the last serious nineteenth-century treatment to draw on a multiplicity of Senecan- and/or Aeschylean-inspired sources. Drawing in plot terms on Seneca's *Agamemnon,* Lytton's Clytemnestra nonetheless provides an Aeschylean protagonist with a fixity of purpose that puts her in a line of descent which would include Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth as well:

> For to conceive ill deeds yet dare not do them,  
> This is not virtue, but a two-fold shame.44

Aeschylus' prototype is again detected in Lytton's androgynous anti-heroine as she is perceived by Aegisthus: 'Thou look'st a woman, but thou art not one';45 and this for Clytemnestra is the rub:

> O fate to be a woman! To be led  
> Dumb, like a poor mule, at a master's will,  
> And be a slave, though bred in palaces,  
> And be a fool, though seated with the wise—  
> A poor and pitiful fool, as I am now,  
> Loving and hating my vain life away!46

With the (Senecan) semi-chorus of Argive women, Clytemnestra raises the question of the motive behind Iphigenia's death: 'Was it murder or a sacrifice?' adding, 'Can all men's good be help'd by one man's crime?' But this Clytemnestra is too wily to be completely believable to the audience—her intense invocation of her rocking of her silent, suckling, baby is in reality no more than a rhetorical ploy, since her daughter's name has been conspicuous in its absence from the first part of the play.

The return of Agamemnon, in the company of a beautiful Phrygian woman, is loosely Aeschylean with the exception of the presence of Electra and Orestes. But with his departure for a bath, Cassandra's premonitions and then her commentary on what is hidden behind the closed doors are given in a scene that is very close to the Aeschylean original. And although the final scenes of the play, with the dispatch of Orestes to Phocis, gesture towards Seneca, Clytemnestra's urging of restraint upon her lover and her overture to her daughter, would imply that an Aeschylean (rather than either a Senecan or Alfieriian) model lies behind the ending.

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When Reece wrote his comic burlesque in 1868, he presumed some knowledge of different versions; and he could do this now because Aeschylus’ play was beginning to receive serious as well as comic consideration in wide circles thanks to the attention it was given by translators at this time. Homer was widely available to Victorian readers by the 1850s—even if the concept of ‘pure’ Homer was itself hotly debated in the wake of Matthew Arnold’s lecture series in Oxford in 1861–2. But Owen Meredith’s method of engagement with the myth of the House of Atreus was no longer fashionable by the 1860s. Now instead of adaptation, it was translation that was to bring Aeschylus’ Agamemnon at last to the British public.

Anna Swanwick, the prominent campaigner for women’s rights and women’s education and the founder of Bedford College, published her own highly praised translation of the Oresteia in 1865, the same year as Swinburne’s Atalanta in Calydon, whose protagonist, Althaea owes much to Aeschylus’ Clytemnestra. Swanwick’s translation was to remain popular throughout the century and was regularly used as a parallel text for the original language productions within the academy (see further Prins, Chapter 9). In the same year, the poet/translator Edward FitzGerald had his own translation of the Agamemnon privately printed (it was later to reach a wider audience when it was anonymously printed in 1876). For FitzGerald, as for Robert Browning, the translation should be designed to seek to create similar effects to the original upon the reader. But unlike Browning, whose Agamemnon of 1877 sought to convey the spirit of Aeschylean tragedy through pushing the English language to its limits, FitzGerald took considerable liberties with Aeschylus’ text and pronounced presciently in his Foreword in 1865 that a ‘literal version of the play, if possible, would scarcely be intelligible’.

During the 1870s and with the publication of Browning’s version of Agamemnon in 1877, the translation of dramatic texts was hotly debated (cf. Taplin, Chapter 13). With his adoption of Greek syntax, Browning clearly explored the potential of the English language in ways remarkably similar to those being tested by the then unpublished poet, Gerard Manley Hopkins. In the Preface he proclaimed that he had translated Aeschylus’ text in ‘as Greek a fashion as English will bear’ without doing it ‘violence’. Most readers, however, found Browning’s transcript (as he called it) ‘unreadable’ (Augusta Webster claimed that at least Aeschylus’ text remained to guide the hapless reader); and it is significant that when Fleeming Jenkin reviewed it in The Edinburgh Review in 1878, he claimed that its main shortcomings derived from its fundamental unperformability.

Fleeming Jenkin was Professor of Engineering in the University of Edinburgh, but he was in many ways a man of the theatre and a veritable product of continental Europe, having been educated in Frankfort, Paris, and Genoa before

49 Although his poems were reprinted in 1869, it is perhaps significant that the publisher was based in Leipzig.
50 FitzGerald (1865), 5.
51 A. Webster (1879), 66–79; Fleeming Jenkin in Colvin and Ewing (1887), 1. 3–34.
taking up a Chair at University College, London in 1866. Jenkin was a man of many talents with a passion for literature and the arts equal to his devotion to his own profession. He wooed his classically educated future wife with his wide-ranging enthusiasms: ‘Yesterday I had some charming electrical experiments. What shall I compare them to—a new song? a Greek play?’ He had been in Edinburgh since 1868, and together with his equally cultured and extremely able wife had formed a vibrant group of amateur thespians that came to enjoy a high reputation both north and south of the border.

Fleeming Jenkin was interested in all aspects of antiquity and spent much time researching the costumes and sets for his productions at the British Museum, where he became a close friend of Sidney Colvin, the Keeper of prints and drawings. In this sense, he was very much in tune with the spirit of the age which followed the excavations in southern Europe with great interest; and he sought to understand the ancient world in its entirety. In some ways he was in deep sympathy with Browning's aims in his \textit{Agamemnon}. Browning had originally intended to include photographs of Schliemann's discoveries alongside his published text and saw his ‘craggy’ translation as a linguistic analogue to Schliemann's recent excavations at Mycenae. Furthermore, Jenkin was not unsympathetic to Browning's adoption of Greek syntax and he readily understood that (with the notable exception of Anna Swanwick's translation) it had been the fundamentally un-Aeschylean qualities of recent versions that had led to Browning's desire to adhere to fidelity at all cost. In his review he dismisses Morshead's translation as sub-Scott, and FitzGerald's for its nineteenth-century, a-religious choruses; but however laudable Browning's aims, Jenkin criticizes the poet for being fundamentally un-Aeschylean in not having written (unlike Aeschylus) for the stage. By contrast, he singles out Lewis Campbell's translations of Sophocles for praise in this regard, and concludes his review with the following challenge:

\begin{quote}
We think that no English translation of Aeschylus has as yet given a version fit for this [theatrical] purpose, also that the task is a worthy one and not impossible.
\end{quote}

It was, perhaps, inevitable that Campbell's efforts should have then turned towards producing the performable translation of the \textit{Agamemnon} that Jenkin called out for. Campbell had been Professor of Greek at the University of St Andrews since 1863, where both he and his wife had formed thriving theatre groups. He had known Jenkin since their early years together at Edinburgh Academy, and they quickly renewed their friendship upon his return to Edinburgh; and they were able to share their enthusiasm for the theatre and for ancient drama in particular. Following Fleeming Jenkin's move into a large house at 3 Great Stuart Street in 1873, they had a private theatre at their disposal, which

\begin{itemize}
\item[52] Robert Louis Stevenson in his ‘Memoir’ in Colvin and Ewing (1887), 1. lxi.
\item[53] For an account of their relationship, see Colvin (1921), 153–61.
\item[54] T. Harrison (2003), 14–15.
\item[55] Fleeming Jenkin (1878) in Colvin and Ewing (1887), 1. 34.
\end{itemize}
they could create by letting down the dining-room wall to provide the stage, which allowed for the playroom behind to serve as back-stage whilst the dining room proper acted as the auditorium. In 1877 Fleeming Jenkin mounted his first Greek tragedy, staging Sophocles' *Trachiniae* in Campbell's translation both in Edinburgh and then later in St Andrews. In May 1880, one month before the much more famous production of the *Agamemnon* in ancient Greek at Balliol College, Oxford, Campbell's own 'performable' text was used for the first full-length production of the play in Britain, which was seen by more than 600 people in Fleeming Jenkin's private theatre.

The *Agamemnon* was Fleeming Jenkin's favourite tragedy, because it was here, he maintained, that we witness the 'birth' of drama over lyric with the arrival of Agamemnon; and with the Cassandra scene in particular came the pivotal moment in the evolution of drama, when 'flesh and blood' combined in 'the whirl of emotion' to 'hail the birth of a new art'. This, claimed Jenkin, is a scene for a Siddons or a Rachel; and in his production, it was his wife Anne, from all accounts a very fine amateur actress herself, who played both Cassandra and Clytemnestra (as she had played Deianeira in 1877) to considerable acclaim.

Fleeming Jenkin's view of the *Agamemnon* was by no means one which was unanimously shared. In a review of the London performances of the Oxford *Agamemnon* in *The Cambridge Review*, the reviewer claimed, not unlike Copleston on Greek tragedy in general a decade earlier, that *Agamemnon* is not properly a drama: it is a long ode'; Oxford, the reviewer continued, should have chosen a different, more psychological play (*Medea* or *Antigone*), to inaugurate its performance tradition. Some scholars, notably Professor John Stuart Blackie in Edinburgh, dismissed the Scottish productions out of hand by not attending; and after Blackie had written a review in which he criticized Fleeming Jenkin for his 'narrowness'—by which he meant his mere amateur interest in the classics—Blackie received an excoriating response by letter, in which Jenkin lambasted the learned Professor for proclaiming an interest in, even a love for, the plays, but for failing to have turned up to see his own production, the first in modern history, in the city in which he lives. Behind Jenkin's deep indignation is also a new understanding that will soon become orthodoxy: 'seeing' *Agamemnon*, indeed 'seeing' ancient drama in general, on the stage will shortly lead to numerous challenges to nineteenth-century critical readings of the plays. As Jenkin had argued in *The Edinburgh Review*, the lyric portions of *Agamemnon* may well

56 Cookson and Hempstead (2000), 151.
57 Fleeming Jenkin in Colvin and Ewing (1887), I, 17.
58 Robert Louis Stevenson in his 'Memoir' in Colvin and Ewing (1887), I. cxxv.
60 Letter from Fleeming Jenkin to Blackie, 12 May 1880. (National Library of Scotland, Blackie's Letters, 1878–80, MS 2633 ff 208, 209, 210). I am indebted to Amanda Wrigley for bringing this letter to my attention.
dominate at the start, but with the arrival of Agamemnon, Aeschylus’ tragedy becomes truly ‘dramatic’.

Jenkin’s production using Campbell’s translation, in a very real sense then, came about as a response to Browning’s intrinsically non-dramatic transcript. Both Campbell and Browning enjoyed close associations with Balliol College, Oxford (Campbell had been an undergraduate there and Browning had been an Honorary Fellow since 1867), and it was perhaps not surprising that it was their close friend and Master of the College, Benjamin Jowett, who was to allow a group of undergraduates under the leadership of Frank Benson to perform Agamemnon in Greek at Balliol later on that year. Indeed Campbell’s correspondence concerning the Scottish theatricals clearly had some bearing on Jowett’s decision to allow the production to take place at Balliol.\(^6\) The 1880 Balliol Agamemnon became the first production of a Greek tragedy in the original language to receive serious critical consideration since the Renaissance. And Browning, whose controversial translation had propelled Aeschylus’ text into the critical limelight, was appropriately in the audience on the first night.

Oscar Wilde claimed that he had first suggested the project, and that he had allocated the parts and designed the costumes and the scenery.\(^6\) There may well be more than a grain of truth in this, even though Benson never mentions Wilde’s involvement, and even though there are other claims that the scenery used a drawing by the late Burne-Jones and that the costumes were designed by Professor W. B. Richmond.\(^6\) What is significant about these claims, of course, is the fact that retrospectively, at least, the undoubted success of the 1880 Agamemnon made it worthy of close association. Indeed Wilde’s close friend, Rennell Rodd (who went on to appear in The Tale of Troy in London 1883) assisted with the painting of the scenery; and Wilde himself remained a keen observer of the later 1880s revivals, even if he did not participate in person.

There was a clear attempt in Oxford to reflect aspects of the ancient theatre that were compatible with modern expectations (for this reason, there were no masks). In this sense this was no ‘archaeologizing’ production tout court; as one satisfied reviewer put it, the set and costumes were instead suggestive of antiquity ‘and that is sufficient’.\(^6\) The two-fold division of the stage space (as with the 1845 Antigone at Covent Garden and which remained the standard scholarly view until the 1890s) was designed to keep actors and chorus separate; and the music was composed by the organist of Magdalen, Walter Parratt, for the beginning of the parodos alone, and consisted of a few austere bars. The choral delivery was controversial, with the alternation between monotone recitation and dialogue between the Chorus members generally not deemed a success.\(^6\) The acting parts, by contrast, were much praised with Benson as Clytemnestra, W. L. Courtney (later the theatre

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61 Hall and Macintosh (2005), ch. 15. 62 Ellmann (1987), 101–2. 63 Mackinnon (1910), 61. See Michelakis, this volume, Fig. 1.2. 64 Cambridge Review, 9 Feb. 1881. 65 See Mackinnon (1910), 60–1.
critic of the *Daily Telegraph*) as the Watchman, and W. N. Bruce as Agamemnon. Benson especially earned critical plaudits, which are surely acknowledged (if not actually being celebrated) in the painting of Clytemnestra by John Collier of 1882 (see Fig. 1.3). Benson was responsible for numerous revivals of the production; and with his own company, he toured Australia and the colonies with a production of the *Oresteia*, which led in turn to new productions of Aeschylus' play being performed in the English-speaking world (notably in Sydney in 1886).

**AGAMEMNON AND THE ORESTEIA**

Just as elsewhere in Europe, the nineteenth century was as much about a turning away from Seneca's version and a rediscovery of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* and increasingly the trilogy as a whole (cf. Michelakis and Ewans), so the *Oresteia* also enjoyed a revival in Britain at this time. The nineteenth-century obsession with origins and the evolutionary process meant that both the idea of a transgenerational curse and the notion of political and social progress from a tribal to a civic system of justice were of particular interest to Victorian audiences. That the *Agamemnon* at Oxford looked towards the retributive and restorative endings of the *Libation Bearers* and the *Eumenides* respectively is implicit in the sketch from *The Graphic* of the final scene of the production. And when Cambridge chose *Eumenides* five years later as its third Greek play, evolutionary concerns are again implicit in the choice. When the music by Charles Villiers Stanford was revived the following year, a reviewer referred to Aeschylus' 'profound belief in the inevitable and inexorable Nemesis which waits upon wrong doing ... a faith which in this opportunistic age of shifty politics and harum-scarum morality seems to be fast dying out altogether.'

Similar concerns prompted George Warr, the Professor of Greek at King's College, London, to attempt to stage an abridged version of the trilogy entitled *The Story of Orestes* in the Prince's Hall, Piccadilly in 1886. Warr defended his abridgement on the grounds that his 'object ha[d] been to rescue the Trilogy from the dislocation to which it has hitherto been subjected'. In part this 'dislocation' could be said to stem from the nineteenth-century need to read myth diachronically: Warr had already staged a production of *The Tale of Troy* with his students in 1883 and this production was now to form a double bill with *The Story of Orestes*. Just as stage adaptations of popular Victorian fiction had become commonplace, so now ancient Greek epic was granted serious theatrical treatment by Warr and his students after earlier burlesque reworkings in the 1850s and 1860s. And just as the triple-decker novel had become the most common form in which

66 *Pall Mall Gazette*, 17 May 1886, 3—4.
67 *The Athenaeum*, no. 3057, 29 May 1886, 725.
the novel reached its reading public, so now the trilogic form was increasingly accommodated within the theatre (cf. Michelakis on France, Chapter 1).

However, it was not simply pedagogical or evolutionary concerns that determined Warr's version of the *Oresteia*. In the Introduction to his translation published some years later, Warr writes that Athene should be seen as an 'embodiment of the Hellenic masculine intellect imposing its ordinances with a quasi-sacerdotal authority'.\(^{68}\) Echoing in some ways Bachofen's earlier theory of the trilogy enacting the historical overthrow of a matriarchy by a patriarchal system of order, Warr's reading demanded an awareness of the trilogy in its entirety because only thus, in his view, could the ascendency of the 'Hellenic masculine intellect' be made manifest. Warr's earlier production of *The Tale of Troy* was staged to raise funds for the Ladies' Department of King's College, and his feminist sympathies in many ways determined his choice of this play in 1886.\(^{69}\) Now with the campaign for women's emancipation beginning to make visible progress (especially with regard to women's education), Warr's version of the *Oresteia* not only demonstrated the power that women can wield in a male society, but also how that power had been institutionally denied to them.

It was, moreover, the idea of the Ladies' Department at the College that led to the original involvement of Frederic Leighton with Warr's productions in both 1883 and 1886. Leighton had painted 'Clytemnestra from the Battlements of Argos watches for the Beacon Fires which are to Announce the Return of Agamemnon' in the early 1870s;\(^{70}\) and now, together with E. J. Poynter, G. F. Watts, Henry Holiday and Walter Crane, he lent his designs for the scenery and *tableaux* to the Greek plays based upon the Atreidae myths, guaranteeing them high public profile. And here in the 1886 version of the *Oresteia*, the different nineteenth-century ways of 'viewing' Aeschylus' tragedy—through both the visual arts and archaeological finds—come together, as the *tableaux* designed by leading Academicians now command centre stage. One reviewer commenting on a scene set against the backdrop illustrated here (Fig. 8.2), praises the overall effect of scenic design:

> Very great care, moreover, had evidently been taken, and several of the tableaux were as effective as any scene from a Greek play yet performed here. The sleeping furies about Orestes, in their flame-coloured garments and green serpentine headdresses, their faces covered with cleverly contrived masks, were first-rate, and whether their leader was a man or a woman nobody could be sure.\(^{71}\)

As the painters had sought to capture the classical world on canvas and had kept certain scenes from the *Agamemnon* in the public mind at a time when they were not shown on the stage, so they were now equally eager to participate in the

\(^{68}\) Warr (1900), xlii–xliii.

\(^{69}\) The 1886 production was staged in aid of the London University Endowment Fund, which was set up to enable both men and women from poorer backgrounds to attend the University.

\(^{70}\) Jenkyns (1992), 215–16.

\(^{71}\) *Pall Mall Gazette*, 14 May 1886, 3.
Figure 8.2. Engraving of George Watt's *The Story of Orestes* (1886).
general attempt to recreate its drama on the stage. If nineteenth-century stage history is in large measure an account of the art of perfecting stage pictorialism, the paintings of this period in turn seem increasingly to invoke the stage; and Collier’s ‘Clytemnestra’ and Richmond’s ‘An Audience in Athens during the representation of Agamemnon’ are but two examples of this rich symbiosis (see Figs. 1.3 and 1.2).

If the set of The Story of Orestes demonstrates the convergence of painters and archaeologists at this time, it is through the character of Cassandra that the links between the visual arts and the acting profession are best illustrated. Gail Marshall has explored those links in a fascinating study of Victorian actresses and the myth of Pygmalion and Galatea. As Marshall points out, the relationship between Leighton and the actress who played Cassandra, Dorothy Dene can be considered representative of what she terms the nineteenth-century Galatea-aesthetic.72 Dene had been ‘discovered’ by the art world in 1879 when she was introduced to Leighton and Watts as a model for portrait studies; Dene is Leighton’s Galatea, desired and desirable in her sculptural state; and her acting career significantly ended following the death of her benefactor. From a poor East End background, she confided to Leighton her ambition to be an actress; and it was Leighton who had funded her training and followed her acting career enthusiastically.

The ‘discovery’ of Dene, however, from the public’s point of view really began with her appearance in Warr’s play, for which she received glowing reviews for her performance as Cassandra:

The chief feature of the performance was the remarkable acting of Miss Dorothy Dene as Cassandra. We are inclined to think it was the best piece of acting that we have seen from an English actress for a long time. Miss Dene has great personal charm, but nobody expected from her a performance so powerful, so finished, and so self-controlled. It was not the least Greek, but we do not hesitate to anticipate from it a high position for her on the English stage.73

In The Illustrated London News, she is praised for being ‘lost in the passion of her personation,’ for playing ‘Cassandra with real fire’. In the estimation of the reviewer, Dene ‘is evidently an artist of considerable promise’; and her interpretation of the role, her ability to lose her ‘identity in the character and [be] absorbed in the contemplation of a great subject’, is considered exemplary and an object lesson from which the professional players in the production (namely the Trees) could learn.74 Although she does not appear to have enjoyed much success on the stage after her startling performance as Cassandra, she remained in the public eye as Leighton’s principal model for all his major paintings in the final decade of his life.

74 Illustrated London News, 22 May 1886, 524. Cf. the engraving of Dene in contemporary dress alongside the review of the play in Punch, 19 May 1886, 245.
Dene was not alone in having the sculptural metaphor imposed upon her: as Marshall’s study ably demonstrates, the desirability of the Victorian actress lies precisely in the fact that it is the male gaze that determines the sexual potential of the otherwise inanimate body. But if Dene’s real-life experience merely exposed the perils of the Galatea-aesthetic—as she was Pygmalion-like transported beyond her sphere only to disappear from view with the demise of her patron—it was in a very real sense her appearance in the part of the ‘all-seeing’ Cassandra that confirmed the redundancy of the nineteenth-century standard view of the play as a non-dramatic lyric ode, and made Fleeming Jenkin’s designation of it as proto-modernist tragedy truly believable.
Woolf’s Agamemnon Notebook

Virginia Woolf read Greek with a passion, beginning in 1897 with a series of private tutors and continuing on her own for many years. In the early journals collected in A Passionate Apprentice, Woolf fondly described her Greek lessons with Miss Janet Case, whose favourite writers were Aeschylus and Euripides: she taught Woolf that ‘Aeschylus was strenuous, grand, impassioned’. Their tutorials included some ‘strenuous’ readings in Aeschylean tragedy, with Woolf reporting in 1903: ‘a great flea jumped on to my Aeschylus as I read with Case the other day—and now bites large holes in me.’ Bitten by the bug, Woolf also jumped into Aeschylus, making her way through the Greek text in leaps and bounds, despite large holes in her comprehension. ‘I have taken a plunge into tough Greek, and that has so much attraction for me—Heaven knows why—that I don’t want to do anything else,’ she wrote. During this early phase of her Greek studies, she recorded her readings in Greek drama in various reading notebooks, where she noted especially of Aeschylus that ‘in the obscurity of the language lies its dramatic merit’.

Woolf returned to Aeschylus two decades later, when she was preparing to write her essay ‘On Not Knowing Greek’ (1925). ‘I am beginning Greek again . . . but which Greek play?’ she asked herself in a diary entry of 1922. Having chosen the Agamemnon of Aeschylus, she wrote, ‘I think that clears the matter up—though
how to read Aeschylus, I don’t quite know: quickly is my desire, but that, I see, is an illusion.6 She resolved to ‘read Greek now steadily’ as a daily discipline, since ‘at forty I am beginning to learn the mechanism of my own brain’.7 In the course of several months, she compiled her own ‘crib’ for translating the Greek text of the Agamemnon, with English on one side of each page and Greek on the other. It is an extraordinary object to behold, with its hand-worn cover and yellowed pages covered in Woolf’s distinctive handwriting, part manuscript and part collage.8

To make this notebook, Woolf cut up an older Greek edition of the play (published in 1831 by Charles James Blomfield) and pasted the printed text into the right side of each page. On the left side she transcribed by hand, in variously black and blue ink from her fountain pen, a prose translation by Professor Arthur Verrall (published in 1904, an annotated edition with Greek and English on facing pages). Woolf wrote at the time, ‘I am making a complete edition, text, translation & notes of my own—mostly copied from Verrall; but carefully gone into by me.’9 Unpublished and unauthorized, her private ‘edition’ was less a translation than a transcription, to which Woolf added a few variations with occasional marks and remarks in the margins, commenting on passages of interest or defining Greek works that she had underlined and looked up in the Greek–English dictionary. After several months of trying ‘to make out what Aeschylus wrote’ and ‘master the Agamemnon’, Woolf was pleased to proclaim, ‘I now know how to read Greek quick (with a crib in one hand) & with pleasure.’10

But the purpose of this ‘quick’ reading was not to revive ancient Greek in living English, but rather to quicken the strange pleasure of reading a dead language. Woolf describes this experience of reading Aeschylus in a remarkable passage from her essay ‘On Not Knowing Greek’. Enumerating the 1663 lines of the Agamemnon, she observes that Aeschylus makes this drama ‘tremendous by stretching every phrase to the utmost, by sending them floating forth in metaphors,’ so that ‘it is necessary to take that dangerous leap through the air without the support of words.’11 Answering her own question—how to read Aeschylus—she seems to have turned the flea literally jumping onto a page of Aeschylus into a figure of thought: a way to trace the movement of her own mind around the words on the page. While the words of Aeschylus are often ‘blown astray,’ according to Woolf, their meaning might be discerned in a ‘rapid flight’:

For words, when opposed to such a blast of meaning, must give out, must be blown astray, and only by collecting in companies convey the meaning which each one separately is too weak to express. Connecting them in a rapid flight of the mind we know instantly and instinctively what they mean, but could not decant that meaning afresh into any other

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6 Woolf (1978), 2. 208.
7 Ibid. 2. 205-6.
8 The notebook has been microfilmed by the New York Public Library for the Berg Collection (Berg Reel 13) and can be viewed on ‘Major Authors on CD-ROM: Virginia Woolf’ (Primary Source Media, 1997).
10 Ibid. 2. 213, 225, 273.
11 Woolf (1925), 31.
words. There is an ambiguity which is the mark of the highest poetry; we cannot know exactly what it means.  

Going on to quote a line from the *Agamemnon* in Greek, Woolf concludes that 'the meaning is just on the far side of language.'

To get that far, to the other side of language, we too must leap into a space between English and Greek. Woolf's *Agamemnon* notebook sets the stage for this way of reading the play. Much more than a 'crib,' the notebook is a theatrical spectacle in its own right; a theatre where Woolf can perform the act of translating—transposing, transcribing, transliterating, transforming—one language into another. This is not a linear movement from English to Greek, but the creation of an interlingual space that allows us to read in multiple directions, as we can see in Figure 9.1. The page of Woolf's notebook reproduced here is the beginning of the Cassandra scene, a primal scene of linguistic estrangement enacted in the first syllables uttered, or rather stuttered, by Cassandra: οτοτοτοί πότι πα. ἄπολλον ἄπολλον (1072—3). At this point in the play, it is not clear yet whether Cassandra is speaking in Greek, or in another tongue, or perhaps in tongues. In its radical unintelligibility, her utterance is both barbaric (οτοτοτοί, a series of stuttering syllables that sounds foreign to the ear) and prophetic (*O Apollo O Apollo*, a punning invocation to the name of the god who is her destroyer).

The momentary alienation of words from meaning is an effect that Woolf admired in Aeschylean tragedy. For her essay 'On Not Knowing Greek', she quoted Cassandra's words as they appeared in her *Agamemnon* notebook, and called this 'the naked cry' of Cassandra:

Every sentence had to explode on striking the ear, however slowly and beautifully the words might then descend, and however enigmatic might their final purport be. No splendour or richness of metaphor could have saved the *Agamemnon* if either images or allusions of the subtlest or most decorative had got between us and the naked cry οτοτοτοί πότι πα. ἄπολλον ἄπολλον.  

What strikes Woolf is a seemingly literal moment, simultaneously before and beyond the figurative language that Aeschylus sends floating forth in metaphors. But if Cassandra's cry might have been heard 'to explode' in the original Greek, here, in Woolf's essay, it can only be spelled out in Greek letters that explode on striking the eye: an enigmatic quotation left 'naked' in the middle of the page, untranslated and untransliterated, to create a space for reading between languages. In the essay, as in the notebook, it is a dramatic encounter with the literality of Greek letters, staged by Woolf for performance in the mind of the reader.

As a performance of and for reading, Woolf's *Agamemnon* reflects back on a long history of translating Greek tragedy for the page and not for the stage: a textual tradition exemplified in translations of Aeschylus by some of Woolf's...
literary precursors in Victorian England. For example, Robert Browning's *Agamemnon* was never intended as a script to be performed for an audience in the theatre; published in 1877, his 'transcript' was a more idiosyncratic writerly production, in which he played the role of a famous reader in his encounter with a famous text. Translating 'in as Greek a fashion as our English will bear', Browning tried to follow the twists and turns of the original text as literally as possible, and in the case of Cassandra simply transliterated her lament: 'Otototoi, Gods, Earth, Apollon, Apollon!' Indeed Browning translated the *Agamemnon* so literally that one reader complained, 'at almost every page I had to turn to the Greek to see what the English meant.' The scene of reading famously (or infamously) enacted in Browning's 'transcript' left him hovering between English and Greek, not unlike Woolf's transcription of the *Agamemnon*; at every page of her notebook, we have to turn from Greek to English and from English to Greek, to see what might have been meant.

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14 On the literary reception of Greek tragedy in Victorian England, see e.g. Jenkyns (1980), 87–111; Hall and Macintosh (2005), chs. 12–17; and Macintosh, this volume.
15 Browning (1877), Preface and lines 1066–7.
16 Litzinger and Smalley (1970), 443. On Browning's *Agamemnon* translation, see also Prins (1989); A. Roberts (1991); Reynolds (2003); Taplin and Macintosh, this volume.
Of course the translation of Greek tragedy within a textual tradition does not preclude or exclude familiarity with other kinds of performance. Alongside scholarly debates about literal and translingual translation in the nineteenth century, there was a dramatic revival of these texts in the visual arts and in the theatre, in amateur theatricals and on the popular stage, in low burlesque and in high opera, and within various academic settings, especially towards the end of the century. Browning attended the 1880 Agamemnon performed in Greek at Oxford, and by the early twentieth century such student productions were an established tradition, familiar to Woolf as well. She was especially interested in the Cambridge Greek Play, and her notebook can be read in relation to two productions in particular. The first was a performance of the Agamemnon in 1900, when Woolf’s brother was a student at Cambridge and Woolf herself was beginning to learn Greek. The second was the Oresteia produced at Cambridge by J. T. Sheppard in 1921, around the time when Woolf was returning to her Greek studies and preparing to write her essay 'On Not Knowing Greek.’ In her Agamemnon notebook, Woolf transposed the strange experience of seeing a play performed in Greek, simultaneously out of and back into the strange experience of reading Greek. By focusing on Cassandra in particular as a figure for ‘barbarous’ utterance, we can see how Woolf’s Agamemnon is enacted somewhere between the page and the stage, in the interplay between theatrical and textual performances of translation. But first let us consider how Woolf learned to read Aeschylus, in different stages.

THE SPELL OF GREEK

Woolf learned Greek not for scholarly purposes but as an amateur, for the love of it. Like so many girls in the nineteenth century, she began informally at home with her brother. ‘It was through him that I first heard about the Greeks,’ Woolf recalled in ‘A Sketch of the Past’, and during the years when Thoby was a student at Cambridge she asked him to ‘help me with a Greek play or two’. Then in 1897, she wrote a letter to him, announcing that ‘I am beginning Greek at King’s College,’ and boasting, ‘we have got as far as the first verb in our Greek, and by the Christmas holidays you will have to take me in hand.’ Woolf’s teacher in the Ladies’ Department of King’s College was Professor George Warr, who had a special interest in Aeschylean drama. He had directed The Story of Orestes in 1886 (see Macintosh, Chapter 8), and was working on a translation of The Oresteia of Aeschylus, Translated and Explained for publication in 1900. Surveying the rise of Greek tragedy in his introduction, he emphasized that the poetry of Aeschylus came to life in ‘a large, imaginative presentation’, and that Aeschylus was

17 See Hall and Macintosh (2005), and Macintosh, this volume.
18 Woolf (1985), 125.
19 Woolf (1975), 1. 42.
20 Ibid. 1. 10.
'a composer, trainer, and actor' who 'exerted his skill, acquired by lifelong professional training, in the invention of orcheistic figures and gestures'.\textsuperscript{21} As a director, Warr also exerted his skill in a vivid recreation of Aeschylean drama, not only by translating Greek words into English but by imagining the translation of words into gestures as well.

While learning to love Aeschylus from 'my beloved Warr',\textsuperscript{22} Woolf also studied Latin and Greek with the sister of Walter Pater, Miss Clara Pater who was 'perfectly delightful'.\textsuperscript{23} Woolf took special delight in Greek, expressed repeatedly in her correspondence from the turn of the century. She fell in love with the language, taking pleasure in spelling out ordinary English words in Greek letters, as she wrote in a letter, ‘\textit{TPΩ νΣΕΠΣ: τρουες: trouses: trousers now, does the obtuse beast understand?’}\textsuperscript{24} Then in 1902, to move into more serious and sustained reading of Greek texts, Woolf began private tutorials with Janet Case that continued off and on for seven years. Case made a strong impression on the young Woolf, whose diary of 1903 includes a sketch dedicated to 'Miss Case': 'an excellent teacher' and 'a valiant strong-minded woman' who lived up to Woolf’s high expectations for Greek.\textsuperscript{25} ‘She seemed to me exactly what I had expected—tall, classical looking, masterfull [sic]’ and also ‘more professional than Miss Pater’.\textsuperscript{26}

The 'masterful' Miss Case expected Woolf to master Greek, as well. Seeing that 'my foundations were rotten, [she] procured a Grammar, & bade me start with the very first exercise' and 'never failed to point out, with perfect good humour that my exercises were detestable'. Often she interrupted delight with 'the tedium of Greek grammar' as Woolf recalled:

I read a very lovely description of maidenhood in Euripides... & at the end I paused with some literary delight in its beauty. Not so Miss Case. 'The use of the instrumental genitive in the 3rd line is extremely rare' her comment upon Love! But that is not a fair example; & at any rate I think it really praiseworthy; aesthetic pleasure is so much easier to attain than knowledge of his uses of the genitive—I think it is true that she read with a less purely literary interest in the text than I did.

But even if she read 'with a less purely literary interest in the text' (it seems Miss Case never missed a case, grammatically speaking), she left room for Woolf to read Greek with a more purely literary interest, for aesthetic pleasure. Woolf took note that 'she was not by any means blind to the beauties of Aeschylus' and sometimes 'she would spend a whole lesson in defining the relation of Aeschylus towards Fate.'\textsuperscript{27}

Janet Case's passion for Aeschylean drama in particular began with her own student days at Cambridge, where she had been among the first generation of women to study Classics at Girton College. In 1885 she was the first (and only)

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{21} Warr (1900), xxxi–xxxii. For further details of Warr, see Hall and Macintosh (2005), ch. 16.
\item \textsuperscript{22} Woolf (1975), 1. 20.
\item \textsuperscript{23} Ibid. 1. 26.
\item \textsuperscript{24} Ibid. 1. 24.
\item \textsuperscript{25} Woolf (1990), 183.
\item \textsuperscript{26} Ibid. 182.
\item \textsuperscript{27} Ibid. 182–3.
\end{itemize}
woman to act in the Cambridge Greek Play, where she was cast in the role of Athena in the *Eumenides* of Aeschylus and widely praised for her classical posture and excellent elocution.\(^{28}\) In 1888 she was featured by *The Woman's World* in an article entitled ‘Greek Plays at the Universities’, turning her into an icon for the new woman, educated and independent.\(^{29}\) She became an advocate for the higher education of women, teaching private pupils in and around London, and later serving as a sponsor for various Greek plays performed as fundraisers for Bedford College for Women. Although (or perhaps because) Case herself did not find a place within the university as a professor and scholar of Classics, she was able to mediate between the popularization and professionalization of Classics at the turn of the century. In 1905 she made a small, pocket-size translation of *Prometheus Bound*, published in The Temple Dramatists series: a philanthropic effort (like the drama of Prometheus himself, who taught the arts of writing to man) to introduce Aeschylus to readers with little or no knowledge of Greek. With Greek and English on facing pages, this translation of Aeschylus may have served as model for Woolf’s early Greek studies and, later, for the *Agamemnon* notebook.

In an obituary from 1937, entitled ‘Miss Janet Case, Classical Scholar and Teacher’, Woolf recalls ‘a noble Athena, breaking down the tradition that only men acted in the Greek play’.\(^{30}\) Under her tutelage Woolf learned that Greek plays could be actively read, re-read, and re-enacted by women, to defend the cause of Woman. ‘Her Greek was connected with the politics of her day,’ Woolf wrote in her eulogy, and she was influenced by Case in admiring Electra and Antigone in particular.\(^{31}\) Case even proposed a ‘feminist’ reading in ‘Women in the Plays of Aeschylus’ (1914), insisting that ‘Aeschylus gives his women brains as well as hearts. He believes in women. It looks as if he would have had them share the freedom that was the breath of his nostrils, freedom to think and to do,’\(^{32}\) Case was especially eloquent in defence of Clytemnestra, who ‘strips naked the unjust bias of men’s condemnation’.\(^{33}\) According to Case, Clytemnestra embodies ‘the qualities [Aeschylus] prized most in women, courage, loyalty, love; only in her . . . they have been poisoned at the source and turned to evil things by the intolerable pain of wrong and suffering’.\(^{34}\) Nevertheless, Case maintained that Clytemnestra commands our respect through ‘sheer intellectual force’ and ‘torrential eloquence’.\(^{35}\)

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\(^{28}\) See the biographical entry on Case in Stray (2004) 1, 161–3. For a photo of Case in the role of Athena, see Easterling in Stray (1999), 29.

\(^{29}\) The article in *The Woman’s World* was published ‘by a Girton Graduate’ and included illustrations of Case as seen in the role of Athena at Cambridge in 1885, and also in the role of Electra as seen in Sophocles’ *Electra* produced at Girton in 1883. For discussion of this production of *Electra*, and a suggestion that ‘Case’s enthusiasm for Electra surely informed Virginia Woolf’s wonderful essay “On Not Knowing Greek”,’ see E. Hall (1999a), 291–6.

\(^{30}\) Alley (1982), 298.

\(^{31}\) On Case’s involvement in various feminist causes and her influence on Woolf’s reading of *Antigone*, see Oldfield (1996), 49–50. Oldfield reproduces a page from Woolf’s notes on the *Antigone* as well, 52–3.

\(^{32}\) Case (1914), 7. I am grateful to Christopher Stray for calling this article to my attention.

\(^{33}\) Ibid.

\(^{34}\) Case (1914), 16.

\(^{35}\) Ibid. 17.
The intellectual force and eloquence of Case commanded similar respect from Woolf, who recalls: ‘she was a person of ardent theories & she could expound them fluently.’36 These theories made a lasting impression. Years later, in her essay ‘On Not Knowing Greek’, Woolf defended Clytemnestra much as Case had done: ‘Clytemnestra is no unmitigated villainess. “δεινον το τικτειν έστιν” she says— “there is a strange power in motherhood.” It is no murderess, violent and unredeemed, whom Orestes kills within the house.’37 And when she published her essay in The Common Reader, Woolf was eager for approval from her former Greek tutor: ‘I am very glad you like the Common Reader. I was rather nervous lest you should curse my impertinence for writing about Greek, when you are quite aware of my complete ignorance.’38

Yet Case did not insist on complete knowledge of Greek, as Woolf recalls in her obituary: ‘If the pupil were destined to remain an amateur, Janet Case accepted the fact and then the grammar was shut and the play opened. Somehow the masterpieces of Greek drama were stormed, without grammar, without accents, but somehow, under her compulsion, so sane and yet so stimulating, out they shone, if inaccessible still supremely desirable.’39 Rather than lamenting the difficulty of educating women to write and pronounce Greek properly, Woolf here turns the Victorian denigration of ‘Lady’s Greek, without the accents’40 into a revelation of Greek as a language of and for desire. While girls may not have been trained to write ancient Greek with the proper accents, or to pronounce it with the proper accentuation, an amateur’s understanding made it seem even more desirable, accentuating the passion of Lady’s Greek beyond a (merely) scholarly reading.

Woolf’s desire for Greek was part of a broader trend toward Ladies’ Greek, in the plural, at the turn of the century when women were entering classical studies at universities. Most successful was Jane Ellen Harrison, appointed in 1898 to a research position at Newnham College. Up to this point, Harrison and Case had been on parallel tracks: both studied Classics during the formation of women’s colleges at Cambridge, both performed in Greek plays, and both moved to London to give public lectures and private lessons in Classics.41 Like the ‘ardent theories’ of Case, Harrison cultivated a passionate style of classical scholarship through her reading of Greek drama in particular, but she performed this within a different institutional setting of Cambridge University, where she was the first woman recognized as a classical scholar. Harrison’s professional persona impressed Woolf when she was introduced to Harrison ‘and all the other learned Ladies’ at Newnham;42 and in the course of their friendship, Woolf came to admire the

39 Alley (1982), 299.
40 A quotation from Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Aurora Leigh 2. 76–7.
41 Harrison performed the role of Alcestis at Oxford in 1887, and also played Penelope in Warr’s 1883 production of The Tale of Troy in London. See Beard (2000), 37–53 and A. Robinson (2002), 81–84.
42 Woolf (1975), 1. 145.
interplay of scholarly and literary prose in Harrison's work. She persuaded Hogarth Press to publish Harrison's *Reminiscences of a Student's Life* (1925), and the spectral presence of 'the famous scholar, could it be J— H— herself?' famously haunts the lecture presented by Woolf at Newnham College, later published in *A Room of One's Own*. Various critics have therefore read Woolf in relation to Harrison, locating both on 'the stage of scholarship' as Sandra Shattuck suggests: 'It is as if Woolf were staging Harrison's work providing a theatre where creative scholarship and creative writing combine.'

To Woolf, Harrison seemed the very embodiment of desire for Greek. 'To fall in love with a language is an enchanting experience,' Harrison proclaimed in *Aspects, Aorists, and the Classical Tripos* (a Cambridge pamphlet published in 1919). 'What was the spell cast by Greek?' she wondered:

> It was not the spell of Homer or Aeschylus or Plato; I could not read them. No—if I may be forgiven a reminiscence important for my point—I fell in love suddenly, hopelessly with the Greek particles μεν and δέ and γόνω and δ'ων. I remember the hours and the place as though it were yesterday when my fate fell upon me, when the sudden sense came over me, the hot-cold shiver of delight, the sense of a language more sensitive than my own to shades of meaning, more delicate in its balance of clauses, in its setting out of the relations of things, more charged with the magic of well—Intellectual Beauty.

Echoing Shelley's 'Hymn to Intellectual Beauty' in her own intellectual, beautiful prose, Harrison describes her first encounter with Greek as a highly aestheticized and eroticized experience. Even before reading Aeschylus (or Homer or Plato), Harrison claims she had already fallen in love with the Greek alphabet. Spelling out in Greek the particles μεν and δέ and γόνω and δ'ων, she was enchanted by the 'spell' of Greek, experiencing the language as a physical sensation with a 'hot-cold shiver of delight'.

So also Woolf was enchanted by Greek, as she recalled later in life: 'How powerful the spell is still—Greek. Thank heaven I learnt it young—an emotion different from any other.' For Woolf the spell that Greek 'still' held was also the spelling of 'still—Greek', a silent alphabet. No matter how long Woolf studied ancient Greek, she found its meaning just beyond reach, and just beyond speech, as she jotted in one of her reading notebooks: 'The difficulty of reading Greek is not the words, but getting the fling of the sentence entire—as it leaves the mouth. I am always being knotted up.' This sensation of 'being knotted up' nevertheless

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43 Woolf (1929), 28.
45 J. E. Harrison (1919), 5–6. For a recent study of Harrison and the role played by women in Greek and Latin studies at the turn the century, see Beard (2000).
46 Woolf (1954), 252.
47 Quoted from Woolf's unpublished reading notes by Fowler (1999), 221. On Woolf's Greek studies, see also Alley (1982); Herman (1983); Fowler (1983); Poole (1995), 173–84; Oldfield (1996); Farrell (2001), 32–36; Dalgarno (2001); Kolocotroni (2005); Fernald (forthcoming).
enabled Woolf to make sense of Greek in a different way, not to reclaim a living language that could be pronounced but to proclaim the experience of reading Greek as a dead language, no longer spoken. And so, as the culmination of two decades of Greek studies, she began her essay ‘On Not Knowing Greek’ by disclaiming knowledge of Greek: ‘For it is vain and foolish to talk of Knowing Greek, since in our ignorance we should be at the bottom of any class of schoolboys, since we do not know how the words sounded.’

Unlike Victorian schoolboys who learned to recite ancient Greek, or Victorian philologists who debated its authentic pronunciation, Woolf understood philology more literally as a love of Greek logoi that would leave the language unpronounced, unspoken, and unknown.

Far from lamenting that we do not know how to hear Greek, Woolf’s essay therefore proves to be a meditation on how to read Greek as a language for not knowing. In the first paragraph she goes on to insist that the very strangeness of Greek, its unknowability, also provokes a strange desire to know it:

All the more strange, then, is it that we should wish to know Greek, try to know Greek, feel for ever drawn back to Greek, and be for ever making up some notion of the meaning of Greek, though from what incongruous odds and ends, with what slight resemblance to the real meaning of Greek, who shall say?

Beginning with the disclaimer that we cannot ‘talk of Knowing Greek’, and ending with the question ‘who shall say?’ the first paragraph of Woolf’s essay implies that the experience of reading Greek leaves one speechless. Throughout the essay she emphasizes an inability to speak and hear Greek, turning the difficulty of its ‘fling’ into a way to track the vanishing flight of thought. ‘We can never hope to get the whole fling of a sentence in Greek as we do in English. We cannot hear it, now dissonant, now harmonious, tossing sound from line to line across a page.’

Quoting various words and phrases in Greek, Woolf concludes ‘it is useless, then, to read Greek in translations’, for what would be lost in English is the untranslatability of the Greek, the encounter with its unspoken otherness, the hot-cold sensation of not knowing Greek. Thus, at a time when classicists made various claims to ‘knowing Greek’, Woolf turned to Greek to perform ‘not knowing’ as a movement of thought more mobile, more emotive, or as she phrased it, ‘an emotion different from any other’.

CASSANDRA ON THE STAGE

Woolf once claimed, ‘I detest pale scholars with their questioning about life, and the message of the classics, and the bearing of Greek thought upon modern

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48 Woolf (1925), 24. 49 Ibid. 50 Woolf (1925), 36. 51 Ibid. 37.
problems,\textsuperscript{52} yet she remained keenly interested in the way scholarly translations and dramatic performances of Greek tragedy might speak (albeit in strange ways) to the modern mind. She was well acquainted with classicists at Cambridge: in addition to Jane Harrison, her circle of friends at Cambridge University included Walter Headlam (of King's College) and Arthur Verrall (of Trinity College), rival scholars of Aeschylus. She had a brief flirtation with Headlam at the time when he was busy editing and translating Aeschylean tragedy, and he may have intended to dedicate his translation to her, before his sudden death.\textsuperscript{53} 'Last time I saw him he complained as usual, but thought that he was becoming known, and he had almost finished some edition of Aeschylus,' wrote Woolf in 1908; and in 1910 she saw the posthumous publication of his \textit{Agamemnon of Aeschylus with Verse Translation, Introduction and Notes}.\textsuperscript{54}

Yet when Woolf returned to Aeschylus a decade later, the translation she chose to transcribe for her \textit{Agamemnon} notebook was not by Headlam, but by Professor Verrall. Known as 'the Great Verrall', he was praised in the 'Memoir' for his \textit{Collected Literary Essays, Ancient and Modern} for a poetic sense of Aeschylean language:

To judge from his work on Aeschylus, Verrall would seem to have come near to grasping its utmost possibilities. By a fearless recognition of the boldness and pregnancy of Aeschylean phraseology, and of the freedom of Aeschylean syntax, he enlarged our whole conception of the whole language. He, so to speak, extended its reach.\textsuperscript{55}

In her notebook Woolf drew on Verrall's authority to enlarge her conception of Greek, and 'extend its reach' into English as well. Choosing Verrall over Headlam, she seems to have taken sides in a notorious debate between the two scholars about editing Aeschylus, in which Headlam claimed philological expertise and Verrall literary sensibility. As Simon Goldhill has argued in 'Wipe Your Glosses', the rhetorical stakes in this scholarly battle were high: 'What glossing does to texts, what knowledge is brought to bear, released or repressed, is inevitably part of an institutional and intellectual politics of reading.'\textsuperscript{56} Woolf played out these politics of reading on a different stage, in the pages of her \textit{Agamemnon} notebook. In contrast to Headlam and Verrall and their public debates about editing Aeschylus, she made this private 'edition' for herself to transpose their self-authorizing glosses into the unauthorized \textit{glossolalia} of Ladies' Greek.

Hence the appeal of Cassandra in particular. To reimagine Cassandra, Woolf learned much from the image of Cassandra that emerged in late Victorian scholarship. George Warr (her first Greek teacher) included a lengthy synopsis

\textsuperscript{52} Woolf (1975), 1.386.
\textsuperscript{53} Marcus speculates that 'Woolf supposedly contributed to Walter Headlam's translation of the \textit{Agamemnon},' and suggests 'it would be interesting to compare her translation (in the Berg collection, unpublished) with his' (1994), 250. See also Dalgarno (2001), 45–6.
\textsuperscript{54} Woolf (1975), 1. 336. \textsuperscript{55} Verrall (1913), xlix.
\textsuperscript{56} Goldhill (1999b), 380. In his 1891 pamphlet \textit{On Editing Aeschylus}, Headlam published a scathing attack on Verrall; for further discussion of the Headlam-Verrall controversy, see also Goldhill (2002), 231–43.
of the Cassandra scene in his 1900 *Oresteia* commentary, making special note of Cassandra’s ‘barbarian speech’ in order to explain to the reader that ‘the word *barbaros* itself suggests a discordant jargon’.57 And in his 1904 edition of the *Agamemnon*, Verrall also wrote that Cassandra is ‘of immense importance in the tragedy... for its pathos’, emphasizing the dramatic impact of her speech: ‘In this astonishing scene Aeschylus seems to have touched the limit of what speech can do to excite pity and terror. The cries come forth to Apollo repeated louder and more wildly as the inspiration grows upon her.’58 Even Headlam was in agreement with Verrall on this (if only this) one point, noting in the introduction to his 1910 *Agamemnon* that ‘none can be more deeply impressive’ than the figure of Cassandra, if successfully performed: ‘The very silence of Cassandra provokes a disposition to hear her speak. From the first moment that she opens her mouth, curiosity is superseded by sympathy and awe.’59

But equally important was the popular reception of Cassandra, who provoked sympathy and awe from British audiences as well. They had seen the character performed with increasing frequency in various productions around London toward the end of the nineteenth century: in *The Tale of Troy* directed by Warr in 1883, Eugenie Sellers played Cassandra in Homeric Greek (one of the ‘lovely women rolling out hexameters’60), and Warr had chosen Dorothy Dene for a picturesque Cassandra in his *Story of Orestes* in 1886.61 Many a girl found a way to identify with the tragically enigmatic Cassandra, including the young poetess, A. Mary F. Robinson. She followed lectures in Classics at University College London in 1879, where she read Greek tragedy and declared the *Agamemnon* her favourite. She even imagined playing Cassandra in a private theatrical with Robert Browning (a family friend) in the role of Agamemnon, and Jane Harrison as Clytemnestra.62 Although nothing came of this grand scheme, Robinson confessed in a personal letter, ‘At home they call me Cassandra because of my dark eyes & because of an evil habit that I have of singing or declaiming to myself so soon as I am alone. They declare that one meets me on the stairs wringing my hands & crying ὁτότοτοτοῖ πόποι δά.’63

Cassandra’s dramatic appeal is also recounted by Mary Vivian Hughes in *A London Girl of the Eighties*, the memoir of a working-class girl educated

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57 Warr (1900), 155.
58 Verrall (1904), xlvi. Verrall concurs with the scholar A. Sidgwick in quoting his description of the Cassandra scene.
59 Headlam (1910), 36.
60 As reported in *Vanity Fair*, quoted in Beard (2000), 42. Beard notes that Virginia Woolf’s cousin J. K. Stephen played the role of Hector in this production.
61 On Dene as Cassandra, see Marshall (1998), 205 and Macintosh in this volume.
62 In letters from 1879 to J. A. Symonds, Robinson wrote, ‘I should like to get up a yet more ambitious undertaking, to play *Agamemnon* in the original! (Fancy poor Aeschylus the prey of amateurs at private theatricals!) ... I can’t think of an *Agamemnon*... I might ask Mr. Browning, he is quite young in his ways and might cover his venerable hairs with a wig!’ French National Library MS, Fonds Anglais 248.f.32. On Harrison, see 248. f. 105.
in North London to prepare for classical studies at Cambridge University. For a performance of 'Hector and Andromache' by the sixth-form girls, Hughes chose the role of Cassandra, reassured by her teacher: 'you can fill the hall with your voice if you like, and if you break down from nervousness or forgetting the words, why that in itself will add poignancy to your speech.' During the performance, Hughes recalls, 'I felt I actually was the prophetess doomed to speak the truth and yet never to be believed.' Eager to strike a classical pose, she identified with the cult of Classics at Cambridge and went to visit Girton College as a prospective student. Here she observed that 'Cambridge was all asplash about a Greek play, to be performed by undergraduates, with only one woman actor, a Miss Case, to take the part of Athene in the *Eumenides*, although as a member of the audience in 1885 she found 'that anything Greek could be so dull was my first surprise'.

Because it was performed in ancient Greek, the Cambridge Greek Play claimed more authenticity than 'popular' productions, but this tradition was easily mocked for its academic pretensions. Cassandra makes a comic cameo appearance, for example, in Edward F. Benson's 1896 novel, *The Babe, B.A., Being the Uneventful History of a Young Gentleman at Cambridge University*. While the main character in Benson's story prepares the role of Clytemnestra for a production of *Agamemnon*, the director of the play 'had very strong and original ideas on the subject of Cassandra, whom he had made his special care, and he had mapped out exceedingly carefully the gestures, tones, postures, and faces she was to make as the prophetic afflatus gradually gained possession over her'. It turns out Cassandra is 'a tall young gentleman with a most lovely girlish face', whose voice cracks during rehearsals of the Cassandra scene:

She was to roll her eyes and stare at the centre of the fourth row of stalls at the word 'Apollo'; she was to make a noise in her throat resembling gargling on the second 'Alas'; she was to stagger on the third, and palpitate on the fourth. . . . She was mad; let the audience know it. Mad people were incoherent and throaty; what she said was incoherent, let her mode of saying it be as throaty as possible. She must continually gargle, gargle, mule, puke, croak, creak, hoop, and hawk, and if then she didn't bring the house down, well,—the fault was not hers. Cassandra, who at any rate had a good memory, and did blindly what she was told to do, had just been through her part with faultless accuracy, and was a little hoarse after it, and no wonder.

In this parody, the naked cry of Cassandra is reduced to sputtering nonsense.

The *Agamemnon* that was actually performed at Cambridge in 1900 was similarly satirized by Max Beerbohm in his damning review, 'Aeschylus Made Ridiculous'. The stage set featured an elaborate archaeological reconstruction of a Minoan palace, suggesting to Beerbohm that 'the palace of Agamemnon was strangely like the Alhambra Palace of Varieties, Leicester Square'. Although he

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64 M. V. Hughes (1936), 105. 65 Ibid. 142. 66 Benson (1896), 200–1. 67 *The Saturday Review*, 24 November 1900. Reprinted in Beerbohm (1969), 325. Beerbohm contrasts the academic extravaganza at Cambridge with an open-air production at Bradfield College:
considered it a 'stupid, tawdry perversion of the Agamemnon', this production proved to be an important moment in the history of the Cambridge Greek Play, and was by other accounts quite a powerful performance. J. F. Crace (later a Classics tutor at Eton) played the role of Cassandra, and was praised in *The Times* 'more than any other single performer, for in appearance, gesture, declamation, and conception the impersonation was most impressive'. A photo of Crace shows him veiled in exotic garments, arms uplifted and eyes averted, striking a darkly prophetic pose (Fig. 9.2).

The photo was printed in the playbill for the Cambridge Greek Play, alongside a brief synopsis of 'this magnificent episode', explaining how the silence of Cassandra is broken when she 'begins to moan and to call on Apollo'. As she is 'grown more and more inspired with prophecy and foretells the murder' of Agamemnon, the chorus responds with disbelief and horror, and finally they 'cry out on her, telling her to be silent'. And so, in the final words she returns to silence, blotted out like a drawing by 'the wet sponge'. The obliteration of Cassandra is a graphic figure, suggesting how she differs from the other actors; she seems to embody visionary language briefly made visible in the theatre, less a speaking character defined by action than a written character that enacts the strangeness of its own speaking. The playbill emphasized how this curious 'character' should impress the audience: 'She is not necessary to the story; she is not even a study of character; she is intensely interesting in her picturesque solitude, and her impressive personality.' In Crace's performance, this literary character was lifted off the page and presented on stage as the embodiment of Greek letters, made to speak to an English audience.

The performance of the Aeschylean script in Greek was a way to animate (dead) Greek letters in the theatre, where the audience could follow the action with a text specially published for the performance: *The Agamemnon of Aeschylus, As Performed at Cambridge November 16-21, 1900, With the Verse Translation by Anna Swanwick*. In this acting edition the Greek text is printed alongside a well-known English translation by Mrs Swanwick, a Victorian woman of letters celebrated for her monumental version of the *Oresteia*. In the passage where Cassandra begins to speak, the Greek script appears on the right side of the page and English on the

"In the overt theatre of Bradfield, where we saw the *Agamemnon* last summer, the original spell of the tragedy seemed to fall on us in all its fullness,' adding the admonition that 'the committee of fourteen dons responsible for the Greek play at Cambridge would have been wiser not to project the *Agamemnon* this year, not to challenge so direct a comparison with Bradfield' (1969), 322-3.

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68 *The Times*, 19 November 1900. In surveying Greek plays at Cambridge, J. H. Edwards also notes that 'the Cassandra of Mr J. F. Crace will be the best-remembered part of this performance' (1909), 5.

69 *Granta Souvenir: The Agamemnon of Aeschylus* (1900), published by permission and dedicated to the Agamemnon Committee, in the Cambridge Greek Play Archive at Cambridge University.

70 *Granta Souvenir*, 28.

71 On the importance of Anna Swanwick's *Oresteia* translation in Victorian England, see Hardwick (2000), 33-6.
left side to help with the translation. But the naked cry of Cassandra is only partially translated, as ‘Ah me! Alas! Gods, Earth! Apollo, O Apollo!’ The un-translatable syllables *otototoi* have dropped out of the English text, leaving Cassandra’s utterance in limbo, heard but not understood. With this bilingual edition in hand, the audience must have entered into a peculiar scene of reading: instead of hearing English and reading Greek, they were hearing Greek while reading English, a reversal of the written and the spoken language that seemed to estrange both tongues.

At least this is how Cassandra might have been seen by Woolf, who certainly knew of this production and may have been in the audience.\(^72\) She was familiar with the tradition of the Cambridge Greek Play, for in the first of these plays performed in 1882, the mad Ajax had been played by her own cousin, J. K. Stephen.\(^73\) This was the same J. K. Stephen who later went mad himself, but not before publishing an eloquent defence of compulsory Greek studies at Cambridge. His 1891 pamphlet, entitled ‘The Living Languages’, argued that ‘knowing’ and ‘having known’ Greek are a necessary part of any gentleman’s

\(^72\) It is possible that Woolf saw the Cambridge Greek Play in 1900, as there is an inscription in a book that Thoby gave to her, dated 18 November 1900, ‘being the day after the performance of the Agamemnon of Aeschylus at Cambridge’. See Fowler (1999), 229.

\(^73\) On the performance of *Ajax* as the first Cambridge Greek Play, see Easterling (1999), 31–6.
education, and Woolf’s subsequent essay ‘On Not Knowing Greek’ can be read as a response to his claim, since she lacked the formal education in Greek that he considered compulsory.\textsuperscript{74} But even as the Greek play became a regular event at Cambridge, the curriculum of the university no longer required ancient Greek. The appeal of these Greek plays was precisely the performance of a language less understood, by fewer students, with the passing of each year, thus making Cassandra a timely embodiment of this sense of foreignness.

Cassandra appeared again on stage at Cambridge, twenty years later in \textit{The Oresteian Trilogy of Aeschylus Acted, in the Original Greek, by Members of the University}, and directed by J. T. Sheppard. In reviewing this production, many newspapers took it as an opportunity to comment on the state of Greek studies at the university. As noted in the \textit{Yorkshire Post}:

It was the first performance of a Greek play at Cambridge since a year or so before the war, and the revival was cordially welcomed by a large audience. Cambridge has abandoned compulsory Greek in its curriculum, and it was extremely interesting, therefore, to find so large a number of young men from our public schools capable of speaking Greek with the fluency necessary for a stage performance.\textsuperscript{75}

The \textit{Daily Telegraph} further observed:

It is an odd, ironical comment upon the way we do things in England that an English audience has never been permitted to see the one Greek trilogy until Greek ceased to be a compulsory subject at the Universities. There may be some who are moved to salute the performance of the ‘Oresteia’ at Cambridge as the swan song of Greek in our country.\textsuperscript{76}

If this production was indeed the ‘swan song of Greek’, it was associated in particular with the doomed Cassandra, ‘the most tragic figure in all drama, unique in pathos and unparalleled in the horror of her fate’, as noted in \textit{The Times}: ‘She appears like a swan in the last song of grief. Many remember the famous acting of Mr. Crace, of King’s, which set a standard for the part on the last occasion when it was played at Cambridge.’\textsuperscript{77}

In contrast to Crace’s somber Cassandra in 1900, Cassandra was played in 1921 by W. Le B. Egerton of Trinity, swathed in white like a dying swan (Figure 9.2). His performance was praised as another ‘striking success’ and ‘a tour de force’ in the \textit{Daily Telegraph}: ‘It is really difficult to believe when Cassandra is on the stage that she is a man at all. Mr. Egerton manages his voice with extraordinary

\textsuperscript{74} ‘Woolf’s opening sentence reads like a response to her cousin,’ Dalgarno observes (2001), 61. For further discussion of J. K. Stephen, who believed ‘the Greek language is the most perfect of languages . . . which he proves by the effect of Greek on the audience of the Cambridge Greek Play’, see Goldhill (2002), 241. On the compulsory Greek debates at Cambridge, see Judith Raphaely in Stray (1999), 71–94.

\textsuperscript{75} \textit{Yorkshire Post}, 3 March 1921.

\textsuperscript{76} \textit{Daily Telegraph}, 7 March 1921.

\textsuperscript{77} \textit{The Times}, 5 March 1921.
Other reviewers also singled out Egerton, ‘whose acting and delivery were both perfect, and whose enunciation of the passionate metres was a delight to the ear’. The musicality of his performance corresponded to Sheppard’s larger vision of the *Oresteia* as ‘a dramatic symphony’ in three movements, where ‘each movement has its own dramatic scheme, built up on simple musical designs’. Since, according to Sheppard, ‘Pity is the first note and the last of Cassandra’s scene,’ it seems that Egerton’s dramatic performance struck the right note to amplify this musical design.

But despite the fluency of his enunciation, audiences still required a bilingual text to understand the play. Reporting on his experience as a member of the audience, a reviewer for *The Times* wrote: ‘the cast—all male members of the University—have shown such devotion to their work that the expression and the gesture, all carried through with ease of manner, make it a fairly simple matter to follow the text of the play, the English verse translation of which has been admirably done by Mr. R. C. Trevelyan, of Trinity College.’ In the acting edition for this performance, English and Greek are printed on facing pages to make the performance more intelligible, like the acting edition for *Agamemnon* in 1900. But unlike Swanwick’s earlier translation, Trevelyan’s translation of the Cassandra scene incorporates the Greek syllables into English: ‘Otototoi O Earth! Earth! O Apollo! O Apollo!’ Trevelyan also preserves the double entendre when Cassandra calls Apollo her destroyer, by translating the line ὃτότοι Ὀ Ἁρδα! Ὀ Ἁρδα! with a pun on the Greek verb ἀπόλλων ἐμος (1080–1) (with a pun on the Greek verb ἀπόλλων to destroy or perish) quite literally as ‘Apollo indeed to me’. Thus, on the stage and on the page, Sheppard’s *Oresteia* sought to recreate the original effects of the Greek language on its English audience.

Not all members of the audience were convinced that this production was an ‘authentic’ reproduction, however. A review by Arnold Bennett conceded ‘doubtless the *Oresteia* is a masterpiece’, but ‘to say that it is performed in Greek is to play with words’ as he went on to grumble:

It is performed in a spoken medium which a tiny majority of persons residing on a small island lying off the western coasts of Europe have agreed among themselves shall be called Greek. Nobody not brought up at an English public school could even seize the mere words, and of the people brought up at English public schools probably not more than .01 (likelier .001) per cent could seize the mere words. If Aeschylus himself could have sat in the New Theatre, Cambridge, he would hardly have guessed that his own work was being performed... The sounds of the words were not Greek, the timbre of the voices was not Greek, nor the emphasis, nor the intonations, nor the vocal rise and fall of the sentences.

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78 *Daily Telegraph*, 7 March 1921. 79 *New Cambridge*, 5 March 1921. 80 Sheppard (1927), 16–17. 81 Ibid. 30–1. 82 *The Times*, 3 March 1921. 83 Trevelyan (1920), 38. 84 Bennett (1923), 13–14.
What was performed on stage was not the revival of ancient Greek as a spoken language, but a peculiar pronunciation that was neither English nor Greek, a tongue neither living nor dead.

Of course the peculiarity of this interlingual experience would appeal to Woolf, who took a special interest in Sheppard's Oresteia. Indeed, his production may have prompted her decision to go back to translating the Agamemnon. She was friendly with Sheppard, and makes note in her diary of her sister Vanessa 'having been to Cambridge, seen the Greek play'.85 In 1922, as she was starting to work on her Agamemnon notebook, she wrote to Trevelyan, 'I want to discuss your Aeschylus with you,'86 perhaps to compare his translation with her own. Although she had chosen to transcribe Verrall's text, the layout of her notebook looks more like Trevelyan's translation. Instead of placing Greek on the left page and English on the right, she followed the format of the acting editions of the Cambridge Greek play, with Greek on the right page and English on the left. This transposition suggests that Woolf's reading of the Agamemnon, influenced by recent performances of the play, moved in many directions—not only from Greek to English and from English to Greek, but also from text to theatre and from theatre to text.

CASSANDRA ON THE PAGE

Woolf's notebook is an imaginative restaging of the Agamemnon, figuratively in the mind's eye and also more literally in the movement of the eye over the page. Looking again at the page reproduced in Figure 9.1, we can see how it opens a space to move freely across, around, between, and through the words. If the eye moves 'forward' from left to right, we are reading 'backward' from the modern to the ancient language, and so projecting English back into the Greek. But if the eye moves from Greek to English, from the 'original' text to the 'translation', we find ourselves reading in reverse from the right side of the page to the left. At the same time the eye must also move up, down, and sideways, as some of the English translation has migrated across the fold to the Greek side of the page, where there are notes written in a column down the right margin: sometimes in English, sometimes in Greek letters, corresponding to words underlined within the Greek text. These various marks complicate a straightforward sequential reading: scanning the text horizontally, vertically, and diagonally, the eye's oscillation over the spatial and temporal field of the page is anything but linear. In reorienting the space of the page along various axes and vectors of reading—on another occasion Woolf marvelled 'how Greek sticks, darts, eels in & out'87—she is re-creating a theatrical encounter with Greek that leaves the reader in limbo, much as the spectacle of Cassandra in the theatre suspended the audience between languages.

Virginia Woolf and ‘The Naked Cry of Cassandra’

This movement between English and Greek is not unlike the texts that Woolf loved to read in the Loeb Classical Library. Reviewing a new Loeb edition a few years before she started the *Agamemnon* notebook, Woolf counted herself among ‘lovers of Greek’ who discovered in these bilingual editions the possibility of an interlingual experience. With ancient Greek text and modern English translation facing pages, the juxtaposition of languages allowed for various forms of linguistic transposition, moving freely from one language to the other, back and forth, and in between. ‘The Loeb library, with its Greek or Latin on one side of the page and its English on the other, came as a gift of freedom,’ Woolf wrote at the beginning of her review. Insisting that no translation can ‘reproduce... all that we feel before we understand the meaning of the original words’, Woolf valued the parallel text of the Loeb editions as another approach to the ‘original’ words, a way of standing before the Greek to ‘feel’ its strangeness, even ‘before we understand the meaning’.

The first Greek example Woolf cites in her review is, not coincidentally, ‘the misunderstood Aeschylus’. On the one hand she maintains ‘it is important to read quickly’ for a reader who wants to believe ‘he knows precisely what Aeschylus meant’, yet on the other hand the reader must recognize the untenability of such knowledge. According to Woolf, the Loeb editions allow for this double understanding, of simultaneously knowing and not knowing Greek, an argument that anticipates her later essay ‘On not Knowing Greek’. While making ancient Greek accessible to modern readers, the Loeb Classical Library also shows us how ‘Greek is an immensely difficult language’ and for this reason ‘we shall never be independent of our Loeb’, she concludes. Indeed, ‘the more we own the difficulty... the more we must testify to the miracle of the language’ and so ‘fall once more beneath the spell’ of Greek.

For Woolf the spell of Greek was not only an encounter with the literality of Greek letters, as I have suggested, but a way to recognize the materiality of language before its meaning is understood. Reading Greek in the Loeb editions, Woolf claimed to discover ‘all the sorrow, the passion, or the joy that words can say, or, more marvellously still, leave unsaid’. What is left unspoken could be idealized as something beyond language, but is better understood as something materialized by and in language, as the interruption of its own speaking: something embedded in language that can’t be grasped as meaning, but giving us the sense of a lack of sound as well as the sound of what is lacking in sense. As a dead language, no longer spoken, ancient Greek seems to make this vivid and visible. Woolf’s review of the Loeb editions is called ‘The Perfect Language’, because Greek demonstrates the barbarism of the language we speak and call our own: ‘Here we have the peculiar magic, the lure that will lead us from youth to age, groping through our island fogs and barbarities towards that unattainable
perfection.'93 Its perfection has the peculiar (or magical) effect of estranging English speakers from their native tongue, and revealing a foreign element in every language that Woolf (eager to ‘own the difficulty’) also found in her own. The interlingual experience of reading between English and Greek therefore opens up an intralingual experience, a moment when English seems as barbaric as Greek.

We might call this moment the ‘Cassandra effect’, and it is re-enacted in the theatre of Woolf’s *Agamemnon* notebook. Before Cassandra begins to speak, Clytemnestra wonders if she has a barbarian voice (φωνή βάρβαρος (1051)) or might understand Greek: ‘Nay, if her foreign tongue is anything less unintelligible than a swallow’s twitter, my reason urged is spoken within her understanding.’ In transcribing Verrall’s translation, Woolf inserts the adjective ‘unintelligible’ in place of ‘uncouth,’ a rare departure from Verrall’s text that emphasizes her own interest in the radical unintelligibility of Cassandra’s first utterance.94 What is heard from Cassandra is a stutter, hovering between sound and signification. The flow of vowels is stopped by consonants, interrupting the voicing of the Ω in the outcry *otototoi popoi*, and further eliding the vocative in ὀπόλλων ὀπόλλων. The punctuation of the voice is represented by Woolf in English, through ellipses that she has transcribed directly from Verrall’s translation: ‘Ah!...O God!...Apollo, O Apollo!’ The dots between the exclamation ‘Ah!’ and the vocative ‘O’ indicate something that is silenced in the very act of invocation, turning Cassandra’s cry into an elliptical utterance: a staccato sound reduced to a series of graphic marks on the page. Pointing to the untranslatability of this cry, the deployment of ellipses (as so often in Woolf’s own prose) signals something cut out of speech that remains inaudible but can be traced in written form.

The chorus struggles to make sense of this stuttering invocation to Apollo, in which Cassandra seems destroyed by her own utterance. ‘What means this sad cry on the name of Loxias?’ they ask Cassandra, or, if we move from the English to the Greek side of Woolf’s notebook, τι ταῦτα ἀνωτότυχος: ‘why did you say *otototoi?*’ Cassandra’s speech seems barbaric in the literal sense: a repetition of syllables that sounds like the stammering of *bar...bar...bar*, without differentiation into meaning. Just as Clytemnestra wonders if Cassandra is a barbarian speaking in ‘a swallow’s twitter’, the chorus compares the ‘ill-omened cry’ of ‘the strange woman’ standing before them to the sound of a bird, twittering in a language before and beyond human articulation: ‘Thou art in some sort crazed by the god who hurries thy thoughts, and wailst thyself in a wild tune, like some brown nightingale that with singing never-sated laments, alas, heart-sore, for Itys, Itys, all her sorrow-filled days.’ Of course this is not just any bird, but a literary figure: the nightingale who sings ‘Itys Itys’ is an allusion to Philomela, who sings of her violation even after her tongue is cut off. By speaking *otototoi*, or singing *itus, itus*

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94 Cf. Woolf’s transcription of this line (line number 937 in her notebook) to the translation (line number 1035 in his edition) in Verrall (1904), 127.
Virgin Woolf and 'The Naked Cry' of Cassandra

Cassandra simultaneously defies translation and demands to be translated. Destroyed by her own prophetic utterance, she sings of the god who has destroyed her, in an untranslatable pun: 'Apollo, Apollo of the Gate, a very Apollo to me.'

Cassandra's lament recalls Electra, also mentioned in Woolf's essay 'On Not Knowing Greek' in comparison to a nightingale, 'whose song echoes through English literature singing in her own Greek tongue', a bird 'distrained with grief'. According to Woolf, 'her words in crisis are, as a matter of fact, bare; mere cries of despair, joy, hate', and after quoting Electra's lament in Greek, she wonders 'what it is that gives these cries of Electra in her anguish their power to cut and wound and excite'. One answer may be found in 'Screaming in Translation', a Woolfian essay by Anne Carson who observes that Electra's screams create 'certain unprounceable concatenations of hiatus like EE AIAI or EE IO which hold the voice and the mouth open for the whole length of a measure of verse and are as painful to listen to as they are to say'.

Meaning is painfully cut out of the concatenations that are so difficult to pronounce, yet it is through this cutting that the characters (or Greek letters) of Electra and Cassandra are made to speak most poetically, according to Woolf: when a character like Electra 'silences her own complaint, she perplexes us again with the insoluble question of poetry and its nature'. So also, at another moment of excitation, the naked cry of Cassandra embodies language cut down to reveal its nakedness—not the revelation of truth, but the truth of its own opacity. Although Cassandra gradually makes herself understood in the play, she embodies something untranslatable in Greek, a foreign element within any language that sounds like the twittering of a swallow. Literally 'swallowing' her words, her naked cry points to the contradiction of a voice that is punctuated by ellipses and can never be heard except, perhaps, by the elliptical ear of translation.

The 'Cassandra effect' gave Woolf both pain and pleasure in her reading of ancient Greek. In a letter from 1916 she wrote, 'I am—or was—reading Greek! I can't make out what the fascination of Greek is, seeing that I have to look out every other word, and then fit them together like a puzzle.' The experience of reading Greek—looking up the words and puzzling to fit them together—is a scene of reading made visible in the Agamemnon notebook, and refracted throughout her fiction, as many readers of Woolf have noticed. Rowena Fowler describes in further detail not only how 'the Greeks haunted Woolf' but how Greek haunts the characters in Woolf's novels as well. In The Years, for example, when

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95 Woolf (1925), 29. 96 Ibid. 26.
97 Carson (2001), 43. Electra's lament quoted by Woolf is glossed by Carson as 'the strangely compressed or'go talaind', demonstrating how the utterance is cut by contraction: 'The pronoun ego sacrifices its opening vowel to the encroachment of the exclamatory ei, and then merges immediately with the epithet talaina so as to enclose Electra's ego in grief from both sides. As she says of herself in v.147, "Grieving is a pattern that is cut and fitted around my mind", 43–4.
100 Fowler (1999), 217.
Edward is studying the *Antigone*, he experiences the ‘quickening’ of a dead language:

He read; and made a note; then he read again. All sounds were blotted out. He saw nothing but the Greek in front of him. But as he read, his brain gradually warmed; he was conscious of something quickening and tightening in his forehead. . . . Little negligible words now revealed shades of meaning.101

The blotting out of sound makes Greek visible and increasingly vivid, allowing the language to come to life and reveal (in a phrase reminiscent of Harrison’s description of Greek) new ‘shades of meaning’.

