The Theology of Aeschylus.

Trafford, Simon J

The Theology of Aeschylus

By

Simon J. Trafford

Submitted to Swansea University in fulfilment of the requirements of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Swansea University

2013

SUMMARY (ABSTRACT)

This thesis examines the theology of Aeschylus through a close text-based discussion of the nature and justice of Zeus. This will not be a dogmatic investigation that looks for signs of monotheism or 'proto-monotheism'. Rather, this thesis will examine the presentation of the god in Aeschylus, as he is found in his plays, free from any desire or attempt to form a rounded, comprehensive 'Aeschylean theology'.

The first chapter considers the two closely connected divine terms, θεός and δαίμων. The clear-cut and easily discernible meaning of θεός acts as a constant with which the more ambiguous and less determinable word δαίμων can be compared and contrasted. This chapter discusses both those instances where δαίμων seems to be synonymous with θεός and where it does not, where the term seems to possess a meaning close to that of an individual's fortune or destiny in life. This is done in order to conclusively see how Aeschylus uses the word δαίμων in the *Eumenides* as part of his characterisation of the Erinyes, which enables us to see more clearly what role divine terminology plays in the presentation of Zeus and the god's justice.

The remaining chapters of this thesis examine Zeus in Aeschylus. First, attention is given to the old debates concerning the potential and respective influence of Homeric, Hesiodic and Presocratic conceptions of divinity on the theology of Aeschylus. Then, the final chapter of the thesis looks at the justice of Zeus primarily through a discussion of one question, whether we should understand Agamemnon as guilty in the eyes of Zeus, which it is argued we should not.

It is shown that Aeschylus does not present an optimistic idea of Zeus or divine justice, and the god's rule is seen as neither kind nor benevolent. Rather a pragmatic and pessimistic view is presented to us by Aeschylus, one which recognises that Zeus is an all-powerful being in need of respect and honour and whose will must be carefully observed.

DECLARATIONS AND STATEMENTS

DECLARATION

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed .....(candidate)

Date 07/01/14

STATEMENT 1

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Where correction services have been used, the extent and nature of the correction is clearly marked in a footnote(s).

Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

Signed .. ..(candidate)

Date 07/01/14

STATEMENT 2

I hereby give consent for my thesis, if accepted, to be available for photocopying and for inter-library loan, and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organisations.

Signed .....(candidate)

Date 07/01/14

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I would like to thank the School of Humanities of the University of Wales Swansea (as was) for granting me a scholarship, without which I would have been unable to undertake my doctoral research.

I am also extremely grateful to my supervisor, Fritz-Gregor Herrmann, who repeatedly went above and beyond the call of duty. To him, I can only offer my sincerest thanks. I could not have asked for a better supervisor.

In addition, I would like to thank Matthew Cobb for his learned and humorous conversations over the years, as well as Peter Collier for reading over the final draft of my thesis and, more importantly, for his friendship.

I am eternally grateful to my parents whose unquestioning and unwavering support in my studies has meant everything and without which I would not have got this far.

Finally, my darling wife has been a constant source of kind words and support over this last year, helping me when I needed it most. Her care and love are everything.

INTRODUCTION

The language of the divine is so closely intertwined with the plot and structure of the ancient Greek tragedies themselves that the gods are an inherent part of their make-up. But, while it seems impossible to conceive of the Greek tragedies without some divine or supernatural aspect to them, it is necessary to think of the ancient Greek gods in a different way from how we conceive of the nature of divinity today. The gods of the classical world were an everyday reality, whether these were the Olympians gods of the traditional pantheon or unknown, unnamed deities. In what way the Greeks 'believed' in the gods or to what extent is not of the strictest concern for my thesis. What is of concern is how the gods were conceived and thought of in the plays of Aeschylus. More than the younger Sophocles, Aeschylus was engaging in or reflecting on philosophical speculation concerning the nature of the gods and, in particular, Zeus. What this thesis will thus focus on is the 'Theology of Aeschylus' and how Aeschylus' understanding of the nature of the gods, and especially Zeus, is presented in his plays.

In recent decades, it has been unpopular (with a few exceptions, for which see below) to examine the nature of the gods in Aeschylus and it is equally unpopular, if not more so, to label such a discussion as the 'theology' of a pre-Christian author, be it Aeschylus or any other. For such reasons, it must be stated from the outset that this will not be a dogmatic investigation that looks for signs of monotheism or 'proto-monotheism', with one eye on finding any indication that could give credence or plausibility to Christian teleological ideas. Rather, this thesis will examine the presentation of the gods in Aeschylus, as they are found in his plays, and will do so free from any pre-conceived desire to form a rounded, dogmatic 'Aeschylean theology'. The theological concerns of this thesis focus on a range of ideas, centred round the way the gods are depicted by Aeschylus in the plays in an attempt to gain a firmer understanding about the nature of the gods in Aeschylus, particularly the highest and most powerful god, Zeus.

The term 'theology of Aeschylus' is also used here in order to tap into the debates concerning the presentation of the gods in Aeschylus that have continued for the best part of two centuries, (broadly speaking) from those in the nineteenth-century who saw Aeschylus as a pioneering proto-Christian poet;[1] to those in the earlier half

[1] See, for example, Tyler (1859, 2006).

of the twentieth-century who posited a more moderate view of Aeschylus, stopping short of claiming anything proto-Christian in his works, but yet seeing something more 'advanced' than what was presented in Homer or Hesiod;[2] and then to Lloyd-Jones in the latter half of the last century, who, reacting against those commentators before him, claimed that there was nothing in Aeschylus that could not be found expressed by Homer or Hesiod.[3] Indeed, since Lloyd-Jones' *The Justice of Zeus* in 1971 there has been little movement in the field concerning the dedicated study of the presentation of the gods in Aeschylus.[4] The view of the divine in Aeschylus laid down by Lloyd-Jones has held sway in one way or another and there has been something of a dearth in the number of works on the gods in Aeschylus since then. Few have considered that in Aeschylus' presentation of the gods there may be something more than or at least different from what we find in Homer; or that there was a more nuanced position in the works of a poet who was writing during an age of intense philosophical speculation, where new ideas concerning the nature of divinity were flourishing.

What I hope to do in this thesis is to re-open the debate concerning the presentation of the gods in Aeschylus by re-examining the primary material. Though the discussion of Aeschylus' theology undertaken in this thesis will give consideration to all of the plays, especially in the chapter on δαίμων, the focus of the thesis in the discussion of Zeus in the second part will primarily be the *Suppliants* and the *Oresteia*, as these plays present far more information on the nature of Zeus. In the final chapter 'The Justice of Zeus', all is subordinate to the *Oresteia*. In this chapter, I put forward the notion and demonstrate that in the view of Aeschylus the gods are not kind or benevolent and that the rule of Zeus, though not explicitly hostile towards mankind, does not care for its betterment.

A Century of Scholarship on Aeschylus and the Divine

There is a long history of scholarship on the nature of Zeus and the gods in the plays of Aeschylus and in archaic and classical literature as a whole, dating back well over a century. It is beyond the scope of this Introduction to give even the most

[2] Murray (1940), Cornford (1952), Kitto (1961).
[3] Lloyd-Jones (1956), (1971); cf. Denniston and Page (1957).
[4] Notable exceptions are Geisser (2002) and Bees (2009) for which see below in the section 'A Century of Scholarship on Aeschylus and the Divine'; but, the Anglo-American tradition remains particularly quiet on this front.

summary of discussions of all the significant scholarly works in this field, and so I will restrict myself to a survey of a handful of them that have a particularly important bearing on this thesis.

Of those works that deal with the presentation of δαίμων in early Greek literature, there are three which are of particular significance for the arguments presented below in Chapter 1. The earliest of these is Ehnmark's *The Idea of God in Homer* (1935). In this work, Ehnmark looks at – among other things – the way the terms θεοί 'gods', θεός 'god', δαίμων 'daimon' and Ζεύς are employed generically in the 'indefinite mode of expression' in relation and as opposed to when a god is referred to by its actual name.[5] Ehnmark presents his arguments with consistent reference, in particular, to the works of Jörgensen[6] and Hedén.[7] Jörgensen was the first to examine the differing ways the narrator and human speakers (characters) refer to divine activity in the Homeric epics and how human speakers – except when narrating past events – tend to use vaguer, more indefinite divine terms, such as 'the gods', 'god', daimon or sometimes Zeus rather than other specific names. Jörgensen argued that such usage was determined by conventional literary practice. A few years later, building on the work of Jörgensen (though by no means following him), Hedén argued that the indefinite mode of expression was employed by Homer as a way of distinguishing between poetic language and the language of everyday religious life. This, Hedén claimed, is borne out by the frequency with which the indefinite mode of expression is used in the poems over the actual names of the gods themselves, and that such frequency was the result of growing scepticism concerning traditional religious faith, with the religious belief of people becoming more abstract in its view of the gods. In response to these two scholars' arguments, Ehnmark asserts that Homer was in all likelihood attempting to supply his human characters with psychologically accurate speech and modes of thought, rather than simply following established literary formulae, as is argued for by Jörgensen. Indeed, while Ehnmark's own views could be seen to come close to those of Hedén with regard to the use of vaguer terms by human characters as an accurate reflection of everyday usage, he does not claim, as Hedén does, that the difference is the result of a distinction between poetic language and the everyday, but rather that it is the result of a difference in the degree to which

[5] Ehnmark (1935) 59-85.
[6] Jörgensen (1904) 357-82.
[7] Hedén (1912) *passim*.

someone is privy to what knowledge: *i.e.* the poet/narrator and the gods have access to knowledge of the unfolding of events which the 'normal' human characters of the poems do not.

The second work of scholarship concerned with δαίμων that has specific significance for this thesis is Gilbert François' *Le Polythéisme et L'Emploi au Singulier des Mots ΘΕΟΣ, ΔΑΙΜΩΝ dans La Littérature Grecque d'Homère a Platon* (1957). In this work, François comprehensively discusses the meanings of θεός and δαίμων. The work is set against a backdrop where many within the academic community still maintained that θεός on its own, with or without the definite article, could mean 'God'. François, however, shows conclusively that the word θεός possesses no monotheistic tendencies in archaic and classical literature, except in specific philosophical contexts such as, for example, in Xenophanes[8] or Plato.[9] Rather, it is shown that when θεός is used generically without specific reference to a known deity, it has a meaning close to θεοί and that the presence or absence of the definite article has no bearing on the meaning. François also argues that θεός and δαίμων are in most instances synonymous and have a collective, generic sense when not specifically referring to a known deity.[10]

After François it was not until Franziska Geisser's *Götter, Geister und Dämonen* (2002), nearly half a century later, that the meaning and nature of δαίμων in Aeschylus was made the explicit topic of an extended discussion again. In her monograph, Geisser focuses on four 'daimonic' words: δαίμων, ἄτη,[11] ἀλάστωρ, ἀρά. In contrast with Ehnmark and François, Geisser does not look for the meaning of δαίμων as a concept in itself, but for its dramatic role within the plays of Aeschylus as an *Unheilsmacht*, a 'force or bringer of evil'. Indeed, this difference in emphasis is indicated in the subtitle of the work: *Unheilsmächte bei Aischylos – zwischen Aberglauben und Theatralik.* Although Geisser does point out that δαίμων does not in itself denote a bringer of evil, the scope of the work which looks only at the negative and destructive characteristics of δαίμων naturally means that the discussion of the term is narrower than Ehnmark's or François' examinations of the word. It also means

[8] François (1957) 160-71. For discussion of Xenophanes and Aeschylus, see Chapter 3 and the section *Anthropomorphism and Invariance*.
[9] François (1957) 246-304.
[10] This thesis will, however, show that while δαίμων and θεός regularly behave as synonyms (and in this respect François is correct), δαίμων often presents meanings far more nuanced than θεός (which is neglected somewhat by François).
[11] For a recent discussion of ἄτη in Aeschylus, see Sommerstein (2013) 1-15.

that there are many aspects of the nature of δαίμων which are left untouched. So, while Geisser's work does discuss the employment of δαίμων in the plays of Aeschylus, it does not look at the term as a rounded concept in possession of a range of potential meanings within the wider context of the plays or how its usage is linked to the context in which it is used.

In contrast with the rather limited number of works that deal with the nature of δαίμων in Aeschylus, there is an abundance of material which has been produced on the nature and justice of Zeus in the plays of Aeschylus. As a consequence of the vast amount of literature, only those works which have a significant impact on this thesis will be given consideration here. Before the authenticity of the *Prometheus* as a play of Aeschylus came to be widely questioned in the 1970s,[12] many works which focused on the nature and justice of Zeus in Aeschylus did so by discussing the contrasting portrayal of the god in the *Prometheus* (as a despotic figure) and the *Oresteia* (as a more kindly, benevolent figure). The *Prometheus* is now widely regarded not to be a genuine play of Aeschylus, and many of the earlier works and arguments dealing with the nature of Zeus in the plays are, if not obsolete, severely compromised for the purposes of this thesis; but there are two exceptions: Reinhardt's *Aischylos als Regisseur und Theologe* (1949); and Solmsen's *Hesiod and Aeschylus* (1949). Both of these scholars regard the *Prometheus* as a play of Aeschylus, but both, in differing ways, counter the 'progressive' model then commonly applied to the Zeus of Aeschylus between the *Prometheus* plays and the *Oresteia*, which sees Zeus as somehow changing and becoming a more enlightened god throughout the course of the action in these plays.

Reinhardt argues that Zeus in the *Prometheus* does not develop into a merciful or benevolent god in the *Prometheus Unbound*, because the conflict between the two opposing figures of Prometheus and Zeus does not give room for either figure to develop or change in any way without detracting from the action. Although Reinhardt only makes this point for the *Prometheus* and not the *Oresteia*, it is nevertheless an important step towards seeing Zeus as something other than a benevolent god or on his way to becoming one, a god who only has the best in mind for mankind – which in the *Prometheus*, he obviously does not. Similarly, in his book published the same

[12] See, in particular, Griffith (1977). Though cf. Porzig (1926), who also regards the play as inauthentic. See below in the Introduction for further discussion of the issue of the authenticity of the *Prometheus Bound* and the position taken in this thesis.

year, Solmsen argues that at the end of the *Eumenides* it is not Zeus who changes in the way he conducts justice, but the Erinyes themselves – though, in contrast with Reinhardt, he argues in favour of a change in the position of Zeus in the *Prometheus*. In differing ways and in discussion of different plays, both Reinhardt and Solmsen argue against a progressivist view of Zeus that sees the god becoming a more merciful and benevolent figure, reconciling himself with older deities and changing his justice in order to incorporate these gods into his order. These works provide a starting point for how we think about the nature and justice of Zeus and such considerations become increasingly significant in the final chapter where we are faced with a manner of conceptualising the justice and rule of the highest god which is not kind.

Arguably the most influential scholar on the theology of Aeschylus in the second half of the twentieth century is Hugh Lloyd-Jones, with his article 'Zeus in Aeschylus' (1956) and the book *The Justice of Zeus* (1971). Lloyd-Jones' importance to the Aeschylean scholarship rests largely on his opposition to the view prevalent at the time that Aeschylus' religious world-view was more 'advanced' than that of Homer and Hesiod, or that he was greatly influenced by Presocratic thinkers, such as Xenophanes and Heraclitus. Rather, Lloyd-Jones states that Aeschylus' presentation of the gods is no different from what we see presented in Homer or Hesiod. For Lloyd-Jones, Aeschylus should not be seen as some great 'thinker', presenting anything more nuanced or developed than either Homer or Hesiod.

However, in the same year that Lloyd-Jones' *The Justice of Zeus* was published, there appeared an article by Joseph Fontenrose, 'Gods and Men in the *Oresteia*'. While this piece has not received nearly as much attention from the scholarly community as Lloyd-Jones', its importance should not be underestimated when it comes to discussions of the justice of Zeus. In his article, Fontenrose states that scholars are mistaken when they claim that Zeus wants Agamemnon or Orestes punished and that Clytemnestra is an instrument of the god's justice. By taking this position, Fontenrose re-opens and reignites the debate concerning the justice of Zeus and the benevolence of the god, which hints at the type of arguments made previously by Reinhardt and Solmsen twenty years earlier. While Fontenrose's conclusions are less than satisfactory and do not do justice to the central thesis of the paper, arguing that Aeschylus presents the gods as partisans, with the Olympians on the side of Agamemnon and the chthonic gods on the side of Clytemnestra, the questions which it raises about the desire of Zeus for Agamemnon's death are significant. Indeed, the

importance of the article rests, in many respects, not with the answers it provides, but rather with the questions it raises, in particular, how we should view the nature of justice when the highest and most powerful god not only does nothing to avenge the killing of a young, innocent girl by her father, but may even view such a killing as a just act.

In the following years, though they do not follow his central thesis, there are two works especially which take a similar pessimistic view of the plays to Fontenrose's and do so by discussing the importance of grammatical and syntactical considerations in the Hymn to Zeus for our understanding of the nature of justice in the *Oresteia* as a whole. The first of these, Maurice Pope's article 'Merciful Heavens: A Question in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*' (1974), discusses the differing implications of two well-attested variant manuscript readings of lines 182-3 (at the end of the Hymn to Zeus) for the presentation of justice and Zeus in the trilogy. With regard to the more widely accepted of these readings, there is a divine grace in the justice of Zeus; on the other, no comfort can be found in Zeus or the manner of justice presided over by the god.[13] A few years after Pope's article, P. M. Smith, in his monograph *On the Hymn to Zeus in Aeschylus' Agamemnon* (1980), also puts forward arguments that can be seen to fall within the pessimistic tradition in its reading of the Hymn to Zeus. However, while the arguments made by Smith in the initial stages of the work concerning the close connection of the sacrifice of Iphigeneia and the will of Zeus are in keeping with the pessimistic tradition – which sees Zeus' rule and the nature of justice over which the god presides as being questioned in the *Oresteia* – this position is then seemingly abandoned in favour of a more optimistic understanding of the Hymn, seeing Zeus' rule as an unquestioned and unquestionable grace (χάρις) – a view which is apparently confirmed by the author's reading of *Ag.* 182-3.[14]

A recent work that discusses 'guilt', the Erinyes and justice is Sewell-Rutter's *Guilt by Descent: Moral Inheritance and Decision Making in Greek Tragedy*' (2007). Sewell-Rutter's book brings out the inter-connected causality surrounding the death of Agamemnon in the *Oresteia*; but the idea of what makes someone 'guilty', and in whose eyes, is never addressed. Indeed, while the nature of *Dikē* as a multi-faceted concept in archaic Greek thought is touched upon, nevertheless by what criteria we

[13] For discussion of *Ag.* 182-3 and the various readings of the lines, see Chapter 4 'The Justice of Zeus' and the section *The Hymn to Zeus*.

[14] See Chapter 4 'The Justice of Zeus' and the section *The Hymn to Zeus* for discussion of the optimistic and pessimistic readings of *Ag.* 182-3.

should judge Agamemnon, Eteocles or any other tragic figure is left unsaid. So, although the concept of justice is alluded to, we are left with little idea about how we should read or understand the nature of justice and the role of 'guilt' within the *Oresteia*. Moreover, the discussion of the Erinyes in the *Eumenides* does little to investigate these deities as dramatic figures within the structure of the play or how the relationship between the Erinyes and Zeus impacts on our understanding of Agamemnon's 'guilt' or the nature of justice within the trilogy as a whole. So, while Sewell-Rutter's book overlaps in its topics with many of the areas discussed in my thesis, its methods and approach are quite different.

The most recent publication to supply an in-depth discussion of the nature of Zeus in Aeschylus is Robert Bees' *Aischylos. Interpretationen zum Verständnis seiner Theologie* (2009). While the work does not advance the discussion in any meaningful way, it is worthwhile to give a brief overview of its key points and the position it holds within the Aeschylean scholarly tradition. Bees sets himself in direct opposition to Lloyd-Jones and Denys Page, who argue that Aeschylus presents nothing new in his plays with regard to his religious or philosophical views, nothing at least which cannot already be seen in Homer or Hesiod. However, rather than moving the debate on from the polemical view championed by Lloyd-Jones towards a more nuanced understanding of the presentation of the gods in Aeschylus, Bees instead takes a position reminiscent of the type held by scholars in the first half of the twentieth century, before Lloyd-Jones first presented his arguments in his paper 'Zeus in Aeschylus' (1956). Bees argues in such a way that the Zeus of Aeschylus seems to be presented as a proto-Christian 'God' and the plays as a dogmatic tract. But, while the underlying position of Bees' work is not an unreasonable one – *i. e.* that everything that happens in the plays is the will of Zeus – the manner in which the arguments are presented is far too closely tied to Christian teleological ideals to provide any meaningful advancement within the field.

The *Prometheus Bound*

This thesis will not adduce passages from the play as evidence to support arguments made and as a result it is necessary to discuss the scholarly debates surrounding its authenticity as a genuine play of Aeschylus and to account for my decision not to use it within the main body of this work. This is not the place, however, to list every single argument and counter-argument, as this has been done by

others in great detail.[15] Instead, I will give the key areas of debate, the major trends of thought regarding the issue and to state clearly my own position regarding it.

There is no indication in the ancient sources that the *Prometheus Bound* was regarded with any suspicion as an inauthentic play of Aeschylus, at least from the third century B.C., and no doubts are recorded in the scholia. Indeed, the grandiose nature of the play's theme seems in keeping with the Aristophanic portrayal of the poet in the *Frogs*.[16] On the other hand, there is no contemporary fifth-century testimony and in quite a few respects the play 'seems' or 'feels' different from the other six unquestioned genuine plays. As a result, much of the debate surrounding the play's Aeschylean 'genuineness' is based upon the play's internal evidence and scholars' argumentation about Aeschylean style and thought. On whatever side of the debate one falls down on, there can be no real certainty. As it has been put by one scholar writing on this very issue: 'Indeed, the ease with which a scrap of external evidence might overthrow the most soundly based indications of style and structure should counsel caution in any approach to stylistic analysis of the play.'[17] One need only look at how the publication of the *Oxyrhynchus Papyri* 2256 Fr. 3 in 1952 changed our understanding of not only the *Suppliants* as a play itself, but also how we understand Aeschylus' work as a whole.

