The Erinyes in Aeschylus' *Oresteia*

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the Erinyes' nature and function in Aeschylus' *Oresteia*. It looks at how Aeschylus conceives the Erinyes, particularly their transformation into *Semnai Theai*, as a central component of the *Oresteia*'s presentation of social, moral and religious disorder and order. The dissertation first explores the Erinyes in the poetic tradition, then discusses the trilogy's development of the choruses, before examining the Erinyes' / *Semnai Theai*'s involvement in the trilogy's establishment of justice and order and concluding with an analysis of why Aeschylus chooses Athens (over Argos and Delphi) as the location for trilogy's decision making and resolution.

Chapter One explores the pre-Aeschylean Erinyes' origin and primary associations in order to determine which aspects of the Erinyes / *Semnai Theai* are traditional and how Aeschylus innovates in the tradition. It further identifies epithets and imagery that endow the Erinyes / *Semnai Theai* with fearsome qualities, on the one hand, and with a beneficial, preventive function, on the other.

The discussion of the development of the choruses throughout the trilogy in Chapter Two takes three components: an examination of (1) the Erinyes' transformation from abstract goddesses to a tragic chorus, (2) from ancient spirits of vengeance and curse to *Semnai Theai* (i.e. objects of Athenian cult) and (3) how the choruses of *Agamemnon* and *Choephori* prefigure the Erinyes' emergence as chorus in *Eumenides*. Of particular interest are the Argive elders' and slave women's invocations of the Erinyes, their action and influence upon events, and their uses of recurrent moral and religious ideals that finally become

an integral part of the Areopagus and the cult of the *Semnai Theai*. The Erinyes' / *Semnai Theai*'s role as objects of Athenian cult supports the institutionalised justice of the Areopagus, putting an end to private vendetta, promoting civic order and piety and rendering the city and its citizens prosperous as a result.

Chapter Three explores how the Erinyes' transformation into *Semnai Theai* relates to the *Oresteia*'s development from conflict and disorder to harmony and order. It examines a selection of the trilogy's speech acts, emotions and attitudes, socio-religious practices and laws and their relationship to the Erinyes' function as goddesses of vengeance and curse and objects of Athenian cult. It suggests that Athens' reception of the *Semnai Theai* runs analogous with the removal of corruption and perversion from the key terms analysed in the chapter (i.e. ἀρά and ὅρκος, φόβος and σέβας, θυσία, ξενία and ἱκετεία, νόμος and θεσμός); the promotion of social, moral and religious norms that benefit the *polis* is integral to the *Semnai Theai* as objects of Athenian cult.

Chapter Four examines Athens' ability to settle differences without violence in the trilogy; it explores the *polis*' capacity to resolve the trilogy's cycle of vengeance and curse, particularly to placate the Erinyes, and relates Athens to Argos as a hegemonic city and to Delphi as Panhellenic centre of worship. The dramatic events at Athens positively represent the *polis*' ideology and hegemony: addressing the social and political situation at 458BC, the trilogy's final scenes advocate internal civic harmony, encourage alliances and *metoikia*, and the pursuit of imperialistic strategies to project Athens as Panhellenic leader.

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Introduction

The Erinyes have left traces throughout ancient Greek mythology, art and literature, as well as in later European culture, and idioms of our day.[1] Throughout these widespread sources the Erinyes are commonly associated with violence, punishment, madness and the supernatural, but also to no lesser degree with justice and morality.[2] One may ask how such an ambiguous conception developed. Aeschylus' *Oresteia* is the most revealing and influential extant work that focuses on the Erinyes' characteristics and functions.[3] Aeschylus' adaptation of the Orestes myth removes the Erinyes from a vague mythical sphere, gives them form and meaning, elucidates their nature and role and employs them to expound on religious, social, judicial, moral and political phenomena in his drama and his society in general. The Erinyes' dramatic character and their

[1] In non-Greek literature and art the Erinyes' Roman title 'Furiae' (which leads, for example, to the English term 'Furies') is more common; this thesis will use the term 'Erinyes' for Greek contexts, and 'Furies' with respect to some other primary and secondary sources. See Mitchell-Boyask (2009) 23 on a succinct paragraph on the Erinyes' popular names. The terms Erinys, Erinyes, Furiae and its derivatives occur in Homer (e.g. δασπλῆτις Ἐρινύς *Od*. 15.234; ἠεροφοῖτις *Il*. 9.571), Hesiod (e.g. περιπλομένου ἐνιαυτοῦ / γείνατ᾽ Ἐρινῦς τε κρατερὰς μεγάλους τε Γίγαντας *Th*. 184-5), Greek drama (e.g. A. *Th*. 70; E. *Tr*. 809; *Med*. 1260), Greek comedy (e.g. Ar. *Pl*. 422-3; *Lys*. 807), Pausanias (e.g. 1.28.6), Greek art (Prag [1985] 44-51, esp. 48-51, pls. 28b, 29a, 30a, b, 31a-c, 32a, 33a), English literature (e.g. 'Comes the blind Fury with the abhorrèd shears, / And slits the thin-spun life' (Milton, *Lycidas* [1638] ll. 75-6), French drama (Sartre [1978] Act III Scene I, IV, V) and idioms (e.g. 'wie von Furien gehetzt' [Röhrich {1991} *s.v*. Furie]; 'Wer den Furien in die Hände fällt, ruft umsonst nach Gnade.' [Beyer {1984}]). Prag (1985) 43 comments that painters seized upon the struggle between Orestes and the Erinyes rather than showing the terrifying killings of the Orestes myth.

[2] Henrichs (1994) 46 presents a succinct introductory paragraph on the polarity of the Erinyes and Eumenides. See also Sansone (1988) 16.

[3] The Orestes myth and Oedipus myth furnish the foremost early appearance of the Erinyes (cf. e.g. A. *Th*.; S. *OC* for the Erinyes' nature and function in the Oedipus myth).

transformation into *Semnai Theai* form a principal ingredient in the trilogy's exploration of conflicts and solutions between old and new, chthonian and Olympian, female and male, retributive and distributive justice, as well as savagery and civilisation.[4] The presence and dramatic trajectory of the Erinyes in the trilogy view vengeance, justice and piety against the concerns of 5th century BC Athenian society.[5] Through the vengeful cyclical events in the house of Atreus Aeschylus presents the Erinyes' development from abstract deities of vengeance and curse to objects of Athenian cult that endorse fair civic justice (i.e. the system that honours both them and Apollo / Orestes). In the dramatic process of clarifying open-ended aspects of justice and morality within fifth-century Athens and the cosmos, 'ancient', 'chthonian' and 'female' qualities clash, contest, and come together with a 'new', 'civilised', 'male' system that promises Athens' future development.

Research into the Erinyes in the *Oresteia* has been split into two approaches, namely a collection of facts about their outer appearance, staging, function and cult on the one hand,[6] and, on the other hand, their relation to the trilogy's theological, philosophical, and moral aspects, which mostly focus on pollution, purification, sacrifice, hospitality, madness and virginity.[7] A study that

[4] Fitton (1973) 256-7 and Bacon (2001) 48. Cf. Rehm (2002) 4, 78, 89-97, 100, 173, 230, 266, 388 n. 67 on the Erinyes' homecoming. For *Proteus*, the fourth and concluding play of Aeschylus' *Oresteia* (which is not considered in this thesis), see Gantz (1993) 664 and Griffith (2002) 237-54.

[5] See Burnett (1998) 115-16, 119. Winnington-Ingram (1954) 16 proposes that tragedy has an inclination to fulfil a religious function. See also Dodds (1951) 28-63.

[6] For example, Müller (1853), Rohde (1920, 1972), Wüst (1956), Dietrich (1965), Harrison (1903, 1922, 1975), Henrichs (1994) 48- 58, Geisser (2002), and Mitchell-Boyask (2009); also Prag (1985) and Dyer (1967) 175-6 for iconography (cf. also Vermeule [1966] 1-22).

[7] For example, Dodds (1951), Lloyd-Jones (1956) and (1971a), Hammond (1965), Zeitlin (1965) and (1978), Vellacott (1977) and (1984), Parker (1983), Winnington-Ingram (1983), Visser (1984), Cohen (1986), and Padel (1983), (1992) and (1995). Visser (1980) provides a comprehensive discussion of the Erinyes' characteristics and function in Greek thought and literature (she especially looks at the Erinyes' variety of offices in relation to jurisdiction) – however, her approach does not allow for a detailed examination of the Erinyes in the *Oresteia*.

looks closely at Aeschylus' technique in designing the dramatic entity of the Erinyes and their involvement in the trilogy's movement from disorder to order is missing as yet. This thesis approaches the Erinyes by way of the choruses – this is an analysis of the development of choruses, their roles, their voices, their language, their performance, their influence, their use of imagery and how it is turned into action through the course of the connected trilogy. The trilogy's development of choruses particularly shifts the presentation of the Erinyes and their relationship to justice. This thesis examines how the poet advances the Erinyes' character on two levels.[8] First, it explores how he transforms them from ancient abhorred goddesses of the curse and objects of *oikos* cult (the house of Atreus') to objects of Athenian *polis*-cult that implicitly guarantee the citizens' adherence to pious, upright conduct. Tied to this transformation is also their movement from being cosmic divinities of retributive justice to cultic goddesses that sanction distributive justice in Athens. Second, this thesis examines how the poet designs the Erinyes' progression from being a powerful abstract supernatural force, to objects of invocation (to manifest events), to being partially perceived as chorus in the first two plays[9] and to finally emerging as influential agents and chorus in the last play. The Erinyes' dramatic importance in raising questions about fifth-century Athenian religious, judicial, social and political agendas, such as the relationship between *oikos* and *polis*, private justice (/vengeance) and civic

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The *Oresteia* also sheds light on political agendas of Aeschylus' day. See e.g. Müller (1853) 71-88, Livingstone (1925) 120-31, Dover (1957) 230-7, Gülke (1969) 21-8, Dodds (1973) 45-63, MacLeod (1982) 124-44, Spatz (1982) 89, Nicolai (1988) 49-51, Podlecki (1966, 1999), Bowie (1993) 10-31, Griffith (1995) 62-129 and Bücher (2008) 255-74 for discussions on politics. The last chapter will examine how some of the political issues of Aeschylus' day reflect in the trilogy.

[8] References to the Erinyes in other tragedies, especially regarding the Orestes myth, are included to provide valuable points of comparison. A. *Th*. and *PV*; S. *El*. and *Aj*.; E. *Or*., *IT*, *El*., *Ba*. *HF* and *Med*. are most often drawn upon.

[9] The chorus in *Ag*. perceives the Erinyes' song in their heart (975-7, 990-7); Cassandra perceives the Erinyes in an ordinary vision and hears their song (*Ag*. 1186-93); in *Ch*. Orestes beholds the Erinyes 'clearly' in a frightening vision (*Ch*. 1048-62).

justice and their respective rituals, Olympian authority and male supremacy, as well as the circumstances surrounding Ephialtes' reforms in 462/1BC including Athens' ideology and hegemony will also be looked at.

The thesis begins with an examination of the Erinyes' nature and function in pre-Aeschylean literature and mythology required for an evaluation of how Aeschylus designs the double development mentioned above. Understanding the Erinyes' literary rendition before Aeschylus one can realise and appreciate how the poet moulds the Erinyes onto his drama whereby he passes commentary on the importance of civic justice and welfare; Aeschylus also dramatically advances justice rendering it compatible to a society which becomes more ordered and civilised. An outline of the semantic field follows: epithets, imagery and the Erinyes' physical appearance will aid in understanding how Aeschylus advances the Erinyes from being a cosmic phenomenon to objects of Athenian cult, from abstract deities to objects of private perception to objects of public perception as a tragic chorus and from Erinyes to *Semnai Theai*.

After a delineation of significant facts about the Erinyes' reception Chapter Two deals with the trajectory of the trilogy's choruses and the Erinyes' emergence as chorus in the *Eumenides*. It seeks to explore Aeschylus' art in expressing the Erinyes' agency through witting and unwitting invocation in the first two plays and preparing their appearance as actual chorus that seizes direct influence in the last play until their action must be controlled. The discussion shows how and why the choruses of the *Agamemnon* and *Choephori* are forerunners[10] for the Erinyes as influential chorus in *Eumenides*. What are the central gnomes of choral philosophy, how do they differ and develop in the respective plays and which concepts are extracted and applied in the end to

[10] This includes how the chorus of *Ag*. is a precursor to the chorus of *Ch*. in its own right.

establish civic justice and order? Further, Athena's influence upon the chorus, its moral and religious ideology and the realisation of their philosophy as well as her role in establishing a civic cult that alludes to the recognised cult of the *Semnai Theai* will be discussed.

This is followed by Chapter Three which examines the Erinyes' transformation into *Semnai Theai* and its interrelation with the trilogy's movement from disorder to order. How does the poet use the Erinyes to deepen awareness about the nature of justice – private and public, retributive and distributive[11] and allow for arriving at a solution that dissolves the drama's conflicts? Speech acts such as the curse and oaths, emotions and attitudes such as fear and reverence, socio-religious practices including sacrifice, the guest-host-relationship and supplication as well as laws (*nomos* and *thesmos*) will receive particular attention.

Finally, this thesis seeks to answer the question as to why the poet chooses Athens as a showplace. How does the social and political structure at Athens of Aeschylus' day inspire and urge the poet to make this unusual choice and what effects does his presentation of the city and its citizens leave upon the audience? It will disclose the effects that Aeschylus obtains from moving the Orestes myth to Athens while associating it with the cult of the *Semnai Theai* at the same time.

The following ancient texts were used: Aeschylus – West (1998), Sophocles – Lloyd-Jones and Wilson (1990), Euripides – Diggle (1982-94), Aristophanes – Wilson (2007), Aristotle – Ross (1957), Demosthenes – Fuhr (1994), Hesiod – Solmsen and Merkelbach (1990), Homer – Munro and Allen

[11] See Winnington-Ingram (1954) 22, Brown (1983) 33-4, and Seaford (2003) 141-63.

(1992-3) and (1993), Pausanias – Rocha-Pereira (1989-90), Pindar – Willcock (1995), Plato – Stallbaum (1980).

The following commentaries and translations were used: Aeschylus (*Agamemnon*, *Libation-Bearers*, *Eumenides*) – Sommerstein (2008), Aeschylus *Agamemnon* – Fraenkel (1950) as well as Denniston and Page (1957), Aeschylus *Choephori* – Garvie (1986), Aeschylus *Eumenides* – Sommerstein (1989) as well as Podlecki (1989), Dinarchus – Worthington (1999), Heraclitus – Kirk (1954).

Chapter 1: Antecedents and Primary Associations

1.1 Introduction

The *Oresteia* is a trilogy densely packed with the social, moral, religious and judicial predicaments of its agents. Questions of justice – private and public, retributive and distributive – are foremost; but they are interrelated with issues of dominance between old and new, male and female, *oikos* and *polis*. Aeschylus' trilogy deals with age-old and traditional discords; it was presented to a rapidly changing society that required models for the attainment of justice, civic welfare, and prosperity. In its treatment of the Erinyes and their transformation from abstract cosmic deities to a tragic chorus and from ancient spirits of vengeance and curse to *Semnai Theai*, the *Oresteia* aims to identify what is virtuous and righteous in the tangled web of subjective claims to justice and what combination of institutions, practises and attributes is best at upholding civic order and welfare.

In order to perceive the *Oresteia*'s vision of civic and cosmic justice, peace and prosperity, it is worthwhile examining the pre-Aeschylean antecedents, primary associations as well as semantic fields of the Erinyes before discussing the drama's finer threads. This subchapter examines the Erinyes' origin and properties in the poetic tradition and juxtaposes them with the Erinyes as presented in the *Oresteia* in order to identify how Aeschylus combines tradition and dramatic innovation to explore moral and religious ideology and order in the trilogy. What are the Erinyes' conventional associations and how do they magnify the drama's underlying conflicts? What innovations does Aeschylus add to the Erinyes myth (and the Orestes myth) and how do they affect the representation of disorder in the trilogy and development of socio-religious and judicial ideas that establish lasting order?

This chapter first looks at the Erinyes' different origins in pre-Aeschylean sources, especially Hesiod and Homer, and in the *Oresteia*. It determines what aspects of their origin (/birth) are used to aid the trilogy's dramatic and thematic development. Then it continues to examine the Erinyes' function in Hesiod and Homer; their association with gender and inter-generational strife, curse, oath and natural order in earlier sources will be juxtaposed to the Erinyes' nature and function in Aeschylus' trilogy revealing some traditional and some new elements in Aeschylus' conception of the Erinyes / *Semnai Theai*. Next a discussion of the semantic field surrounding the Erinyes aids in defining their nature and function in the trilogy. First this subchapter explores the occasions on which the Erinyes are named and invoked; then a discussion of their primary associations follows. The examination of the occurrences of Ἐρινύς, Εὐμενίδες and Σεμναί, the Erinyes' association with Γοργόνες and Ἄτη as well as the imagery of blood, the colour black, snakes and dogs will clarify what aspects the poet uses to describe the Erinyes / *Semnai Theai* as dread goddesses on the one hand and as objects of Athenian cult used for deterring civic crime and promoting civic justice and prosperity on the other.

1.2 Origins

This section examines the different origins of the Erinyes in myth and seeks to explain how their innate qualities are used in the *Oresteia*. This background is imperative for the examination of retributive and distributive, private and public justice, inter-generational strife, as well as male and female supremacy regarding order and fertility in the trilogy. The Erinyes' origin in the mythological and literary tradition aids in understanding their role as maternal avengers at the end

of *Choephori* and throughout *Eumenides*, how this role clashes with their generalised function of safeguarding cosmic justice and their new role as objects of Athenian cult that support, not control, the social, judicial and moral structure of Athens at the end. The Erinyes' appearance as virgin chorus and their submission to a patriarchal *polis* at the end also link back to their parthenogenetic birth in myth.[12]

The *Agamemnon* describes the Erinyes' existence mainly in dramatic and thematic, not biological, terms. Their presence is explained by murder, injustice, vengeance and wickedness; for example, lines 461-70 and 1190 show that the Erinyes spring from moral and natural transgressions. In contrast, Hesiod's *Theogony* and Aeschylus' *Choephori* and *Eumenides* follow another account of their origin, a biological one.[13] Those accounts illustrate and emphasise their chthonian aspects. In Hesiod (*Th*. 178-87) the Erinyes originate from Gaea after the blood from the severed genitals of Uranus spilt onto Earth.[14] This has parthenogenetic overtones. But paternal involvement in their birth is important for the Erinyes. Sprung from a father's blood shed by the violent hands of his son, they are well suited to being executioners of a paternal curse, as well as guardians of the natural order and fertility. The *Oresteia* employs different myths of origins which associate the Erinyes with night, blood, fertility, and justice. Lines 283-4 in *Choephori* employ the concept of paternal Erinyes found in the Hesiodic version of their birth (albeit with the difference that Hesiod speaks of a father's

[12] See Zeitlin (1978) 160-3 on detachment from mother, the archetypal female, the origin myth of Delphi and the transference of power from female to male in the last play.

[13] Cf. Kuhns (1962) 53 and Solmsen (1949) 183, 199.

[14] This makes the Erinyes one generation older than Zeus. See Gantz (1993) 10, 13-15. Heubeck (1986) 145 comments that lines 185-7 reveal hardly anything about the Erinyes' nature. However, he puts forth the thesis (146) that the poet 'den ursprünglich vielleicht elternlosen Erinyen einen 'genealogischen Platz' in seinem verwandtschaftlich gegliederten Götterkosmos angewiesen hat.'

castration): Orestes relates Apollo's threat of the Erinyes that spring from a father's blood (ἄλλας τ' ἐφώνει προσβολὰς Ἐρινύων / ἐκ τῶν πατρώιων αἱμάτων τελουμένας). Both in the Hesiodic and Aeschylean version the Erinyes are spawned in an act that upsets the dominant male order. However, unlike Hesiod, Aeschylus assigns the task of restoring patriarchal order and justice to the Erinyes in *Choephori*. At the end of the trilogy Aeschylus even advances their function. As *Semnai Theai* they not only restore but sanction the upholding of male hegemony and its normative justice. The Erinyes' identification with negative matriarchy through their role as Clytemnestra's avengers ends as the virginal chorus is co-opted into Athens as objects of cult nourishing the *polis*. Resembling the Hesiodic Erinyes, the *Semnai Theai* are associated with civic concern and fertility (e.g. *Eu*. 895, 903-95, esp. 903-15, 938-46). This also corresponds with the trilogy's development from personal vendetta to reciprocal justice.

The *Eumenides* repeatedly stresses that the Erinyes are descended from Night (321-2, 745, 792-3, 822-3, 844, 961-2, 1033-4).[15] Aeschylus makes them parthenogenetic offspring of Night, underscoring the relation with the mother and the wider theme of gender conflict in the trilogy.[16] This gender conflict is most observable in the Erinyes' double function as agents of the paternal curse (i.e. Agamemnon's) and as embodying the maternal curse (i.e. Clytemnestra's). What

[15] See Wüst (1956) 84-6 on the genealogy of the Erinyes. He offers possible consorts of the Erinyes' mother – Kronos (Night), Hades (Persephone), or Apollo (Persephone).

[16] See Sommerstein (1989) *ad* 321: as champions of the mother's right, it is appropriate that they only call upon their mother at *Eu*. 321. This also plays a major role when Apollo brings up the biological argument of the superiority of the father-child bond over the mother-child bond (*Eu*. 658-61), which is endorsed by the 'motherless' Athena. The Erinyes' descent from mother Night without mention of a father places them in stark contrast to Athena, Apollo's argument and the biological judgement by which Orestes is freed from suffering punishment for matricide. See also Scodel (2006) 72.

is more, their origin in Night symbolises their destructive and constructive dramatic potential.[17] As goddesses of vengeance and curse they are related to Helen and Clytemnestra who exhibit the dangerous potential of a woman to upset male order and ruin a patriarchal *polis*. Troy is annihilated because of Helen's promiscuity (and Paris' transgression); Argos' wealth is squandered and its citizens live in fear under the rule of Clytemnestra (and Aegisthus). This suggests that the Erinyes (and their potential beneficial capacities) must be under male control. As daughters of Night they are suited to defend Clytemnestra's maternal rights; yet they fail to perceive the detrimental consequences for the *polis* if Orestes is punished to satisfy Clytemnestra's ghost and to achieve the *lex talionis*.[18] But although the Erinyes' defence of Clytemnestra fails – Orestes is exonerated at the end of *Eumenides* – their nocturnal qualities are useful to the *polis* if subordinated to the city and the Olympian gods. Athena utilises the fact that they are feared chthonian goddesses: she co-opts them as recipients of *polis*-cult and employs their frightening origin, particularly their faces, as a deterrent for crime. The *Semnai Theai* accept the androgynous goddess as their chorus leader (*Eu*. 902) and take up her offers: they become fundamental to Athens as patriarchal *polis*. Further, unlike the promiscuous Helen and Clytemnestra, the Erinyes are virgins in *Eumenides* (e.g. 68-9). The benefit of their virginal properties surfaces as they cease to be maternal avengers and become *Semnai*

[17] Chthonian forces (just like the female) have both destructive and constructive qualities. See Müller (1853) 155-7, Fairbanks (1900) 241-59, esp. 250-3 and 258, and Dietrich (1965) 91-156. Their chthonian aspects render them dark and formidable. Cf. *Il*. 9.572 ἔκλυεν ἐξ Ἐρέβεσφιν; S. *OC* 39-40 where the Erinyes are daughters of darkness and earth, and *OC* 106 where they are only children of darkness. See Wüst (1956) 84-6 for the post-Aeschylean reception of their birth.

[18] However, in the second stasimon of the *Eu*. the Erinyes express their concern what becomes of the *polis* if Orestes is exonerated. The Erinyes' demand for justice, which is in itself laudable and constructive, is linked to a promiscuous and treacherous woman who endangers civic well-being: their motivation in regard to justice needs proper alignment with the interests for the city. See Tyrrell (1984) 120 on the difference between the Erinyes being champions of a mother or of Clytemnestra in particular.

Theai: on the one hand their dramatic role resembles that of suppliant women, on the other hand their virginal purity and fertility render them a 'suitable wife' to the patriarchal city (i.e. supportive female *polis*-cult).[19]

In view of this, Aeschylus' innovative account of their origin aids in the presentation of conflicts and their solution in the trilogy. No traditional account of the Erinyes places their origin in a household. Involving the Erinyes first in matters of the *oikos* the poet prepares for them to emerge as objects of civic cult in the end. At the same time, patriarchy is hailed as the gender conflict is shifted from the confines of the household and placed in the wider infrastructure of the *polis*.

Lastly, the Erinyes' descent from Night places them in a direct relationship with the imagery of light and darkness that governs the trilogy. The cycle of vengeance and curse permeating the first two plays and the Erinyes' defence of Clytemnestra's maternal right echo the darkness that needs to be lifted from the drama in order to achieve freedom from suffering. The instalment of the Erinyes as *Semnai Theai* within Athens as well as the victory of civic justice and prosperity at the end of the trilogy is accompanied by imagery of light: the light of torches graces the celebratory procession of the *Semnai Theai* towards their new cultic home (*Eu*. 1005; cf. *Ch*. 961-4).[20]

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[19] See discussion on p. 153.

[20] Light and dark imagery in the trilogy include, for example, λαμπάδος, *Ag*. 8, λαμπάδι, 28, εὐαγγέλου πυρός, 21 ἀγγάρου πυρὸς, 282, πομποῦ πυρός, 299; ὦ χαῖρε λαμπτὴρ νυκτός, ἡμερήσιον / φάος πιφαύσκων καὶ χορῶν κατάστασιν / πολλῶν ἐν Ἄργει, τῆσδε συμφορᾶς χάριν, 22-4; φῶτ᾽ ἄδικον, 398; φάει, 575; τί γὰρ / γυναικὶ τούτου φέγγος ἥδιον δρακεῖν, / ἀπὸ στρατείας ἀνδρὶ σώσαντος θεοῦ/ πύλας ἀνοῖξαι; 601-4; ἐν νυκτί 653, ὦ φέγγος εὖφρον ἡμέρας δικηφόρου, 1577; ἐν φάει, *Ch*. 62; καὶ λύσσα καὶ μάταιος ἐκ νυκτῶν φόβος, 287; ἢ πῦρ καὶ φῶς ἐπ᾽ ἐλευθερίαι, 863; πυρός τε φέγγος, 1037; τοῖον ἐπὶ κνέφας ἀνδρὶ μύσος πεπόταται, *Eu*. 378, δυσήλιον κνέφας, 396, φέγγει λαμπάδων, 1022; καὶ τὸ φέγγος ὁρμάσθω πυρός, 1029; πυριδάπτωι / λαμπάδι, 1041-2. See Lebeck (1971) 42, 98, 131, 151 on the imagery of dark and light in the *Oresteia* and the Erinyes' association with darkness (e.g. *A*. 462-3; *Ch*. 1049; *Eu*. 52, 370; cf. E. *El*. 1345; A. *Th*.

The origin of the Erinyes in pre-Aeschylean sources defines conflicts between genders and generations.[21] The horror of bloodshed, the subversion of the dominant order and the lack of respect for the elder and paternal authority are brought to the fore in the Erinyes' mythical genealogy. The *Oresteia* adapts the myth and its conflicts; but the poet's divergence from tradition adds important ingredients to the solution. Aeschylus clears the field for resolution of moral and religious problems. Intergenerational strife and retributive justice are replaced by civic law and patriarchy is established as the rational order that secures welfare, justice and prosperity for the *polis*. At the same time the female and chthonian aspects are valued by the Erinyes' co-optation into the *polis* that ensures prosperity and fertility, especially through fear and negative reciprocity. Likewise, the Erinyes' pre-Aeschylean treatment is instructive in defining the social and judicial problems of Aeschylus' day. The following section will, therefore, identify what issues are attached to the Erinyes' nature and function before the *Oresteia* and why and how Aeschylus selects certain features while he dispenses with others in order to discuss civic justice, well-being and prosperity.

1.3 Pre-Aeschylean literary treatments of the Erinyes

This subchapter forms a preliminary to examining and understanding the development of the chorus in each of the plays of the *Oresteia* and the Erinyes' transformation into *Semnai Theai*. Aeschylus draws upon the Erinyes' traditional aspects derived from earlier sources and mythology and pits them against the

699-700). See also Peradotto (1964) 388-93, esp. 392-3 and Fowler (1967) 64-5, 73-4 on the light and dark imagery. Cf. also Paus. 8.34.2-3, Ogden (2001) 224 on the myth of the Erinyes turning from black to white, and Kossatz-Deissmann (1978) 107 on plate 22,1 (K38) where a black Erinys is shown.

[21] See subchapter 1.3.

values of his society. Which aspects are useful and how does the poet harness them to create a theatrical performance that advocates civic strength, balance and prosperity? This subchapter examines how the Erinyes' traditional features are interwoven into the thematic development, choral philosophy and particularly into the presentation and transformation of the Erinyes. How does this network of traditional qualities and the trilogy's themes and technique show that public distributive justice is more civilised and successful than personal retribution and maintain that the collective welfare of the *polis* is more significant than that of its individual households? It also inquires into the trilogy's transformation of the Erinyes into objects of cult extracting their benefit for the city while subjugating their potential harm to Olympian and male supremacy. The discussions about the trilogy's development of the choruses, the Erinyes' transformation into *Semnai Theai* will be elaborated in detail in Chapters Two and Three.

The representation of the Erinyes in pre-Aeschylean literature and myth – Homer and Hesiod especially – is rare and vague.[22] Hesiod briefly explains the origin and one function of the Erinyes. These are short but weighty passages. Here the very birth of the Erinyes is a result of inter-generational strife, vengeance and paternal curse (*Th*. 178-87; cf. Ouranos' curse, 209-10).[23] Gaia stirs her youngest son Kronos to wield vengeance upon Ouranos because he hid his ugly sons (including Kronos) in a secret place on Earth (139-72: in Hesiod, Ouranos will not withdraw his phallus from [his mother] Gaia so she can give birth; he enjoys the pleasure of intercourse and of inflicting pain on Gaia too much to cease

[22] The references to the Erinyes are even more limited in extant archaic lyric. In Alcaeus (fr. 129. 13-16 L-P), they appear because of a broken treaty, and in Pindar (*O*. 2.41-2), the Erinyes exact vengeance for a crime committed in an earlier generation. See Sommerstein (1989) 2, 9 with n. 31 on Alcaeus and Pindar. See also Wüst (1956) 107-8.

[23] This is an intra-familial crime. See Sommerstein (1989) 8 whose contention that they also appear in Hesiod in a sense under the name of Κῆρες is not unfounded.

intercourse and allow his children to be born). She gives him a sickle with which Kronos emasculates Ouranos. From the blood that spills forth from the severed genitals onto the earth the Erinyes (and the great Giants and Nymphs) are born. As for Ouranos, so for Kronos (453-73): the shameful act of a father is answered by the son exacting vengeance (spurred on by the mother and grandmother [Gaia adds Rhea in the deception of Kronos and salvation of the baby Zeus]). This version of the myth clearly associates the Erinyes with gender and inter-generational strife, blood and vengeance and endows them with the power to embody the curse of the elder.[24]

In his trilogy, Aeschylus capitalises on all of the Erinyes' traditional association with raw primitive justice and order while the *Oresteia*'s dramatic framework involves the Erinyes on two new levels: the *Agamemnon* and *Eumenides* expand the Erinyes' involvement to the *polis*, its internal order and expansionist agenda (/war abroad); the *Choephori* and *Eumenides* reinvent the Erinyes' involvement in the gender constellation of the inter-generational strife – contrary to the Hesiodic myth, the son avenges his father and kills his mother. Thus, in Aeschylus' trilogy, the Erinyes appear in association with paternal and maternal curses. Particularly, the Hesiodic emphasis on a paternal curse is reiterated by Aeschylus: frustrating the maternal curse in the *Oresteia* demonstrates that the paternal curse is more powerful and that patriarchy is fundamental to civic and cosmic order. The Erinyes' association with *poleis* and hegemony on the one hand and with the respectful relationship between father and son on the other works towards their final instalment as objects of Athenian cult, as guardians of the *polis*' (patriarchal) order and as promoters of its supreme status in Hellas.

[24] The blood drinking of the Erinyes is not traditional. Brown (1983) 14 with n. 7; cf. *Il.* 19.87.

The Erinyes' involvement with curses is especially clear at *Theogony* 458-73: Kronos not only suffers retribution for swallowing the children born to him by Rhea but also for castrating his own father Ouranos. Although this is not a hereditary curse, it shows a similar pattern in that successive generations of one family are affected and that transgression and consequence bear resemblance. Aeschylus cultivates this impression and presents the royal house of Atreus on the brink of annihilation because of a hereditary curse and cyclical vendetta.

Further, at *Works and Days* 803-4 the Erinyes attend the birth of Oath, child of Eris.[25] This association will find ample exploration in the trilogy where oaths, (closely related to a curse and, by extension, the Erinyes) may subvert or support the normative order. Further, the verb ἀμφιπολεύειν may indicate the Erinyes' subservient position (cf. Δίκης ἐπίκουροι, Heraclitus fr. 94 DK; *Od.* 20.75-8): as objects of Athenian cult they finally guard against perjury – this is an Aeschylean innovation. Aeschylus uses the Erinyes' relationship to service and guardianship of the sanctity of oaths for Athens' internal justice and its building of alliances to strengthen the city against its enemies in the trilogy's finale.

In Homer, the Erinyes are obscure dwellers of the Netherworld (*Il.* 9.571-2; cf. 19.259). Although their dread personality is never in question (*Od.* 2.135, 11.271-80, 15.234, 17.475-6; *Il.* 9.454, 565-72, 19.86-9, 258-60, 21.410-14), epithets such as δασπλῆτις (*Od.* 15.234) and ἠεροφοῖτις (*Il.* 19.87) signify that they are hard to perceive or that their arrival comes as a surprise (cf. *Eu.* 560-2, 932-3).[26] In general, Homer's conception of the Erinyes concentrates on their

[25] See Burkert (1985) 252.

[26] See Sommerstein (1989) 8 who explains δασπλῆτις as perhaps 'who comes very close', using the intensive prefix δας- and the root of πελάζω. Cf. *Il.* 19.259.

functions rather than on their appearance and nature.[27] In contrast, Aeschylus stresses the appearance of the Erinyes in order to emphasise their function as *Semnai Theai* at the end of the *Oresteia*. Cassandra's description of the Erinyes in her prophetic vision in *Agamemnon* is followed by Orestes' frightening vision in *Choephori* and the Erinyes' emergence as horrifying tragic chorus in *Eumenides*. The Erinyes' materialisation as agents and chorus in the last play not only aids in turning metaphor into action but also realises them as embodiment of vengeance and curse and, consequently, as cultic repository of fear (φόβος) and reverence (σέβας) in the finale to inspire voluntary devotion to justice and piety in the audience. Their visibility as chorus in *Eumenides* especially renders τὸ δεινόν a catalyst for Athenian virtue.

In Homer, the Erinyes are mostly called upon in bringing curses to fulfilment, especially amongst kin. These include paternal (*Il*. 9.444-57)[28] and maternal (*Od*. 2.134-6, 11.279-80; *Il*. 9. 571-2).[29] Maternal are more numerous than paternal curses in Homer (e.g. *Od*. 2.134-6, 11.279-80; *Il*. 9.571).[30] Even the gods have maternal curses: Hera invokes the Erinyes against Ares because he switched camp, abandoning the Achaeans and defending the Trojans (*Il*. 21.410-

[27] See also Greene (1944) 10, 17-18, Harrison (1903, 1922, 1975) 215-17, Sommerstein (1989) 1-10, and Podlecki (1989) 2 on the Erinyes' Homeric appearances.

[28] The Erinyes are invoked, yet it is Zeus and Persephone that accomplish the paternal curse. The Erinyes are involved in a father's curse that his son will never get to experience the joy of fatherhood.

[29] See also Greene (1944) 10, 105-6, Dodds (1951) 21 n. 37, and Parker (1983) 196 n. 34. See subchapter 3.2 on curses.

[30] See Winnington-Ingram (1983) 154-8 for a further exploration on the distinction of sex or reference to parents in *Ag*. There seems to be an even distribution of the Erinyes defending the rights of both females and males amongst extant tragedies. See also Zeitlin (2005) 221 n. 14.

14; cf. 15.204; A. *Eu*. 950-5).[31] However, the epic does not deal with matricide as seen in Orestes' killing of Clytemnestra.[32] Whereas paternal curses are fulfilled within the narrative – but not necessarily by the Erinyes – maternal curses are either only fulfilled outside the narrative or trail off into insignificance. Unlike their association with (vengeful) murder in the *Oresteia*, maternal curses are never directly related to (inter-generational) murder in Homer. Instead, Homer deals with a variety of issues between mother and son and the pre-established hierarchy between the elder and younger.[33] These references show that the Erinyes side with those of high(er) social rank; they defend the rights of the older against the younger (*Il*. 15.204). What is more, the Erinyes do not materialise as curse or agent in Homer. This is Aeschylus' innovation. In the *Oresteia*, Aeschylus retains the Erinyes' relation to gender and social standing while pitting the paternal against the maternal curse. He further adds concerns as to how the aftermath of paternal and maternal curse affects the jurisdiction and welfare of the *polis*.

[31] In view of the close relationship between the Moirai and the Erinyes it is not surprising that the greatest of gods must also yield to the impersonal and inexorable goddesses, the Moirai ([A.] *PV* 515-18; cf. *Il*. 16.440-507). See Lefkowitz (2003) 70.

[32] The other well-known matricide in mythology, Alcmaeon, is also pursued by the Erinyes. It is Alcmaeon's father Amphiaraus who commands the matricide; Orestes is compelled by piety towards his father, even though Agamemnon has not directly commanded the matricide. Apollo's main argument, though, is vengeance for Agamemnon (*Ch*. 283-7). On the myth of Alcmaeon see Harrison (1903, 1922, 1975) 220, 237, Mattes (1970) 16 and Gantz (1993) 14-15, 525-7 (cf. e.g. *Od*. 11.326-7; Paus. 8. 24. 7-10). The Erinyes torment and pursue both Orestes and Alcmaeon; long wandering and purification frees them in the end. Gantz (1993) 15 points out that the two versions may have influenced each other. Mattes (1970) 26-30 makes it clear that of all divine and daemonic powers, only the Erinyes punish intra-familial murder. The Erinyes induce madness as a result of intra-familial murder – madness does not cause matricide. Flight is Orestes' and Alcmaeon's initial response and purification or a cure (*Heilung*) is the final outcome.

[33] At *Od*. 2.134-6 Telemachos explains to Antinoos the scenario of sending Penelope away from the house. This is clearly concerned with rights. A mother's Erinyes may be invoked as a consequence of having been sent away by her son (without safe supervision by male kin). At *Od*. 11.279-80 Oedipus transgressed a mother's right in the sense of having killed his mother's husband (i.e. his father), having intercourse with her and marrying her. Because of insurmountable grief Epicaste committed suicide and left Oedipus in such pain as a mother's Erinyes would bring. Oedipus is worthy of the punishment dealt out by maternal Erinyes. At *Il*. 9.571 the Erinyes appear upon Althaea's call for vengeance (cf. B. 5.94-154; A. *Ch*. 602-12.)

In the pre-Aeschylean tradition, the Erinyes punish those who swear false oaths (*Il*. 19.258-60; cf. Hes. *Op*. 803-4).[34] Along with Zeus, they also oversee the law of hospitality and may protect beggars at *Odyssey* 17.475 (cf. *Eu*. 269-72, 545-9).[35] Hence, although the Erinyes favour those of high social ranking, they may be also be concerned with marginal figures.[36] Similarly, Aeschylus makes the *Semnai Theai* guardians of collective justice in *Eumenides*. The Erinyes use ἄτη as a means of punishment at *Odyssey* 15.231-4 and *Iliad* 19.86-9 (cf. *Il*. 19.134-7).[37] They guard against transgressions of the natural order (*Il*. 19.400-18; cf. Heraclitus fr. 94 DK).[38] They are not just the spirits of vengeance as in tragedy, but linked to fate and especially the Moirai in Homer (e.g. *Il*. 19.400-18; *Od*. 15.233-4; cf. e.g. θεσμὸν τὸν μοιρόκραντον, *Eu*. 391-2).[39] Necessity[40] and order, rather than objective justice and morality, direct the Moirai's will in epic (e.g. *Il*. 19.86-8, 134-7); a sense of morality and justice is undeveloped in the

[34] Burkert (1985) 197-8 comments that the Erinyes are the embodiment of the act of self-cursing contained in an oath. Fontenrose (1971) 25 and Burkert (1985) 197, 252 argue that the Erinyes punish oath-breakers after death. See subchapter on oaths, pp. 148-56.

[35] See subchapter 3.7 on supplication.

[36] In the *Oresteia*, Zeus sends the Erinyes in response to a breach of hospitality rather than a transgression of the law not to kill your own kin. See Winnington-Ingram (1983) 154-8.

[37] Greene (1944) 21. See also Greene (1944) 17-18 with n. 53; Lefkowitz (2003) 69, 75, 244 n. 18.

[38] See Johnston (1992) 85-98 on *Il*. 19.400-18. Peterich (1938) 202, 373, 378 comments that the Erinyes are not only helpers of *Dikê* but more generally helpers of cosmic justice. Padel (1992) 167-8 with n. 14 points out that Heraclitean thought is usually the opposite of ordinary Greek beliefs and thus questions whether the Erinyes enforce cosmic justice in ancient Greece. See also Seaford (1994) 222. Johnston (1992) 91 argues that the Erinyes are not to be understood as guardians of the natural order, but as guardians of 'the individual's rights and the punishers of those who would ignore them.'

[39] They are closely related to and evocative of the Moirai and their function. See also Rose (1928, 1953) 84, Greene (1944) 17-18 with n. 43, Harrison (1903, 1922, 1975) 216, Henrichs (1994) 46-7. For Heraclitus on the Erinyes as guardians of natural law, see Greene (1944) 225.

[40] Cf. [A.] *PV* 515-18 where the Erinyes and the Moirai are the helmsmen of necessity.

Erinyes' nature and function before Aeschylus.[41] Theirs is 'natural' justice: they are concerned that horses do not use human speech and that the sun does not overstep its measures. Their justice is tied to social status: they protect the inviolability of the older generation, especially parents and elder siblings. In their role as avengers and defenders of rights, they arise as the champions of the *lex talionis* and of 'natural' justice (δίκη).[42] In the trilogy, Aeschylus shapes the *Semnai Theai*'s understanding of justice to include positive transaction and institutionalised justice.

But before the Erinyes' conversion into *Semnai Theai* Aeschylus draws upon the Erinyes' traditional association with δίκη, negative reciprocity, curse as well as fear and power inherent in their chthonian origins. Applying these properties to the Erinyes, goddesses of vengeance and curse, he portrays them as terrible executioners of punishment and a source of fear (φόβος) and suffering (πάθος). Within the framework of the drama they start as defenders of *xenia*; within the framework of the story they start as defenders of the blood-bond in the horrid meal of Thyestes' own children's flesh served by his older brother Atreus. Here the Erinyes' alliance with the elder is affirmed. Aeschylus also includes the strife over kingship between Atreus and Thyestes – an area Homer elides. This conflict is the origin of the curse of the house of Atreus and forms the principal reason for the Erinyes' dramatic presence in the *Oresteia*.[43] The 'theft' of Helen and the destruction of Troy are important other incentives: Agamemnon sails

[41] In Homer, justice is not necessarily based on ethics. The punishing god can act impulsively – the Erinyes are no exception (e.g. *Il.* 19.86-9; *Od.* 15.233-4). See Harvey (1937) *s.v.* Religion, §§1-2, 358-9, Dodds (1951) 38-40, Wüst (1956) 114 and Sommerstein (1989) 7.

[42] Winnington-Ingram (1983) 170 argues that the Moirai stand for the 'rigidity of the law of *talio*'.

[43] It also moves the Erinyes from Hades to the house of Atreus, which has Hades-like overtones in *Ag*.

against Troy like an Erinys-figure (*Ag*. 40-59). In contrast, in Homer the Erinyes are absent from the Trojan War. The Erinyes' association with Argive hegemony and martial expeditions is an Aeschylean advancement of their Homeric function. In *Eumenides*, Aeschylus first makes the Erinyes vengeful defenders of Clytemnestra's maternal rights: they hunt Orestes and participate in the trial at the Areopagus as his prosecutors. This role continues the basic conception found in pre-Aeschylean sources yet also extends it in that a maternal curse is brought into action and materialised as divine agents onstage. Aeschylus rearranges the traditional properties once more at the end of his trilogy. He activates the constructive qualities of the traditional Erinyes. The *Eumenides* co-opts the Erinyes as objects of Athenian cult that sanction the Areopagus,[44] transforming their capacity to fulfil curses and practise the *lex talionis* into the power to confer blessings and reward the pious with wealth. Their negative aspects, especially τὸ δεινόν, remain as a deterrent to crime in the *polis*.[45] Above all, Aeschylus enhances the Erinyes' traditional characteristics with respect (σέβας) and law (*nomos* and especially *thesmos*) to advance mutual benefit between the city and its cultic goddesses.

The *Oresteia* also develops the presentation and function of the Erinyes through the broad tradition about Agamemnon's murder and Orestes' vengeance. Homer's *Odyssey*, Stesichorus, and Pindar are the most influential sources for the

[44] See Winnington-Ingram (1983) 154-8. See also Kuhns (1962) 31 who states that the Erinyes uphold an ancestral morality that assumes a set of values and obligations. He also states (52) that 'it is wrong to see them [i.e. Erinyes] as evil forces or as destructive of law; rather they support a system of morality, which is rigorous in its demands.' Cf. Versnel (1991) 64 who argues that Erinyes are not only called upon for the strength of their dark nature, but to do justice.

[45] Their final instalment as *Semnai Theai* further incorporates their traditional concern for suppliants and hospitality (cf. *Od*. 17.475), blessings (cf. *Il*. 19.258-60; Hes. *Op*. 803-4) and proper order (cf. *Il*. 19.400-18; cf. Heraclitus fr. 94 DK).

Orestes myth.[46] In Homer and (extant) Hesiod, the Erinyes play no role in Orestes' murder of his mother. In the *Odyssey,* Clytemnestra is portrayed as a shameful woman (3.262-75, 11.405-61). Not only does she commit adultery (3.272), but she exhibits such brazenness and disgrace in the design and execution of murdering Agamemnon (11.424-30) that she pours shame upon all womankind to come (11.432-4). Whereas Clytemnestra only fails to close the eyes and mouth of the corpse in the *Odyssey* (11. 425-6), she even cuts off the extremities of Agamemnon's corpse in *Choephori* (439).

In addition, the maternal curse is already weakened in epic tradition. Aeschylus not only presents Clytemnestra as more criminal, but also renders her more powerful in that she calls upon the Erinyes to bring her curse against Orestes to fulfilment. Further, Aeschylus' presentation of the maternal Erinyes as 'vampires' has no antecedent in earlier sources. The novel conception of the Erinyes as bloodthirsty creatures underscores the trilogy's vendetta principle as well as their capacity to inspire fear which lends immediacy and *gravitas* to their role as guardians of civic order at the end of the *Oresteia*. Interweaving the

[46] See Mitchell-Boyask (2009) 19-21 on Homer's treatment of the Orestes' myth, Gantz (1993) 14 for the absence of the Erinyes' pursuit of Orestes in Homer and Prag (1985) 68-84, Garvie (1986) ix-xxv, Podlecki (1989) 1-9 and Sommerstein (1989) 1-9, esp. 1-6, for a succinct summary of the Orestes legend. Leão (2010) 39-40 puts the Orestes myth in judicial and ethical context. The most important features are mentioned here. Some stories allude to his madness and his subsequent cure (e.g. Paus. 3.22.1, 7.25.7). The earliest surviving evidence of pursuit is probably the *metope* from the sanctuary of Hera at Foce del Sele (Prag [1985] pl. 28b, cf. Gantz [1993] 679-81), datable to 570-550 BC. The lyric poet Stesichorus may have brought Apollo into the story: Apollo gives Orestes the bow (this implies the Erinyes; cf. E. *Or*.) and thereby authorises the killing of Clytemnestra. On Stesichorus' conception of the Orestes myth see Dyer (1967) 175 n. 7, Prag (1985) 73-6, Sommerstein (1989) 2 and (2008) x-xi. Stanford (1972) 32 comments on Stesichorus' influence on Aeschylus' choral lyric. Likewise, Pindar (*P*. 11.15-37) includes Apollo in his work: although Pindar would not render Apollo responsible, Apollo commands the killing and protects the suppliant Orestes from the Erinyes. On Pindar's conception of the Orestes myth see Prag (1985) 77-9, Garvie (1986) xxiv-xxv, and Sommerstein (1989) 2. Stanford (1972) 33 comments on the similarity of style between Pindar and Aeschylus. Prag (1985) 68, 71-3 gives a detailed account of the *Oresteia* motif in the *Odyssey*. Greene (1944) 162-3 comments that the epic cycle, and in particular the *Odyssey*, singles out Orestes' matricide as a righteous act of retribution excluding from it the chain events of curse and fate. The necessity to kill his mother and to avenge his father is the overruling idea in the epic cycle. On the Homeric treatment of the Orestes myth see also Lesky *s.v.* Orestes in *RE* XVIII 966-1010, esp. 978-86, for Orestes in tragedy, Greene (1944) 132-3, and Parker (1983) 136.

Orestes myth with the Erinyes' conventional aspects while also innovating in both traditions, the poet raises awareness about competing claims of justice, particularly in the cases of homicide, gender hierarchy, the danger of gynocracy and the effectiveness of patriarchy in his trilogy.[47] He especially highlights the risk of a debauched woman, her subversive justice and the lack of religious or cultic restrictions that enable her to summon the Erinyes on behalf of a cause that can overturn patriarchal order and bring a whole city to its ruin.

In conclusion, the *Oresteia* works with the Erinyes' characteristics from earlier sources (/myth) to address the key issues in its exploration of moral and religious ideology and civic order. Thus, Aeschylus uses the Erinyes' traditional association with gender and inter-generational strife, curse, natural order, fertility and their distinctive chthonian properties to present their involvement in the disorder of the first two plays. The poet's innovations in the Erinyes tradition, such as their association with the Trojan War and their presentation as vampires, intensify the trilogy's conflicts while preparing for a shift to Athens where the combination of the Erinyes' conventional and novel qualities aids in resolution finding. As Athena domesticates the Erinyes and makes them the city's own, they become objects of Athenian cult – a role unprecedented in earlier sources. At the end of the *Oresteia*, the cult of the *Semnai Theai* sanctions civic justice, prosperity and fertility, and, ultimately, Athens' growth into an empire. A study of the semantic field around the Erinyes can clarify why and how the Erinyes are a helpful dramatic variable identifying social, religious and judicial disorder and how they fit into creating a 'win-win' situation that best suits the glory of Athens.

[47] Henrichs (1991) 162 with n. 2 also adds that the Orestes myth dramatises the conflict between the chthonian and Olympian orders. This inter-generational strife is also used in the *Oresteia* and resolved at the end of *Eu*.

1.4 Primary Associations

1.4.1 Epithets and association with other *daimones*

The following exposition on the Erinyes' relationship with, resemblance to or even identification with, moral and judicial abstractions and supernatural beings is useful for discerning their advancement from abstract divine forces that are invoked in the first two plays to the chorus of Erinyes in the last play as well as their transformation from Erinyes to *Semnai Theai*.[48] It reveals how Aeschylus perceives the role of the Erinyes / *Semnai Theai* and applies it as a catalyst to promote civic justice, beneficial fear, reverence, modesty and healthy thinking (σωφροσύνη). This analysis makes also clear which aspects the poet selects, highlights and negates in order to reinforce patriarchy, Olympian hegemony and *polis*-cult.

1.4.2 Naming and invoking the Erinys (or Erinyes)

The name Erinys (or Erinyes) occurs less frequently as the trilogy progresses.[49] In the first play their name occurs in association with generalised justice, hereditary curse, private vengeance, transgression of *xenia*, perverted sacrifice, suffering, lamentation (esp. *thrênos*) and fear. The invocation of their name realises and perpetuates vengeance and curse, manifests the laws παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα and

[48] Henrichs (1991) 162 comments that the ambivalent terms attributed to the chthonian become relevant to a drama; some names are taboo, others are euphemistic. The Κῆρες will be omitted in this analysis since there is no obvious connection between the Erinyes and *Kêres* in the *Oresteia* (as, for example, at Hes. *Th*. 211-32; A. *Th*. 1055; S. *OT* 472; E. *El*. 1252). See Harrison (1903, 1922, 1975) 213-17, Wüst (1956) 88-9, Heubeck (1986) 161-2, Gantz (1993) 8-9, and Sommerstein (1989) 8 and *ad* 322 on the relation between their character and function.

[49] Nine times in *Ag*., four times in *Ch*., and four times in *Eu*.

δράσαντι παθεῖν[50] and subverts the normative order.[51] In the first two plays, agents unconsciously use the Erinyes' name fuelling the murder plots. In *Agamemnon*, the chorus utters their name most often (59, 463, 749, 991, 1119). Each time the chorus invokes the vengeful Erinyes it unwittingly collaborates in the plot to kill Agamemnon. Likewise, the herald fails in his attempt to make their name auspicious and aids in their invocation as agents of vengeance against Agamemnon (645). Cassandra's visions and prophecy complete the process of invoking the Erinyes to fulfil vengeance and curse (1190). It is significant that Clytemnestra does not utter their name until after the murder. The killers, Clytemnestra and Aegisthus, are the last to use the Erinyes' name (1433, 1580). Both not only finalise the connection between the Erinyes and the atrocity associated with their name, but they also inadvertently invoke the evil that will come upon their heads according to the law παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα. Hence, the name Erinyes serves as embodiment of and catalyst for curse and retributive killing.

In *Choephori*, the Erinyes' name continues to correlate with generalised justice, vengeance and curse; however, the play focuses on the conflict between paternal against maternal curse. Orestes and the chorus take turns invoking the Erinyes' name. Orestes' reference to their name in Apollo's oracle (*Ch*. 276-96) aids in the plot to exact vengeance upon Clytemnestra, while it also exempts him from summoning ruin upon himself if he restores the honour of his father. The chorus' invocation of the Erinyes (βοᾶι γὰρ λοιγὸς Ἐρινὺν / παρὰ τῶν

[50] Since there is no difference between παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα and δράσαντι παθεῖν, παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα will henceforth suffice as reference to the law 'the doer must suffer'.

[51] Mitchell-Boyask (2009) 29. The chapter on the trajectory of the choruses deals with the Erinyes' invocation in greater detail.

πρότερον φθιμένων ἄτην / ἑτέραν ἐπάγουσαν ἐπ' ἄτηι, for murder calls out for an Erinys, who attends those who perished before, to bring another ruin upon ruin', 402-4) serves to press forward the plot of vengeance against Clytemnestra. However, those lines also make explicit that killing Clytemnestra renders Orestes liable to the Erinyes' judgement, their execution of the law παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα, and the perpetuation of *atê* through their agency. Later, Orestes invokes the Erinyes as he envisions the successful killing of Aegisthus (571-8, esp. 577). This is followed by the chorus' emphatic song that ushers justice, vengeance and fate into the house just like Orestes (646-52, esp. 652). But the chorus not only lends verbal strength to the fulfilment of the Erinyes' horrid work:[52] in speaking of deliverance and salvation they also prevent Orestes from becoming the Erinyes' victim, killed for killing his mother. The fact that Orestes will eventually avoid the negative reciprocity hailed at lines 400-4 is embedded in the Erinyes' association with the powers *Dikê* and *Aisa* and the reference κλυτὰ βυσσόφρων Ἐρινύς (651-2):[53] they are associated with reciprocity and justice and can be a paradigm of σωφροσύνη. Thus the poet prepares for the final situation in *Eumenides*. Applied to the right cause (i.e. civic welfare) and under patriarchal and Olympian supervision the Erinyes' powers can be constructive – their powers are used to deter transgression, to support civic well-being and, overall, to guarantee that virtuous conduct will be rewarded and wicked conduct punished.

[52] Mitchell-Boyask (2009) 29 comments that the naming of the Erinyes stops with Orestes' knock at the palace door – he argues that the naming of them ceases as their appearance (in the final play) draws closer.

[53] Cf. Holst-Warhaft (1992) 152.

Ἐρινύς is only mentioned four times in *Eumenides*, in the first two choral odes (331 = 344, 511-12) and in Athena's declaration of the chorus' status and power in Athens (951). In the first stasimon, in which the Erinyes emerge as maternal avengers who are intent on punishing and sacrificing Orestes and emphasise their age-old privileges and their antagonism to Apollo, the Erinyes reveal their name in an authoritative (repeated) stanza of the 'Binding Song'.[54] Focusing on Orestes they declare that their song binds, deranges and ruins the mind (δέσμιος φρενῶν, 332 = 345; παρακοπά / παραφορά, φρενοδαλής, 329-30 = 342-3) withering mortals (αὐονὰ βροτοῖς, 333 = 346). Their focus is on Orestes; their principle is the law παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα. In preparation for the Erinyes' transformation into objects of cult beneficial to Athens, these initial negative connotations, which associate the Erinyes' name with maternal and private vengeance and bloodshed, are followed by a neutral reference. At line 417 they eschew revealing their identity as Erinyes; Aeschylus has them name themselves Ἀραί. In their second stasimon, which introduces the Erinyes' concern for civic and cosmic well-being, they align themselves with Δίκη (511-12) and urge respect for Δίκη.[55] Likewise, after their conversion nuances of power and honour attend their name (μέγα γὰρ δύναται πότνι' Ἐρινύς, 951).[56] Athena replaces the so-far destructive property inherent in invoking the Erinyes and installs a constructive one instead. Nonetheless, Athena keeps their

[54] See Henrichs (1994/5) 60-5 for the Erinyes' choral self-referentiality.

[55] Chiasson (1988) 17.

[56] Here Athena is the first and only one (other than the Erinyes themselves in their Binding Song) to refer to them as Erinyes. Dietrich (1962) 143 explains that Demeter and the Erinys (as well as Artemis, and Despoina) have a common bond in the figure of the Πότνια. See also Dietrich (1974) 190.

fearful power and their name in play as a deterrent against injustice. Uttering Ἐρινύς does not cause calamity at 951, but inspires fear and respect preventing crime in the city. It seems that there is a string of positive connotations regarding Ἐρινύς from line 652 in *Choephori* to lines 511-12 and 951 in *Eumenides*. Although the Erinyes fulfill the role of spirits of vengeance and curse at *Choephori* 652 and maternal avengers at *Eumenides* 511-12, the former presents Orestes as liberator from tyrants and the last accursed in the house and the latter forms part of a catalogue of civic justice; finally at *Eumenides* 951, their function in *polis*-cult matches the positive connotation. Thus *Choephori* 652 and *Eumenides* 511-12 anticipate the *Semnai Theai*'s association with civic justice and prosperity, reverence (σέβας) and their capacity to use fear as a deterrent.

One may begin to wonder when the term Εὐμενίδες, by which the last play is titled, comes into play. Evidently the term does not occur in the *Oresteia*.[57] Referring to the reciprocal relationship between the *Semnai Theai* and Athenians Athena calls them εὔφρονες (*Eu*. 992; cf. 1030, 1034, esp. 1041; and also 868-9, 1035), a euphemism similar to Εὐμενίδες. The euphemisms suggest that the Erinyes are suitable objects of Athenian cult that can reinforce the institution of

[57] Except in the title and the hypothesis which are not part of Aeschylus' original work. However, it has been suggested that Athena gave the Erinyes the name Eumenides in the lacuna to be posited before line 1028 (e.g. Brown [1984] 272-5 and Podlecki [1989] ad 1027). For a discussion about the title and hypothesis see Greene (1944) 132-7, Macleod (1975) 201, Podlecki (1989) 6, Sommerstein (1989) 11-12, Henrichs (1991) 161-201, esp. 162-9, 173-4, 195-6, Gantz (1993) 15 with n. 20, MacLachlan (1993) 146 with n. 20, Henrichs (1994) 47-8, 50-1, Scodel (2006) 72, and Sommerstein (2008) xxi with n. 24. On Eumenides as euphemism see Wüst (1956) 88, Lloyd-Jones (1990) 209, Henrichs (1991) 161-201, esp. 162-9, 173-4, 195-6 and Henrichs (1994) 28-9, 57-8. The word Εὐμενίδες occurs six times in extant Greek tragedy (four times in E. *Or*. [38, 321, 836, 1650]; twice in S. *OC* [42, 486] and, of course, once as a play title [A. *Eu*.]). For example, at *Or*. 38 the Eumenides are the maternal avengers (Menelaus does not dare to mention the Erinyes' name at 410): note at S. *OC* 42 they are all-seeing Eumenides. Paus. 2. 11. 4. and 7. 25. 2-3 presents them as kindly. See Podlecki (1989) *ad* 992, and Brown (1984) 260, 267-76 who gives a historical explanation as to why one should not give too much credit to a play's title and suggests that the original title may have been 'Erinyes'. Nonetheless, because of the ill-omened nature of the name 'Erinyes' it seems unlikely that this would be the original title. Wüst (1956) 88 shows that Erinyes and Eumenides are the same.

justice established at the end of the trilogy.[58] Mitchell-Boyask offers the convincing proposition that the absence of Εὐμενίδες is part of Aeschylus' intention to identify the Erinyes with the cult of the *Semnai* which is closely associated with the Areopagus.[59] Indeed, the textual absence of 'Eumenides' allows for the reverberation of their new name *Semnai Theai*. It emphasises their honour and privileges (τιμή / σέβας) and the newly established interrelation between fear and reverence captured in their cultic presence. This name further accentuates their solemnity which derives from their chthonian origin: it adds *gravitas* to the Areopagus by cultic injunction.[60] The name *Semnai Theai* inspires the Athenians to pursue a path of justice and piety, since they bestow divine χάρις – blessing – in return for honouring their *polis*-cult. The Athenian system of justice and morality operates by fear and the *Semnai Theai* ensure this fear as they maintain the essence of their traditional characteristics as Erinyes (ἐκ τῶν φοβερῶν τῶνδε προσώπων /μέγα κέρδος ὁρῶ τοῖσδε πολίταις, 990-1; cf. 690-708, 517-19). Fear of transgression and the reward for virtue (e.g. 950-5) go hand-in-hand with a prosperous Athens. What is more, the name *Semnai Theai* allows the benefits of the *polis*-cult to be carried beyond the theatre walls.[61] Identifying the Erinyes with the *Semnai Theai*, a cult known by the Athenians,

[58] See Müller (1853) 165-78, Reinhardt (1949) 154-9, Goldhill (1984a) 262-83, and Brown (1984) 260-81, esp. 275. Henrichs (1991) 162-9, 173-4, 195-6 argues (165-7) that the contrary sides of the Erinyes / Eumenides combine to produce the ambivalent basic (i.e. traditional) concept. Reinhardt (1949) 159 conceives of their opposing qualities as an antithetical unity.

[59] Mitchell-Boyask (2009) 95. On a discussion about the identification between the Erinyes and the cult of *Semnai Theai* see the next section (pp. 26-8).

[60] Cf. Din. 1.46, 87; Paus. 1.28.6.

[61] Power and meaning reside in a name: Neustadt (1929) 246 formulates, 'Im Namen enthüllt sich […] Schicksal seines Trägers.' Cf. Henrichs (1991) 200: 'Daß sich in den Namen, vor allem den Eigennamen und Epitheta der Götter, das eigentliche Wesen der so benannten Mächte enthülle, haben viele Griechen geglaubt […].'

adds symbolic substance to the goddesses that affects the audience's reception of Aeschylus' theatre. Thus the next chapter will deepen the inquiry into the link between the Erinyes and *Semnai Theai* in the trilogy.

1.4.3 *Semnai Theai*

In tragedy, the Erinyes are often referred to as σεμναί (e.g. *Eu*. 383, 1041; S. *El*. 112, *Aj*. 837; E. *Or*. 410).[62] In the *Oresteia*, the Erinyes are not called σεμναί except in *Eumenides*. It is no coincidence that σεμναί appears in the same play in which the Areopagus is founded.[63] Sources suggest that the *Semnai Theai* have a cult near to the Areopagus and were closely associated with the council:[64] solemn oaths were taken by prosecutors, defendants and witnesses in their name and sacrifices were made when the defence was successful. In contrast, a cult of the Erinyes is not attested to.[65] This epithet not only associates the Erinyes with reverence and solemnity but also with the Athenian legal system. In turn, the identification of the Erinyes with the *Semnai Theai* lends new properties to the

[62] Cf. *Eu*. 1006, and Paus. 1. 28. 6, 2. 11. 4., 7. 25. 2-3, 7. 25. 7. See also Wüst (1956) 91, Visser (1980) 1-27, Burkert (1985) 273 with n. 51, Podlecki (1989) *ad* 383, Sommerstein (1989) *ad* 1041-2, Henrichs (1991) 163, 170-9, and (1994) 27-58, esp. 36-58. See Seaford (1994) 94-8, 133-4 on the *Semnai*, and 388 on the cult of the Erinyes. He states (96 n. 106) that it is unlikely that the identification is Aeschylus' invention. Mitchell-Boyask (2009) 25, Sommerstein (1989) *ad* 1027 and (2008) xxiii with n. 34 convincingly argue the opposite. For the identification between the Eumenides and the *Semnai Theai*, aetiology, and the cult nearby the Areopagus see further Dietrich (1962) 143 and (1974) 190, Sommerstein (1989) 6-12, Henrichs (1991) 161-201, (1994) 27-58, and Scodel (2006) 72-4.

[63] Cf. Henrichs (1994) 40: 'the Aeropagos had mythical connections with the Erinyes and cultic connections with the Semnai Theai.' Mitchell-Boyask (2009) 25 assumes that Aeschylus was the first 'to identify the Semnai with the Erinyes, but not the first to associate the Semnai with the Areopagus […].'

[64] See n. 60.

[65] The Erinyes had no cult, but the *Semnai Theai* and Eumenides did. Henrichs (1994) 38 n. 50, 46, 54. Cf. Ogden (2001) 118.

cult known by the audience. The violence intrinsic to the Erinyes' traditional role as goddesses of vengeance and curse, their relentless desire to enforce justice and punishment, their fearsome faces as well as the gravity and wisdom ingrained in their ancient origin lend the cult established at the end of the *Eumenides* force, depth and awe.

The Erinyes call themselves σεμναί first (*Eu*. 383); they are not called Σεμναί <θεαί> until the play's end by the χορὸς προπομπῶν. In the same breath as the Erinyes declare that they are versatile, effective, mindful of wrongs and unappeasable, they also claim to be σεμναί (381-4).[66] Prins suggests that the Erinyes anticipate their august status at the end.[67] The female escorts name the Erinyes Σεμναί as they accompany them to their new sanctuary (*Eu*. 1041). This last epithet is very potent. It confirms the Erinyes' own view of their nature and function earlier in the Binding Song, reminds the audience of the cult of *Semnai Theai* that is associated with the Areopagus, and ultimately identifies the two divine figures lending double strength to the court. As Σεμναί reverberates as one of the last words of the whole trilogy it leaves a significant picture of the Erinyes' benign will and the Areopagus' greatness in the audience's mind. Athena also speaks of the holy sacrifices to be made to the new deities within her city (σφαγίων […] σεμνῶν, 1006): her remark alludes to the Erinyes' epithet and status.[68] Further, as the Olympian gods are considered σεμνοί earlier in the

[66] Just as the Erinyes are 'mindful' at [A.] *PV* 516, so the *semnai* Erinyes describe themselves as κακῶν τε / μνάμονες.

[67] Likewise, Goldhill (1984a) 231 judges the uses of *semnai* in *Eu*. 'predication as prediction'. Cf. also n. 294 on the verbal power of fulfilment. See Rabel (1979a) 16-21, esp. 16-17, and Prins (1991) 191 on cledonomancy in *Eu*..

[68] See Henrichs (1994) 47, cf. 44, and Heath (1999) 40.

trilogy (*Ag*. 183, 519), Aeschylus may suggest that the transformed Erinyes receive cultic status and are equivalent with the Olympian gods.

The Erinyes' / *Semnai Theai*'s role as chorus allows for the connection between the cult established in the *Oresteia* and the one existing in Athens. Their foundation as goddesses of cult onstage is a dramatic reinforcement of their cult in contemporary Athens. The *Semnai Theai*'s final choral performances and Athena's complementary speeches promote society's values and norms:[69] their support for Athens' judicial institution and their advice to be σώφρων, act with justice and piety and practise reverence (σέβας) towards parents, fellow-citizens, strangers and gods, especially Zeus, *Dikê* and the Erinyes / *Semnai Theai*, not only commemorates the final solution within the drama but also advocates civic justice and prosperity in contemporary Athens.

In summary, *semnai* forms the nucleus that identifies the Erinyes as benign civic figures and associates them with the cult of the *Semnai Theai* which is traditionally allied with the Areopagus – this epithet pinpoints the decisive moment in their transformation from Erinyes to *Semnai Theai* / Eumenides. It signals that their powers, which were employed to exact violent punishment and to fulfil bloody curses throughout the trilogy, are transformed to bring social, judicial and political benefit to Athens as a whole.[70] The establishment of their cult in *Eumenides* lends additional divine strength to the human institution of justice in the framework of the drama, and greater solemnity and gravity, especially inspiring fear in citizens that deters them from transgression, to the Athens of Aeschylus' day.

[69] See Bierl (2009) 16-7 n. 43, 19-23. Cf. Calame (2001) 231: 'music and dance are means of communicating by performance and assimilating by mimesis a precise set of contents.'

[70] The Erinyes' transformation into *Semnai Theai* in regards to curse, oath, blessing, reverence and fear, supplication, *xenia*, and sacrifice will be analysed in detail in chapter 3.

1.4.4 *Gorgones*

References to the Erinyes as Gorgon-like (e.g. οὔτοι γυναῖκας, ἀλλὰ Γοργόνας λέγω, *Eu*. 48)[71] and other allusions to Γοργόνες in the *Oresteia* (e.g. *Ch*. 831-7) highlight the Erinyes' duality and the latent benefit in their destructive qualities.[72] The comparison of the Erinyes to the Gorgon aids in their transformation into the awesome cult of *Semnai Theai*. The initial focus on the Gorgon's / Erinyes' purely destructive side shifts to realise their apotropaic function. This subchapter examines which Gorgonian properties are attributed to the Erinyes and how they emerge as advantageous for the *polis* stimulating beneficial fear (φόβος), reverence (σέβας) as well as the adherence to healthy thinking (σωφροσύνη) and divinely sanctioned civic ordinances (θεσμός) as Athena welcomes the Erinyes as objects of cult into her city.

The first allusion to the Gorgon arises when the chorus of the *Choephori* envisions Orestes facing his mother with a sword. Here they bid him to uplift Perseus' spirit in his breast (*Ch*. 831-7).[73] The imagery recalls the legend of Perseus, who, after having killed Medusa, is pursued by the other Gorgons (e.g. Hes. *Sc*. 216-37). This suggests that Clytemnestra, like Medusa, is doomed to be killed, and pursuit by other Gorgons awaits Orestes.[74] This captures the negative

[71] The Gorgons are described with hideous faces, glaring eyes, and serpents in their hair and girdles; their paralysing effect can be deduced from the fact that the Gorgon's head has the power to turn anything into stone that met its gaze. The popular belief in this legend leads to the representation of the head as a protective figure on armour and on walls. Cf. [A.] *PV* 799. *S. v.* Gorgon in Harvey (1937) 189-90 and Gantz (1993) 20-2, Wüst (1956) 88, Harrison (1903, 1922, 1975) 223-8, and Hall (2006) 116-18. See also Visser (1980) 143-7, esp. 144, where she suggests that they could be thought of as Phorcys' daughters. Phorcys is also father of Scylla, to whom Cassandra compares Clytemnestra at *Ag*. 1233. Cf. E. *Alc*. 1117-18 and *Ba*. 990; Dionysus is the offspring of some Libyan Gorgon (cf. the Erinyes' association with maenads, e.g. *Eu*. 500; cf. 25).