However the ‘shades of meaning’ revealed by Greek are at the very limit of language, as Emily Dalgarno goes on to argue. In the most sustained reading to date of Woolf’s *Agamemnon*, Dalgarno traces the impact of Greek translation on Woolf’s narrative techniques and tropes, including the recurring trope of birds singing in Greek: here ‘Greek stands for the most distant horizon of intelligibility, the point beyond which the sane mind does not reach’.102 Thus in *Mrs. Dalloway*, a sparrow seems to chirp the name of Septimus ‘and went on, drawing its notes out, to sing freshly and piercingly in Greek words . . . and, joined by another sparrow, they sang in voices prolonged and piercing in Greek words’.103 Like Cassandra figured as a twittering swallow, the twitter of the London sparrows is a figure for a moment of madness where language seems radically foreign to itself, disconnected from meaning.

And of course, the mad Cassandra in Woolf’s notebook resonates with the description of Woolf’s own madness, as recalled by Leonard Woolf:

When she was at her worst and her mind was completely breaking down again the voices flew ahead of her thoughts: and she actually heard voices which were not her voice; for instance, she thought she heard the sparrows outside her window talking Greek. When that happened to her, in one of her attacks, she became incoherent because what she was hearing and the thoughts flying ahead of her became completely disconnected.104

In her biography of Woolf, Hermione Lee cautions against reading the Greek-talking sparrows in the tree too literally: ‘But is there, perhaps, something fishy about these birds?’ she asks.105 Lee emphasizes the literary context for representing these auditory hallucinations, since the trope is repeated not only in Woolf’s fiction but also in her essay ‘On Not Knowing Greek’, where the choruses of Greek tragedy are described as ‘undifferentiated voices who sing like birds in the pauses of the wind’.

The point I want to keep in view, through an elliptical reading of Woolf’s *Agamemnon* notebook, is not that we are reading these voices too literally, as if

101 The Years, 49–50. The passage is quoted by Fowler (1999), 220.
102 Dalgarno (2001), 33. In ch. 3, Dalgarno goes on to read Woolf’s *Agamemnon* translation in relation to *Mrs. Dalloway* as a revision of the *Oresteia*.
Woolf really heard birds singing in Greek, but that we are not reading these voices literally enough, as an encounter with Greek letters that can never be heard. Although Woolf liked to imagine the choral odes of Greek tragedy as bird-song, her essay acknowledges that ‘for the most part the choruses, with all their obscurities, must be spelt out’.107 So also we should read Cassandra's twittering as the translation of a mad spell simultaneously into and out of the experience of reading Greek. In her notebook, Woolf has transposed, transcribed, and transliterated the remarkable episode of Cassandra, returning us to that strange scene of reading where we can see the complex interplay between theatrical and textual performances of translation. Presented on stage and re-presented on the page, _otototoi_ performs the mad literality of Greek letters, the spectacle of being on the far side of language.

107 Woolf (1925), 30.
SECTION III
THE LANGUAGES OF TRANSLATION
Translation or Transubstantiation

J. Michael Walton

In a lecture given in 1967 entitled *The Immediate Theatre*, later to form a chapter in his celebrated book *The Empty Space*, Peter Brook asserted:

There is only one interesting difference between the cinema and the theatre. The cinema flashes on to a screen images of the past. As this is what the mind does to itself all through life, the cinema seems intimately real. Of course, it is nothing of the sort—it is a satisfying and enjoyable extension of the unreality of everyday perception. The theatre, on the other hand, always asserts itself in the present. This is what can make it more real than the normal stream of consciousness. This also is what can make it so disturbing.¹

The last thirty years have seen a great deal of theoretical and speculative writing associated with the nature of reception in theatre and in film. Not everyone would agree with Brook's instinctive analysis of the difference between the media, but he does point to the intangible and unpredictable nature of theatre in a way that is enlightening for some of the more neglected aspects of Greek plays as immediate performance pieces. Drama is almost always, and certainly was in the theatre of the fifth and fourth centuries BC, a collaborative art. That collaboration includes the audience at the point of impact, bringing to their perception their own historical, political and cultural experience. What sticks in the memory may so differ from the experience of one person to that of another, that the 'reality' of the performance is no more than an agglomeration of all the partial recollections of everyone involved as creators and as audience.

Greek drama does not exist in a vacuum. The challenge for contemporary practitioners may be less the revamping of myth in a twenty-first century guise—admirable though a handful of such reworkings may have been—than trying to rediscover the quality of the experience hidden within the surviving texts, and, having discovered it, to find ways of renewing it: less reconstructive surgery, perhaps, than a contemporary hairstyle, makeup, and wardrobe.

It would be hard to challenge Brook's belief that the theatre, even of the deepest past, must assert itself in the present. Perhaps it was always so, but perhaps too it is through the unearthing of the whole 'quality of experience' rather than simply

¹ Brook (1967), 99.
reading or rewriting the scripts that the theatre of the Greeks will most cogently declare itself. Achieving that must be through a collaboration of translator, director, designer, composer, choreographer, and player: yes, and audience too. Classical theatre was the ideal ‘synthetic’ theatre, to use Alexander Tairov’s term, theatre as a synthesis of all the other arts. The starting point is likely to be the text, but the text as preliminary sketch, as score, or simply as inspiration.

A well-constructed play, and most of the surviving Greek plays are well constructed, is as many-faceted as a diamond, with a whole variety of possible interpretations. The same may be true to some extent of any work of literature, but a play has the major dimension of being created for performance: and, therefore, barely fashioned when merely in print. The nature of this malleability, this promiscuity, if you prefer, is much debated. Returning to one of the earliest Greek plays, Aeschylus’ _Agamemnon_, and its critical and stage history, may prove to be a useful way of reviewing the relationship between translation, production, and reception.

Such a search is a recurring one for the theatre historian in a number of guises. Erika Fischer-Lichte of the University of Berlin, in a keynote talk given at the International Federation for Theatre Research in Lyon in September 2000, challenged the theoretical approach of French linguists, philosophers, and psychoanalysts when she examined the concept of ‘embodiment’ which she saw serving ‘as a kind of corrective towards the explanatory claim of concepts like “text” and “representation”’. Such concepts, she implied, were limiting, her own interest as a theatre historian being in ‘trying to explain what happens when a play is performed, when the linguistic—or better: written—signs of the text are transformed into the theatrical signs of a performance: the problem of equivalence’.2

This word ‘equivalence’ is a familiar one to translators as well as to directors and stage designers. It encapsulates all the problems inherent in transferring a play from one language to another: and, much more controversially, from one culture to another. Straight equivalence in the theatre is especially difficult to pin down because of the changing shape of the way in which people talk on stage, as well as how they talk off it. A shelf-life of twenty years may be a bonus for the stage translator. When it comes to a new production, few existing translations of classical plays remain unchallenged in a theatre thirstier for originality than for the original.

The history of translation of the Greek classics into English3 goes back as far as Lady Jane Lumley in the middle of the sixteenth century with her free and condensed version of Euripides’ _Iphigenia in Aulis_. Sophocles surfaces first in English in the Jacobean period, according to Finley Foster,4 with T. E. Bach’s _Oedipus: three cantoes_ (to which Foster appends in brackets the legend ‘translation

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3 See also France (2000).  
4 Foster (1918).
Both playwrights received consistent attention during the eighteenth century, if with a restricted repertoire. No one braved Aeschylus until Thomas Morrell with *Prometheus in Chains* (1773), followed by the Reverend Robert Potter, in 1777, who was to move on to two volumes of Euripides in 1781 and the whole of Sophocles in 1788. *The Critical Review* is quoted on the flyleaf of one of the nineteenth-century reprints of his Aeschylus as saying: ‘The translator has happily preserved the dignity of style, that bold and descriptive imagery, for which the author is particularly distinguished.’ Potter’s reward was to be given an appointment as Prebendary of Norwich. Maybe it was this perceived need for a combination of ‘dignity of style’ and ‘bold and descriptive imagery’ that had daunted previous translators.

Potter’s translation of Aeschylus is principally into iambic pentameters. This includes the first section of Chorus which subsequently remains in iambics but reverts to a mixture of mainly four with some five-foot lines. Any loss of substance from the original Alexandrine and lyric mix is compensated by an increase in overall number of lines from the 1673 of Aeschylus to 1740. Here is a taste of Potter’s Aeschylean style, in the opening speech of the Watchman:

Ye fav’ring gods, relieve me from this toil:  
Fix’d as a dog on Agamemnon’s roof  
I watch the live-long year, observing hence  
The host of stars, that in the spangled skies  
Take their bright stations, and to mortals bring  
Winter and summer; radiant rulers, when  
They set, or rising glitter through the night.  
Here now I watch, if haply I may see  
The blazing torch, whose flame brings news from Troy.  
The signal of its ruin: these high hopes  
My royal mistress, thinking on her lord,  
Feeds in her heart. (1–12)

This, then, is from 1777. Compare it with Gilbert Murray, who can take the credit for first returning the Greeks to the commercial theatre with his translations for the Vedrenne-Barker management at the Court Theatre in the early years of the twentieth century. Murray, that formidable Australian scholar who was awarded the Chair of Greek at the University of Glasgow at the absurd age of 23 and became Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford nineteen years later, had tackled Euripides, Sophocles and Aristophanes before turning in 1920 to *Agamemnon*. Here is his opening:

This waste of year-long vigil I have prayed  
God for some respite, watching elbow-stayed,  
As sleuthhounds watch above the Atreidæ’s hall,  
Till well I know yon midnight festival

6 Potter (1777).
Of swarming stars, and them that lonely go,
Bearers to man of summer and of snow,
Great lords and shining, throned in heavenly fire.
And still I await the sign, the beacon pyre
That bears Troy's capture on a voice of flame
Shouting o'erseas. So surely to her aim
Cleaveth a woman's heart, man-passioned! (1—11)

The change in style is startling. The twentieth-century Murray seems to have consigned Aeschylus, not to a poetic past pre-Potter, for all Potter wrote 123 years earlier, but to a dramatic wilderness, a world that never was, a mirage, a figment of his own fevered imagination that bears no resemblance whatsoever to Aeschylus. Yet it is Murray to whom no less a playwright than George Bernard Shaw could write in 1940: 'though I have lived in the thick of a revolutionary burst of playwriting in London, the only plays that seem to me likely to survive are the old Greek ones in your translations.' Murray sold to the reading public in thousands, of course, and his popularity with actors must be in part due to his willingness to give something for the principals to get their teeth into. The 1930s saw the arrival of the new poetic drama and a consequent waxing of interest in the old. If Murray's translations received considerable exposure on stage, it was largely by default. He had effectively cornered the market in the translation of Greek tragedy and comedy. A formidable scholar, he was also a major popularizer.

Part of the problem later generations have had with Murray was his use of rhyming couplets, a predilection which adds little to any tragic work, especially the Greeks, beyond strengthening a determination on the part of most actors to fracture the delivery wherever possible so as to deceive the audience into mishearing the text. As alarming was his enthusiasm for archaisms, as though they awarded authority to the translation of an old play by virtue of sounding nothing other than old. The only consolation for Aeschylus might be that worse disservice was done by Murray to Euripides.

For the record, it is worth comparing at this point the opening lines of two contemporary 'versions' in English by poets from West Yorkshire, each of which figured in a production at the Royal National Theatre in London. From 1981 for the production in masks by Peter Hall, Tony Harrison wrote:

No end to it all, though all year I've muttered
my pleas to the gods for a long groped for end.
Wish it were over, this waiting, this watching,
twelve weary months, night in and night out,
crouching and peering like a bloodhound,
paws propping muzzle, up here on the palace,

7 G. Murray (1920).
9 An interesting comparison of specific aspects of the translations of Potter, Murray, and others, may be found in Brower (1974).
the palace belonging the bloodclan of Atreus - Agamemnon, Menelaus, bloodkin, our clanchiefs.

I've been so long staring I know the stars backwards, the chiefs of the star-clans, king-stars, controllers, those that dispense us the coldsnaps and dogdays. I've had a whole year's worth so I ought to know. A whole year of it! Still no sign of the signal I'm supposed to catch sight of, the beacons, the torch blaze that means Troy's finally taken... (1-14) 10

Ted Hughes, the first of these mentioned so far not to be working from the Greek, wrote the version that Katie Mitchell directed in the Cottesloe, at the Royal National Theatre in 1999:

You Gods in heaven—
You have watched me here on this tower
All night, every night, for twelve months,
Thirteen moons—
Tethered on the roof of this palace
Like a dog.
It is time to release me.
I've stared long enough into this darkness
For what never emerges
I'm tired of the constellations—
That glittering parade of lofty rulers
Night after night a little bit earlier
Withholding the thing I wait for—
Slow as torture (1-14) 11

In the world of translation the word 'version' is liberally used.

In 1960, before either of these, or a host of other more recent Agamemnons, Peter Green wrote a thoroughly entertaining essay entitled Some Versions of Aeschylus. 12 He identified then over fifty translations of Agamemnon, all of which he had read and most of which he dismissed as 'a prop on which the scholarly poet manqué could peg his own threadbare Muse'. About Murray as a translator of the Greeks he was sleekly dismissive, referring his readers instead to the excoriating assault of T. S. Eliot who concluded an evaluation of Sybil Thorndike's struggles with Murray's Medea with the words 'it is because Professor Murray has no creative instinct that he leaves Euripides quite dead'. 13 Instead, Green referred less to the translations themselves than to the effect those translations had in their own time: 'Up and down England there were thousands of innocents who very likely went to their graves imagining that this was the way that Aeschylus or Euripides actually wrote. They gave the credit for Professor Murray's

poetic sensibility to the Greek dramatists on whom he modelled himself; and since
Aeschylus was dead, and Professor Murray, with scholarly modesty, refused to take
any of the credit, error crept in and persisted.'14

Tempting as it is to dwell on examples of the grosser Murray, the real point is
that Murray is not a victim of changing language patterns. Rather, he is a warning
to all translators of the inherent dangers of invoking classical authority in the cause
of self-promotion. Green's lucid and comprehensive study also queried the notion,
which he claimed was endemic amongst classical scholars, that there was some­
where a single ideal translation of anything classical waiting to be uncovered.
'Nothing', he concluded, 'improves by translation except a bishop', and he went
on to describe translation as 'at best, a crutch for human infirmity; any artistic
merit it might have in its own right is purely secondary'.15

That, though, seems simply to overstate the case by consigning anyone who
does not have access to the originals to a purgatory from which they may do no
more than gaze from afar on the state of the blessed. Might a case not be made for
absolution through translation? After all, in France, Germany, Russia, the multi­
plicity of Shakespeares seems to have done minimal damage to his reputation.
Green seems to be endorsing here Virginia Woolf's dismissive 'It is useless, then,
to read Greek in translations. Translators can but offer us a vague equivalent; their
language is necessarily full of echoes and associations.'16 But what both Woolf and
Green overlook are the two factors above all that make translation for the stage so
different from translation of literature or poetry. Shakespeare, and Aeschylus,
Sophocles and Euripides were makers of plays. Their text as language depends on
the translation of the words on the page. Their text as drama depends partly on the
translation of stage action, partly on the realization of that action through
performance. Perhaps for a theatre work a better word than translation would
be transubstantiation: because if one dictionary definition of translation is 'infer­
ring or transmitting the significance', the non-religious meaning of transubstan­
tiation is identified as 'describing a change of substance or essence'.

This issue of writing with performance in mind is a difficult one, not least
because those fifty-plus translations of Agamemnon through which Professor
Green waded will have contained such a variety of experience of what the
mechanics of the stage might entail. As a counterbalance, all too few translators
are likely to have indulged in much heart-searching over whether their responsi­
bility lies with the original text or with their personal slant on that text. The
attitude to stage directions can be revealing. Director, designer, and theatre
reformer Edward Gordon Craig believed that stage directions were nothing to
do with the playwright, never mind with the translator. In the received texts of
Aeschylus there are none; none, that is, written in as extra-textual guidance as to
what is happening, where, and to whom. Much of the stage action can be inferred
but it is a disciplined translator who can resist spelling it out as part of the duty of

office. Potter was exemplary in this, offering no more than the characters in each scene and indications in the choral passages of strophe, antistrophe and what he calls ‘prosode’. There are no entrances or exits marked. Maybe this is a purist vision. Translation, it might be argued, should include some stage directions if only to give the uninformed reader an idea of what is meant to be happening. Many translators, indeed, seem to see their task as dictating their own production preferences.

In his Agamemnon Murray initially does little more than set the scene: ‘The Scene represents a space in front of the Palace of Agamemnon in Argos...’—Not much to argue with there—‘... with an Altar to Zeus in the centre and many other altars at the sides. On a high terrace of the roof stands a WATCHMAN. It is night’. Soon, however, we find ‘Lights begin to show in the Palace... The women’s Olołúge, or triumph-cry, is heard again and again further off in the City. Handmaids and Attendants come from the Palace, bearing torches, with which they kindle incense on the altars. Among them comes CLYTEMNESTRA, who throws herself on her knees at the central Altar in an agony of prayer...’. The Chorus have elaborate directions as to what their odes are all about. When Agamemnon enters ‘amid a great procession... the chorus make obeisance... some of Agamemnon’s men have on their shields a White Horse, some a Lion... Clytemnestra controls her suspense with difficulty as he (Agamemnon) sets foot on the Tapestries CLYTEMNESTRA’s women utter again their cry of triumph’. After the murder of Agamemnon and Cassandra, Aigisthos says a few lines and ‘a body of Spearmen from outside, rush in and dominate the stage’. Much of this is less descriptive than prescriptive. For the most part, and mercifully, translators now resist the urge to dictate their notional ideal production.

Among translations still in use, Lattimore (1953), Vellacott (1956), Fagles (1966), Raphael and McLeish (1991), Meineck (1998) and Hughes (1999), offer a discreet few directions; as did John Lewin in his ‘free adaptation’ for Tyrone Guthrie in 1966. Grene and O’Flaherty within a single volume (1989) present two different translations, one the ‘unabridged text’, the other an ‘acting version’, both with minimal directions. The ‘acting version’ is condensed to a mere 33 pages from the 58 of the full text and would make an interesting study in its own right. Ewans (1995) acknowledges the stage-directions as modern but includes a few of his own such as ‘Klytaiemesta prostrates herself full length on the ground before him in homage. After a few moments she rises to her feet again; later ‘Kassandra leaps from the chariot which is then removed by the left parodos. She bursts into agonised, energetic dance and song’. Many translators prefer to justify their work not by any personal signature or interpretation, but by some preparatory remarks to explain their approach. Robert Fagles suggested, somewhat humbly, that ‘A translator’s best hope, I think, and still the hardest to achieve, is Dryden’s hope that his author will

speak the living language of the day.' Murray would hardly have subscribed to that, but Potter might have. Robert Lowell, the American poet who died in 1977, confessed to having written from other translations. Lowell's *The Oresteia* was published the year after his death but he had written in a frontispiece: 'I do not want to cry down my translation of Aeschylus but to say what I've tried to do and not tried... No version of the *Oresteia*, even a great one such as Marlowe or Milton might have written, can be anything like what was first performed in Athens with music, dance, masks and an audience of thirty thousand or more—an event we cannot recover and something no doubt grander than any play we can see.' Herein resides both the greatest freedom for the translator and the greatest danger. Which audience is to be addressed, that of fifth-century Athens, or of twenty-first-century Britain, America, France, Germany, Japan, Russia? If the answer is to be in compromise, what are the rules and where do they come from?

Louis MacNeice, in the introduction to his *Agamemnon*, published in 1936 when he was 29 and recently appointed as a lecturer at Bedford College, asserted 'I have written this translation primarily for the stage... it is hoped that my play emerges as a play and not as a museum-piece.' His stage directions are wholly functional offering to the reader nothing that is not implicit in the lines of Aeschylus. It had been W. H. Auden who first suggested that MacNeice translate something Greek for the recently formed London Group Theatre, but in 1934 they turned down his original play, *Station Bell*. Nothing daunted, he offered them his translation of *Agamemnon*, part of which was acknowledged as joint work with E. R. Dodds. *Agamemnon* was published in August of 1936 with a note to the effect that it was to be produced by Rupert Doone with the Group later in the year.

The production, as it happens, was infinitely more imaginative than anything envisaged by Murray (Fig. 10.1). Doone had initially been unenthusiastic about the work, doubting its relevance at such a time, but did direct it at the Westminster Theatre in November 1936. The production details traced by Michael Sidnell make often hilarious reading. MacNeice himself thought the production should 'tend towards the statuesque and rather larger-than-life'. At the same time he seems to have accepted, even if not all the reviewers were as happy, a chorus in dinner jackets and masks made of cellophane panels to look like stained glass; *Agamemnon* in a jester's cap; and Aegisthus' soldiers offering a Nazi salute. MacNeice told Doone that he thought the production should 'tend towards the statuesque... classical Greek dress... to be avoided... Best to create your own costume with hints from the Mycenean age'. What he got, according to *Time and Tide* was 'more slaves dressed like the Klu Klux Clan, Cassandra as an Arab from the shores of the Euphrates, with an Elizabethan ruff, and lastly Aegisthus in a Christmas cracker helmer and black evening cape'.

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Figure 10.1. Cassandra and Chorus from the Group Theatre production of MacNeice's *Agamemnon* (1936).
Here, of course, is the rub. A translation of a piece of literature, or of a poem, is a finished product. A translation of a play, unless it is strictly for publication, is barely the start. There are a number of imperatives for the translator which range from some kind of duty to the original so as not to flout the Trades’ Descriptions Act, to the need to leave open the performance door so as not to provide a straitjacket for directors, designers, and actors. There is, in fact, a world of difference between translating a classical text for a production that you will yourself direct, and offering a text as a block of stone from which the processes of production will fashion a finished sculpture which you may hardly recognize. MacNeice and Tony Harrison, as both poets and playwrights, might well agree.

The question is an abiding one as to how the translator and, indeed, the director may address the huge gulf that separates the theatre of classical Athens from that of the contemporary world. Every generation, it seems, has had recourse to the Greeks as some kind of universal washing-line on which to hang their socks and underwear. Carlyle described the French Revolution as ‘a natural Greek drama’; Newman, Richard Jenkyns suggests, ‘turned Aeschylus and Sophocles into preachers’;25 Oscar Wilde reveals himself in De Profundis as the man, described by the Chorus just prior to the entrance of Agamemnon, who had reared the lioncub as a pet—Bosie as the Helen who savaged his household. Greek drama provides anyone with an exemplum. Original writers for the theatre have followed suit, from Seneca to Racine to Seamus Heaney, recreating the Greeks in the image of their own time. Today, when the presentation of Greek plays has never been more popular, the search for a context for their renewal has become paramount. Here the relationship between translator and director has acquired a new prominence. So too has the need for the translator to become aware of all those factors within a text that go beyond, behind, beneath the words, to unearth the entirety of the stage action: to transubstantiate rather than merely to translate.

In ‘Problems of Translation for the Stage: Interculturalism and Post-Modern Theatre’,26 Patrice Pavis identified the special nature of translation for the stage: ‘In order to conceptualise the act of theatre translation, we must consult the literary translator and the director and actor; we must incorporate their contribution and integrate the act of translation into the much broader translation (that is the mise en scène) of a dramatic text.’ He suggested that translation arrives via the actors’ bodies and what he calls ‘heterogeneous cultures and situations of enunciation that are separated in time and space’.27 He then proceeded to identify those factors that make the act of translation for the stage dramaturgical rather than linguistic, in a manner similar to that espoused by Erika Fischer-Lichte, which include the essentials of ‘a performance text’; the audience; the socio-political image of a culture and so on. This represents a fundamental evaluation of the relationship between translation and direction, and becomes a platform for

defining the whole question of translating a play from any period or culture into any other.

Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* is a play which presents a number of unusual features when viewed in isolation. To begin with it is only the first play of a group of four, two others of which we have and which are usually performed together as the only extant trilogy. Without the satyr play, *Proteus*, there can be no means of knowing how incomplete our *Oresteia* is. Knowing *Libation Bearers* and *Eumenides* makes it much harder to recreate the impact of the play in that first and, as it was probably thought at the time, only performance. Obvious though it may be, Aeschylus wrote *Agamemnon* for an audience who did not yet know how he would develop the action in the other two, or three, plays.

There are unusual features of the structure. The chorus that immediately follows the departure of the Watchman is the longest in surviving Greek drama. After a scene of fewer than a hundred lines with Clytemnestra, there is another. In the first 500 lines—almost a third of the play—all but 116 are allocated to the Chorus. *Agamemnon*, the title character, has 84 lines, only twenty more than the marginal Aegisthus, one-third fewer than the Herald and less than half of Cassandra's. There may be good reasons and justifications but the shape of the play is odd.

There are questions to be raised about the story, bearing always in mind that Greek plays contain what they contain, and exposition for a Greek playwright was as much about ruling out possible intrusions from the myths as it was about explaining what was included. *Agamemnon's* allies, amongst whom he only rates Odysseus as having given him any support, have been dispersed, possibly fatally in a storm. Does this make his entrance a grand one or a rather bedraggled affair? Cassandra is mentioned by name only once, and that is by Clytemnestra. How does Clytemnestra know who Cassandra is, and when does she know, and does it matter? And why does Clytemnestra introduce the carpet of 'scarlet' drapes?

All of these are inevitably production issues. They may all be solved by the nature of the production which could treat them as irrelevant, or explained through presentation, or flamboyant theatrical gesture, which is probably a mixture of the other two. It may well be as unnecessary to explain them as to explain why Orestes' footprints in the *Libation Bearers* should appear the same size as his sister's, or why his hair should be of the same colour and texture. These are, of course, precisely the questions that Euripides' *Electra*, as a character, will be asking in the same theatre only forty years after the *Oresteia*. None of the problems are insurmountable but the one thing directors do at their peril in a contemporary production is ignore creating a whole context in which the play is possible.

The scene in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* which most clearly exemplifies the balance between text and stage action, between linguistic and performance values, is the 'carpet' scene. The two productions at the National Theatre, Peter Hall's in 1981, Katie Mitchell's in 1999, relied on very different translations. Here is Tony Harrison's for the sequence where Clytemnestra tempts her husband to walk on the red drapes:
Clytemnestra: Now, my great manlord, come down from your warcar.
But don’t let those feet that have trampled Troy under
step on mere earth.
(To Slaves)

Why are you waiting?
Carry out my commands for strewing the pavestones,
drag the dark dye-flow right down from the doorway.
Let bloodright, true bloodright be the king’s escort.
No sleeping for me till the gods get their pleasure.
The she-gods of life-lot, I’ll be their she-kin,
the female enforcer of all they have fated.

A battle of wills ensues at the end of which Agamemnon concedes:

Agamemnon: If it means so much…
(To Slaves)
here help get these boots off
Campaign comrades, loyal old leathers.

Keep godgrudge off me as I tread on this sea-red.
I’ll feel that I’m walking the women who wove it.
Mounds of rich silver went into its making.
So much for me…
(Indicates Cassandra)

This stranger needs looking after.
The gods like some kindness from those who have triumphed.
Be kind. Nobody wants to end up in bondage.
Pick of the booty, the Trojan spoil loot-pearl,
the girl’s the men’s gift to grace their commander.
Well, since I’ve yielded, I’ll do what you ask me,
and tread on your red path into my palace.

(Agamemnon begins walking on the cloth towards the palace doors)28

Here is Ted Hughes for the same passage:

Clytemnestra: Agamemnon, step down from your chariot.
But this bare earth is too poor
For the foot that trod on the neck of Troy.
Hurry—the long carpet of crimson.
Unroll the embroidery
Of vermilion and purple.
The richest silks of Argos are prostrated
To honour the King’s tread at his homecoming,
And cushion every footfall of his triumph.
Justice herself shall kiss his instep
And lead him step by step into the home
He never hoped to see.

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After this, everything that thinking,
Night after harrowing night,
Hacked out of the darkness,
Everything shall follow
As the immortals have planned.

In the Greek Aeschylus has a mere six lines here for Clytemnestra, compared to the nine of Harrison and seventeen of Hughes, though Hughes' are shorter.

And Agamemnon's submission in Hughes:

**AGAMEMNON:** How determined you are.
Here—unlace these leathers
That have trampled the walls of Troy.
When I tread this ocean purple
As if the glory were mine
Let no god resent it, or be offended,
As it offends me
To trample such richness under my unwashed feet.
Woven fibres, costly as wire of silver.
This heaped-up, spilled-out wealth of my own house.
Do I make too much of it?
This is Cassandra.
Let her be cared for.
The gods reward a conqueror's mercy.
Her house is ashes,
And she is now a slave. Treat her as mine.
The jewel of Troy, my army's gift to me.
And now since you have conquered me in this matter
Of treading the crimson path—
Let me enter my house at last.

(He goes in)**29**

For this last speech Aeschylus has fourteen lines, Harrison twelve, Hughes twenty, amongst which are several where he clearly identifies Cassandra whom Agamemnon calls only τὴν ἕλενην, 'this foreign girl' (950).

The difference in the playing of this scene in different productions can be startling. There are visual records of the productions of both Peter Stein in 1980, performed first at the Schaubühne in Berlin as part of the Antiquity Project (Fig. 10.2);**30** and Peter Hall's for the National Theatre in 1981. Hall's, with all the characters masked, offers formality rather than tension; Stein's is a sequence of agonizing suspense as Agamemnon stumbles just before he reaches the palace door and Clytemnestra instinctively raises a hand to steady him. Of Mitchell's

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30 This was a production which Stein subsequently revised in Moscow with a Russian cast in the aftermath of the fall of communism, seeing in the Oresteia a parallel between the Athens of 458 BC and Russia in 1994, both striving to come to terms with the unfamiliar concept of democratic government.
Figure 10.2. Purple-cloth scene from Peter Stein's Die Orestie (1980).
(Hughes), there is only a grainy video, from a single camera, in the National Theatre archives. But for her the theatrical imperative resided in Aeschylus’ initial visual shock, the red carpet.

Oliver Taplin considered this scene in considerable detail in The Stagecraft of Aeschylus, coming to the conclusion that ‘the scene has several meanings, all interconnected in various ways. Some are explicit, some are implicit, some are clear at the time, some emerge clearly only later in the trilogy.’ There is little to argue with there except, perhaps, to suggest that for a director any questions about why Clytemnestra should set up this scene come down less to tempting Agamemnon into contributing to his own downfall through an act of hubris than to the promotion of the sequence of pure imagery, the past, the present and the future, the massacre of an innocent, the rivers of blood ten years long, the pathway to his crimson bath. Here is the transubstantiation, the substance, the essence, the word made flesh.

Translating such a scene into stage action is only marginally the province of the translator at all, because Aeschylus effectively suspends words and lets action take over. It is the director and designer who must decide the details. Clytemnestra invites the servants στορωναι πετάμασαι (lit. ‘to strew with things spread out’, 909); and speaks of πορφυρόστρωτος πόρος (‘a purple path’, 910); Agamemnon refers to εἴμαι (‘with garments’, 921), as does Clytemnestra (962); Agamemnon exits, πορφύρας πατῶν (his last two words, ‘treading on purple’, 957). Various stagings offer varying solutions, each of which becomes ipso facto, a statement of interpretation. Peter Hall’s was an ornate and beautiful red cloth. Peter Stein’s ‘pathway’ was created not from a single ‘carpet’ but from a mass of folded cloths. Katie Mitchell took this a stage further with a coup de théâtre, which was thrilling in the way it renewed and embellished such a familiar scene.

Mitchell worked from the Hughes ‘translation’, a version, indeed so personal and free that Bernard Knox dismissed this Oresteia, along with Hughes’ even freer Alcestis, in an article entitled simply Uglification, as ‘a desecration, the literary equivalent of spray-painting a moustache on the Mona Lisa.’ In all this, Mitchell’s production has been so overlooked that, apart from an article by Marianne McDonald in the Hellenic Chronicle, and an appreciative piece by Peter Stothard in The Times it gained virtually no serious critical attention and was effectively pulled from the repertoire at the National. What Mitchell achieved, though, was to establish, despite the Hughes ‘uglification’, a layered throughline of stage action rather than words.

Taking her cue, perhaps, from Martha Graham’s 1958 dance-drama, Clytemnestra, she included in The Home Guard—her, but not Hughes’, title for

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31 Taplin (1977), 308–16.
33 Knox (2000), 85. 34 McDonald (1999).
34 See Chioles (1993), 5–14. Chioles also considers Stein and Mnouchkine in the same article.
35 The Times, 2 December 1999.
Agamemnon—the ghost of Iphigenia, a gagged and desperate creature who flitted in and out of the action as though trying to account for her brief life. Her presence made Clytemnestra’s murderous plans towards her husband seem driven primarily by the loss of her daughter. The space in the Royal National Theatre’s Cottesloe auditorium is small but adaptable, and Iphigenia’s constant presence was impossible to ignore. Agamemnon’s chariot was a large wooden table on castors that served a number of purposes during the three plays: not least as a regular visual reminder of that original horrid feast which triggered Aegisthus’ hatred of Agamemnon. Clytemnestra confronted her husband from one end of the theatre in front of the huge metal gate which was the palace.

When Agamemnon and Cassandra were wheeled in, the traverse staging emphasized the engagement of wills between Agamemnon and Clytemnestra. When she called for the servants to ‘unroll the embroidery of vermilion and purple’, they started to lay out a tapestry from the palace door to the chariot. So far, as you would expect: except that it suddenly became clear that this was not a tapestry but a patchwork, a patchwork made from a hundred little girl’s dresses, Iphigenia’s dresses, all in different shades of red, the obsessive recoverings or remakings of a dead child’s wardrobe (see further, Hardwick below, and especially, Fig. 11.2). The effect was all the more powerful for Agamemnon’s never appearing to notice what he was walking over as he strode to his death. If the first effect of such a moment was to make the hairs creep on the back of the scalp, the full impact had to wait until after the display of the dead bodies of Agamemnon and Cassandra. After first confronting her mother, the little ghost moved to lie down and become, as it seemed, absorbed into her father’s corpse: only for Agamemnon to rise himself and leave the tableau to take up a position as resident ghost for the play that was to follow, the Libation Bearers and Eumenides run together as The Daughters of Darkness.

A second visit to the The Home Guard the following January, first seen at preview four months earlier, failed to reinforce several recollections, partly because the production itself had changed. The Chorus, the ‘Home Guard’ of the title, wheelchair-bound and anxious, still seemed like World War One veterans in suits and trilbies, forced by disability this time to stay at home. But was this too a personal response? A review in the London Observer claimed the plays were set in a modern Bosnia. Second time round, the individuals of the Chorus no longer had their own private nurse, a touch that had added a new dimension to the description of the storm which wrecked the fleet and might, perhaps, have involved local women’s husbands or brothers. That was not something ill-remembered. The director had axed the nurses at a recent rehearsal. The Chorus were still equipped with a range of personal props, like Winnie in Beckett’s Happy Days, which seemed to include little urns, perhaps containing the ashes of sons who had gone to this war and returned in a jar. Was this my invention? It was a touch so poignant it ought to have been intentional. Was what seemed to be Clytemnestra’s chilling resemblance to Margaret Thatcher recognition, recollection, or simple
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prejudice? One thing was certain. The fact that January’s Clytemnestra was clearly pregnant made a difference to the play: but this was only at the second viewing because it was the actress, Anastasia Hille, who was pregnant, and in January this was her final performance in the role before going on maternity leave.

Much of the use of video to record and magnify the stage action had gone by the board by January, so it was now easier to choose what to watch, one of the factors, as Brook would acknowledge, that makes live theatre different from film. Cassandra’s final speech was still very deliberately chalked as a message on the floor and shown in video close-up on a screen above the palace facade:

This was life.
The luckiest hours
Like scribbles in chalk
On a slate in a classroom.
We stare
And try to understand them.
Then luck turns its back—
And everything’s wiped out.
Joy was not less pathetic
Than the worst grief.37

Hughes, free again, but on this occasion, with the help of the director, emphasized word by word.

In the other two plays Hughes’s ‘version’ is equally erratic as a representation of ‘pure’ Aeschylus but, equally, offered a challenge to Mitchell which she met with a series of theatrical strokes providing, as do the greatest directors, superb moments, single flashes of scarlet which, when linked, make a patchwork more telling than the sum of the parts.

Of translation, direction, and reception, the last, then, may be the most capricious. In the theatre everything is, indeed, in a state of flux. Aeschylus may have created a play for a single performance but he surely realized that Agamemnon would not be a fixed entity. A multiplicity of translations is no guarantee that any of them will be any good. There is certainly an argument that the shade of Aeschylus is better off in the translating hands of a poet than of an academic. Shapiro and Burian have notably combined the two in their joint translation. There is an equally strong argument that the Greeks are better served by a playwright than by either academic or poet. One thing only is sure. No translator is without prejudice.

The best play in the world, with text as pristine as the world’s greatest playwright can make it, is not impervious to poor performance. The most inspired, imaginative, and intelligent production is never going to meet with universal approval. To those who wonder why, and find live theatre flawed because it offers no guarantees, the only response can be that it is because it is not static,

because it is something done and something seen, because there is a risk and a
danger in live performance. This is the disturbing quality that Peter Brook
identified ‘more real than the normal stream of consciousness’. The great pro-
ductions add something special to the original, sometimes in their entirety, often
in their tiniest detail. They can ‘improve’ a play, as Stein did with his Russian
Oresteia, by renewing it in a contemporary context. In doing this, the translator
has a major role.

Plato was wary of theatrical performance for being an imitation of an imitation.
Seen only on video the Stein Agamemnon is not even that. It is at best an
interpretation (by the viewer), of an interpretation (by the video director), of an
interpretation by a stage director (Stein), at one stage in his creative life (twenty
years ago), of an interpretation by the translator (Greek into German), of an
interpretation (via a combination of manuscripts), of an interpretation (in the
original production), of what may have been Aeschylus’ own work.

Is that Aeschylus? Of course it isn’t.
Is that Aeschylus? Of course it is.
This chapter explores some verbal and non-verbal aspects of translation practice for the stage, with special attention to the context of the changing relationships between Greek plays and modern audiences. The focus is on two examples, both of which were first staged in 1999. The first concerns a translation into English created specifically for performance and for which the translator was also the director. The second involves a doubly mediated process of translation on to the stage of a poetic version in English of Aeschylus' play. In order to highlight issues of convergence and divergence the focus is on a common point of reference—the tapestry scene in the Agamemnon.

Analysis of the relationship between linguistic and cultural aspects of translation, shows that a rigid distinction between the two is misplaced. In this respect, recent changes in direction in translation studies have been paralleled by shifts in emphasis in the analysis of the staging of Greek plays. In translation studies there has been a movement away from a narrow concern with linguistic aspects towards a broader investigation of the relationship between the cultural contexts of both source and new texts. These changes have also been characterized as 'the cultural turn in translation studies' and 'the translation turn in cultural studies'.

In analysis of Greek drama, attention has moved from text to performance to an extent that has inspired the phrase 'the performative turn' (cf. Bierl, Chapter 16). This takes further the insistence on the relationship between text and performance pioneered by Oliver Taplin and privileges performance issues in the shaping of the discourse applied to Greek plays. The trend has now gone even further and I use the term 'the performative slide' to indicate its momentum. This involves a stretching of the linguistic concepts of translation in a direction increasingly governed by the criteria of performability. It also involves a slide within

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1 For discussion of the issues and a challenge to the construction of false dichotomies between linguistic and cultural approaches, see Baker (2001) and Wolf (2002).
2 See Bassnett and Lefevere (1990) and Bassnett (1998).
3 See Taplin (1977) and (1978).
the performance approach itself, often decided by the director. Both linguistic and performance aspects are shaped by assumptions about the nature and perspectives of the audience.⁴

My discussion is underpinned by three key assumptions.

1. The relationship between the ancient text/performance and the modern is fluid. Few staged translations are now 'close' translations in the traditional sense. Many could be categorized as 'adaptations' or 'versions' and in any case modern critical approaches question the stability of language, thus problematizing the traditional categories used to describe translations as 'faithful' or 'foreignizing' or 'domesticating'. Even when the translation appears to follow the Greek text closely it depends for some of its impact on the way in which it is presented on the stage. Therefore, alongside the obviously 'verbal' language of translation (to which I will return later), I would also want to set those of non-verbal sound—music, lamentation, groans, and other phenomena.⁵ Then there are the indicators of time, space, and social context created by the set design; the impact on the mood and direction of the gaze contributed by the lighting design; possible use of puppets and silhouettes (as in the National Theatre of Craiova's Oresteia, presented in Romanian, 1998, and Foursight Theatre Company's Medea, performed in English, 2001); the contribution of costume and dress, alongside which I include make-up and various kinds of mask. In addition there is the impact of movement (dance, choreography, gesture, physicality), which is currently the focus of renewed interest and research:

as well as indicating such categories as race and gender, the performing body can also express place and narrative through skilful mime and/or movement. Moreover, it interacts with other stage signifiers—notably costume, set and dialogue—and, crucially with the audience. It is not surprising, then, that the body functions as one of the most charged sites of theatrical representation.⁶

To the role of these non-verbal elements in translation (especially in the translation of the seemingly untranslatable and in the carrying over of meaning from one language or culture to another or across different registers within languages or cultures) must be added the effect of newer art forms based on modern technology—video and multimedia of various kinds.⁷ Concepts of what is involved in translation have been revised and broadened. The term now covers a

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⁴ For discussion of the role of the translator, director and audience, see Hardwick (2001). For tension between the performative turn and the textual turn see Hardwick (2002b).

⁵ For example, the threatening and coercive effect of the grounding of staves by the Chorus (as seen in several recent productions from Declan Donnellan's Antigone to the secular oratorio based on Euripides' Trojan Women premiered at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, 2001, by the Harvard-Westlake School and the Rembiko Project).


wide range of relationships between the ancient text and its modern realization. These changing norms need to take account of every aspect of the artistic processes involved in transplanting a play across time, space, and culture.

2. Greek drama is represented in all types of theatre performance and is therefore experienced by a wide variety of audiences. Changes in education and cultural practices mean that comparatively few people now have the opportunity to study Greek plays either in the original languages or in translation. The very fact that professional classicists have felt marginalized from mainstream culture has made them welcome opportunities to make the plays better known, and has resulted in some unique synergy between academics and practitioners. The growing, and in some respects paradoxical, reintegration of classical drama into modern theatrical repertoire (experimental, classical, and commercial) also enriches production possibilities. In this respect the flexibility of Greek drama is important—as David Wiles has put it, 'I admire Greek plays because they have so many possibilities. They can be handled as movement pieces, performance poetry or intellectual arguments. They confront themes like war, gender and the limits of materialism which seem to matter in the present.' Nevertheless, many translators and directors may judge that they have to develop their productions in ways that cater for audiences that have minimal knowledge of the original plays and of their dramatic conventions and production contexts.

3. Production dynamics have changed. The focus of productions has shifted towards the creation of production dynamics which make it appear that the production has been created in the language in which it is spoken/acted and at the same time seek to communicate to the audience (who may have little or no knowledge of ancient theatre) an intellectual and emotional experience which corresponds to that attributed to the original.

The non-verbal aspects of the production are an important component of these aims. The modern theatrical context, responsive to the proclivities of the audiences, is perhaps less verbal in orientation, more open to focus on movement and the body, video and multimedia as expressive forms. These are being developed as a means of communication and explanation in the new theatrical contexts for Greek drama. This is an extension of the way in which privileging performance has provided a means of liberation from the cultural isolation caused by the limited geographical reach of language. An example is provided by the impact of Japanese productions in which Suzuki and Ninagawa (like Mnouchkine, Brook, Grotowski, and Purcarete) have created an ‘intercultural’ theatre. Ancient Greek, now rarely spoken and not universally understood, coalesces naturally into this tendency. Thus increasingly the move is away from the anachronistic

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10 See further Macintosh (1997), esp. 313 and n. 5 which discusses Ninagawa’s use of the Chorus dance to amplify the emotional range of the action as well as the primacy of the actor in Japanese theatrical tradition.
straitjacket applied by Aristotle in the fourth century BC to prescribe how drama should be written and closer to a fifth-century realization of the interdependence between what is seen and what is heard, between performance and language, and between the worlds of theatre and cultural politics.11

Staging *Agamemnon* presents particularly interesting challenges in the context I have just mapped out, challenges accentuated by the difficulties of the original Greek. The Greek is paradoxically both grand and simple—as Hugh Lloyd-Jones has described it, ‘a grand style, designed like his [Aeschylus’] manner of production, to carry the audience far from the world of ordinary reality. Nouns are regularly adorned with resounding poetic adjectives; metaphors, often of startling boldness, are abundant; lofty periphrases are substituted for the ordinary names of things; descriptive passages are made rich with vivid imagery.’12 No wonder that when Robert Browning attempted to reproduce in English the effect of Aeschylus’ language it was said that all that was now needed was a translator for the Browning.13 No wonder, too, that non-verbal aspects of the staging (whether ancient or modern) are so important.

Another factor that affects both translation and staging is the ability of the *Agamemnon* to stand on its own or as part of a trilogy.14 Staging and interpretation can vary according to how the play is linked with the Orestes/Electra theme and how the problems of gendered conflict resolution in the *Eumenides* are perceived. The experiences of audiences at modern performances will undoubtedly shape future perceptions of what Greek theatre was, and of how dramatists and culture in Greece engaged with the themes of war, gender, and materialism that Wiles identified as crossing both ancient and modern experience. This is a very good reason for a close look at all the elements that combine to shape those modern perceptions, including comparison with the conventions and contexts of ancient performance. In the fourth century BC as part of his reforms (c.338–326), Lycurgus caused copies of the plays to be deposited in official archives, perhaps as a check on adaptation and interpolation. According to Pseudo-Plutarch (*Ten Orators* 841), the state secretary gave a public reading to the actors who ‘were not permitted to act except in accordance with the texts’. Lycurgus’ action implies a belief that the canonical status of fifth-century tragedy could be preserved by faithful adherence to the text and suggests that this was threatened. Modern translations for the stage (as opposed to those prepared for the class or seminar room) rarely seek to emulate this aim, and the ways in which they deviate from it are significant both in terms of modern conditions of production and as an indicator of a shift in the values attached to canonicity. The concept of canonicity

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11 For discussion of Aristotle’s view and the reaction of modern critics and dramatists, see most recently Wiles (2000), 168–70.


13 A. Webster (1879), 66–79. See further, Macintosh above, p. 154; Prins, Ch. 9, p. 166.

14 For discussion of this point see Hardwick (2002a).
now tends to be associated with flexibility and transferability of language, situation and meaning rather than implying exact reproduction of an ancient text or performance.

**AGAMEMNON: DAVID STUTTARD’S 1999 PRODUCTION**

My first example is concerned with the verbal aspects of translating *Agamemnon* for performance in a 1999 production by David Stuttard. Stuttard always translates for performance—he is joint artistic director of Actors of Dionysus and usually directs the productions himself. Over a period of several years it is possible to trace a growing flexibility in the relationships between words and other aspects of performance in his work. My observations here are based on a series of discussions and interviews with Stuttard and are also informed by my experiences of working with another company, Foursight Theatre, in the making of a video which traced the initial rehearsal process of moving Stuttard’s translation from the page to the stage.

Stuttard’s stated aim in translating Aeschylus was ‘to convey the monumentality of Aeschylus, with all the richness of his imagery and poetic vocabulary, without losing the dramatic momentum’. Because he is translating for performance, his priority is speakability. Stuttard says, ‘I must be confident that my cast will be able to deliver with conviction the words I put on paper. So, throughout the process I am constantly aware of how the translation sounds, of how easy it is to speak.’ He operates in five stages, first making a literal translation, then working on fluency (‘always with the original in mind but letting it take on more of a life of its own’). He then works through two sequences of listening to the sound and rhythm of the lines. In the first, the lines are read back by the computer voice ‘princess’, a rather mechanical mid-Atlantic. The second sequence of listening involves a rereading in a northern accent, which he finds exposes any pomposities in the translation more harshly than does a reading in Received Pronunciation (RP). The final stage of the whole process is to work on the translation with the actors. At this stage the needs of the production take over from the needs of the text. Stuttard says that this often involves ruthless editing and, where necessary, changing words or phrases so that they suit the theatrical context of the scene. He has found that this part of the process has become increasingly important, to the extent that he now describes his

15 Published text: Stuttard (1999).
16 The work of the company is important in terms of research data because it is one of the few companies which is exclusively concerned with Greek drama. Its biannual touring productions, sustained over a period of ten years, play to large numbers in total and therefore are a significant influence in shaping popular perceptions of Greek drama as well as enabling study of developments in styles of translation and performance. In this connection, the generosity of the artistic directors and members of the company in co-operating with researchers should be warmly acknowledged.
works as adaptations rather than translations. He also believes that theatre can communicate more through actions and movement than through words. Once the plays have been turned into a modern script, 'they are precisely that: a script. Aeschylus was not a classicist. He was not an academic. He was a man of the theatre and a modern production must bring the drama gloriously to life... the production is the final link in the translation'.

It is significant that Stuttard’s work has developed in this way. He is classically trained and his company first began with tours directed primarily at school and college audiences, who were perhaps mainly interested in plays which were on their examination syllabuses. This audience has been considerably enlarged and extended in terms of age, background, and theatrical awareness, and the company now plays primarily in Arts Centres and similar venues. It is an index to changes in translational norms and in understanding of the demands of performability that the move from close translation towards adaptation has been so successful in both aesthetic and box-office terms.

This kind of translation is, of course, a risky operation. Stuttard describes it as a balance between three desiderata—accuracy, conveying the spirit of the original and the need for it ‘to read and sound as if it were originally written in the language into which it has been translated.’ The purpose of the translation influences this balance. For example, a play is not a legal document, which would require a premium on accuracy, whereas a speakable acting script may need denser images to be expanded so that their full impact can be felt. An example of this occurs in Stuttard’s handling of the image of the blossoming flower. The Herald describes the Aegean sea on the morning after the storm destroys the fleet—‘And when the sun broke through at dawn, the whole Aegean sea was blossoming with shipwrecks and the corpses of the dead’ (Aes. Ag. 658–9; Stuttard (1999), 12).

Later, Agamemnon refines the *anthos* metaphor, describing Cassandra as ‘my flower, my blossom’ and ‘the gift my army gave me’ (Aes. Ag. 954–5; Stuttard (1999), 16). Stuttard thought that the audience would have been prepared by the earlier image to pick up the sinister undertones here. In his version, the image was also allocated to Clytemnestra in her welcome to Agamemnon as ‘and now you are here like warmth in winter, thawing out our house to make it blossom’ (Aes. Ag. 968–9). Stuttard again took the image further than did Aeschylus when he made Clytemnestra comment in her triumphant speech after the murders that her struggle for vengeance ‘spans so many years, so much contriving, but now in

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18 The question of the ownership of the written word once it comes to be spoken in the theatre is keenly debated. In some contexts this may involve allowing the performers to put the text into their own words through devising or improvisation. See Cameron (2000).

19 Collard’s translation (2002) has the sea ‘blooming’, which perhaps adds a suggestion that the corpses are swelling and soon to rot. He points out in his note (ad loc) that Aeschylus uses the image at Libation Bearers 1009 and Persians 82 to suggest an unpleasant abundance.

20 Compare Lattimore’s (1953) ‘you bring with you the symbol of our winter’s warmth’ and Lloyd-Jones’s (1993) ‘you signal warmth in winter by your coming’. Collard (2002) also adopts ‘signify warmth in winter’. These translations were not specifically prepared for performance.
time and with eternal justice it has flowered to its fulfilment' (Aes. Ag. 1377–8; Stuttard (1999), 26). The variation on the theme results from Stuttard's view that Aeschylus' major challenge to the translator is the need to preserve and communicate the tension between symbol and reality in the imagery, so in this respect the translator's own interpretation of the play is also influential. It leads to a multiplying of the image, a variant on the tradition of the doubling or repetition of the image by translators who are determined that the audience shall not miss the structural force of a metaphor.

Also important in this context is the translator's perception of cultural relationships within and between ancient and modern. The words of the original and of the translation are informed by the ideas and experiences behind them. To communicate through the translation a modern equivalent of the resonances which a word or a name or a phrase might have set off in the minds of a Greek audience is a major challenge. Making culturally remote works seem familiar to the receiving actors and audience raises particular problems in respect of transposition of religious language.

One controversial aspect of Stuttard's approach to this problem in his 1999 Agamemnon is his choice of religious idiom. This includes the introduction of the reiterated 'chant requiem aeternam, may all turn out well' into the parodos (literally, 'sing the lament for Linus but may good triumph', Aes. Ag. 121; Stuttard (1999), 2–3). Stuttard recognized that his use of plain chant and of words like 'psalm' and 'hallelujah' was open to the criticism that he was blurring the boundaries between classical and Judaeo-Christian religion. He justified his decision on the basis that what he regarded as the relative familiarity of Judaeo-Christian vocabulary would create a similar effect in the modern audience to the use of the language of Greek religious ritual by Aeschylus. Thus Agamemnon was made to invoke the archaic Christian term 'chasubles' (vestments) to signify the traditional and symbolic value of the covering on which he is to tread as he enters the house ('These are not carpets, no, but sacred chasubles; in no way the same'; Aes. Ag. 926–7; Stuttard (1999), 15). Of course, Stuttard's approach loses the hint of public disapprobation which is hinted at in Aeschylus. However, since he was

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21 Compare Lattimore (1953) 'the conflict born of ancient bitterness is not | a thing new thought upon, but pondered deep in time'.

22 Lattimore (1953) has 'sing sorrow, sorrow: but good win out in the end'. Lloyd-Jones (1993) has 'Sing sorrow, sorrow, but may the good prevail'. Collard's (2002) note ad loc. points to the 'hymnic' style of the passage. Cf. Taplin, below 245–50.

23 Lloyd-Jones (1993) notes at line 921 that in ancient Greece, as in some parts of India and Persia in modern times, the distinction among tapestries, carpets and robes was not altogether sharp. The scope for interpretation of the Greek audience's experience of the words is therefore wide. To this might be added the insight of Crane, who interprets the scene as one about Agamemnon's attitude to cultural norms concerning conspicuous consumption and expenditure, Crane (1993).

24 This is developed by Lattimore (1953)—'Discordant is the murmur at such treading down/of lovely things', whereas Lloyd-Jones retains the ambivalence in the Greek in his more distanced—'Apart from footwipers and embroideries | the voice of fame resounds'. Collard emphasizes the clash of values, 'Foot-wipers and embroideries cry out different meanings'.

both director and translator he could integrate the effects of both verbal and non-verbal languages to fill the ‘silence’ and to create or enlarge audience response. Here he supplied indicators for the audience from costume, acting style, and movement. Agamemnon wore a Nazi-style leather coat and dragged Cassandra on a long chain (see Fig. 11.1). She was on all fours hissing and spitting like a wild animal.

Stuttard’s rationale has some other interesting and perhaps unexpected implications. Certainly it might be criticized for implying a restricted cultural range among modern audiences. It is interesting, too, to note the expectations which the translator’s use of post-classical religious language sets up in the minds of actors as well as audiences. For example, I discussed the play with the actors from Foursight Theatre Company who were preparing a rehearsal workshop on the tapestry scene. They had completed their preliminary reading of Stuttard’s translation and noticed its gloss on Geryon (‘a second Trinity... killed once for each of his three aspects’, Aes. Ag. 870–2; Stuttard (1999), 15).25 The actors’ awareness of the religious language in Stuttard’s translation thus inclined them to interpret the Chorus’ reference to ‘A good shepherd sees all things’ as an analogy between Agamemnon’s situation and that of Christ, rather than as an allusion to the Homeric epithet ‘shepherd of the people’ applied to Agamemnon and drawing on the ambivalence of the Homeric image of the shepherd as both the protector of the people and their chief (Aes. Ag. 795; Stuttard (1999), 14).26

For his 2003 production of Agamemnon, Stuttard created a revised translation which he described as a ‘Revised Acting Script, adapted by David Stuttard’. The stress on the ‘blossom’ image was largely retained. However, the use of Judaeo-Christian religious language was moderated. The ‘sacred chasubles’ became a ‘sacred tapestry’ and the interpretation of the tapestry scene stressed Agamemnon’s violation of material wealth (‘And as I trample on these blood-red robes, this sacred tapestry, may no-one shoot the glance of envy at me from afar. I feel ashamed to trample on this house’s wealth, to waste our riches, waste these webs ... ’).27 Another feature of the 2003 production was its increased physicality. This reflected further developments in the company’s performance style since the 1999 production. The text was pared down and violence was directly represented on stage (in contrast both with Greek conventions and with the 1999 production, in which the sacrifice of Iphigenia was mimed in sequence with the Chorus’ account but the murders of Agamemnon and Cassandra took place off stage). In commenting on the adaptation, Stuttard said that he wanted to ‘clarify the storyline, which can be in danger of being swamped in the original’. The desire to orientate the audience, which was assumed both to lack and also to desire

25 Lattimore (1953) has ‘some triple-bodied Geryon... killed once for every shape assumed’. Lloyd-Jones (1993) has ‘then with three bodies, like a second Geryon, he could have claimed to receive a three-fold cloak of earth... perishing once under each aspect’.

26 Cf. Homer, Iliad 2. 85 and 243. See also Haubold (2000).

27 Stuttard (2002), 20. The interpretation is closely aligned to that proposed by Crane (1993).
Figure 11.1. Clytemnestra, Agamemnon and Cassandra from the Actors of Dionysus' Agamemnon (1999).
knowledge of the cultural background to the ancient play, was reflected in the programme notes which included a 'who's who' in the play section. This use made of programme notes and illustrations is an important indicator of directorial and production objectives and about the assumptions made about the knowledge and aspirations of the audience.28 These examples illustrate some of the difficulties facing the translator, who is both steeped in the classical tradition of poetry and drama and also governed by the aim of creating productions, which will communicate to modern audiences in terms of poetry, ideas and theatre. They show how the concept of being 'faithful to the source' has acquired new meanings and applications; and they also demonstrate how movement away from attempts at replication in performance and towards creation of 'equivalence' between the experiences of ancient and modern audiences, has reshaped the ways in which verbal equivalences in language are perceived and communicated through words and through movement.

The challenge represented by these shifts in perceptions of the authority and function of the text and the growing recognition of the shaping function of the modern audience environment has been expressed in a more extreme form by an emerging translator/director, Ed Richardson, in the Director's Notes accompanying his 2001 production of Medea:

The text of the play is, for me, not a complete or 'universal' work, but something essentially transient—the playwright's solution to a problem, the problem of how to make the audience react in a certain way—whether it is an emotional reaction or an intellectual one... In this adaptation [of Medea] we have tried to go beyond the words on the page, to examine how Euripides was hoping to make his audience react, and to rebuild the text in such a way as to provoke those reactions from our audience within the context of a very different theatrical tradition to that in which 'Medea' was written.29

Richardson's formulation of the issue follows in one respect Jonathan Miller's insistence that directors must not be intimidated when staging ancient drama—'the play becomes a public object'.30 However, unlike Miller who wants the director (and audience) to make an imaginative movement away from the text (and especially from its 'traditional' modes of performance), Richardson wants the imaginative movement to be one of response to the translation of the dynamics and dramatic impact of the ancient performance into the modern theatrical context.

30 Jonathan Miller, quoted in Gilman (1982).
THE HOME GUARD/AGAMEMNON: KATIE MITCHELL’S 1999 PRODUCTION

My second example also focuses on the tapestry scene and is from the staging of The Home Guard, which corresponded to the Agamemnon in Part One of Ted Hughes’s version of the Oresteia, staged at the Royal National Theatre in London in 1999, directed by Katie Mitchell. The relationship between the original translation/version by Hughes and the translation to the stage by Mitchell and the RNT company is even more complex than was the case with the Stuttard Agamemnon, in which not only were the translator and the director the same person, but the translation was initially prepared with close reference to the Greek text and especially to the nature of Aeschylus’ imagery and to its resonances for both ancient and modern audiences.

In the case of Hughes’s Oresteia a double translation was involved. Not only was the trilogy a version of Aeschylus mediated via Hughes. It was also a version of the Hughes, translated onto the stage by the director, Mitchell, the designer, Vicki Mortimer, and the whole company. So far as is known, Hughes did not read Greek nor work from the Greek text. His approach to translating Aeschylus was to pare the metre, syntax, and imagery to the bone and sometimes to roughen the tone. For example, when Hughes elaborated Aeschylus’ reference to the silenced tongue of the Watchman (Aeschylus lines 34 ff), he made the Watchman say:

Only the foundations of this house
Can tell that story. Yes,
The tongue that could find
The words for what follows—that tongue
Would have to lift this house’s foundations.
Those who know too much, as I do, about this house,
Let their tongue lie still—squashed flat
Under the foundations.

What the Hughes version loses, however, is the Watchman’s reference to ‘those who understand’, that is those who can hear between the silences (Aes. Ag. 36–9).32

These silences have two implications for the director; first, the [modern] audience may well not be familiar with the history of the House of Atreus nor

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31 Published text: T. Hughes (1999). The production renamed the plays as The Home Guard (Agamemnon) and The Daughters of Darkness (The Libation Bearers and The Eumenides) and performed them as two separate sequences. In addition, The Home Guard was performed with an interval.

32 T. Hughes (1999), 5. Cf. Lattimore (1953) who has: ‘The rest | I leave to silence; for an ox stands huge upon my tongue. The house itself, could it take voice, might speak | aloud and plain. I speak to those who understand, | but if they fail, I have forgotten everything.’ Lloyd-Jones has: ‘But for the rest I am silent; a great ox stands | upon my tongue; but the house itself, if it could find a voice, | could tell the tale most truly; for I of my choice speak to those who know; but for those who do not know I forget’.
even with the events which took place during the expedition to Troy (including the sacrifice of Iphigenia and the eventual sack of the city). Second, there is a need to reveal that which those 'in the know' (both inside and outside the play) might wish to conceal, and thus to expose their complicity. Thus the role of the director and the designer operates at two distinct levels. The production has to develop the languages of theatrical semiotics to translate for the modern stage words and images from the poetic text. And here, it is important that Hughes is a poet, not a dramatist. The director fills the gaps, the omissions and the concealments with sounds and images, which foster a kind of understanding or interpretation of the play for a modern audience in a modern theatrical context.

Interviews given by Mitchell indicate her awareness of the difference between the Hughes and Aeschylus texts and its effect on her approach to the staging. This suggests a triangular and potentially tense relationship between Aeschylus, Hughes, and Mitchell. In translating from Hughes's page to the RNT stage, Mitchell filled in Hughes' silences about time and place. In interviews she has especially emphasized the importance of the cycle of violence in the trilogy and its modern analogues—Bosnia, Kosovo, Rwanda, and the North of Ireland—and also the potential of the situation of the dysfunctional family as both experiential base and metaphor in the understanding of the modern audience. This approach underlies the two aspects of the production that are particularly relevant to a discussion of the languages involved in translation for the stage. The first is the use of multimedia. This is closely related to the second: dress and the properties used in the tapestry scene.

The use of the video screen in *The Home Guard* was slightly different from its use in the rest of the play. Hughes’s diction is direct and almost entirely lacking in specific contemporary references. The staging of the first part of the play grafted on a twentieth-century context—the Chorus, for instance, were veteran soldiers in wheelchairs and wore poppies, the symbol of remembrance for those who suffer in war. Then the camera became another voice in the play, addressing the audience in a way which bypassed the words and instead invoked mediating images to prompt the audience to add a double awareness to their response to the stage action. The large sliding-door to the house doubled as a video screen for black and white grainy film of celebrations of the end of war. Set against the on-stage participation of the Chorus, the mood created was one of tension between rejoicing and reminder of the persistent effects of war. The resonances for Aeschylus’ Athenian audience of Greek victory over Troy were embedded in

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33 I would like to acknowledge the important work being done by Alison Burke in this respect. She kindly showed me her as yet unpublished interview with Mitchell, 1 April 2000, which sheds considerable light in this area, especially on the way in which Mitchell wanted the production to carry both the Aeschylus and the Hughes versions. A critical analysis by Burke of the status of interviews with theatre practitioners as primary sources for the modern reception of Greek drama is forthcoming on the web site of the Open University research project on the Reception of Classical Drama and Poetry [http://www2.open.ac.uk/ClassicalStudies/GreekPlays].
modern experience, through footage a little distanced in time and memory from the present time. This suggested an analogue between the fifth-century BC audience's ability to relate the myth/cultural memory of Troy and its aftermath to their recent experiences (against Persia perhaps), and the invocation of the modern audience's collective memory (two World Wars set against the 1990s Balkan resonances of Agamemnon's dress and the music).

Video was also used as a 'live' contribution to the action of the play. Notably, the image of Iphigenia and her interaction with Clytemnestra was shown at the same time that Iphigenia appeared physically above the stage, gagged and viewing from the gallery the results of her sacrifice on the way to Troy. She represented the impact of both memory and of maternal loss in the cycle of revenge and also had a lower level narrative function for members of the audience, linking the hinterland of the events of the play with the semiotics of the tapestry scene.

Hughes's published text represents Agamemnon as aware both of religious sensibility and conspicuous consumption—

> When I tread this ocean purple
> As if the glory were mine
> Let no god resent it, or be offended,
> As it offends me
> To trample such richness under my unwashed feet.
> Woven fibres, costly as wire of silver.
> This heaped-up, spilled-out wealth of my own house.
> Do I make too much of it?

The words 'spilled-out' also perhaps recalls the killing of his daughter and this is the aspect which the director used as the basis for the staging.34

In this sequence, Agamemnon entered the house, not by stepping on and thus destroying a carpet of valuable tapestries or chasubles but by trampling on a collage of little girls' dresses, stained blood-red in memory of his previous destruction, not just of his own child, but also of others (cf. Walton, Chapter 10).35 The Programme of the production (Fig. 11.2) reinforced the network of associations communicated by the carpet of dresses. This included photographs showing children's clothes, shoes and toys, half buried in the sand, pock-marked with bullet holes and numbered as though presented as pieces of evidence in a criminal trial. This use of the programme was in contrast to that of the Stuttard production. Stuttard's programme turned the audience's attention back to the cultural roots of the play. Mitchell's programme emphasized interpretation and correspondences with modern experience. The programme illustrations presented

34 T. Hughes (1999), 46. This adds a dimension to the concept of 'off-stage space' explored by Rehm (2002), ch. 2 esp. 78–9, in his discussion of the Aeschylean setting.
35 In discussing how this scene might be played, Foursight Theatre Company had considered using poppies to represent the blood and suffering of war, over which Agamemnon might, however reluctantly, stride into the house. They rejected this on the grounds that the representation of suffering would be too generalized.
Figure 11.2. Programme cover for Katie Mitchell’s *The Oresteia* (1999).
Agamemnon's action as a crime, not only against his own daughter but against humanity (cf. Reynolds, this volume). This is in partial and tangible contrast to the offence against religion and traditional norms emphasized in the tapestry scene in Aeschylus and indicates another way in which languages of translation, in this case non-verbal, may function as transplanters and transformers of audience response from one culture to another. For the director, a sense of what is most likely to evoke revulsion in a modern audience may draw on collective cultural memory as well as on contemporary events. In so doing, it also reflects the translator's or director's interpretation of the main focus of the play and its theatrical expression. In this case, the director's interpretation vocalized and visualized the half-silences of the Hughes text in terms of contemporary political and humanistic demands.

In conclusion, I see the contrasting examples I have discussed as helping us to identify trends in theatrical practice in respect of some of the issues involved in translating language, its web of effects and its theatrical resonances across time, places and cultures. They also indicate that the relationship between verbal and non-verbal theatrical language in any production is shaped by the aims of both the translator and director in their interpretation of the source text (whether ancient or modern), by the context of the theatrical tradition and culture within which the play is received and, especially, by the perceptions and knowledge of the assumed audience, including its sensitivity to both ancient and modern allusion.
In 1959 Pier Paolo Pasolini was asked by Vittorio Gassman to translate Aeschylus' *Oresteia*. The translation was intended to be an essential part of an innovative project, which would have revolutionized the classic performance praxis of Syracuse’s ‘Festival of Ancient Drama’. Although Pasolini already had some juvenile experience in translating Greek poetry (for example Sappho into Friulan dialect) and tragedy, this was to be his first public engagement with it. In a short essay published in the programme, the ‘Lettera del traduttore’, he openly discloses his method of translation. Pressed by production deadlines and by a ‘sacrilegious combination’ (screenplays to write!), he placed the Greek text and three modern translations on his writing desk, Headlam-Thomson, Mazon, and Untersteiner—the last one certainly not the best Italian translation, but the most literal—and always followed ‘the brutality of instinct’. Through a long comparison with a dog devouring a bone, Pasolini then gives a description of his visceral and corporal relationship with the text, a description that recalls the terms ‘aggression’ and ‘incorporation’ as defined by George Steiner in his famous essay on translation, *After Babel*.

Detailed comparison of Pasolini’s translation with Aeschylus, in order to search out errors and misunderstandings of the Greek text and of the French translation (which must have been the main text of reference), is surely a false approach. Pasolini’s *Oresteia* must be considered as a creative translation, which has an extraordinary poetic force, and which still preserves a strong emotional impact on the reading public. Moreover, theatrical translations have more evident problems of reception: they usually have to address an audience which is culturally very
distant from the original. Referring to Schleiermacher’s formula, we can say that they tend to bring the text near to the reader, rather than vice versa. That is the reason why Pasolini uses any kind of periphrasis, in order to explain mythological elements and epithets (for example Hermes Chthonios translated as ‘God of Hell’); and why he modernizes many expressions (for example Zeus is translated as God, temples as churches); and why he even adds new symbolic meanings, in his translations of Dikē as Love, or of Moira as Death. However it is important to stress that Pasolini’s poetics of myth and the sacred found a true consonance with Aeschylus’ archaic and sublime style. He deliberately avoids any classicizing temptation, contaminating lyric ardour with reasoning prose, and trying to reach an Aeschylean ‘elemental and rigid spareness’ (‘magrezza elementare e rigida’).

The ‘Translator’s Note’ provides important clues to understanding the ideological background of the translation, and in general Pasolini’s relationship with Greek tragedy. In a peremptory and provocative way—if we think of the 1959 Italian cultural context—he states that Aeschylus’ poetry has an exclusively political meaning. Behind this affirmation one can easily recognize the influence of George Thomson’s Aeschylus and Athens, recently translated into Italian. And in fact Thomson was a very important source of inspiration for the two directors of the Siracusan performance, Gassman and Luciano Lucignani (in the programme you can read an epistolary exchange with him). But if we read the ‘Translator’s Note’ carefully, we discover that it completely lacks Thomsonian Marxist schematicism. By ‘political meaning’ Pasolini means a profound anthropological conflict between, on the one hand, archaic, irrational, primitive forces, connected to the basic metaphors of mother and undifferentiated nature, and, on the other, modern, rational, democratic forces, connected to the masculine logos. Of course one can perceive echoes of Bachofen’s famous and outdated interpretation, but Pasolini basically stresses the moment of synthesis. The final transformation of the Erinyes into Eumenides becomes then a metaphor for a political and social programme. A modern society must incorporate, assimilate and then modify elements of previous cultures, and not simply repress them. It is not by chance that Pasolini used this metaphor in his journalistic activity, and in his polemic against the rough and rapid Italian modernization of the 1960s.

This ideological background clearly influences the translation. In particular, in translating Agamemnon Pasolini shows a powerful identification with the more archaic strata of Aeschylus’ complex system. A good example would be the third stasimon, completely dominated by the pure Aeschylean theme of phobos. Using a technique that best characterizes his translation, Pasolini creates a new thematic pattern around the opposition ‘unconscious / conscious’:

6 Schleiermacher (1838).
7 Some years later he was to go through another similar experience, translating Plautus’ Miles Gloriosus into Roman dialect in a vivid and modernizing style.
8 See Pasolini (2001a), 1008. 9 G. Thomson (1941), translated into Italian in 1949.
10 Bachofen (1948).
Dal mio cuore sgorga
Un lamento mortale,
Senza strumento, quello
Che cantano le Erinni.
Ho perduto ogni gioia, ogni speranza.
E il canto che sgorga
Dal nostro profondo
non inganna mai.
Il cuore che inconscio danza
Alla coscienza del giusto e del vero,
Prefigura sempre i fatti reali
Ma mi faccio l'augurio
che finisca in niente
questo mio disperato pensiero! (990—1000)

From my heart arose
An awful wail,
Without instrument,
The one that the Erinyes were singing.
I have lost all joy and hope.
And the song which arises
From deep-down within never deceives us.
The heart's unconscious dance
When gaining consciousness of what is right and true
Always foreshadows the real facts.
But I wish
It would end in nothing
This desperate thought of mine.

This opposition, parallel to those between purity and impurity and between prehistory and history, is a thematic kernel in Pasolini's poetry. To the former belong peasant culture, primitive Christianity, the Third World, the Roman subproletariat—that is all the beloved objects of his poetics. Aeschylean terror thus becomes a kind of mythical archetype of this cultural constant. Translating the 'Hymn to Zeus' he had already used the same opposition about wisdom coming against the will (180–1): ‘Quando in fondo al sonno, il rimorso si infiamma, è in esso, inconscio, la coscienza’ (‘when deep in sleep, remorse catches fire, it is there, unconsciously, where conscience is.’). And he will use it in similar terms at the end of the trilogy, in the central stasimon and in the final speech by Athena in the Eumenides (531–7 and 935–7). Modulating original elements and adding new ones, Pasolini creates, then, a true Leitmotiv that emphasizes an important Aeschylean element: the primitive terror symbolized by the Erinyes, which must be driven and controlled by a clear system of values.

From a purely stylistic point of view, it is noteworthy that the most impressive parts, full of alliterations and other poetic devices, are those related to the
characters of Cassandra and Clytemnestra. Here I quote just one passage, taken from Cassandra’s delirious speech, recalling Thyestes’ banquet:

Aiuto, aiuto!
Di nuovo l’angoscia divina in me
Fa vorticare la sua tempesta di voci!
Guardate questi ragazzi seduti
davanti al palazzo, ombre di sogno:
sì, sono i figli massacrati dai parenti,
le mani colme di carne, portano in pasto
le loro interiora, le loro viscere,
a un padre che se le porta alla bocca...

Help, help!
Again the divine anguish in me
Let his storm of voices whirl!
Look at these boys
Sitting in front of the palace, shadows of a dream,
Yes, they are the sons who have been slaughtered by relatives,
Their hands full of flesh, on a platter they carry
Their entrails, their guts,
To a father who, if he brings them to his mouth...

Pasolini—Gassman’s Oresteia was performed in 1960, and published in 1960. At that time Pasolini was making the most radical change in his polymorphic and eclectic career: the so-called conversion to cinema. One can even give some symbolic meaning to this synchronism, if we think that Pasolini kept recognizing and theorizing in the movies a new form of mythical and sacred language. Especially because cinema has no clear ‘grammatical’ codification, so that it can be considered ‘oneiric, pre-linguistic, barbarian’. Generally speaking, during the 1960s his Marxism, like his Freudism, although never abandoned, was passing through a crisis, while his interest in anthropology, history of religion and Jungian archetypes was definitively increasing. It is therefore not surprising that, at the end of the decade, these two trends of his poetic world, Greek tragedy and filmmaking, could finally meet.

He then took on two masterpieces of the two other Greek tragic poets. The two movies, Edipo re (1967) and Medea (1970) resume and, one could say, symbolically correspond to the two basic ‘sciences’ that dominate twentieth-century reception of antiquity: psychoanalysis and anthropology. The first, and more autobiographical, is characterized by a cyclical idea of time and evolution—an idea which is typical of peasant cultures and quite opposite to Christian and Marxist teleology. The second, more radical, is based on a strong conflict of cultures, which turns out to be in the end tragically insoluble. The utopia of a cultural synthesis, expressed by the ‘Translator’s Letter’, appears now to be definitely defeated.