Arguably the earliest significant work to question in an extended manner the authenticity of the *Prometheus Bound* as a genuine work of Aeschylus was Schmid's *Untersuchungen zum gefesselten Prometheus* (1929) – although, as noted above, Porzig had already questioned the play's authenticity in his *Die Attische Tragödie des Aischylos* (1926). In his work Schmid argues that the *Prometheus Bound* was not a play of Aeschylus, because it praises the work of Prometheus and mankind to the disadvantage of the highest god. Schmid sees the *Prometheus Bound* as inauthentic, but the (lost) *Promtheus Unbound* as authentic – the latter the work of a pious mind, the former an impious. Thus, the questions raised by Schmid over the play's authenticity were not concerned with stylistic or technical concerns about the play's use of language, metre, the length of choruses or of staging, but were theological and

[15] For example, Herington (1970), Dodds (1973), Griffith (1977), Taplin (1977), Podlecki (2005), Ruffell (2012).
[16] Further, there are possible references in Aristophanes to the play: see *Prom.* 59, 613 and Griffith's notes (1983).
[17] Ireland (1986) 36.

centred round how appropriate or likely it was that the author of the *Oresteia* could portray Zeus in so different a fashion.

Although I will not provide a detailed list of the counter-arguments to this view, it may be worthwhile to highlight a couple of them. An interpretation such as Schmid's depends, first, upon seeing the *Oresteia*, in particular, as presenting Zeus as a kind and benevolent figure – something that is brought into question in the final chapter of this thesis. Secondly, – if I may put to one side for one moment my own arguments concerning the benevolence or otherwise of Zeus in the *Oresteia* and take up a more traditional view which sees a kinder Zeus in the trilogy (and the rest of the unquestioned Aeschylean corpus) – such an interpretation of the theology of Aeschylus also depends upon (i) Aeschylus never changing his presentation of Zeus to suit his dramatic purposes, and (ii) Zeus not tempering his rule in the following play, if we accept the general view that the *Prometheus Bound* was part of a sequence,[18] whether the first or second play,[19] allowing for reconciliation, which in turn would dovetail nicely with the conclusion of the *Eumenides*.[20] It is thus difficult to conclude one way or the other from theological concerns alone whether the play is Aeschylus' work or not.

During the latter half of the twentieth century doubts about the play being the (sole) work of Aeschylus have focused less on the theology of the play and its author and more on stylistic points, such as language, metre and staging (among other things).[21] To summarise and paraphrase the list supplied by Griffith in his commentary on the *Prometheus Bound*, the main areas of suspicion concerning the play's potential spuriousness are:

i) The simpler and more prosaic style of the play as a whole.

ii) The length and metre of the choruses and their less integrated nature into the tragedy as a whole, which is more similar to the later tragedies of Sophocles and Euripides.

iii) The episodic structure, notably the Oceanus and Io scenes.

---

[18] Most scholars accept that the *Prometheus Bound* was part of a trilogy. The possibility has been raised that it was one half of a dilogy; see West (2007a) 361 for criticisms.

[19] For discussion of the play's position within the trilogy, see: West (2007a) 359-96.

[20] For further and more detailed discussion concerning the theological concerns surrounding the *Prometheus Bound*, see: Taplin (1977) 468-9, Winnington-Ingram (1983) 175-97, Ireland (1986) 34-6.

[21] Among the main works to discuss such issues are: Herington (1970), Griffith (1977), Taplin (1977) West (1990), (2007a).

iv) Problems of staging and the requirement of machinery and stage buildings not available to Aeschylus.[22]

v) The occurence of 'un-Aeschylean' language, including words common in Sophocles and Euripides.

vi) The use of sophistic and rhetorical language more in common with Sophocles and Euripides than Aeschylus.[23]

It is not the time or the place to go into the merits of each point, nor is it necessary for the purposes here. Even if we accept the merits of the concerns and stylistic 'evidence' as listed above at face value, it is still difficult to conclude with complete certainty that the *Prometheus Bound* is not a genuine play of Aeschylus. While the issues raised by Griffith that are listed here above and are expressed in greater detail in his book *The Authenticity of the Prometheus Bound* are important, we nevertheless have relatively little comparative evidence, aswe possess less than 10% of Aeschylus' entire corpus, and similar percentages for Sophocles' and Euripides' plays, in addition to no other work from the numerous other Attic playwrights (*Rhesus* notwithstanding). So, we are left, on the one hand, in a situation where there are serious and cogent doubts about the play's style and structure. But, on the other hand, we must admit that we have relatively little comparative data and that we have no source which presents any doubts about its authenticity, at least from the third century B.C. onwards, as well as possessing nothing in the scholia that suggests any concern.

Two reasons have been put forward which could account for the presence of both Aeschylean and un-Aeschylean elements in the *Prometheus Bound.* The first of these reasons advances the possibility that the play was written for production in Sicily on or for one of Aeschylus' trips to the island, perhaps in the final years of his life.[24] In this way, one could see Aeschylus producing a play for a relatively uneducated audience unused to the high-flung styles of Athens. The second possibility, which has gained far more favour, is that the play was posthumously produced, that is was unfinished at the time of Aeschylus' death and subsequently finished and staged by his son Euphorion, whom we know to have been a playwright

[22] On this see, especially, Taplin (1977) 240-75, 460-9; Griffith (1977) 143-6; Ruffell (2012) 80-104.
[23] See Griffith (1983) 33-5.
[24] For bibliography, further discussion and criticism of this issue, see Dodds (1973) 37, Taplin (1977) 463, Griffith (1978), Ireland (1986) 35, Ruffell (2012) 16, 138 n.19. The late dating of the play could also account for the Sophoclean and Euripidean elements present in the play.

himself. This hypothesis would account for a number of the problems, allowing one to see Aeschylean elements of the play as the great poet's original work and at the same time the authorship of Euphorion supplies a reason for those elements of the play which seem un-Aeschylean.[25] But again we cannot know, since there is no positive evidence to support this ingenious solution.

My view and the one which accounts for the exclusion of analysis of the play within the main body of this thesis is one which I alluded to toward the beginning of this section: on whatever side of the debate one falls, there is no certainty concerning the authorship of the *Prometheus Bound* – that is until some new papyrus is found which will show conclusively one way or the other, just as happened with the dating of the *Suppliants* and the *Oxyrhynchus Papyri* 2256 Fr. 3. So, to base any conclusions about the theology of Aeschylus on a play which is considered by a significant number of modern scholars as (at the very least) not wholly the work of Aeschylus is fraught with problems.

Methodology and Structure

In the following pages, my discussion of the nature of the gods in Aeschylus will be based on a close discussion and analysis of the texts in order to see precisely what Aeschylus says about the gods and how he presents them in relation to other divinities and mankind. The thesis takes as its starting-point three closely connected divine words: θεός, δαίμων and Zeus, the three words which are used more than any others of the gods in the plays. Not only does the frequency with which these three words are used help to give a good cross-section of when, where and how the gods are spoken of and referred to in the plays; but in modern discussions, θεός, δαίμων and Zeus have also on occasion been placed together and understood as synonymous terms in what has been called the 'indefinite mode of expression'. The indefinite mode of expression, which – as will be discussed – is often used when no single god can be identified as responsible for an event, brings together the generic nature with which θεός and δαίμων can be used to refer to 'a god', together with the over-arching power and position of the god Zeus. But, while these three words can on occasion be used synonymously, this is not to suggest that θεός always means the same as δαίμων, δαίμων the same as θεός, or that δαίμων denotes the same thing as Zeus, or θεός the

[25] For this view see especially West (1990) 67-72; for further discussion, see Dodds (1973) 37-8, Sommerstein (1996) 326-7, Ruffell (2012) 16.

same as Zeus. Indeed, what this thesis does is to take these three divine terms, which have a well-defined and widely acknowledged similarity and area of overlap in the 'indefinite mode of expression' and work outwards, discussing the meaning of each term in context and how context has an effect on the meaning. I hope that this will aid our understanding of the plays themselves and, by extension, conceptions of divinity that were being put forward in public spaces in fifth-century Athens.

Although there is much that connects θεός, δαίμων and Zeus, the treatment of the three terms below differs in its approach. First, θεός and δαίμων are taken together in the opening chapter. Θεός needs little discussion, as there is almost no confusion or ambiguity regarding its meaning and what it is used to denote; δαίμων, by contrast, is an ambiguous term, whose meaning, as modern scholarly discussion shows, is often far from certain. In order to come to an understanding about the meaning of δαίμων in all of its occurrences in Aeschylus, the word and its meaning-relation with θεός is examined in the various contexts in which it appears. While δαίμων sometimes presents a meaning similar to, if not synonymous with, θεός, there are numerous occasions when the two terms clearly denote different ideas. The clear-cut and easily discernible meaning of θεός acts as a constant with which the more ambiguous and less determinable word δαίμων can be compared and contrasted. So, in the chapter on δαίμων, there is initially discussion of those instances where δαίμων seems to be synonymous with θεός, where it seems to be used to denote a known or unknown deity, before moving on to dicuss those instances where δαίμων does not seem to present a meaning close to that of θεός, where the term has often been thought to possess a meaning close to that of an individual's fortune or destiny in life. The chapter concludes with an in-depth consideration of the way in which δαίμων is used of the Erinyes in the *Eumendies*, how it is used to assist their depiction in relation to the Olympians and thus how it affects the presentation of the theology of Aeschylus. This chapter not only gives a starting-point for engaging with passages discussed throughout the thesis, but it also provides a context for what is to come, especially for the culminating discussion of the Erinyes and Olympians in the *Eumenides*.

The subsequent chapters are concerned with the presentation of Zeus in Aeschylus. The approach taken in these chapters differs from the one taken in the previous chapter on δαίμων. Rather than treating the name Zeus as an ambiguous term that presents various meanings, examining it in various contexts and its meaning-relations, the various aspects of the nature and character of Zeus are discussed in turn.

In contrast with the term δαίμων, Zeus is, as a named divinity, an established figure within the Greek literary tradition, a character who has the same (or very similar) characteristics specific to his divinity from the works of Homer onwards. So, in the chapters on Zeus in this thesis, no attempt is made to find the meaning of the name,[26] but rather the qualities that are given to Zeus himself: what, in essence, the nature of Zeus is. In undertaking this investigation, I look at the respective 'characters' of Zeus in the first chapter, working chronologically through the plays of Aeschylus from the *Persians*, *Seven Against Thebes*, and *Suppliants* to the *Oresteia* trilogy, the *Agamemnon*, *Libation Bearers* and *Eumenides*.[27] In this way, it can be established whether there emerges from the plays a unified or common picture of Zeus, or whether Aeschylus' views concerning the nature of Zeus changed in any discernable way throughout the fifteen year period to which his extant plays belong. The possibility is also entertained that Aeschylus did not have views about the nature of Zeus and used the god for dramatic purposes. The chapter aims to see whether it is possible to create an over-arching picture of Zeus in Aeschylus through characteristics which are unique to the god in individual plays and which are common to the god between plays.

In the second chapter on Zeus, entitled 'The Nature of Zeus', we consider the old debates concerning the potential and respective influence of Homeric, Hesiodic and Presocratic conceptions of divinity on the theology of Aeschylus. It is in this field that the views of Hugh Lloyd-Jones have held sway for the best part of half a century. However, in this thesis, rather than taking an over-arching view of 'Aeschylean theology', seeing it as something either 'primitive' or 'advanced', the different aspects of Zeus' nature which are brought out by Aeschylus in his plays are examined, first and foremost in the various contexts in which they appear. It is only after close analysis of the individual passages that we discuss whether any rounded picture can be

[26] The etymology of the name of Zeus and its connection with the sky has little bearing on the characteristics of the god in extant Greek literature. For further discussion of this aspect of Zeus and related bibliography, see Chapter 3 'The Nature of Zeus', section *The Power and Limitations of Zeus.*

[27] I do not discuss the *Prometheus Bound* in Chapter 2, due to the uncertainty concerning whether the play is by Aeschylus. See the discussion of the *Prometheus Bound* in the Introduction above. In addition, I do not discuss the fragments in this chapter. The lack of context that is inevitable due to their fragmentary nature entails that the information gathered about the god does not present a rounded picture and so does not sufficiently add to what is already taken from the plays themselves to be worthwhile – at least, in this chapter, which looks for a broad picture of what the god is like. In the subsequent chapter, which looks for hints and indications that Aeschylus was interacting with Presocratic conceptions of the divine, there is some discussion of some fragmentary pieces, notably Fr.70.

drawn concerning Aeschylus' presentation of the god in his plays. This examination of the nature of Zeus is undertaken by looking at certain aspects of the god's nature which have been the key areas of contention within the Aeschylean scholarly tradition. The first of these areas is an apparent contradiction in the nature of Zeus. In the section *The Power and Limitations of Zeus*, it is discussed how Aeschylus depicts Zeus as both an almighty god and as a god who is limited and restricted in his divinity by the existence of other gods. Aeschylus' presentation of Zeus is then compared with the Homeric and Hesiodic presentation of the god, in order to see to what extent and in what respects Aeschylus' own view varies from the earlier conceptions of the god.

The second section of this chapter continues the discussion with another set of seemingly contradictory aspects of Zeus' nature: *Anthropomorphism and Invariance*. This section looks at the relation between a god who is presented as omniscient, omnipresent and invariant and a god who is presented anthropomorphically and in possession of the limitations of men. This is done with particular attention to Presocratic conceptions of divinity which are discussed in order to determine their potential influence on Aeschylus – or, at least, in order to consider them as examples of a similarity in thought that could point to an intellectual environment in which received ideas were being reviewed and the understanding of the nature of the gods was being discussed and debated. The third section continues to consider the potential influence of Presocratic thought on Aeschylus by looking at *Zeus as a Primal Substance*. Here, the discussion is focused around one particular fragment from Aeschylus' *Heliades*, Fr. 70, and its similarity (or not) to the manner of thought expressed in the works of philosophers such as Empedocles, Anaximenes of Miletus and Diogenes of Apollonia. The fourth and final section of the chapter, *Zeus and Hades*, examines the relation between Zeus and Hades in Aeschylus in order to see whether the poet intends anything more than simply a synonym for Hades when he refers to 'Zeus of the dead'. In this section, we consider Homeric usage of the phrase 'Zeus of the dead' and Presocratic usage of the name of Zeus, as well as how the name of Zeus is connected with the god of the dead in Sophocles and Euripides.

The final chapter, 'The Justice of Zeus', discusses arguably the most significant aspect of Zeus' nature as the highest and most powerful god of the Greek pantheon. How we understand the nature of Zeus in Aeschylus depends to a large degree, as will be shown, on how we understand the nature of justice. While the will of Zeus and his over-arching power as the highest god can be seen to underpin many

of the events that occur in the plays of Aeschylus, the god should not be seen as responsible for any and every event: he is not omnipotent, omniscient or omnipresent in the way the Judaeo-Christian God is often conceived as being. As is discussed fully in the chapter 'The Nature of Zeus', Zeus' will is limited by the existence of other gods, their own spheres of power and their own individual wills. In Aeschylus, the nature of Zeus and justice is shaped by the presentation of the unfolding events and individual characters' actions, how these events and actions are related to Zeus, and by what individual characters say in the plays. It is necessary to guard against grandiose or sweeping statements in considering the justice of Zeus, and instead to look at the justice of Zeus within the framework of the extant material and to work from the examples gathered from the plays themselves. In this chapter, this is done initially by discussing one particularly important question. The initial question posed in this chapter is whether Agamemnon should be considered unjust in the eyes of Zeus for sacrificing Iphigeneia and, in part as a consequence, whether Clytemnestra acts justly in killing Agamemnon.

Rather than starting the discussion by looking at the actions (and inaction) of Agamemnon himself, we first consider Orestes and his actions in the section: *Orestes δικηφόρος – a test case*. Simply put, because Zeus deems Orestes' act of killing Clytemnestra as just and thus not requiring punishment, Clytemnestra must have committed an unjust act that requires punishment, which is stated in the *Libation Bearers* as being the killing of Agamemnon. This then leaves the question, if the killing of Agamemnon is thought of as unjust, should he be seen as having committed an unjust act in the eyes of Zeus and the Olympians that requires punishment and thus his death? This is not to say that Agamemnon does not deserve his death because Clytemnestra is killed as a direct consequence of killing him. Rather, this chapter addresses the possibility that there is insufficient evidence in the *Agamemnon* itself, or at least ambiguous evidence, which suggests that Agamemnon is killed in line with the desire of the highest gods or at their behest. It is not argued that divine justice is presented by Aeschylus as some sort of zero-sum game, *i.e.*: Agamemnon must be innocent because Clytemnestra is killed for killing him. The possibility put forward throughout this chapter is that events and passages in the *Agamemnon* can be read in a way which indicate Agamemnon did not commit any action which angered the gods, but instead purposefully strove to keep Zeus and the Olympians on his side; while, in contrast, Clytemnestra can also be seen to have transgressed the will and desire of

Zeus and the Olympian gods and can clearly be seen to have been punished by them or at their behest as a consequence. Indeed, this reading will also bring in arguments concerning the 'unity' of the *Oresteia* and demonstrate how my reading of the 'guilt' of Agamemnon gives greater cohesion to the trilogy.

The following section, *The Killer of Agamemnon*, examines who killed Agamemnon, giving consideration to both the natural and supernatural agents mentioned as responsible for his death. Although the answer to the question: 'who killed Agamemnon?' is, of course, a simple one – 'Clytemnestra, with the assistance of Aegisthus' – the issue is complicated by divine involvement and by the daimonic forces which seem to possess the House of Atreus. This section investigates how daimonic forces can be seen to act as mitigating factors in Clytemnestra's act of killing Agamemnon, whether there is any indication that Zeus and/or any other Olympian wants the death of Agamemnon, and how such considerations affect our understanding of divine involvement in his death.

The next three sections work chronologically through the *Agamemnon*, picking up on the key areas of action and how Agamemnon is presented, whether as someone who acts justly or not. The first of these, *Zeus Xenios*, establishes within the structure and plot of the play the primacy of Zeus' will in Agamemnon's decision to avenge the theft of Helen. The second, *The Anger of Artemis and the Sacrifice of Iphigeneia*, looks at the role of Artemis in the king's decision to sacrifice his daughter, and how the wills of the goddess and of Zeus determine how Agamemnon acts in the scene. The third, *The Hymn to Zeus*, examines how the Hymn gives clear signs about the way the justice of Zeus should be understood and how Agamemnon's decision to sacrifice Iphigeneia fits with the doctrine of πάθει μάθος, the meaning of which is also discussed. Together, these three sections put forward the notion that the justice of Zeus, though completely rational, is neither kind nor benevolent nor merciful.

The following and final two sections counter common assumptions about the so-called 'guilt' of Agamemnon through an examination of the individual passages commonly supplied as examples of the king's 'guilt'. First, *Agamemnon's Excessive Actions at Troy*, discusses assumptions connected with the 'transgressive nature' of Agamemnon, such as that he committed acts of excess at Troy, and that he was of a nature that inclined him to commit acts of excess, as is demonstrated by treading on and destroying the 'tapestries' on his return. These notions are then discussed by going through each of the passages commonly seen as demonstrating that

Agamemnon acts in an excessive manner, and arguing in turn that each example presents at best very slim evidence of transgressive and unjust behaviour. The final section, *A Fitting End?*, argues that there are also no examples within the play that can be supplied as evidence for the death of Agamemnon fitting the will of Zeus or any other Olympian god. Rather, it is demonstrated in this section that there is an abundance of examples within the *Agamemnon* and the *Oresteia* as a whole that give a clear indication that the gods favour Agamemnon.

After discussion of the 'guilt' of Agamemnon, the chapter widens to consider the justice of Zeus in the *Oresteia* as a whole. This is done by investigating the conflict between the Olympian gods and the Erinyes in the *Eumenides*. The trial of Orestes in the *Eumenides* is of significance to our understanding of the nature of Zeus and justice in Aeschylus, because it depicts the coming together of old gods with new; simple eye-for-an-eye retribution with a court-based system; and, it has been argued, the introduction of a new form of justice in the *Oresteia* with the establishment of the Areopagus court, which demonstrates a progression from retributive justice in the *Agamemnon* to something more enlightened in the *Eumenides*. However, what this section hopes to demonstrate in conclusion, and what the chapter The Justice of Zeus as a whole intends to show, is that there is no underlying change in the nature of Zeus or the manner of justice over which he presides, but that the god's justice is entirely consistent throughout the three plays of the trilogy. This is not to discount or overlook that there is an important and noteworthy change in the manner of the presentation and manifestation of justice in the form of the Areopagus court. But, nevertheless, the argument that is put forth and made in this chapter is that in spite of this development, the ultimate outcome is and will always be the same, because the will of Zeus will always be fulfilled. So, if the outcome is seemingly fixed and determined, irrespective of the creation of the court, can it be said that there is an underlying change in the nature of justice?