[72] To be discussed in 2.4.6 and ch. 3.

[73] See Gantz (1993) 304-7 on Perseus and Medusa. See also Petrounias (1976) 166-7, Garvie (1986) *ad* 831-7, and Bacon (2001) 55-6.

[74] See Tyrrell (1984) 110-12 on Clytemnestra as a Gorgon.

reciprocity embedded in the *lex talionis* (e.g. *Ch*. 400-4) or the gnome παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα (e.g. *Ag*. 1564) embodied by the Erinyes. The allusion to the Gorgon is associated with the Erinyes' agency. Later, the chorus approves of Orestes having cut off the heads of the pair of serpents (δυοῖν δρακόντοιν εὐπετῶς τεμὼν κάρα, *Ch*. 1047) – this evokes the Perseus story again; the Erinyes of Agamemnon promote the cause of one of these murders. Aeschylus further develops the implication of the Erinyes possessing the character of a Gorgon in Orestes' vision (*Ch*. 1048), where they appear to Orestes in dusky cloaks (1049), wreathed in snakes (1049-50),[75] and with blood dripping from their eyes (1058).[76] Whereas the Gorgon allusion corresponds to the Erinyes' agency by inference at lines 831-7, Orestes' vision conceives the Erinyes as Gorgons by direct metaphor – this anticipates the last play where Gorgon features become more immediate to the dramatic action. In *Eumenides*, the comparison becomes unmistakable. The Pythia calls them Gorgons to correct her first description of them as women, but immediately corrects herself again commenting that they are not similar to Gorgons in figure and form (48) but to wingless and disgusting Harpies.[77] A certain similarity stimulated the Pythia's exclamation. What exactly,

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[75] Visser (1980) 144. Cf. E. *El*. 1250-7 where the Erinyes are associated with Gorgons and snakes. For the Erinyes as hunters see Padel (1992) 118, 176-7.

[76] West (1998) uses νᾶμα instead of αἷμα. Viketos (1992) 376-7 suggests that Aeschylus wrote βλέμμα instead of αἷμα. Their suggestions are not adopted in this thesis. See also Fowler (1991) 94 and Heath (1999) 35. Cf. *Ag*. 1428 and Garvie (1986) *ad* 1057-58.

[77] The myth of Phineus' supper unmistakably conjures up the image of the Harpies. See Rose (1928/ 1953) 201, *s.v*. Phineus 325-6 and *s.v*. Harpies 194 in Harvey (1937), Peterich (1938) 86, Maxwell-Stuart (1973) 81-2 with n. 1, Stanford (1983) 109-10, Hall (1989) 211-12 with n. 36, Podlecki (1989) *ad* 50, Gantz (1993) 17, 18-19, 20-2, Hall (2006) 116-18 and Frontisi-Ducroux (2007) 171-2. Harrison (1903, 1922, 1975) 223-8 with figs. 45-7 illustrates that Gorgons appear non-human, and Harpies human. Johnston (1992) 89 comments that the Harpies and Erinyes are not to be equated in Homer and probably also in later literature and belief.

then, are these Gorgon features and how do they relate to the Erinyes' / *Semnai Theai*'s role in the trilogy?

Although the Gorgon is hideous (as its name suggests), it is perceived as a protective figure represented on armour or walls and drinking cups.[78] Whereas dreadfulness helps the Erinyes in the performance of the Binding Song as an incarnation of horror and in the fulfillment of their task as avengers of Clytemnestra, the apotropaic function is relevant to their final installation as objects of Athenian cult.[79] Fear seizes one when looking upon a Gorgon (e.g. *Od*. 11.633-5). Likewise, one shudders with fear at the thought, utterance and agency of the Erinyes (e.g. *Ag*. 975-7; *Ch*. 33-41); but above all, in *Eumenides*, the fearful faces of the *Semnai Theai* inspire a type of fear that is not destructive, but stimulates the citizens to abide by the law and thus generates civic profit. As the Gorgon head is apotropaic in the framework of religion and warfare, so *Semnai Theai* serve an apotropaic function in the Athenian system of justice at the end of *Eumenides*. Hence, Γοργόνες appears to be a paradigm describing the beneficial use of destructive qualities. The allusion to and metaphor of the Gorgon applied to the Erinyes anticipates the Erinyes' safeguarding function as *Semnai Theai* at the trilogy's finale (e.g. *Eu*. 903-15, 927-37, 938-48, 956-67, 990-1).

Further, the comparison between the Erinyes and the Gorgon may also hinge on the common denominator 'blood'. The Gorgon's blood is said to be

[78] *S.v*. Gorgon in Harvey (1937) 189-90. See also Visser (1980) 145-7, and cf. *Od*. 11.632-5. The serpent is a feature of both the Gorgon and the Erinyes (Erinyes: *Ch*. 527, 1049-50; *Eu*. 128; E. *El*. 1345; *IT* 286-7; *Or*. 256; Gorgon: *Ion* 1015). See subchapter 1.5.4 on snakes below.

[79] Each chthonic divinity is defeated in their acquisition of this apotropaic quality; however, this takes place under different circumstances. In myth Medusa is decapitated as a consequence of immoral sexual behaviour (e.g. *Ov*. *Met*. 4.770-804); Perseus gave Medusa's head to Athena, who placed it on her shield. In contrast, the Erinyes are virginal and hideous before their personal defeat. Further, the Erinyes are overcome by legal justice, persuasion and without violence.

sacred.[80] Likewise, the Erinyes are the divine injunction of the bloodlust inherent in the *lex talionis* and the gnome παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα. But as goddesses of vengeance and curse the association with sacred blood brings destruction and endangers a royal bloodline (i.e. Clytemnestra's regicide and curse upon Orestes) and the *polis* (the Erinyes' threat to blight Athens) in the *Oresteia*. Welcoming the *Semnai Theai* as a civic cult shows how sacred blood and positive reciprocity can be aligned: the Erinyes, like the Gorgon, can not only destroy but also bring life (*Eu*. 950-5; cf. E. *Ion* 1005, 1013). The land of the just flourishes, the land of the unjust goes to ruin. Just as the Gorgon wards off evil, so the Erinyes promote justice, prosperity and fertility (e.g. *Eu*. 804-5, 834-6, 990-1). Thus, the Erinyes' fear-provoking faces stimulate moral conduct and in turn the essential fertility of the *polis*.

Likewise, the Erinyes' continuous relationship with dreadful *Atê* throughout the *Oresteia* emphasises their dual nature; however, up until the finale their association with *atê* involves punishment (i.e. *lex talionis* and the gnome παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα). The next subchapter shows how the Erinyes are defined as and limited to being goddesses of vengeance and curse in their association with ἄτη and how Aeschylus achieves their transformation into *Semnai Theai* that uses Ἄτη's dual and causal properties for positive and negative reciprocity in service to the city and its justice.

[80] See Visser (1980) 145 who comments on the Gorgons' sacred blood and its association with the Erinyes' ambivalence (i.e. good and bad). Cf. E. *Ion* 1001-17 (esp. 1005) with pp. 139-40, 247 where the inducer of punishment and madness also has the capacity to heal. Cf. also Apoll. 3.10.3.

1.4.5 *Atê*

The Erinyes' association with Ἄτη,[81] which encapsulates the notions of folly, delusion, blindness to justice, ruin,[82] mischief, and pest,[83] undergoes changes in the dramatic development of the *Oresteia*. The extended dual aspects of ἄτη such as crime and punishment, divine and human aspects and the causal connection between past, present and future events[84] are re-polarised and become integrated in the *Semnai Theai*, a cult beneficial to Athens.

In *Agamemnon*, Aeschylus first associates *atê* with disrespect for justice, wickedness and sacrilegious rites. The trampling on hallowed things is caused by *peithô*, the child of *atê* (*Ag*. 385-6).[85] Cassandra compares Clytemnestra, who acts as an agent of the Erinyes, to *atê* (1230).[86] After killing Agamemnon for the sake of satisfying personal vengeance, Clytemnestra offers his corpse to Justice, *Atê* and the Erinys (μὰ τὴν τέλειον τῆς ἐμῆς παιδὸς Δίκην / Ἄτην Ἐρινύν θ',

[81] Cf. the strong association between the Erinyes and *atê* in Homer: *Il*. 19.87-133 and *Od*. 15.233-4.

[82] Dodds (1951) 38-40 argues that *Atê* is equivalent to ruin brought on externally, often instigated by divine anger (cf. e.g. S. *OC* 532, *Tr*. 530). The nature and function of ἄτη is not always represented as a punishment. He further argues that it is associated with hereditary guilt: the 'evil debt' may be passed onto the wrong-doer's descendants.

[83] *S.v.* ἄτη *LSJ* (1996) 112. *Atê* is the child of *Eris* in Hesiod (*Th*. 226-32), and in Homer (*Il*. 19.91-133) she is called eldest daughter of Zeus with no mother mentioned. See Gantz (1993) 10. Bremer (1969) 123-4 perceives ἄτη as a leitmotiv in the trilogy.

[84] Cf. Henrichs (1994) 28, 46-54, and Seaford (2003) 141-65. See Neuburg (1993) 491-504. The duality inherent in *atê* is perfectly reflected in the duality of the Erinyes. See also Harris (1973) 156-9, esp. 158-9, on dual aspects in women ('as Furies-witches and as Eumenides'). Dodds (1951) 38-40 notes the 'dynamic nexus, the μένος ἄτης', which ties together crime and punishment. *Atê* draws the victim on to new intellectual or moral error with inescapable ruin following. See also Williams (1993) 52-5 and 185 n. 7 on *atê* in relation to *aitios*, intention and divine causation. See further Neuburg (1993) 491-504 on the subjective / objective duality of ἄτη.

[85] Cf. Dawe (1968) 101. On persuasion in the trilogy see n. 245 and n. 330. See also Buxton (1982) 5-18, 67, 105-14, Vellacott (1984) 22, 30, 32, 125-6, Goldhill (1984a) 280, 283, and Heath (1999) 41-7.

[86] Bremer (1969) 127-8.

ἦσι τόνδ' ἔσφαξ' ἐγώ, / οὔ μοι φόβου μέλαθρον ἐλπὶς ἐμπατεῖ, 1432-4).[87] The instances associate *atê* with hereditary curse, the *lex talionis* as well as with sacrilege. Clytemnestra, however, is free to use the name of the Erinyes in performing her irreverent ritual, because there are no guidelines for Erinyes cult. Aeschylus highlights the Erinyes' potential to be executioners or advocates of justice but he also ties their justice to the negative nature and function of *atê* in *Agamemnon*.

In *Choephori*, *atê* is a catalyst for the cessation of transgression within the *oikos* of Atreus; however, by its inherent causal principles of crime and punishment as well as past present and future, it generates another wrong that perpetuates the cycle of vengeance and curse. Orestes invokes Zeus to send up from below late-punishing *atê* (382-5, esp. 383).[88] Although the Erinyes are not spoken of here, their agency is implicit – Orestes acts as an instrument of *atê* and the Erinyes to exact vengeance upon the murderer of his father (*Ch*. 269-96). The chorus suggests that the correlation between *atê*, the principle 'blood-for-blood' and the Erinys is a social decree: ἀλλὰ νόμος μὴν φονίας σταγόνας / χυμένας εἰς πέδον ἄλλο προσαιτεῖν / αἷμα. βοᾶι γὰρ λοιγὸς Ἐρινὺν / παρὰ τῶν πρότερον φθιμένων ἄτην / ἑτέραν ἐπάγουσαν ἐπ' ἄτηι ('It is the law that drops of blood spilled to the ground demand other blood. For horrible death calls out for an Erinys from those killed before to bring further ruin upon

[87] Cf. Dawe (1968) 108-9. *Atê* is often mentioned in *Ag*. (385-6, 735-6, 1230, 1268-70). Although the Erinyes are not mentioned in these passages, they are related by the concepts of retribution and inheritance and through their association with Cassandra and Clytemnestra. See also Winnington-Ingram (1948) 135 n. 50. Note that the upper and lower cases of the spelling of *atê* correspond to the upper and lower case in the Greek spelling in West (1998).

[88] Cf. E. *Med*. 1389-90. See Wüst (1956) 87.

ruin.', 400-4).[89] Electra questions whether *atê* can be eradicated through three falls (339),[90] an idea that surfaces again at the trial where the Erinyes test Orestes in three falls (*Eu*. 589).[91] Likewise, *Choephori* closes with a dire call for the cessation of *Atê* ('ποῖ δῆτα κρανεῖ, ποῖ καταλήξει μετακοιμισθὲν μένος Ἄτης; 'where will it all end?, where will the power of *atê* cease and fall asleep?', *Ch*. 1075-6). *Atê* is emphatically personified and in last position. The Erinyes' emergence as sleeping chorus in *Eumenides* renders this a proleptic figure of speech which describes the nexus between *atê* and Erinyes as a force that will abate. The chorus' hope for *atê*'s cessation reflects their hope for the healing of the house. In sum, although the Erinyes' association with *atê* in the second play extends justice to the order of the (patriarchal) *oikos*, it still falls short of severing it from the negative aspects of violence and bloodshed and securing civic and cosmic justice and order. *Choephori* associates powerful *atê* with the Erinyes first in the form of negative reciprocity then in the form of a metaphor that expresses the hope of ending the cycle of vengeance and curse.

The association between *atê* and the Erinyes in the first two plays shifts in *Eumenides*. Harking back to the choral closing line in *Choephori* (1076), the last play begins with a chorus of sleeping Erinyes (*Eu*. 47). Metaphor becomes reality; the sleeping Erinyes seem to impersonate *atê* lulled to sleep. Their inactive mode prevents their function as maternal avengers (i.e. as embodiment of *atê*) from being carried out. Later in the Binding Song the Erinyes perform *atê* as an actual dance.[92] Here their guarantee that unbearable ruin will attend the

[89] This correlation does not reflect on the chorus' hopes for peace in the house of Atreus.

[90] See Poliakoff (1980) 253, Burian (1986) 340-1.

[91] It seems that Aeschylus removes the inauspicious notion of *atê* in dealing with Orestes in court.

[92] Prins (1991) 190.

wrongdoer (δύσφορον ἄταν, 376) re-kindles the destructive power of *atê* from the earlier plays but intensifies it, expanding it from *oikos* to *polis*. But any baneful impact of *atê* in the form of maternal vengeance risking the welfare of the city is averted by Athena's arrival. As long as the trial at the Areopagus takes place, *atê* is not mentioned. Only after Orestes' exoneration does its inherent negative causal principle surface again: the Erinyes, who embody ἄτη, threaten to poison Athens in retribution for the trampling upon their honour. It is clear that *atê* is no longer an abstract principle but an immediate threat to Athens in form of angry formidable goddesses. However, Athena addresses *Atê*, personified in the chorus of Erinyes. The Olympian goddess uses *peithô,* the child of *atê* (*Ag*. 385-6), upon the chthonian deities who have a 'soft spot' for honour and power; she effects the cessation of *atê*. Just as Orestes, son of Clytemnestra, restores the patriarchal order and the honour of his father, so *peithô* adjusts *atê* to civic justice in that Athena's charm generates the Erinyes' transformation into *Semnai Theai* who sanction Athens' judicial system. Concerned about the welfare of the city, the Erinyes reject the principle of requital and *atê* as civil war (μηδὲ πιοῦσα κόνῖς μέλαν αἷμα πολιτᾶν / δι' ὀργὰν ποινάς / ἀντιφόνους, ἄτας / ἁρπαλίσαι πόλεως, *Eu*. 980-3): they pray that the city may never experience civil strife. Likewise, they are to keep what is ruinous below the earth and to send what is profitable to the city (1006-10). Hence, the Erinyes / *Semnai Theai* remain closely associated with *Atê* which remains punishment for injustice, albeit in an expanded form that includes the *polis* and works towards its prosperity.[93] The *Semnai Theai* are still the source of *atê* for those citizens whose conduct is unjust

[93] Drawing upon *Ch*. 120 Euben (1990) 82 inquires into the question whether retribution can be just.

and may threaten the *polis* (e.g. 953-5). Thus, Aeschylus refines the Erinyes' association with *atê* to accommodate the needs of the *polis*. The *Semnai Theai* maintain ἄτη's dual and causal properties but dispense them in accordance with the Areopagus. Both positive and negative reciprocity are integral to their function and service to the city.

In conclusion, Aeschylus draws upon epithets and allusions to supernatural beings in order to extract and highlight those features of the Erinyes' nature and function that will define their role as *Semnai Theai* in Athens. Their fierce aspects, particularly inherent in their association with *Gorgones* and *Atê*, inspire fear in the Athenian citizen deterring crime and thus assuring public health and prosperity. The noble aspects, especially evident in the Erinyes' association with *Semnai Theai*, command respect, spur the citizens' zeal for good and emphasise the Erinyes' solemnity, thus lending *gravitas* to the judicial institution. The sum of both formidable and dignified qualities stresses that the Erinyes / *Semnai Theai* work by a principle of reciprocity: virtuous and just conduct will be rewarded while wickedness and 'anti-social' behaviour will be punished. Aeschylus describes the Erinyes' physical appearance accordingly: as the Erinyes cease to be an abstraction and subjective projection of the agents and finally emerge as chorus of the *Eumenides*, outer appearance and imagery corroborate and substantiate what the Erinyes' epithets and associations with supernatural beings have suggested so far.

1.5 Physical Appearance

1.5.1 General

This subchapter analyses how the images' negative qualities make room for and integrate positive properties and how the resulting bi-functional images are interwoven with the *Semnai Theai*'s cultic role to promote civic justice, welfare and fertility at the end of the trilogy. Epithets and association form one part of the Erinyes' presentation and their dramatic and symbolic advancement throughout the trilogy. Rich imagery is complementary to these epithets and associations. Elaborate imagery, especially metaphors of blood, snake, hound and the colour black, achieves more than simply describing the Erinyes' nature and function. Figurative language also prepares for action and resolution in the last play; images become dynamic properties of the Erinyes in *Eumenides*. This dramatic and semantic advancement aids in the realisation of the Erinyes' transformation from abstract beings spoken about and invoked to the tragic chorus.

1.5.2 Blood

Blood is a signifier for the *lex talionis*, the gnome παθεῖν τὸν and the perversion of civic norms in the *Oresteia*. By extension it also describes the function and outer appearance of the Erinyes, goddesses of vengeance and curse, who embody the law 'blood-for-blood' and whose agency of private retributive justice distorts civic justice and social hierarchy.[94] In *Agamemnon* and *Choephori* imagery of blood denotes retribution, illustrates the Erinyes' role as spirits of vengeance and

[94] See Padel (1992) 162-92, esp. 172-9, who argues that the Erinyes 'incarnate horror at blood and desire for more', and Visser (1980) 162-70, who argues that blood is a pollution-image and associates blood and poison. See also Petrounias (1976) 192-5, Sommerstein (1989) *ad* 132 and Fowler (1991) 85-100. Fowler (esp. 85) points out that animal imagery is constantly juxtaposed to 'the factual or metaphorical mention of blood'.

curse and underlines their fearsome character. But the references to blood undergo a qualitative and quantitative change in *Eumenides*. At the beginning, blood imagery continues to signify the law 'blood-for-blood', however, on an unprecedented dynamic level: the incarnation of the *lex talionis*, the Erinyes, hunt Orestes to satisfy their bloodlust, sing about and dance to the cosmic law of 'blood-justice'. However, at the end of the trilogy the Erinyes are transformed into *Semnai Theai* who use and represent reciprocity for the *polis*' benefit. Thus the Erinyes' association with blood changes to fit their new cultic role sanctioning the judicial institution of Athens. Blood imagery attached to the *Semnai Theai*[95] becomes a signifier for upholding civic order, inspiring fear and commanding respect rather than perpetuating the notion of private vengeance and the gnome παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα. The poet removes blood as a hallmark of the destructive Erinyes and renders it a civic beneficial property of the *Semnai Theai* which underscores healthy Athenian relationships amongst citizens, to its allies and to alien residents.

In *Agamemnon*, blood epitomises vengeance, curse and destruction. Thyestes' bloody banquet forms the source of the primordial curse and the cycle of vengeance upon the house of Atreus (*Ag*. 1090-7, 1192, 1583-1602). Yet this takes place outside the narrative. The carpet scene succinctly symbolises the endless cycle of bloodshed and forms the platform for the Erinyes' agency, hereditary curse, private vengeance, *atê* and sacrilege to emerge onstage.[96] The purple cloth with which Clytemnestra welcomes Agamemnon is expressive of the flow of blood and anticipates the queen's murderous blow that results in Agamemnon's blood gushing forth. But it not only prefigures Agamemnon's (and

[95] I.e. the red robes of the *Semnai Theai*. See pp. 49-50.

[96] Lebeck (1971) 81-6.

Cassandra's) death, it also renders the transgressors, Clytemnestra (and Aegisthus) liable to the Erinyes' justice and the perpetual cycle of vengeance and curse. Further, Cassandra perceives the Erinyes to be drunk with blood (1188-9).[97] This highlights the bloodlust of the ancient goddesses; blood is the Erinyes' sustenance – it fuels the cycle of vengeance and curse. The Erinyes are agents of blood-transfer by which the victim's blood shed by the murderer is atoned for with the murderer's own blood.[98] Further, Cassandra's prophetic vision of Clytemnestra as murderer (1107-29) and the Erinyes as enforcers of bloody vengeance and curse in the house (1178-97) echo in the imagery of blood associated with the queen: Clytemnestra ecstatically enjoys the spurts of Agamemnon's blood upon her (1388-92) like a bloodthirsty Erinys and also has blood upon her eyes (1426-30). At lines 1580-2 Aegisthus praises the sight of Agamemnon's corpse lying in the robe spun by the Erinyes. Although blood is not spoken of here, it is evident that the robe is bloodied (cf. *Ch*. 1010-17).[99] In the first play, blood is the Erinyes' sustenance, commodity and hallmark, all of which stress their role as goddesses of vengeance and curse.

In *Choephori* the imagery of blood increasingly denotes retribution, curse and death, and the Erinyes.[100] The snake to which Clytemnestra gives birth in her dream (and which is generally accepted to be symbolic of an avenging son)

[97] See n. 24.

[98] There are similarities to Hes. *Th*. 178-87. Note, however, that in Hesiod Kronos is not a murderer and does not pay the penalty for castrating his father with his blood. The Erinyes avenge Ouranos in the absence of blood.

[99] Cf. Vermeule (1966) 21.

[100] See also Fowler (1991) 95-8 on blood and the Erinyes in *Ch*.

not only sucks milk from her breast but also draws blood (*Ch*. 546).[101] 'Blood for blood' is the emblem of this dream: because Clytemnestra killed Agamemnon, her blood must serve as a recompense to satisfy Agamemnon's Erinyes. Similarly, the image of satisfying the Erinyes' bloodlust emerges as Orestes speaks of the Erinys drinking Aegisthus' blood as a third draught (571-8, esp. 577).[102] Conjuring up this image fuels the success of vengeance against Aegisthus.[103] Likewise, after the matricide, the chorus believes that the fresh blood upon Orestes' hands is the cause of his vision of the Erinyes (1055-6).[104] During the *kommos* the slave women make it clear that bloodshed and horrible death (λοιγός) invoke the Erinys (quoted above, *Ch*. 400-4). 'Blood-for-blood' emerges as a law guaranteed by the Erinys. This formula suggests the Erinyes' correlation with reciprocity and law; indeed the *Semnai Theai*'s enforcement of *thesmos* for civic benefit in *Eumenides* forms the positive counterpart to the chorus' exclamation at lines 400-4. At the end of *Choephori*, blood imagery not only alludes to the Erinyes' function but also denotes their outer appearance. In his vision, Orestes beholds

[101] Visser (1980) 167 with n. 73 comments on the horror of mixing milk and blood; it is a confusion of categories. Milk, pure water and honey are used in the worship of the Erinyes (e.g. *Eu*. 106-9; S. *OC* 100). Cf. Visser (1980) 14, 18 for what is offered to the Erinyes / Eumenides.

[102] Garvie (1986) *ad* 577-8 comments that the third unmixed libation reminds one of Clytemnestra's blasphemy at *Ag*. 1385-7; see also Zeitlin (1965) 484, Petrounias (1976) 156-7, 416 n. 956. See also pp. 61, 89 on the idea of wineless libation. Cf. also Burian (1986) 332-42.

[103] Here the Erinys drinks the blood of a kin-killer; it is Aegisthus, not Clytemnestra who is related to Agamemnon by blood. Orestes will actually commit two kin-killings: both Aegisthus and Clytemnestra are his blood-kin.

[104] After the matricide it seems as though Orestes' (guilty) conscience upon touching the bloodstained robe as well as the robe itself (which also has Agamemnon's blood on it) invokes the Erinyes (*Ch*. 980-90, 997-1004). Greene (1944) 125-6 remarks that the sight of the bloodstained robe arouses the onset of madness, and the vision of the Erinyes. Cf. also Foley (2001) 202. Lebeck (1971) 63-8 comments that the net comprises a major system of kindred imagery, entails the concept of binding fate, and suggests hindering movement. See also Petrounias (1976) 185-6 and Sider (1978) 12-27, esp. 13-14, on net imagery, and Vermeule (1966) 1-22, esp. 4, 21. See McClure (1996-7)124, 127-30 on the association between women and nets (and magic). See also Fowler (1967) 1-74, esp. 25-6.

blood in the eyes of the loathsome women approaching (1058).[105] This semantic advancement of blood imagery prepares for the Erinyes' emergence as bloodthirsty chorus in *Eumenides*. In this case too, metaphor turns into action.

In the last play the frequency, quality and application of the blood theme change. The first third of *Eumenides* (1-397) shows a strong increase in the frequency of blood-imagery; initially, Aeschylus presents the Erinyes in their typical mode, practising the law 'blood for blood'. Drawn to the fresh blood on Orestes' hands,[106] they pursue him in order to avenge the blood of his mother with his own blood (*Eu*. 41-2, 253, 263-7, 302, 316-20, 325-6, 357-9; cf. *Ch*. 400-4).[107] Only the wrongful shedding of kindred blood is of interest to them. Since there is no blood-relation between Clytemnestra and Agamemnon, they did not pursue the queen (*Eu*. 212, 605). The Erinyes need blood for sustenance, for the satisfaction of revenge, and to live up to the purpose for which they were

[105] See n. 268 on West's (1998) emendation. The Erinyes' bloodied eyes could heighten their identification with Clytemnestra (*Ag*. 1426-9). Contrast their non-bloody eyes at *Eu*. 54. Padel (1992) 175-6 concludes that the Erinyes' bloodshot eyes indicate Orestes' mad awareness that he has committed matricide. Visser (1980) 162-3 argues that the Erinyes take on the image of blood to express their office thus suggesting Orestes' pollution. Cf. E. *Or*. 256; *El*. 1252.

[106] For the question of Orestes' purification see Müller (1853) 105-33, Lesky (1931) 209-10, Dirksen (1965) 9 with n. 15, 20-1, Dyer (1969) 38-56, Dodds (1973) 50-1, Taplin (1977) 381-4, Kossatz-Deissmann (1978) 108-12, Brown (1982) 30-2 and (1983) 16-21, 24-6 with nn. 59, 63, Parker (1983) 5-12, 107, 109 n. 15, 114, 370-4, 386-8, esp. 387, Goldhill (1984a) 224-7, Vellacott (1984) 37-46, Visser (1984) 193-206, Prag (1985) 15 with n. 53, 49-50, Garvie (1986) *ad* 1059-60, Podlecki (1989) *ad* 238, 283, Sommerstein (1989) *ad* 237, Neitzel (1991) 69-89, Roth (1993) 12-13, Sidwell (1996) 44-57, and Käppel (1998) 246-9. Orestes speaks at lines 85-7 – this suggests that his pollution must have been removed beforehand. Sidwell (1996) 53-4, Dyer (1969) 39 n. 5, and Parker (1983) 139 n. 142, 228 with n. 121, 386. Cf. *Eu.* 449. Parker (1983) 388 summarises Orestes' purification by the other tragedians: in S. *El*. the question of pollution is not raised; in E. *El*. 1250-75 Orestes is required to leave Argos, be tried at court, and settle in Arcadia; in E. *Or*. 1643-59, purificatory exile in Arcadia precedes the trial by a year, then Orestes may return to Argos. Cf. E. *IT* 939-46, where Orestes has unclean hands.

[107] Brown (1983) 25-6 suggests that the Erinyes' reference to Orestes' bloody hands (*Eu*. 316-17) and their understanding that he is polluted during the Binding Song is a 'metaphor'. He further contends that the blood by which they track Orestes at lines 246-7 is likely to be Orestes' own blood (i.e. neither his mother's nor the pig's).

invoked;[108] blood is the medium of vengeance and punishment that sustains the Erinys (cf. *Ag*. 1188-9; *Ch*. 546, 571-8). The Binding Song particularly emphasises this. It appears to be a lyrical prelude to their bloody sacrifice of Orestes (302, 316-20, 325-6, 357-9).[109]

After the Binding Song, references to blood change in connotation. Whereas the Erinyes proclaim their desire to drink Orestes' blood in exchange for that of his mother before (and during) the Binding Song (*Eu*. 264-6, 316-20, 357-9; cf. 184-93, 305), they do not mention this desire or blood *per se* in their encounter with Athena. In contrast, Orestes mentions his purification without references to blood before the Binding Song (234-43, 276-98; cf. 63, 74-9), but refers to a man who can purify blood pollution afterwards (443-53, esp. 449). The Erinyes' second choral ode, in which they warn against anarchy and *hubris* and advocate healthy thinking, reverence, and τὸ δεινόν as a deterrent, is free from references to blood (490-565). The moment they are presented as guardians of social, judicial and moral order, their association with blood ceases.

In the trial references to blood become more frequent again – they form part of partial arguments that look to establish the advantage for each party respectively. The Erinyes refer to blood when they speak in their own defence as to why they did not pursue Clytemnestra (*Eu*. 605), question Orestes if he disavows his mother's dearest blood (ἀπεύχηι μητρὸς αἷμα φίλτατον; 608), and doubly emphasise the fact that the case is about the shedding of a mother's

[108] Cf. Sommerstein (1989) *ad* 264-6. He argues that blood is a staple diet for the Erinyes. Βοσκάν suggests actual sustenance at 266.

[109] See also subchapter 3.5 on sacrifice.

kindred blood (653).[110] To them blood is proof of guilt, warrant and means of punishment. In their final argument, the Erinyes accuse Apollo of revering deeds of blood, even outside his allotted office (715-16).[111] In contrast to the Erinyes' 'over-evaluation' of blood, Orestes, Apollo and Athena carefully eschew the relation between blood and matricide (e.g. 61, 682, 752-3).

Different approaches to relationship, kin or not kin (i.e. blood relation), hinge on arguments related to blood ties in the trial. Whereas the Erinyes' extreme view of the blood tie excludes civic relations among non-kin such as marriage, citizenship and alliance, Apollo's and Athena's arguments judge kin murder as homicide while emphasising the importance of public relations such as marriage and alliance. Moreover, unlike the maternal avengers, the pro-patriarchal gods do not associate blood and vengeance, but paternal procreation, with justice. Apollo claims that there is no resurrection for a dead man (648-51; cf. *Ag*. 1018-29). This argument draws upon the law 'blood for blood' (*Ch*. 400-4; *Eu*. 261-6), but alters murder to death which excludes the injuring party and retributive punishment. Twice, Athena's references to murder as 'bloodshed' or simply 'blood' neglect the special case of kin murder (682, 752-3). The goddess describes Orestes' acquittal as ἀνὴρ ὅδ' ἐκπέφευγεν αἵματος δίκην (752) – Orestes has escaped the *lex talionis* embodied by the Erinyes.[112] The trial separates distributive justice and patriarchal order from blood, advocates strong respectful kinship amongst the

[110] The Erinyes' biological assumptions are the polar opposite of Apollo's and Athena's. They assert that the mother's blood is that of the child, whereas the Olympian gods believe that the male seed is the supreme origin of progeny. Cf. Goldhill (1984a) 248-9, 251-2.

[111] Reverence has frequently been connected with justice (e.g. *Eu*. 525, 539; cf. 545).

[112] Sommerstein (2008) succinctly translates: 'This man stands acquitted of the charge of bloodshed.' See also Goldhill (1984a) 260. Note that the phrase αἵματος δίκην indicates a 'murder trial' and one must not derive a literal meaning from its composites 'justice' and 'blood'.

paternal bloodline and strong respectful non-kinship concerning Athens' internal social constructs and its alliance with other Greek city-states.

In response to having their blood vengeance upon Orestes frustrated, the Erinyes threaten to poison the *polis* (*Eu*. 782-7 = 811-17) – this desire for personal vengeance acts as a substitute for the destructive *lex talionis*, the law 'blood-for-blood'.[113] Using *peithô* devoid of blood imagery and its implicit negative reciprocity (except for mentioning Zeus' thunderbolt, 826-9) Athena appeases the Erinyes and initiates their cultic settlement in Athens. The *Semnai Theai* pray that the earth shall not drink the citizens' black blood in mutual slaughter (978-80).[114] At last, blood is no longer associated with the earth or the Erinyes drinking it and satisfying vengeance. The Erinyes' care for kinship is applied to positive ends in that the *Semnai Theai* sanction the absence of internecine bloodshed. The cessation of the Erinyes' role as goddesses of vengeance and curse runs analogous with the cessation of their association with bloody killing. However, the notion of blood and suffering is subsumed under the new paradigm of beneficial fear: the *Semnai Theai* maintain their punitive function in case of transgression – citizens are inspired to abide by the law lest their blood is spilt in punishment for crime.

The red robes donned by the Erinyes for the procession form a last possible connection between the Erinyes' outer appearance and blood (*Eu*. 1028).[115] As *Semnai Theai* endorsing civic justice this blood allusion bears a

[113] Ogden (2001) 255 comments on the Erinyes' poisoning of blood in later literary reception.

[114] The history of bloodshed serves as a reminder: Thyestes' feast, the sack of Troy, the murder of Agamemnon, Clytemnestra and Aegisthus failed to bring prosperity and peace. See Podlecki (1989) *ad* 979/980, Padel (1992) 174-5.

[115] Cf. *Eu*. 1011, 1018. See n. 500 on μέτοικοι and metics. See also Headlam (1906) 268-77, Goheen (1955) 115-26, Lebeck (1971) 15, Taplin (1977) 412-13 Whallon (1980) 100-5, Conacher (1987) 174, Podlecki (1989) *ad loc*., and Scodel (2006) 75. Griffith (1988) 552 with nn. 1-6 points to Iphigenia and her saffron-coloured blood reddening the ground, and the cult dedicated to

positive connotation, especially since the red robes seem to identify the Erinyes as metics who support the wealth (ὄλβος) of the *polis*.[116] By suggestion, the red robes indicate that the Erinyes' bloodlust remains part of the *Semnai Theai*'s disciplinary function: in service to the *polis* they punish those who transgress civic law.

In sum, blood imagery pertains to the *lex talionis* and its divine representatives, the Erinyes, throughout the first two plays. The Erinyes' transformation into *Semnai Theai* most succinctly signifies the change in the meaning of blood imagery. Their incorporation as cultic objects who ward off civil strife underscores civic harmony and the value of Athenian beneficence towards non-Athenians. Their final dressing in red robes also draws importance to Aeschylus' use of colour in the trilogy. Before their conversion, the Erinyes are associated with the colour black. The question why they maintain some 'black' aspects but renounce others such as their black cloaks and black blood and how this affects the drama's construction of civic justice and prosperity will be addressed in the following subchapter.

1.5.3 Black

Throughout the *Oresteia*, Aeschylus uses the colour black to describe the Erinyes (e.g. *Ag*. 462-3; *Ch*. 1049; *Eu*. 52, 370).[117] It may refer to their complexion, their

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Artemis at Bauron (cf. E. *IT* 1462-7). These robes could also be identified with the carpet scene (e.g. *Ag*. 910-11). See Goheen (1955) 115-26, esp. 122-6.

[116] The Erinyes' donning of robes that resemble those worn by metics in the Panathenaia symbolises their Athenianisation.

[117] Podlecki (1989) *ad* 52 and Garvie (1986) *ad* 1049 comment on the dark clothes of mourning. Sommerstein (1989) *ad* 370 comments that this line gives a clue about the choreography: they flap their dark garments with a sinister effect. Cf. *Eu*. 70-3; A. *Th*. 699-700; E. *El*. 1345; *Or*. 321 (in Euripides black refers to their skin). At Ar. *Pl*. 422-3 the colour of Poverty's skin, who is

robes, their hair, their nature, or even their totality.[118] This subchapter does not attempt to answer the question what feature of the Erinyes is black, but makes clear how this colour emphasises the Erinyes' primitive form of justice, their role as goddesses of vengeance and curse and how it underscores their solemnity[119] and formidability which will be useful properties to their final role as objects of Athenian cult. It also analyses how the *Semnai Theai*'s donning of red robes reflects the Erinyes' change in function.

In *Agamemnon* and *Choephori* the Erinyes' black appearance renders them fearsome and formidable (κελαιναί, *Ag*. 462-3; φαϊοχίτωνες, *Ch*. 1049). This colour reflects the horror and darkness inherent in their chthonian origin[120] and their role as goddesses of vengeance and curse. *Eumenides* continues to present the Erinyes, maternal avengers, as dark figures. The Pythia perceives them as μέλαιναι (*Eu*. 52)[121] and comments that their appearance is unfit for a god to behold (55-6). The Erinyes also do not share in white-robed festivals (352). This highlights the Erinyes' division from the Olympian gods and suggests that any other place than their sunless abode (δυσάλιον κνέφας, 396; cf. *PV*. 433) is inappropriate to be their home. Their descent from Night also signifies their dark

compared to an Erinys, is pale. See also Wüst (1956) 126. See Peradotto (1964) 388-93, esp. 392-3, and Fowler (1967) 64-5, 73-4 on the light and dark imagery. See also Kossatz-Deissmann (1978) 107 on plate 22,1 (K38) where a black Erinys is shown. Cf. Paus. 8.34.2-3 and Ogden (2001) 224 on the myth of the Erinyes turning from black to white.

[118] Sommerstein (2008) *ad Eu*. 52 perceives them as black-faced and black-clad.

[119] Darkness lends solemnity (E. *Ba*. 486).

[120] E.g. *Eu*. 321-2.

[121] Μέλαιναι (*Eu*. 52) is vaguer than φαϊοχίτωνες (*Ch*. 1049). Μέλαιναι denotes gloominess and a dark hue rather than exclusively black, unlike φαιός which signifies dusky and gray in colour. *S.v*. μελάς in *LSJ* (1996): 'black, dark, gloomy, dusky, murky'. *S.v*. φαιός in *LSJ* (1996): 'dusky, dun, gray'. Cf. also Maxwell-Stuart (1973) 81-2. Grey as an intermediate colour could well be a deliberate choice between light and dark fitting the Erinyes' duality. See also Frontisi-Ducroux (2007) 169.

dreadful aspects (*Eu*. 416, 745). Black particularly renders them embodiments of Clytemnestra's curse and as such reinforces their separation from the Olympian gods who are pro-Agamemnon. The colour black associates the Erinyes with Clytemnestra who is presented as κελαινόφρων (459).[122] Likewise, the image of their vomiting black foam taken from human bodies (183; cf. *Ag*. 1020; contrast *Eu*. 980)[123] adds to their revolting presentation as blood-sucking avengers and curses.

The Erinyes' reception into the city as *Semnai Theai* is reflected by the change of colour in their outfit. Their donning of red cloaks over their dark ones (1028)[124] seems to remedy their outlandish outfit and thus enables them to assume a position amongst the city and the gods. It is likely that the change of colour of their cloaks symbolises their new relationship with Athens. The cloaks, their civic status and their religious injunction upon judicial matters remind one of metics and their beneficial role in a city.[125] Further, the *Semnai Theai* pray against civil strife using the imagery of dust drinking the citizens' black blood (μηδὲ πιοῦσα κόνις μέλαν αἷμα πολιτᾶν, 980; cf. *Od*.16.441; *Il*.1.303). Their affinity with black, which represents their primitive justice and role as goddesses of vengeance and curse, changes, symbolically and literally. However, their association with

[122] Orestes does not name his mother. Goldhill (1984a) 236 observes the link between 'black' as a common denominator between κελαινόφρων and the daughters of Night.

[123] Cf. also A. *Th*. 736. See Lebeck (1971) 42.

[124] See Podlecki (1989) *ad* 1028. See also Marshall (1999) 188-202 on masks. Headlam (1906) 268-77, esp. 270-2, postulates that the crimson colour is representative of lustral or magic ceremonies, anger and the military. On robes (or nets) see also Lebeck (1971) 63-8, Macleod (1975) 201-3, Petrounias (1976) 185-6, and Sider (1978) 12-27, esp. 23, 25-6. Griffith (1988) 552-4 describes an association between the shedding robes and laying off character traits. It follows that the Erinyes do not completely lay off their original (dark) traits such as anger and bloodlust, but use them for the advantage of the city.

[125] Metics wore crimson robes in the procession of the Panathenaia. See, for example, Headlam (1906) 268-77, Weaver (1996) 559-61 and Maurizio (1998) 297-317, esp. 305, 309, 312. See also n. 500 on μέτοικοι and metics.

darkness is not entirely abolished in the end, but maintained in their new preventive function. The *Semnai Theai*'s abode is beneath the earth (*Eu*. 1007, 1023, 1036; cf. 396). Whereas the Erinyes' underground location is not specified at 396, the *Semnai Theai*'s new home lies beneath Athens. Moreover, the *Semnai Theai*'s frightening black faces[126] keep potential punishment in case of transgression and solemnity locked in their identity. The black robes under the red ones suggest that their horrid punitive methods remain available.

Just as imagery of blood and colour change from being an expression of hostility to properties subsumed under the concept of positive reciprocity advantageous for the *polis*, so the polar properties of animal imagery are adjusted and employed for expressing the Erinyes' cultic services to Athens and its court at the end of *Eumenides*. The next subchapter will examine the Erinyes' association with snakes – one of the Erinyes' foremost attributes in the trilogy.[127]

1.5.4 Snake

The image of the snake carries many implications through its associations with Earth, ancestral spirits, and the soul as well as with healing, blessing, and fertility, but also with treachery and death.[128] The image of the snake is especially

[126] See n. 118 above.

[127] See Thomson (1941) 35, Wüst (1956) 124-5, Harrison (1903, 1922, 1975) 232-9, Sansone (1988) 13-15, Visser (1980) 149-52, Prag (1985) 38-9, 42, 44-51 passim, 57, 75, 117-20 passim, 132 n. 13, Sommerstein (1989) 8, and Easterling (2008) 226-7 on Erinyes and snakes. Cf. E. *IT* 286-7; *Or*. 256; and *El*. 1345. See also Heath (1999) 30 n. 47 on serpents and birds in the *Oresteia*, and (31-2) on *Ch*. 1048-50. See Ogden (2001) 189 with n. 76 for the depiction of snakes in the Erinyes' hair in later literature.

[128] As an animal closely connected to the ground and also representative of the soul recumbent in the tomb (see Wüst [1956] 124-5 and Visser [1980] 151 on vase paintings that show snakes drawn on the side of the tomb) or of ancestral spirits, the snake links the Erinyes to earth and the soul, emphasises their chthonian aspect and their role as keepers and avengers of the dead and their tomb (cf. *Ch*. 283-96). Cf. Henrichs (1984) 263. This might indicate the Erinyes' potential to be

appropriate in the *Oresteia*, because the female was thought to kill the male at coition, and the young destroy their mother in revenge while biting their way out of the womb.[129] This renders the image of the snake particularly applicable to the Erinyes who exemplify retribution and intra-familial bloodshed as well as to the *Semnai Theai* whose co-optation into Athens brings an end to *atê* and assures the *polis*' fertility.[130] In Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, the Erinyes and the snake are especially associated by Clytemnestra's nightmare and Orestes' vision – both agent and victim of the Erinyes through the principle of the *lex talionis* (Clytemnestra, *Ch*. 527-50; Orestes, 1048-62, esp. 1050).[131] This subchapter explores the application of snake properties to the Erinyes and *Semnai Theai*.

Snake imagery in *Choephori* captures the principle of vengeance and curse over which the Erinyes preside. The snake in Clytemnestra's dream fuses Orestes and the Erinyes as an avenger (*Ch*. 527-50; cf. 288). Clytemnestra gives birth to a serpent which sucks both milk and blood from her breast; Orestes is Clytemnestra's son who has come to Argos to shed his mother's blood in

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apotropaic assistants to the city – and indeed the snake is a feature that interlinks with the Erinyes' association with the Gorgon (see above p. 34 with n. 75).

[129] Garvie (1986) *ad* 247-9, Visser (1980) 152 with n. 30. Cf. also Fowler (1967) 55-7.

[130] In extant ancient Greek art the Erinyes are shown with snakes mostly in their hair or wreathed around their arms. Paus. 1.28.6 says that Aeschylus is probably the first to present the Erinyes with snakes in their hair. See Frontisi-Ducroux (2007) 165-76, esp. 166, Easterling (2008) 219-36, esp. 219. Garvie (1986) *ad* 1049-50 comments that pre-Aeschylean art even sometimes shows the Erinyes as snakes. Garvie also remarks that although snakes are often coiled around the Erinyes' hair in art, Aeschylus never mentions their snaky hair in the *Oresteia*. Cf. E. *El*. 1345. See Prag (1985) 38-9, 42, 44-51 passim, 57, 75, 117-20 passim, 132 n. 13 on snakes and Erinyes, and Podlecki (1989) 3-4 on the snake in the Erinyes' pursuit of Orestes. Garvie (1986) *ad* 247-9 points out that there is enmity between the eagle and the serpent. See also Padel (1992) 169 with n. 17, who argues that it is not necessarily conclusive from the *Oresteia* that the Erinyes 'were originally' snakes. See Harrison (1903, 1922, 1975) 233-7 on the Erinyes being wreathed with snakes in art. She points out (235-6) that the Gorgon also has snakes in art.

[131] Cassandra does not describe snakes in the Erinyes' appearance (*Ag*. 1186-93). There is no direct association between snakes and the Erinyes in *Ag*.; however, Clytemnestra, whose maternal right the Erinyes defend in *Eu*., is referred to as a snake (*Ag*. 1233). On this dream see Harrison (1903, 1922, 1975) 236: she argues that the snake is the vehicle of the Erinys and thus Orestes is the snake (cf. *Ch*. 549). Apollo's threat to drive out the Erinyes from his sanctuary (*Eu*. 181) uses the kenning of a winged snake to describe shooting an arrow. Cf. *Eu*. 676 where the arrows have already been shot.

vengeance for his father.[132] Clytemnestra's cry οἰ 'γώ, τεκοῦσα τόνδ' ὄφιν ἐθρεψάμην ('Ah me, this is the snake I bore and nourished', 928) further validates this overlapping. Just as Clytemnestra has been identified with a snake (*Ag*. 1233; *Ch*. 249, 994, 1047),[133] so Orestes is identified with the Erinyes through snake imagery in Clytemnestra's dream.[134]

This association takes yet another shape later in *Choephori*. Just as the chorus in *Agamemnon* mentions the Erinyes' name and thus unwittingly realises vengeance and curse in the house of Atreus, in the same 'cledonomantic' manner the chorus' remark δυοῖν δρακόντοιν ('pair of serpents', *Ch*. 1047) may conjure up Orestes' vision of Erinyes wreathed in snakes, ready to exact vengeance on the matricide (1050).[135] To all intents and purposes, the Erinyes' association with snakes in *Choephori* highlights their daemonic, death-bringing and especially their vengeful aspects.[136] Lastly, the snake is also connected with deceit. Both human surrogates of the Erinyes, Orestes and Clytemnestra, kill by treachery.[137]

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[132] Cf. *Ch*. 283-96. Visser (1980) 151 comments that the snake may be Agamemnon's ghost or Orestes as an avenging Fury.

[133] And even with the *alastôr* of the house (*Ag*. 1501) as Visser (1980) 151 remarks.

[134] Whallon (1958) 271-5, esp. 273, comments that Clytemnestra and Orestes each assume the role of the serpent towards the other; the serpent image does not represent either person exclusively, but symbolises the unnatural relationship between them.

[135] This suggests that Orestes is not unlike Clytemnestra and that the principle 'blood-for-blood' is active. See Whallon (1958) 271-5 on the multivalent serpent imagery. See also Zeitlin (1966) 650 n. 15. The depiction in art of Orestes' struggling with a snake may evoke his battle with the Erinyes or his inner turmoil. Parker (1983) 386-8 and Taplin (1977) 381-4. See further Peradotto (1969b) 1-21 on cledonomancy. He attributes line 1047 to Orestes (19), whereas West (1998) assigns it to the chorus. Cf. Frontisi-Ducroux (2007) 168.

[136] Keller (1963) II 284 says: 'Kein Tier ist mehr geschaffen, abergläubische und besonders dämonische Empfindungen zu erzeugen als die unheimliche, bisweilen sogar giftige und todbringende Schlange.' Petrounias (1976) 162-4 also points to the snake's negative traits.

[137] Apollo orders Orestes to kill δόλωι (*Ch*. 557-8; cf. Clytemnestra's association with δόλος, 556); he is associated with patriarchal order.

There is no evidence that the Erinyes are shown onstage with snakes in *Eumenides*.[138] At *Eumenides* 128, however, δράκαινα occurs in an ambiguous manner. It seems likely that δράκαινα refers to the Erinyes, because of their mythological connection with snakes and chthonian forces and their function as avenging spirits.[139] The Erinyes' threat to inflict blight on the city (*Eu*. 476-9, 729-30, 782-7 = 812-17, 800-3, 829-31) may refer back to their association with the snake, its venom and its retributive nature.[140]

[138] Cf. Tyrrell (1984) 119, who points out that the Pythia (likewise Athena) does not perceive the Erinyes with serpents. Although there is no (textual) evidence for the Erinyes being brought onstage with snakes coiled in either their hair or hands (or both), extant post-Aeschylean art depicts them haunting Orestes in the scene at Delphi mostly with snakes in their hair or in their hands (*s.v.* Erinys in *LIMC* I 825-43 and II 595-606, esp. I 831-33; with snakes 41, 42, 43, 45, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52 55, 57, 58, 59, 61; without snakes 44, 47, 53, 54, 56, 60, 62). This may indicate the daemonic aspect of the Erinyes. Likewise the terrifying, withering pursuit of Orestes shows the Erinyes four times with snakes (*s.v.* Erinys in *LIMC* I 834: 68, 69, 70, 73) and twice without snakes (*s.v.* Erinys in *LIMC* I 834: 71, 72). In the purification scene with Orestes the depiction of the Erinyes with snakes slightly outweighs their depiction without them (*s.v.* Erinys in *LIMC* I 833-34: with snakes 63, 64, 67; without snakes 65, 66). This almost balanced portrayal demonstrates the dual properties of the Erinyes and their attribute, the serpent: they may exercise their baleful or their purifying capacities here. The Erinyes are near Orestes in Athens with snakes once (*LIMC* 834-5: 74) and without snakes three times (*s.v.* Erinys in *LIMC* I 834-5: 75, 76, 77). The proportional absence of the snakes in the presentation of the Erinyes in the court runs parallel with the focus on jurisdiction outside the frame of the Erinyes' mythological heritage. In summary, there seems to be a general tendency in the extant post-Aeschylean artistic reception of the Erinyes in the Orestes myth to present them with snakes in the scene at Delphi, in the purification scene, and in the pursuit of Orestes, but without them in Athens and at the Areopagus. However, the *Oresteia* and extant post-Aeschylean art differ. Visser (1980) 150-2 makes the assumption that snakes grow from the Erinyes' head because this induces horror. She also points out that maenads have snakes around their arms (cf. *Eu*. 500).

[139] See Podlecki (1989) *ad loc*. It may refer to the Erinyes (cf. *Ch*. 1050) or to Clytemnestra (cf. *Ag*. 1233, *Ch*. 249, 994, 1047). Visser (1980) 151 suggests that it may refer to the collective power of the Erinyes or to Clytemnestra (as the instrument of *alastôr*, *Ag*. 1501). Petrounias (1976) 162-3 with n. 628 remarks that the eagle is associated with Agamemnon and Zeus, and the snake is associated with Clytemnestra and the chthonian powers. Since Clytemnestra's ghost does not pay attention to the other agents onstage, but only addresses the sleeping Erinyes, it seems the more likely that δράκαινα describes the Erinyes. Whallon (1964) 319 comments, 'The serpentine woman he [i.e. Orestes] has slain is a spectral dragoness (*Eum*. 128) who arouses the projections of herself.' See also Harrison (1903, 1922, 1975) 232-3. Zeitlin (1978) 164 argues that an archetypal encounter recurs (myth of Delphi); the dragon will not be slain, but finally persuaded. She further points out that the Erinyes are concrete embodiments of metaphorical allusions that appeared earlier (*Ag*. 1233-6; *Ch*. 249, 994, 835). Fowler (1991) 99 argues that this line 'clearly states that she [i.e. Clytemnestra] is herself an Erinys.'

[140] Cf. Easterling (2008) 227.

But traditionally the snake has polar properties, bringing evil or good.[141] Abhorrent and deadly on the one hand, they are also capable of healing, bringing fertility and delivering safety. The snake's positive association with fertility and blessing does not directly surface in the *Oresteia*, but it is perhaps implied in that fertile crop and land (940-8) and the union of man and wife (958-60) belong to the *Semnai Theai*'s tasks in the closing scenes of *Eumenides* (cf. blessing and fertility, 804-5, 834-6, 895, 903-13, 922-6, 938-48, 956-67, 976-87, 1006-9).[142] Snakes are also known for guarding sacred places. Just as Philoctetes is bitten by a snake on Chryse (e.g. S. *Ph*. 194-5; Paus. 8.33.4), transgressors in and against Athens have to count on the *Semnai Theai*'s merciless guardianship. Given that snake imagery designates retribution and bloodshed in the *Oresteia*, its absence in the *Semnai Theai*'s cultic reception indicates that they are no longer maternal avengers. Unlike snake imagery, dog imagery is transformed into action in the last play. The following section illuminates how dog imagery describes the Erinyes' nature and function, prepares for their emergence as tragic chorus in *Eumenides* and becomes an integral part of the *Semnai Theai*'s protective function at Athens.

1.5.5 Dog

The image of the snake characterises the Erinyes' function and their physical appearance; in contrast, Aeschylus employs the image of the dog to describe the

[141] Besides the snake's negative associations with daemons and death, Keller (1963) II 284-91 shows that they are also represented as benign. Cf. Kuhns (1962) 20-1 who states that the Erinyes, in relation to Asclepius, have curative powers. The poison of a snake can have healing properties if administered in the right dose.

[142] Likewise, the Gorgon's apotropaic quality inherent in the Erinyes is only implied in their frightening faces (however, the Erinyes' ability to inflict tears is real harm). See also Harrison (1903, 1922, 1975) 232 on the humanising of the Erinyes.

Erinyes' behavioural tendencies.[143] In Greek thought, dogs are classic liminal figures – domesticated and part of the human world, but also wild and capable of savagery. On the one hand, they are associated with hunting, guardianship and obedience:[144] they are praised for their courage, loyalty, and strength; on the other hand their animalistic drive is destructive to order. This subchapter makes clear how the imagery of the dog describes subversion of the dominant order and destruction in the first two plays. It further examines how dogs become an image for vengeance and curse in *Choephori* and how this imagery turns into action in the last play. Finally, it explores how the *Eumenides* introduces the dog's positive qualities and associates them with the *Semnai Theai* thus assuring well-being and prosperity at Athens.

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[143] See Sansone (1988) 11-13, Garvie (1986) *ad* 1054 and Visser (1980) 152-6. Sansone (1988) 15 perceives the Erinyes' composite nature (i.e. serpentine and canine) as appropriate: 'Their character as hounds enables them to track down and pursue their victim, while their serpentine nature associates them with the chthonic world in two respects. The snake-skin, which they had originally worn as a symbol of regeneration, becomes a wreath of snaky locks, which enhances the hideousness of their appearance and forecasts their victim's imminent demise. And at the same time this aspect associates them with the angry spirit of the dead, calling out for vengeance.' See Easterling (2008) 225-7 on the theatricality of these fused characteristics. In contrast, Visser (1980) 154 comments that this combination of snake and dog adds to the confusion in the presentation of the Erinyes. Heath (1999) 34 comments: 'The dominant picture of the Furies is in fact that of a disgusting conflation, a combination of elements that makes them part beast, part human, certainly divine but excluded from the ranks of all three categories.' The Erinyes have canine facial features at E. *IT* 284; *Or*. 260; and *El*. 1252. The Dioscuri warn Orestes of hounds following him at E. *El*. 1342-3. Through the image of the dog, the Erinyes are also linked to Lyssa (*Ba*. 977; *HF* 860). Cf. *Ag*. 1228-36 where Cassandra calls Clytemnestra a treacherous dog, with *Od*. 11.424-7 where the dead Agamemnon also likens Clytemnestra to a dog. Dog-metaphors are only applied to the Erinyes in *Ch*. and *Eu*., not in *Ag*. (cf. *Ag*. 1228-36); the hunting associated with the Erinyes' dog-like behaviour prepares for their emergence as agents and chorus in pursuit of Orestes in *Eu*.

[144] Cf. *Od*. 17.290-323; Plat. *Rep*. 2.375b. Visser (1980) 154 comments that the dog is a model of shamelessness (ἀναίδεια), an expression of bestiality and strength, as well as of *poinê* and *miasma*. See further Lilja (1976) 54-8, and Lebeck (1971) 66-7. See also Keller (1963) I 104-7, 116, cf. 98, 102-3. He also (113) relates the legend of Adranos' dogs who would greet benign people (Aelian *NA* 11.20); but they would attack and tear apart any person with bloodied hands, would chase away evil people, and as guardians of the temple they would tear apart anyone who intended to rob the holy temple. These dogs also returned erring people back onto the right path. This legend assembles many of the Erinyes' characteristics within different stages of the trilogy: they are attracted to (Orestes') bloodied hands (e.g. *Eu*. 253), practise violent punishment (e.g. *Eu*. 132-9, 183-97, 261-6, 357-9), and in the end they become guardians of the city (*Eu*. 895, 903-95).

In the first play ambiguity attends the dog metaphor. Clytemnestra regards herself as the watchdog of the house (*Ag*. 607; cf. 896): she considers herself alert and loyal – but this is loyalty to her own cause that subverts patriarchal supremacy embodied by Agamemnon. Cassandra's prophecy of Clytemnestra killing Agamemnon is delivered through the metaphor of the hateful dog biting after fawning (1225-36, esp. μισητῆς κυνός, 1228). The comparison to Scylla at line 1233 continues to develop the (image of the) dog as subversive to patriarchal order in *Choephori* where the chorus considers Scylla, who betrays her father and his kingdom, a dog (*Ch*. 613-22, esp. 621). Moreover, dog imagery illustrates how perpetual transgression and the cycle of vengeance bring an entire *polis* to its ruin. Sailing against Troy, Agamemnon and his men are called the 'winged hounds of Zeus' against whom Artemis bears a grudge (135-6). The Achaeans' tracking of Helen (694) and Cassandra's keen canine scent (1093; cf. 1184-5) also emphasise the dog's excellence in pursuing prey and suggest this metaphor's suitability to describe an avenger. Thus, dog imagery is loosely related to the law παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα.

Choephori resumes the use of dog imagery to portray the subversion of the dominant order. Electra is shut away like a dangerous dog (*Ch*. 447) because she tarnishes Clytemnestra's tyrannical rule. As mentioned in the foregoing paragraph, the catalogue of transgressive women (602-30, esp. Scylla, 613-22) uses dog imagery to describe the destruction of basic rules of society by shameless women. Towards the end of the second play dog imagery is narrowed down to maternal vengeance and curse and thus more clearly linked to the law παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα – this correlation entails the Erinyes. Orestes perceives the approaching Erinyes as hounds of the mother (σαφῶς γὰρ αἵδε μητρὸς

ἔγκοτοι κύνες, 'these are clearly the wrathful hounds of my mother', 1054; cf. ὅρα, φύλαξαι μητρὸς ἐγκότους κύνας, 'behold, beware of your mother's wrathful hounds', 924). Orestes envisions the fearsome hunting Erinyes (1054) and *Eumenides* realises them onstage as tragic chorus.

The *Eumenides* succeeds in bringing the dog metaphor to action. But because the Erinyes are the embodiment of Clytemnestra's curse, the dog metaphor is tied to maternal vengeance – subversion of the patriarchal order is implicit in the Erinyes' hunting of Orestes. First, the Erinyes only dream of hunting Orestes (130-1, 132).[145] In their sleep the Erinyes utter canine sounds (117, 120, 123, 126, 132).[146] They also lap up offerings (106). But more advanced canine qualities also surface: the Erinyes obey and are loyal to their mistress, Clytemnestra (e.g. 116).[147] They rise as hunting hounds and track Orestes like a fawn (e.g. 111-12, 131-2; cf. 147-8, 231, 246-53, 326-7). But Athena not only frustrates the success of the Erinyes' hunt, she replaces Clytemnestra as their mistress. Dog imagery ceases to be associated with maternal curse and private vengeance and is linked with the *polis* and its patriarchal rule as the Erinyes comply with Athena's persuasion and offers (916).[148] Negative reciprocity (i.e. the law παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα) aligned with dog imagery in the previous two plays gains a positive (and civic) outlook in the Erinyes' new role as *Semnai Theai* and under Athena's guidance. Aeschylus shows that canine obedience can

[145] Because of their sharp senses and their efficient running skill dogs are especially used for hunting. Keller (1963) I 124-6.

[146] Clytemnestra also 'barks' (*Ag*. 1427). Fowler (1991) 94.

[147] Keller (1963) I 115. Cf. Fowler (1991) 91, 92.

[148] Keller (1963) I 115. Similarly, he (128) states that the ancient Greeks commended caressing and fondling of dogs (e.g. *Od*. 10. 216-17; Hes. *Op*. 604-5, 796-7). This suggests that dogs are fond of receiving attention or gifts, which could be reflected in the Erinyes' change of mood when they accept Athena's offer of becoming an integral part of Athens.

be used either to good or bad ends, depending on the master. In addition, positive canine traits such as vigilance (930-7, 976-87, 1014-20), guardianship (903-9, 930-7, 938-47, 948-55, 956-67, 1006-9, 1014-20), fertility (895, 903-13, 922-6, 938-48, 956-67, 976-87, 1006-9) and obedience (916-20, 1001-2) to Athena and her *polis* emerge as the Erinyes are co-opted as objects of Athenian cult.[149] However, direct canine terminology is absent; in this way Aeschylus prevents the *Semnai Theai*'s identification with their earlier form of destructive beings, especially as hounds of the mother.

In summary, dog imagery first describes the subversion of the dominant order and bloodshed in general. In the second play, this literary figure is especially applied to Clytemnestra's curse and associated with the Erinyes. The last play turns dog metaphor into action exemplified by the Erinyes hunting Orestes as the hounds of his mother. This emphasises the Erinyes' capacity to be excellent hunters and obedient servants, properties which are not only useful for propagating bloodshed but also for deterring crime. Loyal to Athena and her city, the Erinyes' / *Semnai Theai*'s dog-like behaviour no longer undermines but sustains patriarchal rule. The *Semnai Theai* maintain the Erinyes' fearsome canine traits such as hunting and bloodlust to prevent crime in Athens, while beneficial canine traits are embedded in their role as guardians of the city and its fertility.

[149] Like snakes, dogs are also associated with the chthonian world. The chthonian aspects not only evoke horror and highlight the Erinyes' origin in the darkness of Tartarus, but they also point to their close connection to earth, and aspects such as guardianship and fertility. Visser (1980) 154-6, Keller (1963) I 104-7, 113, 116, 140-1. Cerberus guards Pluto's wealth in the Underworld. Keller (1963) I 137 connects dogs with fertility: the Athenians sacrifice dogs to Aphrodite Genetyllis at the Thesmophoria.

1.6 Conclusion

In the *Oresteia*, Aeschylus relates the Erinyes to their earlier conventions, other *daimones* and epithets, and imagery to outline their nature and function, to prepare their transformation into *Semnai Theai* and to identify their useful properties as Athens makes them its own cult. The poet distils those qualities of the Erinyes which can be used for deterring crime and sustaining justice and fertility of the *polis*.

Their association with horrifying entities such as Ἄτη and Γοργόνες emphasise their formidable aspects which bring social and judicial upheaval as long as they are agents of private retributive justice in the first two plays, but which aid in the realisation of civic justice and prosperity as they are received as *Semnai Theai* and governed by male and Olympian rule. Their chthonian characteristic (e.g. 1036-8; cf. πότνι' Ἐρινύς, *Eu*. 951) are maintained to reinforce their apotropaic function beneficial and indispensable for the Athenian legal system. While the overtly euphemistic name Εὐμενίδες does not appear in the text, the *Eumenides* explicitly links the Erinyes with the Σεμναί, the cult-goddesses worshipped in Athens. The Erinyes' identification with this cult known to the Athenians lends religious *gravitas* to the Areopagus. Positive associations and epithets remain scarce yet understood in the Erinyes' / *Semnai Theai*'s correlation with imagery to further their role as cultic (and symbolic) guardians of the natural, social, judicial and political order.

The metaphors of the first two plays are transformed into action in the last play. Through the use of imagery especially through the snake and the dog, the poet gradually calls into life the tragic chorus of the *Eumenides*. The first third of the *Eumenides* realises the verbal imagery as visual action on stage. In the

Agamemnon and the *Choephori*, negative traits of the snake and dog denote tyranny / anarchy, bloodshed and the law παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα and, towards the end of the *Choephori*, also correlate with the goddesses of vengeance and curse, the Erinyes. These negative features become implied properties of the *Semnai Theai*'s preventive function to the city, while the snake's and dog's constructive properties such as guardianship and fertility remain unspoken yet reflected in the *Semnai Theai*'s function. Likewise, the imagery of blood denotes retributive justice and correlates with the Erinyes' agency of it in the first two plays. But as the *Semnai Theai* are welcomed into the city, donning red robes and praying against civil strife, blood imagery lauds healthy kinship in the *oikos* and *polis* and with Athens' neighbours and allies. Likewise, the colour black first describes misery, pain and death, but finally substantiates the *Semnai Theai*'s terrifying but also solemn character that aids in upholding civic justice and prosperity. The complexity of the trilogy's metaphors reaches clarity as the Erinyes are established as cultic objects forming the cornerstone to long-lasting Athenian justice and morality.

The analysis of the Erinyes' traditional treatment, epithets, soubriquets, appellations, images and symbols forms a base for the following examination of the development of the choruses in the trilogy (Chapter Two) and the transformation of the Erinyes into *Semnai Theai* (Chapter Three) as well as an inquiry into the choice of Athens as the location for the finale / resolution (Chapter Four). This analysis aims at understanding the Erinyes' roles as abstract spirits of vengeance and curse, object and medium of choral philosophy and as tragic chorus in the *Oresteia*. The transformation of the Erinyes into *Semnai Theai* contains the trilogy's assessment of social, moral, religious and judicial problems

and its promotion of civic justice, prosperity and fertility, patriarchy, Olympian hegemony, and last but not least, Athens' greatness.

Chapter 2: The Choruses of the *Oresteia*

2.1 General

Structurally, tragedy is fundamentally concerned with, *inter alia*, (dis)order and (in)justice in the community and the cosmos and this concern manifests itself most clearly in tragic choruses;[150] tragedy is a poetic exploration of justice, an individual's (subjective) understanding of it[151] and its objective reality in the community represented onstage as well as in the Athenian community. Of all tragic units, choral expressions best own this 'order and justice'.[152] The chorus in each play of the *Oresteia* corresponds to and aids in the unfolding of the trilogy's plot, identifying fallacies of justice and moral predicaments inherent in obsolete social codes. Choral expositions voice human and divine rules and aspirations as well as conflicts: they aid in defining justice and realising a prosperous community. Although each chorus has a singular, homogenous identity, they share the common interest of bringing healing, safety and justice to the community.[153] Through the choruses Aeschylus especially works towards a solution that realises civic justice, peace and prosperity at the end of the *Oresteia*.

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[150] Braungart (1994) 93-116, esp. 95, 'Eben diese Gattung [i.e. tragedy] exponiert schon in ihren Anfängen bei Aischylos, wie jener archaischen Gerechtigkeit durch die Institutionalisierung des Rechts und eines ihm gemäßen juristischen Verfahrens eine Grenze gesetzt werden kann und muß.' and 96 '[Die griechische Tragödie] als ein Diskurs über das Verhältnis von Menschen und Göttern – und dies nicht nur insofern die Götter die Mächte sind, die das menschliche Schicksal bestimmen, sondern auch die Instanz, der Genüge zu tun ist, wie es angemessen ist, wie es sich schickt und gehört.'

[151] I.e. the poet's understanding which he voices through the agents and the chorus.

[152] See Gruber (2009) 28-38, 43 and 53 on the chorus and its relationship to the *polis*-community and choral order as an expression of the order of the cosmos and *polis*. Cf also Bacon (1994/5) 6-24, esp. 7, 9, 14, 17, 19 on the importance of the chorus and choral performance in Greek life.

[153] According to Gruber (2009) 90-142, a chorus, in response to a crisis, strives for safety, survival and healing.

The choice of choruses in the first two plays not only anticipates peace and justice at the end of *Eumenides*, but also facilitates the Erinyes' dramatic role: as divinities invoked to bring about vengeance and curse in the first two plays; then, in the *Eumenides*, as maternal avengers and finally as *Semnai Theai*, who are co-opted into Athens for civic benefit, thus supporting resolution to deadlocks of justice and morality. The development from the chorus of elder men in the *Agamemnon*, to the chorus of slave women in the *Choephori* and finally to the dramatic chorus of Erinyes in the *Eumenides* is dramatically (and aesthetically) required for the progression from the judicial, moral and religious crisis at the beginning of the trilogy to the final scene of institutionalised *polis*-justice sanctioned by the cult of *Semnai Theai*.[154] The *Oresteia*'s choral thread not only prepares for final public safety, joy and well-being; it also prepares for the Erinyes' emergence as chorus and their transformation into *Semnai Theai* that participate in the *polis*' justice.

This chapter looks closely at how Aeschylus designs the trajectory of the choruses in the plays. What attributes are used, how do the choruses evolve and how do they reach an artfully designed fulfilment in the *Eumenides*? It addresses the question of how and to what extent each chorus influences the action, particularly perpetuating the curse, and brings about the establishment of justice and peace. At the same time, it seeks to explain how choral development in the first two plays affects the Erinyes' (choral) identity and perception; how does it advance them from the sphere of the abstract and object of human projection and invocation towards their actual presence as chorus and Ἀραί and finally as a

[154] Cf. Foley (2003) 7-8 (with quote on p. 7): 'In Aeschylus' Oresteia […] the chorus becomes increasingly exotic and visually arresting.'

blessing to Athens in the last play.[155] The chapter primarily examines the choruses' natures, roles, statements and invocations, as well as their influence upon the *dramatis personae*. The influence of other agents who manifest the Erinyes' power through invocation plays a secondary role. Likewise, other agents' perception of the Erinyes that is not germane to the development of the choruses *per se* but significant for the Erinyes' realisation as chorus and Ἀραί in *Eumenides* will be included. The *Oresteia*'s quest for justice in the *oikos*, *polis* and cosmos runs parallel with the Erinyes' double advancement. The Erinyes progress from their abstract existence towards their concrete visual manifestation as the dramatic chorus of the *Eumenides*; they also change from goddesses of vengeance and curse to objects of civic cult that sanction justice in *Eumenides*.