It is less well known that during the same years Pasolini wrote a series of five tragedies, clearly inspired in their formal structure by ancient theatre, and completely different from his mythological movies. The latter exploit to the full non-verbal communication (dance, music, gesture), and try to fix an ethnographic, 'barbarian' cinema based on non-Western settings and body language. The former, on the other hand, aim at creating a new 'theatre of the word' (teatro di parola), opposed at the same time both to the official, bourgeois theatre—polemically defined as 'theatre of chit-chat' (teatro della Chiacchiera)— and to the avant-garde theatre, defined as 'theatre of scream and gesture' (teatro dell'Urlo e del Gesto). The contrast between the two experiences certainly derives from the very different nature of the two media (a difference often stressed by Pasolini); and it turns out to be less acute than at first sight. The mythological movies preserve a specific kind of dramaturgy, based on a personal reinterpretation of the Greek models: the dramas latently express a mistrust in the power of logos, paradoxically conveyed through an excess of logos (they are actually full of ideology and didactic elements).

One of these tragedies, Piade, evokes the myth of Orestes, and in particular its political meaning and its metaphorical application to the present. It is conceived as a continuation of Aeschylus' trilogy, like Euripides' Orestes, but strongly contaminated with a contemporary setting: the allusions to Italian post-war history play a central and structural role. The three mythical main characters, Electra, Orestes, and Pylades, embody three opposite ideological attitudes: Electra the irrational, obsessive, almost Fascist affection for the past; Orestes the rationalist, enthusiastic reliance on modernization; and finally Pylades the desperate, neurotic attempt to conciliate modernity and democracy with myth and the sacred. This tries, in fact, to make a synthesis of the two poles symbolized by the two mythical siblings. The play deconstructs any fixed ideology and any 'monological' position, creating a complicated system of intersections between the three poles. In the end the position embodied by the clearly autobiographic eponymous character totally fails: exiled by a new order based on homologation, and sanctioned by new Eumenides, Pylades curses any form of Reason and of God—a negative conclusion which reflects the late Pasolini's pessimism and nihilism, and subverts the Marxist—Utopian position of 1961.

At the end of Pasolini's Greek phase we find the Oresteia once again. Filmed in 1968 and 1969, and first screened in 1973, the Notes for an African Oresteia (Appunti per un'Orestiade africana) is an interesting and remarkable mixture of documentary and fiction movie. In every artistic genre of Pasolini's late production one can sketch a true poetics of the unfinished: a predilection for

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15 That is the consolidation and levelling of cultural behaviour, a central concept in Pasolinian ideology.
16 One can read a transcription of the soundtrack of the film in Pasolini (1983); now, with small alterations, in Pasolini (2001b), 1. 1175–96.
notes, projects, fragments, conceived not as preparation for real works, but as new forms that negate and subvert artistic conventions, that is to say the Aristotelian idea of an enclosed organism. We might mention the two collections of poems Poesia in forma di rosa and Trasumanar e organizzar, full of titles such as Projects for future works. Or the two narrative works La divina Mimesis and Petrolio. The first is conceived as a critical edition of a poem interrupted by the violent death of the author. The second, likewise, is a critical edition of fragments and various material taken from a huge novel, a modern Satyricon, this time really interrupted by Pasolini’s tragic assassination (we have approximately one third of the entire work). Or again the movies Notes for a film on India (Appunti per un film sull’India) and Sopralluoghi in Palestina. Even the Notes for an African Oresteia were thought of as a part of a big project, called Notes for a Poem on Third World (Appunti per un poema sul Terzo Mondo), equally conceived in terms of unfinished fragments, and frustrated because of problems of production.

In this movie Pasolini aims at applying an Aeschylean synthesis of cultures, visualized by the Erinyes’ transformation into Eumenides, to post-colonial Africa, and to the passage from tribal culture to modern democracy. Application to traumatic transitions is certainly a constant element in the modern reception of the Oresteia, if we think of the several dramatic rewritings during the Second World War (Sartre, Yourcenar, Hauptmann), or, more recently, of Peter Stein’s revival of his famous performance in contemporary Russia. In Pasolini’s poetic imagination, Africa always played an important role as escape from the ‘horrible universe’ of technological neocapitalism. One of his most famous poems, the Frammento alla morte, ends with the exclamation ‘Africa, my only alternative’.

It is at the same time a literary myth, taken from Arthur Rimbaud and from decadent poetry; an object of anthropological and scientific interest; and it is finally a beloved destination of long travels together with two other prominent Italian writers, Alberto Moravia and Elsa Morante.

The basic idea of the Notes is that the Aeschylean structure could help in understanding African post-colonial transformation, and that African countries offer a unique example of cultural synthesis and hybridization. However, this idea is never stated in a dogmatic way: on the contrary, Pasolini discusses it in a public debate with a group of African students in Rome, which is very important from an ideological point of view, since the author questions his own eurocentric project. The students express their doubts and unease about the superimposition of Western categories; they identify with Orestes but find the innovation of the ending purely formal; and finally they suggest the backdating of the setting to the 1960s, since modernization has already totally changed African identity. In fact the movie sometimes shows significant examples of modern lifestyles, imported to Tanzania and Uganda (the two countries where the movie was shot) both from capitalist USA and from communist China. Moreover, in the presentation of the

movie, Pasolini affirms that in the last decade tribal culture had suddenly become mere folklore even to young African people. Once again cultural synthesis appears as an ephemeral and elusive utopia.

It is then not by chance that Pasolini’s Oresteia, the last movie of his mythical trilogy, remained fragmentary. Twentieth-century culture has always felt uncomfortable with Aeschylus’ sublime ‘happy ending’, although it is very ambiguous and not certainly celebratory. At the end of O’Neill’s Mourning becomes Electra or Hauptmann’s Die Atriden-Tetralogie we find no new order, but just madness, desperation, and cyclic return of the past. And one can trace similar characteristics in many famous performances, such as those by Luca Ronconi, Peter Stein, and the Societas Raffaello Sanzio. Even in Pasolini’s movie, the final transformation of Erinys into Eumenides—his beloved metaphor of cultural synthesis—is represented through the non-verbal code of dance, in a very allusive and fascinating way.

The movie has in fact two basic components: a path towards ethnographic documentary, and a path towards non-verbal, musical expression. The first comes from the Italian neo-realist tradition (especially Rossellini), and from Pasolini’s ‘hallucinatory love for Reality’, which culminated in the choice of cinematic visual immediacy. The second comes from his increasing mistrust in the expressive powers of logos, as already discussed. We shall now take a look at two examples of those tendencies that will give an idea of Pasolini’s Agamemnon. The first tragedy of the trilogy is problematic for modern directors because of the prominent role of the chorus. This very special movie, that wants to be ‘chiefly popular’, visually transcribes the chorus through images of social life, such as markets, streets, and other meeting points. It is the ‘humble everyday life’ of African people, that can best express the myth and the sacred. In the entire movie Pasolini strongly exploits the counterpoint between visual and acoustic parts; here in Agamemnon, he reads his translation of the ‘Hymn to Zeus’ through the aforementioned images of social life. This documentary path culminates in the use of reportage images of the Biafra war aimed at visualizing Agamemnon’s death.

The Notes for an African Oresteia frequently uses African dance, music, and rites (for example at the beginning of Libation Bearers). In an article entitled ‘Notes for a setting of the ‘Oresteia’ in Africa (Note per l’ambientazione dell’Orestiade in Africa)’, Pasolini wrote that especially in the Sudan one often has the feeling of a rebirth of the ancient Greek chorus. This statement, together with the expressive solutions of the movie, has nothing to do, in my opinion, with the genetic perspective of the controversial Black Athena by Martin Bernal. It is rather a universalistic attitude, that recognizes transcultural constants, and shows ethnic identity as a product of continuous hybridization. The same attitude can be traced

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18 See Bierl (1996).
20 See Bernal (1987–91) and Berlinerblau (1999).
in some post-colonial writers and intellectuals, such as Wole Soyinka, if we think of his adaptation of Euripides' *Bacchae*, written in the same year as Pasolini's movie was released (1973), and based upon a clear syncretism between Dionysus, the Yoruba God Ogun, and Christ.21

Because of this poetics of hybridization there is no traditional African music, but the most basically blended musical genre of the twentieth century: jazz, in particular the free jazz of the South American saxophonist Gato Barbieri. From this point of view, the Cassandra monologue sounds particularly impressive. Translated into English, the delirious speech is sung by two African American singers, Yvonne Murray and Archie Savage. Pasolini's trend towards musical expression perfectly meets here with the lyric and metaphorical style of Aeschylus' famous passage. The scene may be considered a culminating point of his barbaric vision of Greece and, more generally, of ancient culture. It is not surprising therefore that, according to some scholars,22 this movie can be considered one of Pasolini's masterpieces, just because of and not in spite of its fragmentary nature, as opposed to Medea's more traditional magnificence.

Gassman's 1960 production of the *Oresteia* similarly used many African elements, both in the stage design by Theo Otto, enriched by totems and bronze columns, and in the choreography by Mathilde de Beauvoir (Figs. 12.1 and 12.2). It certainly had a revolutionary impact on Italian classicistic and traditional performance praxis.23 After that crucial experience Pasolini's translation was used at times by some directors, still preserving its very specific tonality.

I would like to conclude by quoting a very recent production which heavily exploits a relationship with Pasolini's Aeschylus: the *Appunti per un'Orestiade Italiana* by the prominent Milanese group Teatro dell'Elfo, directed by Elio De Capitani. It is a new version of Aeschylus' *Oresteia* based on Pasolini's translation, that focuses on the relationship masculine/feminine, and aims at creating a kind of 'contemporary archaica' on stage. The oxymoron expresses the programme of evoking Southern Italian anthropological traditions, parallel to ancient lamentations and *kommoi*, and at the same time of alluding to contemporary Balkan conflicts, not in order to modernize Aeschylus, but to understand it better through our historical experience. The first part was the *Libation Bearers*—a choice made due to practical reasons (the composer Giovanna Marini wanted to start with a feminine chorus and with lamentations), but theorized afterwards by De Capitani as a good way to focus first on the core of the trilogy. The second part was a performance of *Eumenides* which used some fragments of Pasolini's *Pilade* to stress the political components of the birth of democracy. It had a more abstract and metaphysical scenography, and impressive choral music alluding to Southern Italian funeral traditions. The third part, *Agamemnon*, before a final reproduction

21 Soyinka (1973).
Figure 12.1. Cassandra on Agamemnon's wagon from Pasolini's *Orestiade* (1960).
Figure 12.2. The final scene of Pasolini’s *Agamemnon* with Clytemnestra and Aegysthus (1960).
of the entire trilogy, was planned for July 2001; and my intention had been to conclude this chapter commenting on the performance. Unfortunately some problems of production forced the director to cancel the project. Once again an unintentional poetics of the unfinished has prevailed!
Music was vital and central to Aeschylus' own production of *Agamemnon* in 458 BC.¹ I am using 'music' here as a shorthand for a complex, dynamic, and volatile interaction of melody, metric, pace, rhythm, and tone. This indisputable element will have been especially prominent for the various lyric parts of the play, with their complex metres and instrumental accompaniment. But the iambics also had some musicality in this broad sense, even though they were spoken unaccompanied in a relatively simple line-after-line (stichic) metre. They were still far more dynamic than prose—and even further from what Pasolini dubbed 'teatro della Chiachiglia' (theatre of chit-chat).²

Few modern performances make any organic attempt to reflect this Aeschylean music. Peter Stein's production, great though it was, had virtually no place for music of any kind. Ariane Mnouchkine's was accompanied continuously by the multi-instrumental virtuosity of Jean-Jacques Lemetre, but the words of the plays were not integrated or matched with this in any significant way (at least not memorably so); nor were the choral and other lyric passages differentiated in delivery. This chapter will discuss a notable exception: Peter Hall's production of Tony Harrison's translation in 1981–2. If I had to pick out one leading strength of that *Oresteia*, it would be momentum, pace, dynamic, rhythm—a constant sense of dramatic urgency and forward movement. It is a production that has been much admired, and almost as strongly disliked and derogated. The weighing of the pros and cons will also serve, I hope, as a springboard to considering the general importance of dynamic, of metre, and of music in the modern translation and performance of Greek tragedy.

There may be a variety of reasons for this absence of poetically integrated music from modern performances. One is our ignorance (not as total as often claimed)
of the actual sounds of ancient Greek music; another is their very different and alien metrics and phonetics, which were based on pitch and syllable-length rather than on the stress which dominates most modern patterning. Another is the appropriation of dramatic music by what is generally now regarded as a separate art-form (despite its originally direct relation to ancient Greek tragedy): opera. But, more than anything else probably, this lack of music is inextricable from the diction and metrics of the translations used. Very few have any realizable musicality built into them. Not many of them attempt any metrical version of the spoken iambics, let alone begin to echo or recapture the metrical and musical virtuosity of the lyric passages. Paradoxically, the lyric passages are more usually translated into prose than the spoken iambics, though even these seldom depart from a school-book blank verse. Most translators would probably reply, if challenged, that the achievement of a complex metric—or even of a simple one—is too high a price to pay, that it requires too much distortion of the text, or too distant a departure from the original, to be justified.

Many academic scholars or theorists of translation, as well as practitioners, would go along with them, and with André Lefevere, who argued that any attempt at metrical translation ends up paying too high a price in the alteration to diction and syntax that is inevitable. This stands in stark contrast with the poet Joseph Brodsky’s insistence (in 1974) that ‘metres in verse are kinds of spiritual magnitudes for which nothing can be substituted... A translator should begin his work with a search for at least a metrical equivalent of the original form’. The Harrison Version clearly sides with Brodsky.

It might be clearest to weigh straight in with a practical illustration; and rather than taking just one passage, I shall consider the whole phenomenon of stichomythia. This device of single-line dialogue interchange was a basic constructive feature of Greek tragedy right from the early days. True, later Sophocles tends to avoid regular stretches, but later Euripides on the contrary goes in for ever more relentlessly long and regular passages. In Aeschylus stichomythia usually involves the chorus as one of the two participants, reflecting the place of the chorus within the power balances of earlier tragedy. But in the *Oresteia* the central two-party confrontations of the first two plays take the form of stichomythia: Agamemnon and Clytemnestra in the purple-cloth scene, and Orestes and Clytemnestra, once the cards are on the table, in *Libation Bearers*.

Why should the tragedians have been so devoted to this dialogue-form? Part of the point of stichomythia must have been that it has such a very different dynamic from the central spoken mode, the rhesis or set-piece speech. No less essentially, the 1/1/1/1 pattern makes for a sense of tension, a period of ding-dong capping, of attacking, parrying, and manoeuvring. Stichomythia moves fast, and it fits a lot

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3 We are greatly helped towards seeing what there is to be heard by Pohlmann and West (2001).
4 I owe both these citations—with gratitude—to Peter France’s introduction to ‘Translation studies and translation criticism’ (p. 5), which itself forms the first section of the generally excellent introduction to ‘Theoretical Issues’ in France (2000).
of argumentative movement into a tight space. Some of the best observations on it are to be found in John Gould's articles: for example, 'the very ceremoniousness of the exchange serves to create tension and precariousness of mood.'

Stichomythia is usually one of the translators' least favourite challenges. Such a radically non-naturalistic type of dialogue has proved a headache to most, who have been naturalizing 'domesticators' (I shall return to this term). If they are to stick to the technique, they find that they are constantly compressing one line to keep it in bounds, and then fattening out another to make it stretch to fit the space. Many simply abandon the regularity altogether, encouraged no doubt by the dialogue techniques of modern drama, whether naturalistic or artificial, which draw away from the tight, tense, and agonistically balanced forms of Greek drama.

It is an almost emblematic feature of Harrison's Oresteia that stichomythia, far from being an embarrassment, becomes a strength. His key is (of course) rhyme: it is rhyme that for him achieves in English that dynamic of tense regularity, 'a metrical equivalent of the original form'. In keeping with this, in the original 1981 production all the stichomythias were conducted to a strict metronomic pulse, the tempo differing depending on the ambient atmosphere. The form was also given an explicit musical emphasis through Harrison Birtwistle's scoring: a regular three-note cadence sounded at the beginning and end of each stichomythia, marking a framing pause on either side of it. And it is worth noting that in the printed versions of the translation the couplets are numbered, and that this is reinforced by the archaic typographical device of side-lining the rhyming couplets, a reminder of their dynamic.

I shall now quote the very last scene of Agamemnon (lines 1665—73) in a recent 'close' translation and in the Harrison. These lines take the form of a stichomythia (in trochaic tetrameters rather than the usual iambic trimeters) between the chorus and Aegisthus, interrupted by Clytemnestra and brought to a close by her final couplet. This will introduce some of the most conspicuous features of Harrison's metric and diction, and begin to raise the question of his engagement with the original Greek. So here is the passage in Christopher Collard's recent translation for Oxford Worlds Classics, which aims to be 'readable and accurate'.

CHORUS: It would not be like Argives to fawn upon an evil man!
AEGISTHUS: But I shall still pursue you in later days!
CHORUS: No, not if fortune direct Orestes to come here.
AEGISTHUS: I'm well aware that men in exile feed on hopes.

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5 This is from his 1987 article on characterization, in Gould (2001), 78—111 at p. 99. For a survey of the form see B. Seidensticker in Jens (1971), 183—220.
6 The score has never been published, but can fortunately still be heard on the video of the television film made for Channel 4 (available only from Films for the Humanities and Sciences, Princeton, NJ—not from Channel 4 itself).
7 There are slight typographical differences between the various printings (1981, 1985 = 1986, 2002). The latest drops the numbering of the couplets in stichomythias, thus diluting the printed indicators of musicality. I shall cite from Harrison (1986), since I like that volume's title best.
8 Collard (2002), lxiv.
CHORUS: Go on, then, do it, get yourself fat, polluting justice since you can!
AEGISTHUS: You shall pay me the penalty, be sure of it, in return for this foolishness!
CHORUS: Vaunt away while you have the confidence, like a cockerel near the hen!
CLYTEMNESTRA: Take no account of this empty yelping! In our twin mastery of this house
I and you will make things well.

And now the Harrison (though without the sideline bracketing of each couplet):

1. CH: Argives don't grovel to your evil sort.
   AEG: Then Argives like you will have to be taught.

2. CH: Not if Orestes comes back to his own.
   AEG: Exiles eat hope, all gristle and bone.

3. CH: Grow fat on injustice. Shit on the state!
   AEG: I'm warning you, old fool, before it's too late...

4. CH: Cock-a-doodle-doo, the dungheap lord,
   crow a bit louder, your hen will applaud!

CLYTEMNESTRA: Let the terriers yap, all bark and no bite!
   You and I, we'll rule this house, and set it right.

This immediately demonstrates what a high premium this version puts on
dynamic, metric, and rhythm. While the lines are distinctly terser than the
original (and the Collard), I do not find that this is seriously at the expense of
the verbal sense—in fact the literal sense is never far distant, and there is a constant
sensitivity to verbal nuance. But the driving force lies with metre and with music.
The tight wording also serves to bring out some argumentative tensions that tend
to be lost in 'closer' versions: notice here the triangular antitheses, present in the
original text, between the chorus’ emphasis on the city set against Aegisthus’
personal ambition, which is in turn set against Clytemnestra’s emphasis on ‘this
house’. The agonistic repartee between ‘exiles eat hope’ and ‘grow fat on injustice’
is nicely brought out; and so are the farmyard images spelt out in ‘the dung-heap
lord’ and ‘let the terriers yap’. But what about ‘shit on the state’ (‘polluting
justice’)? Is this not merely the kind of vulgarizing liberty that one might expect
from the poet of πτωθήσεσθαι; μεταμεταβολήν; μετατροπή; Μήδεμνός. Yet μετά 
τὴν δίκην immediately after πτωθήσεσθαι in 1669,
alongside the cock in the next insult, arguably bring the dung-heap pretty close to
the surface of the original Greek. The 4-letter word undoubtedly helps to keep the
tension of the stichomythic struggle 'precarious'. The distance from the original in
some respects brings it closer in others, particularly in musicality.

The wasps' nest that I have stirred here is a fundamental paradox that has always
haunted literary translation, practice and theory—and always will: to stay close to
the original you have to depart from it; and if you stick close to the original, you
will be untrue to it. Every translator, whether consciously or unconsciously, makes
fundamental decisions of priority along the axis of this paradox. When William
Cowper set about translating Homer, he claimed fidelity ('I have omitted nothing;
I have invented nothing'); yet at the same time, he insisted: 'If we copy Homer too closely... instead of translating, we murder him.' This recognition that to stick too closely is to 'murder' your beloved poet has not, generally speaking, filtered through to our times, and especially not to professional classicists. Classicists like their translations to be describable as, for example, close, accurate, plain, consistent. These epithets would fit all four of the current major series of translations: Loeb, Penguin, Worlds Classics, and Everyman. Many of the surviving tragedies have, in fact, been retranslated for these series recently; and it is very telling that all four translate into prose. All have been too cautious to risk or to defy the accusations and denigrations that literary or poetic versions almost invariably attract from classicists: distortion, taking liberties, self-indulgence, and so forth. Poetic effusions may be tolerated, or even admired, if they are the creations of fringe-figure geniuses, like Ezra Pound, or of poets who know no Greek, such as Christopher Logue; but those who know the languages well are expected to play safe.

A leading reason for this preferred taste of classicists for accurate, careful translation is not hard to find. In order to become professionals, they (we) will have to have translated both prepared and unprepared texts, and to have shown due knowledge of them in examinations. These official translations have to be close enough to demonstrate that the candidate fully understands the precise wording and syntax of the original. This formal exercise inevitably imposes a restraint on any sense of larger poetic qualities through its insistence on displaying knowledge of the construal of the detailed verbal sense of the original text. But, while it has been business as usual in the 'set book' and 'unseens' classes of Classics Departments, a whole new domain or mystery, which knows itself as 'Translation Studies', has mushroomed in the last 25 years. Some of the notions that have become common currency in Translation Studies have clear applicability to the wasps' nest that I am prodding. There is, for example, a central and particularly useful pair of terms promoted by Lawrence Venuti: 'foreignization' and 'domestication'. Domestication is, of course, the normal practice with the translation of Greek and Latin classics. But it might be claimed that domestication means 'murder', or at least drugging into a compliant and trouble-free half-life. Even to put it in more friendly language, it means taming and homogenizing.

But once the matter is put in terms of this polarity, it is immediately obvious that this kind of 'domestication' or 'making at home'—sometimes fudged with

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10 The same is largely true of the various versions recently published by Methuen, Pennsylvania and Cambridge.
11 This disjunction is openly recognized in the OUP New York series 'The Greek Tragedy in New Translations', initiated a long time ago by William Arrowsmith (one of the few classical scholars to have produced powerful translations himself). These are by poets who work with the advice and moderation of a professional scholar. It is interesting that they have rarely travelled to this side of the Atlantic. When the series reaches completion, before long, it may well have some renewed impact.
vacuous phrases like 'what Aeschylus would have said if he were writing today'—runs directly counter to one of the main currents in classical scholarship of the last twenty-five years. The move has generally been away from appropriation and towards anthropologizing, contextualizing, historicizing. This is the equivalent of what in the translation context Venuti calls 'foreignizing'. Meanwhile, assimilation, identification, and naturalism have all been very much not the name of the current game; 'domestication' is regarded as an attitude of the past, quite often labelled with that most abusive of epithets, 'Victorian'.

Harrison's Oresteia is very clearly an example of foreignization. Anthony Pym cites it as a notable exception to the general trend in the later twentieth century towards 'privileging exact plainness over adventurous literariness'.13 Responses to it make an interesting test-case of what is at issue. Generally speaking, both the production and the translation were positively appreciated back in 1981–2, and they undoubtedly made a significant impact at the time. But people either loved it or hated it. There certainly were those who responded negatively; including many of the press critics. I also have the impression that a proportion of classicists and classicist-theatrologists were among the detractors of the production or the translation or both. Back in 1984, Michael Walton wrote, 'The translation... represents a considerable feat of imaginative composition, but in production, sound dominated sight... must be chalked up as an opportunity missed.' More recently, David Wiles regards the Hall/Harrison Oresteia as a negative and in some ways perverted instance of 'ritual theatre'.15 The fullest academic account is by R. B. Parker,16 who is, generally speaking, admiring of most aspects. Nonetheless he has some pretty negative things to say about the translation: 'Its insistent alliteration proved ultimately exhausting... Its meaning was sometimes obscure and its decorum unreliable' (I shall come back to this last phrase later). No less damning than any of these is Michael Silk's extravagant praise of the Ted Hughes's version which was backed up with a negative comparison with the 'quaint and numbing (if sometimes brilliant) Anglo-Saxonism of Tony Harrison'.17

Without entering into dispute about the merits or defects of the Ted Hughes, what is this about 'quaint... Anglo-Saxonism'? I suspect that Silk may have been influenced by his student Simeon Underwood, who published an interesting article, which is unusually well informed by contemporary Translation Studies, about Harrison and Logue.18 Underwood makes some positive points and shrewd observations about the Harrison Version, but he eventually comes through on his last page as pretty seriously negative in his final assessment. 'This synthetic style claims familiarity through its use of colloquialism and its strong rhythm; but it is

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13 Pym in France (2000), 77.
in itself confrontational, with its vocabulary of “otherness”. What is left is an abrasive inverted snobbery... there is continual friction...\(^{19}\) The irony is that Harrison would himself probably welcome much of this—in fact, ‘abrasion’ is a word that he has himself cited as something which he strives for. The otherness and the confrontation are precisely the characteristics which the foreignizing and anthropologically aware type of translation strives for. In other words, Underwood condemns in terms that others might well regard as praise.

But my main problem with Underwood’s critique is the supposition, taken for granted and never demonstrated, that what the Harrison translation (and indeed the Peter Hall production as a whole) strove for was some kind of ‘primitiveness’. I quote his last page again: ‘Harrison’s reading of Aeschylus does seem fundamentally mistaken: the poetic primitivism for which Harrison forges a hybrid equivalent is based on historical stereotyping, and does little justice to Aeschylus’ sophistication of dramatic technique, language and thought.’ I find this sentence way off the mark.\(^ {20}\) This whole attack seems to be based on one feature only, namely the echoes in Harrison’s \textit{Oresteia} of Anglo-Saxon poetry. For Underwood and for Silk, this Anglo-Saxon colouring seems to be the dominant characteristic. But how essential or conspicuous is it? How many of Harrison’s readers, let alone of theatre audiences, were (or are) conversant enough with the metrics and sound effects of Anglo-Saxon poetry for this to be a significant, let alone a dominant, colouring? I suspect that the answer is even fewer than the proportion who know or recognize ancient Greek colouring. This is not to deny that it is there, but to deny that it makes for a predominant primitivism.

Harrison has, in fact, recently written about this himself.\(^ {21}\) He displays that he is much more erudite about the \textit{Corpus Poeticum Boreale} than most of us—or of his audience—are. The first point to note in his own account is that he compares the presence of Anglo-Saxon in his \textit{Oresteia} to the presence of Homer in Aeschylus. In other words, it is a sophisticated intertext, not a primitivizing reversion. Second, he singles out consonantal alliteration—what he calls ‘consonantal crag splinters’—as something particularly congenial to his own poetic language, especially to its Yorkshire roots. Third, he finds in Anglo-Saxon kennings a way into handling Aeschylus’ famous compound words—or at least a way of transplanting that poetic feature into English.

These compound words, especially nouns, most certainly are a central feature of Harrison’s \textit{Oresteia}, but with a few exceptions, there is nothing particularly redolent of Anglo-Saxon about them. They are used freely, without any precise correspondence to the placing of such word-formations in the original Aeschylus; and they have a huge range of functions and levels. At one extreme of the sliding scale there are the unique formations (more often than not \textit{hapax legomena} in

\(^{19}\) Ibid. 97.

\(^{20}\) I bridle particularly at the claim that it does little justice to Aeschylus’ ‘sophistication of dramatic technique’, because my own \textit{Stagecraft of Aeschylus} is implicated in this accusation!

English) which are generally of the kind that is closest to the Aeschylean lexicon: words like ‘galesqualls’, ‘bloodstorm’, ‘lootlust’, ‘whore-war’, ‘oar-spoor’, ‘child-stew’, ‘grieftrills’, ‘woecups’, ‘flesh-chef’, ‘lootpearl’, ‘looseflow’, ‘shrewgrudge’. At the other extreme, there are recurrent formations, words which become part of the basic vocabulary of the plays, and integral to their whole thematic texture. These would include, for example, ‘he-child’ and ‘she-child’, ‘he-god’ and ‘she-god’, ‘bed-bond’, ‘blood-bond’, ‘man-lord’, ‘blood-grudge’. Another leading motive—or at any rate another leading effect—of these word-coinages is to avoid areas of English language which bring with them over-familiar ‘domesticated’ baggage, associations which are not necessarily appropriate, if not downright inappropriate. They are, in other words, part of Harrison’s anthropological foreigning. Thus, ‘he-child’ and ‘she-child’ avoid ‘son’ and ‘daughter’; ‘clan-chief’ avoids ‘general’ or ‘king’ or ‘prime minister’—all with notions of hierarchy or of national unity that should be avoided.22

Just as importantly, the Harrisonian word-building is used to avoid the familiar language of religion, especially of Christianity. Thus, for example, ‘god-stone’ avoids the word ‘altar’;23 ‘god-sop’ avoids ‘sacrifice’; and ‘he-god’ and ‘she-god’ not only gender the gods but also de-Christianize them. This contrasts with most other translators, including Ted Hughes, who not only usually uses the singular ‘God’, always with a capital ‘G’, but even repeatedly calls Apollo ‘Son of God’. Harrison’s avoidance of transcendental religiosity is one of the leading interpretative priorities of his version—and one of the reasons why the application of the term ‘ritual’ to his translation seems so odd. This is at its clearest and most controversial in the total omission (often criticized) of the so-called ‘Hymn to Zeus’ at Agamemnon 160–83.24 The Harrison version challenges us to ask to what extent our obsession with the religion, especially the ‘theodicy’, of Aeschylean tragedy is an imposition driven by the search for religion-substitutes in the aftermath of the decline in the power of Christianity in our era.

You can take a horse to water, but you cannot make it drink. I can’t make anyone like the Harrison version, but I can try to show that its chief characteristics are thought through, and that they engage with Aeschylean theatre and Aeschylean Greek. Some of the things that are most characteristic of Harrison, and which are exemplified in his Oresteia, are the very things that some people don’t like in his

22 I have to confess, though, that the heavy use of the word ‘clan’ and its compounds is not my favourite device in the language of Harrison’s Oresteia.

23 This particular example provoked a keen dispute at Bristol, where it was protested by some ‘Bristol receptionists’ that ‘altar’ has now irreversibly become the word for such sacred stones, used by classicists and anthropologists no less than Christian activists; they protested that ‘god-stone’ is overintrusively alienating. So this provides a nice test-case for the ever-present dilemma between domestication and foreignization.

24 I was interested to learn from Amanda Wrigley that the Third Programme broadcast of Louis MacNeice’s translation in July 1950, produced by Raymond Raikes, also omitted the so-called Hymn to Zeus. See Wrigley (forthcoming). This, like Harrison, presumably found that celebrated passage too liable to be assimilated to Christian redemptiveness.
poetry as a whole. Take for example, the ‘unreliable decorum’ that Parker complained of (see above, p. 240). This is undeniable and ubiquitous—and very Harrisonian. It comes from his lifelong mission to tear down the barriers that have been erected between high art and low art; it also tunes with his strong sense of humour, and of anti-authoritarianism. And his Oresteia, like all his work, aspires to be accessible. His seasonings of colloquialism and even of rude language stand as a kind of token of that. Words like ‘gob’, ‘crapping’, ‘chops’, ‘gang’, and ‘bash’ float to the surface of the text—all the way from the prologue with its ‘come on, blasted beacon’, to ‘feminine flame-a-hores’, to ‘Shaggermemnon’. The humour and ‘unreliable decorum’ can also be more gently worked in. Two particularly nice examples are at the expense of the chorus of old men in Agamemnon. Just after Clytemnestra has finished her virtuoso beacon speech, they say,

But your tale’s such a marvel we would like it repeated.
We’d like all the details. You said first that Hephaistos . . .

before she interrupts. And at a moment of great pathos in her final stichomythia Cassandra says,

There’s no escape now. No more delay.
to which the chorus respond,

‘While there’s life there’s . . .’ you know what they say.

Is this lack of decorum so unAeschylean? The extent to which tragedy did or did not invite laughter from its audience is still a hotly debated topic. But whatever one might think about that issue, it is clear that there are places when Aeschylus turns to ruder language, the language of invective and even of obscenity. Apollo’s attacks on the Furies in Eumenides 179 ff. are an extreme example; then there is the nurse with her nappies and baby crap in Libation Bearers. Clytemnestra’s sneering at Agamemnon’s infidelity at Agamemnon 1438 ff. is particularly sharp: that is the context, in fact, of Harrison’s ‘Shaggermemnon’ and of the description of Cassandra as ‘his bash back on shipboard’ for ναυτίλων δὲ σελμάτων ἱσοτριβῆς (or whatever that last word should be).

It is an interesting question whether one could tell on purely internal grounds whether any particular translation was made from the original language or from an intermediary version or versions (or some combination of the two). It must, in fact, be easier to prove dependence on another translation,25 than to prove the direct consultation of the original text. In Tony Harrison’s case, there is, in any case, masses of external evidence. His copy of Gilbert Murray’s Oxford Classical Text edition with its neat colour-coded underlinings and annotations bears ample witness to many a long hour spent labouring with the Lexicon and with the commentaries (see Fig. 13.1). There is also his huge collection of working

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Figure 13.1. The ending of *Agamemnon* from Tony Harrison’s copy of the Oxford Classical Texts.
notebooks, which leave a kind of paperchase of his wrestlings with the original, with all sorts of secondary literature, and with his preoccupations in politics, current events, and in theatre.

Many features of his version can be claimed to be, in one way or another, inspired by the original Greek—no less so than with the translation by the professional scholar, Louis MacNeice. But the Harrison Version is, in fact, more akin to the Browning Version (published 1877). It was Robert Browning’s aspiration to produce what he called ‘a transcription’. The result is so strange in places that, as W. B. Stanford said, ‘It’s a good thing that the Aeschylus is there to explain what the Browning is meant to mean!’ The double-sided irony is that what Browning aimed to do was to make the Aeschylus totally present—in a sense, he favoured absolute domestication: whereas what he now seems to us to have done is to have totally foreignized the Aeschylus. In the cases of both Browning and Harrison, it is a direct engagement with the language and the cultural context of the original that has led to the foreignizing.

This brings me to the point when I can challenge the notion, which is quite widespread among those interested in translation from Greek or Latin, that knowledge of the original language is somehow bound to lead to respectable domestication. Hand-in-hand with this is the supposition that tame translation is the province of scholars, while literary daring and inventiveness is the province of artists or amateurs who are not hampered by a knowledge of the original. There is a provocative footnote relating to this by Simeon Underwood. He cites André Lefevere’s assumption (with reference, in fact, to modern languages) that the translator needs to know the original text and the background culture: ‘Lefevere is surely wrong in this regard. Logue’s Homer is not invalidated by his lack of knowledge of the source language. An evaluative framework which would exclude Logue on these grounds seems to me to be scholarly protectionism. Logue might go further by arguing that the validity of his project is increased by his lack of knowledge of the source language.’ I do not want to get bogged down with the terms ‘validity’ and ‘invalidate’, and I would not want to ‘exclude’ a translator who does not directly know the source language. What I would strongly take issue with is the notion that there is some kind of virtue in not knowing the original language; that those who are trammelled in this way are somehow doomed to dogged domestication. Harrison is my prize counter-example. The highly-crafted conscientiousness of Louis MacNeice might be regarded as an example that tips the other way, though he certainly would not exemplify Logue’s (tongue-in-cheek?) suggestion that the more a translator knows the original Greek, the worse the translation is bound to be. The fundamental point for me is that a knowledge of the original language and a knowledge of the cultural context make a

26 See Adrian Poole in France (2000), 358 and Macintosh, Ch. 8, p. 154; Prins, ch. 9, p. 166. For Harrison’s own debt to Browning, see T. Harrison (2002), 8–13.
difference. This is not a matter of scholarly protectionism, although it is an observation on the bearing of scholarship on translation in the longer run. Whether that knowledge of language and culture leads towards a tame homogenization or towards a liberation of fresh perspectives, and even of fresh provocations, is not something intrinsic to the knowledge (or ignorance), but to the translator's particular priorities and abilities.

In the case of Harrison, the fact that his knowledge of Greek and of the Aeschylean world led him to unorthodox and foreignizing inventiveness, rather than to conscientious accuracy, is all part and parcel of his profoundly ambivalent relationship with the place of Classics within British education and British class structures. And this is in its turn rooted in his own experience of a classical education. That education was vital to his discovery of his own poetic talent, but it also came to exemplify for him the cultural barriers and the class system which he has dedicated himself to defying and breaking down. The great thing about his Oresteia is that his chief ally in wresting the plays out of the grip of exclusivity and orthodoxy has been Aeschylus himself. Aeschylus supplied him with poetry and drama of such invention and such unpredictable power that they have fuelled his own poetry and dramatic technique. They have provided the momentum to take the version into orbit, free of the gravitational pull of deadening respectability. It is this that makes his translation both faithful and foreign.

Right back in 1975 Harrison had written to Peter Hall, 'I am always ready to jettison the poetic ballast to keep the balloon aloft.' And among the several ways that this is achieved, I would single out the lyric element as the greatest. The last part of this chapter will be devoted to this. This again is highly Aeschylean—and there is of course a much greater proportion of lyric in the Oresteia than in Sophocles or Euripides. Most Victorian or Edwardian translators had used strict rhyming metres for these lyrics, most notoriously Gilbert Murray; but the reaction against that, endorsed by Louis MacNeice himself, had meant the almost total abandonment of any such metric throughout the mid-twentieth century.

The first point to note about Harrison's reinstatement of rhyming lyric is that there is significantly less in his Agamemnon than in the other two plays. A very rough calculation indicates that over 20 per cent of the text of the translation of Eumenides is in rhyming stanzas or couplets (I am not counting in stichomythias, of course), 35 per cent of Libation Bearers, but under 15 per cent of Agamemnon. This has, I suspect, a direct bearing on the sense which I myself had, back at the time of the original performances, that the trilogy, instead of losing power as it went on, became stronger and stronger. Perhaps Libation Bearers was even better than Eumenides, but there was no sense of anticlimax. This is the opposite of the
usual Oresteia-experience, where Agamemnon tends to be so much more effective
than the other two plays that it is downhill all the way once Aegisthus has arrived.

Relatively little of Agamemnon is translated, then, into lyric metres in English;
and there are in fact some lost opportunities, for example the first section of
the Cassandra scene. Also, as well as the omission of the Hymn to Zeus
(see above, p. 242) three of the four stanzas of the lyric after Agamemnon's
exit (viz lines 988–1034) are omitted from the text—it is hard to see why, as
I should have thought that they were good Harrison material. In the video
performance, there are also substantial cuts from the published translation in
the so-called ‘first stasimon’ (355–487), and another cut, though smaller, from
the lyric confrontation between the chorus and Clytemnestra after the murder.
Nonetheless, there are still some marvellous lyrics. I am going to select for closer
examination a passage from early in the play, in fact the first rhyming stanzas of
the trilogy, which I remember as electrifyingly powerful in the original
production. It also gives me an opportunity to make a more general point
about choral lyric in performance.

There is a long anapaestic passage when the chorus first enters in the
Agamemnon, all the way from line 40 to line 103, before the metre eventually turns to
dactylic strophic lyric and the narrative of what happened at Aulis. I am going to
concentrate on lines 114–21, the second half of the first lyric strophe. The first
half of the strophe (7 lines, 37 words in the Greek) introduces how the old men
can recall the departure of the expedition against Troy from ten years before, and
how there was an omen. Harrison covers this in only two lines:

Gab's the last god-gift of the flabby and feeble—
singing the omens that mobilised Argos:

The second half (7 lines, 34 words) describes the omen. Here it is first in the
‘accurate’ version of Collard:

the king of birds for the king of ships,
one black bird and one bird white behind,
appearing hard by their headquarters
on the spear-hand side, perching where they were seen
clearly all round as they fed
on a creature big with young heavy in its womb, a hare
stopped from its final run.
Cry 'Sorrow, sorrow!', but let the good prevail!

The lyric in the Harrison waits for this moment so that it can embark straight
away on the narrative of the omen:

Two preybirds came as prophecy
blackwing and silverhue
came for our twin kings to see
out of the blue the blue
The right side was the side they flew
spear side luck side War
one blackwing one silverhue
and everybody saw

and everybody saw them tear
with talon and with claw
the belly of a pregnant hare
and everybody saw

and everybody saw the brood
from their mauled mother torn
wallowing in warm lifeblood
and dead as soon as born

blackwing and silverhue
prophesying War
the twin preybirds that cry and mew
hungering for more . . .

_Batter, batter the doom-drum, but believe there'll be better!_

In terms of a word-for-word translation, this is appreciably further from the original than most of the Harrison Version: five stanzas to cover what is only seven lines of Greek—and something like triple the number of words. But it is not hard to see what is driving it: the kind of priority that Joseph Brodsky advocated, which is to say that the rhythmical and ceremonial sense come first. The stanzas have an incantatory, almost mesmeric, quality, enhanced by the repetitions, particularly 'and everybody saw' (four times). This brings out for a modern audience something which is inherent in the original rather than explicit: that the chorus is embarking on a narrative of huge potential consequence, a narrative which is, however, one of symbol and metaphor rather than directly explained or spelled out in moralizing.

Anyone who has seen and heard the video would agree, I think, that this sense of hidden consequence, of power beyond the direct narrative, is immeasurably enhanced by being set to choral song. All the lyrics of the original production had some kind of musical accompaniment (scored by Harrison Birtwistle, of course), but so too did much of the dialogue. But only a small proportion of the lyrics were set to song, and an even smaller proportion set for singing in unison as this one was. Personally, I feel that this was a pity, and that this passage shows what a huge potential the choral performance-mode has. Why was this passage made the first sung lyric of the trilogy? Partly, no doubt, simply because it is the first strophic choral lyric. But there is also an annotation in an early draft, which I found when Tony Harrison generously and patiently let me riffle through his notebooks (see Fig. 13.2). He typed within brackets, with several question-marks, 'so long ago that it's become a song?' I suppose the idea of this is that this story of ten years ago is something that the old men have so often gone over, that it has
The right side was the side they flew
spear side, (sword side) WAR,
one blackwing, one silverhue & everybody saw

& everybody saw them tear
with talon and with claw
the belly of a pregnant hare & everybody saw

& everybody saw the brood
from their mauled mother torn
wallowing in warm lifeblood & dead as soon as born

one blackwing, one silverhue
each prophesying WAR & everybody saw.

Blood follows blood
Can't the cycle be broken?

blackwing & silverhue
prophecying WAR
drove the preybirds cry & mew
hungering for more.

BLOOD
follows

BLOOD
Can't the cycle be broken?

Figure 13.2. Page from Tony Harrison’s Agamemnon notebooks.
become a kind of folksong. Whatever the reasoning, the effect in performance suggests to me that it would have been a good thing if only more, and even perhaps all, of the lyrics of Harrison’s Oresteia had been set to choral music in this way.

Very few productions of Greek tragedy today, outside Greece itself, even attempt to explore the possibilities of song. The Oresteias of Peter Stein and Ariane Mnouchkine, Silviu Purcarete, and Katie Mitchell included even less singing, solo or choral, than the 1981–2 National Theatre production. All sorts of explanations may have been at work, but in this case there is a direct declaration from the Director. In the first of his lectures Exposed by the Mask, Peter Hall pontificates on ‘the Choruses of Greek tragedy’: ‘So how were they performed? Danced? Only surely as a secondary action to the words. Eloquent movement destroys eloquent words... Some say they were sung. I don’t believe it. The sung text can never be a complex text.’ And then on the next page, ‘I believe that a single voice either spoke or sung or chanted every line that was complex. It could be then understood.’

It would be indecorous to embark on a polemic against the presumption that what a director experiences in his own theatre and culture can—let alone should—be transferred to other times and cultures. It is a matter of fact not opinion that ancient Greek culture was permeated through and through with chorality: Choruses, sometimes as large as fifty, sang words that were sometimes simple, but often complex, on a huge variety of occasions from weddings to funerals to religious processions and festival competitions to victory celebrations to tragedy and comedy. They learnt how to sing and how to listen to choral singing while they were children.

What is most strange is Peter Hall’s failure to realize—or remember—how effective choral song was in his own production of the Oresteia. On that occasion he had a poet and a composer of sufficient quality and determination to overcome his own objections. He might claim that this particular stretch in the parodos is not complex—though that would surely be mistaken. But there were also two other chorally sung lyrics in the performance of Agamemnon: ‘Geldshark Ares god of War’ (437 ff) and ‘Hubris I breeds Hubris II’ (763 ff); and there was an effective unison chant just before the death-cries of Agamemnon. His own performance refutes him. It would be fascinating to hear Harrison’s Oresteia with a choral singing of all the choral lyric passages: within them there lurks a powerful genie waiting to be released.

Finally, aiλινον aiλινον eιπέ, ́το δ eδ νικάτω an old ritual cry of lament, comes three times at the end the stanza (121, 138, 159), like a kind of refrain. Harrison’s version of it is characteristically bold, alliterative, and unpredictable: ‘Batter, batter the doom-drum, but believe there’ll be better!’ By now it may be possible to see something of how this might have been arrived at; and that may be made clearer by working towards it from the usual translation. Somehow, a standard wording

30 P. Hall (2000), 30–1. 31 A good introduction to this subject is Bacon (1994–5).
has become attached to this line: ‘Sorrow, cry sorrow. But may the good prevail.’ These words, with slight variations, are to be found in almost all modern English versions (including Collard, see above 247). For a start, ‘the good’ has a more metaphysical or transcendental ring to it than τὸ εὖ, anathema to Harrison. And ‘prevail’ has an archaic tone suited more to priests and politicians than to accessible theatre. Also we hardly ever use the third-person imperative ‘let the’ or ‘may the’ in the live language: we use second- or first-person imperatives, such as ‘hope’ or ‘let’s hope’. Hence ‘believe there’ll be better’ (the elision of parts of the verb ‘to be’ are standard Harrison). The clichéd ‘sorrow’ is pretty weak for αἰλινοῦ, a call of lamentation with specific associations of death. Better than pretending that we have some form of equivalent, Harrison comes up with his ‘doom-drum’; and since there has to be a shift from the first verb to ‘believe’ and to ‘better’, the more outlandish ‘batter’ frames the line.

‘Metres in verse are kinds of spiritual magnitudes for which nothing can be substituted.’ It might be argued that one of the fundamental ways in which tragedy gives some meaning to human suffering (or, if you insist, seems to give some meaning to suffering) is by turning it into poetry and music. Greek tragedy is musopoeic; and the music is not just decorative, but integral to its very raison d’être. If there is anything to this point of view—and I believe it has much truth to it—then music and dynamic should be at the top of the translator’s agenda. It may be from long ago, but it should become a song.
SECTION IV

THE INTERNATIONAL VIEW
Agamemnon in Russia

Dmitry Trubotchkin

Seneca's *Agamemnon* has never been produced in Russia or the USSR, and the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus has never been performed as a separate play. This chapter, therefore, focuses on the *Oresteia* in the Russian theatrical tradition and the role played by the first play in Aeschylus' trilogy in particular. The *Oresteia* is the only ancient drama to appear regularly on the stage in the twentieth century in Russia; and whilst its production history includes a theatrical disaster that had a direct effect on the fate of the Moscow Academic Art Theatre (or MAAT II), it was also the only play to survive during the difficult years for the arts, notably in the 1930s and 1940s. No other Greek or Roman play has had such a dramatic stage history in Russia.

I

Before the 1990s only two *Oresteias* based on Aeschylus' plot were staged in Russia. The first was the musical trilogy (opera) by Sergey Taneev, with a libretto by Alexander Venkstern; the second, the translation by Sergey Soloviov. Taneev's opera was premiered in the season 1895 at the Mariinsky Theatre, St Petersburg, and has subsequently enjoyed numerous revivals throughout Russia and the USSR. Soloviov's translation of the *Oresteia* (slightly adapted for the production by the director Valentin Smyshliáev) was premiered at the Moscow Academic Art Theatre II (or MAAT II) in 1926, and it went on to be performed regularly throughout the 1926–7 season before disappearing from the repertoire and being

1 In Russian: 'Moskovski Khudózhestvenny Académitcheski Teatr Wtorói (MHAT II)'. This theatre was founded in 1924 on the base of the First Studio of Moscow Academic Art Theatre (MHAT). From the year of its foundation until 1928 it was headed by Mikhail Tchékhow.

2 Here and below, the accents in Russian names and words are only used to indicate tone syllables.

3 It ran throughout the 1895–6 season. Revivals include the following: 1915: Mariinsky Theatre, St Petersburg; 1917–18: Theatre of the Council of Workers' Deputies, Moscow; 1939: concert performance in the Minor Hall of the Moscow Conservatory; 1945: concert performance in the Moscow House of the Actor; 1945–1950: concert performances in different minor clubs in Moscow (director of all concert performances from 1939 to 1950 was M. Yúdina, a famous Russian musician);
Dmitry Trubotchkin

almost lost to Russian theatre history in general, with many theatre scholars today hardly remembering it at all. And yet whilst Taneev’s opera has been the most longstanding within the Russian theatrical tradition, it was the three Oresteias of the 1990s by international directors that have proved the most popular and that reached the widest audiences.

There are three distinct periods for the reception history of the trilogy: first, from the end of the nineteenth century up to 1927, during which time the Oresteia appeared (despite relatively short runs) four times within the repertoires of three different theatres. Taneev’s opera was performed eight times in its first season, and six in its second at the Mariinsky Theatre. By contrast, Soloviov’s translation never completed its first season, the sixteenth performance in May 1927 being the last one, which also marked the end of this first period. This first phase is generally known as an outstanding period in terms of Russian interest in Greek and Roman drama, and it yielded very interesting results, including avant-garde interpretations of the classics. It is significant that the adaptations of the Oresteia mark both the beginning and end of this period. It is worth noting too that Taneev’s Oresteia of 1917 was the only ancient tragedy to be staged during the season of the October Revolution (1917–18), which is known to have led to incontrovertible changes in the social and artistic spheres. This season was the most successful one for the opera, when it was shown thirty-five times, which is twice as many times as it had been seen in the previous twenty years in St Petersburg; and it never enjoyed as much success as it did in the Theatre of the Council of Workers’ Deputies in the season of the Revolution. Thus, it is quite clear that the Oresteia stands at the key points, in what is considered to be the ‘classical line’ in Russian theatre, marking the dates of its beginning, peripeteia, and its end.

The second period under discussion here is from the 1930s to 1990, which belongs entirely to Taneev’s opera. But there is a major difference here from the first period: now the initiative for each production did not come from the world of musical theatre; instead it was from the world of academic music, which is known to be more closed than that of the theatrical community. Such estrangement between musical and dramatic theatre affected the production history of the Oresteia in this period. The production of the opera in Belorussia was one such instance; and this also explains why critical reviews of the opera in Russia were only written by musical critics, while during the first period (especially, in the first

1966: première in Minsk Opera Theatre, Belorussia, director T. Kolomýtseva; 1990: concert performance in the Major Hall of the Moscow Conservatory; 2001: grand concert performance in the Major Hall of the Moscow Conservatory, performed by the Russian National Orchestra (conductor Mikhail Pletniôv), two Moscow Chamber Choirs and soloists. Before the 1917–18 season, there were also a number of minor performances of parts of the opera in different places in Moscow (schools, institutes etc.). Taneev himself took part in all of them playing the piano. See Asafiev et al. (1952), 293–5. To the productions mentioned above I should also add, with a promise of further explanation below, the 1961 spectacle-concert Medea with Taneev’s music for the Oresteia, directed by Nikolai Okhlópkov, starring Anastasia Papathanasiou.
two decades of the century), opera was a point of great interest to both theatre scholars and practitioners.

For a long time I was puzzled by the sixty-year disappearance of the ‘ancient’ or ‘classical’ tradition from the Russian theatre after the 1920s; and only recently, thanks to my research for this chapter, have I come to understand that it merely moved into another sphere. The second period could be described as a refusal of theatre in favour of concert performances. In this respect too the Oresteia was very important: concert performances of the opera kept the whole ‘classical tradition’ on stage alive for sixty years, until 1991. It is these first two phases that will provide the main focus of my discussion in this chapter.

The third phase, however, is worthy of brief attention here and covers 1991 to the present. This is a period of ‘international’ Oresteias. The idea for the three biggest productions of the trilogy arose outside Russia, and each was an international project. In François Rochaix’s production, both international and Russian elements had great importance; but Peter Stein’s Oresteias of the 1990s, each performed several times in the Academic Theatre of the Russian Army, were ‘Russian’ projects par excellence as all the actors were Russian. Both Rochaix and Stein intended to create productions closely connected to a contemporary (even ‘up-to-the-minute’) situation in Russia and the world. For this reason, they could never become repertoire productions, and each had to be recreated de integro every time. By 1992 Rochaix’s production lived on only in memories, whilst Peter Stein went on to produce two different Oresteias—one for 1994 and a revival for 1995 (the latter was performed at the International Chekhov Festival in Moscow in 1996). The most recent concert performance of the Taneev opera in April 2001 was international in an important sense too, since it aroused the interest of some European countries. It is reported that the Taneev Musical Society and the Russian National Orchestra are currently involved in international negotiations for a European tour of the Oresteia. In this sense, it fits in with this third phase, but with a new important difference: now Russia is the starting point for spreading the Oresteia beyond its borders.

II

The Oresteia was the only opera ever written by Taneev. He decided to compose it in 1882 when he was 26, and he spent twelve years working on it before its première. After the opera was removed from the repertoire of the Mariinsky Theatre, he edited it for another five years and then he had to wait eleven more years for the Moscow première.

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Thaddeus Zielinski, a well-known classical philologist and translator of Sophocles, started one of the chapters of his *History of Ideas* (written in 1908, that is, thirteen years after the first production of the opera) with regrets that Taneev's *Oresteia* remained unappreciated. In this short apology for the opera, he, in fact, wrote an apology for the myth itself, but argued that it was the myth, not the opera, that was untimely.

Taneev's interest in Aeschylus' trilogy was rather unexpected for his contemporaries. As a result, it caused quite diverse opinions: those involved in the theatre were excited with Taneev's plans, those in music were surprised. Sergey Iuriev, a famous Russian theatre director, actor and teacher, told Taneev that the very desire to compose the *Oresteia* was evidence of Taneev's genius. But Tchaikovsky wrote to Taneev in a letter of 14 January 1891: 'I have always tried to choose the plot that could warm me... That is why Wagner's plots are unbearable to me as there is no humanity in them; what about the plot you are working on, with monstrous wickedness and crimes, with the Eumenides as stage characters—well, I would never choose it.' From this and similar passages from other contemporaries, we can see that Orestes' acquittal and purification in the *Eumenides* were profoundly unsatisfactory to Taneev's contemporaries. *Agamemnon* was the play that caused most controversy: nothing could compensate for Clytemnestra's bloody crime.

It is important to note that Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* was slightly changed for the opera. In the libretto by Venkstern, Aigysthos comes on stage before the arrival of Agamemnon; after getting the message of the capture of Troy, Aigysthos tells the story of Thyestes' feast and then he and Klytaimnestra disclose their plotting against Agamemnon. Thus we have two more reported crimes than there are in Aeschylus' tragedy, strongly reminiscent of Seneca's tragedy (see Hall, Chapter 4). The desire to find a balance between crime and purification and the inevitable failure to do so no doubt enhanced the commonly held view that the first part was too long.

The tendency to shorten the *Agamemnon*, indeed the longest part in the trilogy (it lasted about an hour and a quarter), arose immediately after Taneev submitted his score of the *Oresteia* to the Mariinsky Theatre. The very first time the conductor V. Napravnik heard the opera, he suggested that Taneev substantially cut the *Agamemnon*; he thought that the musical trilogy was oratorio rather than opera. Taneev refused to make any substantial cuts but there was no possibility of avoiding the editing of the conductor. Finally, V. Napravnik refused to conduct the opera at all, and the role of the conductor was handed to his assistant E. Krushëvski.

At the first performance, there was no applause during the course of the *Agamemnon*, only at the end before an intermission; *Libation Bearsers and Eume*

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5 Zhdanov (1951), 169. Here and below all the translations of Russian quotations into English are my own.
6 See Asafev et al. (1952), 258–62; Iakovlev (1946), 118.
nides met with much more applause. The report of an official from the Mariinsky Theatre to the Director of the Russian Imperial Theatres was rather cold; however, in Taneev’s diary and in the press, the opera was considered to be an undoubted success, and this was matched by an even more favourable response from audiences. However, later, after Taneev left for Moscow, his musical trilogy was performed with cuts in accordance with the wishes of various directors, and these were criticized by some musicians and critics who visited the Mariinsky Theatre.

Why was the length of the Agamemnon that much of a problem? In a letter to Napravnik of 9 March 1895, Taneev gives an answer which is worth quoting at length:

the reason is that a character can stay on the stage for an unusually long time; we do not often find this in contemporary dramas. For instance, Kassandra stays alone on the stage with the chorus for nearly quarter of an hour... The rare change of scenes and, therefore, their length—is the feature of all ancient tragedies which does not prevent them from having success with the contemporary public, even one so fastidious as that of France. I mean the great success of the tragedy by Sophocles in the Comédie-Française.10

In 1915, when it was decided that the Oresteia should return to the repertoire, the first suggestion to Taneev was to make cuts again: a few were suggested for Agamemnon, but Taneev agreed to just one.11 The cutting of the Agamemnon was obviously destructive because of its special musical conception. Taneev's music enables the characters to sing each small change of mood and sense, and every such change is of great importance for the whole opera. For instance, when Klytaimnestra comes on stage with Aigysthos to sing their duet, her theme of love towards Aigysthos sounds full of tenderness, pure sorrow and tears, and there is no sign of the bitter feelings normally expected from her; but in the evil plotting afterwards, she quickly shifts to markedly different emotions when mentioning her husband, Agamemnon.

The correlation between the theme of war and that of worship of the gods is another good example. The former always brings anxiety in music. But in Agamemnon's aria immediately after his arrival, there is some mention of the gods in the story of the terrors of war: every short expression relating to the glorification of gods sounds celebratory. These are just two examples among many others that illustrate that the music itself created a balance within Taneev's Agamemnon, clearly delivering every small theme in either a 'negative' or 'positive' sense.

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7 Asafiev et al. (1952), 262. 8 Iakovlev (1946), 121-2. 9 Ibid. 133. 10 See Zhdanov (1951), 440-1. Taneev meant the famous production of Sophocles' Oedipus the King with the actor Mounet-Sully. 11 Asafiev et al. (1952), 281-4. Among the suggested cuts were Aigysthos' report of Atreus' crime, and the march following Agamemnon's return which carried with it the positive spirit of victory and heroism. Taneev agreed only to shorten the march.
Moreover, two major counterweights at either end of the balance can easily be recognized. The first is that of crime and betrayal; the second is formed by the themes of victory, the end of war, love of motherland, worship of native gods, and homecoming—and they all combine to form a very strong line in the opera. In fact, only after listening to Taneev’s *Agamemnon* could I feel how intensively the tragedy was charged with the theme of motherland and exultation over the victorious end of war. Taneev stressed this by introducing a chorus of women singing that their husbands and brothers are coming back from war. The chorus of women replaced the chorus of citizens used by Taneev in *Agamemnon* (instead of the Aeschylean chorus of old men) in a scene before the arrival of Agamemnon.

It is not surprising, then, that the opera was an unqualified success in 1917. The season started in the third year of the First World War, and just a month before the October Revolution—so the *Oresteia*’s themes were even closer to the audience’s minds than they had been at the end of the nineteenth century.

The costumes for the 1895 production were in accordance with the ‘generic’ aesthetics of opera of those days. Agamemnon looked like an ‘opera king’, combining royal attributes of very different epochs; the same is true of Clytainenstra and Orestes, the archetypal ‘young man’ of opera with slight pastoral touches. As is clear from the photos and reviews of the productions, the costumes were not intended to create anything specially ‘ancient’, or ‘Greek’; nor did the movement of individual singers. The sets were designed by the artists of St Petersburg Imperial Theatres in a manner of historio-geographic realism which, in fact, affords less scenic ‘truth’ than the more conventional sets of the period did.

In the Theatre of the Council of Workers’ Deputies in 1917, the costumes were designed in the style of Greek vases. The sketches themselves imitated the composition of Greek vases: Fedorovsky’s original composition consists of three long sheets of paper which form a single picture if you put them in line (see Fig. 14.1). The costume designer this time found it essential to associate the aesthetics of opera with the works of Greek art. This followed the tradition started by Meyerhold: in 1913 he had produced Strauss’s *Elektra* in the Mariinsky Theatre with the sets designed in accordance with recent archaeological finds on the island of Crete; and in 1914 in his Borodinskaia Studio, he introduced special classes in stage movement in order to animate, by means of the actor’s body, the poses from ancient statues and paintings.12

Thus, in the production of the *Oresteia* in 1917, the costumes were very far from those designed for the characters in 1895. The stage sets too were very exciting. The curtain was not used at all, and they built a kind of *orchestra* with an

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12 This, of course, reminds us of the similar practice of Adolf Appia in Hellerau and Nijinksy with the Ballets Russes. Both Meyerhold, in 1911, and Appia, in 1912, produced C. W. Gluck’s *Orfeo et Euridice* where they presented new principles of stage design and movement. In Meyerhold’s *Orfeo* the set designer was A. Golovin and M. Fokin the choreographer; in 1913, he directed Strauss’s *Elektra*, with sets by A. Golovin and with M. Valitskaia in the lead role. Cf. Feldman (2000), 98–9, 202, 223–5, 301, and 316.
altar on it. Fedorovsky painted lots of fabulous pictures, rich in colour, which were somewhat realistic with numerous details of real Greek scenery and ancient buildings. Fedorovsky, the artist of the Theatre of the Council of Workers’ Deputies, had painted his impressions of the music, while Taneev was playing the opera on the piano; and it was through the music that the designer discovered the images of Greek art and architecture which he had in his memory and imagination.13 By contrast, M. Botcharov, the leading artist of the Russian Imperial Theatres, had travelled to the Crimea and Greece in 1894 to collect impressions of natural landscapes, which could then be used for the production in the Mariinski Theatre.14

It is sometimes said by theatre designers that Fedorovsky’s sets were not really sets in the strictest sense: they were paintings, more or less close to the theatre. In the case of the Agamemnon, this seemed to be related to the performance aesthetics. The pictures were presented as a ‘slide show’: huge pictures were displayed one by one in the course of the action behind the orchestra on the back wall of the stage. Again, there was no intention to create any realistic illusion: the sets associated themselves with the works of art, no more—but no less—and therefore the surroundings of the opera action were, in fact, those of art.

In this sense, then, the Oresteia of 1917 marked a major turning point in the interpretation of Greek plays—from the sentimentality of the abstract opera of

13 See the Memoirs of N. G. Raiski, published in Asafiev et al. (1952), 340: ‘Before playing a scene or an act, Taneev briefly told their plot, and after he played each part, the artist F. Fedorovsky showed his sketch of sets for the part of the opera just played, to everyone’s great surprise.’
14 In the Bakhrushin State Theatre Museum (Moscow), Manuscript Dept., Fund 37, there is a list of landscape studies by M. Botcharov, made in 1894. In this list, two numbers are interesting: No. 298, ‘The sea-shore near Delphi, for Oresteia’ and No. 369 ‘The sea-shore, for Oresteia’.
the 1880s towards a style that paid more attention to the nature of Greek tragedy than to the traditions of opera. In many ways, the 1917 production was very much a forerunner of the avant-garde performances of ancient plays which started in Russia in 1918.\footnote{Cf. Trubotchkin (2002), 216–232.}

### III

You cannot read about the 1926–7 *Oresteia* of Moscow Academic Art Theatre II in books. This performance has never been studied by theatre historians, and at the time was reviewed mostly in negative or wary ways, often in expressly ideological terms. In 1927 the *Oresteia* was removed from the repertoire, at a time when there was major discord within the famous constellation of actors of MAAT II. In 1927, A. Diky left the theatre together with a group of actors; and in 1928, M. Tchékhov emigrated from Russia.

Nothing has been written about this *Oresteia* since 1927. The main body of MAAT II’s archive disappeared. Therefore, the 1926 *Oresteia* itself needs to be reconstructed, ironically, as if it were an ancient play. Besides press reviews and a couple of short interviews with the director in the newspapers (he did not seem to like interviews), we have the following pieces of evidence: (1) Smyshliaev’s copy of the text of the play with handwritten remarks made by his assistant; (2) brief daily records in the registries (or ‘protocols’) of rehearsals and performances; (3) two drafts of stage sets and a few drafts of costumes; (4) a few photos from a programme of the production and from newspapers, together with press reviews collected in Smyshliaev’s album. The documents, in original or copies, are kept in the archives of Bakhrushin State Theatre Museum in Moscow,\footnote{Manuscript department, Fund 538.} and the Museum of the Moscow Academic Art Theatre.

1. **Text.** This was the third Russian translation of the *Oresteia* and the fourth of the *Agamemnon*,\footnote{The *Oresteia* was previously translated by N. Kotlov (St Petersburg, 1883) and V. Ivánov. Ivánov’s translation included all extant plays by Aeschylus and although it was ready by the early 1920s it was not published until 1950 (as *The Tragedies by Aeschylus*, Moscow) because Ivánov took it with him to Italy where he emigrated in 1924. Another translation of *Agamemnon*, by S. Rádzig, was published in Moscow in 1913.} but it has never been published because it was intended to serve only as a text for performance.

It is clear that the first technical task for S. M. Solovióv, the translator, and Smyshliaé, the director, was to shorten the text; as a result, the whole performance lasted two and a half hours. Solovióv’s translation, being close to a simple plot narration from the very first line, was more like a narrative than an attempt to express feelings and *pathos*. The parts containing mythological motivations and associations were normally excluded; explanations and descriptions of situations were normally maintained, but shortened. The *parodos* of the Chorus, for...
instance, was shortened to five lines that provided not even a story, but merely a brief report of the preceding events and conveying the feeling of uncertainty. But it is worth noting that after Agamemnon's entrance and towards the end of the play, the narration gets more detailed.

In Soloviov's text there are two major changes to Aeschylus' plot to be noted: first, Aigysthos comes to the stage earlier, before the Messenger, as he wants to see if Agamemnon's fleet is approaching (he seems to have been doing this regularly); second, Agamemnon and Kassandra are killed near the altar in front of the audience. The chorus, as in Seneca, was divided into two parts, each with its own choryphaios; and in the newspaper picture of Eumenides, two separate groups of choreutai (Areiopagita) are seen. The principle of 'chorus as one person' gave way to the idea of increasing the dynamics of the chorus within the action.

In some places, there are inconsistencies in the text. For instance, after Agamemnon is killed, the Chorus says: 'Gods, why did you not keep me from seeing the king in his silver bath filled with blood?'. However, nobody on stage has said a word about how Agamemnon has been killed until now. Kassandra in her prophecy only mentioned the net, not the bath; and in the scene of the murder of Agamemnon and Kassandra, the bath was probably not used.

Soloviov was a well-known classical philologist, having translated among other texts, some of Plato's dialogues. There are various signs of scholarly work on the text of the Oresteia; for instance, among the two forms of the name 'Klytaimnestra' or 'Klytaimestra' (with or without 'n'), the second one was chosen, though both earlier Russian translations had 'Klytaimnestra'. Such points show that the text was sometimes 'closed' to a wider public, requiring a rather specialized kind of spectator to appreciate it.

2. Stage sets. The set designer of the 1926–7 Oresteia was Alexei Nikitin. But Smyshliaev participated in designing the stage as well: on every surviving draft design we can see his remarks and signature as a sign of approval. According to the drafts the floor was plain. The front edge of the stage, the one closest to the audience, consisted of three steps. The left entrance was a conventional palace of Agamemnon: two great columns and three steps slightly turned so that the audience could see the entrance to the palace. At the right entrance there were two narrow board-like plates put together to form an angle marking a half-closed

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18 The same change to Aeschylus' Agamemnon was noted above, in the case of the libretto of Taneev's opera; here again, the influence of Seneca's Agamemnon, and the direct influence of the libretto of Taneev's opera are possible.

19 See Novy Zritel [The New Spectator], No. 51 (1927).

20 The same choice was made for the Prometheus trilogy in the Moscow Academic Art Theatre (see below).

21 In the Manuscript Department of the Moscow Bakhrushin State Theatre Museum (Fund 538, No. 65), I found a letter addressed to Smyshliaev, dated 4 February 1927, by S. Panafidin, a student of classics. He notes that the actors did not articulate their words, and Klytaimnestra pronounced her own name nearly without the sound 'n'.
space that opened in the direction of the audience. At the centre of the stage there was a cube representing the altar. All sets were in white or light grey. The back wall was light blue.

There are two details to be noted. At the rear of the stage against the backdrop, there was a reddish sail (painted or constructed) probably showing the ship of Agamemnon. From the sail towards the altar ran a red carpet; near the altar it turned at an angle towards Agamemnon's palace, then it went up the conventional steps and ended in front of the entrance to the palace. The sail and the carpet obviously showed the sets for the first part of the trilogy, *Agamemnon*; they were in marked contrast to the rest of the sets, being the only colourful parts, while the others were of pale, toneless colours.

As we can see, the sets made no historical allusions, and have nothing to do with realism. Among the two remaining drafts of the design, on the earlier one, the palace was constructed with three columns and with a triangular roof above them, the later one includes only two columns going up ‘infinitely’; and while on the earlier one there was a spear with a glittering edge standing on two board-like narrow plates, on the later one the spear has been removed. Such rearrangements show the signs of a highly conventional and minimalist manner.

Compare the draft designs by Nikitin with the sketches by Fedoróvsky for Tanéev's *Oresteia* (Fig. 14.1). Obviously, Fedoróvsky painted his sets to be shown as they are: his pictures are good enough for both performance and exhibition and, in fact, from 1918 they were exhibited in the picture gallery organized in the Theatre of the Council of Workers’ Deputies as part of its museum of opera. The drafts for Smyshliaév’s performance, on the other hand, were painted on the pages of a school exercise-book. They only had technical meaning and were never taken as works of art. According to the sketches, the sets on the stage themselves looked like unfinished drafts to be filled with sense and colour during the action.

In the reviews, some critics compared Nikitin’s sets with those by Adolf Appia or Gordon Craig. Apart from the use of panels and a cubist manner, there is precious little in the drafts to support such a conclusion so far. However, we can detect a certain similarity between the sets of the *Oresteia* and those of Taïrov’s *Phaedra*, performed five years earlier in the Kamerny Theatre, Moscow (1922, set designer Alexánder Vesnín). The ‘white column’, a notorious negative symbol of old classical performances, was also among the similarly broadly cubist sets of *Phaedra*. But here the huge column (its capital could not be seen by the spectators) was in marked opposition to the earlier traditionally sentimental classical symbols. The costumes of *Phaedra* were in absolute accordance with the style of stage sets.

3. Costumes, sets, and light. It was very surprising to find the drafts of the costumes for the 1926 *Oresteia*. They are of that sentimental pseudo-historical

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22 Cf. Beskin (1926).
style which is found in popular books retelling Greek myths. The style is partly copied from Greek vases, partly reflecting the artist's own views (in Russia, for instance, it reminds one of sugary and sentimental illustrations in the book *Attic Fairy-tales* by Prof. Thaddeus Zielinski, which was popular in the 1910s). Among the critics there were some who associated these costumes, with their 'sugary, excessive delicacy' with works by the modernist artist, Franz Stuck.25 Obviously, they had nothing to do with the abstract cubist manner of the set. The only common point between the set and the costumes lies in that 'toneless' style—though they were significantly 'toneless' in different ways.

Why, though, such divergent aesthetics? In the reviews, several critics singled out the Temples of Apollo and Athena in the *Eumenides* for praise.26 On the draft design, the temple is put at the rear of the stage and looks as if four great columns rise up to the stage ceiling, without a roof above them. This design is strongly reminiscent of Agamemnon's palace in the *Agamemnon* (described above), but the critics noted the Temples in the *Eumenides* only.

On the picture in a newspaper showing the trial scene (obviously taken by a photographer as a highlight of the performance), there are no columns at all, despite the fact that the court gathered in front of the Temple of Athena. How could this be? From the reviews, it is known that the gods of the *Eumenides*, Apollo and Athena, arose 'in between streams of light'.27 Obviously, four great columns of light were used going down from the stage ceiling, instead of real columns. The columns of light were certainly very spectacular and therefore mentioned by critics, but they could easily get lost in a black and white newspaper picture of poor quality.

Special attention to the light in the *Eumenides* is also proved by a quite angry note made by Smyshliäev in the register of performances of MAAT II on 19 December 1926, right after the performance of the *Oresteia*. He reproaches theatre attendants and technicians with being careless about the lighting. At the beginning of the *Eumenides*, he writes, there should have been absolute darkness in the theatre before the Pythia rises near the altar, but the attendants after the intermission had not closed the door to one box letting a gleam of light on the stage, which was 'totally unacceptable'.28 The absolute darkness seemed to be necessary to contrast with the shafts of light.

Another evidence of the importance of light for Smyshliäev in the period of 1926–7 is to be found in a 'questionnaire on problems of the art of the director' which was given to Smyshliäev by the Theatre Department of the State Academy for Art Studies and filled in by him on 1 October 1927: 'For me, visual image interfuses with sound image. That is why I put exceptional weight on light and music. Light, music and tone of voice interfuse in my mind making an organic

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inseparable unity. This unity certainly has its rhythm.'29 Note that light and sound, crucial elements of the performance, are also the two elements that are most difficult to record for theatre history. Note also that now it is clear that it was the light that gave critics the reason to note similarities between Nikitin's sets and the works by Adolf Appia and Gordon Craig, who were well known (along with Max Reinhardt) as the first to experiment with stage light.

The light, literally, 'coloured' all the pale sets and costumes of Smyshliaev's Oresteia: the drafts of set designs show that for the Libation Bearers and the Eumenides, they used the same sets as for the Agamemnon, but now richly coloured—obviously through light filters. The Agamemnon was not a 'coloured', but a 'light' part; and the stage for it was not pale, but simply bright. Thus, we will not be mistaken to say that the lighting was the main stage character in the Agamemnon.

If we study the playscript of the Agamemnon again, we will see that all the events and metaphors connected with optics, vision, lightening, the sun were not removed from the text; on the contrary, it is clear that Smyshliaev and Solović stressed every optical effect presented in the trilogy.

Look back now at the costumes: for nearly every main character of Agamemnon, there was something that could perfectly reflect light to produce glittering effects. For Klytaimnestra, these were bracelets of peculiar shape (Fig. 14.2); for Kassandra, chains and jewels around her head; for Agamemnon, the body armour. There is no such thing for Orestes alone, but this seems to be a conscious decision of the director. In an early draft design by Nikitín, Orestes is shown as a warrior in armour, but there is no armour on the photo of the character played by A. M. Zhilinski. There is clear evidence of a glittering element for the costume of a lady mourner from the Libation Bearers—a silver stripe on her dress: note that the words 'silver stripe' are written by Smyshliaev on Nikitin's draft.

It is interesting to try to reconstruct specific optical effects of the performance. The bracelets of Klytaimnestra were designed to cover her palms like two small mirrors. In the memoirs of Nikitin's wife,30 there is a passage telling how long Nikitin and Smyshliaev discussed these bracelets, creating and rehearsing special movements and the dance of Klytaimnestra to show them off most effectively.31

The bracelets could be interpreted in the following way: at the beginning, they

29 V. Smyshliaev, 'Questionnaire on problems of the art of the director. The answers to the questionnaire of the Theatre Department of State Academy for Art Studies, 1 October 1927', in the Manuscript department of the Bakhrushin State Theatre Museum (Moscow), Fund 517, No. 32.
31 In Nikitina's Memoirs (see n. 30 above), 108, it is said that Smyshliaev worked very seriously on the reconstruction of ancient dances. When he rehearsed an ancient Egyptian dance with the Russian dancer N. Leontieva, he worked very often in the Egyptian department of the Pushkin Art Museum (Moscow), and invited V. Avdiev, Egyptologist and art historian, to help them understand Egyptian pictures.
glittered like a hidden weapon in her hands, but after the arrival of Agamemnon and before the crime, she had to take them off to hold a shining sword, a weapon which could be seen equally well. Similarly, light concentrating around Kassandra's head created a sort of nimbus that could indicate her special relation with the gods, and particularly Apollo, who gave her the fatal gift of prophecy.