The over-arching aim of my thesis is to supply a comprehensive study of the nature of the divine in Aeschylus in the hope of re-opening discussion about how the gods are presented in his plays. The chapter on δαίμων will give a clearer indication about how one of the most commonly used divine words in Greek literature presents a range of inter-connected meanings and how what it denotes in each case is often dependent on context. The opening chapter also discusses how in later Greek literature δαίμων came to denote a separate stratum of divinity between gods and men, by

looking at how Aeschylus himself uses the word in his plays in contexts where it refers to deities of a lesser power and position than θεός. The chapter will also look forward to the final chapter of the thesis, by examing how δαίμων and θεός are used in the *Eumenides* to help facilitate the presentation and divide between the Erinyes and the Olympians.

In the chapters that examine the presentation of Zeus in Aeschylus, the main aims are, first, to demonstrate that Aeschylus was not writing in isolation, detached from the rest of the world and from the literary and philosophical Greek tradition; rather, Aeschylus was influenced by a range of authors and ideas, including Homer, Hesiod and the Presocratic philosophers, who were speculating about the nature of the highest and most powerful god. But, more than this, it is my intention to show that the gods of Aeschylus were not kind or benevolent deities interferring in the lives of men in order to help or improve them. Instead, it will be argued that the gods of the Greek pantheon, including (especially) Zeus, were selfish gods concerned only with their own honour.

PART 1: ΔΑΙΜΩΝ AND ΘΕΟΣ

1: ΔΑΙΜΩΝ IN THE PLAYS OF AESCHYLUS

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is twofold: first, to highlight the flexibility and ambiguity of the word δαίμων in Aeschylus, while also demonstrating that at times the word presents clearly discernible meanings. The second purpose is to show, based on the conclusions reached in the main body of the chapter in relation to the first purpose, how the meaning-relation of δαίμων and θεός adds to and aids our understanding of the conflict and resolution between the Olympian gods and the Erinyes in the *Eumenides*. However, this can only be done by giving detailed consideration to what δαίμων denotes and means in its various contexts in the plays and how the word is used by Aeschylus.

In relation to other divine terms such as θεός or Zeus, δαίμων appears, at first glance at least, to be an ambiguous word in many of its instances in archaic and classical Greek literature. It seems to be used to denote a god or gods, the idea of fortune, an individual's personal guardian deity, a vague supernatural force, as well as representing the manifestation of the ills of a family. The difficulty of understanding the word is also compounded to some extent by our modern English word demon, which is derived from the Greek δαίμων, via the Latin *daemon*, and which in English holds sinister and evil connotations. The pejorative character which δαίμων came to hold in later antiquity, and which had an effect on later conceptions of the word, is demonstrated in the New Testament, where δαίμων, δαίμονες is used to refer to a malevolent spirit or spirits: in the King James Version of the Bible, it is translated as devil(s).[1] But, the systematisation of divine terminology with δαίμων denoting a deity of lesser power and position than θεός did not become an established idea in Greek religio-philosophical thought until Plato and Xenocrates,[2] sometime after Aeschylus and the period under discussion here.

Δαίμων has been the subject of many treatments, especially with regard to its employment and meaning in Homer,[3] as well as treatments which deal with the word

[1] See *Mat.*8:31, *Mar.*5:12, *Lu.*8:29, *Rev.*16:14, 18:2.
[2] See, for example, Plato *Symp.* 202e-203e; Xenocrates Fr.15, 23-4; cf. Burkert (1985) 331-2.
[3] Jörgensen (1904); Hedén (1912); Ehnmark (1935); Else (1949); Brunius-Nilsson (1955); Wilford (1965); Dietrich (1967).

in a general and over-riding fashion.[4] There has been, however, something of a vacuum when it comes to studies of δαίμων, its usage and meaning between Homer and Aeschylus. There are two noteworthy exceptions: Shirley Darcus' article '*DAIMON* as a Force Shaping *ETHOS* in Heraclitus' and Franziska Geisser's book *Götter, Geister und Dämonen*, which looks at destructive daemonic agencies in Aeschylus. While Geisser stands alone in looking at δαίμων in Aeschylus, her work's scope only really allows for an examination of the word in its capacity as an *Unheilsmacht* and thus does not really permit a comprehensive approach to δαίμων as a religious/supernatural concept in Aeschylus. What the discussion in this chapter aims to do, by contrast, is to examine δαίμων as a concept and to consider it in context in order to see how it is used to denote different ideas and notions. In so doing, consideration will be given to the potential influence of Homeric, Hesiodic and Presocratic employments of the word, as well as the potential anachronistic influence of the Platonic 'personal' δαίμων on many interpretations of δαίμων in earlier literature.

Traced from the root **dai-*, from which δαίομαι 'to divide, to distribute' is derived, δαίμων can be seen as 'he who distributes, allots and dispenses'.[5] From this etymology, it is possible to see how δαίμων came to be conceptualised as both a deity (he who dispenses) and, derived from that, the fortune that results. But, in spite of these relatively easily understood meanings – and, of course, while a word is never completely bound by etymology – in a significant proportion of occurrences the precise meaning of the word is not entirely clear, where the idea of 'deity' or 'fortune' cannot be said to express fully what is being presented by the word. Before we come to a discussion of the more ambiguous instances of the word, the investigation will look at the more easily understood examples, where it can be determined without too much difficulty what δαίμων in the singular and δαίμονες in the plural denote.

---

[4] Wilamowitz (1955, 2nd ed.) 356-63; Dodds (1951) 11-14; François (1957) *passim*; Kittel, Bromiley, Friedrich, Pitkin (eds.) (1964-1976) 2. 1-10; Nilsson (1967) 200-6; Kerenyi (1975) 16-20; Burkert (1985) 179-81. It was popular, in the late nineteenth century and in the early part of the twentieth, to look at how the nature of δαίμων originated out of the natural world and natural phenomena, and how what we find in Homer relates to 'popular practice'. Cf. Usener (1896); Frazer (3rd ed., 1918). With the exception of Dietrich (1967), this practise had lost favour by the second half of the twentieth century.

[5] For discussions on the word's etymology, see Wilamowitz (1955, 2nd ed.) 1.356-64; Nilsson (1967) 1.202-4; Dietrich (1967) 14-15; Kerenyi (1975) 16-17; Burkert (1985) 180, 420 n.3; Geisser (2002) 7 n.2; cf. Frisk (1954) 340-1; Chantraine (1968) 246-7.

ΘΕΟΣ IN AESCHYLUS

In contrast with δαίμων, the word θεός seems to present few difficulties in meaning in the works of Aeschylus and in the works of authors earlier than and contemporary with him. The unambiguous nature of θεός will offer a useful starting point and introduction to the subsequent, more thorough discussions on δαίμων, by providing characteristics with which the latter term can be compared and contrasted, and from which firmer and more fruitful conclusions can be drawn about the nature of δαίμων in the plays of Aeschylus.

Θεός/θεοί denote the idea of a god and gods respectively; they always do and there is no ambiguity in meaning in this respect. Nevertheless, there are a few areas which need to be clarified. First of all, in Aeschylus, as well as in archaic and classical Greek authors more generally, θεός and θεοί are used both generically and specifically. When used specifically, θεός, in the singular, refers to a specified deity, and this can be seen clearly, for example, when the Danaids speak of Apollo: ἁγνόν τ' Ἀπόλλω, φυγάδ' ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ θεόν. 'And holy Apollo, the god exiled from Heaven'[6] (*Supp.* 214).[7] Something similar is true when θεοί, in the plural, is used specifically: it refers to a specified plurality of deities. This usage can be seen, for example, at *Suppliants* 159-61 in reference to the Olympian gods: τὸν πολυξενώτατον | Ζῆνα τῶν κεκμηκότων | ἱξόμεσθα σὺν κλάδοις | ἀρτάναις θανοῦσαι, | μὴ τυχοῦσαι θεῶν Ὀλυμπίων. 'With boughs we will approach as suppliants the host of very many, Zeus of the departed, having died by the noose, unless we meet with the Olympian gods.'[8] And as would be expected, when θεοί is used generically it refers to an unspecified plurality of deities.

However, when θεός is used generically, it can either refer to an unspecified god or to the gods as a whole, as a generic, collective singular, in a manner comparable to the way 'man' can be used in English. As a generic, collective singular, θεός presents a meaning similar to θεοί. This we can see, when in response to the Herald's announcement that Agamemnon is soon to arrive, Clytemnestra says: τί γάρ |

---

[6] The Greek text of Aeschylus is taken from West (1998), unless otherwise stated; all translations of Aeschylus are based (with some minor variations) on Sommerstein (2008), unless otherwise stated. Where Sommerstein's Greek text diverges from West's, I supply my own translation using Sommerstein as a starting point.

[7] Cf. *Supp.* 214 (Apollo), 299 (Hera), 1073 (Zeus); *Ag.* 1078 (Apollo) and 1204; *Ch.* 300 (Apollo); *Eu.* 25 (Dionysus), 33 (Apollo), 282 (Apollo), 297 (Athena) and 883.

[8] Diverging from the translation of Sommerstein (2008). For similar use of θεοί, see *Th.* 185; *Supp.* 189, 242, 333-4, 354-5, 413, 465, 501, 503, 981, 1014; *Ag.* 88-91; *Ch.* 784; *Eu.* 73.

γυναικὶ τούτου φέγγος ἥδιον δρακεῖν, | ἀπὸ στρατείας ἄνδρα σώσαντος θεοῦ | πύλας ἀνοῖξαι; 'What light could be sweeter than this for a wife to behold, when she opens the door to a husband whom a god/the gods/the divine has brought safe home from the wars?'[9] (*Ag.* 601-3) It is thus possible to see that the meaning of the passage is effectively the same should we read 'a god', 'the gods' or simply 'the divine' for θεός.

While we cannot be sure what exactly is being conceptualised with this type of generic usage of θεός – if, indeed, anything more than a vague notion of the divine is being implied – it is certain that it does not denote the idea of a monotheistic deity comparable to the Christian God. Indeed, any debate that existed regarding monotheism in early Greek thought and the use of θεός was effectively refuted with the publication of Gilbert François's 1957 work, *Le Polythéisme et l'emploi au singulier des mots THEOS, DAIMON dans la littérature grecque d'Homère a Platon.* François shows in this comprehensive study that outside of specific philosophical authors such as Xenophanes[10] and Plato, θεός in the singular was not used to denote a monotheistic notion of god (or God) before 350 BC, but was often used generically, just as in the example from the *Agamemnon.*

THE INDEFINITE MODE OF EXPRESSION

The most commonly found use of δαίμων in early Greek literature is as an unknown and unspecified agent that brings about events, and it is in this mode of employment that δαίμων has been most frequently treated by scholars. While the studies in question are primarily treatments of the word in Homer, the underlying discussions regarding the nature of the word and its usage are nevertheless applicable to Aeschylus too. In studies of δαίμων in Homer, the generic employment of δαίμων as an unknown, unspecified divine agent is often equated with the generic usage of θεός/θεοί and Zeus[11] in what has been called the 'indefinite mode of expression'.[12]

---

[9] In the translation of θεοῦ, I differ from Sommerstein, who translates it as 'god', which is potentially misleading in its monotheistic connotations.

[10] This is not to say that Xenophanes exclusively uses the word θεός/θεοί for his *one god* alone: see, for example, Fr. B1, 14-16, 18, 23, 34. For discussion of the 'monotheistic' fragments and their significance for our understanding of Aeschylus, see Chapter 3 'The Nature of Zeus', section *Anthropomorphism and Invariance.*

[11] See Else (1949) for a detailed discussion of the generic usage of Zeus. For examples of the generic Zeus, see *Il.* 24. 525-47, *Od.* 3. 130-83.

[12] Jörgensen (1904) was the first to look at this issue. He was followed by Hedén (1912) and Ehnmark (1935), who gives a detailed summary of the scholarly debate up to that date, cf. 59-71; and in the post-

The 'indefinite mode of expression' is understood as a 'device for indicating that a supernatural event was caused by a god as to whose identity no definite statement was possible or desirable.'[13]

An example of this type of usage can be seen in *Iliad* Book 15, where the narrator, Teucer, Ajax and Hector all view the same event as the work of different divine agents, and all do so because of varying levels of insight into the divine workings surrounding the event. So, first, the narrator tells us that when Teucer was aiming his bow at Hector, Zeus protected Hector by breaking Teucer's bow-string (461-5). Secondly, Teucer, who has no insight into the divine workings of the scene, sees a δαίμων as responsible for breaking the bow-string (467-70). Thirdly, Ajax, who is in a similar unenlightened state, says that a θεός made the bow of no use (472-7). Fourthly, Hector correctly sees Zeus as responsible for breaking Teucer's bow-string (483-93). Hector's naming of Zeus here has been seen as yet another instance of the use of the name of Zeus as an indefinite term, in much the same way as δαίμων and θεός are used by Teucer and Ajax.[14] But this is not what is being expressed by Hector's use of Zeus in this instance. This is not to say that the term Zeus is never used in a generic manner. Zeus, as the most powerful god and as the 'father of gods and men', came to be representative of the totality of the gods in an all-encompassing fashion.[15] However in this instance here, in contrast with Teucer and Ajax, Hector has been privy to the help Zeus has given him through Apollo (cf. 15.254-5), and he is referring directly to the god as the source of his good luck. The differing levels of insight into the divine workings of this episode can be clearly seen. The narrator clearly tells us that Zeus is the god directly responsible for the breaking of Teucer's bow-string, and Hector here, because of Apollo's revelations at 254-5, can reasonably assume the god to be behind this particular event; while, on the other hand, Teucer and Ajax have no such insight into the specific workings of any one god and consequently refer generically to a δαίμων and a θεός as being responsible for the

---

war era, Brunius-Nilsson (1955) offers a discussion of this usage with specific analysis of several Homeric passages; cf. Else (1949); Dietrich (1967) 297-326; Nilsson (1967); Geisser (2002) 8-11.

[13] Ehnmark (1935) 71.

[14] Brunius-Nilsson (1955) 125.

[15] Ehnmark (1935) 80; Else (1949) 26-36. For comparative examples of Zeus as a specific god with clearly definable characteristics or as representative of the totality of the gods, see Hesiod *Op.* Indeed, it is possible to see from the generic usage of θεός/θεοί and Zeus how Presocratic thinkers like Xenophanes came to discuss the nature of the gods. For a discussion of this topic, see Chapter 3, section *Anthropomorphism and Invariance*.

event with each term synonymous with the other:[16] both are thinking of a god as the agent behind the deed, but neither knows which god. It is thus Teucer's and Ajax's lack of knowledge concerning which god is involved which determines their use of δαίμων and of θεός as indefinite modes of expression.

ΔΑΙΜΟΝΕΣ IN THE PLURAL

The synonymity of δαίμων and θεός can be seen in Aeschylus too. In one of its most easily recognisable applications, δαίμων is used to designate a deity of whatever nature. The plural δαίμονες is employed by Aeschylus in this way only.[17] In early Greek literature in general, on the many occasions when δαίμονες is employed in reference to deities, it appears to be synonymous with θεός/θεοί, and as such there is no perceptible difference in meaning between the two words. This synonymity is easily shown in scenes where the statues or altars of deities are being prayed to and honoured.[18] Statues and altars offer fixed points of reference from which it is possible to gather information about how the two sets of terms are used, because although the divine words – δαίμονες, θεός and θεοί – used to refer to them change, the statues or altars of the deities being honoured and prayed to are known and do not. Although what is being evoked or prayed to may nevertheless still change, the passages below can be seen in each instance to offer a secure context and a basis from which to start a discussion of possible synonymity of the two words.

In the parodos of the *Seven*, the chorus pray that they and the city may be saved from the Argive attack. Various individual deities and collectives of deities are invoked during the parodos, with θεός, θεοί and δαίμονες being used seemingly interchangeably: ἰὼ ἰὼ θεοὶ θεαί τ', ὀρόμενον | κακὸν ἀλεύσατε. 'Oh, oh, you gods and you goddesses keep off the surge of evil.' (*Th.* 87-8); τίς ἄρα ῥύσεται, τίς ἄρ' ἐπαρκέσει | θεῶν ἢ θεᾶν; 'Who, who of the gods and goddesses will protect us, who will ward them off?' (*Th.* 93-4); πότερα δῆτ' ἐγὼ <πάτρια> προσπέσω | βρέτη δαιμόνων; 'Should I, then, fall down before the <ancestral> images of our

[16] Cf. Else (1949) 26-31.
[17] *Pers.* 203, 628, 724, 811, 1005; *Th.* 77, 95, 174, 211, 236, 515; *Supp.* 85, 217, 483, 693, 893, 922; *Ag.* 182, 519, 635; *Ch.* 125, 214, 436; *Eu.* 23, 101, 150, 302, 920, 929, 947, 963, 1016.
[18] *Pers.* 203, 628, 811; *Th.* 95, 211; *Supp.* 85, 217, 483, 693; *Ag.* 519; *Eu.* 920.

daimones[19]?' (*Th.* 95-6); θεοὶ πολιάοχοι χθονὸς. 'Gods who dwell in this city and land.' (*Th.* 108); ποῖ δ' ἔτι τέλος ἐπάγει θεός; 'What is the ending that [a] god has yet to bring?' (*Th.* 157); ἰὼ παναρκεῖς[20] θεοί, | ἰὼ τέλειοι τέλειαι τε γᾶς | τᾶσδε πυργοφύλακες, 'O gods that shine on all alike, o gods and goddesses with decisive power to guard the walls of this land,' (*Th.* 166-8); ἰὼ φίλοι δαίμονες, | λυτήριοί <τ'> ἀμφιβάντες πόλιν | δείξαθ' ὡς φιλοπόλεις, 'O beloved daimones, stand over our city to liberate it and show how you love it,' (*Th.* 174-6). And directly before and after the parodos, Eteocles mentions both δαίμονες and θεοί where no change can be discerned between the deities spoken of: πόλις γὰρ εὖ πράσσουσα δαίμονας τίει. 'For, when a city enjoys success, it honours its daimones.' (*Th.* 77); βρέτη πεσούσας πρὸς πολισσούχων θεῶν 'To fall down before the images of the city's gods' (*Th.*185). The manner in which Eteocles uses the two terms can be seen as effectively synonymous with the chorus' own employment seen in the previous examples.

This use of δαίμονες as a synonym for θεός/θεοί is not exclusive to the *Seven*, but occurs in the other plays too. In the *Suppliants*, for example, the altars and statues form a similar type of focal point to that seen in the *Seven*. So, when Pelasgus[21] tells Danaus to place suppliant boughs upon other altars of deities throughout the city, he does so by calling them both θεοί and δαίμονες: κλάδους τε τούτους αἶψ' ἐν ἀγκάλαις λαβὼν | βωμοὺς ἐπ' ἄλλους δαιμόνων ἐγχωρίων | θές. 'Quickly take these boughs in your arms, and place them on the altars of our native daimones.' (*Supp.* 482-4); ἡγεῖσθε βωμοὺς ἀστικούς, θεῶν θ' ἕδρας· 'Take him to the city altars and the abodes of the gods.' (*Supp.* 501); καὶ ξυμβολοῦσιν οὐ πολυστομεῖν χρεὼν | ναύτην ἄγοντας τόνδ' ἐφέστιον θεῶν. 'And you must not be talkative with those you meet while escorting this sailor who took sanctuary at the gods' hearth.' (*Supp.* 502-3). No discernible change in reference can be seen between δαίμονες and θεοί; the focal point remains the same, while only the divine term used for it differs, just as was the case in the *Seven*.

Δαίμονες can also act as a synonym for θεός/θεοί, when no such focal point as icons or statues exists. In Aeschylus, there is one example outside of those references

[19] I translate δαιμόνων here (and elsewhere) as 'daimones' instead of 'gods' as is found in Sommerstein. This is done in order to more readily make visible where θεός, θεοί and δαίμων, δαίμονες are used, whether or not any difference in meaning is intended by the author.
[20] Reading παναρκεῖς with West (1998), instead of παναλκεῖς as in Sommerstein (2008) and Page (1972).
[21] I am aware that not all editors name the king Pelasgus. Cf. Page (1972).

to statues and altars where δαίμονες is used as a specific way of denoting deities in a manner synonymous with θεός/θεοί. This comes toward the end of the *Eumenides* (*Eu.* 961-7):

> θεαί τ' ὦ Μοῖραι
> ματροκασιγνῆται,
> δαίμονες ὀρθονόμοι,
> παντὶ δόμῳ μετάκοινοι,
> παντὶ χρόνῳ δ' ἐπιβριθεῖς
> ἐνδίκοις ὁμιλίαις,
> πάντᾳ τιμιώταται θεῶν.
>
> And goddesses, O Fates, our sisters, children of the same mother, daimones just in apportionment, sharers in every house, pressing home your just visitations at all times, the most highly honoured of the goddesses in all ways.

Here, the Fates are called θεαί and δαίμονες within three lines, and there is no difference in reference implied.[22] They are even referred to as the most honoured of the gods a couple of lines latter. One could, of course, argue that the word δαίμονες seems to be used here with a particular eye on its etymological root *dai-*, as those who distribute, apportion, allot, playing on the meaning of word ὀρθονόμοι 'making right apportionments'[23] which follows, as well as playing on the role of the Moirai as those who allot a man's share in life and the connection the name Moirai has with μέρος 'part', which the goddesses have in the houses (and, by consequence, life) of the Athenians. But, regardless of the potential etymological word-play, it is still the case that there is no change of reference between θεαί and δαίμονες, although there is a difference in connotation.

There are several occasions when δαίμονες does not refer to any specific collection of deities, but does nevertheless seem to be synonymous with θεός/θεοί. In certain instances, when δαίμονες is used shortly before or after θεοί, this usage is quite plain to see. Such is the case in the *Libation Bearers* (*Ch.* 212-14) when Orestes tells

[22] Nor is θεαί a pejorative or negative feminine version of θεός. See below discussion of Erinyes and Athena.
[23] Cf. Sommerstein (1989) 268.