2.2 *Agamemnon*

2.2.1 The first two choral odes

In the first play, Aeschylus chooses an anonymous chorus of Argive elders who did not participate in the war against Troy. They are marginalised figures in society who have far progressed in age. Their advanced age allows them to inform the audience about numerous detailed accounts of past events related to the current situation at Argos and makes them appear experienced in the applied theology about Zeus and justice. They are guardians and counsellors who uphold

[155] They are perceived privately by the chorus of *Ag*., by Cassandra and by Orestes before they become publicly perceptible. See Wüst (1956) 82-166 for their general occurrences. For art esp. see Wüst (1956) 138-66 and *s.v.* Erinys *LIMC* I 825-43, esp. 829-35; II 595-606, esp. 596-602, figs. 22-80. See Padel (1992) 169-70, who argues that the Erinyes 'were an effective part of tragedy because they were a part of life, relationships, consciousness.'

the old morality.[156] Despite their physical weakness and their succumbing to emotional outbursts typical for a chorus, their male gender endows them with an authority that the female choruses in *Choephori* and *Eumenides* lack.[157] The moral and religious understanding of the elder men is pronounced, but their sharp perception and criticism is tied to unstable emotions, indecision and inaction.

In the *parodos* of the *Agamemnon*, the chorus expatiates on events and all the ills that have come to pass outside of Argos (*Ag*. 40-257).[158] It further intimates future events and interlocks transgressions and suffering from all parties involved (i.e. Atreidae, especially Agamemnon; Trojans, especially Paris). The name of the Erinys appears in relation to judicial, moral and natural transgression, war and vengeance already nineteen lines after the chorus' entry (*Ag*. 59) in a complex simile.[159] The chorus declares that Zeus or some other Olympian god sends the sons of Atreus against Troy for the sake of a πολυάνωρ woman, Helen, and Paris' violation of the law of hospitality (55-61; cf. καὶ ξενοτίμους / ἐπιστροφὰς δωμάτων / αἰδόμενός τις ἔστω, 'let one respect the honour paid to guests welcomed in his house', *Eu*. 546-48; cf. also *Ag*. 1335). The chorus perceives Agamemnon and his army as surrogates of the Erinys, who punish the Trojans' transgression of a social and moral law – Agamemnon is perceived as agent, not victim, of the Erinys.[160] This passage suggests a functional correlation

[156] Cf. also Kuhns (1962) 31 on the Erinyes as guardians of ancestral morality. Like the Argive elders, the Erinyes are guardians of ancestral morality; ultimately, in *Eu*., the Areopagus gets this role.

[157] Cf. Smethurst (1972) 89-93 on the elders' authority.

[158] Initial anapaests prepare for the internal complexity of the *parodos* (*Ag*. 40-103). However, this is typical of Aeschylean *parodoi* and of some stasima.

[159] The chorus does not hesitate to name the Erinyes. Cf. S. *OC* where they name them Eumenides at line 486, Oedipus does not name them at all and Polyneices calls them Erinyes at line 1434; cf. also E. *Or*. 37-8, esp. *Or*. 409-10, where Menelaus does not dare to mention the Erinyes' name.

[160] Cf. *Ag*. 522-8: Agamemnon is Zeus' avenging instrument.

between Zeus and the Erinys: the chorus not only makes clear that the Erinys is an extension of Zeus' will, but also suggests that she sanctions unwritten laws. Late-avenging (ὑστερόποινον, 58) stresses that injustice is remembered and that the balance of the cosmos will be restored in due time by inevitable punishment (cf. παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα, 1564).

Invoking the name of the Erinyes[161] the chorus unwittingly assists in the establishment of the Erinyes' curses, vengeance and punishment. But at lines 153-5 the chorus merely perceives an indiscriminate child-avenging guardian of the house and a wrath that remembers; even though it fails to recognize them as the Erinyes until lines 463-5, it understands the law παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα. Claiming divine authority it describes how, at the departure of Agamemnon's fleet, two eagles tore apart a pregnant hare (104-21) and further informs the audience of Calchas' prophecy (122-59). Its constant emotional interchange between hope and worry during the *parodos* up until now concludes with the wishful words τὸ δ' εὖ νικάτω (159) before it begins the famous Hymn to Zeus (160-83).

Despite its earlier emotional ambivalence (as well as the initial protracted worry at *Ag*. 160-6), the chorus evokes Zeus' world order with optimism and vigour. Using lecythia, it sings of Zeus' guiding of men (174-83), the value of healthy φρένες and σωφροσύνη (174-5, 180-1).[162] The gnomes πάθει μάθος

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[161] The physical appearance of the Erinyes in *Eu*. is not matched by an increased textual frequency of their name. Whereas the *Ag*. mentions them nine times, *Eu*. mentions them only four times, just as in the *Ch*.. Henrichs (1994) 57 identifies the avoidance of a chthonian name with the attempt to 'put a safe distance between themselves [i.e. humans] and the special, dangerous dead.' Mitchell-Boyask (2009) formulates, 'The closer the Furies are to appearing, the less they are named.'

[162] Justice and piety are closely interconnected: pious thoughts and deeds are just (however, just thoughts and actions are not necessarily pious). Above all, piety before the gods is a form of justice. The condition of φρήν or φρένες determines the degree of piety; σωφροσύνη is the state of having safe and sound φρένες. This echoes the choral philosophy of σωφροσύνη. See Mikalson (1991) 179-82 and Herman (2006) 102, 110; Socrates comments that piety is a form of

(177; cf. 250-1) and χάρις βίαιος (182) capture the *Oresteia*'s main gist in regard to justice.[163] The chorus recognises the principle of causality; punishment follows guilty action; yet more importantly learning follows suffering.[164] It does articulate the moral and religious framework of the trilogy what the characters in the *Agamemnon* do not internalise. This hymn anticipates lines 427-74 (esp. 456-74) where the chorus feels what is in store for Agamemnon. Yet the elders lack influence and ability to implement their knowledge, because their opinion about the king is ambivalent and they are afraid of the truth, of their king's death by the agency of females (i.e. Erinyes, by extension, also Clytemnestra).

The Hymn to Zeus further suggests the Erinyes' relation to the supreme Olympian god and the unwritten laws.[165] Δαιμόνων (*Ag*. 182) appears to be a collective word for the gods; it may possibly refer to the Erinyes as Gruber suggests.[166] Whether this is true or not, δαιμόνων appears to be a collective word for the gods; the Erinyes are part of a group of which Zeus is the overseer. The Hymn to Zeus seems to be a forerunner of the choral songs in the

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justice (Pl. *Euthphr*. 11D-12D). Regarding *Eu*. 1019, Chiasson (1999-2000) 150 observes the mutuality between the Erinyes and the Athenians: the former give prosperity in return for the latter's piety.

[163] The Erinyes' Binding Song will echo this essence in preparation for the finale in *Eu*.. Zeus, the choruses of the trilogy and the Erinyes share an understanding of the unwritten laws.

[164] See Lebeck (1971) 25-36. The major issue involves whether πάθει μάθος applies to audience or characters. Aeschylus' choice of Athens as a locale for the solution makes it clear that, ultimately, the poet aims for the audience's learning.

[165] See Lloyd-Jones (1956) 61-3 for Zeus' influence and relationship with justice in *Ag*. and *Ch*., Winnington-Ingram (1983) 160 and Brown (1983) 27-8. Chiasson (1988) 1-21, esp. 1-2, 10, observes that the Erinyes and Zeus share a common interest in the punishment of crime. He also argues (1-2, 14-15, 17) that Orestes' matricide disrupts the relationship between Zeus and the Erinyes. See also Chiasson (1999-2000) 150-2 with n. 37 for a comparison between *Ag*. 160-83 and *Eu*. 996-1002. See subchapter 3.8 on law.

[166] Gruber (2009) 296-7 with n. 56. Cf. *Ag*. 1175, 1468, 1477, 1482, 1569, 1660, 1663, 1667; *Ch*. 125; *Eu*. 150, 302, 802, 920, 929, 948, 963, 1016 for the use of *daimôn*.

'Versöhnungsdrama'[167] *Eumenides*. Each contains cruel but just elements, particularly the idea that σωφροσύνη comes by divine force[168] and that justice may be secured and warranted by means of violence. The recurrence of dominant lecythia in the last play's stasima will be examined later in this dissertation.

Relating Iphigenia's gruesome sacrifice at Aulis immediately after the Hymn to Zeus (*Ag*. 189-247) the chorus' explanation about faith in divine justice returns to the reality of men's crimes. The chorus suggests that Agamemnon has acted unjustly (e.g. δυσσεβῆ, 219, ἄναγνον, ἀνίερον, 220, βροτοὺς θρασύνει γὰρ αἰσχρόμητις / τάλαινα παρακοπὰ πρωτοπήμων, 222-3).[169] It depicts the king as transgressor and as such now indicates that he has a dual relationship to the Erinyes. Agamemnon is vulnerable to divine vengeance, wrath and punishment – even though the Erinyes are not named,[170] their vengeful spirit may be an extended hand of Artemis.[171] Although the elders understand that the king is at fault, they side with him. They are ambivalent, just like the Areopagus in *Eumenides*: one half rules to condemn Orestes and the other half exonerates him. Their concern for Argos' well-being seems to override their criticism of the king – without a male leading figure Argos' safety and prosperity cannot be assured.

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[167] Braungart (1994) 108 with n. 51.

[168] Chiasson (1988) 1-21. Cf. Scott (1984a) 23-43, esp. 28-32, 36-8, 41-2. He explains (137) πάθει μάθος by saying that Zeus sometimes calls for awful acts without which there would be no justice. See also Lesky (1966) 83, Beck (1975) 76-84 and Fowler (1991) 89.

[169] Cf. also *Ag*. 460-74, 782-804, 1560-6. Note also that the chorus does not use the inherited curse upon the house of Atreus to justify Agamenon's action. See also Lloyd-Jones (1962) 187-99, Lesky (1966) 78-85, Gantz (1981) 18-32, (1982) 1-23 and Roth (1993) 1-17 for discussions on Agamemnon's guilt.

[170] Fowler (1991) 89-90 also perceives Calchas as an agent of the Erinyes.

[171] The manner of the girl's sacrifice suggests that she is a σφάγιον to the chthonian gods. This, however, can only be so if there is no fire and smoke. See Fowler (1991) 90 with n. 24. See also n. 466.

Perceiving Agamemnon as guilty of brutally murdering his daughter, the chorus is unwittingly complicit in Clytemnestra's plot to kill him. The first stasimon not only concentrates on Agamemnon's guilt and factors building up to his killing, but it also implies that the trilogy's greater matrix of crime and punishment, causality and reciprocity, vengeance and curse, ought to be restructured for the better. Although the chorus of *Agamemnon* shows its understanding of the way Zeus and the Erinyes operate in the cosmos, its ambivalence makes them reluctant to see the future. It cannot manoeuvre the action towards the stern morality they articulate.

Following Clytemnestra's report about the Achaeans' sack of Troy, the second stasimon first picks up the thread sung in the Hymn to Zeus. The chorus mingles its understanding of Zeus' world order – especially healthy thinking (σώφρων, *Ag*. 351), divine favour through force (χάρις βίαιος, 354) and pain / suffering (πόνος, 354), with hope and the wish for good to triumph. To the elders, the victory of the good equals the health of patriarchal order and Zeus' victory (168-75).[172] As explorations of *atê* and *peithô* (385-6) enter the song, the chorus elaborates on its understanding of the cosmic law while its emotions spiral towards disquiet: the gods do not neglect (to punish) the transgressor, who tramples upon sacred things (369-72, 383-4), violates the law of *xenia* (355-402), displays *hubris* (376), and accumulates excessive amounts of wealth (378-84). It states that *atê* is incurable and *peithô* is its child (385-402).[173]

[172] The fact that the Erinyes' mother, Night, is aligned with Zeus (355-6, 361-6) suggests that chthonian forces share in Zeus' laws.

[173] The theft of Helen informs the audience about related past events while it serves as a prime example of transgressions and the fateful mechanisms of *atê* (402-55). Gentili (2008) 146 n. 2 describes lines 445-7 as gloomy and mournful. Mournful and angry seem to describe ἀλλοτρίας διαὶ γυναι - / κός better.

The chorus advises the golden middle and fortune without envy – gnomes which will be echoed in the last two choral songs in the *Eumenides*. It seems to avoid realising Agamemnon's transgression against modesty for the sake of seeing Argos united with its king thus assuring its safety and prosperity. Yet, proving its ambivalence again, the chorus implicitly exposes more of Agamemnon's faults. Relating to justice and fate in a similar fashion, lines 461-70 (cf. *Ag*. 40-159) emphasise that Agamemnon is liable for the death of many valiant men and that he has accumulated wealth without justice or good fortune (367-84; cf. *Eu*. 531-7, 550-65) The chorus' (unwitting) fuelling of vengeance against Agamemnon through the cosmic agency of Zeus and the Erinyes intensifies. The elders make clear that Zeus and the Erinyes take care of the cosmic balance, punishing those who are guilty of the transgressions mentioned before (*Ag*. 456-74, esp. 463, 470).[174] Without justice human prosperity cannot persist (cf. *Eu*. 538-65). Even though they justify Agamemnon's punishment, they are unable to envision (or prevent) it in advance.

In the second stasimon, the chorus emphasises the various transgressions involved in the war against Troy. The lion parable (*Ag*. 717-36),[175] which underlines the inherited character within a family, and stresses transgression of unwritten laws (773-81), especially against *xenia* (700-16), the unwarranted spilling of blood (776-7), impious behaviour (778) and accumulation of wealth without justice (779-81), precedes the chorus' welcome of Agamemnon in Argos. The chorus introduces themes that will specifically be echoed in the second stasimon of *Eumenides*, which puts forth ideologies germane to civic well-being.

[174] Cf. Lesky (1966) 83, de Romilly (1958) 66. Chiasson (1988) 7 on line 461 in *Ag*. points out that the killing at Troy displeases both Olympian and chthonian gods.

[175] See Knox (1952) 17-25, Lebeck (1971) 47-51, 70, 122, 130 and also Nappa (1994) 82-7.

Particularly, Zeus and the Erinyes share common spheres: Zeus is related to the hearth (703; cf. *Eu*. 269-71, 355-6, 513-16, 545, 895),[176] *xenia* (*Ag*. 748, cf. 703; cf. *Eu*. 269-71, 545-9),[177] late vengeance (*Ag*. 700-3, cf. 58; cf. *Eu*. 383) and accomplishment (*Ag*. 582, cf. 700-3; cf. *Eu*. 382, 953, 968-9),[178] which are also covered by the Erinyes.

The Argive elders reinforce the fundamental law of *xenia* and the punishment for its transgression (it already recognises this at *Ag*. 355-402) as they call Helen 'an Erinys who brings tears as bride' (νυμφόκλαυτος Ἐρινύς, 749).[179] First, the chorus perceives Helen as the agent of punishment for Paris' breach of an essential and unwritten law endorsed by the Erinyes (cf. καὶ ξενοτίμους / ἐπιστροφὰς δωμάτων / αἰδόμενός τις ἔστω, 'let one have honour and pay respect to guests welcomed in his house', *Eu*. 546-8). Second, the chorus makes it clear that a promiscuous woman who has no regard for the sanctity of a marital tie[180] causes calamity: her marriage to Paris brings retribution to an entire community.[181] The chorus emphasises causality and it eventually perceives Agamemnon's vulnerability to the Erinyes once again. Agamemnon's guilt, which originates in his sacrifice of Iphigenia and the annihilation of Troy,

[176] The Erinyes' concern for intra-familial crime is similar in conception.

[177] See also Pötscher (1989) 52 on Zeus *xenios*.

[178] Clytemnestra prays to Zeus the Fulfiller (*Ag*. 973-4; cf. 1485-8), but she will also perform an Erinys' task. See Scott (1984a) 139. Lines 381-2 in *Eu*. recall Clytemnestra's prayer to Zeus. Goldhill (1984a) 232, see also (1984b) 170. On Zeus as the fulfiller see Burian (1986) 332-42 and Goldhill (2000) 54.

[179] Wüst (1956) 118. Cf. E. *Tr*. 458 where the metaphorical use is extended in Cassandra's comment that she is an Erinys for her *polis*. See also Zeitlin (1965) 493. Cf. also E. *Tr*. 895, 1051; *Ph*. 1029. Helm (2004) 25-6 comments that the Erinys appears for the violation of guest-friendship and impiety. It is not success or wealth that brings misery but impious acts.

[180] Cf. *Eu*. 212 and 605. Likewise, Clytemnestra commits adultery during Agamemnon's absence.

[181] In contrast, the Erinyes' 'marriage' to Athens at the end of the trilogy (n. 372) is an example of a female's positive integration into the city; whereas Helen causes retributive justice, the *Semnai Theai* confer blessings.

adds to his hereditary curse.[182] The Argive elders' moral and religious philosophy is tied to civic wellbeing. This is retained in the second and third choral ode in the last play. But unlike the chorus of Argive elders, the Erinyes will carry their sense of justice into action at first against Olympian guidance, then in conformity with it.

2.2.2 *Paean*, *thrênos* and *choros*

The Erinyes will not only emerge as a choral phenomenon as they form the third of the trilogy's three choruses, but also through other agents' identification of the Erinyes with song. The herald understands the Erinyes' *paean* (παιᾶνα Ἐρινύων, 645; cf. *Ch*. 152)[183] as fit for a homecoming of defeated men.[184] A *paean* to the Erinyes is unusual and striking. Normally, a *paean* is associated with the Olympians, especially Apollo, and it has an apotropaic or healing function (cf. 146, 1248).[185] The reference παιᾶνα Ἐρινύων seems to hint at the Erinyes' role

[182] See Lebeck (1971) 47-51.

[183] The genitive in παιᾶνα Ἐρινύων is ambiguous: the Erinyes could be the singers of a *paean* rather than, or as well as, its addressees. The first option foreshadows their later choral role. Cf. Cassandra who sings a θρῆνος / γόος (*Ag*. 1079, 1445) for herself. Haldane (1965) 38-9 points out that a *paean* turns into a *thrênos* in the trilogy. E.g. *Ag*. 242-7, 512-13 (cf. 1076-7, 1078-9), which turn a *paean* into a *thrênos*. In reverse, in *Ch*. a *thrênos* becomes a *paean* for the dead (150-1). See the following paragraphs and n. 185 on the Apolline association and features of the *paean*.

[184] Swift (2010) 71-2 points towards the *paean*'s inverted use, ironic effect, but also its creation of tension. See also Rutherford (2001) 3-7, 120 n. 7, who discusses the paean's (symbolic) function and its capacity to reinforce civic safety and values.

[185] A *paean* is meant to be dedicated to Apollo, not the gods of the Underworld as the Erinyes are (*Ag*. 636-7). This suggests the Erinyes possess inherent duality or unified opposites (cf. 1075, 1078-9). See Seaford (2003) 152-3 with n. 60, and for the juxtaposition of the *paean* with its chthonian opposite in tragedy, see Rutherford (1994-5) 121-4. The *paean* is traditionally Apollo's tune; it has healing properties (ἰήϊον, 146) and an apotropaic function – see also *s.v.* Apollo in Hornblower (2003) 122, Rutherford (1994-5) 112-35, esp. 112-14. He points out (114) that the paean-cry *iê paian* is chanted by groups of men and thus stands in contrast to the female cry ὀλολυγή. He explains (119-20, 122-3) that the chorus' ode in *Ch*. is a deformation of the basic *paean* (152-63; cf. 149-51, 340-4). Thus παιᾶνα Ἐρινύων is oxymoronic, because Apollo stands

as chorus in *Eumenides*, and, more specifically, to anticipate the Erinyes' acquisition of apotropaic qualities in their role as *Semnai Theai* and the final procession at the end of the *Eumenides*.[186] But for now, the Erinyes seem mainly concerned with reversing Agamemnon's fortune; the well-being of the community does not pertain to their but to the chorus' function in the first play. A preventive function (/apotropaic qualities) is fulfilled neither by the Erinyes nor the Argive elders in *Agamemnon*, but will only be established through Athena's distribution of new tasks to the *Semnai Theai* at the trilogy's closure.

Moreover, the *paean* links the Erinyes to the paradoxical pairing of bloodshed and grief with triumph and prosperity.[187] Seaford convincingly argues that 'it is paradoxical, but for the *polis* essential, that the ancient agents of private violent revenge become, through public cult, a means of excluding it.'[188] The παιὰν Ἐρινύων thus not only foreshadows more grief and murder to come, but also heralds Orestes' acquittal, the Erinyes' acquisition of an honourable cultic position with a preventive function in Athens.

But the Erinyes' *paean* remains only a figure of speech (as yet); victory songs are also invocations of the Erinyes as the chorus discovers when it tries to

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in opposition to the dead, mourning and the Netherworld. The *thrênos* takes place without a lyre (ἄνευ λύρας, *Ag*. 990), just like the Binding Song (ἀφόρ - / μιγκτος, *Eu*. 332-3 = 345-6). Cf. *Ag*. 16-18, 105-7, 121 = 159, 242-7, 704-12, 979 for songs of lamentation. Petrounias (1976) 291-4 shows Aeschylus' use of what is bright for death and gloom. Cf. Podlecki (1989) *ad* 308-9 and Rutherford (1994-5) 113. Cf. also Burnett (1991) 290-1 with n. 67. Sansone (1975) 48 also assigns the hopeful lines *Ag*. 1001-16 to an Erinyes' song sung by the *thumos*.

[186] It further foreshadows the conflict between the Erinyes and Apollo in *Eu*.

[187] Haldane (1965) 39 points out that the traditional sense of the *paean* and *ololugai* is restored in the last play, '[…] in the *Eumenides* the true meaning of paean and ὀλολυγή, distorted in the two previous plays, is restored.' Aeschylus parallels the Erinyes' transformation into object of *polis*' cult with musical restoration: what the Erinyes claim to be their function (i.e. overseers of justice) is realised in their instalment as objects of Athenian cult.

[188] Seaford (1994) 105. Further, it contains the idea that loss propels forward the concept of 'learning through suffering'.

sing a thanksgiving for victory (*Ag*. 975-1034; cf. 782-809).[189] At Agamemnon's homecoming fear and uncertainty spread in the heart of the chorus. The tapestry scene (907-74), which exposes both Clytemnestra's treachery and Agamemnon's arrogance and folly, precedes its feelings of doom.[190] The act of trampling (on the red tapestry), which symbolically recreates offstage crime, sacrilege and bloodshed, evokes the threnodic song of the Erinyes in the chorus' θυμός (θρῆνον Ἐρινύ‹ο›ς, 991).[191] The chorus perceives a sorrowful song filled with lamentation and no hope (τὸν δ' ἄνευ λύρας ὅμως ὑμνωδεῖ / θρῆνον Ἐρινύ‹ο›ς αὐτοδίδακτος ἔσωθεν / θυμός, οὐ τὸ πᾶν ἔχων / ἐλπίδος φίλον θράσος, 'nevertheless, within me my spirit sings, self-taught, the lyreless lament of the Erinyes, having entirely no hope and courage', 990-4; cf. *Eu*. 332-3). However, at the same time, they also strongly feel in their bones that wrong will not go unpunished and that justice will be fulfilled (σπλάγχνα δ' οὔτοι ματάϊ- / ζει, πρὸς ἐνδίκοις φρέσιν / τελεσφόροις δίναις κυκλούμενον κέαρ, 'my bowels do not act in folly, as my heart, whirling in circles towards the mind that understands justice, brings fulfilment', 995-7). The Erinyes that the chorus has felt and unwittingly invoked so far are now perceived in and uttered vehemently through its body and spirit. Their presence and agency become

[189] After the murder Clytemnestra is the first to raise a victory song (1372-98, which precedes her offering of the corpse to *Atê* and the Erinys, 1433) and soon Aegisthus follows suit (1577-82). However, their victory songs do not invoke the Erinyes to aid in their plot, since the murder is already accomplished; rather it rebounds fuelling the reciprocal vengeance and curse upon the heads of the murderers.

[190] See Lebeck (1971) 74-9. Image is turned into action; the chorus' unwholesome feeling will be realised.

[191] Cf. Agamemnon's foot that sacked Troy, 906-7; right trampling on what is not right, *Ch*. 641-5; younger gods trample upon the Erinyes, *Eu*. 778-9, 808-9; the Erinyes are tramplers par excellence, 367-76. See also Scott (1984a) 16, and de Romilly (1958) 64. Cf. Henrichs (1994) 28, 46-54.

stronger and more inevitable while the chorus' *pathos* culminates in fear (δεῖμα, 976) and certainty of justice's fulfilment.[192] The chorus feels and hears in its heart that Agamemnon must die, but its understanding lacks clarity and its tongue is tied; in fact, after the third stasimon the chorus fails to take decisive action against the violent death of its king. Just as παιᾶνα Ἐρινύων anticipates the Erinyes as a chorus, so does the imagery in this stasimon.

The Erinyes' ultimate formation as influential chorus in *Eumenides* can be deduced from Gruber's argument that this passage recalls the Hymn to Zeus.[193] A succession of lecythia with intervals of iambics, and occurrence of one dactylic pentameter occurs in both, yet its content and mood are antithetical. This, so Gruber, marks a division between Olympian and chthonian forces. He correctly comments on the passages' importance for the drama but neglects their significance for the trilogy's choral architecture: the Hymn to Zeus follows as the chorus' own reaction towards Calchas' prophecy about Μῆνις τεκνόποινος, while the Erinyes' *thrênos* is intuned by the chorus' externally forced prophecy about what it does not understand just before Μῆνις turns into reality. Inherent, yet not discussed, in this observation, is the anticipation of the Erinyes as chorus and quasi-*dramatis personae* in *Eumenides*. The Erinyes are the active, conscious part behind the choral utterance in the third stasimon in *Agamemnon* which will be reflected in their action and pursuit of justice in the last play. Evidently, in *Eumenides*, the Erinyes' Binding Song, second choral ode and choral exodus will increasingly implement lecythia (and the justice of Zeus) and move towards a

[192] Gruber (2009) 350-6 remarks that this passage contains vocabulary of punishment and *dikê* which is the end of *atê*. See also Thalmann (1986) 489-511 on *thumos*, *kardia* and *phren*.

[193] Gruber (2009) 354-5.

resolution that celebrates the unity of Olympian and chthonian gods and the protection of civic justice and order.[194]

Following the chorus' destabilising experience of the *thrênos*, its anxiety subsides and it delivers sound advice. Modesty, a healthy mind, the right balance of things and caution (*Ag*. 1001-16) form a constructive echo of the hymn to Zeus. The antistrophe endorses this advice with the ominous complementary gnome 'spilt blood cannot be recalled' (1019-21), which resonates through the entire trilogy. In particular, these are principles expounded by the Erinyes in the last play: gathering of riches without justice (1014-15; cf. 456-74, esp. 457, 463, and *Eu*. 538-65) and the fact that fallen blood cannot be retrieved (*Ag*. 1022-4; cf. *Ch*. 400-4; *Eu*. 261-3, 646-50). This gloomy outlook leaves the chorus full of despair and uncertainty at the end of the third stasimon: its ζωπυρουμένας φρενός (1034) is far from the σωφροσύνη recommended earlier.

Cassandra's role expands the portrayal of the Erinyes, especially their musical association. Even though Cassandra is doomed not to be understood (*Ag*. 1212), the chorus regards the content of Cassandra's song as credible (πιστά, 1213); yet the chorus avoids understanding her ill-omened words. Instead, the chorus advocates speaking only good things and keeping silent about the bad (1247). The prophetess adds the hereditary curse originating in Thyestes' banquet, which the Argive elders have not mentioned and recoil from (*Ag*. 1098-9, 1198-1201; contrast 1511-12), to the catalogue of past events. Dochmiacs betray the chorus' agitation, fear and distress (e.g. 1164, 1174).[195] The chorus' flight from engaging in constructive discourse and to gain insights about future events,

[194] The choral songs' similarities and differences in metre, content and mood between *Ag*. and *Eu*. will be examined later in the discussion of the choral songs in *Eu*.

[195] See also Gentili (2008) 231.

especially Agamemnon's immediate death and Orestes' vengeance against Clytemnestra and Aegisthus (1280-5), bears testimony to its helplessness and inability (or lack of willpower) to affect or instruct the *dramatis personae* in its knowledge of cosmic justice.[196] The chorus and Cassandra complement each other, expressing the causal relationship between past and future, transgression and consequence. It is revealed to the audience that Agamemnon is doomed to die because of his personal guilt and the hereditary guilt / curse while it is also implied that the cycle of vengeance and curse remains alive through yet another avenging agent (and thus his death will also be a transgression).

Moreover, Cassandra's prophecy develops the chorus' experience of the Erinyes in the third stasimon. The Trojan maiden extends the idea of the Erinyes as cosmic goddesses who protect the unwritten social and moral laws (*Ag*. 1186-93; cf. 1119).[197] She explicitly links the Erinyes with the hereditary curse that hangs over the house of Atreus (Aegisthus only explicitly mentions it at 1600-1; Clytemnestra mentions it under different names, 1497-1512, 1567-74). Although Aeschylus retains the traditional association between the Erinyes and the curse, their relation to status and power of the curse deviates from the tradition.[198] Cassandra is the innocent medium whose vision of the Erinyes contributes to realising the Erinyes as fulfillers of the Atreidae curse and as Ἀραί in the last play (*Eu*. 417; cf. *Ch*. 405-9, esp. 406). Whereas the chorus keeps the curse alive

[196] However, the chorus concedes that the *oikos* is infected with incurable *atê* (1198-1201).

[197] The Erinyes are visible only to Cassandra (*Ag*. 1186-93; cf. 1211, 1241-4). See Sansone (1975) 44 n. 13 who comments that her vision is real, but those near her do not share her perception. Beyond simply seeing (1217), Cassandra also feels (1256), hears (1186-7, 1191) and smells (1309, 1311) what others do not perceive.

[198] The (change in) frequency of the curse, the gender of the one who curses, its effects upon the *oikos* and *polis*, and finally its transformation into blessing will be elaborated in subchapter 3.2.

through unwitting invocation, Cassandra speaks aloud the ill-omened words that the chorus is afraid to utter.

In the eyes of Cassandra, the Erinyes are already an anthropomorphic chorus – this is a further explicit inkling of the chorus that will emerge in the *Eumenides*.[199] Cassandra details the Erinyes' dramatic significance. She perceives the blood-drunk, emboldened Erinyes (*Ag*. 1188-9) upon the house of Atreus, which is Hades-like in the *Agamemnon* (τὴν γὰρ στέγην τήνδ' οὔποτ' ἐκλείπει χορός / ξύμφθογγος οὐκ εὔφωνος, 'for there is a chorus, who chant in unison, but without harmony, that never leaves the house', 1186-7; κῶμος ἐν δόμοις μένει / δύσπεμπτος ἔξω, ξυγγόνων Ἐρινύων. / ὑμνοῦσι δ' ὕμνον δώμασιν προσήμεναι / πρώταρχον ἄτην, 'the band of Erinyes stays in the house, hard to send away, they sing a song of the first ruin that beset the house', 1189-91). They chant in unison, yet ill-tuned, about the primal act of criminal madness (1187, 1191-2). They especially despise the adulterer Thyestes and his son Aegisthus (ἐν μέρει δ' ἀπέπτυσαν / εὐνὰς ἀδελφοῦ τῶι πατοῦντι δυσμενεῖς, 'and taking turns they loathe the brother's bed and the one who defiled it', 1192-3) – paradoxically so since it is Thyestes who invokes them and Agamemnon who is trapped in their net.[200]

[199] The third stasimon betrays the Erinyes' emergence as chorus already. See Heath (1988) 186, 194 on κῶμος and χορός and also Henrichs (1994/5) 63-4. Brown (1983) 14 speaks of Cassandra's perception as attesting to the Erinyes' 'objective existence within the framework of the play.' He also comments that 'at 1186 they are actually called a χορός in anticipation of the guise in which we shall see them in Eum.' Gruber (2009) 368 observes the link to *Ag*. 23-4: the drunken band of Erinyes as envisioned by Cassandra stand in stark contrast to χορῶν πολλῶν ἐν Ἄργει who respond with joy to the beacon of light.

[200] For net-imagery and the Erinyes see Lebeck (1971) 63-8, Petrounias (1976) 140-52; cf. *Ch*. 981; *Eu*. 111-12, 297-8, 308-96.

Although the Erinyes avenge only transgressions of blood-tie and have no concern for marital ties in the last play (*Eu*. 212, 605), these transgressions often involve breaches of the convention of marriage. Atreus served Thyestes' children to him, because Thyestes seduced his wife;[201] Agamemnon sails against Troy because Paris seduced Helen away from Agamemnon's brother Menelaus.[202] In Cassandra's vision, the Erinyes are concerned with the intra-familial transgressions of the house of Atreus. The establishment of the *Semnai Theai*'s cult in Athens in the last play remedies the Erinyes' lack of concern for communal well-being in *Agamemnon*:[203] the *Semnai Theai*'s co-optation forms an example of healthy 'marriage'[204] while their function also protects this societal construct as part of protecting *polis*-order in general (e.g. *Eu*. 834-6).

Although Cassandra does not elaborate on the Erinyes' outer appearance, this passage is laden with key imagery that will be realised as action (and by the use of costume) in the last play. The description of the Erinyes, as avenging spirits, employs the many blood images of the *Oresteia* (e.g. *Ag*. 1188-9).[205] Portrayed as deeply drunk in Cassandra's vision, they want to suck Orestes' blood in *Eumenides* (e.g. 264-6, 316-20, 357-9). As long as the bloodshed

[201] It was also a means to attain kingship. Cf. A. *Ag*. 1585 where Aegisthus mentions a power struggle between his father and Atreus (while he neglects to mention the adultery). Cf. also E. *IT* 1-41 where the primordial crime within the house of Atreus may be conceived as Pelops' trickery in the chariot race. E. *Or*. goes back even further to Tantalos. *S.v*. Pelops in Harvey (1937) 311 and Gantz (1993) 540-5.

[202] Although Helen is considered the cause of the Trojan War and therefore has a heavy share of responsibility, the name of Atreus' wife remains unmentioned.

[203] However, the chorus sees them as avengers of the basic laws, and these may be an element of communal well-being.

[204] Cf. n. 372.

[205] See subchapter 1.5.2 on blood.

continues in the house,[206] the Erinyes have sustenance to feed on. Aeschylus prepares for the last play in which the Erinyes' feeding on blood is their main objective that must be frustrated in order to achieve a solution. The Erinyes' agency is now explicit. Although the Erinyes are not playing a part as characters onstage, the chorus' and Cassandra's perception of them and citations of their name awaken their spirit of justice, vengeance and curse facilitating fulfilment of vengeance in this play and the next as well as preparing for the Erinyes' entrance as tragic chorus and Ἀραί in *Eumenides*.

In particular, Cassandra's vision emphasises the Erinyes' (paradoxical)[207] association with song (*Ag*. 1186-92; cf. 645, 991; *Ch*. 1024-5; *Eu*. 308-96, 954, 1043, 1047). The Erinyes' ritual and action is unlike that of a conventional theatrical chorus: they do not lament or dance in joy, nor do they communicate society's values and norms with the intention of correcting wrongdoing; instead, they are drunk with blood and aggressively embody and uphold the ruin attached to the house of Atreus. In the *Agamemnon* and *Choephori*, the Erinyes primarily exist in choral lyric. More specifically, their name (or the concept of vengeance) is related to or cited in dirges (e.g. *Ag*. 645, 991, 1280-5, 1323-5; *Ch*. 327-31, 306-14, 400-4, 418-28). This anticipates their appearance as terrifying χορός at the beginning of *Eumenides*: they will sing the Binding Song as a means to manifest further retribution, curse and destruction; but at the end their choral performance is based on blessings, fertility and justice.

[206] The fact that no one can banish them (δύσπεμπτος ἔξω, 1190; cf. *Eu*. 384) foreshadows that Athena cannot simply drive them out peacefully in *Eu*. (however, she can annihilate them, *Eu*. 826-9), but that a solution must be found, of which the Erinyes form an integral part.

[207] Whether it is melodious or unmelodious (*Ag*. 1187). Cf. *Eu*. 48-51, 67-9, where the Erinyes are described through paradoxes.

Cassandra's character and role appear to be a prelude to what shapes the chorus of Erinyes in the last play; one may even consider her the 'inactive' prototype of the Erinyes as chorus of the *Eumenides*.[208] The difference in their reception in the respective cities (Argos for Cassandra, Athens for the Erinyes) passes commentary on the dramatic and moral evolution of the trilogy. Both are virgins.[209] Cassandra's rape seems to be rectified by the *Semnai Theai*'s co-optation into Athens at the end of the trilogy. While Cassandra's abduction, rape and death are manifestations of disorder, Athena's wisdom and the establishment of the Areopagus employ the Erinyes' virginity to enforce justice and order. Further, just as Cassandra is non-Greek / barbarian, the Erinyes are conceived of as 'outlandish' (i.e. chthonian goddess from the Netherworld without *polis*-connection and in a world governed by Olympian hegemony) and their punishment is barbarian (*Eu*. 186-90). But whereas the Argive tyrants kill the former, Athens makes the latter an ally at the end. Lastly, just as Cassandra is the epitome of the lamenting agent in *Agamemnon*, so the Erinyes are the archetype of lamenting chorus, especially after being defeated at the trial (e.g. *Eu*. 140-77, self-lament, 778-93 = 808-23, 837-46 = 870-80).

The trilogy's choral development is also reflected in the movement from singing about calamity and realising vengeance and curse to voicing auspicious things and conferring blessings. Not only the Argive elders, but also Cassandra,

[208] Cf. Beck (1975) 97 on a characterisation of Cassandra (cf. 93-8). He argues that she 'represents a person who can have done an immoral deed and, at the same time, be both pitiable and brave.'

[209] Sissa (1990) argues that it is not the act of sex that defines Greek virginity. A woman is a virgin until she has a child. The important point is that virgins do not have the passions that can overturn the dominant order, as Clytemnestra does. In relation to Cassandra the Erinyes' asexuality and chastity are emphasised (cf. *Eu*. 68). This will be important for their reception into the *polis* in *Eu*., because only the asexual chaste woman is safe to be assimilated into spheres of the *polis*' authority. The Erinyes are associated with chaste women, Cassandra and Athena, as well as promiscuous women, Helen and Clytemnestra. Their sexuality is balanced throughout the trilogy. Their acceptance of Athena as quasi-*chorêgos* in the end suggests the *Semnai Theai*'s chastity. See also Goldhill (1984a) 268-9 on the Erinyes' lack of sexual conflict.

the only singing actor in the *Agamemnon*, manifests the ruinous events in the first play. The Argive elders advise Cassandra to speak auspicious things (εὔφημον, ὦ τάλαινα, κοίμησον στόμα, 1247). Contrary to the chorus' wish, Cassandra accurately foretells the calamities that befall Agamemnon and the house. Likewise, in *Choephori*, Orestes asks the chorus to keep its tongue auspicious and to speak at the right moment (ὑμῖν δ' ἐπαινῶ γλῶσσαν εὔφημον φέρειν, / σιγᾶν θ' ὅπου δεῖ καὶ λέγειν τὰ καίρια, 580-1). The slave women's *peithô* aids in realising vengeance and curse upon Clytemnestra and Aegisthus. Later the chorus advises Orestes to cease ill-omened speech (1044-7). In the last play, powerful, 'magical', prophetic and self-fulfilling song changes from aiding personal vengeance and hereditary curse to supporting civic justice and bringing blessing.[210] Thus, the Binding Song of the Erinyes, incarnation of curse, fails.[211] In the *Eumenides*' second choral ode, the Erinyes speak of justice as a foundation for a prosperous and safe *polis* – their vision is realised through the agency of the Olympian goddess Athena and Athens' best citizens (*Eu*. 475, 487). The third choral ode, sung by the Erinyes in harmony with Athena, hails justice and order. As *Semnai Theai* their song no longer realises curses, but blessing for the city.

2.2.3 The Argive elders' inaction, μάθος and change of sentiment

The chorus grows increasingly capable of action in the course of the trilogy, until its action must be curtailed. The first chorus' lack of influence or action to

[210] Johnston (1992) 94, 96-7, 98 argues that the Erinyes have prophetic powers (in Homer). Referring to *Eu*. 206 Goldhill (1984a) 221 even regards the Erinyes' language as manipulative (cf. Goldhill [1984a] 232: 'the Erinues are […] fulfillers'). See n. 294.

[211] Cf. Henrichs (1994/5) 65 who comments that 'the failure of ritual to effect remedy is an essential tragic motif.'

overcome the deadly predicament in the house of Atreus becomes especially manifest in the murder of Agamemnon. Hearing Agamemnon's death cry, the chorus does not intercede (*Ag*. 1344, 1346-7), but contemplates what plan to follow (1348-71). Despite their acting as judges (they censure guilty Clytemnestra, 1505-6; cf. also 1399-1400, 1407-11, 1426-30, 1468-74),[212] the old men are unable to act and they cannot remedy the moral disorder pervading the first play. Upon Clytemnestra's boastful display of victory (1372-94, 1401-6), the Argive elders are amazed and warn her about the public reaction and curse (1399, 1407-11, esp. δημοθρόους τ' ἀράς, 1409). But the chorus' warning and its disturbance and disgust, made clear by dochmiacs (1407-11, 1426-40), leave the queen untouched. The Argive elders give in to despair and lamentation (1448-61, 1468-74, 1481-96, 1513-20, 1538-50). They repeat παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα (1564, cf. 177) and recognise it as Zeus' θέσμιον (1562-4) – ordinances taken up in *Eumenides* (484, 491, 571; cf. 690-3). Towards the end it even betrays a minor influence upon Clytemnestra's and Aegisthus' proclamations. Its invocation of the law 'tit-for-tat' (ἄντιτον ἔτι σε χρὴ στερομέναν φίλων / τύμμα τύμματι τεῖσαι, 1429-30) incites Clytemnestra to proclaim an oath that killing Agamemnon is an act in accordance with *Dikê*, *Atê* and the Erinys (1432-4).[213] Likewise, despite their feeble rebellion against Aegisthus (1612-16, 1625-8, 1633-

[212] Cf. Herington (1986) 111-24 on poetry and action in *Ag*.

[213] Clytemnestra states that the final third blow against Agamemnon is in honour of Zeus of the Underworld (1385-7; cf. *Ch*. 243-6). Clytemnestra suggests that her plan and 'ritual' to kill Agamemnon take place by the grace of both Zeus and the Erinyes. Likewise, she speaks of Zeus as Agamemnon enters the house walking the red carpet (*Ag*. 970-4); cf. Chiasson (1988) 9 on lines 973-4 in *Ag*., and as she 'welcomes' Cassandra into the house (1036). Clytemnestra first claims that she accomplished the murder herself (*Ag*. 1372-98, 1401-6, 1412-25, 1431-47, 1462-7, 1475-80) but then claims to have carried out what had to be done in accordance with the *alastôr* of the house (1497-1504, 1551-9, 1567-76). Cf. Fraenkel (1950, 1962) *ad* 1501. Fowler (1991) 93-4 points out that Clytemnestra's killing Agamemnon (1388-92) renders her an Erinys of Iphigenia and that Agamemnon was his own Erinys, too. She draws further parallels (94-5) between the nature of Clytemnestra and the Erinyes.

5, 1643-8, esp. 1652), Aegisthus is moved to say δεχομένοις λέγεις θανεῖν γε. τὴν τύχην δ' / αἱρούμεθα ('You say 'to die' for those who receive it; we choose this outcome', 1653) which carries an ironical allusion to the tyrant's own horrible death. The chorus' eventual attempt at action (*Ag*. 1649-53) is stifled by Aegisthus' armed guards and Clytemnestra's verbal intervention. Despite the chorus' lack of action, it opposes the establishment of tyranny in Argos (this is a choral theme that the chorus of *Choephori* takes up, 55-9, 1046-7, as well as the Erinyes themselves in *Eumenides*, 526-30) and voices Zeus' principles (as the Erinyes do in *Eumenides*).[214] In this way, the choral ideas in the trilogy remain grounded in a common moral-religious order over which Zeus presides.[215] By the end of the *Agamemnon*, the chorus sees no distinction between the *lex talionis* and Zeus' laws while the tyrants, Clytemnestra and Aegisthus, claim justice in the name of the Erinyes.

Both choruses (i.e. *Ag*. and *Eu*.) resist the central action of the play and both are persuaded of its correctness by other agents in due course – μάθος takes place albeit on different levels. The chorus of Argive elders learns about the cosmic principle of reciprocity that the killer will be killed. They agree with Clytemnestra and express their understanding that Agamemnon died justly (*Ag*. 1560-6). However, Aegisthus' entrance breaks the accord: they are stripped of their honour as elders / advisors and want vengeance. The vengeful slave women continue this sentiment in *Choephori* in preparation for the last play. In

[214] Cf. Mitchell-Boyask (2009) 27-33 on the parallel between Zeus and the Erinyes in the *Oresteia*. Civic ideology only enters the trilogy when it is set at Athens.

[215] In *Ag*., the Erinyes are related to Zeus by concepts of unwritten laws of fallen blood, vengeance and justice, unjust prosperity, and hospitality. Zeus' laws πάθει μάθος and παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα establish a link with the Erinyes and their inexorable punishment (e.g. *Eu*. 225, 308-96, esp. 381-8). Scott (1984a) 149-50 rightly contends that attainment of knowledge is the fundamental achievement in *Oresteia*. At the end of the trilogy the audience learns about the value of just and pious behaviour and Zeus' ordinances that put men on the right path.

Eumenides, the Erinyes first want vengeance and then come to an accord with Athena, accept the cult in Athens and earn new honours. The chorus of the Erinyes learns about the civic principle of positive reciprocity by which honour is returned for honour.

2.2.4 Summary

To summarise this section: Aeschylus' choice of Argive elders as chorus is an effective starting point for the trajectory of choruses in the trilogy. Because of their advanced age the Argive elders are an ideal source of information of the past and wise advisers to the *dramatis personae* as they elucidate on the nature of Zeus' will, the Erinyes and the cosmos. Their role as wise councillors well versed in Zeus' theology forms one half of the nature and function of the chorus of Erinyes in *Eumenides*. This choral identity balances the barbarian elements which the slave women in *Choephori* lend to the nature and function of the chorus in the last play. The Argive elders' choral philosophy will be maintained and developed in the following two plays. Pronouncing advice such as practising modesty and possessing healthy φρένες / σωφροσύνη, as well as the gnomes πάθει μάθος, παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα and χάρις βίαιος are indispensable to the dramatic action in *Choephori* and *Eumenides* and the solution at the end of the trilogy. However, despite the chorus' wisdom, knowledge of divine decrees and desire to bring healing to the house, it fuels vengeance and curse through unwitting invocation of the Erinyes. The herald and Cassandra complement the chorus in perpetuating retributive justice and *ara*. Both underpin the chorus' invocation of the Erinyes, especially anticipating the Erinyes' choral identity in the last play. In particular, Cassandra's perception of the Erinyes' function is complementary to the chorus.

She not only stresses the Erinyes' compound roles, but also Agamemnon's guilt and his position as hapless victim of a hereditary curse; whereas the chorus hears and feels the Erinyes in their body, Cassandra sees the Erinyes in the house and verbalises what Clytemnestra is about to enact. The chorus' statements and suppositions about justice in the first play first dovetail with that of the slave women in the second play, then with the Erinyes' second choral ode of the last play until they are finally incorporated into the Areopagus and cult of the *Semnai Theai* at the end of the trilogy (e.g. third choral ode and *coda*).

Next, the Argive elders' lack of interference whereby they could realise their philosophy, bring *atê* to an end and partake in the establishment of (civic) justice forms a platform for rendering the choruses in the following two plays more active until the action must be foiled at the end of the trilogy. The chorus' ambivalence towards Agamemnon, their vacillating between hope and despair and their incapacity to exercise control will be transformed into a more influential chorus of slave women in *Choephori*, then into the formidable chorus of Erinyes who is also maternal avenger (and quasi-*dramatis persona*) and finally into subservient guarantors of civic justice, *Semnai Theai*, in the last play.

The Erinyes' (or Erinys') expansive function and horrific nature has been made clear through choral songs and the agents' words and action (*Ag*. 59, 463, 645, 749, 991, 1119, 1190, 1433, 1580).[216] In some of these instances the Erinyes not only represent social, religious or moral notions, but also the nature and behaviour of humans – for example, Agamemnon, Clytemnestra[217] and Helen. Their emergence in malediction, claims to justice as well as violent and retributive

[216] Line 645 belongs to the herald, 1190 to Cassandra, 1433 to Clytemnestra and 1580 to Aegisthus.

[217] On the complex personality of Clytemnestra in *Ag*. see Harris (1973) 148-9.

acts portray them as goddesses of vengeance and curse while their appearance as unruly χορός in Cassandra's vision and their naming in songs of victory or of lamentation (645, 991) present them as potential ritual singers and dancers. In the *Agamemnon*, the Erinyes preside over the chain of causality composed of vengeance, curse and suffering without physical or visible presence and direct causation of retribution. Their punishment traps men in a cycle of vengeance and evil that continues to affect the descendants of the transgressor (*Ag*. 1190, 1432-4; *Ch*. 283-96, 400-4, 652; *Eu*. 229-31, 261-75, 312-26, 334-40, 354-9, 381-4; cf. 490-565, esp. 541-2).[218] But this leads to the annihilation of both *oikos* and *polis* – and this spells ultimate calamity in Greek tragedy. Thus, the positive force of the trilogy is to prevent this in the case of the house of Atreus and the *polis* of Athens.[219] Further, the Erinyes play multiple, chaotic roles. Their dual function as cosmic goddesses and as curses on the house of Atreus makes members of the *oikos* both agents and victims of the ancient goddesses. Those that are identified as a late-avenging Erinys (i.e. Atridae, Thyestes, Clytemnestra, *Ag*. 45-62) soon become liable to the Erinyes' sense of justice and punishment because of their unjust and immoral actions. Discrepancies and overlapping in their function must be solved and adjusted to a constructive / preventive cause. Any of the Erinyes' destructive characteristics or functions displayed in the *Oresteia* must be attributed to their original privileges and chthonian origin. The first two plays explore this tradition: the *Agamemnon* and *Choephori* highlight the danger of familial and civic extinction inherent in the Erinyes' standards and actions.

[218] See Dodds (1951) 42 on blood-guilt. The Erinyes practise the principle of 'blood for blood' early in the last play (*Eu*. 229-31, 261-75; cf. *Ch*. 400-4).

[219] Troy is beyond salvation.

2.3 *Choephori*

2.3.1 The first choral ode

The chorus of *Agamemnon* ends the play lamenting and then praying for vengeance; the absence of a proper choral exodus designates that the events, as they stand, do not furnish a long-term solution. The *Choephori* ought to produce a chorus that maintains the wisdom of the Argive elders, but uses force and influence to implement it. Moreover, the Erinyes' role and nature need to be unified and approximated to the social, judicial and moral scope of the second play. Thus, the lamenting chorus of the second play not only instructs Electra and Orestes how to curse and invoke the Erinyes to fulfil their demands for vengeance and justice, but it also resembles the Erinyes in outer appearance and retributive attitude.[220] Metaphors give way to the chorus' (and Orestes') private experience as the action unfolds. In due course the choral evolution extends to the last play in which the deities thus far evoked and witnessed in private perceptions become the actual dramatic chorus. In the second play choral attitude and activity engage in and attempt to explicate the question of objective justice and morality, draw attention towards the effects of φόβος and σέβας and probe the gnomes πάθει μάθος and παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα. The chorus of lamenting slave women, whose awareness has grown through the experience of suffering, simplifies complexities of justice.

The chorus of the second play forms an immediate dramatic progression from the chorus of the first play while it sets up the Erinyes' appearance as tragic chorus in the *Eumenides*. Just as the *Agamemnon* pits Erinyes' functions against each other, the *Choephori* foregrounds the Erinyes' overlapping and contradictory

[220] On resemblance between the slave women (*Ch.*) and the Erinyes (*Eu*). see p. 108.

functions, albeit in a different area. *Choephori* narrows their wide-ranging functions, setting the stage for the events in *Eumenides*.[221] The play focuses on the clash between paternal and maternal curse and on the *oikos*, largely excluding the extra-familial event of the Trojan War; however, Troy still casts a shadow. The chorus of *Choephori* consists of Trojan slave women who speak for their new master Agamemnon and his rightful heirs (*Ch*. 75-83); it resumes the voice of Cassandra who spoke in favour of her new master. Unlike the chorus of the first play, which is ambivalent about its loyalties and desires, the slave women side with Agamemnon, Orestes and Electra (81-3). They make clear that fear (φόβος) instead of reverence (σέβας) rules under Clytemnestra and Aegisthus (55-9). The slave women know and practise the art of mourning and coercion.[222] Unlike the elder men in the *Agamemnon*, they exert a direct influence on the action of the play: they continually provide information and pragmatic advice, aid in the planning of the murder, interfere directly, invoke the Erinyes and also instruct the children in how to make the Erinyes their ally, curse effectively and set the scene for a successful killing. In short, the chorus serves the rightful owner / heir of house. The choral action in *Choephori* attempts to separate justice from injustice; it tries to achieve a partisan outcome – to kill the tyrants Clytemnestra and Aegisthus and to side with its rightful owners. This is especially interesting because the Erinyes are goddesses of the *oikos* (e.g. 800-2; cf. 84), particularly, of the storehouse – they cling to wealth and avenge the rightful possessor. The

[221] The play also furnishes the first detailed description of the Erinyes' outer appearance in the form of Orestes' vision (1048-62).

[222] Lamentation is a powerful instrument in the hands of women to participate in the male domain of vengeful action. See Foley (2001) 34 with n. 46, Alexiou (2002) 13, 22 with n. 109, 102-3, 112, and McHardy (2004) 101-14. Holst-Warhaft (1992) 161 also comments that female mourning poses a threat to the state and male authority. Cf. also Rabinowitz (2008) 121, 144-5, 152, 195 on women as agents of vengeance

Erinyes' function is still convoluted in this play, albeit narrowed down to intra-familial matters.

The prologue shows the slave women bearing a libation to Agamemnon's tomb by the command of Clytemnestra. This scene emphasises that the retributive killing of Agamemnon has not brought justice and peace, but elicited greater fear (φόβος) and concern for the loss of reverence (σέβας). The queen is terrified of the wrath of the dead (*Ch*. 33-41, esp. 35), the Argives fear the tyranny (57-8), and the chorus fear the perpetuation of bloodshed (and vengeance) according to cosmic law (45-53). Although the chorus feels uneasy carrying out Clytemnestra's duplicitous order, their action substitutes for the missing *thrênos* at the end of *Agamemnon*,[223] and thus ties in with their functional assistance of putting an end to the cycle of *atê*.

Already before the *kommos* the slave women show an extraordinary amount of influence. By their own volition they remind Electra of her loyalty to her father and brother while they also teach her the art of the curse and how to summon the Erinyes on behalf of their justice (*Ch*. 84-163). They show respect for Agamemnon (75-83, 106-7; cf. 108), and advise Electra to remember Orestes (115), and label those people who hate Aegisthus good (109, 111), honing Electra's loyalties and perception of justice. Their counselling of Electra includes encouragement towards violence (113-16, 120-2): in the light of reciprocity, they advise her to pray for some god or mortal to come against the murderers, to 'take life for life' (117-23), with repeated emphasis (122-3). Electra formulates her prayer according to the chorus' suggestion; the *lex talionis* (142-4) and value of σωφροσύνη (σωφρονεστέραν 140; cf. εὐσεβεστέραν 141) – common

[223] See Gruber (2009) 388-9.

threads from the choral songs in *Agamemnon*, echo in her words while the chorus remains silent (124-51). But as Electra bids the chorus to utter a *paean* for the deceased (150-1), the chorus takes a more active role (152-9), crying out for an armed man to deliver the house from woes (160-3). The metre in this *paean*, dochmiacs mixed with iambics, shows its pathetic, not joyous, mood.[224] But despite the chorus' lack of encouraging words and tenor, its lamentation fuels vengeance (cf. 23-31).[225] Ὀρχεῖται δὲ καρδία φόβωι ('my heart is dancing with fear', 167) recalls the fear (δεῖμα) hovering in front of the chorus' heart in the *Agamemnon* (975-7). The revelling χορός of Erinyes as seen by Cassandra in the *Agamemnon* (1186-92) is realised as dancing fear in the chorus' heart (*Ch*. 167). Ὀρχεῖται suggests that the Erinyes (as embodiment of fear) are dancers, which anticipates their choral identity in the *Eumenides*. Without direct address, the slave women, who call for more vengeance and bloodshed in the name of justice and deliverance, invoke the Erinyes.

2.3.2 Paternal versus maternal curse

Although the first reference to the Erinyes in *Choephori* is not immediately relevant to the trajectory of choruses, it develops their function as curses which will be significant for the Erinyes' role as Ἀραί in the last play. Lines 269-96 attribute the role of paternal curse to the Erinyes – this contrasts with their role as maternal avengers in *Eumenides* but anticipates the *Semnai Theai*'s pro-

[224] See Gentili (2008) 86 and Gruber (2009) 391-3 on the metre in the chorus' *paean*.

[225] Holst Warhaft (1992) 152 comments that the 'magical' lament of the female chorus in *Ch*. evokes the Erinys.

patriarchal attitude at the end of the trilogy. Thus, Orestes' second hand report enlarges the contradiction of the Erinyes' functions, introduces the clash between paternal and maternal curse, and prepares for the Erinyes' co-optation as *Semnai Theai* that turns paternal curse into pro-*polis* blessing. Orestes first cites that the Erinyes spring forth from the father's blood (283-4; cf. 285-6 where they are stirred by victims who are slain by their own kin)[226] and punish one who fails to take vengeance for a father's murder (273-96).[227] The Erinyes of the father[228] will pursue and torment their victim with 'madness' and 'empty fears at night' (καὶ λύσσα καὶ μάταιος ἐκ νυκτῶν φόβος, 288),[229] and whip their victim's body and drive him from the city (κινεῖ ταράσσει, καὶ διωκάθει πόλεως / χαλκηλάτωι πλάστιγγι λυμανθὲν δέμας, 289-91).[230] Their victim is also excluded from pouring libations and hospitality (291-4). Such expulsion from the city (including prohibition against participating in rituals, frequenting altars and other people's houses) not only reflects society's view that the son who fails to avenge his father is an outcast, but it could also imply that the paternal Erinyes are associated with the order of the *polis*. Further, the Erinyes of the father force their own realisation by penalising non-performance. This is already anchored in the

[226] See Jones (1956) 190 on the Erinyes as avengers of kin-killing.

[227] Cf. *Eu*. 269-75 where failure to respect god, guest or parent results in punishment.

[228] Cf. S. *El*. 110-20, 275-6.

[229] See Mattes (1970) 109-10 on darkness and madness. See Lebeck (1971) 42, 98, 131, 151 on the imagery of dark and light in the *Oresteia* and the Erinyes' association with darkness (e.g. *Ag*. 462-3; *Ch*. 1049; *Eu*. 52, 370; cf. E. *El*. 1345; A. *Th*. 699-700). μέλας is a traditional epithet of blood; it also describes blood at *Ag*. 1020 and *Eu*. 183, 980.

[230] See Garvie (1986) *ad* 281-2. On skin disease Parker (1983) 217-18. Cf. *Eu*. 785, 815. See also Zeitlin (1965) 488-9 comments that disease imagery is expressive of moral sickness. This is also true later in *Eu*. where the Erinyes threaten blight. Cf. Fowler (1967) 72-3. In addition, other infernal powers cause torture akin to that of the Erinyes (skin disease, *Ch*. 276-82, social and religious exclusion as well as withering, *Ch*. 291-6). See Garvie (1986) *ad* 291-6 for the notion of the polluted outcast. Cf. *Eu*. 655-6; E. *Or*. 46-8; *IT* 947-60; *HF* 1281-93.

tradition of relating Erinyes to social position (e.g. οἶσθ', ὡς πρεσβυτέροισιν Ἐρινύες αἐὶν ἕπονται, 'you know how the Erinyes always follow the elder born', *Il*. 15.204).[231]

The play pits paternal against maternal curse; Aeschylus is unique in pitting these functions against each other – tradition keeps them distinct. The paternal Erinyes seek to avenge a father and aid the son in fulfilling his highest duty (*Ch*. 273-96). They require Orestes to kill his mother – the penalty for failure to do so is horrendous. They induce the greater fear of non-compliance. They also seek vengeance for a son killing his mother (e.g. 912, 924, 1048-62, maternal Erinyes; 1021-5, not mentioned). Thus, Erinyes are both the cause and effect of matricide in *Choephori*.[232] One contradiction of the play involves paternal versus maternal Erinyes. The first play's contradiction between the Erinyes as cosmic forces and as the curse of the house of Atreus (i.e. household goddesses) is addressed in the second play. Unlike the Argive elders who explicitly expound unwritten laws, the slave women are primarily concerned with vengeance for father and master and its success within the *oikos* (e.g. *Ch*. 804-6, 931-71; cf. 826-30); however, justice and the unwritten laws from the first play are a secondary concern complementary to their vengeance for Agamemnon.

2.3.3 The *kommos*

In the *kommos*, the chorus takes on a noticeably active role (*Ch*. 264-478). First, it counsels silence in order to render the plan of vengeance successful (264-8). The

[231] See ch. 1, pp. 19-20, for an earlier discussion on social standing / status.

[232] Lines 400-4 and 577 associate them with the general principle of vengeance that is not confined to matricide.

chorus praises reciprocity and prays that justice will win the day (306-14). The slave women want to see blood spilt for the sake of justice. This chorus is bloodthirsty; the chorus of *Agamemnon* is not until the end. However, it continues the moral and religious ideology of the first chorus: its understanding of justice is tied to Zeus' law (παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα, 'the doer must suffer', 313) and vengeance (ἀντὶ δὲ πληγῆς φονίας φονίαν / πληγὴν τινέτω, 'let the price for a murderous stroke be a murderous stroke', 312-13; cf. 646-52).[233] Emphasising that bewailing the dead aids in successful vengeance (327-31), the chorus continues to advance vengeful action and wishes for the transformation of lament into *paean* after victory[234] (340-5). It also unleashes its wrath against those who killed Agamemnon, inflaming the children's need for justice (386-93, Electra's response, 394-99). The chorus' explanation ἀλλὰ νόμος μὴν φονίας σταγόνας / χυμένας εἰς πέδον ἄλλο προσαιτεῖν / αἷμα. βοᾶι γὰρ λοιγὸς Ἐρινὺν / παρὰ τῶν πρότερον φθιμένων ἄτην / ἑτέραν ἐπάγουσαν ἐπ' ἄτηι ('It is the law that drops of blood spilled to the ground demand other blood. For horrible death calls out for an Erinys from those killed before to bring further ruin upon ruin', 400-4) resonates with Electra's demand for justice in place of injustice (394-9). Thus, in the midst and height of lamentation, anger (e.g. 391-3) and talk of justice the chorus expounds on the law of 'blood for blood' again

[233] The *kommos* of *Ch*. (306- 478) is in essence a lamentation for Agamemnon (esp. 334) and a hymn to the gods below asking for successful vengeance (475). It is not only a *goos* (lamentation), but a *humnos* (cf. *Ag*., e.g. 160-83); Haldane (1965) 39; cf. Fleming (1977) 222. See Foley (1993) 113-17 on the lamentation / revenge nexus. She argues (esp. 116) that the slave women and Electra 'play the dominant role in generating revenge through their lament.'

[234] Envisioning such a performance in response to successful vengeance is another example of παιὰν Ἐρινύων.

(400-4, esp. νόμος 400;[235] cf. 306-14, *Ag*. 160-83), which echoes the choral philosophy of παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα permeating the trilogy (e.g. *Ag*. 1564).

The Erinys' punishment equals the victim's transgression, and involves blood (αἷμα, *Ch*. 402) and *atê* (ἄτην, 403, ἄτηι, 404). The chorus approves of Orestes' action on the one hand (cf. 1044), yet warns him of the consequences on the other: mentioning the name 'Erinys' specifically as practitioner of the unwritten rule that blood springs from one injustice and avenges through inflicting another injustice, stimulates the fulfilment of vengeance and curse that arises from committing matricide. Anapaests enforce this truth (400-4; cf. *Ag*. 1338-40, 1535-6). Using *pathos*, *peithô* as well as the key word θάρσος, the chorus bids Orestes to speak courageous words so that things end well for the *oikos*. The slave women beat their breasts, rip their cheeks bloody with their hands[236] and sing an Arian dirge like Cissian women (*Ch*. 418-28; cf. 22-31).[237] In contrast, speaking of wisdom coming at the price of suffering, the Argive elders in the *Agamemnon* refuse to lament in advance (*Ag*. 250-2); but lament they do as a precursor to the chorus of *Choephori* (*Ag*. 1489-96, 1513-20, 1537-50; cf. 991).[238] The slave women's violent lament (*Ch*. 423-8) fuels vengeance and curse.

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[235] Cf. Fuller (1915) 474 who comments that the Erinyes are rather spirits of vengeance than the voice of justice. See also subchapter 3.8 on *nomos* and *thesmos*.

[236] The bloody gashes of the chorus' cheeks (24-5) are the equivalent of the stream of blood Orestes sees dripping from the Erinyes' eyes (1056-7). Verrall (1893, 1908) *ad* 1046 argues that Orestes perceives the chorus in *Ch*. as the approaching Erinyes, 'As Orestes gazes at the slave-women […] they take to his diseased eye the form and garb of the Erinnyes [sic].' Verrall (1893, 1908) *ad* 1046 does not comment on this similarity of portrayal of blood beneath their eyes / on their cheeks.

[237] Cf. Sider (1978) 19, 21-3 and Fowler (1991) 95.

[238] In further contrast, the chorus of Erinyes does not lament the chain of tragedy in the *oikos* of Atreus, but the injury upon their honour by the younger gods (*Eu*. 778-93, 808-23, 837-9, 870-2) – lament ceases as Athena offers them honours inviting them to be cultic objects of the *polis* (in fact this is the end of all lament in the trilogy).

Ultimately, the chorus brings out the ghastly details of Agamemnon's *maschalismos* (*Ch*. 439-44). The slave women urge this information about the burial to pierce through to the quiet depth of Orestes' mind (ἡσύχωι φρενῶν βάθει,[239] 452), in other words, to use σωφροσύνη as a sound base for vendetta. The absence of further talk about *atê*, the chorus' final positive reinforcement using μένος and advising σωφροσύνη, and the joint (i.e. the children and the chorus) calling on Agamemnon (456-60) culminate in Orestes' famous outcry ἄρης ἄρει ξυμβαλεῖ, δίκαι δίκα ('violence will clash with violence, justice with justice', 461), which the chorus wraps up and magnifies through its own final prayer for victory to the powers of the Netherworld (476-8).[240] In particular, the slave women perceive the cure of the house as residing within (the house).[241] They refer to the song as θεῶν τῶν κατὰ γᾶς ὅδ' ὕμνος ('This is the hymn of

[239] West (1998) and Sommerstein (2008) use βάθει.

[240] Later the chorus also tutors Orestes in dealing out the roles in the plan of murder (551-3). Noticeably, the children, unlike their parents and ancestors, need to be instructed in the ways of the Erinyes.

[241] *Eris* is related to a cure for the house from within (474; cf. *Eu*. 975). Similarly, the chorus sings that the Erinyes, along with *Dikê* and *Aisa*, bring a child *into* the house that will pay for the transgressions of old. The chorus perceives both the Erinyes and *Eris* as healing forces to the *oikos*. During the trilogy the Erinyes and *Eris* have matching and opposing qualities. Even though the Erinyes aim to bring about justice, they rectify transgression through (retributive) violence, just as *Eris* is the goddess of discord causing anger, fighting, and war among men (e.g. *Ag*. 699, 1461; cf. *Il*. 11.3-14, 20.48). *Eris* is at the very outset of the Trojan War which forms a primary ingredient in the chain of events in the *Oresteia* (e.g. *Il*. 24.27-30); *s.v.* ἔρις in *LSJ* (1961) 689, see Gantz (1993) 9-10; for the similarity of their method of drinking their victims' blood see Gantz (1993) 14. Hesiod (*Er*. 11–26) distinguishes between two different goddesses Ἐρίδες. One, whose nature is blameworthy, stirs evil, war and cruelty. The other one's nature is praiseworthy as she induces the idle man to work, yet she may also conjure up the competitive spirit amongst people. The latter, the good-hearted sister of the two, is identified as the daughter of the Night, fathered by Kronos (*Th*. 211-32, esp. 226-32). See Wüst (1956) 84-6 on etymology and genealogy of the Erinyes. The word Erinys (ἐρ-ρι- ϝ-νυς) is also possibly etymologically related to ἔρις. Thomson (1941) 35-6 comments that 'erinýs' is probably not Indo-European, but likely to have an Aegean origin. See also Wüst (1956) 83-4 (esp. 1e and h), 112-13, Gruppe (1906, 1975) II 764-5 with n. 8, Heubeck (1986) 143-65, Henrichs (1994) 53, and Neumann (1986) 43-51 on etymology, and esp. 48-50 on *eris*. The etymology of 'Erinyes' remains uncertain. See also Peterich (1938) 119, 223 who comments that the etymology of 'Erinyes' remains obscure. Ἐρινύειν may possible be related to their name (cf. Paus. 8. 25. 6).

the gods beneath the earth.', 475); the audience will remember this when the Erinyes sing the Binding Song in *Eumenides*. However, before the *kommos* ends, the chorus relapses into a state of fear and uncertainty again. It shudders at the results of fate and *atê* which it has urged (463-75).

The slave women are the proponents of raw blood-for-blood justice, who think that they have right on their side – this makes them more similar to the chorus of the next play; the chorus associates vengeance with *dikê* throughout the play (e.g. 306-14, 639-45, 646-52, 783-8, 803-6, 935, 946-52). It is more pro-Agamemnon than the chorus of *Agamemnon*;[242] they aim at balancing the killing of their master with another even more atrocious act, matricide (e.g. 783-837). In its second choral ode (*Ch*. 585-652), the chorus gives a mythological account of gynocratic women and the intra-familial and communal ruin which results from female usurpation and inverted gender hierarchy (594-638).[243] The last strophe and antistrophe about the trampling of *Dikê*, the injury against Zeus' majesty, *Aisa*'s executive force and the Erinys' bringing an avenging child into the house (639-52) follow the chorus' citation about the Lemnian women who brought an entire race to ruin. Because the chorus is pro-Agamemnon (/pro-patriarchal) and intent on bringing healing to the *oikos*, *Dikê*, *Aisa* and the Erinys seem to work against the destruction of the male order through malicious women. The slave women pick up on the elder Argives' earlier descriptions of the Erinys as agents of justice and vengeance, especially as collaborators with Justice and Destiny.

[242] This chorus does not condemn Agamemnon for Aulis and Troy.

[243] At *Ch*. 603-12 the chorus relates the tale of Althaea, who killed her son Meleager in revenge for Meleager killing his mother's brothers. Next, Scylla cut off her father's hair on which his life and the protection of the *polis* depends (613-22). See Garvie (1986) *ad* 613-22. Note that Cassandra likens Clytemnestra to Scylla (*Ag*. 1233). After an interlude which tells of loveless marriage and a wife's betrayal of her husband, and which praises obedient women (623-30), the chorus continues to make explicit the warlike nature seen in female characters by the example of the Lemnian women's cruel deeds, whereby not a single (male) person, but an entire race comes to its ruin (631-6).