A 'light scenario' could also be supposed for the character of Agamemnon. At the beginning of the Agamemnon, lights were used to indicate the nocturnal sky with moving stars (because the watchman said he was watching the stars circling); this sky was noted by most critics. It is now clear why the text was shortened until Agamemnon's entrance in glittering armour: it is because they wanted to produce the effect of a sunrise that was finished with the entrance of Agamemnon whose armour reflected the light most intensely. The sun was Agamemnon himself: he brought the victory, the end of war, he was the only 'light' person in the tragedy. The effect of sunrise is clearly best observed within a reasonably limited period of time.

I am sure more elements of the lightening scenario could be found, if we had more evidence about the Oresteia production. All these, again, refer back
to Appia's experiences and give a good example of the development of similar ideas in Russia.

4. Music. In the Smyshliaev's passage quoted above, music was named as the element that was as important as the light. The composer of the production was Vladimir Kriukov. The music he wrote was symphonic and contained no singing parts. Most of the stage action, and all the recitations of the chorus were accompanied by the orchestra which sat backstage (some critics wanted it closer to the audience). In the register of rehearsals, there is evidence that the recitations were rehearsed under the guidance of a professional choirmaster.

Unfortunately, there is not much evidence of the music left in the reviews or memoirs. The critics generally liked it; they noted that on the whole it avoided excessive use of the drums and brass wind-instruments. It is possible that Taneev's music had some influence on this Oresteia too: the composer V. Kriukov was among Taneev's pupils at the Moscow Conservatory, and he obviously knew Taneev's trilogy well. Taneev's music 'The Temple of Apollo' is very well known and is now included amongst the loci classici in musical anthologies. And as I noted above, critics of MAAT II liked the way the Temple of Apollo was shown on the stage; perhaps the music by Kriukov played its role here too, and it could well have been inspired by Taneev's music.

In an interview, Smyshliaev made the following observations which are worth quoting at length:

In Greek tragedy, the problem of mass performance is very interesting... The theme of Oresteia is obviously alien to modernity. With the style of the whole performance, I wanted to stress the points of Aeschylus' tragedy which could be of interest to a contemporary spectator. The main interest is formal... it is in the action, which develops through the change of postures. The whole Greek tragedy is descended from the forms of folklore theatre, from round dance, so the most interesting point is the chorus from which steps out a single actor as soloist. For the actors, this provides an opportunity to show their skill... But the core of this tragedy is its theatricality.32

This interview shows that Smyshliaev saw his work in the context of the research by the Russian avant-garde theatre, which was concerned with both mass performance33 and the formal characteristics of action. It is difficult to judge the role of chorus in the Oresteia, but Smyshliaev's interest in formal principles of performance seems clear. By means of lighting, the principle of theatricality was put at the base of the whole performance; therefore, the Oresteia of MAAT II is to take its place among the most interesting lighting scenarios in early twentieth-century theatre.

32 Cf. the newspaper Programma gosudarstvennyh academitcheskih teatrov [The Programme of State Academic Theatres], No. 64 (26 December 1926).
33 Cf. the section entitled 'Mass performance' in Trubotchkin (2002).
The season of 1926–7 was extremely interesting in Moscow because it promised the simultaneous production of two ancient trilogies in two famous theatres. The trilogy _Prometheus_ was in preparation at the Moscow Academic Art Theatre for three years, 1924–7, but finally it was removed from the repertoire even before its première. For that production V. Nemirovitch-Dantchenko invited, again, Smyshliaev as director. They were planning a masked production: these were extraordinary plans for MAAT. In the choral parts, the translation of _Prometheus_ was at the same time a scenario of performance: the chorus was divided into two parts (like in the _Oresteia_), and the recitation was arranged as an alternation of lines between half-choruses and a chorus-leader. The translator provided repetitions of lines, and even numerous pauses.

It would be, of course, very interesting to try to perform this scenario today, as well as the scenario for the chorus of the _Oresteia_. But it is much more interesting that by 1926 regular performances of ancient plays had prepared a special kind of audience and critic.

Back in 1916, in Meyerhold's Studio on Borodinskaia Street (Petrograd), M. F. Gnesin worked with the actors on the technique of 'musical recitation' for the chorus. 'Musical recitation' was not singing, but it used notations for voice to imitate Greek musical metres. Meyerhold wanted to use this technique for his performance of Sophocles' _Antigone_ which he started to rehearse, but did not finish, and the technique of 'musical recitation' did not develop. However, the idea of 'musical recitation' was not forgotten, and in 1927 N. Volkov, a theatre critic, disapproved of Smyshliaev's chorus for being unable to present the real technique of 'musical recitation'. Other critics remembered that the 'ancient line' in Moscow started with the attempted historical reconstruction of ancient Greek performance in _Antigone_ at the Moscow Art Theatre (1898, director A. Säfin), and praised the _Oresteia_ for not being an 'academic' performance, but an attempt to tailor ancient material to the modern spectator. It is clear that the tradition of interpretation of classical tragedy in Russia in the mid-1920s was sufficiently well established to create paradigmatic elements which were obvious for people close to the theatre.

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34 The _Prometheus_ trilogy which was being rehearsed by MAAT at the same time as _Oresteia_. It consisted of the following tragedies: _Prometheus Stealer of Fire_, a pantomime; _Prometheus Chained_, the tragedy by Aeschylus newly translated by S. Soloviov (the translator of _Oresteia_) and V. Nilénder; _Prometheus Liberated_, composed by S. Soloviov (he preferred the word 'restored') on the basis of the myth. The text of the last two tragedies was published by Soloviov and Nilénder as _Eshil. Prometei Prikovannyi. Prometei Osvobozhdennyi_ [Aeschylus: _Prometheus Chained. Prometheus Liberated_], (Moscow and Leningrad, 1927).


37 His review of _Oresteia_ is kept in Smyshliaev's album in the Manuscript Department of the Bakhrushin State Theatre Museum.
Thus, the Moscow audience saw just one of the two trilogies, and 1927 became the last year in this ‘ancient line’ in Russian theatre. It is clear that the devotion of the *Oresteia* to pure theatricality in connection with ancient mythology and religion\(^\text{38}\) looked suspicious to the official mainstream of the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s: it wanted ‘topical’ plays with theatre close to life, and ‘realism’, which in those days started the creation of the myth of happiness of the Soviet country. Ancient classics were dropped from the contemporary sphere, and the niche of classics came to be occupied instead by Shakespeare and Russian dramatists of the nineteenth and early twentieth century.

**IV**

The ‘ancient’ line vanished from Russian theatres for sixty years; but thanks to Tanéev’s opera, this line moved into the sphere of academic concerts to take the shape of oratorio performance. Every such performance necessarily had some sets and decorative elements reminiscent of ancient ornaments and architecture.\(^\text{39}\) That it was essential for the idea of oratorio performances, and not an accidental element, is supported by the fact that M. Yudina, the organizer and musical supervisor of the performances, always worked with one theatre artist, V. Favórsky; and in the 1940s they worked together with K. Popóv, a theatre director. Thus, in the 1930s and 1940s they worked out a special oratorio-dramatic style for Tanéev’s *Oresteia*. It is again notable that two most successful and memorable performances—in 1939 and 1945—were chronologically close to the historical cataclysm: they were held right before and after the Second World War.

It is important to conclude the discussion here with reference to the ‘spectacle-concert’ *Medea*. Directed by Nikolái Okhlópkov in 1961, with Anastasia Paphathánasiou in the lead, the music was based on Tanéev’s *Oresteia*. The performance involved dramatic actors and a set (including columns, masks, and a statue of Euripides), but the main factor in choosing the space for performance was the interpretation of Greek tragedy as oratorio with dancing parts. With this idea in mind, the *Medea* was produced in an academic concert hall—the Tchaikóvsky Concert Hall in Moscow, with a symphonic orchestra playing live music.

When we recall that the Tchaikóvsky Concert Hall was originally the Theatre of Meyerhold, some interesting associations come into play. The building was rebuilt in 1934 along the lines of an ancient theatre with a vast semicircular

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38 Some critics found even ‘mysticism’ in Smyshliáev’s *Oresteia* and in the creative method of MAAT II: see Orlinsky (1927).

39 Pictures of those concerts were shown at the 2001 *Oresteia* exhibition in the Moscow Conservatory, organized by the Tanéev Musical Society. The pictures were also published in the booklet of the exhibition: Nikeshitchev (2001). I am very grateful to the Tanéev Musical Society (Moscow) and particularly to the Chairman Mikhail Nikeshitchev, Professor of the Moscow Conservatory, who most kindly provided me with pictures and facilitated my research with his invaluable advice.
auditorium. Although Meyerhold is known to have had some plans to mount Greek tragedies and had himself many ideas about the ancient theatre in general, the nearest he got was when he produced two operas based on classical plots. However, thirty years after his death, through a combination of the idea of oratorio performance of Greek tragedy, the special architectural features of the building, the direction of Nikolai Okhlopkov, the acting of Anastasia Papathanasiou, and Taneev's music, it could be argued that Meyerhold's plans had finally been put into practice.

41 Cf. above, n. 12.
When someone decides to stage the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus, s/he is involved in a very complex debate about the possible meanings of the play and about the aesthetics of modern theatrical performance. S/he has to deal with some difficult and well-known technical questions, such as: 'How should one resolve the problem of the tragic chorus? When should Clytemnestra appear on stage? What kind of music is most appropriate today?' And so on. But if a director wants his/her work to get some individual and acknowledged value within theatre history, if s/he is not content with simply mounting just another good production of the play but seeks instead to innovate, then there are greater difficulties to contend with. In which case, the production is not only supposed and expected to be pleasurable, as if performing a classical drama in a modern context were somehow natural, or unproblematic; it is also supposed to prove that it actually makes sense to replay this drama and to play it in a certain way. To a certain extent one can say that a performance, by taking the form of performance, makes a de facto case for its own inevitability.

This argument, or justification, is difficult, since modern theatre, just as any other modern art, does not have at its disposal a clear concept of what it could really be; no tradition, no definition of art, no aesthetic rules can now prevail and tell the artist what s/he should or could do; and the audience itself is devoid of any given criterion which could help it to understand and to value what it sees. It is generally assumed that aesthetic taste is completely free and individual. If a performance succeeds in convincing the audience, or at least part of it, of its value, this is not due to the existence of some shared ideas about what a Greek tragedy actually is, or about what the *Agamemnon* means. There is no agreement on these questions and no such shared ideas: directors feel no less bewildered about these difficult texts than classicists themselves. The success of an innovative performance, then, results from two things. First, its ability to propose new standards of judgement to the audience, or to impose them; second, its demonstration, through its own effectiveness as theatre rather than through intellectual
arguments, that these standards can allow new and important aesthetic experiences to take place.

My contribution to this volume is concerned with a striking theatrical experience, the *Agamemnon* performed by the Théâtre du Soleil in 1990–3, as part of *Les Atrides*. This production, directed by Ariane Mnouchkine, included the *Iphigenia in Aulis* of Euripides and the *Agamemnon*, the *Libation Bearers* and the *Eumenides* of Aeschylus, in this unusual order. My purpose is not so much to analyse this performance of *Agamemnon* as an event, as a theatrical product taken for itself, but rather to reconstruct the way it relates to its context, to the different and even contradictory traditions which informed this context; and to consider the way it shaped new possibilities for contemporary theatre. Perhaps I shall raise questions that Ariane Mnouchkine herself did not ask and miss, in turn, many questions she did raise. But my task here, over ten years later, is to attempt to define the effects that *Les Atrides* was able to produce.

I

My point of view is not totally neutral since I was involved for many months with the preparations for the production: I helped Mnouchkine to produce her translation, providing her with a written and oral running-commentary of the whole text and discussing difficult passages with her. Jean Bollack, who had translated with his wife, Mayotte, the *Iphigenia* for this occasion (1990), did the same exegetical work on the *Libation Bearers*. I interpreted the text of the *Eumenides* for the translator, Hélène Cixous; and we read, re-read and discussed the many versions of these new translations.

This experience of an unusual, non-academic philological debate with both Ariane Mnouchkine and Hélène Cixous (which made me change my mind on some difficult points of the text) afforded the opportunity for a concrete reflection about the possible relationships between classics and modern art. As we know, this question is too often neglected: too many stage performances avoid this confrontation between methodical text-interpretation and staging. These productions therefore stick to cultural clichés, to conventional readings of the text, however

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1 See the analyses by Taplin (1996), 210–15; Bierl (1996); Ertel (2001), 95–102; and the articles collected in *Théâtre Aujourd'hui* 1 (1992).

2 This collaboration is related by both Mnouchkine (1990) and Cixous (1992) in the prefaces to the published translations. They first had a word-for-word translation made by Claudine Bensaid. When Mnouchkine noticed the discrepancies between the various published translations, she decided to call for the help of Jean Bollack and myself. She had read the three volumes of our commentary on the lyrical parts of the *Agamemnon* (1981, 1982). This kind of co-operation between theatre practitioners and classicists is so unusual that some theatre critics and historians totally missed the point and interpreted the making of *Les Atrides* with their own prejudices: Goetsch (1994), 75–95 and Fréal (1998), 209.
new and revolutionary they may be in other respects. It is as if the literal meaning of the words and their comprehension were not an essential part of a show which is based on a text.

Mnouchkine, by contrast, chose to associate scholarship with her project intimately, so that her findings in the wording of the translation and in the staging of the plays could always be related to precise and argued decisions concerning the meaning and the syntax of the words. She refused second-hand interpretation and tried to build up her own reading of the plays through a constant discussion with classicists, which lasted months or even years. She refused to resort to the help of a 'dramaturg' as mediator between text and stage, as it is often done in Germany and in some French companies, calling instead upon the help of scholars, who were at that time working on the same texts. This, for sure, does not mean that she performed an interpretation that she could take for granted because it had already been worked out and elaborated (not even mine). Her reading of the plays is totally her own; but she worked it out through an open and long discussion, as new hermeneutic problems arose. The question for us scholars, then, is to define the benefits, in terms of gaining new perspectives and new questions, that this kind of close co-operation can provide. And as for the performance itself, how is this analytical moment of interpretation, of cautious reading and writing, integrated into the new aesthetic synthesis that constitutes the production proper?

*Les Atrides* is a long story. It started in 1989, following the completion of the film *La Nuit miraculeuse*, directed by Ariane Mnouchkine, and it ended in 1993. The first play, *Iphigenia at Aulis*, was produced in 1990, and the last one, the *Eumenides* was premiered in 1992. The lengthy period that was devoted to the work on the text, the rehearsals, the long collaboration between the director, the stage designer, the sculptor, the musician, and the actors, was something unique in the context of state-theatre (and of theatre in general). A performance is more typically conceived in a deductive way, since the ideas which frame the stage interpretation are often fixed before the real work on stage takes place. Usually a director knows what s/he wants to say and to show before s/he meets the actors, and four or five weeks of rehearsal are often thought to be enough.³ Mnouchkine, though, worked in an experimental way by allowing ample time, and bringing an openness, to the rehearsal process.

At first, she had planned to produce a play about the French Resistance, but she gave up the idea because of two main aesthetic difficulties: it would have been difficult to avoid realism in the representation of a contemporary rebellion, and also she felt that the open space of the stage and its essential light as revelation (as 'Soleil'), were in contradiction with the shadows of a clandestine and oppressed

³ This has evidently to do with the economical situation underlying theatre production in France, but also with aesthetic choices, which emphasize ideas rather than stage practice, according to the social and aesthetic importance invested in directors.
world. She then turned to the public and highly stylized art of Greek tragedy, which she had never worked on before. This change throws some light on the whole enterprise: since she did not find an adequate theatrical language for a modern event, she thought she could rely on old tragedies and find there a form which could express social disaster, violence, oppression and the claim for justice.

In the Théâtre du Soleil’s next production, *La Ville parjure ou le réveil des Erinnyes* (*The City of Perjury or the Awakening of the Erinnyes*), written by Hélène Cixous and performed in 1994, the Erinnyes of the *Eumenides* are directly transported into the contemporary world and urge revenge for the victims of the political felony that the scandal of AIDS-infected blood constituted in France in the late 1980s: as Aeschylus put it, they know that blood, once shed, ceases to flow any more. But this does not mean that in order to produce *Les Atrides*, Greek tragedy had to be modernized, to be adapted to express modern concerns: on this occasion, the challenge was to make Greek tragedy in its own right, as a historical phenomenon, quite literally something that ‘signified’—had a significance—for today.

The title, *Les Atrides*, refers to the first concept of the enterprise: it should include a larger set of plays dealing with the story of this family. Mnouchkine had already worked on the *Electras*, but decided to concentrate on the *Iphigenia in Aulis* and the *Oresteia* to prevent the project from becoming enormous. It was for the sake of clarity that she chose the order in which Euripides was performed before Aeschylus (the Théâtre du Soleil upholds the political ideal of a popular theatre which goes back to Jean Vilar and Jacques Copeau): the story had to be told from the beginning. This was then a practical choice and presupposes no interpretation of the plays: the name *Atreidae* is a synonym for tragedy; it signifies a tragic world and tragic works which one has to explore. Even if this proper name, unlike *Oresteia*, does not belong to the tragic genre itself but rather to mythology, this does not mean that the performance is primarily concerned with a myth, and not with theatre. Unlike interpreters of tragedy such as George Steiner or Heiner Müller, who, despite their differences, both make of tragedy the expression of myth, conceived as a pre-dramatic, archaic reality, deeply rooted in Greek culture and imposing its semantic complexities on art, Mnouchkine refuses these kinds of speculative and romantic fascinations. For her, tragedy is a cultural artefact, which displays its meaning in its own ways and does not depend upon supposedly more profound, more archaic forms of truth. We are dealing with art, not with myth or ritual; and here in *Les Atrides*, we are dealing, above all, with the political issue of injustice and retaliation not as a theoretical problem, but as one which is lived by individuals in their society.

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4 *La Ville parjure*, performed after *Les Atrides* in 1994, took up this challenge. *Le Dernier Caravansérail* (*Odysées*), 2003, which shows the stories of those arriving at the Sangatte refugee camp, near Calais, also proposed a very impressive solution for this contradiction between what is clandestine and the representation of it.
At the end of the 1980s, the *Oresteia* had constituted its own artistic and intellectual tradition in France, not so much as drama, the object of a possible theatrical practice, but rather as the symbol of much debated political, philosophical and aesthetic questions. During a long part of the twentieth century, the work, unlike the *Oedipus Tyrannus* and the *Antigone*, did not really belong to the repertoire (as it does now, and as did the *Prometheus* at the beginning of the century). It is said that Jacques Copeau and Charles Dullin were tempted, but they never carried out their wish.

In fact, the *Agamemnon* and, more generally, Greek tragedy began to be considered as dramatic texts suitable for the modern stage thanks to an initiative which came not from the world of professional theatre, but from the University: in 1936 a group of students at the Sorbonne, guided by Roland Barthes and Jacques Veil, decided to found the Groupe de Théâtre Antique de la Sorbonne; they immediately made an impact by performing the *Persians* in the court of Sorbonne (the *Agamemnon* came later, in 1947).

Two complementary claims seem to have been made by these students, who until the end of the 1960s were true to their wish to remain amateurs and anonymous: they wanted to give back to the tragic texts they read as young classicists their original living theatricality. Against the declamatory style of conventional theatre, they wanted the stage to be faithful to the original text with dance, music, and masks supporting the delivery of a literal translation. For Aeschylus, generally, they used the one composed by their Professor of Greek Literature, Paul Mazon; and the procedure was the same when they performed the *Agamemnon*, for which they preferred Mazon's translation to the popular version by Paul Claudel. In their view, ancient conventions could preserve the text from any kind of modern false immediacy of a psychological or realistic kind (women were played by men); but archaeological conformity was not what they looked for. The Greece that was shown was more savage than classical; and avant-garde theatre and modern art (with painters like Jean Bazaine or, after the war, musicians like Pierre Boulez and his 'Ondes Martenot') were required to restore the original strength of the text. The director of the *Persae* and of the *Agamemnon* was Maurice Jacquemont, whose work was in part inspired by Jacques Copeau.

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6 See Gillibert (1955), 88–93 (esp. 90) and Barrault (1959), 86.
7 Cf. Roland Barthes (1962, repr. in 1993a), 961–2; and Ertel (1986), 43–51. Ertel was herself a member of this group.
8 The *Persians* went on to be performed 150 times.
9 Evelyne Ertel reminds me that the use of half-masks by the Groupe had more to do with the tradition of the *Commedia dell’arte* (in which Jacques Copeau was interested) than with the ancient world.
Tragedy was no longer seen as a storehouse of myths or of literary themes that a modern writer could use for his or her own purposes (as Jean Giraudoux, Jean Anouilh, and Jean-Paul Sartre did), but as an artistic event. Roland Barthes stresses another historical feature: in 1936, the year of the Front Populaire, these amateurs could enact an ideal of autarky and think that their action could change French culture. A sociological approach could show how this enterprise at the Sorbonne helped the founding of a state theatre (théâtre public), where intellectuals coming from University theatres dominate (Ariane Mnouchkine, Patrice Chéreau, Jean-Pierre Vincent, Jean-Claude Penchenat, Jacques Nichet all come from the University; Jean-Pierre Miquel belonged to the Groupe de Théâtre Antique de la Sorbonne).

This new kind of interest in tragic texts, mixing modern forms and ethnic archaism, was introduced into professional theatre in 1955 when Jean-Louis Barrault and his company presented the _Oresteia_ at the Bordeaux Festival and later in Paris at the Théâtre Marigny (Fig. 15.1). Jean Gillibert, a member of the Sorbonne group, was assistant to Jean-Louis Barrault and served as mediator. Pierre Boulez, who had worked for the Groupe, composed the music. We shall come back to this famous performance, which was the occasion of a debate revealing the way Greek tragedy was perceived.

In 1969—70, Hubert Gignoux, in collaboration with André Steiger, produced a play at the Théâtre National de Strasbourg entitled _La Prise de l'Orestie_, as we say 'la prise de la Bastille', the storming of the Bastille. This title, however, referred more directly to the events of May 1968 in Paris and the 'prise de l'Odeon'. _La Prise de l'Orestie_ was not only a (shortened) version of the _Oresteia_—which critics raised in counter-cultural May 1968 might well have disqualified as reactionary—but it was also a theatrical representation of the debates about theatre and culture. A chorus of young people intervenes during the play and they finally replace the Erinyes in the _Eumenides_ and initiate a contradictory discussion about the possibility of saving traditional art. There was an acute contrast between the ritualism and the archaism that Hubert Gignoux used to give form to the tragedy itself and these political interventions, which were virtually improvised. This contrast recalls, as we shall see, the contradictions that determined the current conception of tragedy in France.

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10 Cf. Gillibert (1955). Gillibert joined the group after the war and he produced an _Agamemnon_ in 1970 with Maria Casarès as Clytemnestra.
11 See Barrault (1959), 85–109 on the trilogy and the justification of his choices. He insists on the similarities between occult rituals he saw in Brazil and the Cassandra scene or the dance of the Erinyes.
12 He recommended the work to Jean-Louis Barrault.
13 André Steiger had directed the _Libation Bearers_ for the Sorbonne Group in 1961. He had been recommended to Jean-Pierre Miquel, who was president of the Group, by Roland Barthes: cf. Ertel (1986), 51.
14 See the interview and texts in _Théâtre National de Strasbourg_, 1970.
Later, Luca Ronconi in the great amphitheatre of the Sorbonne (1972) and, above all, Peter Stein in Bobigny (1981) were celebrated for having demonstrated that ancient drama could be modern in a more radical way. One must not forget that a great part of the audience still held in mind Jean Prat's hieratic and, so to speak, neoclassical *Persians* as an authoritative image of what ancient tragedy should look like. This had been produced in 1961 both for radio and France's only TV channel at that time as a prime-time programme. This production is still often referred to as the symbol of a Golden Age in the media: it succeeded since it could reconcile modern technique and modern music (by Jean Prodomides) with rather traditional performance modes.

Despite the numerous differences between these productions of ancient plays, I think one can still find a deep intellectual continuity, which concerns both the

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15 The production was broadcast two more times, in 1966 and 1975.
interpretation of the text and the aesthetic categories which underlie these projects. A consensus appears, an interpretation dominates, which is at the same time theological and political (or to put it more simply, Catholic and Marxist); and a new order emerges from Dionysiac violence.

As often in French culture, the idea of Grace, conceived as a sudden, unpredictable violence, and the idea of Revolution tend to fall into one. The *Oresteia* was read as the story of salvation, as the coming of Grace into a realm of endless transgression and strife. Whether it was in explicitly Christian terms with Paul Claudel, who assimilates the Erinyes with the ‘Mosaic Law’, or in Marxist terms, in the wake of George Thomson (who was much quoted), the trilogy was supposed to represent a breach, a kind of miracle. What mattered was not so much the terms which were opposed (law versus justice; matriarchy versus patriarchy; aristocracy versus democracy), but the fact that change occurs suddenly, in a kind of devastating ecstasy, with the help of the matricide. The crime of Orestes was not understood as the last one of a series, but as the very tragic event (in fact the only one), as the radical horror that can bring the blessing of a new order.

Progress, in these terms, does not result from evolution, but from violence. According to an old theological idea, of which philosophers like Georges Bataille were very fond, evil was thought to be the condition for grace, crime the first step towards salvation. In a famous talk of 1944, Bataille explains how sin, which produces the disclosure of the sinning self, can create a true human communion. The Erinyes could then be discarded as being barbaric and pre-modern at the same time, and be seen, because of their Dionysiac violence, as the incarnation of the truth that tragedy conveys. In this context, the *Agamemnon* was much less significant than the *Libation Bearers*; and the *Eumenides* seemed too peaceful in the second half. For this reason, then, the *Agamemnon* had limited influence in contemporary literature: Orestes and Electra were the main tragic figures, as positive murderers.

Since we are dealing with theatre, and not only with ideas, it is worth examining how this synthesis of theology and politics can produce aesthetic models. If we read the testimonies and the reviews which were written or gathered about the *Oresteia* of Jean-Louis Barrault, we can grasp the preconceptions that prevailed then and continue to do so to this day, about ancient theatre and theatre in general. Three names dominate this debate and they symbolize three different and

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16 The word ‘interpretation’ here does not concern the text itself—the problems raised by its literal understanding are never mentioned in the essays written on the *Oresteia*—but the event to which it relates.

17 Cf. Fusillo, Ch. 12, p. 224.


19 See Jean Giraudoux’s *Électre* (1937); Jean-Paul Sartre’s *Les Mouches* (1943); and the fragmentary *Oreste* by Jean Anouilh, which was published in 1945. One could say of the French Electra what Jean Gillibert said about Antigone: ‘On reconnaît bien là les Français, toujours prêts à retrouver Jeanne d’Arc partout où elle n’est pas’ (1955), 89. See the history of this interpretation in Jean Bollack (1999), 95–104 (with an analysis of Jacques Lacan’s reading of Sophocles, 1986).
contradictory intellectual traditions which, quite often, mingle in surprising ways. First, Paul Claudel, who had become a close friend of Jean-Louis Barrault (even if Barrault preferred not to play his version of the Orestie and asked André Obey to adapt the one by Paul Mazon). Second, Antonin Artaud, whose book Le Théâtre et son double had been published in 1938, and whom Barrault declared his master. The third figure invoked in this debate was Bertolt Brecht, whose concepts Barthes radically opposed to this production in a merciless and famous review published in 1955 by the Brechtian journal, Théâtre populaire. These three authors, or their traditions, conceptualize and enact three different ways of thinking about what is a truly powerful and significant theatrical event. Since tragedy is concerned with a radical and ravaging event, a catastrophe, it could be used as the artistic form where these concepts could be put to the test.

To put it very roughly, then, three poetics, three conceptions of the potentialities of theatre are opposed. With Paul Claudel, the violence of the action, which is not denied, gets some dignity and some artistic necessity when poetical language refigures it in a balance between sudden bursts of expressivity and syntax. This balance changed during the life of the poet: this is amply clear from a comparison between his translation of the Agamemnon where discontinuity prevails (1893–5), and his later translations of the two other plays of the trilogy, made after his conversion to Catholicism, where the style is much softer (1912–15). The important point for Claudel’s theatre is that speech, ‘le verbe’, which does not function as a symbol, as an expression, but as an autonomous world, is in charge of the conflicts tragedy represents. Drama here is incorporated into the dynamics of language, and dialogue is superseded by the chaotic continuity of emphatic speech.

At the other end of the spectrum, according to Artaud and his idea of a theatre of cruelty, speech is nothing more than a physical noise, and participates in the action only as much as it is able; on the other hand, the gestures and the presence of the bodies, by contrast, give life to the scenic matter. A performance is no longer conceived as a representation (this would endorse an intellectuality which is contrary to the essence of theatre), but rather as an ecstatic ritual, which transforms, discomforts, and endangers both the performers and the audience.

Jean-Louis Barrault seems to have referred simultaneously to these two opposing models, and this would explain the attacks he received from the Brechtian Roland Barthes. According to Barthes, speech in Barrault’s Oresteia faded into declamation, and cruelty into a poorly represented, rather than enacted, rituality. With Brecht, or we should rather say with the Brecht that was reconstructed in France, language recovers its semantic function, but in an indirect way: it is not used to reveal the purpose of the author or truth of the characters, whether patent or latent; it has to be taken literally, in its own banality. In Brecht, the words of the

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20 See Barrault (1959), 201–32. 21 Barthes (1993b).
22 See the very useful Mémoire de maîtrise by Lechevalier (1988).
characters are brought onto the stage as quotations from typical, familiar languages, characterized by their social existence; the words are uttered by people who do not understand their own situation. For the audience, this discrepancy between the words and the plot signifies the necessity of changing both language and the world. In France, this appeal to the conventionality of language could function in either of two ways: as avant-garde criticism of the 'théâtre bourgeois', with its psychology and its inauthentic interiority; or as a return to old forms of the Ancien Régime, with the norms and conventions of the language used in classical theatre. Greek tragedy, because of its conventions and its artificiality, was seductive to Brechtian critics and directors, who were also very fond of Racine and Corneille for a similar reason—the lack of naturalism to be found in these authors.

The three central ideas I have been describing are poetical language as an instantiation of lyric, the violence of suffering bodies, and convention. With these three ideas, I think we can delineate an intellectual model which dominated, and continues to dominate French theatre productions. It would be easy to show that this model functions like an aesthetic system, since each term presupposes the other ones, and since directors could shift (and do shift) in the same performance from one to another. And in order to explain the vitality of this aesthetic model, or system, in French theatre, I think it would not be far-fetched to recognize in it the concepts of an aesthetics coming from a religious tradition which has been prevalent in France. French theatre practice is clearly underpinned by the Catholic ritual tradition stemming from the Counter-Reformation, which had differing and indeed opposing ways of dealing with the question of salvation—either through the beauty of a consensual religious community and tradition, or through the ecstatic violence of conversion, or through the rules of convention. This, in fact, is not surprising: the more one asserts the ritualism of theatre, the more one re-enacts old religious forms and concepts from one's own culture.

There is a great irony in the capacity of this system of intellectualizing to sustain itself in France. At first, the aim of these modern definitions of the essence of theatre was to free it from any kind of symbolism: theatre is not the representation or the unveiling of any kind of interiority (this would be 'bourgeois'), but has to make sense literally, by the means of its own scenic forms (language, bodies, artificiality). However, this intellectual system has its own conceptual logic and therefore its own autonomy. It declares in three different ways what theatre is or is supposed to be, and tends therefore to become universal, as if claiming to be able to fit any kind of occasion. Performances are then required to illustrate these ideas, which are no more considered as *modi operandi*, as working schemes, but as theatre's content, its object and its meaning; distancing and violence are no more the constituents of a style, but the phenomena which must be shown. Ready-made philosophies are then invited to provide theatre with its alleged truth: Brechtian artificial dullness of speech becomes an abstract concept which defines language as an assertion of the impossibility of verbal communication; cruelty loses its physical violence and expresses the disasters of human nothing-
ness; in a quasi-Claudelian way, these concepts are sacralized. It is as if they were the very things which art had to reveal about society, language, bodies, in a ritual ceremony where trained individuals enjoy watching the repeated symbols of their ontological deficiencies. The danger is then one of boundless redundancy, and the loss of what primarily determines performance and (precisely what Mnouchkine maintained) ample rehearsal time and openness. Concepts do not need much time to be represented and understood.

III

How did Les Atrides relate to this shared theatrical culture? It would be easy to recognize in this production many typical features we have already mentioned: archaic ritual, with the total absence of any reference to classical Greece, and the use of ritual forms of theatre coming from the East (Noh for Cassandra, Kathakali for the chorus of the Agamemnon—see Fig. 15.2), with the impressive moves of the dancers. There was also the feeling a spectator could get, when s/he entered the theatre-building, that s/he was joining a cultural community of friends which was already in existence. Physical violence played its part as well, especially in the scene where Orestes confronts Clytemnestra: matricide was not performed as an act one
could discuss, as a juridical problem, but as an unbearable and cruel insanity. Distancing, or artificiality, were apparent also in the slow scenic tempo that was chosen: speech, in opposition to dances or movements, was represented as a social event which required its own formalities; quite often the actors had slowly to take seats on a carpet before they spoke. But it would be misleading to isolate these features and to present them as illustrative of Ariane Mnouchkine’s pre-existing concept of tragedy. On the contrary, these features, and the theatrical models which are behind them, were not used conceptually, as embodying a predetermined view of what tragedy is, but as parts of a common aesthetic material, a material at the disposal of the actors; this material has its own story, the one sketched above, and the one of the Théâtre du Soleil itself.

To put it in other words, this project evaded the difficulties art has to face when it is perceived as the representation of a concept such as the tragic, or in more recent performances, the denial of the tragic—violence, corporeality, politics, myth and so on. When tragedy becomes the allegory of familiar concepts, it tends to be abstract and cold, even if the concepts that are represented consist of violence, cruelty and Dionysiac disorder. Unlike most productions of Greek tragedy, Les Atrides did not rely on such general statements as: tragedy is political, or tragedy is ritual, or is ambiguous, or feminist, and so on. It took them for granted, and, with their help, tried to create a new artistic synthesis. There was no manifesto in this show; ideas were not its content, but only instantiated as practical means, or schemes, which allowed the shaping of a unified collective experience. Ariane Mnouchkine and her troupe did not start from a given interpretation of the Oresteia, but from its opacity, as text and as theatrical matter. Like a good classicist, she decided to understand this work without undue speed, and to solve the problems she met gradually, in the making of the performance, through continuous dialogue with her collaborators. They all testified that the solutions they finally adopted were discovered during the work on stage. Nathalie Thomas, for example, who designed the costumes, says in an interview that she drew no previous sketches of them.23 It was during a rehearsal, when an idle member of the chorus tried to hide behind a frame, that Guy-Claude François, who made the scenery, found his idea of an arena, with its burladeros where the actors can hide themselves.24

I would like to examine some elements of the performance which show how this whole enterprise constructed its own idea of what constitutes the meaning of this tragedy.

Where to perform? Most directors think it possible to transfer tragedy to a traditional theatre-building (Italian theatre). This kind of space secures the freedom of the spectator, who sits in a familiar place and can judge what is represented in front of him or her. But how can the show begin, how can someone leave everyday life and enter a totally new and foreign universe, if the place where

one finds oneself is already conventional? And how could this place not be conventional (with rows of seats separated from the stage) if theatre is expected? Ariane Mnouchkine and the sculptor Erhard Stiefel found a practical solution, which immediately achieves the transition from one world to another: the spectators reached their seats walking in the dark, above graves with a Chinese appearance, in which excavated grey figures represented the chorus of the play they were going to see. Without even thinking about it, they perceived that they were invited to see something about death and about a world that had disappeared. These graves were not the representation of a general idea, they were not a symbol, but the occasion of a concrete, particular experience.

The scenery: exits and entrances. The scene was a sand coloured square bull-ring, which looked old, as if it had recently been used—bloodstained; at the back there were two wooden doors, the one behind the other. The chorus and some characters enter through the first door; the second door, huge and blue like the wall at the back of the theatre, serves only once in each play, for crucial events: the arrival of Agamemnon (with Cassandra, still hidden), the emergence from the tomb during the kommos of the Libation Bearers, and the arrival of Athena in the Eumenides. Contrary to all we know about ancient theatre, the door of the palace did not face the audience, but was situated below it; the queen, the corpses of Agamemnon and Cassandra appeared on a kind of platform which was rolled out from under the rows of seats, and rolled in again when Agamemnon and Cassandra left the open space of the stage going to their deaths, and when, in an ambiguous triumph, Clytemnestra and Aegisthus enter the conquered palace. Why? Ariane Mnouchkine did not intend to answer the traditional question of whether we should play Greek tragedy as it was played, or adapt it to the modern theatre and to our contemporary era.

The very idea of a modern theatre, of a modern stage would make no sense to Mnouchkine. The purpose was, I think, quite clear: a stage is a space devoted to light; the entrances of the chorus and of the herald belong to this universe of light and should thus be seen from the front; these characters exist only in so far as they speak, and they are totally public. Agamemnon, Cassandra, the tomb, and Athena relate to another, divine world, the public nature of which is provisional; they emerge from the dark blue world at the back of the theatre. As for the palace, it plays no part in the open space of the stage: in the prologue of the Agamemnon it is described as a place of shadows, secrets and intrigue. In the play, the inhabitants come out by surprise, in an unnatural way (they do not walk), since they are carried by black-robed assistants to or from the place where they speak; and consequently living bodies (Clytemnestra, Aegisthus) and corpses become associated in the same mechanical image. This artistic, practical idea, which here serves a purpose directly related to the specific meaning of the play, could later be reconsidered, reshaped, and reused in another context. In the Théâtre du Soleil’s

25 The third grave, for the chorus of the Erinyes, remained empty.
Les Tambours sur la digue (1999), every actor was carried on stage by assistants like a puppet. Art evolves: a limited aspect of the Oresteia reappears later, maybe casually, as a possible style.  

Music. Jean-Jacques Lemètre, with the help of his assistant, improvised throughout the performance; the actors never sang, indeed they all spoke (even the chorus), but no spoken sentence was uttered without continuous accompaniment of the improvised musical line. From time to time, recorded music (inspired by Balkan tradition) accompanied the dances of the chorus; the improvisation still continued. This recorded music stopped when the chorus, or rather a Chorus leader, spoke. The idea that music should be continuous does not relate to any theory of tragedy as being essentially musical, or to any project of ‘total’, or ‘complete theatre’. Again, I think the idea was practical: first, music belongs to the material of tragedy, and one has to test it, and this turned out to be a challenge; and, second, it is not put on stage for its own purpose, as if it were expressive by itself, but in order to facilitate an acute listening to the text. Many times a musical effect anticipates what is going to be said, so that the listener can concentrate upon the words. No lyrical atmosphere is created—this would deprive tragedy of its power. The continuity of music guarantees the specificity of the theatrical artefact, and gives a sensually perceptible form to dramatic time; it reminds us that when tragic characters speak, they say in fact more than they intended to say, and that they are acting out a story which takes its own course.

Chorus. Instead of treating the chorus as a problem (what almost everyone does, and in doing so fails miserably), Mnouchkine made it the centre of the performance. The parodos becomes a spectacular event (see Fig. 15.2), and we are immediately freed from the trammels of the traditional debate. Is the chorus a commentator or an actor? The passivity of the old men of Argos, who try to interpret what they hear and see, becomes a physical reality and produces a form of catastrophe the chorus has to experience and endure. As Hélène Cixous said: ‘The Chorus has its own tragedy, that of the Powerless Witness, the tragedy, always begun anew, of exile, of the forbidden, of exclusion, which is the lot of all those who are deprived of the most precious good: the possibility of acting.’

26 I am not sure that these two scenic ideas were related to one another; I realized the similarity while I was writing this chapter.

27 ‘Si la musique et la danse sont à ce point interpénétrées, c’est parce que Eschyle et Euripide nous l’ont demandé. Tant que nous n’étions pas passés sous ces fourches caudines, ils n’en ont pas démordu. Et tant que nos corps ne l’ont pas compris, nous avons tout simplement souffert’, Mnouchkine in Picon-Vallin (1995), 74. This interview, which also contains interventions by Simon Abkarian, Guy-Claude François, Jean-Jacques Lemètre, and Catherine Schaub, provides clear evidence of the way different crafts could work together.

28 Translated by Goetsch (1994), 78.
drama, in which shared language and the possibility of a social consensus appear to be physically destroyed. Thus the importance given to choral lyric does not contradict the dramatic character of tragedy; it reinforces it (in total agreement with the presentation of the ‘lyrical dissonance’ Jean Bollack and I gave in the introduction to our commentary in 1981).

**Ethnicities.** Ancient Greek culture never appears as such in *Les Atrides,* the stage is full of quotations, or fragments of several Asiatic traditions, utilized freely. Post-modern culture, with its vindication of openness, allows this kind of free reuse of different traditions. Is the audience being invited here to face the question of cultural Otherness once more? Again, the idea was surely not so abstract. Usually, exoticism is shown on stage in order to break cultural routine and to insist upon the strangeness of an art-form, which our tradition believes it can appropriate. Ironically, this exoticism becomes itself a routine, and the otherness which it is supposed to express tends towards banality. This happens because it is quite often opposed to the so-called intellectuality of canonical texts or of their academic reception. Once appropriated, the otherwise impressive form, with its rhythms, dances, and drums, often fails to produce strange, unexpected emotions; instead, the result is a conventional physical immediacy that inspires feelings one can have outside theatre in everyday life.

Mnouchkine, however, does not proceed in this manner: in the theatrical tradition of Théâtre du Soleil, ‘Asia’ is a set of articulated codes, of sophisticated and stylized forms (a ‘text’), which does not immediately signify East, as opposed to ‘us’. It functions rather as a progressively elaborated language, which enables the performers to express ideas, feelings, situations. Appropriation seems to work here on two levels: first, these exotic forms have to be mastered, and reshaped by the actors in a long and difficult process of training; and, second, the technical craft which is so gained becomes so secure, looks so traditional (in the history of the Théâtre du Soleil), that something like Greece can finally be represented. The continuity of this new style throughout the tetralogy ensures that the audience is really introduced into a coherent world, both strange and familiar. The result is that this Greece is neither the classical one, nor its more or less savage denial, but consists of a specific experience, made of individual texts and forms one has to discover anew. It is precisely because it is methodical and consistent that this aesthetic transfer from our culture to other ones gives us the feeling that classical texts are not what we are accustomed to read. At the same time, it gives us the feeling that they can be understood.

Otherness, cultural distancing, is a condition for the reinterpretation and the reappropriation of our own culture. Of course Asia is not only a form, or a scheme which helps the work of staging; it allows this dynamics of appropriation because it is interesting by itself (in *Et soudain les nuits d'éveil* (1998) it is the very theme of

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29 Except in one detail: a figure of Dionysus appears above the entrance of the theatre; the tragic god could not be left out.
the play). The preference of Asia over other traditions is not only grounded on technical or theatrical reasons; besides a deep personal empathy, it also constitutes a world that politically and aesthetically constrains us to question the weaknesses of our own.31

_Clytemnestra._ Much has been said about the feminist orientation of _Les Atrides_ (cf. Rehm, Chapter 18). Clytemnestra is performed as a positive character (which I think she really is in many aspects in Aeschylus—cf. Hall, Chapter 4).32 This is true, but it is not vindicated as such; the positive aspect results from an analysis of the text and of the dramatic form Aeschylus chose for his play: why is the act of revenge preceded by speeches that are so long and (dramatically speaking) ineffectual, in which Clytemnestra takes so much time to caricature all the contradictions of her male interlocutors? Feminity is neither a concept, nor a cause to plead, but a situation.

_Text and interpretation._ The translation was still in the making when the rehearsals had already begun. For a while, the actors had to use Paul Mazon’s text and the new words were tested on stage while they were written. The general questions about the meaning of the different scenes and of the play were raised progressively, as the staging was going on. The interpretation was discussed with Jean Bollack and myself only when a local problem of understanding appeared. This way of proceeding was totally new; usually directors rely on pre-existent and general reading of the text (the works of Jean-Pierre Vernant and Pierre Vidal-Naquet, 1972 and 1986, which insist on the ambiguous relationship between tragedy and its political context, are those more commonly used by Brechtian directors). The usual way of proceeding has two deleterious effects. First, no real attention is paid to the exact wording of the text, to the innovations the author might have made.33 Second, the concept that the play is supposed to illustrate takes precedence over the concrete work with the actor.

For Mnouchkine, the meaning of the play has its own strength. The play’s meaning should only be served and defended by the resources of the theatre, rather than represented.34 An interpretation of the text was then built up in

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30 The play tells the misfortunes in France of a Tibetan delegation, which the Théâtre du Soleil decides to shelter. The real event, to which this play refers, was the arrival of African refugees at the Théâtre du Soleil; the shift from one continent to the other is to some extent due to the Théâtre du Soleil’s intimacy with Asiatic forms.

31 ‘Pourquoi vais-je chercher là-bas, même pour un spectacle qui n’a rien à voir avec l’Inde? Parce que tout ce qui est pire là-bas, et tout ce qui est beau est encore plus beau’, in Picon-Vallin (1995), 82.

32 See e.g. Auffret (1984).

33 ‘L’impression que nous donnent les grands auteurs de théâtre, en particulier Eschyle, c’est qu’eux-mêmes ont été surpris par ce qu’ils écrivaient’ (‘The impression that the great theatrical authors give us, especially Aeschylus, is that they themselves were surprised by what they wrote’), Abkarian (the main actor of _Les Atrides_) in Picon-Vallin (1995), 76.

34 At this point one could regret that the interpretation did not go far enough, and that, for the sake of scenic effectiveness, the sophistication of Clytemnestra’s rhetorical art, which proceeds indirectly by irony, by oblique allusions to traditional forms, was not really taken into account. But this would have been another artistic project.
rehearsal, and this interpretation was innovative from many perspectives. The innovation can be seen in the idea that reconciliation, as it occurs in the *Eumenides*, however necessary it may be, is a tragedy; and that the Erinyes are not barbaric, but embody a true claim for justice with which one cannot dispense. But this interpretation, however, was not the main purpose of the play; it exists by itself and can be reused in another play, as for example when the Erinyes return in *La Ville parjure*. In *Les Atrides* the meaning of the texts was a practical idea, which orients the work on stage, and was not a cerebral concept.

I would say in conclusion that Mnouchkine's enterprise is at variance with the aesthetic models which currently prevail in France. This is because her enterprise transcends the questions and antinomies, which are normally imposed by the problem of representation. *Les Atrides* neither symbolizes an idea, nor portrays the difficulty of representing an idea, as with many productions. It demonstrates that contemporary art, however self-conscious and critical it may be, can produce a positive and collective aesthetic experience. 'Positive' here does not entail creating the illusion of an artistic consensus, nor the tentative revival of old concepts, such as the classical perfection of a work of art. It means, instead, that unity of a kind can be arrived at by a process of experimentation which respects the specificity of each craft involved in the making of a production as well as the heterogeneity of the materials involved in theatre:

—*Le théâtre comme organisme?*—Je n'emploierais pas le mot d'organisme. Non. C'est plutôt une quête... Il y a quelque chose qui est, à chaque instant, indispensable, vital. C'est ce qui fait de nous des 'primitifs'. Oui, on nous traite souvent de primitifs, je l'avoue.36

35 Unlike Peter Stein, Ariane Mnouchkine inserts no irony in her staging of the end of the *Eumenides*: democracy is not criticized as being a self-repeating meaningless process (in Stein's *Oresteia* the judges endlessly continue voting after the trial); sticking closer to Aeschylus' text, she shows that democratic justice provides a poor solution, based on rhetorical arguments, but a solution nonetheless.

36 '—The theatre as an organism?—I would not use the word organism. No. It is rather a search... There is something which is, at every moment, essential, vital. It is what makes us 'primitives'. Yes, we are often treated as primitives, I admit it' (Picon-Vallin (1995), 75).
The Chorus of Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon* in Modern Stage Productions:  
*Towards the ‘Performative Turn’*

Anton Bierl

The modern productions of Aeschylus’ *Oresteia*, the only surviving ancient Greek trilogy, are of pivotal importance for the renaissance of tragedy on the contemporary stage. *Agamemnon* can certainly be enjoyed as a play in itself, but it is evident that it also functions to expose the subject of the entire cycle to the spectators. As the chorus plays such a major role in creating this thematic basis and providing a mythical and narrative background, I think it is worthwhile concentrating on how they function in performance. Furthermore, even though I have been asked to give a survey of the German scene, I consider it necessary to transcend the geographical and cultural boundaries of Germany and consider the larger European context as well. This is due to the fact that the changes in the role of the chorus in recent productions of this play are not at all typical of German theatre and society specifically, but say something about the trends and status of theatre across Europe as a whole.

The phenomenon of the Greek chorus has attracted a lot of academic attention in the last decade.¹ This may to some degree reflect a shift in the humanities in the 1990s away from language, signs, and meaning towards the performative. Some critics have labelled this development the ‘performative turn’.² In this perspective

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¹ See e.g. Paulsen (1989); Hose (1990-1); Henrichs (1995); (1996); Golder and Scully (1995-6); Paulsen (1998); Riemer/Zimmermann (1999); Baur (1999a); (1999b); P. Wilson (2000a); Bierl (2001); for the chorus in the *Oresteia* see Wilson and Taplin (1993); Kappel (1999).

² For the term ‘performative turn’ see e.g. Rao and Köpping (2000), 1; Schlesier (2000), 1135; Wirth (20026), 10.
*Geisteswissenschaft* (humanities) focuses less on the reference and fixed significance of texts and other artefacts than on the process of a synaesthetic performance. Body movements, dance, lighting, costumes and all other semiotic signs yield to an effect of intense transformation. In such a highly stimulating event the meaning is not prestabilized and fixed, but *emergent* in the actualization. The ritual embedding can also be interpreted under this performative aspect.3

As we do not have any choral equivalent in our modern western theatre tradition, the chorus has always been one of the main difficulties in modern productions of ancient Greek tragedies. But it has also been a stimulus to find practical solutions. The multiple functions of the ancient chorus have enabled modern directors to challenge the realistic dramatic conventions and to reach out for new (post)-modern modes of playing.4 Since Walther Kranz, we can speak of a triple function of the ancient tragic chorus: it is *dramatis persona*, Schlegel's 'idealized onlooker' or instrument of *Rezeptionssteuerung* (focalization of attention), and voice of the poet.5 In other words: they participate in the dramatic action, mediate between the events on the *skene* and the audience; they tend to give comments, reflections and gnomic knowledge and they can take over narrative functions, opening up mythical background information. They focus the attention of the spectators marking contrasts, hinting at norms and values, foils and analogies. As a group they incarnate the tensions between the individual and the collective: they are to some degree a microcosm of the entire *polis* (even though the chorus does not usually represent the city but more often groups that the *polis* excludes such as slaves, women, etc.), and they have an authoritative voice which is based on the ritual and mythical macrotext of the community.

The chorus embeds the play in its ritual and cultic dimension. It has its biotic pragmatic equivalents in a song and dance culture of real choruses, where young boys and girls very often are educated. These choruses are incorporated in a tragic fiction. In addition to this identity of a role in the internal system of communication the chorus can shift and reach out to the public in the here and now (external system of communication). This highly flexible and malleable theatrical means dynamically oscillates between all these functions and dimensions. And it is a highly synaesthetic as well as performative part of the ancient tragedy. The stylized verses in the foreign Doric together with the singing and body movements have an enigmatic and transformative effect on the spectators who are struggling for the emergent meaning.

In the main, modern directors have worked with the following solutions:6 in the worst case they simply cancel the choral passages or leave out as much as

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3 See e. g. Goldhill (1999a); Fischer-Lichte (1998a); (1998b); (1999); in connection with ritual studies see Rao and Köpping (2000); for the application of this concept to the chorus of ancient comedy see now Bierl (2001). See now the collections of essays in Fischer-Lichte and Wulf (2001) and Wirth (2002a).


5 Kranz (1933), esp. 170–1.

6 For the following typology see Erken (1997), 380–2; Baur (1999a).
possible. Very often the chorus is cut down to a very small ensemble of three to five persons, in the extreme form to only one commenting voice. At the other extreme, Max Reinhardt worked with masses in circus arenas in order to re-establish the aspect of a public form. A static-ritual way of producing with ceremonial unison pronunciation in the Gustav Rudolf Sellner/Carl Orff era gave way to experiments to dissolve the collective into different single voices. In the heyday of the German Regietheater (theatre largely influenced by directors) in the 1970s, we find all sorts of experimental and comic deconstructions of the chorus. Then, Peter Stein tried to put the speech-act into a naturalistic-psychological frame with the chorus coming only momentarily and with great effort to a collective unison. Hansgünther Heyme vitalized and improved group recitations, sometimes even trying a psalmodic mode. Beyond the German-speaking world, Peter Sellars reduced the chorus to invisible acoustic participants, whereas Ariane Mnouchkine’s choruses all of a sudden danced again. To regain this rich body language and ritual-performative dimension, she had to set it in an eastern key (see further, de La Combe, Chapter 15).

Everyone is able to realize that the chorus plays an eminent role in Agamemnon. As I said above, it has here, besides all the other functions just mentioned, the task of providing the narrative basis of the story of a generational curse. My working hypothesis is that in the last half of the twentieth century we can follow a path from static solemnity, as in Gustav Rudolf Sellner’s Hamburg production of 1951, to more developed performative approaches. Already Pier Paolo Pasolini, in Vittorio Gassman’s celebrated staging of his translation in the Greek Theatre of Syracuse in 1960, had worked with the element of comparative ethnology (see Fusillo, Chapter 12). In order to find an adequate way of expressing the ritualistic dance dimension, he had introduced tribal Voodoo-dances. Following the evolutionary construct of a historical development after the theory of George Thomson, he projected these tribal groups onto the beginning of the Agamemnon. But very soon Vittorio Gassman and Pasolini fell back into the pseudo-archeological style of Syracuse.

This search for cultural equivalents in order to express the notion of dance was followed by Karolos Koun (1980–2) and Ariane Mnouchkine (1990–3). Starting with Luca Ronconi’s Oresteia (1972), we can trace a line of development from an experimental production based on performative, but mostly semiotic, concepts rooted in the ‘linguistic turn’, through to reactions grounded in forms of Sprechtheater (theatre of words), towards the more recent efforts in the performative trend.

7 e.g. Paul Schlenther, director of the Oresteia in Vienna (1900) (translation U. v. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff). In a lecture he said that the chorus was essential for the ancient theatre, but not a necessary element of the plot. Hence: ‘An die Chorpartien also gilt es zunächst Hand anzulegen.’ And he did so: the trilogy was over in 123 minutes. See Flashar (1991), 119–20 (with citation).
Ronconi's often underrated but nevertheless epoch-making performance in 1972 is an expression of the new Regietheater. His elitist production experimented within the framework of semiotic theory, which was just then becoming known, and integrated in an eclectic way the diverse discussions making up contemporary intellectual discourse. Traces of structuralism and post-structuralism were mixed with numerous directorial ideas, which turned the Oresteia into a total experience of the fragmentation of the individual, into a phylogenetic journey from a nebulous primordial past to the present-day world of alienated human beings. For the first time, the finale of the Eumenides was read as negative and anti-affirmative.8

The transition between the Middle Ages and the beginning of the classical Modern Period entailed a radical break in mindset from the old to a modern Foucauldian 'discourse formation'. This analytical framework of epochal thresholds, including all its ideological implications, was brought to bear on the development of the plot. Ronconi's Agamemnon was equated with the period between prehistory and the Middle Ages; the Libation Bearers with the Renaissance and the bourgeois nineteenth century; and the Eumenides with the present modern era. This concept, based on homology, was translated to all semiotic levels of the production. The text, the design, and the concept of space were all to relate to each other by analogy. Unconventional stage machinery and scene creation helped convey this.

The stage was constructed on various planes so that the action could take place simultaneously on different levels.9 The anthropological development was also translated spatially and scenically. Agamemnon was characterized by an archaic-primordial mood. The chorus in their medieval peasant costumes found their individuality only slowly. Articulate speech developed out of a primitive stammering, but with great effort. The figures did not yet have firm ground under their feet. A swinging joint caused the lowest stage level to sway dangerously during the opening scenes. Thereafter, the play was animated by the up and down motion of the two hanging stage levels.

On the basis of this anthropological reading, Ronconi experimented, above all, with the translation of semiotic equivalents to the stage. The various sign systems that are involved in the creation of a theatrical performance were related to each other by homology. Ronconi attempted to elucidate the text, which formed the basis for the plot, through the targeted use of appropriate accompanying signs. He used them like differing voices that were orchestrated around the basic melody.

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8 See Quadri (1973), 192–262; Bierl (1996), 77–86.

9 An audience of about 350 to 400 sat around three sides of a large rectangular stage on three gallery-like floors set atop each other. The fourth side was closed off by a multipurpose wooden wall and served as the front of the palace with openings.
line of his score. Mario Untersteiner's ambiguous text, which comfortably imitated the fabric of the original, served such a fragmented, multilevel form of communication well.

Important metaphors in *Agamemnon* were made visual on the stage in another sign system by simultaneously blending them in, which lent the action a dream-like quality. This technique multiplied the signifiers which denoted a single signified. Or else it created the confusing configuration in which a signifier became the signifier of a common signified.

I will discuss the technique of multiplication of signs by presenting the example of the staging of the parodos in *Agamemnon*. The image of the two eagles that the chorus depicts on the occasion of the fleet's departure from Aulis (*Ag.* 104–59) is well known. A white and a black eagle appear and tear a female hare apart. Calchas interprets this as a sign that the two generals, Agamemnon and Menelaus, will be victorious if Agamemnon sacrifices his daughter Iphigenia. The kings and the eagles, on the one hand, and the hare and Iphigenia, on the other, are metonymically connected to one another. According to Ronconi, Calchas' mantic pronouncement is not amenable to a single unambiguous interpretation, and the signs become independent of the blurred content. The sacrifice of Iphigenia and the female hare can mean not only victory over Troy, but also ruin. Signifiers and signifieds are conflated in this prophetic pronouncement, and this 'double bind' contains the tragic dilemma.

In the production, Ronconi did not try to neutralize the dense concentration of similes, but rather grounded the chorus' recitation in accompanying visual images. Thus, the metaphor was elucidated on another level of signification. Two choral dancers emerged from the portal dressed in black suits in the style of the 1930s. They turned into circus magicians, and in front of the chorus they acted out the spoken images, using visual and gestural signs. One of them pulled a live rabbit out of his hat. The other one hacked at the animal with a wooden eagle that had been fastened to a pole. Dream-like flashbacks then made allusion to the sacrifice of Iphigenia. The central motif of sacrifice was transformed into paleochristian symbolism that alluded to the Eucharist.

The sacrificial ritual was divided into two separate *tableaux*—that is, it was split into two possible signifiers (out of an infinite number of possibilities) of the sacrifice; the sacrificial victim itself was divided into two 'transubstantiations' as described below.

Agamemnon appeared as a priest before his actual entrance marked by his first speech in the text. An altar was pulled up from below, and one of the two choral dancers lifted up a statue made of bread dough that symbolized Iphigenia. The statue was handed to Agamemnon who broke it apart, beginning with the head, and passed the pieces to the chorus members who approached him one by one. This association with transubstantiation in Catholic communion served to clarify his actions. Agamemnon slowly and hesitantly completed this sacred ritual fully understanding his dilemma. When the word 'daughter' was spoken, the sacrificial
victim was transformed into a new image. In the second 'transubstantiation', the choral dancers turned the altar around and it now contained a slaughtered sheep wrapped in a blood-smeared cloth, a symbol of the sacrificial lamb. After a pseudo-ritual, one of the choral dancers plunged his hand into the blood and then reached out with it to the other choral dancers. The chorus started to sing the famous hymn to Zeus; the ritual act now continued with the enunciation of words. Hunting and sacrificial metaphors, supposedly the original motifs of tragedy, were transformed into real images with the help of a 'language' the audience could understand. The information that was transmitted purely through spoken language was grounded and strengthened by homologous signs. The result was a 'theatre within a theatre', that sought to engage the mindset of the contemporary audience while transcending the time and place of the actual plot. In this scene, Ronconi's probing after lost ritual, based on the popularized theories of the 'Myth and Ritual School', became clearer. Interest in ritual was transformed into a rito all'italiana, a circus dream-world à la Pirandello and Fellini, which caused the message of the original text to 'zoom' in on the audience, and which at the same time added to the audience's sense of alienation.

Such props, which served to transmit the message by the use of homologous semiotic codes, turned up again and again during the entire spectacle. Lights were attached to struts within spheres that rolled onto the stage which underscored the message of the bonfires in Agamemnon. Accessories of modern daily life were placed next to primeval earthy objects. For example, a typewriter appeared often. It was always used when the past, in the form of a report, was blended into the main action. It thus served to underscore the notion of bridging different time periods. For example, the mention of Helen in the first stasimon in Agamemnon was elucidated by the device of a secretary at her typewriter. Cassandra's prophecy in particular was accompanied by a typing secretary.

The explanation for this probably lay in the two fundamental interests of postmodern literary criticism. On the one hand, it demonstrated the subordinate position of women in modern 'phallo- and logocentric' society; at the same time, it reflected the problems associated with written language. Both themes were explored in their multiple permutations. The subordinate woman served Apollo who in turn dictated prophecy to Cassandra. Cassandra was merely the organ carrying out the divine message which she received through enthousiasmos from Apollo. Cassandra's oral, living discourse based on similarity, was transmitted by a secretary's typing, so that in a sense, the typewriter became the tool of a tool, the typed language, a sort of tertiary reflection. This portrayal had similarities with ideas contained in Plato's cave analogy. The discourse consolidated itself, becoming indirect and de-substantialized.10 This image concentrated the key themes of

Ronconi’s reading of the trilogy: a story of the loss of both the truth of language as well as of female autonomy.\textsuperscript{11}

III

In contrast to this highly sophisticated concept, Peter Stein elaborated the naturalistic-psychological motivation of the chorus in his famous production of 1980 at the Schaubühne of Berlin.\textsuperscript{12} It toured some years later to Ostia and Athens, and Stein happened to stage a remake in the dramatic days of a communist counter-revolution against Boris Yeltsin in 1994 (cf. Walton and Trubotchkin, this volume).\textsuperscript{13} According to Stein, the chorus must not be alien and additional; on the contrary, it is a very natural and completely organic part of the theatrical event, growing out of the text which forms its plausible legitimation.\textsuperscript{14} The twelve elder men from Argos, like all other elements, props, and the setting, neither imitated any archeological truth nor were they overlapped by contemporary layers of signification, but seemed to be neutral and naturally timeless in a rather modern style. They were dressed in black suits with hats and sticks in their hand (Fig. 16.1). They could have just come out of a modern Greek \textit{kafénion}; appearing in their everyday garb, they got involved out of curiosity. They wanted to know what was going on.

As the collectivity, Stein’s chorus started a common process of thought: everybody murmured his own average ideas and worries about the public situation. Out of this separated babbling within the group, they found their way very gradually and only occasionally towards unison reflections. They all shared the same experience in a small face-to-face village society. They started standing up from their table hobbling around in quite natural movements, always sticking to their identity within the play. With their limited knowledge—the relation between the chorus and the audience was basically the same in the original Berlin production and in the remakes—they reflected on the situation and behaved like the average citizens among the spectators. The cultic simply grew out of the political dimension. The chorus as a unit was fragile and open, but grounded in the textual basis that was never fragmented nor called into question. Stein’s translation, which adopts a rather relaxed and fluent tone minimizing the stylizations of the original,\textsuperscript{15} held the group together and legitimized its presence. The emphasis on the word resulted in a great reduction of the other modes of body expression. The chorus neither sang nor danced; as old men they were almost

\textsuperscript{11} Another proof for the linguistic approach is the fact that the dramaturge of the project, Cesare Milanese, applied the linguistic opposition of \textit{langue} and \textit{parole} to the chorus. The chorus, according to him, is the \textit{langue} from where the utterance of the figures as \textit{parole} have their origin. See Milanese (1973), 125–9.

\textsuperscript{12} Schmidt and Schuh (1981); Flashar (1991), 260–5.

\textsuperscript{13} See Bierl (1996), 46–53.\textsuperscript{14} For the following see Baur (1999a), 233–4.

\textsuperscript{15} Stein (1997).
bodiless figures. The bodies were hidden behind long coats and their postures, movements, and gestures were adapted to the code of senility.

With such a troupe, any optical effects beyond their mere pragmatic presence were impossible. Therefore, the chorus acted mostly in the half dark emphasizing the black colour of the setting and the painful emotional atmosphere. Variation took place only in the domain of the word, with a sometimes highly artificially displaced way of rhythmical utterance reminiscent of fugues. This was one of the most successful choruses of the Agamemnon, because the naturalistic theatrical presence did not create any feeling of estrangement. The talkative manner and curiosity of their role identity legitimized the presentation of the mythical background. But it was performative only in the Aristotelian sense of a chorus participating in the action. Its ritual role of singing and dancing, which might point to the external frame of communication was left undeveloped. The special status of a chorus diachronically stemming from choral lyric and incorporated into tragic action was ignored. In contrast to the vivid chorus of Stein, there was the static and ceremonial style of Peter Hall and Karolos Koun. In a hieratic oratorium-like production, Hall (1981) let the chorus play with masks that nevertheless made an inauthentic and manneristic impression (cf. Taplin, Chapter 13). Similarly at Epidaurus, Koun (1982) created rituality with a lugubrious chorus employing allusions to the Greek-Orthodox context.

16 Parker (1986).
The German productions of the 1980s were more or less influenced by Stein. First of all, let us have a look over the wall into the scene of the former GDR, which until then did not have a great history of ancient theatre played in the original. As the régime judged the humanistic tradition bourgeois, working with ancient material had to function as productive adaptation. According to the so-called Erbe-discussion, antiquity had an impact on the socialist society only in the form of inheritance and reception of the culturally progressive elements.

In a project with the programmatic label ‘Antike-Entdeckungen’ (‘Discoveries of Antiquity’), Christoph Schroth put a cycle of four ancient plays on the stage of the Mecklenburg State Theatre at Schwerin (1982). The selection was part of a thinly veiled didactic programme. Under the influence of the NATO installation of Pershing missiles and other nuclear weapons, the official State doctrine proclaimed a wide initiative for peace. And the theatre as Volkstheater (theatre of the people) had to convey these ideas to the people, creating a sequence of plays dealing with the socio-political and economic origins and consequences of war.

Therefore, Schroth started his cycle with Iphigenia in Aulis (in Friedrich Schiller’s version), preceded at the première by a short reading by Christa Wolf from her Kassandra. In the intermission some had the chance to follow Volker Braun’s ‘Der Fight des Jahrhunderts. Aktion in 15 Runden für einen Schauspieler und Schlagzeug’ (‘The Fight of the Century. Action in 15 Rounds for an Actor and Battery’), a dramatic description of the famous boxing fight between Mohammed Ali and Joe Frazer in the style of a war-report. Then soup was served. Spectators who happened to have a ‘T’ on their spoon were supposed to watch Euripides’ Troades, which put the Trojan captive women on stage in a setting reminiscent of a concentration camp. The rest of the visitors with the ‘A’-spoon had the chance to see Aeschylus’ Agamemnon in the eerie backstage behind the so-called iron curtain. While one group was to witness the terrible destiny of the defeated, the other watched the no less cruel fate of the victor. Finally, the spectators reunited for the ‘satyr-play’ in the form of Aristophanes’ Acharnians, the political cabaret of a boorish citizen striving for a private peace.

Removed from the context of the trilogy, Schroth’s Agamemnon was tied up in the pedagogical corset of this anti-war concept. The stage consisted of a long lane, where the chorus stood mainly at the side or was seated on the wooden stage-bridge in the rear, from where they watched the dramatic events as internal spectators. The chorus was dressed in long yellow-beige cowls, grey hats and glasses, unconsciously suggestive, to some degree, of the grey everyday outfit of the

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17 See among others Kerndl (1983); Ullrich (1986), 118–28; Flashar (1991), 274–5. I thank the librarian of the Mecklenburg State Theatre, Mrs Hannah Kuhnert, for kindly sending me all archived information and pictures available.
GDR-gerontocracy. They symbolized the petty-bourgeois civil servants, who as a collective wanted to comment on everything and pretended to have insight. They were the timid mass entangled in the crimes of their leader, because they were unable to oppose his war policy. The lighting was also rather dark. Therefore, again we did not have a singing or dancing chorus, but a chorus based on the laconic diction of the translation of Gerhard Kelling (West Berlin) reminiscent in a way of Heiner Müller. The intonation was powerful, but it was a very reduced picture of the chorus which had its model in Bert Brecht. The style was impressive, eerie, creating eleos and phobos, but, like most aspects of the former GDR, rather outmoded, lagging behind the western standard. As an enterprise loyal to the aims of the régime, the tone of the raised index was not astonishing; therefore, there were no ironic fissures or similar modernizing gags.

Whereas the production was enthusiastically received in the East, it evoked a very different, mostly negative echo in West Germany on a later tour. In a period shaken by peace-movements and apocalypse-scenarios, Schroth's company was asked to perform at mass-spectacles, partly sponsored by the West German Communist Party (DKP), in the tradition of the labour movement in the Ruhrgebiet. Both young and older spectators remained somehow disappointed by this politically one-dimensional message. They missed the innovations and insights that had been promised to them. With this yelling intonation of a nevertheless well prepared chorus, Brecht sent his regards, including a quick lesson on the dialectics of war.

Very different in matters of style was Holk Freytag's 1985 archaic-chaotic staging of the *Oresteia* in the small, innovative Schlosstheater in Moers. On the one hand, he made use of Peter Stein's political conception of the trilogy as a celebration of the triumph of democracy. However, he also reached back to the tradition of Regietheater and included all sorts of modernist ideas. The director overcame the limitations of the proscenium stage and was able to involve the audience in all three plays. The affirmative message was at the same time ironically undermined. The play became a meditation on the democratic process, including its possible manipulation, as well as a political lesson and enlightened eclectic Aktionstheater (agit-prop) in matters democratic.\(^\text{18}\) With ingenious inventiveness the director staged the *Agamemnon* at a huge table, at which eighty spectators were seated and served with wine and bread. The existence of the chorus was legitimized by being symposiasts at this party expecting the king. In the vein of Vsevolod Meyerhold (in Gogol's *Government Inspector*, Moscow 1926), they comically undermined the serious atmosphere as white-painted clowns. As fools they stood up and chatted about politics, but in their limited vision, they also occasionally hit the truth in their opposition to Clytemnestra.

A last example of the Sprechtheater influenced by Stein is Hansgünther Heyme's production of the *Oresteia* in Essen (1988), which reached back to the politically

\(^{18}\) See among others J. Schmidt (1985); Hennecke (1985).
engaged theatre of the 1960s and 1970s. His minimalist version, based on Ernst Buschor's translation and including passages from the *Persians* and *Ecclesiasonae*, almost seemed like a sort of ancient agitprop at times, propagandizing for feminist and communistic social relations. In the classic but somehow anaemic *Bildungsstheater* (theatre of education), the old men were dressed in blue suits with ties. They appeared studious and felt uncertain in the face of authority. With their indeterminate modern costume, the chorus had the potential to reach out to the contemporary surroundings, while the script closely followed the original text. The chorus climbed up steep pedestals in a cool and blue-coloured stage-landscape of stairs. It functioned again mainly as an acoustic instrument. Variations did not happen in the body movements but in the vocal delivery, which was even more elaborate than in Stein's production. They spoke in unison, or in a displaced sequence, in a confused mumble or as single voices. Sometimes they even sang standing on the stairs like a modern choir. In his didactic impetus to give a lesson in the history of West Germany, its constitution, and in the *Oresteia* itself, Heyme even presented a selection of choral passages on the stairs inside the Duesseldorf State Parliament.

**V**

The tetralogy *Les Atrides* (1990–3) by Ariane Mnouchkine was a real break with the tradition of *Sprechstheater*, as far as the production of the chorus was concerned. Simultaneously with the 'performative turn' her choruses dance, especially the one in Euripides' *Iphigeneia in Aulis*. Trying to show that the real motivating force behind the action in *Agamemnon* is Iphigeneia's sacrifice at Aulis, Mnouchkine led off with the Euripidean play and skilfully meshed it into the *Oresteia*. Her controversial work sought to make theatre truly experiential again. She attempted to make the audience feel the foreignness of the ancient world by incorporating Asian theatre modes such as Noh, Kabuki, and Kathakali as well as exotic musical sounds. Dance and body movements were acted out rectangularly directly and frontally towards the spectator. This new performative quality made a great impression and conveyed some of the ritual dimension of the Greek chorus. The frontal position also alluded to the external communication in the here and now. The dance was the sensuous expression of the inner participation with the action. The textual units were uttered by the chorus-leader in between the dance-units, underlining the meaning transferred onto the sphere of body language. This approach is the opposite of Stein's text-based chorus. In Mnouchkine's concept the chorus gradually lost its power and vividness. Already in *Agamemnon* the

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20 See among others Goetsch (1994); Golder (1996), with a collection of other reviews at 200 n. 2; Taplin (1996); Bierl (1996), 54–77; Baur (1999a), 234–5; and, esp., de La Combe, Ch. 15.
chorus of old men (Fig. 15.1) was comically ‘feeble, indecisive, unable to affect the outcome of events’. Bearded, dressed in a fantastic eastern costume with a womanish long dress and a kind of turban, impressively painted and holding a stick in their hands, they marvellously conveyed this whirling around in more measured movements, whereas in the first play the chorus had almost flown across stage with enormous energy. But in Agamemnon the chorus produced wonderful tableaux, moving from schema to schema trying to give expression to the words. And in the performative acting of the bodies, there was always a surplus of a hidden, extra meaning which emerged in the audience’s minds as they watched the chorus’ performances.

In the extremely experimental production of the Oresteia by Romeo Castellucci (1995), which I treated in detail in my monograph, we encounter a different kind of performativity. Since the violence in the trilogy, according to Castellucci, is simply unbearable, it can only be shown through the lens of a fairy tale. In the mode of a phantasmagoric children’s theatre, a synaesthetic performance of utter cruelty was shown. There was almost nothing left of the original text; the bare bones of Aeschylus were covered by different metatextual layers. One decisive intertext among others was Lewis Carroll’s Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass together with Antonin Artaud’s radical counter-reading. In the first chapter of Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland, entitled Down the Rabbit-Hole, the half-asleep Alice sees a rabbit taking a watch out of his waistcoat pocket. With a sigh ‘Oh dear! Oh dear! I shall be too late!’ the rabbit disappears, and Alice full of curiosity runs after it, enters the hole and falls down into it. With this separation starts her liminal period of nightmare.

From the perspective of this rabbit, who played the role of the chorus-leader in Castellucci’s adaptation, the spectators became witnesses to an eerie Agamemnon which extended for more than half the playing-time. The choric group was represented by a line of little plaster rabbits, which were mechanically moved in and out. Thus were the choral movements simulated. The chorus-leader was played by an actor in a rabbit costume with long ears. As a commentator, he bridged between the worlds of fiction and reality. The few words he spoke were distorted by electronic effects. The violence and horror were represented by torture and scenes of psychiatric disorder. The chorus-leader attached two electric poles to his ears and started reciting Aeschylus in tortuous movements full of pain.

21 See Goetsch (1994), 80–1, citation from p. 81.
22 Whereas the chorus of Agamemnon was the most compatible with Stein’s textual concept, because of their passivity, Mnouchkine succeeded best with her chorus of Iphigenia which was the most active in the play.
All of a sudden in this theatre of cruelty, the chorus figurines couldn’t stand the violence any longer and they exploded. In this multimedia performance, the absence of dance and text was compensated for by an audio-visual show of tormented, empowered and overpowered bodies playing in a pseudo-ritual of potential transformation. The meaning and reference were strangely hidden and emerged only during the process of the performance.

