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I

MARK GRIFFITH

THE POETRY OF AESCHYLUS (IN ITS TRADITIONAL CONTEXTS)

INTRODUCTION

Athenian tragedy was still a fairly new art-form when Aeschylus began his career as a playwright; but ever since its first inception at the City Dionysia, it had obviously been drawing from and combining a number of long-established poetical and performance traditions. While there is no way for us to determine what particular individual contributions such playwrights as Thespis, Phrynichus, Choerilus, or Pratinas may have made to the language and metrics of early Attic tragedy,[1] we are surely safe in asserting that already by the 490s BCE a vibrant Athenian 'tradition' of tragic diction and style must have existed — a tradition that was still evolving, of course, but was by now well-defined and distinct from the continuing traditions of epic, choral lyric, iambic, monodic, sympotic, and paraenetic poetry.

It would of course be fascinating and instructive to be able to sample even a 10- or 20-line excerpt from Thespis' or Phrynichus' dialogue — and no less so from their lyric compositions, just as it is fascinating to contemplate the remarkable passage of

[1] B. SNELL (ed.), *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta, Vol. 1, Didascaliae tragicae, catalogi tragicorum et tragoediarum, testimonia et fragmenta tragicorum minorum* (Göttingen 1986) [= *TrGF* 1], 1-4; see A. LESKY, *Die tragische Dichtung der Hellenen* (Göttingen ^{3}1972); C.J. HERINGTON, *Poetry into drama* (Berkeley 1985).

frantic choral lyrics attributed to Pratinas: the fragment (if genuinely old and dramatic, rather than, as some claim, a product of the late-5th C. New Music)[2] seems to confirm that a Peloponnesian poet, already firmly established in his native Phlius as a master of a popular kind of satyric drama, could bring this form into the Theater of Dionysus in Athens, adapt it to Attic dialect (despite, e.g., the reference in line 17 to τὰν ἐμὰν Δώριον χορείαν), and quickly achieve success both for his own plays and for satyr-drama as an art-form for decades to follow.[3]

Both as a tragedian and as a satyr-dramatist Aeschylus certainly must be regarded as simultaneously a radical innovator/inventor, and a deeply knowledgeable traditionalist, all at once: both a borrower and an adapter of existing forms. This is certainly true of his dramatic technique, in reshaping heroic myths and constructing out of them new plays and trilogies/tetralogies; and it is doubtless no less true of his achievements as a 'poet', i.e. a verbal-metrical artist composing texts (scripts, librettos) out of words and phrases, verses and stanzas, speeches and songs to be uttered by a variety of characters and choral groups in the Theater. That is to say, even though most of the fundamental elements of that style were retained and continued, more or less wholesale, by Sophocles and Euripides, so that we can speak

[2] *TrGF* 1 4 F3 = D.L. PAGE (ed.), *Poetae Melici Graeci* (Oxford 1962) [= *PMG*], 708. E.g., B. ZIMMERMANN, "Überlegungen zum sogenannten Pratinasfragment", in *MH* 43 (1986), 145-54; E. CSAPO, "The politics of the New Music", in *Music and the Muses*, ed. by P. MURRAY and P.J. WILSON (Oxford 2004), 207-48; but for support of an early date, some time between 500 and 460 BCE, see R. SEAFORD, "The 'hyporchema' of Pratinas" in *Maia* 29-30 (1978-1979), 81-94; G. B. D'ALESSIO, "Ἦν ἰδού: *Ecce Satyri* (Pratina, *PMG* 708 = *TrGF* 4 F3)", in *Dalla lirica corale alla poesia drammatica*, a cura di F. PERUSINO and M. COLANTONIO (Pisa 2007), 95-128; M. GRIFFITH "Dithyramb and satyr-play", in *Dithyramb and its contexts*, ed. by B. KOWALZIG and P.J. WILSON (Oxford 2009), with further references.

[3] Pratinas' most popular successor, of course, as composer of Athenian satyr-dramas in the 5th C, was Aeschylus himself– an issue which these Entretiens were unfortunately unable to pursue. See further M. GRIFFITH "Slaves of Dionysos: Satyrs, audience, and the ends of the *Oresteia*", in *CA* 22 (2002), 195-258; ID., "Sophocles' satyr-plays and the language of romance", in *Sophocles and the Greek language*, ed. by I.J.F. DE JONG and A. RIJKSBARON (Leiden 2005), 51-72.

comfortably of a 'norm' for tragic expression that was largely shared by all three, Aeschylus' poetic style, his diction, morphology, syntax, word-arrangement, metrics, and imagery, all strike any modern reader as being highly distinctive, even perhaps at times idiosyncratic or bizarre.[4]

For the present purposes, it is Aeschylus' originality that is our focus: and my assigned topic is his poetry. In general, Aeschylus' language has always been renowned, in antiquity as in the modern era, for its "grandiloquence" (*megalêgoria, megalophônia*), its "loftiness" (*hupsos, hupsêgoria*), "weightiness" (*onkos*), its complexity and "difficulty" (*authadeia, sklêrotês, austêra harmonia*) and "grandness of conception" (*megalophrosunê, megalophuia*).[5] The most widely-used commentary on an Aeschylean drama in the English-speaking world, J.D. Denniston and D. Page's *Agamemnon*, has offended countless generations of eager Hellenists by its dismissive remarks about Aeschylus'

[4] Studies of Aeschylus' distinctive vocabulary, metrics and 'style' include: W. ALY, *De Aeschyli copia verborum (*Berlin 1904); W. KRANZ, *Stasimon* (Berlin 1933); R. HÖLZLE, *Aufbau der lyrischen Partien des Aischylos* (Marbach 1934); J. SEEWALD, *Untersuchungen zu Stil und Komposition der aischyleischen Tragödie.* (Greifswald 1936); W. B. STANFORD, *Aeschylus in his style* (Dublin 1942); F.R. EARP, *The style of Aeschylus* (Cambridge 1948); O. HILTBRUNNER, *Wiederholungs- und Motivtechnik bei Aischylos* (Bern 1950); V. CITTI, *Il linguaggio religioso e liturgico nelle tragedie di Eschilo (*Bologna 1962); ID., *Eschilo e la lexis tragica* (Amsterdam 1994); A. LEBECK, *The Oresteia* (Washington 1971); A. SIDERAS, *Aeschylus Homericus* (Göttingen 1971); W. JENS (Hrsg.), *Die Bauformen der griechischen Tragödie* (München 1971); E. PETROUNIAS, *Funktion und Thematik der Bilder bei Aischylos* (Göttingen 1976); M. GRIFFITH, *The authenticity of* Prometheus Bound (Cambridge 1977); A. N. MICHELINI, *Tradition and dramatic form in the Persians of Aeschylus* (Leiden 1982); W. C. SCOTT, *Musical design in Aeschylean theater* (Hanover 1984); M. L. WEST (ed.), *Aeschyli tragoediae* (Stuttgart 1990); ID., "Colloquialism and naive style in Aeschylus", in *Owls to Athens,* ed. by E. CRAIK (Oxford 1990), 3-12; G. MATINO, *La sintassi di Eschilo* (Napoli 1998).

[5] Such terms, and their Latin equivalents (*sublimis, gravis, grandiloquus,* etc.) are constantly encountered in the ancient critical assessments *de arte poetica Aeschylea;* see S. RADT (ed.), *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta, Vol. 3, Aeschylus* (Göttingen 1985) [= *TrGF 3*] T 115-44; and further A.J. PODLECKI "Αἰσχύλος μεγαλοφωνότατος", in *Dionysalexandros,* ed. by D. CAIRNS and V. LIAPIS (Swansea 2006), 11-30.

lack of intellectual subtlety and his clumsy mixing of metaphors and syntactical perversity. For Denys Page, as for many 19th and early 20th C. scholars (and many ancient critics too, it should be added), Aeschylus was a raw primitive, a pioneer who was not yet quite a fully accomplished or even conscious literary artist: rather "simple" (*haplous*) and "archaic, old-fashioned" (*archaikos*). In antiquity, he was accordingly imagined as a "wine-drinker" — inspired, to be sure, but not technically refined and apparently often out of control — in contrast to the cerebral, bookish, and hyper-cultured (even "Socratic") Euripides.

Along with Pindar and Thucydides, Aeschylus is generally regarded by modern readers as the most difficult of Classical Greek authors to translate and interpret: his language can be so densely metaphorical and multilayered, and the progression of ideas so convoluted and unexpected. In the terms of Classical rhetoricians, again,[6] or even earlier, of Aristophanes in the *Frogs*, his diction and word-formations (*lexis*), word-order, syntax, figures of speech, and sound-effects (*synthesis, schêmata*), are all quite conspicuously (and audibly) distanced from normal or everyday expressions. This "elevation, difficulty, thickness" of style, i.e. the distance between Aeschylean poetry and — not just normal Attic (prose, colloquial) usage, but also — the later tragic modes of Sophocles and Euripides, are in fact easily measurable and quantifiable: even if we cannot literally 'weigh' his phrases in the scales against Euripides' or measure the correctness of joins and lines with surveying instruments (as in the *Frogs*), we can in fact count the exceptionally high rates of compound adjectives and polysyllabic words in general, including many hapaxes and new coinages;[7] the greater ratio of

[6] E.g. ARIST. *Po.* 21; D.H. *Peri Synth.* 22 = *TrGF* 4 T 128a, cf. T127; LONGIN. *Peri Hypsous* 15, 5 = *TrGF* 4 T 132; QUINT. *Inst. Or.* 10, 1, 66 = *TrGF* 4 T 133; Ar. *Ra.* 757-1530 confirms just how strange, even ridiculous, Aeschylus' language and metrics could seem even to the Athenians of the next couple of generations.

[7] W.B. STANFORD, *op. cit.* (n. 4); F.R. EARP, *op. cit.* (n. 4); D.M. CLAY, *A formal analysis of the vocabularies of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides*, 2 vols.

choral lyric *vs* spoken iambic verse, and of overtly ritualistic and incantational linguistic elements (esp. refrains, popyptoton and anaphora, etc.,) as compared with Sophocles and Euripides,[8] and more extensive use of metaphor (rather than simile, which is more usual in epic).[9]

All this is true enough, and helps to explain why Aeschylus' plays were less widely read, copied, and performed from the 4th C. onwards than those of Sophocles or (especially) Euripides.[10] But at the same time, Aeschylus' poetry is far from being homogeneous or uniform. On the contrary, the language, metrics, and verbal structures can be extraordinarily varied, multileveled and versatile, capable of suiting many different contexts and of conveying sharply contrasting moods and dynamics — far more so, for example, than the language of epic or choral lyric, or of history or presocratic science and philosophy, or even, I should say, than the poetry of the other two surviving Attic tragedians. (Thus more like e.g. Elizabethan English tragedy than Neo-Classical French.) If Aeschylus was the "creator, inventor, father" of tragedy (as he has often been labeled), then he must also be credited with having developed[11] a poetic language and metrical-formal repertoire of quite extraordinary flexibility and range.

(Minneapolis, Athens 1958, 1960); M. GRIFFITH *op. cit.* (n. 4), 149-50, 268; A.J. PODLECKI, *art. cit.* (n. 5).

[8] W. KRANZ, *op. cit.* (n. 4); R. HÖLZLE, *op. cit.* (n. 4); V. CITTI, *op. cit.* (n. 4); B. GYGLI-WYSS, *Das nominale polyptoton im alteren griechisch* (Göttingen 1966); S. SREBNY, *Wort und Gedanke bei Aischylos* (Warsaw 1964); W. JENS, *op. cit.* (n. 4); D. FEHLING, *Die Wiederholungsfiguren und ihr Gebrauch bei den Griechen vor Gorgias* (Berlin 1989).

[9] W.B. STANFORD, *Greek metaphor* (Oxford 1936); A. LEBECK, *op. cit.* (n. 4); E. PETROUNIAS, *op. cit.* (n. 4), etc. Euripidean lyric in turn tends to prefer a more descriptive/pictorial kind of imagery, rather than metaphor: W. BREITENBACH, *Untersuchungen zur Sprache der euripideischen Lyrik* (Stuttgart 1934); S.A. BARLOW, *The imagery of Euripides* (London 1971).

[10] See the contribution of F. Montanari in this volume.

[11] The standard Greek rhetorical terms for "composing" a literary or dramatic text were συντίθημι *(synthesis)* and συνίστημι *(sustasis)*, i.e. a "putting together, combining" of preexisting elements.

In what follows, I will first, in Part 1, survey quickly the ways in which Aeschylus drew from and adapted the main pre-existing poetic-stylistic traditions and performance contexts, in creating a new Attic "art-speech" and a definitive set of verbal-structural conventions for tragedy; then in Part 2, I will focus briefly on a particular area of Aeschylean innovation that seems to me most distinctively and effectively to enrich and complicate the meaning and impact of his poetry, through the mixing of voices, 'levels', and structures, and the resulting multivalence and indeterminacy (or 'over-determinacy') of meaning that this produces.[12]

Part 1
Aeschylus as adapter of pre-existent poetic (and other) traditions

I will consider here six main categories of poetic production from which Aeschylus (and Athenian tragedy in general) appears to have drawn, in one way or another. The selection of precisely six categories is inevitably arbitrary, and some of them overlap a bit with one another. But I think they can provide a helpful starting point for analysis and discussion. The categories are the following: (1a) Homeric epic-narrative; (1b) didactic/gnomic/paraenetic poetry, i.e., 'wisdom traditions'; (1c) choral celebratory lyric and monodic/sympotic poetry; (1d) non-literary ritual speech-acts (prayer, incantation, curse, magic, etc.); (1e) science-ethnography-'presocratic' discourses, including medicine; (1f) law, practical politics, and 'rhetoric'.

[12] On the question of the authenticity of *Prometheus Bound*, I remain agnostic: so I will concentrate mostly on the other six plays. As for Aeschylus' satyr-plays, which presumably comprised one quarter of his whole dramatic production, I shall mention these only occasionally: but see further M. GRIFFITH, *art. cit.* (n. 3) and ID., "Satyrs, citizens, and self-presentation", in *Satyr drama. Tragedy at Play* ed. by G.M.W. HARRISON (Swansea 2005), with further references.

1a. 'Homeric' epic-narrative

Famously, Aeschylus is said to have described his plays as "slices (τεμάχη) from the great feasts of Homer..." (Athen. 8.347d). By this he (or whoever made up the phrase, if not Aeschylus himself) doubtless meant both that the stories and characters of his plays were generally taken from the great epic cycles, and that his language and style were similarly 'heroic' and elevated. Of course such terms as "Homer" and "Homeric banquets" are very loose and imprecise — "Homeric" poetry for us might involve just the *Iliad* or *Odyssey,* or might refer instead to any number of early hexameter narrative poems, including the *Homeric Hymns*, fragments of the *Thebais* and Trojan Cycle, and even the Hesiodic *Theogony* and *Catalogue of Women*; and in fact Aeschylus clearly did draw heavily from the Theban and Trojan Cycles for his plots. But the ambiguity necessarily persists, as to whether "Homeric style" should be extended to include all diction and forms that are characteristic of traditional Ionic-Aeolic formulaic and semi-formulaic hexameter poetry of the 8th-6th centuries — which would of course include many expressions found also in the elegists, and even in Archilochus and the monodic poets as well.[13]

Modern scholars have documented in exhaustive detail the "Homerisms", modifications of epic diction, similarities and differences between 'Homeric' diction (in all its dialectal variety and flexibility) and the vocabulary of Aeschylus' surviving plays (in all their textual and orthographical uncertainty).[14] In

[13] It has become increasingly clear (from papyrus finds) that Stesichorus' lyrics, in particular, are both heavily Homeric and yet also in their themes and narrative technique often anticipate Aeschylus in remarkable ways. And if 'Homeric' style is often 'Stesichorean' style as well, an Athenian audience surely would not have heard such phrases or understood such themes as being specifically 'epic' in flavor; see J. M. BREMER *et al.* (eds), *Some recently found poems* (Leiden 1987); G.O. HUTCHINSON, *Greek lyric poetry: a commentary on selected larger pieces* (Oxford 2001).