Electra to pray to the gods: εὔχου τὰ λοιπά, τοῖς θεοῖς τελεσφόρους | εὐχὰς ἐπαγγέλλουσα, τυγχάνειν καλῶς. 'Pray to the gods for continued success, proclaiming to them that your previous prayers have been fulfilled!' To which Electra replies: ἐπεὶ τί νῦν ἔκατι δαιμόνων κυρῶ; 'Why, what success have the daimones now granted me?' Both Orestes and Electra refer generically to the gods, but do so using different words, with Orestes calling the gods θεοῖς and Electra δαιμόνων. In spite of two different words being used, in both instances it is clear that θεοῖς and δαιμόνων refer generically to the gods as a whole or indefinitely to any group of gods.

It is also possible to see that δαίμονες is used synonymously with θεός/θεοί through their general patterns of employment. For instance, Aeschylus only uses θεοί together with the word Ὀλυμπίοι to refer to the Olympian gods (θεοί Ὀλυμπίοι), and never uses δαίμονες.[24] Θεός/θεοί are also used to refer directly to Olympian gods when not prefaced by the epithet Ὀλυμπίοι.[25] The plural θεοί can denote both Olympian gods and non-Olympian gods together;[26] and θεός/θεοί can even refer to non-Olympian gods by themselves.[27] Finally, θεός/θεοί are used to signify the presence of gods represented by either an altar or icons, as has already been seen.[28]

Due to the frequency with which θεός or θεοί are used with specific reference, and because of the unambiguous nature of the words' employment generally, there is little doubt that when they are used generically they refer to unknown, unspecified deities. The same is true for δαίμονες. The unambiguous manner of the employment of δαίμονες with specific reference, where it always denotes a collection of known deities, enables us to understand that when it is used generically it too denotes a plurality of unspecified deities. So, in the *Persians*, when the Queen says: ὦδ' ἔχει· γνώμης δέ πού τις δαιμόνων ξυνήψατο. 'It is true. One of the daimones must have touched his wits,' (*Pers.* 724) the meaning seems quite clear that δαιμόνων denotes an

---

[24] See, *Supp.* 161, 981, 1014; *Ch.* 784; *Eu.* 73. This tendency is not exclusive to Aeschylus. In all but one instance before Aeschylus, θεοί is always used with Ὀλυμπίοι when referring to the Olympian gods. The only exception comes at Solon 36.4.

[25] See, *Th.* 301-2; *Supp.* 214, 218, 299, 630-1, 1036-7, 1073; *Ag.* 1078, 1204; *Ch.* 300, (probably 340); *Eu.* 25, 33, 153, 224, 242, 259, 282, 297, 666a, 671, 883.

[26] *Th.* 510-11; *Eu.* 20, 722, 882-4.

[27] For θεός: *Pers.* 157, 643; for θεοί: *Eumenides* 115, 728, 825. These references from the *Eumenides* are far from unambiguous uses of θεοί. All three refer to the Erinyes and two of the instances are used, in all likelihood, as terms of flattery. These three references will be discussed later in greater detail below in the discussion of the Erinyes and Athena. For now it is enough to be aware that θεός/θεοί (or their feminine equivalents) are used of non-Olympian deities.

[28] See, for example, *Th.* 185; *Supp.* 189, 242, 333-4, 354-5, 413, 465, 501, 503; *Ag.* 88-91; cf. the discussion above.

undefined plurality of deities, and that it was one of their number that assisted Xerxes in his decision to yoke the straits. Similarly, in the *Agamemnon*, the idea of an undefined plurality of deities is in evidence when the chorus ask the Herald about the storm which hit the Argive fleet on the voyage home: πῶς γὰρ λέγεις χειμῶνα ναυτικῷ στρατῷ | ἐλθεῖν τελευτῆσαί τε δαιμόνων κότῳ; 'Well, how did the storm you speak of come upon the naval host through the wrath of daimones, and how did it end?' (*Ag.* 634-5). Δαίμονες again identifies divine involvement in a general fashion as it did in the *Persians*, and the meaning must be that a plurality of unknown and unspecified deities had a role in the storm which came upon the Argive fleet.

ΔΑΙΜΩΝ IN THE SINGULAR

With the terms δαίμονες and θεός/θεοί, the idea of a god or deity is ever present, and this is true whenever they are employed. In contrast, the singular form, δαίμων, is only infrequently used to denote a god or deity by Aeschylus. There are two examples of it being used of a named deity. The first of these refers directly to Ares (*Th.* 104-7):

> προδώσεις, παλαίχθων
> Ἄρης, γᾶν τεάν;
> ὦ χρυσοπήληξ δαῖμον, ἔπιδ' ἔπιδε πόλιν
> ἄν ποτ' εὐφιλήταν ἔθου.
>
> What do you mean to do, Ares, ancient god of this land? Betray your own country? Daimon of the golden helmet, watch over, watch over the city which you once held worthy of your love?

This is the only occasion when δαίμων in the singular is used of a god traditionally associated with the Olympic pantheon.[29] The only other place where it is used of another named deity, or at least of a non-human, supernatural being, in Aeschylus[30] comes in the *Seven* with reference to Typhon (*Th.* 523).[31] What is more, this

[29] For a further discussion of this passage and the use of δαίμων to refer to Ares, see the section below entitled δαίμων *as a deity lesser than and/or distinct from* θεός.
[30] I exclude from this group *Pers.* 620, 641 where Darius is called a δαίμων. See below for discussion of Darius and δαίμων in the section δαίμων *as a deity lesser than and/or distinct from* θεός.
[31] See below for discussion of Typhon as a deity lesser than and/or distinct from θεός.

infrequency of usage is not exclusive to Aeschylus. In extant literature, there are only two instances before him when δαίμων is used of a specific, known deity (whether synonymously with θεός or otherwise).[32] The examples can be found in the *Iliad*: one at *Il.* 3.420, where it is used to refer to Aphrodite in the expression ἦρχε δὲ δαίμων 'The daimon led'; the other at 15.418, ἐπεί ῥ' ἐπέλασσέ γε δαίμων 'Since the daimon has brought them there', refers back to Apollo (15.236-80) when the god, instigated by the promptings of Zeus, breathes courage into Hector's breast and urges him on to assault the Greek ships.[33]

There is only one place in Aeschylus where δαίμων is used generically in a way that unambiguously conceptualises the idea of deity or a non-human, supernatural being. This is in the expression, ἐλθεῖν τιν' αὐτοῖς δαίμον' ἢ βροτῶν τινα - 'Ask for some daimon, or some mortal, to come against them - ' (*Ch.* 119). Although no deity is named, the idea of a deity or supernatural being is present, where the choice under consideration is between a mortal or divine avenger. Comparable instances of θεός being used to denote an unknown deity acting as a fulfiller of events can be seen elsewhere in Aeschylus. For instance, in the *Persians*, the Messenger states: ὡς γὰρ θεός | ναῶν ἔδωκε κῦδος Ἕλλησιν μάχης, 'When a god had given the triumph in the naval battle to the Greeks,' (*Pers.* 454-5). In either example, δαίμων or θεός could be used and the meaning would not be changed; the idea of an unknown deity is present in both. Such usage is comparable with the indefinite mode of expression, where δαίμων and θεός appear as synonymous terms, denoting an unknown supernatural force.

The employment of δαίμων as an unknown supernatural force is very common in Aeschylus. Δαίμων is often seen as the bringer of both good and evil when no specific god can be named as the source. It has long been accepted that δαίμων is not in itself an agent of evil.[34] This view is supported by those instances where δαίμων is qualified by positive descriptions. So, in the *Persians*, for example, Darius is called

[32] Excluded from this number are examples such as the use of δαίμων in the so-called Teucer scene in the *Iliad*, because although the poet knows that it was Zeus who saved Hector, Teucer himself does not and as such blames δαίμων as the cause or source of his foiled purpose. See section *The Indefinite Mode of Expression* above.

[33] There are two other examples which could be seen as using δαίμων to denote gods. In Hesiod and the *Theognidea* δαίμων is used to refer to Phaethon (*Theogony* 988-91) and Ganymede (1345-8) respectively. However, in these instances, δαίμων is used to refer to a different class or type of deity. For a further discussion, see the section below δαίμων *as a deity lesser than and/or distinct from* θεός.

[34] See, for example, Brunius-Nilsson (1955) 119-25, Broadhead (1960) 69-70, Burkert (1985) 179, Geisser (2002) 7-10.

δαίμονα μεγαυχῆ (*Pers.* 641) and in Aristophanes reference is made to an ἀγαθός δαίμων.[35] Also, that δαίμων was not in itself an agent of evil or sinister doings during this period is supported by the fact that it is qualified by negative adjectives, such as στυγερός (*Od.* 5.396), κακός (*Od.* 10.64, 24. 149; *Pers.* 354), χαλεπός τις (*Od.* 19.201), στυγνέ (*Pers.* 472), δυσπόνητε (*Pers.* 515). It is the adjectives themselves which give the δαίμων a negative character, not the word δαίμων itself.[36] But, while δαίμων does not possess any negative or positive weight in itself one way or the other, this does not, of course, exclude it from being employed to refer to a bringer of destruction or a bringer of good respectively. Indeed, in Aeschylus, δαίμων is often employed as a bringer of evil.[37] This feature is most readily apparent in the *Persians*, where δαίμων appears consistently as a destructive force working against Xerxes and the Persian army. The first time δαίμων is used in the play it is as a bringer of ill-fortune (*Pers.* 157-8):

> θεοῦ μὲν εὐνάτειρα Περσῶν, θεοῦ δὲ καὶ μήτηρ ἔφυς –
> εἴ τι μὴ δαίμων παλαιὸς νῦν μεθέστηκε στρατῷ.
>
> You were the spouse of one who was a god to the Persians, and you are the mother of their god too – unless an old daimon has now changed its stance concerning our army.

Here we see δαίμων and θεός used in juxtaposition, each presenting a meaning quite different from the other. While θεός refers to the Persian kings, Darius and Xerxes respectively, and the status in which they were supposedly held by their Persian subjects, δαίμων takes the form of an agent that has some kind of control over the fate of the army by changing, or by being deemed to alter, the course of events. The potential threat the δαίμων presents at 157-8 becomes actualized in the course of the play (cf. *Pers.* 345, 354, 472, 515, 725, 911, 921, 942), where, by the end, a δαίμων is seen by both Xerxes and the chorus as the sole divine agent responsible for the destruction of the army: ὀτοτοῖ βασιλεῦ, στρατιᾶς ἀγαθῆς | καὶ Περσονόμου τιμῆς μεγάλης κόσμου τ' ἀνδρῶν | οὓς νῦν δαίμων ἐπέκειρεν 'Woe, my King, for that fine

[35] Ar. *Eq.* 85, *V.* 525. See Burkert (1985) 180 n.9.
[36] See Brunius-Nilsson (1955) 119.
[37] For δαίμων as an *Unheilsmacht*, see Geisser (2002) 17-56.

army, and for the great honour of the Persian empire and the men who adorned it, whom now a daimon has scythed away' (*Pers.* 919-21; cf. 942).

The destructive nature which δαίμων frequently possesses in the *Persians* can be seen further at 345-7, where it is placed in juxtaposition with θεοί:

> ἀλλ' ὧδε δαίμων τις κατέφθειρε στρατόν,
> τάλαντα βρίσας οὐκ ἰσορρόπῳ τύχῃ·
> θεοὶ πόλιν σῴζουσι Παλλάδος θεᾶς.
>
> It was some daimon that destroyed our fleet like this, weighting the scales so that fortune did not fall out even: the gods have saved the city of the goddess Pallas.

While the destruction of the Persian army and the protection of Athens are effectively two sides of the same coin, the acts of destruction and protection are themselves very different. Through their respective actions it may be possible to see δαίμων, in this example, as denoting a divine agent that is in some way distinct from the divine agents denoted by θεοί, and that the two words are not simply synonyms here. Or, if one does not accept the notion of different divine agents, then δαίμων and θεοί could be seen as representing in some way a difference in connotation or implication. In either case, it may be possible to compare this usage with those instances of δαίμων and θεός that will be discussed below in relation to δαίμων as a deity, where δαίμων seems on many occasions to denote a type of deity lesser than and/or in some way distinct from θεός.[38] This is all the more plausible with the juxtaposition at *Pers.* 345-7, because the only positive action(s) attributed to divine agencies in the play are those ascribed to θεός (cf. *Pers.* 454).

Although it may be the case that Aeschylus is using δαίμων at *Pers.* 345-7 to distinguish between types of divine action and agent, with one demonstrating more positive attributes than the other, I do not wish to argue that Aeschylus had in mind a demarcation between the two terms and thus between opposing or differing classes of divine agency elsewhere in the *Persians*, not least because θεός/θεοί are seen as the

[38] For example, Typhon and Zeus at *Th.* 521-5; see section below δαίμων *as a deity lesser than and/or distinct from* θεός.

cause of destruction as often as δαίμων is, [39] in spite of being responsible for the only positive actions in the play. Rather, what is being suggested here is that δαίμων and θεός are used on *this* occasion for *this* specific juxtaposition. This is because, as different words (with different histories), they possess different connotations,[40] which could help facilitate the expression of the contrast between the *destruction* of the Persian army and the *protection* of the city of Pallas; or it may be that the Messenger does not want to accuse the (Olympian) θεοί personally of having been the agents of destruction. But, for whatever reason the Messenger decides to employ these divine terms, it seems that θεοί, because of its usage up to and including Aeschylus, is more closely associated with the Olympians than δαίμων and as a result automatically establishes a connection between θεός and the Olympians in which δαίμων cannot share. This Olympian connection which θεός has and which δαίμων does not have could be seen to present a connection between the Olympian gods and the city of Pallas Athena, so that it may implicitly appear through the word's common associations with the Olympians – in contrast with δαίμων – that Athens is divinely protected by the highest and most powerful gods as a collective, and not just by their patroness, Athena.

The destructive character of δαίμων is not exclusive to the *Persians*, but can also be seen in the *Eumenides*, where a δαίμων laughs at the arrogant man who casts his wealth upon the reef of justice (*Eu.* 558-65):

> καλεῖ δ' ἀκούοντας οὐδὲν <ἐν> μέσᾳ
> δυσπαλεῖ τε δίναι·
> γελᾷ δὲ δαίμων ἐπ' ἀνδρὶ θερμῷ,
> τὸν οὔποτ' αὐχοῦντ' ἰδὼν ἀμηχάνοις
> δύαις λαπαδνὸν οὐδ' ὑπερθέοντ' ἄκραν·
> δι' αἰῶνος δὲ τὸν πρὶν ὄλβον
> ἔρματι προσβαλὼν Δίκας
> ὤλετ' ἄκλαυτος αἶστος.

[39] Θεός/θεοί/: 93, 283, 294, 362, 495-502, 514, 604, 741, 742; δαίμων: 158, 345, 354, 472, 515, 725, 911, 921, 942.
[40] See the section below δαίμων *as deity lesser than and/or distinct from* θεός.

> In the middle of the eddies, unable to fight his way out, he calls, but they pay no heed; the daimon laughs at the headstrong man, seeing him powerless, the one who boasted it could never happen, in helpless distress, as he fails to surmount the crest of the wave: he has wrecked the ship of his former lifelong prosperity on the reef of Justice and perishes unwept, unseen.

The δαίμων in this image is depicted as assisting or, at least, witnessing the man's destruction of his own wealth, presenting the audience with a destructive form of justice. The laughing δαίμων here in the *Eumenides* can be compared with Dionysus in the *Bacchae*,[41] where both present unnerving and destructive characteristics. Dionysus, who is frequently referred to as δαίμων throughout the play (*Ba.* 22, 42, 219, 272, 298, 377, 416, 481, 498, 769), smiles or laughs in a sinister manner when he is 'seized' by Pentheus' guards (*Ba.* 439); and he is urged by the chorus of Bacchants to cast the net of death over the hunter of maenads with a smiling/laughing countenance (*Ba.* 1021). Indeed, both Dionysus and the laughing δαίμων of the *Eumenides* exhibit further similarities in that they do not bring about either man's destruction by or in themselves, because both Pentheus and the man in the *Eumenides* passage are in some way responsible for their own downfall.

Although δαίμων is frequently used by Aeschylus to denote an agent of destruction, it is not solely employed in this way. Often δαίμων presents no negative connotations and is simply the agent by or through which an event is brought to pass. So, in the *Persians*, where δαίμων is frequently associated with bringing destruction, it is said that: ὅταν δ' ὁ δαίμων εὐροῇ, πεποιθέναι | τὸν αὐτὸν αἰὲν ἄνεμον οὐριεῖν τύχης. 'Whereas when the daimon sends it favour your way, you tend to be sure that the breeze of good fortune will always continue to blow from astern' (*Pers.* 601-2). Similarly in the *Seven*, the chorus, when trying to persuade Eteocles not to go out and fight his brother, speak of the favourable way in which δαίμων can change: μίμν' ὅτε σοι παρέστακεν, ἐπεὶ δαίμων | λήματος ἂν τροπαίᾳ χρονίᾳ μεταλ|λακτὸς ἴσως ἂν ἔλθοι θελεμωτέρῳ | πνεύματι. 'Stay, while you have the chance, since a daimon, altered in its purpose at the turning of time, may perhaps come with a more kindly breath' (*Th.* 705-8). And the truly ambivalent nature of the word is demonstrated at *Ag.* 1667 where the chorus make known their hope for Orestes' return to Argos: οὔκ, ἐὰν

[41] Geisser (2002) 20-1.

δαίμων Ὀρέστην δεῦρ' ἀπευθύνῃ μολεῖν. 'Not if a daimon guides Orestes to come back here.' Although his return would be a happy event for the chorus, it would not be for Clytemnestra and Aegisthus.

ΔΑΙΜΩΝ AS AN INDIVIDUAL'S FORTUNE OR LOT IN LIFE

While there are numerous instances where δαίμων appears to be synonymous with θεός, this is not always the case. There are many occasions in Aeschylus and elsewhere where δαίμων seems to denote a deity lesser than and/or in some way distinct from θεός; where it seems to denote an individual's fortune or lot in life; and where it seems to denote an individual's own personal or tutelary deity – which is closely connected to the former two usages.

In Aeschylus, as well as in authors before and contemporary to him, there are times when δαίμων is better understood as having a meaning close to that of 'fortune'. In this mode of employment, δαίμων seems to be used in two distinct, but closely connected, ways: first, as an – often unknown – agent which causes events and changes in men's lives. Such instances can be directly compared with the way δαίμων is used in the 'indefinite mode of expression', where it appears synonymous with θεός as an anonymous agent fulfilling events. The second way δαίμων is used to denote the idea of fortune as that which falls to any one as his lot in life. However, the two are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but are outlined in this fashion in order to help gain greater understanding of the term and to demonstrate its flexibility. It is thus possible to speak of someone who is fortunate as εὐδαίμων; someone who is prosperous or blessed as ὀλβιοδαίμων; someone who is unfortunate as κακοδαίμων; or someone who is unhappy as δυσδαίμων, where the adjectives can be seen to describe the agent working for an individual or as the state created for the individual.[42]

When δαίμων is employed to denote the idea of fortune, whether as the agent which brings an event to pass or as the state which falls to an individual as his lot, its precise meaning is usually far more difficult to define than when the term is used to denote a god or other divine being. Indeed, it is not wholly unproblematic to say that δαίμων is used to designate an idea close to that of fortune. In translations of Aeschylus, when δαίμων acts as either the agent of fortune or as the state of fortune

[42] Burkert (1985) 180-1.

itself, it is often translated as destiny or fate.[43] Although δαίμων cannot be said to have any connection with deterministic notions or an over-arching will or godhead, the various translations which have been given to δαίμων do give some indication about the uncertainty surrounding δαίμων and what exactly it means. The following discussion will highlight the indeterminate nature of δαίμων and that it is not connected with the movements of an over-arching will.[44] It will also be established that in Aeschylus there is a clear indication that δαίμων behaves as an individual divine force, as a personal, guardian-like deity intimately connected with a person's life, affecting events for them and being representative of their particular fortune, always subject to change and never fated or set.

The personal and individual nature of fortune which δαίμων denotes can be seen in a passage from the *Persians*, where Darius warns of the temporal nature of their daimon (*Pers.* 823-6):

> τοιαῦθ' ὁρῶντες τῶνδε τἀπιτίμια
> μέμνησθ' Ἀθηνῶν Ἑλλάδος τε, μηδέ τις
> ὑπερφρονήσας τὸν παρόντα δαίμονα
> ἄλλων ἐρασθεὶς ὄλβον ἐκχέῃ μέγαν.
>
> In looking upon these things, be mindful of the damages incurred from the Athenians and Greece and let no one, overestimating their present daimon, squander a great wealth through desiring more.

What Darius seems to be suggesting in this passage is that as a result of misjudging one's present lot in life, this misjudgement may lead to a desire for more wealth that will ultimately end in destroying what one already has. The use of δαίμων and παρών together further indicates the impermanent nature of fortune. This type of usage of δαίμων can also be seen in the *Agamemnon*, where Aegisthus responds angrily to the chorus, saying that they are testing their δαίμων: ἀλλὰ τούσδε μοι ματαίαν γλῶσσαν ὧδ' ἀπανθίσαι | κἀκβαλεῖν ἔπη τοιαῦτα δαίμονος πειρωμένους, | σώφρονος γνώμης δ'

[43] See, for example, the translations of Headlam (1909), Weir Smyth (1926), Fraenkel (1950) of *Ag.*1667. There are others who have shied away from translating δαίμων as destiny or fate at Ag. 1667, in favour of translating it as fortune, so Thomson (1938), Collard (2002) *ad loc.*
[44] See, Usener (1896) 292 and the idea of '*Augenblicksgötter*'; cf. Nilsson (1967) 201-6.