Dikê's foundation is firmly set in Orestes' action (τόδ' ἄγχι πλευμόνων ξίφος / διανταίαν ὀξυπευκὲς οὐτᾶι / διαὶ Δίκας, τὸ μὴ θέμις, {γὰρ οὐ} / λὰξ πέδον πατουμένας / τὸ πᾶν Διὸς σέβας παρεκ- / βάντες οὐ θεμιστῶς / Δίκας δ' ἐρείδεται πυθμὴν, προχαλκεύει δ' Αἶσα φασγανουργός, 'This sharp-pointed sword extends near the chest, because Justice lies on the ground trampled underfoot, when someone has entirely gone against the majesty of Zeus without right. The foundation of justice is firmly set and Destiny forges the sword in preparation', 639-48) and the Erinys' leading of the son into the house (τέκνον δ' ἐπεισφέρει δόμοις / αἱμάτων παλαιτέρων / τίνει<ν> μύσος χρόνωι κλύτα βυσσόφρων Ἐρινύς, 'the famous deep-thinking Erinys brings a child into the house to pay for the pollution of earlier blood in due time', 649-51). Lines 639-52 make clear that the law παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα applies, but does not identify the situation as the murder of Clytemnestra.[244] The second choral ode serves as a final justification for murdering Clytemnestra (and Aegisthus). Making clear that paternal vengeance is linked to civic order and well-being the chorus labels Clytemnestra guilty thereby validating Orestes' vengeance as implicitly beneficial. The death of the aristocratic / paternal lineage would be the greatest tragedy; the family line must continue. Matricide is the height of murder yet it is necessary and preferable to the extinction of the royal *oikos* (623-30).

[244] However, it is clear that this is their reference.

2.3.4 *Peithô* and *pathos*

Persuasion and trickery progress in *Choephori*.[245] The question πότε δὴ στομάτων δείξομεν ἰσχὺν ἐπ' Ὀρεστηι; ('When shall we show our verbal power in support of Orestes?' *Ch*. 720) sums up the verbal influence of the slave women in this play. Following Orestes' advice (ὑμῖν δ' ἐπαινῶ γλῶσσαν εὔφημον φέρειν, / σιγᾶν θ' ὅπου δεῖ καὶ λέγειν τὰ καίρια, 'I advise you to keep your tongue auspicious, to keep silent whenever there is need and to speak whenever there is the right moment.', 580-1) the chorus is 'εὔφημος': it utters sounds of good omen to manage the stage. This echoes the Argive elders' advice to Cassandra, εὔφημον, ὦ τάλαινα, κοίμησον στόμα ('speak auspicious things, wretched woman, put your tongue to sleep', *Ag*. 1247); however, the choruses' perception of what is auspicious differs according to the victim of the murder plot. Whereas the chorus of *Agamemnon* advises silence to prevent the killing of Agamemnon, the chorus of the second play considers *peithô* auspicious for killing Clytemnestra. The slave women use *peithô* on the nurse Cilissa and Aegisthus. Engaging Cilissa, who reared the infant Orestes *in loco matris* (*Ch*. 768, 779-80), in the murderous plot, highlights the chorus' active involvement in aiding the successful vengeance on behalf of its late master. In anapaests, the chorus call Πειθὼ δολία down to earth to aid Orestes ('now it is high time for deceptive persuasion to come', 726). The slave women consciously realise the invocative power of language (and song) whereas the chorus' speech in *Agamemnon* was unconsciously cledonomantic and unwittingly invocative. The

[245] Whereas Aeschylus allows the chorus to invoke persuasion and trickery in order to gain victory in *Ch*., he separates persuasion from trickery in *Eu*.: Athena uses persuasion to appease the infuriated Erinyes and to achieve the *polis*' welfare (*Eu*. 885); the Erinyes despise her persuasion as trickery (846 = 880). But whereas the chorus of slave women applies persuasion for retributive justice (within the *oikos*), Athena will use it to buoy distributive justice (in the Panhellenic *polis*).

chorus partakes in the plot and the audience is privy to it in *Choephori*. The slave women dispense three wily instructions: at lines 770-4 and 779-80 they command Cilissa to inform Aegisthus to appear without guards before the messenger (without imparting the truth that Orestes is alive); next, they instruct Orestes to reply 'πατρός' when Clytemnestra cries 'τέκνον' (826-30); finally, they instruct Aegisthus to inquire about the news from the messenger directly (848-50). Despite its purpose to restore Agamemnon's honour and his heir and to liberate Argos from tyranny, *peithô* links with deception and destruction in the *Choephori*.

Making Cilissa an accomplice in vengeance reinforces the link between vengeance and paternalistic civic order.[246] Cilissa's role emphasises the solidarity of slaves against illegitimate owners and the solidarity of the *oikos* against usurpers who prevent Orestes from inheritance, citizenship and manhood and Electra from marriage and womanhood. Paternal vengeance not only satisfies the personal needs of Orestes (and Electra), but also restores freedom to the *polis*: through Orestes' matricide the righteous heir is restored to his inheritance and the citizens of Argos may now be worthy of their victory in Troy receiving their deserved dignity and glory. Alongside this interdependency between the well-being and stability of *oikos* and *polis*, the play stresses the supremacy of patriarchy and of the paternal curse.

In the third choral ode, the slave women use resources of song and dance to pray to Zeus, the Erinyes, and Apollo to bring about Orestes' successful vengeance and liberation of his *oikos*. They invoke Zeus (*Ch*. 783-4), hail the law παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα and pray for an avenger to bring about justice (789-92; cf. 646-52, and the Erinyes' understanding of bloody atonement at *Eu*. 264-75). The

[246] Cilissa cared for the infant Orestes, reared the young boy for his father (761-3) and sincerely grieves at the news of his death (733, 734-65, esp. 744-7).

chorus' announcement that a feminine tune accompanies and fuels the destruction of enemies (819-25) suggests that they are instrumental in keeping alive and realising the curse. Following Aegisthus' entrance into the palace (854), the chorus prays to Zeus in the same anapaests (855-68) that it used in a prayer addressing chthonian gods after Clytemnestra, Orestes and Pylades entered the palace (718). The chorus' use of a metre that evokes a warrior's attack[247] leaves no doubt that its active involvement for the past 150 lines assists in realising another strike of bloody vengeance.

Yet the chorus' influence remains verbal. It does not participate in the act of vengeance. In fact, upon hearing Aegisthus' cries (*Ch*. 869) it takes a safe distance from the house so that its share in the action cannot be identified (870-4). Yet it resumes its previous advisory position as Orestes and Pylades force Clytemnestra off stage to bring the Pythian oracle to completion (930). In the remaining choral performances, except in the final one, the chorus' *pathos* changes erratically and its lyrics show a discrepancy between content and metre. This recalls the ambivalence of the Argive elders in *Agamemnon*. The chorus expresses its grief for the citizens who experience a twin disaster (*Ch*. 931-4); it perceives that Orestes has reached the apex of crime through his act and utters a prayer that the 'eye' of the house shall not fall – in choral song it foresees the celebration of the act of vengeance (cf. φῶς, 961 and their approval of Orestes' act, 1044). Yet its *paean* is composed of dochmiacs; the content of the chorus' song is antithetical to its mood. A shadow of fear and uncertainty remains over the triumphant lyrics of liberation and the end of *atê*. Before long the chorus bewails the present and future suffering and trouble of the house (1007-9, esp. πάθος, 1018-20, esp. μόχθος) in anapaests, instead of the usual dochmiacs. With

[247] See von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1921, 1975) 62, 366 and Gentili (2008) 125.

another change of mood, Orestes' gloomy reaction and imposing of self-exile (1021-43) is met with the chorus' praise, encouragement and confidence (1044-7). It approves of Orestes' deed and advises him to cease ill-omened speech (1044-7; cf. *Ag*. 1247, *Ch*. 580-1), counsels him not to let fear overcome him (1052, cf. 1024; *Eu*. 88) and assures salvation (*Ch*. 1059-60).[248] Clearly the chorus speaks in favour of Orestes (and thus of Agamemnon). But the chorus' confidence in victory (1051-2) fades in its closing lines (1063-76); yet despite its uncertainty as to the nature of (the chain of) *atê*, the light of optimism shines through its final words. The chorus of this play strives to see the outcome of action in terms of the appropriate choral performance. This is advancement from the first play: the chorus of the *Agamemnon* is incapable of this – its thanksgiving, for instance, turns into a lament.

2.3.5 Orestes' vision

Complementary to the final choral performance, Orestes' concluding experiences aid in the Erinyes' transition from abstract divinities of vengeance and curse in *Choephori* to the chorus of *Eumenides*.[249] The use of images in Orestes' struggle to keep control of his mental faculties (*Ch*. 1021-5) and in his vision of the approaching Erinyes[250] not only instantiates παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα[251] and

[248] Orestes' 'prophetic' vision does not conjure up Apollo as saviour. But he calls upon Apollo to defend him from the Erinyes that are multiplying in his consciousness (πληθύουσι, 1057).

[249] The chorus and Orestes alone utter the Erinyes' name in the second play. These two agents particularly realise the Erinyes' power as spirits of vengeance and curse.

[250] The Erinyes' subjective and objective reality in the *Oresteia*, especially in the scene of Orestes' vision, has been a matter for scholarly debate. Brown (1983) 13-14 succinctly summarises the scholarly debate, namely the argument of the Erinyes' corporal existence versus their invisibility. He argues persuasively that in *Ag*. and *Ch*. the Erinyes remain invisible to the audience of the play; divine forces take the stage in *Eu*. in order to solve the insoluble problems of the previous two plays. Padel (1992) 181 (cf. 185 on the Erinyes' subjective and objective reality) comments, 'It is

anticipates ξυμφέρει σωφρονεῖν ὑπὸ στένει (*Eu*. 521),[252] but also contributes to the realisation of the Erinyes as chorus in *Eumenides* where metaphor turns into reality. The images of fear and disturbing music (1024-5)[253] continue the choral imagery begun in the first play (*Ag*. 975-9, 990-4, 1186-90; *Ch*. 167).[254]

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madness to see them. It may be madder not to.' Euripides' *IT* also deals with the visibility of the Erinyes to Orestes (281-335). Here the herdsman says that none of the apparitions were visible to him and that Orestes must be mistaken to identify the noises of cattle and dogs as those of the Erinyes (*IT* 291-4). Orestes charges at the cattle mistaking them for Erinyes according to the herdsman (296-300). Recent scholarship, such as Lissarrague (2006) 51-70, Labarrière (2006) 9-93, Frontisi-Ducroux (2006) 29-50 and (2007) 165-7, 169-71, and Easterling (2008) 222-5, has opened up the question of their visibility again. The problem is acute in the *Oresteia*. But there is no question about the audience's perception of the Erinyes in extant drama apart from the *Oresteia*.

[251] See Garvie (1986) *ad* 1021 who comments that Orestes knows he is going mad. See also Sansone (1975) 69, 72.

[252] Ξυμφέρει σωφρονεῖν ὑπὸ στένει seems to be an amalgamation of gnomes πάθει μάθος (*Ag*. 177; cf. 250-1) and χάρις βίαιος (*Ag*. 182).

[253] In the *Oresteia*, the Erinyes are associated with madness, not in the clinical, but moral and psychological way (in relation to *atê*, *hubris*, *dussebia*, *aischromêtis parakopa*). The Erinyes are often associated with madness in tragedy (e.g. E. *Or*. 238, 253-4, 258-9, 264, 269-70, 274-8, 316-27, 389, 400, 401, 411, 793, 835-7; *IT* 79-84, 291-9, 307-8, 932). They are not associated with madness in the Sophoclean *El*. Wüst (1956) 113-14 argues that their function as goddesses of madness mostly emerges in the legends of Alcmaeon and Orestes. In epic, the Erinyes precipitate madness or infatuation (e.g. *Od*. 15.231-4). Cf. *Eu*. 329-32. See also Hartigan (1987) 126-35 and Theodorou (1993) 32-46 on Euripidean madness. In contrast to the clinical references to maddening Erinyes in Euripides, the references to madness associated with the Erinyes in the *Oresteia* are linked to justice, vengeance, curse and morality. The Euripidean Orestes in *Or*. and *IT*, who shows undeniable signs of madness such as abnormal activity of the eyes and hallucination (*Or*. 224, 253-4, 258-9, 264, 389, 408, 836-7; *IT* 79-84, 291-300), mistaking animal noises for Erinyes' noises (*IT* 291-4), 'sickness' (*Or*. 227-8, 480, 792-3, 881), raving and breathlessness (*Or*. 274-8), foaming mouth (*Or*. 219-20; *IT* 307-8), and unkemptness (*Or*. 223-4, 225-6, 387, 388). Mattes (1970) 92 lists conventional symptoms of madness; cf. Theodorou (1993) 34 on Heracles. Note also that the Euripidean Orestes is amnesic and helpless (*Or*. 211-16, 232, 277-8; cf. *HF* 1094-1108), whereas the Aeschylean Orestes suffers neither from amnesia nor helplessness directly after matricide – only in the trial does he appear to be weak and passes the defence on to Apollo. See also Parker (1983) 129, 218 on madness caused by murder, and 243-8 on causes of madness. Madness is used to express the clash between culture and nature, rationality and emotion. For example, Nussbaum's (2001) 41-2 use of the term 'madness of remorse' suggests emotional madness; μανίας μελάθρων ἀλληλοφόνους (*Ag*. 1576) suggests madness of intra-familial murder. See also Theodorou (1993) 32 on madness and emotion. Brown (1983) 20 formulates: 'Aeschylus is interested in the madness of Orestes, not for itself, as a phenomenon deserving analysis, but for its wider significance in the sequence of events that the *Oresteia* depicts.' Theodorou (1993) 32, 41 views Orestes' madness as contact with the divine world.

[254] The images of the chariot going off path and of maddening music, expressive of Orestes' experience (1021-5), often signify madness in drama ([A.] *PV* 881-6; E. *HF* 880-3; also cf. *El*. 1252-3; *IT* 82-3; *Ba*. 853; *HF* 833-7, 871-3, 877-9, 889-90). See Brown (1983) 17 n. 24 and Garvie (1986) *ad loc*. Mattes (1970) 111 explains the use of chariots and horses in the description of madness. Likewise, a ship going off course, waves or the ocean indicate madness (cf. *Eu*. 550-7 and Fowler [1967] 63). See Mattes (1970) 106-8, 112-13. Cf. also Webster (1957) 152 who argues

Significantly, both choruses perceive disturbing music in their heart and soul (καρδία and θυμός); but Orestes not only perceives it in his καρδία but his φρένες are also affected (1024). The addition of φρένες will be significant for the last play. Ultimately, in *Eumenides*, the choral imagery of music comes into action in form of the Erinyes as chorus, who advises σωφροσύνη (i.e. healthy φρένες) in the second choral ode (490-565, esp. 521).

The imagery of Orestes' vision of the dreadful Erinyes prepares for the role of the Erinyes as chorus and as the embodiment of what is fearful and keeps humans within the boundaries prescribed for them in the cosmos, as citizens in the *polis*, and as members of an *oikos* in the *Eumenides*. Hideous women looking like Gorgons, clothed in dark grey tunics and wreathed with snakes (σμοιαὶ γυναῖκες αἵδε Γοργόνων δίκην, / φαϊοχίτωνες καὶ πεπλεκτανημέναι / πυκνοῖς δράκουσιν, *Ch*. 1048-50) appear to him. Orestes perceives them as a pack (πληθύουσι, 1057) of wrathful hounds of his mother (ἔγκοτοι κύνες, 1053-4; cf. ἐγκότους κύνας, 924)[255] dripping hateful liquid from their eyes (κἀξ ὀμμάτων στάζουσι νᾶμα δυσφιλές, 1058). These fearsome attributes, symbolic of the *Oresteia*'s cycle of bloodshed, vengeance and curse, teem with potential action. This first detailed account of the Erinyes' outer appearance plays a part in Aeschylus' dramatic preliminaries: in addition to choral allusion and imagery, intensification of conflict and emphasis on gnomes essential to justice,

that '*phrenes* here is diseased intellect' and that Orestes will be driven off the course of sanity. Cf. *Ch*. 514.

[255] See also Garvie (1986) *ad* 1054. They are so real to him that he even perceives the need to take physical flight (1050, ἐλαύνομαι, 1062). The power inherent in mentioning the Erinyes' name can no longer be questioned. It seems as though Orestes no longer dares to utter their name for fear of seeing vengeance and curse as a consequence of matricide carried out upon him immediately.

the Erinyes' pre-corporeal appearance in Orestes' vision assists in the dramatic preparation for the Erinyes' emergence as chorus (and huntresses) in *Eumenides*. Likewise, the outer appearance of the slave women anticipates the outer appearance of the Erinyes in *Eumenides*.

As discussed above, the chorus of *Choephori* prefigures the Erinyes' barbarian and fearful vengeful aspect – this is complementary to the chorus of elder men in the *Agamemnon*, which prefigures the use of the Erinyes' 'old-fashioned' values, the guardianship of the Areopagus and its sanctity and the cult of *Semnai Theai* in the *Eumenides*. But the similarities between the choruses of the last two plays also extend to their outer appearance: the slave women are composed of 'foreign' unmarried females[256] and dress in black garments (10-12) like the Erinyes (*Ag*. 462-3; *Ch*. 1049; *Eu*. 52, 370). The audience sees the Erinyes-like chorus of *Choephori*; Orestes sees the Erinyes – this suggests interchangeability. In addition to the slave women's similar appearance to the Erinyes, the chorus in *Choephori* uses *peithô* upon agents and interferes in the action thus realising the curse and vengeance which the Erinyes embody – in the next play curse and vengeance advance to such a degree that they assume the bodily form of a dramatic chorus.

2.3.6 Summary

In summary, the *Choephori* is a thematic transition from *Agamemnon* to *Eumenides*. Matricide forms the peak of vengeance and curse and intertwines with the paternalistic order of the *oikos* and *polis*. Orestes' vengeance upon his mother

[256] Women and foreigners are associated with irrationality in ancient Greece. Foley (2001) 34-5 shows how other scholars have suggested that the chorus in *Ch*. portend the Erinyes and their retribution.

not only restores his father's honour but also restores his legitimacy to the *oikos* and *polis*. Choral action and philosophy recall that of the Argive elders in the first play and underpin the quest for establishing justice and order. Unlike the chorus in the *Agamemnon*, which only experiences feelings of the Erinyes' power and comes to understand the chain of cause and effect inherent in this power only late in the drama (*Ag*. 1560-6), the slave women are not afraid to apply the principles of Zeus and the Erinyes and act upon their belief. They coach the children and keep vengeance (and curse) alive through lamentation and rage. The chorus in *Choephori* knowingly invokes the Erinyes so that paternal vengeance reaches fulfilment and assists in the forthcoming realisation of the Erinyes as influential chorus in *Eumenides*.

The second play lacks the conclusion and resolution regarding the vendetta and curse in the house of Atreus, on the one hand, and the Erinyes' contradiction between their functions as cosmic goddesses of vengeance and curse and goddesses of the *oikos* as well as paternal and maternal avengers, on the other. Without direct divine interference and an institution / judicial body, *atê* cannot be brought to an end and men's virtuous conduct (by free will), lasting private and public justice, stability and welfare cannot be realised. The conclusion of *Choephori* puts extremely high demands on the last play, and yet at the end of the second play Aeschylus has completed his preparation to bring about the seemingly impossible. The introduction of new locations – firstly, Delphi, then Athens, the choice of a terrifying chorus of Erinyes, its (antagonistic) interaction with Olympian *dramatis personae* and its eventual transformation into *Semnai Theai*, and the establishment of the Areopagus will provide the needed solution.

2.4 *Eumenides*

2.4.1 The nature of the chorus of Erinyes – a brief outline

In the *Eumenides*, Aeschylus' choice of chorus is unique and remarkable; to an audience in 458BC it is perhaps even disquieting.[257] On the one hand, it is a logical dramatic conclusion that Aeschylus realises the Erinyes *in personis* on stage after vengeance, curse and *atê* culminate in Orestes' matricide in *Choephori*. How does the chorus continue the choral action and philosophy of *Agamemnon* and *Choephori*? How does Athena intercede in choral action so that vengeance, curse and *atê* cease and communal justice and stability are established? The choruses of the earlier plays are anonymous mortal men and women, pro-Agamemnon and rather reserved in action, guidance and influence. In contrast, the Erinyes, as ancient goddesses of vengeance and curse possess a strong extra-dramatic identity and authority[258] and their agency is beyond doubt in the face of the disasters in the first two plays; as maternal avengers in *Eumenides* they are also pro-Clytemnestra. This seems to be a choral discontinuity. However, Zeus' will and laws (e.g. παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα, χάρις βίαιος, πάθει μάθος and σωφροσύνη), relentlessly voiced by the Argive elders and slave women, are in accord with the Erinyes' principles in the first two plays. This sub-chapter examines how Aeschylus concludes the development of choruses in the trilogy by using the Erinyes as chorus, achieving a 'happy ending', corroborating choral

[257] Though artfully prepared and constructed the Erinyes' appearance as the chorus shocks the audience. *Vita Aeschylii* 9 narrates women's miscarriages and the fainting of children when the *Eu*. was first performed. Although this is unlikely to be historically correct, it does at lest testify to the reputation which the chorus had acquired at a later period. See Brown (1983) 23; Stanford (1983) 6. Garvie (1986) *ad* 1049-50 states that Aeschylus was probably the first to humanise them for the sake of the stage appearance in *Eu*. His argument replaces Robert (1887) I 837 (see also Wüst [1956] 104-7), who argues that the process of the Erinyes' humanisation had probably begun before Aeschylus. However, their humanisation is only a means to an end that eventually establishes the Erinyes as a cult.

[258] Yet, unlike the Argive elders and slave women, they do not identify with a country, *polis* or *oikos*. Cf. Gruber (2009) 429-31.

gnomes with the social, judicial and religious structure of both his drama and the Athens of his day. In particular, the choral performances and philosophy in *Eumenides* will be compared to those of the earlier plays in order to reveal how dramatic action realises choral advice and conveys a value system beyond the walls of theatre.[259] How are the Erinyes, who are an incarnation of Ἀραί, transformed into a blessing for the city of Athens? This subchapter explores how the Erinyes' power becomes curtailed, or controllable for that matter, in their role as chorus and how their song and dance anticipate and enable their cultic integration into the city. Their realisation as performers of ritual suggests their association with (civic and religious) order and an inherent purpose to bring joy, solidarity and strength to the *polis*. The Erinyes' transformation from Erinyes to *Semnai Theai* will be examined in the following chapter.

Unlike the chorus in the *Agamemnon*, which is powerless in crucial situations (e.g. *Ag*. 1025-34, 1343-71), unconsciously facilitates Clytemnestra in achieving her plan and sets up Agamemnon as a victim of the Erinyes, the chorus of Erinyes speaks and acts in full consciousness and with unbending will. This chorus even surpasses the agency of the chorus of slave women in the *Choephori*, that coaches Orestes and Electra, teaches the children how to curse, utters prayers of divine assistance, formulates visions of success with corresponding choral performances and even manoeuvres the circumstances of Aegisthus' meeting with the messenger. The chorus of Erinyes in *Eumenides* fulfils a double role – it is both agent (quasi-*dramatis-persona*) and chorus who can speak and act at key moments. On the one hand, it is 'subjective' agent, namely the pursuer and prosecutor of Orestes and the antagonist of Apollo; on the other hand, it assumes

[259] See n. 297.

the position of the 'objective' chorus through which it can utter its neutral opinion and comment on the matters of the play. In addition, Aeschylus makes this chorus a virgin chorus (68-70; cf. Νυκτὸς παῖδες ἄπαιδες, 1034) which allows for the legitimacy of the Erinyes' appeal for justice, their eventual subjugation before the patron of the city, and their acceptance of Athena as a leader.[260] Thus, the Erinyes resemble suppliants (cf. the Danaids in A. *Supp.*); as such they can stay in the city.[261] What is more, finally virgins are not used for sacrifice (Iphigenia), taken as war booty and raped (Cassandra) or prevented from marriage (Electra). What is more, in contrast to the previous two human choruses, the chorus in *Eumenides* consists of divine beings – a rare choice. As immortal goddesses and as chorus[262] they are invested with experience, wisdom and authority and outlive whatever the outcome may be. In regard to longevity and power, therefore, the chorus of Erinyes improves on the Argive elders in *Agamemnon* and the slave women in *Choephori*.

2.4.2 The Erinyes in Delphi

The opening scene restates the trilogy's main divergences between old and new, female and male, the conflict between chthonian and Olympian hegemony (especially over their object of strife – Orestes). The Pythia talks about the peaceful history of the Delphic shrine (*Eu.* 1-33),[263] the polluted man Orestes (40-

[260] Likewise, the chorus of A. *Su.* consists of virgin Danaids who will live protected within the Argive walls at the end of the play.

[261] See subchapter 3.7 on supplication and converted suppliant drama.

[262] Revermann (2008) 243-4. Unlike a *dramatis persona* that may suffer death, the chorus never dies in the end.

[263] In this Aeschylean version Apollo inherited the Delphic oracle in a peaceful manner through gift-giving (*Eu.* 7). See Podlecki (1989) *ad* 5-8, *s.v.* Delphi in Harvey (1937) 137 and Gantz

5), the sleeping, horrifying Erinyes (46-59),[264] and introduces Apollo as healer-priest, diviner and purifier (60-3). In particular, the Pythia provides a helpful transition for transforming the Erinyes from Orestes' private vision in *Choephori* to publicly visible beings (i.e. dramatic chorus) in *Eumenides*.[265] Her description and demeanour echo Orestes' reaction to his vision and heighten the theatrical effect of the Erinyes' imminent appearance. Like Orestes, she is stricken with fear. She crawls away on all fours (34-9).[266] Like Orestes, the Pythia compares the Erinyes to Gorgons (48-9),[267] but she also likens them to the Harpies (50-1), although she calls them wingless creatures (ἄπτεροι, 51), and describes their black appearance (μέλαιναι, 52), their snorting noises (ῥέγκουσι, 53), nauseating breath (οὐ πλατοῖσι φυσιάμασιν, 53), and a foul stream dripping

(1993) 87-9 for the more popular version of Apollo's violent usurpation of the shrine. Cf. Segal (1974) 297-8 on tameness. See also Taplin (1977) 368-9 and Brown (1983) 22 on the prologue. Mitchell-Boyask (2009) 46 comments how the Pythia is the second priestress of Apollo; but unlike Cassandra, she has an untainted relationship to the god and is intelligible to others – this foreshadows solution.

[264] Whereas the ghost of Clytemnestra and Apollo clearly know who these revolting creatures are, the prophetess cannot identify them (*Eu*. 46-63). Cf. Harrison (1899) 206. Athena also inquires after their identity (*Eu*. 406-14). Previously their name had been used, deliberately or unwittingly, to bring about vengeance and curses. The Pythia has no such concern or conception of them. She is at best concerned about the purity of the shrine. The Erinyes have to fear that they are no longer invoked if Orestes is acquitted of matricide (cf. 490-516).

[265] The Erinyes' invisibility in *Ag*. and *Ch*. signifies the unresolved conflicts of primitive / private justice in these plays. The Erinyes remain invisible until a crime of sufficient magnitude (i.e. matricide) which endangers the *polis*' welfare forces them to make an epiphany. Cf. Whallon (1995) 231-2 who comments on the continuity of the Erinyes' nature and function in the *Oresteia*. See also Brown (1983) 13-34. He states (33) succinctly that 'the visible presence of divine forces brings home their existence and importance all the more powerfully to the audience' and (34) 'for, once the issue has been turned into a conflict between divine powers on stage, this can be resolved by the defeat and conversion of one party.'

[266] Stanford (1983) 86-7 states that fear can also be expressed through movements of escape or retreat. The Pythia's grotesque flight accentuates the horror of the Erinyes' appearance. See Podlecki (1989) *ad loc*. He comments (*ad* 37-8) that the Pythia's language mirrors and enforces her physical uneasiness. Likewise, see Prins (1991) 177 on the break-down of the Pythia's language. Sommerstein (1989) *ad* 34 suggests that the Erinyes may even personify fear here.

[267] Thus the Pythia validates the (relative) sanity of Orestes in *Ch*. as she perceives the same abhorrent creatures as he did in his vision. See Lefkowitz (2003) 122-3, 125-30.

from their eyes (ἐκ δ' ὀμμάτων λείβουσι δυσφιλῆ λίβα, 54; cf. *Ch*. 1058).[268] Their attire as inappropriate to wear near the statues of the gods or in the houses of humans (*Eu*. 55-6) and the people and land which bred them must be afflicted by regret (57-9). The Pythia's words and reaction are a comment on the Erinyes' power to inspire fear: even in their sleeping mode they affect those around them.[269] Through the Erinyes' motionless presence Aeschylus also achieves a shift from private to public perceptibility.[270] The fact that the Erinyes are present onstage after the Pythia's exit attests to their physical reality; they are not only visible to the Pythia, but also to Apollo, Orestes, and the ghost of Clytemnestra. Their imminent visibility to the audience (64) verifies the Erinyes' physical presence and concludes their public recognition.

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[268] These accounts are delivered by highly visual language: Prins (1991) 179. See also Stanford (1972) 55 who comments that Aeschylus uses 'plain words for ugly things' to 'emphasize the palpable physical loathsomeness of sin.' See also Stanford (1972) 70 for an emphasis on ugliness in *Eu*.. The Pythia perceives the liquid upon Orestes hands as blood (*Eu*. 41-2), but not what oozes forth from the Erinyes' eyes. This suggests that the Erinyes have ceased to have blood dripping from their eyes (cf. *Ch*. 1058). West's (1998) emendation νᾶμα is not very convincing in terms of thematic and metaphorical development as well as dramaturgy. Cf. *Ch*. 447-8 and Fowler (1991) 97.

[269] Sleep is a recurrent image in the *Oresteia*. See Mace (2002) 35-56, esp. 35, 37, 45, 47 and (2004) 39-60, esp. 43, 49-59, on the Erinyes, sleep, nocturnal activity and retaliatory violence. See also Scott (1984a) 115, Garvie (1986) *ad* 619-21, 881-2, and Sommerstein (1989) *ad* 705-6. In the first two plays the lack or disturbance of sleep denotes transgression, evil and futility, whereas uninterrupted sleep is associated with peace and happiness (*Ag*. 12-19, 25-7, 179-80, 290, 334-7, 420-6, 559-62, 889-94, 1357, 1451; *Ch*. 32-41, 523-33, 613-22, 881-91, 1076; cf. *Eu*. 705-6, 1035, 1038). In *Eu*. sleep is closely interwoven with the Erinyes (68, 94-161). Zeitlin (1965) 486 affiliates the Erinyes' sleep with savagery. Scott (1984a) 135 comments that the trilogy shows a decline in the chorus' ability to sing and dance up to the middle of the third play; it reaches its low point with the sleeping chorus. Their sleeping pose signals their fatigue hunting their young prey. This runs parallel to how the practice of the *lex talionis* collapses and will be replaced by a more circumspect justice, namely the justice exercised by the Areopagus. Neitzel (1991) 75 argues persuasively that the Erinyes' sleep is necessary because otherwise they would interrupt the εὐφημία of Orestes' cleansing. It also anticipates the answer to the slave women's question 'ποῖ δῆτα κρανεῖ, ποῖ καταλήξει / μετακοιμισθὲν μένος Ἄτης; ('where will it all end?, where will the power of *atê* cease and fall asleep?' *Ch*. 1075-6). Finally, sleep is also associated with the Areopagus: Athena establishes it as a wakeful guardian 'of the land on behalf of those who are sleeping' (*Eu*. 705-6).

[270] For the ambiguity of the Erinyes' entry see n. 277.

The Pythia's description of Orestes as a man abominable to the gods (ἄνδρα θεομυσῆ, *Eu*. 40),[271] with bloodied hands, with a sword and an olive branch in the position of a suppliant (40-5), suggests the Erinyes' function as maternal avengers and punishing spirits. They are drawn to the blood on Orestes' hands (e.g. 183-4, 212, 254) and take over the gruelling task of punishing him (cf. 360-4). The Erinyes' presence suggests that Orestes' purification from matricide is unresolved and that the cycle of vengeance and the curse upon the house of Atreus still operates contrary to the chorus' hope for solution and salvation at the end of *Choephori*. The facts that, firstly, *pathos* prevails (Clytemnestra's ghost, 97, 100, 103, Erinyes, 116, 120, 135, 143-6, 155-61)[272] at Delphi, the place of cleansing and healing, and, secondly, that Apollo sends Orestes to Athens, confirms the continuation of *atê*.

Apollo augments the Pythia's account of the Erinyes' dreadfulness. He explains that they are insatiable women (μάργους, *Eu*. 67),[273] disgusting maidens (κατάπτυστοι κόραι, literally 'to be spat upon', 68),[274] and aged children (γραῖαι, παλαιαὶ παῖδες, 69). He claims that the Erinyes came into life for evil's sake (71), have their abode in Tartarus (72), are dissociated from god, man and even beast (69-73), and are hated by gods and men alike (73). The god emphasises their dark chthonian aspects (σκότον νέμονται Τάρταρόν θ' ὑπὸ

[271] She might regard him as θεομυσῆ, because the Erinyes are with him (cf. 195, 378).

[272] Cf. Gruber (2009) 431-4. This is not physical pain, but suffering due to imbalanced justice.

[273] See Mattes (1970) 102 on words with the stem μαργ- which denotes greediness bordering on madness.

[274] Cf. *Ag*. 1191-3. This imagery confirms the multiple overlapping chaotic roles of the Erinyes and calls for establishing a clear-cut function for the Erinyes: the curse upon the house of Atreus for which they were invoked is uttered by the very man, Thyestes, whom they despise for his adultery. Visser (1980) 107 believes that spitting is a means of transferring responsibility and cheating the consequence of bloodshed.

χθονός, 72). He also speaks of their relentless pursuit (75-7). But he assures Orestes of his guardianship (64-5) and orders his protégé not to allow fear to perturb his judgement (88). At lines 193-4 he likens the Erinyes to a hungry lion, which is reminiscent of the lion parable – an image representing the hereditary curse which is strung throughout the entire trilogy.[275] But whereas the lion parable refers to a figure who acts as an instrument of the Erinys in the previous two plays, the Erinyes themselves instantiate the image of the lion. The Erinyes' appearance as a blood-lapping lion shows that the hereditary curse of the house of Atreus and retribution in the *Oresteia* are active (e.g. cf. *Ag*. 824-8). Vengeance and curse of the *oikos* still have the power to grow to maturity, cause further bloodshed and pose a danger to the community. Lebeck argues that an antithesis is made in which the lion does not only inherit the savage nature from its parents, but can also be formed by the kind treatment of others nursing it.[276] Her argument appears to dovetail with the Erinyes' status at the end of *Eumenides* where they receive kind treatment from the nurturing figure Athena (cf. also *Eu*. 522-5). Athena's offering them a cult and honours in Athens appeases their lionine ferocity and harnesses it for the good of the *polis*. At the end of the trilogy, the principle of reciprocity within the lion parable is sustained and shaped onto the overall good of the *polis* in the closing scene.

Through the Pythia's and Apollo's disparaging and often ambiguous account (i.e. presenting paradoxical characteristics of the Erinyes, e.g. *Eu*. 48-51, 68, 69), Aeschylus achieves three objectives. First, he highlights the Erinyes' fierce aspects: their ghastliness is welcome since they, as cultic goddesses, can instil fear and awe in those who dare to disrespect justice and act immorally; their

[275] See Knox (1952) 17-25 and Lebeck (1971) 47-51, 70, 122, 130.

[276] Lebeck (1971) 51.

capacity to inspire fear gives symbolic and religious sanction to the public justice of the Areopagus. Second, the Erinyes' negative and ambiguous connotations reflect their primitive understanding of justice and the viciousness of the very cycle of curse and vengeance which render them unfit for an authoritative position in the *polis*' judiciary matters. Finally, it suggests that they need to disappear from the surface of judicial and political action and judgement: their new residence will not be within the courtroom but in a nook at the bottom of the hill of Ares.

The point at which the Erinyes enter the stage is questionable. Podlecki, Brown and Sommerstein convincingly argue that they appear after line 63, whereas Stanford and Taplin make the case for their appearance after the speech of Clytemnestra's ghost at line 140.[277] Rehm offers an alternative staging in which

[277] Taplin (1977) 366-74, Brown (1982) 26-32, esp. 26-8 with nn. 3, 15, 16, Stanford (1983) 78-9, Scott (1984b) 159-62, Podlecki (1989) 12-13 and *ad* 63, Sommerstein (1989) *ad* 64-93, and Fletcher (2007b) 38 n. 23 deal with this problem and a summary of their arguments follows here. Podlecki (1989) 12 argues that at least some Erinyes enter at *Eu*. 64, because the deictic τάσδε at *Eu*. 67 shows that they are visible. For dramatic reasons such as suspense and the interaction of the Erinyes with Clytemnestra's ghost, Brown is almost certain that the chorus appears after line 63. Brown further postulates that the chorus of 12, perhaps 15 Erinyes seated on chairs, was delivered on stage via the use of the ekkyklema (cf. Marshall [2003] 268 with n. 51). Sommerstein (1989) *ad* 64-93 also states that the ghost-scene (94-139) cannot be convincingly staged without some of the Erinyes present and further contends that the Erinyes' early absence would render Orestes' protection by Apollo anticlimactic. He further suggests that they were presented sleeping around Orestes on the ekkyklema. In contrast, Stanford (1983) 78-9 argues that the Erinyes do not appear until line 140 for reasons of suspense. Likewise, Taplin (1977) 369-74 argues against the established view that they enter at *Eu*. 64, and makes a case for their entry at *Eu*. 140, because 1) the chorus enters *to* the first song, not *before* it, 2) there is dramatic and theatrical advantage, and 3) the bloodcurdling noises are rendered more effective. Taplin argues that τάσδε does not mean they are visible and points to the use of τοῦδε at *Eu*. 46, and he further establishes that ὁρᾶις means 'understand'/ 'see'. Scott (1984b) 159-60 suggests that two or three Erinyes are onstage at line 140 and then 'summon others who enter through the door from backstage one by one.' Similarly, the foreboding of the Erinyes' arrival is contestable. Whereas Brown argues that Clytemnestra's warning of her hounds (*Ch*. 924) is the first clear instance of foreshadowing the Erinyes, Lebeck and Taplin argue that there are earlier indications of their onset. See Brown (1983) 14 with n. 8, Lebeck (1971) 97-8, 108-9, 114-16, 200-1, and Taplin (1977) 359-60. Fletcher (2007b) 38 n. 23 rightly comments that it is difficult to determine the point of entrance of Erinyes (cf. 34 where she suggest that they enter through the *skênê* building). See also Marshall (2003) 268 with n. 51, Ley (2007) 36-42, and Easterling (2008) 224-5 with n. 22. Mitchell-Boyask (2009) 52-55 emphasises that the Erinyes' entry has an anarchic effect and 'introduces the inter-generational divine conflict'. In sum, the theses of Podlecki, Brown and Sommerstein seem more plausible, because the dramatic and thematic interaction on the stage is heightened if the Erinyes appear already after line 63 (in a sleeping mode); additionally, presenting the chorus asleep onstage emphasises the Erinyes' exhaustion and thus the fading away of the power of retributive justice and the rise of distributive justice. Hence, they 'enter' after line 140.

the Erinyes lie on the orchestra floor from the beginning.[278] Irrespective of the point of the Erinyes' entrance, the staging mirrors the transitional nature of the scene – the Erinyes make an epiphany at Delphi; the unseen ancient goddesses become visible where the oracle urging matricide was pronounced and where *katharsis* for matricide and cure for *atê* ought to take place; in other words where their name is used in conflicting matters (i.e. paternal curse versus maternal curse). The Erinyes' sleep links to the inaction of the previous choruses, while it indicates that vengeance and curse are near an end.

Before the *parodos*, the ghost's speech associates the Erinyes with a mother's self-righteous cause (*Eu*. 94-116).[279] At line 103 Clytemnestra is asking the Erinyes to look at her wounds with their heart – the organ of vision in dreams (ὅρα δὲ πληγὰς τάσδε καρδίαι σέθεν). No other divinities are angered on Clytemnestra's account (101-2). This indicates that the Erinyes represent personal, not public (or cosmic), justice and also reminds one of the separation between the Erinyes and other gods (cf. 109). The Erinyes' identity is conflicted between generalised justice and specific representation of a murdered mother. It also once again brings to attention the question of the maternal curse pitched against the paternal one. Eventually, the Erinyes do not carry out their task of avenging the mother successfully; the paternal curse prevails at the end of the play. Despite the greater frequency of the maternal curse over the paternal one, in pre-Aeschylean sources (as shown already), the maternal curse contains inherent dangers for the well-being of the *oikos* and the *polis*. If Clytemnestra's curse is

[278] Rehm (2002) 90-1. Cf. Fletcher (2007b) 34 who suggests that the Erinyes enter through the *skênê* building.

[279] This speech lacks respect for the Erinyes. Podlecki (1989) *ad* 94 also points out that the bare feminine participle contains a note of disparagement. It appears that Clytemnestra lacks σέβας for the Erinyes.

successful, the *oikos* of Atreus would be entirely obliterated. But the paternal curse achieves the opposite, namely the thriving of both the *oikos* and the *polis*, because Orestes is restored a rightful heir and the Erinyes receive new *timai* whereby they aid in the prosperity of Athens. Paternal, unlike maternal, vengeance is tied to civic order and well-being.

Aeschylus' portrayal of the Erinyes as divinities who receive Clytemnestra's personal sacrificial offerings seems to be the precursor for the Erinyes' establishment as objects of Athenian cult. The ghost of Clytemnestra speaks of the wineless libations and sacrificial meals she offered at a hearth-fire by night,[280] a time that is assigned not to be shared with other gods (*Eu*. 104-9). The Erinyes do not reciprocate; the ghost criticises them for trampling upon these offerings (110).[281] These offerings refer to her own private cult to the Erinyes that she established to get her vengeance against Agamemnon and her sacrifice of Agamemnon to them. Clytemnestra's indelicate offerings (throughout the *Oresteia*: e.g. *Ag*. 1432-4; *Ch*. 523-39; *Eu*. 104-10; Clytemnestra's propitiatory *choai* were used by the chorus and the children to awaken an Erinys against her) make clear that offerings to the Erinyes needs to be adjusted to serve the public good and patriarchal order.[282]

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[280] See n. 466 for libations.

[281] The ghost's capacity to see everything 'trampled underfoot' (λὰξ ὁρῶ πατούμενα, *Eu*. 110) closely links to the notion of justice and religious piety. The *Oresteia* underlines the wrong of trampling upon things holy and precious (*Ag*. 367-72, 944-9, 956-7, 1296-8, 1624; *Ch*. 639-45). See Lebeck (1971) 38-9, 74-9, Petrounias (1976) 278-80, Sider (1978) 17-18, Vellacott (1984) 84, Garvie (1986) *ad* 639-45, and Podlecki (1989) *ad* 110. In *Eu*. the Erinyes trample upon wrongdoers (368-76) and speak against the trampling of justice (539-42; cf. *Ag*. 369-72). During *Eu*. the Erinyes and their law become trampled upon by the younger gods (150, 731, 778-9, 808-9).

[282] Scodel (2006) 75 comments that *Eu*. gives the impression that there is no regular worship for the Erinyes. Cf. Henrichs (1994) 37-8 with n. 50, 44.

Choral influence changes into choral activity as the Erinyes awaken. As curse of Clytemnestra / maternal avengers (e.g. *Eu*. 244-75) the chorus resumes the previous choruses' realisation of vengeance and curse, but, unlike the Argive elders and slave women, it now has the power to act and influence the other agents bringing healing to the crisis. But instead of aiding the 'saviour figures' Apollo, and later Athena,[283] the Erinyes are antagonistic to them. Sounds reminiscent of hounds and hunting noises accompany the Erinyes' rise to action (μυγμός, *Eu*. 117, 120, ὠγμός, 123, 126, μυγμὸς διπλοῦς ὀξύς, 129, κλαγγαίνεις, 132;[284] cf. 53). Canine sounds and spectacle, which were previously figurative qualities of the Erinyes in the first two plays, are expressive of the Erinyes' raw chthonian nature which suggests their opposition to the Olympian gods and their role as Ἀραί.[285] The lack of a requisite choral song further emphasises that the Erinyes are a factor of disorder, just as in *Agamemnon* and *Choephori*.[286]

The Erinyes' first coherent utterance consists of the fourfold repetition of the single word λαβέ (*Eu*. 130-1), which suggests agitation and passion, and

[283] Gruber (2009) 94, 97-8 explains that the chorus embodies order and attempts to influence the *dramatis persona*, especially the saviour figure. Apollo only appears as an interim-saviour figure until Athena appears and fulfils the role completely. Apollo practices retributive justice just like the Erinyes and everyone else in the trilogy. In *Ch*. the Erinyes' rival Apollo assumes the function of stirring Orestes to commit matricide (276-96). See also Fowler (1967) 60 and Roberts (1984) 36-7.

[284] Stanford (1983) 56-7. Cf. A. *Th*. 381, and *Ag*. 157.

[285] Stage directions in Podlecki (1989) *ad loc*. See also Scott (1984a) 115. Fletcher (2007b) 33-4 adds that their howls suggest their feral nature. The Erinyes' later cessation of bestial sounds is related to the *polis*' success, the establishment of laws, and the rise of justice and civilisation. See Heath (1999) 41-7, esp. 43-4, on human speech, animalistic noises and silence (especially in relation to justice); cf. Thalmann (1985b) 231. See also Prins (1991) 182-3. See also Stanford (1983) 6, 56-7.

[286] Mitchell-Boyask (2009) 56-8.

may even resemble hunting cries.[287] But the *parodos* shows that the unwholesome sounds convey the Erinyes' pain (*pathos*, 143-6, esp. ἐπάθομεν, 143, 145, παθοῦσα, 144, πάθος, 145). They lament the injury of *dikê* (154, 162-3) and the pollution (166, 169; cf. 177) of the ὀμφαλός (166; cf. 40). Worse, Apollo honours a godless man (τὸν ἱκέταν σέβων, ἄθεον ἄνδρα, 151) and invalidates the ancient-born Moirai (παλαιγενεῖς δὲ μοίρας φθισάς, 172). According to the chorus, *atê* is no longer only attached to the house of Atreus but has spread infecting the religious sanctum of Greece bringing instability to cosmic order. But the Erinyes' anger at the new gods' hampering their function of punishment overrides their choral concern for healing this diseased place and situation. Before the first stasimon, the Erinyes and Apollo clarify their positions in stichomythia (201-12, 225-8): the former proclaim their rights and assert their role as avengers of mother; the latter concedes his guidance in Orestes' matricide, raises the issue of non-kindred homicide and suggests a trial over which Pallas Athena presides. The Erinyes want to perpetuate vengeance and curse; Apollo wants to restore Argive royalty and establish patriarchal order.

2.4.3 The Erinyes' arrival at Athens and the Binding Song

The scene shifts from Delphi to Athens.[288] At Athens the Erinyes' *epiparodos* takes place. But their song is marked by disorder and destruction. The passage preceding the first stasimon is chaotic, lacking strophic structure (i.e. astrophic)

[287] These feral sounds may also serve to highlight the contrast between genders and thus the superiority of the male. See Tyrrell (1984) 120.

[288] The significance of choosing Athens as a locale for decision making and solution will be discussed in ch.4.

and unity – this suggests that the Erinyes bring disorder. The mixture of iambics and dochmiacs emphasises agitation, tense emotion and hostility (*Eu*. 254-75).[289] Repeatedly the Erinyes refer to Orestes as matricide (256, 261-2, 268) and to executing the *lex talionis* upon him (268, 269-75). The Erinyes' understanding of *dikê* is tied to blood vendetta and their disorganised choral performance reminds one of the horrifying chorus which upsets the Argive elders and Cassandra sees in her vision (*Ag*. 990-2, 1186-91). But before the beginning of its first stasimon the chorus assumes more order and efficiency. In the preamble to the Binding Song the frenzied mixture of iambics and dochmiacs is replaced by formal, 'march-like' anapaests suiting the chorus' well-organised synopsis of the first stasimon. The horrifying chorus of Erinyes anticipated in *Agamemnon* (e.g. *Ag*. 990-2, 1186-91) turns into reality; Μῆνις (*Ag*. 155) is embodied onstage as an effective chorus. Yet the Argive elders' (/Calchas') reference to Μῆνις τεκνόποινος seems to be substituted by means of positive reciprocity and conscious anticipation of παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα at lines 313-14 in *Eumenides*: men's pure and just behaviour prevents the Erinyes' wrath.[290]

The Binding Song picks up on themes addressed in the choral songs in *Agamemnon* and *Choephori*. The chorus' desire for retribution and punishment

[289] Scott (1984a) 112-18. Scott's argument that the first part of *Eu*. is composed of frustrated attempts to create order attests to the Erinyes' dramatic conversion from chaotic vengeful goddesses to objects of Athenian cult that endorse distributive justice and harmony. See Scott (1984a) 38, 55-6, 77, 78, 109, 121, 126, 135 for iambic metre in contexts of crime and retribution. Scott (1984b) 162: 'If Aeschylus wanted to show that the formal structure of this chorus – so shattered in the *Agamemnon* – was still broken and that the very gods of ancient Justice were unable to create a harmoniously ordered musical form, he could have done it in no stronger way than by opening with this ramshackle parodos.' He draws attention to the inarticulate groans, varying metres, incapacity to sing a strophe in unison, and to the dance which probably mimics the 'groggy movements of a person fighting off a deep sleep.' See also Gentili (2008) 84 on the lyric system in *parodos* and *epiparodos*. Fletcher (2007b) 34 also comments on the Erinyes' random arrival, entry through the *skênê* building, and departure from the orchestra: this is unconventional and poses a threat to convention and the traditional order of things. The lack of a chorus leader not only adds to their chaotic structure, but also confirms their atypical female freedom and need for (male) authority. See also Tyrrell (1984) 120 on the Erinyes' sporadic entry.

[290] Σωφροσύνη is implicit.

(e.g. 323, 336-40) echoes Zeus' law παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα. Additionally, lecythia (e.g. 321, 322, 327, 330-3, 354, 371, 375, 388) recall the Hymn to Zeus. But whereas the chorus sings about Zeus' guiding of men in *Agamemnon* (174-83), the Erinyes, using self-referentiality, explain their function to punish wrongdoers and their separation from Zeus. However, just as the chorus in *Agamemnon* proclaims that the man who enjoys good fortune without justice will soon experience reversal of fortune in the third stasimon (1001-16), so the chorus of Erinyes announces that men's 'high and mighty' will melt to nothing under their power, and that they will experience *atê*, pollution and mourning (*Eu*. 368-80). Contrary to the gnomes πάθει μάθος (*Ag*. 177; cf. 250-1) and χάρις βίαιος (182) in the first play, the Erinyes' task brings only suffering void of learning and favour. The Erinyes also address the value of σωφροσύνη, albeit in the negative: the destruction of the φρένες forms part of the Erinyes' punitive function. Δέσμιος φρενῶν, παρακοπά, παραφορά and φρενοδαλής (*Eu*. 328-33 = 341-6) form the negative counterparts to the recommendation of σωφροσύνη. Instead of endowing Orestes with σωφροσύνη, the Erinyes want to bind Orestes' mind in the net of *atê* (contrast: 521). Likewise, the chorus asserts that its attack takes away the senses of the wrongdoer (ἄφρονι, 377). The importance of σωφροσύνη hailed in the first play (*Ag*. 174-5, 180-1, 351) subsides in the Erinyes' singing about deranging and destroying their victim's mind. In contrast, at the end of the play, the motivation to be σώφρων belongs to the *Semnai Theai*'s civic function to prevent wrongdoing.

Παρακοπά, παραφορά and φρενοδαλής (329-30 = 342-3) are signposts of the *Oresteia*'s choral development. Παρακοπά, παραφορά and

φρενοδαλής (329-30 = 342-3) are usual symptoms of a madman in drama (cf. τάλαινα παρακοπὰ πρωτοπήμων, *Ag*. 223; παράκοπον, [A.] *PV* 581, παραπαίειν, 1056; cf. 883-4; παράκοποι, E. *Ba*. 33; παραπεπληγμένωι, *HF* 935).[291] This language is used in the chorus of the *Agamemnon*'s narrative of Agamemnon's sacrifice of Iphigenia (223). Whereas the chorus in the *Agamemnon* perceives irritation resembling madness and Orestes realises himself going mad at the end of the *Choephori* (1021-43, 1048-62), the Erinyes, active as chorus, threaten to bring delirium to their victim in their Binding Song in *Eumenides*.[292] Metaphor turns into action. In retrospect, the similarity of language between the Erinyes' effect on the human mind and Agamemnon's sacrifice of Iphigenia suggest the Erinyes' involvement in the murderous action earlier. Likewise, ἀφόρμιγκτος (332-3 = 345-6) reminds one of the Argive elders' perception of a sorrowful song filled with lamentation and hopelessness (*Ag*. 975-9, 990-4, esp. ἄνευ λύρας, 990). The corresponding language between the Erinyes' maddening effect and the chorus' perception in *Agamemnon* and Orestes' vision in *Choephori* implies the Erinyes' active, successful yet unseen agency. The language of the Binding Song recapitulates the Erinyes' influence on justice and *atê* throughout the trilogy.

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[291] See Goldhill (1984a) 229 on παρακοπά. See also Padel (1995) 14, 120-2, 136, 139-40, 206-11 on *para* as a key-word in madness that indicates the hitting aside of the mental faculty. Cf. Sansone (1975) 31, 75 with nn. 14, 15. Line *Ag*. 223 describes Agamemnon's wicked madness in his decision to kill his daughter. See Dawe (1968) 97, 109-11 and Bremer (1969) 126 on line *Ag*. 223. Padel (1995) 14 with n. 8 associates the madness of the father and the son: one initiates crime, one punishes crime. For similar uses of *para* in drama see A. *Th*. 756, 806; S. *Ant*. 792; *OT* 691; *El*. 472; E. *Or*. 824, *IA* 838. See also Mattes (1970) 92 for conventional symptoms of madness, and 104-6 for hitting aside the φρένες.

[292] Elsewhere in tragedy music is used to madden (cf. *Ag*. 991, 1186-89; E. *HF* 871, 889-90; *Ba*. 21, 114, 148, 184, 190, 195, 207, 220). Padel (1995) 134-44. See also Wüst (1956) 113-14. The Erinyes' association with maenads (e.g. *Eu*. 500; cf. 25) further emphasises their link with madness.

Further, ἄζεται and δέδοικεν (*Eu.* 389, 390) evoke the interconnectedness between fear (φόβος) and reverence (σέβας) suggested in the choral songs in the previous two plays. Significantly, the Erinyes speak of θεσμός (391) which harks back to Zeus' ordinance regarding παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα (*Ag.* 1562-4) and anticipates the establishment of ordinances in *Eumenides* (e.g. 484, 491, 571; cf. 690-3). But in the first stasimon the Erinyes only touch upon this philosophy and relate θεσμός to the ancient powers (μοιρόκραντον, 392): it will be developed further in interaction with Athena and the remaining choral songs. As Athena establishes judicial ordinances and welcomes the Erinyes into the city as cultic objects in the end, the *Semnai Theai* will be the archetypical embodiment of the healthy relationship between fear and reverence: the *Semnai Theai*'s preventive and restricting function aids in the building of a just and prosperous society.

Moreover, in the first stasimon, the chorus continues the use of *peithô*: the Binding Song is a ritual song with magical properties analogous to *peithô*.[293] Just like *peithô*, the words of this hymnic spell are invested with magical power.[294]

[293] Out of the entire song, the stanzas that contain their name are the only ones repeated (328-33 = 341-6, esp. 331, 344). It appears that uttering their name with such emphasis aids in bringing about punishment for Orestes. Yet although uttering their name attends the seeking and manifestation of vengeance (e.g. 318-20, 326-7, 358-9), just as the invocations by the choruses in the first two plays exhibited, the success of their vengeance is flouted. For incantation and incantatory properties of the Erinyes see n. 294 below.

[294] Neustadt (1929) 243-65, esp. 246, 'In diesem daimonischen Hin- und Wiederwirken besitzt stärkste vis magica das Wort.' He also says (247) 'der Name [ist] ein Doppelgänger des Wesens, das Wort Formel und Vertreter der Sache ist: wer das ὄνομα kennt, hat Gewalt über Wesen und Sache, wer es ausspricht, realisiert sie.' See also Peradotto (1969b) 7, de Romilly (1975) 17, Sansone (1975) 75 with n. 15, 87 with n. 23, Rabel (1979a) 16-21, esp. 17, Buxton (1982) 67, cf. 153-4, 160, Faraone (1985) 150-4, Prins (1991) 183-92, Gager (1992) 12-13, 21, 121, 244-5, Holst-Warhaft (1992) 156-7, Henrichs (1994/5) 62-4, McClure (1996-7) 123-40, esp. 131-2, and Collins (2008) 70. Prins (1991) 183, 185-6 comments that the Erinyes' language is 'self-fulfilling', and states (187) that the Erinyes' words are fated and fulfilled. She comments (191) that the Erinyes' words are good omens (thus contradicting Peradotto [1969] 20-1). Holst-Warhaft (1992) 157 also refers to them as μοιρολόγια (songs of fate) that belong to the female and ought not to be witnessed by men. See n. 57 on euphemism.

Thomson comments that the refrain is used in the same way as in the first stasimon in A. *Supp*. where the fugitives curse their pursuers.[295] The similarity of the Erinyes' Binding Song to curse tablets, which is most likely also recognised by the audience, further attests to the Erinyes' incantatory power.[296] The Erinyes' practice of *peithô* corroborating with their purpose of private vengeance and bloodshed recalls the slave women's involvement in *Choephori*. However, unlike the slave women, the Erinyes bring disorder to the patriarchal system of the *poleis* (i.e. Argos and Athens). Athena's entrance immediately after the Binding Song prevents the success of destructive *peithô*, *atê* and bloodshed; eventually, the Olympian goddess will use *peithô* to constructive ends.

True to the continuation of choral philosophies from the first two plays, the chorus of Erinyes continues the chain of curse, vengeance and bloodshed in the first stasimon in *Eumenides*. They are fierce effective executioners of punishment: they are just (*Eu*. 312-20, 354-9), punish murderers (313-27) and kin murders (355-9) thereby overturning houses, and persecuting agents of violence and injustice (336-40), until death and beyond the grave (339-40, 387-8). However, this seems no longer on accord with Zeus' will: they derive their entitlement from Moira (334-5; cf. 349, 389-96) and exercise their ancient powers independently of the Olympians (347-52, 361-6, 385-6).

The repeated first mesode tells of their method: pain and delirium await their victim. Although the Erinyes claim that lyreless song, not physical violence through mouth, hands or man-made tools, forms the medium through which they destroy their victim (*Eu*. 329 = 342, 332-3 = 345-6), they sing of hurling

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[295] Thomson (1941) 186.

[296] See Faraone (1985) 150-4, esp. 150.

themselves upon their victim to suck his blood (357-9) already in the third mesode. The third stanza and the fourth mesode continue this threat of physical violence by means of angry kicks and leaps from above that bring their victim to fall (368-76). But the Erinyes do not merely deliver a description; they carry out what they describe[297] – the activity of this chorus exceeds that of the earlier choruses by far. Not only does *Eumenides* turn metaphor into action, but it also shows the chorus' immediate enactment of its lyrics. Leaping, striding, kicking, skipping (368-76)[298] in 'expanded' dance are male activities, whereas bending, stretching, whirling, and hand-gestures are 'closer' motions which are female.[299] This shows a dangerous potential of the Erinyes to be usurpers of the male domain (similar to Clytemnestra; cf. also *Ch*. 585-630). The Erinyes' cultic integration as *Semnai Theai* into the *polis* prevents gynocracy and its disastrous outcomes (similar to civic demise as a result of a successful maternal curse). They are no longer active dancers in the end (1032-47), and least of all they perform male dance performances. The Erinyes remain silent in the end; auspicious silence on the one hand, succumbing to being silent through Athena's patronage on the other.

The Erinyes' dance seems to directly apply their menacing words of mental destruction and physical agony. It seems reasonable to suppose that they dance holding each other by the hand, whereby the last dancer grasps the hand of

[297] Wiles (1987) 136-51 argues that word and act have to be perceived in conjunction when dealing with drama. See also Prins (1991) 180-5. She remarks (180-1) that the Erinyes 'are meant to be seen as incarnation of speech acts, which places them on another level of representation than the other actors', and argues (183) that lines 308-9 suggest that 'their song is a visual revelation of their verbal being.' For example, ἐπί suggests the Erinyes' movement (and likewise their musical effect) on Orestes. See also Austin (1962, 1975) 12, Henrichs (1994/5) 61-2 and Easterling (2008) 226.

[298] See Sommerstein (1989) *ad* 371.

[299] See Fitton (1973) 260-1 with n. 6, Lawler (1964) 108-10. This also fits into the imagery of trampling that is so important to the trilogy – the Erinyes trample the tramplers. Cf. nn. 191 and 281.

the first one to form a complete circle (*Eu*. 306, 307, 322).[300] The formation of a circle would suggest the containment and punishment of Orestes.[301] In contrast to the procession which celebrates peace and triumph of justice at the end of the trilogy, a wave-like circular dance[302] could reflect the disorganisation found in a ritual that is not recognised as a civic cult.[303] It could also figure their agonising effect upon their victim.

Although the Erinyes' ritual song is at first organised it grows increasingly disorganised. This disorganisation is expressed in their inconsistent metre moving from lecythia to cretics, dactyls and iambics.[304] They seem to lack a *chorêgos* that instructs them in harmonious song and dance[305] – Athena's

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[300] Neitzel (1993) 142 points out that they (numbered twelve) form a circle; δέσμιος φρενῶν (*Eu*. 306, 332) may be facilitated by a circular formation. Guépin (1968) 21 also comments that the Erinyes perform a ring-dance. See also Whallon (1964) 321, Henrichs (1994/5) 63 with n. 38 and Ley (2007) 42-3. In contrast, Calame (1997) 34 says that the tragic chorus is shaped in a rectangle (cf. Pickard Cambridge [1968] 239-40). However, irrespective of shape, whether circular or rectangular, it seems that the Erinyes form one closed 'band' around Orestes. See also Calame (1997) 37 with nn. 72, 73, Tölle-Kastenbein (1964) 54-65, esp. 58-64, and Crowhurst (1963) 283-6 on the procession-type movement, and 289-93 on circles. The Binding Song seems to be a *Kreisreigen*, whereas the final procession is a *Langreigen*, such as marriage processions and sacrificial processions. The Erinyes are thus 'married' to the state in the end. Cf. also Seaford (1990) 77-8, esp. 78: 'In the wedding procession, as in the funeral procession of an unmarried girl, the girl is taken from her parental home to the power and the house of an unknown male (her husband, Hades).'

[301] See Fitton (1973) 262. See Sachs (1937) 62 on the exchange of power between dancers and the encircled person.

[302] Following the principle that metaphor turns into action in *Eu*., the image of the whirlpool (διναί, *Ag*. 550-65), and more generally the image of the shipwreck and waves that overwhelm one after hitting an unseen reef at sea, make it likely that the Erinyes move in a wave-like manner. Waves, an imagery derived from nature, are often used to express turmoil, or surging of emotions. They also often describe madness. See Mattes (1970) 111-13. See also Peradotto (1964) 383-8 on wave and weather imagery. Cf. Easterling (2008) 227 who argues that their dancing is not performed in snake-like movements.

[303] See Seaford (1994) 368-9. Private rituals may endanger a *polis*; disorganised dancing reflects the potential danger in private rituals.

[304] See Scott (1984a) 118-23 for the metre and form of the Binding Song. Although the song lacks an insistent repeated metre there is a basic movement from lecythia, to dactyls and iambics. He argues (122-3) that the Erinyes fail to sing a unified hymn. Cf. Chiasson (1988) 1-21 who disagrees with Scott in regards to lecythia: he argues that they are associated with death, suffering and violence. He observes (15) that the Erinyes use lecythia, which is the metre of Zeus' justice, in their Binding Song.

[305] Fletcher (2007b) 34 remarks that they do not have a *chorêgos*.

imminent arrival after the Binding Song turns out unsuccessful and her eventual role as quasi-*chorêgos* in the third stasimon substantiate this hypothesis. Prins[306] challenges Scott as she asserts that the metre of the Binding Song is not 'desultory' but has a mimetic function: the anapaests indicate appropriate marching, while the intermittent spondees stress the linking of hands, and the trochees conjure up the picture of hunting Orestes. However, it is highly unlikely that, in their role as maternal avengers, this orderly dance equals the *Semnai Theai*'s procession at the end. In all, the Erinyes' presence as chorus allows them to enact their song realising their function as Ἀραί and displaying their ferociousness (to the Athenian audience). Their influence upon events exceeds that of the former two choruses. However, the Binding Song must fail since the Erinyes' justice does not comply with the public good which the Olympian agents in the *Eumenides* try to enforce; Athena, who cares about communal justice and welfare, has already perceived Orestes' cry (235-43) and arrives before the Erinyes' exact vengeance upon Orestes.

Because the Binding Song is ineffective upon Orestes – he is still alive and shows no signs of fright[307] – one may ask what exactly, then, is the effect of it? There are various hypotheses. Apart from the suspense that creates a tight grip on the audience and the presentation of the Erinyes' dreadfulness and power (including their thorough judgement, *Eu*. 312, 313-20, 336-40, 354-9; cf. βυσσόφρων *Ch*. 652; and swift and effective action; *Eu*. 229-31, 251, 360, 381-

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[306] Prins (1991) 186-7.

[307] The Binding Song enacts the fear which took hold of Orestes at *Ch*. 1021-5. See Prins (1991) 183, 190. She agrees (190, 192) with Felman (1983) 64 and suggests that it is the loss of footing (physically and metrically) which causes the failure of binding Orestes. Even Athena has no qualms leaving Orestes alone for the duration of the second stasimon. In the end the Erinyes' solid setting of foot on Athenian ground shows how political institutions such as theatre and court become indispensable parts of the city.

4), it allows Athena to arrive after Orestes' summoning. Rabel's hypothesis that the Binding Song actually summons Athena who then saves Orestes through means of *peithô* is yet another possible view of its effect.[308] Indeed, since the Binding Song is a song of fate that is filled with self-fulfilling words,[309] Aeschylus could be initiating a dramatic chain reaction which aims at the Erinyes new cultic role as *Semnai Theai*. It seems possible that the Erinyes' Binding Song is an early judicial 'curse', as Faraone claims,[310] and thus it may possibly place them in an intermediate position between their function as goddesses of the curse and their final function which establishes them as objects of Athenian cult who can bless and whose relation to curses endows the Areopagus' judicial oath with numinous power. Lastly, it forms a perfect demonstration of their capacity to inspire fear (τὸ δεινόν) which will be essential for their role as *Semnai Theai* at the end of the trilogy.

2.4.4 The second choral ode

Before the second choral ode the chorus and Athena engage in stichomythia (*Eu*. 418-35). Yet unlike the violent dispute between the chorus and Apollo earlier, acceptance of the opposite agent dominates this dialogue. Key words regarding learning and good judgement (μάθοιμ', *Eu*. 420, δίδαξον, 431, σοφῶν, 431),

[308] Rabel (1979a) 16-21, esp. 21.

[309] See n. 294 above. Cf. also Johnston (1992) 94, 96-7 who comments that the Erinyes might have oracular powers since chthonian deities are frequently credited with such.

[310] See Faraone (1985) 153. Prins (1991) 188 argues that the Erinyes represent cledonomancy: 'they are Curses who perform the meaning of their own name.' Although she claims to follow Peradotto (1969b) 1-21, Peradotto (1969b) 20-1 argues that cledonomancy has no part in *Eu*.; Rabel (1979a) 16-21, esp. 16-17, criticises Peradotto, and proves that cledonomancy is applied in *Eu*. (esp. line 397 and the Binding Song). Prins also argues (190) that the Erinyes are actors who perform *atê* as a dance.

reverence (σεβούσηι, 435), as well as privileges (τιμάς, 419) and oaths (ὅρκον, 429, ὅρκοις, 432; contrast the initial Ἀραί, 417), but also compulsion and anger (ἀνάγκης, κότον, 426) evoke the gnomes of earlier choral songs (e.g. παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα, πάθει μάθος and χάρις βίαιος) and prepare for the second stasimon and the public trial. Athena's subsequent proposal to conduct a public trial (482-4) not only expands choral wisdom from the private to the public sphere (including the risk of the chorus' wrath being directed towards the *polis*), but it also prepares for its institutionalisation (esp. θεσμόν, 484).

In the second choral ode, the foundations of justice and the welfare of the *polis*, instead of personal vengeance, emerge as a large part of the Erinyes' interest (*Eu*. 490-565).[311] This resonates more with the outlook of the other choruses of the earlier plays, as Mitchell-Boyask notes.[312] In the first two strophic pairs the chorus laments and envisions moral anarchy if Orestes is exonerated and their privileges are overrun (490-525). They seem to suggest that not only their privileges but also Zeus' laws are ignored: θεσμίων (491) continues Athena's train of thought (484; cf. 571, 615), but also evokes Zeus' law παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα by the Argive elders' assertion θέσμιον γάρ (*Ag*. 1564). They put forward that tyranny and anarchy are inadequate systems to rule a community and make it prosper. Strophe β indicates that the removal of the Erinyes' rights equals the fall of *dikê* (*Eu*. 507-16). Of all the moral themes and imagery which surround the Erinyes' self-naming, they ally themselves with Justice at lines 511-12 (ὦ

[311] For a more detailed reading of ll. 490-1 see p. 221. Holst-Warhaft (1992) 158 comments that the meaning of *dikê* undergoes shift from 'tit for tat' to appropriate punishment. She also points out that Erinyes' female qualities seem less marked.

[312] Mitchell-Boyask (2009) 69-71.

Δίκα, / ὦ θρόνοι τ' Ἐρινύων),[313] and continually emphasise this association (492, 516, 525, 539, 550, 554, 564). Even though their understanding of *dikê* is still that of retribution, it contains glimpses of a justice that is appropriate to the law court in that they speak of a proper civic and cosmic order.[314] Further, they picture themselves on thrones (ὦ θρόνοι τ' Ἐρινύων, 512). Although this may seem arrogant at first,[315] it lends them a certain weight in civic matters;[316] indeed, in the end, Athena offers them a ἕδραν (855; cf. 805-6, esp. λιπαθρόνοισιν), which takes the ceremonial or royal aspect out of θρόνοι but grants them an influential position in the *polis*. The corresponding antistrophe fosters the connection between the Erinyes, on the one hand, and the Olympian, especially Zeus', will and civic justice, on the other (517-25). The Erinyes' assertion that fear is beneficial for a *polis* dovetails with Athena's concern for civic welfare. In particular, the chorus develops the interconnection between fear (φόβος) and reverence (σέβας) at lines 522-5: fear nourished in the heart of men inspires one

[313] Note that Justice is personified at *Eu*. 511. Cf. S. *Tr*. 807-9. The personification of justice is common. Mitchell-Boyask (2009) 70 interprets lines 511-16 as the Erinyes claiming that 'they *are* Justice', concluding that 'any further evolution of justice will have to take them into account.'

[314] Following contact with Athena, they bring attention to civic justice (492, 511, 516, 522-5, 539, 554, 564), piety (532-7, 540-9) and the need for fear (517, 522). In particular, the Erinyes fear that the foundations of justice will crumble and that parents victimised by their children will not invoke them (512). Reverence for and voluntary practice of justice (525, 550-1), respect for parents and guest (545-9), moderation (532-7) and need for fear (517-25) replace a catalogue of vindictive violence. But the threat of punishment by the Erinyes remains necessary for the maintenance of this traditional moral order. Cf. Mitchell-Boyask (2009) 98-100 on justice in *Eu*.

[315] Apollo speaks of his throne (*Eu*. 616-18). This takes the edge off the Erinyes' arrogance. Podlecki (1989) *ad* 512 comments that the Erinyes are somewhat presumptuous, since thrones are reserved for the great gods or kings. Note the talk about the interrelation of *hubris*, health of mind and prosperity (*Eu*. 532-7).