[14] See esp. W.B. STANFORD, *op. cit.* (n.4); L. BERGSON, "The omitted augment in the messengers' speeches of Greek tragedy", in *Eranos* 51 (1953), 121-28;

general, though, we can summarize the gist of these numerous studies of Aeschylus' "Homerisms" as follows: his language does contain many distinctly 'Homeric' (non-standard-Attic) words, and a fair sprinkling of epic dialect forms and expressions as well,[15] and the resulting heroic distance and epic coloring are vital to the creation and maintenance of a tragic 'world', one that is inhabited both by (old-style) royal families and by (contemporary-style) ordinary people — soldiers, heralds, priests, and 'citizens' — a world that is not quite now, though not entirely 'then' either.[16] But at the same time, Aeschylus does not make any sustained attempt to replicate Homeric dialect in general; there are relatively few Ionic and virtually no Aeolic dialect forms; and there is almost no direct citing or usage of epic formulae as such; even relatively few specific mannerisms of epic narrative technique.[17]

A. SIDERAS, *op. cit.* (n. 4); A. MARCHIORI, "Sulla presenza di formule epiche in Eschilo" in *Didaskaliai. Tradizione e interpretazione del dramma attico,* a cura di G. AVEZZÙ (Padova 1999), 41-70; J. BARRETT, *Staged narrative. Poetics and the messenger in Greek tragedy* (Berkeley 2002). These analyses do not always distinguish clearly enough between uniquely Homeric diction and usage, and words and phrases that may have been common to several poetic dialects, or even to spoken Attic: see previous note. By 'orthographical uncertainty', I wish only to signal the fact that we do not know how Aeschylus' text was first written out: was the Attic alphabet, or Ionic, used? It seems all too likely that our medieval manuscripts represent texts that have undergone quite a bit of intentional and unintentional modification since the date of the first productions.

[15] In particular: adjectival epithets, esp. compound adjectives; tmesis and use of simplex verbs in place of standard Attic compounds; frequent omission of the definite article.

[16] Thus, e.g., even such routine usages as Ἀχαῖοι (for "Hellenes") in reference to the Greek troops at Troy, or "children of Cadmus" (for the "Thebans" in general), along with traditional locutions such as calling a king ἄναξ or "shepherd of the people," constantly keep the audience aware that these plays are taking place in a quasi-Homeric time-frame and social environment (in Bakhtin's terms, "chronotope"); see J.-P. VERNANT, *Mythe et tragédie en Grèce ancienne* (Paris 1977); P.E. EASTERLING, "Anachronism in Greek tragedy", in *JHS* 105 (1985), 1-10.

[17] No traditional epithets, repeated formulae, or near-identical type-scenes; few similes. There is no room here to discuss the ways in which the tragic agôn, *amoibaia* and epirrhematic scenes, stichomythia, etc. adapt the antithetical verbal-rhetorical structures and paired speeches of Homeric epic analysed by

Certain types of scene are more given to self-conscious or marked Homerizing than others. Catalogues of names or places, such as the lists of Persian leaders and troops (*Pers.* 21-54, 302-30) or the Pythian succession at Delphi (*Eum.* 1-33); messenger speeches; or lengthy descriptive rheseis (such as Clytemnestra's beacon speech in *Ag.* 281-311, or Danaus' report of the Argive vote in *Supp.* 600 *sq.*), are particularly likely to reflect Homeric (or Hesiodic) style and technique, in one way or another. But in each of these cases, we may observe that neither the sound nor the vocabulary of the passages is at all similar — the language is non-hexametric, non-formulaic, and for the most part not specifically 'Homeric' in texture.[18] The consensus by now seems to be that such epic 'coloring' is very faint, though not for that reason wholly insignificant.[19]

D. LOHMANN, *Die Komposition der Reden in der Ilias* (Berlin 1970); R.H. MARTIN, *The language of heroes* (Ithaca 1989); J.L. READY, *The adorner of heroes: contestation in similes in the Iliad* [Ph.D. diss.] (Berkeley 2004) and others: see esp. W. JENS, *op. cit.* (n. 4); M. ALEXIOU, *The ritual lament in Greek tradition* (Cambridge 1974); J. DUCHEMIN, *L'agon dans la tragédie grecque* (Paris 1945); M. LLOYD, *The Agon in Euripides* (Oxford 1992); and below, pp. 40-42.

[18] C.J. HERINGTON, *op. cit.* (n. 1) made the interesting suggestion that it may have been the early Attic tragedians, perhaps Aeschylus himself, who first adapted the anapaestic meter (to allow the metron of the form –⏑⏑––, as well as the more standard forms ⏑⏑–⏑⏑–, ⏑⏑–––, ––⏑⏑–, and ––––), so that anapaestic passages could more comfortably incorporate dactylic-shaped words, a technique that both makes these catalogues easier to manage and also, e.g. in the parodos of *Ag.* (48-60), does perhaps add to the Homeric flavor of the vulture simile (*tropon aigupiôn*...). Yet even here, very little in the language of the passage is specifically 'Homeric': only 51 *strophodinountai* (*cf. Iliad* 2. 792, A. SIDERAS, *op. cit.* [n. 4], 158, and *uxuboân* (*cf. Iliad* 16.256 etc., A. SIDERAS, *op. cit.* [n. 4], 146-47); the other compound adjectives are not so (*ekpatiois, demniotêrê, oiônothroon, husteropoinon*). On the epic-rhapsodic-mantic coloring of the "lyric dactyls" that follow (*Ag.* 104-59), see Part 2 below.

[19] In Aeschylean messenger speeches especially, slightly increased rates of epic *te*, Ionicisms, parataxis, and other 'Homeric' details are sometimes found: L. BERGSON, *art. cit.* (n. 14); ID., "Episches in den ῥήσεις ἀγγελικαί", in *RhM* 102 (1959), 9-39; L. DI GREGORIO, *Le scene d'annuncio nella tragedia greca* (Milano 1967); L. BELLONI (ed.), *Eschilo. I Persiani* (Milano 1981), J. BARRETT, *op. cit.* (n. 14).

But in some ways more interesting, and also more distinctively Aeschylean, are certain modifications of narrative techniques that are found in some of these extended reports and descriptions: especially the uses of direct *vs* indirect discourse; back-and-forth exchanges (even stichomythia) between speakers; and the implicit shifts in narratorial voice, authority, and point-of-view. The degree of narrative reliability presented by the Homeric narrator (who is usually more-or-less omniscient), or by a main character in the epic reporting his or her observations and announcements, is significantly different from the more indeterminate and/or personally colored accounts that we often hear from Aeschylean reporters, whether choruses or individual characters, even messengers.[20]

A single example will have to suffice here: *Pers.* 351-64, 401-7. The Queen begins by asking (351-52), "Who began the battle? Was it the Hellenes, or my son...?" The Messenger's response is both explicit, and yet evasive or unsure: "It was an avenger appearing (φανεὶς ἀλάστωρ), or an evil spirit (κακὸς δαίμων) from somewhere (ποθέν), that began the whole evil. A man (ἀνὴρ), a Hellene from the army of the Athenians came, and said the following to your son Xerxes: that if..." (353-56). The indeterminacy of this response is itself pregnant with meaning: is the ἀλάστωρ (354), whom we presume to be identical to the κακὸς δαίμων, also to be understood as the same person as ἀνὴρ (355), the Athenian "man" whom the audience, but not the Queen or the Chorus — and probably not the Messenger either — know to be Themistocles' agent? And what is the force here of ποθέν? or φάνεις? The scene conveys inklings of a deceptive divine apparition (which would normally be expected to be false), as well as some uncertainty in the Messenger's mind; yet it also (esp. to the Athenian theater audience) rings true with respect to their own recent history. In any case, at 373 the Messenger acknowledges that "the gods"

[20] I.J.F. de Jong, *Narrative in drama: the art of the Euripidean messenger-speech* (Leiden 1991); J. Barrett, *op. cit.* (n. 14).

knew — and planned — more than Xerxes could understand; and his own imprecision and uncertainty are further suggested by his choice not to report verbatim the words of the "Greek man" or Xerxes' reply (as would be normal epic practice; or that of choral lyric too), but instead to summarize their words in indirect discourse. The cloudiness and multiple levels of awareness, between divine omniscience and Persian bafflement, allow the audience to experience all these points of view at once.[21]

1b. Didactic/gnomic/paraenetic (including elegiac and iambic) poetry and "wisdom" traditions:

Aeschylus is often regarded, with good reason, as not 'only' a dramatist but also a deeply serious and important thinker — a moralist, theologian, and politically engaged commentator and sage. His plays are undeniably all about justice, piety and Zeus, about the proper regulation of a polis, about good and bad conduct among family, friends and enemies, and about human duties and responsibilities in general — topics and concerns that place him squarely in a mainstream of traditional paraenetic and didactic poetry that includes (most obviously) Hesiod, Tyrtaeus, Solon, Simonides, and Xenophanes, and many others too, such as Archilochus, Theognis, and even Aesop.

Certainly many Athenians of the later 5th century regarded him thus, i.e. as a moralist and sage, for in the *Frogs* Aeschylus is made to claim that tragedians are "teachers" and are supposed to "make the citizens better" — and Homer, Hesiod, Musaeus and Orpheus are cited as the tragedians' forerunners.[22]

[21] See further my discussion in Part 2 of the parodos of *Ag.*, and of the shifting states of knowledge and insight displayed in that play by the Chorus, Calchas, Clytaemestra, and Cassandra.

[22] Ar. *Ra.* 1030-56. The question, whether Aeschylus was a clear-thinking moralist/theologian with a carefully worked-out system of beliefs and social recommendations (like, e.g., Goethe or Shaw), or more of an eclectic and opportunistic borrower from existing gnomic and didactic repertoires, selecting phrases

Whether or not we regard 'didactic poetry' as a separate literary tradition from 'epic' (on the one hand) and 'lyric/elegy' (on the other) — given that e.g. the poems of Hesiod, Xenophanes, and even (we now know) Simonides seem to cross these boundaries quite frequently and comfortably — we certainly can be in no doubt that Aeschylus knew all of these authors well and expected his audience to be familiar with them too.

We should also have no doubt, however, that other non- (or sub-)literary traditions were also available and widely known, conveying and reinforcing cultural norms and rules of all kinds. For example, we might think of the Seven Sages, whose sayings and anecdotal biographies were often reported as taking place in contexts of competitive, even quasi-dramatic, 'exchanges of wisdom':[23] thus a figure such as Pittacus, Bias, or Pythagoras, as well as Solon himself, could be cited as authority for all sorts of gnomic wisdom and criticism (as e.g. Pindar's poetry confirms); and similarly Aeschylean choruses can refer vaguely to "someone" or "an old story, a saying" (e.g. *Ag.* 750 παλαίφατος... γέρων λόγος..., *Cho.* 313-14 τριγέρων μῦθος τάδε φωνεῖ), to provide proverbial heft to a piece of moralizing or general advice. And the traditions of competitive wisdom within which so many of these Archaic figures are supposed to have operated are duly reflected in such expressions as Aesch. *Ag.* 757-58 δίχα δ' ἄλλων μονόφρων δ' εἰμί ..., i.e., in effect, "my wisdom is better than their old wisdom"![24]

and rhetorical gambits to suit particular characters in this or that dramatic situation (like, e.g., Shakespeare), is not my concern here. See further R. Parker's contribution to this volume, along with my contribution to the Discussion.

[23] R.H. MARTIN, "The Seven Sages as Performers of Wisdom", in *Cultural Poetics of Archaic Greece*, ed. by C. DOUGHERTY and L.V. KURKE (Oxford 1993), 108-128; H.P. TELL, "Sages at the Games", in *CA* 26 (2007), 249-75.

[24] For the prevalence of this competitive stance in archaic Greek poetic composition, see M. GRIFFITH "Contest and contradiction in early Greek poetry", in *Cabinet of the Muses*, ed. by M. GRIFFITH and D. J. MASTRONARDE (Atlanta 1990), 185-207; D. COLLINS, *Master of the Game* (Washington, D.C. 2004). One area of poetic contestation was etymologies and "correct naming", on which see p. 47-48 below. The tragic (and comic) argumentative modes of *stichomythia* and *agôn* obviously owe much to such traditional habits of poetical face-to-face argumentation; see n. 17 above.

If we turn to a lower social-ethical (or sub-literary) level, not only Archilochus' poetry but also perhaps the prose stories about, and supposedly narrated by, 'Aesop ', the 6th century slave-sage from Samos, were apparently available as well. Aeschylean dialogue (and even lyric) is by no means unrelentingly elevated and polysyllabic in style, nor is it always dignified and densely metaphorical: the poetry can be quite earthy and colloquial, whether for 'lower-class' effects or in order to obtain a cruder, more physical tone and to make a more simple and/or disconcerting impact.[25]

Thus suddenly, in the middle of a long and mainly high-flown choral ode, Aeschylus can introduce a simple animal fable (*Ag.* 717-36), an element usually reserved for the lowest social and literary registers. Animal fables are extremely rare in 'high' Greek poetry of the Classical period,[26] and in fact only one other passage in all of Greek tragedy contains a direct narration of a fable type at all: Soph. *Aj.* 1142-58 — a remarkably crude and down-in-the-gutter dialogue exchange between Menelaus and Teucer. In general, 5th C. writers clearly regarded this literary element as too low and prosaic for tragedy or formal prose — it is above all Xenophon and Plato in their Socratic discourses (and of course the ultra-low Aesopic tradition itself) who came to perpetuate these 'fables' in the long run.[27] This

[25] On 'colloquial' and/or 'comic' elements in Aeschylean dialogue, see P.T. STEVENS, "Colloquial expressions in Aeschylus and Sophocles", in *CR* 39 (1945), 95-105; ID., *Colloquial expressions in Euripides* (Wiesbaden 1976); B. SEIDENSTICKER, *Palintonos Harmonia: Studien zu komischen Elementen in der griechischen Tragödie* (Göttingen 1982); M.L. WEST, *art. cit.* (n. 4); A.H. SOMMERSTEIN, "Comic elements in tragic language: the case of Aeschylus' Oresteia", in *The languages of Greek comedy*, ed. by A. WILLI (Oxford 2002), 151-68; also A.N. MICHELINI, *op. cit.* (n. 4) on the different tone and pace of trochaic tetrameter vs iambic trimeter passages in early tragedy.

[26] L.V. KURKE, *The Aesopic conversations* (Princeton 2010), with further references.