VI

The last episode in my short survey concerns a recent production (1999), which will be hardly known outside Germany or among classicists. In the Bavarian province of Memmingen, Walter Weyers staged an *Oresteia* as rock opera, with compositions by David Defeis, leader of the heavy-metal band ‘Virgin Steele’. From its beginnings opera has always been a medium to put ancient tragic subjects on stage. Obviously music and ecstatic body movement were here more relevant than the text. The libretto is a modern adaptation of the *Oresteia*: Aeschylus’ text was drastically cut. Martina Krawulsky and Walter Weyers composed a new easy version in a rhythmic form. The text is based mostly on *Agamemnon* and *Libation Bearers*, with an emphasis on Clytemnestra and especially gender conflict and the suppression of matriarchy by patriarchy. Hence the title *Klytaimnestra oder Der Fluch der Atriden* (*Clytemnestra or The Curse of the House of Atreus*). From the *Eumenides* only Athena’s verdict is preserved; she announces that Orestes is free and the Erinyes should not worry about Clytemnestra who served as a sacrificial victim. But finally, in the half-dark, we see the shadow of Orestes set free. Somebody gives him a knife with which he commits suicide. All cry out and Athena steps in front of the spectators and says ‘Da capo. But how?’ alluding to the play’s concept as a mental work in progress.

In the prologue, we face a petty-bourgeois family, mother, father, and child quarrelling in front of the TV and introducing the different points of view. The chorus is reduced to three people participating in the action, with an additional fourth figure wearing a grinning mask, which has the function of giving comic and sarcastic comments (Fig. 16.2). The chorus recited in unison, but there were no choral songs. Song and dance are provided by the twenty-four lyric intervals in English, which connect the different scenes. In the production, these were performed by the entire cast, who all wore black leather outfits suitable to the

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24 See among others Weyers (1999): Jahnke (1999). I thank the Landestheater Schwaben, Memmingen, for kindly sending all relevant material.

25 All music and lyrics are composed by David Defeis. In September 1999 ‘Virgin Steele’ released two albums, entitled ‘The House of Atreus, Acts I & II’ with the music to the opera on ‘T&T records/Modern Music records’. This is an expanded version, now interpreted by the professional rock band. As an example I print the song ‘And Hecate Smiled’, the fifth lyric of the performance, at the end.
heavy-metal context. The lead singer, Clytemnestra, was played by the director’s wife Joséphine Weyers, who is also a singer in a similar band in real life. The music was accompanied by complex choreographic patterns of moving visual images consisting of complicated steps and gestures.

But what is behind this synthesis of Greek tragedy and heavy metal? The composer describes his music as barbaric, romantic, and bombastic; he intends it to convey a feeling of strength, an inner connection with chthonic and Dionysian energy. Most of all, the shrieking voice coupled with the distorted sound of the electric guitar form the basis of heavy metal music. In simple and clear forms, the music finds a way of expressing the violence, chaos, and pain in our society. Therefore, it can be applied as an equivalent in order to convey the terror and pathetic horror dominating the Oresteia to the younger generation. This attitude of reaching out to the masses and youth as the intended audience may shock the literary scholar as well as the educated theatre visitor. But it is as legitimate as the intellectual efforts to close the gap of 2,500 years. This opera is a different form of performance. In the process of experiencing this synaesthetic show lies a transformative potential comparable to rituals. A hidden meaning

might emerge, even though, as in many modern adaptations, Aeschylus' message is somehow distorted.\textsuperscript{27}

In this whirlwind tour of modern productions of \textit{Agamemnon}, I have tried to show to what degree the presentation of the chorus and the intellectual trends of specific epochs are mutually dependent. In other words, I argue that theatre engages with and transforms modern cultural discourses in ways pertinent to its generic parameters. The pivotal role of the chorus in ancient tragedy makes its modern staging a particularly good example to show this. I have tried to sketch a development, which applies not only to this paradigmatic play but also to the rest of the trilogy and all the other tragedies; in the days of political engagement and semiotics of the 1970s and 1980s, the choral realizations were focused on forms of \textit{Sprechtheater}. Simultaneously with the 'performative turn', there are serious efforts towards an adequate understanding of the performative, ritual, and synaesthetic dimension of the chorus. In this new perspective we wonder again: \textit{How can we know the dancer from the dance?} And parallel to this creative and performative handling of the chorus in productions of ancient tragedies, we can speak of its renaissance in general on the German as well as the European stage in the 1990s. In the German theatre, I am thinking of such authors as Einar Schleef, Frank Castorf, Botho Strauß, or Christoph Marthaler.\textsuperscript{28} Last, but by no means least, it has become obvious that ancient tragedy and, especially, the exemplary \textit{Agamemnon} (and the \textit{Oresteia}) have been at the forefront of theatrical experimentation and development across Europe as a whole in the past few decades, because of both their 'close otherness' as well as their privileged position in western theatre.\textsuperscript{29}

\section*{APPENDIX}

\textbf{The Song 'And Hecate Smiled' (lyric used in Walter Weyers' production)}

Bride of lawless lies sent ten thousand men to die
Prophecies un-met still cry
Cold, we understand Blood and Fear still walk the Land
Looking for the Scars we hide from Ourselves . . .

I see the Fire spreading, I see the Towers Burn
I hear the Voices calling, I see the Kings return

\textsuperscript{27} Walter Weyers, in Weyers (1999) speaks about a double-edged relation between rock music and Greek tragedy: on the one hand it would convey the energy of being, but on the other hand it would negate the affirmation of values and norms in myth, as rock sets the listeners free of all boundaries. Weyers does not seem to consider that myth implies similar tendencies. Moreover, tragic myth tends to put in question all norms of society by perverting these.

\textsuperscript{28} Baur (1999a), (1999b).

\textsuperscript{29} See Bierl (1996). For an overview of the impact of Greek tragedy in the theatre since the 1960s, see Hall, Macintosh and Wrigley (2004). For an overview of the most recent productions of \textit{Agamemnon}, see the afterword in Bierl (2004), 157–83, esp. 162–83.
Did they die for God and Glory, Drowned in Mist, Cast from the Light
Trapped inside the Line of Fire, Vale of Tears, Passage of Shame
On this Day of Doom!

Ride across the Sky on a Fountain of Desire
Moaning at the Gates of Dawn
Cold persistent Tear, crushing Hope and breeding Fear
Looking for the Scars we hide from Ourselves

I see the Fire Spreading, I see the Hours Burn
I hear the Choices falling into the Mouth of Ruin
Did they die for God and Glory, Blazing Fists Cast from the Light
Trapped inside the Line of Fire, Vale of Tears, Mounds of the Slain
On this Day of DOOM!

Text cited after Weyers (1999). On the CD, Act I, no. 10, the choral song is without the antistrophe.
The Millennium Project:

Agamemnon in the United States

Helene P. Foley

Although US performances and adaptations of Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon* and the *Oresteia* only began in the twentieth century, giving a comprehensive picture of the play(s)’ reception on both college and university and professional levels has proved exceptionally difficult, both because of the problems of collecting accurate information at all periods, and because it is impossible to do justice to the immense volume of material available in a short chapter. I have chosen to focus on scripts and performances about which I have substantial documentation and which represent clear historical and cultural trends in interpretation/reception rather than on those productions that are more innovative on the technical, performance-value side. In particular, I shall argue that performances and new versions of *Agamemnon* and the *Oresteia* have responded most frequently to issues involving gender conflict/issues of identity and politics, issues which are also central to Aeschylus’ original. I have largely eliminated discussion of important questions of style, translation, and abridgement of the original(s). In my brief discussion of opera versions of the original(s), I emphasize the librettos over the music. I rarely offer my own opinions of texts and performances, although my choice of texts and details to emphasize represents personal judgement. In this chapter, I play the role of historian, not reviewer; ideally, I aim to put readers in a good position to form their own opinions. There are many questions that I cannot yet answer any more than speculatively, especially questions relating to patterns of performance at certain periods, regional differences, or the preference for performing or adapting *Agamemnon* alone rather than choosing to do a (usually abbreviated) version of the *Oresteia*. I also regret that considerations of space have made it

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1 I would like to thank Lynn Kozak for her help in gathering materials for this paper and all of the scholars and artists around the country who have helped me document the performances discussed in this paper.

2 To my knowledge, only the 1976 production of the *Oresteia*, translated and directed by Ioannis Chioles at Stanford University, and the Berkeley Repertory’s 2001* Oresteia, directed by Tony Taccone and Stephen Wadsworth, were performed virtually uncut.
impossible to do full justice to even one of the many exciting performances that I shall discuss.

**MAJOR TRENDS**

Before turning to performances and new versions that responded specifically first to gender and then to political issues, I would like to locate my discussion of specific plays in the broader historical context. The earliest US performances of *Agamemnon* took place in colleges and universities across the country. The first performance, presented twice in 1906 (in addition to a dress rehearsal) in Greek to an audience of around 5,000 at Harvard University, used the university stadium to reconstruct the classical archaeologist Wilhelm Dörpfeld’s theories about the Attic stage. The cast used an orchestra 60 feet in diameter as its main playing space, despite the erection of a 130 ft. (length) x 26 ft. (width) skène building. From the stadium bleachers the audience viewed a performance that included elaborate costumes copied from the Alexandrian sarcophagus and a chorus that sang in harmony (though it did not dance). Domis Plugge’s 1938 dissertation, which documents the history of Greek play production in American colleges and universities from 1881 to 1936, notes a rapidly increasing interest in the revival of Greek drama across the entire country. Yet of the 349 performances that he identified, *Agamemnon* itself was performed only seven times during this period, compared with seventy-five for *Antigone*, fifty for *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, and forty-five for *Alcestis*. The programme for the performance of the *Oresteia* at Chicago’s Wright Junior College in 1952, directed by Robert A. Johnston, claims to be the first performance of the whole trilogy ever done in translation. It had a chorus of twelve with an additional group of twelve jurors and twelve citizens at the end. *Agamemnon* was read by the entire college in the Wright Humanities programme. The first university performance of the whole *Oresteia* directed in Greek by the inspiring Prof. Mabel Whiteside took place in 1954 at Randolph-Macon Woman’s College as a culmination to the longest largely unbroken tradition of performances in the original in the US (thirty-nine annual performances from 1909 to 1954). Although I have been unable to achieve Plugge’s level of documentation for college and university performances at later periods, it

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3 See Hains (1910), 27 and (1914), 192–4; Plugge (1938), 73, 83. Although there was no actual production before the 20th cent., there was a reading of *Agamemnon* at Drury College in 1895. As in many places in Europe, early college performances often reflected recent literature on historical reconstructions of Greek theatre. See Macintosh (1997), 292.

4 Actually there were eight by my count in addition to two *Libation Bearers* and four *Eumenides* mentioned by Plugge. See the Appendix (Ch. 19) for the 1929 performance of *Agamemnon* at University of North Carolina not included by Plugge.

5 A film was made of this ambitious performance with its elaborate music and choreography that is now available on video. I thank Amy Cohen of Randolph-Macon for providing me with extensive materials on this production. Wellesley College, which also has a long tradition of performing
appears that with the partial exception of the 1950s, *Agamemnon* in the United States were performed fairly sporadically at the university level until the 1990s.

What seems to have been the first commercial production of *Agamemnon* was directed by Wayne Richardson at the off-Broadway Theatre Marquee, New York, in 1957. A number of critics lauded the attempt for its 'nobility of feeling' but on the whole agreed that Richmond Lattimore's translation was incomprehensible to an audience unfamiliar with Greek drama, that the acting was marred by eye-rolling and overly dramatic gestures, and that the direction was heavy-handed.

The next commercial production of *Agamemnon* did not occur until 1966, when the *Oresteia* was performed at the ill-fated Ypsilanti Greek theatre in Ypsilanti, Michigan; the following year Tyrone Guthrie directed in Minneapolis a version of the *Oresteia*, entitled *The House of Atreus*, that was cut and adapted by John Lewin. The impressive Ypsilanti production starred Judith Anderson as Clytemnestra and was directed by Alexis Solomos, former head of the Greek National Theatre, with choreography by Helen McGhee, a Martha Graham disciple, and music by Yannis Xenakis. The performance, paired with an Aristophanes' *Birds* starring Bert Lahr, was meant to help raise money for the building of a permanent Greek theatre in Ypsilanti, located between Detroit (a city with an important Greek population) and the university town of Ann Arbor, and designed to resemble the theatre of Dionysus in Athens. The roofed complex was to house annual productions of Greek drama, as well as a range of other performances. The funding fell through, partly because of internal squabbles, exorbitant expenses, and low ticket sales, and partly because the first two productions were presented in an outdoor venue (the Briggs Baseball stadium at Eastern Michigan University) that was not adequately protected from the weather, and some productions had to be cancelled. Guthrie's production anticipated in many respects Peter Hall's classical plays, did *Agamemnon* in Greek in 1943 and 1975. The Utah Classical Greek Theatre Festival (1971—the present), which uses professional directors and student casts and sends its productions on tours to other campuses, has a lengthy tradition of performing Greek plays in English. The Festival did performances of *Agamemnon* in 1976 and 1985. The other institution that frequently does Greek and Latin plays in the original, Barnard College, Columbia University, has not done any part of the *Oresteia* as yet.

6 The production grew out of a reading at New York School University in 1954.
7 Whitney Bolton, *Morning Telegraph*, 28 March 1957; Frances Herridge, *New York Post*, 22 May 1957; *Christian Science Monitor*, 16 April 1957; *Variety*, 4 April 1957. The *Monitor* review used the phrase 'nobility of feeling'. Several reviews pronounced this production to be the first commercial *Agamemnon* in New York.
8 Lewin (1966).
9 Excerpts of Xenakis' music are available on CD, MFA Naïve Montaigne 782151.
well-known 1981 London performance at the National Theatre in its use of an all male cast, masks, and striking visual effects (especially the contrast between the dark setting and strategically deployed brilliant red robes). It became the first of many US Oresteias to cut and moderately adapt the original in an effort to present the whole Oresteia in a more do-able time frame. The performance received mixed reviews, \(^\text{11}\) and was probably more influential for its production values than as an innovative interpretation of the trilogy. The use of enormous golden puppets for the gods and a radical shift in tone verging on comedy in Eumenides offered one solution to the difficulty of the trilogy’s ending that was imitated in different ways thereafter. \(^\text{12}\)

Commercial and regional performances of Agamemnon or the Oresteia appear to have been relatively scarce until the 1980s. Andrei Serban’s important 1977 production of Agamemnon in New York, which was especially notable for its original and exciting choral movement and music, \(^\text{13}\) was followed in the 1980s and 1990s by an increasing number of versions of the original across the country, as well as performances of John Barton and Kenneth Cavander’s The Greeks (published in 1981), which includes adapted scenes from Aeschylus. Of these, the 1985 Agamemnon adapted by John Lewin and directed by Erik Vos at the Missouri Repertory Theatre in Kansas City was especially distinguished by its outstanding acting, choral performance, and innovative stagecraft. \(^\text{14}\) Its immodesty, passionate, and visionary Clytemnestra (Juliet Randall), who became almost sick with rage and pain after her crime, was matched by an Agamemnon (Robert Karlin) turned almost monstrous by war, and a power hungry, rather dignified Aegisthus (William Metto). The stage was steeply raked with three tiers, the first draped with sheets of canvas suggesting a literal ship of state. All three layers were


\(^{12}\) See Chioles (1993), 14–16.


\(^{14}\) A videotape of the production is available at the Library for Performing Arts at Lincoln Center.
Agamemnon in the United States

constantly used by an active chorus wearing costumes suggestive of sailors. Agamemnon ascended an extraordinarily steep ramp over which a huge red net fell and remained to trip Cassandra (Olivia Harper) on her ascent. Nevertheless, it is safe to say, as with university productions, that both Agamemnon and the trilogy have never been more popular in the US than they are at the moment; the current popularity of cut versions of the full trilogy is especially notable. I will return later to some of these productions and the question of the plays’ recent popularity.

These commercial productions or abbreviated adaptations of Aeschylus’ plays alone would offer us a distorted impression of the history of Agamemnon/the Oresteias’s reception in the US, however, and this brings me to my first important point. Adaptations and radical remakings of Aeschylus’ original(s) have from the beginning until a rash of millennial performances in 2000–1 played a dominant, and perhaps the formative, role in the play(s)’ reception history. Of these Eugene O’Neill’s Mourning Becomes Electra and Martha Graham’s dance-theatre piece Clytemnestra played a major role in establishing a central focus on politics and gender conflict/issues of identity in future productions.

O’Neill’s trilogy was first performed in 1931 at the Guild Theatre in New York before any commercial version of Agamemnon or the trilogy. It was preceded by the publication but not the performance of Robinson Jeffers’s powerful poetic drama The Tower Beyond Tragedy in 1925. Jeffers’ drama moves quickly past the tapestry scene and the death of Agamemnon to stage a confrontation between Clytemnestra, Cassandra, and the people as the queen awaits the arrival of Aegisthus to protect her. Cassandra first confronts Clytemnestra in her own person; then Agamemnon possesses her body and speaks through her. As the crowd turns against the queen, Clytemnestra offers her naked body to any who will take her. The men hold back, and Aegisthus finally arrives. Cassandra remains resistant. In Act II, Cassandra, a beggar at the palace gate, encounters Electra in disguise. After a dialogue among Cassandra, Clytemnestra, and Electra, Orestes appears. Electra and Cassandra push him into matricide; he then goes mad, kills Cassandra thinking that she is another Clytemnestra, and ultimately leaves for exile and death—a move ‘beyond tragedy’ and humanity to a communion with a godless and unknowable nature. Electra, after offering to commit incest with Orestes and threatening suicide to keep him at home, re-enters the palace. I have not been able to determine how early the play was generally known, but it anticipates O’Neill both in drawing on Freudian theory and in exploiting the possibility of incest between the siblings.

O’Neill’s trilogy, brilliantly directed by Philip Moeller with a stellar cast, met with instant acclaim for every aspect of the production. Mourning becomes Electra was clearly instrumental in O’Neill’s winning the Nobel prize in 1936; it shortly

16 Dickinson (1969), 117; Dickinson thinks it likely that O’Neill was familiar with Jeffers (p. 157).
became a standard part of the school curriculum across the country and was regularly performed, although its popularity began to decline after World War II.\textsuperscript{17} It grew out of a new American interest in serious drama, both American and European, in the teens and twenties that spread throughout the country from New York City with the help of the amateur Little Theater movement.\textsuperscript{18} Indeed, the fact that major theatre productions in, for example, New York fell by a third in the wake of the depression and the war years and that the number of theatre productions throughout the entire country has increased in the last twenty years probably has as much to do with the number of commercial performances or adaptations of Greek drama during these periods as other cultural factors.\textsuperscript{19}

O'Neill's reworking of Aeschylus' \textit{Oresteia} as a family drama in New England established several lines of interpretation that reappear in many later US versions, as well as in performances of the original plays.\textsuperscript{20} First, he deliberately set the story in a post-Civil War context, which gave the trilogy's meditations on war and domestic violence a specific, new historical dimension that at the same time deliberately retained the distance characteristic of Greek tragedy. Second, although O'Neill himself at times disclaimed the importance of psychoanalysis to the formation of his dramas,\textsuperscript{21} the influence of Freud, Jung, and his own experience with psychoanalysis conveniently dove-tailed with the interpretation and working out of his own family drama and Catholic upbringing that heavily conditioned all his plays. Orin and Lavinia's (Orestes and Electra) patently Oedipal relations with their opposite-sex parents are repeated in the third play of the trilogy in their own nearly incestuous relation and repetition of same-sex parental roles.

O'Neill turned to Greek tragedy as a way of re-creating a viable sense of inevitability in serious modern drama, and in particular, of exploring the family with its conscious and unconscious tensions as a form of fate. 'Is it possible to get a modern psychological approximation of the Greek sense of fate... which an intelligent audience of today, possessed of no belief in gods or supernatural retribution, could accept and be moved by?'\textsuperscript{22} O'Neill refers to the subconscious

\textsuperscript{17} Manheim (1998), 1–2. Two university productions performed Aeschylus with all or part of O'Neill in the late 1950s: \textit{Agamemnon} was performed with O'Neill's \textit{The Homecoming} (part I) at University of Delaware in 1956 and with O'Neill's \textit{Mourning Becomes Electra} at University of Delaware in 1957; the \textit{Oresteia} was performed with O'Neill's \textit{Mourning Becomes Electra} at Alfred State Technical Institute, Alfred, NY in 1958.

\textsuperscript{18} See Watermeier (1998).

\textsuperscript{19} See Watermeier (1998), 49; Wainscott (1988), 255–68; Bird (1999), 5–34. The strong interest of the Kennedy administration in the arts and the founding of the National Endowment for the Arts in 1965 played an important role in this transition.

\textsuperscript{20} The plays also borrowed from Sophocles' and Euripides' versions.


\textsuperscript{22} Frenz (1965), 3. For O'Neill, Greek tragedy also offered the only powerful dramatic paradigm combining art and religion.
as the 'mother of all gods and heroes'. The fall of the house of Mannon in O'Neill's trilogy is as much a product of the sins of the fathers as it is of the Civil War and its devastating repercussions on the family. The inescapable effects of New England puritanism and of aristocratic (that is, powerful and respectable) heritage, contrasted throughout the trilogy with the carefree pagan life of the Blessed Isles in the South Pacific, are visibly embodied in the grey-columned neo-Greek facade of the house, the frigid family portraits, the mask-like faces of the protagonists, and the characters' often mechanical movements. 'Death becomes the Mannons,' as Orin remarks to his father's corpse (345), and mourning becomes Electra, as Lavinia, the only survivor, finally shuts herself in the family mansion to expiate the family crimes at the close of the trilogy. Heavily influenced by Nietzsche, O'Neill argued that 'a man wills his own defeat when he pursues the unattainable. But his struggle is his success.' In an implicit critique of American materialism he remarked that tragedy 'is the meaning of life—and the hope. The noblest is eternally the most tragic. The people who succeed and do not push on to greater failure are the spiritual middle classes.' O'Neill's drama of this period spurred the pursuit of a peculiarly American form of tragedy that emerged most pointedly in Arthur Miller's influential Death of a Salesman, which also deliberately responds to the tragic tradition in the West, especially Sophocles.

O'Neill's emphasis on inescapable repetition in history and on family psychology and his novel transposition of Greek tragedy into a theatrical style congenial to modern realism re-emerges, although with more resistance to standard Freudian interpretations, in Jack Richardson's 1960 The Prodigal and David Rabe's 1973 The Orphan, both important early remakings of the Orestes myth that pointedly built on Aeschylus' version. Both plays emphasize Orestes' 1960s/70s-style rebellion against his parents, especially his father, and give a far less significant role to the Electra figure who dominates O'Neill's version. By contrast, Kelly Stuart's feminist version of the Oresteia, Furious Blood (2000), restores Electra to a comparably prominent position in the family psychological drama. Both Rabe's and Stuart's versions will be discussed shortly.

The Orestes of Richardson's well-received The Prodigal echoes the hero of Sartre's Les Mouches (1943) in struggling but finally failing to reject his traditional heroic role as avenger of his father. Initially cynical about his father's legendary

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23 Floyd (1981), 52.
24 The past family sins range from colonial witch burning to the expulsion from the family of Ezra Mannon's brother, who married beneath his station and produced Captain Brant, the plays' Aegisthus figure with whom both mother and daughter are in love. Ezra is the trilogy's Agamemnon figure.
27 See Martin and Centola (1996), 146—50, 373, 420, 426, 495, 547. Although Miller notes that he regularly goes back to Sophocles (495), he does not comment directly on a number of close parallels between Death of a Salesman and Sophocles' Ajax.
28 Dickinson (1969), 147 and 149 stresses O'Neill's originality here.
29 Rabe's play is far more post-modern in many parts. See below.
reputation, Richardson’s beatnik Orestes attempts to turn his back on the more complex figure whom he meets on Agamemnon’s return. He tries to reject the world’s demand that ‘we inherit the pretensions of our fathers, that we go on killing in the name of ancient illusions about ourselves, that we assume the right to punish, order and invert philosophies and to make our worst moments seem inspired’ (109). After Aegisthus’ politically motivated murder of his father (the play’s feminine Clytemnestra resists the crime), Orestes aims for a peaceful, private life in exile, and plans to marry a fisherman’s daughter, Praxithia, in Athens. But the combination of his friend Pylades’ rejection of his unheroic choice, the past meetings with Agamemnon, and the urging of a surviving, here middle-aged, Cassandra, who reports the popular will, finally propel him back to his familiar public destiny in Argos. He recognizes that ‘I was not great enough to create something better’ (113).

The second remaking of Aeschylus that significantly influenced or prefigured many US interpretations of the Oresteia was Martha Graham’s dance-theatre piece, Clytemnestra, first performed in 1958 at the Adelphi Theatre in New York. As with O’Neill, the scale (90 minutes) and ambition of the piece, reflecting that of the original trilogy, was unprecedented, the cast was stellar, and the immediate critical reception was equally glowing. ‘According to one critic, it stands in the history of drama where Joyce’s Ulysses stands in the history of the novel: it is as bold an experiment, as radical a departure.’ The performance was revived regularly in the 1960s and 1970s both inside and outside New York, but perhaps more importantly it was shown on public television in the popular ‘Dance in America’ series in 1974. Graham shared with O’Neill an interest in projecting the human psyche on stage. Her Clytemnestra invites the audience to experience the Oresteia through the mind of the heroine; finding herself dishonored in Hades at the opening of the piece, she seeks to come to terms with herself and her past. Clytemnestra’s memory of the past is relived in two forms. Part 1 above all juxtaposes in cinematic fashion a series of critical events chosen for their psychological importance, not for their place in a sequential narrative: Helen and the rape, Agamemnon’s sacrifice of Iphigenia, the anger of Electra, and Clytemnestra’s death at Orestes’ hands. This last memory brings Clytemnestra to a rapid confrontation with Helen, Paris, Electra, Aegisthus, Iphigenia, Agamemnon, and finally Cassandra’s seductive entrance, which refocuses her thoughts on revenge. Part 1 concludes with Clytemnestra’s imagined justification of her revenge. Apollo and Athena are present, but do not preside.

31 The performance included original eastern Mediterranean-style music composed specifically for Clytemnestra by Halim El-Dabh, sets by Isamu Noguchi, and costumes by Graham herself.
32 Leatherman (1966), 43.
Parts 2 and 3 take the audience in a partly chronological fashion through the events of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* and *Libation Bearers*, but scenes and meditations from the choral odes also become part of a fragmented 'narrative' that remains a projection of Clytemnestra's gradually evolving confrontation with her past. Part 4, an epilogue, returns us to Hades and the theme of Clytemnestra's dishonour. Clytemnestra views Orestes' trial before Apollo, Athena, and the Furies. She embraces and forgives Orestes, acquiesces in his ascension to the throne of Mycenae, and goes off holding the black leaves that have been the symbol of Hades' power. In this version Clytemnestra herself symbolically transforms the Furies into beneficent powers. A chorus of two (a man and a woman in evening clothes) periodically sings or speaks from the side a limited number of explanations or introductions, often drawing on translations of the trilogy by Lattimore and Lowell. The repeated phrase governing the entire piece, 'Why do I go dishonored among the dead?', is drawn from the speech of Clytemnestra's ghost at the opening of *Eumenides*.

Graham's Clytemnestra remains in many respects the complex, powerful, horrific heroine of Aeschylus. The dance deliberately doubles the heroine with her sister Helen; the seduction and adultery of the two sisters is explored and juxtaposed. The sisters are said to be from one egg: Helen killed, Clytemnestra took revenge. We see enacted at length the sexual pleasure of Clytemnestra's younger self in her relation to the nevertheless visibly despicable Aegisthus. At the same time, the sacrifice of Iphigenia, who is virtually crucified on the two crossed spears of Agamemnon in Clytemnestra's agonized presence, is played twice before Clytemnestra's murder of Agamemnon and is recalled four times during the whole piece. In memory, Clytemnestra also hopelessly reaches out to Electra, called the 'image of my very soul'; at one critical moment they stretch out towards each other in a futile effort to join hands. Her relation to and reconciliation with Orestes is complex and pointedly Oedipal.

The tapestry scene evolves as a lengthy struggle that is coloured by Agamemnon's aggressive introduction of Cassandra at the beginning of the scene, and his almost brutal and highly sexualized attempt to dominate his wife. Here the king significantly walks *from* his momentarily reclaimed throne, across the tapestry, and into the female-dominated red tent that the tapestry becomes. Because in this scene Clytemnestra both briefly wears the tapestry as a robe and is thrown on it by Agamemnon, this strip of red cloth attached to two poles becomes a symbolic extension of her body. By contrast, Agamemnon's body becomes virtually identified with the spears that he brandishes, on which he is carried (a substitute for Aeschylus' chariot), and on which he binds Iphigeneia. Graham's angry Mycenaean queen killed, but she also suffered; she does not deserve her dishonor among the dead and finally moves past it in a single gesture of love.

33 Graham (1973), 258. 34 See Lea therman (1966), 77 on the use of spears in the dance. 35 Clytemnestra's first costume deliberately evokes the dress of Mycenaean goddesses and priestesses.
Graham's self-consciousness about her aesthetic choices remain readily available for others to consult in her published notebooks and in her biography by Agnes deMille. Her own thinking was especially influenced by George Thomson's commentary on the *Oresteia*, above all his remark that the words of the *Agamemnon* parodos 'are designed as an unconscious comment on what is passing in her [Clytemnestra’s] mind', and his stress on gender issues and ritual/the Eleusinian mysteries. Graham's choice in *Clytemnestra* to reinterpret Greek myth through female experience and to ritualize it recurs in her other pieces based on Greek myth or drama, such as *Cave of the Heart* (Medea), *Night Journey* (Jocasta), and *Errand into the Maze* (Ariadne).

GENDER ISSUES

Many later US performances followed Graham in attempting to refocus the trilogy to a greater or lesser degree on Clytemnestra's and/or Iphigenia's experience or even more pointedly on gender conflict, whether by using Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis* as a prologue to the trilogy, by performing *Agamemnon* in combination with tragedies by Sophocles or Euripides, or by a deliberate rewriting of the original plays. Although Graham may have been motivated as much by her interest in creating starring roles for herself as by the feminist drama that she undoubtedly encountered during her formative years in New York, these later versions clearly reflect a growing self-consciousness about contemporary gender politics. In this section of the chapter I shall single out one performance that recombines the Greek originals, several feminist remakings of the plays, operatic versions that stress or in one case subtly redefine gender issues, and cross-dressed or partially cross-dressed performances for more detailed discussion.

Both the Guthrie Theater's 1992 *The Clytemnestra Project* and Richard Davis' adaptation *Clytemnestra*, performed at the University of San Francisco in 1994, imitated the French director Ariane's Mnouchkine's decision to use Euripides'...
Iphigenia at Aulis to introduce Agamemnon in her 1990 Les Atrides at the Cartoucherie de Vincennes, Paris. Other performances borrowed from John Barton and Kenneth Cavander’s The Greeks in order to avoid Aeschylus’ ending in Eumenides, which is now generally perceived as problematic. A recent production at Augustana College in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, also entitled The Clytemnestra Project, for example, included parts of IA, Agamemnon, Electra, and IT. In fall 2001 The Arena Stage Company in Washington, DC performed a new adaptation by Kenneth Cavander entitled Agamemnon and his Daughters based on these same four plays.

Whereas Davis’ Clytemnestra linked his two plays by importing into Agamemnon a second chorus of women from IA, the Guthrie ‘Clytemnestra Project’ performed cut versions of Iphigenia at Aulis, Agamemnon, and Sophocles’ Electra both separately and as a group. Although the plays aimed, in the words of the director, Garland Wright, to trace ‘the overall decay of a culture through the eyes of the family,’ they became above all a vehicle to explore the figure of Clytemnestra, played by Afro-American actress Isabell Monk, and to make gender issues central (Fig. 17.1). The chorus was exposed to the gender-specific gestures of Indian and Burmese dance in order ‘to develop their own dance vocabulary’. As the dramaturg, Jim Lewis, put it in his published production notebooks: ‘The men are essentially secondary to the drama of the three plays. They come across as largely vain and out of touch with the general havoc they are causing to the community.’ By contrast, Clytemnestra moved from naive, proud maternity to a primitive and highly sexualized peak of vengeful ecstasy and finally to a hollow, tormented shell of her earlier self. This trilogy aimed to put the action and responsibility of culturally marginalized women at the centre of the play, albeit women who ‘are ridiculed for being strong and who have learned to think like men’. In contrast to Mnouchkine’s Les Atrides, the Guthrie production maintained its focus on female action by interpreting Iphigenia’s sacrifice as an act of genuine heroism. To this end the infamous line ‘If only one man can see the sunlight | what are the lives of a thousand women in the balance’ was cut.

Electra in Agamemnon and his Daughters borrowed from Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. For more details, see my review in Theater Journal 54.1 (March 2002), 143–45. The Greek Project, directed by Tim Ocel at Theater Emory, Atlanta, in 1993, did Agamemnon in combination with Electra, but this production does not seem to have stressed gender issues.

Figure 17.1. Cassandra in The Clytemnestra Project (1992).
through the rich, red garments and extravagant jewellery that she and her entourage wore in deliberate contrast to the drab costumes and suffering half-masks of the poverty-stricken mixed chorus of older citizens.

Douglas Stein's set put a black circle framed by a series of illuminated stones at centre stage, surrounded by a huge draped cyclorama curving across the back of a thrust stage constructed to slope upwards in the rear. In the second two plays a bloody stone altar was added in the centre, creating an austere, ritualized space that continually revived the sacrifice of Iphigeneia in the mind of the audience. The bodies of Agamemnon and Cassandra were dragged out in a net and draped on the altar. Clytemnestra's red tapestries were laid on the entire circle and then remained on the stage, so that other characters became implicated in their symbolism as the action unfolded. The mother–daughter relation was also central throughout the trilogy. *Agamemnon* brought Electra and Chrysothemis on stage as silent witnesses to most of the play's significant actions, thus preparing for the *Electra* to follow. The three plays, when performed at one sitting, closed by implicating the audience in a call for female justice. Aeschylus' speech for the ghost of Clytemnestra in *Eumenides* was deployed to address both Furies and female audience members. The ghostly voice began with a call to 'Awake. Women awake. What use are you asleep?' and closed with 'Arise you Furies, you women—and kill my shame—| kill my shame.'

Kelly Stuart's *Furious Blood*, as directed by Kirsten Brandt at San Diego's Sledgehammer Theatre in 2000, offered a provocatively colloquial and feminist remaking of *IA* followed by the *Oresteia* that frequently verged on comedy and even deliberate crudity. Her version of *IA* left the initially naive and subservient Clytemnestra facing an unlikely story about Iphigenia's rescue in the mouth of Kolchis (Calchas) and Agamemnon's blithe farewell, as he urged his wife to go home and be happy. Part II, 'Agamemnon—Come Home, All is Forgiven', opened with a troubador's song about the heroic Iphigenia, followed by a brief dialogue in which Clytemnestra complained to Aegisthus about communal attitudes and asked for his support. The watchman's speech was replaced by a song shared by the watchman and Electra that pointedly hinted at dark doings in the palace. Clytemnestra intervened, but the domestic confrontation between mother and father-mad daughter was interrupted by the appearance of the beacon. The production doubled Clytemnestra—although her younger self largely disappeared after the first play—and doubled her voice as well, projecting a more complex consciousness for the central character than for other characters. Three Furies were present from the beginning and often served to express Clytemnestra's growing suspicion and anger or another level of a deceptive

49 Lewis (1996), 29, 36.
50 This crudity went beyond language; for example, at one point Electra put the bloody penis of Aegisthus in her mouth and the Furies threw bloody tampons at Apollo. I would like to thank Kelly Stuart for a copy of her script and Kirsten Brandt for an interview and a chance to see a video of the performance.
situation. Their first song, which began ‘Somebody thinks he can get away with murder | but he’s wrong | Somebody thinks that Greece ain’t gonna notice | all the men are gone’, introduced Agamemnon’s return. A dialogue followed in which the Furies expressed the subtext in Clytemnestra’s deceptive language to her husband. Here is a brief sample:

**Agamemnon**: Honey? Honey?

**Clytemnestra**: Come home now, all is forgiven.

**Agamemnon**: For what? . . . Just joking.

**Furies**: Bastard.

**Agamemnon**: I brought something for you.

**Furies**: Some jewelry torn from the arms of the dead.

**Agamemnon**: You like it?

**Clytemnestra**: Yes, but it’s YOU I like.

**Furies**: Roasting on a spit with your balls cut off.

**Agamemnon**: Honey, What are these beautiful shroud things?

**Furies**: Your death net.

**Clytemnestra**: Those are tapestries darling.

**Agamemnon**: Oh. What are they for?

**Clytemnestra**: They’re for you to walk on dear.

**Agamemnon**: To WALK on. Me?

**Furies**: Your walkway to hell.

**Clytemnestra**: Yes.

**Agamemnon**: That’s nice of you.

**Clytemnestra**: When a woman sits, ten years alone, at home, her man off at war . . .

**Furies**: Fucked really well by your nicely hung cousin.

**Clytemnestra**: The loneliness is terrible.

**Agamemnon**: Uh, well, you look good.

Following the tapestry scene, Clytemnestra invited Cassandra to leave of her own accord, but the seer refused, urging the queen to turn her wrath on the exploitative Apollo instead. The rest of Aeschylus’ Cassandra scene evolved until her departure into the palace as a dialogue between the seer and Electra and a group of old men. Electra received a confusing glimpse of the murder and was present during the exposure of the bodies. This play closed with a raging Electra castigating her mother.

The next play, ‘Electra,’ unfolded as a nightmarish sitcom. The intransigent Electra, dressed in Agamemnon’s coat, jeans, and combat boots and permanently averse to bathing, repeatedly disrupted a family dinner cooked by the domestic Aegisthus. He and the co-operative, ‘normal’ sister Christy (Chrysothemis) finally bound and gagged Electra against the will of Clytemnestra, who was still attempting a reconciliation with her daughter. Orestes appeared, disguised as a surf bum who recommended the psychological benefits of dolphin therapy to deal with grief and anger. At Electra’s urging, the reluctant and confused Orestes killed his mother at the grave of Agamemnon, where she had gone to share the libations of
gin that she poured on her husband's grave. In *Eumenides*, the Furies pursued Orestes and Electra to Apollo's swank penthouse. The trial amounted to a lot of pseudo-scientific gibberish from Apollo, supported by a puppet Athena, for whom Apollo spoke. Electra and Orestes discovered that the myth about Iphigenia's survival of her sacrifice was untrue, recognized their mother's love for them, and regretted their actions; but this recognition was fruitless and neither was absolved of guilt. Clytemnestra wanted justice but could not give her children over to the Furies. Apollo then 'democratically' turned the matter over to the men of the audience in the form of a choice between 'hot babes' or 'old bags' (the Furies). The audience predictably chose hot babes, and the Furies turned into cocktail strippers. Clytemnestra in both her young and older incarnations was left tied to statues at either side of the ensuing stage celebration and hung with signs saying 'bitch' and 'cunt.'

In this production the direction added a layer of meaning only implicit in the original script.\footnote{I base this discussion largely on an interview with Kirsten Brandt.} The staging of the plays was designed to reflect an historical shift in the women's movement: the *IA* echoed the ideology of the 1950s, *Agamemnon* of the 1970s, *Electra* of the 1980s, and the brief final section, *Eumenides*, the 1990s. The Clytemnestra of *Furious Blood* was a consistently maternal figure throughout. The events of *IA* betrayed a Clytemnestra with the dress and outlook of a 1950s housewife. The second play portrayed a rebellious incipient career woman dressed in pants, whose language echoed her growing sophistication and disillusion. On the other hand, this mother, as she puts it, 'does not kill children', and the play brought Clytemnestra, against her intent, into a head-on conflict with Electra that became an irresolvable nightmare in the next play. Here the conflict between Clytemnestra's political authority, reflected in her expensive power suit and superficially confident manner, and her desire to make her new family work, exploded. Only by betraying her maternal self could the Clytemnestra of the final play win any kind of public recognition for the justice she demanded. *Furious Blood*’s bitter ending, in the wake of the radical shifts in historical milieu and tone of the earlier plays, thus became a meditation on feminism itself, and the many ways in which earlier goals had been compromised or mired in hopeless contradictions. Women's free expression, even including the ability to take a lover, was still disproportionately constrained; social forces constantly brought female ambition or self-realization and maternity into conflict and threatened to turn women back either into mere bodies or into people whose female identity was permanently crippled, like the confused Electra.

Reviews of this performance, along with audience reactions reported by Brandt, were predictably divided between outrage at the plays' crudity and blatant politics and admiration for Brandt's fast-paced and witty direction and Stuart's feisty and iconoclastic treatment of Aeschylus' trilogy—far more amusing and engaging
than the famous diatribes of Kate Millett or Sue Ellen Case. The Sledgehammer Theatre aims at a young audience in addition to the subscribers who frequently support regional theatres. Part I, 'Iphigenia', which more closely reflects Euripides' original in both structure and tone than the later plays, genuinely moved the older subscriber audience, who developed increasing doubts thereafter, whereas the younger audience tended to remain engaged throughout, despite some queries about the conclusion.

Other feminist versions of Agamemnon|the Oresteia have presented an even more radical departure from the original, however. In May 1979 the feminist group Emmatroupe performed a piece entitled Against Silence and directed by Eleanor Johnson and Judah Kataloni that stressed the disruptive effects of the sacrifice on the mother—daughter relation between Clytemnestra, Iphigenia, and Electra. The performance by eight women and one man included music (violin), song (soprano), chanting, movement, and images. A female scribe in white sat rewriting history to candlelight. The text interpolated material from the feminist writers Robin Morgan, Kate Millett, Mary Daly, Andrea Dworkin, Susan Griffin, and Adrienne Rich. Reviews pronounced it a 'laudable failure', commenting on the lack of interaction among the characters and the 'joyous rigidity' of the piece. In September 2001, Avra Sideropoulou's monologue Clytemnestra's Tears was performed by Kristin Linklater to cello accompaniment. The piece meditates on the heroine's highly conflicted response to the death of Iphigenia, her period of abandonment during the Trojan War, her compellingly attractive yet hated husband, her ambivalence towards Aegisthus, her rejection of her remaining children, and her approaching murder by Orestes in revenge for her crime.

Katharine Noon devised (with Christopher DeWan) and directed an ensemble piece for the Ghost Road Company and Theater of Note in Los Angeles (2001)


53 In 1989 the City Troupe performed the Italian playwright Dacia Maraini's play, The Dreams of Clytemnestra, directed by Greg Johnson at the Judith Anderson Theatre in New York. A translation is available in Maraini (1994); for a review see Kris Dean, Backstage, 29 Sept. 1989. The play relocates a Sicilian working-class family to face economic and cultural struggles in the north of Italy. Agamemnon has rescued Clytemnestra from prostitution to redefine her as a partner to serve his economic ambition and patriarchal will. He departs to make his fortune for ten years in the US, leaving behind his wife, a father-fixated Electra, and an Orestes torn by his homosexuality and his alien life as a guest worker in Germany, and returns with an American mistress, Cassandra. Although excerpts of Aeschylus' trilogy are interwoven into the narrative, Iphigenia dies because she was forced to carry a child that killed her, Agamemnon dies of a heart attack, and Orestes does not kill his mother. The central figure here is the degraded yet resistant Clytemnestra, who refuses patriarchal subjection and traditional femininity, and finally ends in a psychiatric ward shocking the staff with her blatant sexuality.

entitled *Clyt at Home: the Clytemnestra Project*. This play, an outgrowth of Noon and DeWan's own writing and improvisatory work by the cast, was a new version of *Agamemnon* and *Iphigenia at Aulis* that gives the central role to Clytemnestra the mother (Jacqueline Wright). Act I opens about one year after Iphigenia's sacrifice onto a set dominated by the dead girl's belongings. Clytemnestra obsessively watches a video in which Iphigenia's last broadcast from the front degenerates from heroism into terror. Iphigenia's attempt during this broadcast to block out her fear with memories of Christmas leads to a flashback replaying this family event. Clytemnestra's attaché Horace attempts to draw her away from her obsessive grief. As she reluctantly prepares for a press conference to laud Iphigenia's sacrifice, Orestes (Lynn Odell) and Electra (Miguel Montalvo) resist hearing from her the truth about their sister's death. Clytemnestra later catches the children playing with the dead girl's memorabilia and explodes. Aegisthus (Phil Ward) then introduces himself and begins to distract Clytemnestra from her grief. The Furies of this play are a group of matrons whom Clytemnestra has assigned to return the urns of the war dead to their families; they chafe under the burden of an avalanche of deaths that are awakening active hostility among the people. The play includes song and dance, but the language remains colloquial throughout.

Act II finds Horace and Electra attempting to cope with Clytemnestra's affair with Aegisthus. Iphigenia's effects are now concealed in a trunk on stage. Orestes, who is away at school, returns unexpectedly to discover what is happening and is outraged. Orestes then departs before Agamemnon (Hugo Armstrong) returns with a satchel in which he has the ashes of Iphigenia and the sacrificial knife. Clytemnestra forces Agamemnon to revisit every detail of the sacrifice. They both weep, embrace, and go to sleep. Clytemnestra awakens to find Agamemnon kneeling with the urn before Iphigenia's trunk. Clytemnestra kills a largely unresisting, guilt-ridden Agamemnon with the sacrificial knife. The play closes with a scene between Electra, who defends an idealized Agamemnon, and her mother. Electra leaves; Clytemnestra goes to the trunk and takes out Iphigenia's urn. She pours the ashes through her fingers. In Noon's view, this play uses Greek tragedy to highlight the contradictory demands of motherhood in an extreme situation. It exposes the difficulties of coping with maternal grief, anger, responsibility, and choice in a context with unforeseen and disastrous consequences for all actions.

Several recent operas based on the trilogy also highlight Clytemnestra's role and conflict between the genders. John Eaton's 1980 one-act opera *The Cry of Clytemnestra* focused on the disastrous domestic situation of Clytemnestra after the sacrifice of her daughter. The opera opens with the cry of Clytemnestra as she dreams of Iphigenia. She awakens and quarrels with Aegisthus over his

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55 I would like to thank Noon for a draft of her script and a phone interview in Aug. 2001, before the play opened. For reviews, see Steve Mikulan, *LA Weekly* (www.laweekly.com/ink/01/44/theater-mikulan.shtml) and Carl Mueller, *Didakalia* 2001. Mikulan criticizes the cross-gender casting of Electra and Orestes.
ill-treatment of Orestes and Electra. Clytaemnestra then imagines a dialogue between Agamemnon and his mistress Cassandra at Troy. The seer’s prophecy about Agamemnon’s future crystallizes Clytaemnestra’s plans. The queen is then called in to mediate the deteriorating relations between Aegisthus and her children; Aegisthus has bullied both and made advances to Electra. After a quarrel, Orestes and Electra are banished from the palace. The distraught Clytaemnestra dreams of Agamemnon’s return and murder. She awakens, the beacons flare, and she goes to her destiny.

Garrett Fisher’s *Agamemnon*, performed on a Kabuki-style stage at Seattle’s Nippon Kan theatre in 1998, was a dance drama choreographed by his sister Christy Fisher and composed for a chamber ensemble consisting of piano, Indian harmonium, oboe, English horn, viola, electric guitar, and Taiko percussion. The piece enfolds as a musical dialogue between Clytemnestra (soprano), Agamemnon (baritone), and a chorus; it focuses above all on the sacrifice of Iphigeneia and its justice. One dancer plays both the silent ghost of Iphigeneia in a white mask and Cassandra in a blue mask; a second dancer plays the figure of Fate, who presides over the entire action. The text juxtaposes a series of scene fragments. After a choral introduction to the sacrifice and the war, the returning Agamemnon offers a solo defense of the sacrifice. Clytemnestra then recalls Iphigeneia’s death; she and her husband begin to engage in the final stichomythia (dialogue) of Aeschylus’ tapestry scene. But Agamemnon’s line ‘And where’s the woman in this fight for all?’ receives the unexpected reply ‘Always with her child.’ Clytemnestra then challenges Agamemnon openly over the sacrifice. Agamemnon repeats his justification of the sacrifice while Clytemnestra simultaneously laments Iphigeneia and the loss of Agamemnon to war and another bride (Cassandra; Aegisthus is not present in this version). In the following scene, the ghost of Iphigeneia revokes in Clytemnestra the death of ‘the beautiful body of the child who had not grown old, with roses at the head and jasmine at the toe’. Agamemnon is moved to forget his claim to justice and the spouses join in a lyrical duet of regret over their child. But this reconciliation is momentary. The chorus introduces a dance by the silent figure of Cassandra, another young and innocent victim of war. Agamemnon moves from recitative to lyric as he recognizes in Cassandra a replacement for the lost child Iphigeneia. Clytemnestra, who has observed this scene, cannot accept Cassandra as a ‘new child’. In a climactic tripartite exchange, the differing views of Clytemnestra, Agamemnon, and the chorus culminate in Clytemnestra’s reception of a knife from the silent figure of Fate. The spouses depart for the

murder off-stage in a ritualized fashion, with Agamemnon still defending his act, and Clytemnestra now claiming justice for her own ‘sacrifice’.

Roger Reynolds’s *The Red Act Project* adapts William Arrowsmith’s translation of Euripides’ *Iphigenia in Aulis* and *Trojan Women* and Richmond Lattimore’s translation of *Agamemnon* to portray the conflict between Agamemnon, ‘subject to pride and representative of the state,’ and Clytemnestra, who is ruled ‘by natural imperatives and personal loyalty’. Part II of the work, *JUSTICE*, focuses on Clytemnestra, whereas the yet to be completed *ILLUSION* centres on Agamemnon, but includes Iphigenia and Cassandra. The work becomes a musical and dramatic dialogue between the spouses in which neither protagonist speaks directly to the other. *JUSTICE* unfolds in three parts. Part I, ‘Sacrifice’, dramatizes the speech from Euripides’ *Iphigenia in Aulis* in which Clytemnestra asks Agamemnon if he intends to kill his daughter and warns him of the possible effects of the sacrifice on herself. Part II, ‘Absence’, contains excerpts from some of Clytemnestra’s earlier speeches to the chorus and the messenger in *Agamemnon*, but revolves largely around her long speech to Agamemnon in the tapestry scene. This arrangement emphasizes the effects on Clytemnestra of Agamemnon’s absence. (Aegisthus is again absent from this version.) Part III, ‘Nightmare and Judgment’, opens with a nightmare drawn from the chorus’ anxious anticipations of disaster at *Agamemnon* lines 975–98, but is sung by both Clytemnestra and the chorus. Excerpts from Clytemnestra’s dialogue with the chorus in which she justifies her ‘red act’ follow. The piece closes with the lines: ‘I will be content | that I swept from these halls | the murder, the sin, and the fury.’

In *JUSTICE*, Clytemnestra is played by both a soprano and a speaking actress and accompanied by a range of percussion instruments; all other voices and sounds are pre-recorded on computer. Since the actress’ voice is often low, and frequently emphasizes harsh aspiration and especially dental sounds, the intertwining of the two human voices creates an androgynous effect that links a soprano’s lyric pain with an angry claim to vengeance and authority. The effect is enriched by comparable percussive effects that extend these voices ‘gesturally’. In the tapestry scene, for example, the device underlines the deceptive doubleness of the heroine’s speech. Fragments of the speech, such as the phrase ‘cut full of gashes like a fishing net’ emerge from beneath the main narrative. The final scene includes at some length the choral replies from Aeschylus’ original to the triumphant murderess Clytemnestra, but because these voices are pre-recorded on computer they sound remote and ineffectual in comparison with the live voices of the queen. This piece allows the audience to concentrate on Clytemnestra’s case

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57 Reynolds’s own description in the introduction to the libretto. I would like to thank Reynolds for a copy of the libretto and a CD, and for his helpful replies to my queries. *ILLUSION* has been commissioned for the 2004–5 season by Esa-Pekka Salonen and the Los Angeles Philharmonic in the Walt Disney Concert Hall. On stage Agamemnon will be represented by an actor, a baritone, and a cellist; Iphigenia by an actress and a clarinetist; Cassandra by a soprano and a piccolo player. The production also includes a chamber orchestra and computer sound.
yet obscures none of its frightening ambivalence. *ILLUSION,* by contrast, will create a multiplicity of conflicting voices that remain in opposition until the end. The libretto includes Agamemnon's struggle with the sacrifice of Iphigenia (his story is questioned by Menelaus, Hecuba, Cassandra, and the chorus), Cassandra's mad wedding song from *Trojan Women,* excerpts from the choral odes of *Agamemnon,* and the Cassandra scene of *Agamemnon.* The last lines are 'From all sides the voices multiply—to make me choose...'

By contrast, the fourth opera version of *Agamemnon,* composed by Andrew Simpson with a libretto by Sarah Brown Ferrario and performed in a concert version 2001 at Catholic University of America in Washington, where it also received a full premiere in spring 2003, abridges Aeschylus' original in such a way as to de-emphasize the explicit gender conflicts represented in Aeschylus' original in the first half of the play; when they emerge more powerfully in later scenes, the audience's response to them inevitably differs. I shall stress this issue as one brief example among many of how cuts, translation, and aspects of the performance can strongly affect our interpretation of the play and its gender politics. Robert Auletta's translation of *Agamemnon* performed at the American Repertory Theater in Cambridge (1994–5) strongly emphasized gender conflict throughout; his bold and colloquial Clytemnestra was more aggressively hostile, confrontational, and semi-irrational than in any recent US translation. John Lewin's translation in the Guthrie's *The House of Atreus* mentioned earlier has a comparable if less flamboyant emphasis. By contrast, cuts (by the director, Henryk Baranowski) in Amy Russell's adaptation of the *Oresteia* in *The Millennium Project,* performed in 2000 by the Clarence Brown Theater Company in Knoxville, Tennessee, subtly enhanced Clytemnestra's already prominent role by preserving her speeches disproportionately in the choice of cuts, as well as through the tone of the queen's language. The Berkeley Repertory's 2001 *Oresteia* used a mixed-gender chorus in *Eumenides* and cut many of Athena's and Apollo's arguments to minimize the awkward gender politics of this final play.

Simpson and Ferrario's *Agamemnon* virtually eliminated the early confrontations between Clytemnestra and the chorus along with most of the queen's challenging beacon speech and some of her deceptive exchange with the messenger. Tensions simmered, but just beneath the surface. The large mixed male and female chorus, with a female chorus leader, was characterized more by its stake in civic harmony after long suffering than by its repeated (in the original, masculine) challenges to the queen's authority as a woman, which only became explicit after the murder. In this libretto, gender came to play a significant role for the first time.

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58 I would like to thank Andrew Simpson and Sarah Ferrario for a copy of the libretto, a piano score, a CD, a videotape of the performance, and an interview. For a review see Joseph McLellan in *The Washington Post,* 28 April 2003. A chamber version of their *Libation Bearers* was performed in spring 2004.

59 As reviewed by M. Griffith (2001). Athena was characterized above all by her (literal) personal touch.
in the tapestry scene. Clytemnestra’s lyrical and in parts deliberately feminine opening aria to Agamemnon performed the suffering of the wife in the absence of her husband so convincingly that the ominous ambiguity of the speech threatened to, yet did not, recede into the background. Although her wide-ranging mezzo-soprano preserved an androgyny and authority that became increasingly visible after the murder, the Clytemnestra of this opera was characterized less by her political challenge to the community and her physical dominance of the stage than by subtle shifts in her complex characterization, which was enhanced by her strongly virtuosic and chromatic music, her highly dramatic interventions in the action, and her repeated link with ominous musical motifs expressing death. Aegisthus sang tenor to Agamemnon’s baritone, and his complex opening aria, the only one in rhymed verse, simultaneously revealed his fabricated claim to heroism and made a powerful case for his revenge. The excursion into verse deliberately recalled and delicately parodied baroque opera seria.60

The return of Agamemnon heralded an electric victory celebration, which was made all the more impressive by a previous reduction of the parts of the messenger scene that raised multiple questions about the sack of Troy and the disastrous return voyage; this messenger was above all happy to be home and urged a welcome for his master. The libretto cut some of the more ambivalent parts of Agamemnon’s first speech as well, thus enhancing his claim to leadership. This Agamemnon may be pompous, and the chorus’ description of the sacrifice of Iphigeneia and of the city’s reaction to the war dead was strongly emphasized, but the momentary relief that his return brought to his city was overpowering. In the agon over the tapestries, Agamemnon’s longer and louder lines gave way to longer and stronger lines from Clytemnestra; here the gender conflict became more pointed and was then enhanced by the words of Cassandra in the next scene. Developing this conflict in the second half of the play subtly de-politicized the early scenes in favour of a confrontation between tragic individuals, each of whom is flawed but has a powerful claim on our sympathy. In my view, both the libretto and music of this opera directed the audience above all to the action itself, its high intensity and increasing tension, its radical and frightening shifts of mood, its legibility, its powerful repetitions and imagery, and the impossibility of reaching a clear judgement when all perspectives are engagingly presented.

Finally, there have been four gay send-ups or cross-dressed (or partially cross-dressed) versions of Agamemnon: Ethyl Eichelberger’s 1987 Klytemnestra: The Nightingale of Argos; John Fisher’s 1992 Oresteia, The Musical; Aaron Mack Schloff’s Agamemnon vs. Liberace in 2000; and Rob Grace’s Klytaemnestra’s Unmentionables, starring Bradford Louryk, in 2001.61 Eichelberger’s influential performance made Klytemnestra the central figure. A famous New York drag queen of the late 1970s and 1980s, Eichelberger composed many adaptations of Greek myth that revolved around a major female role; his oeuvre included a

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60 Verbal communication from Andrew Simpson.  
61 See the appended play list, Ch.19
Phaedra (1977), an Oedipus (1977) focused on Jocasta, a Medea (1980), a Medusa (1985), and an Ariadne Obnoxious (1988). Androgy nous figures like Clytemnestra were particularly attractive because Eichelberger liked to remind the audience of his masculine identity during the production. This included displaying the large male angel (representing himself in drag) tattooed on his back.\textsuperscript{62} Despite claims in the programme that the play adapts the Oresteia, the melodramatic plot of his Klytemnestra above all developed a narrative that fits between Aeschylus' first two plays. Eichelberger consistently made a point of celebrating outrageous or marginalized heroines ('the other woman'); in his view this play emphatically represents Klytemnestra's point of view, not Electra's.\textsuperscript{63} The plot revolved largely around a dialogue between the heroine and Electra that was briefly interrupted by the appearance of an Aegisthus, who placated Klytemnestra with promises of sexual distractions and tried to bully and finally seduce Electra. The play linked Klytemnestra above all with the nightingale Procne, due to her continuous and obsessive lament for Iphigeneia, whose death had to her regret destroyed her relation to Electra and to life itself. Electra, distraught over her mother's extravagant maternal suffering and shifts of mood as well as her alternating rejection and wooing of herself, committed suicide after the revenge was completed. Eichelberger performed his play in both group and solo versions. This best documented production included a deliberately over-decorated palace and shrine, a musical invocation to Dionysus with incense, an opening pantomime showing the murder of Agamemnon, and a heavily made up Eichlelberger wearing purple fabric, canvas breasts, prominent junk jewelry, and a red fright wig.\textsuperscript{64}

Louryk's Klytaemnestra's Unmentionables offered a solo tribute to Eichelberger and his mentor Charles Ludlam of New York's Ridiculous Theatrical Company.\textsuperscript{65} His Klytaemnestra borrowed the obsession of Eichelberger's heroine with Iphigeneia and her ambivalence toward Electra, including a stupendous shriek of outrage and horror at the loss of her sacrificed child (she even wore a prominent embryo pendant). The guilty queen was then followed by a girlish Electra, condemned to wash the family linens in the very bathtub from which Klytaemnestra emerged after killing her husband. Electra condemned her mother for the killing, but above all for her miserable life, which she spent waiting for Orestes and lamenting in the style of both Sophocles' resistant Electra and Euripides' petulant exiled princess. Louryk, perhaps following in the tradition of Greek theatre itself, aimed to use his masculine distance from female roles to enhance his ability to play the other; whereas Eichelberger deliberately identified himself as a drag

\textsuperscript{62} This discussion of Eichelberger is based on an unpublished copy of the script, Jeffreys (1990) and (1996), and Parnes (1988). I would like to thank Yopie Prins for helping me to obtain this material and Joe Jeffreys for further documentation.

\textsuperscript{63} Jeffreys (1996), 223 and 157.

\textsuperscript{64} Review by Amy Ward, \textit{High Performance} 10.2 (1987), 72.

\textsuperscript{65} For further discussion and bibliography, see Foley (2004). I am grateful to Louryk for a post-performance interview and a copy of a videotape.
performer and constantly reminded the audience of his male identity, Louryk's performance invited engagement with his role and with the character's evolving thought process.

Fisher's 1992 *Oresteia, The Musical* at University of California, Berkeley offered a condensed tongue-in-cheek version of the trilogy interspersed with songs borrowed from Cole Porter musicals.\(^{66}\) The lively romantic duo of the first play, a male Clytemnestra paired with a female Aegisthus, was replaced in the second play with a growing romance between Electra and Pylades, who soon abandoned Orestes to his fate after assisting in a second explicit but absurdly exaggerated onstage murder. Even in the finale, two reconciled male and female furies paired off for a song and dance number with the outrageously patriarchal Apollo and Athena ('Friendship'). The campy production featured an opening family slide show from the house of Atreus (including a pie containing Thyestes' children), a carpet the size of a bathmat, frantic lovemaking heard or glimpsed offstage by Clytemnestra and Aegisthus and Agamemnon and Cassandra, and a projected mask of Apollo. Aside from numerous love duets ('All of You', 'So in Love', 'Let's Do It'), the trio Electra, Pylades, and Orestes crowed over their coming revenge with Porter's 'Night and Day' and 'It's De-lovely' and Clytemnestra faced her approaching demise with 'Just One of Those Things'.

SchlofF's *Agamemnon vs. Liberace* followed the return home of Agamemnon with Cassandra, here played by the famous cult pianist of television's 'The Liberace Show' in the 1950s. In 1956 Liberace sued a columnist for the *London Mirror*, whose pseudonym was Cassandra, for allegedly libellous insults made during a tour, and won in 1959. Liberace was viewed by many as a notorious perverter of classical music; in this play SchlofF has him take on the classics in the form of Greek tragedy. Slipping in and out of his Cassandra role, Liberace refused to enter the palace with Agamemnon and play his traditional role, after Agamemnon was summoned by a Clytemnestra mysteriously waving from a window and a red carpet suddenly rolled out from the palace door. Liberace finally called out to his manager, Seymour, who bought off the watchman/chorus figure and had Liberace's Baldwin piano drop from the ceiling to crush Agamemnon. Liberace played a concert for the audience as Agamemnon screamed below; he ended in the arms of his literal double, his chauffeur and lover Scott Thorson, who had undergone plastic surgery in order to resemble his master. The play pitted an Aeschylean vision of fate and suffering espoused by Agamemnon and the Chorus against the antithetical 'comic' perspective of Liberace, whose god was the author of a self-help book called *The Magic of Believing*, Claude M. Bristol; both Scott's and Liberace's mask-like faces were linked in the text specifically with comedy, for which Liberace himself expressed a preference.\(^ {67}\)

\(^{66}\) I would like to thank John Fisher for a videotape of the performance.

\(^{67}\) Directed by Samuel Buggeln, the play starred Vin Knight as Liberace, David Brown, Jr. as Agamemnon, and Lisa Ramirez as the Chorus; it was reviewed in *LGNY* (Lesbian and Gay New York), 6 April 2000.
RESPONSES TO CONTEMPORARY POLITICS

US productions and adaptations motivated by an interest in political concerns quite naturally respond to these implicit or explicit elements in Aeschylus' original. O'Neill's *Mourning Becomes Electra* once again initiated the trend by setting his trilogy in a post-civil war context. Yet the shell-shocked behaviour of his Orestes figure, Orin, must have been equally evocative for an audience including veterans of World War I. In 1951 Burton Crane published a trilogy in which he translated a cut version of Euripides' *Hecuba*, Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, and Sophocles' *Electra* with the recommendation that they be performed together in one evening. The English translations, originally designed for productions in post-war Taiwan and Tokyo, were clearly meant to address contemporary issues. Several productions/adaptations have made direct or indirect references to contemporary wars. Doug Dyer's 1971 musical *Blood: From the Heart of America* staged Orestes as a returned Vietnam vet 'in a plea for brotherhood after 4,000 years of bloodletting, war and savagery' (*Daily News*, 8 March 1971). The music in this production, a mixture of country-folk, soft rock, and gospel, including acapella choral singing and army marching chants, was apparently far superior to the rest of the production, since reviewers seem to have been confused about the events of the plot. These apparently included the drowning of Orestes' grandmother in a bathtub. David Rabe's 1973 *The Orphan*, to be discussed shortly, also re-envisioned the Orestes myth as a response to the Vietnam War.

Robert Auletta's translation/adaptation of *Agamemnon*, directed by François Rochaix and performed as the first part of his *Oresteia* in 1994–5 at the American Repertory Theatre in Cambridge, Massachusetts, referred directly or indirectly to the Gulf War, and more generally to nuclear war. Andrew Ordover's 1994 *Agamemnon*, twice performed off-Broadway in New York, set his remaking of Aeschylus explicitly in the Balkans, with neither time or exact location specified. *The Millennium Project*, a cut and partially adapted version of Aeschylus' *Oresteia* performed at the Clarence Brown Theater in Knoxville, Tennessee in 2000, was directed by a visiting Polish director, Henryk Baranowski, who put an Eastern European stamp on the production. Other productions, such as Charles Mee's *Agamemnon*, added new dimensions to Aeschylus' meditations on violence and civilization in a more general and broadly historical fashion. Still others, such as recent university productions at the University of Washington in 1999 and at the

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68 B. Crane (1952).
70 I would like to thank the adapter, Amy Russell, for a copy of the script and an interview.
University of New Mexico in 2001 framed their productions to respond in general terms to violence and revenge on a global level, and to express what some of the directors saw as a kind of millennial anxiety. The turn of a new century, in a context where violence was proliferating rather than attenuating, led these directors back to what they saw as the earliest major theatrical attempt to take on these familiar issues. A number of productions also introduced a direct or oblique commentary on the role of the media in modern politics; this element was central to Mark Jackson’s adaptation of the Oresteia, Messenger #1, performed at the Exit Theatre in San Francisco in 2000.

David Rabe’s 1973 The Orphan, which borrows from Euripides’ IA and the Oresteia, was published by the playwright in volume 2 of his The Vietnam Plays. Rabe was inspired to write the play after viewing a production of Euripides’ IA on his return from a tour of duty in Vietnam; he found himself working for a newspaper in New Haven, Connecticut, outraged at the war, yet appalled by the shallow understanding of student war protesters. In his afterword to the volume (written in 1992), Rabe envisions the Vietnam War as both a symptom of a larger historical tradition of violence and as a national loss of ‘innocence’ brought on by a massive public denial and an attempted self-exoneration in the face of daily televised images of the Vietnam War’s destructive powers and the political hypocrisy of US leaders. The play mentioned Vietnam infrequently. Nevertheless, Agamemnon, played in the original production as a caricature of US President Lyndon Johnson, made Euripides’ apology for retrieving Helen to protect Greece’s women from future attacks echo the domino theory; Pylades was a brutalized war veteran who had engaged in a My Lai-type massacre; and the stay-at-home Aegisthus was a Nixon figure who suppressed Electra’s rebellion by cutting off her hands and tongue in prison.

In fact, however, Rabe’s play becomes a complex indictment of an entire age, where the political and the personal/psychological become nightmarishly inter-twined. For example, the idealistic Orestes initially prefers to solve all problems verbally and intellectually and wants to unite rather than destroy his family. He is lured into matricide by a Figure suggesting both Apollo and Charles Manson, by the use of drugs (a hallucenogenic mushroom), and by the Figure’s mesmerized and pointedly twentieth-century female followers, a Manson-style Family who substitute for Aeschylus’ Furies when they are not playing other choral or messenger roles. The play explicitly interweaves descriptions of the infamous

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71 The play was not well reviewed at its New York opening (Walter Kerr, New York Times, 29 April 1973; Clive Barnes, New York Times, 19 April 1973). See also Rabe’s own comments in Rabe (1993), 188–89. Performances in Winston-Salem, NC (a workshop production by Barnet Kellman that led to major changes in the script: see Kellman 1977 for details) and Philadelphia in 1974 were more successful, as was an excellent student production directed by Paul Berman at Barnard College, NY in 1990.

72 Kellman (1977), 72–3. Colakis (1993) has a helpful discussion of the play that inevitably dovetails with my own at some points.

Sharon Tate and LaBianca murders into the final scenes leading up to the killing of Aegisthus and Clytemnestra. (On 9–10 August 1969 Charles Manson and the other members of his Death Valley, California, commune were responsible first for the gruesome cult murders of movie star Sharon Tate, pregnant wife of Roman Polanski, and four house guests, and then for the murder of Leno A. La Bianca and his wife Rosemary.) The claims of the Figure and the Family are reinforced by the crazed veteran Pylades, who blames the whole war on Orestes’ parents in a symptomatically late 1960s/1970s fashion. The play closes with Orestes’ sterile, and in the final analysis meaningless, ascent to the heavens, leaving behind the enormous net that has shadowed or captured the other characters, all divine or human moral laws, and even reproduction of the species. The Figure announces: ‘You have killed your mother and it means nothing and you have seen the nothing that it means.’ Orestes later responds, ‘I have killed my mother and there is no punishment.’ Orestes also feels: ‘that there should be no more children for we are ruining the earth.’ The Figure replies: ‘Orphan! Orphan, what need of children, when you are the first and the last.’

The Orphan blurs boundaries between public and private, body and mind, by suggesting that its setting is a womb and/or a universe with laws that may or may not have relevance to human experience. ‘Good evening. In a place like this we all begin. Deep in the dark of another’s belly.’ We hear a rhythmic breathing as light emerges from darkness. The action also collapses the boundaries between past and present, between the deaths of Iphigenia and Agamemnon and Orestes’ murder of his mother. Orestes’ mission opens the play; yet at the beginning of Act II he is born from the tub where his father was murdered, covered in the bloody net that destroyed Agamemnon, and then reaches at once for the murder weapon, which has been expelled from between Clytemnestra’s legs. Clytemnestra is played by two identically dressed selves. The dutiful wife and mother of Iphigenia goes to her death in Aeschylean terror. She not only fails to make the Euripidean transformation to self-sacrifice, but cannot even get her father to respond to her hopes for dying with some dignity.

The argument between Agamemnon and Clytemnestra One over the sacrifice of Iphigenia considerably expands on and deepens the Euripidean failure of communication. In Euripides’ version of the myth in Iphigenia at Aulis, Agamemnon has killed Clytemnestra’s first husband and infant son before their marriage. This story is repeated at length in a new form. Rabe’s Clytemnestra is played by two identically dressed selves. The dutiful wife and mother of Iphigenia goes to her death in Aeschylean terror. She not only fails to make the Euripidean transformation to self-sacrifice, but cannot even get her father to respond to her hopes for dying with some dignity.

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Rabe (1993), 175–6.
daughter and believes that the gods have demanded it. But when presented with Calchas' mumbo-jumbo over a heap of prophetic bird bones that he takes from his briefcase, Clytemnestra will have none of it. She does not believe that the wind is anything but 'deaf beyond response' to human lives. The play’s repeated failures of communication are dramatized as well by the ringing of a telephone that never leads to full connection among the characters. Self-delusion and attempts at exoneration predictably end in a violence that becomes almost terrifyingly commonplace and meaningless at the play’s conclusion. And at the human level, familial bonds, even the powerfully Oedipal bonds of this play, have less power than those of the Figure’s horrific Family.

The Balkan setting for Andrew Ordover’s Agamemnon is clearly borne out in its treatment of the revenge theme.75 The world of this play constantly juxtaposes ancient and modern. Cassandra is still a seer, but she opens the play with a radio broadcast from a Troy punctuated by gunfire, without power, without phone. At the same time, Cassandra is pursued by the repeated vision of Clytemnestra sewing in Argos. The Agamemnon of this play is a hard-line avenger of past butchery determined to excise any trace of the enemy and end the violence once and for all. Orestes’ tutor does his best to inculcate the prince with this narrowly focused paternal ideology of ethnic hatred. But Ordover’s Orestes is another visionary like Cassandra, haunted by memories of Iphigeneia that reveal the truth of her harsh death behind the propaganda of self-sacrifice; his anxieties for the future often deliberately echo those of Aeschylus’ chorus of old men. This play’s messenger arrives on the point of death to announce that he is the only survivor besides Agamemnon. The king’s ‘weapon past all knowing’ (19, 21) destroyed the city; the army’s common cause collapsed in disarray during the fall; atrocities against the innocent were legion. Orestes envisions his father as the Argive beast itself, bringing war within the walls of Argos. On her arrival Cassandra recalls Agamemnon’s killing of Clytemnestra’s first husband and child and Iphigeneia’s sacrifice in the presence of both Clytemnestra and Agamemnon; the queen is terrified but Agamemnon fails to understand the implications of this memory or even to notice the presence of Orestes. Clytemnestra unrolls a blood-red tapestry made of little girl’s clothes. Although Ordover’s tapestry scene closely follows Aeschylus, it closes with a final surprising meditation by Agamemnon in which he recalls how the Trojans repeatedly cut off the heads of the enemy dead and threw them down on the Greeks. His final words are:

The things
You cannot know
Unwordable but
Necessary

75 I would like to thank Andrew Ordover for providing me with a copy of his script. The expansion of the role of the seer perhaps derives from Robinson Jeffers’s The Tower Beyond Tragedy. Page numbers to this script appear in brackets after the citation in the text.
Helene P. Foley

Things
I had to do
To conquer such a will
To smash that wall and
Win
Loving men
You understand
All decent men
To do those things
And worse
And worse

I'm not the man you knew.

But, says Clytemnestra ironically, 'you are, my lord, you are' (32).

The Cassandra scene becomes a kind of duet between Orestes and the seer, as she draws from within the prince's hidden knowledge about Iphigenia. Clytemnestra displays the bodies of Agamemnon and Cassandra before Orestes and his teacher. She claims to have acquiesced in Orestes' education in order to protect him from his father. But her past harshness backfires and Orestes kills his mother. The play closes with a speech by Clytemnestra to the Furies and the audience, commanding them to pursue Orestes and perpetuate the ideology of hate. This play collapses Agamemnon and Libation Bearers into one condensed action. But as with many other adaptations, the choice to conclude before Aeschylus' final play emphasizes the impossibility of his resolution in a modern context or of finding a substitute for it. In the Balkans, the play suggests, there can be no resolution.

Charles Mee's 1994 Agamemnon 2.0 follows closely the plot of Aeschylus' original. But his unusual chorus adds a novel historical and political dimension to the play. All four chorus men, Herodotus, Thucydides, Homer, and Hesiod, are physically crippled in one respect or another. Hence they belong on the sidelines, where they engage in meditations on memory, war, and civilization. Not surprisingly, this chorus frequently does not represent a collective perspective, and the four can view issues in a somewhat characteristic, if often anachronistic, fashion: Hesiod: 'There's some comfort in the memory of it.' Thucydides: 'If it's true.' Herodotus: 'I was here. I know it to be true.' Thucydides: 'What one remembers and what is true are so seldom the same.' This chorus leads both the messenger and Agamemnon, who would prefer not to dwell on the issue, into at first denying and then more or less admitting in detail what a terrible destruction of beauty and civilization occurred during the fall of Troy. Here animals are used

76 The text is available on Mee's website, www.panix.com/~meejr. For reviews of the Actors' Gang Theater performance in Los Angeles in 1994, see Jan Breslauer, Los Angeles Times, 22 March 1994; Dan Cox, Daily Variety, 23 March 1994. The play was also directed by Tali Gai, Access Theater, NY, May 2000 and influenced the first part of the 1999 University of Washington Oresteia.