[316] Sommerstein (1989) *ad* 508-12 acknowledges that the image dignifies the Erinyes. This passage seems to convey both a warning against arrogance and a prelude to the Erinyes' final reception of worship from all.

to revere justice.[317] In addition, the chorus' proclamation that σωφροσύνη comes under duress echoes the gnomes πάθει μάθος (*Ag*. 177; cf. 250-1) and χάρις βίαιος (182). The plots of vengeance and murder and the agents' perpetuation of *atê* in *Agamemnon* and *Choephori* allowed for παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα to supplant πάθει μάθος up until now. Hence the chorus re-introduces an important theme that is essential for the establishment of justice appropriate to the Olympian gods. Given that the Erinyes' task is the embodiment of vengeance, punishment and suffering, the weight between παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα, on the one hand, and πάθει μάθος, on the other, seems equally distributed.

Moreover, lecythia, which is the predominant metre in the Hymn to Zeus (*Ag*. 160-83) and in the third stasimon of the first play, provide the appropriate metre in the first two strophic pairs of the second choral ode thus emphasising the continuation of the Argive elders' philosophy; the metre reflects the Erinyes' adjustment to Olympian justice. Scott argues that the improved musical order of the second choral ode renders the Erinyes fair and honest in comparison to the Olympians as well as showing their concern for mankind.[318] In contrast to the Erinyes' dreadful appearance in the *epiparodos* and the first choral ode, they appear now beneficial to the community. The chorus' bloodthirsty nature demonstrated earlier remains as an embodiment of τὸ δεινόν, which it hails as deterrent to citizens' wrongdoing. However, the methodical lecythia are soon replaced by dactyls (*Eu*. 529-31, 533-5), iambics (536, 554; cf. 550, 553), cretics (528, cf. 536, 555) and bacchiacs (555). The Erinyes' sensible choral philosophy

[317] The text is corrupt at line 522. However, the editions of Podlecki (1989), Sommerstein (1989 and 2008) and West (1998) render the meaning alike in the sense of connecting fear and reverence.

[318] See Scott (1984a) 124- 7, esp. 126.

is destabilised by their erratic performance. They still seem to lack a *chorêgos* who brings order and purpose to their song and dance. Lecythia will resurface in the choral exodus again when the Erinyes have been co-opted into the city as *Semnai Theai* and accepted (the 'saviour') Athena as their '*chorêgos*' who gives them direction.

The third strophe elaborates on the interrelationship between fear (φόβος) and reverence (σέβας),[319] advocating the choral philosophies of σωφροσύνη and πάθει μάθος from the earlier plays. The Erinyes' condemnation of anarchy and tyranny (*Eu*. 526-9) recalls how the Argives fear the tyrants Clytemnestra and Aegisthus, but do not respect them (e.g. *Ch*. 55-9, 1046-7), and how they abhor Aegisthus (*Ag*. 1612-16, 1625-7, 1633-5, 1643-8). Establishing the Areopagus later Athena advises the community to respect a system void of tyranny and despotism (*Eu*. 696-7). This implicit commentary on the value of reverence is further explained in the Erinyes' perception of *hubris* as the child of irreverence (δυσσεβίας μὲν ὕβρις τέκος ὡς ἐτύμως, 534)[320] and their advice that healthy φρένες (535-6) bring prosperity (ὄλβος, 537). Men's reverence (before gods, parents and guests) and just conduct is a means to achieve prosperity. Ὄλβος is the ultimate objective of both the individual and the community – it is 'dear to all and much wished for' (ὁ πᾶσιν φίλος / καὶ πολύευκτος ὄλβος, 536-7). This continues and develops the Argive elders'

[319] The Erinyes' visibility is not only a means to capitalise on their capacity to inspire fear but also to establish *sebas* for them.

[320] If σωφροσύνη does not rule the mind of a man, then ὕβρις may emerge in its stead. Ὕβρις is a quality despised by the gods and considered impious thinking resulting from defect φρένες. Mikalson (2005) 181-2. Plato (*Phdr*. 237E-238A) treats reason and *sophrosune* as opposites of emotion, irrationality, and *hubris*. See also Fisher (1976) 177-93 and MacDowell (1976) 14-31on *hubris*.

advice not to accumulate excessive amounts of wealth in *Agamemnon* (378-84). Without threat, the chorus makes clear that respect for the altar of justice (539) and for parents and guests (545-9) as well as moderation, abstinence from greed and blasphemy (540-4) are virtuous and just. In particular, the image of the abused altar of justice (539) reiterates the choral lyrics in *Agamemnon*'s first stasimon (*Ag*. 381-4).

Without delay, the last strophe picks up on the concept of χάρις βίαιος (*Eu*. 550; cf. *Ag*. 182): the Erinyes suggest that man can be virtuous and just by his own free will, without compulsion. They propose that good judgment or learning precede wrongdoing and consequent suffering – 'das antizipierte πάθει μάθος' as Gruber succinctly calls it.[321] But by itself this is too hopeful an outlook: ξυμφέρει σωφρονεῖν ὑπὸ στένει (*Eu*. 521) and the Erinyes' assertion that fear forms a beneficial building block in a just community (517-25) counterbalance the idea of uprightness without ἀνάγκη. The last strophe continues to warn against ὕβρις and elaborates on the interconnection between σωφροσύνη, σέβας, δίκη and ὄλβος. Imagery of *Agamemnon*'s third stasimon runs again analogous with the imagery of the Erinyes' second choral ode in the *Eumenides*. Both choruses use the metaphor of the reef (*Ag*. 1005-6; *Eu*. 564), and the shipwreck (*Ag*. 1005-14; *Eu*. 553-65) to express a common understanding of

[321] Gruber (2009) 448-57, esp. 456. He explains that ever-present *deinon* resides at the centre of learning. The knowledge about inevitable punishment can be understood as anticipated *pathos*. There is a new foundation for *pathei mathos*: the wrong path / the wrong φρονεῖν forms the basis for *pathei mathos* in the Hymn to Zeus, but in the last play's second choral ode the ever-present *deinon* anticipates *drasanti pathein* and guarantees σωφροσύνη. He concludes that healthy thinking is not the end in itself but it is the requirement at the outset.

justice and morality within the community and cosmos by the ghastly example of a criminal's fate.[322]

In summary, in the second choral ode, the chorus of Erinyes recommends an organic social, judicial and moral order reminiscent of earlier choral philosophy. Yet despite their exceeding of the previous choruses in authority, activity and influence, they lack the means in a *polis* (cf. they belong to no race or country, *Eu*. 57-9, 410-12) to realise their vision. Besides, their ancient privilege to exact vengeance and fulfil curses renders them hazardous overseers of civic justice. However, the chorus lays down a firm foundation of *dikê*; they deliver the preface for Athena's establishment of the Areopagus. Their understanding of justice as proclaimed in the second choral ode becomes institutional law (θεσμός, 484, 491, 571-2; cf. 681, 690-3) and finds its proper place in the Areopagus as Athena later reiterates their ideas and brings them to fruition.[323] Athena's reference to θεσμόν (681, cf. 484) echoes the Erinyes' 'μοιρόκραντον' θεσμόν (392, 491, 571-2). Likewise, she speaks of the preventive value of φόβος and σέβας (690-1, 696-8, cf. also fear, 700-3, reverence, 705, 710), denounces anarchy and tyranny (696) and esteems moderation (704). In particular, her description of the Areopagus embodying fear and ensuring civic safety (700-3) recalls the Erinyes' second stasimon (esp. 517-

[322] Cf. Rosenbloom (1995) 110-11 and Mitchell-Boyask (2009) 70-1.

[323] On *nomos* and *thesmos* see subchapter 3.8. See Jones (1956) 24-36, Ostwald (1986) 85-8, 129, Todd and Millett (1990) 11-13 and Cartledge and Millet (1990) 231-2. Holst-Warhaft (1992) 158 notes the fine details in transition as she argues that the *hymnos desmios* is destroyed by a *neon thesmion*: a shift has taken place from what binds by custom and what binds by law. Nicolai (1988) 46 comments that Aeschylus does not specify whether Athena introduces *thesmos* by the authority of Zeus or by her own. The Erinyes also consider their Binding Song a form of *thesmos* (*Eu*. 389-93, esp. 391). Cf. Prins (1991) 187.

25) and resembles their cultic function at the end. Last but not least, just like the Erinyes, the Areopagus is described as quick to anger (ὀξύθυμον, 705).

2.4.5 Athena's establishment of the Areopagus and Orestes' trial

The Erinyes' participation in the trial constitutes a considerable advancement in choral activity from the earlier choruses.[324] The chorus exceeds its advisory function and assumes the role of plaintiff thus acting as a quasi-*dramatis persona*. The Erinyes' condemnation of transgressors and anarchy develops the Argive elders' case against Agamemnon, Clytemnestra and Aegisthus and the slave women's desire to kill the tyrants. Although the Erinyes refrain from violence or cursing and express their concern for the *polis*' welfare, their approach to justice is still tied to Clytemnestra's cause during the trial (*Eu*. 566-777, esp. 587, 591, 595, 607-8, 622-4, 653). Their verbal influence remains strong (585-608): Orestes gets caught in their net of questions that inquire into his motivation and justification; he hands over the defence to Apollo. The problem between old and new gods trumps maternal vengeance or justice. Each party brings forth one-

[324] The Erinyes' strength and influence is emphasised especially by the tied vote: they come very close to arguing their case against Orestes successfully. See Fletcher (2007b) 34 and also Pötscher (1989) 59 who says that the number of votes against Orestes shows that his deed was wrong. The text does not make it clear whether Athena casts her vote together with the jurors or only if the jurors' vote produces a tie. It seems plausible that Athena casts her vote after the jurors' one has produced a tie, because that lends Athena greater authority, which is important in the resulting interaction with the Erinyes. Winnington-Ingram (1948) 130-47, Gagarin (1976) 121-7, Hester (1981) 265-74, Goldhill (1984a) 256-9, Podlecki (1989) *ad* 734-5, Sommerstein (1989) *ad* 736-40, Seaford (1994) 366 with n. 133, and van Erp Taalman Kip (1996) 146 discuss this ambiguity of Athena's vote. For example, Podlecki (1989) *ad* 734-5 claims that she only adds the pebble if the jurors' votes are tied; Seaford (1994) 366 with n. 133 believes that Athena casts the deciding vote (i.e. her vote produces the tie and acquittal); van Erp Taalman Kip (1996) 146 argues that she votes together with the jurors. See also Tyrrell (1984) 122-3 with nn. 25, 26. He argues (123) that her vote results in the tie and concludes that the jurors must have 'voted six to five for mother's blood.' Cf. Vernant (1981) 23 n. 3: 'it was only Athena's vote that made the two sides equal.' Mitchell-Boyask (2009) 78-87 (cf. 100-2) concludes that there must be eleven jurors. Irrespective of whether Athena's vote produces the tie or not, Fletcher (2007b) 34 remarks that the Erinyes come close to arguing their case against Orestes successfully. The Erinyes, although 'defeated', have shown the high degree of their strength and influence.

dimensional arguments. The Erinyes neither contest nor accept Apollo's biological argument about the superiority of the father over a mother in relation to their child;[325] this argument is immediately succeeded by Apollo's political promises to Athens, Athena's announcement for votes to be cast as well as the Erinyes' concern about the power of the old gods and the protection of their rights. Such self-interest is exhibited by the previous choruses only to a minor, less threatening, extent.[326] Because the new gods have interfered with the Erinyes' *timai*, the Erinyes' lust for vengeance is now directed at the new gods and the city. Their concern for the welfare of the city expressed in their second choral ode and also made manifest in the trial through their concern about Orestes' purification (654-6; contrast 711-12, 719-20) is quickly forgotten in the face of having their ancient honours overridden by the Olympians. Just like the earlier choruses (e.g. *Ag*. 975-83, 990-7; *Ch*. 23-31, 463-75), the chorus of Erinyes yields to *pathos*. In addition to its advice to the jurors to respect their oaths (*Eu*. 679-80) and to steer clear of disrespecting the Erinyes (711-12), the chorus threatens destruction of the *polis* even before the verdict (711-12, 719-20).

Orestes' acquittal puts an end to his dilemma but simultaneously expands the crisis onto the *polis*. The Erinyes' *pathos* culminates in a dynamic third choral ode. Iambics and dochmiacs predominate in the metre of the third stasimon,[327] strophic pairs are separated by Athena's conciliatory speeches and

[325] Cilissa's speech (*Ch*. 734-65) already removes the Erinyes from the role as champions of the mother, by discrediting Clytemnestra as a mother. However, as long as the ghost of Clytemnestra is onstage an identification between Clytemnestra and the Erinyes takes place inevitably, just as the association between them is achieved through imagery in *Ch*. Cf. Tyrrell (1984) 120.

[326] The Argive elders are concerned about their authority and rights (e.g. *Ag*. 104-6, 1633-5). The slave women are only concerned about their well-being as members of the *oikos* (e.g. *Ch*. 75-83, 160-1, 458-60, 476-8) – they are concerned about the authority and rights of Agamemnon's heirs.

[327] The absence of lecythia (except at line 782) suggest that this choral ode is not analogous to the Hymn to Zeus or the second choral ode. See Gentili (2008) 233 n. 1 on *Eu*. 837-46, 870-80. He

antistrophes repeat strophes. The consequential metrical disarray is expressive of the Erinyes' agitation, lamentation and anger (which stands in stark contrast to Athena's formally organized speech in trimeters).[328] The choral philosophies, especially the value of σωφροσύνη, πάθει μάθος and σέβας, collapse in *pathos* (e.g. ἐγὼ δ' ἄτιμος ἁ τάλαινα, *Eu*. 780 = 810, ἀντιπεν - / θῆ, 782-3 = 812-13, γελῶμαι, 789 = 819, ἔπαθον, 790 = 820, ἰὼ †μεγάλατοι κόραι δυστυχεῖς† / Νυκτὸς ἀτιμοπενθεῖς, 791-2 = 821-2): their personal suffering causes them to overthrow their healthy (/civic) thinking and act by the law of παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα. The Erinyes want to cause suffering in revenge (ἀντιπεν - / θῆ, 782-3 = 812-13). Athens must suffer blight not for exonerating the matricide, but for overriding the Erinyes' ancient personal privileges (778-93 = 808-23, 840 = 873). Unlike the earlier choruses, that only influence the *dramatis personae* in their action, the chorus of the Erinyes in *Eumenides* has a clear vision of what it wants to achieve and is ready to act as though they were *dramatis personae*.

Peithô no longer belongs to the chorus' lyrics; instead, Athena uses *peithô* (πίθεσθε, *Eu*. 794, εὐπειθής, 829, ἀλλ' εἰ μὲν ἁγνόν ἐστί σοι Πειθοῦς σέβας, 885) to constructive ends in her interludes between the chorus' strophic pairs (794-807, 824-36, 848-69). Besides flattery – Athena acknowledges that the Erinyes are older and wiser (848-9; cf. 883) calls them great, implacable

points towards the association of dochmiac metre with so-called lamenting anapaests: 'from the point of view of pathos these anapaests are treated as actual dochmii.'

[328] Just as the Erinyes are infuriated as a consequence of not getting what they originally want, the chorus of Argive elders becomes furious after the murder of Agamemnon (e.g. *Ag*. 1643-8).

(928-9), reverend (951)[329] and kind (992),[330] harmony between the Olympian and chthonian gods, civic employment (not the abolition) of the Erinyes' fearsome nature and conferral of new honours upon the Erinyes form the crux of her persuasion.[331] This scene and specifically the use of πότνια (951) reminds one of the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*: Demeter, the angry mother, first prevents all growth and birth and brings the world to its knees; she then restores fertility after she makes amends with Zeus (through Rhea). Likewise, the Erinyes first threaten infertility, then, appeased and instructed by Athena, they safeguard civic growth. But Athena does not need to first witness the Erinyes' poisoning of her city to convince the chorus to have a positive effect on the community. She links honour (*timai*) and reverence (*sebas*) with fertility and prosperity (*olbos*): the Erinyes have not been dishonoured (796, 824, 882-4), but will receive honours (807, 833, 891), become co-residents of Athens (833, 868-9, 901, 916, 1011, 1018) and play a vital role in conferring riches and fertility upon the *polis*, its citizens and its land (804-5, 834-6;[332] cf. the inverted statement / condition that they must refrain from

[329] Πότνια emerges as an attribute common to both the Erinyes and Demeter (μέγα γὰρ δύναται πότνι' Ἐρινὺς, 951). See Dietrich (1962) 143 and (1974) 190.

[330] Lebeck (1971) 19 with n. 33 points out that despite Athena's flattering words, she teaches the Erinyes a new concept of justice (*Eu*. 848-9, 882-3; cf. *Ch*. 171). Dirksen (1965) 87-8 argues that it is Athena's *charis* that recognises the wise side in the Erinyes despite their anger. Chiasson (1999-2000) 148 observes that Athena asserts the Erinyes' divinity. He further argues that the 'sacrifice on behalf of children and marriage implicitly grants longevity that is characteristic of deity to their devotees'.

[331] Here, persuasion, unlike earlier in the trilogy, where it is presented as a temptation to transgress (e.g. *Ag*. 205-7, 385-6; *Ch*. 726), has a positive outcome. It shows Persuasion supporting civic stability and prosperity as well as conciliation instead of the trampling of basic rules. See Podlecki (1989) and Sommerstein (1989) *ad* 885, Vellacott (1984) 22, 30-2, 125-6, and Mitchell-Boyask (2009) 92.

[332] The Erinyes' shift of concern from *oikos* to *polis*, from natural to societal law, becomes apparent in their assignment of a role in marriage. Foley (1994) 150 comments on the tensions over marriage and its role in the larger social structure. Although there are no indications in the text that the Erinyes punish killing between husband and wife, they receive a share in the sacrificial offering in the rite of marriage (834-6), and care for marriage being successful (958-60). Cf. Kuhns (1962) 40. Petersmann (1979) 41-53, esp. 41-5, observes that the Erinyes need the Moirai for blessing marriage. If he is correct, then not only the Erinyes, but also the Moirai, extend

causing sterility, 800-3, 830-1, 858-63).[333] Athena appeals to the Erinyes' desire for honour (τιμιώτερος, 853, τιμίαν, 854, τιμωμένην, 868, τιμωμένηι, 891) and their sense of justice in two respects, literally (δικαίως, 888, 891) and in principle, which forbids them from bringing harm to Athens (885-91). She also employs the principle of positive reciprocity (τοιαῦθ' ἑλέσθαί σοι πάρεστιν ἐξ ἐμοῦ, / εὖ δρῶσαν, εὖ πάσχουσαν, εὖ τιμωμένην / χώρας μετασχεῖν τῆσδε θεοφιλεστάτης, 867-9). She emphasises that their new task has benign ends (εὖ, 868). The repeated εὖ underscores the benefit that the Erinyes will receive in Athens. Above all, the Olympian goddess appeals to the Erinyes' σωφροσύνη (esp. γεραιτέρα γὰρ εἶ / καὶ τῶι μὲν εἶ σὺ κάρτ' ἐμοῦ σοφωτέρα, 847-8). Although both female deities, Demeter (i.e. in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*) and the Erinyes, receive new honours in a world governed by Zeus to achieve a resolution, the Erinyes' understanding and exercise of justice is restricted and changed, whereas Demeter's honours are amplified.[334]

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their concern for nature onto that of culture by merit of this example; the harmonious union between Zeus and the Moirai (*Eu*. 1045-7) would attest to this hypothesis.

[333] Wüst (1956) 104-7 comments that the old majesty of the goddess of the earth is reconstituted, and that the poet has given the primitive regal forces (*Urgewalten*) back their holiness which was taken from them in Homer. The Erinyes' new home is within the city walls; they are active from within the heart of the *polis*. See Dirksen (1965) 92. Lloyd-Jones (1956) 67 remarks that 'the Eumenides do not change their character, but they do a deal with Athene, and in consequence their attitude changes.' See also Heath (1999) 36 on the meaning and value of the Erinyes' incorporation under Athena's guidance. See Easterling (2008) 230-5 for a recent attentive reception of the final scene. See also Goldhill (1984b) 172-3 on the question of *telos* and reconciliation in the last play.

[334] See Foley (1994) 116. Demeter has a choice as to the new honours from Zeus. Mitchell-Boyask (2009) 90 comments, 'A model for the Furies' anger can be found in the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, as that goddess directs her final rage not against Zeus, whom she cannot affect directly, but against the fertility of the earth, which supports the humans who worship him and the other Olympians.' (Cf. ch. 4). Cf. also the connection between the *Oresteia* and the Eleusian Mysteries as discussed by Headlam (1906) 268-77, Thomson (1935) 20-34, Thomson and Headlam (1938) 357 and Bowie (1993) 24-6.

Athena retains the moral and religious philosophy throughout the trilogy and assimilates it to the Areopagus and the cult of the *Semnai Theai*. Her strongest arguments are delivered with the weight of *Peithô*; but unlike the ruinous and guileful nature of *peithô* in the first two plays (*Ag*. 385-6; *Ch*. 726), Athena relates *Peithô* with reverence (σέβας, *Eu*. 885) and thus also with *dikê* (cf. 887-91, esp. δικαίως, 888, δικαίως τιμωμένη, 891); however, the chorus, just as the previous choruses, perceives *peithô* aligned with deceit (δόλος, 836, 846). But Athena's speeches not only reiterate the choral philosophy of the Argive elders and slave women, but also that of the Erinyes in the second stasimon, which becomes lost in their lust for revenge.

Last but not least, Athena's threat of Zeus' lightning bolt indicates that the law παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα still operate and that the Erinyes are not the supreme authority in practising these laws. This 'inferiority' correlates with the Erinyes' role as chorus which limits their function to counselling and passivity. Athena's threat also recalls χάρις βίαιος (*Ag*. 182). Aeschylus restricts the Erinyes' exercise of (personal) retribution in order to enable a dramatic solution: a new judicial system that distributes justice while still also serving as a vehicle for public vengeance (τιμωρία)[335] is established. The Areopagus aids in keeping order in the city and in the cosmos. Its establishment makes room for the Erinyes to receive a role that sanctions justice and order, just as they have in pre-Aeschylean sources.

[335] This mirrors the movement of *dikê*: *dikê* as retributive justice moves towards *dikê* as legal justice in *Eu*. See Mitchell-Boyask (2009) 98-100.

2.4.6 The choral exodus and coda

The stichomythia following the third choral ode (*Eu*. 892-902) concentrates on the absence of *pathos* (893), privileges (894), civic prosperity (895), as well as positive reciprocity and reverence (897). At the end of the stichomythia the Erinyes ask Athena for advice on the content of their new hymn that gives blessing upon Athens (902, cf. 306, 331, 344);[336] in other words, they accept her as *chorêgos*.[337] This curtails their action: choral growth of influence and action comes to an end as Athena prevents Athens' ruin and makes the Erinyes subservient to civic order. The seemingly obsolete and incompatible Erinyes, whose aspect of fear is a prerequisite for establishing a just and prosperous society, are made compatible in their acceptance of Athena's leadership. Significantly, the chorus' question appears in the stichomythia's final position; Athena's rhesis, in which she elaborates on her offers and the Erinyes' new honours and tasks, appears to be a *chorêgos*' organisation for the final choral ode in which her fellow young women sing and dance.[338] Athena educates Erinyes,[339]

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[336] See Scott (1984a) 17. See also Tyrrell (1984) 117 on autochthony and re-creation of myth in this passage. Poliakoff (1980) 255 remarks that there is a change in the definition of victory (esp. *Eu*. 903).

[337] See Calame (2001) 10-18, esp. 16, on religious function, and 43-9 on the function of the *chorêgos*. Cf. also 72 on the *chorêgos*' higher social position; Athena enjoys a superior social and dramatic position in the play. Note that Calame's work, which concerns itself with the role of the young female chorus in Ancient Greece, does not discuss the chorus of Erinyes in *Eu*. The ambiguity of the Erinyes' age in *Eu*. might be reason for this (e.g. κατάπτυστοι κόραι, 68, γραῖαι, παλαιαὶ παῖδες, 69). The Erinyes' depiction as young women in art (see pp. 54-5 with nn. 130 and 138 and p. 67 with n. 155) and the constellation of the choral exodus in which Athena appears to guide the chorus, makes it highly probable that the chorus of Erinyes consists of young women.

[338] In retrospect, the fact that the Binding Song is 'lyreless' futher suggests the lack of a leader (i.e. Athena as *chorêgos*) who provides musical guidance (cf. Calame [2001] 50-1 with n. 123 on Apollo, and 64-5 on the lack of a musical instrument suggesting the lack of leader). The second choral ode is shared between the chorus and Athena on a peculiar level: parallel to the chorus' song about civic concern, Athena acts for civic concern gathering jurors. Her choice to incorporate the Erinyes in the court procedures seems to form a prelude to her role as quasi-*chorêgos* of the chorus of Erinyes in the choral exodus.

[339] See Calame (2001) 222-31 on the chorus as a place for education.

turns them into an accomplished cult and later gives the signal for the final procession (1003-13, 1021-5). As young women, the Erinyes are the old order initiated into the new order.[340] The chorus' question of how the old can learn from the young in *Choephori* (171) anticipates the Erinyes' learning from and initiation into the new order by Athena in *Eumenides*. This new order is formed by a system of institutions and norms that govern the social, cultural, political and religious life of the Athenian community. Thus, before the choral exodus (*Eu*. 916-1020), the chorus' derelict advisory function is approximated to the earlier choral philosophy now articulated by Athena. The Erinyes' (latent) capacity to be σώφρων (βυσσόφρων, *Ch*. 652; thorough judgement, *Eu*. 312, 313-20, 336-40, 354-9) is realised as the *Semnai Theai* inspire and constitute a paradigm of good sense. Whereas in archaic thinking, the Erinyes keep order, in classical thinking (/in the *Oresteia*), they bring disorder; Athena re-aligns the Erinyes with their traditional role at the end of the trilogy. The choral exodus continues to realise the merit of σωφροσύνη and anticipated πάθει μάθος as well as the civic benefit deriving from the interrelation between fear (φόβος) and reverence (σέβας), thus establishing justice and prosperity for the *polis*.

Lecythia start off and prevail in the choral exodus.[341] The metre supports the presentation of the Erinyes as orderly goddesses and singers.[342] But, unlike the

[340] Calame (2001) 12 explains that 'the old order is represented by the community of childhood, the new order by the socio-cultural system of the adult community.'

[341] Scott (1984a) 135, 136, 149 argues that the lecythion metre returns in full force at end of *Eu*. It signals removal of confusion as words of justice are sung to the metre associated with justice; it does not repeat but surpasses the hopes of the chorus in *Ag*. (sung in lecythion, e.g. 160-91, 1025-30). He also explains (130) that the dactylic lends epic dignity and (133) that the Erinyes are also led offstage in dactyls. Likewise, Chiasson (1988) 2, 18-21 comments that the Erinyes sing lecythia at the moment of resolution and their integration into the system authorised by Zeus whose justice is concerned with both blessings and punishment. Mitchell-Boyask (2009) 33 comments that by depicting the new honours of the Erinyes in dactylic metre the finale of the *Eu*. operates like a Homeric Hymn.

[342] See Scott (1984a) 127-33 and Chiasson (1988) 19-21.

earlier songs, which lapsed into 'disorderly' metre, slow and ordered lecythia are sustained in the third and last strophic pair.[343] This metre suitably expresses the Erinyes' following of Athena's instruction and their new peaceful attitude. Blessings of prosperity and fertility for Athens (*Eu*. 916-1020) form the content of the Erinyes' last song, which is sung in harmony with the other agents onstage and accompanied by *ololugmos*. The choral wisdom and advice uttered in the Hymn to Zeus, the third stasimon in *Agamemnon* and the second choral ode in *Eumenides* (all of which are composed in lecythia) congregate in the form of good judgement, the beneficial use of fear, reverence, positive reciprocity, civic justice and welfare in the Erinyes' last choral ode and Athena's interpolated speeches in her role as quasi-*chorêgos*. The choral exodus makes explicit how τὸ δεινόν (e.g. *Eu*. 517-25, 690-706, 990) and knowledge of inevitable punishment lead to σωφροσύνη and consequently bring about a just and thriving *polis*.

The choral exodus begins with the Erinyes' acceptance of co-residency with Athena (*Eu*. 916-26). The Erinyes' integration is emblematic of the integration of τὸ δεινόν, which inspires δεῖμα in the Athenians urging them to be virtuous and just for which they will be rewarded with blessing and prosperity. In anapaests that signify formality and authority, Athena elaborates on the Erinyes' fearsome nature and inevitable punishment (927-37). In particular, lines 932-3 reiterate the Erinyes' bringing of physical pain and mental destruction to the wrongdoer declared in the Binding Song (372-7). Her emphasis on the consequences for not knowing of the Erinyes' punitive function (930-7) insinuates the value of σωφροσύνη and anticipated πάθει μάθος. The Erinyes' presence

[343] The second strophic pair contains various other metres, such as hemiepes, but lecythia remain intermixed (957, 958, 966, 967, 977, 978, 986, 987).

makes σωφροσύνη possible from the beginning (cf. *Ag*. 175, 182-3). Fear (931-7; cf. 867-9, 910, 918, 954-5) promotes justice which in turn promotes fertility (i.e. creation and blessing, 903-9, 921-5, 938-47, 956-67, 976-87, 1006-8). They maintain their original role as avengers but employ it for the benefit of the *polis*.[344] Unlike the chorus in *Choephori*, who perceives *dikê* as synonymous with vengeance, the chorus of Erinyes / *Semnai Theai* now identifies *dikê* with legal order and civic welfare.

In the first antistrophe (938-48),[345] the chorus continues to sing about its positive effect upon the community evoking earlier choral philosophy, especially χάρις βίαιος and σωφροσύνη. The chorus sings of its χάρις (939). Although this recalls δαιμόνων δε' που χάρις βίαιος / σέλμα σεμνὸν ἡμένων uttered by the chorus of Argive elders in their Hymn to Zeus ('this favour comes with force from the gods sitting on exalted deck'[346], *Ag*. 182-3), the chorus' χάρις is embedded in its promise of how it brings blessing and fertility to the community and how it prays against civic sterility and destruction. Its force (βία), albeit unspoken, is contained in the Erinyes' visibility as chorus onstage and in their presence on a ἕδραν (855; cf. σέλμα σεμνὸν ἡμένων, *Ag*. 183). Δαιμόνων (*Eu*. 948) seems to refer to the collective of gods, both Olympian and chthonian (in harmony), and interconnects choral passages central to the establishment of civic justice and peace: the Argive elders assure that the gods bring σωφροσύνη

[344] See Seaford (1994) 132-3 who argues that reciprocal violence is only ended when the Erinyes accept both the verdict of a law court and a cult for themselves.

[345] Metrically corresponding to the first strophe, lecythia predominate in the antistrophe.

[346] The alternative translation 'rowing bench' seems to relate to the shipwreck metaphor at *Ag*. 1005-14 and *Eu*. 553-65 – the occurrence of δαίμων in the imagery at *Eu*. 560 leaves no doubt that Aeschylus builds on earlier choral imagery to convey the causal relationship between men's just, virtuous and moderate behaviour and cosmic justice and prosperity men receives in turn.

(*Ag*. 182); the chorus of Erinyes asserts that a god laughs at the disempowered hubristic man (*Eu*. 560); Athena invites the relentless goddesses to stay in her *polis* (928-9); the Erinyes / *Semnai Theai* avow that fertility and prosperity are granted by the gods (948, 963).[347]

Unlike in the previous two plays where the Erinyes' name attends the fulfilment of vengeance and curse, Athena's use of Ἐρινύς (μέγα γὰρ δύναται πότνι' Ἐρινύς, *Eu*. 951) portrays them as goddesses who use their power to keep order.[348] The Erinyes' practice of reciprocity is no longer only limited to negative reciprocity (i.e. vengeance, παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα), but also now embraces positive reciprocity (953-5): they can cause a life of tears (e.g. 954-5),[349] but also joyous song (953). The Erinyes are no longer Ἀραί, but transformed into a blessing for the city of Athens. Implanted in Athena's reference τοῖς μὲν ἀοιδάς (953) are the chorus' ritual value for establishing civic justice and anticipation of the joyous procession at the end. The Erinyes cease to be an exclusively horrid χορός (Cassandra's vision, *Ag*. 1186-90). Τοῖς μὲν ἀοιδάς even seems to realise the watchman's hope for joyous choral dances in response to συμφορᾶς χάριν (*Ag*. 23-4; cf. *Eu*. 939).[350] Gruber correctly recognises the cessation of the

[347] These are selected references; *daimôn* (/*daimones*) is mentioned in other places too (e.g. *Ag*. 1175, 1468, 1477, 1482, 1569, 1660, 1663, 1667; *Ch*. 125; *Eu*. 150, 302, 802, 920-1, 1016).

[348] Podlecki (1989) *ad loc*., Sommerstein (1989) *ad* 951 and intro §2. Referring to them as Ἐρινύς rather than as a euphemism in the end also emphasises that the citizens ought to fear them. Not only the absence of Εὐμενίδες, but the dual allusion to the Erinyes' chthonian aspect contained in their name Ἐρινύς suggests that their chthonian nature is not ignored, but acknowledged and respected, and rendered useful for upholding civic peace and justice and promoting fertility

[349] Cf. *Eu*. 782-5, 801-3, 812-15 where they precipitate infertility and bane. As chthonian goddesses they possess constructive and destructive functions. Cf. *Il*. 9.455 and Paus. 8. 42. 2. See Harrison (1899) 205, Wüst (1956) 114-15, Rohde (1920, 1972) 5 and 6, 247, and Henrichs (1984) 263.

[350] The watchman only hoped for dances in Argos, but his hope is even exceeded in that they will take place in the Panhellenic city Athens.

(antagonistic) communication between the Erinyes and Athena; both address the audience – the Erinyes through prayers for the *polis* and Athena through descriptive interpretation which connects their prayers with Athens thus forming a foundation for her citizens to be virtuous.[351] His observation provides further evidence for the argument that the Olympian goddess acts as a quasi-*chorêgos* for the chorus of Erinyes. Athena voices and refines earlier choral expressions along with the Erinyes; the daughter of Zeus and patron goddess of Athens possesses the authority and influence to co-opt the chorus which has so far foiled its assimilation by insisting on its classified role as goddesses of vengeance and curse and its horror. In addition, their lyric exchange enacts the harmony between the Olympian and chthonian gods which becomes manifest in the parallel references to Zeus (by Athena, 974)[352] and the *Moirai* (by the Erinyes, 961).[353]

The chorus' second strophic pair and Athena's interludes (*Eu*. 956-95) deepen the realisation of choral philosophy and justice in the *polis*. The chorus prays against an ἄτη that is civil war (i.e. they pray for the absence of *stasis*, 976-87; cf. 858-66;[354] contrast *Ag*. 1117, 1119),[355] against ὀργή (contrast *Ch*. 451-5),

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[351] Gruber (2009) 470.

[352] Athena also gives praise and gratitude to *Peithô* and its triumph over destruction and hostility (970-2).

[353] See Sommerstein (1989) *ad* 956-67 who comments that their new tasks are normally those of the Olympians. Further, the Erinyes appear to be in balanced association with both the divine realms: they include both sky and earth in their blessings as well as they acknowledge Olympians and chthonians.

[354] Athena especially instructs the Erinyes to refrain from causing civic war. But the Erinyes never threaten civic war. Flaig (2006) 48- 51 comments that civil strife is the worst curse of all in Athena's eyes. See also Dodds (1973) 51. Heath (1999) 37 perceives a link between the Erinyes 'hybrid ethos' and 'inspiring internecine strife'. See also ch. 4 on the events in 458BC (social and political unrest following Ephialtes' reforms).

[355] Cf. *Eu*. 934 where hereditary guilt still lingers on, but becomes subject to trial. See subchapter 1.4.5 on a discussion of *atê*. See also the use of στάσις ἁμή at *Eu*. 311 (cf. Henrichs [1994-5] 62-3): the Erinyes may imply that their former choral formation with its anger and drive for vengeance is no longer present at the end.

against the passion for vengeance amongst those not entitled to it, and against the fact that those who have been wronged and have justice on their side try to achieve it through committing another injustice (*Eu*. 976-87).[356] It is made implicit that σωφροσύνη is the prerequisite for the absence of injustice. Through the Erinyes' new position as objects of Athenian cult they will reward and preserve the continuation of just people and weed out the bad (*Eu*. 956-67, esp. ἐνδίκοις, 966, 992-5; cf. 909-37, 953-5).[357] Before the chorus' last strophe, Athena underlines that they function predominantly by positive reciprocity and fear (ἐκ τῶν φοβερῶν τῶνδε προσώπων / μέγα κέρδος ὁρῶ τοῖσδε πολίταις. / τάσδε γὰρ εὔφρονας εὔφρονες αἰεὶ / μέγα τιμῶντες καὶ γῆν καὶ πόλιν / ὀρθοδίκαιον / πρέψετε πάντως διάγοντες, 990-5; cf. εὖ δρῶσαν, εὖ πάσχουσαν, εὖ τιμωμένην / χώρας μετασχεῖν τῆσδε θεοφιλεστάτης, 868-9).[358] In return for the Erinyes' lending of their powerful weapon 'τὸ δεινόν' to Athena and her city, they are publicly recognised and revered. The choral exodus never tires of making clear the connection between fear and reverence.

The metre that has been used for weighty choral philosophies throughout the trilogy, lecythia, also delivers the chorus' final strophic pair. Σωφροσύνη (*Eu*. 1000; cf. εὔφρων, 1030) and σέβας (εὐσεβοῦντες, 1019) form key ideas

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[356] Dodds (1951) 18.

[357] The Erinyes maintain their principle of negative reciprocity (which includes παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα). Cf. Hes. *Op*. 274-81; cf. also Heath (1999) 17. He further formulates (39) that 'the Furies do not lose their bite.' Chiasson (1999-2000) 155-6 comments that the Erinyes' maintenance of their punitive power is reflected in their costuming (i.e. masks and robes).

[358] See also Lebeck (1971) 59-66 and Chiasson (1988) 18-19. Note also that their identification with ἄραι (*Eu*. 417) is not brought into effect after their defeat at the court.

in the chorus' rejoicing. These key ideas highlight that healthy φρένες can precede suffering (i.e. anticipated πάθει μάθος) and that fear (φόβος) and reverence (σέβας) are interrelated. In addition to the Erinyes' punitive function, they now also exercise a preventive function. Athena, in her role as quasi-*chorêgos*, organises and directs the last procession: leading the way, she ushers the Erinyes to their new home underground (1003-9, 1022-6) near the Areopagus and the Acropolis, connecting them with the preservation of moral law and order, and at the bottom of the hill of Ares.[359] Their underground residence is further evidence for the fact that the Erinyes are aligned with their traditional aspects of keeping order. The metre suggests that their footing is steadfast.[360] Solemn sacrifices (1006), instead of duplicitous or bloody (/human) ones, embellish their procession.[361] Athenians will have no reason to complain about the fortune of their lives if they pay honour to the Erinyes (μετοικίαν δ' ἐμὰν / εὐσεβοῦντες οὔτι μέμ- / ψεσθε συμφορὰς βίου, 1018-20; cf. συμφοραῖς, 1031). The herald's hope for χορῶν κατάστασιν / πολλῶν ἐν Ἄργει τῆσδε συμφορᾶς χάριν ('many choral dances in Argos as a result of good fortune', *Ag*. 23-4) comes true in Athens.

The last choral ode provides revealing clues about Aeschylus' choice of the chorus of Erinyes in *Eumenides*. As mythical figures embodied onstage the

[359] This association with Ares (i.e. strength deriving not only from warfare but also from the Amazons' failed attempt to defeat the Athenians in battle, despite sacrifices to their father Ares) is linked to their new constructive qualities. See Visser (1984) 206. See Mitchell-Boyask (2009) 21-23 on the myth of the Areopagus.

[360] Prins (1991) 190, 192 and Felman (1983) 64.

[361] On sacrifice throughout the trilogy see subchapter 3.5.

chorus of Erinyes has an influential bearing on *polis*-matters.[362] Because choral song and dance is a ritual action which hands down society's values and norms,[363] the Erinyes' role as chorus and their emblematic performances facilitate the establishment of their cult and Athenian justice and prosperity. The chorus of Erinyes does not form the usual line of communication between a deity and its followers as Calame explains,[364] but more precisely between divine justice and Athenian citizens, between religious cult and civic justice. The fact that the Erinyes are a chorus of divinities renders their paying homage to a deity[365] redundant. Instead, the Erinyes dedicate their last choral song and dance (and the procession) to Athena, her city and its justice: they promote Athens' judicial institution and embody *polis*-cult by Athena's (and Zeus') will.[366] The Erinyes' final choral ode is concerned with Athenian reality (i.e. the *polis*). Having changed their appearance from abstract mythical creatures in the first two plays into singers and dancers onstage in the last play, their choral performances transform myth into reality.[367] In contrast, the earlier choruses only sing about

[362] Myth shapes reality. Cf. Shapiro (1994) 1, 'What we call mythology was, for the Greeks, the early history of their own people.'

[363] See Bierl (2009) 16-7 n. 43, 19-23. Cf. Calame (2001) 231: 'music and dance are means of communicating by performance and assimilating by mimesis a precise set of contents.' Kowalzig (2004) 42-3 comments how choral performances are the medium through which a whole community experiences its social and religious structure. See also Kowalzig (2006) 79-81 and (2007) 1-12, 13-23, 32-55, 181-23, Easterling (1988) 109, Bacon (1994/5) 6-24, Henrichs (1994/5) 56-111, esp. 68, Sourvinou-Inwood (2003) 513-18 and (2005/6) 293-304, esp. 297-9, and Ajootian (2005) 223 for the reception of ritual in ancient theatre. Meier (1988) 154-6 succinctly explains how theatre affects civic order.

[364] Calame (2001) 207-63 on the function of the lyrics chorus.

[365] See Calame (2001) 89-206 on the chorus and ritual and its religious aspects that associates it with a deity. Calame does not mention the Erinyes in his discussion.

[366] As discussed above, the fact that they are a (virgin) chorus in need of a *chorêgos* allows Athena to guide them.

[367] The Erinyes' role as chorus prepares them for the cultic role as *Semnai Theai* sanctioning the Areopagus in 'real' Athens (i.e. beyond the walls of the theatre). Cf. n. 361 above.

myth (e.g. fall of Ouranos and Kronos, *Ag*. 167-73, Asclepius, *Ag*. 1022-4; catalogue of gynocratic women, *Ch*. 602-30).

Dactylic rhythm indicates the march-like formation in the final celebratory procession (*Eu*. 1032-5 ≈ 1036-8, 1039-42 ≈ 1044-6/7). Unreserved joy is conveyed through the absence of dochmiacs (i.e. absence of *thrênos*), as well as through the escorts' words and phrases such as εὐφαμεῖτε (*Eu*. 1035, 1038) and ὀλολύξατε νῦν ἐπί μολπαῖς (1043, 1047).[368] In contrast to the Binding Song and the jubilation which degenerated into further suffering in the earlier plays, the final song is a genuine hymn of celebration and joy.[369] In *Agamemnon*, the joy of *ololugmos* is not realised. The watchman anticipates jubilation too soon (*Ag*. 28-31). Clytemnestra feigns delight at the Argives' homecoming (587) and cries *ololugmos* at Agamemnon's death (1236-7). The *daimôn* of the house inspires Clytemnestra to raise a song of triumph (1468-74).[370] In *Choephori*, the chorus first expresses their intent to raise a *paean* to welcome Orestes (*Ch*. 340-4), then in joyful anticipation of Aegisthus' and Clytemnestra's death (387), and finally as Orestes and Pylades force Clytemnestra into the palace (942-5). *Paean*, *ololugmos* and death are blended against the background of a victory that spawns more disaster. But in *Eumenides*, *ololugmos* becomes finally affiliated with joy, victory and piety for the gods: the escort raises sincere shouts of joy as they usher the Erinyes to their new home and cult (*Eu*.

[368] *S.v.* ὀλολῦγή and ὀλολυγμός in *LSJ* (1996) is the loud crying, normally done by women, in honour of gods and / or expressive of joy. In rare cases it may also denote lamentation.

[369] See McClure (1999) 110-11 on the duplicitous *ololugmos* in the first two plays, and the unsullied one in the last play. On *paean* and *ololugoi* in the *Oresteia* see Haldane (1965) 37-40. See also Sommerstein (1989) *ad* 1043. See Zeitlin (1965) 507 on the restoration of *ololugmos* in *Eu*. Stehle (2004) 152-4 perceives the Binding song as a 'horrid parody of euphemic ritual;' the final procession is a 'powerful evocation of efficacious ritual' that removes the disturbance by the Binding Song.

[370] Fleming (1977) 230 titles this a 'violation of musical nomos'. See also Haldane (1965) 38.

1003-47, esp. ὀλολύξατε 1043, 1047; cf. εὐ- compounds 1035, 1039). The procession recalls marriage processions:[371] the image of the Erinyes' marriage with the state shows that human institution and ritual bring order in the end.[372]

When the *Propompoi* call the Erinyes Σεμναί they summarise the choral philosophy of σωφροσύνη, σέβας, χάρις and positive reciprocity. Their song depicts the *Semnai* and itself as positively minded (εὐθύφρονες, *Eu*. 1040, ὑπ' εὔφρονι πομπᾶι, 1034). The implicit mutual respect is accentuated by the reference to the deities as honour-loving (φιλότιμοι, 1033) and their reception of reverence and sacrifices (τιμαῖς, θυσίαις, 1037) by the citizens. Analogous to the harmony between men and gods, there is also harmony between the Olympian and chthonian gods (1045-7).[373] The trilogy's trajectory of choruses culminates in the Erinyes' co-optation into the *polis* as objects of cult. The first two choruses' desire to establish order is achieved in the Erinyes' presence in the city as a catalyst for being σώφρων, for avoiding *atê*, vengeance and curse and for sustaining civic peace, justice and prosperity. Just as choral metaphor turns into action, fiction turns into reality in the *Eumenides*: not only does the escort's reference to the Erinyes as Σεμναί (1041) resonate with the audience' knowledge of the cult of *Semnai Theai*, but the final dramatic procession also coincides with the festivity intrinsic to theatre performance. Sommerstein points out that the

[371] Συνοικία (*Eu*. 916) is the closest word in Greek to our 'marriage'.

[372] Tölle-Kastenbein (1964) 54-65, esp. 58-64, and Crowhurst (1963) 283-6 on the procession-type movement. The final procession is a *Langreigen*, which is used for marriage processions and sacrificial processions. The *Oresteia* shows a unity of marriage and sacrifice (e.g. Helen/Troy, Clytemnestra/Cassandra/Agamemnon); sacrificial ritual and marriage ritual properly coexist. The blessings of the Erinyes on Athens recall blessings of bridal couple in marriage ritual.

[373] Gruber (2009) 474 notes that this reflects the connection of *pathei mathos* and *drasanti pathein*.

audience is directly addressed and Stehle argues that it participates 'through its familiar role in euphemic ritual of silence and response.'[374]

2.4.7 Summary

In summary, there is a strategic narrowing and clarification of the Erinyes' function throughout the *Oresteia* and a dramatic progression concerning the Erinyes' function and method in *Eumenides*. The latter specifically runs analogous with the trajectory of choral odes in the last play. At the beginning of *Eumenides* the description of the Erinyes is marked by desire for violence and vengeance and the execution of παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα. The first choral ode mixes the nature of the previous choruses and captures the Erinyes' dual side. Lecythia indicate that the chorus of Erinyes reflects the wisdom of the Argive elders and their understanding of Zeus' laws in *Agamemnon*. Yet the first stasimon's violent content mirrors the slave women's lust for vengeance in *Choephori*. With the arrival of Athena, the Erinyes' second choral ode exhibits civic concern that entails the value of σωφροσύνη, the beneficial use of fear (φόβος) and its interrelation with reverence (σέβας), χάρις βίαιος as well as the law παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα; however, as avengers of Clytemnestra their objective conflicts with what they advocate. As Athena becomes the Erinyes' *chorêgos*, the third choral ode aligns with the moral and religious philosophy of the earlier choruses, transform the Ἀραί (e.g. 417) into *Semnai Theai* who confer blessing and curtail choral action that has grown up until this point. The Erinyes maintain their old privileges of τὸ δεινόν and the practice of παθεῖν τὸν

[374] Sommerstein (1989) *ad* 1039 and Stehle (2004) 152-4 with quote on 153.

ἔρξαντα as a deterrent, while their new privileges (τιμή / σέβας) are tied to the civic justice embodied by the Areopagus and the citizens' exercise of σωφροσύνη thus anticipating πάθει μάθος. This last choral ode / exodus advances choral philosophy from fiction to reality: the value of φόβος, σέβας, σωφροσύνη and justice in order to cultivate a community with lasting prosperity is transmitted onto real life Athens in form of the celebratory procession (*coda*) that resembles the Panathenaia.[375] The cledonomantic nature of the Erinyes' final song particularly assures that their blessings will be fulfilled.[376]

The contradictions inherent in the Erinyes' functions in the first two plays are resolved at the end of *Eumenides*. The clash between generalised justice and the specific representation of a murdered mother ceases. Not only does Clytemnestra's curse come to nought, but the *Semnai Theai*'s sanctioning of the *polis*' justice, peace and prosperity is in harmony with the principle of patriarchal hegemony. Embedded in the conclusion is the superiority of the paternal curse. The role of the *Semnai Theai* even seems to resemble the paternal curse found in the *Oresteia* – both have regard for and assure patriarchy and civic stability and fertility. The pro-Agamemnon attitude of the earlier choruses is now equalled by the Erinyes' pro-patriarchal and pro-*polis* attitude.

Whereas the choruses of Argive elders and slave women remain unchanged in their identity and function, the chorus of Erinyes, despite their acting with greater consciousness and determination, is re-formed by the drama. Although the Erinyes' action and influence excels that of the earlier choruses,

[375] See, for example, Headlam (1906) 268-77, Sommerstein (1989) *ad* 1028, 1031, Weaver (1996) 559-61 and Maurizio (1998) 297-317, esp. 305.

[376] Ll. 1014-20 (esp. ἐπανδιπλάζω, 1014) have a self-fulfilling overtone. See n. 294 on the magical properties of the Erinyes' song. See Braun (1998) 160-3. He adds (162) that the fact that their blessing is χάρις makes their blessing not a mere wish but a favour of the gods (i.e. fulfilment is guaranteed).

their role as chorus (i.e. *non-dramatis persona*) in *Eumenides* allows them less authority and power than the other *dramatis personae* and curbs their (sovereign) agency of the earlier plays; their instalment as *Semnai Theai* continues the restriction of their power.[377] Whereas the invocation of their name realises vengeance and curse in the *Agamemnon* and *Choephori*, it is associated with fear and reverence, punishment and blessing, sanctioning civic δική and ὄλβος in *Eumenides*. The *Semnai Theai* replace the Erinyes, but also retain the essence of the Erinyes. Their virginity allows for their assimilation, while their divine nature allows for their establishment as cult. Finally, the Erinyes belong – but not merely to an *oikos* like the earlier choruses, but to the greatest *polis*. Athens capitalises on the Erinyes' integration.[378] The *Eumenides* reveals that Athens has the capacity to incorporate differences, perform constructive transactions and bring about resolution: Athens guarantees honours and shelter for its alien residents while in return receiving cultic commodities that impel agricultural, military and economic growth thus making it a potent and frightening city state.

The trajectory of the choruses throughout the *Oresteia* runs parallel with the trilogy's development of order. In the first two plays the choruses' desire for order is not realised. The Erinyes, as abstract phenomenon and goddesses of vengeance and curse, appear as a factor of disorder (alongside men's transgressions) in the first two plays. The Erinyes' emergence as chorus in *Eumenides* allows for the restoration of their archaic role of bringing and keeping order, not only because their role merges with that of the chorus that strives for healing and order, but also because Athena shapes their function appropriate for her just and prosperous city. The next chapter will look at the Erinyes

[377] Their integration is *metoikia*. Cf. p. 208 with n. 500 and p. 236 with n. 562.

[378] Chapter 4 analyses this further.

transformation into *Semnai Theai* alongside the terms that are crucial in the depiction of order and disorder in the *Oresteia*. It examines how the trilogy, especially the *Eumenides*, reconstructs order through speech acts (curse, oath and blessing), emotions (fear and reverence), socio-religious practices (sacrifice, the guest-host relationship and supplication) and judicial institutions (the laws).

Chapter 3: From Erinyes to *Semnai Theai*

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter shows that the chorus and its performances have a bearing on communal justice and order. In the *Eumenides* the relationship between chorus (/choral performance) and communal order is especially outlined in the Erinyes' / *Semnai Theai*'s presence and role in Athens and their interaction with the *polis*' patron goddess and judicial system. This chapter looks at how the transformation of the Erinyes into *Semnai Theai* – from ancient goddesses of vengeance and curse to deities beneficial for the *polis* and recipients of *polis*-wide cult – is interwoven with key terms that are instrumental in depicting the trilogy's movement from disorder and perversion to justice and order. The Erinyes' conversion is particularly apparent in their acts of speech (curse – *ara*, oath – *horkos* as well as blessing), emotions /attitudes (reverence – *sebas* and fear – *phobos*), and socio-religious, judicial institutions (sacrifice – *thusia*, the guest-host relationship – *xenia* and supplication – *hiketeia*) including laws (social custom – *nomos* and divine law – *thesmos*). The Erinyes' advancement from embodiments of private vengeance and curse to being religious / cultic guarantors of civic justice and welfare, which reflects the *Oresteia*'s restoration of order, employs curse, oath and blessing, reverence and fear, sacrifice, the guest-host relationship and supplication, as well as *nomos* and *thesmos*. As these terms cease to be associated with moral and religious disorder and destruction they become essential building blocks in the framework of the dramatic action. In particular, these terms clarify how and in what form choral wisdom (i.e. gnomes and advice including παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα, πάθει μάθος, χάρις βίαιος, the relationship between φόβος and σέβας, and the value of σωφροσύνη as well as civic

justice and prosperity) emerges as the *Semnai Theai* become integrated into Athens. It will make clear how Aeschylus embeds key terms of order in the Erinyes' performance thus using the chorus of Erinyes, their song and dance to reflect on and promote Athenian justice and hegemony. This chapter furnishes a preparation to the next chapter 'why Athens', which will deal with the *Oresteia*'s historical and political background at 458BC (462/1BC); Aeschylus' presentation of restoring and upholding justice and order and his identification of key elements in this order are a prerequisite to reflecting on and understanding Athens' growth and its establishment as empire, its internal political situation at 458BC (462/1BC) as well as its foreign policies in Hellas. Presenting the establishment of long-lasting harmony and order for the *polis* and the cosmos in the drama the poet suggests how Athens' hegemony, its benevolent yet raw power in the Mediterranean, and its emergence as a Panhellenic centre of worship can also be established for a lifetime.

3.2 *Ara*

This section examines how the curse (ἀρά) is portrayed throughout the trilogy; it inquires into the Erinyes' / *Semnai Theai*'s relationship to curses, particularly hereditary, paternal, maternal and public curses, and how Athens implements the curse for its social, judicial and moral institutions.[379] It pays detailed attention to the paternal and maternal curse – both exist before the *Oresteia*.[380] The trilogy is

[379] Cf. Geisser (2002) 242–52 for a survey of the relationship of curse and Erinyes.

[380] Although the maternal curse occurs more frequently in pre-Aeschylean sources than the maternal one, paternal curses are always realised (maternal are not always). For example, *Od.* 2.134-6 refers to a hypothetical situation that never takes place, 'for my mother as she leaves the house will invoke the hateful Erinys.' Likewise, the woes suffered by Oedipus are an outcome of his mother's curses (*Od.* 11.271-80): 'but for him she left behind many woes, even all that the

the first extant narrative to pit them against each other and make a child choose between them. Aeschylus extends the curse on two levels. First, the Erinyes are no longer only associated with curses that are the result of perceived transgression of the naturalised social order such as the transgression of *timê* against a father, mother, or elder sibling, as found in Hesiod and Homer.[381] The poet accentuates their traditional concern with the status and gender of the one they avenge. Secondly, the poet extends the traditional 'simple' curse to that of a hereditary one whereby he also emphasises the notion of human free will and its limitations.[382] This subchapter further explores how choral philosophy is related to the curse on the house of Atreus, paternal and maternal curse as well as the public curse. It looks at how the various facets of the curse (i.e. knowledge of the curse to deter crime, its positive counterpart 'blessing' and its obverse the 'oath') run parallel with the emergence of an authoritative set of values at the end of *Eumenides*. In particular, it examines how the curse ceases to bring down the powerful and becomes institutionalised (as a cult) that protects justice and order and serves as a weapon against transgression.

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maternal Erinyes to pass' is an image to express Oedipus' woes. Finally, the *Iliad* remains silent about the wrath of Ares mother mentioned at *Il*. 21.410-14. For the curse in tragedy see also [A.] *Pr*. 910; S. *OC* 952, 154; *OT* 295; E. *Ph*. 67; *IT* 77-84; *Or*. 255-7; contrast S. *El*. 341-68; E. *Or*. 552-604. Lines 110-20, 275-6 in S. *El*. speak of the Erinyes of Agamemnon. The Euripidean Orestes contemplates the relative powers of his parents' Erinyes and the righteousness of matricide (*Or*. 544-63, 579-90). At *Or*. 411 Menelaus tells Orestes that the Erinyes weigh heavy on him because of kindred bloodshed. See also Wüst (1956) 116-17 and Sommerstein (1989) 7.

[381] For example, elder sibling: Hom. *Il*. 15.204; parent's curse: *Il*. 9.454, 9.571-2, 21.412, *Od*. 2.135, 11.280 and Hes. *Th*. 472 (cf. 180-7). See also subchapters 1.2 and 1.3 on preliminaries.

[382] This association already exists in pre-Aeschylean literature (*Il*. 9.444-57, 571, 21.412; *Od*. 2.134-6, 279-80). West (1999) 31-2 comments on curses and the Erinys in Homer. He explains (32) that the two concepts (i.e. the Erinys is the divine agent of vengeance and the curse is the direct evocation of punishment for the wrongdoer) are readily combined in the form of the Erinys being the agent who brings the curse to fulfilment. In drama, A. *Th*. especially associates the Erinyes with curses (e.g. 70, 574, 695, 791, 887, 955, 977, 1055). See also Wüst (1956) 104-7, Harrison (1903, 1922, 1975) 217-18, Burkert (1985) 200, Parker (1983) 199 n. 53, Faraone (1985) 150-4, and Burnett (1998) 54-7, 110-13.

A curse is an utterance that consigns one to divine vengeance and to malignant fate. It thus appears to be the religious injunction of (secular) vengeance. The curse sanctions and assures that παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα is realised in the form of bloody revenge and destruction. In their traditional role as goddesses of vengeance and curse, the Erinyes combine blood vendetta amongst men and its verbal form, the curse, in the *Oresteia*. Vengeance and curse permeate the *Oresteia*; however, retribution is not always linked to curse. This subchapter isolates those transgressions and acts of vengeance that are linked to a curse.

In the *Agamemnon*, the king Agamemnon, the gruesome events within the house of Atreus and the city of Argos form the focus of the relationship between vengeance and curse. Agamemnon is caught in a confluence of multiple imprecatory (and retributive) forces. The foremost one, the intra-familial hereditary curse attached to the house of Atreus, is mentioned relatively late in the first play (*Ag*. 1186-93, 1583-1603, cf. also 1087-97; *Ch*. 692).[383] Cassandra makes clear that the Erinyes are specifically related to this family curse (*Ag*. 1186-93). They have been present in the *oikos* ever since the crimes of Thyestes and Atreus, and especially since the former uttered a curse on the house. Imagery of violent butchery and feasting on the flesh of one's own kin (1590-7) is emblematic of the hereditary curse: just as Thyestes is eating the flesh of his own children served to him by his brother Atreus, so the hereditary curse consumes the life of one's offspring.[384] The first play merges the Erinyes' function as guardians of moral and natural transgression and those of intra-familial curse and killing.

[383] See West (1999) 38.

[384] Animalistic feasting is common imagery in the *Oresteia*; for example, the Argive beast lapping up the blood of the tyrant (*Ag*. 824-8) is parallel to the Erinyes in *Eu*. (193-4) as are the Atreidae / eagles feeding on a pregnant hare (*Ag*. 134-8). Cf. Also *Ag*. 48-54, where vultures grieve violently over the loss of their young ones.

What keeps this curse alive in the *Agamemnon*? Iphigenia's sacrifice appears to awaken the hereditary curse on Agamemnon's father (e.g. *Ag*. 205-47, 1521-9, Iphigenia's sacrifice; cf. 1500-4, 1598-1602).[385] Yet the *Oresteia* does not establish a clear connection between Iphigenia and the Erinyes curse.[386] As Iphigenia is sacrificed by her father her cry is suppressed, so that she cannot utter a curse (235-7, 248-9; cf. 228). However, her cries of 'father' (228) may trigger the curse and invoke the Erinyes.[387] The Erinyes never overtly aim at avenging the crime against Iphigenia in the *Oresteia*,[388] nonetheless one might infer that the Erinyes punish Agamemnon for this. Agamemnon's sacrifice of Iphigenia is thoroughly criticised by the chorus in the *Agamemnon*. In addition to the chorus' report of Calchas' fear of a μνάμων Μῆνις τεκνόποινος ('wrath that remembers and avenges a child', 155), which shows the prophet's understanding of the implications of sacrificing the girl, it condemns Agamemnon (e.g. 219-

[385] The similarity in language at *Eu*. 329-30 = 342-3 and *Ag*. 223 suggests the Erinyes' agency in the sacrifice. Cf. p. 124 with n. 291.

[386] When the trial in the *Eu*. presents Clytemnestra as deserving punishment (600-3, 625-39), the Erinyes make no attempt to establish that Clytemnestra was justified in taking vengeance for Agamemnon's shedding his daughter's blood. *Ch*. already covers her guilt (e.g. Cilissa's role). See p. 103 with n. 246 and p. 138 with n. 325. Only Clytemnestra uses Iphigenia's name (*Ag*. 1526 [daggered], 1535). Iphigenia's name does not occur in *Ch*. either; however, *Ch*. 242 remembers her as 'cruelly slaughtered / sacrificed'. See Zeitlin (1965) 463-508, esp. 489-92 on the disappearance of Iphigenia and Clytemnestra' character and daughters becoming victims of their father only. There is no evidence in extant Greek drama of a mother killing her daughter. But mothers kill their male offspring for various reasons. Agave kills Pentheus in her madness; Medea kills her sons to punish Jason; Clytemnestra desires Orestes' death for the sake of her own safety (*Ch*. 891). However, she only abuses Electra, but does not kill her or Chrysothemis. In regard to gender issues, Clytemnestra's desire to kill Orestes is an inversion of Agamemnon's sacrifice of Iphigenia. Since the queen will eventually be unavenged, this could indicate the failure of the principle 'two tits for one tat' (see Herman [2006] 405).

[387] Rabel (1980) 253-4, 255 argues that Iphigenia's cries of 'father' (*Ag*. 228) are in fact the cledonomantic curse which Agamemnon and his men tried to stifle (*Ag*. 235-7): the bloody events, especially Agamemnon's death, which follow in the house show that Iphigenia, though no longer mentioned by name in the last two plays, successfully contributes to the perpetuation of the curse providing work for the Erinyes. *Ag*. 146-55 might support this view.

[388] As has been established earlier, the Erinyes act according to the social status (and gender) of the one who invokes them. Since children have no social standing in Greece in 458BC, the Erinyes may neglect Iphigenia's justice.

223).[389] Later, Clytemnestra claims to avenge her daughter (1432-4) and that the *alastôr* of the house acts through her (1501).[390]

In addition to the curse of the *oikos*, the *Agamemnon* also mentions a public curse (*Ag*. 456-74, esp. δημοκράντου δ' ἀρᾶς τίνει χρέος, 457; cf. 1409). Beside the hereditary curse, Agamemnon also incurs the curse of his own people. The Argives are angry at the loss of many valiant men – not just members of his household, but citizens of the *polis*, who die avenging the honour of the Atreidae (638-45). After the chorus speaks of the public curse, it announces that the Erinyes' task is to bring down the one who prospers without justice (461-74, esp. 463). Thus, choral philosophy links the Erinyes to a public curse (cf. τιμωρία). Likewise, the chorus warns Clytemnestra of the public curse, the hatred of and banishment from the community resulting from the slaughter of Agamemnon and her *hubris* (1407-11). In particular, the chorus links the queen's irreverence (δυσσεβία) for her people with the public curse (1393-4, 1403-4). The subtle suggestion that σέβας and ἀρά are related anticipates the healthy judicial and moral constellation between reverence and fear at the end of the trilogy.

In *Choephori*, paternal and maternal curse replace the focus on hereditary and public curse. Matricide (e.g. *Ch*. 912, 924, 1052; cf. *Eu*. 94-178, 210, 652-6, 657-66, 736-40)[391] is the outcome of the paternal curse and the root of the maternal curse: the threat of Agamemnon's curse urges Orestes' killing of his

[389] However, the chorus refuses to endorse Clytemnestra's condemnation of Agamemnon on this ground later (e.g. *Ag*. 1426-30, 1448-54).

[390] Note that in her claim that the *alastôr* has entered her, she ceases to speak of vengeance for Iphigenia but claims atonement for the murdered children of Thyestes. But the chorus does not accept it. See Fraenkel (1950, 1962) *ad* 1501.

[391] The earliest references to the Erinyes in the *Oresteia* are neither concerned with kin-killing, nor with paternal and maternal curse (*Ag*. 59, 463, 645, 749, 991).

mother which in turn evokes Clytemnestra's curse upon Orestes. Παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα is ingrained in this causality. The various occurrences of curses in *Agamemnon*[392] are narrowed down to the curse on the house of Atreus and eventually become synonymous with the Erinyes of Clytemnestra.[393] Delphic authority on the curse, however, trumps that of the Erinyes in this play: the oracle is an institutionalised embodiment of curse and vengeance and enables the house to rid itself of the curse. The Erinyes seem to become divorced from the curse of the house with the occurrence of the oracular command to avenge Agamemnon: whereas prophecy and curse have always been in harmony before the Delphic oracle, they diverge after it.[394] The Erinyes' antagonist Apollo is the (only)[395] representative of the curse which requires the death of Clytemnestra to avenge Agamemnon.

The passage in which Orestes reveals Apollo's oracular command (*Ch*. 269-96) demonstrates a novel function of the Erinyes: they would punish the man who fails to take vengeance for a slain father.[396] The paternal curse is particularly

[392] The first play involves a range of curses relating to Iphigenia (*Ag*. 235-7), the public (463, 1409), Clytemnestra (1231-8, 1407-11) and the primordial crime (1189-91, 1596-1602) as well as miscellaneous commentary on curses (1114, 1564-6). All curses entail killing – even the curse of the *dêmos* (*Ag*. 456-74, esp. 463) indicates death for the wrongdoer.

[393] Contrast [A.] *PV* 910 where there is mention of the curse of a father. See also A. *Th*. (e.g. 70, 574, 695, 791, 887, 955, 977, 1055) on the Erinyes' relation to curses and Oedipus' curse against both his sons.

[394] See Roberts (1984) 36-7. Cf. also Braun (1989) 213 who argues that the Erinyes' declared disinterest in punishing Clytemnestra for the murder of Agamemnon in *Eu*. (210-12, 604-5) puts an end to their function of overseeing the chain of vengeance; Apollo is responsible for keeping the cycle of vengeance alive.

[395] Apollo gave the order. However, there are many others, such as Cassandra, the chorus of *Ag*., the chorus of *Ch*., the Areopagites and Athena who advocate or sanction this course of action. Cf. the epic and lyric tradition before the *Oresteia* (subchapters 1.2 and 1.3)

[396] The practise of familial impiety is brought to fulfilment mostly by curses. Mikalson (2005) 190-1.

concerned with communal well-being, albeit tied to the *lex talionis*:[397] the city and its socio-religious constructs bar the man who does not avenge the honour of his father. Unless Orestes kills those liable for his father's death by the principle 'tit for tat' (273-4), banishment from the city (289), exclusion from religious rites (291-2), altars (293) and the guest-host relationship (294), and death without honour and friends (295-6) await him.[398] In contrast to this meticulous catalogue of punishment uttered with Delphic authority, the maternal curse lacks equivalent force, civic concern and divine sanction: she asks Orestes if he has awe for a parent's curse (912) and invokes the wrathful hounds that avenge a mother (924).[399] Whereas the paternal curse ensures vengeance by punishing non-fulfilment of social and religious duty and necessity (i.e. not because of parricide), the maternal curse is dominated by Clytemnestra's private desire for vengeance that overrides social and religious constructs.[400] In addition, the inverted condition of the paternal curse aims at Orestes' self-preservation and the continuation of the royal bloodline: if Orestes fails to revenge Agamemnon, he himself, the last male heir of his family's blood, must die. In all, the imperative to avenge the father is particularly strong and justifies even matricide; the trilogy demonstrates the

[397] Although justice is not mentioned in Orestes account (*Ch*. 276-96), the chorus' following speech (*Ch*. 306-14) expresses the idea that justice works by reciprocity. Justice takes the place where one expects to find the Erinyes: the Erinyes and Justice serve the same function at *Ch*. 306-14, just when the content of the Delphic oracle has been made known to the audience. Yet this holds true throughout the trilogy: the Erinyes are associated with someone's claim to justice and vengeance.

[398] Leprosy also afflicts the one who does not restore his father's honour (278-82). However, this affliction has nothing to do with protecting the city from a man who does not fulfil his social and religious duty.

[399] Clytemnestra does not employ ἀράομαι (cf. *Od*. 2.135); nor does this verb occur in *Eu*.

[400] Regarding the maternal curse, one must keep in mind that the Erinyes do not defend Clytemnestra and her wicked ways in any other form than trying to punish the son who killed her; they are not aware of her adultery, murder of her husband, or the way she kept her children from coming to adulthood, marriage, inheritance and citizenship.

superiority of and greater force of the paternal over the maternal curse.[401] The differences in gender of the person who utters a curse recapitulate the traditional hierarchy of the family.

Hereditary and public curses, even though reduced to marginal concern, still dovetail with the paternal and maternal curses in the *Choephori*. Clytemnestra cries that a curse, which is hard to remove and looks far into the future, haunts the house (ὦ δυσπάλαιστε τῶνδε δωμάτων Ἀρά, / ὡς πόλλ' ἐπωπᾶις κἀκποδὼν εὖ κείμενα, 'O curse of this house, hard to wrestle free of, how many things you see – even what was placed well out of the way', *Ch*. 692-3);[402] but this is play acting: she blames the curse for killing Orestes and she is pleased that Orestes is dead. Further, Orestes invokes the powerful rulers of the underworld and the curses of the dead in a prayer asking for help for those that remain of the lineage of the Atridae (405-9). The collocation of the tyrannies of the underworld and πολυκρατεῖς Ἀραί (405-6) is suggestive of the connection between the curse and socio-political power. This immediately follows the chorus' declaration of the principle 'blood spilt must be atoned for' in which the Erinyes take a prominent role (400-4). The various curses' relation to the Erinyes and civic justice are clarified in the last play.

In *Eumenides*, the Erinyes appear as the embodiment of Clytemnestra's curse. They are the hounds in pursuit of Orestes to exact vengeance for matricide

[401] Cf. S. *El*. 115, 276, 490. The Erinyes of the father are more prominent in the myth of Oedipus in A. *Th*. In A. *Th*., Oedipus pronounces a curse against both his sons (e.g. 70, 723, 867, 977; cf. *OC* 1434). At *Tr*. 807-9 Hyllus warns his mother Deïanira that both Erinyes and Justice will punish her for killing his father Heracles; however, Deïanira unwittingly killed her husband, being deceived by Nessus. At E. *HF* 1073-7 Amphitryon fears that (his 'son') Heracles will kill him thereby adding the Furies' curse. Zeus overthrows his father at Hes. *Th*. 472. The Erinyes are born in the act of a son violating his father in the Hesiodic version (*Th*. 180-7). Wüst (1956) 116 lists further occurrences of paternal Erinyes.