[27] *Ibid.* E. Fraenkel's claim (on *Ag.* 736) that this lion-cub fable (which was apparently well-known in 5th C. Athens, as Plato's *Gorgias* confirms), originally "came from the Near East" is not unlikely, but not very helpful. Many elements in Greek culture "came from the [Near] East"; but what is significant is to trace how these elements were employed in their particular Greek contexts.

"lion cub", first "fawning" and driven by its "belly" to be "bright-eyed" and "friendly-to-children", and then later "paying back thanks" by "making a dinner, uninvited" so that the whole "household was made filthy with blood", is unforgettably vivid, evocative, and disruptive.[28] The simple metrical structure of the stanzaic pair (glyconics, enoplians, iambics, and choriambic dimeters) reinforces the narrative simplicity and transparency (esp. 717-19 ἔθρεψεν... οὗτος ἀνὴρ in ring composition with 737 προσεθρέφθη), and of course the image of the lion is picked up repeatedly throughout the play and trilogy (resurfacing fifty years later in Ar. *Ra.* — here in relation to Alcibiades and the future of Athens itself). Like Orestes in the next play, alternately represented as peeing and puking in his Nurse' arms "like a little animal" (*Cho.* 753) and "turned completely into a snake" so as to bloody his mother's nipples and kill her (523-51; 896-930), the lion-cub here is a troubling reminder of the basic, violent, and even bestial energies that seem to be required if vengeance and 'justice' are to prevail in the world.[29]

1c. Choral celebratory lyric

My third category of 'poetic traditions' from which Aeschylus drew is, on the face of it, perhaps the most obvious and straightforward of all. As Aristotle states (*Po.* 4.1449a10) and modern scholars are happy to accept: "Tragedy <evolved> out

[28] For excellent discussions of this pair of stanzas, see B.M.W. KNOX, "The lion in the house", in *CP* 47 (1952), 17-25, and J. BOLLACK et P. JUDET DE LA COMBE (éds.), *L'Agamemnon d' Eschyle* (Lille 1981), *ad loc.*

[29] Elsewhere in *Ag.*, Aeschylus has already redeployed elements of a famous Archilochean fable (the eagle and fox: ARCHIL. frs 172-181 W, *cf. Ag.* 50-59) — but there none of the stylistic markers of fable-style narration are employed. *Cf.* too Atossa's account of her dream (*Pers.* 176-200), where again the dignity of tragic narrative is maintained and the baser elements of fable ("belly... suckling, dinner," etc.) are excluded. Likewise, the elaborate riddling-images of the "Scythian Stranger" (*Sept.* 720ff, etc.) and Orestes' step-by-step self-identification as the 'solution' to the puzzle of his mother's ghastly but enigmatic dream (*Cho.* 549 ἐκδρακοντωθεὶς δ' ἐγὼ), maintain a consistently 'high' stylistic level.

of those leading-off the dithyramb...", and Aeschylus and his immediate predecessors in Athens were certainly deeply indebted to the choral lyric traditions that we know (in pitifully decimated form) from the surviving scraps of Alcman, Stesichorus, Ibycus, Simonides, Pindar, Bacchylides, and the rest. Not just dithyrambs, but also paians, thrênoi, epinikia, hymns, etc. comprised a vast and ever-growing body of lyric narratives of both local and panhellenic relevance, providing multiple versions of heroic stories, an almost limitless array of mythical connections and genealogies, and an extensive repertoire of conventional types of expression.

Every Greek polis had its own choruses, and most of them probably had their own local choral poets too, at least for small-scale occasions; and traveling professionals like Simonides and Pindar were always available too, at a price.[30] A high proportion of the people attending a *tragoedia* in the Theater of Dionysus would surely have heard and seen (and perhaps themselves performed in) dozens, perhaps even hundreds, of previous choral songs — most of which were probably never written-down or published. The verbal and metrical-musical-choreographical conventions of public thanksgiving for rescue or victory, prayers for help in battle or in time of trouble (plague, famine, loss), aetiological celebrations of a particular hero-cult or local divinity, funeral laments, wedding-song — all of these common kinds of choral celebration were institutionalized parts of polis-life, and elements of all of these song-types show up in the surviving tragedies. In Aeschylus, "the dependence on, or imitation

[30] It is worth observing that the evidence for the existence of distinguished local Attic poets before the 5th C is very small; and at no point was 'Attic song' or 'Athenian music' accorded any recognition at all, in contrast e.g. to Spartan and Dorian, or Theban and Aeolian, modes, songs, and poets (to say nothing of Lydian, Phrygian, or Thracian ones). It looks as if the choral and musical components of Athenian tragedy (and dithyramb too, perhaps) were regarded as being more of an amalgam of imported elements than a home-grown (Attic) cultural creation; see further W. KRANZ, *op. cit.* (n. 4); A. LESKY (1972); C.J. HERINGTON, *op. cit.* (n. 1); A. BARKER (ed.), *Greek musical writings* [2 vols] (Oxford 1984, 1989); E. CSAPO, *art. cit.* (n. 2); M. GRIFFITH, *art. cit.* (n. 2).

of [*Anlehnung*] cult-ritual expressions plays an incomparably greater role than it does in [Soph. or Eur.];"[31] and even though "we know all too little about the pre-literary forms of ritual expression among the Greeks", there can be little doubt that many of the forms of expression we find in Aeschylus' plays do reflect quite closely actual cult language and structures.[32]

This is not the occasion for a full-scale discussion of whether or not 5th C. Greek tragedy was itself inherently (originally... always...?) a 'ritual' event (civic, religious, Dionysian, whatever...). The issue is interesting, but unanswerable — and not entirely relevant to my topic. What is relevant, however, and inescapable, is the fact that all of our surviving 5th century tragedies are full of choral lyric songs and celebrations that 'mimic' (reproduce) the conventions of real-life choral performance, both Athenian and non-Athenian, as well as other passages that recall other types of social ritual and commemoration that might or might not take choral form in 5th C. Athenian practice.[33]

The narratives that we find in the surviving choral lyrics of the Archaic period can often be highly dramatic, or proto-dramatic, with individual characters being given direct speeches in their 'own' voices; but of course all these passages necessarily

[31] R. HÖLZLE, *op. cit.* (n. 4), 5.

[32] *Ibid*; see too K. AUSFELD "De Graecorum precationibus quaestiones", in *Jahrb.f.kl.Phil. Supp.-Band* 28 (1903), 503-47; V. CITTI, *linguaggio religioso e liturgico... op. cit.* (n. 4); S. SREBNY, *op. cit.* (n. 8); A. BIERL, *Der Chor in der Alten Komödie* (Leipzig 2001); P.E. EASTERLING, "tragedy and ritual", in *Métis* 3 (1988), 87-109; S. PULLEYN *Prayer in Greek religion* (Oxford 1997); W. FURLEY, J.M. BREMER (eds.), *Greek Hymns* (Tübingen 2001); M. SCHAUER *Tragisches Klagen. Form und Funktion der Klagedarstellung bei Aischylos, Sophokles und Euripides* (Tübingen 2002); C. SOURVINOU-INWOOD, *Tragedy and Athenian religion* (Lanham 2003); see too A. WILLI, *The languages of Aristophanes* (Oxford 2003), 8-50.

[33] The important question, to what degree these actions and words performed in the Theater by a chorus were felt to be 'real', or merely 'mimetic', need not be addressed here: see, e.g., J. RODE, *Untersuchungen zur form des aischyleischen chorliedes*, (Tübingen 1966); P.E. EASTERLING, *art. cit.* (n. 32); E. STEHLE, "Choral prayer in Greek tragedy", in *Music and the Muses*, ed. by P. MURRAY and P.J. WILSON (Oxford 2004), 121-55, A. BIERL *op. cit.* (n. 32); A. HENRICHS, *"Warum soll ich denn tanzen?"* (Leipzig 1996).

still contain (as epic does) the explicit markers of direct speech ("So spoke x... and y spoke in reply...", etc.), and the choral voice is thus limited in the degree to which it can enter the persona of any character or make itself fully 'present' at the mythical occasion that they are presenting, however vivid and artful the narrative.[34] Yet such Aeschylean individuals as Agamemnon and Calchas at Aulis in *Ag.* are vivid reminders of how effective such choral voicing can be, and the choral lyric narratives of Stesichorus and Bacchylides already present striking scenes of a mythical character's personal pathos.[35]

It is a truism that traditional choral lyric provided the backbone, or life-blood, of (especially early) Athenian tragic style. In particular, Aeschylean poetry shares many important characteristics with the poetry of (most notably) Stesichorus and Pindar, not just in their mythic material and 'high' diction, but also aspects of syntax, compression, gnome and moralism; metaphor and imagery; etc. For Stesichorus, we have the direct testimony of an ancient commentator that the tragedians borrowed heavily from his works, and a growing body of papyrus scraps confirms the close dependency of Aeschylus on Stesichorus in several different plays.[36] As for Pindar, his is the only name that is ever advanced as a rival to Aeschylus in boldness of metaphor or imagistic complexity.[37] (We may note, incidentally, that Stesichorus and Pindar are quite unlike one another in the main features of their style: the one diffuse

[34] C.J. HERINGTON, *op. cit.* (n. 1); A.P. BURNETT, "Jocasta in the West: the Lille Stesichorus", in *CA* 7 (1988), 107-54; E. STEHLE, *art. cit.* (n. 33); C. CALAME *The craft of poetic speech in ancient Greece*, [eng. transl.] (Ithaca 1995).

[35] For example, Geryon (STESICH. *SLG* S7-15), or Teiresias and Jocasta/ Epicasta in the *Thebais* (STESICH. *PLille* 76 + 73); Meleager and Heracles in the Underworld (BACCH. 5. 136-64).

[36] STESICH. fr. 217 *PMG* = *POxy* 2506, fr. 26, col. ii. See M. NOTHIGER, *Die Sprache des Stesichorus und des Ibycus* (Zürich 1971); G.O. HUTCHINSON, *op. cit.* (n. 13); J.M. BREMER *et al.* (eds), *op. cit.* (n. 13).

[37] Notably J.H. FINLEY, *Pindar and Aeschylus* (Cambridge, Mass. 1955); see G. MATINO, *op. cit.* (n. 4).

and Homeric, the other highly concentrated and particular. 'Choral lyric' existed in many forms.)

For all these close connections and continuities from choral lyric to tragedy, the changes and developments that had been introduced by the time Aeschylus was producing his mature (surviving) plays were very significant — indeed quite radical. Not only were first one, and then two and even three speaking actors now taking over the performance space with whole episodes of iambic or trochaic dialogue between each choral song, but the choral songs themselves were now of a quite distinctively different shape and character from all other kinds of traditional choral songs that we know. At a superficial level, the dialect is now Atticized, with just a slight Doric veneer in lyric passages. More important, the choral songs of tragedy are structured, not as strings of repeated triads or metrically identical stanzas, but in constantly modified strophic pairs, often with radically different (shifting) stanzaic and metrical structures from one ode to another, and even within a single choral ode. Furthermore, the choral songs of tragedy might also often involve epirrhematic and amoebaic structures of alternating metrical forms, between lyrics and anapaests, or lyrics and iambic lines delivered by individual actors. There is nothing remotely like this in Alcman or Stesichorus or Pindar: and the modifications of mood and dynamics, and contrasts of character and perspective, that are thereby made possible make the poetry of tragedy far more flexible and variegated than pure choral lyric could ever be.[38]

[38] See esp. W. KRANZ, *op. cit.* (n. 4); W. JENS, *op. cit.* (n. 4); M. SCHAUER, *op. cit.* (n. 32); M.G. FILENI, "L'amebeo lirico-epirrematico in docmi e giambi nella tragedia greca", in *Dalla lirica corale alla poesia drammatica,* a cura di F. PERUSINO e M. COLANTONIO (Pisa 2007) and below, pp. 45-46, for some examples. To enhance further such dynamic possibilities of pathos, contrast and crescendo, the tragedians — perhaps Aeschylus himself — had also invented an important new metrical-rhythmical form, the dochmiac: see below, p. 26.

1d. Non-literary ritual speech-acts (prayer, incantation, curse, magic, etc.)

My fourth category of traditional contexts for Aeschylean poetic utterance is that of practical (non-literary, lower-key, more or less 'realistic') speech-acts, whether of a religious-ritual character, such as prayers, oaths, curses, incantations and magical spells, (i.e., overlapping with 1c above), or more secular and political requests for protection, formal expressions of thanks, commemorations, oaths of allegiance, etc. (which will begin to overlap with 1f below).[39]

Even though we tend as scholars and teachers to experience and study these tragedies as works of high literature, they were of course live dramas performed in the Theater of Dionysus, and were designed to present their audience with vivid representations of flesh-and-blood men and women engaging with one another in anger, fear, hope and affection — and engaging with the forces of heaven and of nature too, all in more or less realistic ways: making requests and pacts, giving thanks, calling down curses, lamenting, screaming, gloating, etc. In real life, of course, one would not usually compose trimeters or whole lyric stanzas, nor bring in a dozen choral by-standers to assist, whenever one wished to ask for help or say thank you: standard, conventional, day-to-day expressions were available for such purposes. Such utterances might often be quite hum-drum and brief, as we can see from reading Aristophanes, or Herondas, for example; or even the versified requests by Archilochus, Alcaeus, or Anacreon for divine assistance of one kind or another. Likewise, at a mundane, material level, numerous 5th C. Attic inscriptions in verse or prose duly record for posterity the gratitude or obligations of different kinds of participants in everyday Athenian life, both public and private.

[39] For useful discussion of the different 'registers' of religious language available in 5th C. Athens, see A. WILLI, *op. cit.* (n. 32), 8-50.

Aeschylus' plays are full of brief semi-ritualized (performative) utterances of this kind. To take a familiar example: at the beginning of *Choephoroi*, Orestes addresses the statue of Hermes outside the ancestral palace door:

> Ἑρμῆ χθόνιε, πατρῷι' ἐποπτεύων κράτη,
> σωτὴρ γενοῦ μοι σύμμαχός τ' αἰτουμένωι·

The language is highly formulaic, but simple and almost prosaic — not marked as epic or particularly elevated (apart from the poetic plural κράτη and lack of definite article); a son prays briefly and succinctly for the protection and support both of his father's spirit and of the Olympian and chthonian.[40] Similarly, *Supp.* 212-25 presents a crescendo of short prayers from the young Egyptian women to each of the statues of the gods, with powerful effect even though little distinctly poetic language is employed.[41]

More extended and somewhat more emotionally charged — though still far from the loftiest heights of Aeschylean lyric invention — is the sequence at *Supp.* 418-37, where the homely cretic rhythms, emphasized by diaeresis and accelerating in the second strophic pair into dochmiacs, underline the simplicity and vigor of this appeal to the king:

> [στρ. δ] φρόντισον καὶ γενοῦ
> πανδίκως εὐσεβὴς πρόξενος·
> τὰν φυγάδα μὴ προδῷις, *420*
> τὰν ἕκαθεν ἐκβολαῖς
> δυσθέοις ὀρομέναν...
>
> ...[ἀντ. ε] ἴσθι γάρ, παισὶ τάδε καὶ δόμοις,
> ὁπότερ' ἂν κτίσηις, μένει Ἄρει 'κτίνειν *435*
> ὁμοίαν θέμιν.
> τάδε φράσαι. δίκαια Διόθεν κράτη.