77 Mee himself is a polio victim.
to shock an audience over-exposed to violence among humans. Herodotus: ‘The rumor we heard was that there is no longer a menagerie in the royal palace of Troy. Even those innocent animals were killed.’ Messenger: ‘I don’t know anything about that.’ Herodotus: ‘The last grizzly bear has died, they say.’ Messenger: ‘I don’t know anything about that.’ Herodotus: ‘I’ve heard someone saw a peacock and a white swan killed for no good reason at all.’ Messenger: ‘There are always rumors. By definition none of them are true.’

After the chorus’ questioning, Agamemnon is drawn into memories, such as soldiers rounding up 200 women and then driving them naked like cattle to a ramp where their limbs were cut off until they could no longer move, or tying up and covering an ape in dirt until only its vulnerable pink anus remained visible as it choked to death. After this scene, Agamemnon’s initial attempt to celebrate the Trojan victory and to return to peace and normality rings entirely hollow. Cassandra’s dialogue with the chorus also extends far beyond the house of Atreus to a meditation on the fall of Troy, which is equated with the fall of civilization itself. As Clytemnesstra soon makes clear, justice for Iphigenia was impossible for her to win in Argos, and the final scene, in which a gigolo-like Aegisthus lures her into the house with explicit erotic promises, leaves the audience with a very modern image of civic corruption. Mee’s deliberate anachronisms superimposed on a visibly Aeschylean text painfully renew the relevance of the original while exposing an even greater fragmentation and coherence in the contemporary world. Unlike Ordover, however, Mee’s language ranges from poetic to deliberately crude or pornographic, so that the contrast with the original is more pointed.

Mark Jackson’s adaptation of the Oresteia, Messenger #1, performed in spring 2000 by Art Street Theatre at Exit Theatre in San Francisco, takes a refreshingly original perspective on the myth. The major events of the trilogy are perceived and experienced through three messengers. Messenger #1 has been at Troy with Agamemnon and absorbs the role of the messenger in Agamemnon. Messenger #2 has remained at home currying favour with the royals. Messenger #3, the former lover of Messenger #1, is a woman who disguises herself as a man and becomes a Messenger at his departure for Troy. The play interweaves the experiences of the Messengers with the events in the palace. Messenger #1’s return and happy reunion with his lover is juxtaposed with the meeting of the royal couple, followed by Agamemnon’s death at Clytemnestra’s hands (Fig. 17.2). The three Messengers meet while Orestes and Electra enter the palace and kill Clytemnestra. Finally, Messenger #3, a former slave to the royal women, risks telling the spoiled Electra that Orestes has gone mad and left for Athens. The happy outcome of Orestes’ trial in Athens, a shamelessly political trial in which Athena is out to protect the rich and

78 I would like to thank Mark Jackson for a copy of his script, photographs, and the opportunity to view a video of the production. Page references to his script appear in brackets after the citation.
powerful, is juxtaposed with the execution of Messenger #3 for displeasing Electra, and the murder of Messenger #2 by Messenger #1 because he delivered the order to execute #3.

This remaking allows Jackson to raise important class issues. The messengers are slaves, at the beck of a set of cruel, arbitrary, corrupt, and in Orestes’ and Electra’s case, spoiled and neurotic, masters. The delivery of any unpopular message persistently puts the messenger at risk. Messenger #3, who is the most self-conscious about issues of justice and injustice (15), is destroyed because of her dangerous sense of responsibility to her profession (34), which has allowed her to get a perspective on life unavailable to a woman. She cannot bring herself to leave Argos with her lover, as he proposes, both because of her ties to her liberating profession (26), and because she cannot escape her fascination with the family that she served. On her own initiative she goes to tell Orestes and Electra, who have been sold into slavery by their mother, of the death of their father. She not only chooses to give the bad news to Electra about Orestes’ departure, but reveals her identity to her former mistress. Her implicit request to be recognized and treated as an autonomous human being causes her death. ‘I needed her to look me in the eye!’ (47).
The messengers of this play become as well a kind of critically involved chorus. Their self-consciousness about their role hints more and less explicitly at the contemporary role of the media/the artist. Indeed, the choice to substitute the messenger for the chorus and investigate the messenger role accords with the experience of public access to such remote but influential figures in the modern community. On the one hand, we observe the shameless Messenger #2 repeatedly readjusting his message to make the best of the war and the appalling events in the palace. Yet he recognizes the significance of his own role: ‘A King can kill a princess his daughter but what’s the difference if nobody hears about it? We’re not just some cog in a machine. The swells may press the buttons, yes, but we are the energy that dashes from cause to effect. We’re the blood in the veins that moves the nation. We spread the word that makes history happen!’ (9). Indeed, he hopes that one day ‘we’ll cast our net over great Gaia’s earth and for the right price no one will be left alone, not one person deprived of knowing what’s what. The world will turn on the messenger’s word and the swell’s plump lives will be meat for us to grind up and dish out to that hungry drooling populace half dead from boredom by their own daily grind. That’s the day I’m living for. Until then, what good is it to bite the hand that feeds.’ (11) The play closes somberly as we observe the reluctant but surviving Messenger #1 stepping publicly into his fellow’s compromised role. ‘People of Argos. it is my duty to inform you that Orestes, our new king, has been formally forgiven for his crimes. That a history of chaos has finally been disrupted by a new civic order, and the Law of Blood replaced by a Law of Reason. They call it Justice’ (49).

Other productions have allowed the media to play a choral role during performances of the original. Tim Ocel’s production of Agamemnon at Theater Emory in 1993 turned the chorus into television and print reporters and photographers.79 The 2001 University of New Mexico production used projected video images to relay Agamemnon’s success at Troy, occasional flashbacks from the past, and images of the royal family as they conducted press conferences with the chorus. Clytemnestra naturally proved to be a highly self-conscious deployer of spin.80 In Theater Faction’s 2004 eclectic new version of the Oresteia in New York, Erik Nelson’s Agamemnon began with Clytemnestra chalking up logical syllogisms and ethical queries about good effects of bad actions on blackboards while passers-by on Eighth Avenue became a chorus on video by replying to questions about whether a wife could justly kill her husband if he had killed one of her daughters. Agamemnon simultaneously staged his return from an ‘anti-terrorist’ venture on the video cameras; he then darkened the stage to rape and impregnate his uncooperative Japanese wife (Saori Tsukada). She won the right to kill him by

80 As reported in M. Griffith (2001).
negotiating a hopscotch maze on a television show entitled ‘Agamemnon, the Game’.81

On the whole, deliberate remakings of Aeschylus’ text have been more successful, if in many ways uneven or unsubtle, than attempts to perform the originals with an eye to contemporary political issues, particularly if the production lacked a clear and consistent direction. As noted earlier, Robert Auletta’s highly contemporary translation of the Oresteia for the American Repertory Theater’s 1994–5 production directed by François Rochaix included references to contemporary warfare.82 The play’s Agamemnon arrived on stage in a Gulf War Humvee. But these sporadic contemporary references apparently formed no consistent pattern and thus did not enrich or add another clear layer of interpretation to the performance, as they had done in Auletta’s 1986 adaptation of Sophocles’ Ajax for the director Peter Sellars in Washington, DC.83

Other performances have included attempts to sway the audience’s reaction to political issues within Aeschylus’ plays by framing them with contemporary references, or by using costume and performance style to give a contemporary dimension to the play. In the University of New Mexico performance anti-war and anti-government fliers were distributed to the audience between Agamemnon and Libation Bearers. Paper ballots were passed out to the entire audience in the final play. The Millennium Project tried to project a crisis of civilization by making the chorus of Agamemnon homeless, dispossessed victims of an oligarchy; they used found objects to create percussion for the performance’s music. Electra, Orestes, and the chorus in Libation Bearers were violent, punk youth nevertheless seriously concerned with justice; the Furies of Eumenides created an atmosphere suggestive of science fiction as background to the final play, which in many respects offered a partially comic send-up of a collapsing civilization. Overall, the production was motivated by a desire to reconfront the Furies and the nightmare that they and the crimes that they avenge represent. The University of Washington’s Oresteia filled


83 The play was performed in 1986, first in the American National Theater in La Jolla, California then at the National Theater in Washington. For a discussion see McDonald (1992).
the lobby with a broad range of contemporary images of war.\textsuperscript{84} The chorus of \textit{Libation Bearers} were represented as anarchists. The Furies, initially primitive spirits naked from the waist up and covered with mud, were domesticated with the offer of washcloths and mops. For a society not at this time engaged in a war of its own, these recent performances instead invited an engagement with global issues.

\section*{CONCLUSIONS}

In conclusion, then, I think we can make some tentative generalizations about the US-reception of \textit{Agamemnon/the Oresteia}. First, adaptation or radical remaking of the text has played a critical role from the beginning, and continues to do so. Americans seem to want to rewrite the play(s) for themselves, even while they also view performances of the original as a highly significant theatrical challenge.\textsuperscript{85} These plays have more often served less as vehicles for star performers than as opportunities to address issues of content or performance and have provoked a significant number of music and dance versions. Many performances have accepted the challenge of \textit{Agamemnon/the Oresteia} by concentrating on technical performance values without attempting to make a larger statement through the play(s); and these interesting experiments have been regrettably short-changed in this paper (see the Appendix below for selected highlights). Nevertheless, we can conclude that gender/issues of identity have consistently, from the seminal performances of O'Neill and Graham onwards, played a critical role in this reception process either through highlighting gender conflict and debate or by revising and amplifying the role of Clytemnestra (and/or Iphigenia) to make an already prominent character more so. Indeed, a number of productions doubled the figure of Clytemnestra to enhance our experience of a figure changing over time, or to highlight her complexity or androgyny. Dissatisfaction with the resolution of the trilogy has led to radical experiments with tone in the performance of \textit{Eumenides}, rewriting, or the substitution of another Greek tragedy for an alternative conclusion. This thread of interpretation is strongly evident in the

\textsuperscript{84} The 1993–4 \textit{Oresteia} at Catholic University, translated by Robert Auletta and directed by William Foeller, attempted something similar through references to contemporary events in its programme.

\textsuperscript{85} Many college or university directors whom I interviewed chose to perform the play for this reason. In college curricula that do a sequence of plays from periods important to the history of theater over a period of time, Greek dramas have a regular place in this sequence. This does not explain why \textit{Agamemnon/the Oresteia} has recently been selected to play this role more often, however. A number of directors who chose the play(s) as a major theatrical challenge felt that overly modernizing or thematizing a student production undermined pedagogical goals such as familiarizing students with different modes of theatre.
various translations of the plays—again an issue that I would have liked to address in more detail had space permitted.  

Politically oriented interpretations and remakings have been significant, if fewer than those that aim to address larger cultural issues, whether public or private. Of those wars in which Americans participated on a substantial level, the Vietnam War alone seems to have provoked several adaptations of parts of Aeschylus’ trilogy; more recent performances have responded instead to global issues concerning recurring violence and revenge. The current dense cluster of millennial or near millennial performances may suggest a revived concern in US theatre with broader public historical and political issues at the turn of a new century. Both The Millennium Project and the 1999 University of Washington adaptation of the Oresteia were specifically conscious of the millennial setting for the Oresteia’s concern with violence and civilization. To this I could add Atreus Dawn, a 1998 musical at Brown University by Abi Bausch with music by George Bissen and Dave Peck set ‘at the dawn of the new millennium’, which addressed the dangers of hyper-technology by a return to Greek myth as envisioned in the mind of Iphigenia. A theatre professor at Columbia reported to me that colleagues on his theatre research email list (American Society for Theatre Research) identified the Oresteia as the play of choice to teach in response to the 9/11 crisis. A 2002 performance of the Oresteia at Baylor University did choose to emphasize justice and revenge in a response to September 11, but stressed the rebellion of nature itself (earth, wind, fire, and water) against the family crimes; both music and costumes were inspired by traditional cultures worldwide in an attempt to make a connection between past and present and ‘to put ourselves in line at this moment’ with more distant cultures. It is still too
early to analyse the broader response, since much significant theatrical engagement with 9/11 only began to emerge in the winter of 2002 and the war in Iraq has diverted attention to new issues.

APPENDIX ON PERFORMANCE VALUES

Perhaps the most ambitious experimental production was Andrei Serban's *Agamemnon* mentioned above. Serban's visceral presentation of the chorus, in his case composed of young men and women rather than old men, was notable. The group performed to the music of bells, horns, and drums composed by Elizabeth Swados under the inspiration of African, Persian, and Arabic story-telling music and sung or chanted in both ancient Greek and English, as the chorus moved in an often ritualized fashion both on the triangular metal grating that served as the main playing space and below it, carrying firepots and torches that glimmered from beneath. The audience sat in bleachers on stage as well as off, and the bleachers parted to reveal the great door of the palace after a forty-five minute dumb show outlining the myth at some length and an initial procession. This description applies to the Lincoln Center performance; the performance at the outdoor Delacorte theatre in Central Park also gave the chorus a central role but was staged very differently. *The Millennium Project* also relied on extensive original music (composed by Noa Ain) and movement throughout.

Many directors developed elaborate mask work for their productions. The *Agamemnon* performed at the Grand Marais Playhouse in Grand Marais, Minnesota and directed by Zachary Morgan was in part designed to deal with limited resources. Set outdoors on the top of a dramatic ancient lava flow, the entire trilogy was performed by three actors wearing a large range of ‘dumb’ masks and communicating with complex gestures and by a male and female speaker who adopted different voices for different characters. The style of the production responded to the large local Scandinavian community. Agamemnon was a Viking Chief returning from London after tearing down the Bridge to a wife who was his legal equal, but severely culpable as an adulteress. Among the brilliantly coloured masks, Agamemnon was at one point a bull; at another he wore a Viking helmet ‘with blood shooting from his eyes’. Cassandra alone had a mouth that opened in a ‘perpetual scream’ and an enormous forehead.

John Edwards, who directed a 1991 performance of the *Oresteia* at the University of New Hampshire, experimented with mask work in Greek tragedy throughout his career. Relying on Tony Harrison's translation and a bronze-age style setting as background for a non-realistic performance, his chorus consisted of speakers dressed in black who shadowed movers dressed in masks. This device,

90 The quotations are from Zachary Morgan, who kindly provided me with a detailed description of the performance.
borrowed from Japanese Bunraku, permitted the use of more elaborate music and ritualized movement than would otherwise have been possible in a student production. The production used 92 full head masks with hair.91 Augustana College's 2001 The Clytemnestra Project, directed by Ivan Fuller, was inspired by the use of masks in John Barton's Tantalus (Denver, Colorado, 2000), to which the whole cast travelled from South Dakota.92 The performance of the Oresteia at Indiana University in 1989, directed by Howard Jensen, was equally ambitious in its use of choral masks and visual effects, including bold lighting design, a stage flanked with nets, and an eight-foot tall gold statue of Athena set against a sky-blue background that created the calm of a Japanese temple. The entire production aimed to trace visually a movement from darkness to light.93 Some productions, such as that of the Berkeley Repertory Theatre in 2001, arguably emphasized production values at the expense of coherent interpretation.94

91 I am grateful to John Edwards for a phone interview about his production.
92 I wish to thank Ivan Fuller for an extensive interview.
93 This discussion is based on material from Howard Jensen, including reviews from Linda Thomas, Sunday Herald Times, 5 March 1989, and by Jeff Stone, Arts Indiana, April 1989.
94 See Griffith (2001). See further Rehm, Ch. 18, p. 355.
Epilogue:

Cassandra—The Prophet Unveiled

Rush Rehm

It is with hesitation and awe that I come to speak of the Cassandra scene.…every comment, every analysis, every summary will fall sadly short of its intensity and many-sidedness.

(Kamerbeek (1965), 33–4)

To risk theatrical sacrilege, we could say that the Oresteia is alive with the sound of mantics. Prophets, prophetic utterance, gods of prophecy, oracles, and oracular sites abound. Eumenides opens at Delphi, the Pythia herself delivers the prologue, Apollo drives the Furies from the omphalos and reappears at the trial of Orestes, asserting the validity of his prophetic commands: 'I am a seer who does not lie' (μάντις ὃν ὑπὲρ θεῖος ὕψοσμας, Eum. 615). At the end of the play Athena adopts the mantic role, predicting what the Furies' residence in Athens will do for her city (988–95). Libation Bearers opens with Orestes' arrival in Argos from Delphi; we tend to remember only his panicked flight back to the oracle at the end. He graphically describes Apollo's prophecy of all he will suffer if he fails to avenge his father (Cho. 269–97), and at the crucial moment Pylades resurrects these oracular compulsions (900–2) to spur on the matricide ('the voice of Apollo himself,' as Knox puts it). The Nurse speaks of herself as a prophet (προφήτης 758), recalling her efforts to interpret the needs of baby Orestes. She admits to having gotten it wrong, because 'young insides are a law unto themselves' (757). On a less embodied level, Clytemnestra's fear-induced nightmare acts as a dream-prophet (δρεπροφήτης 33), a fact reiterated by Orestes as he prepares to kill his mother ('the fear your dream inspired proved a true prophet [μάντις]’ 929). The prophets in the house offer their interpretation of her dream (37–41), as does Orestes himself when the Chorus relate it to him (540–52). Similarly, household

3 The Nurse is a failed prophet again at 776–7; 'Nurse: But Orestes, the hope of the house is gone. Chorus: Not yet. Only a bad prophet [μάντις] would interpret it so.'
4 Regarding Clytemnestra's fear as the prophet that induces her nightmare and attendant offerings at the grave, I follow Heath's reading of line 32; see Garvie (1986) on 32.
prophets in *Agamemnon* (δύομον προφήται, 409) interpret Menelaus' dream of longing for the absent Helen. In fact, the Chorus of elders speak in the prophets' voice for 17 lines (410–26), as they do earlier for Calchas (126–38 and 140–55), the στρατόμαχος ('army-prophet,' 122) whose dire predictions lead to the sacrifice of Iphigenia. Prophetic language surfaces on many other occasions, particularly in the lyric of the Chorus, the comments of the Coryphaeus, and the speeches of Clytemnestra.

But surely the prophetic—indeed the dramatic—heart of *Agamemnon* resides in the captive Trojan princess Cassandra, a priestess of Apollo cursed to predict the future and never be believed. As Pat Easterling points out earlier in this volume, her scene struck the ancients as the epitome of Aeschylean ekplexis, 'bringing the spectators into contact with something beyond their normal experience'. How prophecies in general, and Cassandra specifically, come to life on stage are defining issues in any production of the play. I will approach Cassandra’s prophecy and its performance in *Agamemnon* with the following questions in mind:

1. What distinguishes Cassandra from other prophets in the *Oresteia*, and indeed, from other prophets in tragedy?
2. What is the relationship between prophecy and unveiling, and between prophecy and disrobing? Cassandra herself assures the Chorus, 'No more like a newly-wedded bride | my prophecies will not look out from under veils' (Ag. 1178–9), and she later casts off her prophetic robes to meet her death (Ag. 1264–76).
3. What is the relationship between prophetic utterance and offspring? Key moments in *Agamemnon* conjoin the two. Eagles devour a pregnant hare, inspiring Calchas to prophesy that Agamemnon must sacrifice his own daughter to appease Artemis. Cassandra's prophetic ‘gift’ arises from her denying sex and offspring to Apollo; in her mantic frenzy, she sees Thyestes' children, holding out their entrails that their father consumed.
4. How have these questions been answered, or avoided, in recent stagings of *Agamemnon*? The relative eclipse of Cassandra in contemporary productions

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5 Frequently in modern productions, one Chorus member speaks as 'Calchas'. Although certainty is impossible, I have little doubt that Aeschylus as *didaskalos* also employed individual Chorus members in this fashion. He uses the same technique when 'Agamemnon' speaks before the sacrifice of his daughter, Ag. 206–17. Quoted speech in choral lyric deserves further study.

6 The Chorus think that Clytemnestra responds to 'visions of dreams' (δειέρων φάσματα 274) in thinking Troy has fallen; she offers a prophetic-like warning that the conquering Greeks not lose control in sacking Troy (341–7); the Chorus consider the predictive, kledonomantic meanings inherent in the name Helen (681–9, discussed with other examples by Peradotta (1969)); Agamemnon would tread on the tapestries, if a prophet had told him to (934, see Denniston and Page (1957) on 933–4); Clytemnestra would have put out all the wealth of the house to be trampled, if an oracle had deemed it necessary to bring Agamemnon home (963–5); the Chorus address the terror in their prophetic hearts, emerging like an uninterpretable dream (975–83); Clytemnestra vaunts over the body of Cassandra, 'that seer of visions [τερασκότος] and 'oracle-spouting [θεσαφατρέγω] bedmate' of Agamemnon (1440–2); finally, she agrees with the Chorus' summation of Zeus' law, 'Who acts must suffer': 'You have reached this oracle [χρησιμών] with truth' (1567–8).
and her 'displacement' by Iphigenia (powerfully evoked in the lyric, but a character that Aeschylus never brings on stage) deserves further examination. Modern approaches to the play reflect great sympathy—sometimes approaching sentimentality—for Clytemnestra as the vengeful mother of Iphigenia, but they do so by occluding her malicious violence against Cassandra, the innocent prophetess whose insights place her centre stage.

Returning to the first question—how does Cassandra differ from other prophets in _Agamemnon_ and elsewhere in tragedy?—we need to clarify what we mean by 'prophet.' Fraenkel offers some assistance: 

προφήτης does not primarily denote one who 'prophesies', i.d. foretells future events. The word, akin to προειπεῖν... means literally 'pronouncer'. In actual use, however,... the word signifies in the main a person who makes pronouncements for or on behalf of a god, acting as his spokesman or mouthpiece. When, as is often the case, a god manifests his will by means of prodigia or σφάγες or some other veiled indications, the prophet's 'pronouncing' must of necessity include an interpretation of the heaven-sent tokens. But even so the original meaning of προφήτης persists wherever it occurs in earlier literature. It is not synonymous with μάντις.7

Denniston and Page find 'a common contrast between the divination and the pronunciation of what is revealed thereby'. On this model, the μάντις 'divines' then the προφήτης 'pronounces', although frequently the same person performs both roles.8

Because enactment lies at the heart of drama, divination without utterance will not take us very far in the theatre. Sophocles goes the distance in _Oedipus Tyrannus_, when the blind prophet Teiresias refuses to reveal what he knows for fifty high-pressured lines (OT 300—51). Cassandra in _Agamemnon_ exhibits just the opposite tendency. After Clytemnestra's exit (1068), Cassandra cannot keep silent about the prophetic visions that overwhelm her, although the Chorus beg her to stop.9 In the process, the Argive elders uphold the distinction between divination and proclamation: 'Your mantic fame [κλέος μαντικόν] we have heard of; but we're not searching for any prophets [προφήτας].' (Ag. 1098—9). Similarly, the Pythia in _Eumenides_ describes Apollo's eventual possession of the oracle at Delphi: 'Zeus inspired his soul [φρένα] with the art [τεχνή] and set him up as fourth seer [μάντις] at this oracular seat; but it is of Zeus that Loxias is the prophet [προφήτης]' (Eum. 17—19). Roughly interpreted, Apollo has the gift of divination, but he

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7 Fraenkel (1950) on 1099.
8 Denniston and Page (1957) on 1098 f.; for complications to this division, see Maurizio (1995), 70 and D. Roberts (1984), 20—24. Jameson (1991), 204—5 discusses instances in Thucydides and Xenophon where μάντις interpret the battle-line sacrifices (σφάγες), clearly manifestations of technē and not possession.
9 Prins (Ch. 9) emphasizes Cassandra's 'naked cry', which 'explodes meaning and alienates language from itself'. However, one is struck far more in performance by how much Cassandra sings and says (her scene with the Argive elders is the longest in the play). Although the Chorus claim not to understand her, the audience finds a plethora of intelligible signification in her manifold utterances.
speaks for Zeus. Understood atemporally, the English word ‘prophet’—someone who pronounces what divination reveals about the past, present, or future—captures the Greek terms μάντις and προφητής better than any other.

In Plato’s Phaedrus, Socrates distinguishes a divinely possessed ‘manic’ prophet from the rational interpreter of signs, or the collector and expounder of oracles (χρησμολόγοι). Such an ‘unmanic mantic’ easily can misinterpret the evidence, like a modern-day fortune teller, astrologer, or Tarot-card reader. Tragic characters frequently harbour suspicions about such technical ‘diagnosticians’, open to the influence of money, politics, and corruption—a charge laid against the human interpreters of Apollo’s oracle at Delphi, against Teiresias, and against prophets in general. Cassandra distances herself from such oracle-mongers: ‘Am I some false prophet, babbling lies from door-to-door? Bear witness, swear that I know well the ancient sins of this house’ (Ag. 1195–7). She faced similar accusations at Troy, ‘mocked by friends turned enemies, with no dissenters—I prophesied in vain, treated like a wandering beggar looking for handouts’ (1272–3). In her scene with Clytemnestra (1035–68) and then with the Chorus (1069–330, the longest in the play), Cassandra establishes her credentials, a prophet possessed by the god, driven to speak by μανία.

Although admitting her insight into the past of the house of Atreus, the Chorus cannot—or will not—understand what Cassandra says about the present and immediate future. However, they never accuse her of lying or misrepresenting the...

10 προφητής occurs only twice elsewhere in Aeschylus: at Ag. 409, the Chorus speak of the ‘prophets of the house,’ interpreting Menelaus’ dream of absent Helen; and at Sept. 611 Eteocles uses the term for Amphiaratus (also called μάντις at Sept. 72). The more common term μάντως, however, occurs over twenty times, eight in Sept. and the rest in the Oresteia, where it describes Apollo, Cassandra, Pythia, Calchas, the Nurse, and ‘fear’ (φόβος). Compounds and cognates of μάντις—στρατόμαντις, μαντίδος, μαντείον, μαντείως, μαντική, μαντικός, μαντιστήδες—occur another twenty times in Aeschylus. In Sophocles and Euripides, manteis occurs frequently, applied to the female chorus (S. El. 472), to a newly wedded wife facing life in a strange home, who must ‘divine’ how to deal with her husband (Eur. Medea 239), etc.


12 For doubts about Apollo’s oracle, see Eur. And. 1031–6, El. 399–400, 971–3, 1244–6, Ion 685, IT 711–15, Or. 162–4; about Teiresias, S. OT 380–403, 707–24, Ant. 1033–47, Eur. Pho. 772–3, Bact. 255–7; about prophets and divination generally, see Ag. 1132–5 (the Chorus distrust oracles, which always bring evil); S. OT 497–503 and 705–9 (see Jebb 1887 on 708); Eur. Hipp. 1057–9, Hel. 744–57, IA 520–1. D. Roberts (1984), 83 reminds us that fictional attitudes towards prophets and prophecies tend to shift over the course of a given work. At Eur. Pho. 954–9, Teiresias gives the prophet’s point of view, which boils down to ‘damned if you speak and damned if you don’t’. On manteis as rationalizing sophists, see Roth (1984) and Bushnell (1988), 114–17. The locus classicus for rejecting prophetic advice is Hector’s response to the Trojan prophet Polydamus in Iliad 12.195–243.

13 Knox (1972), 120–3 offers a rich analysis of Cassandra’s interaction with the Chorus, where her mantic vision of reality meets their growing moral understanding (epigrammatically summarized as
truth, which makes her rare among prophetic figures on the Attic stage. Compare the Chorus’ response with that of Creon and Oedipus to Teiresias in Antigone and Oedipus Tyrannus. Moreover, Cassandra has no previous ties to those who hear her prophesy. Teiresias, on the other hand, is a permanent fixture at Thebes—off stage in Aeschylus’ Seven Against Thebes, on stage in Sophocles’ two Theban plays, and in Euripides’ Phoenician Women and Bacchae. A similar relationship obtains with ad hoc prophetic figures, like the ghost of Darius in Persians, revealing the future to his wife and the elders of his kingdom. The blind Polynestor, who prophesies at the end of Hecuba, had been a friend to both the Trojans and Greeks. Even Eurystheus in Heraclidae, who tells Alcmene the oracle of his future role as Athens’ protector, shares a tortured history with Heracles and his family. So, too, the prophetic utterances that end many of Euripides’ plays come from figures (usually divine) closely related to those who must hear what the future holds— Thebes in Andromache, Castor in Electra, Medea in Medea, Dionysus in Bacchae, etc. Finally, although the prophet Calchas never actually appears on stage, his prophecies in Agamemnon, Ajax, Helen, Iphigenia among the Taurians, and Iphigenia at Aulis address the Greek army of which he is a member. Among characters in extant tragedy, only Cassandra prophecies to those she does not know. In performance, this alienation from the figures on stage can make her even more sympathetic to the audience.

Cassandra is also the exception to the rule that the ‘seer’ does not actually ‘see.’ The most famous tragic prophet, Teiresias, is blind, as are Polynestor and Oedipus when they come to predict the future. Sophocles captures the link between blindness and insight in his famous fragment 774 (for which we have no context): ‘I close my eyes and see.’ Other prophetic figures in tragedy ‘know’ or ‘intuit’ what will happen, without literally seeing it before their eyes. When Calchas sees the two eagles devour the pregnant hare, he draws the conclusion that they represent the two Atreidae, Agamemnon and Menelaus: ‘seeing [ἐπὶ τὸν ἱερὸν] the sign, he knew [καὶ θεὸν] that the warlike devourers of the hare were the two Atreidae, twin-spirited, who led the army’ (Ag. 122–4). The process is not παθεί μαθός). A fruitful combination leading to true wisdom fails to transpire, however, because her prophecies are doomed to rejection. Lebeck (1971), 29–32 further observes how the Chorus of Agamemnon ‘refuse to be persuaded by that gift of prophecy that they [themselves] possess’.

14 Davidson (1997) draws interesting parallels between Creon’s and Oedipus’ rejection of Teiresias in Sophocles, and Agamemnon’s rejection of Chryses, priest of Apollo, in Iliad 1.
15 In Oedipus at Colonus, Oedipus promises strangers great gain for their city if they protect him (OC 72–4, 621–3), but his actual prophecy for Athens is delivered offstage to Theseus at the end of the play (1518–38, 1643–65), after the Athenians have accepted him as their own. Oedipus’ prophecy regarding his sons is delivered to family members and fellow Thebans: to Ismene and Antigone (450–4), to Creon and his henchmen (786–93), and finally to Polyneices in the form of a curse (1370–92).
16 When we say that they ‘see’ the future, we use vision metaphorically. As Murdoch (1977), 68 points out, ‘Our ability to use visual structures to understand non-visual structures...is fundamental to explanation in any field.’
17 See Denniston and Page (1957) on 122 ff.
visionary but rational, one of deduction by inference and analogy. When the gods make predictions regarding the future, like Dionysus at the end of Bacchae, they also don't 'see' what they pronounce. They may ensure the results by predicating them (a divine speech-act), but they don't actually see what they describe.

Cassandra does. 'Ah, ah, look, look' (ἀ ἄ ἰδοὺ ἰδοὺ 1125) she tells the Chorus, for she sees through the palace facade to the fatal bath that Clytemnestra readies for her husband. Deictics abound, as Cassandra points out to the Chorus the visions that appear to her:

μαρτυρίοις γάρ τοῦτον ἐπιπεθόμαι
κλαίομεν τάδε βρέφη σφαγάς

I put my trust in the evidence right there—
those children crying at their own slaughter. (1095–6)

εἰ εἰ παπαί παπαί, τί τάδε φαίνεται;
ἡ δίκτυων τι γ' Ἡδον

Oh, not that, not that! What is this that appears?
Is it some net of Hades? (1114–15)

ὀράτε τούσδε τούς δόμους ἐφημένους
νέοις άνείρων προσφερεῖς μορφώμασιν

Do you see them, over there, sitting by the house,
young ones, just like the shapes in a dream? (1217–18)

Not only does Cassandra see the past, present, and future, but she hears it: in the cries of Thyestes’ children (1096) and the ‘choir that never leaves the house, singing together in discord’ (1186–7), in the ‘reveling band of Furies | who hymn their hymn against the house’ (1190–91). She smells it, too, fulfilling the Chorus’ simile that likens her to a ‘keen-scented bloodhound | tracking down murder’ (1093–4): 18

φεῦ φεῦ.

...

φόνον δόμοι πνέουσιν αἰματοσταγῆ.

...

όμοιοι ἄτμοι ὅπερ ἐκ τάφου πρέπει.

Ahh, ahh.

...

The house reeks with blood-dripping gore.

...

It’s like the breath of an open tomb. (1307–11)

18 Cassandra also adopts the comparison: ‘Bear witness how, in close pursuit, | I track the scent of ancient evils’ (1184–5). Mason (1959), 84 describes Cassandra’s ability to ‘transfer to our nostrils the stench of older bloodshed the sickly sweet smell of rotting human flesh’.
Finally, when the fire of prophetic mania burns through her, Cassandra’s response suggests that she feels it on her skin:

\[ \pi 
\]

\[ \ldots \text{Oh god. That fire. It comes on me.} \]

Alas, no! Lycean Apollo! Ah me, me! (1256–7)\(^1\)

Cassandra is unique in extant tragedy, a sensually present seer, completely ‘in the moment’ as we say of actors in the theatre. Her insights are not metaphorical mental sightings, nor do they result from rational deduction or internal reflection, cut off from the world around her. Rather, they arise from a kind of synaesthetic X-ray vision, which allows her to transcend the constraints of space and time. She sees the naked truth behind the palace facade, beyond the false divisions that separate here from there, and now from then.\(^2\)

The very presentness of Cassandra’s experience—one might say its simultaneity with itself—requires a kind of acting different from that demanded of other characters in tragedy. To generalize, tragic characters usually ‘report’ the past, outline the future, and/or engage in a rhetoric of dialogue, all in the mode that John Jones calls ‘acoustic mask-wearing’.\(^3\) In this regard, we might contrast Cassandra with the Pythia in Eumenides, who sees the Furies at the omphalos and then describes them after the fact. The same post facto reportage informs the stage life of the Herald, who revisits the horrors of war and the disaster of the storm; of Agamemnon, who narrates the destruction at Troy; of Clytemnestra, who describes the great chain of fire, the dual realities of a fallen city, her own (virtual) experience waiting at home; and of Aegisthus, who describes the events leading to Thyestes’ curse and his own apparent triumph. Similarly, when these characters speak about the future, they hope and plan and fear for it, but it is not in view.

Cassandra’s union with the ‘now’ is no mystical transcendence that allows her to escape reality. On the contrary, it is fully tragic, because it forces her to confront the immediacy and inevitability of death, her own and others. In Euripides’ Medea, the Messenger describes how Glauke admires herself in the mirror, ‘smiling at the lifeless image of her body’ (Med. 1162), unaware that her death is already in train. Unlike the smiling Glauke, Cassandra truly ‘sees in the mirror’, and the dead are everywhere: the children of Thyestes, Priam, the city of Troy, Agamemnon, Clytemnestra, Aegisthus, herself. Inextricably bound to what she prophesies, Cassandra is literally wiped out by it: ‘One stroke of a wet sponge and the picture is gone’ (Ag. 1329).

This challenging role—reflected in the sudden shifts between possession and sanity, between lyric and rhetoric—requires that the actor convey what Cassandra

\(^1\) Sansone (1975), 44 n. 13.
\(^2\) As Kamerbeek (1965), 34 puts it, ‘Time seems to have a stop before the wholeness of vision.’ See also Schein (1982), 11–12.
\(^3\) J. Jones (1962), 277: ‘the shared-out spoken word is all.’
sees before her eyes, including her own imminent death. In her first possessed outburst, the prophetess asks Apollo where he has brought her, ‘to what house?’ (1087). When she leaves the stage, she knows the answer: ‘I call on these gates as the gates of Hades’ (ándose πυλας δὲ τάδ’, ἐγὼ προσευνέπω 1291). Cassandra’s other visions must have the same reality for the actor playing the part as those palace doors, which even the audience can see.

Unlike Cassandra, most of us live our lives by refusing to confront the one thing we all know, namely that we’re going to die. We resemble the title character of the English morality Everyman, insisting that the timing is wrong, that we have unfinished business, that it can’t happen today. In Greek terms, we take full advantage of Prometheus’ ‘blind hopes’ (τυφλᾶς... ἐλπὶδας), which enable us ‘no longer to foresee our fated end’ (μὴ προδέρκεσθαι μόρον, A. Prom. 250, 248). We prefer the ‘veil of Maya’ to the truth of our ephemerality, as Nietzsche explores in The Birth of Tragedy. This predilection for illusion leads to our second question, the relationship between prophecy and unveiling, between mantic insight and revelation.

When she first moves into normal dramatic speech, Cassandra proclaims: ‘No more like a newly-wedded bride, my prophecies will not look out from under veils’ (Ag. 1278–9). Adopting a more rational mode of expression, Cassandra promises to reveal what she sees and knows to the Chorus. Her nuptial comparison refers to the ἀνακαλυπτήρια, an event in the Athenian wedding ritual when the bride unveils herself to her husband. This symbolic action performed by a Greek woman marks a new intimacy and sexual openness, appropriate for her transition from maiden to wife. In Chamber Music (XI), James Joyce advises her Irish counterpart ‘... softly to undo the snood | That is the sign of maidenhood.’

Wearing a veil or covering over the head (indistinguishable in ancient Athens, at least from the visual evidence) indicated female modesty and chastity. Generally in Greece, hiding one’s head or eyes suggested ἀίδος, a sense of shame, modesty, or (dis)honour. By comparing her prophecies to an unveiled bride, Cassandra promises unconcealed truth telling, eye-to-eye with the Chorus, unabashed, and unashamed. She fulfils her promise (although the Chorus still fail to understand),

22 For Hades conceived as a sunless house from which there is no escape, see also S. Ant. 1241 and Th. 120–21; Eur. Alc. 25, 73, 126, 436–37, 626, 852, 867; Vermeule (1979), 35–7; S. Roberts (1978), 182–5; Macintosh (1994), 80–5 (Agamemnon dramatizes ‘a whole House dying into death’).
24 For the ἀνακαλυπτήρια, see Rehm (1994), 141–2; in relation to Cassandra specifically, 47–50; also Seaford (1987), 128.
25 Joyce (1932).
even revealing her own sexual violation by Apollo ('Before now I was ashamed to speak of it,' *Ag.* 1203) and the mockery she endured from her fellow Trojans.28

Cassandra removes the symbolic veils to expose the truth about her own past, the place where she has come, and the future that lies ahead for her and the house.29 When the prophetic frenzy seizes her again ('Ah, this fire, it burns through me!' 1256), she throws off the raiments that tie her to Apollo: wand, coronal, and prophetic robes (1264—70). In the Royal National Theatre's production of Ted Hughes' *Oresteia* (1999), Cassandra appeared partially disrobed at this point (see Fig. 18.1); whereas in the production that first brought me to the *Oresteia*, staged by the Greek Theatre Project in Melbourne, Australia in 1974, and in the most recent version of the play I have seen, staged at Berkeley Repertory Theater in 2001, Cassandra disrobed completely at this point.30 On both occasions, the effect was shocking and appropriate. For modern audiences, nakedness on stage can suggest powerlessness, vulnerability, 'the thing itself; unaccommodated man...a poor, bare, forked animal'—to quote from the one play to which Aeschylus' trilogy can reasonably be compared, *King Lear* (iii. iv. 9—10).

The Greeks tended to view nudity as a source of pride rather than vulnerability, and (in the case of males) as a public display of musculature, physical prowess, and sexual allure. Greek men exercised, trained, and competed athletically in the nude, *γυμνός* ('naked'), which gives us 'gymnasium'. A centrepiece of the Panathenaia was the *εὐανάθλη*α, a tribal contest of manly (nude) beauty reserved for Athenians (perhaps for fear of the competition).31 As part of their own festivals, women, too, held athletic contests, the most famous taking place at Olympia in honour of Hera, and they presumably competed in the nude as well.32 Nudity on the Greek stage, however, was a non-starter, given the subject matter of tragedy, the fact that all performers were masked, and that all of them were male. A naked Cassandra in the theatre of Dionysus would have had quite the wrong effect, something like

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28 Morgan (1994), 128 notes that the transition to bride is precisely the one Cassandra refused to make with Apollo, resulting in her prophetic curse. Expanding on D. Roberts (1984), 66—8, who notes parallels between Cassandra and Orestes, Morgan argues (134) that 'Cassandra's function in *Agamemnon* is partly to act as a negative paradigm for Orestes'. Orestes succeeds by submitting to Apollo's will, whereas Cassandra fails, an interesting but dramatically unpersuasive idea.

29 As Vicaire (1963), 351 notes, 'Le poète nous montre Cassandre oscillant de l'état de transe violente à une lucidité amère et éloquente' ('The poet shows Cassandra oscillating between a violent trance-like state and a bitter and eloquent lucidity."


31 Crowther (1985). Bonfante (1989) describes male nudity in such contexts as a costume or uniform.

32 Harris (1979), 179—86. See also Scanlon (1984), esp. 79—81 and Bonfante (1989), 552—4, 558—62, and 569, both of whom note female nakedness (partial or total) in some ritual contexts, including rites connected to Artemis for young girls at Brauron in Attica. Plato (*Rep.* 451c—7c) argues strenuously and controversially that male and female guardians should train together in the nude, part of their equal status and education.
the undressing scene in *The Crying Game*—not the prophetic unveiling I have in mind.

However, a modern director can point to ancient evidence supporting a nude Cassandra at a moment of great vulnerability. Several vase-painters of the sixth and fifth century depict the notorious rape from the *Iliupersis*, showing the Trojan princess naked, clinging to the statue of Athena while Ajax the Lesser assaults her. As Anderson observes, Cassandra's 'striking state of whole or partial nudity... stands out as a clear violation of the norms of contemporary Greek art, according to which no women except hetairai regularly appear completely nude'. In the visual tradition, as well as in *Agamemnon*, the character of Cassandra is unprecedented. When a modern-stage Cassandra fulfils the image of unveiling by completely disrobing, she prepares like a bride for that

33 Anderson (1997), 200. For vases representing the scene, with Cassandra partially or fully nude, see Anderson's catalogue, 274–7, nos. 13, 16 (fig. 8a–c), 22 (fig. 6b), 27 (fig. 5a), 31 (Davreux (1942), fig. 49), 34; see also Davreux (1942), figs. 40, 41, 45, 50, 52, 53, 63, and 64. Bonfante (1989), 561 expands the norms for nude depiction somewhat: 'a naked woman [in art] was a slave, for hire, or about to be violated' (561). Connelly (1993) analyses the shift in emphasis in artistic portrayals of Ajax' rape of Cassandra from the violation of Athena's sanctuary (where it takes place) to the violation of the Trojan prophetess.
'consummation | devoutly to be wish'd'. Following Hamlet's scenario, the 'husband' who awaits her is death, as I have discussed elsewhere.34

This possibility takes us back to Socrates' preference for manic seeing in Phaedrus. Recall that when making his first speech in praise of the non-lover, Socrates insists on veiling his head, not looking at Phaedrus out of a sense of shame (Phaedr. 237a). However, when he delivers his palinode, Socrates uncovers his head, no longer disgraced by what he has to say about love (243b). In his recantation he praises μανια as a blessing for prophets, poets, lovers, and finally philosophers ('lovers of wisdom'), accounting for their detachment from ordinary human pursuits and their allegiance to the eternal Forms. By the end of the dialogue, Socrates himself turns to the mantic arts, 'prophesying' (μαντεύομαι, 278ε—79α) that his rival Isocrates will see the error of his ways and abandon rhetorical composition for spoken dialogue, a mode that engenders philosophical understanding:

[these will teach] lessons...written on the soul of the hearer: such discourses ought to be accounted a man's own legitimate children—a title to be applied primarily to such as originate within the man himself, and secondarily to such of their sons and brothers as have grown up aright in the souls of other men.35

Socrates' conflation of divine possession and philosophical children brings us to our next question, the relationship between prophecy and offspring. As noted above, Aeschylus in Agamemnon intertwinews the two, insofar as every significant prophecy involves the killing of children, or killing by children. The twin eagles that signal success at Troy for the Greeks also swoop down on a pregnant hare, devouring her and her unborn pups (111-20). Calchas prophesies the need for a compensatory sacrifice to appease Artemis (122—58), and Agamemnon sacrifices his daughter Iphigenia (198—249). The prophet's prediction that Troy will fall (125—30) comes to pass when 'shield-bearing young of the wooden horse | time their birth to the setting stars' (825—6), as Agamemnon puts it. Seeing the past horrors of the house of Atreus, Cassandra beholds the children of Thyestes, crying aloud at their fate, holding their own entrails, the roasted meat their father tasted (1095—7 and 1217—22, confirmed by the Chorus at 1242—4). Looking into the future, she sees a 'descendant' (φιτυμα) who will return from exile to avenge his father by murdering his mother (1280—3). Cassandra prophesies Orestes' matricidal homecoming, which occurs in the next play. As we discover there, his return

34 Hamlet 111.i.64—5. See Rehm (1994), 44—50. R. Griffith (1988) notes that the removal and/or change of clothing by those murdered in the trilogy—Iphigenia 'pouring' her robes to the ground (239), Agamemnon removing his boots to walk on the tapestries (944-5) and later disrobing completely for his fatal bath, Clytemnestra exposing her breast to Orestes (Cho. 896—8). Cassandra discarding her prophetic raiment—suggest the ritual change of clothing undergone by initiates and by corpses dressed for burial.
35 Pl. Phaed. 278a—b.
fulfils Clytemnestra’s prophetic dream of giving birth to a deadly serpent-son (Cho. 32–41, 523–51, 928–9).36

Cassandra herself embodies these irreducible ties of prophecy and offspring. The source of her visions lies in her rejection of Apollo, usually understood as a refusal to become his lover. However as Kovacs has argued (persuasively in my view), the description of Apollo’s interaction with Cassandra suggests that she deceives the god after he rapes her.37

CHORUS: So, was the god struck with sexual longing?
CASS: Before, I was ashamed to speak of it.

... He wrestled me, breathing his grace hard upon me.

CHORUS: Did you come to bear him children, as is usual?
CASS: I consented, and then I deceived Apollo.

(Ag. 1203–8)

Although certainty eludes us, the text allows the possibility that Cassandra aborts the foetus, or kills the newborn infant.38 Such a proto-feminist interpretation finds support in the earlier comparison of Cassandra to the nightingale (1140–9). The Chorus allude to the myth of Procris, who slays her children by Tereus after he rapes her sister Philomela and cuts out her tongue.39

The poetic irony of Cassandra raped and then doomed to produce stillborn prophecies strengthens the link between Cassandra and Iphigenia, herself the victim of a prophecy that leads to her death at the hands of her father. Although Aeschylus never makes the comparison explicit,40 Iphigenia—whose death at Aulis the Chorus re-enact in the parodos (228–49)—shares many attributes with

36 The connection between prophecy and offspring continues in Eumenides. After promising the Furies ‘first fruits of the land, | sacrifices at childbirth and at the rites of marriage’ (Eum. 834–5), Athena invites them to bless the land with fecundity and offspring (907–12). The Furies respond: ‘I make my prayer for Athens, | prophesying [theem'cœuoa] with kind intent | that the radiant rays of sunlight | cause the earth to burgeon with profusion, | blessings that make life prosper’ (Eum. 921–6). Cf. the prophecy-offspring dyad in Oedipus Tyrannus (as reported by Jocasta) and Prometheus Bound (Prometheus’ prophecy about Io’s offspring). The foresight of prophecy sees the resolution of a cosmic stand-off in terms of human offspring, which—for the Greeks as for us—represent the past’s link to the future. Cf. Macbeth, when the three sisters reveal their final prophecy that Banquo’s offspring and his line will wear the crown (Macbeth iv.i.100–25).


38 As Aeschylus suggests, and myth confirms, offspring inevitably result from divine coupling with humans. These divine–human σόφοι are mortal and therefore ‘killable’, manifest in the stories of Achilles, Aeneas, Ion (in Euripides’ play), Helen, Heracles, and others. These heroes may be divinized—as happens to Heracles and Helen, in some versions—but such apotheoses occur after their deaths.

40 For verbal and imagistic connections between the two characters, see Rehm (1994), 50–2 and 175–7 nn. 33–48. Wiles (1988), 83 suggests that the Chorus act out Iphigenia’s sacrifice using an altar located in the centre of the orchestra, making the event even more memorable for the audience. The Melbourne production in 1974 did just that, using the actress who later played Cassandra as Iphigenia.
Cassandra. Each of their deaths takes the form of a perverted sacrifice, with a royal daughter substituted for the animal victim. Both Iphigenia (238) and Cassandra (1266–72) cast off items of clothing, metaphorical disrobing connected to the twin gods associated with their demise, Artemis (134–8, 146–55, 201–2) and Apollo (1072–87, 1202–13, 1256–7, 1269–72). As noted above, Cassandra’s prophetic ‘unveiling’ and symbolic undressing signal the transition from an innocent maid to a bride of death, a standard trope in mythical accounts of Iphigenia, lured to Aulis under the pretext of marriage to Achilles.41 Held over the altar, Iphigenia resembles ‘a picture (γραφαίς) straining to speak’ (242), an image that Cassandra uses for herself and other doomed mortals, when a stroke of a wet sponge means that ‘the picture’ (γραφήν 1329) vanishes.

By linking the two young women at the moment of their deaths, Aeschylus brings together the respective damage wreaked by Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, and the audience views their fate accordingly. We understand that Agamemnon has to die, the result of his impious conquest of Troy that began with the sacrifice of his daughter at Aulis. Similarly, Clytemnestra’s murder of Cassandra—more than her slaying of Agamemnon—turns the audience against her and makes her death acceptable. By butchering the innocent Trojan prophetess, Clytemnestra participates in the final destruction of the city, a disaster set in train ten years earlier when her sister Helen came to Troy and her husband Agamemnon led the expedition to sack the city and bring her home.

These observations lead to my final question about the presentation of Cassandra in contemporary productions of the play. As the topic is too vast to cover in detail, let us concentrate on current theatrical interest in Iphigenia at the expense of Cassandra. Several recent productions—including Mnouchkine’s Les Atrides (with Iphigenia in Aulis as the prologue), the recent Oresteia at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, and Katie Mitchell’s production of The Oresteia at the Royal National Theatre—have introduced the character of Iphigenia, with her ‘ghost’ reappearing onstage at relevant points later in the trilogy. As a director, I embrace the freedom of theatre artists to find new ways to perform old plays for contemporary audiences. However, as an admirer of Agamemnon, I sense that these Iphigenia-heavy interpretations obscure the power and importance of Cassandra (see Fig. 18.2), and tend to downplay the sacrilege of her murder by Clytemnestra.

As indicated above, Aeschylus delicately but unmistakably evokes Iphigenia in the character of Cassandra, one more innocent victim awash in the bloodshed of the house of Atreus. An on-stage Iphigenia tends to displace the emphasis that Aeschylus puts on her Trojan counterpart. Not gagged or bound like Agamemnon’s daughter, Cassandra is free to unveil herself, to reveal prophecies, to speak powerfully to those who can see and hear—namely the audience. Goethe’s letter to von Humboldt summarizes the effect of Cassandra on stage:

The weave of this primal tapestry amazes me more than ever—past, present and future are so beautifully integrated that the spectator becomes a seer, in other words, close to divinity. And that is after all in the last resort the final mark of success in poetry of any kind, at any level.\textsuperscript{42}

Perhaps we should trust Aeschylus’ prophetess to reveal for us the tragic integration of past, present, and future, without recourse to shadow figures and interpretive pointers. If we introduce Iphigenia to ensure that the audience understands Clytemnestra’s motivation for killing Agamemnon, then we run the risk of diminishing other reasons for the murder (her sexual jealousy, lust for political power, and erotic passion for Aegisthus). More significantly, we may miss what it means for her to kill Cassandra.

In theatrical terms, this directorial choice involves visualizing the unseen, filling in the gaps by taking poetic images and allusions and physicalizing them on stage. In his famous 1977 production of \textit{Agamemnon} at Lincoln Center, Andrei Serban made the same choice, manifesting for the audience what Cassandra sees, including physically present children holding out their guts like fishmongers, and a

\textsuperscript{42} Quoted by Mason (1959), 85. Cf. Ewans, Ch. 6, p. 107; and for the late 19th-cent. readings of this scene, see Macintosh, Ch. 8.
jock-strapped Apollo prodding Cassandra off to her death. Such picture-making interventions indicate a deep distrust of the actor's capacity to use language to open the audience's imagination. Treating spectators like cinematic dummies undermines the aesthetic basis of Greek tragedy, which depends on a combination of character-driven speech and choral lyric (poetry, music, dance) to bring the story to life.

A similar, albeit more effective, instance of this theatrical tendency occurred in Mitchell's production where Iphigenia's 'ghost' climbed a ladder to the gallery after the sacrifice at Aulis and watched over the rest of the play. The production called attention to her visual presence on several occasions, notably during Agamemnon's homecoming, where Clytemnestra's tapestry consisted of bloodied children's dresses (cf. Walton and Hardwick, this volume). Eventually Iphigenia even found her way into Agamemnon's bath, again making physically concrete an image that Aeschylus suggests in language alone—namely Clytemnestra's wish that Iphigenia embrace her father with a kiss, greeting him in the land of the dead (Ag. 1555–9). If my reading of the Cassandra scene is correct, then Aeschylus already has 'visualized' this reunion. It is manifest—imaginatively but not literally—in the twin corpses of Agamemnon and Cassandra, exposed by Clytemnestra for all to see. Reintroducing Iphigenia at this point occludes Cassandra; physically representing her visions onstage diminishes their imaginative power.

How might we account for the focus in contemporary productions on Iphigenia at the expense of Cassandra? Certainly, this theatrical emphasis exposes Agamemnon's horrific violation of the female principle of childbirth and maternal love, a violation compounded by the fact that the murdered child is a girl. Devaluing what strikes us (and, I think, struck the Greeks) as natural, Agamemnon subordinates the innate ties of offspring to a dubious 'public good' by sacrificing his daughter to pursue a foreign war. Ties between males (Agamemnon's relation to his brother Menelaus, and to the army) displace those that connect men and women (Agamemnon's relation to his daughter Iphigenia, and to his wife Clytemnestra). However, this tendency in production approaches the sentimental when it converts Clytemnestra—a complex and unsentimental dramatic figure, if ever there was one—into a single-minded mother out for vengeance for the murder of her youngest daughter. As Edith Hall points out in this volume, critics over the centuries have tended to de-fang the Argive queen of her drive for political power, an ambition clearly stated in her confrontation with the

43 See Knox (1979), 75–6.
44 In my discussion of contemporary productions, I have profited from the Open University's electronic seminar convened by Lorna Hardwick, entitled 'Rehabilitating Agamemnon', May–June 2001 (contact C.A.Gillespie@open.ac.uk.). Contributions by the convenor, Robert Garland, and Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones focused on Mnouchkine's Les Atrides (Théâtre du Soleil), Stuttard's Agamemnon (Actors of Dionysus), and Katie Mitchell's The Oresteia: The Home Guard (Royal National Theatre). Although Mnouchkine didn't bring Iphigenia onstage in Agamemnon, Les Atrides opened with a version of Euripides' Iphigenia in Aulis, foregrounding the sacrifice of Iphigenia and establishing its sympathies with Clytemnestra from the start. See further, de La Combe, this volume.
Chorus after the murders and tacitly evident throughout the play. Productions that present Iphigenia as the motivating factor in the assassination of Agamemnon also tend to ignore the strong sexual tone in Clytemnestra’s celebration over the corpses of Agamemnon and Cassandra (Ag. 1384–92, 1438–47), and the erotic image she uses in referring to her paramour and conspirator Aegisthus (1434–7). Above all, this theatrical trend neglects the queen’s responsibility for murdering the prophet Cassandra, an act of violence and violation that reveals the blindness of its perpetrator to the inextricable relationship between action and fate. In Margaret Reynold’s memorable phrase earlier in this volume (see Chapter 7), there can be ‘no amnesty for apathy’, but we should extend that admonition to directorial apathy for the fate of Cassandra.

In my view, the dramatic challenge of Agamemnon is how to unveil the prophet; how to bring Cassandra fully to life, without sentiment or theatrical overkill. To be sure, the murder of the last Trojan brings the carnage at Troy home to Argos, and home to the audience. But Cassandra’s fate also serves existential ends. By her example, the audience glimpses what death might mean, if one were brave enough to confront it before it happens. As the Chorus say in Ted Hughes’ translation, ‘One brave death | Helps many living.’ Cassandra accepts the prospect of imminent death because her prophecies cannot be gagged or silenced. She speaks and dances and sings them, gathering rich associations of prophecy and unveiling, of prophecy and nakedness, of prophecy and children. Her words may go unheard, unheeded, or uncomprehended. We must wait to see what offspring they engender, what the future unveils. Time, as Cassandra knows, will tell.

45 T. Hughes (1999), 64.
Appendix:

Agamemnons on the APGRD Database

Amanda Wrigley

This chapter comprises a reference list of over 750 works of performance which draw on Aeschylus and Seneca's *Agamemnon*. The list includes theatrical, operatic, and danced works, as well as those delivered through the medium of film, television, and radio. Since the overwhelming majority claim an Aeschylean rather than a Senecan influence, it should be assumed that they draw on Aeschylus unless it is stated otherwise. The *Oresteia* trilogy—comprising Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, *Libation Bearers*, and *Eumenides*—is included in the list under the title of the trilogy, unless there is good reason to consider the three plays to be separate productions in some respect: for example, the Gibellina *Oresteia* which was performed over a three year period from 1983. Plays not drawing on Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* but on *Libation Bearers* and *Eumenides* are mentioned in the listing only when they receive significant discussion in the preceding chapters; an example of this is John Pikeryng's *Horestes*, performed in London by 1567.

The geographical spread of the list is understandably most concentrated around Europe and North America, with approximately three quarters of the total number of recorded productions having been first performed in these areas, and with Britain and the USA enjoying approximately 18 per cent and 30 per cent of the total number of productions respectively. The remaining quarter of productions fall across an extremely wide and rich array of countries, for example, Cuba, Iceland, Israel, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria, the Philippines, Poland, Russia, Turkey, and Zambia. The two images which illustrate this chapter—both examples of the type of evidence on productions the APGRD holds in its archival collections—have been chosen especially for their international flavour: the first, taken from the Leyhausen-Spiess Collection, shows the programme for a student production which travelled from Mainz for performance in Verona at the 1952 Delphiade Festival; and the second image shows a flyer advertising a Romanian *Oresteia* on tour to London in 1998.
The chronological spread of the data is heavily concentrated in the twentieth century, with 90 per cent of all entries falling within this period. Some easily identifiable trends emerge from an analysis of the figures from the last century. As one might expect, the number of productions of these plays increases steadily through the century: in the first fifty years, there is an average of twenty-five productions per decade, with a noticeable drop in the decade of the First World War; after 1950, however, the number of productions rises steadily each decade, from seventy-five in the 1950s to approximately one hundred in the 1990s. The figures promise to continue to increase: the first five years of the twenty-first century have already seen over a hundred productions of the plays under discussion. This rise in the number of productions being performed has, of course, much to do with the greater preservation of ephemeral material pertaining to theatrical productions in more recent decades, and also the increasing use of the internet as a research resource, enabling access to information on productions being performed in all corners of the globe. But it is equally important to note that these figures support trends identified in the production chronologies of other plays which have been the subject of concentrated research by the APGRD team, in particular, Medea (see David Gowen's chapter, 'Medeas on the Archive Database', in Hall, Macintosh, and Taplin, 2000). Whereas Medea was well performed throughout the nineteenth century, the performance history of the Agamemnon does not start in earnest until the 1870s; nevertheless, the comparison between the figures for the production of these two plays in each of the six centuries under scrutiny is still extremely close. One way in which the following list will differ from that in the Medea in Performance volume is that multiple principal actors in each production will be listed (those in the roles of Agamemnon, Clytemnestra, and Cassandra), reflecting the debate which appears in certain essays in this volume on the lack of one central character in the Agamemnon.

The shorthand term 'production' is used to refer to a work of performance repeated over any length of time, in any number of venues, with largely the same cast, and with the same director(s) and company involved in its realization. Tours and revivals of a work are, therefore, included in the entry for the original production and not separately. When, however, a revival of a production is considered to have differed significantly from the original in some way, for example with a notable change in text, cast, design, music, or direction, the revival receives either an explanatory note, or a separate entry in the list (see, for example, the entries under 1980 and 1994 for Peter Stein's Oresteias).

When the Oresteia trilogy is produced as one theatrical event (even if the three plays are performed on separate days, or at separate locations), it is listed as one production under its collective title. However, if the three plays in the trilogy have different directors, for example, they would then be considered to be three separate productions, and in such a case only the Agamemnon would appear in the list which follows. It is noteworthy that approximately 60 per cent of the entries are for productions of Agamemnon alone, with the remaining 40 per cent...
being productions which draw from the entire *Oresteia* trilogy. When it is known, the title of a production is given as it was advertised during the run; otherwise simply *Agamemnon* or *Oresteia* are cited. If the title of a production does not make clear from which Greek tragedy(ies) the work draws, a brief indication is offered. The terms translation and adaptation are used somewhat loosely. It is important to note that, since playscripts are not usually available for consultation, it is very often necessary to rely on the estimation of those staging the production with regard to how closely the play as performed lies in relation to the ancient *Agamemnons*. A full production history of adaptations such as Eugene O'Neill's *Mourning Becomes Electra* has not been attempted, but they are well represented in the list, especially with regard to premières and significant stagings.

The list is arranged chronologically by year of first performance. Within each year, productions are grouped geographically by country of first performance (and geographical areas are identified by the countries in which they are currently located, so Magnesia on the Maeander is listed under Turkey, and current country names such as the Czech Republic, Russia, and Slovenia are used throughout). Within country groupings, productions are ordered by month of performance (when it is known), and then within months alphabetically by title. For films, the year of distribution and main country of origin is listed.

The following production details are included: author of the script (writer, translator, adaptor, librettist), composer (for musical works), conductor (for opera), director, venue at which the première of the production took place, with brief details of tours and revivals, the company involved in the production of the work, and the actors in the roles of Agamemnon, Clytemnestra, and Cassandra. These details are included when they are known, and so the absence of a Cassandra should not necessarily be taken to indicate that there was no Cassandra role in that production. Composers (except for opera and other musical productions) and individuals responsible for design and choreography are not usually cited. For reasons of space the following abbreviations are used: tr. (translated/translation), ad. (adapted/adaptation), comp. (composed), cond. (conducted), dir. (directed), des. (designed), Ag. (Agamemnon), Clyt. (Clytemnestra), and Cass. (Cassandra).

Whilst the list strives towards accuracy and comprehensiveness, it is published in the knowledge that it can be no more than a work in progress. It includes all performed works which have come to the attention of the researchers and staff of the Archive of Performances of Greek and Roman Drama at Oxford. Monumental efforts have been made to verify all the details in the list, but there remain cases where verification was not possible at the time of going to press. We are, however, confident that it offers a more comprehensive chronology of *Agamemnons* and *Oresteias* in performance than previously published lists (see, for example, that in Hellmut Flashar’s *Inszenierung der Antike: Das griechische Drama auf der Bühne der Neuzeit, 1585—1990*). This chapter is a snapshot of the information collected in the APGRD Database (accessible at www.apgrd.ox.ac.uk) which at the time of
going to press holds records for over 8,000 works of modern performance which draw on ancient Greek and Roman drama. The database is and will remain a work in progress, being constantly revised and added to as a result of the work of the APGRD’s Researchers and Graduate Associates, and the information supplied by an international network of friends and colleagues in the worlds of academe and the theatre. Additions, clarifications, and corrections to this list are welcomed by Amanda Wrigley, Archive of Performances of Greek and Roman Drama, Classics Centre, University of Oxford, 67 St Giles’, Oxford OX1 3LU (email apgrd@classics.ox.ac.uk). Information on amateur and professional productions of other Greek and Roman dramas, on stage and film, and in opera and dance, performed since the Renaissance to the present day would also be warmly received.

The basis of the following list is the work done over many years by my colleagues at the APGRD, Peter Brown, Edith Hall, Fiona Macintosh, Pantelis Michelakis, and Oliver Taplin, to whom I owe many thanks for help in the compilation of this chapter. Graduate students at the APGRD have also offered help of various kinds: Elina Dagonaki, Eleftheria Ioannidou, Kathleen Riley, and Avery Willis. My biggest debt of gratitude with regard to the compilation of the list is owed to Christopher Weaver, the APGRD’s Administration Assistant, who has with characteristic efficiency and cheerfulness undertaken the lion’s share of the correspondence with archives and theatre companies. To those individuals—too numerous to mention individually here—who have been most generous with their time and resources in response to our pleas for help, thank you. It is also my pleasure to thank a small army of APGRD friends and associates who keep the research project up-to-date with what is happening on stages across the world. For details of American productions from the 1960s I am deeply indebted to Helene Foley. The Open University’s database under the management of Lorna Hardwick and Carol Gillespie has provided this list with many new entries, as has the research undertaken by the many scholars across Europe who have contributed to the work of the European Network of Research and Documentation of Ancient Greek Drama. At the risk of committing the sin of omission I would like to offer thanks to the following colleagues and associates who have been particularly helpful in the course of drawing up this list: Herman Altena, Ruby Blondell, Alison Burke, Erica Clarke, Freddy Decreus, Karelisa Hartigan, Mary Hart, Pete Hartley, Philip Hooker, Andreja Inkret, Allen Kuharski, Oonagh Lahr, Michelle Paull, and William Zewadski.

458 BC  Greece  Oresteia by Aeschylus; performed at the Theatre of Dionysus, Athens.
452–421 BC  Greece  Agamemnon by Ion of Chios; performed in Athens.
240–207 BC  Italy  Aegisthus by Livius Andronicus; performed in Rome.
140–86 BC  Italy  Clytemnestra by Lucius Accius; performed in Rome.
100–50 BC  Turkey  Clytemnestra by Polemaios; performed at a festival competition at Magnesia on the Maeander.
55 BC  Italy  Clytemnestra; a revival of Lucius Accius’ play; performed for the gala opening of Pompey’s Theatre, Rome.
49–65 AD  Italy  Agamemnon by Seneca; performed in Rome.
January 1554  Germany  Die mordisch konigin Clitimestra; ad. by Hans Sachs, drawing only indirectly on Aeschylus; performed in Nuremberg, Bavaria.
1556  France  Agamemnon; ad. from Seneca by Charles Toutain; performed in France.
By 1567  Britain  Horestes; a play by John Pikeryng drawing on medieval versions of the Orestes story; performed in London.
December 1584  Britain  Agamemnon and Ulysses; performed in Greenwich, London.
1585  France  Clytemnestre; ad. from Seneca by Pierre Matthieu; performed in Paris, Basochiens, France.
1590  France  Clytemnestre; ad. from Seneca by Pierre Matthieu; performed in Paris, Basochiens, France.
1599  Britain  Agamemnon; ad. by Henry Chettle and Thomas Dekker; performed at the Elizabethan Rose Theatre, London.
c.1609–13  Britain  The Iron Age; a play, including an adaptation of Agamemnon, written by Thomas Heywood as part of a series of four Ages; performed at the Red Bull, London.
c.1609–19  Britain  The Tragedie of Orestes; an original English language play by Thomas Goffe drawing on Euripides’ Orestes, Seneca’s Agamemnon and Thyestes, Shakespeare’s Hamlet, and Sophocles’ Electra; performed at Christ Church, Oxford.
c.1619–22  Britain  The True Tragedy of Herod and Antipater; a play written by Gervase Markham and William Sampson which includes a ‘Dumbe Shew’ of Agamemnon; performed at the Red Bull, London.
1642  France  Agamemnon; ad. by Sieur Arnauld of Provence; performed in France.
March 1680  France  Agamemnon; a play by Claude Boyer, drawing on Seneca; performed at the Théâtre Guénégau, Paris.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1702</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Cassandre; ad. by Joseph de La Grange-Chancel; performed in Paris.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1706</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Cassandre; opera comp. by François Bouvard and Toussaint (Thomas) Bertin de la Douë; libretto by Joseph de La Grange-Chancel; performed at the Académie Royale de Musique, Paris.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 1731</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Attanagamanenone; opera buffa comp. by Bartolomeo Cordans; libretto by G. B. Buini; performed at San Moisè, Venice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1738</td>
<td>Britain</td>
<td>Agamennon; ad. from Aeschylus and Seneca by James Thomson; performed at Drury Lane, London; James Quin (Ag.), Mary Anne Porter (Clyt.), and Susannah Maria Gibber (Cass.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1771</td>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Agamennon Venge; ballet choreographed by Jean-Georges Noverre; music comp. by Joseph Starzer; performed in Vienna.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Agamennone Vendicato; ballet choreographed by Jean-Georges Noverre; music comp. by Joseph Starzer; performed in Milan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1780</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Agamennon; Henri Panckoucke's French translation of James Thomson's Agamennon, adapted from Aeschylus and Seneca (see under 1738 above); performed in Paris.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1787</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Agamennone; a lyric monodrama by Francesco Mario Pagano; performed at Raimondi, Naples.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1789</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Il ritorno di Agamennone; ballet choreographed by Francesco Clerico; performed at San Benedetto, Venice (see below for the 1801 revival under the title Agamennone).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1794</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Clytemnestre; cantata for solo voice by Luigi Cherubini; probably performed in France.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late April (Floréal) 1797</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Agamennon; 'Citizen' Louis Jean Népomucène Lemercier's adaptation from Aeschylus and Seneca; performed at the Théâtre de la République, Paris; Françoise Vestris (Clyt.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Clytemnestra; opera comp. by Niccolò Zingarelli; libretto by F. Salfi; performed at La Scala, Milan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1800</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Cadet-Roussel aux Champs-Élysées; ou, la Colère d'Agamennon; vaudeville written by Joseph Aude; performed at the Théâtre Montasier, Paris.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1801</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Agamennone; ballet choreographed by Francesco Clerico; performed at La Scala, Milan (a revival of the 1789 production performed under the title Il Ritorno di Agamennone, on which see above).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Agamemnon on the APGRD Database

1803
December 1803 France Cassandre-Agamemnon et Colombine-Cassandre; parody of Lemercier's Agamemnon (on which see under 1797 above) written by François-Georges Fougues Desfontaines; performed at the Vaudeville, Paris.

1816
November 1816 Saint Helena Agamemnon; read by Napoleon to his companions on Saint Helena Island in the South Atlantic Ocean.

1820
1820 Germany Clytemnestra; [ad.] by Michael Beer; performed at the Hofbühne.

1820
Spain Agaménône e Egisto y Clitemnestra; ad. by P. Montêngone; ?performed in Spain.

1821
Italy Agamemnône; ballet choreographed by Giovanni Galzerani (see below under 1828); performed at the Teatro della Pergola, Florence.

1822
November 1822 France Clytemnestre; a play after Alfieri and drawing on Agamemnône and Sophocles' Electra by Alexandre Soumet; performed at the Odéon, Paris.

1828
September 1828 Italy Agamemnône; new version of the ballet choreographed by Giovanni Galzerani and performed in 1821 (see above); music comp. by Cesare Pugni; performed at La Scala, Milan.

1842
Italy Agamemnône; ad. by Vittorio Alfieri; performed at the Teatro Re, Milan. Alfieri wrote Agamemnône and Oreste (drawing on Libation Bearers) in the period 1776-1778 with the intention that they be performed together, but, whereas Agamemnône did not receive a performance until 1842, Oreste was performed in 1781 in Rome.

1847
November 1847 Italy Agamemnône; opera comp. by G. Treves; libretto by Perrane (Perone); performed at La Scala, Milan.

1848
March 1848 France Agamemnon; ad. by Joseph Autran; music comp. by Auguste Morel; performed at the Odéon, Paris.

c.1855
Portugal Vingança de Agamemnon; version of Oresteia by H. Ayres Victoria; ?performed in Portugal.

1856
January 1856 France L'Orestie; ad. by Alexandre Dumas, père; performed at the Théâtre de la Porte Saint-Martin, Paris; Henri
Amanda Wrigley

Luguet (Ag.), Lucie Mabire (Clyt.), and Marie Laurent (Cass.).

April 1856

Agamemnon; ou, Le chameau à deux bosses; burlesque opera comp. by Hervé (= Florimond Ronger); libretto by the composer; performed at the Folies-Nouvelles, Paris.

1867 Britain

Agamemnon at Home; or, The Latest Particulars of That Little Affair at Mycenae; burlesque written by Edward Nolan; St John's College Amateurs, Oxford; performed at St John's College, Oxford.

1868 April 1868 Britain

Agamemnon and Cassandra; or, The Prophet and Loss of Troy; burlesque written by Robert Reece; music comp. by Mr Connelly; performed at the Prince of Wales Theatre, Liverpool, and touring to Dublin and Portsmouth; Caroline Parkes (Ag.), Julia Matthews (Clyt.), and Mr H. Beckett (Cass.).

1873 January 1873 France

Les Erinnyes; adaptation of Agamemnon and Libation Bearers by Leconte de Lisle; no music accompanied this première, but the first of several revivals from 1876 had music comp. by Massenet (see below); performed at the Odéon, Paris; M. Leute (Ag.), Marie Laurent (Clyt.), and Mme J. Régnard (Cass.).

1875 France

Clytemnestre; cantata comp. by André Wormster (winner of the Prix de Rome); performed in France.

1876 France

Les Erinnyes; first of several revivals of the 1873 production of Leconte de Lisle's adaptation of Agamemnon and Libation Bearers; music comp. for this revival by Jules Massenet; performed at the Gaité, Paris.

1880 May 1880 Britain

Agamemnon; tr. by Lewis Campbell; produced by Fleeming Jenkin; performed at Fleeming Jenkin's Private Theatre, Edinburgh; Anne Jenkin (Clyt. and Cass.).
June 1880  Britain  Agamemnon; in ancient Greek; produced by Frank Benson; music comp. by Walter Parratt; University of Oxford; performed at Balliol College, Oxford, and touring that year to Eton College, Harrow School, Winchester College, and St George's Hall, London, and in 1881 to Cambridge; W. N. Bruce (Ag.), Frank Benson (Clyt.), and George P. Lawrence (Cass.).

1881  France  Cassandre; opera comp. by Arthur Coquard; libretto (after Seneca?) by Henri de Bornier; performed at the Société Chorale d’Amateurs, Paris.

1885  Britain  The Oresteian [sic] Trilogy of Aeschylus; in translation; produced by Frank Benson; F. R. Benson’s Dramatic Company; performed at the New Theatre, Cambridge, followed by a tour.

1886  Australia  Agamemnon; in ancient Greek; music comp. by Hector MacLean; University of Sydney; performed in the Great Hall, University of Sydney; R. R. Garran (Ag.), H. A. Russell (Clyt.), and G. H. Leibius (Cass.).

1886  France  The Story of Orestes; abridged version of Oresteia tr. and dir. by George Charles Winter Warr; performed at Prince’s Hall, Piccadilly, London; Dorothy Dene (Cass.).

1889  France  Les Erinnyes; revival of the 1873 production of Leconte de Lisle’s adaptation of Agamemnon and Libation Bearers; with music comp. for the first revival of the production in 1876 by Jules Massenet; performed in a series of ‘Classical Evenings’, following a conference by J. Lemaître at the Odéon, Paris; Albert Lambert (Ag.), Marie Laurent (Clyt.), and Mme Tessandier (Cass.).

1891  France  Les Erinnyes; revival of the 1873 production of Leconte de Lisle’s adaptation of Agamemnon and Libation Bearers; with music comp. for the first
revival of the production in 1876 by Jules Massenet; performed at the Odéon, Paris.

1892
June 1892 Britain

*Agamemnon*; in ancient Greek; produced by Herbert Branston Gray; Bradfield College; performed at Bradfield College, Berkshire; C. M. Blagden (Clyt.) and E. d’A. Willis (Cass.).

1895
October 1895 Russia

*Oresteya*; première de Sergéy Ivanovich Tanéev’s opera; libretto by Alexánder Venkstern; cond. by E. Krushevski; performed at the Mariinsky Theatre, St Peters burg.