[402] Here the curse is personified. Cf. *Ag*. 1565; *Eu*. 417. See Garvie (1986) *ad* 692.

(cf. *Ch*. 912, 924). At Delphi, where earlier their name prompted Orestes to commit matricide by divine authority, their function as executioners of the maternal curse is unsuccessful: the Erinyes' exhaustion and sleep as well as Orestes' flight to Athens are further evidence for the superiority of the paternal curse. The change of location from Delphi to Athens concurs with the first step in the change from private to public curse while it carries religious injunction onto the municipal grounds of the city. Performing their Binding Song, which is evocative of curse tablets,[403] the Erinyes exhibit their curse power in public: focussing on Orestes and the fulfilment of Clytemnestra's curse, the Erinyes' song and dance manifests features of the curse at the heart of Athens. The curse is a speech act; verbal power, just like other metaphors, turns into action.[404] Their subsequent public declaration that other powers in the Netherworld name them Ἀραί (*Eu*. 417)[405] lends additional weight to their ritual performance; in particular, the personification of ἀρά reinforces the Erinyes' conception as goddesses of destruction and vengeance (cf. A. *Th*. 70; S. *El*. 111; *OT* 418). However, since the Erinyes' understanding of *dikê* is exclusively tied to Clytemnestra's cause and the gnome παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα thus lacking concern for civic justice and prosperity,[406] their incantation is ineffective. Nonetheless, the first choral ode is a demonstration of the Erinyes' curse capacity and seems to be

[403] See Faraone (1985) 150-4 and (1991) 8.

[404] See p. 127 with n. 297.

[405] See Harrison (1903, 1922, 1975) 222 for a comment on line 417. *Ara* and the Areopagus are traditionally associated; thus the conception of the Erinyes as curses is a 'convenient bridge'. Prins (1991) 188 argues that the Erinyes represent cledonomancy: 'they are Curses who perform the meaning of their own name.' Although she claims to follow Peradotto (1969b) 1-21, Peradotto actually argues (20-1) that cledonomancy has no part in *Eu*.; instead, secular language takes over in the last play; Rabel (1979a) 16-21, esp. 16-17, disproves Peradotto.

[406] I.e. the Argive bloodline comes to an end with Orestes' death.

a primitive forerunner of the institutionalisation and politicisation of curse properties for the benefit of the *polis* at the end of the play.

After the trial the shift from private to public curse becomes explicit. The angry Erinyes threaten to blight the city (*Eu*. 781-7 = 811-17; cf. 711-12, 719-20). By negative reciprocity they want to return the slight to their personal honour with violence against the community (e.g. ἀντιπενθῆ, 782).[407] Their threat is no longer addressed towards a man (i.e. member of an *oikos*), but the collective of men (i.e. citizens) who worship the gods who have disrespected the Erinyes' ancient honours. But Athens averts such a calamity (794-807, 824-36) – instead, it makes the Erinyes' curse power its own and aligns it with positive reciprocity. The *polis* provides the *Semnai Theai* with a cult so that their curse power becomes subordinated to the city and serves its citizens. The *Semnai Theai* are the symbolic and religious enforcement of the curse (as well as oath and blessing) behind the Areopagus' justice. Their capacity to curse dovetails with the trilogy's choral insistence on σωφροσύνη and anticipated πάθει μάθος at the end of the last play; the citizens' healthy φρένες and their knowledge of the Erinyes' / *Semnai Theai*'s curse power prevents crime, encourages just conduct and promises prosperity. Likewise, just as fear (φόβος) is changed into a constructive civic property and becomes closely interrelated with reverence (σέβας), so does the Erinyes' / *Semnai Theai*'s curse become a beneficial asset related to reverence. In addition, the Erinyes' / *Semnai Theai*'s initiation into practising positive reciprocity by Athena calls into life their capacity to bless the city, its citizens, land and flock (e.g. 903-13, 922-6, 938-47, 956-67, 976-87, 1006-9; cf. 902). Their benediction is a divine favour which forms the positive counterpart to

[407] See Holst-Warhaft (1992) 160.

χάρις βίαιος (cf. 939; contrast *Ag*. 182). The Erinyes' reception of a cult sanctioning the Areopagus further suggests that the curse / blessing has been politicised and institutionalised while it maintains its roots in the religious authority of the Erinyes and the Olympian gods, especially Zeus. The next section will explore how exactly the curse is related to the oath, and how the Erinyes' transformation into *Semnai Theai* accommodates the curse-blessing-oath group to Athens' justice, supporting civic order.

3.3 Oath

An oath (ὅρκος) is an individual's solemn declaration invoking a god as a witness to the truth of one's statement.[408] In the *Oresteia*, an oath more precisely pertains to the invocation of a god as witness to the justice of an action; since vengeance, curse and *atê* permeate the first two plays of the *Oresteia*, an oath specifically constitutes an individual's calling for or assertion of divine consent for a rectification of a transgression, which forms a transgression in itself. Thus, in the first two plays individuals use oaths to achieve personal vengeance and gain which overturn the order of the community; especially in *Agamemnon*, oaths have a conspiratorial function. But the use of ὅρκος in correlation with vengeance and private justice in the *Agamemnon* and *Choephori* changes in the last play. In *Eumenides*, the oath becomes domesticated, tied to an authoritative judicial

[408] Sommerstein (2007) 2 notes three elements integral to an oath: (1) 'a declaration, which may be a statement about the present or past or an undertaking for the future', (2) a specification of the 'powers greater than oneself' who are invoked as witnesses', and (3) 'a curse which the swearer(s) call down upon themselves if their assertion is false or if their promise is violated.' Likewise, Cole (1996) 233 identifies three elements of an oath, (1) 'an invocation to a god or gods to bear witness', (2) 'a claim or a promise, and, in solemn or 'great' oaths', [sic] and (3) a self-directed curse if the claim were not true or the promise not kept.' See also 227-48 on oaths as a political ritual in Athens.

system which is sanctioned by the Erinyes / *Semnai Theai* as cultic objects of Athens. This subchapter examines how ὅρκος relates to private justice in the first two plays and how it changes to be principally concerned with civic justice and prosperity in the final play. It further explores how choral advice and wisdom are associated with an oath and which gods are invoked for the declaration of truth and justice; in particular, it looks at the Erinyes' / *Semnai Theai*'s relationship to ὅρκος. It seeks to explain how the Erinyes' reception of cult in Athens runs analogous with the institutionalisation and politicisation of an oath in the *polis*. To a certain extent, this subchapter is a continuation of the previous chapter on ἀρά: a curse can be a rebound of a broken oath; ὅρκος requires ἀρά as a guarantee to fulfill the oath. However, the first two plays are not concerned with this phenomenon – only the finale of *Eumenides* will introduce this concept for the *polis*' justice and well-being.[409]

In the first play oaths correlate with various forces: they are related to the Erinyes (*Ag*. 1196-7, 1198, 1431-4),[410] Justice (1432 – this is Clytemnestra's justice, i.e. private justice), the *daimôn* of the Pleisthenids (1568-70) and the principle of vengeance (1282-4, 1290, 1564); these instances show a relationship

[409] Cf. Burkert (1985) 197-8 on the Erinyes embodiment of the act of self-cursing contained in an oath. Cf. also *Il*. 19.258-60, Hes. *Op*. 803-4, where Ὅρκος, personified, is the son of Eris.

[410] In epic the Erinyes already answer and guarantee oaths (*Il*. 3.276-80, 19.258-60; cf. Hes. *Th*. 231, *Op*. 803-4, 219), and punish oath-breakers (*Il*. 19.418). Cf. also Heubeck (1986) 163 on the Erinyes' association with oaths in archaic epic. See Thomson (1941) 36 with n. 36, Wüst (1956) 112-13, Burkert (1985) 252, and Padel (1992) 165. Rohde (1920, 1972) 178 with n. 156 states that the judicial office is closely interlinked with the service of the Erinyes: both parties take an oath in the name of the Erinyes. He also says (178 n. 158) that the oath is not judicial but religious in nature, as it is bound up with a curse, if the oath is broken. Cf. E. *Med*. 754 and Dem. 21.115, 23.67-9. See Müller (1853) 145- 7, Dirksen (1965) 41, Parker (1983) 126 on pollution, the role of courts and oaths (also 186-7), Faraone (1985) 150-4, Podlecki (1989) 203-10 Appendix I on Judicial Procedure, Padel (1992) 165, Callaway (1993) 20 with n. 17, Henrichs (1994) 45, Geisser (2002) 384, and Fletcher (2007a) 102-12. Aeschylus links the notions of oath, curse and blessing through the concept of justice thereby commenting on the change from retributive to distributive justice and the parallel transformation of the Erinyes from goddesses of vengeance and curse to objects of Athenian cult throughout the trilogy.

between ὅρκος and Zeus' law παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα. In the concluding lines of her prophecy, which presents the revelling χορός of Erinyes as the embodiment of the hereditary curse on the house of Atreus, Cassandra wants to elicit an oath from the chorus testifying to the truth of the ills perpetuated within the *oikos* (1196-7; cf. 1184). But the chorus asks how an oath can provide healing (καὶ πῶς ἂν ὅρκου πῆγμα γενναίως παγὲν / παιώνιον γένοιτο; 1198-9). It suggests that swearing an oath in an environment polluted by private justice, vengeance, curse and deception cannot establish a cure for ills of the house. Inadvertently, the chorus implies that without the force of an institution, an oath has no judicial and veracious weight and thus lacks the means to bring about communal order. The appearance of ἐκμαρτυρέω at *Agamemnon* 1184 and 1196[411] is repeated at *Eumenides* 461: the idea of witnessing / testifying on an oath seems to be a precursor to linking the oath to an institution.

Cassandra makes mention of another oath – a great one sworn by the gods (*Ag*. 1282-4, ὅρκος ἐκ θεῶν μέγας, with 1290 transposed to follow 1283). She relates how the gods have sworn that the corpse of Agamemnon will bring the return of an avenger from exile. Ὅρκος is interrelated with the gnome παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα, on the one hand, and the Erinyes as goddesses of vengeance on the other. However, uttered by the gods, this oath appears to be linked to the principles of σωφροσύνη, πάθει μάθος and χάρις βίαιος, because the Hymn to Zeus explains them as divine principles governing human life.[412] Cassandra's

[411] Reading ἐκμαρτύρησον προυμόσας τό μ᾽ εἰδέναι (not ἐκμαρτύρησον προυμόσας τό μὴ᾽ εἰδέναι) at 1196.

[412] These principles will be reiterated by the chorus of Erinyes and its quasi-*chorêgos* Athena in the *Eumenides*' third choral ode after the Areopagus, where jurors swear oaths to abide by justice and truth, is established.

statement also anticipates the divine participation in rendering ὅρκος beneficial for civic justice and order in the last play.

The order of things can be reasserted by divine oaths or unsettled by conspiratorial oaths. Clytemnestra swears an oath at lines 1431-6 by the fulfilled *Dikê* due for her daughter Iphigenia,[413] *Atê* and the Erinys who aided her in slaying Agamemnon. Because she names the Erinys after the killing, she does not seem to activate the Erinys' agency to abet her murder. Instead, it seems that, failing to understand and apply the law πάθει μάθος, the queen invokes the principle 'tit-for-tat' (i.e. a curse upon herself) whereby she renders herself vulnerable to the Erinyes.[414] Clytemnestra does not fear retribution so long as Aegisthus protects her (*Ag*. 1435-7; cf. S. *El*. 276). But her oath is perverted: not only private vengeance but also her illicit affair with Aegisthus justify murdering the king whereby gender and social status hierarchy are upset.[415] Moreover, she wants to pledge an oath with the *daimôn* of the Pleisthenids[416] to accept the ordinance of παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα[417] and plague another family with death and destruction in the future (*Ag*. 1567-73, esp. ὅρκους, 1570). Insufficient ὄλβος, not violent death, is the consequent (and acceptable) suffering envisioned by Clytemnestra (1574-6). In contrast, the last play will show that true justice brings

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[413] Iphigenia's sacrifice is barely directly mentioned in *Ch*. and *Eu*. (e.g. *Ch*. 242). See p. 162 with nn. 386-7 and ch. 4, p. 239 with n. 568. See also Zeitlin (1965) 489 on slaughter in terms of ritual imagery and the sacrifice of Iphigenia as a prototype of the other murders.

[414] Her related display of *hubris* (e.g. *Ag*. 1372-92, 1420-1; cf. 1399) may also heighten her liability, because the Erinyes punish *hubris* (*Eu*. 530-7; cf. *Ag*. 764-72).

[415] Fletcher (2007a) 102-12 argues that oaths sworn by females in the *Oresteia* are perverted or incomplete.

[416] See p. 147 with n. 347 for the references of *daimôn* referring to the Erinyes.

[417] The chorus just asserted παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα. θέσμιον γάρ (*Ag*. 1564).

greater ὄλβος to a *polis*: the Erinyes will not be recipients of perverted oaths, but cultic guarantors of civic justice and prosperity. Clytemnestra also seeks to solidify the alliance formed between herself and Aegisthus in which they vow to take over the house of Atreus (cf. *Ch*. 977). Her oath does not coincide with the justice and well-being of the royal house (i.e. Atridae).[418] Clytemnestra's and Aegisthus' oath are part of a conspiracy detrimental to the community. Such objectionable employment of the oath links tyranny and gynocracy with sacrilege and the destruction of a family line; by inference, patriarchy (and, in particular, the imperative to avenge one's father) emerges as the quintessence of civic order.

Last but not least, in *Agamemnon*, oaths bring former or natural enemies together to unsettle the established normative order; this unsettling helps to usher in a new order. For example, fire and water, previously enemies, make a covenant to destroy the Achaean fleet (ξυνώμοσαν γὰρ, ὄντες ἔχθιστοι τὸ πριν / πῦρ καὶ θάλασσα, καὶ τὰ πίστ' ἐδειξάτην / φθείροντε τὸν δύστηνον Ἀργείων στρατόν, *Ag*. 650-2). This imagery will be echoed in the trial, the alliance between Athens and Argos and the commonality between chthonian and Olympian gods, particularly the Erinyes' integration into the city guarded by the Olympians, in *Eumenides*. The new order arising from those coalitions strengthens Athens in its military and political power and judicial order.

The second play continues the association between ὅρκος, vengeance (παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα) and the Erinyes. In its first song the chorus states that interpreters of Clytemnestra's nightmare declare, bound by a pledge to the gods,

[418] At *Ch*. 977 Orestes speaks of an oath pledged by the tyrant pair to kill Agamemnon and to die together. Garvie (1986) *ad* 975-7 points out that oath is personified here and that two of the other three Aeschylean instances of πίστωμα (*Ag*. 878; *Eu*. 214) are related to marital faithfulness. Rhodes (2007) believes (18) Orestes' comment (*Ch*. 978-9) to mean that the tyrant pair swears solidarity to each other.

that the divine ordinance παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα is active: the gods beneath the earth are angered at the killers of Agamemnon (*Ch*. 38-44).[419] By religious injunction the interpreters foretell the emergence of the Erinyes to exact vengeance (cf. 276-96). Likewise, Orestes, standing triumphant over the corpses of the murdered pair, proclaims that the tyrants' oaths kept true to their pledges: Clytemnestra and Aegisthus murdered Agamemnon, and their oath to die together was also fulfilled (977-9). Unlike Clytemnestra, Orestes refrains from uttering an oath. In retrospect, Clytemnestra's oath to *Dikê*, *Atê* and the Erinys causes her downfall (*Ag*. 1431-6): her unwise formulation (i.e. her lack of σωφροσύνη) to be free from φόβος as long as Aegisthus lights her hearth renders her now liable to Orestes' / the Erinyes' vengeance at Aegisthus' death. An oath invoking the Erinys (/Erinyes), like a curse personified by those goddesses, is a divine ruling that brings arbitrary justice to fulfilment.

Whereas *Agamemnon* (and *Choephori*) display the oath as a phenomenon connected with private justice, especially as a tool in perpetuating vengeance and subverting the established order of the community, *Eumenides* correlates it with distributive (and public retributive) justice, social institutions, political relationships, and, in particular, the Erinyes. At the beginning of the last play, oaths are not uttered, but their value is discussed. Accusing the Erinyes of disrespecting the pledge of Hera, goddess of marriage, Apollo suggests that their disregard, caused by the pursuit of exacting private (/maternal) vengeance, endangers the stability and welfare of society (the marital bed is greater (/more sacred) than an oath, *Eu*. 217-18). Civic order, social construct and Olympian

[419] Describing Clytemnestra's offering to the dead as τοιάνδε χάριν ἀχάριτον, ἀποτροπον κακῶν ('such is the graceless favour to avoid evil', *Ch*. 44) is evocative of χάρις βίαιος (*Ag*. 182): but unlike Clytemnestra who employs distasteful favours for her own protection, the gods guide men via forceful favours.

hegemony ought to establish guidelines for the utterance of a ὅρκος. Evidently, none of those fall in the Erinyes' sphere, especially not in their role as avengers of Clytemnestra. Further, in *Eumenides*, ὅρκος is moved from the private to a public sphere. The Erinyes want to defeat Orestes by an oath ordeal in Athens (429)[420] – but this seems irrelevant: such an oath establishes the fact whether or not he committed the matricide; it does not find out whether or not the deed is ethically correct, how to protect the *polis* from transgressions that threaten its stability and health or how to tie an oath to an authoritative judicial system.[421] Orestes' answer can only determine whether the Erinyes carry out the law παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα or not.

Ὅρκοις τὰ μὴ δίκαια μὴ νικᾶν λέγω ('I say that injustice is not to be victorious through oaths', *Eu*. 432) seems to echo the chorus' answer to Cassandra in *Agamemnon* (quoted above, 1198-9). Like the Argive elders, Athena believes that an oath must be bound to a positive force, one free of injustice, or personal (/arbitrary) justice for that matter. Before the second choral ode and Athena's inauguration of the court, Athena announces that her chosen jurors must respect the ordinance of an oath (ὁρκίων αἰδουμένους / θεσμόν, 483-4).[422]

[420] Rehm (2002) 95 credits the Erinyes with an understanding of Attic law because they try to elicit an oath from Orestes. Burkert (1985) 253 argues that this is an oath of purification. Fletcher (2007a) 107 refers to the Erinyes as oath goddesses. Rohde (1920, 1972) 178 refers to them as curse-goddesses. These are two sides of the same thing.

[421] See Podlecki (1989) 203-10 and Sommerstein (1989) 13-17 and *ad* 429, 432. Legal procedure at a homicide trial requires that an oath is taken by accuser and defendant. If Orestes fails to swear, his case is lost; however, he cannot swear that he had not killed his mother. For this reason, the trial would not take place at the Areopagus, but at the Delphinion. This scenario would interfere with Aeschylus' aetiology of the Areopagus. Cf. Sommerstein (2010) 26 who explains how the fifth-century Orestes would not have been tried before the Areopagus: Orestes does not claim that he had not killed his mother, but that he killed her 'with justice' – such a case is tried be the *ephetai* at the Delphinium.

[422] On the term 'juror' / δικαστής see Euben (1990) 82. See Mirhady (2007) 48-59 on the dikastic oath, the jurors' adherence to Athenian jurisdiction and their exercise of 'most just understanding'. Fletcher (2007a) 109 and Vellacott (1984) 32 put forth different perceptions of Athena's theory

The goddess links ὅρκος with respect (i.e. σέβας) and divine law while she sets up the institutionalisation of justice.[423] In addition, the goddess calls attention to the violation of an oath (ὅρκον περῶντας μηδὲν ἐκδίκοις φρεσίν, 489). She makes clear that unrighteous thoughts do not belong to the swearing of an oath asserting truth and justice. This resonates with the choral ethics of σωφροσύνη strung throughout the *Oresteia*.[424] Significantly, in the following second choral ode, the Erinyes remain quiet about ὅρκος; although their song develops tendencies that promote the community, concern for oaths beneficial for the *polis* is not pertinent because of their continued function as maternal avengers and curses.

At court Apollo's remark ὅρκος γὰρ οὔτι Ζηνὸς ἰσχύει πλέον ('for an oath is not stronger than Zeus', *Eu*. 621) develops Athena's comment earlier (ὅρκοις τὰ μὴ δίκαια μὴ νικᾶν λέγω, *Eu*. 432). Apollo makes clear that Zeus' will and divine ordinance are superior to swearing an oath declaring justice. Further, Apollo associates alliances and oaths. Promising Argive alliance to Athens (667-73) he argues that future generations of Athenians will be glad they have this sworn pledge. After his exoneration Orestes swears an oath that Argos will be Athens' ally (762-74). Unlike the perverted oath uttered by Clytemnestra,

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and practice of justice. Fletcher points out that Athena does not want injustice to win by oaths (*Eu*. 432) whereas Vellacott argues on the contrary that Athena's persuasive technique does not contain any allusion to moral issues, especially justice and truth. Vellacott (1984) 22 comments on reverence for oaths at *Eu*. 710; Apollo and Athena flout the sanctity of an oath. He also convincingly argues (36) that *Eu*. closes with justice assigned as a privilege to male supremacy. Indeed, oaths are sworn by male jurors. Cf. Cole (1996) 227-48, esp. 229-30, on oaths and the male community in Athens.

[423] The oaths taken by the participants of the court have religious underpinning. Cf. Rohde (1920, 1972) 178, 212 n. 156. The oath appeals to a higher instance and thus supplements human justice (i.e. the legal processes of men are supplemented by sacred oath-taking).

[424] It is also a subtle hindsight at the beneficial aspect of fear, on which the Erinyes will expound in their upcoming choral ode.

this (final) oath is pronounced by a male and concerns politics – a male domain. The oath becomes an institutionalised tie among non-kin (citizens) replacing kinship as basis of group life. The oaths sworn in the final stages of the *Eumenides* link so far disjointed groups for peace and greater power and serve the good of the community rather than individual purposes. Oaths ensure the performance of (civic) roles in good faith; in contrast, in *Agamemnon* and *Choephori*, oaths vowed among kin or in familial relationships (i.e. husband, wife, son etc.) served satisfaction of personal desires and flouted the order of things.

Just as the pledge to alliance promotes Athens' greatness, the dikastic vote promotes Athens' justice and order. Athena and the Erinyes remind the jurors to show respect for their oaths (*Eu*. 679-80, 709-10). Both point out that an oath is associated with σέβας. Φόβος and σέβας become interconnected in the oath. The fact that the correlation between φόβος and σέβας is also captured in the Erinyes' /*Semnai Theai*'s cultic presence in Athens at the end of the trilogy emphasises the Erinyes' τὸ δεινόν lends *gravitas* to oaths. The institutionalisation of the oath thus realises part of the choral wisdom in *Eumenides*. The Erinyes' new cultic powers assigned to them by Athena guard the system of justice.[425] Their civic cult (i.e. *Semnai Theai*) links the ritual of an oath and curse to the judicial and political life in Athens.[426]

In sum, at the end of the trilogy, oaths are used to support the *polis*' system of justice and its hegemony. Oaths taken by the jurors assure civic order

[425] See Mikalson (2005) 80-6 with n. 62.

[426] Din. 1.46-7 shows that their name, *Semnai Theai*, was invoked in oaths taken at the homicide cases that were tried at the Areopagus (cf. Dem. 23.67-9). Cf. Cole (1996) 227-48. See also Fletcher (2007a) 110.

and the oath uttered by Orestes promises military support to Athens to pursue its imperialistic strategies successfully. Further, the Erinyes' involvement with oaths and curses is an advantage to the *polis*, its politics and its system of justice and order.[427] Ὅρκος requires ἀρά as sanction and promise to fulfill the oath. As Aeschylus installs the Erinyes as objects of Athenian cult, their ancient association with curses remains intact. The Erinyes enable the political life of the *polis* by sanctioning the oaths that form the basis for participation in legal and political institutions. Fear and reverence before the gods and the civic institution are intrinsic to oaths: the swearer must fear a curse when his declaration at court is false; the swearer must have reverence for the god invoked in his oath. Fear and reverence are also requirements for civic justice and welfare beyond the oath. The next section examines the interrelationship between fear and reverence, the value of their synthesis for the *polis*, and the Erinyes' / *Semnai Theai*'s role in using fear and reverence as a compound instrument to inspire civic justice and prosperity.

3.4 *Phobos* and *Sebas*

The *Oresteia* moves towards establishing a relationship between fear (φόβος)[428] and reverence (σέβας) – this relationship unlocks the beneficial aspect of the former. Although the first two plays portray φόβος and σέβας as related, agents

[427] A curse is supernatural and religious, but a court that judges in cases of homicide excludes such practices. Cf. Dem. 23.67-9. See Geisser (2002) 384.

[428] In Aeschylus' trilogy one must differentiate between two types of fear: ὁ φόβος (/τὸ δεῖμα) constitutes the panic and fright felt by man while τὸ δεινόν is expressive of the fear emanating from superior divine forces such as Zeus, *Dikê*, *Aisa*, and, last but not least, the Erinyes. A strict verbal distinction in terms of helpful or unhelpful properties does not apply to ὁ φόβος, τὸ δεῖμα and τὸ δεινόν; for example, φοβ-words mostly, but not exclusively, denote unhelpful fear (e.g. *Eu*. 990-1). See de Romilly (1958) who succinctly explains Aeschylus' peculiar treatment of fear in her chapters on descriptions of fear (21-53), significance of fear (55-106) and the utility of fear (107-14). She points at fear's physical and metaphorical reality and perceives the Erinyes as a concrete divine reality which substantiates the autonomy and power of men's fear and conscience.

do not internalise this relation in their thoughts and action.[429] The destructive quality of fear and false reverence are emphasised in *Agamemnon* and *Choephori*. Feelings of fear signal the forthcoming agency of the goddesses of vengeance and curse, the perpetuation of *atê* and the shedding of blood. In the first two plays, φόβος reigns within the chorus' private organs, especially the heart (καρδία); communal fear is implicit in the chorus' fear. The last play not only moves φόβος into the public sphere, but it also associates it with σέβας; because this takes place in Athens, the audience is invited to internalise this relationship between φόβος and σέβας thus effecting civic justice and order in their own *polis*. In particular, Athena and the Erinyes' choral odes suggest that the correlation between φόβος and σέβας creates order. This subchapter traces the deployment of fear and reverence throughout the trilogy and examines how the Erinyes' transformation into objects of Athenian cult associated with the Areopagus concurs with the entailment of φόβος and σέβας to keep transgression at bay. It explores how the Erinyes become objects of σέβας whilst they maintain their fearful faces. It also explains how the Erinyes' visibility is not only a means to capitalise on their capacity to inspire fear but also to establish σέβας for them.

In the *parodos* of *Agamemnon*, the chorus contends that man must fear and respect Zeus, a harsh yet just ruler. In the Hymn to Zeus, the chorus makes clear that the supreme Olympian god guides men and endows them with healthy φρένες through suffering and force (*Ag*. 160-83, esp. πάθει μάθος, 177, and χάρις βίαιος, 182; cf. 355-85). It suggests that those who enforce justice should

[429] For example, in the first play, Agamemnon kills Iphigenia and Clytemnestra takes up with Aegisthus and kills husband and king. In the second play, the chorus fear the tyrants but have no reverence for them.

be both feared and respected – this implicit statement will have a bearing in *Choephori* and *Eumenides*. Zeus' rule stands in stark contrast to the tyrannical rule of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus in the second play; justice is trampled underfoot when the reverence for Zeus is flouted (*Ch*. 639-45, esp. Διὸς σέβας, 644-5). In the last play it forms a prototype of Athenian institutionalised justice sanctioned by the cult of the Erinyes / *Semnai Theai*.

At the beginning of the third choral ode, which immediately follows the carpet scene (*Ag*. 914-74), the chorus perceives fear fluttering in front of its heart (975-7) and hears the Erinyes' dirge (990-7).[430] Similarly, fear makes the chorus' heart dance when Electra is about to show them the lock of hair in *Choephori* (167;[431] cf. 1024-5). The physical and metaphorical realities of φόβος merge. Fear is transformed into lyric. But the chorus' fear and foreboding lack clear articulation and decisive action.[432] It seems that δεῖμα paralyses the Argive elders: fear aids in the killing, rather than preventing it. On the contrary, fearless Cassandra pronounces Agamemnon's death 'clearly', despite the riddling nature of her words.[433] The chorus is possessed by fear and confusion (*Ag*. 1242-5) listening to Cassandra's description of Thyestes' children on the roof (1214-41). But it is powerless to use its feelings of fear to bring about a cure to the cycle of vengeance and curse. In contrast to the chorus' intent on generating justice, Clytemnestra, uttering an oath by the Erinys, perceives no fear pervading her halls

[430] See Webster (1957) 152, Thalmann (1986) 508 and de Romilly (1958) 42-4, 46, 48, 50.

[431] Fear affects the heart (καρδία) at lines 102 and 167. Electra's statement μὴ κεύθετ' ἔνδον καρδίας φόβωι τινός ('Do not conceal your thought inside your heart for fear of anyone.', 102) emphasises the heart's susceptibility to fear. See also de Romilly (1958) 15.

[432] 'The chorus *sing about* that song because they cannot *sing it*.', as Thalmann (1985a) 108 puts it.

[433] See Thalmann (1985a) 106-11 on Cassandra and her song.

(1434). The Erinyes are figures who embolden the individual to go beyond φόβος and σέβας. This will be important in Chapter Four, where Athens, possessing the cult of the Erinyes / *Semnai Theai*, projects raw power intimidating its enemies and pursues an intrepid expansionist agenda in Hellas.

In *Choephori*, fear expands, intensifies and transforms into song and action.[434] The prologue indicates that fear possesses the queen (*Ch*. 33-41, esp. 35; cf. 543-50, 929[435]), the chorus of slave women (45-53) and the citizens (57-8).[436] Clytemnestra cries out in terror as she awakes from a nightmare portending retribution (35). Inspired by fear that breathes forth anger (cf. the Erinyes breathing anger, *Eu*. 840 = 873; cf. 53, 137),[437] Clytemnestra is ready to take action. However, her action is hypocritical: her *choai* are not meant for honouring the chthonian gods or dead Agamemnon, but to shield her from wrath. Likewise, the chorus of slave women is afraid (*Ch*. 45-53). But in contrast to the queen, whose offerings are irreverent and self-serving in purpose, the chorus turns its fear into a performance of a *thrênos*, a civic ritual, thus showing reverence for the *polis* (i.e. complying with the social norm) and the gods.[438] The extension of fear

[434] Fear is often a reality principle in drama – what characters and chorus fear becomes dramatic reality. See de Romilly (1958) 61, who comments, 'Les textes, en effet, parlent volontiers de prophéties; et il n'y a pas lieu d'en être surpris: puisque du simple battement, du simple piétinement, les effets de la crainte se muent, chez Eschyle, en une danse, un chant, une voix, il n'est pas étonnant qu'elle puisse aboutir à une sorte de message, plus ou moins prophétique. Les témoignages, à cet égard, ne manquent pas.' Although fear increases in *Ch*., reverence does not increase in a parallel fashion.

[435] Μάντις (*Ch*. 929) signifies the prophetic dimension of fear and the fearful dimension of prophecy (cf. *Ag*. 1132-5).

[436] Φοβεῖται δε' τις could also mean that the pair of tyrants is afraid of the people. Sommerstein (2008) *ad loc* notes that it is not clear whether the tyrants are filled with fear or the people with terror.

[437] See also Zeitlin (1965) 500 with nn. 57-8 on wind imagery and the Erinyes' breathing.

[438] The chorus' *thrênos* somewhat replaces what it is afraid to utter aloud – that there is no absolution from blood once it has been shed to the ground (*Ch*. 44-54; cf. *Ag*. 1119-21) except by shedding further blood, which is a choral principle of drama and will also exhibited by the Erinyes

and reverence from a private to a public environment is developed further in the relationship between the tyrants Clytemnestra and Aegisthus and the citizens (*Ch*. 55-9, 1046-7): 'someone is afraid' (φοβεῖται δε' τις, 57-8). The Argives fear but do not respect the rulers – φόβος has ousted σέβας; fear is associated with the people's lack of respect for Clytemnestra and Aegisthus, who are lawless usurpers, lacking entitlement and capacity to rule – they exercise power without the consent of the governed. This is a pronounced choral theme. In *Eumenides*' second choral ode, for example, the Erinyes assert that anarchy and tyranny overthrow laws ordained by the gods – anarchy and tyranny are a form of ὕβρις and lack of σέβας and σωφροσύνη (*Eu*. 526-37; cf. 490-1).

After the matricide, fear makes Orestes' heart (καρδία) ready to dance to a tune of wrath (*Ch*. 1024-5; cf. *Ag*. 975-7; *Ch*. 167).[439] Anger (κότος) sets the tune to which Orestes' heart moves (cf. *Ch*. 33-41). Fear and anger signal the consequences of παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα and the agency of the Erinyes, as in *Agamemnon* (975-7) and *Choephori* (167). In response to his perception, Orestes declares his departure for Delphi (1034-42). But before the realisation of his intended purification and expiation, the Erinyes are already upon him in the form of a vision. The fear perceived in his heart becomes a vision perceived with his mind and eyes (1048-62). Unlike Clytemnestra whose nightmare fills her with fear and instigates her to perform a ritual that suits her personal desires, Orestes first perceives fear, then resolves to leave for Delphi and last of all perceives the

(cf. *Eu*. 261-6). One must, however, note that at *Ch*. 46-7 the principle applies to homicide in general, whereas at *Eu*. 261-6 the Erinyes have narrowed it down to matricide.

[439] The Erinyes contend that the man whose heart is diverted by fear shows reverence for justice (*Eu*. 522-5). At *Ch*. 1021-4 Orestes' heart is diverted by fear: this suggest that Orestes attains reverence for justice. Cf. de Romilly (1968) 47 and Webster (1957) 152.

vision of the Erinyes compelling him to run (1062).[440] Orestes' plan contains signs of reverence towards his people: afraid he leaves in order to save Argos from his pollution; fear is loosely tied to *sebas* for the Argives. The chorus counsels Orestes not to let fear overcome him (1052). Intent on healing the house and hopeful to see salvation, it asserts that Orestes does not have to be afraid because victory is his (ἴσχε, μὴ φοβοῦ, νικῶν πολύ, cf. *Eu*. 88; contrast *Ch*. 58-9). Up until the final scene in *Choephori* the first two plays show how fear fails to bring about justice and how lack of fear is the root of transgression. Orestes' emotional upheaval and flight suggests that the interrelationship between fear and reverence is starting to be internalised – a thread picked up in the *Eumenides* where the Erinyes provide the fear that keeps humans in place, citizens from transgressing the laws and society from degeneration into despotism or anarchy. Moral strength requires surmounting φόβος. However, as long as φόβος and σέβας are not linked to each other as well as to a civic authority, φόβος alone cannot regulate morally correct conduct in society.

In *Eumenides*, fear ceases to be part of the imagery. It becomes a physical reality through the Erinyes' presence onstage – τὸ δεινόν, the fear emanating from the Erinyes and their relentless punitive function, is added to the inventory of fear.[441] At the beginning, fear is dissociated from σέβας and bears the same connotations of horror as in *Agamemnon* and *Choephori* (*Eu*. 34-63, esp. 38).[442] The Pythia is terrified at the sight of the Erinyes (34-9). However, the

[440] Lebeck (1964) 128 introduces the hypothesis that the Erinyes are a manifestation of the fear which drives the guilt-ridden transgressor. Cf. Sider (1978) 23 n. 42.

[441] Cf. p. 110 with n. 257 on *Vita Aeschylii 9*.

[442] The Pythia's language is calm and dignified until she begins to talk about the Erinyes (*Eu*. 34). See Podlecki (1989) *ad* 36-38 and his stage direction at lines 33-4.

terrorising effect of fear is lessened because the Erinyes are asleep, possibly also because they are not a recognised (civic) cult. Although Orestes screams ἆ, ἆ when he beholds the vision of the Erinyes in *Choephori* (1048), he remains composed and asks Apollo for guidance in three simple and effective lines in *Eumenides* (85-7). In addition, Apollo exhorts Orestes not to let fear overcome his wits (88; cf. *Ch*. 1052).[443] Nor does Orestes shriek as the Erinyes draw close in flesh and blood in Athens (e.g. *Eu*. 276).[444] Likewise, Athena is not afraid at the sight of the Erinyes (407). As the Erinyes announce their Binding Song, Orestes does not answer (303); however, this unresponsiveness is unlikely to be paralysis through fear, but adherence to Apollo's advice earlier.

The Binding Song forms the choral incarnation of fear. The Erinyes aim at terrorising and binding Orestes. It is the prelude to the execution of their appointed task – to punish murderers, specifically to avenge Clytemnestra. The chorus' repeated proclamation to cause insanity and withering epitomises fear (*Eu*. 328-33 = 341-6). The mesodes' predominant metre, the lecythion, lends gravity to the horror inherent in the Erinyes' narration of their punitive method.[445] Further, the Erinyes enumeration of suffering experienced by the wrongdoer (when he has died, he is not all free, 339-40; draining blood, 359; angry kicks that cause ruin, 371-6; destruction of the mind, 377-8) inevitably fill the listener with fear. Indeed, the chorus sums up its first stasimon with a pointer that fear is beneficial and tied to reverence: τίς οὖν τάδ' οὐχ ἅζεται / τε καὶ δέδοικεν βροτῶν, / ἐμοῦ κλύων θεσμὸν / τὸν μοιρόκραντον ἐκ θεῶν / δοθέντα

[443] Cf. de Romilly (1958) 88-9.

[444] See Podlecki (1989) *ad loc*. for Orestes ignoring the Erinyes' violent threats.

[445] Chiasson (1988) 1, 'the lecythion is associated with the just order of the universe maintained by Zeus, while iambic rhythm is associated with the sequence of sin and punishment.' In addition, one can assume that the chorus' dancing evokes terror. Cf. pp. 125-7.

τέλεον; ἔπι δέ μοι / γέρας παλαιόν, οὐδ' ἀτιμίας κυρῶ, / καίπερ ὑπὸ χθόνα τάξιν ἔχουσα / καὶ δυσάλιον κνέφας ('Therefore what mortal does not respect and fear this, hearing from me this ordinance appointed by the Moirai and granted in completeness by the gods? I have an ancient privilege, and I am not without honour, although I reside in a sunless dark place beneath the earth.', 389-96). The Erinyes make clear that they possess privileges sanctioned by the gods – both ancient[446] and new. Their task, carried out for justice's sake (312, 313-20), commands respect and evokes fear. However, the key words φόβος and σέβας are not formulated; verbs (ἅζεται, δέδοικεν) replace nouns and σέβας is circumvented by using γέρας and ἀτιμία instead. The Erinyes' emphasis on being chthonian, even though it increases their horror, also encourages public rejection. In their role as maternal avengers their justice is neither equivalent to civic nor to Olympian justice. Even though the Erinyes speak of the preventive aspect of fear and its relationship to reverence, their justice amounts to arbitrary private retributive justice which can be a civic hazard, especially when tied to the cause of a gynocratic woman.[447] The failure of the Binding Song may be the result of an incongruity between the Erinyes' specific task and universal role and / or the lack of civic indoctrination by an accepted *polis*-figure (i.e. Athena).[448]

[446] The Erinyes stress their affinity with the Moirai (334-40, 391-3, cf. before Apollo 172-3; cf. 724). At *Eu*. 208-9 and 227 the Erinyes only speak of their prerogatives, but do not mention the Moirai. Similarly, at *Eu*. 310-11 and 346-7 the Erinyes speak of their office and privileges but do not explicitly name the Moirai.

[447] It seems that Aeschylus describes vengeance as an obsolete form of justice: as long as the Erinyes are intent on practising retributive justice, they are not respected and their element of fear is ineffective (as it previously fed a cycle of endless bloodshed).

[448] See Henrichs (1994/5) 64, Bacon (2001) 56 and Rehm (2002) 97. See Faraone (1985) 153 on the Erinyes' action as a judicial curse. Prins (1991) 191-2 argues that the Binding Song both is and is not fulfilled.

Unlike the first choral ode, the second choral ode is not an incarnation of fear. Instead, the chorus sings about the value of fear for the *polis*. The Erinyes call attention to the fact that fear (τὸ δεινόν) has a permanent place as 'overseer of the mind' (*Eu*. 517-19, cf. 389-90).[449] Ξυμφέρει σωφρονεῖν ὑπὸ στένει (521) makes implicit that the fear inspired by the Erinyes makes man learn and heed σωφροσύνη – this dovetails with what the Argive elders in *Agamemnon* declare (*Ag*. 179-83; cf. 351).[450] The Erinyes thus suggest that σωφροσύνη, just like fear, is the basis for justice. If men's fear is complemented by σωφροσύνη then men will be blessed with justice and prosperity. The second antistrophe concludes with the question, τίς δὲ μηδεν ἐν †φάει†/ καρδίαν ἀνὴρ τρέφων / ἢ πόλις βροτῶν ὁμοί- / ως ἔτ' ἂν σέβοι Δίκαν; ('What man that does not nourish his heart on fear at all, or, likewise, what city of men would still revere Justice?' *Eu*. 522-5). This question develops the imagery of the previous two plays in which fear was violently perceived in the heart (*Ag*. 975-7; *Ch*. 167, 1024-5). However, this imagery receives a positive note now: nurturing (τρέφων) suggests benevolence, compassion and growth. Lebeck's suggestion that the lion parable, normally representing the hereditary curse, also offers a positive version,[451] could be applied to this metaphor. The Erinyes suggest that

[449] Cf. *Eu*. 193-7. Here fear emanating from the Erinyes' presence at (and intrusion into) the Apolline temple, that forms a haven for suppliants, is unfitting. See also Thalmann (1986) 507-8.

[450] In contrast, Clytemnestra and Aegisthus use σωφροσύνη to keep their people in their ordained submissive place (*Ag*. 1424, 1620, 1664) – theirs is an example of *phobos* without *sebas*. See also Mikalson (2005) 190-1.

[451] Lebeck (1971) 51.

fear is constructive and underline their association with Justice (*Eu*. 511, 516, 525, 539, 550-64).[452]

Further, the second choral ode elaborates on the need for σέβας. The chorus sings that ὕβρις is the child of δυσσεβία (*Eu*. 534), advises respect for the altar of justice (βωμὸν αἴδεσαι Δίκας, 539), honour for parents, and for *xenia* (545-9). Particularly, line 534 recalls the Argive elders' understanding that Justice honours the just man, that amoral deeds breed misfortune and moral ones fortune (*Ag*. 750-81). Unlike the first choral ode, in which the chorus displays concern for its own privileges, the chorus demonstrates its concern for reverence required for the *polis*' thriving. In particular, the repeated reference to θεσμός (*Eu*. 491, 571-2, 615, 681; cf. 391) hints at the institutionalisation of the Erinyes' recommendations to form a triangular relationship between justice, fear and reverence (/privileges). The *thesmoi* of the Erinyes, Athena and Zeus are complementary.[453]

In the (delayed) inaugural speech Athena succinctly sums up the bond between φόβος and σέβας and announces its function of deterring crime thus rendering the city a safe place (ἐν δὲ τῶι σέβας / ἀστῶν φόβος τε ξυγγενής τὸ μὴ ἀδικεῖν / σχήσει τόδ', ἦμαρ καὶ κατ' εὐφρόνην ὁμῶς, *Eu*. 690-2). She proclaims that the Areopagus constitutes the communal repository of φόβος and σέβας (cf. 700). Her advice to respect a system that is neither anarchic nor despotic (696-7) clarifies that Athens forms the archetype of a just and prosperous city. Tyranny, lack of respect and fear, which dominated the community of Argos

[452] They also underscore their association with *Dikê* in confrontation with Apollo and Orestes (*Eu*. 154, 230, 272-3) and in their first two choral odes.

[453] See subchapter 3.8 on laws below.

under the rule of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus, will not be repeated. Yet fear, τὸ δεινόν, must not completely be cast out of the city (698): τίς γὰρ δεδοικὼς μηδὲν ἔνδικος βροτῶν; ('for what mortal who fears nothing at all, is just?' 699) recalls the Erinyes' choral questions at lines 389-96 and 522-5 and anchors them in Athena's institution. The development of the choruses throughout the trilogy discussed in the previous chapter further suggests that the Argive elders' moral and religious philosophy is fastened to the Areopagus; at the end of the trilogy the Areopagus embodies the ideology of the counselling men of *Agamemnon* which the chorus of Erinyes maintained up until its establishment in *Eumenides*.

With this speech in mind, the jurors cast their votes; Orestes is exonerated; the Erinyes are in disbelief and exude grief and anger. But the outcome of the trial is a means by which the recommendation of the second choral ode can be realised and Athena's vision of a city, in which fear and respect are beneficial, can be fortified. Although Athena already realises the Erinyes' lyrics in her establishment of the Areopagus, a divine measure to enforce fear and respect is as yet absent. In their third choral ode (*Eu*. 778-93 = 808-23, 837-46 = 870-80) the Erinyes demonstrate τὸ δεινόν, particularly through their threat to blight the city. Similar to the Binding Song, their threat of blight in the third choral ode is an incarnation of fear – this time it is not just directed against the individual Orestes, but towards the Athenians. They also emphasise that they have been dishonoured (778-9 = 808-9, 780 = 810, 792 = 822, 839 = 872, 845-6 = 879-80): they must have τιμή and σέβας is their due. Countering and capitalising on the Erinyes' lamentation and anger Athena stresses that they have not been dishonoured and offers them an honourable position in the city (796, 807, 824,

854, 868, 884, 891), especially σεμνοτίμος (833) links τιμή and σέβας. Co-opted into a patriarchal system and serving institutionalised justice, the transformed Erinyes' capacity to instil fear is not abhorred but honoured. Furnishing an example of practical positive reciprocity, Athena further suggests that if the Erinyes honour *Peithô*, σέβας will be theirs (885; cf. the Erinyes' response, 917). The chorus will echo this principle in the exodus (1014-20): if the citizens respect the Erinyes' / *Semnai Theai*'s status as metics, then their life will also be privileged with fortune. Athena confirms this exchange of mutual respect between the citizens and the goddesses in her final lines (1025-31; cf. the escort, 1033-9). Likewise, the goddesses' love for honour (1033), their reception of reverence (1036-7) and their blessing of the city and its citizens (1040-3) form the hub of the escort's celebratory shouts.

Implementing the Erinyes' suggestion that fear is beneficial, Athena also fulfils the Erinyes' prayer uttered in the second choral ode (esp. *Eu*. 517-25):[454] their fearsome faces deter crime and safeguard the *polis* bringing justice and prosperity (951, esp. 990-1; cf. 690-1, 697-702);[455] this *polis*-cult, *Semnai Theai*, assures that fear remains in the city as a preventive and constructive measure. In fact, deterrence is new to their task: before their dramatic conversion the Erinyes did not discourage crime, but even encouraged it.[456] In view of this, the Erinyes / *Semnai Theai* are also figures who embolden the individual to go beyond φόβος

[454] Kuhns (1962) 72-3 comments that Athena's understanding of fear is different from that of the Erinyes. The former understands fear as 'engendered by the wise lawgiver', the latter instils 'an animal-like, congenital fear'. However, Athena's comment 'from these fearful faces' (990) suggests that she understands it as a primal kind of fear. Thalmann (1986) 507-8 argues that fear becomes salutary. Cf. also Vidal-Naquet (1981) 164.

[455] Chiasson (1999-2000) 157 n. 52 observes the association between wealth and fate (*Eu*. 996): Athenian prosperity is endorsed by divine will.

[456] Seaford (1994) 104 points out that there is no deterrence and resolving of homicide before their conversion.

and σέβας and let Athens be presented as a city with a courageous spirit that can overcome any enemy.[457] In her last rhesis before the choral exodus Athena summarises that φόβος entails σέβας[458] and that the Erinyes / *Semnai Theai* are precisely those figures who urge φόβος and σέβας – as objects of Athenian cult, they are both feared and respected and reinforce the power of the Areopagus and Athens' status as Panhellenic city.[459] The Areopagus forms one dimension of the Erinyes' transformation into *Semnai Theai*.[460] It is the legal system of justice that mirrors the union of φόβος and σέβας ingrained in the cult of the *Semnai Theai* (cf. 690-1). The Erinyes' / *Semnai Theai*'s visibility and cultic force required for the effect of fear and the establishment of σέβας is realised in their role as chorus in the *Eumenides*. Through their ritualistic song and dance throughout the last play they exhibit their awesome capacity to inspire fear in men so that they abide by justice and piety which is the precondition for ὄλβος. Finally, their integration as objects of Athenian cult does not only bring a conclusion to the drama, but it also forms a catalyst for the citizens' adherence to justice and piety in real life Athens.

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[457] See p. 178 above – the example of Clytemnestra swearing an oath and not perceiving fear (1434).

[458] Podlecki (1989) *ad* 697 comments on how fear and respect are interwoven in social and political authority.

[459] For Seaford (2003) 161-2 with nn. 104, 105, the fact that awe and fear are not dispelled and necessary for the successful mechanism of social, moral and natural order in the *polis*, is a failure. The result is dislodgement instead of resolution. In his concluding line Seaford argues that the tied vote and the ambivalence of Athena's nature are just a precondition for reconciling the Erinyes who are then the epitome of a differentiation and reconciliation of opposites. See also Beck (1975) 102-3 on the interrelationship between fear and reason (and *sôphrosynê*).

[460] There is an interdependent relationship between the Erinyes' final position as objects of Athenian cult and the social institution of justice. Conacher (1974) 340. Thalmann (1986) 508 remarks that the Erinyes 'represent the presence of fear in the collective *kardia* of the city […]. This settled fear will preserve the proper orientation of the citizens' *phrenes* and will thus ensure fulfilment of the chorus's prayer.'

In sum, throughout the *Oresteia* Aeschylus extracts the value of φόβος and σέβας, especially when interrelated. In the first two plays, lack of fear and reverence before the gods and their laws result in *atê*, death and disaster. Fear also signals forthcoming vengeance and bloodshed, in particular the unseen agency of the Erinyes. The last play seeks to associate fear and reverence and to interlock them with an institution and cult. Φόβος moves away from being perceived solely within an individual's heart (καρδία) towards affecting the entire community. In tandem, the *Eumenides* stresses the Erinyes' capacity to inspire fear. But in addition to the traditional destructive elements intrinsic to fear, the chorus of Erinyes expounds also on the notion that fear has a constructive (/preventive) quality rendering a community just and prosperous. If φόβος is retained and refined as σέβας, together they are the basis for morality, justice, fertility and prosperity. Through the agency of Athena, choral advice is realised: the Olympian goddess establishes a court and sets up the Erinyes' reception as beneficial civic cult. Both the Areopagus and the cult of *Semnai Theai* sanctioning this judicial institution form a repository of φόβος and σέβας: the former represents fear and reverence as a civic body, the latter as a religious injunction.

The Erinyes' transformation from abstract spirits to chorus and from goddesses of vengeance and curse to *Semnai Theai* in *Eumenides* is essential in interlinking σέβας and φόβος. Visual perception is crucial to σέβας – men experience σέβας through sight (e.g. Areopagus, *Eu*. 690-1, fearful faces of the *Semnai Theai*, 990-1; σέβας μ' ἔχει εἰσορόωντα, *Od*. 3.123, 4.75, 6.161, 8.384, σέβας μ' ἔχει εἰσορόωσαν, 4.142). Making the Erinyes visible in the *Eumenides* is a tactic to inspire σέβας in the audience – this is the power of

dramatic spectacle. In the last play, the Erinyes and their power to instil the fear that restrains citizens from transgression is maintained and appropriated by the *polis* and its judicial body. The Erinyes / *Semnai Theai* as visible creatures are placed within a system of σέβας while also retaining the φόβος that is crucial to their operation.[461] This interconnects with the Areopagus. The Erinyes work on an individual and cultic level; the Areopagus on a collective and secular level. The Erinyes share their most powerful weapon, 'fear', with the male and Olympian forces in order to ensure civic welfare and prosperity (ὄλβος). Male and Olympian hegemony cultivate the Erinyes in a 'sustaining' manner that serves their own purpose. Their new function as cultic divinities entails their being a social and religious symbol of fear. This change is part and parcel of the Erinyes' transformation into *Semnai Theai*.[462] Likewise, other socio-religious constructs require a change to reconstruct order in a community: sacrifice, the guest-host relationship and supplication lack guidelines in Argos. The following three sections will point to the distortion of sacrifice, supplication and the guest-host relationship up until the end of *Eumenides* and explain how these stand corrected with the Areopagus' establishment and Athens' incorporation of the Erinyes.

[461] Dodds (1953) 21 also correlates fear and blessing. See also Burnett (1991) 117-18, and Conacher (1974) 339-40 with n. 29

[462] The Eumenides are a paradoxical entity that unifies terror and grace. This paradox of benign and malignant attributes also occurs in S. *OC* where the sanctuary of the Eumenides is situated in beautiful grove, but the goddesses to be worshipped evoke fear and apprehension amongst the citizens. See Winnington-Ingram (1954) 18 and Scodel (2006) 73. Lloyd-Jones (1971b) 93 note on the analogy between Athena's and the Erinyes' language may suggest that Athena appropriates the Erinyes' language for the *polis*. What the Erinyes, helpers of justice, are in the universe, the Areopagus is in Athenian constitution.

3.5 Sacrifice

Sacrifice (θυσία) is one of the socio-religious practices in the *Oresteia* by which the trilogy's movement from disorder to order can be measured. Perverted sacrifice permeates the first two plays; in the *Eumenides* the Erinyes' intention to make Orestes their sacrificial victim first continues the relationship between sacrifice and destruction; at the end of the last play Athena uses θυσία to secure Athens' prosperity and fertility as she makes the Erinyes a respected *polis*-cult. This section examines how the Erinyes are initially depicted as the source of retributive justice in the form of perverted sacrifice and how the last play shifts away from this notion as the Erinyes are prevented from exercising their bloodlust and turned into recipients of sacrifice instead.[463] Up until the end of the *Eumenides*, the Erinyes are objects of perverted sacrifice that appears to be tied to an agent's private cause, hereditary curse and the *lex talionis*. An established cult that offers guidelines for sacrificing to the Erinyes is missing up until Athena's offering of a civic cult to the Erinyes.[464] When Athena welcomes them as *Semnai Theai* into the city, they become objects of collective sacrifice that functions by positive reciprocity and captures the benefit of interrelating fear (φόβος) and reverence (σέβας). The *Oresteia*'s thematic movement from conflict to order and harmony is reflected in the last play's movement from perverted to proper sacrifice and in the Erinyes' transformation into *Semnai Theai*.

[463] For murder, vengeance, ritual violence, sacrifice and its perversion in the *Oresteia* as well as in the Orestes myth in the Sophoclean and Euripidean versions see, for example, Zeitlin (1965) 463-508, (1966) 645-53, Burkert (1966) 87-121, Sommerstein (1989) *ad* 102, Seaford (1994) 369-71, 374, 386, Henrichs (2000) 179-83, 185-8, Bacon (2001) 49 and Gibert (2003) 159-206, esp. 182-6.

[464] Cf. n. 466 below. Scodel (2006) 75 comments that *Eu*. gives the impression that there is no regular worship for the Erinyes.

In *Agamemnon*, the chorus informs the audience about Agamemnon's sacrifice of his daughter Iphigenia at Aulis (189-247). This sacrifice forms an element in the chain of the hereditary curse upon the house of Atreus. Sacrificing a human being, particularly his own kin, Agamemnon emerges as transgressor, agent and victim of the Erinyes, the curse and the law παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα. Before the Erinyes become doers[465] of sacrifice Clytemnestra makes them recipients of sacrifice in the first play. Since no external or supernatural force compels Clytemnestra (in contrast to Agamemnon) and since there are no guidelines in offering sacrifices to the Erinyes, Clytemnestra is free to invent a sacrificial ritual that serves her personal interest: she offers Agamemnon's dead body to Justice (for Iphigenia), *Atê* and the Erinys (μὰ τὴν τέλειον τῆς ἐμῆς παιδὸς Δίκην / Ἄτην Ἐρινύν θ', ἧσι τόνδ' ἔσφαξ' ἐγώ, / οὔ μοι φόβου μέλαθρον ἐλπὶς ἐμπατεῖ, 1432-4). Her sacrifice concludes her act of vengeance and evokes another act of vengeance against herself. Clytemnestra's private ritual performance of the law παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα not only demonstrates Agamemnon's falling victim to Zeus' law, but also Clytemnestra's transformation from agent to victim of this law. Her private cause, subjective view of justice, indelicate sacrifice and the fact that her newly founded rule (i.e. tyranny) endanger the welfare of the community perpetuate the law παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα.

In *Choephori*, a nightmare, emblematic of vengeance and the law παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα, instigates Clytemnestra to perform ritual acts. She sends the slave women to Agamemnon's tomb to pour libations for her (*Ch*. 23-4, 33-

[465] Cf. Goldhill (1984a) 232: 'the Erinues are sacrificers.'

53). However, these *choai* do not honour the dead or the gods, or safeguard the *polis*; they aim at Clytemnestra's personal well-being. She is afraid (φόβος) and displays false σέβας. Her plea for protection from her crime's repercussion is badly chosen. Her ritual is not even expiatory. The chorus' question whether there can be expiation once blood has been shed on the ground (τί γὰρ λύτρον πεσόντος αἵματος πέδωι; 48) suggests that the law παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα cannot be deactivated by her libations – indeed, Clytemnestra is killed by Orestes. Her sacrifices and libations in *Agamemnon* and *Choephori* indicate the need to establish a suitable procedure for sacrifices that promote communal well-being as well as ones to the Erinyes.

Whereas the previous two plays show human agents murdering kin and performing improper sacrifices, the *Eumenides* shows the failure of ritual perversion and the success of proper sacrifice beneficial for the public. At the beginning of the last play, the ghost of Clytemnestra refers to wineless libations and sacrificial meals offered to the Erinyes at night (*Eu*. 106-9; cf. 137-9).[466] But the Erinyes' sleep, instead of their pursuit and killing of Orestes, illustrates the failure of the queen's sacrifices. Aeschylus provides a reminder that perverted sacrifice does not bring personal success, civic success, or peace.[467]

[466] For libations to the Erinyes see Müller (1853) 106-33, 155-7, Fairbanks (1900) 241-59, esp. 250-3 and 258, and Dietrich (1965) 91-156, esp. 114-18. See also Visser (1980) 7-85, Podlecki (1989) *ad* 107-9, Henrichs (1983) 87-100, esp. 88-93, (1984b) 255-68, esp. 257-61, and (1994) 36 with n. 44, 42-4. Sacrifices to the chthonian powers are offered at night. They are wineless (*Eu*. 107; cf. *Eu*. 860, S. *OC* 100, 469-81). Cf. *Ch*. 523-39 where Clytemnestra's offerings follow her nightmare. Fowler (1991) 98 assumes that these offerings (not literally but by association) suggest blood. Kuhns (1962) 36 regards Clytemnestra as a priestess of black magic. Guépin (1968) 57 says that it is possible that Clytemnestra refers to the meals with which she celebrated the death of her husband (*Eu*. 106-9). He also points out (311 with nn. 1-2) that wineless libation go to both the Erinyes and Zeus Meilichios. Henrichs (1991) 163 comments that *meilichios* is a euphemistic epithet of the Erinyes. Cf. Henrichs (1984) 266 on Zeus Meilichios, and 259 n. 14 on Zeus Eumenes.

[467] Over time the transgression of the sack of Troy (and Iphigenia's sacrifice for the Argive's fleet successful sailing against Troy) is forgotten, and the κλέος of it increases. Transgressing or

Perverted sacrifice culminates in the *Eumenides*: the chthonian goddesses, now chorus and thus the epitome of ritual performers within (and outside) the play, seek to make Orestes their sacrificial victim. The Erinyes literally want to sacrifice Orestes onstage. In contrast, Clytemnestra metaphorically sacrifices Agamemnon in the stage house and Agamemnon's sacrifice of Iphigenia is most remote in time and place – it is narrated to the audience and the final moment is elided. But in the last play, the Erinyes' role as chorus not only brings such bloody sacrifice close to being performed onstage (cf. the Erinyes' threat to blight Athens, *Eu*. 711-12, 719-20, 781-7 = 811-17), but also carries it into the centre of Athens because the chorus fulfils a social and cultic function in the *polis*.[468]

Apollo emphasises the sacrilegious nature of the Erinyes' intent declaring that their fondness for such a feast makes them disgusting to the gods (*Eu*. 190-7; cf. 350-1). They hunt Orestes like an animal (e.g. 111-13, 147-8, 246-53, 325-8),[469] consider him a drink (264-6)[470] and a fattened sacrificial victim (304-5, 328 = 341).[471] The sacrificial terms σφαγαί (187) and ἑορτῆς (191) describe the Erinyes' methods: sacrifice and feast metaphorically sum up the brutal punishment over which the Erinyes preside. They are on top of the food chain

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violating sacred rules, religious rituals and moral codes in general produces *miasma*, which is expressive of a disintegration of social and ethical rules and the disruption of the community. See also Zeitlin (1965) 483, 488 (1966) 649; cf. 653.

[468] See p. 151with n. 363.

[469] See also Goldhill (1984a) 227. On the hunt see Segal (1974) 295, 303, Vidal Naquet (1981) 150-74

[470] See Gibert (2003) 182 with n. 78 on the red colour of the drink. See also Sider (1978) 21 on πελανός. Cf. also *Ag*. 1407-8 and *Ch*. 577.

[471] Zeitlin (1965) 485. Note also, that, unlike Agamemnon (to Iphigenia) and Clytemnestra (to Agamemnon and Cassandra), they directly address Orestes as sacrificial victim. Agamemnon and Clytemnestra beat around the bush using animal metaphors to describe their respective victims, Iphigenia and Agamemnon (and Cassandra) will be slaughtered for their personal ritual sacrifices (*Ag*. 1037-8, 1055-7, 1168-9, 1235-7, 1278, 1298, 1309-10, 1384-92, 1432-4). See Seaford (1984) 247, Heath (1999) 35, and Henrichs (2002) 181-4, 186.

along with the Atridae and their army (cf. *Ag*. 134-8, 824-8; *Eu*. 193-4) – each acts in the name of retributive justice.

Embodying the law παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα the Erinyes are also symbolic of the rituals indicative of this law. As chorus in *Eumenides* they not only fulfil the role as recipient but also executioner of sacrifice. The Erinyes' intention to suck Orestes' blood in requital for his mother's (*Eu*. 259-68) illustrates their role as executioner of sacrifice complying with the law παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα. The Binding Song appears to function as a lyrical ritual preceding the Erinyes' feasting on Orestes. This song inaugurates the sacrifice: it aims at binding Orestes so that they can feast on the consecrated man without slaying him at the altar (304-6). Lines 304-6 especially employ the terminology of a ritual.[472] Likewise, they refer to Orestes as a sacrificial victim in the repeated *mesode* (τῶι τεθυμένωι, 328 = 341). Similarly, they also accuse Apollo of depriving them of their 'hare' (πτῶκα, 325-7) as if they were hunters. The chorus' statement that no god partakes in their feasts (350-1)[473] reiterates Apollo's description of their function through σφαγαί (187) and ἑορτῆς (191). At the end of the first choral ode it is clear that the Erinyes' punishment is a sacrificial feast. In order to stop the cycle of perverted sacrifice and killing at its source, such blood lust must be frustrated – the divine embodiment of vengeance, the Erinyes, must be prevented from the feasting violently on Orestes. Straight after their prelude to their 'sacrifice' of Orestes, the Binding Song, Athena appears onstage and interrupts

[472] Gibert (2003) 182-3.

[473] Their black robes mark their exclusion from the sacrificial feasts of mortals, where men dress in white garments (*Eu*. 349-52). The only flesh-eating implied occurs at *Eu*. 106: ἐλείξατε recalls *Ag*. 828 (see Heath [1999] 34 n. 57, 35). Cf. also *Ch*. 577: λείχω implies lapping up blood rather than eating raw flesh.

the bloody ritual, inquiring into the situation and assembling the Areopagus, where Orestes will be tried.

After encountering Athena, the Erinyes cease to employ metaphors of sacrifice and animalistic feasting; instead, in the second stasimon, the imagery of nourishment applies to beneficial fear: τίς δὲ μηδεν ἐν †φάει†/ καρδίαν ἀνὴρ τρέφων / ἢ πόλις βροτῶν ὁμοί- / ως ἔτ' ἂν σέβοι Δίκαν; ('What man that does not nourish his heart on fear at all, or, likewise, what city of men would still revere Justice?', *Eu*. 522-5). Further, the Erinyes are concerned about the citizens' respect for the altar of Justice (538-44). Whereas at line 305 the altar appears in the context of negative reciprocity and slaying (cf. *Ch*. 293), at 539 it becomes associated with positive reciprocity and justice. Likewise, they extend their concern onto the community: they raise the issue of the public altars' purity and Orestes' reintegration into Argive society (*Eu*. 655-6).

Orestes' exoneration foils the Erinyes' sacrificial feast.[474] However, the value of the Erinyes has been made known and their co-optation into the social, judicial and religious sphere of Athens appears to be of great consequence. Athena offers them a cult within her *polis* (*Eu*. 855, 1004, 1023, 1036) whereby they become the recipients of offerings and bless the city by the principles of positive reciprocity and exchange of mutual honour (esp. 868). Through Athena's persuasion the Erinyes are the first to cease (the cycle of) human sacrifice – in contrast, Agamemnon sacrifices his daughter, Clytemnestra sacrifices

[474] Bacon (2001) 51 points out: 'Orestes is delivered from the status of hunted animal (Eum. 754-60) and restored to the human community. At last he can go home. The Furies have left Argos, and the legitimate kingship has been restored.' See also Zeitlin (1965) 507-8, (1966) 653 and Bowie (1993) 19. Seaford (1994) 386 remarks that reciprocal perversion of sacrificial and marriage ritual ends with the institution of a collective sacrifice (835, 1006, 1036-9).

Agamemnon,[475] Orestes commits a murder that is ethically ambivalent – he himself describes it as 'slaughter' (ἕπου πρὸς αὐτὸν τόνδε σε σφάξαι θέλω, *Ch*. 904).[476] The Erinyes are the very link in the chain that puts a clear end to perverted (individual) sacrifice as they become *Semnai Theai*, recipients of collective sacrifice beneficial for the *polis*. Significantly, the previous human choruses could not have been transformed into a cult. The Erinyes' role as chorus is decisive in this change: their choral performances throughout the *Oresteia* are a forerunner to their final cultic reception and celebratory procession both of which convey social and cultural values and norms. As their cult forms a link between divine and civic justice, the *Semnai Theai* set an example for positive transactions, just behaviour and striving for prosperity in Athens.

Aeschylus advances the Erinyes from sacrificers to recipients of sacrifice while he renders their new cult exemplary of collective sacrifice. Not only do the Erinyes / *Semnai Theai* receive honour from the Athenians (*Eu*. 807, 833; cf. 890-1, 1033),[477] but also offerings such as first fruits, and sacrifices before childbirth and before the completion of marriage (834-5).[478] In particular, *proteleia* takes us back to Iphigenia and Cassandra. It is not unlikely that the Erinyes' honoured incorporation into the *polis* is an indirect reciprocal event in

[475] See Seaford (1994) 369-71 with n. 12, esp. 371, on reciprocal perversion of sacrificial rituals in the *Oresteia*.

[476] The cutting of Clytemnestra's throat is sacrificial by method (*Eu*. 592). Cf. Seaford (1994) 369-71 with n. 12, esp. 371, who comments that Orestes sacrifices his mother. However, language and image of ritual sacrifice are almost non-existent in regard to Orestes' killing of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus in *Ch*.. Cf. the imagery of the Erinyes drinking Aegisthus' blood (*Ch*. 577-8); Orestes seems to give Aegisthus' blood as a libation to the Erinyes. No such action is undertaken to appease the Erinyes of his mother. See Zeitlin (1965) 463-508, esp. 469, 483-5, 508.

[477] Cf. *Eu*. 853-6.

[478] Tyrrell (1984) 123 speaks of the first fruits and sacrifices for weddings and births as 'dowry'. It seems that their new function resembles that of a married woman, who looks after the well-being of the *oikos*. This reflects the symmetry and opposition between the *oikos* and the *polis* as perceived in Athenian thought. See Goldhill (1984a) 269 (cf. 266-7 on the relationship between *oikos* and *polis*). See also Sommerstein (1989) *ad* 835-6 on the shifting use of προτέλεια.

answer to the sacrifice of the virgin Iphigenia.[479] Although Iphigenia seems to have disappeared from *Choephori* and *Eumenides*, the injustice of slaughtering an innocent virgin is somewhat amended in the cultic and judicial instalment of the virgin Erinyes / *Semnai Theai* as recipients of first fruits, and sacrifices before childbirth and before the completion of marriage. Whereas Iphigenia's virgin blood is shed to stop hostile winds (*Ag*. 214-16), the winds of *atê* (*Ch*. 1065-7, 1075-6) are stilled as the virgin Erinyes / *Semnai Theai* stop pursuit of bloodshed and prevent further bloodshed as guardians of the *polis*' order and harmony. Likewise, the establishment of the *Semnai Theai* redeems the victimised virgin and murdered concubine Cassandra. The guidelines for this cult are set clearly: in response to the citizens' honours and offerings the Erinyes / *Semnai Theai* pray for and bless the city and its people (*Eu*. 922-6, 1012-13, 1021, 1030-1; cf. each house, 895[480]) invoking positive powers from earth, water and sea, wind and sun (902-15) while they also prevent natural disaster (938-48) and social calamity (956-67), particularly civil strife (976-87). In short, they ensure that the city thrives and profits (e.g. κέρδος, 991; cf. 704).

Sacrificial festivity accompanies the Erinyes' procession to their new home as metics in Athens (*Eu*. 856-7, 1036-47).[481] Aeschylus includes all the

[479] Lebeck (1971) 133 comments that the images of sacrifice and ritual perverted in *Ag*. and *Ch*. are restored to their real significance at the end of *Eu*. (1006-7, 1037). See also Wüst (1956) 125-6 and Podlecki (1989) *ad* 1028. Cf. Paus. 8.25.1-7. See Griffith (1988) 552-4.

[480] They guarantee that each household flourishes (895) – this appears to be the positive response to how Cassandra perceives them as revellers in Atreus' house singing about bloodshed (*Ag.* 1186-94).

[481] Bacon (2001) 48-59, esp. 51, observes that each sacrificial feast is occasioned by a homecoming. But only the closing moments of the trilogy demonstrate a sacrificial feast and homecoming that proves triumphant, peaceful and fertile. However, one cannot exactly speak of a 'homecoming' in the case of the Erinyes since Athens was not their home in the first place. Noticeably this is an arrival of divine creatures that keep guard over the civic transactions of men, unlike the preceding cases which witness the homecoming of mortal men deficient in morality and sense for the community.

traditional elements that are present at a victory feast: Athena's proclamation of victory[482] (*Eu*. 973-5, 1009), the chorus' *ololygê* (1043, 1047), sacred blazing torches (1005, 1022, 1029, 1041-2), animal sacrifices (1006, 1037), as well as the libations of wine (1044) are a prelude to feasting.[483] In particular, the sacrifice of animals now replaces human sacrifice; they are solemn sacrifices (σφαγίων σεμνῶν, 1006). Whereas the Erinyes' drunken revelry on the roof in *Agamemnon* followed the report about the bloody banquet of Thyestes' children, this final celebration in *Eumenides* is free from the notion of vengeance or a cannibalistic *deipnon*. The final procession is a civilised and communal celebration; the sacrifices made to the Erinyes / *Semnai Theai* at the end of the trilogy emphasise their progression from household to civic goddesses (i.e. from the house of Atreus to the house of Erechtheus, 855).