[40] See A.F. GARVIE (ed.), *Aeschylus Choephori* (Oxford 1986), *ad loc.*; also the AR. *Ra* parody with K.J. DOVER (ed.), *Aristophanes Frogs* (Oxford 1993), *ad loc.* See too A. WILLI, *op. cit.* (n. 32), 13-17, 27-37 for the language of prayers in 5th C. Attic Greek.

[41] Likewise *Ag.* 1, 20-21, 503-26; *Eum.* 85-93, etc.

Moving further up the emotional scale, we find in *Sept.* the panic-stricken chorus of Theban women accosting the statues of their local divinities and demanding protection from enemy invasion:[42]

[Χο.] θρεῦμαι φοβερὰ μεγάλ' ἄχη.
μεθεῖται στρατὸς στρατόπεδον λιπών·
ῥεῖ πολὺς ὅδε λεὼς πρόδρομος ἱππότας...· *80*
...ἰὼ ἰὼ θεοὶ θεαί τ' ὀρόμενον
κακὸν ἀλεύσατε.
ὀᾶ·
ὑπὲρ τειχέων ὁ λεύκασπις ὄρ- *90*
νυται λαὸς εὐτρεπεῖς ἐπὶ πόλιν
διώκων <πόδας>·
τίς ἄρα ῥύσεται, τίς ἄρ' ἐπαρκέσει
θεῶν ἢ θεᾶν;
πότερα δῆτ' ἐγὼ <πάτρια> ποτιπέσω *95*
βρέτη δαιμόνων;
ἰὼ...
...κτύπον δέδορκα· πάταγος οὐχ ἑνὸς δορός·
τί ῥέξεις; προδώσεις, παλαίχθων Ἄρης, τὰν τεάν; *105*
ὦ χρυσοπήληξ δαῖμον, ἔπιδ' ἔπιδε πόλιν
ἄν ποτ' εὐφιλήταν ἔθου....

...*[ἀντ. α]*
σύ τ' ὦ Διογενὲς φιλόμαχον κράτος,
ῥυσίπολις γενοῦ *129*
Παλλάς, ὅ θ' ἵππιος ποντομέδων ἄναξ *130*
ἰχθυβόλωι †μαχανᾶι Ποσειδᾶν†
ἐπίλυσιν φόβων ἐπίλυσιν δίδου·
σύ τ' Ἄρης φεῦ φεῦ πόλιν ἐπώνυμον *135*
Κάδμου φύλαξον κήδεσαί τ' ἐναργῶς·
καὶ Κύπρις, ἅτ' εἶ γένους προμάτωρ *140*

In this case, the diction is more marked and elevated,[43] and the 'ritualizing' lyric manner (mostly dochmiac meter) is more

[42] On this whole episode, and the chorus' 'chaotic' language and sonic effects, see esp. P. JUDET DE LA COMBE, "La langue de Thèbes" in *Metis* 3 (1998), 207-30; G. IERANÒ, "La musica del caos: il lessico dei suoni nei *Sette contro Tebe* di Eschilo", *Dalla lirica corale alla poesia drammatica,* a cura di F. PERUSINO e M. COLANTONIO (Pisa 2007).

[43] E.g., epic *potipesô, tean, poliaochoi*; compound adjectives *agastonoi, palaichthôn, promâtôr, chrysopêlêx, euphilêtan, panteles.*

rapid and flowing, with pervasive exclamations, repetitions, anaphora, alliteration, and polyptoton bringing heightened sonic and rhythmic impact. Indeed, the sound effects and choreography might be at least as important as the semantic content — as often is true in actual social contexts ('tone of voice', 'body language').[44] Throughout the first half of *Sept.*, the opposition between the Chorus' shrill lyric outpourings of dismay and need, and Eteocles' more measured assessments (expressed in iambic trimeters) of what is and what is not appropriate public utterance (*Sept.* 181-86, 230-32, 253-56) provides a doubled aural dimension, both gendered and spatialized. Such gendered — and sometimes also racialized (Egyptian, Persian, Anatolian)[45] — oppositions are common in Aeschylus' plays; and it is clear that whereas the conventions of sound and signification are sometimes stylized in order to produce an enhanced (more pathetic, and more sustained) emotional mood and/or contrast between interlocutors, his audience is nonetheless still being presented with what is basically a very familiar sequence of speech acts. That is to say, even though the expressions are in verse (and in some cases sung and accompanied by the aulos), the basic rhetorical tropes — and most of the vocabulary — are often not far removed from those of 'actual' Attic speech.

In general, as I noted earlier, the range of metrical and structural variation available to Aeschylus, along with the possibilities for distributing and alternating speech and singing between two or even three voices, allows for a much more multi-layered

[44] W. KRANZ, *op. cit.* (n. 4); R. HÖLZLE, *op. cit.* (n. 4); J. RODE, *op. cit.* (n. 33); T.G. ROSENMEYER, *The art of Aeschylus* (Berkeley 1982); E. MEDDA, "Su alcune associazioni del docmio con altri metri in tragedia", in *Stud.Class.Or.* 43 (1993), 101-234; V. CITTI, *Eschilo e la lexis…*, *op. cit.* (n. 4); also D. FEHLING, *op. cit.* (n. 8); B. GYGLI-WYSS, *op. cit.* (n. 8); M. SCHAUER, *op. cit.* (n. 32).

[45] W. KRANZ, *op. cit.* (n. 4); H. FRIIS JOHANSEN and E.W. WHITTLE (eds.), *Aeschylus. The Suppliants* (Copenhagen 1980); E. HALL (ed.), *Aeschylus Persians* (Warminster 1995); ID., *Inventing the Barbarian* (Oxford 1989); F.I. ZEITLIN *Playing the Other* (Chicago 1996), 123-71, 341-73.

expressive texture within a single scene than could be produced by Homeric hexameters or Stesichorean lyrics alone. Within a sequence of scenes, too, we may be presented with different poetic registers that contrast with one another and shed different light on the same scenario: for example (in *Ag.*), first a down-to-earth watchman, then a garrulous herald, then their self-confident king, and finally their hypocritical queen all express "thanks to the gods for the fall of Troy and end of the war" in their respective styles and with differing degrees of formality; likewise (in *Pers.*) we hear first Darius' and Atossa's iambic expressions of dismay over the loss of their ships, men, and imperial prestige, and then the sustained lyric laments of Xerxes and the chorus that bring the play to a close.

We might compare too the very different ways in which Aeschylus can handle the basic 'type-scene' of a ritualized appeal for help at the tomb of a recently-deceased king, even within the same play (*Cho.* 1-9, 306-529), underlining just how versatile and evocative of different moods Aeschylean poetry can be. The one passage is plain and unadorned, with no shrieking, no singing, almost no poetically marked expressions; altogether quite close to everyday language. By contrast, later in the same play the two young Argives are drawn into participating with the Asian slave-women in an invocation-ritual over Agamemnon's tomb, with elaborate antiphonal, repetitive, onomatopoeic, and popyptotal effects combined to extremely exotic effect — a far cry from the civic norms and sanctioned choral behaviors of actual (non-theatrical) Athenian custom. As with the shorter but equally colorful scene in *Pers.* (625-83), Aeschylus' chorus of costumed young men thus provided an exciting imitation of the forbidden spectacle and emotive sounds of wailing foreigners.[46]

[46] From Aristophanes (*Ra.* 1029) we can deduce that the audience enjoyed the Persian chorus's hand-clapping and cries of ἰαυοῖ: exoticism in the Theater is usually appreciated more than it is in 'real life'. See further G. HOLST-WARHAFT, *Dangerous voices* (New York 1992); M. GRIFFITH, "The King and Eye: The rule of the father in Greek tragedy", in *PCPhS* 44 (1998), 36-43, 48-57.

We have entered now into the region of magic and curses. However we choose to define 'magic' (as distinct from, e.g., 'religion' or 'ritual'),[47] Aeschylus' plays contain several scenes that are tinged with what by any definition must be regarded as popular 'magical' behaviors. The most obvious and best-known, doubtless, is the Furies' Binding Song (*Eum.* 307-96). Here, after a careful and explicit iambic introduction (305-6), the rhythm of the refrain is particularly incantational and folksy (328-32 repeated paeonics, with striking coincidence of word-shape and colon: ⏑⏑ ⏑–); and the diction is concrete, deictic, self-referential and performative ("this melody… a binding song of the wits from the Erinyes"):[48]

[Χο.] καὶ ζῶν με δαίσεις οὐδὲ πρὸς βωμῶι σφαγείς· *305*
ὕμνον δ' ἀκούσηι τόνδε δέσμιον σέθεν.

ἄγε δὴ καὶ χορὸν ἅψωμεν, ἐπεὶ μοῦσαν στυγερὰν
ἀποφαίνεσθαι δεδόκηκεν…

…*[ἐφυμν. α]*
ἐπὶ δὲ τῶι τεθυμένωι
τόδε μέλος, παρακοπά,
παραφορὰ φρενοδαλής, *330*
ὕμνος ἐξ 'Ερινύων
δέσμιος φρενῶν, ἀφόρ-
μικτος, αὐονὰ βροτοῖς.

[47] 'Magical' speech acts that aim at providing help or harm by invoking and manipulating natural or supernatural forces, or by 'binding' and gaining control over other human beings, cannot generally be distinguished neatly or consistently from other 'religious' speech-acts, such as prayers, oaths, sacraments, etc. See in general, J.G. GAGER, *Curse tablets and binding spells from the Ancient World* (Oxford 1992); C. FARAONE, "Aeschylus *Eum.* 306 and Attic judicial curse tablets", in *JHS* 105 (1985), 150-54; R. PARKER, "Greek states and Greek oracles", in *Crux. Essays presented to G.E.M. de Ste Croix*, ed. by P.A. CARTLEDGE and F.D. HARVEY (London 1985); M. DICKIE, *Magic and magicians in the Greco-Roman world* (London 2001); D. OGDEN, *Greek and Roman necromancy* (Princeton 2001).

[48] U. VON WILAMOWITZ-MOELLENDORFF, *Griechische Verskunst* (Berlin 1921); C. FARAONE, *art. cit.* (n. 47); A.H. SOMMERSTEIN (ed.), *Aeschylus Eumenides* (Cambridge 1989); Y. PRINS, "The power of the speech act: Aeschylus' furies and their binding song", in *Arethusa* 24 (1991), 177-195; G. GALVANI, *Escilo Eumenidi. Interpretazione metrico-ritmica delle sezioni liriche* [Ph.D. Diss.] (Urbino 2005).

Somewhat less crude and explicit in its binding-effect, yet hardly less incantational in its rhythms — and in the end more successful! — is the interaction of the chorus of *Suppliants* with King Pelasgus as he "plunges deep into thought" and tries to make his fateful decision (*Supp.* 407-38: esp. 407-9, 417, 418-38). Here again, the cretic-paeonic rhythms, staccato phrases, and simple language seem to be based on popular and sub-literary (quasi-magical) models of persuasion (418-37); but in this case the shift into dochmiacs in the second strophic pair sympathetically begins to propel the king towards action, rather than into the inertia and mental paralysis imposed on Orestes by the Furies in their song.[49]

Nowhere in Sophocles or Euripides, to be sure, do we find anything like these incantational stanzas from *Supp.* and *Eum.* —it seems that later tragedy moved away from such direct representations of popular magical practices.[50] And in general, it does appear that the texture of Aeschylean poetry is in many respects thicker, coarser, and more varied/colorful than that of his successors.[51] As for Aeschylean music and choreography: ancient testimony assures us that his choreographical innovations (like those of his contemporary, Phrynichus) were significant and influential. But we know no details as to how popular or refined, how local or cosmopolitan or exotic, his

[49] Then, to make quite sure of their ritual-rhetorical victory over their potential protector, the chorus immediately proceeds to bind him more securely to their side with the riddling threat of suicide by hanging (455-67). On the metrical aspects, see E. MEDDA, *art. cit.* (n. 44).

[50] Or in Euripides' case, the most 'realistic' and emotive types of lyric expression were increasingly given to solo actors. See esp. AR. *Ra.*, and E. CSAPO, *art. cit.* (n. 2); further W. KRANZ, *op. cit.* (n. 4); E. HALL, "Actor's song in tragedy", in S. GOLDHILL and R. OSBORNE (eds.) Performance culture and Athenian democracy (Cambridge 1999), 96-122.

[51] The related question, how much genuinely (or fictionally) 'foreign' language, titles, and exotic sound-effects Aeschylus introduced into his plays (esp. *Pers.* and *Supp.*), is still not well-resolved by scholars: see e.g. J.W. HEADLAM, "Ghost-raising, magic and the underworld", in *CR* 16 (1902), 52-61; W. KRANZ, *op. cit.* (n. 4); H.D. BROADHEAD (ed.), *The Persae of Aeschylus* (Cambridge 1960); E. HALL *op. cit.* (n. 45), 38-39; *cf.* A. WILLI, *op. cit.* (n. 32), 198-225.

melodies, rhythms and dance-steps may have seemed to his original audience.[52]

One particularly important metrical feature can be identified, however, which we may identify as being, not just unique to Athenian drama, but possibly the particular invention of Aeschylus: the dochmiac meter.[53] There is (most metricians agree) no clearly identifiable usage of dochmiac in surviving choral lyric outside drama; and it seems that this is one — very illuminating — area in which we can see the early Athenian dramatists developing a new metrical element specifically in order to generate more fluid and emotionally dynamic lyric progressions: specifically, dochmiacs are especially suited to both the blending of cretic-iambic utterances with other lyric forms, and also the incorporation of multiple short syllables and excited (fast, resolved) rhythms into a somewhat 'realistic' rhetorical structure. As we saw earlier, in our brief examinations of the first choral song of *Sept.* and parts of *Supp.*, dochmiacs tend to be both the most emotionally-charged of all Greek dramatic meters and also the most flexible and versatile.

1e. Science, medicine, ethnography — and other 'presocratic' discourses

This is a fascinating category to investigate and to speculate about, though it may often involve discussion more of Aeschylus' ideas and world-view than of his actual poetic language. Whether or not we choose to distinguish sharply between 'Presocratic' thought on the one hand (embracing

[52] *TrGF 3*, T 103. For the background to Aeschylus' music, and speculation about the different rhythmic-melodic-regional components of his lyrics, see W. KRANZ, *op. cit.* (n. 4); A. BARKER, *op. cit.* (n. 30); M.L. WEST, *Ancient Greek music* (Oxford 1992); also W.C. SCOTT, *op. cit.* (n. 4). For musical imagery in his plays, J.A. HALDANE, "Musical themes and imagery in Aeschylus", in *JHS* 85 (1965), 33-41; E. PETROUNIAS, *op. cit.* (n. 4).

[53] See above, n. 38; further A.M. DALE, *The lyric metres of Greek drama.* (Cambridge ^{2}1968), E. MEDDA, *art. cit.* (n. 44); M.G. FILENI, *art. cit.* (n. 38).