1895 USA

*Agamemnon*; a reading; dir. by F. A. Hall; performed at Drury College.

1897
August 1897 France

*Les Erinnyes*; revival of the 1873 production of Leconte de Lisle’s adaptation of *Agamemnon* and *Libation Bearers*; with music comp. for the first revival of the production in 1876 by Jules Massenet; performed at the Théâtre Romain d’Orange.

1898

1900
December 1900 Austria

*Orestie*; ad. of Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff’s translation by Paul Schlenther; dir. by Fritz Krastel; music comp. by Charles V. Stanford and G. Romberg; performed at the Burgtheater, Vienna (this production was revived in Coburg in 1906 and Gotha in 1907, and it returned to the Burgtheater in 1909); Hedwig Bleibtreu-Kömpler (Clyt.).

1900

1900

1900
France

*Les Erinnyes*; revival of the 1873 production of Leconte de Lisle’s adaptation of *Agamemnon* and *Libation Bearers*; with music comp. for the first revival of the production in 1876 by Jules Massenet; performed at the Odéon, Paris.

November 1900 Germany

*Orestie*; Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff’s translation ad. and dir. by Hans Oberländer; Aka-
demischer Verein für Kunst und Literatur, Germany; performed at the Theater des Westens, Berlin, and touring Germany until 1907; Louise Dumont (Clyt.) and Rosa Bertens (Cass.).

1902
February 1902 Germany Orestes; opera based on Oresteia comp. by (Paul) Felix Weingartner; performed in Leipzig.

1903
1903 Germany Kassandra; a play written by Herbert Eulenberg; performed in Germany.

November 1903 Greece Oresteia; tr. by Georgios Sotiriadis; dir. by Thomas Oikonomou; music comp. by Charles V. Stanford; Vasilikon Theatron, Greece; performed at the Vasilikon Theatron, Athens, and touring to Cairo and Alexandria.

February 1903 USA Oresteia; musical composition by Sergey Ivanovich Taneev, drawing on themes from his opera of the same name which received its world première in 1895 (see above) and its American première in 2004 (see below); Boston Symphony Orchestra; performed at the Carnegie Hall, New York.

1904
Spring 1904 Britain The Oresteian [sic] Trilogy of Aeschylus; George Warr’s translation ad. by E. D. A. Morshead; dir. by Frank Benson; performed at the Coronet Theatre, Notting Hill Gate, London, and touring to Camden, Belfast, Derry, Jersey, and some English public schools; F. R. Benson’s Dramatic Company; Constance Benson (Clyt.).

1905
December 1905 Italy Cassandra; opera comp. by Vittorio Gneccchi; libretto by Luigi Illica; cond. by Arturo Toscanini; performed at the Comunale, Bologna (see below for the revised version performed in 1909).

April 1905 USA Oresteia; entr’acte from the opera comp. by Sergey Ivanovich Taneev which premièred in 1895 (see above); Russian Symphony Society; performed at the Carnegie Hall, New York.

1906
1906 Italy Orestiade (Agamemnon and Libation Bearers only); tr. by Tito Marrone and Antonio Cippico; dir. by Rodolfo Kanzler; Compagnia F. Garaviglia, Italy; performed at L’Argentina, Rome; and the following year in the Teatro Olimpico, Vicenza; Ciro Galvani (Ag.), Ida Carloni Talli (Clyt.), and Evelina Paoli (Cass.).
Agamemnon; in ancient Greek; music comp. by John E. C. Lodge; Harvard Classical Club; performed in the Stadium, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.; Perley Noyes (Ag.), Herbert Wyndham-Gittens (Clyt.), and Arunah Brady (Cass.).

Orestes; Josef Král’s translation ad. by Jaroslav Kvapil; dir. by Jaroslav Kvapil; Národní Divadlo; performed at the Národní Divadlo, Prague; Jan Vavra (Ag.), Ludmila Danzerova (Clyt.), and Isa Gregrova (Cass.).

Les Erinnyes; adaptation of Agamemnon and Libation Bearers by Leconte de Lisle; performed at the Théâtre Romain d’Orange, France.

Agamemnon; English tr. by Goodwin, with Plumptre’s version of the choruses; dir. by Professor Wilkie; Department of Greek, College of Emporia; performed at the College of Emporia, Kansas.

Oresteia; tr. by Georgios Sotiriadis; Company of Vasileia Stephanou and Evangelos Delenardos; performed at the Teatro Athenaion, Athens; Vasileia Stephanou (Clyt.).

Cassandra; revised version of Vittorio Gnecchi’s opera (see under 1905 above); performed in Ferrare.

Dzieje Orestesa; tr. by Jan Kasprowicz; dir. by Ludwika Solskiego; Teatr Miejski, Poland; performed in Kraków; Stanisława Wysocka (Clyt.).

Orestes; ballet; ad. by Richard Le Gallienne; performed in USA.

Cassandra; opera comp. by Vittorio Gnecchi; cond. by Willem Mengelberg; performed at the Volksoper, Vienna; Maria Jeritza (Clyt.).

Agamemnon; in ancient Greek; dir. by J. H. Vince; Bradfield College; performed at Bradfield College, Berkshire.

Orestie; tr. by Karl Vollmoeller; dir. by Max Reinhardt; Deutsches Theater; performed at the Musikfesthalle, Munich, and transferring (without Eumenides) to Zirkus Schumann, Berlin (see below for the revivals in 1917 and 1919); Mary Dietrich (Clyt.).

Oresteia; tr. by Coelho de Carvalho; performed at an open-air venue in Lisbon.
January 1911  Turkey  Oresteia; tr. by Georgios Sotiriadis; Company of Marika Kotopouli; performed in Constantinople, transferring to the Theatro Marika Kotopouli, Athens in September 1912, and repeatedly revived (see under 1924 below); A. Marikos (Ag.), Marika Kotopouli (Clyt.), Chrysoula Myrat (Cass.).

May 1911  USA  Agamemnon; a reading of the play, with parts in ancient Greek and parts in translation, by Bernice Banning; performed at Professor Charles Foster Smith’s house, Madison, Wisconsin.

1913  Britain  Agamemnon; des. by Charles Ricketts.

1914  April 1914  Italy  Agamennone; tr. and dir. by Ettore Romagnoli; Istituto Nazionale del Dramma Antico; performed at the Teatro Greco, Syracuse (I Ciclo di Spettacoli Classici); Gualtiero Tumiati (Ag.), Teresa Mariani (Clyt.), and Elisa Berti Masi (Cass.).

1914  USA  Cassandra; opera comp. by Vittorio Gncechi; libretto by Luigi Illica; performed in Philadelphia (American première).

1915  Russia  Oresteya; opera comp. by Sergéy Ivanovich Tanéev; libretto by Alexander Vénkstern; performed at the Mariinsky Theatre, St Petersburg.

1917  January 1917  Switzerland  Oresteia; tr. by Karl Vollmoeller; dir. by Max Reinhardt; Deutsches Theater; performed at the Stadttheater, Zurich (a revival of the 1917 production, on which see above).

1917–18  Russia  Oresteya; opera comp. by Sergéy Ivanovich Tanéev; libretto by Alexander Vénkstern; performed at the Theatre of the Council of Workers’ Deputies, Moscow.

1918  December 1918  Greece  Oresteia; tr. by Georgios Sotiriadis; dir. by Thomas Oikonomou; Vasilikon Theatron; performed at the Theatron Odeion, Athens; A. Sakellariou (Ag.), A. Kotsali (Clyt.), and X. Kanellopoulou (Cass.).

May 1918  Italy  Agamennone; tr. by Ettore Romagnoli; dir. by Gualtiero Tumiati; performed at the Teatro Romano, Fiesole.

1919  November 1919  Germany  Orestie; tr. by Karl Vollmoeller; dir. by Max Reinhardt; Deutsches Theater; performed at the Grosses
Schauspielhaus, Berlin (a revival of the 1911 and 1917 productions, on which see above).

1920
November 1920  Britain

The House of Atreus (Agamemnon and Choephoroe only); tr. by E. D. A. Morshead; dir. by A. Parry Gunn; music comp. by Charles H. H. Parry (for Agamemnon) and W. G. Whitaker (for Choephoroe); University of Aberdeen; performed in the Music Hall, University of Aberdeen; W. G. Craigen (Ag.), Florence E. Shirras (Clyt.), and Margaret K. Ferguson (Cass.).

February 1920  Germany

Orestie; ad. and dir. by Johannes Tralow; performed at the Schauspielhaus, Cologne (revived in 1923 in Frankfurt and Oldenburg).

1921
March 1921  Britain

The Oresteian Trilogy; in ancient Greek; dir. by J. T. Sheppard and J. Burnaby; music comp. by Armstrong Gibbs; University of Cambridge; performed in the New Theatre, Cambridge; W. L. Runciman (Ag.), R. C. N. Barton (Clyt.), and W. Le B. Egerton (Cass.).

1921

Oresteia; film of the March 1921 stage production dir. by J. T. Sheppard and J. Burnaby (see above); Gaumont, Britain; screened in Cambridge (June and August 1921) and London (February 1922).

1922
February 1922  Britain

Agamemnon, and the final scene of Choephoroe; tr. by R. C. Trevelyan; an educational matinée arranged by the Chiswick Education Committee for school children, and acted by members of the University of Cambridge; performed at the Chiswick Empire, London. The performance was followed by a showing of the 1921 film (see above), accompanied by music comp. by C. Armstrong Gibbs.

1922

Agamemnon; Department of Speech, Bates College; performed at Bates College, Lewiston, Maine.

1923
June 1923  Britain

The Curse of the House of Atreus; tr. of Oresteia by R. C. Trevelyan; dir. by Kenneth Johnstone; music comp. by Jack Westrup; Balliol Players, Oxford; performed on the lawn of Bromsgrove School, Worcestershire, followed by a tour of the south and west of Britain; Hugh Keen (Ag.), Kenneth Johnstone (Clyt.), and Roger Mynors (Cass.).

1923

USA

Clitemnestra; ad. of Agamemnon and Sophocles’ Electra by Henry Lister; La Boheme Club, USA;
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>June</td>
<td>Britain</td>
<td><em>The Curse of the House of Atreus</em>; tr. of Oresteia by R. C. Trevelyan; dir. by Kenneth Johnstone; music comp. by Jack Westrup; Balliol Players, Oxford; performed at Wadham College, Oxford, followed by a tour of the south and west of Britain; Theodore Wade-Gery (Ag.), Kenneth Johnstone and Cedric Cliffe (Clyt.), and Anthony Asquith (Cass.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>July</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td><em>Agamemnon</em>; opera comp. by George Frederick Linstead; performed in Britain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>August</td>
<td>Greece</td>
<td><em>Oresteia</em> (<em>Agamemnon</em> and <em>Libation Bearers</em> only); tr. by Georgios Sotiriadis; Company of Marika Kotopouli; revival of the 1911 production performed at the Odeion of Herodes Atticus, Athens, in honour of Ras Tafari, the future Emperor of Ethiopia (known as Haile Selassie I); it was repeated at the same venue, with cast changes, later that month, and in Cairo in December; Nikos Rozan (Ag.), Marika Kotopouli (Clyt.), Chrysoula Myrat (Cass.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.1924</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>The Tower Beyond Tragedy</em>; a reading of the unpublished manuscript of Robinson Jeffers' ad. of <em>Agamemnon</em> and <em>Libation Bearers</em>; performed at a private party given by Harry Laffler, Telegraph Hill, San Francisco.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>June</td>
<td>Britain</td>
<td><em>Agamemnon</em>; in ancient Greek; dir. by Cecil Bellamy; music comp. by Douglas Fox; Bradfield College; performed at Bradfield College, Berkshire; I. C. Stuart (Clyt.), and J. J. Tawney (Cass.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>August</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td><em>Agamemnon</em>; tr. by Gilbert Murray; dir. by Evalyn Thomas; Stanford University; performed at the Museum, Stanford University, Palo Alto, California; Herbert Abbott (Ag.), Elizabeth Wilbur (Clyt.), and Beatrice Myers (Cass.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>November</td>
<td>Britain</td>
<td><em>Oresteia</em>; tr. by R. C. Trevelyan; dir. by Herbert Prentice; choreographed by Ninette de Valois; Festival Theatre Company; performed at the Festival Theatre, Cambridge; Miriam Lewes (Clyt.), and Marion Prentice (Cass.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Oresteia</em>; tr. by Sergey Soloviov; dir. by Valentin Smyshlyaev; performed at the Moscow Academic Art Theatre II; V. Orlova (Clyt.).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
January 1926  USA  The Tower Beyond Tragedy; ad. of Agamemnon and Libation Bearers by Robinson Jeffers; 'acted' by moulded clay figures in a small theatre; models created and production dir. by Lincoln Kirstein; performed at the University of Harvard, Cambridge, Mass. Orestes [= Oresteia]; dir. by Edgar M. Woolley; music comp. by David Stanley Smith; Dramatic Association, Yale University; performed at the Shubert Theatre, Yale University, New Haven; Guy Richards (Ag.), Howard Phillips (Clyt.), and William Hinkle (Cass.).

May 1926  USA  Agamemnon; Department of Speech, Carleton College; performed at Carleton College, Northfield, Minnesota.

July 1927  Britain  Agamemnon; in ancient Greek; produced by H. Balmforth; music comp. by Armstrong Gibbs, and adapted for this production by Alan Palmer; Repton School; performed at Repton School, Derbyshire; H. D. P. Lee (Ag.), A. E. Darling (Clyt.), and M. Balkwill (Cass.).

April 1927  France  Agamemnon; concert première of musical setting of the closing scene of the play; comp. in 1913 by Darius Milhaud; libretto by Paul Claudel; performed in Paris (see below under 1955 for the first staged performance of this piece).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Production Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>Agamemnon; performed at the Ancient Theatre of Delphi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1930</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Agamemnon; tr. by Armando Marchiori; dir. by Biagio Pace; music comp. by Ildebrando Pizzetti; Istituto Nazionale del Dramma Antico; performed at the Teatro Greco, Syracuse (Ciclo di Spettacoli Classici); Corrado Racca (Ag.), Evelina Paoli (Clyt.), and Giovanna Scotto (Cass.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>Britain</td>
<td>Oresteia (the latter part of Agamemnon and all of Choephoroe); Little Theatre Players, Sheffield Educational Settlement; performed at the Little Theatre, Sheffield.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1931</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Agamemnon; dir. by Wilhelm Leyhausen; performed at the Staatliches Schauspielhaus, Berlin; Theodor Loos (Ag.), Maria Koppenhöfer (Clyt.), and Anne-Marie Loose (Cass.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1931</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Mourning Becomes Electra; première of Eugene O'Neill’s ad. of Oresteia; dir. by Philip Moeller; Theatre Guild; performed at the Guild Theatre, New York; Lee Baker as Ezra Mannon (the Ag. figure) and Alla Nazimova as Christine Mannon (the Clyt. figure).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1931</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Agamemnon; tr. by Ettore Romagnoli; performed at Paestum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1932</td>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>Agamemnon; tr. by Ioannis Gryparis; dir. by Photos Politis; National Theatre of Greece; performed at the National Theatre of Greece, Athens; Emiliros Veakis (Ag.), Katina Paxinou (Clyt.), and Mary Saganou-Katseli (Cass.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Agamemnon; in ancient Greek; Department of Greek, College of Wooster; performed at the College of Wooster, Ohio.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Agamemnon; Department of Speech, University of California, Los Angeles; performed at the University of California, Los Angeles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td></td>
<td>The Tower Beyond Tragedy; ad. of Agamemnon and Libation Bearers by Robinson Jeffers; dir. by Edwin Duerr; Mortar Board Dramatic Group, University of California, Berkeley; performed at the Greek Theatre, University of California, Berkeley.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td></td>
<td>Agamemnon; in translation; music comp. by M. A. Huybrechts; performed by current and former pupils at the Institut Saint-Louis, Brussels.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
February 1933  Britain  Oresteia; in ancient Greek; dir. by J. T. Sheppard; University of Cambridge; performed in Cambridge.

1933  Republic of Ireland  Agamemnon; tr. by Lord Edward Longford; performed at the Gate Theatre, Dublin.

1934  June 1934  Britain  Agamemnon; in ancient Greek; dir. by Cecil Belyam; music comp. by Douglas Fox; Bradfield College; performed at Bradfield College, Berkshire; R. P. Webber (Ag.), R. P. M. Miles (Clyt.), and G. H. J. Bovell (Cass.).

1935  December 1935  Finland  Agamemnon; Swedish tr. by Emil Zilliacus; dir. by Helge Wahlgren; music comp. by Björn Schildknecht; Svenska Teatern; performed at Svenska Teatern, Helsinki; Erik Lindström (Ag.), Kerstin Nylander (Clyt.), and Birgit Kronström (Cass.).

1936  November 1936  Britain  Agamemnon; tr. by Louis MacNeice; dir. by Rupert Doone; music comp. by Benjamin Britten; Group Theatre; performed at the Westminster Theatre, London; Robert Speaight (Ag.), Veronica Turleigh (Clyt.), and Vivienne Bennett (Cass.).

August 1936  Germany  Die Orestie; Ulrich von Wilamowitz' translation ad. and dir. by Lothar Mütthel; Staatliches Schauspielhaus, Berlin (during the Olympic Games); Friedrich Kapssler (Ag.), Hermine Körner (Clyt.), and Maria Koppenhofer (Cass.).

October 1936  USA  Daughters of Atreus; ad. by Robert Turner; dir. by Frederic McConnell; performed at the 44th Street Theatre, New York.

1937  November 1937  Britain  Mourning Becomes Electra; ad. of Oresteia by Eugene O'Neill; dir. by Michael MacCowan; performed at the Westminster Theatre, London, transferring to the New Theatre in 1938; Mark Dignam as Ezra Mannon (the Ag. figure) and Laura Cowie as Christine Mannon (the Clyt. figure).

1938  April 1938  Lithuania  Oresteja; tr. by Stefan Srebrny; dir. by Srebrny and Mieczystawa Szpakiewicz; Teatr Miejski na Południe w Wilnie; performed in Vilnius.

December 1938  USA  Daughters of Atreus; Reno Little Theatre; performed at the Reno Little Theatre, Nevada.

1939  February 1939  Britain  Agamemnon; tr. by A. Y. Campbell; Department of Greek, University of Liverpool; performed at the University of Liverpool.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Performance Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>Oresteia; performed in Argos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>Oresteia; concert performance of opera comp. by Sergéy Ivanovich Tanéev; libretto by Alexánder Vénkstern; dir. by M. Yúdina; performed at the Moscow Conservatory of Music.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Oresteia; tr. by Ludwig Wolde; dir. by Hans Meissner; Schauspielhaus, Frankfurt; performed at the Schauspielhaus, Frankfurt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>The Tower Beyond Tragedy; ad. of Agamemmnon and Libation Bearers by Robinson Jeffers; adapted for the stage and dir. by John Gassner; Forest Theater Guild; performed at the Forest Theater Guild, Carmel-by-the-Sea, California; Judith Anderson (Clyt.), on whom see under 1971 below.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Oresteia; performed at the Preussisches Staatstheater, Kassel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>Oresteia; tr. by Vollmoeller; performed in Zurich.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Agamemmnon; in ancient Greek; dir. by Miss Law and Barbara McCarthy; Wellesley College; Wellesley College, Mass.; Ellen Cohen (Ag.), Patricia Parfitt Graham (Clyt.), and Bernice Libman Lewis (Cass.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>Oresteia; concert performance of opera comp. by Sergéy Ivanovich Tanéev; libretto by Alexánder Vénkstern; dir. by M. Yúdina; performed at the House of the Actor, Moscow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Agamemmnon; in ancient Greek; dir. by Mabel K. Whiteside; Department of Greek, Randolph-Macon Women's College; performed at the Randolph-Macon Women's College, Lynchburg, Virginia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>De Oresteia; ad. by Herman Teirlinck; dir. by Maurits Balfoort; performed at the Koninklijke Nederlandse Schouwburg, Gent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>Britain</td>
<td>Agamemmnon; tr. by Louis MacNeice; dir. by Val Gielgud; a BBC Radio production broadcast on the Third Programme; Frederick Valk (Ag.), Margaret Rawlings (Clyt.), and Olive Gregg (Cass.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td></td>
<td>Agamemmnon; in translation; dir. by G. Wilson Knight; Union Theatre Group, University of Leeds; performed at the Riley Smith Theatre, University of</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
July 1946  Germany  
Leeds, and touring to the National Student Drama Festival in Birmingham in 1947.

1947  
June 1947  Britain  
*Agamemnon*; tr. by Louis MacNeice; dir. by David Raeburn; music comp. by Ivor Keys; Experimental Theatre Club, University of Oxford; performed at Christ Church, Oxford; James Lund (Ag.), Doreen Zimbler (Clyt.), and Daphne Levens (Cass.).

February 1947  Czech Republic  
*Oresteia*; tr. by Vladimír Šrámek; dir. by Karel Dostal; music comp. by M. Ponc; Národní Divadlo; performed at the Národní Divadlo, Prague; Bedřich Karen (Ag.), Leopolda Dostalová (Clyt.), and Olga Scheinpfühlová (Cass.).

June 1947  France  
*Agamemnon*; tr. by Paul Mazon; dir. by Maurice Jacqueumont; Groupe de Théâtre Antique de la Sorbonne; performed in Paris, and touring to Epidaurus.

September 1947  Germany  
*Die Atriden-Tetralogie* (Iphigenie in Aulis, Agamemnon Tod, Elektra & Iphigenie in Delphi); première of the complete tetralogy by Gerhart Hauptmann; dir. by Heinz-Wolfgang Litten; Deutsches Theater; performed in Berlin (see under 1946 above for the first performance of *Agamemnons Tod* alone); Walter Süssenguth (Ag.).

March 1947  Poland  
*Oresteja*; tr. by Stefan Srebrny; dir. by Arnold Szyfman; Teatr Polski; performed at the Teatr Polski, Warsaw.

February 1947  USA  
*Agamemnon*; tr. by Louis MacNeice; dir. by Bob Carter; University Theatre, University of Chicago; performed in Mandel Hall, University of Chicago; Albert Hibbs (Ag.), Mary Schulman (Clyt.), and Violet Salzer (Cass.).

December 1947  
*Agamemnon* (acts 1 and 2); ad. by William Alfred; dir. by Helen Roach; Department of Speech, Brooklyn College; performed at Brooklyn College, New York (where it was produced again the following year; see below); Evelyn Newman (Clyt.).

1947  
*Mourning Becomes Electra*; film; ad. of *Oresteia* by Eugene O'Neill; dir. by Dudley Nichols; Raymond Massey as Ezra Mannon (the Ag. figure) and Katina Paxinou as Christine Mannon (the Clyt. figure).

1948  
*Agamemnon*; ad. by Rudolf Bayr; performed in Vienna.
October 1948  Britain  Agamemnon  

May 1948  Italy  Oresteia; tr. and dir. by Manara Valgimigli; Istituto Nazionale del Dramma Antico; performed at the Teatro Greco, Syracuse (X Ciclo di Spettacoli Classici); Mario Besesti (Ag.), Giovanna Scotto (Clyt.) and Sarah Ferrati (Cass.).

March 1948  USA  Agamemnon; tr. by Edith Hamilton; dir. by Natalie E. White; Department of Speech, George Washington University; performed in the Lisner Auditorium, George Washington University, Washington, DC; Henry Danilowicz (Ag.), Dorothy Ohliger (Clyt.), and Valeska Griffin (Cass.)

March 1948  Britain  Agamemnon; in ancient Greek; dir. by Cecil B. Lamy; Bradfield College; performed at Bradfield College, Berkshire; H. W. Joynt (Ag.), J. R. W. Ackroyd (Clyt.), and B. T. G. Prevost (Cass.).

September 1949  Greece  Oresteia; tr. by Ioannis Gryparis; dir. by Dimitris Rondiris; National Theatre of Greece; performed at the Odeion of Herodes Atticus, Athens; Giannia Apostolidis (Ag.), Marika Kotopouli (Clyt.), and K. Panagiotou / Titika Nikiforaki (Cass.).

1949  

June 1949  Britain  Agamemnon; tr. by Louis MacNeice; Balliol Players, Oxford; touring the south of England.

July 1950 Britain  Agamemnon; tr. by Louis MacNeice; dir. by Raymond Raikes; music comp. by John Hotchkis; a BBC Radio production broadcast on the Third Programme; Julian Somers (Ag.), Sonia Dresdel (Clyt.), Diana Maddox (Cass.).

1950  

June 1950  Britain  The Oresteia; opera comp. by Norman Demuth; libretto by D. Clarke.

1950  Greece  Oresteia; tr. by Ioannis Gryparis; dir. by Takis Mouzenidis; music comp. by Manos Hadjidakis; Company of Marika Kotopouli; performed in
1950

Malta

November 1950

USA

1951

Britain

October 1951

Germany

March 1951

Taiwan

January 1951

USA

December 1951

1952

c.1952

Australia

Austria

September 1952

Britain

September 1952

Croatia

November 1952

Cuba

Italy

Agamemnon; tr. by Gilbert Murray; British Institute Players, Britain; performed in Malta.

The Tower Beyond Tragedy; ad. of Agamemnon and Libation Bearers by Robinson Jeffers; dir. by Robert Ross; American National Theatre and Academy (ANTA); performed at the ANTA Playhouse, New York; Frederic Tozere (Ag.), Judith Anderson (Clyt.), and Thelma Schnee (Cass.).

Agamemnon; tr. by H. W. Stubbs; dir. by Peter Bucknell; Attic Players; performed at the Toynbee Hall Theatre, London; Harold Jones (Ag.), Greta Raikes (Clyt.), and Meg Graves (Cass.).

Oresteia; tr. by Johann Gustav Droysen; dir. by Gustav Rudolf Sellner; performed at the Deutsches Schauspielhaus, Hamburg.

Agamemnon; English ad. by Burton Crane; performed in Taipei.

Agamemnon; tr. by Edith Hamilton; dir. by Henry B. Williams; Dartmouth Players; performed at Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire; Aram Chorebanian (Ag.), Geraldine Biel (Clyt.), and Dilys Bennett Laing (Cass.).

Agamemnon; a reading by William Alfred of his own adaptation; performed at Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts; a recording of the reading was later broadcast on the radio station WGBH.

Agamemnon; in ancient Greek; University of Sydney; performed at the University of Sydney.

Agamemnon; Verein der Freunde d. humanistischen Gymnasium, Vienna; performed in Vienna.

Agamemnon; tr. by Gilbert Murray; dir. by Arnold Freeman; Little Theatre Players, Sheffield Educational Settlement; performed at the Little Theatre, Sheffield; Arnold Freeman (Ag.).

Agamemnon; tr. by K. Rac and M. Kombol; dir. by Branko Gavela, assisted by Mladen Škiljan; performed at the Croatian National Theatre, Zagreb.

Agamemnon; ad. by Brieva Salvatierra; University of Havana; performed at the University of Havana.

Agamemnon; tr. and dir. by Wilhelm Leyhausen; Collegium Delphicum, Mainz, Germany; per-
formed at the Teatro Romano, Verona (2nd Delphiade: Internationale Festspiele der Studententheater); Achim Ludwig (Ag.), Anna Marie Loose (Clyt.), and Bettina Werner (Cass.). See Fig. 19.1.

Agamennone; ad. by Vittorio Alfieri; dir. by Orazio Costa; performed at the Piccolo Teatro, Rome.

Oresteia (Agamennon and Libation Bearers only); tr. by Ioannis Gryparis; dir. by Takis Mouzenidis; music comp. by Manos Hatzidakis; Ancient Drama Organisation, Greece; performed in Istanbul, and touring to Egypt and Cyprus; T. Vandis (Ag.), Marika Kotopouli (Clyt.), K. Panagiotou (Cass.).

The Oresteia; in translation; dir. by Robert A. Johnston; Little Theatre Group, Wright Junior College; performed at Wright Junior College, Chicago; Donald Amtman (Ag.), Edythe Manassa (Clyt.), and Rose Mary Hefferman (Cass.).

Agamemnon; tr. by Herwig Hensen; performed in Belgium.

Agamemnon; in ancient Greek; dir. by George Rylands; music comp. by Patrick Hadley; University of Cambridge; performed at the Arts Theatre, Cambridge; Frances Hedley (Clyt.).

Agamemnon; tr. by Louis MacNeice; dir. by Raymond Raikes; music comp. by John Hotchkis; a BBC Radio production broadcast on the Third Programme; Francis de Wolff (Ag.), Catherine Lacey (Clyt.), Marjorie Westbury (Cass.).

Oresteia; performed in Hamburg.

Agamennone; tr. by Manara Valgimigli; dir. by Gianfranco De Bosio; performed at the Teatro Ruzante, Padua.

Agamemnon; ad. by William Alfred; dir. by Nancy Davids; performed at The Poets' Theatre, Cambridge, Mass.

Oresteia; tr. by Ioannis Gryparis; dir. by Dimitris Rondiris; National Theatre of Greece; performed at the Odeion of Herodes Atticus, Athens; Ioannis Apostolidis (Ag.), Elsa Verghis (Clyt.), and K. Panagiotou (Cass.).

Oresteia; dir. by Olof Molander; performed at Kungliga Dramatiska Teatern, Stockholm.

Agamemnon; a reading of Richmond Lattimore's tr.; dir. by Wayne Richardson; New School University; performed at New School University, New York.
1954

Oresteia; in ancient Greek; dir. by Mabel K. White.
side; Randolph-Macon Women's College; per-
formed at Randolph-Macon Women's College,
Lynchburg, Virginia.

1954

Oresteia; dir. by Delmar E. Solem; Knox College;
performed at Knox College, Galesburg, Illinois.

1955

June 1955 Austria Agamemnon Muß Sterben; dramatic cantata comp.
by Paul Angerer; libretto by Rudolf Bayr; performed
at the Konzerthaus, Vienna.

1955 Britain Mourning Becomes Electra; ad. of Oresteia by Eugene
O'Neill; dir. by Peter Hall; performed at the Arts
Theatre, London.

1955

Oresteia; in translation; performed at Goldsmith's
College, London.

May 1955 France L'Orestie; tr. by André Obey; dir. by Jean-Louis
Barrault; music comp. by Pierre Boulez; Renaud-
Barrault; performed at the Festival de Bordeaux in
Paris, and transferring to the Théâtre Marigny in
Paris in October.

1955 Germany Agamemnon; first staged performance of musical set-
ing by Darius Milhaud of the closing scene of the play;
libretto by Paul Claudel; performed in Darmstadt (see
under 1927 for concert première of this piece).

1955 Greece Klytaimnestr; version by Alexandros Matsas; per-
formed at the National Theatre of Greece, Athens.

1956

February 1956 Britain As the Stone Falls; ad. of Oresteia by John Boud; dir.
by John Boud; Group Five; performed at the Irving
Theatre Club, London; Edward Meigh (Ag.) and
Catherine Carrie (Clyt.).

May 1956

Oresteia; tr. by Philip Vellacott; dir. by Raymond
Raikes; music comp. by Antony Hopkins; a BBC
Radio production broadcast on the Third Pro-
gramme, and repeated in October and November;
Howard Marion-Crawford (Ag.), Margaret Rawl-
ings (Clyt.), and Beth Boyd (Cass.).

1956 Switzerland Oresteia; dir. by Karl Gotthilf Kachler; performed
at Stadttheatern St Gallen, St Gall.

1956

Oresteia; dir. by O. Wälterlin; performed at the
Schauspielhaus, Zurich.

November 1956 USA The Oresteia; ad. by Leo Brady; dir. by James War-
ing; Speech and Drama Department, Catholic Uni-
versity of America; performed at the University
December 1956

Agamemnon, alongside Eugene O’Neill’s The Homecoming from Mourning Becomes Electra (see below under 1957 for Agamemnon with Mourning Becomes Electra); ad. of Agamemnon by Cyrus Day; both productions dir. by C. Robert Kase; E 52 University Theater, University of Delaware; performed at the Mitchell Hall, University of Delaware, Newark; Edwin Mullen (Ag. / Ezra Mannon, the Ag. figure), Mary Minkiewich (Clyt. / Christine Mannon, the Clyt. figure), and Gretchen Berguido (Cass.).

1957

1957

Theatre, Catholic University of America, Washington, DC; Philip Bosco (Ag.), Mary Grant (Clyt.), and Marie Zaikawsky (Cass.).

The Tower Beyond Tragedy; a reading of Eva Hesse’s tr. of Robinson Jeffers’ ad. of Agamemnon and Libation Bearers; performed in Hamburg.

Theater, Catholic University of America, Washington, DC; Philip Bosco (Ag.), Mary Grant (Clyt.), and Marie Zaikawsky (Cass.).

Agamemnon, alongside Eugene O’Neill’s The Homecoming from Mourning Becomes Electra (see below under 1957 for Agamemnon with Mourning Becomes Electra); ad. of Agamemnon by Cyrus Day; both productions dir. by C. Robert Kase; E 52 University Theater, University of Delaware; performed at the Mitchell Hall, University of Delaware, Newark; Edwin Mullen (Ag. / Ezra Mannon, the Ag. figure), Mary Minkiewich (Clyt. / Christine Mannon, the Clyt. figure), and Gretchen Berguido (Cass.).

Agamemnon; concert performance of Darius Milhaud’s musical setting of the closing scene of the play, together with Protee; libretto by Paul Claudel; performed in Munich (see also under 1927 and 1955 above for first concert and staged performances of this piece).

The Tower Beyond Tragedy; a reading of Eva Hesse’s tr. of Robinson Jeffers’ ad. of Agamemnon and Libation Bearers; performed in Hamburg.

Greek Scene; musical composition for voice and chamber ensemble drawing on Agamemnon, Euripides’ Electra, and Sophocles’ Oedipus Tyrannus; comp. by Harold Farberman; performed at the Jordan Hall, Boston, Massachusetts; sung by Corinne Curry.

The Tower Beyond Tragedy; a reading of Eva Hesse’s tr. of Robinson Jeffers’ ad. of Agamemnon and Libation Bearers; performed in Vienna.

1957

Germany

1957

USA

1957

March 1957

March 1957

1958

1958

Austria

Agamemnon; tr. by Richmond Lattimore; dir. by Wayne Richardson; performed at Theater Marquee, New York; William Shust (Ag.), Rowena Burack (Clyt.), and Marie Andrews (Cass.).

Agamemnon, alongside Eugene O’Neill’s Mourning Becomes Electra (see above under 1956 for Agamemnon with The Homecoming); dir. by C. Robert Kase; University of Delaware; performed at the University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.

The Tower Beyond Tragedy; Eva Hesse’s tr. of Robinson Jeffers’ ad. of Agamemnon and Libation Bearers; performed in Vienna.
June 1958  Britain  *Agamemnon*; in ancient Greek; dir. by David Raeburn; music comp. by Ivor Keys; Bradfield College; performed at Bradfield College, Berkshire; H. D. Shutt (Ag.), A. J. Bowen (Clyt.), and Michael C. Scott-Joynt (Cass.).

October 1958  *Agamemnon*; tr. by Raymond Postgate; dir. by Frederick Bradnum; a BBC Radio production broadcast on the Third Programme; Godfrey Kenton (Ag.), Freda Jackson (Clyt.), and Barbara Chilcott (Cass.).

September 1958  Czech Republic  *Agamemnon*; a reading of a Czech translation; dir. by František Štěpánek; Lidová Univerzita, Prague; performed at Městská Lidová Knihovna, Prague.

January 1958  New Zealand  *The Trilogy of the Oresteia*; tr. by J. T. Sheppard; dir. by Patric Carey; Rosalie and Patric Carey Productions; performed in Dunedin.

April 1958  USA  *Clytemnestra*; a three-act dance treatment of *Oresteia*, choreographed by Martha Graham; music comp. by Halim El-Dabh; set des. by Isamu Noguchi; Martha Graham Dance Company; performed at the Adelphi Theatre, New York; Bertram Ross (Ag.), Martha Graham (Clyt.), and Linda Hodes (Cass.).

September 1958  *The Oresteian Trilogy*; tr. by Edith Hamilton (Agamemnon) and George Thomson (Libation Bearers and Eumenides); dir. by Fred O. Harris; University of California, Berkeley; performed at the William Randolph Hearst Greek Theater, University of California, Berkeley; Hiram DeWitt (Ag.), Henrietta Harris (Clyt.), and Eleanor Kunitz (Cass.).

1958  *Oresteia* (alongside Eugene O’Neill’s *Mourning Becomes Electra*); performed at the Alfred State Technical Institute, Alfred, NY.

1959  Germany  *Black Sun*; ballet choreographed by Tatjana Gsovsky; music comp. by H. F. Harting; performed at the Municipal Opera, Berlin; Tatjana Gsovsky (Clyt.).

June 1959  Greece  *Oresteia*; tr. by Ioannis Gryparis; dir. by Dimitris Rondiris; National Theatre of Greece; performed at the Odeon of Herodes Atticus, Athens, and in Epidaurus; G. Apostolidis (Ag.), Anna Synodinou (Clyt.), and K. Panagiotou (Cass.).

1959  Spain  *La Orestiada*; ad. by José Maria Pemán and Francisco Sánchez Castañer; dir. by José Tamayo; Compañía Lope de Vega; performed at the Festival de Teatro Clásico de Mérida, and in Sagunto (see below under 1960 and 1975).
Jan 1959

January 1959 USA

Agamemnon (alongside Eugene O’Neill’s The Homecoming from Mourning Becomes Electra); tr. by Edith Hamilton; Agamemnon dir. by Nikos Pacharopoulos and The Homecoming dir. by F. Curtis Canfield; School of Drama, Yale University; performed at Yale University, New Haven; James Shepherd (Ag. / Ezra Mannon, the Ag. figure), Angela Wood (Clyt. / Christine Mannon, the Clyt. figure), and Carrie Nye McGeoy (Cass.).

Oresteia; in English translation; broadcast on American television; Irene Worth (Clyt.).

Jan 1959

January 1959 Zambia

Oresteia; performed in Zambia.

1960

April 1960 Britain

Agamemnon; ad. by William Alfred; dir. by Val Gielgud; a BBC Radio production broadcast on the Third Programme; Malcolm Keen (Ag.), Mary Wimbush (Clyt.), and Judy Bailey (Cass.).

May 1960 Italy

Orestiade; tr. by Pier Paolo Pasolini; dir. by Vittorio Gassman; music comp. by Angelo Musco; Istituto Nazionale del Dramma Antico; performed at the Teatro Greco, Syracuse, Sicily; Vittorio Gassman (Ag.), Olga Villi (Clyt.), and Valentina Fortunato (Cass.).

March 1960 Poland

Oresteia; tr. by Stefan Srebrny; dir. by Krystyna Skuszanka and Jerzy Krasowski; set des. by Józef Szajna; Teatr Ludowy of Nowa Huta; performed at the Teatr Ludowy, Nowa Huta.

1960 Spain

La Orestiada; ad. by José María Pemán and Francisco Sánchez Castañer; dir. by José Tamayo; Compañía Lope de Vega; performed at the Teatre Grec, Montjuïc, Barcelona, at the Teatro Español, Madrid, and in Mérida (see above under 1959, and below under 1975); Irene José Heredia (Clyt.) and Victoria Rodríguez (Cass.).

June 1960 Switzerland

Oresteia; tr. by Johann Gustav Droysen; dir. by Karl Gotthilf Kachler; performed at the Stadthetater, Basel, for the 500 jubilee celebration of the Universität Basel.

March 1960 USA

Oresteia; tr. by Richmond Lattimore; dir. by Walter Boughton; Amherst College; Amherst College, Amherst, Mass.; Steven Barbash (Ag.), Beverly May (Clyt.), and Georgiia Boughton (Cass.).

April 1960

Agamemnon; tr. by Richmond Lattimore; dir. by Harry F. Thompson; Hardin-Simmons University; performed at Hardin-Simmons University, Abilene, Texas; Delbert Hooper (Ag.), Amnarine Hamilton (Clyt.), and Penny Means (Cass.).
April 1960  
_Agamemnon_; a reading; Living Theatre Company; performed in New York.

1960  
_Agamemnon_; Queen’s Revels Group; performed on the steps of the Low Memorial Library, Columbia University, New York.

1960  
_Clytemnestra_; performed at Boston University; Olympia Dukakis (Clyt.).

1960s  
_Oresteia_; performed in the Sanders Theatre, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.

1961  
October 1961  
Britain  
_Oresteia_; _Agamemnon_ tr. by Edith Hamilton, and _Libation Bearers_ and _Eumenides_ tr. by Minos Volonakis; dir. by Minos Volonakis; music comp. by Elisabeth Lutyens; Oxford Playhouse Company; performed at the Oxford Playhouse, transferring to the Old Vic, London, in November; Ronald Lewis (Ag.), Catherine Lacey (Clyt.), and Ruth Meyers (Cass.).

May 1961  
Cyprus  
_Oresteia_; tr. by Ioannis Gryparis; Pagkyprion Gymnasion; performed at the Pagkyprion Gymnasion, Nicosia, and touring to the Ancient Theatre of Kourion, Limassol, in June; Sotirios Lois (Ag.), Anastasia Kitromilidou (Clyt.), and Niki Païzanou (Cass.).

c.1961  
Finland  
_Agamemnon_; tr. by E. Vaara; dir. by A. Kivimaa; performed at the Kansallisteatteri, Helsinki.

1961  
March 1961  
France  
Germany  
_Oresteia_; performed in France.  
_The Tower Beyond Tragedy_; Eva Hesse’s revised tr. of Robinson Jeffers’ ad. of _Agamemnon_ and _Libation Bearers_; performed at the Regensburg State Theatre, Regensburg.

April 1961  
_Die Orestie_; tr. by Staiger; dir. by Ortman; radio broadcast by Westdeutschen Rundfunks (WDR).  
_Oresteia_; tr. by Walter Jens; dir. by Reichert; performed at the Festspiele von Bad Hersfeld.

1962  
January 1962  
Britain  
_Oresteia_; tr. by Constantine Trypanis; dir. by Val Gielgud; music comp. by John Hotchkis; a BBC Radio production broadcast in three parts on the Third Programme; Brewster Mason (Ag.), Mary Wimbush (Clyt.), and June Tobin (Cass.).

April 1962  
Czech Republic  
_Oresteia_; tr. by Ferdinand Stiebitz; dir. by Miloš Hynšt; Státní Divadlo, Brno; performed at the Mahenovo Divadlo, Brno.

January 1962  
France  
_L’Oreste_; tr. by André Obey; dir. by Jean-Louis Barrault; performed at the Odéon, Paris.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Production Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 1962</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td><em>Agamemnon</em>; tr. by Wilhelm Leyhausen; dir. by Anne Marie Leyhausen-Loose; Collegium Delphi-cum, Mainz; performed at the Städtisches Theater, Mainz (IX Delphiade: Internationale Festspiele der Studententheater).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Clytemnestra</em>; a three-act dance treatment of <em>Oresteia</em>, choreographed by Martha Graham; music comp. by Halim El-Dabh; Martha Graham Dance Company; performed in Cologne, and touring Europe (but not London).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1962</td>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td><em>Agamemnon</em>; ad. and dir. by Georges Bouchut; L’Alliance Française de Rabat; performed at the Lycée Gouraud, Rabat; Georges Billion (Ag.), Lise Van Thoyer (Clyt.), and Jacqueline Kleux (Cass).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td><em>The Oresteia</em>; dir. by Patric Carey; Rosalie and Patric Carey Productions; performed at the Globe Theatre, Dunedin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td><em>Song of a Goat</em>; version of <em>Agamemnon</em> by J. P. Clark; dir. by Wole Soyinka; performed at the Mbari Centre, Ibadan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 1962</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td><em>The Oresteia</em>; tr. by Richmond Lattimore; dir. by Robert Gray; School of Drama, University of Washington; performed at the Penthouse Theatre, University of Washington, Seattle; Olan K. Carson (Ag.), Gloria Hewitt (Clyt.), and Dewey Evans (Cass.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Britain</td>
<td><em>Clytemnestra</em>; a three-act dance treatment of <em>Oresteia</em>, choreographed by Martha Graham; music comp. by Halim El-Dabh; Martha Graham Dance Company; performed at the Empire Theatre, London; Bertram Ross (Ag.) and Martha Graham (Clyt.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1963</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td><em>Oresteia</em>; first staged performance of the whole of Darius Milhaud’s opera; dir. by Gustav Rudolf Sellner; performed at the Deutsche Oper, Berlin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td><em>Agamemnon</em>; Rosalie and Patric Carey Productions; performed at the Globe Theatre, Dunedin; dir. by Patric Carey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1963</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td><em>Agamemnon</em>; tr. by Stefan Srebrny; dir. by Kazimierz Dejmek; Teatr Narodowy; performed at the Teatr Narodowy, Warsaw.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1963</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td><em>The House of Atreus</em>; ballet choreographed by Grant Strate (for revised version see under 1964 below); music comp. by Alberto Ginastera; Julliard Dance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ensemble; performed in New York; Chase Robinson (Ag.) and Paula Kelly (Clyt.).

1963    USA

Agamemnon; ad. by William Alfred; dir. by Daniel Seltzer; music comp. by Robert Bernat; performed at the Loeb Drama Center, Cambridge, Mass.; David Stone (Ag.), Frances Gitter (Clyt.), and Lynn Milgrim (Cass.).

1964    April 1964    Australia

The Oresteia; dir. by Richard Campion; National Institute of Dramatic Art; performed at the Tent Theatre, Rushcutters Bay, Sydney.

1964    Britain

Oresteia; tr. by Richmond Lattimore; dir. by Colin Davis; Dramatic Society, Keble College; performed in the Fellows' Garden, Keble College, Oxford; Roger Taylor (Ag.), Marguerite Smith (Clyt.), and Marion Pearce (Cass.).

January 1964    Canada

The House of Atreus; revised version of the ballet choreographed by Grant Strate (for original version see under 1963 above); music comp. by Harry Somers; National Ballet of Canada; performed in Toronto; David Adams (Ag.) and Jacqueline Irvings (Clyt.).

1964    c.1964    Finland

Agamemnon; performed in Finland.

1964    Greece

Atreides; written by V. Katsanis; music comp. by Theodore Antoniou; performed in Greece.

1964    Hungary

Oresteia; tr. by G. Devecseri; dir. by J. Ruszt; performed in the University Theatre, University of Budapest.

June 1964    Italy

Agamemnone; tr. by Ettore Romagnoli; dir. by Giuseppe Di Martino; performed in the Teatro Greco, Syracuse.

1964    Romania

Oresteia; tr. by A. Pop; dir. by V. Mugar; performed in the Lucia Sturza Bulandra, Bucharest.

1965    April 1965    Austria

Oreste; Akademischen Gymnasium, Vienna; performed in Vienna; Peter Gruber (Ag.) and Gudrun Geier (Clyt.).

1965    Britain

Song of a Goat; version of Agamemnon by J. P. Clark; performed at the Commonwealth Festival of the Arts, London.

1965    France

Les Visions Prophetiques de Cassandre; cantata comp. by Monic Cecconi-Botella; libretto by Aeschylus; performed in France.

May 1965    Germany

Oresteia; tr. by Walter Jens; dir. by Karl Pempelfort; performed in Bonn.

June 1965    Greece

Agamemnon; tr. by Ioannis Gryparis; dir. by Alexis Minotis; National Theatre of Greece; performed in
Epidaurus, and revived in 1966 and 1967 when it toured to the Expo-Théâtre, Montreal; Ghicas Biniaris (Ag.), Katina Paxinou (Clyt.), and Eleni Hadjiargyri (Cass.).

1965

**Hungary**

*Oresteia*; tr. by I. Janosy; dir. by E. Marton; performed at the National Theatre, Budapest.

March 1965

**Italy**

*Clitennestra*; opera comp. by Ildebrando Pizzetti using his own libretto; performed at La Scala, Milan.

1965

*Agamemnon*; musical version comp. by Thérèse Brenet and Lucie Robert-Diessel (winner of the Prix de Rome); performed in Italy.

1966

1966

**Belorussia**

*Oresteya*; opera comp. by Sergey Ivanovich Taneev; libretto by Alexander Venkstern; dir. by T. Kolymiytseva; Belorussian State Opera and Ballet; performed in Minsk.

May 1966

**Britain**

*Agamemnon*; tr. by Louis MacNeice; dir. by Margery Withers; Tavistock Repertory Company; performed at the Tower Theatre, London; John Gordon and James Cockburn (Ag.), Denyse Macpherson (Clyt.), and Suzanne Doggett (Cass.).

1966

*Agamemnon*; Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts; performed at the Vanbrugh Theatre Club, London.

c.1966

*Mourning Becomes Electra*; ad. of *Oresteia* by Eugene O'Neill; dir. by Gordon McDougall; Traverse Theatre Club of Edinburgh; performed at the Arts Theatre, London, touring to the Baalbeck International Festival, Lebanon, in 1967; Michael Barrington as Ezra Mannion (the Ag. figure) and Judy Campbell as Christine Mannion (the Clyt. figure).

1966

**France**

*Agamemnon*; tr. by Paul Mazon; dir. by Philippe Lagard; Groupe de Théâtre Antique de la Sorbonne; performed at the Théâtre de la Cité Internationale, Paris, and the Teatro Romano di Verona (X Delphiade: Internationale Festspiele der Studententheater).

1966

**Italy**

*Orestiade*; tr. by Manara Valgimigli; dir. by Mario Ferrero; broadcast on Italian television; Ivo Garrani (Ag.) and Sarah Ferrati (Clyt.).

1966

**USA**

*Agamemnon*; tr. by Robert Fagles; dir. by Anthony Stimac; Princeton University; performed at the McCarter Theatre, Princeton University, Princeton; Charles Siebert (Ag.), Angela Wood (Clyt.), and Susan Babel (Cass.).

1966

*Agamemnon*; ad. by William Alfred; dir. by Richard Herd; performed in New York.
Oresteia; tr. by Richmond Lattimore; dir. by Alexis Solomos; music comp. by Ioannis Xenakis; Ypsilanti Greek Theatre Festival; performed at the Greek Theatre, Ypsilanti, Michigan, and touring to Paris in 1967; Donald David (Ag.), Judith Anderson (Clyt.), and Ruby Dee (Cass.).

The Agamemnon of Aeschylus; opera comp. by Felix Werder; Werder’s libretto based on the tr. by Gilbert Murray; radio broadcast by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (see below for a re-worked version of the opera performed in Melbourne in 1977). Clytemnestra; a three-act dance treatment of Oresteia, choreographed by Martha Graham; music comp. by Halim El-Dabh; set des. by Isamu Noguchi; Martha Graham Dance Company; performed at the Saville Theatre, London; Martha Graham (Clyt.).

Agamemnon; tr. by Anthony Holden; dir. by Ray Miles; Oxford University Dramatic Society (OUDS); performed in Oxford and Greece.

Oresteia; tr. by Stefan Srebrny; dir. by Zbigniew Stok; Lubuski Teatr; performed in Jelenia Góra.

Mourning Becomes Electra; opera comp. by Martin David Levy; libretto by Henry Butler, using Eugene O’Neill’s ad. of Aeschylus’ Oresteia and Euripides’ Orestes; dir. by Henry Butler; performed at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York.

The House of Atreus; ad. by John Lewin; dir. by Tyrone Guthrie; music comp. by Dominick Argento; des. by Tanya Moiseiwitsch; performed at the Guthrie Theater, Minneapolis, and touring to New York and Los Angeles in 1968; Lee Richardson (Ag.), Douglas Campbell (Clyt.), and Robin Gammell (Cass.).

The House of Atreus; dir. by Peter C. Jackson; performed at the Derby Playhouse, Derbyshire; Alec Linstead (Ag.), Dorothy Edwards (Clyt.), and Gina Manicom (Cass.).

Clytemnestra; ‘sound action’ for dancers, actors, choir, and orchestra comp. by Theodore Antoniou; libretto by Tasos Roussos; performed in Kassel.

Oresteia; in a modern Greek translation; Piraeus Theatre Company; performed at the Odeion of Herodes Atticus, Athens.

Agamennone; by Vittorio Alfieri; broadcast on Italian television.
March 1968  Poland  

Danaidy; Seven against Thebes and Oresteia ad. and
dir. by Bohdan Głuszczyk; Teatr Dramatyczne im.
Stefana Jaracza; performed in Olsztyn.

March 1968  Slovenia  

Oresteia; tr. by Anton Sovrè; dir. by Mile Korun;
performed at the Slovensko Narodno Gledališče,
Ljubljana, and touring Europe; Bert Sotlar (Ag.),
Štefka Drolčeva (Clyt.), and Ivanka Mežanova
(Cass.).

1968  USA  

The House of Atreus; ad. by John Lewin; performed
at the Billy Rose Theater, New York.

1968  

The House of Atreus; ad. by John Lewin; performed
at the Mark Taper Forum, Los Angeles.

c.1968  

The House of Atreus; ad. by John Lewin; Pomona
College; performed at Pomona College, Claremont,
California.

c.1968  

The Oresteia; Conservatory of Theatre Arts, Web­
ster University; performed at Webster University, St
Louis, Missouri.

1969  

November 1969  Britain  

Agamemnon; opera comp. by Richard Morris; li­
bretto by Anthony Holden; cond. by Peter Robin­
son; dir. by Andrew Samuels; performed at the
Oxford Playhouse; Richard Savage (Ag.), May Hof­
man (Clyt.), and the role of Cass. sung and danced
by Sue Berry and Rosalind Erskine respectively.

1969  

Agamemnon; performed at the Everyman Theatre,
Liverpool.

c.1969  France  

La Prise de l'Orestie; dir. by Hubert Gignoux and
André Steiger; performed at the Théâtre National
de Strasbourg.

June 1969  Greece  

Agamemnon; tr. by Ioannis Gryparis; dir. by Thanos
Kotsopoulos; State Theatre of Northern Greece;
performed at the Ancient Theatre of Philippi; Tha­
nos Kotsopoulos (Ag.), A. Rautopoulos (Clyt.), and
L. Triantaphyllou (Cass.).

December 1969  

Excerpts from Greek Dream; dance-drama drawing
on Agamemnon, Euripides' Bacchae, and Aristoph­
anes' Birds; modern Greek tr. of Agamemnon by Vas­
silis Rotas; choreography by Zouzou Nicoloudi; dir.
by Michael Sisk; music comp. by Nikiforos Rotas;
Chorica Dance Company; performed at the Munici­
pal Theatre of Piraeus; Alkistis Tsementzi (Cass.),
O. Tournaki as Voice of Cass., and Julia Yiannicou as
Voices.

April 1969  Poland  

Oresteia; tr. by Stefan Srebny; dir. by Piotr Para­
dowski; Teatr Wybrzeża; performed in Gdansk.
Agamemnon on the APGRD Database

April 1969
Russia

*Oresteia*; Slovak National Theatre Company; performed in Moscow.

1970
April 1970
Britain

*Agamemnon*; tr. by Louis MacNeice; dir. by Jonathan Crowther; Hampstead Garden Suburb Dramatic Society; performed at the Institute Theatre, Hampstead, London; Bill Critchley (Ag.), Sonia Woolf (Clyt.), and Josephine Gros (Cass.).

1970
France

*Agamemnon*; dir. by Jean Gillibert; performed at the Châteauvallon; Maria Casares (Clyt.).

1970
Italy

*Agamennone*; Compagnia Teatrale Moderno Classico; performed at the International House Theatre Club, Rome.

October 1970
Germany

*Orestie*; ad. by Walter Jens; dir. by Günther Fleckenstein; performed in Göttingen.

November 1970
Spain

*Cassandra*; 'sound action' for dancers, actors, choir, and orchestra comp. by Theodore Antoniou; libretto by Tasos Roussos; performed in Barcelona.

1971
January 1971
Britain

*Agamemnon*; première of opera comp. by Havergal Brian; libretto by J. S. Blackie, abridged and ad. by the composer; cond. by Leslie Head; Opera dei Giovani and the Kensington Symphony Orchestra; performed at St John's, Westminster, London; Richard Gandy (Ag.), Valerie Hill (Clyt.), and Carole Rosen (Cass.).

February 1971

*The House of Atreus*; ad. by John Lewin; *Agamemnon* dir. by Steven Berkoff, and *The Libation Bearers* and *The Furies* dir. by Paul Burge; Royal Academy of Dramatic Art; performed at the Vanbrugh Theatre Club, London; Sion Pryce (Ag.), Alison Mullin (Clyt.), and Gay Wilde (Cass.).

November 1971
Cyprus

*Agamemnon*; dir. by Nikos Chatziskos; Theatre Organization of Cyprus; performed at several venues across Cyprus; Grigoris Vaphias (Ag.), Titika Nikiforaki (Clyt.), and Tritsia Tymvou (Cass.).

1971
Italy

*Orestiade*; ad. by Antonio Calenda; dir. by Antonio Calenda; Teatro Stabile di L'Aquila; performed in L'Aquila.

April 1971
Poland

*Oresteja*; tr. by Stefan Srebrny; dir. by Andrzej Przybylski; Bałtycki Teatr Dramatyczny; performed in Koszalin.

November 1971
USA

*The Tower Beyond Tragedy*; a reading of Robinson Jeffers' ad. of *Agamemnon* and *Libation Bearers*;
Forest Theater Guild; performed at the Forest Theater Guild, Carmel-by-the-Sea, California; performed by Judith Anderson to raise funds for the theatre company (for whom she had previously starred as Clyt. in a production of the same play; see above under 1941).

**Blood: From the Heart of America**; rock musical adaptation of *Oresteia* comp. by the Blood Company; libretto and direction by Doug Dyer; New York Shakespeare Festival; performed at the Public Theater, New York.

### 1972

**March 1972**

*Britain*

*The Oresteia*; translated and dir. by Ian Sinclair; Classics Club, High School of Stirling; performed at the High School of Stirling, Scotland.

**April 1972**

*Oresteia*; tr. by Tasos Roussos; dir. by Takis Mouselidis; music comp. by Stefanos Vasiliadis; set des. by Kleovoulos Klonis; costumes des. by Dionysios Fotopoulos; National Theatre of Greece; performed at the Aldwych Theatre, London, followed by an international tour; Vasilis Kanakis (Ag.), Mary Aroni (Clyt.), and K. Panagiotou (Cass.).

**October 1972**

*USA*

*Agamemnon*; ad. by William Alfred; dir. by Hovanness I. Pilikian; Princeton University’s Professional Theatre Programme; performed at the McCarter Theatre, Princeton University, Princeton; Dolph Sweet (Ag.), Nan Martin (Clyt.), and Cara Duff-MacCormick (Cass.).

**September 1972**

*Yugoslavia*

*Oresteia*; tr. by Mario Untersteiner; dir. by Luca Ronconi; Cooperativo Tusculano, Rome; performed at the Filmskijgrad Atelier, Belgrade (Belgrade International Festival), and touring to Prato, Spoleto, and the Grand Amphithéâtre de la Sorbonne, Paris; Massimo Foschi (Ag.), Marisa Fabbri (Clyt.), and Mariangela Melato (Cass.).

### 1973

**1973**

**Belgium**

*Agamemnon*; television film; tr. into Dutch by Johan Boonen; dir. by Lode Hendrickx; television broadcast in Belgium; Jef Demedts (Ag.), Joanna Geldof (Clyt.), and Veerle Wijffels (Cass.).

**March 1973**

*Britain*

*Agamemnon*; opera comp. by Havergal Brian (for première see under 1971 above); libretto by J. S. Blackie, abridged and ad. by the composer; cond. by Richard Armstrong; dir. by Ernest Warburton;
BBC Northern Singers and Northern Symphony Orchestra; performed in Manchester Town Hall; the performance was later broadcast on BBC Radio 3 on 16 June 1973 and 20 August 1974. William MacAlpine (Ag.), Milla Andrew (Clyt.), and Ann Howard (Cass.).

August 1973

Agamemmon Part I; ad. and dir. by Steven Berkoff; music comp. by Gordon Phillips; London Theatre Group; performed as a work in progress at the Round House, London (see also under 1976 below); Steven Berkoff (Ag.), Theresa d’Abrue (Clyt.), and Anna Nygh (Cass.).

1973 Greece

Oresteia; performed at the University of Athens.

1973 Italy

Appunti per un’Orestiade africana; film; dir. by Pier Paolo Pasolini; first screened in 1973 in Venice, and first released in 1975 in USA.

March 1973 Poland

Oresteja; tr. by Stefan Srebrny; dir. by Józef Para; Teatr Współczesny; performed in Wrocław.

May 1973

Oresteja; tr. by Stefan Srebrny; dir. by Janusz Kozłowski; Teatr Dolnośląski; performed in Jelenia Góra.

March 1973 USA

Agamemnon; St Louis Community College; performed at the St Louis Community College, Meramec, Missouri.

March 1973

The Orphan; a play by David Rabe drawing on Oresteia and Euripides’ Iphigenia in Aulis; dir. by Jeff Bleckner; New York Shakespeare Festival; performed in New York (revived twice the following year; see below).

c.1973

Seeds of Atreus; version of Oresteia written and dir. by Herbert Blau; performed at Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio.

1974

April 1974 Australia

Orestes Trilogy; tr. by Rush Rehm; dir. by James McCaughey; music comp. by Dan Robinson; Greek Theatre Project; performed at the Pram Factory, Melbourne; Andrew Lynch (Ag.), Meredith Rogers (Clyt.), and Barbara Ciszewska (Cass.).

February 1974 Britain

Clytemnestra; opera comp. by Peter Wishart; libretto by Don Roberts; dir. by Adrian Slack; Music Society, University College London; performed at the Colleigate Theatre, London; Maureen Lehane (Clyt.).

1974 Greece

The Travelling Players; film drawing on Oresteia and Sophocles’ Electra; written and dir. by Theodoros Angelopoulos; Stratos Pachis (Father / Ag.) and Aliki Georgouli (Mother / Clyt.).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Production Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 1974</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td><em>Oresteia</em>; puppetry; dir. by Peter Arnott; Marionette Theatre of Peter Arnott; performed at the Residential College Auditorium, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, and touring USA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Oresteia</em>; Franklin and Marshall College; performed at the Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster, PA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>The Oresteia</em>; Theater Department, University of North Carolina, Greensboro; dir. by Herman Middleton; performed at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington, DC (American College Theater Festival).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>The Orphan</em>; a workshop production of David Rabe's play drawing on <em>Oresteia</em> and Euripides' <em>Iphigenia in Aulis</em>; dir. by Barnet Kellman; performed in Winston-Salem, North California (a revival of the 1973 production).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>The Orphan</em>; a play by David Rabe drawing on <em>Oresteia</em> and Euripides' <em>Iphigenia in Aulis</em>; dir. by Barnet Kellman; Manning Street Actor's Theater of Philadelphia, in association with the New York Shakespeare Festival; performed in Philadelphia (a revival of the 1973 production).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Republic of Ireland</td>
<td><em>The Sanctuary Lamp</em>; ad. of <em>Oresteia</em> by Thomas Murphy; performed at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td><em>La Orestiada</em>; ad. by José María Pemán and Francisco Sánchez Castañer; dir. by José Tamayo; Compañía Lope de Vega; performed in Mérida (and see above under 1959 and 1960).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1975</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td><em>Agamemnon</em>; in ancient Greek; dir. by Nan Richardson; Wellesley College; performed at Wellesley College, Wellesley, Mass.; Clayton Fant (Ag.), Amy Bajakian (Clyt.), and Amy Broadus (Cass.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 1976</td>
<td>Austria</td>
<td><em>Die Orestie</em>; tr. by Johann Gustav Droysen; dir. by Luca Ronconi; music comp. by Giancarlo Chiaramello; performed at the Burgtheater, Vienna; Norbert Kappen (Ag.), Judith Holzmeister (Clyt.), and Martha wallner (Cass.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1976</td>
<td>Britain</td>
<td><em>Agamemnon</em>; in ancient Greek; dir. by Charles Lepper and Christopher Stace; music comp. by Christopher Steel; Bradfield College; Bradfield College, Berkshire; Mark Blackburn (Ag.), Timothy Ackroyd (Clyt.), and Charles Rigby (Cass.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1976</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Agamemnon</em>; ad. and dir. by Steven Berkoff; London Theatre Group; performed at the Greenwich Theatre.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Agamemnon* on the APGRD Database

November 1976

Ag*; ad. by Gabriel Josipovici; dir. by John Theoc­
charis; music comp. by Christos Pittas; a BBC Radio
production broadcast on Radio 3; Timothy West
(Ag.), Jill Balcon (Clyt.), and Maureen O'Brien
(Cass.).

1976

Clytemnestra; a three-act dance treatment of Ores­
teia, choreographed by Martha Graham; music
comp. by Halim El-Dabh; Martha Graham Dance
Company; performed at Covent Garden, London;
Tim Wengerd (Ag.), Takako Asakawa (Clyt.), and
Janet Eilber (Cass.).

1976–9 Netherlands

Oresteia; dir. by Erik Vos; Toneelgroep De Appel;
performed in the Netherlands, and revived each year
until 1979.

February 1976 USA

Oresteia; tr. and dir. by Yannis Chioles; music comp.
by Theodore Antoniou; Stanford University; per­
formed at Stanford University, Palo Alto, California.

1976

Agamemnon; in translation; dir. by Charlene Bletson;
Classical Greek Theatre Festival, University of Utah;
performed at University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

1977

June 1977 Australia

Agamemnon; re-worked version of the opera comp.
by Felix Werder (see above under 1967 for the
original version); Werder's libretto based on the
tr. by Gilbert Murray; dir. by Malcolm Richardson;
performed at the Grant Street Theatre, Melbourne,
Australia.

September 1977 Britain

The Golden Masque of Agamemnon; version of Ores­
teia by John Wiles; Cockpit Summer Youth Theatre;
performed at the Cockpit Theatre, London.

1977

January 1977 USA

Oresteia; ad. by Leo Brady; dir. by Leo Brady;
Drama Department, Catholic University of Amer­
ica; performed at the Catholic University of Amer­
ica, Washington, DC; Kate Van Burek (Clyt.) and
Debra Cerruti (Cass.).

December 1977

Oresteia; Renaissance Theatre Company; performed

1977

Agamemnon; tr. by Edith Hamilton, with excerpts in
ancient Greek; dir. by Andrei Serban; music comp.
by Elizabeth Swados; New York Shakespeare Festi­
val; performed at the Vivian Beaumont Theater,
Lincoln Center, New York, and transferring to the
Delacorte Theater with cast changes; Jamil Zakkaı
(Ag.) and Priscilla Smith (Clyt. and Cass.) at the Vivian Beaumont; Jamil Zakkaï (Ag.), Gloria Foster (Clyt.), and Dianne Wiest (Cass.) at the Delacorte.

1978
June 1978 Greece
*Agamemnon*; tr. by G. Dilboi; dir. by K. Marios; Askitiko Theatro; performed with *Libation Bearers* at the Kalithea Public Stadium, Kalithea.

February 1978 Italy-
*A Nià-Nià, l’Oresteia del Gruppo*; dir. by Lisi Natoli; Cooperativa Spaziozero; performed at the Teatro-circo, Rome.

1978 Russia
*Oresteia*; opera comp. by Sérégéy Ivanovich Tânéïév; libretto by Alexandre Vënksëtnë; chorus and orchestra of the Belorussian State Opera and Ballet; Victor Chemobayev (Ag.), Lëdija Galushkina (Clyt.), and Nelli Tkachenko (Cass.).

1978 USA
*Mourning Becomes Electra*; ad. of *Oresteia* by Eugene O’Neill; dir. by Nick Havinga; music comp. by Maurice Jarre; broadcast on American television over five episodes; Joan Hackett as Christine Mannon (the Clyt. figure).

1979
March 1979 Britain
*The Serpent Son*; ad. by Frederic Raphael and Kenneth McLeish; dir. by Bill Hays; music comp. by Humphrey Scarle; a BBC Television production broadcast in three parts on BBC 2; Denis Quilley (Ag.), Diana Rigg (Clyt.), and Helen Mirren (Cass.)

October 1979
March 1979 Germany
*Oresteia*; tr. by Walter Jens; dir. by Franco Enríquez; performed at the Residenztheater, Munich.

1979 Israel
*Agamemnon*; ad. by Steven Berkoff, translated into Hebrew by Avraham Oz; dir. by Steven Berkoff; music comp. by Zohar Levy; Haifa Municipal Theatre and the Chan Theatre of Jerusalem; performed at the Haifa Municipal Theatre; Asher SarFaty (Ag.), Joanna Peled (Clyt.).

March 1979 Italy
*Il Ritorno di Oreste*; dir. by Ricci; Compagnia Gruppo Sperimentazione Teatrale; performed at the Teatro Novelli, Rimini, and touring to Milan.

December 1979
*I sogni di Clitennestra*; ad. by Dacia Maraini; dir. by Giancarlo Sammartano; Politecnico-Teatro; performed at Il Fabbricone, Prato.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Production Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 1979</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td><em>Agamemnon</em>; in ancient Greek; Classics Department, Amherst College; performed at Amherst College, Amherst, Mass.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1980</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td><em>Oresteia</em>; tr. by Frederic Raphael and Kenneth McLeish; dir. by John Bell; music comp. by Nicolas Lyon; performed at the Nimrod Theatre, Sydney; Ralph Cotterill (Ag.), Arianthe Galani (Clyt.), and Chris McQuade (Cass.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1980</td>
<td>Britain</td>
<td><em>Agamemnon</em>; performed as part of <em>The Greeks</em>, ten Greek tragedies ad. by John Barton and Kenneth Cavander; dir. by John Barton; music comp. by Nick Bicat; des. by John Napier; Royal Shakespeare Company; performed at the Aldwych Theatre, London; John Shrapnel (Ag.), Janet Suzman (Clyt.), and Celia Gregory (Cass.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td><em>Oresteia</em>; opera comp. by Sergéy Ivanovich Tanéev; libretto by Alexandre Vénkstern; a BBC Radio production broadcast on Radio 3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1980</td>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td><em>Oresteia</em>; tr. by Vladimir Šrámek; dir. by Miloš Hynšt; Slovácké Divadlo; performed at the Slovácké Divadlo, Uherské Hradiště.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1980</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td><em>Oresteia</em>; performed at Avignon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 1980</td>
<td>Greece</td>
<td><em>Oresteia</em>; tr. by Thanasis Valtinos; dir. by Karolos Koun; music comp. by Michalis Christodoulidis; des. by Dionyssis Fotopoulos; Teatro Technis, Greece; performed in Epidaurus and Eleusis; Ch. Kalavrouzos (Ag.), Melina Mercouri (Clyt.), and M. Lymperoupolou (Cass.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td><em>L'Orestie</em>; ad. by Gérard Gelas; dir. by Antonis Manologlou; performed at the Teatro Greco-Romano, Taormina.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1980</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td><em>The Cry of Clytemnestra</em>; chamber opera comp. by John Eaton; libretto by Patrick Creagh; performed at the Opera Theater, University of Indiana, Bloomington, Indiana; Robert Bork and Tim Noble (Ag.), Nelda Nelson and Paula Redd (Clyt.), and Victoria Frances Czuba and Edith Diggory (Cass.).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1981 | Britain | *Oresteia*; tr. by Tony Harrison; dir. by Peter Hall; music comp. by Harrison Birtwistle; des. by Jocelyn...
Herbert; National Theatre; performed at the Olivier Theatre, National Theatre, London, and touring to Epidaurus (see below under 1983 for the television broadcast); James Carter (Ag.), Philip Donaghy (Clyt.), and John Normington (Cass.).

1981

**March 1981**

Czech Republic

*Oresteia*; Questors Theatre Company; performed at the Questors Theatre, Ealing.

December 1981

*Oresteia*; tr. by Ferdinand Süebitz; dir. by Jaroslav Vostry; music comp. by Václav Zamazal; Divadlo Jindřicha Průcha; performed at the Středočeské Divadlo, Kladno.

January 1981

Italy

*Oresteia*; dir. by Rino Sudano; Gruppo Quattro Cantoni; performed at the Cabaret Voltaire, Turin.

April 1981

South Africa

*Die Oresteia-Trilogie*; Walter Jens's tr. translated into Afrikaans by H. v. d. Merwe Scholtz; dir. by Diete Reible; Cape Performing Arts Board; performed at the Nico Malan-Teater, Cape Town; Johan Malherbe (Ag.), Wilna Snyman (Clyt.), and Brümilda van Rensburg (Cass.).

1981

USA

*Agamemnon*; dir. by James Fisher; Wabash College; performed at Wabash College, Crawfordsville, Indiana.

1981

*The Greeks* (Part 1 *The Cursed* and Part 2 *The Blest*); shortened version of ten Greek tragedies, including *Agamemnon*, ad. by John Barton and Kenneth Cavander; dir. by Nikos Psacharopoulos; performed in Williamstown, Mass.; Donald Moffat (Ag.); Jane White (Clyt.), and Jill Johnson (Cass.).

1981

*Orestes and the Three Furious Ladies*; farcical ad. of *Oresteia* by Melia Kaplan and Evris Tsakirides; performed at the Gallery Theater, Los Angeles.

1982

Australia

*Oresteia*; dance version choreographed and dir. by Don Asker; music comp. by Ioannis Xenakis; co-production by the Human Veins Dance Theatre and Canberra School of Music; performed in Australia, in a double bill with Stravinsky's *Les Noces*.

December 1982

Germany

*Agamemnon*; tr. by Gerhard Kelling; dir. by Christoph Schroth; Mecklenburgisches Staatstheater Schwerin; performed as part of the Antike-Entdeckungen project at the Mecklenburgisches Staatstheater, Schwerin, and touring.

July 1982

Greece

*Oresteia*; tr. by Thanasis Valtinos; dir. by Karolos Koun; music comp. by Michalis Christodoulidis;
des. by Dionyssis Fotopoulos; Theatro Technis of Karolos Koun; performed in Epidaurus; Antonis Theodorakopoulos (Ag.), M. Lymeropoulou (Clyt.), and Katia Gerou (Cass.)

c.1982 Iceland
*Oresteia*; dir. by Sveinn Einarsson; performed at the Thjodleikhusid, Reykjavik.

1982 Poland
*Oresteja*; dir. by Zygmunt Hubner; performed at the Stary Teatr, Kraków.

March 1982 USA
*Oresteia*; KISS, Leeuwarden, Netherlands; performed at Stony Brook State University of New York (SUNY), Stony Brook, NY.

May 1982
*Agamemnon*; tr. by Edith Hamilton; dir. by Jonathan Ringkamp; music comp. by Evangelos Fampas; Greek Theatre of New York; performed at the Greek Theatre, New York.

1982
*Agamemnon*; performed as part of *The Greeks*, ten Greek tragedies ad. by John Barton and Kenneth Cavander; music comp. by Theodore Antoniou; performed in Boston.

1983
June 1983 Britain
*The Oresteia*; translated and dir. by Ian Sinclair; Classics Club, High School of Stirling; performed at the High School of Stirling; Christopher Dalgleish (Ag.), Karen Elder (Clyt.), and Catriona Lorimer (Cass.).

October 1983
*The Oresteia: The Trilogy by Aeschylus*; a television broadcast of the stage performance dir. by Peter Hall (see under 1981 above); broadcast by Channel 4; music comp. by Harrison Birtwistle; des. by Jocelyn Herbert; James Carter (Ag.), Philip Donaghy (Clyt.), and John Normington (Cass.).

1983 Canada
*The Oresteia*; tr. by Robert Lowell; dir. by John Wood; National Arts Centre; performed at the National Arts Centre, Ottawa, Ontario; Roland Hewgill (Ag.), Kate Reid (Clyt.), and Diane D’Aquilia (Cass.).

February 1983 Germany
*Klytaiemnestra*; ad. by Jochen Berg; dir. by Schalich; performed at the Kammertheater der Württembergischen Staatsatheater, Stuttgart.

August 1983 Italy
*Agamemmuni*; ad. in the Sicilian dialect by Emilio Isgrò; dir. by Filippo Crivelli; music comp. by Francesco Pennisi; performed in Gibellina, Sicily, as the first part of *L’Orestea di Gibellina (I Cuéfuri was staged in 1984 and Villa Eumenidi in 1985).*

1983
*Il Progetto Agamemmone*; Magazzini; performed in Scandicci, Tuscany.
1983 **Japan**

*Klytaimnestra*; version by Tadashi Suzuki drawing on *Oresteia*, Sophocles' *Electra*, and Euripides' *Elektra* and *Orestes*; dir. by Tadashi Suzuki; Suzuki Company of Toga Theater (SCOT); performed in Togamura (see below for the 1985 revival); Kayoko Shiraishi (Clyt.).