ἁμαρτεῖν τὸν κρατοῦντ' <ὀνειδίσαι>.[45] 'But that these men should cull their idle tongues and cast such words at me, testing their daimon, and they insult their master in erring from moderate thought' (*Ag.* 1662-4, cf. *Ch.* 513; Pi. *O.*13.28). As with *Pers.* 823-5, δαίμων denotes the idea of an individual's (or group of individuals') fortune, which can change and which is not fixed. It need not overly concern us that δαίμων here extends to a group. The chorus act as one for the most part; but even if they did not, there is nothing that prevents δαίμων from referring to the fortune of a collection of individuals who share a common character or lot in life.[46]

In Theognis we meet a similar idea of δαίμων where it refers to the fortune of a collection of individuals. There are those who have poor minds but a good δαίμων and those who have good counsel but have a bad δαίμων (*Theognidea* 161-4):

> πολλοί τοι χρῶνται δειλαῖς φρεσί, δαίμονι δ' ἐσθλῷ,
> οἷς τὸ κακὸν δοκέον γίνεται εἰς ἀγαθόν·
> εἰσὶν δ' οἳ βουλῇ τ' ἀγαθῇ καὶ δαίμονι δειλῷ
> μοχίζουσι τέλος δ' ἔργμασιν οὐχ ἕπεται.
>
> There are many that have worthless minds, but have good fortune,
> For whom things which seem bad come to be good;
> And there are those who take good counsel and suffer poor fortune,
> And accomplishment does not follow their deeds.

In these examples, it is possible to see not only how δαίμων can refer to the fortune of a plurality of individuals, but also how it can present a meaning close to that of τύχη. Both concepts, what we would call 'fortune' (δαίμων) and 'luck/chance/fortune' (τύχη), have a bearing on, or give an indication about, an individual's condition in life, as well as at the same time being indeterminate and subject to change. The connection between δαίμων and τύχη is nothing new and has been documented.[47] The close relation between the two terms can also be seen at *Pers.* 345-6:

---

[45] Text uncertain.
[46] See West (1978) 182.
[47] See Wilamowitz (1955, 2nd ed.) 1.358 n.1.

ἀλλ' ὧδε δαίμων τις κατέφθειρε στρατόν,
τάλαντα βρίσας οὐκ ἰσορρόπῳ τύχῃ·

But some daimon destroyed the army completely, weighing down the scales with unequal fortune.

Although τύχη may be seen as close to μοῖρα, as an abstract idea of fortune, it is nevertheless the case that here δαίμων is that which brings about the destruction of the Persian army, and τύχη can be seen to denote the effect of the δαίμων's actions. Δαίμων is the active agent by which the event has come about, while τύχη is a qualitative assessment of what the δαίμων has brought about.[48] Though it is possible to see the correlation between the agent and the event which it brings about, it is not this comparison alone which demonstrates the similarity between the two terms. It is by comparing the way in which τύχη is used in line 346 with the way δαίμων is used at 823-5 that really highlights the connection between the two words. The τὸν παρόντα δαίμονα at *Pers.* 823-5 and ἰσορρόπῳ τύχῃ present very similar characteristics and seem to have a very similar meaning.[49] They both capture a particular state of being, as well as indicating the temporal nature of that state. Δαίμων denotes the fortune of a hypothetical person who may over-estimate just what this fortune is; while τύχη denotes the change in fortune of the Persian army. There is thus a clear overlap in the meaning of the two terms.

These examples demonstrate that δαίμων can be used to denote an individual's or a collection of individuals' fortune or lot. But, there are also times when δαίμων seems to be presented as a personal or guardian-like deity who determines the future of an individual or is representative of an individual's fortune. So, in the *Agamemnon*, the chorus, seemingly peturbed by Cassandra's prophetic utterances, reflect on the possible fortune of their king and say (*Ag.* 1341-2):

τίς τἂν εὔξαιτο βροτῶν ἀσινεῖ
δαίμονι φῦναι τάδ' ἀκούων;

[48] A similar use of τύχη and δαίμων can be seen in Pindar (*O.*8.67), where τύχη refers to the victory won by Alcimedon and δαίμων to the divine assistance by which the victory came about.
[49] Cf. *Pers.* 601-2.

Hearing this, what man could boast to be born with an unharmed/harmless daimon?[50]

Δαίμων can be read in two different ways here. First, as denoting an individual's 'fortune', with the phrase ἀσινεῖ δαίμονι, meaning 'with an unharmed fortune'. However, because the adjective ἀσινής can be read as both 'unharmed' and 'harmless', the phrase ἀσινεῖ δαίμονι can also be translated as 'with a harmless daimon'.[51] Δαίμων would be understood as an agent coming into existence (φῦναι) with a person, guiding him through life and being in some way responsible for what happens to him. Δαίμων would thus be some form of guarding or tutelary deity specific to a person. Although, arguably, the earliest unambiguous examples of δαίμων being used as a personal tutelary deity for men come some time after Aeschylus, in the works of Plato[52] (cf. *Phd.* 107d; *Rep.* 617e, 620e), there is evidence of this concept of the personal deity in earlier authors.[53]

Hesiod is the earliest author to employ δαίμων in a way that explicitly denotes a personal, tutelary deity. There are two passages which support this statement.[54] The first, found in the *Works and Days*, describes the condition of Hesiod's addressee in the phrase: δαίμονι δ' οἷος ἔησθα 'but however you are by way of your daimon' (*Op.* 314).[55] As Dodds remarks '[there is] a ... type of daemon [δαίμων], who makes his first appearance in the Archaic Age, [and] is attached to a particular individual, usually from birth, and determines, wholly or in part, his individual destiny. We meet him first in Hesiod and Phocylides.'[56] In the passage from Hesiod, we see that a daimon is concerned with the health, welfare or lot of the individual addressed. The daimon can thus be seen as something personal and connected intimately with the individual it describes.

---

[50] In order to help capture the untranslatable nature of δαίμων in this passage, I have provided my own translation and the two possile translations of the epithet.

[51] The ambiguous nature of these two words is highlighted by the different ways they have been translated in editions of the *Agamemnon*. Hogan (1984) and Ewans (1995) both see δαίμων as a personal, guardian deity; while Headlam (1909), Weir Smyth (1926), Thomson (1938), Fraenkel (1950), Grene and O'Flaherty (1989), Collard (2002), Sommerstein (2008) all understand ἀσινεῖ δαίμονι as some variation on an unhurt fortune through life.

[52] For δαίμων in Plato's *Republic* see Halliwell (1988) 184, 191.

[53] On this topic, see Rohde (1925) 514; Dodds (1951) 42; Guthrie (1962) 1.482; Dietrich (1967) 322; Marcovich (1967) 502-4; Darcus (1974) 398-407.

[54] *Op.* 314 and *Op.* 121-6. See, Dodds (1951) 42; Guthrie (1962) 1.482; Kerenyi (1975) 17.

[55] Cf. West (1978) 235.

[56] Dodds (1951) 42.

The other such example of δαίμων in Hesiod is again found in the *Works and Days*, used of the epichthonic daimones, who are described as watchers of men and guardians of ill deeds (*Op.* 121-6). It need not overly concern us that the plural is used by Hesiod here and the singular in the previous example. Hesiod is speaking here collectively of a whole race of guardian deities watching over the whole human race.[57] The δαίμονες here act as guardians of men, watching over their actions, giving both good and ill.

In spite of the guardian-like nature of these δαίμονες, it has been argued that the epichthonic daimones should not be confused with personal tutelary deities. As Rohde has put it, they are of a 'different range of ideas' from what is seen at *Op.* 314 or indeed in Plato.[58] Indeed, as mortals made immortal, it is I think reasonable to consider the epichthonic daimones as a class of deity distinct from θεοί 'gods' (those beings that have always been immortal) and yet more than mortal men, as immortal deities.[59] This is consistent with how Hesiod uses δαίμων to refer to Phaethon (*Th.* 991). So, in his presentation of *deities*, Hesiod can be seen as consistent in his use of δαίμων to denote mortals who have been made immortal. Nevertheless, it is still the case that Hesiod also uses δαίμων to denote the idea of an individual's fortune in life, as at *Op.* 314. Regardless of the fact that Hesiod uses δαίμων to denote a different class of deities, can we completely separate the idea of δαίμων as a deity and δαίμων as an individual's lot or fortune in life at *Op.* 121-6? Can we say that there is no suggestion at *Op.* 121-6 that Hesiod is merging or drawing a connection between these two ways of conceptualising the nature of δαίμων? Or, perhaps we should see one vaguer notion that is being interpreted in two ways here? Indeed, the plurality of daimones hints at the possibility that they can be paired off with the current race of men, dealing out good and bad for men and thus determining each individual's fortune in life. It seems reasonable to conclude that we cannot dismiss the possibility that the epichthonic daimones are also guardian or tutelary daimones in this passage.[60]

---

[57] See West (1978) 182 for this argument. This argument is also relevant for Phocylides Fr.16: see below.

[58] Rohde (1925) 515; cf. 71-4. Compare the epichthonic daimones with Darius' spirit in the *Persians*.

[59] 'There was a tendency to honour outstanding men after their deaths by believing them still to possess power for the good or ill of the community.' West (1978) 182; cf. *Th.*991 (Phaethon), Theognis 1348 (Ganymede), *Pers.* 620, 641 (Darius). See the discussion in the section δαίμων *as a deity lesser than and/or distinct from* θεός.

[60] I am aware that there may be a danger of over-specialisation by emphasising the individual and tutelary function of the epichthonic daimones over the chthonic and agricultural. However, for the

Phocylides Fr.16, which is traditionally dated at the start of the 6th century B.C. and which is comparable with *Op.* 121-6 , has also been seen to supply evidence of the idea of a personal, guardian δαίμων before Aeschylus.[61] The fragment reads:

> ἀλλ' ἄρα δαίμονές εἰσιν ἐπ' ἀνδράσιν ἄλλοτε ἄλλοι
> οἳ μὲν ἐπερχομένου κακοῦ ἀνέρας ἐκλύσασθαι.
>
> But there are different daimones for men at different times,
> Who give release from on-coming evil.[62]

For Phocylides there are δαίμονες who, at different times, can give assistance to men. At first glance, because of the close relationship between the daimones and the men, because there are multiple daimones for multiple men, it could seem that they are of a similar kind to those we find in Hesiod at *Op.* 121-6. However, in contrast with the presentation of δαίμων/δαίμονες in Hesiod, in the fragment from Phocylides different daimones are explicitly stated to come upon men at different times, ἄλλοτε. They are not, it seems, permanent, guiding companions as Hesiod's guardian daimones seem to be. But, in fact, the notion of deities who, now and again at different times, affect an individual's life (for better and for worse) is, in essence, no different from the Homeric conception of δαίμων. In Homer, a δαίμων is seen by some to snap Teucer's bow-string (*Il.* 15.467-8); brings Lycaon to Achilles (*Il.* 21.93); breathed much courage into Odysseus in the Cyclops' cave (*Od.* 9.381); and a δαίμων is said to have spun for (ἐπέκλωσεν) the disguised Odysseus his current fate (*Od.* 16.64). It cannot, therefore, be said with any real confidence that Phocylides is saying anything radically different from what is presented in Homer; and it cannot be said that he is depicting a conception of δαίμων which sees it acting as a guarding deity for men, and thus that he is presenting a guardian, personal type of δαίμων similar to the kind we find in Plato.

---

purposes of the argument being made above in the main body of the text, it is more important to stress the guardian-like nature of δαίμων at this juncture.

[61] For example, Dodds (1951) 42.

[62] The fragment is incomplete. From what Clement of Alexandria says before quoting Phocylides, it seems relatively clear that the daimones give both good and evil; Phocylides' fragment only mentions the good, but they are οἳ μὲν, so that it would not be unreasonable to let the thought continue as οἳ δὲ 'bring evil in the middle of good fortune' *vel sim.*

The personal and fortune-like nature of δαίμων can also be seen to extend to a family or house, as is the case with the δαίμων of the House of Atreus. The powerful and insidious nature of the δαίμων comes to the fore in the final scene of the *Agamemnon*, and does so in a gradual fashion.[63] In the first speech she delivers after killing Agamemnon, Clytemnestra names several factors that have a bearing on her husband's death, and among them is the accursed nature of Agamemnon and the House: τοσόνδε κρατῆρ' ἐν δόμοις κακῶν ὅδε | πλήσας ἀραίων αὐτὸς ἐκπίνει μολών. 'Having filled a mixing-bowl in the house of so many accursed ills, he himself drank from it on coming here' (*Ag.* 1397-8). The δαίμων of the House is not mentioned straight away, but is hinted at and foreshadowed in the phrase, 'accursed ills [of the house]'. It has been argued that all that these two lines indicate is Agamemnon's need to pay for what he did in the past – *i.e.* the killing of his daughter, Iphigeneia – and that we need look no further than this.[64] However, this seems, at the very least, to overlook the role of the divine and supernatural in the cycle of destruction within the House and the role of the individual family members in assisting its perpetuation.

It is the connection of the δαίμων with the ills of the family which suggests Clytemnestra's statement at 1397-8 as an allusion to the δαίμων of the House before it is mentioned more explicitly seventy lines later. The word ἀραίων, derived from the same root as ἀρά (ἀρή) 'curse',[65] also hints at the sinister nature of the events which have been befalling the House over the course of several generations. The vague and sinister character of the House and the forces connected with it, and seemingly working through it, are brought out further by the chorus shortly after at 1468-74, when they call this supernatural and destructive agent a daimon:

> δαῖμον, ὃς ἐμπίτνεις δώμασι καὶ διφυί-
> οισι Ταντα̣λίδαισιν,
> κράτος <τ'> ἰσόψυχον ἐκ γυναικῶν
> καρδιόδηκτον ἐμοὶ κρατύνεις·
> ἐπὶ δὲ σώματος δίκαν {μοι}
> κόρακος ἐχθροῦ σταθεὶς ἐκνόμως

[63] See Chapter 4 'The Justice of Zeus' for a further discussion of the death of Agamemnon and the role of the δαίμων.
[64] Fraenkel (1950) 3.659.
[65] For use of curses in Aeschylus and Sophocles, see West (1999) 31-45; Geisser (2002) 198-252; Sewell-Rutter (2007) 49-77; cf. Parker (1983) 191-206.

ὕμνον ὑμνεῖν ἐπεύχεται ***.

The daimon that assails this house and the two Tantalids so different in their nature, and controls it, in a way that rends my heart, through the agency of women whose souls are alike! Standing over the corpse, in the manner of a loathsome raven, it glories in tunelessly singing a song ***.

Clytemnestra then confirms the role of the δαίμων in the killing (*Ag.*1475-80, 1497-1504). The δαίμων of the House is inherently bound up with the family and its ills: it is the thrice manifest δαίμων of the race, and is nurtured by blood (*Ag.* 1477). For this reason, it may be possible to see the δαίμων of the House of Atreus as a personal δαίμων, one which is representative of, and co-existent with, the family's own fortune. Indeed, the chorus think of the δαίμων as something more than this, as that agent which has actively brought destruction on the family, as that agent without which the family would not have been beset by ills.[66]

In Aeschylus, there are also occasions when the meaning of δαίμων seems to extend beyond denoting a person's fortune in life to become a synonym for death. In this respect δαίμων presents a similar meaning to μοῖρα, μόρος or πότμος. Although these latter three words are more akin to the idea of fate than fortune,[67] in many places they appear as synonyms for death – and present this meaning far more often than δαίμων does.[68] So, in the *Seven*, the Messenger reports the deaths of Eteocles and Polyneices, saying that they died together at the same time and by each other's hands (*Th.* 811-12):

οὕτως ὁμαίμοις χερσὶν ἠναίροντ' ἄγαν
αὐτούς· ὁ δαίμων κοινὸς ἦν ἀμφοῖν ἅμα·

[66] But, it is not only those houses affected by ill-fortune that have a δαίμων. Pindar speaks of a δαίμων γενέθλιος '*the daimon of the family*'. *O.*13.105. Cf. Dietrich (1967) 322.

[67] For discussions of fate in early Greek literature, see Ehnmark (1935) 74-82; Greene (1948); Wilamowitz (1955, 2nd ed.) 1.352-6; Dietrich (1967) *passim*.

[68] See, for example, Μοῖρα: *Il.* 16.434, 853, 19.410, 20.477, 21.83, 110, 22.5, 303, 436, 23.81, 24.132; *Od.* 2.100. Μόρος: *Il.* 18.465, 19.421, 21.133; *Od.* 1.166, 9.61, 11.409, 16.421, 20.241. Μοῖρα: *Pers.* 912, 917; *Ag.* 1266. Μόρος: *Pers.* 546; *Supp.* 65, 804; *Th.* 199, 589, 704, 751; *Ag.* 329, 1246, 1297, 1381, 1415, 1600, 1627, 1634; *Ch.* 18, 444, 841, 911, 927, 1074; *Eu.* 26, 502, 640, 739, 760. Πότμος is only used as the fate of death in Homer, but is not employed in this way in Aeschylus, cf. *Ag.* 762, 1005.

Thus, they completely destroyed themselves with their kin-hands; the daimon was common to them both at one and the same time.

It has been argued[69] that δαίμων here refers to the δαίμων of the House of Laius, and as such parallels the δαίμων of the House of Atreus in the *Agamemnon* (*Ag.* 1468, 1477, 1569). While it seems to be correct to assert that δαίμων at *Th.* 812 does not refer to Apollo,[70] it is difficult to see why δαίμων should refer to the δαίμων of the House, when no such δαίμων is mentioned in the play. The only 'daimonic' entity associated with the family of Laius in the play is the Erinys/Curse of Oedipus (*Th.*70, 720-3), and while an Erinys or Erinyes are referred to as δαίμων or δαίμονες in other plays (cf. *Eu.* 150, 302, 929), Oedipus' Erinys/Curse is never referred to as a δαίμων in the *Seven*. It is true that the Erinys is called a god unlike gods: πέφρικα τὰν ὠλεσίοικον | θεόν, οὐ θεοῖς ὁμοίαν, | παναληθῆ, κακόμαντιν, | πατρὸς εὐκταίαν Ἐρινὺν (*Th.* 720-2), which may be suggestive of a daimonic nature. But, even if it could be asserted that 'a god unlike gods' is equivalent to being called a δαίμων,[71] we are still left with the problem of whether the Erinys of Oedipus can be equated with the δαίμων of the House. For, the δαίμων of the House in the *Agamemnon* (on which this model is based in modern interpretations) is a separate entity from Atē, the ἀλάστωρ of Atreus and the Erinys/Erinyes, although part of the wide menagerie of 'daimonic' entities afflicting the House of Atreus (cf. *Ag.*1431-3;[72] 1468, 1477, 1482, 1501, 1569). The δαίμων represents and behaves as a manifestation of the ills of the House of Atreus and stands alongside Atē, ἀλάστωρ and Erinys/Erinyes as agents of destruction which have seemingly helped perpetuate the cycle of familial killings

[69] Hutchinson (1985) 177. Tucker (1908) 166, understands δαίμων here as the work of the brothers' 'evil genius'.

[70] With Hutchinson (1985) 177.

[71] That is, of course, if we can say that such a strict hierarchical model can be applied systematically to Aeschylean thought, with δαίμων being lesser/lower than θεός. The only place in Aeschylus where such a model could be said to exist is in the *Eumenides* with the Olympians and the Erinyes. But, even then, the nuances and flexibility of δαίμων and θεός seem to preclude any form of strict hierarchy of terms. For this, see discussion below in this chapter in the section δαίμων *as being lesser than and/or distinct from* θεός, and in Chapter 4 'The Justice of Zeus'.

[72] It is, of course, the case that Clytemnestra seems to be referring to the Atē and Erinys of Iphigeneia at 1433: τῆς ἐμῆς παιδὸς Δίκην Ἄτην Ἐρινύν θ', with Justice, Atē and the Erinys all taking the genitive 'of my child'. In this way, one could argue that the comparison between the δαίμων of the House and the other daimonic entities of Atē and the Erinys is not a direct one. However, this is not the case, because Iphigeneia is part of the family, part of the House; her blood is that of her father and grandfather. Clytemnestra's claim to be bringing about the vengeance of her daughter is a perpetuation of the cycle, a reinforcement of the destructive nature of all these similar, though distinct, daimonic entities.

besetting the House.[73] Although, it is, of course, possible to speak of similar ills manifesting themselves within the House of Laius, we are never presented with an abstraction in the *Seven* of the sort found in the *Agamemnon.* We should thus be careful not to merge destructive 'daimonic' agencies which happen to be connected with the ills of the family or the House.

It would perhaps be better to look at *Th.* 811-12 in a different way, seeing δαίμων as marking the moment at which the two brothers killed each other. Δαίμων would denote death (in a way similar to μοῖρα, μόρος and πότμος), and in this way one's fortune in life would be understood as being extended to refer to the passing from this life into the next. The line could, thus, be read as, 'their death (fortune) was common to them both at the same time.' It would be possible to compare this example with the use of δαίμων at *Il.* 8.166, where δαίμων also seems to act as a synonym for death: πάρος τοι δαίμονα δώσω 'Before that I will give you your daimon'.[74] It is possible to see that in these two passages, just as at *Pers.* 823-6 and *Ag.* 1662-4, δαίμων is connected with an individual's personal fortune, whether denoting one's present position in life, as at *Pers.* 823-6 and *Ag.* 1662-4, or marking the moment of death, as at *Th.* 812 and *Il.* 8.166. What would underlie all of these instances is a connection with a person's life and the temporality of their lot in life and present state of being.