Ionian science, cosmology, and eschatology) and 'sophistic' ideas and practices on the other (beginning with Protagoras and Gorgias and their teaching of *politikê technê* and rhetoric), it is clear that Athens between ca. 520 and 450 was increasingly exposed to a broad range of new ideas, techniques, and social practices, several of which posed radical challenges to traditional Greek beliefs and institutions.[54]

Aeschylus' surviving works show clearly the impact of such ideas — not only in occasional phrases or concepts that may be directly traceable to this or that Presocratic or medical author[55], but also more pervasively in the tendency of his language to represent the constitution and behavior of the whole natural world — including human beings — as a single interconnected and materially encountered cosmos.[56] For Aeschylus, as for Anaximander, Empedocles or the Hippocratics, the processes of violent dissolution or harmonious co-existence, of growth and decay, contagion and healing (among plants and animals, rivers, seas, winds, and mountains — and among gods and

[54] Most of these new ideas and techniques seem to have come from outside Athens; several probably originated, more or less directly, from more or less distant parts of the Persian Empire by way of Greek communities and contacts in Anatolia, the Aegean islands, or Thrace. Others probably developed in South Italy and Sicily, where Aeschylus himself made several prolonged visits; see A. DUNCAN, "Aeschylus at the courts of tyrants", in *Why Athens*? ed. by D. CARTER (Oxford forthcoming) with further references.

[55] See A. TRAGLIA, *Studi sulla lingua di Empedocle* (Bari 1951); B. GLADIGOW, "Aischylos und Heraklit", in *AGPh* 44 (1962), 225-39; W. RÖSLER, *Reflexe vorsokratischen Denkens bei Aischylos* (Meisenheim 1970); R. PARKER *Miasma* (Oxford 1983), W.G. THALMANN, "Aeschylus' physiology of the emotions", in *AJP* 107 (1986), 489-511; S.D. SULLIVAN, *Aeschylus' use of psychological terminology* (Montréal 1997); also J. DUMORTIER, *Le vocabulaire médical d'Eschyle et les écrits Hippocratiques* (Paris 1935); J. JOUANNA, "Médecine hippocratique et tragédie grecque", in *Anthropologie et théâtre antique* CGITA 3 (1987), 109-31; A. GUARDASOLE, *Tragedia e medicina nell'Atene del V secolo a.c.* (Napoli 2000).

[56] The word *kosmos* itself is not so used by Aeschylus; but numerous words denoting "completion, finality, totality" are found (esp. *telos* and *pan*-terms), along with words for "nature, growth, breeding" (*phusis, ktl.)*; see U. FISCHER, *Der Telosgedanke in den Dramen des Aischylos* (Hildesheim 1965); W. KIEFNER *Der religiöse Allbegriff des Aischylos* (Hildesheim 1965); S. GOLDHILL, "Two notes on *telos* and related words in the *Oresteia*", in *JHS* 104 (1984), 169-76.

humans too), seem to comprise an enormously extensive yet closely interactive and interconnected system. Body-and-mind are likewise viewed as a single complex yet integrated organism functioning, and sometimes dysfunctioning, through wet-and-dry, windy-and-still, hot-and-cold reactions and interactions of/among/within the *splanchna, phrenes, kardia, prapides, pneuma, stagones, haima, thumos, nous*.[57] This psychosomatically integrated human organism is presented as being both an independent little world of its own and yet also a vulnerable and often-victimized component, or symptom, of the larger, all-encompassing external world.

To a degree that we never encounter in Homer or Hesiod, nor in Stesichorus, Pindar or Bacchylides, (nor even later, in Sophocles or Euripides, or Herodotus for that matter), Aeschylus' world-view and his way of representing human motivation and psychology seem to share and to have absorbed the assumptions and habits of mind that we find in late-6th and early-5th C. theorists and scientists. As Ruth Padel has put it:[58]

> "Early theorizing about the world, and human relations with it, works with the same pattern of imagery as the poets, at a time when imagery is not a vehicle of explanation but embodies it. Emotional and intellectual events are not merely describable in the same terms as physical movement: they 'are' physical movement". —Or to phrase this another way — "[For them] perceiving or feeling (*aisthanesthai*) and thinking (*noein*) are both the same, both 'somatic'".[59]

All of this means, of course, if we are students of Aeschylus' poetry, that we have to lay aside to some degree our notions of 'imagery' and 'metaphor', and some of our distinctions between 'mental' and 'physical' processes as well, in trying to come to

[57] J. ONIANS, *The origins of European thought* (Cambridge 1951), W.G. THALMANN, *art. cit.* (n. 55); S.D. SULLIVAN, *op. cit.* (n. 55); R. PADEL, *In and out of the mind. Greek images of the tragic self* (Princeton 1992).

[58] *Ibid.*,44.

[59] *Ibid.*, following ARIST. *De An.* 3. 427a 21 = H. DIELS and W. KRANZ (hrsg.), *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* [=*DK*] (Berlin ^{6}1952) EMP. B 106.

terms with his expressions and world-view. There have been numerous — often very useful — studies of Aeschylus' "metaphors for intellectual activity" (D. Sansone), his "use of psychological terminology" (S.D. Sullivan), his "physiology of the emotions" (W.G. Thalmann), and various aspects of his medical, botanical, zoological, and sacrificial imagery.[60] But in reading and figuring Aeschylus' peculiarly synaesthetic/expressive psycho-physiology, it is often impossible to maintain the usual terminological and rhetorical distinctions between words, concepts, material things, and physical processes. "Metaphor" and "imagery" do not always suffice as terms to describe Aeschylean language at work.

There is not space here to survey all the Presocratic authors and texts that have been thought to underlie Aeschylean poetics — whether he derived his ideas directly from these texts or simply shared a common world-view and resultant habits of describing that world.[61] Such cosmic theories as Anaximander's ongoing process of "paying-back" for "injustice" (*DK* fr. 1) and Xenophanes' single, non-material, omniscient, transcendent divinity (*DK* frs 19-22) seem obviously akin, on the one hand, to the Aeschylean notion that "the doer suffers" and on the other to such speculations about Zeus's power as Aesch. *Supp.* 86-103, 823-24, and *Ag.* 160-66, 176-83, 1485-87. Above all, we might single out Empedocles, Aeschylus' Sicilian contemporary (or almost so), as most closely resembling the tragedian in his ideas and expressions.[62] For example, Empedocles' frs 105-109 put us strongly in mind of the numerous passages in

[60] D. Sansone, *Aeschylean metaphors for intellectual activity* (Stuttgart 1975); S.D. Sullivan, *op. cit.* (n. 55); W.G. Thalmann, *art. cit.* (n. 55); J. Dumortier, *op. cit.* (n. 55); F.I. Zeitlin, "The motif of the corrupted sacrifice in Aeschylus' *Oresteia*", in *TAPA* 96 (1965), 463-508; B.H. Fowler, "Aeschylus' imagery", in *C&M* 15 (1967), 1-59; E. Petrounias, *op. cit.* (n. 4).

[61] See n. 54 above.

[62] A. Traglia, *op. cit.* (n. 55); C.J. Herington, *op. cit.* (n. 1). Empedocles' precise dates continue to be debated: it is possible that Aeschylus's poetry may have influenced Empedocles, rather than vice versa; or the influence may have been mutual.

which Aeschylean characters speak or sing how "the memory of pain drips in front of the heart" (*Ag.* 179), "the yellow drop ran to my heart [*sc.* in fear]" (1121, etc.).

Whether Empedocles' surviving fragments come from one great poem, or two, his *Nature* (*Peri Physeôs*) and his *Purifications* (*Katharmoi*) must have been quite closely integrated; so the exiled or blessed *daimones*, polluted by bloodshed and Strife or liberated by Love respectively, belong to the same moral-material world as the four elemental 'roots' of all things, hot, cold, wet and dry — a world that seems in turn to be closely related to that of the Greek medical practitioners and theorists of the 5th C., some of whom we associate traditionally with the name of Hippocrates. Both Empedocles and Aeschylus obviously shared a familiarity with an extensive, and growing, body of ideas, sayings, and practices concerning the human body, its constituents, the causes of its ailments, and the best ways to enhance its health. Written prose treatises on these topics of the kind we find (written in Ionic dialect) transmitted in the Hippocratic Corpus may not yet have been available in the first half of the fifth century. More likely, perhaps, the prevailing medium of dissemination of medical ideas at this period was word-of-mouth (including pithy and well-known remarks akin to the surviving *Aphorisms*).[63] Scholars have documented convincingly the close resemblances between Aeschylus' vocabulary and the terminology of the Hippocratics for the parts of the human body, as well as the terms for describing the effects of diseases, wounds and fevers, and similarities in the processes and techniques for treating and curing them.[64] And of course

[63] J. Jouanna suggests, however, that already in the early 5th C. written technical texts, now lost, may have existed, preceding those that we now possess as *the Corpus Hippocraticum.*

[64] J. Dumortier, *op. cit.* (n. 55); J. Jouanna et P. Demont, "Le sens d'ichor", in *REA* 83 (1981), 197-209; J. Jouanna, *art. cit.* (n. 55); A. Guardasole, *op. cit.* (n. 55). See too on *Cho.* 183-84, A.F. Garvie, *op. cit.* (n. 40) *ad loc.* We can probably assume too that Aeschylus was himself talking and listening to actual doctors (and midwives, and herbalists, and Eleusinian priests, and incantation-specialists too), since their activities and social status did not keep them by any

Apollo's notorious paternity argument (*Eum.* 657-66), while it does not correspond to any particular Hippocratic text that we have, looks as if it reproduces current scientific theory from one 'school' or another.[65]

The resulting views of 'human nature' that we find in Aeschylus' plays may well have been fairly typical of a well-educated, much-traveled, inquisitive Greek of the early 5th C. Scholars have often described Aeschylus' notions of causation, the gods, moral responsibility, etc. as being primitive, or naive, or confused, because they show relatively little interest in the mind-body distinction, individual moral responsibility, or indeed the logical consistency that we associate with Socrates, Plato, and their Western philosophical successors. But in several respects, his views may be said to conform quite well to habits of thought encountered in our own society, with super-natural ('divine') explanations and causes co-existing quite comfortably with material-corporeal and mental-moral accounts, without apparent contradiction.

Thus in Aeschylus, guilt-ridden characters (or whole families) are diagnosed as suffering from hallucinations, dry or rolling or bloodshot eyes, dripping or furry or purulent sores, yellow complexions or wasting-sicknesses, even as their conditions (including death) are also ascribed to the contagion of kin-murder, to a mother's or husband's or daughter's curse, to the guilty consciousness of having committed an atrocious crime, or to the activity of a *daimôn,* or Erinys, or (one or more of) the Olympian gods. All of these are presented as believable and disturbing causes that need to be taken seriously; and we can find all these types of causes of disease attested likewise in the various medical texts and practices of the fifth century — while recognizing that "medical" arts existed in several rather

means segregated from non-specialists. Empedocles for his part was apparently touring through different communities bringing his own incantations and cures with him; *cf.* A. WILLI, *op. cit.* (n. 32), 79-87, with reference mainly to later 5th C. Athens.

[65] Maybe Alcmaeon; *cf.* A.H. SOMMERSTEIN, *op. cit.* (n. 48) *ad loc.*

different, and sometimes incompatible, forms, including not only the authors of Hippocratic treatises, but also various kinds of *iatromanteis* and incantation-specialists, itinerant oracle-mongers and purifiers, and (at least by the late fifth century) healing sanctuaries of Asclepius or Apollo. Thus, even as Hippocratic writers may insist (e.g., *On the Sacred Disease*) that gods do not cause illnesses in normal people, and accordingly may argue — quite cogently — for purely physical explanations of diseases and cures (e.g., epilepsy as caused by a phlegmatic condition of the brain; curable with appropriately warm, dry diet and treatments), many medical specialists of this period assume that incantations and amulets can indeed help against certain kinds of affliction, and/or that the sick should make prayers and offerings to the gods and behave piously in order to remain healthy. In particular, the huge, well-attended and much-inscribed sanctuaries of Asclepius (e.g., at Epidaurus, Pergamum, and elsewhere) speak eloquently of medical, magical and religious expertise and energy all being combined to bring about cures.[66]

So it is too (*mutatis mutandis*) with Aeschylus' suffering, guilty characters too. Only if the whole organism (*polis, oikos, kosmos*, or individual person) is healthy and governed by good sense, piety, and *eunomia,* can it flourish, be good, and be happy, as at the end of *Eum.* 938-47, with all the blessings and blights that are mentioned, in terms of "wind... heat... disease... etc.", in conjunction with Athena's blessings and the just outcome of the jury trial.[67]

[66] The patient must sleep in a particular (sacred) place; must make prescribed payments and food-offerings to the snake and priests; must dream properly; and must carry out the instructions and treatments prescribed by the dream-experience (perhaps interpreted or assisted by interventions from priest-doctors). Finally, the cured person must make a suitable thank-offering (dedication, inscription), or else the cure may go bad and the disease may return. For "the art of medicine" to work properly, then, all of these energies — geography, climate, prayer, sympathetic magic, medical diagnosis and treatment, a good mental attitude, and luck — need to be properly harnessed.

[67] Likewise, at *Eum.* 992-95 both "land" and "city" are to receive "profit" from the pervasive "good-will" of the *Semnai* and the citizens of Athens (and we may contrast the opposite at *Pers.* 814-22; *cf. Ag.* 761-62, 763-71).

As a pair of particularly vivid and representative examples of Aeschylus' poetic integration of physical/medical processes with moral ones, and of climatic/meteorological/botanical symptoms of social order and disorder with psychological ones, I conclude this section with two Aeschylean passages in which an individual is described as experiencing a personal and political crisis:

(i) *Sept.* 686-711. Here Eteocles, in epirrhematic dialogue with the Chorus, is 'diagnosing' the past and present reasons, and immediate prognosis, of his desperate malaise, even as he prepares to go out and fight his brother. The forces that drive him on are variously characterized as his own "madness" (686 τί μέμονας); as a "heart-filling delusion" <sc. sent from the gods?> (686-87 θυμοπλήθης ...ἄτα; *cf.* 689 θεός, 691 Φοίβου, 700 Ἐρινύς, 701 θεοί, 705 δαίμων); as "desire, passion" <presumably his own> (688 ἔρωτος, 692 ἵμερος); as a "breeze" or "tidal wave" or "river" or "changing wind" of evils (690-91 ἴτω κατ' οὖρον, κῦμα Κωκυτοῦ..., 706 τροπαῖαι, 708 πνεύματι); as a "boiling <sc. fever?>" (708 ζεῖ, 709 ἐξέζεσεν); as a "father's curse, sitting with dry, unweeping eyes..." (695-96, *cf.* 700 Ἐρινύς, 705 δαίμων, 709 κατεύγματα); even as a symptom of divine 'neglect' (702 παρημελήμεθα).[68]

(ii) Again, at *Ag.* 218-24 the Chorus describe the process whereby παρακοπὰ (itself a recognized Hippocratic term for "mental derangement"[69] impels Agamemnon, who was previously torn by indecision in the face of his two "heavy" alternatives (206-17), to the point of becoming "emboldened to be the sacrificer of [his own] daughter" (225). The psychological-meteorological-medical process whereby this "change" occurred in him so that he entered that abnormal state is captured in an

[68] See further W.G. THALMANN, *Dramatic art in Aeschylus' Seven against Thebes* (New Haven 1978); A.A. LONG, "Pro and contra fratricide: Aeschylus, *Septem* 653-719", in *Studies in Honour of T.B.L. Webster*, ed. by J. BETTS and J.T. HOOKER (Bristol 1986), 179-89.