March 1983 **Romania**

*Agamemnon (Oresteia I)*; music drama for radio; music comp. by Aurel Stroe; radio broadcast from Bucharest (the rest of the trilogy was broadcast in 1978 and 1986).

November 1983 **USA**

*Clytemnestre, ou Le Crime*; part of Marguerite Yourcenar's prose poem *Feux*; set to music comp. by Donald Harris; broadcast on National Public Radio.

1984 **March 1984** **Britain**

*Agamemnon*; dir. by Andrew Holmes; performed at the 29th National Student Drama Festival; Paul Dornan (Ag.), Ingrid Simler (Clyt.), and Gaby Chiappe (Cass.).

1984 **Israel**

*Oresteia*; Holk Freytag's ad. translated by Dan Meron; dir. by Holk Freytag; Habimah National Theatre; performed at the Habimah National Theatre, Tel Aviv.

March 1984 **USA**

*The Oresteia*; ad. by Robert Lowell; dir. by Douglas McKeown; Jean Cocteau Repertory; performed at the Bouwerie Lane Theatre, New York; Craig Cook (Ag.), Lynn Treveal (Clyt.), and Stephanie Lett (Cass.).

1985 **March 1985** **Britain**

*The Oresteia*; dir. by Ian Emmerson; music comp. by Clive Anderson; Norwich Players; performed at the Maddermarket Theatre, Norwich.

c.1985 **Czech Republic**

*Oresteia*; tr. by Ferdinand Stiebitz; dir. by Jaroslav Vostry; music comp. by Václav Zamazal; Východočeské Divadlo; performed at the Východočeské Divadlo, Padubice.

March 1985 **Czech Republic**

*Oresteia*; tr. by Václav Renč; dir. by Milan Pásek; music comp. by Vladimír Verner; Divadlo Bratři Mrtvicko; performed at the Divadlo Bratři Mrštíko, Brno.

June 1985
November 1985  Germany  Orestie; tr. by Dietrich Ebener; dir. by Holk Freytag; performed at the Schloßtheater, Moers.

June 1985  Greece  Extracts from Agamemnon; performed in Delphi at an event dedicated to the memory of Katina Paxinou at which female monologues from several ancient Greek tragedies were delivered (1st International Meeting of Ancient Greek Drama); Maria Crenobori and Lore Tappe (Clyt.).

1985  Oresteia; performed at the Odeion of Herodes Atticus, Athens.

October 1985  Italy  Clytemnestra; revival of Tadashi Suzuki's version drawing on Oresteia, Sophocles' Electra, and Euripides' Electra and Orestes; dir. by Tadashi Suzuki; Suzuki Company of Toga Theater (SCOT), Japan; performed at the Teatro di Venezia, Venice, and touring to Japan, Greece, and USA from 1986 to 1987 (see above under 1983 for the original production); Kayoko Shiraishi (Clyt.).

October 1985  Oresteia; tr. by Pier Paolo Pasolini; dir. by Riccardo Vannuccini; Compagnia di Teatro Milleuno in collaboration with the Pier Paolo Pasolini Foundation; performed at the Teatro Trianon, Rome.

November 1985  Oresteia; tr. by Emanuele Severino; dir. by Franco Parenti; Cooperativa Franco Parenti; performed at the Salone Pier Lombardo, Milan; Paolo Triestino (Ag.), Lucilla Morlacchi (Clyt.), and Giovanna Bozzolo (Cass.).

1985  Spain  La Orestiada; ad. by Domingo Miras, Manuel Canseco, and Rodríguez Adrados; dir. by Manuel Canseco; Compañía Española de Teatro Clásico; performed in Mérida.

January 1985  USA  Oresteia (in two parts: Agamemnon and Elektra / Orestes); tr. by Robert Fagles; dir. by Christopher Martin; music comp. by Bob Jewett and Jack Maebay; City Stage Company; performed at the City Stage Company, New York; Tom Spiller (Ag.), Karen Sunde (Clyt.), and Essene R (Cass.).

July 1985  Agamemnon; ad. by John Lewin; dir. by Erik Vos; Missouri Repertory Theatre; performed at the Missouri Repertory Theatre, Kansas City, Missouri; Robert Lewis Karlin (Ag.), Juliet Randall (Clyt.), and Olivia Virgil Harper (Cass.).

1985  Agamemnon; performed as part of The Greeks, ten Greek tragedies ad. by John Barton and Kenneth Cavander; American Conservatory Theatre; performed in Seattle, Washington.
1985

*Agamemnon*; in translation; dir. by Marilyn Holt; Classical Greek Theatre Festival, University of Utah; performed at the University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

1986

March 1986 **Australia**

*Agamemnon*; tr. by Michael Ewans; dir. by Michael Ewans; music comp. by Michael Lonsdale; performed at the University of Newcastle, New South Wales; Barry O’Connor (Ag.), Vanessa Turton (Clyt.), and Jan Hunt (Cass.).

Late 1986

*Ostraka*; dance-drama based on *Agamemnon*; choreographed by Elizabeth Burke and Pierre Thibaud-deau; Entr’acte Theatre; performed at the Performance Space Theatre, Sydney, revived in 1987, with a European tour in 1988.

1986 **Britain**

March 1986

*Agamemnon*; Questors Theatre Company; performed at the Questors Theatre, Ealing.

1986

**France**

*Oresteia*; tr. by Robert Ireland; dir. by James Kerr; Classical Society, University College London; performed at the Bloomsbury Theatre, London, and revived at the British Museum the following summer; Simon Shaw (Ag.), Tessa Bembridge (Clyt.), and Gail Hemming (Cass.).

**USA**

c. October 1986

*Oresteia*; tr. by David Grene and Wendy O’Flaherty; dir. by Nicholas Rudall; Court Theatre, University of Chicago; performed at the Court Theatre, University of Chicago, Illinois; John Rensenhouse (Ag.), Deanna Dunagan (Clyt.), and Ingrid Blekys (Cass.).

1986

*Agamemnon*; performed as part of *The Greeks*, ten Greek tragedies ad. by John Barton and Kenneth Cavander; dir. by Allen Miller; performed at the Back Alley Theatre, Los Angeles.

c.1986

*Oresteia*; dir. by J. Lundstrom; Department of Theatre Arts, University of Louisville; performed at the University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky.

c.1986

*Oresteia*; Upstart Crow Theatre Company; performed at the Dairy Center for the Arts, Boulder, Colorado.

1987

March 1987 **Britain**

*Agamemnon*; tr. by Robert Ireland; dir. by James Kerr; Classical Society, University College London; performed at the Bloomsbury Theatre, London, and revived at the British Museum the following summer; Simon Shaw (Ag.), Tessa Bembridge (Clyt.), and Gail Hemming (Cass.).

July 1987

*A View of the Oresteia*; dir. by Julie de Rohan and Gary Jordan; Croxleywood House Theatre Club; performed at the Croxleywood House Theatre, Rickmansworth, and transferring to Teatro Technis, London; Ian Smith (Ag.), Irene Hardy (Clyt.), and Julie de Rohan (Cass.).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Production Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>Oresteia; tr. by Thanasis Valtinos; dir. by Karolos Koun; Theatro Technis of Karolos Koun; performed at the Ancient Theatre of Delphi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 1987</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Oresteia; dir. by Ioannis Kokkos; music comp. by Ioannis Xenakis (including a performance of his musical composition Kassandra, a setting of lines from Agamemnon); performed in Gelli, Sicily.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 1987</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>Oresteia; tr. by Pier Paolo Pasolini; dir. by Lorenzo Salveti; Venetoteatro; performed at the Teatro Olimpico, Vicenza; Gabriele Moriconi (Ag.), Valeria Moriconi (Clyt.), and Rosa Di Lucia (Cass.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1987</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Het Huis van Atreus; drawing on The Greeks, ten Greek tragedies ad. by John Barton and Kenneth Cavander; dir. by Helmert Woudenberg; Toneelgroep Theater, Arnhem; performed in a tour across the Netherlands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Clytemnestra; a three-act dance treatment of Oresteia, choreographed by Martha Graham; Martha Graham Dance Company; performed in USA; Donlin Foreman (Ag.), Peggy Lyman (Clyt.), and Maxine Sherman (Cass.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Oresteia; tr. by Ernst Buschor; dir. by Hansgünter Heyme; performed at the Aalto-Theater, Essen, and touring to Delphi in 1989.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1988</td>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>Excerpts from Ancient Greek Drama: Agamemnon, Bacchae, Trackers; dance-drama drawing on the 3rd stasimon and 4th episode of Agamemnon, Euripides' Bacchae, and Sophocles' Ichnouetai; choreography by Zouzou Nicoloudi; music comp. by Theodore Antoniou; Chorica Dance Theatre Company; performed at the Ancient Theatre of Delphi (4th International Meeting of Ancient Greek Drama), and the Lycabettus Theatre, Athens (Athens Festival).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 1988</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Agamemnon; tr. by K. Ch. Myris; dir. by Spyros Evangelatos; Amphitheatro (Spyros Evangelatos); performed at the Ancient Theatre of Philippi, and in Epidaurus; D. Papamichael (Ag.), Eleni Hadjiargyri (Clyt.), and Leda Tasopoulou (Cass.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1988</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Una giostra: l'Agamemnone; dir. by Marco Isidori; Compagnia Marcido Marcidoris, and Famosa Mimosa; performed at the Festival di Chieri.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1988 New Zealand

Amanda Wrigley

Agamemnon; dir. by Michael Hurst; performed in New Zealand.

April 1988 Republic of Ireland

Oresteia; ad. and dir. by Paul Treanor; School of Classics, Trinity College Dublin; performed at the Samuel Beckett Centre, Dublin.

May 1988 USA

The House on Walker River; ad. from Robert Fagles’s tr.; dir. by Bill Rauch; music comp. by David Reiffel; Cornerstone Theater Company; performed in Schurz, Nevada; Wayne Johnson (Ag.), Amy Brennan (Clyt.), and Yvonne French (Cass.).

c.1988

Agamemnon; Boston University; performed at the Huntington Theatre, Boston University, Boston.

1988

Oresteia; dir. by Kathelin Gray and Gregg Dugan; Caravan of Dreams Theater (a.k.a. Theatre of All Possibilities); performed in Fort Worth, Texas.

1989

March 1989 Britain

Agamemnon; tr. by Robert Fagles; dir. by Andrew Arnold; Slaves of Dionysos, University College London; performed at the Bloomsbury Theatre, London, followed by a tour of American universities; Peter Hilton (Ag.), Tessa Bembridge (Clyt.), and Julia Hagan (Cass.).

1989

Agamemnon; dir. by Amanda Palmer; Hot Men Manage; performed at the Rifle Lodge, Edinburgh, Scotland.

1989

Mourning Becomes Electra; ad. of Oresteia by Eugene O’Neill; performed at the Tabard Theatre, London.

1989 France

L’Oresteie; television film; using the text of Nicole Loraux and François Rey; dir. by Bernard Sobel; produced by Théâtre de Gennevilliers, and broadcast on La Sept.

February 1989 USA

The Oresteia; ad. by John Lewin; dir. by Dale Luciano; Southern Oregon University; performed at Southern Oregon University, Ashland, Oregon; Donald Stand (Ag.), Judith Sanford (Clyt.), and Kimberly Rhodes (Cass.).

April 1989

The Oresteia; dir. by Dennis Carroll; University Theatre, University of Hawaii at Manoa; performed at the Kennedy Theatre, University of Hawaii at Manoa, Honolulu; Roman Galvan (Ag.), Jana Lindan-Ihrie (Clyt.), and Kehaunani Maile Koenig (Cass.)

September 1989

The Dreams of Clytemnestra; Tim Vode’s tr. of Dacia Maraini’s adaptation I sogni di Clitennestra; dir. by Greg Johnson; City Troupe; performed at the Judith Anderson Theatre, New York (see under 1979 above
Agamemnon on the APGRD Database

for the première of Italian text); Steve Singer (Ag.), Carmen de Lavallade (Clyt.), and Wendy Way (Cass.).

September 1989

The Oresteia; tr. by E. D. A. Morshhead; dir. by Bevya Rosten; Department of Drama, Tisch School of Arts, New York University; performed at New York University, New York; Stout Landau (Ag.), Alyssa Bresnahan (Clyt.), and Linda Patel (Cass.).

1989

Honey, I'm Home; a play drawing on Agamemnon and Elvis; Department of Greek, Bryn Mawr College; performed at Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania.

1989

Oresteia; dir. by Carmen Sauerbeck; Julian Theatre; performed in San Francisco.

1989

Oresteia; tr. by Robert Lowell; dir. by Howard Jensen; Department of Drama, University of Indiana; performed at the University of Indiana, Bloomington, Indiana.

1990

April 1990 Britain

Agamemnon; ad. by Steven Berkoff; performed in Scarborough (35th National Student Drama Festival).

Oresteia; version by George Taylor; dir. by Michael Chase; The Mask Studio; performed in Stroud, Gloucestershire (Stroud Festival).

November 1990 France

Les Atrides; Iphigénie à Aulis tr. by Jean Bollack, Agamemnon and Les Choéphores tr. by Ariane Mnouchkine, and Les Éuménides tr. by Hélène Cixous; dir. by Ariane Mnouchkine; music comp. by Jean-Jacques Lemetre; Théâtre du Soleil; performed at the Cartoucherie de Vincennes, Paris, and touring internationally until 1993; Simon Abkarian (Ag.), Juliana Carneiro da Cunha (Clyt.), and Nirupama Nityanandan (Cass.).

July 1990 Greece

Agamemnon; opera comp. by Brian Wilson; libretto ad. by Arthur Beer from Rush Rhein's translation; dir. by Arthur Beer; Classic Theatre Company, University of Detroit Mercy, USA; performed at the Classic Theatre Program, Spetses; Ray Aceto (Ag.), Mary Nighosian (Clyt.), and Denise Novak (Cass.).

Kassandra; opera, drawing on Agamemnon and Euripides' Trojan Women, comp. by Nicholas Zumbro; dir. by Vassilis Nicholaïdis; performed at the Theatre of Rhematia, Khalándrion, Athens (Aetopouleio Festival); Andreas Koulombis (Ag.), Markelia Harziann (Clyt.), and Maria Thoma (Cass.).

August 1990

Oresteia; tr. by K. Ch. Myris; dir. by Spyros Evangelatos; music comp. by Mikis Theodorakis; Amphi—

1990
Theatro (Spyros Evangelatos); performed at the Ancient Theatre of Epidaurus; Nikitas Tsakiroglou (Ag.), Eleni Hadjiargyri (Clyt.), and Leda Tasopoulos (Cass.).

1990 Italy

1990 Russia

1990 June Spain

1990 November USA

1991 March Britain

c. April 1991

Summer 1991

1991

Oresteia; dir. by Luca Ronconi; broadcast on Radio Televisione Italiana Rete 3.

Oresteya; concert performance of opera comp. by Sergéy Ivanovich Taneev; libretto by Alexander Venkstern; performed at the Moscow Conservatory of Music.

La Orestiada; ad. by Alvaro del Amo; dir. by Jose Carlos Plaza; Centro Dramático Nacional; performed in the ruins of a building in Madrid, and also in Mérida; Joaquin Notario (Ag.), Berta Riaza (Clyt.), and Paca Ojea (Cass.).

Agamemnon; tr. by Carl Caravana and Gary Beck; dir. by Gary Beck; Sidewalks Theatre; performed at the Sidewalks Theatre, New York; Clay Dickinson (Ag.), Nancy Guarino (Clyt.), and Maren Burke (Cass.).

The House; version of Oresteia; dir. by Helen Kaplow; Society for New Things; performed at the Society for New Things, Chicago; Lauren Campedelli (Clyt.).

The Orphan; a play by David Rabe drawing on Oresteia and Euripides' Iphigenia in Aulis; dir. by Paul Berman; performed at Barnard College, New York.

In the Border Country; television film drawing on Oresteia; written by Daniel Mornin; dir. by Thaddeus O'Sullivan; a Little Bird production for Channel 4. 

Mourning Becomes Electra; ad. of Oresteia by Eugene O'Neill; dir. by Philip Prowse; Citizens' Theatre; performed at the Citizens' Theatre, Glasgow, Scotland; Gerard Murphy as Ezra Mannon (the Ag. figure) and Glenda Jackson as Christine Mannon (the Clyt. figure).

Klytemnestra, act one of Klytemnestra's Bairns; ad. by Bill Dunlop; dir. by Michael David; performed at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, Scotland (see below under 1993 for the first staging of the entire play).

Agamemnon; tr. by Peter Meineck, Graham Mitchell, and Dirk Obbink; dir. by Peter Meineck and Graham Mitchell; Aquila Productions; performed at Bridge Lane Theatre, London, and touring to Can-
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 1991</td>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>Agamemnon* on the APGRD Database</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1991</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Oresteia; tr. by Kirsti Simonsuuri; dir. by Ritva Siikala; music comp. by Henrik Otto Donner; Raivoisat Ruusuri; performed at the Katajanokan Konehalli, Helsinki.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1991</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Oresteia; Valon Teatteri; performed in Finland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td></td>
<td>Die Oresteia; dir. by Tebbe Klein.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1991</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>Oresteia; performed in four languages; dir. by François Rochaix; performed in Bergen, and touring to Switzerland, Russia and USA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>Oresteia; National Theatre of Spain; performed in Mérida.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Agamemnon; a staged reading; Theater Emory, Emory University; performed at Emory University, Atlanta.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td></td>
<td>The Kentucky Cycle; play drawing on Oresteia written by Robert Schenkkan; dir. by Warner Shook; Intiman Theatre; this world première was performed at the Intiman Theatre, Seattle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td></td>
<td>Oresteia; tr. by Tony Harrison; dir. by John Edwards; performed at the University of New Hampshire.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1992</td>
<td>Britain</td>
<td>The Gift of the Gorgon; a play by Peter Shaffer drawing on Agamemnon; dir. by Peter Hall; music comp. by Judith Weir; Royal Shakespeare Company; performed at the Pit Theatre, Barbican Centre, London, and transferring to Wyndham's Theatre, London in March 1993.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 1992</td>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>Oresteia; Ferdinand Stiebitz's translation ad. by Jaroslav Vostrý; dir. by Karel Brožek; Klicperovo Divadlo; performed at the Klicperovo Divadlo, Hradec Králové.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td></td>
<td>Oresteia Images: Greek Tragedy Through Necrobiology; performance and art show; artwork by Julie Newdoll and Belinda Van Valkenburg; music comp. by Newdoll, van Valkenburg, Craig Birnie, Misha Birnie, and Charles Granich; performed at the Nadace Hermit, Plasy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 1992</td>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>Oresteia; opera comp. by Ioannis Xenakis; performed at the Megaron Mousikis, Athens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Agamennon; tr. by Pier Paolo Pasolini; dir. by Alvaro Piccardi; performed in the Auditorium, Casa Della Cultura, Palmi; Giuseppe Savio (Ag.), Maria Chiara D'Apote (Clyt.), and Elena Stancanelli (Cass.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1992</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Oresteia; Charles Mee's ad. of Aeschylus' Agamemnon and Euripides' Orestes performed as a single drama; dir. by Robert Woodruff; performed at the Mandell Weiss Theatre, University of California, San Diego.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1992</td>
<td></td>
<td>The Clytemnestra Project: Iphigeneia at Aulis, Agamemnon and Electra; Iphigeneia at Aulis tr. by W. S. Merwin and George E. Dimock, Agamemnon tr. by Robert Lowell, and Sophocles' Electra tr. by Kenneth McLeish; dir. by Garland Wright; Guthrie Theater; performed at the Guthrie Theater, Minneapolis; Stephen Pelinski (Ag.), Isabell Monk (Clyt.), and Shawn Judge (Cass.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td></td>
<td>Agamemnon; dir. by Douglas Hunt; Theater Schneater; performed at Gasworks Park, Seattle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td></td>
<td>The House of Atreus; ad. by ?John Lewin; dir. by Peter Lackner; Department of Dramatic Art, University of California; performed at the University of California, Santa Barbara, California.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td></td>
<td>Oresteia, The Musical; musical comp. by John Fisher; performed at the University of Berkeley, California.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1993</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>The Oresteia; opera comp. by Liza Lim; libretto by Barrie Kosky and Liza Lim from Tony Harrison's tr.; cond. by Sandro Gorli; dir. by Barrie Kosky; Elision Ensemble; performed at TheatreWorks, Melbourne.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Oresteia; performed in Vienna.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1993</td>
<td>Britain</td>
<td>Agamemnon; tr. by Dennis Douglas; dir. by Dennis Douglas; music comp. by Malcolm Atkins; Shoe-string; performed at Bryanston Arts Centre, Blandford, Dorset, and touring Britain; Dennis Douglas (Ag.), Meg Douglas (Clyt.), and Angela Warren (Cass.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer 1993</td>
<td></td>
<td>Klytemnestra's Bairns; ad. of Oresteia by Bill Dunlop; dir. by Toby Gough; performed at The Observatory, Edinburgh, as part of the Fringe Festival (see under 1991 above for the first staging of act one alone).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 1993</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>The Oresteia; dir. by Ulrich Hub; performed in Germany.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
November 1993  Greece  *Oresteia*; tr. by Kostas Georgousopoulos; dir. by Giorgos Michaelidis; music comp. by Theodore Antoniou; set and costumes des. by Dionysis Fotopoulos; Anoichto 'Theatro; performed in Greece; Minas Hatzisavvas (Ag.), Marietta Sgourdaiou (Clyt.), and Ntina Michaelidi (Cass.).

c.1993  Iceland  *Agamemnon*; dir. by Thorstein Gunnarsson; performed in Iceland.

August 1993  Macedonia  *Oresteia*; in translation; the three parts of the trilogy were produced respectively by the National Academy of Theatre and Film Arts, Sofia, Bulgaria, the Academy for Theatre, Radio, Film and Television, Lubiljana, Slovenia, and the Academic Theatre Laboratory, Skopje, Macedonia; performed at Samoil's Fortress, Ohrid (33rd Ohrid Summer Festival).

1993  Nigeria  *Oresteia-Skizze: Staging Greeks in the Niger Delta*; condensed versions of *Iphigenia in Aulis* and *Oresteia*; dir. by Anna Hlavacova; performed by students at the University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

November 1993  Slovenia  *Oresteia*; tr. by Jesih Milan; dir. by Magelli Paolo; Slovensko Narodno Gledalisce; performed at Slovensko Narodno Gledalisce, Maribor, and touring to Ljubljana and Italy; Polič Radko (Ag.), Muhic Milena (Clyt.), and Mišič Ksenija (Cass.).

November 1993  USA  *The Greek Project*; tr. of *Agamemnon* by Kenneth McLeish and tr. of Sophocles' *Electra* by E. F. Watling; dir. by Tim Ocel; Theater Emory, Emory University; performed at Emory University, Atlanta. *Agamemnon*; tr. by Robert Fagles; dir. by Therese Sellers; music comp. by Steven Sweeting; Harvard Classical Club; performed at the Sanders Theatre, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.

c.1993  Britain  *Shifting Landscapes: The Oresteia Story*; dir. by Katherine Moller; Department of Theatre, Fort Lewis College; performed at Fort Lewis College, Durango, Colorado.

1994  Britain  *Agamemnon*; in ancient Greek; dir. by Tamlin Walenn; Department of Classics, King's College London; performed at King's College London (7th London Festival of Greek Drama); Oscar Blend (Ag.), Georgina Whittington (Clyt.), and Lucia Anthony (Cass.).

October 1994  *Oresteia*; tr. by Tony Harrison; dir. by Michael Raw; Sedbergh School; performed at Sedbergh School, Sedbergh, Cumbria; Matthew Rinsdale (Ag.), Adam Birley (Clyt.), and Paul Baguley (Cass.).
November 1994

Clytemnestra; musical composition for soprano and orchestra comp. by Rhian Samuel; BBC National Orchestra of Wales; performed at St David’s Hall, Cardiff, Wales, and broadcast on BBC Radio 3 on 5 February 1995; Della Jones (Clyt.).

1994

Agamemnon; University of Leicester; performed at the University of Leicester.

1994

The Oresteia; ad. from the translations of Robert Eagles and Philip Vellacott; dir. by Gay Smith and Caroline Thomson; Ludamus Theatre Company; performed at Stantonbury Campus School, Milton Keynes.

c.1994

Germany

Oresteia; dance-theatre choreographed and dir. by Joachim Schlömer; music comp. by Ioannis Xenakis; Ulmer Theater; performed at Ulmer Theater, Ulm.

1994

Israel

Oresteia; tr. by Aharon Shabtai; dir. by Doron Tavori; touring Israel; a one-man show with Doron Tavori in all roles.

January 1994

Italy

Oresteia; tr. by Pier Paolo Pasolini; dir. by Antonio Sxyxty; the three plays in the trilogy performed separately over a period of three months at the Teatro Out-Off, Milan; Raffaella Boscola (Clyt.).

February 1994

Agamemnon; Compagnia Marcido Marcidoris, and Famosa Mimosa; performed at the Teatre delle Saline, Cagliari, Sardinia

June 1994

Agamemnon; tr. by Umberto Albini; dir. by Roberto De Simone; Istituto Nazionale del Dramma Antico; performed at the Teatro Greco, Syracuse (XXXIII Ciclo di Spettacoli Classici); Mariano Rigillo (Ag.), Ida Di Benedetto (Clyt.), and Alvia Reale (Cass.).

1994

Agamemnon; dir. Franco Venturini; performed at the Teatro D’Oggi, Rome.

1994

Agamemnon; tr. by Pier Paolo Pasolini; dir. by Ugo Ciartedo; Le Cristaldi; performed at the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore; Alessandro Barbero (Ag.), Maria Teresa Floris (Clyt.), and Carla Costa (Cass.).

January 1994

Russia

Oresteia; revival of Stein’s 1980 production (see above) but with significant changes; ad. by Peter Stein, tr. into Russian by Boris Shekassiotuk; dir. by Peter Stein; co-production by the Melpomene Society for German-Russian Cultural Exchange, Academic Theatre of the Russian Army, and the Goethe Institutes of Munich and Moscow; performed at the Academic Theatre of the Russian Army, Moscow, followed by a European tour and a significant revival in 1996; Anatoli Vassiliev (Ag.), Ekaterina Vassilieva (Clyt.), and Natalia Kotchetova (Cass.).

Amanda Wrigley
1994 Slovakia Prelude to an Opera; The House of Atreus; Vorspiel for an unwritten opera; comp. by Jack Fortner in 1987 and recorded by the Vienna Modern Masters label in 1994; cond. by Szymon Kawalla; Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra; radio broadcast from Bratislava.

March 1994 USA Agamemnon; ad. by Charles L. Mee; dir. by Brian Kulick; Actors’ Gang; performed as part of a separately-directed trilogy with Sophocles’ Electra and Euripides’ Orestes at the Actors’ Gang Theater, Los Angeles; Ned Ballamy (Ag.), Clare Wren (Clyt.), and Molly Bryant (Cass.).

c. March 1994
The Orphan; a play by David Rabe drawing on Oresteia and Euripides’ Iphigenia in Aulis; dir. by James Lynch; National Pastime Theatre; performed at Greenview Arts Center, Chicago; Arch Harmon (Ag.), and Elizabeth Laidlaw and Paula Line (both Clyt.).

April 1994 Clytemnestra; ad. of Iphigenia in Aulis and Agamemnon by Richard Davis; dir. by Bill Allard; Fine and Performing Arts Department, University of San Francisco; performed at the Gill Theatre, University of San Francisco; Barbara Jaspersen (Clyt.).

April 1994 Oresteia; tr. by Fagles; New World School of the Arts; performed at the Gerrits Theater, New World School of the Arts, Miami.

October 1994 Agamemnon; ad. by Keith Scales and Peter Montgomery; dir. by Keith Scales; Classic Greek Theatre of Oregon; performed at the Cerf Amphitheater, Reed College, Portland, Oregon; Peter Montgomery (Ag.), Susan Jonsson (Clyt.), and Paula Harrigan (Cass.).

c. November 1994 The House of Atreus; ad. by John Lewin; dir. by Patrick Kelly; Drama Department, University of Dallas; performed at the University of Dallas, Dallas; Susanna Morrow (Clyt.).

November 1994 Oresteia; tr. by Robert Auletta; dir. by François Rochaix; American Repertory Theatre (ART); performed at the Loeb Drama Center, Cambridge, Mass.; Charles Levin (Ag.), Randy Danson (Clyt.), and Natacha Roi (Cass.).

1994 Agamemnon; ad. by Andrew Ordover; dir. by Dave Mowers; Common Ground Stage and Film Company; performed at the Ohio Theatre, New York.

1994 Clytemnestra; three-act dance treatment of Oresteia; choreographed by Martha Graham; Martha Graham
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Britain</td>
<td>Victory Morning; a play drawing on Oresteia by Gerard McLarnon; dir. by Jacob Murray; Allende Theatre Company; performed at the Bridewell Theatre, London.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Agamemnon; dir. by Adel Hakim; performed at the Théâtre des Quarts d'Ivry, Paris.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Kassandra; version of Agamemnon by Christa Wolf; dir. by Harald Demmer; Theater im Bauturm; performed at the Theater im Bauturm, Cologne.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Oresteia; dance-theatre; dir. by Joachim Schlömer; Nationaltheater; performed in Germany.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>Oresteia (una commedia organica?); ad. and dir. by Romeo Castellucci; Societas Raffaello Sanzio; performed at Il Fabbricone, Prato, and touring to Dresden and Montreal in 1996 and 1997 respectively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>Les Danaides; Silviu Purcarete's adaptation of Aeschylus' Suppliants, including a reconstruction of the satyr play Amymone, the Parodos of Agamemnon, lines 67–71 of Septem, and Io's tirade from Prometheus Bound; dir. by Silviu Purcarete; National Theatre of Craiova; performed in Romania, and touring internationally until 1997.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>Oresteia; in Mandarin; in collaboration with Richard Schechner; Contemporary Legend Theatre, Taiwan; performed in Taipei.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>Oresteia; adaptation; Mei Deng Feng [Ghosts Reaching for the Peak]; performed in Taiwan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>Oresteia; National Institute for the Arts, Taiwan; performed in masks by students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.1995</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>Oresteia; dir. by Mustafa Avkiran; performed in Istanbul.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Agamemnon; ad. by Steven Berkoff; dir. by Dale Goulding; European Repertory Company, USA; performed at the Baird Hall, Chicago; Matt Yde (Ag.) and Janet Hayatshai (Clyt.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td></td>
<td>Oresteia; Classic TheaterWorks, Kennesaw State University; performed at Kennesaw State University, Kennesaw, Georgia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.1995</td>
<td></td>
<td>Oresteia; tr. by Robert Auletta; dir. by William Foeller; performed at Catholic University of America, Washington, DC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>Oresteia; tr. by Gerard Koolschijn; dir. by Franz Marijnen; K.V.S. (Koninklijke Vlaamse Schouwburg); performed at K.V.S. (Koninklijke Vlaamse Schouwburg), Brussels; Wim van der Grijn (Ag.), Geert De Jong (Clyt.), and Chris Thys (Cass.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1996</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>Oresteia; tr. and dir. by George Taylor; Department of Drama, University of Manchester; performed at the University of Manchester; Clive Hiley (Ag.), India Fisher (Clyt.), and Emma Ashcroft (Cass.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1996</td>
<td>Britain</td>
<td>Oresteia; ad. by Leticia Agudo; QMW Theatre Company; performed at the C Too Theatre, Edinburgh, Scotland (Fringe Festival).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer 1996</td>
<td></td>
<td>L'Orestie; ad. and dir. by Silviu Purcarete (revised in 1998; see below); performed at the Théâtre de l'Union-CDN, Limoges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1996</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Trilogia del Presente / Oresteia; ballet choreographed by Virgilio Sieni; music comp. by Alexander Balanescu; costumes des. by Miuccia Prada; Compagnia Virgilio Sieni Danza; performed at the Teatro Communale, Ferrare, and at the 2nd Piattaforma Della Danza Contemporanea Italiana in Florence in 1997.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Agamennone; dir. Renato Cuocolo; RAA Theatre; performed at the Festival delle Colline Torinesi; Walter Malosti (Ag.) and Tony Yap (Cass.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Oresteia; dir. by Antonio Lucifero; performed at the Teatro S. Agostino.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Republic of Ireland</td>
<td>Oresteia; dir. by Mark O'Brien; Galloping Cat Theatre Company; performed at the City Arts Centre, Dublin; Michael McInerney (Ag.) and Sheila McDonald (Clyt.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1996</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Orestien; tr. by Emil Zilliacus; dir. by Micke Lidén; Teater Satori; performed at the Kulturhuset, Stockholm.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Amanda Wrigley

February 1996   USA
  Clytemnestra; dir. by Yukihiro Goto; Department of Theater Arts, University of Pittsburgh; performed at the University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

April 1996   Canada
  The House of Atreus; adaptation; Heidelberg College; performed at Heidelberg College, Tiffin, Ohio.

1996
  The Kentucky Cycle; play drawing on Oresteia written by Robert Schenkkan; dir. by Lucia Colombi; Ensemble Theatre; performed at the Civic Theatre, Cleveland, Ohio.

1997
1997 Belgium
  Oresteia; ad. and dir. by Gerry Large; Hamilton College; performed at Hamilton College, Hamilton, NY.

January 1997 Britain
  The House of Atreus; adaptation; Heidelberg College; performed at Heidelberg College, Tiffin, Ohio.

August 1997
  The Red Act Arias; musical composition by Roger Reynolds drawing on Agamemnon (part of a large-scale work entitled The Red Act Project; see under 1999 and 2004 for other parts); libretto by Richmond Lattimore; BBC Symphony Orchestra and Singers; performed at the Royal Albert Hall, London (Proms Festival), and broadcast on BBC Radio 3.

1997
April 1997 Canada
  Oresteia; tr. by Robert Fagles; dir. by Sanjay Talwar and Josephine LeGrice; Equity Showcase; performed at the Harbourfront, Toronto, Ontario; David Macniven (Ag.), Alison Lawrence (Clyt.), and Tara Rosling (Cass.).

January 1997 France
  L'Orestie; tr. by Paul Claudel; dir. by Serge Tranvouez;
  Maski Théâtre and Théâtre Nanterre-Amandiers; performed at the Théâtre Nanterre-Amandiers, Nanterre; Jean-Baptiste Sastre (Ag.), Catherine Epars (Clyt.), and Nathalie Nambot (Cass.).

1997
May 1997 Spain
  Agamemnon; Grupo Muy Clásico Adynaton del I.E.S. No. 5, Albacete; performed at the Teatro Romano de Segóbriga (Festival Euopro de Teatro Grecolatino).

February 1997 USA
  Agamemnon; tr. by Howard Rubenstein; dir. by Barry Bosworth; Granite Hills Acting Workshop; performed in El Cajon, California.

The Oresteia; scenes from Robert Fagles translation; Boston University; performed at Boston University, Boston.
1997

*Agamemnon*; ad. from Richmond Lattimore's tr.;
dir. by Alexander Harrington; La MaMa e.t.c. (Experimental Theatre Club); performed at La MaMa e.t.c. (Experimental Theatre Club), New York;
Cullen Wheeler (Ag.), Lynne McCollough (Clyt.), and Lori Putnam (Cass.).

1997

*Agamemnon*; performed as part of *The Greeks*, ten Greek tragedies ad. by John Barton and Kenneth Cavander; dir. by Gregory Boyd; Alley Theatre;
performed at the Alley Theatre, Houston, Texas.

1997

*Oresteia*; a reading of Peter Meineck's tr.; Aquila Productions; performed at Columbia University, New York.

1998

1998 France

*L'Orestie*; in ancient Greek; Théâtre Démodocos;
performed at the Théâtre Démodocos, Tours, together with Philippe Brunet's reconstruction in French of *Protée*, the lost satyr play.

July 1998 Greece

*Orestis*; dance-theatre inspired by *Oresteia*, Sophocles' *Electra*, Euripides' *Orestes*, and Ioannis Ritsos' *Orestis*; dir. by Isidoros Sideris; music comp. by Ioannis Metallinos; Theatrokinisi; performed at the Ancient Theatre of Delphi (9th International Meeting of Ancient Greek Drama).

June 1998 Italy

*Agamennone*; dir. by Giuseppe Argirò; performed at the Anfiteatro, Tuscania, and at the Teatro Euclide, Rome, in October.

November 1998

*Una giostra: l'Agamennone*; Compagnia Marcido Marcidoris, and Famosa Mimosa; performed in Turin.

1998

*Agamennone*; dir. by Pasquale De Cristofaro; Associazione Teatro Studio; performed at the Castello Aragonese, Taranto (Magna Grecia Festival).

1998

*Agamennone*; in translation; performed at the Lyceum, Roseto degli Abruzzi.

1998

*Oresteia*; tr. by Pier Paolo Pasolini; *Agamennone* dir. by Guido D'Avino (*Le Coefore* and *Le Eumenidi* dir. by Giancarlo Sepe and Alberto Di Stasio respectively); performed at the Tempio di Giove Anxur, Terracina.

May 1998 Romania

*Oresteia*; ad. and dir. by Silviu Purcăreţ; National Theatre of Craiova; a revision and new staging of the 1996 production (see above) performed at the National Theatre of Craiova, and touring to Britain; Ilie Gheorghe (Ag.), Maia Morgenstern (Clyt.), and Mirela Croabă and Adriana Moca (Cass.). See Fig. 19.2.
Figure 19.2. Flyer cover for Purcarete's *Oresteia* (1998).
April 1998  South Africa  *In the City of Paradise*: English and seSotho reworking of *Oresteia*, the *Electra* plays of Sophocles and Euripides, and Euripides' *Orestes*; created in workshop by the cast; dir. by Mark Fleishman; University of Cape Town; performed in the Hiddingh Hall, University of Cape Town; Niall Segell (Ag.), Jacqui Pickering (Clyt.), and Warona Seane (Cass.).

January 1998  Sri Lanka  *Clytemnestra*; ad. and dir. by Daniel Foley; Performance Exchange, England / Japan; performed at the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, followed by an international tour; Daniel Foley (Ag.) and Risako Ataka (Clyt.).

March 1998  USA  *Agamemnon*; tr. by Robert Lowell; dir. by Royce Gehrels; Different Stages Repertory; performed at the Acting Studio, Austin, Texas; Mike Vaughn (Ag.), Ellie McBride (Clyt.), and Sonia Montoya (Cass.).

March 1998  USA  *Agamemnon*; ad. and dir. by Alan Kreizenbeck; Theatre Department, University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC); performed at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC), Maryland; Garrett Wright (Ag.), Kimberly Reisenweber (Clyt.), and Margarita McCabe (Cass.).

April 1998  USA  *Agamemnon*; dir. by Dick Caram; Department of Theatre, Pennsylvania State University; performed at the Pennsylvania State University (Altoona Campus), Pennsylvania.

June 1998  USA  *Agamemnon*; music drama comp. by Garrett Fisher; libretto by Garrett Fisher; choreography by Christy Fisher; performed at the Nippon Kan Theater, Seattle (see below for the 2004 première of *Dream of Zeus*, drawing on the whole *Oresteia*); Robert Tangney (Ag.), Deeji Killian (Clyt.), and Teresa Mathern (Cass.).

July 1998  USA  *The Oresteia*; ad. and dir. by Stuart Bousel; Quicksilver; performed at the Tucson Center for the Performing Arts, Tucson, Arizona; DaleAnn Winnie (Clyt.) and Alba Jaramillo (Cass.).

October 1998  USA  *The Oresteia*; ad. and dir. by Tim Soulis; Transylvania University; performed at the Carrick Theatre, Transylvania University, Lexington, Kentucky; Richard S. Foley (Ag.), Amber Porter (Clyt.), and Tracy Pervine (Cass.).

December 1998  USA  *The Oresteia*; dir. by Richard Sewell; Department of Theater & Dance, Colby College; performed at Colby College, Waterville, Maine.
1998

_Agamemnon_; dir. by Claire Graham; performed at Emerson College, Boston.

_Agamemnon_; ad. by Andrew Ordover; performed at the Trilogy Theater, New York.

_Oresteia_; University of Louisville; performed at the University of Louisville, Kentucky.

_Oresteia_; tr. by Peter Meineck; dir. by Robert Richmond; Department of Theater, Speech and Dance, University of South Carolina; performed at the University of South Carolina, Columbia.

1999

**Belgium**

_Drie Madammen_; performed in Belgium.

_Agamemnon_; tr. and dir. by David Stuttard; Actors of Dionysus; performed at Paston College, North Walsham, followed by a national tour; David Logan (Ag.), Kate Gabriel (Clyt.), and Kim Evans (Cass.).

**Britain**

_Oresteia_; tr. by Tony Harrison; dir. by Peter Barlow; GSA Conservatoire, England; performed at the Electric Theatre, Guildford; David Cairnduff (Ag.), Mark Rind / Kerry Ellison / Esther O’Toole / Alex Duncan (Clyt.), and Mina Cayiroglu (Cass.).

**France**

_L’Orestie_; tr. by Daniel Loayza; dir. by Georges Lavaudant; music comp. by Jean-Francois Herqué; Odéon-Théâtre de l’Europe; performed at the Odéon, Paris, followed by a European tour; Gilles Arbona (Ag.), Christiane Cohendy (Clyt.), and Marie-Paule Trystram (Cass.).

**Germany**

_Klytaimnestra oder Der Fluch der Atriden_; rock opera version of _Oresteia_ comp. by David Defeis; libretto by Martina Krawulsky and Walter Weyers; dir. by Walter Weyers; Landestheater Schwaben; performed in Memmingen, Bavaria; Peter Höschler (Ag.), Joséphine Weyers (Clyt.), and Silvia Danek as Kassandra. In 1999 an expanded version of the opera was released on two albums _The House of_
Atreus, Act I and Act II) by David Defeis' rock band Virgin Steele.

July 1999 Greece

Oresteia; in ancient Greek; dir. by Lakis Karalis; Prosodia; performed at the Manos Hatzidakis Open Theatre, Heraklio, and touring Greece.

1999

Agamemnon (The Ghost Sonata); ad. in modern Greek and English by Michael Marmarinos; dir. by Michael Marmarinos; music comp. by Kurt Weill and the German rock group Tuxedomoon; des. by Dionysissis Fotopoulos; Diplous Eros; experimental production performed in Athens (see under 2000 below for the full production); Blaine Reininger (of Tuxedomoon) (Ag.) and Jenny Drivala (Clyt.).

1999 Italy

Agamemnon; Compagnia Marcido Marcidoris; performed at the Rassegna di Allestimenti Scenici Sperimentali.

1999

Agamemnon; dir. by Rafaello Malesci; Compagnia II NODO; performed in Italy; Emiliano Baresi (Ag.), Francesca Carini Vedetta (Clyt.), and Paolo Franchini (Cass.).

May 1999 Japan

Justice; musical composition by Roger Reynolds (the second part of a large-scale work entitled The Red Act Project; see also under 1997 and 2004 for other parts); libretto assembled by the composer from Euripides' Trojan Women and Iphigenia at Aulis, and Aeschylus' Agamemnon; dir. by Tadashi Suzuki; performed in Shizuoka, Japan (2nd Theatre Olympics).

1999 Lithuania

Mourning Becomes Electra; ad. of Oresteia by Eugene O'Neill, in Lithuanian translation; dir. by G. Varnas; Kaunas State Drama Theatre; performed in Lithuania.

October 1999 Mexico

La Orestiada; ad. by Jorge Plata; dir. by Ricardo Camacho; Bogota Free Theater Troupe, Colombia; performed in Guanajuato (Cervantino Festival of Guanajuato), and touring to the Epidaurus Festival in 2000; Germán Jaramillo (Ag.), Laura García (Clyt.), and Yamyle Lanchas (Cass.).

September 1999 Philippines

Dularawan Ng Pating; musical ad. by Nonon Padilla and George de Jesus III, drawing on Oresteia, and Leon Ignacio and Julian Cruz-Balmaceda's Banganga ng Pating; dir. by Nonon Padilla; Tanghalang Pilipino; performed at the Cultural Centre of the Philippines, Pasay City.

February 1999 USA

Agamemnon; performed as part of The Greeks, ten Greek tragedies ad. by John Barton and Kenneth Cavander; dir. by James DePaul and Bill Walters;
Professional Theatre Training Program and Dance Program, University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee; performed at the School of the Arts Theatre, University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee.

April 1999

Agamemnon; based on the ad. by Steven Berkoff, dir. by Aminta Goyel; Risley Theatre, Cornell University; performed at the Cornell University, Ithaca, NY; Eric Kruger (Ag.), Aimee Baumann (Clyt.), and Amy Lee Bennett (Cass.).

April 1999

Athena, Live!; a play drawing on Oresteia written by Danielle Dresden; dir. by Jo Scheder; TAP-IT New Works; performed at the TAP-IT Performance Space, Madison, and touring to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

May 1999

Oresteia; ad. from a variety of translations by Jude Domski and James Aitken; dir. by Jude Domski; School of Drama, University of Washington; performed at the Playhouse Theatre, University of Washington, Seattle; Mark Waldstein (Ag.), Sue Guthrie (Clyt.), and Tikka Sears (Cass.).

June 1999

Iphigenia and Other Daughters; ad. of Euripides’ two Iphigenia plays, Sophocles’ Electra, and Oresteia by Ellen McLaughlin; dir. by Annalise Christ; Hidden Theatre; performed at the Southern Theater, Minneapolis; Dona Werner Freeman (Clyt.).

1999

Agamemnon; performed as part of The Greeks, ten Greek tragedies ad. by John Barton and Kenneth Cavander; Odyssey Theatre Ensemble; performed at the Odyssey Theatre Ensemble, Los Angeles.

1999

Agamemnon; dir. by John C. Green; Department of Theatre, Butler University; performed at Butler University, Indianapolis.

2000

January 2000

Britain

Oresteia; semi-staging of opera comp. by Ioannis Xenakis (see above under 1966), including Kassandra (see above under 1987) and La Déesse Athêna (see above under 1992); cond. by Guy Protheroe; dir. by Alain Germain; English Bach Festival Opera; performed at the Linbury Studio Theatre, Royal Opera House, London (as part of a Myth of Orestes season, together with the first performance of Handel’s Oreste in Britain since 1734; Anthony Scales (Cass.).

September 2000

Czech Republic

Příběh Elektry [Story of Electra]; ad. of Oresteia and Euripides’ Orestes by Johana Kudláčková and Irena
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>France</td>
<td><em>Cassandra</em>; opera comp. by Vittorio Gnecchi; libretto by Luigi Illica; cond. by Enrique Diemecke; a Radio France production, with the Orchestre National de Montpellier and the Latvian Radio Chorus; concert performance in Montpellier (Festival de Radio France); Alberto Cupido (Ag.), Denia Mazzola-Gavazzeni (Clyt.) and Tea Demurishvili (Cass.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Greece</td>
<td><em>Agamemnon (The Ghost Sonata)</em>; ad. in modern Greek and English by Michael Marmarinos; dir. by Michael Marmarinos; music comp. by Kurt Weill and the German rock group Tuxedomoon; des. by Dionyssis Fotopoulos; Diplous Eros; performed at the Theseion Theatre, Athens, and touring to Georgia, Switzerland, and Venezuela (see above for the experimental production in 1999); Blaine Reininger (of Tuxedomoon) (Ag.) and Jenny Drivala (Clyt.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2000</td>
<td>Israel</td>
<td><em>The Whiners</em> (a.k.a. <em>Crybabies</em>); play-within-a-play in which the staff of a Calcutta hospital perform <em>The Torments and Death of Agamemnon</em> for their patients; written by Hanoch Levin; dir. by Ilan Ronen; Cameri Theatre; performed at the Cameri Theatre, Tel Aviv.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2000</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td><em>Oresteia-Atridi</em>; ad. by Michele di Martino; dir. by Maurizio Panici; performed at the Teatro Antico di Segesta, Sicily; Maurizio Panici (Ag.), Pamela Villoresi (Clyt.), and Elisabetta Valgoi (Cass.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td><em>Agamennone</em>; Teatro Studio di Grosseto; performed in Italy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Agamennone</em>; dramatic monologue ad. by Ioannis Ritsos; dir. by Giorgio Gallione; Teatro dell’ Archivolti di Genova; performed at the S. Giovannello, Ortigia (Progetto Ritsos: Letture Scenice sul Ciclo Mitologico di Ioannis Ritsos); Giole Dix (Ag.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Il Decimo Anno</em>; ad. of <em>Agamennone</em>; performed in Italy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Le Mura Di Argo, Uno Studio per L’Agamennone di Eschilo</em>; dir. by Francesco Saponaro; performed at the Palazzo dello Spagnolo, Naples.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2000

March 2000  Netherlands

Rosso Cantato; dance-drama drawing on Agamemnon; choreographed by Virgilio Sieni; music comp. by the Balanescu Quartet; co-production by the Ente Teatro Vittorio Emanuele, Messina, and the Centro Regionale Toscano per la Danza L'Eclisse.

Oresteia; dir. by Alize Zandwijk; ROTheater; performed at the Rotterdamsche Schouwburg; Jack Wouterse (Ag.), Catherine ten Bruggencate ( Clyt.), and Fania Sorel ( Cass.).

June 2000

Aars! Anatomische Studie van de Oresteia; ad. by Luk Perceval and Peter Verhelst; dir. by Luk Perceval; Het Toneelhuis, Belgium; performed at the Transformershuis Toneelgroep, Amsterdam, followed by a European tour; Wim Opbrouck (Ag.) and Diane Belmans ( Clyt.).

January 2000  USA

The Millennium Project; ad. of Oresteia by Amy Russell; dir. by Henryk Baranowski; Clarence Brown Theater Company (graduating members of the University of Tennessee's International Actor Training Academy); performed at the Carousel Theatre, University of Tennessee, Knoxville; Gabriel S. Maxson (Ag.), Jennifer Rives / Amy Russell / Nancy Prebilich ( Clyt.), and Michelle Torres ( Cass.).

February 2000

Furious Blood; ad. of Iphigenia at Aulis and Oresteia by Kelly Stuart; dir. by Kirsten Brandt; Sledgehammer Theatre; performed at the Sledgehammer Theatre, San Diego, California; Tim West (Ag.) and Jessa Watson ( Clyt.).

March 2000

Agamemnon vs. Liberace; ad. by Aaron Mack Schloff; dir. by Samuel Buggeln; performed at the Here Arts Center, New York; David Brown, Jr. (Ag.)

March 2000

Messenger #1; ad. of Oresteia written and dir. by Mark Jackson; Art Street Theater; performed at EXIT Stage Left, San Francisco; Kevin Clarke (Ag.) and Michelle Tälgarow ( Clyt.).

March 2000

The Oresteia; ad. and dir. by James Dunn and Carla Smith-Zilber; Drama Department, College of Marin; performed at the College of Marin, Kentfield, California; Gene Ptak (Ag.), Wendy Robie ( Clyt.), and Anna Fischbach ( Cass.).

April 2000

Agamemnon; dir. by Michael Iannoli; California Institute of the Arts (CalArts); performed at the California Institute of the Arts, Valencia, California.

April 2000

The Oresteia; tr. by Peter Meineck; dir. by Shepard Sobel; Pearl Theatre Company; performed at the
Agamemnon on the APGRD Database

May 2000

*Agamemnon* 2.0; ad. by Charles L. Mee; dir. by Tali Gai; International WOW Company; performed at the Access Theater, New York; Jeffrey Fracé (Ag.), Susan Hightower (Clyt.), and Magin Schantz (Cass.).

August 2000

*The Murders at Argos*; ad. by David Foley; dir. by Samuel Buggeln; performed in New York (International Fringe Festival); Fred Burrell (Ag.) and Susan Rutledge (Clyt.).

2000

*Agamemnon*; dir. by Zachary Morgan; performed at the Grand Marais Playhouse, Grand Marais, Minnesota.

2000

*Agamemnon*; tr. by Ted Hughes; performed at the University of Harvard, Cambridge, Mass.

2000

*Cracks Between the World—The Goddess Returns*; ad. from *Oresteia* by Sandra Kamman; Studio Theatre; performed at the Studio Theatre, Washington, DC.

c.2000

*Agamemnon*; Department of Theatre & Dance, Winthrop University; performed at Winthrop University, Rock Hill, South Carolina.

2001

March 2001

*Britain*

*Agamemnon*; tr. by Tony Harrison; dir. by Alan Beale; Central Newcastle High School; performed at the Central Newcastle High School, Newcastle-upon-Tyne; Claire McKenna (Ag.), Hannah Europe-Finner (Clyt.), and Christie Charlton (Cass.).

April 2001

*The Oresteia*; tr. by Philip Vellacott; dir. by David Tudor; The Rep College; performed at New Greenham Arts, Newbury; Gareth David Lloyd (Ag.), Ali Mercer (Clyt.), and Yvie Magee (Cass.).

June 2001

*House of Blood*; scene from *Agamemnon* tr. by Ted Hughes; dir. by Chris Vervain; performed as part of a postgraduate symposium on Greek Drama in Modern Performance at the Boilerhouse, Royal Holloway University of London, Egham; Chrissie Kiff (Clyt.) and Jill Griffin (Cass.).

June 2001

*The Serpent Son*; tr. by Frederic Raphael and Kenneth McLeish; dir. by Kymberley Chase-Foos; Merlin Theatre Skills Project; performed at the Steiner Theatre, Sheffield; Andrew Costa (Ag.), Anna Regan (Clyt.), and Marie Lillian Smith (Cass.).

September 2001

*Clytemnestra: An Actor’s Account*; scenes from *Oresteia* tr. by Tony Harrison; dir. by Felicity Hilton; performed by Diana Quick in the Holywell Music
Amanda Wrigley

February 2001 Finland
Agamemnon; tr. by Kirsti Simonsuuri; dir. by Ville Sandqvist; Teatteri Jurkka; performed at the Teatteri Jurkka, Helsinki; Stig Fransman (Ag.), Vappu Jurkka (Clyt.), and Helena Rångman (Cass.).

July 2001 Greece
Orestea; tr. by Dimitris Dimitriadis; dir. by Ioannis Kokkos; National Theatre of Greece; performed at the Ancient Theatre of Epidaurus; Nikitas Tsakiroglou (Ag.), Lydia Koniordou (Clyt.), and Olia Lazaridou (Cass.).

May 2001 Italy
Agamemnon; tr. by Manara Valgimigili; dir. by Antonio Calenda; Istituto Nazionale del Dramma Antico; performed at the Ancient Theatre of Syracuse, and transferring to Rome in November; Mariano Rigillo (Ag.), Piera Degli Esposti (Clyt.), and Daniela Giovanetti (Cass.).

May 2001
Agamennone, dir by Francesca Nenci; Liceo Classico G. Galilei, Pisa; performed at the Teatro Verdi, Pisa, and in Padua; Alberto Guidi (Ag.), Martina Cianferotti (Clyt.), and Adriana Leon Lalci (Cass.).

July 2001
Agamennon (the third part of Appunti per un'Orestiade Italiana); ad. drawing on Pasolini's translation; dir. by Elio de Capitani; Teatro dell'Elfo; performed in Milan.

2001
Agamennone; dir. by Arnaldo Ninchi; Teatro Fra Antiche Mura; performed at the Anfiteatro Romano, Larino.

2001
Luna Rossa; film drawing on Orestea written and dir. by Antonio Capuano.

September 2001 Nigeria
Song of a Goat; version of Agamemnon by J. P. Clark; dir. by Ahmed Yerima; performed at the Muson Centre, Lagos, followed by a tour.

April 2001 Russia
Oresteya; concert performance of opera comp. by Sergéy Ivanovich Tanéev; libretto by Alexandre Vénckstern; cond. by Mikhail Pletnióv; Russian National Orchestra; performed at the Moscow Conservatory of Music; Mikhail Guzhóv (Ag.), Marianna Tarásóva (Clyt.), and Svetlana Sozdáteleva (Cass.).

2001 South Africa
Aars! Anatomiese studie van die Orestea; ad. by Luk Perceval and Peter Verhelst; tr. into Afrikaans from the Dutch by Martinus Basson; dir. by Martinus Basson; Vleis, Rys & Aartappels Production Company; performed at the Aardklop Room, Oxford, as part of the APGRD's 'Agamemnon in Performance' conference.
Nasionale Kunstefees, Potchefstroom, and revived at other South African festivals in 2002.  
*Agamemnon*; dir. by Mark Holtorf; Tarleton State University Players; performed at the Tarleton State University, Tarleton Station, Texas.  

**March 2001**  
*Oresteia*; tr. by Ted Hughes; dir. by David Richard Jones; Theatre and Dance Department, University of New Mexico; performed at the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque; Adam Durant (Ag.), Kate Schroeder (Clyt.), and Emily L. Hermansen (Cass.).  

**March 2001**  
*The Oresteia*; tr. by Robert Fagles; dir. by Tony Taccone and Stephen Wadsworth; Berkeley Repertory Theatre; performed at the Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Berkeley; Derrick Lee Wheeden (Ag.), Robynn Rodriguez (Clyt.), and Francesca Faridany (Cass.).  

**April 2001**  
*Agamemnon*; workshop production of an opera comp. by Andrew Earle Simpson; libretto by Sarah Brown Ferrario; cond. by Jean Hsu; dir. by Ellwood Annaheim; performed at the Catholic University of America, Washington, DC (for the first full staging of this work, see under 2003 below).  

**April 2001**  
*The Clytemnestra Project: Agamemnon, Euripides’ Iphigenia in Aulis and Iphigenia among the Taurians, and Sophocles’ Electra* adapted and dir. by Ivan Fuller; Augustana College Theatre Company; performed at Augustana College, Sioux Falls, South Dakota; Jordan Estes (Ag.), Amanda Johnson (Clyt.), and Jennie Graves (Cass.).  

**May 2001**  
*The House of Atrus*; ad. by John Lewin; dir. by Brian Sajko; Eureka College; performed at the Pritchard Theatre, Eureka College, Eureka, Illinois; Carole Brashers (Clyt.).  

**June 2001**  
*Agamemnon*; tr. by Tony Harrison; dir. by Peter DeLaurier and Cel Phelan; People’s Light & Theatre Company; performed at the Malvern Theater, Malvern, Pennsylvania (2nd Outside the Box Festival); Stephen Novelli (Ag.), Kathryn Petersen (Clyt.), and Saige Thompson (Cass.).  

**August 2001**  
*Agamemnon and His Daughters, Agamemnon, Libation Bearers, Sophocles and Euripides’ Electra, and Euripides’ Iphigenia in Aulis and Iphigenia among the Taurians* ad. by Kenneth Cavander; dir. by Molly Smith; Arena Stage; performed at the Fichandler Stage, Washington, DC; Jack Willis (Ag.), Gail Grate (Clyt.), and Tsidi Le Loka (Cass.).
Clyt at Home: The Clytemnestra Project; ad. from Agamemnon and Euripides' Iphigenia at Aulis by Katharine Noon and Christopher DeWan; dir. by Katharine Noon; Theatre of NOTE, and The Ghost Road Company; performed at the Theatre of NOTE, Los Angeles (see below for the 2003 revival); Hugo Armstrong (Ag.) and Jacqueline Wright (Clyt.).

The Tears of Clytemnestra; monologue written by Avra Sideropoulou; performed at the Donnell Library Center, New York; Kristin Linklater (Clyt.).

Agamemnon; in a double bill with Sophocles' Electra; dir. by Kristin Horton; University Theatres Second Stage, University of Iowa; performed at the University of Iowa, Iowa City.

The Oresteia; ad. and dir. by Life Blumberg; Theatre Laboratory, Berea College; performed at Berea College, Berea, Kentucky; Nathaniel Green (Ag.), Anika Alvar (Clyt.), and Katie Davies (Cass.).

Klytaemnestras Unmentionables; written by Rob Grace; dir. by Jennifer Wineman; Studio 42; performed at the Here Arts Center, New York; Bradford Louryk in a one-man performance.

Agamemnon; tr. by Ted Hughes; dir. by Michael Ellis-Tolaydo; Department of Dramatic Arts, St Mary's College of Maryland; performed at the St Mary's College of Maryland, St Mary's City.

Agamemnon; Morningside College; performed at Morningside College, Sioux City, Iowa.

Oresteia; ad. and dir. by Kaitlin Chantry; Dartmouth College; performed at Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire.

Oresteia; film; ad. by William Whallon, including his reconstruction of the lost satyr play Proteus; dir. by Bill Vincent; Michigan State University; all-student cast.

Agamemnon; in translation; dir. by Lucy Brant; Classical Society, University College London; performed at the Bloomsbury Theatre, London (15th London Festival of Greek Drama); Stephen Aviss (Ag.), Kamila Thompson (Clyt.), and Marina Scala (Cass.).

Agamemnon; tr. by Tony Harrison; dir. by Sarah Punshon; School of Drama, Royal Scottish Academy of Music & Drama; performed at the Chandler Studio Theatre, Royal Scottish Academy of Music &
Agamemnons on the APGRD Database

2002

**Oresteia**; tr. by Tony Harrison; dir. by Catherine Hallsworth; Theatre Society, University of Leicester; performed at the University of Leicester; Tony Joslin (Ag.), Maya Jani (Clyt.), and Katie Roderson (Cass.).

July 2002

**Cassandra**; ad. by Bill Buflery drawing on Christa Wolf's **Cassandra**; dir. by Bill Buflery and Gill Nathanson; performed in Winnipeg, and touring to Saskatoon, Edmonton, and later to Britain; Gill Nathanson (Cass.).

October 2002

**The Oresteia**; tr. by Ted Hughes; dir. by Craig Walker; Theatre Kingston; performed at the Theatre Kingston, Kingston, Ontario; Matthew Gibson (Ag.), Anita La Selvas (Clyt.), and Michelle Mallen (Cass.).

June 2002

**Oresteia**; tr. by Petr Borkovec and Matyáš Havrda; dir. by Ivan Rajmont; Národní Divadlo; performed at the Národní Divadlo, Prague; Miloslav Mejzlík (Ag.), Tat’jana Medvecká (Clyt.), and Sabina Kralová (Cass.).

November 2002

**Oresteia**; tr. by Ernst Buschor; dir. by Andreas Kriegenburg; performed at the München Kammerspiele; Hans Kremer (Ag.), Nina Kunzendorf (Clyt.), and Ulrike Krumbiegel (Cass.).

March 2002

**Klytemnestra Songs**; operatic cycle for soprano and piano comprising the highlights of the role of Klytemnestra from the one-act opera **Agamemnon** by Andrew Earle Simpson; libretto by Sarah Brown Ferrario; performed at the American School of Classical Studies, Athens (see under 2001 and 2003 above).

2002

**Oresteia—Mirror, Eggs of September**; in Japanese; dir. by Yuko Senga; Yuko Senga Unit, Japan; performed on the island of Syros; Yuko Senga (Clyt.).

August 2002

**Mythos**; Hebrew version of **Oresteia** ad. and dir. by Rina Yerushalmi; Itim Ensemble; performed in Tel Aviv; and touring internationally in 2001.

June 2002

**The Night of Women**; ad. drawing on **Trojan Women** and **Oresteia**; dir. by Yuko Senga; Yuko Senga Unit, Japan; performed in Kraków.

October 2002

**Ariel**; ad. from **Iphigenia in Aulis** and **Oresteia** by Marina Carr; dir. by Conall Morrison; performed at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin; Frances Fermoy (Clyt.).
2002 Spain

Agamemnon; Grupo Muy Clásico Adynaton del I.E.S. No. 5, Albacete; performed at the Teatro Romano de Segóbriga, Segóbriga (19th Festival Juvenil Europeo de Teatro Grecolatino).

February 2002 USA

The Oresteia; dir. by Stan Denman; Department of Theatre Arts, Baylor University; performed at the Mabee Theatre, Baylor University, Waco, Texas.

April 2002

Agamemnon; Coffeyville Community College; performed at the Coffeyville Community College, Kansas.

April 2002

Agamemnon; dir. by Nigel Sanders-Self; performed at the Second Stage Theater, University of California, Santa Cruz; Erik Gandolfi (Ag.), Irene Teegardin (Clyt.), and Jemila Alldis (Cass.).

June 2002

Bad Women; monologues from Greek tragic women, including Clytemnestra and Cassandra; dir. by Sidney Goldfarb and Tina Shepherd; Talking Band; performed at the Here Arts Center, New York.

June 2002

Oresteia; ad. by Iason Demos and Ioannis Papatheodorou; dir. by Ianthe Demos; One Year Lease Theater Company; performed at the Theatre for the New City, New York, followed by a European tour.

September 2002

Agamemnon; ad. by Steven Berkoff; dir. by Dale Goulding; European Repertory Company, USA; performed at the Clarke House Museum, Chicago (a brief revival of the 1995 production, on which see above); Dale Goulding (Ag.), Laura Millet (Clyt.), and Jennifer Kern (Cass.).

November 2002

Agamemnon; tr. by Howard Rubenstein; dir. by Robert Homer-Drummond; Theatre Department, Palm Beach Atlantic University; performed at the Palm Beach Atlantic University, West Palm Beach, Florida.

November 2002

The Oresteia; tr. by Ted Hughes; dir. by Dale Luciano; Theater Arts Department, Southern Oregon University; performed at Southern Oregon University; Matthew A. Brown (Ag.), Cat Gould (Clyt.), and Christine Klein (Cass.).

November 2002

The Oresteia; ad. by James Harrington; Torrey Honors Institute Theatre, Biola University; performed at Biola University, La Mirada, California.

Oresteia: Agamemnon and Libation Bearers; dir. by Dan Ambrose; Indiana University-Purdue University; performed at Indiana University-Purdue University, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

2002

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2003

January 2003  **Britain**  *Agamemnon*; ad. by David Stuttard; Actors of Dionysus; performed at the Theatre Royal, Bath, followed by a national tour; Tamsin Shasha (Clyt.).

February 2003  *The Oresteian Trilogy*; tr. by Philip Vellacott; dir. by David Tudor; The Rep College; performed at Queen Mary's College, Basingstoke; John Giles (Ag.), Chantel Riches (Clyt.), and Emma Hartley (Cass.).

June 2003  *Agamemnon*; in ancient Greek; dir. by Alan Kilburn; Bradfield College; performed at Bradfield College, Berkshire (35th Bradfield Greek Play); Guy Robertson (Ag.), Ashley Sependa, Sarah Terry, and Elizabeth Dismorr (Clyt. 1, 2, and 3 respectively), and Amy-Samantha Andrews (Cass.).

September 2003  *The Cardboard and String Oresteia*; ad. played out by three actors and puppets; The Predictable Pig Theatre Company; performed at the Quay Theatre, Sudbury, Suffolk.

November 2003  *Mourning Becomes Electra*; ad. of *Oresteia* by Eugene O'Neill; dir. by Howard Davies; Royal National Theatre; performed at the Lyttelton Theatre, Royal National Theatre, London; Tim Pigott-Smith as Ezra Mannon (the Ag. figure) and Helen Mirren as Christine Mannon (the Clyt. figure).

June 2003  **Canada**  *Agamemnon*; tr. by Ted Hughes; dir. by David Latham; Stratford Ontario Festival Company; performed at the Stratford Shakespearean Festival, Ontario (at the same time the company also staged English translations of Jean Giraudoux's *Electre* and Jean-Paul Sartre's *Les Mouches*); Sean Arbucke (Ag.), Karen Robinson (Clyt.), and Sara Topham (Cass.).

December 2003  *Agamemnon*; 'Citizen' Louis Jean Népomucène Lemercier's adaptation from Aeschylus and Seneca (see under 1797 for the première); dir. by Georges de Napierville (= Georges Duquesne); Troupe théâtrale du Grand Marshall; performed in Napierville, Québec.

April 2003  **Greece**  *Oresteia*; tr. by K. Ch. Myris; dir. by Giorgos Michailidis; music comp. by Theodore Antoniou; des. by Dionyssis Fotopoulos; Anoichto Theatro; performed at the Anoichto Theatro, Athens; Tasos Bantis (Ag.), Marietta Sgourdaioi (Clyt.), and Lina Markaki (Cass.).

July 2003  *Cassandra*; written by Christa Wolf; performed at the European Cultural Center of Delphi (International Meeting of Ancient Greek Drama); dir. by Roula Pateraki; Roula Pateraki (Cass.).
July 2003 | **Italy** | *Agamemnone*; Comune di Zafferana Etnea; performed at the Comune di Zafferana Etnea, Sicily.

September 2003 | **Agamemnone**; dir. by Rodrigo García; Compagnia La Carniceria, Spain, in association with Teatro Stabile and Orestiadi di Gibellina; performed at the Baglio di Stefano, Gibellina, Sicily.

January 2003 | **Norway** | *Orestien*; new ad. written and dir. by Silviu Purcar-ete; Norske Teatret; performed at the Norske Teatret, Oslo; Paul-Ottar Haga (Ag.), Gjertrud Jynge (Clyt.), and Kirsti Stubø (Cass.).

September 2003 | **Serbia** | *Oresteia*; dir. by Fadil Hysaj; performed at the Teatri Kombetar, Pristina, Kosovo.

June 2003 | **South Africa** | *Molora*; a re-working of *Oresteia* by Yael Farber; performed in Grahamstown (National Arts Festival).

April 2003 | **USA** | *Agamemnon*; first full staging of this opera comp. by Andrew Earle Simpson (for the 2001 workshop production see above); libretto by Sarah Brown Ferrario; cond. by Robert Garofalo; dir. by Mark Jolin; Benjamin T. Rome School of Music, Catholic University of America; performed at the Catholic University of America, Washington, DC.

April 2003 | *Dipteracon*; or, *Short Lived S%*t Eaters—*A Rock 'n Roll Adaptation of the Oresteia*; dir. by Raine Bode; La MaMa e.t.c. (Experimental Theatre Club); performed at La MaMa e.t.c. (Experimental Theatre Club), New York.

April 2003 | *The Murderers: Agamemnon and [Sophocles'] Electra*; ad. by John Barton and Kenneth Cavander; dir. by John Garrity; Providence College, Rhode Island; performed at the Blackfriars Theatre, Providence College, Rhode Island.

April 2003 | *The Oresteia*; dir. by Lawrence Kornfeld; Theatre Ensemble, Purchase College; performed at Purchase College, Purchase, New York.

June 2003 | *Agamemnon*; dir. by James Dean Carter; Gorilla Theatre Productions; performed at the Wheeler Amphitheatre, Theis Park, Kansas City, Missouri, at sunrise as the 13th Annual Summer Solstice Greek Show; Jeffrey Hull (Ag.), Caroline Baughman (Clyt.), and Robyn Busch (Cass.).

July 2003 | *Clyt at Home: The Clytemnestra Project*; ad. from *Agamemnon* and Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis* by Katharine Noon and Christopher DeWan; dir. by Katharine Noon; Theatre of NOTE, and The Ghost Road Company; performed at Amherst College,
October 2003

*Mourning Becomes Electra*; world première of the revised version of opera comp. by Martin David Levy (see above under 1967); libretto by Henry Butler based on the ad. of *Oresteia* by Eugene O'Neill; cond. by Richard Buckley; dir. by Bartlett Sher; New York City Opera and Seattle Opera; performed at the Marion Oliver McCaw Hall, Seattle Opera, and transferring to the New York City Opera in spring 2004; Gabor Andrasy as Ezra Mannon (the Ag. figure) and Lauren Flanigan / Susan Marie Pierson as Christine Mannon (the Clyt. figure)

2003

*Agamemnon and His Daughters; Agamemnon, Libation Bearers*, Sophocles and Euripides' *Electra*, and Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulis* and *Iphigenia among the Taurians* ad. by Kenneth Cavander; dir. by Adrianne Krstansky; Department of Theater Arts, Brandeis University; performed at Brandeis University, Waltham, Mass.

2004

January 2004 **Australia**

*The Oresteia Project*; dir. by Glenn Hayden; Wordplay Theatre for Young People; a youth arts project performed at the Biscuit Factory Arts Centre, Fremantle, Western Australia.

January 2004 **Belgium**

*J'ai touche la terre ou la mort m'attend*; montage of various French reworkings of Greek tragedies on the House of Atreus; dir. by Hervé Loth; Le Loup Théâtre, Amiens, France, in collaboration with Scarabaeus Espace Théâtral, Belgium; performed at the Scarabaeus Espace Théâtral, Brussels.

March 2004

*Le Retour des Atrides*; ad. drawing on *Agamemnon*, Euripides' *Orestes*, and Ioannis Ritsos's *The Return of Iphigenia*; dir. by Irène Chalkia; Scarabaeus Espace Théâtral; performed at the Scarabaeus Espace Théâtral, Brussels.

February 2004 **Britain**

*Agamemnon*; Philip de May's translation ad. by Dorinda Hulton; dir. by Dorinda Hulton; Foursight Theatre; performed at the Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton; Ralph Mondi (Ag.), Naomi Cooke (Clyt.), and Beatriz Pasamón-González (Cass.).

May 2004

*Agamemnon, Orestes, and Fury*; the trilogy presented on three separate evenings; Milk Bottle Repertory Company; performed at Sudbury Upper School and Arts Centre, Sudbury.
Roast Beef; première of Leah Vitali's comic adaptation, performed in English tr. by Sozos Loizou; dir. by Alkis Kritikos; Trojan Horse Company; performed at the Riverside Studios, London; Stratos Tzortzoglou (Ag.) and Sarah Douglas (Clyt.).

Agamemnon; tr. Frederic Raphael; dir. by Phil Wilmott; Steam Industry; performed at the Scoop, Riverside, London.

Ta Dakrua tis Klitemnistras [The Tears of Clytemnestra]; monologue written and dir. by Avra Sideropoulou; performed at the Dipylon Theatre, Athens, and touring to Istanbul in June; Clyt. played by Themis Bazaka in Greece, and Derya Durmaz and Kristin Linklater in Istanbul.

Agamemnon; ad. and dir. by Erik Nelson; Theater Faction; performed at the American Theatre for Actors, New York, as part of a separately-directed Oresteia trilogy; Christopher Oden (Ag.) and Saori Tsukada (Clyt.) (there was no Cass. figure).

Agamemnon; tr. by Peter Meineck; dir. by Robert Richmond with Peter Meineck; Aquila Productions; performed at Purchase College, Purchase, NY; and the John Jay College Theater, New York; Louis Zorich (Ag.), Olympia Dukakis (Clyt.), and Miriam Laube (Cass.).

Dream of Zeus; opera drawing on Oresteia comp. by Garrett Fisher; libretto by the composer; dir. by Ilene Fins; Fisher Ensemble; performed at the Consolidated Works Theater, Seattle (see above under 1988 for the première of Agamemnon alone); Robert Tangney (Ag.) and Deeji Killian (Clyt.).

Agamemnon; ad. by Rachael Hayes and Frank LaFrazia; dir. by Frank LaFrazia; Main Street Stage; performed at the Main Street Stage, North Adams, Mass.; Jeremy Clowe (Ag.), Alexia Trova (Clyt.), and Alyssa Sklar (Cass.).

Agamemnon; opera comp. by Sergei Ivanovich Taneev; libretto by Alexandre Vënkshtern; Russian Chamber Chorus of New York and Manhattan Philharmonic Orchestra; performed at the Isaac Stern Auditorium, Carnegie Hall, New York (American première; see also under 1903); Stefan Szkafarowsky (Ag.), Nina Terentieva (Clyt.), and Angela Brown (Cass.) in the singing parts; Louis Zorich (Ag.) and Olympia Dukakis (Clyt.) in the speaking parts, actors from the 2004 Aquila production (see above).
September 2004

*Agamemnon*; in translation; Classical Greek Theatre Festival, University of Utah; performed at the University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

*Illusion*; musical composition by Roger Reynolds drawing on *Iphigenia in Aulis* and *Agamemnon*; performed at the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles (see under 1997 and 1999 for other parts of the large-scale work entitled *The Red Act Project*).
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