The concluding choral wisdom, which speaks of civic justice and prosperity as a result of relating fear (φόβος) and reverence (σέβας) and extracting the beneficial aspect of fear, is reflected in the establishment of the cult of *Semnai Theai*. The Erinyes' conversion into *Semnai Theai* is symbolic of how perverted sacrifice ceases to be a tool of an angry avenger and a ceremonial procedure of the law παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα. Instead, the *Semnai Theai* become the cultic centre and ritual reinforcement of the interrelation between fear and reverence. In exchange for inspiring fear (e.g. *Eu*. 990-1), their status is respected (μετοικίαν δ' ἐμὰν / εὐσεβοῦντες οὔτι μέμ- / ψεσθε συμφορὰς βίου, 1018-20; esp. εὐσεβοῦντες, 1019) and they receive honours along with

[482] Even defeat is a victory. This is important for the concept of distributive justice. In retribution the looser dies and the community is annihilated as Troy was and Athens is threatened.

[483] Some scholars even claim that the audience joins in the cries of victory. See Grethlein (2003) 225-6 n. 92.

sacrifices (τιμαῖς, 1037). Further, the citizens receive divine χάρις (e.g. 868, 895, 922-6, 1012-13), not through force (χάρις βίαιος, *Ag*. 182) but in return for their honouring the cult of the *Semnai Theai*. The same process can be observed in other socio-religious constructs which are perverted in the first two plays and rectified analogous with pro-*polis* choral philosophy in the last play. The guest-host relationship, in particular, is perverted in *Agamemnon* and *Choephori* and reformed in *Eumenides* – the next chapter examines how the Erinyes' transformation into *Semnai Theai* reflects how *xenia* stands corrected to support Athens' greatness.

3.6 Guest-host relationship

In the *Oresteia*, the guest-host relationship (ξενία)[484] is an unwritten law which, when transgressed, gives rise to Zeus' law παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα, and, when treated with σέβας, generates strength and well-being for individual and community. Even though the Erinyes are not authoritative enforcers of *xenia*'s social, religious and moral principles, their involvement with vengeance and curse, and particularly the law παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα as well as σέβας, associates them with the guest-host relationship in the trilogy. This subchapter looks at the transgressions of *xenia* and their association with the cycle of *atê*, vengeance and curse in the first two plays and examines how the events of the last play, especially the Erinyes' transformation into *Semnai Theai* and the

[484] *Xenia* is the unwritten law in the Greek system concerned with hospitality, the relationship between host and guest. Its intrinsic notion of mutual exchange succinctly conveys the relative repercussions of positive and negative reciprocity in a community. See Robert (1887) I 836, Regenos (1955) 49-52, Wüst (1956) 117, Roth (1993) 1-17, Griffith (1995) 68-72, 101 n. 126 and Bacon (2001) 52. Cf. also *Od*. 17.475, 15.57. Herman (2002) argues that *xenia* is a bond of fictitious kinship rather than a tie of hospitality or ordinary 'friendship'.

establishment of a civic and judicial institution, put an end to the perversion of the guest-host relationship. It explores how Athens' reception of the cult of *Semnai Theai* furnishes a paradigm of the *polis*' prosperity brought forth by healthy *xenia*: the civic rewards of positive reciprocity and σέβας (not only towards a guest or a host, but also towards fellow citizens and the gods) is reinforced in the Erinyes' new status and role appointed by Athena.

In *Agamemnon*, Zeus *Xenios* punishes Paris for transgressing the law of hospitality by sending Agamemnon as an Erinys (59-65).[485] This violation of *xenia* clearly lacks σέβας, activates the law παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα and invokes the Erinys. Bloodshed and loss take place on both sides: Agamemnon sacrifices his daughter (*Ag*. 189-247) and many valiant Argives die during this expedition;[486] Troy is completely sacked and destroyed. Further, the Erinyes' occupation of the house (1186-92) appears to be a metaphor of corrupted *xenia*:[487] they are not transgressors *per se*, but in their supposed role as guardians of justice their 'uninvited' drunken revelling (κῶμος, 1189) reflects the Atridae's transgressions, especially that of *xenia*. The Erinyes do not bring prosperity to the house, but their presence is symbolic of perpetual ruin. Civic concern, judicial authority and σέβας are absent in the notion of *xenia* in the first play.

In *Choephori*, Orestes violates the code of *xenia* in order to exact vengeance by Apollo's command and to violate an even more basic code involving the treatment of blood relations.[488] Just as Orestes' social and familial

[485] Roth (1993) 2-8 provides an extensive account of corrupted *xenia* in *Ag*.

[486] However, over time the transgression of the sack of Troy is forgotten, and the κλέος of it increases.

[487] Cf. Heath (1988) 194.

[488] Roth (1993) 8-11.

situation is at a moral impasse, so his attitude towards *xenia* is ambiguous, were it not for Apollo's specification that he has to kill δόλωι just as Clytemnestra killed Agamemnon. Failure to exact vengeance will deny him hospitality at other people's houses (*Ch*. 291-6); yet matricide will affect the same (e.g. *Eu*. 242, 439-41, 451-2, 474).[489] The chorus, despite its intention of bringing healing to the *oikos*, supports the breach of *xenia*. Using persuasion and trickery, the slave women engineer Aegisthus' reception by Orestes – murderer in disguise – without guard (*Ch*. 770-4, 779-80, 848-50). Not only in killing Aegisthus, but also in committing matricide, Orestes violates the law of *xenia*. Terminology describing hospitality attends Orestes' and Pylades entry into the palace, yet murder, not *xenia* is their purpose (569-70, 575, 656, 662, 669-71, 700, 702-3, 706). The cycle of vengeance and curse, in other words the law παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα, thwart adherence to *xenia* and thus the establishment of positive reciprocity and civic prosperity.

The last play takes steps towards removing corruption from the guest-host relationship.[490] Apollo's reception of the suppliant Orestes is free from deception and abuse of *xenia* (*Eu*. 41; cf. 232-4). However, he does not welcome the Erinyes, his antagonists, at his shrine (180, 194-5). Further, Orestes' frequenting of other houses (451-2) without harm indicates a healthy guest-host relationship. Orestes is also welcome in Athens (242, 439-41, 474), and offers

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[489] See Roth (1993) 8-9.

[490] See Roth (1993) 12-17 on *xenia* in *Eu*. He writes (16-17): 'The *Eumenides*, then, can be viewed in part as a patriotic work celebrating the Athenian tradition of hospitality and its rewards. The trilogy closes with the validity of the Greek code of hospitality re-affirmed, its relevance expanded into the civic arena as the basis for two important Athenian institutions: military alliance and metoicism.'

Argive alliance to Athens in turn (289-90; cf. 669-73, 762-74).[491] Corresponding to the uncorrupted *xenia* practised by Apollo and Orestes, the Erinyes also ensure that the law of hospitality is not breached.[492] In contrast to the previous plays where they reflect the corruption of *xenia* in the role as goddesses of vengeance and curse they guard *xenia* in the last play. However, as maternal avengers, they still defend *the lex talionis* – this seems a paradox. At the beginning, the Erinyes are concerned that the matricide Orestes and his guardian Apollo do not breach *xenia*, dishonour the ancient laws and pollute Delphi: although the Erinyes regard Orestes as ξένον (202, it seems that they regard him as Apollo's *xenos* – or at least foreign to Delphi rather than to themselves), they detest the corruption of the oracle by blood pollution, condemn Apollo for honouring a suppliant who is godless and polluted (151-4), as well as for honouring a mortal beyond the norm of the gods (171), trampling the old gods (150) and destroying ancient boundaries (172). Their declaration that failure to respect a host or guest as well as a god and parents is to be punished in Hades (269-75, Hades remembers these transgressions and punishes them) extends their concern from the scenario of matricide towards one that embraces *oikos*, *polis* and the cosmos. In particular, the second choral ode, which forms a prelude to the new Athenian ordinances, spells out the principle of respecting *xenia* (πρὸς τάδε τις τοκέων σέβας εὖ προτίων / καὶ ξενοτίμους / ἐπιστροφὰς δωμάτων / αἰδόμενός τις ἔστω, 'in view of this, let someone properly honour the reverence towards parents, and pay honour towards guests welcomes in the house, 546-9). Significantly, they claim that *xenia* must be interrelated with σέβας. But although part of the Erinyes' motive is the

[491] See MacLeod (1982) 126-7.

[492] Cf. Regenos (1955) 49, Roth (1993) 14-17.

protection of *xenia per se*, their role as maternal avengers interferes with and mars their counsel.

The trial differentiates between the cultural and natural aspect of *xenia* and employs it in order to bring resolution to the underlying conflicts of the trilogy.[493] Apollo's arguments in defence of Orestes at court pivot around *xenia*. First, he claims that the bond between mother and child is a kind of *xenia* instead of a kin relation (*Eu*. 658-61, esp. ξένωι ξένη).[494] Second, the god seems to imply that the institution of marriage parallels *xenia*.[495] Refuting the Erinyes' argument that Clytemnestra's deed is less impious as extra-familial murder, Apollo appears to argue that she has transgressed the sacred bond of *xenia* in a twofold manner, violating the tie between husband and wife as well as that between a king and his subject.[496] Orestes, on the other hand, violates the bond of *xenia* only once: based on Apollo's argument that the mother is not a true parent to a child, Orestes does not commit kin-killing, but transgresses the law of *xenia*.[497] The god lessens the severity of Orestes' crime (because of the person Clytemnestra and her treatment of the general Agamemnon) while he hopes to circumvent the Erinyes' jurisdiction as avengers of kin blood. Apollo and Athena turn Clytemnestra into a

[493] Bringing *xenia* into the judgement of Orestes suggests the Erinyes' / *Semnai Theai*'s involvement in enforcing this unwritten law. This is especially the case, since the violation of hospitality, like the desecration of a blood tie by killing amongst kin, incurs *miasma* and disrupts social order.

[494] The Erinyes, normally representing concern for *oikos*, apply ξένος in the form of host/guest relationship thus going beyond intra-familial confines, whereas Apollo, whose concerns normally lie with civic constructs, brings ξένος back to the intra-familial area. The gods' differing applications of ξένος indicate the relativity of their respective arguments and justice.

[495] Marriage and *xenia* are parallel institutions: both bring an outsider into the kin-group, exchange gifts and form a bond with mutual obligation; both are corrupted in the *Oresteia*. Cf. Roth (1993) 3-4.

[496] Bacon (2001) 52.

[497] Bacon (2001) 55. However, this is not the reason for the Erinyes to claim him as sacrificial victim – they want him because he killed his mother. Orestes' case is not redefined as a breach of *xenia* in the trilogy but as the killing of a non-blood relative.

xenê as mother in answer to the question at line 606 (ἐγὼ δὲ μητρὸς τῆς ἐμῆς ἐν αἵματι; 'am I related to my mother by blood?'); this intensifies the thematic importance of the nurse Cilissa, who nursed the infant Orestes instead of Clytemnestra in *Choephori* (730-82, esp. 761-3, 768, 779-80). The discussion about *xenia* at court suggests the strong private and civic respectful kinship and forms part of its institutionalisation. It honours the Erinyes' concern about purity but shields it from their illegitimate practice of negative reciprocity (i.e. vendetta). The Areopagus protects *xenia*;[498] the *Semnai Theai*, who are later welcomed as 'metics' – guests / strangers, into Athens, sanction the court's power.

Orestes' exoneration and the consequent alliance between Argos and Athens (*Eu*. 762-74; cf. 669-73) furnishes an example of healthy *xenia*, no longer attached to law παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα, but to positive reciprocity. Roth summarises, 'upon his acquittal Athenian hospitality is duly rewarded with συμμαχία, the relationship of *xenia* on the military and diplomatic levels.'[499] Unlike the alliance pledged by Clytemnestra and Aegisthus, this alliance forestalls tyranny and anarchy. However, as a secondary result of Orestes' exoneration, the Erinyes' threat to blight the *polis* (729-30, 782-7 = 812-17, 800-3, 829-31) is a violation of *xenia*. Although the Erinyes enter into Athens with the intention of effecting justice, their threat to blight disrupts the order of Athens. Respect for and enforcement of *xenia* must be accomplished now or never. Athena subordinates and 'civilises' the Erinyes so that they may partake in enforcing the unwritten laws through the Areopagus (804-7, 833, 869, 881-91). The relationship between Athens and the Erinyes (*metoikia*) exemplifies healthy *xenia* as

[498] See Bacon (2001) 52. The court is also endowed with the function of protecting *xenia*.

[499] Roth (1993) 14.

recommended in the second choral ode: the city welcomes them without evil design, and they enter with benign intention, too.

The Erinyes receive a status similar to metics (*Eu*. 1011, 1018, cf. 1028). Just as metics are resident aliens who have economic, social and legal rights but are not citizens and cannot own land, the Erinyes become objects of Athenian cult but only to sanction, not to execute, civic judicial and moral affairs. Just as metics take an important part in the industry and commerce, or could hold intellectual professions, so the Erinyes become indispensable figures for inspiring fear and respect, positive reciprocity and solidarity.[500] However, this relationship is not symmetrical. Whereas the metic is subject to the *polis*, the Erinyes are co-opted into the civic structure. *Xenia* expands to include healthy and gracious kinship and non-kinship in the *oikos* and *polis*.

The values of σωφροσύνη and σέβας are reflected in the new alliance between Argos and Athens and in the Erinyes' integration as *Semnai Theai* into the *polis*. Whereas alliance with Argos embodies the military and diplomatic elements of *xenia*, the reception of the Erinyes as *Semnai Theai* symbolises the civic, cultic and religious side of *xenia*.[501] In fact, they are complementary: in combination both forms of *xenia* prevent civic ruin and uphold social justice and order; the former safeguards the city against war and evil from outside and furthers its expansionist agenda (762-74), and the latter protects it against *stasis*

[500] On μέτοικοι and the Erinyes' status in the trilogy see Whitehead (1977) 69-72, esp. 70, Vidal-Naquet (1997) 109-19, esp. 110-11, and Bakewell (1997) 209-28, esp. 222-3, on *metoikia* in A. *Supp*. and *Eu*. (esp. 1017-20). See also Headlam (1906) 272-4. On the notion of τιμή (e.g. *Eu*. 827, 858, 870, 885, 895, 1033) he suggests (268-9, 272-7) that metics enjoy the full extent of civil rights, even if they were not politically franchised. See also *s.v.* metic in Harvey (1937) 268. MacLeod (1982) 126, 130, Roth (1993) 15-17 and Scodel (2006) 75-6 with n. 25. Cf. also A. *Su*., where the virgin chorus is incorporated as metics; and Arist. *Pol*. 1278a 35-8.

[501] One could also perceive the Erinyes' function as defensive while Argos' alliance increases the belligerent force of Athens against its enemies.

inside (976-87) as well as bestowing blessings of harmony, fertility and prosperity upon the *polis* (e.g. 903-13, 922-6, 938-48, 956-67, 976-87, 1006-9; cf. 902).

The proposal of practising uncorrupted *xenia* (i.e. 546-9) turns into action in the finale; the Erinyes and Athena no longer discuss but realise the guest-host relationship. Athens' role as host of the ancient and fearsome Erinyes emphasises its power and stability. In addition to playing the role of the respectful guest, the Erinyes can also reassert the traditional values of *xenia* as cultic objects. In turn, the implementation of the traditional values of *xenia* combined with the establishment of the Areopagus' judicial authority validates the Erinyes' transformation into *Semnai Theai*. The Erinyes' incorporation into Athens is an enduring patriotic kind of *xenia*. In particular, the *Eumenides* links *xenia* and metics. Μετοικία becomes a solution for potentially destructive outsiders. Athens opens itself to ξένοι in ways, and with results, that no other *polis* can match. The incorporation of strangers into the city stresses mutual benefit (i.e. benefit for the alien citizen and the Athenians) and thus highlights Athens's supremacy.

Likewise, supplication (ἱκετεία)[502] forms part of the unwritten laws. In a similar fashion the *Eumenides* will make it clear that the Areopagus, sanctioned by the cult of the *Semnai Theai*, offers protection and support to suppliants and strangers alike. As *xenia* steers clear from distortion and provides benefit for both Athenians and non-Athenians under the Areopagus' protection and the *Semnai Theai*'s blessings, so does another socio-religious institution, supplication (ἱκετεία). As long as private vendetta and curse dictate events in the trilogy,

[502] See Gould (1973), Grethlein (2003) 201-54 and Naiden (2006), esp. 241 n. 125, on the concept of supplication. Rabinowitz (2008) 74 states that Orestes performs traditional acts of supplication.

supplication meets with rejection (and death); even at Delphi Orestes' supplication does not produce the desired effect / required exoneration. The next section will explore how the establishment of the Areopagus and of the cult of the *Semnai Theai* render supplication successful without jeopardising the health of the community and its leadership.

3.7 Supplication

Just as the cultural norms mentioned above are subject to the law παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα in the *Agamemnon* and C*hoephori*, so supplication (ἱκετεία) is distorted by the cycle of *atê*, vengeance and curse in the first two plays. Supplication occurs especially before horrific moments of intra-familial murder, but remains unsuccessful because private retributive justice rules these plays' events. In *Eumenides* there is a complex progression of ἱκετεία: Apollo's role of σωτήρ in Delphi is transferred onto Athena in Athens. The end of the trilogy shows how the *Semnai Theai* provide religious (and symbolic) aid to the Areopagus' enforcement of ἱκετεία. This section examines how the *Eumenides* dramatises the reception of a suppliant, heals perverted ἱκετεία and lauds the courage and power of Athens to give shelter to the destitute / 'outsiders'. It further looks at the Erinyes' / *Semnai Theai*'s role, examining the process restoring ἱκετεία as a civic norm and characteristic Athenian gesture.

In *Agamemnon*, where vengeance and curse contort most social interaction, supplication is absent from stage performance and occurs once by allusion. It is implicit that Iphigenia supplicated her father to spare her life. In

order to satisfy Artemis and to continue his expedition of retaliation against Troy, Agamemnon stifles her cry (/curse) and kills her (*Ag*. 231-47). The other victim, Agamemnon, does not and cannot assume the role of suppliant.[503] In *Choephori*, supplication and preparation for supplication take place onstage. Clytemnestra appeals to Orestes to spare her life (*Ch*. 896-930).[504] Clytemnestra bares one breast as she supplicates to Orestes (896-8).This action recalls Hecuba's baring her breast to Hector as she supplicates to him not to fight Achilles in the *Iliad* (22. 79-89).[505] But her plea is rejected and she is killed. Unlike innocent Iphigenia, Clytemnestra must suffer death as a punishment for her wrongdoing. Having killed Agamemnon and usurped his rule as tyrant, the queen is subject to the law παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα. During her weak supplication, Clytemnestra recognises that she is responsible for her destiny (928-9; cf. Orestes 923, 930).[506] The concept of supplication emerges again at a crucial point in the *Oresteia*: after the matricide and upon his loss of control (*Ch*. 1021-5), Orestes, equipped with branch and wreath, announces his self-imposed exile and his intention to go to Apollo's shrine (1034-43). Although he is subject to the law παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα like Clytemnestra, the chorus of slave women assure Orestes that Apollo will purify him thus setting him free from suffering (1059-60). The image

[503] Supplication cannot take place for various reasons. First, it is a question of status and grace. It is unacceptable for Agamemnon to assume the role of a suppliant before his wife. In transgressing laws (i.e. the sacrifice his daughter and, as a result the death of many Argives, and excessive destruction of Troy) he is victim of the Erinyes rendering the law παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα inevitable and supplication disgraceful. Second, he is not given the opportunity because regicide takes place by treachery.

[504] Naiden (2006) 163, 302.

[505] Cf. Sommerstein (2008) *ad loc* (i.e. ad 896).

[506] She missed the opportunity to assume the role of a genuine suppliant: in *Ag*. she exhibits *hubris*; at the beginning of *Ch*. she sends duplicitous *choai*; only as the oracle is about to be fulfilled does she beg for her life using unwarranted arguments such as claiming genuine motherhood (*Ch*. 896-8, 908, cf. 914), threatening Orestes with a curse (912, 924) and attempting to evoke pity for having been neglected by Agamemnon as a wife (920).

of the matricide as a suppliant and the restoration of proper ἱκετεία will be explored in *Eumenides*.

The last play restores the traditional values of supplication under Olympian hegemony and the *Semnai Theai*. Supplication is linked to normative practices early in the *Eumenides*. For the sake of male superiority to the female (i.e. paternal curse is superior to the maternal curse), for civic benefit, and by anticipation of positive reciprocity, Orestes' supplication is successful. Apollo receives Orestes as a suppliant (*Eu*. 90-3, 232).[507] Because Apollo delivered the oracular command to kill his father's killer the law παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα become inactive in Orestes' supplication at Delphi. In contrast, the Erinyes, in their role as maternal avengers and executioners of παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα, disregard Orestes' right to protection as a suppliant (149-54, 169-77).[508] Beside their primary desire to suck Orestes' blood to satisfy vengeance, they also consider his supplication as a great risk to the purity of the shrine. On the contrary, Apollo believes the Erinyes' presence at his shrine unfitting (179-97). Athena also receives Orestes as a suppliant when she finds him embracing her

[507] Although the Pythia does not mention Apollo's authority to receive a suppliant (e.g. 60-3) and the Erinyes assert that this is not Apollo's right (151-2), there is ample evidence that Orestes is Apollo' suppliant. See Naiden (2006) 37 n. 41, 92 n. 372, 159 n. 301, 168 n. 40, 302. The Pythia sees a man in the position of a suppliant at Delphic shrine (40-5); Orestes implores Apollo in the manner of a suppliant (64-6); Apollo refers to Orestes as his suppliant (ἱκέτης, 90-4, 232-4, 576-9, προστραπέσθαι 205; implicitly presenting Orestes to Athena as a suppliant, 667-70). Apollo is known as *nomios*, guardian of flocks and herds; he is also known for his moral excellence promulgated from Delphi 'for it prescribed purification and penance for the expiation of crime, and discouraged vengeance.' Quote *s.v.* Apollo in Harvey (1937) 34. See also *s.v.* Apollo in Hornblower (2003) 122-3, and Gantz (1993) 87-96. However, both Athena and Apollo vehemently defend the principle of the superior male – this might form the reason for their protection of Orestes from the 'hounds of the mother'. See Vellacott (1984) 21-36.

[508] However, they seem to acknowledge that Orestes is a suppliant, albeit polluted, at *Eu*. 175-8. They recognize his status, but they are concerned about the purity of the shrine. Podlecki (1989) *ad* 177-8 notes that the text and meaning are obscure here.

statue (264-72, 439-42; cf. 79-80, 717-18).[509] The harmlessness (445-6, 470-5) and observance of the law (576-9; cf. 90-2) of the suppliant Orestes are emphasised. Moreover, Orestes stresses the familial relationship between his family and Athena (457-8) and offers military support if he is acquitted (289-91; cf. 762-6).[510] The trial constitutes a new form of supplication; supplication becomes a judicial agenda and subject to 'democratic' voting. The new location suggests that concern about ἱκετεία shifts from *oikos* to *polis*. Towards the end of the trial, ἱκετεία even expands onto the mythical and cultic plane. While the jurors cast their votes, Apollo's comment of Ixion's supplication to Zeus (*Eu*. 717-18)[511] provides religious validation for Orestes' acquittal.[512]

The Erinyes' role as virgin chorus (e.g. Νυκτὸς παῖδες ἄπαιδες, 1034) renders them similar to suppliants (cf. the Danaids in A. *Supp*.; e.g. 27, 192, 360, 713).[513] Like suppliants, they cry out that they have suffered injustice and plead for the protection of their honour (*Eu*. 778-80 = 808-10, 789-92 = 819-22, 837-9 = 869-72, 845-6 = 879-80). They submit to Athena's direction.[514] But unlike Orestes, the Erinyes cannot lay claim to having a connection to the goddesses (e.g. 190-2, 365-6); they also just displayed their powers to destroy Athens, not contributing to its greatness as Orestes does. But wise Athena

[509] Athena is known to be the protectress of Athens, yet not explicitly as receiver of suppliants. *S.v.* Athena in Harvey (1937) 55, *s.v.* Athena in Hornblower (2003) 201-2, and Gantz (1993) 83-7.

[510] See also Griffith (1995) 97-100 and Grethlein (2003) 212.

[511] Zeus also protects suppliants and strangers (*Eu*. 92-3; cf. *Od*. 17.475; A. *Supp*. 360); i.e. Zeus *Hikesios* and Zeus *Xenios* (*Ag*. 61-2, 362, 748).

[512] However, Apollo does not narrate that part of the legend in which Ixion attempts to rape Hera. Ixion's abuse of Zeus' generosity to receive the suppliant despite his *miasma* is thus excluded.

[513] Cf. Bakewell (1997) 209-28, esp. 222-3, on *metoikia* in A. *Supp*. and *Eu*. (esp. 1017-20).

[514] Athens is without a king in *Eu*. In her role as patron and presiding magistrate Athena takes on a king-like role. The significance of the locale Athens, where the Erinyes' potentially hazardous act of supplication takes place, will be discussed in the next chapter.

conceives of the potential benefit within the Erinyes' powers for her *polis*. Her offer of a civic cult resembles the welcoming of suppliants for protection within the city walls. The Erinyes' suppliant-like position attests to their transformation into kind goddesses. They cease to be angry persecutors and instead become subordinate members of the *polis*. The argument that Aeschylus reverses the traditional pattern of a suppliant drama in *Eumenides* reinforces this conclusion.[515] The suppliant Orestes, who by tradition ought to stay in the city, leaves – he no longer assumes the role of a suppliant but is to be a powerful king and ally to Athens; the persecutors the Erinyes, who by tradition leave, stay in Athens and use their power to help the city. Athens becomes the only place where suppliants receive proper treatment and protection from persecutors and are incorporated into the *polis* as subordinated members. The dramatic enactment of supplication not only exhibits σέβας, σωφροσύνη and positive reciprocity, but also Athens' generosity and power. The pious reception and salvation of suppliants may be a great risk to the city (cf. A. *Supp*.), yet Athens' supremacy surmounts this risk and turns it into mutual benefit.

It seems that the Erinyes not only assume the role of suppliant in the end, but as *Semnai Theai* they also oversee ἱκετεία. Although the play does not indicate that the cult of the Eumenides / *Semnai Theai* receives suppliants, there are subtle hints in the text that their new task extends to include this function. This hypothesis is built on a reading of Sophocles' *Oedipus Colonus* and the association between their epithets and names through cult. In Sophocles, the Eumenides receive suppliants (*OC* 486-8) and in cult Eumenides are identified

[515] This argument is put forth by Taplin (1977) 407-8, Sommerstein (1989) *ad* 239-40 and Mitchell-Boyask (2009) 89. Cf. also Grethlein (2003) 213.

with the *Semnai Theai*.[516] Addressing the Erinyes as *Semnai* (*Eu*. 1041) is an indirect way of referring to them as Eumenides.[517] Aeschylus may suggest that the traditional values of ἱκετεία are enforced and protected by the court and sanctioned by the *Semnai Theai*. Supplication thus shifts towards being a civic norm.

In sum, in the first two plays, the Erinyes are central to sacrifice, the guest-host relationship and supplication expressive of the deformation of social and moral order in the trilogy. The Erinyes' movement from goddesses of vengeance and curse to *Semnai Theai* runs parallel with the cessation of distortion of these three symbolic practices. The trilogy's resolution depends on transforming the Erinyes into objects of Athenian cult that stabilises positive reciprocity of sacrifice, the guest-host relationship and supplication. However, the reception of the Erinyes as cult does not institutionalise sacrifice, the guest-host relationship and supplication as well as curse, blessing and oath and the relationship between fear and reverence discussed above – Athena's establishment of the Areopagus does. Nevertheless, the Erinyes, particularly through their role as chorus, strongly contribute to the delineation of social convention (*nomos*) and divine decree (*thesmos*). Assimilating choral ideas from *Agamemnon* and *Choephori*, the choral odes in *Eumenides* clarify the subject matter of and advocate unity between civic and divine law. The following subchapter examines the Erinyes' / *Semnai Theai*'s involvement in generating and upholding civic and divine law. Just as socio-religious constructs are remedied and rendered beneficial by the formation of the Areopagus and the cult of the *Semnai Theai*, so *nomos* and *thesmos* are united and institutionalised thus forming

[516] See Scodel (2006) 72-5 and Mitchell-Boyask (2009) 25 with n. 9.

[517] See subchapters 1.4.2 and 1.4.3.

the overarching judicial structure for the socio-religious constructs responsible for Athenian safety, justice and prosperity.

3.8 Laws

In archaic thinking, the Erinyes are the embodiment of law-enforcement in the cosmos. They guard against transgressions of the natural order in the *Iliad* (19.400-18) and Heraclitus also refers to them as ministers of Justice: Ἥλιος γὰρ οὐχ ὑπερβήσεται μέτερα, φησίν ὁ Ἡράκλειτος, εἰ δὲ μή, Ἐρινύες μιν Δίκης ἐπίκουροι ἐξευρήσουσιν ('for the sun will not overstep its measures, says Heraclitus, if it does, the ministers of Justice, the Erinyes, will find him out.', Heraclitus fr. 94 DK). However, in the first two plays of the *Oresteia*, the Erinyes, in their role as goddesses of vengeance and curse, are a factor of disorder. In *Eumenides*, Athens and its institutions restore the Erinyes' archaic role: maintaining civic and cosmic order and guarding the unwritten laws belong (i.e. what was natural law in archaic thinking) to the *Semnai Theai*'s function at the end of the trilogy.

Parallel to the Erinyes' progress from agents of disorder towards cultic guarantors of civic justice and order, Aeschylus employs *nomos* and *thesmos* (civic and unwritten law)[518] to highlight the *Oresteia*'s movement from chaos to order. The unwritten laws (θεσμοί), common among Olympians and chthonians,

[518] Whereas *nomos* connotes social custom or the practises decreed by society, *thesmos* designates those laws laid down by divine origin. In the first two plays, *nomos* indicates what is ethically correct, but more precisely it reflects the principle of vengeance (*Ag*. 151; *Ch*. 400-4; cf. 93-5, 990). *Anomos* indicates illegal and unethical (i.e. violent), *nomos* indicates legal and ethical (i.e. peaceful) acts. See Fleming (1977) 232. On *nomos* and *thesmos* see Jones (1956) 24-36, Ostwald (1986) 85-8, 129, Todd and Millett (1990) 11-13 and Cartledge and Millet (1990) 231-2. See also Harris (2010) 16-17 for a list of occurrences of *dikê*, *nomos*, *themis*, *thesmion*, *thesmos* in *Ag*., *Ch*. and *Eu*..

are injunctions that humans must obey. Civic law (νόμος) overlaps with these but is not identical to them. The poet also uses the conflation between *nomos* as tune with *nomos* as law is a measure to emphasise chaos in the first play.[519] This section explores which secular and religious components Aeschylus perceives to be crucial to justice and how he merges the traditional customs with the new historical development at Athens as well as with the unwritten law of the gods. After offering an overview of the association and uses of *thesmos* and *nomos* in the first two plays, this section examines how the *Eumenides* presents and reinvents these types of law and custom. It explores how *thesmos* and *nomos* become institutionalised and unified. This also forms a preparation for examining the poets' dramatic restoration of the Areopagus' reputation after Ephialtes' reforms in the following chapter 'why Athens'. Further, particular attention will be given to how the Erinyes' role as chorus assists in the formation of a cohesive law that prompts civic justice and prosperity. It also clarifies how the establishment of the Areopagus and the Erinyes' reception as civic cult restores justice and order in the trilogy whilst also serving as a prototype of justice for Athens.

In the first play, *thesmos*, *nomos* as well as *themis* are tied to the concept of negative reciprocity and disorder. Repeating Agamemnon's words, the chorus perceives *themis* in terms of bloody sacrifice and reciprocal bloodshed ordained by the gods (214-17; cf. 1431; contrast 98). Clytemnestra also describes her oath,

[519] Additionally, although that what is customary, θέμις, plays a minor role in the *Agamemnon*, it contributes to the coherence, consistency and progression of justice and law will not go unobserved. Greene (1944) 10, 105-6 describes the Homeric Erinyes as the daemonic and chthonian offshoots of divinities who are guardians and executors of moral and natural order (φύσις and θέμις) before the gods or the *polis* have established a law of dealing with homicide. Although φύσις and θέμις do not surface in *Eu*., his argument links onto and is verified by the fact that the *Semnai Theai* sanction *thesmos* and guard the *polis*' fertility at the end of *Eu*.: as objects of Athenian cult they implicitly integrate their traditional Erinyean aspects 'θέμις' and 'φύσις'.

whereby she pledges that murdering Agamemnon is an act in accordance with *Dikê*, *Atê* and the Erinys, as θέμιν (1431). Finally, the chorus makes explicit that παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα is a θέσμιον ordained by Zeus (1562-4). This elaborates on, intensifies and concludes the harsh but just Olympian rule of the preceding Hymn to Zeus, where πάθει μάθος and χάρις βίαιος are prominent (160-83, esp. 177, 182). Moreover, the first play conflates *nomos* as musical strain and law (*<a>nomos*, 150-1, 1142). While this conflation indicates that Iphigenia's sacrifice is void of the appropriate feast and song and constitutes a transgression of civic law at the same time (150-1), it also forms a measure of chaos in the *Agamemnon*. Likewise, Cassandra's song is *anomos* (νόμον ἄνομον, 1142; cf. 1153): her prophetic song is without tune and joy, stirs fear in the chorus (1152) and anticipates the fulfilment of vengeance and curse in the house of Atreus.[520] The sacrifice of a virgin (i.e. Iphigenia) and the inauspicious song of the abused virgin (i.e. Cassandra) are expressive of disorder – this disorder is heightened by the conflation of *nomos* as musical strain and law. Likewise, the *paean* to the Erinyes (παιᾶνα Ἐρινύων, 645)[521] succinctly embodies the confusion of singer, song and occasion: this song of triumph and thanksgiving dedicated to the goddesses of vengeance and curse attends the news of the complete annihilation of Troy, Agamemnon's' sacrilege and the loss of many Argives. In sum, the first play establishes that θέσμιον, *nomos* as well as *themis* is closely interconnected to disorder, especially vengeance, curse, improper sacrifice, ruin and grief.

[520] Cf. A. *Th*. 951-2, τελευταῖαι δ᾽ ἐπηλάλαξαν / Ἀραὶ τὸν ὀξὺν νόμον ('in the end, the Curses have raised their piercing cry').

[521] See discussion in ch. 2, pp. 74-6.

In *Choephori*, *nomos* continues to be associated with custom (*Ch*. 93, 990), bloody vengeance, the Erinys (400-4) and to be conflated with song (822). Offering Clytemnestra's *choai* at the tomb of her father, Electra perceives reciprocity to be a custom among mankind; she makes implicit that this reciprocity equals the law 'tit-for-tat' (93-5). The chorus specifically advises Electra to apply negative reciprocity (117, 119, 121, 123): it transforms Electra's neutral ἀντιδοῦναι (94)[522] into a vengeful ἀνταποκτενεῖ (121) and τὸν ἐχθρόν γ' ἀνταμείβεσθαι κακοῖς (123). In the *kommos*, the chorus spells out the meaning of *nomos* without reservation: ἀλλὰ νόμος μὴν φονίας σταγόνας / χυμένας εἰς πέδον ἄλλο προσαιτεῖν / αἷμα. βοᾶι γὰρ λοιγὸς Ἐρινὺν / παρὰ τῶν πρότερον φθιμένων ἄτην / ἑτέραν ἐπάγουσαν ἐπ' ἄτηι ('It is the law that drops of blood spilled to the ground demand other blood. For horrible death calls out for an Erinys from those killed before to bring further ruin upon ruin.', 400-4). Although the slave women are intent on bringing healing and thus justice to the house of Atreus, their conception of *nomos* entails negative reciprocity, bloodshed, ruin and especially the agency of the Erinys. Similarly, they intend to utter a feminine strain to fulfil vengeance and to bring about justice (822). The paradox inherent in Cassandra's tune – tuneless / joyless song (νόμον ἄνομον, *Ag*. 1142) becomes even more gruesome in that song not only anticipates bloody murder but accompanies the act. Finally, Orestes announces that killing Aegisthus has been in accordance with *nomos* (*Ch*. 990).[523] Although the young Argive perceives that matricide renders him subject to the law παθεῖν

[522] Or, more likely, sarcastic ἀντιδοῦναι. See Sommerstein (2008) *ad loc*.

[523] At *Ch*. 990 *nomos* might mean *polis* law. *Ch*. 400 and 990 can be linked to divine and civic authority respectively. *Eu*. unites the two.

τὸν ἔρξαντα, and requires a trial and Zeus' testimony that his act was justified (985-9), his killing of the adulterer is free from retributive ramifications.

In the last play, *thesmos* is prominent. The diverging opinions of Olympian and chthonian gods over their object of strife, Orestes, affect their common understanding of *thesmos*. But the Erinyes' mission of exacting vengeance from Orestes conflicting with Olympian support of the matricide prepares for the emergence of a new public form of justice.[524] The Erinyes claim that Apollo violates the *nomos* of the ancient gods by receiving the polluted matricide Orestes at Delphi (*Eu*. 171-2). More specifically, it violates Moira's laws and their own. The Erinyes specify that they are the ancient and divine embodiment of justice, the representatives of the ancient law dispensed by Moira; they even perceive Apollo's (and later also Athena's) action as a dishonour of their personal rights (e.g. 778-9 = 808-9, 780 = 810, 792 = 822, 839 = 872, 845-6 = 879-80).

In the first stasimon, the Erinyes explain their tasks: besides enumerating their duties (to punish murderers, *Eu*. 313-27, kin murders, 355-9, to persecute agents of violence and injustice, 336-40), they explain that Moira appointed them to exact vengeance (334-6; cf. 349, 391, 961-7). The conclusion of the first stasimon associates *thesmos* with the ancient gods (i.e. Moira and themselves), but also with the new gods, as well as with fear and honour / reverence (τίς οὖν τάδ' οὐχ ἅζεται / τε καὶ δέδοικεν βροτῶν, / ἐμοῦ κλύων θεσμὸν / τὸν μοιρόκραντον ἐκ θεῶν / δοθέντα τέλεον; ἔπι δὲ μοι / γέρας παλαιόν, οὐδ' ἀτιμίας κυρῶ, / καίπερ ὑπὸ χθόνα τάξιν ἔχουσα / καὶ δυσάλιον κνέφας, 'Therefore what mortal does not respect and fear this, hearing from me

[524] Jones (1956) 26.

this ordinance appointed by the Moirai and granted in completeness by the gods? I have an ancient privilege, and I am not without honour, although I reside in a sunless dark place beneath the earth.', 389-96). Thus they point out that their *thesmos* is universally valid and authorised and cannot be undermined.

In the opening lines of the second choral ode the Erinyes expound on the downfall of ordained laws (νῦν καταστροφαὶ νόμων / θεσμίων, *Eu*. 490-1)[525] if Orestes is acquitted. These unwritten ordained laws comprise *dikê* (507-16), benefit of fear and its interconnection with reverence (517-25, 526-37), σωφροσύνη (522-5; cf. 535-6), absence of anarchy and tyranny (526-9), moderation instead of *hubris* (534, 540-4), and men's reverence before gods, parents and guests as well as before the altar of justice (539, 545-9; cf. 270-1). As discussed in the previous chapter,[526] this advice is evocative of the choral odes in *Agamemnon* and *Choephori*, in particular of Zeus' law (*Ag*. 1564). Hence, the Erinyes, despite their role as maternal avengers and their antagonism to Apollo, advocate what appears to be the *thesmos* of Zeus.[527]

Athena assumes the task of establishing civic ordinances and an institution (*Eu*. 484, 571, 681; cf. 615 where Apollo gives support to Athena in her establishment of ordinances). As shown in the previous chapter, Athena virtually echoes the Erinyes' words in establishing the Areopagus; this shows that the chorus of Erinyes have a charter value for the Areopagus. She further regards the sanctity of a juror's oath θεσμόν (484) and presents the Areopagus itself a *thesmos* – an institution divinely founded (571, 681; cf. 615). The Olympian

[525] This reading is H. L. Ahrens' conjecture. The MSS have νέων. See also Dover (1957) 230 and Sommerstein (2008) *ad loc*.

[526] See pp. 129-35.

[527] See Sommerstein (1989) *ad* 391.

goddess also warns against man-made additions to the laws (νόμους, 693)[528] – such civic / human legislation is potentially at odds with divine laws / *thesmos* and may disturb their stability. Orestes' admission to court as matricide furnishes one such potential clash; but despite the *Eumenides*' ambiguity about Orestes' purification,[529] Orestes and Apollo assert Orestes' right to be tried at court. Referring to *nomos*, Orestes explains that it is the law that one who commits homicide must not speak until blood from a sacrificial victim has been poured over his hands by a purifier (448-50). Using *nomos*, Apollo confirms that Orestes is purified and thus a lawful suppliant (576; cf. 473). In fact, the desired outcome of a union between unwritten and civic law for all time to come (εἰς τὸν αἰανῆ χρόνον, 572) is already exemplified at court in that both mortal and immortal participate in the judicial procedure. In addition to Athena acting as presiding officer, the Erinyes as persecutor and Apollo as defence, Athena chooses Athenian citizens without fault as jurors (470-89, esp. δικαστάς, 483).[530]

The Erinyes, defeated at court, exclaim that ancient laws (παλαιοὺς νόμους) have been trampled by the younger gods (*Eu*. 778-9 = 808-9; cf. 171-2, 961-3, esp. ὀρθονόμοι, 963; cf. also 994). Whereas they understand the ancient laws to be *thesmos* in the first and second choral ode (quoted above, 490-1) they conceive them as *nomos* (again) after the trial. It may also be that the Erinyes do not distinguish between *nomos* and *thesmos*. *Nomos* is to be subsumed under the paradigm of institutionalised divine law – the *thesmos* 'Areopagus' (571, 681; cf.

[528] Macleod (1982) 128 reduces the reference of νόμους to the law of homicide / blood, an essential Athenian principle. Cf. Braun (1998) 128.

[529] See n. 106.

[530] See Leão (2010) 41-2, 49, 50, 54 on how the mythical origin of the Areopagus intersects with the historical reality of Athens in the play.

615) – in order to bring about civic and cosmic justice.[531] Perceiving the Areopagus as *thesmos* also attests to the court's solemnity that might have been injured by Ephialtes' democratic reforms in 462/1 BC. Unlike *nomos*, which limits law to one society, *thesmos* also implies that the court's laws are not only tied to the Athenian community, but pertain to all of Hellas – trying the Argive Orestes at the Areopagus seems to prove this hypothesis; the Areopagus enforces law amongst Athenians and Athenian allies. In conjunction with the cooperation between Athena and the Erinyes and the common rejoicing of Zeus and Moira (1044-7), the unity between civic and divine law also indicates that the differences between Olympian and chthonian law stemming from Orestes' matricide are settled. The Areopagus forms the legal basis for Zeus' (i.e. the Olympians') and the Erinyes' / *Semnai Theai*'s (i.e. chthonians') common enforcement of the unwritten laws.

Athena's offer of a civic cult to the Erinyes, representatives of the ancient laws, integrates ancient law into her new ordinances. The Erinyes' final association with unwritten laws emphasised in the second choral ode (moderation instead of *hubris*, 534, 540-4, and men's reverence before gods, parents and guests as well as before the altar of justice, 539, 545-9; cf. 270-1) dovetails with their role to safeguard the natural law in archaic thinking. In *Eumenides*, Athens is portrayed as a progressive *polis* that has the power to order the cosmos through human institutions. *Polis*-law becomes important to the Erinyes – as *Semnai Theai* they gain a cult and honours that tally with their archaic function of guarding the unwritten laws. Whereas the Areopagus passes judgements (and imposes law), the cult of *Semnai Theai* inspires just and virtuous behaviour in the citizens through

[531] The Areopagus (*thesmos*) also seems to remedy the conflation between *nomos* as musical strain and law.

τὸ δεινόν while their curse power punishes transgressors. The Erinyes are no longer a factor of disorder as in the first two plays: they promise not to dishonour the city which Zeus and Ares have established as the citadel of the Hellenic gods (*Eu*. 918-20), acknowledge Zeus' supremacy over and trustworthiness in regard to men and gods,[532] proclaim that Zeus respects those who are under Pallas' protection (1000-1), and call him πατήρ (1002).[533] In particular, the ancient Erinyes lend solemnity and sanctity to the new order established at the end of the play.[534] The sisterhood between the Erinyes and the Moirai, who apportion justly (961-3), renders the final conception of *thesmos* especially sacrosanct. Although both old and new gods sanction justice and prosperity of the city, the Erinyes / *Semnai Theai* lend the *polis*' legal and political institutions the necessary cultic *gravitas*.[535] The development of the chorus of Erinyes and the cult of the *Semnai Theai* are instrumental in maximising the efficiency of the Athenian judicial system. In the first play, *thesmos* was associated with Zeus' will, especially with the law παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα (*Ag*. 1562-4); in addition to Zeus' supremacy in the last play (e.g. *Eu*. 973, 996-1002, 1045-7)[536] Athena's institution of the Areopagus also encompasses positive reciprocity, σωφροσύνη, beneficial φόβος, σέβας and prosperity enforced by an awesome cult. Justice, peace and prosperity find fulfilment and receive a proper seat in a civic court inaugurated by

[532] The Erinyes call Zeus παγκρατὴς (*Eu*. 918). Brown (1983) 27-8 comments that the Erinyes reluctantly accept Zeus' ultimate authority. See de Romilly (1968) 54 with n. 57 for epithets of power applied to Zeus.

[533] Heath (1999) 38-9 comments that the Erinyes lay down their bestiality and that their last direct animal allusion (1001-2) is free of brutality and corruption.

[534] See Revermann (2008) 248.

[535] Cf. Prins (1991) 187.

[536] See Lloyd-Jones (1956) 58-9 on Zeus' omnipotence and its limitations (cf. *Eu*. 644-51).

Olympian authority and sanctioned by a chthonian cult. Finally, the union between all-seeing Zeus and the Moirai (1045-7)[537] and the celebratory procession of the *Semnai Theai* to their new sanctuary at the end (1033-47) testify that *timai* for Olympian and chthonian gods are equally assured in the synthesis of unwritten and civic law. This summarises the significance of the Erinyes' transformation into *Semnai Theai* for the establishment of wholesome and efficient socio-religious and judicial institutions and practices.

To summarise: speech acts (curse, oath and blessing), emotions (fear and reverence), socio-religious practices (sacrifice, the guest-host relationship and supplication) and the laws are indicators of the trilogy's development from disorder to order. The Erinyes' close association with these key terms that first exemplify corruption and injustice in *Agamemnon* and *Choephori* and then constructive and just civic living at the end of *Eumenides* dovetails with their transformation into *Semnai Theai*. As object of Athenian cult the *Semnai Theai* reinforce the Areopagus and amplify the *polis*' justice and order.

Whereas the power of the curse subverts patriarchal rule and civic well-being in the first two plays, in *Eumenides* Athens domesticates the Erinyes, sets them up as a cult , employs their curse power to deter transgression and uses their capacity to pass divine injunctions to bless the city with fertility and prosperity. Likewise, at the end of the trilogy, oaths are no longer an instrument of perpetuating vengeance or forming alliances that destabilise a community: the

[537] Zeus does not seem to be subject to the Moirai in the *Oresteia* (contrast e.g. [A.] *PV* 515-18; *Il.* 16.394, 431-61, 508, 548). Cf. Hes. *Th*. 903 where the Fates are nearest to the throne of Zeus. See also Greene (1944) 125-6, 129, Bowra (1958) 235, Dawe (1968) 109, Rabel (1979b) 183, Poliakoff (1980) 255 with n. 6, and Scott (1984a) 148. Lloyd-Jones (1956) 59 argues that the last lines in *Eu*. recall *PV* 518. See also Pötscher (1989) 56, 59-60 and Nicolai (1988) 44, 47 on a new divine rearrangement of the old order.

Erinyes' / *Semnai Theai*'s curse power guarantees that oaths are sworn with sincerity, respect and with the intention of promoting the *polis*' justice and order.

Moreover, the relationship between fear and reverence (φόβος and σέβας) is not internalised by the agents in *Agamemnon* and *Choephori* and thus allows for disorder, transgression and destruction to manifest themselves. In *Eumenides*, the horrifying Erinyes arise as the epitome of τὸ δεινόν whereby they make men abide by justice and piety and deter transgression. The *Eumenides*' second choral ode emphasises the value of fear for the *polis* – Athena reiterates the Erinyes' counsel in her establishment of the Areopagus and its ordinances and in the *Semnai Theai*'s integration into her city. The Areopagus becomes the repository of fear and reverence while the Erinyes are the cultic embodiment that urges φόβος and σέβας.

The socio-religious practices sacrifice, *xenia* and supplication also underpin the trilogy's reconstruction of order and align with the Erinyes' transformation into *Semnai Theai*. Men's corruption of *xenia* and *hiketeia* and performance of perverted sacrifices in *Agamemnon* and *Choephori* come to an end in *Eumenides*. Both Orestes and the Erinyes are part of the proper socio-religious rituals sacrifice, *xenia* and supplication. Athena receives Orestes as suppliant and accepts Argive alliance; she also frustrates the Erinyes' bloodlust and threat to poison her city and incorporates them as a civic cult which receives sacrificial offerings from the Athenians. In particular, Athens' practice of the guest-host-relationship (regarding Orestes and the Erinyes) reflects on the *polis*' generosity, power, stability, sense of order and ability to conduct positive transactions.

Finally, the first two plays' disorder, described through the judicial terms and practices *thesmos*, *nomos* and *themis,* ceases in the last play in which Athena inaugurates the Areopagus – a *thesmos* itself. Divine law is anchored in a human institution established by the Olympian goddess Athena. *Nomos* and ancient law represented by the Erinyes become an integral part of the Areopagus and its ordinances so that judicial balance is created in the *polis* as well as in the cosmos. This grand Athenian institution not only accomplishes civic order and justice but also restores the Erinyes' traditional (/archaic) role as guardians of the natural law.

The trilogy's victory of order and justice largely depends on the agents and locale in *Eumenides*. Gods restore order and establish ordinances and Athens succeeds Argos and Delphi as a place of resolution. The next chapter will examine why Aeschylus selects Athens as the showplace where differences are settled, foreigners incorporated, curse power is transformed into blessings, fear and reverence are interrelated, institutionalised and linked to a civic cult, and where socio-religious and judicial practises serve communal justice and prosperity.

Chapter 4: Why Athens?

4.1 Introduction

Scholarship has extensively discussed the relationship between ancient Greek tragedy and contemporary Athenian society and politics.[538] This subchapter will not concern itself with clarifying the different approaches as to what extent Athenian ideology is reflected in the *Oresteia* or what Aeschylus' personal political and religious opinion was.[539] But it seeks to answer why the poet selects Athens as the locale for a solution regarding Orestes' moral and religious dilemma. Not only is Athens an atypical setting for Greek tragedy,[540] but it also strikes one as unusual because it constitutes the showplace for resolution for the Orestes legend that traditionally has associations with Sparta / Mycenae. This subchapter examines how Aeschylus' choice celebrates Athens' greatness, power and Panhellenism,[541] its benevolence and fierceness, highlights its civic and

[538] On the fifth-century BC Athenian politics, the social and political function of the *Oresteia* and tragedy in general see, for example, West (1931) 174-93, Tierney (1938) 98-110, Charles (1946) 86-91, Stoessl (1952) 133-9, Dover (1957) 230-7, Costa (1962) 22-34, Dodds (1973) 45-63, Cole (1977) 99-111, Rhodes (1981) 309-18 and (2003) 104-19 Goldhill (1987) 58-76, Meier (1988) 113-56, Bowie (1993) 10-31, Griffith (1995) 62-129, Rosenbloom (1995) 91-130, (2011) 353-81, Braun (1998) 13-203, Saïd, (1998) 275-95, Griffin (1998) 39-61, Goldhill (2000) 34-56, Kennedy (2006) 35-72 and Kowalzig (2006) 79-98.

[539] *Eu*. is not a commentary, least a one-on-one analogy, on political events, factions and institutions in 462/1 BC, but a reflection on social, judicial, moral order in Athens and the *polis*' status in and relationship to Hellas. Cf. Meier (1988) 132 and Saïd (1998) 280-1.

[540] Although Athens is the locale for the performance of Attic theatre, it is a rare setting in tragedy. Rosenbloom (1995) 99 with n. 47 establishes that 'Athens is not subject of tragic *pathos*. On the contrary, Athens is the scene where tragic violence can be resolved, and tragic pain can be healed.' Other suppliant tragedies that take place in Attica are, for example, E. *Heracl*. (before the temple of Zeus in Marathon), E. *Supp*. (before the temple of Demeter at Eleusis), and S. *OC* (by the grove of the Eumenides at Colonus); other suppliant tragedies are not set in Attica (A. *Suppl*.; E. *HF* and *Andr*.). Boedeker (1998) 192 comments that 'the *Eumenides* makes the story of Orestes' crime and eventual acquittal into a kind of Athenian suppliant drama.' See also Vidal-Naquet (1997) 112 and Revermann (2008) 245.

[541] Panhellenism describes the cultural, social, moral, judicial, religious, military and political unity and solidarity of people from different Hellenic *poleis*. For a more detailed discussion of the term see Rosenbloom (2011) 353-8. In contrast, imperialism describes Athens' cultural, social,

imperial ideology, and endows the audience with a sense of security, unity and pride. It will explore the *Oresteia*, and especially the last third of the *Eumenides*, against the framework of Athens' internal and external circumstances in 458BC.[542] How does the *Oresteia* emphasise Athenian ideology and power? How does the trilogy contribute to shaping Athenian perceptions about its social, judicial and political structure? In particular, this chapter will examine the *Semnai Theai*'s reception into the city. What effects does the reception of a *polis*-cult consisting of awesome ancient goddesses have upon the city, its citizens, friends and enemies? This chapter looks at the juxtaposition of Athens and Argos (1), the Areopagus, its relationship between old and new ordinances, and the results of Orestes' exoneration (2), Athens as Panhellenic centre of worship (3), and finally Athens' glory (4).

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moral, judicial, religious, military and political domination over other Greek city-states. Panhellenism is a prerequisite for imperialism.

[542] Composition and reception take place at different times. The *Oresteia* was performed in 458 BC; it was composed sometime after 462/1 BC. In 462/1 BC the democrat Ephialtes (in the absence of the conservative leader Cimon) reforms the Areopagus: the privileges of the conservatives are removed and the *dêmos* is given power instead; the Areopagus loses its right to make political decisions and is reduced to a court that tries homicides. This not only created a *stasis*-like situation between democrats and conservatives that culminates in Ephialtes' assassination, but also affected Athens' foreign policy. The alliance with Sparta (i.e. conservative foreign policy) is broken and Argos becomes Athens' new ally. At the time of the *Oresteia*'s composition the growth of the Athenian democracy and naval empire is well underway. In addition to internal strife, Athens' expansive foreign policy with its many expeditions to the extreme borders of Hellas form the political, moral and religious background of the closing scenes of *Eumenides*. On fifth-century Athenian politics see, for example, Dover (1957) 230-7, Dodds (1973) 45-63, Cole (1977) 99-111, Macleod (1982) 124-44, Meier (1983) 144-246, Jones (1987) 53-76, Cawkwell (1988) 1-12, Hall (1990) 319-28, Stockton (1990) 19-56, Fornara and Samons (1991) 25-8, 60-4, 66-72. In particular, this thesis builds on and extends Macleod's argument that the play is concerned with the ideal *polis* (rather than the poet's patriotism or politics *per se*): Aeschylus' artistry in designing the trilogy's development of the choruses and particularly the Erinyes elaborates on how social problems and solutions are succinctly addressed by dramatic composition. On the Areopagus and *Eu*. see Braun (1998) 13-203. On Athens' hegemony and imperialism in the *Oresteia* see Tierney (1938) 106-7, Rosenbloom (1995) 91-130, Kennedy (2006) 35-72, esp. 35, 38, 40; cf. also Meiggs (1943) 21-34 for Athenian imperialism in general. Kennedy (2006) 35-72 explains how the geographical references and the establishment of a court in *Eu*. contribute to glorifying Athens as supreme power in Hellas, especially its judicial imperialism. On Athenian naval power and the relationship between the naval force and democracy see Charles (1946) 86-7, Dover (1957) 237 and Goldhill (2000) 43.

4.2 Athens and Argos

Aeschylus' trilogy does not locate the Orestes legend in Mycenae as Homer did; he transfers it to Argos, Delphi and Athens. This is a novelty – especially Argos and Athens have not been associated with the Orestes myth before.[543] The choice of Argos and Athens seems to reflect and comment on the current political situation in Athens, the *polis*' ideology and institutional system, and its relationship with its allies and enemies in Hellas.[544] The first two plays, set in Argos, introduce the audience to moral and religious philosophy and conflicts devoid of explicit Athenian references.[545] However, in *Eumenides* Athens emerges as the ultimate place of decision making and resolution that puts an end to the cycle of vengeance, curse and bloodshed in the house of Atreus and even effects stability and order amongst the cosmic forces. But before analysing why Athens has been selected as the location for the conclusion of the trilogy, attention must be given to the *Oresteia*'s setting in the *Agamemnon* and *Choephori*, Argos. Athens' social and judicial structure as well as its status and reputation in Hellas are juxtaposed to Argos' handling of moral and religious conflicts. Likewise,

[543] The Spartans took it over early and Stesichoros set his *Oresteia* there. Agamemnon and Orestes were important to Argos, Sparta and Athens, because in Homer Agamemnon has the right to rule 'all Argos and many islands' (*Il.* 2.108) – he is the only figure with a title to rule 'Argos' as 'Hellas' in Greek mythology. See Tierney (1938) 98-105, Dover (1957) 236, Rosenbloom (1995) 101 and Grethlein (2003) 201-4. Tierney (1938) 100 further comments on the destruction of Mycenae: 'He [i.e. Aeschylus] was equally inhibited from restoring it to its rightful home, Mycenae, by the fact that Mycenae had been wiped out of existence three years before by Argos, the ally of Athens, and that a victory won in the course of the campaign had been shared in by an Athenian contingent and solemnly celebrated in an Athenian public building.'

[544] I.e. it embraces the politics of Panhellenic myth (Argos is the old hegemonic city, Athens the new, to the exclusion of Sparta) and the plot of the *Oresteia*, which links up with the *polis* of Argos and forms an alliance between it and Athens.

[545] Argos is often a 'double' of Athens: for example, naval hegemony, *andrapodismos*, and orientalism in *Ag.*; democracy and autochthony in A. *Supp.*; democracy in E. *Or*. The trilogy pits two versions of the city against each other. Contrast Vidal-Naquet (1997) 113-14 who describes Argos as a place of confrontation but also as a city that does not perish in the *Oresteia*.

Athens' alliance with Argos at the end of *Eumenides* comments on Athens' achievements.[546]

Whereas in Homer the Erinyes are absent from the Trojan War, in *Agamemnon*, Agamemnon acts as agent of the Erinyes in his martial expedition against Troy.[547] Showing the Erinyes' relation to Argive hegemony and Agamemnon's triumph over Troy suggests that their religious power can be used for civic, imperialistic and Panhellenic purposes. The innovative interrelationship between the Erinyes and the *oikos* (/ *polis*) is picked up and remedied from its detrimental aspects in the last play. At the end of *Eumenides*, Athens domesticates the Erinyes and possesses them as cult of *Semnai Theai*. But contrary to the *Agamemnon* where the Erinyes are sovereign goddesses of vengeance and curse and man can be both their agent and victim, Athens owns them and enters into a transaction with them whereby the pious Athenian cannot be victimised. Thus, unlike Argos, which does not possess the Erinyes as a cult but is subject to their power, Athens Athenianises the Erinyes / *Semnai Theai* so that they exclusively support the *polis* and its hegemony.[548] Like Agamemnon, Athens will be triumphant in war with Athena and the Erinyes / *Semnai Theai* at its side. The finale of the trilogy promises that the Athenian fleet (which had gone to Egypt), unlike the Argive king, will return without a reversal of fortune (cf. *Eu*. 292-5).

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[546] The alliance with Argos is the first achievement in foreign policy of the victorious democrats in 462-1 BC. See Tierney (1938) 93-8.

[547] In *Ag*., Agamemnon controls the Panhellenic alliance against Troy and is 'king of ships' (184-5, 1227; *Ch*. 723-4; *Eu*. 456, 637). Similarly, Athens becomes a naval power after the Persian War – Athens' fleet protects the *polis*' democracy and realises its imperialistic aims. See Charles (1946) 86, Rosenbloom (1995) 106-11, 115 and Raaflaub (2009) 97.

[548] The Erinyes' threat to blight the city is symbolic of them being a disease to the city: as undomesticated goddesses of vengeance and curse they do not internalise a pro-*polis* attitude. Cf. Allen (2005) 382.

The relationship between the Erinyes and Argos on the one hand and Athens on the other also reflects on each city's system of justice. Although Argos is portrayed as hegemonic city of Greece with a powerful military (/naval) force in the first two plays,[549] it is also portrayed as lacking in a judicial institution that prevents tyranny and moral and religious transgression assuring personal and civic justice, peace and prosperity. In the *Oresteia* as in reality, naval expeditions expand hegemony gaining profit which augments the city. However, there is a difference in how each respective *polis* experiences its grandness in the community and abroad. In the first play of the trilogy, Agamemnon is dishonourably killed because his seeking of justice and prosperity through transgression render him victim to vengeance and curse. But not only Agamemnon transgresses unwritten laws and accumulates excessive wealth (without good fortune) in the sack of Troy; the tyrants Clytemnestra and Aegisthus also abuse Argive order and wealth for their own aggrandisement overriding the citizens' welfare. Power and hegemony are not interrelated with respect for the gods and *dêmos*, civic justice and prosperity in Argos (cf. *Ag*. 937-8). Aeschylus seems to warn Athens against immoderate and illegitimate means that disrespect the gods and the *dêmos*[550] in becoming a just and wealthy Panhellenic city. But this dreadful outlook of imperialistic agenda is remedied in *Eumenides*. Under the patron goddess Athena, Athenians do not have to fear that waging war and making allies abroad will be ruinous (*Eu*. 913-15).[551] Her good

[549] Athens enormous fleet built in 483/2 BC was a new powerful instrument of Attic politics. Argos' expedition against Troy can be compared with Athens' war against Asia. See Cole (1977) 106, Meier (1988) 93-9, Rosenbloom (1995) 94-8 and Kennedy (2006) 40-50.

[550] Sommerstein (1997) 75 n. 71 points towards the absence of the term δῆμος and its derivatives in the Athenian portion of *Eu*.

[551] Aeschylus, however, does not mention a fleet in *Eu*. See Rosenbloom (1995) 91-130, esp. 95-8 and Kennedy (2006) 35-72.

judgement and morality, stronger than those of Agamemnon, will guide them. Perceiving that battle and honour must be interrelated, Athena bids the Erinyes to utter prayers that are appropriate to an honourable victory – ὁποῖα νίκης μὴ κακῆς ἐπίσκοπα (903).[552] Unlike Argos, Athens' war abroad is not motivated by private vengeance and curse, but underscored by the *Semnai Theai*'s civic blessing. Sommerstein also points out that the pro-Argive attitude of the supernatural forces Athena, Apollo, the Erinyes and Orestes (as hero-cult) reinforce the audience in its support of Athens' foreign policy.[553] The *Semnai Theai*'s power to curse wrongdoers and their blessing of fertility and prosperity, the repeated advice to abstain from *hubris* and calling the Areopagus untouched by profit (704) draw attention to Athens' correct correlation between justice, well-being and prosperity inside and outside the *polis*.[554] This not only assures civic order and wealth for Athenians (e.g. 834), but also affirms that allies or allies-to-be would not have to fear injustice. However, these references to modesty disguise the fact that Athens would use the money from Delian League member-states for its own aggrandisement, its military expeditions or grand religious festivals.[555] In fact, not long after the *Oresteia*'s production, at 454 BC at the latest, Athens took control of the treasury of the Delian League.[556]

[552] This seems to be positive encouragement to the Athenians who have just experienced loss and grief in battle. See Rosenbloom (1995) 113-14.

[553] Sommerstein (1997) 74 with nn. 63-5.

[554] See Cole (1977) 104-8.

[555] Meier (1988) 69 and Raaflaub (2009) 95 give some examples of how the money was used. Rosenbloom (1995) 104-5 summarises the function of the Dionysia as 'regulating relations between the inside and outside of the *polis*' and deferring 'Athenian hegemony while displaying its beneficence and power.'

[556] Raaflaub (2009) 95. Cf. also Neer (2004) 63-93 and Rutherford (2004) 76.

Despite Agamemnon's majestic fleet and naval warfare the king neglects his people's welfare in *Agamemnon*. Iphigenia is sacrificed (albeit as the cost of keeping his alliance and of launching his fleet; she is προτέλεια ναῶν, *Ag.* 227), Argive men die in the expedition against Troy, and tyranny is established in Argos during Agamemnon's absence.[557] Likewise, Clytemnestra and Aegisthus have no concern for public welfare; Argives fear but do not respect the tyrants. Personal and public well-being and relationships are undermined by the ruler's concern for personal power (in the absence of an institution that oversees justice). Already the original curse in the house of Atreus derives from the transgression of one brother against another; Clytemnestra kills her husband and exiles his heir Orestes to establish herself as tyrant, overturning the accepted gender and status hierarchy. How can a royal house without a healthy familial structure and (an institution of) objective justice care for the good of its citizens, make other Hellenic people their subject and Hellas great? What makes a royal house healthy? Argive rule may be a dominant power in Hellas but its justice lacks integrity, coherency and civic concern.

Whereas Argos is ruled by an ambiguous royal figure and by tyrants in the first two plays, Athens is controlled by Athena in *Eumenides*. The Olympian goddess and the Areopagus (inaugurated by her) take responsibility for the well-

[557] Cole (1977) 99-102 observes parallels between Agamemnon (/Argos) and Cimon. Both are great conquerors of Asia and both are attacked on their return home. Cole's observation implies that Agamemnon's / Cimon's rule is powerful yet his (/their) commitment to the good of the public is dissatisfactory. It further suggests that the restoration of the Argive bloodline through Orestes' exoneration by Athena and the resulting alliance between Athens and Argos in *Eumenides*, seeks to subordinate the old hegemonic power to the new civic system thus averting *stasis* in Athens. Moreover, Cole's commentary (103) on the development of homecoming scenes throughout the *Oresteia* aids in the portrayal of Athens as supreme city. In *Ag.*, Agamemnon is killed at his return; in *Ch.*, Orestes comes home to kill; in *Eu.*, Athena returns to Athens as saviour figure, who sends the exile Orestes home acquitted and allied to Athens.

being of the *dêmos*, treating them and its power with respect.[558] In turn, the Athenians as well as non-Athenians respect Athena and her ordinances. Athena's practice of reverence, her wisdom and martial power coupled with the Areopagus render Athens a more evolved *polis* thus capable achieving what Argos cannot: it correlates its authority and hegemony with concern for civic justice from which flow public well-being and prosperity, including even non-Athenians, allies and foreigners.

Further, Argos incorporates foreigners by force. Cassandra in *Agamemnon* and the slave women in *Choephori* are war booty taken against their own will. Although the conquered foreigners side with Agamemnon against Clytemnestra, they foster private justice, vengeance and bloodshed without control in Argos. In *Eumenides*, the Erinyes' eventual siding with Athena, and by extension with Zeus and patriarchy, places their vengeance and curse power under Athens' control. Both Cassandra and the slave women fuel the cycle of vengeance and bloodshed in Argos: the former through prophetic song, the latter through lamentation, *peithô* and lust for revenge. No authority or recognised institution exists in the first two plays to control their fuelling of calamity and death. Their viewpoint, which exemplifies patriarchal order and reciprocity, is ultimately institutionalised in the Areopagus. What is more, a positive transaction does not exist between Argos and its foreign adversaries. Agamemnon annihilates Troy; there are no foreign subjects. Athenian imperialism defers annihilation and displaces it through tribute exaction.[559] In *Eumenides*, Athens stands in sharp contrast to Argos' (in particular, house of Atreus') treatment of foreigners. Athena accepts

[558] Agamemnon is well aware of the power of the *dêmos* in *Ag*.; in fact he attributes more power to the *dêmos* than does Athena in *Eu*..

[559] Athena, however, takes possession of land in the Troad (*Eu*. 397-402) – an eternal possession for the 'children of Theseus' and presumably for the entire *polis*.

Argive Orestes' supplication and founds a court to try him, exonerates him and in turn receives voluntary Argive alliance as a token of gratitude for acquittal. The old hegemony is subordinated to the new.

Likewise, the Erinyes' antagonism is addressed diplomatically and peacefully in Athens. In contrast to 'tit-for-tat' that rules most of the *Oresteia*, Athena's offers restore Orestes to his property and rights[560] and give the Erinyes a home and honours without violence (yet with a threat of violence that epitomises that *sebas* may require insurmountable force). In addition to the military and political benefit inherent in the pact with Argos, the alliance with the Erinyes / *Semnai Theai* aids religious sanction to Athens' power. On the one hand, their religious sanction inspires the Athenians with hope, courage and strength to stand united against their enemies (e.g. Persia in Egypt, Sparta, Korinth, and other Peloponnesians), on the other, their frightening faces render Athens a frightening city state to its enemies. Athens' incorporation of the Erinyes shows it now worships the curse on the line of the previous generation and can use it as a weapon (or threat); these metic goddesses also ensure justice and fertility in the city so that Athens can pursue just and moderate policies towards outsiders – it can transform enemies into friends and friends into foreign residents.

The Erinyes' 'Athenianisation' is *metoikia*; incorporating difference into Athens is credit to the city's greatness and a means of power and prosperity.[561] *Metoikia* is crucial to Athens' success as an imperial city.[562] The city gains wealth

[560] He is not restored to his 'throne'; this leadership is reserved for Athens, supreme city of Hellas.

[561] See, for example, Goldhill (2000) 34-56.

[562] Metics are analogous to subjects in that each pays the *polis* to defer slavery. Metics who fail to pay the metoikion can be sold into slavery just as subjects that do not pay tribute can be annihilated by *andrapodismos* (destruction by which men are killed and women and children sold into slavery). On *andrapodismos* see Hansen (2003) 279. On μέτοικοι / metics see p. 208 with n. 500.

from incorporating them as cult; the Erinyes' new θάλαμος ('store room', 1004; cf. *Ch*. 800-2) emphasises their resourcefulness (cf. εὐμήχανοι, *Eu*. 38). As Erinyes they have no concern for the interest of the Athenians; as *Semnai Theai*, however, Athenian power and prestige is significantly enhanced. *Metoikia* is the ideology of empire building – what other *polis* would have the audacity to domesticate cosmic goddesses?[563]

The portrayal of Athens' generosity towards Orestes and the Erinyes is linked to its ideology and imperialism.[564] Alliance with Argos and co-optation of the Erinyes projects Athens as a magnanimous city. But Athens' generosity is not an end in itself; it serves political interests. It confirms Athens' reputation as the city that welcomes those that are weak and oppressed in Hellas; it enhances the city's positive public image and emphasises it Panhellenic nature, thus underlining its superiority in Hellas. The audience witnesses Orestes' suffering and Athens' power to release him from that suffering (ἀπαλλαγὴν πόνων, *Ag*. 1, 20; ὥστ᾽ ἐς τὸ πᾶν σε τῶνδ᾽ ἀπαλλάξαι πόνων, *Eu*. 83); reflecting back on the audience this scene fills the audience with civic pride.[565] The city helps those who recognise its supremacy and who voluntarily accept it as *hêgemôn*. Athens' generosity is linked to Athenian justice, embodied in a system of

[563] Tragedy Athenianises cults of non-Athenian heroes as part of tragic aetiology; this forges an identity for Athens that connects it to the storeroom of Greek myth as well as to Hellenic hegemony: for example, the hero-cult of Oedipus in S. *OC*, the hero-cult of Ajax in S. *Ajax*, the hero-cult of Hippolytus in E. *Hipp*., the hero-cult of Eurystheus in E.*Heracl*., and the hero-cult of Iphigenia in E. *IT*. Scholarship into the tragic aetiology of Athenianising divine cult is scarce. The *Prometheia* and the Danaid trilogy are likely to have established the festivals of the Prometheia and Thesmophoria. For Athenianising hero-cult see Kowalzig (2006) 79-98; for the tragic aetiology of the Prometheia see Griffith (1983) 281-3, 303-4; for the tragic aetiology of the Thesmophoria see Sourvinou-Inwood (2003) 217. Cf. also Sourvinou-Inwood (2011) 270-89; Ar. *Th*. (for a parody of this festival), and Tzanetou (2002) 329-67. See Lardinois (1992) 327 who sees 'an element of imperialism behind all this: Athens presents itself as the inheritor of the power of the Erinyes and, consequently, as the moral leader of Greece.'