[69] So e.g. HP. *Epid.* 3.3.17.5; *cf.* J. DUMORTIER, *op. cit.* (n. 55), 45-46.

untranslatable and syntactically imprecise phrase (221 τὸ παντότολμον φρονεῖν μετέγνω); but the following generalizing phrases seem to indicate that such a process is not entirely uncommon or unfamiliar (222 βροτοὺς θρασύνει γὰρ ... gnomic; 224 δ' οὖν = the expected consequence); and the preceding reference to Agamemnon's "impious breathing" and "change of wind-direction" (219 φρενὸς πνέων δυσσεβῆ τροπαίαν), coming as it does in the middle of the lengthy account of the "windlessness" and/or countervailing "winds" at Aulis (147 ἀντιπνόους ἀπλοίας, 192 πνοαὶ, 199 χείματος, 214 παυσανέμου; also 187 συμπνέων, of Agamemnon), again combines weather, divine influence, and human physiology in a compellingly over-determined pathology of human recklessness and historical inevitability.[70]

1f. Law, politics, and the rhetoric of civic life

This section will be brief: but I want to be sure not to ignore the obvious (and in recent years, much discussed) point that Aeschylean drama came to its peak during exactly the period in which the institutions and procedures of the Athenian democracy were being formulated and refined. In fact Greek 'political' life in general — not only in Athens, but in all the major cities (several of them still governed as oligarchies or even as monarchies)[71] — required much collective deliberation, legislation, issuing of decrees, commemorations, arguments, claims and counter-claims, all involving more or less public verbal debates that were heard and assessed by 'audiences' of many different kinds.

Aeschylean tragedy is full of such rhetorical-political occasions, often combining old-style monarchical or aristocratic with new-style democratic procedure. Thus in *Ag.*, a returning

[70] See too *Cho.* 183-87, with A.F. GARVIE, *op. cit.* (n. 40) *ad loc.*

[71] For productions of Greek (and especially Aeschylus') tragedies outside Athens, including the courts of kings and tyrants, see A. DUNCAN, *art. cit.* (n. 54).

general/king states his achievements and announces his priorities for resuming administrative powers, and is greeted by the various official representatives of the city (including his wife); in *Cho.*, a stranger arrives in town and is formally announced and 'received' at the monarch's palace (in fifth century Athens it would probably be at the *bouleutêrion*); in *Supp.* and *Eum.*, exiles arrive/return seeking protection as suppliants at a public altar; in *Prom.*, rival factional groups claim their opposing shares of legitimacy and authority after a political coup.

Particularly memorable and often-cited as instances of contemporary Athenian politics translated onto the Aeschylean stage, are two scenes that serve as virtual charters of the new democracy: (i) the references in *Supp.* to the "votes of the people" (600-01 δήμου ... ψηφίσματα), and the "authoritative hand of the *dêmos*" (604 δήμου κρατοῦσα χείρ), which are so surprising to the Egyptian visitors in Argos;[72] (ii) and in *Eum.* the process of the founding of the Areopagus Court and its first homicide trial.[73] But we could point to scores of additional contexts in which Aeschylean characters speak and act in ways that resonate, more or less closely, with actual contemporary political situations. Indeed the whole physical lay-out of the Theater itself resembles a council-chamber, and the formal structures of actor-actor 'episodes' and *agôn*-scenes lend themselves irresistibly to extensive use of legal and political language.

[72] M. OSTWALD, *From popular sovereignty to the sovereignty of law* (Berkeley 1986).

[73] A.J. PODLECKI, *The political background of Aeschylean tragedy* (Ann Arbor 1966); M. GAGARIN, *Aeschylean drama* (Berkeley 1976); C. MEIER, *Die politische Kunst der griechischen Tragödie* (München 1988); A.H. SOMMERSTEIN, *op. cit.* (n. 48), etc.; see also the contribution of P. Judet de La Combe in this volume. On the *agôn* in tragedy, J. DUCHEMIN, *op. cit.* (n. 17); W. JENS, *op. cit.* (n. 4); M. LLOYD, *op. cit.* (n. 17); on legal/political procedures and language, esp. in Aeschylus, B. DAUBE, *Zu den Rechtsproblemen in Aischylos' Agamemnon* (Zürich 1939); D. KAUFMANN-BÜHLER, *Begriff und Funktion der Dike in Aischylos* (Bonn 1955); E. PETROUNIAS, *op. cit.* (n. 4); J.P. VERNANT, *op. cit.* (n. 16); S. GOLDHILL and R. OSBORNE (eds.), *Performance culture and Athenian democracy* (Cambridge 1999); see too A. WILLI, *op. cit.* (n. 32), 72-79.

I offer here just one example, less obvious than those mentioned above, but I think nonetheless emblematic, of an Aeschylean scene that seems designed to remind the audience, however fantastically, of the highly-charged expectations and challenges faced by every prominent politician, especially in Athens, when he had to present his achievements in public and to claim for them the proper commemorative and symbolic value. For it was important to claim credit — but important too to ensure that this claim was not excessively boastful, selfish, or irreverent. As one (rare, surviving, well-attested) example of a properly-executed monumental claim from this period, we may point to the Acropolis dedication of ca. 506 BCE (*IG* I^3. 501 [I^2. 394, ML #15]; *cf.* Hdt 5.77), in which the Athenians celebrated their defeat and capture of a force of invading Boeotians and Euboeans (who had assisted King Cleomenes in attempting to overthrow the new democracy) by placing the chains of the captured prisoners, and also a large bronze and marble statue-group of a four-horse chariot, close to the Propylaia, with an inscription dedicating them all to Athena:[74]

δεσμῷ ἐν ἀχνύεντι σιδηρέῳ ἔσβεσαν ὕβριν·
παῖδες Ἀθηναίων ἔργμασιν ἐν πολέμου .
ἔθνεα Βοιωτῶν καὶ Χαλκιδέων δαμάσαντες
τῶν ἵππους δεκάτην Παλλάδι τάσδ' ἔθεσαν.

The inscription, in pointing to the "iron fetters" with which the Athenians "quenched the arrogance" (ἔσβεσαν ὕβριν) of the invaders, and also to the bronze statue of "these horses" which passers-by for years to come will gaze at in approval of the Athenians' successful act of "taming" (δαμάσαντες) their foes, proudly affirms the piety, military valor, and civilizing spirit of the "sons of the Athenians", as against the outrageous impropriety of their enemies. But no individual Athenian claims credit for himself on this monument.

[74] Discussion in R. Meiggs and D. Lewis (eds.), *A selection of Greek historical inscriptions: to the end of the fifth century B.C.* [rev. ed.] (Oxford 1989) [= ML], 28-29.

This, along with numerous other public monuments, provides some background (*mutatis mutandis*) to Orestes's proud speech at *Cho.* 972ff, where the "passers-by" (980 ἐπήκοοι: i.e., not only the Chorus of slave-women but the citizens of Argos — and to some degree the Theater audience too)[75] are being presented with an unforgettable tableau: in front of the palace door, a pair of assassinated "tyrants" and "co-conspirators" (973 διπλῆν τυραννίδα, 977 ὅρκός, 978 ξυνώμοσαν, 979 εὐόρκως, along with the "chains... net... fetters" that they themselves had previously used in their "acts of impiety" (981-84; 986). With this tableau and this speech, Orestes is summoning "witnesses" (985-89) to testify to the justice and piety of his deed — and these witnesses include "all-seeing father Helios" as well as (implicitly) the spirit of his own father (984-86; *cf.* 1-2).

Many *coups d'état*, victories over invaders, and acts of liberation were commemorated in Athens: above all, of course, the great deed of the devoted pair of aristocratic 'tyrant-slayers' Harmodius and Aristogeiton, whose iconography seems often to have been merged with that of Orestes and Pylades.[76] And the rhetoric and iconography of such commemoration were closely scrutinized and hotly contested. Elsewhere in Greece (especially Delphi), conspicuous, inscribed monuments laid claim to the achievements of this or that individual or city; and the shockingly self-aggrandizing example of Pausanias was widely remembered (Thuc. 1.135).[77] Aeschylus' theater audience must have enjoyed gauging — and contrasting — the

[75] There seems no good reason not also to recognize "the world at large" as part of this "audience": see GARVIE's note *ad loc.*

[76] On the relationship of Pylades and Orestes, and the importance of "sworn companionships" (*sunômosiai*, *hetaireiai* — and also of *xenia*-relations) in the *Oresteia*, see M. GRIFFITH, "Brilliant dynasts: Power and politics in the *Oresteia*", in *CA* 14 (1995), 68-72, 87-96; also A.F. GARVIE, "The opening of the *Choephori*", in *BICS* 17 (1970), 79-91.

[77] καὶ ὅτι ἐπὶ τὸν τρίποδά ποτε τὸν ἐν Δελφοῖς, ὃν ἀνέθεσαν οἱ Ἕλληνες ἀπὸ τῶν Μήδων ἀκροθίνιον, ἠξίωσεν ἐπιγράψασθαι αὐτὸς ἰδίᾳ τὸ ἐλεγεῖον τόδε·

Ἑλλήνων ἀρχηγὸς ἐπεὶ στρατὸν ὤλεσε Μήδων,
Παυσανίας Φοίβῳ μνῆμ' ἀνέθηκε τόδε.

level and style of self-congratulation displayed, first, by Agamemnon (*Ag.* 810-54), then by Clytemnestra (*Ag.* 1372-98), and now by Orestes (*Cho.* 973ff), in comparison to the behavior, public declarations, and dedications of such distinguished figures of recent experience as Aristides, Themistocles, Miltiades, Cimon, — and Pausanias; or, from earlier generations, the various Peisistratids and Alcmeonids. Thus Orestes' rhetoric, like his visual self-presentation side by side with his fellow-tyrannicide Pylades, will have made its political impact, even in its metrically enhanced, poeticized idiom.

Part 2.
The indeterminacy factor in aeschylean poetics

Who speaks Aeschylus' poetry? What/whose authority guarantees the meaning of an utterance and the validity of its interpretation? Whose knowledge and intentions lie behind, and are expressed within, the words that emerge from the chorus' or actors' mouths and now lie on our *OCT* (Budé, Teubner) page, and who are the 'hearers' (audience, readers) that are expected (intended) to receive, decipher, understand and respond to these words? Of course, the answer is that there are many voices, and many listeners (and readers): not just in the true, and obvious sense that the reception and interpretation of any literary text, and habits of interpreting texts in general, necessarily keep changing with time and cultural context, but also more specifically, in Aeschylus' case — unlike (e.g.) the situation with Homeric recitation or Stesichorean or Pindaric choral celebration, or the real-life utterances of fifth century. Athenian statesmen and cult-worshippers — it is vital not to lose sight of the fact that the speakers and singers in the Theater are not supposed to represent the poet himself, nor even to address (in the first place) the assembled (external, seated) audience of citizens and fellow-celebrants. Instead, these 'speakers' are masked actors and chorus-members impersonating characters

from other places and contexts long ago, in communication with their (imagined) contemporaries and associates. As a result, every single utterance on the Aeschylean stage acquires at least one extra dimension of 'meaning': i.e., the meaning of an utterance will constitute both what the speaking character or chorus means to communicate to those listening nearby (on-stage; or interested gods, etc.), and also what the poet Aeschylus wants to communicate to his audience sitting in the theater. Often, too, we (as theater audience and readers) can trace and respond to further layers of meaning and reference as well, adding to the complexity and significance of each utterance through ambiguities, double-meanings, half-truths, ironies, intended and unintended resonances, etc. That is how drama works; and Aeschylean drama is exceptionally multivocal in its techniques — especially the choral utterances.[78] In this concluding section, I will consider a few examples taken entirely from one play, *Agamemnon*, focusing on the ways in which Aeschylean poetry conveys its indeterminate and many-layered meanings to its multiple (actual, and imagined) hearers through the simultaneous articulation of these different 'voices' and intentions.

Where better to begin than with the opening stanzas of the longest and most famous of all Aeschylean choral lyrics, the parodos (*Ag.* 105ff)?

[78] For valuable discussion and clarification of the various voices and communicative capacities of tragic choruses in general, see J. GOULD, "Tragedy and collective experience", in M.S. SILK (ed.), *Tragedy and the tragic* (Oxford 1996), 217-43; S. GOLDHILL *Reading Greek tragedy* (Cambridge 1986); A. HENRICHS, *op. cit.* (n. 33); C. CALAME, "Performative aspects of the choral voice in Greek tragedy", in S. GOLDHILL and R. OSBORNE (eds.), *Performance culture and Athenian democracy* (Cambridge 1999), 125-53; D.J. MASTRONARDE, "Knowledge and authority in the choral voice of Euripidean tragedy", in *Syll.Class* 10 (1999), 87-104; H.P. FOLEY, "Choral identity in Greek tragedy", in *CP* 98 (2003), 1-31; and on the personalities and mentalities of Aeschylean choruses in particular, A.J. PODLECKI, "The Aeschylean chorus as dramatic persona", in *Studi Cataudella* 1 (Catania 1972), 187-203; T. GANTZ, "The chorus of Aischylos' *Agamemnon*", in *HSCP* 87 (1983), 65-86; J. BOLLACK et P. JUDET DE LA COMBE, *op. cit.* (n. 28); M. GRIFFITH, *art. cit.* (n. 76); L. KÄPPEL, *Die Konstruktion der Handlung in der Orestie des Aischylos* (München 1999).

[στρ. α] κύριός εἰμι θροεῖν ὅδιον κράτος αἴσιον ἀνδρῶν
ἐκτελέων· ἔτι γὰρ θεόθεν καταπνείει *105*
Πειθὼ μολπᾶν ἀλκὰν σύμφυτος αἰών·
ὅπως Ἀχαιῶν δίθρονον κράτος, Ἑλλάδος ἥβας
ξύμφρονα ταγάν, *110*
πέμπει ξὺν δορὶ καὶ χερὶ πράκτορι
θούριος ὄρνις Τευκρίδ᾽ ἐπ᾽ αἶαν,
οἰωνῶν βασιλεὺς βασιλεῦσι νεῶν, ὁ κελαινὸς... *115*

βοσκόμενοι λαγίναν ἐρικύμονα φέρματι γένναν,
βλαβέντι λοισθίων δρόμων· *120*
αἴλινον αἴλινον εἰπέ, τὸ δ᾽ εὖ νικάτω.

[ἀντ. α] κεδνὸς δὲ στρατόμαντις ἰδὼν δύο λήμασι δισσοὺς
Ἀτρεΐδας μαχίμους ἐδάη λαγοδαίτας,
πομποὺς ἀρχᾶς, οὕτω δ᾽ εἶπε τεράιζων· *125*
"χρόνωι μὲν ἀγρεῖ Πριάμου πόλιν ἅδε κέλευθος...
... οἷον μή τις ἄγα θεόθεν κνεφάσηι προτυπὲν στόμιον μέγα Τροίας
στρατωθέν· οἴκτωι γὰρ ἐπίφθονος Ἄρτεμις ἁγνὰ
πτανοῖσιν κυσὶ πατρὸς *135*
αὐτότοκον πρὸ λόχου μογερὰν πτάκα θυομένοισιν·
στυγεῖ δὲ δεῖπνον αἰετῶν.
αἴλινον αἴλινον εἰπέ, τὸ δ᾽ εὖ νικάτω.