HERACLITUS ON THE AMBIGUITY OF ΔΑΙΜΩΝ

In this chapter, we have discussed the meaning of δαίμων, how it appears as a vague, indeterminate fulfiller of events and as a personal, guardian deity that determines an individual's fortune or lot in life. But this is not to say that these characteristics are wholly distinct from one another. There is a great deal of overlap between them all, especially between those instances where δαίμων is connected with the fulfillment of events and an individual's fortune. In a fragment attributed to Heraclitus, the ambiguity of the meaning of δαίμων is shown perfectly (B119):[75]

---

[73] Cf. Burkert (1985) 181.

[74] Cf. Darcus (1974) 395. I am aware of the controversy surrounding this particular line in the *Iliad* and the use of δαίμων. But, for want of a more established textual tradition, I adhere to this reading of the line. See Kirk (1990) 310 for discussion of the textual problems of the line.

[75] For discussion of this fragment, see, for example, Rohde (1925) 514; Nilsson (1967) 202; Dodds (1951) 42; Guthrie (1962) 1.482; Dietrich (1967) 322; Marcovich (1967) 502-4; Darcus (1974) 398-407; Geisser (2002) 16.

ἦθος ἀνθρώπῳ δαίμων

Character for a man is his daimon.

There are two prevailing interpretations of this fragment. The first understands δαίμων as a person's fortune and as being determined by a man's character;[76] the other, sees δαίμων as an active divine agent that determines a man's character.[77] Of course, the difficulty of interpretation is derived not only from the ambiguity and flexibility of δαίμων, but also the complete lack of context of the fragment. As a consequence, almost any interpretation of B119 is open to criticism. Nevertheless, it is in awareness of these facts and recognising that the validity of the arguments made in this chapter is not reliant on any one interpretation of the fragment that the following discussion is proffered. All that is hoped is that the internal logical consistency is recognised for what it is, and as such that the discussion may be seen to offer an extra dimension to our understanding of the preceding pages on δαίμων.

As has been discussed above, δαίμων was commonly used to denote a person's fortune. If we understand δαίμων at Heraclitus B119 in this way, a man's character (ἦθος) is that which determines his fortune (δαίμων) in life.[78] The fragment would thus be read as a 'denial of the view, common in Homer, that the individual often cannot be held responsible for what he does.'[79] The divine element would be minimized, with man understood as having control over his life. Δαίμων would have no real connection with the godly or divine sphere, but would simply refer to a man's fortune or lot in life. This does, however, raise questions about Heraclitus' religious convictions. Is he implying in this fragment that the divine has no place in the decisions and actions of mankind? Is he dismissing divine involvement in the lives of mankind? Other fragments suggest quite the opposite. While he does, of course, question the way in which religious customs and practises are conducted (cf. B5, 14, 15, 93), he does not question the existence of gods or the divine.

---

[76] E.g. Rohde (1925) 515; Dodds (1951) 42; Marcovich (1967) 502; Kahn (1979) 260-1; Kirk, Raven and Schofield (hereafter KRS) (1983) 211-12.

[77] E.g. Dietrich (1967) 322; Guthrie (1962) 1.482.

[78] A similar view is expressed by Epicharmus, with similar language: ὁ τρόπος ἀνθρώποισι δαίμων ἀγαθός, οἷς δὲ καὶ κακός.

[79] KRS (1983) 211.

If Heraclitus is not dismissing the role of the divine in the lives of mankind, what, then, is being expressed in B119? Can, or should, the fragment be read in a different way? In the vast majority of occurrences of the word before Heraclitus, δαίμων, in the singular, rather than referring to a person's fortune or lot in life, designates an active and unspecified divine agent which brings events to fulfilment. This is most consistently seen in the 'indefinite mode of expression', in those instances where δαίμων appears to be synonymous with θεός, as a vague, unknown supernatural agent. In such instances, δαίμων affects lives and is seemingly arbitrary, yet because of it and because of what it does, δαίμων shapes a person's life. The active characteristics of δαίμων with its ability to affect the course of people's lives give an indication about how δαίμων in B119 can be understood as that which shapes a man's character.

But, is not the ambiguity of δαίμων the very point Heraclitus is making in the fragment? The two potential meanings of the phrase – δαίμων being determined by a man's character and δαίμων determining a man's character – are themselves reliant on, determined by, and playing on the two most common ways that δαίμων was used in early Greek literature: first, as a fulfiller of events that acts as an agent of fortune; and secondly, as that which denotes the result of the events fulfilled.[80] Δαίμων is both the means and the end; the cause and the effect. It points to man's ability to shape his own fortune in life; but it also implies that man is never fully in control of his life in the face of divine agencies. These three words are a pithy summation of Greek conceptions of causality: no man is wholly responsible for his own fortune in life, nor is he completely free from responsibility either.

ΔΑΙΜΩΝ AS A DEITY OR BEING LESSER THAN AND/OR DISTINCT FROM ΘΕΟΣ

Although both δαίμων and δαίμονες are employed by Aeschylus to denote deities and are on occasion employed in way synonymous with θεός and θεοί, δαίμων and δαίμονες are very rarely used of the Olympian gods in literature before Aeschylus. There are only five instances when δαίμων (singular or plural) is employed to refer to the Olympians (*Il.* 1.221-2, 3.420, 15.236-80; *Od.* 3.160; Solon 36.3-7).

[80] See Darcus (1974) for a similar view of δαίμων as an agent which brings things about and as the result of that which is brought about.

This is, of course, in stark contrast with the terms θεός/θεοί in Aeschylus and those before and contemporary with him, which are used overwhelmingly to denote the Olympian gods. Indeed, in Hesiod δαίμων is never used to denote the Olympians (or any other of the gods), while θεός is used almost exclusively to do so.[81]

In Aeschylus and in earlier authors, the terms θεός and θεοί seem intimately connected with the Olympian gods. In the plays, only θεοί is used with the epithet Ὀλυμπίοι; and it is θεός/θεοί which is used consistently to denote the Olympians when the epithet is not present. From the extant literature before Aeschylus, it is possible to come to some understanding about how the Olympian gods are spoken of, and about the divine terms used to denote them. There is a noticeable difference in the way the two sets of terms are used when it comes to the terms used to designate the Olympians. Whether there is something inherent in the nature of the word θεός that makes it more appropriate to be used to denote the Olympian gods instead of δαίμων does not strictly matter for the purposes of this study. What does matter is the simple and easily observable fact that θεός *is* used far more often than δαίμων. This seems to indicate that there is a perceptible (though by no means absolute) demarcation between θεός and δαίμων when it comes to the highest stratum of divinity. This is not to say, however, that there is a strict or dogmatic hierarchy with θεός always designating deities higher and more powerful than those denoted by δαίμων. Such a hierarchy does not become an established idea until Plato and Xenocrates over a century later, and then only very gradually.[82] Indeed, to claim that there is such a demarcation would be to ignore those instances in early Greek literature where δαίμων is clearly used to denote the Olympian gods. It may even be argued that Aeschylus is as consistent in this regard as those before him in using δαίμων for the Olympians – if not slightly freer in his usage – because not only does he use δαίμων of the Olympian god Ares in the *Seven*, he also speaks of icons of the gods as βρέτη δαιμόνων, which seem at least to include icons of Olympian gods (*Th.* 90-182). Rather, what the following discussion will examine is the way Aeschylus uses δαίμων and θεός to help establish a contrast or comparison between two deities or sets of deities.

[81] There are thirteen occasions where μάκαρες is used of the gods, but this is a relatively small percentage in comparison with θεός/θεοί.
[82] Cf. Burkert (1985) 331-2.

There is evidence in several of the plays that suggests δαίμων is used in certain passages in opposition to θεός in order to designate deities or supernatural beings that are of lesser power or position than, and/or are in some way distinct from those denoted by θεός. It is possible to see such a distinction in the *Seven*, where the chorus respond to the positioning of Hyperbius against Hippomedon at the fourth gate, where they draw out the comparison between the combatants and the images on their respective shields (*Th.* 521-5):

> πέποιθά <τοι> τὸν Διὸς ἀντίτυπον ἔχοντ'
> ἄφιλον ἐν σάκει τοῦ χθονίου δέμας
> δαίμονος, ἐχθρὸν εἴκασμα βροτοῖς τε καὶ
> δαροβίοισι θεοῖσιν,
> πρόσθε πυλᾶν κεφαλὰν ἰάψειν.
>
> I trust that he who has on his shield the adversary of Zeus, the unloved form of an earth-born daimon, an image hateful to mortals and to the long-lived gods, will lose his head before the gates.

Here Typhon is called δαίμων and named an adversary of Zeus; he stands in direct opposition to the ruler of the gods, the father of the Olympians, and his image is said to be hateful to both men and gods. It is not that Typhon is called δαίμων that makes him both an adversary of Zeus and hateful to men and gods; rather, it is that he is said to be an adversary of Zeus and hateful to men and gods that has an effect on our understanding of δαίμων in this context. The two images of Typhon as an opponent of Zeus and as hateful to men and gods situate him firmly outside the Olympic pantheon, in addition to his chthonic nature and heritage of which the audience would no doubt have been aware. This dichotomy is strengthened by the respective positions of the two combatants: Hyperbius, who is a Theban champion (and so an insider); and Hippomedon an Argive (and therefore an outsider). With such a distinction being drawn by Aeschylus between not only the two mortal combatants, but between Typhon and Zeus, as well as Typhon and those gods who stand with Zeus as Olympians or as supporters of the Olympian order, with whom the mortal combatants are mirrored, it is possible that the description of Typhon as a δαίμων and of those gods who hate him as θεοί may not be purely arbitrary, but intimate something in

itself. This would suggest that δαίμων, in juxtaposition with θεοί, is being used as part of the presentation of Typhon (and by extension, Hippomedon), in order to help draw out the distinction between the respective positions of the two deities, Zeus and Typhon (and the two mortal warriors).[83] Δαίμων and θεός may, therefore, each possess associations and connotations in themselves which are different from those associated with and connoted by the other – at least, in Aeschylus.[84]

In the *Seven*, there is another instance where δαίμων seems to be used over θεός to denote a deity in a way that suggests it is considered lesser than and/or distinct from those deities denoted by θεός/θεοί. This instance comes in reference to Ares at *Th.* 104-7, where he is addressed: ὦ χρυσοπήληξ δαῖμον, 'Daimon of the golden helmet.' It has been suggested that the reason Ares is spoken of as a δαίμων is because θεός had no vocative until later in antiquity.[85] This argument certainly could explain why θεός is not used here, but it does not explain fully why δαίμων is used in its stead, rather than, for instance, ἄναξ which is commonly used by Aeschylus of other Olympian gods (cf. *Pers.* 762; *Th.* 130; *Supp.* 524; *Ag.* 509, 513; *Eu.* 85). Of course, the reason for the use of δαίμων may be simply that δαίμων fits metrically and was often used as a synonym for θεός. This is all very well, but there could also be a more meaningful reason for the word's use in this passage in reference to Ares, a reason that brings greater understanding to the presentation of the gods in Aeschylus. By the time Aeschylus came to compose this passage, there was already evidence in the poetic tradition which presents Ares in a way distinct from the other Olympian gods. For example, in Homer, Zeus says of Ares: ἔχθιστος δέ μοί ἐσσι θεῶν οἱ Ὄλυμπον ἔχουσιν· 'You are to me the most hateful of the gods who inhabit Olympus' (*Il.* 5.890).[86] Indeed, Ares' position as the god of war alone, as that god who brings only strife to men, creates a sense of disgust (*Il.* 5.889-98). Ares appears to stand apart from the other Olympians. It may thus be for this reason that Ares is spoken of as a δαίμων, rather than being referred to by the term ἄναξ or any other. As we saw above in reference to Typhon (and as we will see in the further examples below), δαίμων can be used in certain places to complement the presentation of particluar deities to bring

[83] Cf. Zeitlin (2009) 55-64 for further discussion of the role Zeus and Typhon play in the portrayal of Hyperbius and Hippomedon.
[84] In Hesiod, however, it is worth noting that Typhon is called θεός (*Th.* 824).
[85] Wilamowitz (1955, 2nd ed.) 1.357 n.1. Indeed, it is also possible to have nominative for vocative for θεός.
[86] See Otto (1954) 46-7, 247-9; Burkert (1985) 169.

about a comparison. This is often in juxtaposition with the presentation of other gods with the use of θεός/θεοί. But, when θεός/θεοί are not used where one may expect them to be, and δαίμων/δαίμονες are used instead, then it may suggest that δαίμων or δαίμονες is being employed to suggest something not possible by the use of θεός/θεοί, as, for example here, that Ares may not be considered an Olympian god in quite the way the other Olympian gods are.

The manner of employing δαίμων and θεός in juxtaposition is not only seen in the *Seven*. In the *Persians*, Darius' spirit is called δαίμων (620-1, 641), and in both instances his spirit is juxtaposed with the gods of the underworld. In the Queen's initial request to bring Darius from the underworld, δαίμων and θεοί are placed in opposition. She says (*Pers.* 619-22):

> ἀλλ' ὦ φίλοι χοῆσι ταῖσδε νερτέρων
> ὕμνους ἐπευφημεῖτε, τόν τε δαίμονα
> Δαρεῖον ἀνακαλεῖσθε· γαπότους δ' ἐγὼ
> τιμὰς προπέμψω τάσδε νερτέροις θεοῖς.
>
> Now, friends, accompany these drink-offerings to the nether powers with auspicious songs, and call up the daimon Darius; meanwhile I will send these honours on their way to the gods below, by letting the earth drink them up.

The passage indicates that the nether θεοί are those who have control over whether Darius will come up from the underworld. It is they to whom the Queen and the chorus offer prayers and libations for the δαίμων Darius to be conveyed from below. The balance of power between the nether θεοί and the δαίμων Darius seems firmly set in the former's favour. So, as was the case with the juxtaposition of δαίμων and θεοί at *Th.* 521-5, θεοί here seems to denote deities that are ruling deities, that are both distinct from and superior in power and position to the being denoted by δαίμων – although what is meant by δαίμων in the respective passages is, of course, different: the one is a non-Olympian deity, the other is the still active spirit of a dead heroic human.

The second passage that I want to highlight in this sequence is when Darius' spirit is referred to as ψυχή by the chorus, while the gods of the underworld are called chthonic δαίμονες (*Pers.* 627-30):

ἀλλὰ χθόνιοι δαίμονες ἀγνοί,
Γῆ τε καὶ Ἑρμῆ βασιλεῦ τ' ἐνέρων,
πέμψατ' ἔνερθεν ψυχὴν εἰς φῶς·

Now, you holy daimones of the underworld, Earth and Hermes and the king of the gods below, send that soul up from below into the light.

Again we are faced with the juxtaposition of the spirit of Darius and the gods of the underworld, yet here δαίμονες denotes something different from what δαίμων denoted at *Pers.* 619-22. The chthonic δαίμονες of this passage can be equated with those deities called θεοί in line 622,[87] while ψυχή refers to Darius, who was previously called δαίμων in line 620. In the third passage in this particular sequence, at lines 640-3, we are faced with a similar juxtaposition of Darius and the gods of the underworld with the chorus calling Darius' spirit a δαίμων, just as the Queen had done previously at 620:

ἀλλὰ σύ μοι, Γᾶ τε καὶ ἄλλοι χθονίων ἀγεμόνες,
δαίμονα μεγαυχῆ
ἰόντ' αἰνέσατ' ἐκ δόμων, Περσᾶν Σουσιγενῆ θεόν,

But I pray you, Earth and you other rulers of the underworld, consent to this glorious daimon emerging from your abode, the Persians' god, born in Sousa.

This time the δαίμων Darius is not placed in juxtaposition with θεοί, but with the phrase ἄλλοι χθονίων ἀγεμόνες. The position of Γᾶ and the ruling nature implicit in the designation ἄλλοι χθονίων ἀγεμόνες indicates that Γᾶ and the ἄλλοι χθονίων ἀγεμόνες should be equated with the nether θεοί of line 622 and the chthonic δαίμονες of line 627. Indeed, it must be stated outright that although Darius is called Περσᾶν Σουσιγενῆ θεόν directly after he is called δαίμων at 640-3, it should not be inferred from this that he *is* a θεός in the way that Zeus or any other Olympian is – one would

[87] See the discussion of δαίμονες in the section, δαίμονες *in the plural*, for the synonymity of the word with θεοί.

hardly expect this to be the case.[88] The statement is focalised through the minds of the Persians, who look upon their former king as a divine and godly being, contrary to the descriptions of Darius at 619-22, 627-30, 640-3 as a δαίμων and a ψυχή, which, due to their common Greek usage as terms for a dead person's spirit (especially a great individual with regard to δαίμων), can be understood as far closer to what a 'normal' Greek would recognise as 'factual statements' concerning Darius' nature as a spirit in the underworld. Such use of θεός is comparable to the way the chorus spoke of Darius and Xerxes to the Queen at *Pers.* 157-8, although not identical. At 157-8, it seems reasonable to say that the chorus could either be flattering the Queen, Darius and Xerxes by saying that Darius and Xerxes are gods, which would indicate that such usage is slightly different from the use of θεός at 643; or, as at 643, the use of θεός at *Pers.* 157-8 may simply be a representation of how Persians were perceived by the Greeks as speaking or thinking of their (dead) kings. Thus, both *Pers.* 157-8 and 643 can be understood as depictions of the way Persians spoke of their kings, and not as common, universally recognised statements of the nature of Darius' spirit (or indeed, the spirit of any deceased individual); whereas the chorus' use of δαίμων and ψυχή are similar to the common Greek usage for deceased individuals.[89]

What is important to bring out from the three passages and the descriptions of Darius and the gods of the underworld is that meaning is effectively given to the opposing sets of divine words because of the way in which they are contrastingly juxtaposed and because of the hierarchy that is established with θεός as a more powerful being than δαίμων, and δαίμων a more powerful being than ψυχή. Thus, in the first example, θεοί denotes deities that are more powerful than the spirit of Darius, which is called δαίμων. In the second example, δαίμονες refers to the same set of deities as θεοί before, but this time is juxtaposed with ψυχή, and not with δαίμων. This use of δαίμονες and ψυχή still maintains the same balance seen in the first example with θεοί and δαίμων, but ψυχή, just as with δαίμων in the first passage, refers to Darius, while δαίμονες refers to the gods of the underworld. In the third of the three passages, δαίμων is used again of the spirit of Darius, as in the first example, while Aeschylus on this occasion employs the phrase ἄλλοι χθονίων ἀγεμόνες of the ruling

[88] Contra Nilsson (1967) 201, who sees θεόν here as a synonym for δαίμων, as does Garvie (2009) 99-100.
[89] See Rohde (1925) *passim* (esp. 70-2 for δαίμων), Dietrich (1967) 14-58.

underworld deities. In each passage we are presented with the same juxtaposition: the presiding underworld gods and the spirit of Darius, but in each instance, Aeschylus shows just how flexible and subtle the meaning of δαίμων can be, and how reliant on context our understanding of it is.[90] Δαίμων is a more flexible term and can encompass both, θεοί and ψυχή are more specific and rigid in their meaning. Thus, δαίμονες and θεοί are used synonymously for those deities that seem to have control over the spirit of Darius; while δαίμων and ψυχή denote Darius' spirit.

Aeschylus was, of course, not the first author to conceive of the deceased spirit of a great individual as somehow higher and/or more important than that of the average man.[91] The use of δαίμων which we see with Darius in the *Persians* can be compared with the employment of δαίμων in Hesiod. Of the three instances of δαίμων in Hesiod,[92] two refer to mortals who have been transformed into immortals, one employing the singular δαίμων, the other the plural δαίμονες (Hes. *Op.* 121-6, *Th.* 988-91; cf. E. *Alc.* 1003). The first comes toward the end of the *Theogony*, where Phaethon, a young, beautiful man is transformed into a δαίμων (Hes. *Th.* 988-91):

> τόν ῥα νέον τέρεν ἄνθος ἔχοντ' ἐρικυδέος ἥβης
> παῖδ' ἀταλὰ φρονέοντα φιλομμειδὴς Ἀφροδίτη
> ὧρτ' ἀνερειψαμένη, καί μιν ζαθέοις ἐνὶ νηοῖς
> νηοπόλον μύχιον ποιήσατο, δαίμονα δῖον.
>
> While he was young and still in the delicate bloom of his glorious prime, a boy with childish thoughts, Aphrodite the lover of smiles was stirred to action, snatched him away and made him her closest servant in her holy temple, a divine daimon.[93]

Having previously been human, Phaethon, like Darius, has become a δαίμων.[94] However, in contrast with Darius, Phaethon became one while he was still young and not after death. There is no indication given in the *Theogony* that Phaethon has died as such; rather he seems transformed, risen to an existence above and beyond what is usually experienced by a human. Nevertheless, it still remains true that both Phaethon

[90] It is worth noting that δαίμων and δαίμονες are never used in juxtaposition.
[91] Cf. Broadhead (1960) 163; West (1978) 182; Garvie (2009) 256.
[92] There are only three instances of δαίμων being used in Hesiod. For the other instance cf. *Op.* 314-16.
[93] Translations of Hesiod are based upon West (1988).
[94] Compare with Ganymede: *Theognidea* 1345-8.

and Darius are daimones and have become so after having been human beings. Similarly, this conception of δαίμων can be seen in the *Works and Days*,[95] where the Golden race of men is turned into δαίμονες after death (*Op.* 121-6):

> αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ δὴ τοῦτο γένος κατὰ γαῖα κάλυψεν,
> τοὶ μὲν δαίμονες εἰσι Διὸς μεγάλου διὰ βουλάς
> ἐσθλοί, ἐπιχθόνιοι, φύλακες θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων,
> πλουτοδόται·
>
> Since the earth covered up that race, they have been daimones on the face of the earth by the great Zeus' design, good, watchers over mortal men and bestowers of wealth.