[564] Cf. Tzanetou (2005) 98-122.

[565] Cf. Ajootian (2005) 223-4.

distributive justice sanctioned by divine will. The reception of the cult of the *Semnai Theai* particularly stirs a feeling that Athens and its subjects can enjoy security, on a cultic and secular level. Simultaneously, Athens' generosity linked to institutional justice in the *Eumenides* masks and justifies Athens' self-interest. Put in historical context, it disguises Athens' imperialist strategies in Hellas as just and benign hegemony of a sort markedly superior to that of Agamemnon. Athens' generosity is an instrument of Athenian power, civic ideology and imperialistic tactics.

Athens' generosity, wisdom and openness offer a kind of 'win-win situation' (i.e. positive reciprocity) to Orestes and the Erinyes. This is a characteristically Athenian positive transaction – a 'win-win situation' for both generations of gods as well as the *polis* and its citizens. Athena restores Orestes as heir and assures the continuation of the royal male bloodline (*Eu*. 754-61) and protects its ally. In turn, Orestes swears an oath that Argos will be at peace with Athens, fight on Athens' side and that misfortunes will be sent to those who violate his oath (i.e. Orestes' hero-cult) (762-77).

Likewise, although the Erinyes are loathed at Delphi and they showed no σέβας for men, the *Semnai Theai* are feared and respected in Athens while they show reciprocal respect for the Athenians. If the honour of the city grows (*Eu*. 853) so does that of the *Semnai Theai*; if the honours of the *Semnai Theai* grow so do those of the *polis*. The cultic character of the *Semnai Theai* becomes an embodiment of the Athenian principle of reciprocity (868-9, 932-7, 953-5, 992-3, 1012): good conduct will be answered with rewards (especially prosperity and fertility, e.g. 804-5, 834-6, 902, 904, 921-6, 953-5); however negative transaction continues in that bad conduct will be answered with punishment (e.g. 931-7, 953-

5).[566] Athens' dealing with the Erinyes / *Semnai Theai* serves as a positive example of transactions and partnership with other parts of Hellas.

Yet each exchange is asymmetrical. Although the *Eumenides* portrays a 'win-win situation',[567] Athens gains more than it gives. Athens' act of giving enables it to control others by gratitude and indebtedness. Moreover, unlike Argive leaders, Athens does not need to sacrifice its subjects or its honour and prestige in order to gain.[568] In gratitude for being acquitted, Orestes' offer of alliance renders Athens superior to Argos in military strength. The final scene shows Athens' supremacy – Orestes seeks Athens' protection and offers Argive subordination. Athens builds on and exceeds the royal, military and naval legacy of Argos. The eternal alliance with Argos, achieved through Athens' judicial institution and generosity and Orestes' indebtedness and voluntary deference

[566] The principle of inherited guilt is maintained: ancestral sins still render one answerable before court and the Erinyes. However, this is not a legal principle in the play. Cf. Peradotto (1969a) 249 n. 47.

[567] Cf. Thuc. 2.40.4 where Athenian generosity and alliance are described: καὶ τὰ ἐς ἀρετὴν ἐνηντιώμεθα τοῖς πολλοῖς· οὐ γὰρ πάσχοντες εὖ, ἀλλὰ δρῶντες κτώμεθα τοὺς φίλους. ('And in matters regarding *arête*, we are the opposite of majority. For we possess friends not by receiving favours but by doing favours.')

[568] The explicit nature of Agamemnon's sacrifice of Iphigenia in *Ag*. seems to be part of Aeschylus' dramatic and thematic design to render Athens' morally superior to Argos. Although art and literature very rarely refer to Iphigenia's sacrifice it is not of Aeschylean origin (e.g. Arg. §8; cf. fr. 20 West; Hes. fr. 23a 17ff M-W, Pi. *P*., Stesich. *PMG* 215, 217); nonetheless, Aeschylus places unprecedented emphasis on Agamemnon's personal role in the sacrifice. According to Prag (1985) 63, Homer knows nothing of Iphigenia's death (cf. 68); however, Vermeule and Chapman (1971) 291 suggest that the vase of the middle of the seventh century BC (anonymous loan, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 6.67.) may show the earliest sacrifice of Iphigenia. See also Prag (1985) 61-7 and Aretz (1999) 47-51, 60-1, 62-83. Tierney (1938) 101-2 argues that Iphigenia's sacrifice appears to be of Aeschylean origin. First, it places the king in an ambiguous light; this adds to the final portrayal of Athens' superiority over Argos. Iphigenia's sacrifice also brings Clytemnestra into focus in the drama. Matricide and Clytemnestra's curse upon Orestes form the essential groundwork for establishing the Areopagus in *Eu*. Further, the queen's tyranny, her subversion of the hierarchal order, her immodesty, disrespect towards gods and her subjects and her vengeful lust to kill the king are examples of a rule that destabilises itself from the inside, thwarts civic justice and prosperity and does not command respect from its citizens. Finally, whereas Argos maltreats virgins (Iphigenia as well as Cassandra), Athens' co-optation of the virginal *Semnai Theai* shows Athens' justice.

serves as a model for other Hellenic city-states and islands to join under the common protection of Athens and accept the *polis*' leadership.[569]

4.3 The Areopagus

The establishment of the Areopagus in the *Eumenides* particularly suggests the greatness of Athenian institutions which enable peaceful and just co-operation among citizens and non-citizens alike. Aeschylus goes an extra mile to create an aetiology of the Areopagus' establishment.[570] In history, the Areopagus was stripped of its conventional powers by Ephialtes in the absence of Cimon (462/1 BC). The Areopagus was almost entirely restricted to judging cases of homicide.[571] In particular, the power to make political decisions was taken from the Areopagus in 462/1 BC.[572] This unsettled the delicate balance between political and social order.[573] The Erinyes' concern and prayers (anarchy will reign

[569] Rosenbloom (2011) 365 notes that Orestes promises a one-way 'alliance'.

[570] It is likely that the *Oresteia*'s version of the Areopagus' aetiology is Aeschylean. See Jacoby on 323a *FGrH* F1 and F22. Aeschylus' aetiology seems to incorporate references to Ephialtes (for obvious reasons), Solon (see p. 242 with n. 577) and Cleisthenes. The poet's use of βουλευτήριον / βουλευτηρίου (*Eu*. 570, 684, 704) seems to acknowledge that the Areopagus was formally a *boulê* – Aeschylus seems thus also to acknowledge Cleisthenes' contribution to the Athenian structure of court and democracy: it is not unlikely that βουλευτήριον describes Cleisthenes' *boulê*, thus symbolising the court's financial, diplomatic and military involvement in Athens' democracy and imperialism. See Sommerstein (2010) 25-38, esp. 26, 30. See Stockton (1990) 19-56 on the development of Athenian democracy from Solon to Ephialtes and 84-95, esp. 90, 93, 94, on *boulê* (cf. also Rhodes [1972]). Cf. also the 'other' aetiology of the Areopagus within this aetiology at *Eu*. 685-90 (cf. Sommerstein [1989] *ad loc*.).

[571] Sommerstein (2010) 25-38 notes that the trial in *Eu*. contains all standard features of an Athenian trial yet does not conform to normal homicide procedure.

[572] This seems to be a strategy to enable changes in Athens' foreign policy: the alliance with Sparta is broken and a new alliance with Argos is brought to life. Rosenbloom (1995) 91-130 argues that it enables the Athenians to expand their empire into mainland Greece, which they did immediately after the reforms. Cf. also Braun (1998) 136.

[573] See Meier (1988) 95-7 on Cimon's relationship with the Areopagus and 113-17, 123-4 on the disempowerment of the Areopagus (462/1BC). Cf. also Meier (1983) 144-246 and Pelling (1997) 227.

if the ordained laws are overthrown, *Eu*. 490-507; they pray that civil war does not harm the city, 976-83; they pray that returning favours with a mind that loves the common and hating with a single mind is a cure for many things among mortals, 984-7; cf: Athena warns against the citizens introducing new laws polluting the Areopagus / city, 690-5) seem to be analogous to Athenian concern regarding how Ephialtes' reforms affect the ancient court, its laws and thus civic stability.[574] The peaceful inauguration of the court, by the will of the gods and in agreement with each party, also continues the choral philosophy that criticises tyranny and anarchy and advertises pro-civic ideology. In contrast, in the first two plays, Clytemnestra and Aegisthus usurp the rule of Argos by force; Argive citizens lack respect for the tyrants.

Athena's inauguration of the Areopagus, its respectful treatment of all parties and its capacity to deliver a judgement that eventually confers honour and influence on factions reflects back on a healthy social infrastructure. This aetiology leads Athenians to have faith in the Areopagus' enduring social, judicial and political authority: their feeling of civic pride and unity is reinstated and civic disorder is prevented. Civic justice assures social order, which in turn allows political coherence and power. Thus, it seems that the *Eumenides* restores the Areopagus' reputation as guardian of δίκη, repository of φόβος and σέβας, and guardian of the entire community, which influences moral, judicial, political as well as military matters harmonising competing classes and factions at Athens.

[574] Although Ephialtes' reforms appear to have taken the prestige of the Areopagus (i.e. its role as guardian of δίκη is damaged) and unsettle the balance between political and social order, they are to be viewed as favourable in the last play, especially in regard to changing foreign policy (e.g. the alliance with Argos). See Fornara and Samons (1991) 63-4 on the disestablishment of the ancestral constitution and transferral of jurisdiction to the *dêmos*. See also Tierney (1938) 107-9, Stoessl (1952) 134-7, Dover (1957) 235-7, Dodds (1973) 45-63, Cole (1977) 109, Jones (1987) 53-76, Cawkwell (1988) 1-12, Hall (1990) 319-28, Stockton (1990) 19-56, Braun (1998) 153-7, 217, Goldhill (2000) 48-50 and Anderson (2003) 49, 55, 57, 80, 97, 124 for Ephialtes' reforms, sacredness of the court, the promotion of civic ideology, institutionalised justice and concord among Athenian political factions.

The *Eumenides* contributes to civic ideology and peace – its setting, Athens, immediately transfers positive suggestions of civic unity to the Athenian audience.[575]

Moreover, the power of the court is not only a celebration of the city, its justice and unity, but also of its foreign politics and imperial control. The fact that Orestes is an Argive, not a citizen, to be tried, comments on the Areopagus' weight in matters of foreign policy and Athens' judicial supremacy and the legitimacy of its hegemony in Hellas. Orestes is the archetypical non-Athenian who voluntarily comes to Athens (as a suppliant) in the hope of justice and freedom (from persecution). He seeks Athena's protection; he acknowledges, reveres and contributes to the *polis*' greatness. Although the court is largely put together by 'Athenian' components – the patron goddess Athena and the best citizens of Athens (ἀστῶν τῶν ἐμῶν τὰ βέλτατα, *Eu*. 487), it judges on matters outside the city walls. The Areopagus is an instrument of state authority and foreign policy and furnishes an example for all courts under Athenian hegemony.[576] It is the essence of Athens' Panhellenic justice.

In *Eumenides* the Areopagus is more than just an institution where homicides are tried (according to Ephialtes' reforms). Lines 681-710 represent the court's dignity and power as far-reaching:[577] it not only guards against transgressions of all kind (ἐν δὲ τῶι σέβας / ἀστῶν φόβος τε ξυγγενὴς τὸ

[575] Cf. Bowie (1993) 10-31 and Saïd (1998) 283 with n. 94.

[576] 'Certain categories of trials, resulting in serious punishment and /or involving Athenian citizens, were taken away from allied courts and transferred to Athenian courts.' Raaflaub (2009) 96.

[577] See Dover (1957) 232-4. Jones (1987) 73-4 suggests that the role of the Areopagus in Athena's speech (*Eu*. 697-9) resembles that of Solon's Areopagus (for Solon's Areopagus see Braun [1998] 38-40); cf. also 136-43 on Athena's speech being evocative of Solon's court. Her argument underscores the perception of the Areopagus as untouchable supreme institution.

μὴ ἀδικεῖν, 'upon it, reverence and inborn fear of the citizens prevent wrongdoing', *Eu*. 690-1), but its greatness is unlike that of any other people (702-3). This is significant for Athens' imperialism, in particular its leadership of the Delian League (since 478 BC). The widespread geographical references in *Eumenides* (e.g. Egyptian expedition, *Eu*. 292-7) suggest an Athenian expansionist agenda. Orestes' trial at the Areopagus shows that Athens' 'overlordship' is not merely geographical but judicial, political, and, above all, Panhellenic.[578] Athenian imperial power in reality is linked, substantiated and celebrated in the aetiological establishment of the Areopagus through the Orestes myth and Athena's wisdom and (martial) power. In the last play, the Areopagus emerges as a source of shared δίκη under which the Athenians can feel unified and secure and as an instrument of imperial policy. Just as Athena and the Areopagus solve the moral and religious impasses of many generations of the house of Atreus, so Athens will safeguard justice in its *polis* and in Greece for all time to come.[579] Athens and its Areopagus exceed Argos (which appears to be symbolic of a previous Hellenic hegemony and for the collective of all other Hellenic city states) in moral and judicial capacity in the closing scene of *Eumenides*.

Communal self-interest is an integral part of Athenian legal justice.[580] The Athena-Apollo nexus works at this level while it also works at an ethical level: Apollo's justice is the self-interest of the house of Atreus and of Athens; Athena's

[578] See Kennedy (2006) 35-72. Rosenbloom (2011) 361 argues that 'Panhellenism is often construed as a function of imperialism.'

[579] The Areopagus becomes an instrument of imperialism, civic ideology and pride and Athens' image as Panhellenic city. See also Kitto (1956) 82; cf. Grethlein (2003) 236.

[580] Greek forensic argumentation treated self-interest of the jurors as sometimes more important than the law, especially defendant rhetoric. See, for example, Rhodes (2004) 137-58, Todd (2005) 97-111 and Rubinstein (2005) 129-45.

justice is the welfare and majesty of her city. Athena understands the nexus between justice and civic self-interest as she accepts Apollo's argument and the promise of making Athens great (*Eu*. 667-73; cf. 754-77); he validates her judgement by the authority of the oracle (798-9) and Zeus' will (797, 826, 850, 973, 998). Athena and the dikasts put an end to the endless Argive hereditary cycle of vengeance and curse in one swift trial that is profitable for all parties involved. The exoneration of Orestes from matricide, his restoration to his ancestral property and the replication of the royal (/paternal) bloodline portray Athens as saviour.[581] The trial not only judges Orestes but also comments on the validity of old and new law.[582] The depiction of Athens' system of justice as superior to that of Argos underwrites its judicial and moral leadership in Hellas.

Moreover, the Erinyes' lamentation, anger and threat to blight Athens after the trial epitomises *stasis*. The integration of the ancient goddesses into the *polis* as cult, their reception of new honours and role as guarantors of civic justice emphasise that their honour (τιμή) remains untouched and their contribution to civic justice is esteemed and required. Athena's appeasement of the Erinyes and their integration into Athens as a cult advocates civic harmony.[583] Thus, Aeschylus promotes absence of *stasis* inside Athens' city walls (*Eu*. 851-2);

[581] Dirksen (1965) 78 points to the parallel use of 'saviour' in Orestes' gratitude to Athena (σώσασα, 754) and the collocation Zeus σωτήρ (cf. Burian [1986] 332-42). In *Eu*. Athens appears as divine saviour of those who suffer injustice in Hellas.

[582] Several scholars have argued that the antagonism between the old gods, the Erinyes, and the new gods, represented first by Apollo then strengthened by Athena's presence, forms a religious analogy to the events at Athens at 462/1BC. This must not be understood as a 'one-to-one'-analogy. See, for example, Livingstone (1925) 120-31, Meier (1983) 144-246, esp. 177, 187, 202, 238 and (1988) 126, Braun (1998) 150-66, 195-203.

[583] According to Braun (1998) 160-1 (who argues that the events in *Eu*. form an analogy to the political events at Athens at 462/1BC), the Erinyes' / *Semnai Theai*'s prayer against civil strife (976-87), especially the wish that the dust may not drink up the dark blood of the citizens (980-3), may be a response to the assassination of Ephialtes.

aggression is to be channelled towards Athenian enemies (857-67).[584] The solution of ethical problems and the institutionalisation of justice by divine forces at the heart of Athens form a positive guideline for the political events of Aeschylus' day.

Family relations gain civic importance at the end of the *Oresteia*.[585] Griffith explains how the exchange of family credentials between Orestes and Athena enables an inter-*polis* alliance.[586] As Orestes' paternal inheritance has been restored to him by Athena he returns Athens' kindness by offering an inter-city alliance that enhances Athenian hegemony.[587] Even though the Erinyes cannot offer a similar reciprocal relationship with Athena (*Eu*. 190-2, 365-6, 406-14, 418, 419, 418-24, 428-35), Athena finds common ground with them.[588] The Erinyes receive a new home, cult and honours in return for yielding their private possession 'curse' to the city and for blessing it with fertility and prosperity. Athens' reception of the *Semnai Theai* as objects of cult establishes a pro-civic relationship with the Erinyes while it emphasises the *polis*' generosity. Athens' greatness is even made greater through making the Erinyes their cultic property.

[584] See also Braun (1998) 158 for how the Erinyes' co-optation is not an exact reflection of the political situation at Athens in 458 BC, but an idealistic version of how to handle the conflict arising from Ephialtes' reforms. Cf. also n. 574 for a list of scholars who also include the prosecution of the Areopagites and Ephialtes' reforms, sacredness of the court, the promotion of civic / institutionalised justice and the negation of tyranny in their discussion.

[585] The vendetta within the Argive family presents a *stasis*-like situation. Cf. Braun (1998) 201-2 who draws a comparison between the conflicts of the house of Atreus and Athenian internal politics.

[586] Griffith (1995) 97-102, 110-13.

[587] See Goldhill (1986) 147-54 and (2000) 53. Rosenbloom's observation (2011) 371 that 'the colonial right to rule is an extension of the relationship between parent and child' could be transposed onto this affiliation: Orestes' acknowledgement of Athena's /Athens' supremacy, which has overtones of a son's reverence for his parent, attests to Athens' empirical status.

[588] See n. 586 above.

At the same time as Athens displays its largesse to allies and aliens, they also assure that the hierarchy in Hellas is understood by all.

4.3 Athens as Panhellenic centre

The *Eumenides* further shows how Athens constructs itself as a Panhellenic centre of worship. Besides taking on the mythical entitlement to Hellenic hegemony by excelling Argos, Athens also takes on Panhellenic religious authority by building on and excelling Delphi, which is the centre of Panhellenic law and religion.[589] Already in *Choephori*, Delphi's religious injunction, in spite of its positive intention to restore the legacy of the house, ties justice to vengeance, particularly to the Erinyes, thus adding transgression to transgression. At the end of the second play, Delphi is portrayed as the locale for solution: Orestes seeks purification and exoneration from Apollo under the god's direction. However, just as men fail to remove injustice from Argos in the first two plays, so the quarrel between Olympian Apollo and the chthonian Erinyes in Delphi only intensifies the differences. But although Delphi is a place insufficient to deal with the moral predicament of the young Argive and the inconsistency of universal justice, it is an interim measure to solution. First, Orestes (allegedly) receives purification at Delphi[590] which allows him to go to Athens without contaminating other houses and sacred objects. Delphi also introduces the agent Apollo. Paternal and maternal

[589] See Rosenbloom (2011) 368-70 on Delphi (and Eleusis) as sanctuary of Panhellenic law and religion. Cf. Raaflaub (2009) 94: 'the Delian cult of Apollo had the great advantage of balancing Sparta's privileged relationship with Delphi.' Given Delphi's strong relationship with Sparta, it is clear that Athens is greater than Sparta. Apollo's presence at Delphi and then at Athens and Athens' reception of the *Semnai Theai* further reveal Athens to be superior to Sparta in its religious relations and strength.

[590] See n. 106.

curse are pitted against each other in their respective divine personification, Apollo and the Erinyes. Apollo also promotes Athens: he sends Orestes to Athens with Hermes as escort (*Eu*. 78-80, 88-93), speaks of judges fit for proper judgement (81; cf. 224 where he announces that Pallas will oversee the trial) and charming words (81-2), and assures that there will be means to free Orestes from misery once and for all (82).[591] Later, during the trial, Apollo calls the Areopagus a great institution justly ordained by Athena (614-15), announces that he wants to endorse the greatness of her city and people (667-8) and that Orestes will become an ally for all time (669-71). The god perceives Athens and its patron goddess as the authority to exonerate Orestes and restore him to his paternal inheritance. Apollo, who commanded matricide, also appears as an inferior agent to Athena in *Eumenides*. Panhellenic religious authority is subsumed under Athenian power and justice embodied by the patron goddess.

In addition to the alliance, Athens also benefits from the hero-cult of Orestes. It sounds as though Orestes puts a curse upon any Peloponnesian ruler who attacks Athens (*Eu*. 762-74, esp. 767-71). The hero-cult of Orestes becomes Athenianised by Orestes' own choice. The reception of the hero-cult of Orestes is a tragic aetiology that connects Athens to the repertoire of Hellenic mythology making it a Panhellenic *polis* whereby it can authorise its imperialistic strategies. Zeus' part in the matricide (618-21, 713-14, 797, 975) especially lends the hero-cult of Orestes a Panhellenic element. In sum, the hero-cult of Orestes underpins the Argive alliance's reinforcement of Athens' political and military hegemony through non-secular power while it also aids to Athens' portrayal as Panhellenic centre. However, the end of the *Oresteia* not only shows how Athens makes the hero-cult of Orestes its own: Athens also accommodates the most powerful curse

[591] See Podlecki (1989) *ad loc*.

incarnation, the Erinyes, as cult. The cult of *Semnai Theai* even takes prominence over the hero-cult.

Presenting and dealing with the Erinyes at Athens reflects on the *polis*' strength, prudence and, last but not least, its Panhellenism. Whereas no agent could hinder the Erinyes' agency in the first two plays, Athena and her city exercise control over them in the last play. First, Athena's arrival prevents the Erinyes from satisfying their bloodlust upon Orestes as announced in the Binding Song. Likewise, at court, their agency is restricted. Although the tied vote demonstrates the Erinyes' strong sway,[592] votes are cast by the jurors and the final judgement belongs to Athena (ἐμὸν τόδ' ἔργον, λοισθίαν κρῖναι δίκην, 'this is my task; to pass final judgement', *Eu*. 734). Athens decides the ἀγών (744) and the Areopagus replaces the Erinyes in cases of murder (and τιμωρία). Moreover, using *peithô* Athena prevents the Erinyes from casting blight upon the city (i.e. Athens will not be victimised like Argos by the Erinyes) and convinces them to become objects of Athenian cult. The Erinyes accept the civic figure and 'masculine' goddess Athena as chorus leader (902)[593] and her offer of becoming a vital part of *polis*-cult in exchange for their sanction of civic order and justice. Athens' offer underscores the *polis*' stability – only a city with social, judicial and moral strength and coherency can control the Erinyes.

The dramatic aetiology of Athens' integration of the *Semnai Theai* is expressive of Athens' Panhellenism. The Erinyes' presentation as ancient goddesses of vengeance and curse, especially as curse of the house of Atreus and of Clytemnestra, throughout the trilogy, makes them a recognised and formidable

[592] See p. 137 with n. 324 on the vote.

[593] See Seaford (1994) 102 and Fletcher (2007b) 35.

power. Whereas the most powerful *oikos* has the most powerful curse without control in *Agamemnon*, the most powerful *polis* has the most powerful curse under control at the end of *Eumenides*. Making the former goddesses of vengeance and curse its own Athens also makes τὸ δεινόν its own.[594] In *Eumenides*, τὸ δεινόν has a moral and religious as well as a judicial and political nuance.[595] If Braun's conjecture that Ephialtes has stripped the Areopagus' status of τὸ δεινόν is correct,[596] then Athena's and the Erinyes' assertion that τὸ δεινόν remains in the city and the *Semnai Theai*'s faces betraying its presence reunite τὸ δεινόν with the court. Likewise, as the *Semnai Theai* also embody φόβος and σέβας, φόβος and σέβας are transmitted onto Athens' ideology and hegemony. Τὸ δεινόν, φόβος and σέβας prevent transgression and violence – they are also 'civilising' elements of imperialism. Further, the Erinyes bless Athens, its people and administration (*Eu*. 903-15, 921-1020) – this promotes the absence of *stasis* in Athens, which is a prerequisite for its imperialism.[597] The optimistic tone of the final scene predominantly derives from the cultic benefit that can be drawn from Athens' new divine metics. Just as the raw divine power of the *Semnai Theai* keeps men in their prescribed boundaries (cf. 517-28), so Athens and its institution keep order in Hellas. As objects of *polis*-wide cult the *Semnai Theai* reflect and contribute to Athenian civic ideology, imperialistic expansion and especially Panhellenism.

[594] Cf. Grethlein (2003) 252-3

[595] See Dover (1957) 232 and Braun (1998) 96-8, 140, 226.

[596] Braun (1998) 143-5.

[597] A well-functioning social order is significant to the audience of 458 BC, who is well aware of Ephialtes' reforms and the consequential conservatives' resentment (and Ephialtes' assassination). See Grethlein (2003) 253. Stockton (1982) 227-8 argues that Ephialtes was not assassinated; however, Sommerstein (2010) 143-63, esp. 154-9, convincingly refutes Stockton.

In fact, the *Oresteia* shows Athens' reception of two powerful cults (and curses): both the hero-cult of Orestes and the Erinyes as objects of Athenian cult add to Athens' hegemony through non-secular power reinforcing the *polis*' Panhellenism.[598] The *Oresteia* appears to be the only extant work in which Athens doubles the number and strength of its *polis*-cult at the end: the hero-cult of Orestes connects Athens to what was the greatest Hellenic hegemony before Athens' rise to an empire; the Erinyes are ancient goddesses of vengeance and curse who originally received their privileges from the Moirai. Tragic aetiology of owning hero-cult and myth goddesses renders Athens Panhellenic. But whereas the reception of the hero-cult of Orestes lacks a ritual (/theatrical performance), the final procession of the *Semnai Theai* towards their sanctuary, which recalls the Panathenaic procession, allows the audience to associate the aetiology of Athens' possession of a curse-cult with the real world.[599]

Athena supersedes the Erinyes' ancient dispensation by the Moirai with her new ordinances. Athena's success of transforming them into harmonious singers who are well versed in the choral philosophy that generates justice and *olbos* in Athens attests to the *polis*' Panhellenic achievements.[600] The *Semnai Theai*'s cosmic and natural function is now part of a judicial, social and cultural

[598] Athens hardly figures in Greek myth. Through Greek tragedy it fills the gap of mythological legends and aetiology. See Parker (1987) 187-214 and Kowalzig (2006) 97.

[599] Cf. Kowalzig (2006) 79-98, esp. 97, for hero-cult and Athenianisation of cult and Sourvinou-Inwood (2005/6) 293-304, esp. 298-9, for the relationship between the world of tragedy and the cultic reality of the audience. Rosenbloom (1995) 110 points out that 'the Erinyes alone are *semnai* (*Eum*. 383)' – the august status of the *polis*-guarding Erinyes is genuine unlike that of the king of ships, Agamemnon, and the tyrants, Clytemnestra and Aegisthus, in Argos.

[600] Cf. Pl. *Lg*. 2.668b: καὶ τούτοις δὴ τοῖς τὴν καλλίστην ᾠδήν τε ζητοῦσι καὶ μοῦσαν ζητητέον, ὡς ἔοικεν, οὐχ ἥτις ἡδεῖα ἀλλ᾽ ἥτις ὀρθή. The Erinyes only sing and speak in *Eu*. – in earlier sources the Erinyes do not have a voice. Their metrically harmonious, eloquent and wise song occurs under Athena's guidance in their last choral ode.

function; it belongs to Athenian civic ideology and imperialism.[601] Their reception of privileges from Athena renders them more integral to the contemporary life of the fifth-century Athenian but also yields their justice to a utilitarian society. Yet the new tasks assigned by Athena still build on the sound base that is formed by the privileges assigned by the Moirai.[602] Retaining the essence of their ancient privileges acknowledges the merit in retributive justice to prevent crime. Moira, together in harmony with Zeus, agrees with the Erinyes' procession to their new sanctuary (1044-7).[603] The fact that the Erinyes' sanctuary is just below the Acropolis – the very heart of Athens – puts emphasis on their benefit for Athens and the fact that their shrine is subject to Athenian oversight.

Besides having gained two new cults, Athens also enjoys the goodwill of the gods. The *Eumenides* emphasises Athens' divine sanction. The trilogy's move from Argos to Athens runs parallel with the shift from human to divine. Gods take over in the last play where men have failed in the first two plays. Besides bringing about a solution to Orestes' dilemma, the gods continue to lend their wisdom and strength to Athens, its civic and imperialistic ideology, even after the trial. Athenians are dear to Athena and revered by Zeus (*Eu*. 917-20, 1001-2, cf. 913-15, 927-8). The expression τὰν καὶ Ζεὺς ὁ παγκρατὴς Ἄρης / τε φρούριον

[601] The Eumenides, representatives of nature, are standardised onto a cultural norm; society's standard controls and binds the Erinyes finally. Those who sing the Binding Song are bound. Henrichs (1991) 173-4, 195-6 perceives Erinyes as the 'mythic' and Eumenides as the 'cultural' perspective on the same spirits. The negative aspects are diverted to *mythos*, whereas the optimistic aspects remain in cult (apotropaic properties belong to cult, too). Cf. Henrichs (1984) 267.

[602] Lebeck (1971) 160, 165-6 argues that law provides a link between the Erinyes' old and Athena's new ordinances. The old law is recognised by Athena and made into the basis of new law. Fletcher (2007b) 34 remarks that they take their place in Athenian patriarchy through another virgin. See also Sommerstein (1989) *ad* 778-891.

[603] Aeschylus fills the gap (found in tradition, e.g. in Homer or Hesiod) between the Erinyes as goddesses of the *oikos* and overseers of the cosmos as he makes them cultic guardians of the composite '*oikos-polis*-cosmos'. In Homer and the archaic tradition the Erinyes are dread goddesses who fulfil curses and police the cosmic and social order; the end of *Eu*. makes explicit for the first time that the Erinyes have a role in the *polis* – the Areopagus is guardian of the *polis*.

θεῶν νέμει, / ῥυσίβωμον Ἑλλάνων ἄγαλμα δαιμόνων (918-20) especially portrays Athens as the stronghold of the gods while it also attests to Athens' Panhellenic status.[604] Athena, who fulfils the function of a king in *Eumenides*,[605] invests all her strength in making the *polis*' wars abroad victorious (913-15). The hero-cult of Orestes (767-72) endorses Athens' imperialistic success. Internal affairs will be guarded by the *Semnai Theai* who continue to enforce cosmic order and particularly Zeus' will (cf. *Ag*. 160-83).[606] Just as Zeus brings good sense to men (180-1), so do the Areopagus and the *Semnai Theai* at the end of the trilogy. Zeus' rule as praised by the Argive elders in the first play seems to be similar to that of Athens – harsh but just. The *Oresteia*, especially the *Eumenides*, demonstrates that wrongdoing is punished while good behaviour is rewarded. Just as each party agrees to the establishment of the Areopagus and its jurisdiction in the last play, so all Hellenic states and islands ought to agree voluntarily (contrast: ἄκοντας, *Ag*. 180-1) with Athenian judicial institutions.[607] Athens has 'divine' powers – it can become ruler without force, through generosity and justice as well as through the sanction of gods and cult. In sum, the city is guarded by the gods and non-secular injunction, by Athena, Zeus, the hero-cult of Orestes and, above all, by the Erinyes, ancient curse powers.

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[604] Sommerstein (1989) *ad loc*. comments that this is related to the Athens of Aeschylus' day which exacts vengeance against the Persians who have transgressed the unwritten laws. Likewise, see Rosenbloom (2011) 364- 6 who states (364) that this trope depicts the city as metonymy for Hellas.

[605] See Griffith (1998) 97, 105-7.

[606] The magical self-fulfilling properties of their song, formerly used to fuel vendetta and bloodshed, now guarantee the fulfilment of their blessings. See Braun (1998) 160-3. See n. 294 on the magical properties of the Erinyes' song.

[607] Cf. Kennedy (2006) 66. Athena's threat / knowledge of the key to the chamber of Zeus' thunderbolt underlines the fact that a peaceful diplomatic approach is attempted first while violence remains an option.

Aeschylus' unusual choice of Erinyes is related to his choice of the locale Athens. The significance of selecting the fearsome Erinyes as chorus reaches completion in the celebratory procession resembling (and coinciding with) the Panathenaia, which honours the imperial city and its goddess, Athena, while it also demonstrates the hierarchy of Athens and its dependents. Aeschylus uses the Erinyes' reception as goddesses of cult in Athens within the play to inspire order and justice in his community. As chorus, the Erinyes' philosophy not only influences the play's dramatic events but also the Athenian audience. Athena appropriates for the city the Erinyes' concern for the unwritten laws, justice and human values in society irrespective of gender or social status (*Eu*. 490-565).[608] Respect for parents, *xenia* and altars, the conquest of *hubris*[609] and the practice of just pious behaviour are values through which the audience defines itself. After the Erinyes accept Athena's offer of a home and cult in Athens, their ritual song and dance, led by the quasi-*chorêgos* Athena (i.e. the third choral ode sung in interchange with Athena), epitomises the choral ideology of the trilogy, extracting its constructive properties, produces a 'happy ending' and passes values and norms onto the audience.[610] Using Athens as a locale for the resolution, *thesmoi* and choral advice, especially for moderation, beneficial fear interrelated to

[608] They advise a middle path (532), health of mind (ὑγιείας / φρενῶν, 535-6), reverence for the altar of justice (βωμὸν αἴδεσαι Δίκας, 539), reverence and honour to parents and guests (σέβας, 545-9), voluntary justice (ἑκὼν δ' ἀνάγκας ἄτερ δίκαιος ὤν, 550), and warn of inevitable ruin (552-65) as a consequence of arrogance, impiety (532-3) and godless seeking of profit (540-2). The idea that a man is morally culpable for excess already occurs in connection with the Erinyes at *Ag*. 461-70 (cf. *Ag*. 180-1). Sommerstein (1989) *ad* 526-8 draws attentions to the exhortations in the second-person singular and how civic justice is thus addressed to the individual human being (cf. Chiasson [1999-2000] 146-7). Chiasson (1988) 15-17 notes the important development in regards to reconciling divine conflict, the extensive use of lecythia and purity of metre. See also Goldhill (1984a) 239-45.

[609] See Rosenbloom (1995) 98 on how the conquest of *hubris* hailed in *Eu*. clashes with the reality of Athens' power.

[610] See p. 151 with n. 363.

reverence, σωφροσύνη and positive reciprocity, are thus carried beyond the walls of theatre. This is applied philosophy: the *Eumenides*' setting and performance in Athens allows for the audience to learn before suffering (i.e. anticipated πάθει μάθος).

The final procession also serves as a tool to unify the *dêmos*: at a time of crises, the procession celebrating the triumph of justice assures the audience that their city is just and prosperous as well as sanctioned by the Olympian gods and blessed by the powerful *Semnai Theai*. The resulting civic pride would inhibit social, moral, judicial and political degeneration into *stasis*. The final festivity restores fear and reverence for Athens and the Areopagus. While the audience witnesses the celebratory procession of the *Semnai Theai* towards their new home, they also join in the triumph and joy over resolving the trilogy's moral and religious conflict and celebrate the greatness of their city and its institutions.[611] This feeling of civic membership and harmony is reflected in the ritual procession at the end of the *Eumenides* as well as in the festival in which Aeschylus' plays are set.[612] Foreigners who attend the City Dionysia are given the impression that Athens highly values the relationship between Athenians and non-Athenians. The closing scenes of the last play, just like the Dionysia, acknowledge the presence and contributions of all and bring to awareness the privileges that derive from being a 'member' (/ally) of the Panhellenic *polis*. Thus, the finale set in Athens asserts an Athenian imperial hierarchy.[613] The city's dependants are inferior but respected, recognised and supported. Their tribute, especially their military

[611] See p. 155 with n. 375 on the Panathenaia.

[612] See Meier (1988) 57 on how festivals remove conflict within and unify the *dêmos*. See also Sourvinou-Inwood (2005/6) 293-304.

[613] See Goldhill (1987) 58, 60-4, 67, (2000) 35, 37 and Anderson (2003) 158-77 on the significance of the Panathenaia and the Dionysia for Athens and its social, judicial and political structure.

support, is honoured. In return, Athens offers protection: its judicial institutions and practices, its military force and the *Semnai Theai*'s blessings of prosperity are so powerful that it can safeguard all – citizens, allies and foreigners.

To conclude, Aeschylus chooses Athens as a locale for solution to the trilogy's conflicts in order to emphasise the *polis*' Panhellenic qualities, judicial authority, hegemonic power and religious sanction as well as to address the contemporary political situation. Excelling and supplanting Argos as hegemonic *polis* and Delphi as centre of Hellenic worship, Athens becomes the condition for closure in the *Oresteia*. Athena's establishment of the Areopagus in *Eumenides* concludes the trilogy's dramatic events in Argos and Delphi while also reflecting on the political events that surround Ephialtes' reforms. The court's approach to Orestes' moral and religious impasse, is based on non-violence and diplomacy. Aeschylus thereby restores the Areopagus' ancient function and reputation as a sacred and powerful Athenian institution. The poet also advocates peaceful co-operation between factions and the integration of foreign and old forces (/law) into the new system of *polis*-justice, suggesting that constructive collaboration and mutual acknowledgement of each party's prestige and honour will prevent *stasis* within the *polis* and benefit Athenian dominion in Hellas. The Areopagus is portrayed as a powerful institution: Athena presides as magistrate and her vote resolves all differences; the court can successfully try and judge Athenian as well as non-Athenian cases thus bringing justice and order to all Hellas. The court emerges as the ultimate guardian of δίκη within the *polis* and abroad. The final scenes inspire a feeling of safety, unity and civic pride within the audience and inspire non-Athenians to be part of Athenian hegemony.

Athens' just and generous treatment of Orestes also reflects on and supports Athens' pro-Argive foreign policy. In particular, Athens' generosity

towards Orestes endorses Athens' public image as just and generous empire and *hêgemôn*. Orestes' (and Apollo's / Delphi's, *Eu*. 668-73) offering of an alliance out of gratitude for Athens' justice, generosity and protection forms an example that all Hellenic anti-Spartan city-states ought to follow. The positive transaction exchanged between Athena and the Erinyes further stresses Athens' generosity and grandness in the treatment of foreigners. The Erinyes receive a home and honours while Athens gains their divine blessings and protection. Only Athens has the strength and stability to institutionalise *metoikia*, incorporating differences without causing civic disturbance. Both Argos and the *Semnai Theai* serve Athens increasing the city's image as the leading *polis* of Greece. At the same time, this portrayal of Athens glosses over Athens' selfishness and harsh rule.

Finally, Athens emerges as Panhellenic centre of worship. It has presented itself so just, generous and in alignment with Zeus' will that the gods lend their support to the city and its people without reservation. In addition, it receives two cults; but unlike other tragedies which are an aetiology of how Athens receives hero-cults (e.g. S. *OC*, *Ajax*; E. *Hipp*., *IT* and *Heracl*.), the *Oresteia* is unique in establishing a divine *polis*-cult.[614] Athens possesses two curse powers: the hero-cult of Orestes and the incarnation of the curse, the Erinyes / *Semnai Theai*, bring 'forward-looking rationales of punishment'[615] to Athens. In addition to the curse powers, the Erinyes / *Semnai Theai* also confer their blessings of justice, prosperity and fertility upon Athens. As this aetiology of the cult of *Semnai Theai* makes the Erinyes Athenian property, Athens' image as Panhellenic empire shines pristine. Yet the *Oresteia*'s paradigm of establishing a divine *polis*-cult

[614] See n. 563.

[615] See Cohen (2005) 175.

gains no traction in (extant) literature;[616] likewise, the Erinyes' / *Semnai Theai*'s place and role in Athenian cult importation, rituals, empire-building and law has not received much attention in (recent) scholarship. The following conclusion will first summarise this dissertation's findings and then finish with suggestions to make the trilogy's aetiology of the Athenian cult of *Semnai Theai* an integral part of future scholarship in Classics.

[616] Cf. n. 563. Staged aetiology differs from narrated aetiology. No extant tragedy dramatises the foundation of a divine cult. E. *IT* offers a narrated aetiology; some scholars doubt the veracity of the aetiology as narrated.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Aeschylus' *Oresteia* is an exceptionally complex trilogy that inquires into human piety, justice and the gods' unwritten laws. The trilogy tests the validity of social, judicial and moral notions and seeks solutions by means of an innovative dramatic movement. The Erinyes and their dual transformation (from abstract deities in the first two plays to the chorus of Erinyes in *Eumenides* and from goddesses of vengeance and curse to objects of civic cult) figure in and enhance the presentation of conflict and its resolution in the *Oresteia*. Their roles in the poetic tradition before the *Oresteia*, their presence and function in the trilogy's choral design and their involvement in the trilogy's depiction of disorder and order deepen the understanding of the *Oresteia*'s moral and religious philosophy and (Athenian) justice and order. In particular, the Erinyes' presence at Athens and the *polis*' interaction with the goddesses reflect on and advocate a set of moral values that generate justice and harmony. Athens solves the moral and religious problems of the previous plays; the trilogy's presentation of Athens' treatment of the Erinyes / *Semnai Theai* is especially expressive of the *polis*' superior civic justice and prosperity and its establishment as *hêgemôn* of the Hellenes. This conclusion recapitulates the main points of the dissertation and outlines the problems that Athens solves. It will then close with a suggestion as to how the findings of the *Oresteia*'s development of choruses and the (interwoven) aetiologies of the Areopagus and the cult of *Semnai Theai* complement further research.

The Erinyes are not part of the Orestes myth in Homer.[617] Aeschylus interprets the Orestes myth as a drama of moral and religious transgression interweaving it with the divine involvement of the Erinyes. Apollo's command of Orestes' murder and the Erinyes' unbending will to exact bloody vengeance on Orestes necessitate the shift from Argos (via Delphi) to Athens, where beneficial fear, reverence, healthy φρένες, justice, harmony and prosperity can be realised in civic *thesmoi*. Whereas Aeschylus' modification of the Orestes myth largely consists of elaborating on the moral repercussion of matricide and including Orestes' trial at Athens,[618] the poet's adaptation of the Erinyes is more complex. The Erinyes' involvement in defining disorder and order as well as in establishing justice expands over the course of the trilogy and includes the renovation of their archaic nature and function using exceptional dramatic techniques.

The *Oresteia* draws upon the archaic presentation of the Erinyes, in which they appear as guardians of the natural law; it then fuses this presentation with a depiction of the Erinyes as agents of disorder. The epithets and imagery describing the Erinyes throughout the trilogy reflect on this paradox. This contradictory arrangement fuels the trilogy's exploration of injustice and justice and the quest for a cure to (perpetual) transgression – a cure that not only works in theatre but also in the Athens (and Greece) of Aeschylus' day. The Erinyes' epithets and imagery used throughout the trilogy sustain their pre-Aeschylean nature and function as dread guardians of natural law while they also feature in generating transgression, communal loss and destruction.

[617] However, not all pre-Aeschylean sources exclude the Erinyes' pursuit of Orestes (e.g. Stesichoros' version includes them – p. 22 with n. 46).

[618] Cf. p. 175 with n. 421, esp. Sommerstein (2010) 26. The fifth-century Orestes would not have been tried before the Areopagus, but such a case would be heard at the Delphinium.

The poet predominantly draws upon images borrowed from blood, the colour black, snake and dog. The Erinyes' dread aspects, such as being a source of Ἄτη, resembling Γοργόνες, acting like a fierce pack of hounds, and sucking blood, first render them despicable objects and antagonists in the drama – they are the epitome of fearful disorder. Their status as old women and virgins, their existence in the darkness and their despicable appearance further add to their ghastly portrayal. However, under Athena's supervision the Erinyes' association with *atê* and their resemblance to Gorgons become symbolic of the Erinyes' / *Semnai Theai*'s power to curse and to inspire fear whereby they prevent transgression. Epithets and metaphors which dovetail with justice, prosperity, fertility and civic good apply to the Erinyes as they are transformed into *Semnai Theai*; the epithet *semnai* signifies the Erinyes' / *Semnai Theai*'s august status whereby they lend *gravitas* to Athens' judicial and moral system; *semnai* is also the soubriquet that associates the Erinyes with the recognised cult of *Semnai Theai*. Metaphors, especially those representing the Erinyes' feral features – such as snake and dog – turn into physical features or conduct as the Erinyes become the chorus of the *Eumenides*, intensifying antagonism and introducing crucial components for the final institutionalisation of justice and order.

Finally, Athena and the Areopagus fuse the Erinyes' archaic and classical presentations turning the Erinyes into object of *polis*-cult.[619] Aeschylus' use of images and epithets indicates the restoration of the Erinyes' traditional function as overseers of the natural law but subordinates their fearsome aspects to the *polis*' order. The trilogy reconstructs the Erinyes / *Semnai Theai* as cultic figures that

[619] Cf. Seaford (2003) 141-65.

sanction civic justice, punish and prevent transgression and as benign divinities who bless the city with prosperity and fertility.

The *Oresteia*'s sequence of choruses is instructive in understanding the Erinyes' choral identity and philosophy as well as their progression from abstract divinities, to objects of invocation, to being partially perceived as chorus in the first two plays, to their appearance as active chorus and finally as objects of Athenian cult in the last play. Choral action and influence advance progressively throughout the trilogy. In *Agamemnon*, the Argive elders invoke the Erinyes unwittingly as they pronounce moral and religious judgements; without knowing they aid in the killing of Agamemnon thus perpetuating the cycle of transgressions for which they seek a cure. Their understanding of *dikê*, Zeus' will, the principle of παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα and πάθει μάθος as well as their knowledge of the nature of reciprocity is severed from their ability to act.

In contrast to the Argive elders who articulate the unwritten laws but cannot ensure the outcome they desire, the slave women of the *Choephori* show an increased agency and influence but lack an ideology of justice free from bloodshed, vendetta and curse. The chorus of slaves intentionally invokes the Erinyes' vengeance and curse to restore Agamemnon's honour. Like the Argive elders, they understand the principle of cause and effect as required by the *lex talionis*. The slave women are more partisan than the Argive elders and concerned about immediate action. They fuel vengeance through lamentation and anger, instruct the children how to curse, invoke the Erinyes on their behalf and manipulate the nurse to influence Aegisthus' entrance. In addition, the slave women and the Erinyes are both dressed in mourning grey and their faces are bloodied; both can also be categorised as 'other' – female, barbarian and slaves.

These consecutive forms of choral voice and intensifying choral action prepare for the Erinyes as influential yet bloodthirsty chorus in *Eumenides*. The chorus of Erinyes / *Semnai Theai* integrates elements such as *dikê*, the principle of παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα and the *lex talionis* of the Argive elders and slave women. The Erinyes are the incarnation of the most powerful curse on the most powerful *oikos* (and of defenders of the natural law in myth). As primordial divinities and embodiments on the curse, they exceed the previous choruses in power and authority. Their association with chthonian forces Night and the Moirai and their resemblance to vampires make their otherness palpable. The choruses of the trilogy become stranger even as they articulate moral ideas that are increasingly familiar; the Erinyes amalgamate and supersede the earlier choruses in age and gender.

The choruses' ideas prepare for the arrival of the Erinyes as chorus of the *Eumenides*. Just as the chorus of Argive elders in *Agamemnon*, the Erinyes represent ancient wisdom about cosmic order and natural law whereby Zeus is feared and revered and the authority of the patriarchal *caput* is honoured. This moral and religious philosophy remains consistent throughout the trilogy; it reaches its peak of expression in the Erinyes' choral performances and its peak of authority in Athena's role as quasi-*chorêgos* who echoes the Erinyes' words and integrates their ideas into the Areopagus' ordinances.[620] The Argive elders' advice to achieve σωφροσύνη and to abstain from *hubris* is key choral concepts that the *Semnai Theai* will enforce through their cult and Areopagus. Likewise, the constructive dimensions of πάθει μάθος, παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα and χάρις βίαιος will be part of the *Semnai Theai*'s role in that they punish transgression,

[620] Although it momentarily collapses when the Erinyes' objective disagrees with that of Zeus and they defend the right of a mother, this choral philosophy is retained in *Eu*. and incorporated into the Areopagus and cult of the *Semnai Theai* at the end of the trilogy.

possess the capacity to anticipate suffering in the community and to bless Athens with their divine favour. Finally, the fear (φόβος) felt by the Argive elders (e.g. 975-7, 990-4) will cease to signal imminent calamity in the closing scenes; instead, fear (τὸ δεινόν) will become the *Semnai Theai*'s instrument for deterring crime in Athens.

Analogous to the chorus of barbarian slave women in *Choephori*, the Erinyes exhibit a violent passion for vengeance. Their lust for revenge and righteous indignation influence dramatic events and effect justice. Such justice tied to negative reciprocity is also retained in the end as the *Semnai Theai* still carry out a punitive role and sanction public vengeance (τιμωρία). The Erinyes / *Semnai Theai* incorporate ancient wisdom and lust for vengeance from the previous two choruses while they also form a unique chorus that exceeds the earlier ones in power, privilege and choral capacity. The fact that Athena virtually quotes their ideas and transforms them into harmonious singers of moral and religious ideas makes these ideas a kind of charter for the Areopagus.

But unlike the choruses of the first two plays, who side with the king and its rightful heirs, the Erinyes are defenders of the mother (/Clytemnestra) in *Eumenides*: the Erinyes' role as agents of the maternal curse conflicts with their maintenance of justice in the cosmos and patriarchal *polis*. At first, they represent private justice, vengeance and maternal privilege, subverting patriarchal and public order and communal prosperity. This focus on the Erinyes as agents of a maternal curse exposes the normative relationship between male and female, *oikos* and *polis* and private and public justice. In emphasising the potential civic danger inherent in private vengeance and female – as exemplified by brazen Clytemnestra and her hounds – the poet underlines the importance and benefits of

patriarchal order, public justice, incorporation of differences and internal harmony brought about by Athena and the Areopagus at the end.

In the finale, Athens achieves the Erinyes' / *Semnai Theai*'s identification with a principle of male leadership, as the choruses of *Agamemnon* and *Choephori* had done. The androgynous goddess Athena acts as a key figure in the Erinyes' transformation. In particular, her role as quasi-*chorêgos* allows her to extend and realise the choral ideas of the trilogy thus refurbishing the Athenian system of justice. Athena founds the Areopagus – a sacred institution at the heart of Athenian justice and hegemony that enforces order, piety, fear and respect. She further instructs the Erinyes in their choral action and cultic function: Athena's offer of a civic cult to the Erinyes connects their guardianship of justice to the Areopagus and its civic and religious context – the patriarchal *polis* and Olympian hegemony. Not only do the Erinyes let go of Orestes so that he receives his paternal property, continues the royal bloodline of Argos and strengthens Athens through military alliance, but they also agree to use their incantatory power for Athens and in harmony with Zeus' will to bless the *polis*.

The *Agamemnon*, *Choephori* and the first part of the *Eumenides* (before the shift to Athens) feature moral and religious transgression, emotional disorder and corruption of socio-religious ideals. Speech acts (curse and oath), emotions / attitudes (fear and reverence), socio-religious institutions (sacrifice, *xenia*, supplication) and laws illustrate the state of disorder in the *Oresteia*; at the same time these terms are also closely linked to the Erinyes before their conversion into *Semnai Theai* in the last play.

Hereditary, private and public, paternal and maternal curse are central to the *Oresteia*. Except for the paternal curse, which is not realised but only used as a threat, each form of the curse has a detrimental effect on the individual, *oikos*,

polis and especially the patriarchal leader in the first two plays. The Erinyes, as goddesses of vengeance and curse, symbolise and perpetuate the curse as they are invoked by agents and chorus in *Agamemnon* and *Choephori*. However, in *Eumenides*, Athena brings the Erinyes under control and employs their capacity to pronounce their powerful supernatural injunctions for the benefit of her city. On the one hand, the Erinyes' potential to curse goes hand-in-hand with their capacity to inspire fear: both deter transgression in the city; on the other hand, Athena changes the polarity of the Erinyes' curse so that they bless the *polis* with fertility and prosperity. In addition, the Erinyes' / *Semnai Theai*'s presence as cult goddesses with their inherent traditional curse power intact assures that oaths, sworn to support civic justice and order and strengthen Athenian hegemony, are not broken. Orestes' oath that Argos will be allied to Athens lending its military support is a prime example of a constructive oath (backed by a curse).

Disorder in the *Oresteia* further arises through the agents' lack of fear and reverence (φόβος and σέβας). In *Agamemnon*, fear forebodes calamity but paralyses those who experience it: action to avert tragedy is impossible. Fear is also associated with the Erinyes as a musical phenomenon: the chorus' experience of fear fluttering in front of its heart is linked to the Erinyes' dirge. The chorus' narratives of past events are tales of irreverence. Agamemnon's and Clytemnestra's behaviour towards gods, family, citizens and strangers lack reverence. Both neglect civic well-being and perform perverted rituals. In *Choephori*, fear grasps all, queen, citizens and chorus. But fear neither deters the atrocity of matricide, nor promotes justice. The play singles out tyranny as a destructive form of government that feeds on fear and lacks respect.

After the matricide, Orestes' fear is followed by his vision of the Erinyes as the 'wrathful dogs of a mother' (*Ch*. 1054) which will hunt Orestes in

Eumenides. In *Eumenides*, fear becomes a physical reality as the Erinyes emerge as chorus. Their ugly appearance and bloodthirsty nature make them the epitome of τὸ δεινόν; their Binding Song is the choral incarnation of fear. However, in Athens and under Athena's guidance the Erinyes emphasise the value of φόβος and σέβας for civic justice and order. Athena reiterates the Erinyes' words in her establishment of the Areopagus and cult of the *Semnai Theai*. The Olympian goddess makes the Areopagus the repository of φόβος and σέβας; the Erinyes / *Semnai Theai* praise φόβος and σέβας as instruments of social control, enabling Athenians to be pious, just, respectful towards each other, their guests and allies and the gods, and emboldened against enemies. Fear and reverence are joined at all levels of Athenian society; the cult of *Semnai Theai* best symbolises this connection.

Socio-religious practices such as sacrifice, the guest-host relationship and supplication exemplify disorder in *Agamemnon* and *Choephori* but underscore Athenian order at the end of the trilogy. These socio-religious practices are freed from corruption and perversion as Athena establishes the Areopagus, announces its ordinances, receives Argos as an ally and welcomes the Erinyes as cult goddesses. In contrast to Paris' transgression, Clytemnestra's false welcome of the returning king and Orestes' deceptive entry into the palace, *xenia* regains its positive connotation in the *Eumenides*. Apollo's offering an Argive alliance and Orestes' pledge to such in gratitude for his just treatment and restoration of his legacy as well as Athens' reception of the Erinyes as *metoikoi* and cult goddesses who bring blessings for Athens and its citizens in return for the Athenians' honouring their cult exhibit healthy *xenia*. Unlike Clytemnestra's (and

Iphigenia's), Orestes' supplication is successful; successful supplication brings profit not only to Orestes and Argos but also to Athens.

Further, the Erinyes, who pursue the suppliant Orestes, finally appear similar to suppliants, virgins whose rights are abused. But Athena does not jeopardise Athens' order and harmony by incorporating foreigners and their differences into the city; in contrast, King Pelasgus fears that receiving the entreating Danaids could overthrow Argos' internal stability in Aeschylus' *Suppliants* (342, 354-8, 365-9, 376-80, 397-401, 407-17). Moreover, the end of the trilogy no longer witnesses corrupted private sacrifices that subvert the order of the community, but pays tribute to the civic cult of the *Semnai Theai* that bless the city with order, harmony, prosperity and fertility in response to receiving sacrifices from the Athenians. Further, the final procession, which celebrates the establishment of the beneficial *polis*-cult of *Semnai Theai* as well as the triumph of civic justice and harmony over bloodshed and disorder, is a well-ordered socio-religious ritual in itself. Suggesting the Panathenaia, this festive procession celebrates Athens' organised social, cultural, religious and judicial structure that renders it the supreme Hellenic *polis*.

Institutionalising and unifying *nomos* and *thesmos* also overcomes the disorder of the first two plays and renders justice and order cohesive and steadfast. The re-definition of law occurs on more than one level. First *nomos* and *thesmos* are cleared of negative practices and connotations such as private justice or the *lex talionis*. *Nomos* is also freed from its conflation with musical tune. Next, the differences in opinion between Olympian and chthonian gods as to what constitutes *thesmos* is removed. The Erinyes' understanding of their ancient privileges is subsumed under the Areopagus, which Athena presents as a *thesmos*, and Olympian will, especially Zeus' ordinances as made clear in the Hymn to

Zeus in *Agamemnon*. The moral precepts of the chorus, in particular positive reciprocity, σωφροσύνη, beneficial φόβος, σέβας and anticipated πάθει μάθος, are contained in the laws enforced by the Areopagus, granted by the gods and sanctioned by the cult of the *Semnai Theai*.

Along with the Erinyes, these key terms are transferred from the private to the public sphere. As speech acts, emotions, socio-religious practices and laws are clarified and the Erinyes are installed as pro-*polis* cult goddesses, their judicial, moral and religious authority gains weight from their location in Athens, where Greek social paradigms (e.g. success in warfare, alliance, patriarchy, marriage and inheritance) dominate. But the inverse also occurs: Athens not only lends substance to the trilogy's judicial, moral and religious ideas, but is also positively affected by them.

The historical events at Athens around 462/1BC suggest that the *Oresteia*, especially the *Eumenides*, reacts to contemporary Athenian political and social circumstances. Ephialtes' reduction of the Areopagus' political powers, the renunciation of alliance with Sparta and the formation of an alliance with Argos, as well as Ephialtes' assassination led to political unrest and social confusion that threatened Athens' internal stability. While avoiding a 'one-on-one' analogy between current politics and dramatic development, the *Oresteia* reflects on these events in its conclusion and suggests general methods of peaceful cooperation and positive transactions whereby both old and new as well as local and foreign elements benefit. Old attitudes and rights are subsumed under the new paradigm.

Athens exceeds and replaces Argos as hegemonic city. In myth, Argos is entitled to rule Hellas; its cultural, political and military (esp. naval) strength

allows it to pursue an imperialistic strategy and be Hellas' supreme hegemony.[621] In answer to Argos' failure to connect justice, power and hegemony with reverence and its citizens' welfare, Athens organises a system of justice that honours citizens and non-citizens, practises positive reciprocity (e.g. forming of alliances, *metoikia*), and assures *olbos* for those who respect the Areopagus and the *Semnai Theai*. The establishment of the Areopagus not only improves upon Argos' lack of institutionalised justice, but also reflects on historical events in Athens. Ephialtes' reforms affect the court's *gravitas*; Aeschylus' foundation of the Areopagus addresses this 'injury': inaugurated and endowed with ordinances by Athena, the Areopagus has its reputation as guardian of δίκη (/νομοφυλακεία) restored. This judicial institution stabilises Athens' internal political and social order, invokes a feeling of unity amongst citizens and, in particular, prevents *stasis*. The example of positive reciprocity, *sebas* and *sôphrosynê* offered by Athena's treatment of Orestes and the Erinyes suggests ways of handling the precarious political situation not only at Athens, but in all of Hellas. Judging the non-Athenian Orestes (and respecting the honour of all parties involved), the Areopagus proves itself an institution fit for judging matters inside and outside its territory. Restoring Orestes to its rightful inheritance, Aeschylus also makes clear that the Areopagus fights tyranny; Athens is not a tyrant, but a Panhellenic city and saviour.

Athena's generosity towards Orestes and the Erinyes enhances Athens' positive public image as just, munificent Panhellenic city. Athena relieves Orestes and the Erinyes of their suffering and restores them to their rightful place in the social network. She even bestows greater power on them than they enjoyed before: Orestes is not only reinstated in his paternal property but his community is

[621] Cf. pp. 230-1 with nn. 543-7.

now also allied to Athens; the Erinyes are not only restored to their traditional function as guardians of natural law but they are now also a recognised cult attached to the greatest *polis*. Singing its own praises, Athens represents its imperialistic strategies as benevolent hegemony at many levels – religious, moral, judicial, political and military.

Just as Athens succeeds Argos as hegemonic city, so it succeeds Delphi as centre of Panhellenic worship. Unlike Delphi, Athens institutionalises unwritten laws, reconciles conflicting forces and thus realises choral ideals of justice and harmony. The *polis*' sanction by the gods is seamless: Athens not only enjoys Athena's and Zeus' protection and favour, but it also gains the Erinyes' support. At first bearing no relation to Athens, the Erinyes' justice interferes with that of the Olympian gods and threatens Athens' welfare; however, turned into objects of *polis*-cult, they form part of the solution that replaces private vendetta with civic order, harmony and prosperity. The Erinyes / *Semnai Theai* no longer derive their privileges from the ancient Moirai, but from the Olympian goddess Athena (and her city): they are civilised and their function is appropriated to the *polis*. Civic and sacred powers coalesce in Athens. The *polis* empowers the *Semnai Theai* to safeguard civic moral and religious well-being. Thus, the *Semnai Theai* act as the cultic / religious enforcement of the Areopagus and its ordinances. In particular, the Erinyes' capacity to inspire fear (τὸ δεινόν) has a moral and religious as well as a judicial and political quality. The city's domestication and possession of the *Semnai Theai* as *polis*-cult as well as its already established protection by the Olympian gods projects Athens as a formidable and sacrosanct *polis* in Hellas.

This thesis has attempted to demonstrate the multitude of ways with which the Erinyes are central to the development of the *Oresteia*'s themes.[622] The connection between the Orestes myth and the Erinyes, the dual transformation of the Erinyes from abstract phenomenon to chorus and from goddesses of vengeance and curse to objects of *polis*-cult, the reorganisation of the Erinyes' traditional qualities and their connection to the *oikos*, *polis* and *kosmos* measure disorder and create order in the course of the trilogy. Aeschylus draws upon these figures to put forward social, moral and political ideas that resonate with his fellow-Athenians, whose concern about social and political security is urgent in 458BC.

The Erinyes, as object of choral mediation and invocation in *Agamemnon* and *Choephori* and as chorus *per se* in *Eumenides*, are the focal point of the trilogy. The phenomenology of the Erinyes is meticulously prepared: their appearance as a dirge in the heart of the chorus of Argive elders and Cassandra's vision in *Agamemnon*, followed by Orestes' vision in *Choephori*, and their emergence as chorus of sleeping old maidens, furious hunters, persecutors at the court and finally as objects of Athenian cult in *Eumenides* carefully match the development of their function from ancient goddesses of vengeance and curse to objects of Athenian cult. Yet recent scholarship devoted to tragedy's myth, ritual and cult foundation and its association with Athenian society, morality, religion, politics and hegemony can sometimes neglect Aeschylus' thorough design of the phenomenology of the Erinyes / *Semnai Theai*, the *Oresteia*'s development of choruses, the foundation of a divine cult in Athens and its relationship to the

[622] Cf. Bacon (1994/5) 6-24, esp. 7, 9, 14, 17, 19 on the significance of the chorus and its performance in Greek life and drama.

Athenian system of justice.[623] These closing paragraphs suggest how the findings of this dissertation might complement and confirm recent research and maybe even suggest new directions for research. The example of the Erinyes' presentation through the course of the trilogy, the Athenianisation / foundation of a *polis*-cult of ancient divinities and the Erinyes' / *Semnai Theai*'s influence on civic order particularly fits into the current research regarding tragic aetiology of divinity cult (i.e. non-hero-cult) and its significance for Athens' socio-religious structure and Panhellenism (1), the relationship between choral performance, cult and curse power on the one hand and Athenian law and order, on the other (2), and last but not least the relationship between tragedy and empire-building (3).

This dissertation about the Erinyes / *Semnai Theai* may be complementary to recent scholarship concerned with Athenian myth, cult, ritual and tragic aetiology.[624] For example, Sourvinou-Inwood's approach to Athenian festivals and the myths that underlay them[625] could be applied the Erinyes / *Semnai Theai*. This thesis may add to the already existing conjectures about the establishment of the cult of the *Semnai Theai* or other tragic aetiologies of Athenian divinity cult (cf. Prometheia and Thesmophoria). Kowalzig's methodology regarding the relationship between the Athenianisation of hero-cults and Athenian empire[626] serves as a perfect example of how knowledge about the Erinyes / *Semnai Theai* in the *Oresteia* could add to research into the relationship between divine *polis*-cults (i.e. divinities as objects for *polis*-cult) in drama and Athenian empire.

[623] Lardinois (1992) 313-27 is a notable exception.

[624] For example, Kowalzig (2007) and Sourvinou-Inwood (2011).

[625] *Athenian myths and festivals: Aglauros, Erechtheus, Plynteria, Panathenaia* (2011). Cf. her reference to the Erinyes in her earlier article, using them as an example of how their final procession (/ritual) 'zoomed the world of the tragedy to the cultic reality of the audience.' Sourvinou-Inwood (2005/6) 293-304, quote on 298.

[626] Kowalzig (2006) 79-98.

Likewise, continuing Robertson's argument,[627] research into the *Semnai Theai*'s possible influence on the Thesmophoria or an examination of the role played by their cult (as presented in the *Oresteia*) as a religious institution that celebrates the social norm of just, pious and submissive women will add to scholarly inquiry into relationships between the trilogy's tragic aetiology and religious festivals at Athens. Thus, this research into Aeschylus' representation of the Erinyes / *Semnai Theai* (the only cult that has been founded in extant drama) may confirm and complement scholarship into how incorporation of cult in tragedy brings mythological and religious elements into the *polis*' festivals, what emotional effect they have on the audience and how it shapes the projection of Athenian ideology and hegemony.

Bacon, Henrichs, Sourvinou-Inwood, Kowalzig and Gruber,[628] to name a few, have already made clear that the chorus is one of the most significant elements of a tragedy to communicate virtues and an understanding of order to the audience. The importance of the development of the choruses and phenomenology of the Erinyes / *Semnai Theai* for resolution of the *Oresteia* and the establishment of *polis*-cult in honour of a divine chorus underscores the importance of the chorus to tragedy.[629] The relationship between curse power (inherent in a hero-cult or divine *polis*-cult) and the Athenian judicial system appears as a principal factor in the trilogy's conclusion – yet the *Oresteia* is unique in that respect. The trilogy's close interconnectedness of law and religion

[627] Robertson (1924) 53 comments: 'On the analogy of the *Eumenides* we might expect to find the final solution symbolised by Aeschylus in the foundation of some religious institution safeguarding the dignity of women; and I wish to make the suggestion that he found such an institution in the Thesmophoria.'

[628] Bacon (1994/5) 6-24, Henrichs (1994/5) 56-111, Sourvinou-Inwood (2005/6) 293-304, Kowalzig (2007) and Gruber (2009).

[629] For example, Calame (2001), esp. 207-63, has worked on the chorus as an education. Cf. also Bacon (1994/5) 6-24.

– *Eumenides* founds a court and a divine cult and appropriates two curses for Athenians (Orestes' and the Erinyes' / *Semnai Theai*'s) – has no footing in later tragedies and the Athenian law court. In Euripides' *Orestes*, for example, the gods, not the Areopagus, acquit Orestes.[630] Likewise, Greek law and forensic oratory omit elaboration on the Erinyes.[631] Instead, developing Kowalzig's and this dissertation's discussion further, research could be focussed on the relationship between divine *polis*-cult and its power to curse and Athenian ideology and hegemony, particularly its empire-building.

The simultaneity of and causal relationship between Athens' rise to an empire and drama's status as a centrepiece of Athenian culture has yet to be explored systematically. One may assume that it was only natural for Aeschylus to celebrate Athens' growth into an empire but also to warn against transgressions that can cause even the greatest of hegemonies to collapse. Athens did rise to be an empire but it fell within several decades because advice such as Aeschylus proposed at the end of the *Oresteia* was not sufficiently understood and realised (cf. the agents in *Agamemnon* and *Choephori*). Athens' demanding foreign policies such as establishing *klêrouchiai*[632] and the transfer of the Delian treasury to Athens and its internal strife throughout the Peloponnesian War ignore Aeschylus' advice of positive reciprocity, *sôphrosynê* and reverence. The effect of Aeschylus' aetiology and establishment of the *Semnai Theai* seems to have lost gusto after its performance – Pausanias claims that there is 'nothing fearful in the

[630] See E. *Or*., *IT* and *El*. and, for example, Dunn (2000) 3-27 and Zeitlin (2005) 199- 225.

[631] The Erinyes are mentioned in Dem. 23.66 and Dein. 1.87, but the weight attributed to them there cannot be paralleled to that in the Aeschylean trilogy. See *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Greek Law*, Gagarin and Cohen (eds.) (2005), Sommerstein (2010) 25-38 and Leão (2010) 39-60.

[632] The rebellion of Naxos and Thaos also speak for Athens' less than peaceful and fair imperialistic methods.

statues of the goddesses which Athenians call Σεμναί.'[633] Nonetheless, the portrayal of the Erinyes as guardians of justice and dread executioners of retribution remains alive even beyond Greek borders today. Milton and Sartre,[634] for example, have received and used the Erinyes' association with bloodshed, vengeance and justice to reflect and comment on morality and order germane to their respective societies. The *Oresteia*'s employment of the Erinyes and development of choral action and philosophy point towards real and ideal communal ideology and order and serve as a crucial example of how art fulfils a social, moral and religious function.

[633] Πλησίον δὲ ἱερὸν θεῶν ἐστιν ἃς καλοῦσιν Ἀθηναῖοι Σεμνάς, Ἡσίοδος δὲ Ἐρινῦς ἐν Θεογονίᾳ. πρῶτος δέ σφισιν Αἰσχύλος δράκοντας ἐποίησεν ὁμοῦ ταῖς ἐν τῇ κεφαλῇ θριξὶν εἶναι· τοῖς δὲ ἀγάλμασιν οὔτε τούτοις ἔπεστιν οὐδὲν φοβερὸν οὔτε ὅσα ἄλλα κεῖται θεῶν τῶν ὑπογαίων. 'Nearby is a temple of goddesses, which the Athenians call 'August', but Hesiod in the *Theogony* calls Erinys. Aeschylus is the first who makes them have snakes on their head and hair. But there is nothing fearful neither on those statues nor on those of any of the other underworld gods.' (Paus. 1.28.6).

[634] See the introduction, p. 1 with n. 1.

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