[ἐπῳιδ.]... μίμνει γὰρ φοβερὰ παλίνορτος
οἰκονόμος δολία, μνάμων Μῆνις τεκνόποινος." *155*
τοιάδε Κάλχας ξὺν μεγάλοις ἀγαθοῖς ἀπέκλαγξεν
μόρσιμ᾽ ἀπ᾽ ὀρνίθων ὁδίων οἴκοις βασιλείοις·
τοῖς δ᾽ ὁμόφωνον
αἴλινον αἴλινον εἰπέ, τὸ δ᾽ εὖ νικάτω.

In this heavily dactylic triad, the Chorus sings with many voices. And they address — at least, they sing to and for — multiple audiences.[79] κύριός εἰμι θροεῖν, they begin, "I am

[79] L. KÄPPEL, "Die Rolle des Chores in der Orestie des Aischylos: vom epischen Erzähler über das lyrische Ich zur dramatis persona", in *Der Chor im antiken und modernen Drama,* hrsg. von P. RIEMER und B. ZIMMERMANN, (Stuttgart 1998), 72-74 emphasizes that the whole parodos is directed solely to the "external" (theater) audience, since no other character is present and no character needs to be "persuaded" (106 *Peithô*) of the reliability of the chorus' narrative. Nonetheless, the public character of this chorus' singing and dancing in front of the palace should be understood as communicating to the city (the world) at large the Elders' understanding of what has been happening —

authorized to cry out…"; and they immediately back up this authoritative claim with a convincing reference to the divinely-inspired origin of their song-power (θεόθεν καταπνείει *ktl*). As Elders of Argos, leaning on their staffs (75), these singers share the implicit authority of a Nestor or a Homeric/Hesiodic rhapsode: their story — and their interpretation of it — will surely be reliable and knowledgeable ("breathed-in" to them like the visions of the Muses (*cf.* Hes. *Theog.* 31 ἐνέπνευσαν δέ μοι αὐδὴν). Their voice then merges, almost seamlessly, with the voice of Calchas, that always-reliable prophet-interpreter from the *Iliad*: 'his' dactylic verses sound just like — indeed are — 'theirs', and 'his' vision, anxieties, predictions, and prayers thus become 'their' own, all still conveyed in full dactylic (partially hexametric) solemnity. But of course this dactylic rhythm is also heard (and maybe intended, by Calchas at least) as the distinctive cadence of mantic-oracular utterance: the *mantis* in interpreting a portent of eagles and hare will be expected (not only in Homer or Hesiod, but also in e.g. Herodotus, if not in real life)[80] to communicate in such cadences; and the copious traditions of 'Musaeus' and 'Orpheus' already by the early fifth century provided plenty of appropriate dactylic hexameter pronouncements, interpreting signs, warning of disasters, and prescribing cures and rituals of appeasement. Calchas' words here, and consequently the words of the Argive Elders as well, thus carry oracular as well as Homeric/Hesiodic authority — especially as it is the meaning of the divinely-sent bird-portent and the responses (anger, and favor) to it of Apollo and his sister, Artemis, that are especially at issue.

Curiously, however — and surely, significantly — the precise terms in which this Chorus' 'authority' is first asserted are

globally as well as locally — over the last ten years; compare pp. 37-38 above, on Orestes at *Cho.* 972ff.

[80] H.W. PARKE and D.E.W. WORMELL, *The Delphic Oracle* (Oxford 1956); J. FONTENROSE, *The Delphic Oracle* (Berkeley 1978); R. PARKER, *art. cit.* (n. 47); L. MAURIZIO, "Delphic oracles as oral performances", in *Cl.Ant* 16 (1997), 308-34; M.A. FLOWER, *The seer in ancient Greece* (Berkeley 2007).

completely unHomeric, and non-oracular: κύριός εἰμι θροεῖν: the word κύριος and its derivatives (κῦρος, κυρόω, *ktl.*) are never found anywhere in Homeric or Hesiodic poetry. This seems to be a set of terms that belong in the political-social world of the early-Classical polis, used to denote powers and institutions that are officially "authorized", property and ownership that is "legally ratified", and decisions that are "duly validated", etc. (*cf. Eum.* 581, 639, 960; *Supp.* 391, 603, 732, 965). Aeschylus could hardly have chosen a less epic, or less mantic, word with which to launch his choral lyric narrative; and to the Athenian audience in the Theater this self-descriptive expression from the Chorus would inevitably be heard, at some level, as reminding everyone that these young masked men who are embarking on this first choral ode of the tetralogy are indeed "authorized" to sing of anything they like — as is Aeschylus himself, their ultimate 'author'. To push this a little further: Aeschylus (the poet) may be old, but his chorus is young: and what they "shriek out, wail" (104 θροεῖν — another very non-Homeric term; one that seems almost always to connote 'collective' voices, often voices raised in musical or fearful tones, as at *Sept.* 78 θρέομαι, discussed earlier) is supported by the god-sent "breath" of the Dionysian aulos — their choral limbs and bone-marrow are indeed "equal-to-children" (ἰσόπαιδα) in their vigor (*Ag.* 71-78).

Throughout the play, this Chorus (notoriously) will shift back and forth repeatedly between, on the one hand, states of apparently clairvoyant, inspired and reliable authority (e.g., reporting Agamemnon's exact words, the details of Iphigeneia's mouth, eyes, and clothing, and the ghastly process whereby her father's judgment was clouded and converted into maddened, violent folly), and, on the other, moments of sheer blindness and head-in-the-sand ignorance, or panic-stricken indecision and doubt.[81] Indeed, right at the end of this huge choral song,

[81] For contrasting interpretations of the shifting levels of confidence of this chorus of Elders, see T. GANTZ, *art. cit.* (n. 78), A.J. PODLECKI, *art. cit.* (n. 78), and L. KÄPPEL, *art. cit.* (n. 79).

they state (249-53: now in homely cretics rather than sweeping dactyls):

> τὰ δ' ἔνθεν οὔτ' εἶδον οὔτ' ἐννέπω·
> τέχναι δὲ Κάλχαντος οὐκ ἄκραντοι. 250
> Δίκα δὲ τοῖς μὲν παθοῦσιν μαθεῖν ἐπιρρέπει·
> τὸ μέλλον δ' ἐπεὶ γένοιτ', ἂν κλύοις· πρὸ χαιρέτω·
> ἴσον δὲ τῶι προστένειν.

Here, instead of merging their voice with that of Calchas, as earlier (where e.g. the refrain to each stanza of the triad, αἴλινον αἴλινον εἰπέ, τὸ δ' εὖ νικάτω, had itself even been shared between him and them: 121, 138 — and explicitly, 159 τοῖς δ' ὁμόφωνον),[82] the Chorus now distance themselves from the prophet and also from their own earlier claims to divine "authority": "What happened then/there... I didn't see, and I do not say. But Calchas' skills [do] not [go] unfulfilled...". This sudden acknowledgment that the Elders were not (after all) at Aulis, that they did not witness the whole scene they have just narrated, and that they are therefore reduced to relying on the arts of Calchas (and other indirect reports...?) for their whole understanding of past, present and future, allows them to re-inject a crucial element of poetic indeterminacy into the narrative. We are reminded that Iphigenia may not after all have been killed (an outcome that the audience presumably finds confirmed — as is usual in the House-of-Atreus-tradition — in the fourth play of this trilogy, *Proteus*);[83] but we are also prepared for the subsequent series of encounters between this (suddenly ignorant, short-sighted, impatient) group of feeble old men and the (suddenly authoritative, omniscient, clairvoyant) mistress of the household, the new controller of the Argive political arena, Clytemnestra, whose

[82] Line 138 should be included within the words quoted from Calchas himself, though most modern editors separate this refrain-line and represent it as the chorus' own insertion (whether or not any theater audience could discern the difference). It was Calchas, we realize, who already articulated this refrain.

[83] M. GRIFFITH, *art. cit.* (n. 3), 237-54.

own — intermittently disputed — authority is repeatedly voiced in these same terms: κύριος, κυρόω at *Ag.* 878, *Cho.* 658, 689.

In the following scenes, it is Clytemnestra who has the uncanny ability to "see" what others cannot see, to "know" what the audience alone can recognize to be true and mythologically guaranteed even as the characters on-stage — and especially the Chorus — fail to recognize or appreciate its reality or significance:

> [Κλ.] τοιοίδε τοί μοι λαμπαδηφόρων νόμοι,
> ἄλλος παρ' ἄλλου διαδοχαῖς πληρούμενοι·
> νικᾶι δ' ὁ πρῶτος καὶ τελευταῖος δραμών.
> τέκμαρ τοιοῦτον σύμβολόν τέ σοι λέγω 315
> ἀνδρὸς παραγγείλαντος ἐκ Τροίας ἐμοί.
> [Χο.] θεοῖς μὲν αὖθις, ὦ γύναι, προσεύξομαι·
> λόγους δ' ἀκοῦσαι τούσδε κἀποθαυμάσαι
> διηνεκῶς θέλοιμ' ἂν ὡς λέγοις πάλιν.
> [Κλ.] Τροίαν 'Αχαιοὶ τῆιδ' ἔχουσ' ἐν ἡμέραι. 320
> οἶμαι βοὴν ἄμεικτον ἐν πόλει πρέπειν·
> ὄξος τ' ἄλειφά τ' ἐγχέας ταὐτῶι κύτει
> διχοστατοῦντ' ἄν, οὐ φίλω, προσεννέποις.
> καὶ τῶν ἁλόντων καὶ κρατησάντων δίχα
> φθογγὰς ἀκούειν ἔστι συμφορᾶς διπλῆς. 325

Here Clytemnestra's voice and vision are "victorious", running "first and last" (314 πρῶτος καὶ τελευταῖος); she is master of the "laws/musical strains" (νόμοι), managing the "evidence" (τέκμαρ) and "symbols"(σύμβολόν) of Troy's fall with unerring accuracy. The Chorus (like the Theater audience) cannot get enough of her words — they want to hear the account again, all the way through (317-19); and Clytemnestra is able to summarize it baldly and with perfect clarity (320): "The Achaeans hold Troy this day...". Not only does she "know" from her husband's message-beacons what must have happened, but she even has the capacity to see and "hear" (325 ἀκούειν ἔστι) the vivid sights and sounds of victory and defeat from the two sides, as "separate and unmixed" as oil and vinegar. This is an almost prosaic expression, with its modest οἶμαι ("I guess...",

321), idealising 2nd person (322-23) and homely imagery, all stated in simple iambic trimeters: but the authoritative ἔστι (325) leaves no room for uncertainty. Clytemnestra does know exactly what is happening. She is, at this moment in the play, a (the) voice of Aeschylean authority, and hers are the eyes and ears of accurate "vision" and interpretation.

Later, by the time Cassandra has finally been recognized as an object of dramatic attention, this allocation of "authority" changes, to brilliant poetic effect. Now it is Clytemnestra who is unable to communicate effectively (1035-68), and Cassandra instead who can begin to "look out" from beneath the veils of prophetic obscurity (1178), she who can smell the old blood, see the pitiful chopped-up children, and hear the Furies' hideous dirge coming from inside the house; she can even see (and describe for the Chorus and audience) Clytemnestra's hands reaching out to grab and chop up her husband (1126-28): "keep the bull away from the cow...!" (1125-26): such simple language, but such a shocking image (as often, conveyed primarily through dochmiac rhythms).

In the next two plays, the "chorus of Furies" that Cassandra has described (*Ag.* 1186-93; *cf.* 1217-22) will become visible, first to Orestes (*Cho.* 1021-64), then finally to the theater audience (*Eum.* 94ff); but already here in *Ag.*, through Cassandra's words, we (the audience) are able, as the Argive Elders barely are yet, to "track... the evils done long ago...". Indeed, during this present scene, as Cassandra's words have shifted from inarticulate lyric cries to increasingly intelligible, spoken iambic verses — and the Chorus conversely have began to relapse into agitated and confused dochmiacs[84] — the audience's understanding of who knows what, who is authorized to speak for whom, and who can guarantee us a reliable picture of what is about to happen next, keeps on evolving. Aeschylus' poetry thus shifts its authorial basis, from scene to

[84] See M.G. FILENI, *art. cit.* (n. 38), 136-45 for further discussion of the rhythms.

scene and even within the same scene. Clytemnestra, previously so commanding and authoritative, has now lost her uncanny powers of vision and control; the Chorus is hesitant and slow: it is Apollo's disenfranchised and powerless prophetess (bride, beggar-priestess) that commands our imaginations and tells us what we need to know. Her vision, and her voice, have at this point become the playwright's vision and voice — but with the added pathos that she is herself the helpless victim of the violence she is describing, not just an observer (or author) of it. Like the theater audience, she knows that she cannot change the outcome of the story (βρότεια πράγματα) — only go forward to meet it. Her "lament" (1322 θρῆνον) is also simply a "statement, narrative" (ῥῆσιν).

Thus even as Cassandra speaks for the Furies, for the dead children of Thyestes, for Agamemnon, and for Troy, guaranteeing the divinely-promised action of vengeance that will dominate the next play (1279-83, 1291), her now more calmly spoken iambics provide a combination of lamentation (for so many deaths and so much loss), celebration (of vengeance), and resignation: but she also calls those present (Chorus, and audience: 1315 ἰὼ ξένοι would apply equally to both) to "be witnesses" to her mantic-poetic testimony (1317 μαρτυρεῖτέ μοι).

Such indeterminacy of voice and authority, and hence of reference and meaning, are often essential components of Aeschylean poetry, and I think this sets it apart from most of the earlier poetry (and literature) that are available for us to study.[85] The multiple narrators and focalisers of Homeric narrative, for example, are far less diverse and complex than Aeschylus'. Even in a relatively simple Aeschylean narrative such as the Messenger's in *Persians* (353ff, discussed earlier),

[85] I think too that neither of the other two great Athenian tragedians seems to have exploited these 'indeterminate' possibilities in quite the same way or to the same degree — though the techniques of Sophoclean 'irony' certainly constitute a distinctive variation on this 'indeterminacy', and, as Richard Rutherford reminds me, such passages as SOPH. *OT.* 463ff (again, in oracular context) have some similar dynamics.

we saw how the references to an "ἀλάστωρ or evil δαίμων from somewhere or other", and the indeterminacy as to the identity of the "Hellene man", as well as the plural audience itself (Queen, Chorus, and theater audience) helped to create extra levels of possible meaning. In *Ag.*, not only are various invisible powers and divine forces credited insistently with agency and ideas, as often in Greek tragedy (Apollo, Artemis, Zeus, Athena, Dikê, Erinus, Alastôr, Mênis, Atê, Parakopê, etc.),[86] but the frequent use of indefinite τις, or ideal second person, or unspecified third person singular or plural subjects for verbs of saying and thinking, introduces numerous further (often quite unpredictable) shifts of voice and perspective.[87]

One famous pair of closely-related passages will provide my final examples of Aeschylean poetry at its most characteristically 'indeterminate'. Fittingly, these involve the (always elusive) figure of Helen (681-701; 737-48):

[στρ. α] τίς ποτ' ὠνόμαζεν ὧδ'
ἐς τὸ πᾶν ἐτητύμως,
μή τις ὅντιν' οὐχ ὁρῶμεν προνοί-
αισι τοῦ πεπρωμένου
γλῶσσαν ἐν τύχαι νέμων, 685
τὰν δορίγαμβρον ἀμφινει-
κῆ θ' Ἑλέναν; ἐπεὶ πρεπόντως
ἑλένας ἕλανδρος ἑλέ-
πτολις...