Again we are presented with mortals turned into δαίμονες. As with Darius, but not with Phaethon, this change seems to occur after death, τοῦτο γένος κατὰ γαῖα κάλυψεν. But as with Phaethon, the δαίμονες here are not called ψυχαί, as Darius is.[96]

In Hesiod, it is possible to see a clear distinction drawn between what is designated by θεός and what is designated by δαίμων. In general terms it can be seen that, in Hesiod at least, δαίμων denotes a being that has attained immortality, having previously been mortal, while θεός denotes only those divine beings who are immortal from the moment of birth.[97] Also, this distinction between the two divine terms seems to go even further, by extending to the function. Both Phaethon and the epichthonic daimones serve gods: Phaethon serves Aphrodite (Hes. *Th.* 990-1), while the epichthonic daimones serve Zeus and Justice as watchers of humanity and guardians of evil deeds (Hes. *Op.* 248-62). And it seems, at least superficially, that they have been made immortal for the very purpose of serving the god that has made them an immortal δαίμων.

While this last factor is not applicable to Darius, there does seem to be some overlap with the other two factors and with Aeschylus' use of δαίμων at *Pers.* 620 and

---

[95] West (1978) 182 argues that in poetry δαίμονες is used as a synonym for θεοί and that it was not until the fifth century that they were distinguished. He does say, however, that Hesiod could not, in all likelihood, have called the deceased race of the Golden age θεοί. Cf. West (1966) 429.

[96] Contra Rohde (1925) 70-2, who equates the epichthonic daimones with souls.

[97] Xenophanes (Fr.14) raises questions about gods 'coming-into-being'. The argument put forward here concerning the gods in Hesiod is not intended to question the nature of the gods or Hesiod's theology, but recognises that there is a difference between divine beings that have always been divine beings and divine beings who were once mortals.

641. In the presentation of Darius, Phaethon and the epichthonic daimones, δαίμων is used to denote a category of divinity distinct from θεός, which is lower in both power and position, as well as a class of divinity which has attained immortality having previously been mortal. However, the clear distinction that can be seen in Hesiod – though admittedly from only two instances[98] – between what terms designate what types of deity is not as straightforward in Aeschylus. What type of being Darius is and what is meant by δαίμων is far less clear than in Hesiod. It is clear that Darius is a ψυχή 'spirit' (*Pers.* 630): this is all relatively unambiguous. But what is meant by δαίμων? Is it purely an honorific title given to him by his wife and former subjects?[99] Or, does it denote something more? Does it indicate that while he is a soul, he is more than simply that? It is clear that the Queen and the chorus still hold their former king in high regard; indeed, it is equally clear that although Darius does not have any real power or position in the afterlife, he does have the power to come back from the afterlife in order to give advice and he has knowledge which neither the Queen nor the chorus possess.

On the one hand, we must bear in mind that it is in the eyes of the Queen and the chorus that Darius is thought of as a δαίμων, and not necessarily in anyone else's. The statements could thus be subjective expressions concerning the nature of their former king. Should these statements of Darius' nature and being, therefore, be equated with the statement at *Pers.* 643 that he is a god among the Persians, and that he is ἰσοδαίμων (634) and ἰσόθεος (856)? But, can Darius be ἰσοδαίμων if he is a δαίμων proper? Garvie answers the question by saying of the descriptions of Darius (and Xerxes) as divine individuals that they are 'meant to be an exaggeration rather than literally true'.[100] In this case, δαίμων would not be a literal denotation of the nature of Darius any more than ἰσοδαίμων. However, that Darius is called a δαίμων is different from him being called θεός (643), ἰσοδαίμων (634) or ἰσόθεος (856). In the latter two instances, Darius is being likened to and/or compared with something/someone else; while at 643 he is referred to as a god, in what is, at the very least, a description of a mortal man (dead or living) unparalleled in Aeschylus or archaic Greek literature. He is judged by his former subjects as a god unlike the other

[98] See below for a discussion of *Op.* 314.
[99] Garvie (2009) 256.
[100] Garvie (2009) 99. Garvie argues that there is no difference in the way δαίμων and θεός are used of Darius in the *Persians*. Cf. 263-5.

Persians, as well as being an equal of the gods. These are terms of flattery. When he is spoken of as a δαίμων it seems to be more a factual statement concerning his nature than an exaggeration or complement. This is indicated by the interchangeable way δαίμων and ψυχή are used to describe the dead Darius. As such, the use of δαίμων bears greater similarity to those instances where he is referred to as a ψυχή. This is not to say that δαίμων is just a synonym for ψυχή. What seems to be expressed by the Queen and the chorus in their use of δαίμων when referring to Darius is a belief that he is more than the average soul and more than any other normal dead person, because he can actively interfere and interact in their lives, if only by giving advice. This manner of reference could thus be seen to bear similarity to the way the deceased were spoken of in hero-cult and how Phaethon or the epichthonic daimones are spoken of in Hesiod.[101]

ΔΑΙΜΩΝ AND THE ERINYES

Aeschylus' portrayal of the Erinyes in the *Eumenides* offers further examples of δαίμων being used to denote deities that are of lesser power and position than, and/or are in some way distinct from those denoted by θεός. Though the Erinyes are seen as working with or in co-operation with Zeus in the *Agamemnon* (*Ag.* 59, 749),[102] from the beginning of the *Eumenides*, the Erinyes are depicted as isolated from the rest of the divine world, especially from the Olympians.[103] Apollo states that no god, man or beast mixes with them: αἷς οὐ μείγνυται | θεῶν τις οὐδ' ἄνθρωπος οὐδὲ θήρ ποτε 'with whom no god ever holds any intercourse, nor man nor beast either' (*Eu.* 69-70); he continues to say that they are born for evil and inhabit Tartarus beneath the earth, and are objects of hate for men and the Olympian gods: κακῶν δ' ἔκατι κἀγένοντ', ἐπεὶ κακὸν | σκότον νέμονται Τάρταρόν θ' ὑπὸ χθονός, | μισήματ' ἀνδρῶν καὶ θεῶν Ὀλυμπίων 'they were absolutely born for evil, for they dwell in the evil

[101] See Rohde (1925) 115-55 for discussion of hero-cult; cf. Broadhead (1960) 163; Dietrich (1967) 14-58.

[102] For further discussion of the Erinyes and justice in the *Oresteia*, see Chapter 4 'The Justice of Zeus'.

[103] The distinctive and distinct nature of the Erinyes in contrast with other gods is not isolated to the *Eumenides* – although nowhere else in Aeschylus is the differentiation of the Erinyes so marked. There is a noteworthy reference at *Th.* 720-2, where the Erinys is called a 'god, unlike gods' θεόν, οὐ θεοῖς ὁμοίαν, which could indicate a form of categorisation of the Erinyes and the nature of δαίμων. However, as the discussion of *Th.* 720-2 above and the present discussion highlight, we must be careful not to assume automatically that a strict hierarchy of divine beings exists in Aeschylus; though as is posited in this section, it may be possible to claim such a hierarchy does exit in the *Eumenides*.

darkness, in Tartarus beneath the earth, and are hateful to men and the Olympian gods' (*Eu.* 71-3); Clytemnestra honours them by night, at an hour shared by no god: καὶ νυκτίσεμνα δεῖπν' ἐπ' ἐσχάρᾳ πυρὸς | ἔθυον, ὥραν οὐδενὸς κοινὴν θεῶν 'and I also sacrificed solemn nocturnal feasts at a hearth of fire, at a time shared with none of the gods' (*Eu.* 108-9); they say of themselves that they stand apart from the gods without sun: {ἄτιμα} ἀτίετα διόμεναι λάχη | θεῶν διχοστατοῦντ' ἀνηλίῳ λάπᾳ 'we carry out our despised function, far away from the gods, in the sunless slime' (*Eu.* 385-6). Even Athena on first seeing the Erinyes states that she does not know who the Erinyes are, saying that she has never seen their race before: ὅμοιαι δ' οὐδενὶ σπαρτῶν γένει, | οὔτ' ἐν θεαῖσι πρὸς θεῶν ὁρωμένας, | οὔτ' οὖν βροτείοις ἐμφερεῖς μορφώμασι 'You resemble no race of begotten beings, neither among the goddesses who are beheld by gods, nor is your appearance similar to that of mortals' (*Eu.* 411-12).

It is clear that the Erinyes are presented in a way that separates them off from the Olympians. There is something wholly 'other' about them. Of the few occasions their divinity is stated, they are referred to as δαίμονες three times: they twice refer to themselves as such (*Eu.* 150, 302); and once Athena calls them δαίμονες (*Eu.* 929). In a similar fashion to those passages from the *Seven* and *Persians*, though by no means exactly replicating them, the words δαίμων and θεός are contrasted with one another, and definition seems to be given to δαίμων by the juxtaposition (*Eu.* 148-54):

> ἰὼ παῖ Διός·
> ἐπίκλοπος πέλῃ,
> νέος δὲ γραίας δαίμονας καθιππάσω,
> τὸν ἱκέταν σέβων, ἄθεον ἄνδρα καὶ
> τοκεῦσιν πικρόν·
> τὸν μητραλοίαν δ' ἐξέκλεψας ὢν θεός.
> τί τῶνδ' ἐρεῖ τις δικαίως ἔχειν;
>
> Alas, son of Zeus, you are a thief, a youth riding roughshod over ancient daimones by showing respect for the suppliant, a godless man who injured his parents: you, a god, smuggled away the man who attacked his mother. Who will say that any of this is in accordance with justice?

This passage draws out a comparison between (as the Erinyes see it) old daimones and a young, disrespectful god. The passage highlights issues that will be central to the play: the matricide and the division between the Olympians and the Erinyes. Bearing in mind that we have already elicited information from the play that sets the Erinyes apart from the rest of the divine world, it is possible that, as with Typhon in the *Seven*, Aeschylus is using the word δαίμων in contrast with θεός as one aspect of his presentation of the Erinyes as deities distinct from, and in conflict with, the Olympian gods in the *Eumenides*. But, in contrast with Typhon, the Erinyes are called δαίμονες on more than the one occasion. It is a term used repeatedly to describe them and not a one-off occurrence employed to bring out a single contrast. It is something that is a consistent part of their presentation, which is mentioned throughout the play (cf. *Eu.* 302, 929) and seems to help set them apart from the Olympians, Apollo and Athena, both of whom are never referred to as δαίμονες in the *Eumenides* or indeed in the rest of Aeschylus' *Oresteia*. Moreover, in contrast with the depiction of Typhon, the Erinyes call themselves δαίμονες. For them, at least, it is not a negative term. This does not mean that δαίμονες is not used by the Erinyes to differentiate themselves from the Olympian gods in the *Eumenides*. Indeed, for them it may even have a positive meaning. But, for whatever reason, the Erinyes use δαίμονες in the above passage, the term stands in juxtaposition with θεός, just as the Erinyes do with the Olympian gods, and the Erinyes themselves do not mean anything negative by their use of the word.

However, the contrast between the Erinyes as δαίμονες and the Olympian gods as θεοί is not so clearly drawn as it may first seem from this particular passage, because the Erinyes are not exclusively referred to as δαίμονες: they are also called θεαί. It must be stated outright that θεά/θεαί are not derogatory or pejorative feminisations of θεός/θεοί. Athena is called both θεός and θεά interchangeably throughout the play (*Eu.* θεά: 224, 242, 259, 671; θεός: 297, 883), while commanding a position of the highest respect and regard. In this way, it may not be the case that δαίμων is used by Aeschylus in order to help facilitate the presentation of the conflict between the Erinyes and the Olympian order, but is simply a synonymous term used in conjunction with θεαί. The employment of θεαί to denote the Erinyes may by consequence affect our initial conclusions concerning the employment of δαίμων as an

aspect of the presentation of the two conflicting sets of deities, which will now be assessed.

In contrast with Athena, the Erinyes do not command a position of the highest respect and regard in the play – at least not initially. They are described as objects of hate for men and gods, they stand apart from all creatures, and their nature is differentiated from the Olympians consistently throughout the play by means other than the use of the word δαίμονες, in a way comparable to Typhon in the *Seven*. So, how are we to understand the use of θεαί when it is used to denote the Erinyes? Let us look at the exact instances where the Erinyes are spoken of as θεαί. Toward the end of the play, Athena calls the Erinyes θεαί when attempting to dissuade them from wreaking revenge after losing the vote (*Eu.* 824-5):

> οὐκ ἔστ' ἄτιμοι, μηδ' ὑπερθύμως ἄγαν
> θεαὶ βροτῶν κτίσητε δύσκηλον χθόνα.
>
> You are not dishonoured! And do not yield to excessive anger and, goddesses that you are, afflict mortals with a canker on their land.

In this passage, Athena desires the Erinyes to consent to her wishes. It seems peculiar, especially coming from Athena, that the plural form of a word which has been used of her is now used of deities who have previously been depicted as 'other' and placed in opposition to the Olympians. This seems all the more out of place when we consider how θεός (and θεά) is used overwhelmingly of the Olympians, over δαίμων in Aeschylus and throughout early Greek literature. Indeed, it is possible that, because of the frequency with which θεός/θεοί are used of the Olympians, they possess connotations in and of themselves which are not shared by δαίμων/δαίμονες. And if, as is observed above, the feminine forms θεά/θεαί do not bear any negative associations in and of themselves, then employment of θεαί at this moment may implicitly connect the Erinyes with the nature of the Olympians in a way which would not otherwise have been possible with the employment of δαίμονες. It may thus be the case that Athena uses θεαί as a mode of flattery that would, due to the connotations and associations implicit in the word θεαί, subtly bridge the gap between herself and

the Erinyes, and so form one part of her persuasion during the final scene of the play to prevent the Erinyes from wreaking destruction upon Athens.[104]

Similarly, when the Ghost of Clytemnestra tries to wake the Erinyes, who have been lulled to sleep by Apollo, she calls them θεαί (*Eu.* 114-16):

> φρονήσατ', ὦ κατὰ χθονὸς θεαί.
> ὄναρ γὰρ ὑμᾶς νῦν Κλυταιμήστρα καλῶ.
>
> Take heed, you goddesses from below the earth: I who now call you in your dreams, I am Clytemnestra.

As with Athena, Clytemnestra is trying to persuade the Erinyes to do what she wants. The balance of power between Clytemnestra and the Erinyes is set firmly in the latter's favour. Clytemnestra can do nothing about avenging her own death; only the Erinyes can help her to this end. It would thus seem quite natural for Clytemnestra to use flattery here. While, of course, she says that: οὐδεὶς ὑπέρ μου δαιμόνων μηνίεται | κατασφαγείσης πρὸς χερῶν μητροκτόνων 'none of the daimones is wrathful on my behalf, slaughtered as I have been by matricidal hands' (*Eu.* 101-2) directly before calling the Erinyes θεαί, so that it may appear that Clytemnestra uses δαίμονες and θεαί as synonyms, δαίμονες and θεαί are, however, used to denote overlapping sets of deities in a distinct manner. Δαίμονες refers generically to the totality of gods – whether this refers to all the gods or just those of the underworld does not matter strictly here – while θεαί addresses the Erinyes directly. The two terms should, therefore, not be treated as synonyms, in spite of their close proximity. As a consequence, it is possible to draw the conclusion that Clytemnestra uses θεαί as a subtle mode of flattery in her attempt to get the Erinyes to do her bidding, just as Athena does at 824-5, to implicitly connect the Erinyes with the highest stratum of divinity, which would not have otherwise been possible if δαίμονες had been used.

So, if the Erinyes are portrayed as distinct from the rest of the divine world, and δαίμων is used to help facilitate this presentation, while θεαί is used in contexts where it seems to connect them implicitly with the Olympians, then these two words

[104] For further discussion of the resolution between the Erinyes and the Olympians, see Chapter 4 'The Justice of Zeus'. Cf. Buxton (1982) 110-14 for the importance of persuasion in the resolution.

could help indicate shifts in how the Erinyes are viewed or presented within the context of the play. If it is accepted that Athena's use of persuasion in the final scene is enhanced or complemented by the use of θεαί at 824-5, then it may also be the case that Athena's use of δαίμονες at *Eu.* 929 indicates another shift in the balance of power in the play: while the Erinyes posed a threat to Athens and while Athena was in the process of persuading the Erinyes to desist, it was in the goddess' interest to use flattery to assuage the Erinyes' anger, and thus she uses the term θεαί with all its connotations to assist in this end. However, once the Erinyes relent of their anger and are incorporated into the framework of Athenian worship, they are no longer a threat to the city and to the Olympian order. The balance of power and conflict between the Erinyes and the Olympians, which is momentarily upset and comes to a head during the trial scene and subsequently after, is reset by line 929. This realignment is then reflected in the vocabulary Athena uses of the Erinyes. So, when the Erinyes pose a threat and there is need to bridge the gap between the Olympians and the Erinyes, Athena calls them θεαί; whereas, once the threat has passed, they are again called δαίμονες by Athena. This indicates that while the Erinyes see, at the very least, nothing negative in calling themselves δαίμονες, Athena may well believe θεαί a more dignified term than δαίμων/δαίμονες.

With regard to the Erinyes, they seem to use θεαί and δαίμονες synonymously. This is indicated in the only remaining instance of θεαί used of the Erinyes, which comes at line 728, where they use it in reference to themselves (*Eu.* 727-8)[105]:

> σύ τοι παλαιὰς διανομὰς[106] καταφθίσας
> οἴνῳ παρηπάφησας ἀρχαίας θεάς.
>
> You're the one who destroyed the old allotment of power and beguiled those ancient goddesses with wine.

At this moment in the play we are awaiting the result of the vote. The honour due to the Erinyes and their position within the divine world seems to be at stake. Indeed, the Erinyes themselves appear all too aware of this possibility (*Eu.* 715-16, 727-8), and

[105] Cf. *Eu.* 920, where the Erinyes use δαίμονες of the gods generally.
[106] Reading διανομὰς instead of δαίμονας (daimones) and δαιμονάς (allotment).

threaten the destruction of Athens if they do not win (*Eu.* 711-12, 719-20, 731-3). It seems quite natural that the Erinyes have concerns about their position within the divine world and feel their honour may be subordinated to (and by) the Olympians. It could be argued that the Erinyes use the word θεαί at this moment to give themselves a more magisterial appearance, to place themselves on an equal footing with Apollo and the Olympians, so as to present their status and honour as of equal worth and importance, due equal reverence. While their use of the word would be different from that of flattery, its desired effect would nevertheless be similar, as it presents them in a way that implicitly likens their nature to that of the Olympians and in particular to the Olympian who has been called θεά repeatedly throughout the play and who has an important role in the trial: Athena. But, this could only be said if the Erinyes had previously presented themselves in such a way as to imply that they consider δαίμονες a lesser term with which to refer to themselves – which, of course, they have not. Rather, they have seemed proud to call themselves δαίμονες, as is seen above at *Eu.* 148-54. In contrast with Athena, the Erinyes see nothing negative – at the very least – in calling themselves δαίμονες, and as a result it cannot be said with any real certainty that the Erinyes use θεαί to imply anything more than if they had used δαίμονες, unless, and of course I think we are to undertand that, they recognise that Athena sees something different and more positive in the use of θεαί over δαίμονες and so use the word accordingly. But, this is difficult to determine, especially as we only have the one instance of the Erinyes' use of θεαί.

The two words δαίμονες and θεαί serve two distinct roles throughout the *Eumenides* helping to depict the Erinyes and the conflict between them and the Olympians that arises out of Orestes' decision to kill his mother. But, the role the words play is determined by the characters who employ them. In the mouth of Athena, δαίμονες is used as a lesser term than θεός/θεοί or its feminine equivalents, which is likely to be the result of θεός/θεοί being the term used far more frequently of the Olympians throughout Greek literature; but, in the mouths of the Erinyes, while the two terms are treated as distinct (as seen at *Eu.* 148-54), neither is considered a negative or pejorative term.

The relationship between the chthonic realm and δαίμων is something that has been stressed in previous studies of the word.[107] As an early example of this idea, such studies commonly point to Hesiod's Golden Race of men turned into δαίμονες after they are covered by the earth. Hero cult too is cited as a 'real-life' parallel of mortals being thought of as transformed after death into god-like beings who possess power to influence events, with the result that the spirits of dead heroes are commonly understood to be δαίμονες.[108] Aeschylus' presentation of Darius as a δαίμων hints at hero-cult and chthonic ideas. However, to argue that δαίμων is inherently bound up with the chthonic in literature would be a dangerous leap to make.[109] First, δαίμων is used in many contexts where notions of the chthonic are not present. Indeed, in the *Persians* δαίμονες (628) and θεοί (622, 689) are used synonymously and interchangeably in reference to the chthonic gods within one hundred lines of each other; and in the *Suppliants* and *Agamemnon* we are faced with parallel instances of contrasts between the heavenly gods above and chthonic gods below: ὕπατοί τε θεοί, καὶ βαρύτιμοι | χθόνιοι (*Supp.* 24-5), πάντων δὲ θεῶν τῶν ἀστυνόμων, | ὑπάτων, χθονίων (*Ag.* 87-8), where θεοί is used of both upper and lower gods. The same is true of the *Libation Bearers* where in the three places chthonic gods are spoken of θεοί, δαίμονες and μάκαρες are all used once (δαίμονες: 125; θεοί: 475; μάκαρες: 476).[110]

It has been argued here that Athena especially uses δαίμονες to highlight the 'otherness' of the Erinyes in relation to the Olympian gods. In the *Eumenides*, the conflict between the Olympians and the Erinyes is repeatedly presented and their natures are contrasted consistently throughout the play. While the Olympians are gods of the upper world and described as θεοί, the Erinyes are chthonic deities and δαίμονες. But, it does not necessarily follow that the Erinyes are δαίμονες because they are chthonic. Indeed, the Erinyes are called θεαί three times in the play, and in spite of sometimes being a term of flattery employed to liken the Erinyes to the nature of the Olympians, it is not an inaccurate description of their divinity (cf. *Th.* 720-3; *Ag.* 1580). Rather, it seems that the use of δαίμονες is driven by the context of the

[107] See, for example, Dietrich (1967) *passim*, esp. 55-8; Nilsson (1967) 1.200-6.
[108] Usener (1896) 247-53; Rohde (1925) 71-4; Dietrich (1967) 14-58; Geisser (2002) 14-15. See also the discussion above of Darius.
[109] Cf. Dietrich (1967) *passim*.
[110] Chthonic Hermes is also referenced three times (1, 124, 727), but his divinity, whether θεός or δαίμων, is never stated.

play, utilized to stress the difference between the Olympians and the Erinyes, and is not reliant or dependent on the chthonic aspect of their nature in and of itself. If there was reliance on the use of δαίμονες because of the chthonic, it would need to be explained why the Erinyes can be called θεαί and why other chthonic deities are called θεός and why δαίμων is used in contexts where the chthonic is not present. It thus does not seem that in Aeschylus, at least, the word δαίμων is in any way exclusively associated with the chthonic, nor is it the chthonic in and of itself which determines which divine term is used.