[ἀντ. α] Ἰλίωι δὲ κῆδος ὀρ-
θώνυμον τελεσσίφρων 700
Μῆνις ἤλασεν...

[86] Particularly deserving of close discussion, if space permitted, would be *Ag.* 217 Θέμις, in Agamemnon's reported speech; text and application are of course disputed.

[87] So, for example: indefinite τις: 55-56 ἤ τις Ἀπόλλων ἢ Πὰν ἢ Ζεὺς..., 449 τάδε σῖγά τις βαΰζει, 369 οὐκ ἔφα τις θεοὺς βροτῶν ἀξιοῦσθαι μέλειν...... ὁ δ' οὐκ εὐσεβής, 735 ἱερεύς τις Ἄτας (after 718 ἀνήρ...); vague 3rd p. plurals or off-stage imagined speakers: 367 Διὸς πλάγαν ἔχουσιν εἰπεῖν, 408ff δόμων προφῆται, 456 βαρεῖα δ' ἀστῶν φάτις, 938 φήμη ... δημόθρους, etc. See further M. GRIFFITH, *art. cit.* (n. 76), 74-77.

[στρ. γ] πάραυτα δ' ἐλθεῖν ἐς Ἰλίου πόλιν
λέγοιμ' ἂν φρόνημα μὲν
    νηνέμου γαλάνας, 740
ἀκασκαῖον <δ'> ἄγαλμα πλούτου,
μαλθακὸν ὀμμάτων βέλος,
δηξίθυμον ἔρωτος ἄνθος·
παρακλίνασ' ἐπέκρανεν
    δὲ γάμου πικρὰς τελευτάς, 745
δύσεδρος καὶ δυσόμιλος
    συμένα Πριαμίδαισιν,
πομπᾶι Διὸς ξενίου
νυμφόκλαυτος Ἐρινύς.

The passages are well-known, and have been well discussed.[88] Here I wish only to point out the way in which first the Chorus begin by opening up the fullest range of possibilities, as to "who" may have been the one who so "successfully" (ἐν τύχαι) named Helen: a parent (human or divine), an all-determinant (even Pythagorean?) providence, mere chance...? The "fittingness" of her name has now been fully revealed through time and through the outcome of events at Troy (like the "true nature" (ἦθος) of the lion-cub that is revealed "in time" (χρονισθεὶς 727); but the failure of almost everyone previously to see or recognize what "Helen" truly meant, like the misrecognition in 699ff of which kind of κῆδος was brought to Troy ("wedding", or "grief"), leaves the Chorus all too aware of the fallibility of their own understanding and that of others too. Even the imperfect tense (681 ὠνόμαζεν) seems to add to the sense of continuing imprecision, of a long-term discrepancy between the moment of correct naming and the first correct interpretation of that name.

Likewise, when the Chorus proceed (738ff) to describe, in a slightly evasive potential optative construction (λέγοιμ' ἂν) who or what it was that "came to the city of Troy", their multiplicity of terms (φρόνημα ... γαλάνας, μαλθακὸν ... βέλος, δηξίθυμον

[88] See especially the full commentary *ad loc.* of J. BOLLACK et P. JUDET DE LA COMBE, *op. cit.* (n. 28).

... ἄνθος) signals again the difficulty of determining what the presence of Helen should mean: φρόνημα, ἄγαλμα, βέλος are all neuter nouns, all requiring an act of exchange or interpretation to complete their signification. Then, at 744, as the meter slides from iambic-aeolic into ionics (a rhythm frequently associated with luxury, decadence, and orientalism), the indirect statement gives way to direct (ἐπέκρανεν), neuter nouns give way to feminine singular nominative participles (παρακλίνασα ... συμένα ...), and the "calm... soft..." tone turns bitter and violent. The beginning of the shift is signalled by παρακλίνασα (744, in quasi-asyndeton), but only when we reach the last word of the whole stanza do we realize that the subject of the whole sentence, all along, has been Ἐρινύς. The voice that sings of this nominative singular feminine subject of ἐπέκρανεν — while also going on to identify her as Ἐρινύς operating "at the dispatch of *Zeus xenios*" (just like the Atreidai and the portentous "bird" at *Ag.* 55-62, 109-20) — hardly seems to be the same voice as uttered the tentative initial λέγοιμ' ἂν that opened the stanza (738). The indeterminate shift of awareness and authority conveyed within this one stanza is typical of Aeschylus' poetry. "Someone whom we do not see..." (a god, a prophet, a poet-dramatist) is indeed "governing [his/her] tongue in fore-knowledge of what is due" (683-84). It is the audience's (and critic's) challenging, pleasurable, disturbing and rewarding task always to keep trying to grasp as many Aeschylean meanings as we can find, and to gain access thereby to the ever-expanding range of references, contexts, and dramatic effects of that 'unseen' poetic voice.

DISCUSSION

A. Podlecki: You say that "we are surely safe in asserting that [when Aeschylus began his career as a playwright] a vibrant Athenian 'tradition' of tragic diction and style must have existed". The conclusion is perhaps not as 'safe' as one would like. We really know very little about the history of Attic tragedy before Aiskhylos, and even then, we know almost nothing of 'early' Aiskhylos (i.e., the works produced between ca. 496 and 472 BCE). Without having contemporary works in the same genre (at least substantial fragments of, say, Phrynikhos or Khoirilos), it is hard to see what standards to apply by which his 'originality' could be judged.

M. Griffith: A fair point. What we can say is that by 472 the genre had progressed from zero to a work as sophisticated as the *Persians*; but whether this was almost all the achievement of Aeschylus himself (at whatever pace, between the 490s and late 470s), or whether he had largely inherited what we find in the extant plays from his predecessors, cannot be determined. Certainly Phrynichus was highly regarded by many even as late as Aristophanes' day, and Pratinas was likewise a major figure in the history of the dramatic competitions. I think the evidence of Phrynichus' surviving opening line of *Phoenissae* (anticipating the *Persians*' opening) and also of Pratinas' extended lyric tour de force (*TrGF* 1 4 F3 = *PMG* 708: satyric, not tragic: but very clever) between them speak quite forcefully: these earlier playwrights were imaginative, versatile, and technically accomplished. I suspect that Aeschylus stands in relation to those predecessors somewhat as Shakespeare stands in relation to Pikeryng, Sackville, Heywood, Kyd, and the other pioneers of Elizabethan tragedy, ca. 1565-1580; but this

cannot be demonstrated. If one prefers to substitute "Aeschylus and his immediate predecessors" for "Aeschylus" in most of the first part of my paper, I should not complain.

J. Jouanna: Pour l'influence de la poésie lyrique, vous parlez des chants choraux — de la tragédie — qui sont atticisés avec un "léger placage dorien (atticized, with only a slight Doric veneer)". Pensez-vous que les chants choraux de la tragédie sont artificiellement colorés de dorismes? Les chants choraux de la tragédie grecque ne sont-ils pas historiquement issus de la lyrique chorale dorienne, non seulement pour le dialecte, mais aussi pour le vocabulaire, la composition chorale et la variété des rythmes, même s'il y a des innovations propres à la tragédie telles que le dochmiaque comme vous le signalez à juste titre?

M. Griffith: I think it is hard to say what 'dialect' an Athenian in 475 BCE thought he was hearing when the tragic chorus started singing. Apart from Doric *alpha* for *eta*, Aeschylus' lyrics (choral, or monodic/epirrhematic, as, e.g., Cassandra at *Ag.* 1072ff) are basically Attic-Ionic in dialect and vocabulary. Truly Doric choral song (such as that of Alcman; or even Pindar's Doric-Aeolic blend) is very different; and even the Doric-Ionic blend of Stesichorus seems to be much more thoroughly saturated with Homeric diction and morphology than what we find in Aeschylean lyric. (We might make a similar comparison with Solon's elegies and iambics: the language contains many Ionicisms/Homericisms, but it nonetheless does not come across as being any more Ionic than Attic, does it?) Certainly, it was expected (one might say, required?) that choruses sound Doric; but I see the Doric *alphas* as no more than a veneer, and I find few signs of other actual Doricisms in Aeschylus' lyrics. Of course, Doric choruses employed epic language extensively, and few choral lyric poets composed in pure Doric: so I agree with you that there was a large amount of commonly shared 'poetic diction' that was available for

poets of almost any tradition to employ. (Even Archilochus can sound quite 'Homeric' at times!)

F. Macintosh: I like the way you have defined Aeschylean 'bigness' in terms of height, breadth, and depth — it is all-encompassing. It reminds me of Henry James's comment about Victorian novels being "great baggy monsters", from the perspective of "streamlined" high Modernism. Could we say, perhaps, that Aeschylean 'bigness' is a typical feature of an emergent genre, or at least one in its early stage of development before it becomes 'streamlined' at a later stage (i.e., in Aristotle's terms, "reaches its *phusis* or *telos*")?

M. Griffith: An interesting idea: one thinks of Rabelais, Cervantes, Sterne, Fielding... all of them 'big' and/or startlingly inclusive of (what to later, more 'streamlined' generations seem to be) somewhat disparate elements and shifting tone. Or the classical four-movement symphony whose rules evolved out of many decades which composers had employed looser ('baggier') sequences of instrumental composition. In the case of Athenian tragedy, the pre-existence of those other forms (epic, choral lyric, iambic, etc.) that were already so highly developed perhaps made it easier for an audience to enjoy Aeschylus' 'bagginess' — and the Theater was intrinsically a place where many different voices could be heard. On the other hand, 'bigness' (the sheer scale of the connected trilogy; and grandeur of diction and concept) was not apparently characteristic of the earliest tragedy (according to Aristotle).

P. Judet de La Combe: Les analyses de la 'langue d'art' d'Eschyle que vous proposez ont, à mes yeux, le très grand mérite de montrer à la fois comment cette langue est fondamentalement hétérogène dans ses matériaux, puisqu'elle emprunte à l'ensemble des domaines linguistiques constitutifs de la culture, qu'ils soient 'élevés', dans la grande tradition poétique, ou socialement 'bas', et comment malgré cette

diversité elle forme un ensemble identifiable, régulier. Eschyle ouvre la langue poétique traditionnelle à l'ensemble des usages langagiers de la société, puis recompose à partir de cela une langue propre à la tragédie (ou à sa tragédie). Il y a donc, selon cette présentation, plus de souplesse, plus de sophistication et de 'modernisme' chez lui qu'on a l'habitude de le dire. L'opposition convenue de l'innovation et de la tradition paraît alors inadéquate, puisque c'est quand il emprunte, mais de manière ouverte et variée, qu'Eschyle innove. Ma question porte sur l'effet qui est ainsi produit. Les emprunts s'accompagnent d'un décalage et de surprises, puisque la langue est mixte. Ainsi, pour reprendre un exemple développé par M. Griffith, le début de la parodos lyrique de l'*Agamemnon*, est ostensiblement homérique par le thème épique (Aulis) et par la forme (un hexamètre dactylique, vers 104), mais la *lexis* ne l'est pas, avec les emplois de κύριος pour dire l'autorité poétique, de θροεῖν, avec le sens nouveau donné à αἴσιον, "porté par un présage" et non "favorable". Et pourtant, la nouveauté se construit dans une relation étroite avec Homère: les épithètes ὅδιον ... αἴσιον reprennent l'expression ὁδοιπόρον ... αἴσιον, employée pour Hermès, le "voyageur de bon augure" rencontré par Priam en *Il.* 24, 375 *sq*. Comment interpréter cet entrelacement entre le traditionnel et le non-traditionnel? Et, plus généralement, qu'en est-il des 'modernismes' d'Eschyle, des emprunts à la langue technique de la médecine, du droit, ou même de la science physique, etc., dans des contextes qui donnent à ces emprunts un sens qui n'est pas celui de leur usage habituel? Ce mélange semble produire un effet de double prise de distance: il devient possible de parler de réalités mythiques, traditionnelles, dans un langage contemporain, et ce langage prend un sens nouveau du fait même qu'il est sorti de son contexte et appliqué à des réalités mythiques, anciennes.

Sur "l'indétermination de la voix et de l'autorité": il ne s'agit visiblement pas, dans la présentation qu'en fait Mark Griffith, de la même chose que l'ambiguïté, telle que la mettent en avant

Jean-Pierre Vernant ou, sur un mode plus radical, Simon Goldhill, puisque ce qui est en jeu est l'autorité du locuteur, mais non pas le contenu sémantique de ce qu'il dit. Quelle fonction a ce changement de statut des voix à l'intérieur d'un même discours? S'agit-il pour Eschyle de 'déconstruire' toute vérité, ou de montrer un hiatus entre les possibilités langagières des personnages et la situation dont ils essaient de parler?

M. Griffith: Thank you for these two excellent questions, at once both broad and penetrating. Yes, I think you are certainly right with your suggested explanation — and this is indeed one of the effects well described by Jean-Pierre Vernant, Simon Goldhill and others who have emphasized Athenian tragedy's function as a re-reading of 'traditional' myth through the lens of the polis and its institutions. But I think there are other ways of looking at this phenomenon as well (not that these contradict or cancel-out the first in any way). I would suggest that the multiplicity of contexts, institutions, personal statuses and idiolects that are invoked, embodied and 'played with' in Aeschylus' plays — especially if we include the satyr-dramas (and I wish we had had the opportunity to discuss these more at these Entretiens!) — engages different elements within the audience with a variety of mental-verbal experiences and fantasies, with several of which they will be already quite familiar, others not. This experience would not be identical from one audience member to another: thus it is often not simply a matter of a (contemporary) 'polis' mentality collectively confronting a 'mythical' Homeric-traditional mentality — though certainly this does happen frequently — but also a complex, even fragmented, blending and confusing of alternative attitudes, beliefs, and subject positions. The audience in the Theater of Dionysus was not entirely homogeneous — in terms of gender, status, age, or ideology. The *Oresteia* (at one level) is all about family, property disputes, violations of marriage norms, relations between masters and slaves, domestic cults...; but (at another level) it is also about international military ventures,

democracy, law, and the Olympian gods. Its mixed language, by speaking aloud in multiple registers, gives voice to participants and observers from all levels.

Your second question is equally challenging and, I fear, would take me much longer to answer adequately than is available to me. In brief, I would suggest that the Aeschylean techniques of indeterminacy that I've described lead the audience not so much to 'deconstruct' reality or mistrust the power of language to identify and describe things as they 'really are', but rather to appreciate that 'reality' tends to comprise an immensely thick and many-layered package of meanings, and that any individual's insights or inspired visions, even when uncannily accurate and revealing, will present only one momentary glimpse of that reality — and the glimpse of another speaker or singer may present startlingly different facets and wrinkles, without necessarily contradicting or undermining the 'reality' of the first one. This is, as you say, not so much a matter of 'ambiguity', or irony, as of polyvalence and multiple perspectives, and of the audience's sense (if not always awareness) of competing authorities (vocal, visual and musical, as well as political) that are striving to express themselves within this one play. All of these voices speak (or sing) 'Aeschylus'' poetry, and at times we come to believe — if only briefly — that one of them is communicating to us, and to other characters, with almost complete authority. But a moment later that authority may slip away, and we find ourselves listening instead to another voice that commands our attention with equal insistence and persuasiveness.