SUMMARY REMARKS

In looking at δαίμων in Aeschylus, it is possible to see that the word possesses greater complexity than may at first have been thought. Δαίμων is more than simply a synonym for θεός or another way of denoting a person's fortune in life; it is a subtle and nuanced term by Aeschylus' time, something that seems not to have been lost on Heraclitus. It is through the term's connection with an individual's fortune in life that it is possible to see how – we do not know when – δαίμων came to be connected with and understood as someone's personal guardian deity. But, more than this, δαίμων is often used by Aeschylus to denote a deity that is in some way distinct from or lesser than a deity who is juxtaposed with it and referred to as θεός. While it is clear that Aeschylus was not operating with a strict stratification of divine terms – though one could argue that he comes close in the *Eumenides* – there is enough evidence from the way he uses δαίμων and θεός in his plays to say that Aeschylus used and understood different things by each term. Indeed, it is from a deeper understanding of the terms δαίμων and θεός that we can see how Aeschylus is able to assist the characterisation of the conflict between the Erinyes and the Olympians in the *Eumenides*. Not only do the terms help depict the divide between the two sets of deities, but they even give an indication about subtle shifts in the conflict's intensity and the balance between the Olympians and the Erinyes, as we shall see in the second half of the final chapter, *The Justice of Zeus*.

PART 2: ZEUS

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Since Hugh Lloyd-Jones' *The Justice of Zeus*, it has been rather unfashionable to look at the nature of Zeus in Aeschylus. Lloyd-Jones argues that the Zeus of Aeschylus is no different from the Zeus found in Homer or Hesiod, and that Presocratic conceptions of divinity played no part in Aeschylus' presentation of the gods. Or in Lloyd-Jones' own words: 'If Aeschylus knew of modern thinkers like Xenophanes and Heraclitus, he refrained from obtruding his knowledge upon his audiences. The authors who are really important influences upon him, as they are for his countryman Solon, are Homer and Hesiod.'[1] Both *The Justice of Zeus* and Lloyd-Jones' earlier article 'Zeus in Aeschylus' are in many respects reactions against earlier commentators, who saw Aeschylus as depicting a Zeus more evolved than the Zeus of Homer and Hesiod, a deity that was in some way a direct descendent of Xenophanes' *one god*.[2] Many of these studies are attempts to reconcile the crueller and more despotic Zeus of the *Prometheus Bound* with the kinder, more 'profound' Zeus of Aeschylus' other plays. Scholars assumed the Zeus of the *Oresteia* and *Suppliants* to be a more 'developed' divinity,[3] a natural precursor to the Platonic Demiurge in his presentation of what were considered monotheistic qualities.[4]

While this thesis will not discuss the *Prometheus* for the reasons discussed in the Introduction,[5] questions still remain from the issues brought out by these studies about whether there exist any traces of Presocratic influence on the thought of Aeschylus; not least, because if we accept Lloyd-Jones' conclusions we are forced into a position where we effectively ignore the intervening centuries between Homer and Aeschylus and the development of philosophical and religious investigation. From this perspective alone it is worthwhile to re-examine Aeschylus. But more than this, if it is possible to detect traces of Presocratic thought it would add another dimension to Aeschylus' works, which would not only provide new insight into the

---

[1] Lloyd-Jones (1971) 86; cf. Denniston and Page (1957) xiii-xvi for a similar position.
[2] See, for example, Murray (1940) 80-1, 108-10; Solmsen (1949) 153-66; Cornford (1952) 145, 153; and for a 'no holds barred' proto-Christian reading of Aeschylus, Tyler (1859, repr. 2006).
[3] E.g. Jaeger (1945) 263-4; Solmsen (1949); Grube (1970) 50-1. Cf. Golden (1961) for a brief overview of the 'developmental' arguments and a theory of an 'amoral Zeus'; and see Golden (1962) and Kitto (1966) 68-9 for 'two-Zeus' theory.
[4] E.g. Cornford (1935).
[5] See Introduction for a discussion of the authenticity of the *Prometheus Bound* and the related bibliography.

workings of the divine in his plays, but would also open up a whole new dialogue that taps into the religio-philosophical debates of the age. This is not to make any claim for a progressivist model of religious development by seeing a natural movement from polytheistic 'primitivism' to 'advanced' monotheism with a single benevolent god, all-knowing and all-powerful. Rather, I want to undertake an examination of Zeus in Aeschylus as the Zeus of Aeschylus. The discussion will look back to Homer, Hesiod and the lyric poets, as well as back and sideways to the Presocratics for potential similarities (and notable differences), but will do so only in an attempt to achieve an understanding of the god within the context of the plays.

The second chapter of this thesis will consider whether there is consistency in the presentation of Zeus between plays and discusses how Zeus is presented play-by-play, determining whether there are any similarities in how the god is depicted. In this and the subsequent chapter, a working distinction is made between 'characteristics' and 'nature' of the god. The two terms 'characteristics' and 'nature' are not used as part of some over-arching, grand scheme of categorisation, but solely as aids in differentiating between how the god is depicted, perhaps inconsistently, between plays (characteristics); and those qualities and aspects which appear to be basic to and/or inherent in the god of Aeschylus (nature). The third chapter of the thesis, 'The Nature of Zeus', looks at the key underlying features of the god, examining qualities, such as anthropomorphism, invariance and the god's connection with Hades. This is done with frequent discussion of the arguments derived from Presocratic philosophy. The final chapter of the thesis then considers the nature of justice and Zeus, focusing primarily on the question of the guilt of Agamemnon in the Agamemnon and the conflict between the Erinyes and the Olympians in the *Eumenides*.

In the three chapters of the second part of this thesis on Zeus, I intend to argue against any conception of a kind or 'progressive' Zeus; while at the same time, I intend to demonstrate that the Zeus of Aeschylus is not the same as the Homeric Zeus or the Hesiodic Zeus, that Aeschylus interacts with and responds to Presocratic conceptions of divinity, and that the Zeus of Aeschylus exhibits qualities not found in the epics of Homer.

2: THE CHARACTERISTICS OF ZEUS

This chapter will consider Zeus as a figure within each play, seeing when, where and how the god is characterised. This will help to determine whether, in different plays, he is presented in any markedly different ways, by establishing an overview of the characteristics of Zeus that will highlight in a broad and overarching way the themes which accompany the god. Such an overview will demonstrate whether or not there are any clear divisions within or between the plays in the utilisation of the god: whether Zeus is used pragmatically and thus acts as a dramatic tool for the poet; used in different ways in different plays to suit the specific purposes of an individual play; or whether there are underlying patterns and threads in the way the god is conceptualised.

The extant plays of Aeschylus span a fourteen-year period from 472 to 458 B.C. Although Aeschylus was already a mature poet by 472,[6] we should not assume that his thought concerning Zeus and the nature of justice must have remained unaltered during the period belonging to his extant plays. So, we should not take as writ that Aeschylus was or had become 'stuck in his ways' by his early fifties. Nor can we ignore that 472-458 was a time of political change in Athens (and throughout the Greek world as a whole) and the possibility that political events had an effect on the way in which the nature of justice was understood and presented, as well as how the role of the gods in the lives of human beings was conceived. Aeschylus would have witnessed the breakdown of the peace between Athens and Sparta in 462/1 which had lasted from the expulsion of Persia from mainland Greece in 480/79; the ostracism of Cimon in 461; the rise of Ephialtes, his radical democratisation of Athens' political institutions, and his subsequent suspicious death; and the rise of Pericles and his continuation of the democratisation started by Ephialtes.[7] And while this will not be a discussion of the political context of the plays, nor an investigation into 'what Aeschylus thought', it is still necessary to be aware that the period between 472 and 458 B.C. was a time of great change and that such external factors may have had an effect on the portrayal of justice, Zeus and the gods in Aeschylus' plays.

---

[6] I adhere to the traditional view that Aeschylus was born c. 525 and died 456/5.

[7] For further discussion of the political context of Aeschylus' plays see, here and in general, Podlecki (1966); for the *Oresteia* in particular, see also Macleod (2007), Sommerstein (1989) 25-32.

In discussing the presentation of Zeus in Aeschylus, it would thus be worthwhile to start by looking at the plays chronologically, picking out where Zeus is involved and spoken of, highlighting areas of interest and noteworthy similarities or differences. In so doing, no attempt will be made to supply a detailed, full discussion of all the passages quoted and cited. As there are not enough references to the god in either the *Persians* or *Seven Against Thebes* for a discussion to be worthwhile or illuminating, I will look exclusively at the *Suppliants* and the *Oresteia* trilogy in this instance.

The chorus and its pronouncements on the nature of the gods, and Zeus in particular, plays an important role in the plays of Aeschylus and has a significant bearing on this thesis. The authority of the chorus is also something that has been the subject of debate over the past twenty years or so. First, Vernant and Vidal-Naquet have seen the chorus as representative of the civic body and able to express the audience's emotions and thoughts.[8] This view was countered by Gould a few years later, who argues that the chorus is not representative of the civic body and audience, but is often presented by the poet as marginal outsiders and thus lacks any real authority to pronounce on events.[9] Gould adds that the chorus is also not a mouthpiece for the poet's voice, but is a set of characters constrained by the fictional world they inhabit.[10] Gould's arguments were in turn argued against by Goldhill, who states, 'that the chorus can speak with the full weight of a collective authority is crucial to tragedy's explorations of authority, knowledge, tradition within the dynamics of democracy's ethics of group and individual obligations.'[11] But, while Goldhill gives the chorus of tragedy a privileged place within the dramatic discourse, aiding 'commentary, reflection and [giving] an authoritative voice,'[12] he does not grant it the heightened status of authorial voice (although in what manner this is defined is unclear).[13] What Goldhill's interpretation of the role of the chorus highlights is that while the context of each play is important, and the characterisation of the chorus within it, the chorus plays a key role in the contemplation of the events of each play.

---

[8] Vernant and Vidal-Naquet (1988) 24.
[9] Gould (1996) 224.
[10] Gould (1996) 231.
[11] Goldhill (1996) 253.
[12] Goldhill (1996) 255.
[13] See further discussion of this in the chapter 'The Justice of Zeus' in the section *The Hymn to Zeus*.

So, when we look at the various plays in the following chapters, it is important to recognise and bear in mind the dramatic context which the chorus inhabit as well as their ability to explore and reflect on different questions which the plays raise. This is particularly important in the following discussions of the *Suppliants* and *Oresteia*. But, this is not to give greater authority to the choruses of either of these plays concerning pronouncements on Zeus. What is of importance in this chapter and the next is not the trustworthiness or authority of the chorus, so much as the type of views being expressed by them and their interaction with the thought of philosophers. It is not that what the chorus says in either of these sets of plays is more important, but that what they have to say is more illuminating about the nature of Zeus and the author's interaction with contemporary philosophical and religious thought. One may go so far as to say that these next two chapters are not interested in the truth, but what was perceived as true. Since the plays present on-stage life-like characters with life-like issues (though dramatised and placed within a mythological setting), one can reasonably make the assumption that the beliefs, language, cares and concerns are not fantastic, but understood and relatable to the audience. In a similar way, one can understand that the Zeus of Aeschylus was believed in by him and presented in a way that the audience would relate to, understand and believe in themselves. Though certain characteristics of the god may change or be emphasised differently between plays, the underlying nature of the god would be the same.

Zeus in the *Suppliants*

Zeus dominates the *Suppliants* more than any other extant Greek play. His name occurs 55 times, if we restore 175a but not 574 or 967,[14] as is now generally accepted. Zeus is the first word of the play and he is the god under consideration in the final lines of it too: Zeus is a frequent point of reference throughout the entire play, from first to last.

In the prologue, we are introduced to several key themes with regard to Zeus. In the first line, the god is called on as Ζεὺς ἀφίκτωρ, Zeus the Approacher, i.e. 'Zeus the guardian of suppliants'. Ἀφίκτωρ is not a known cult title for Zeus and

[14] See Friis Johansen and Whittle (hereafter FJW) (1980) 2.5 for the precise figures concerning references to Zeus from other Aeschylean plays. All references to Zeus in the *Oresteia* are discussed below.

seems rather to be an Aeschylean invention used in place of the more common title Ἱκέσιος. The etymological connection between the verbs ἀφικνέομαι and ἱκνέομαι and their respective nominal forms is picked up on by the poet and played upon in lines 20-2, where the chorus of Danaids say: τίν' ἂν οὖν χώραν εὔφρονα μᾶλλον τῆσδ' ἀφικοίμεθα | σὺν τοῖσδ' ἱκετῶν ἐγχειριδίοις[15] | ἑριοστέπτοισι κλάδοισιν; 'So, to what more friendly land than this could we come with these hand-held emblems of the suppliant, these wool-wreathed olive branches?' In the prologue we also encounter for the first time the myth of Io, which occurs periodically throughout the play and in which, of course, Zeus is a central figure. The first explicit[16] reference to the Io myth occurs in lines 15-19 and reads: ... κέλσαι δ' Ἄργους γαῖαν, ὅθεν δὴ γένος ἡμέτερον, | τῆς οἰστροδόνου βοὸς ἐξ ἐπαφῆς | κἀξ ἐπιπνοίας Διὸς εὐχόμενον, τετέλεσται. '... and [we] put in to the land of Argos, from whence originates our race, which claims to derive from the touch and breath of Zeus.' The myth of the rape of Io is an important factor in the discussion of the nature of Zeus, because it can be interpreted as either a beneficial act or a violent and negative one. The final reference to Zeus in the prologue sees the Danaids call on the god as the Saviour and the guardian of pious men's homes to receive them as suppliants into Argos and to protect them from their Egyptian cousins (*Supp.* 26-9). The prologue can be seen to establish Zeus as key figure in several different key thematic areas for the play: as the god of suppliants; the Danaids' progenitor and the former sexual partner of Io; the Danaids' saviour; and the just protector of pious men's homes.

The first choral ode begins in line 40 by referencing the Io myth with an invocation to the child and ancestor of the Danaids, whose name Ἔπαφος means 'the Touch' and who was the product of the union between Io and Zeus (*Supp.* 40-8). There is nothing negative in the presentation of Zeus and the conception of Epaphos so far in the play, only the gentleness of Zeus' part in the act of consummation. What

[15] Here I punctuate differently from West (1998) by removing the comma after ἐγχειριδίοις, and in so doing agree with Page's OCT (1972).

[16] I say explicit reference here, because there is a possibility that within the imagery of the male-female contrast contained in lines 8-9, which describes the conflicting relationship of the Danaids and the Egyptians, there is an allusion to the relationship of Io and Zeus. For this argument, see R. D. Murray (1958) 28, 98-102. While this argument may come under attack for presuming the existence of the Io story within the *Suppliants* before Aeschylus has explicitly referred to it, the connection between Io and Argos is, nevertheless, a natural one. For example, Ps.-Apollodorus, in reporting Hesiod, says that Zeus seduced/destroyed (ἔφθειρε) Io, which indicates that the story of Zeus entering into some form of sexual congress with Io was pre-Aeschylean and thus potentially known by Aeschylus' audience (Hesiod Fr. 124). So, in line 8, it may already be perfectly acceptable to connect the male-female contrast of the Danaids and Egyptians with Io and Zeus.

follows at *Supp.* 86-103 is a passage which raises questions about the invariance, unknowableness and detachment of Zeus. Such a description of the nature of Zeus naturally casts a light on all subsequent references to the god in the play, especially those instances which describe Zeus as a fulfiller of events, because all subsequent references to Zeus' power as the greatest of gods can be seen to recall the image of his invariance and detachment from events described during the first choral ode (cf. *Supp.* 138-40, 211-12, 524-30, 624, 822-4).[17] Indeed, soon after, Zeus is referred to in a way that encompasses several prominent aspects of his powerful nature: τελευτὰς δ' ἐν χρόνῳ πατὴρ ὁ παντόπτας | πρευμενεῖς κτίσειεν· 'Now may the all-seeing Father in time bring about a propitious end' (*Supp.* 138-40). First, Zeus is the Father, which can be seen to refer to the god as the progenitor of the Danaids, as well as to his traditional position as the father of men and gods. These lines also allude to Zeus as the ultimate fulfiller of events and do so in conjunction with the god as an all-seeing, all-knowing deity.

In the final four verses of the first choral ode (*Supp.* 151-76), Zeus again looms large in three striking passages. First, the name of Zeus is used to refer to the god of the dead: Ζῆνα τῶν κεκμηκότων, 'Zeus of the departed.' (*Supp.* 157)[18] Secondly, he is called upon in a twofold vocative with Io: ἆ Ζήν· Ἰοῦς ἰὼ μῆνις | μάστειρ' ἐκ θεῶν· 'Oh Zeus; oh the wrath of the gods that takes vengeance on Io.' (*Supp.* 162-3). This is the first time the tale of Zeus and Io is put in a more negative light. And thirdly, if they should be left to the violent advances of their Egyptian cousins or forced to commit suicide to avoid these advances, the Danaids ask: καὶ τότ' οὐ δικαίοις | Ζεὺς ἐνέξεται ψόγοις, | τὸν τᾶς βοὸς παῖδ' ἀτιμάσας, τὸν αὐ- | τός ποτ' ἔκτισεν γόνῳ, | νῦν ἔχων παλίντροπον | ὄψιν ἐν λιταῖσιν; 'And then will Zeus not be liable to merited censure for dishonouring the child of the cow, whom he himself once begot and caused to be, by turning his face away when we pray to him?'[19] (*Supp.* 167-73). The Danaids' question here demonstrates how they view their relationship with the god. They feel that Zeus is under an obligation, not only

[17] The position of Zeus as the great fulfiller of events is something which is present throughout all Aeschylus: see below for passages in the *Oresteia*, as well as, for example, *Pers.* 739-40, 759-64, *Th.* 117-18.

[18] One may think that this is just another way of referring to Hades, but the position of Zeus as a god of the dead is discussed below in Chapter 3 'The Nature of Zeus' in the section *Zeus and Hades*.

[19] Following West (1998), FJW (1980), and Weir Smyth (1922), who have these lines asking a question. Page (1972) does not see this passage as asking a question at all.

by way of his connection with them as both their ancestor and as the god of suppliants, but also because he owes them protection for his role in dishonouring Io. The question is, indeed, focalised in such a way through the eyes of the Danaids that Zeus is in many ways removed from his normal state, from his position as the king of gods and men and the overseer of justice, to being just another individual under consideration for potential crimes. His position of power and authority is thus inverted to one of being under an obligation in the eyes of the Danaids.[20]

In the following scene between Danaus and the chorus, we are presented with little new information concerning Zeus. First, the god is called αἰδοίου Διός (*Supp.* 192), which can be translated either 'reverend Zeus', with Zeus understood as the one deserving of reverence (αἰδώς); or alternatively 'reverent Zeus', where the epithet can be taken in an active sense with Zeus seen as the one who will give reverence to his suppliants.[21] Friis Johansen and Whittle, in support of the former reading, supply references from the *Odyssey* which attest that αἰδοῖος is an epithet used of suppliants (*Od.* 7.165, 7.181, 9.271).[22] Zeus is then spoken of as Ζεὺς γεννήτωρ 'Zeus, our ancestor' (*Supp.* 206), which refers to the Io story and recalls the obligation the suppliants feel Zeus is under as their ancestor. This is reinforced by the Danaids' request that Zeus take pity on them before they die (*Supp.* 209). Danaus also speaks of Ζεὺς ἄλλος ἐν καμοῦσιν ὑστάτας δίκας 'Another Zeus who pronounces final judgements on the dead' (*Supp.* 231), which can be seen to pick up line 157, where Zeus was spoken of in similar terms as a god of the dead.[23]

With Pelasgus' entrance and first words at line 234 we learn more about the myth of Io and Zeus' role within the tale. We are told that Zeus μιχθῆναι, 'had intercourse', with Io (295) and that Hera, having found out about this, turned Io into a cow (296-9). Indeed, at *Supp.* 295, we encounter the first occurance in the play when the sexual union itself between Zeus and Io is not euphemistically spoken of as the 'touch' or 'breath' of Zeus. Though now a cow, Io's appearance does not prevent Zeus from approaching her, which he does in the form of a bull (300-1). As a consequence, Hera set up Argos as a guard (303-5) and sent Io to be driven by a

[20] See Brill (2009) 161-80 on the power of the suppliant.
[21] Thus Cairns (1993) 183-4.
[22] See FJW (1980) 2.153.
[23] Cf. note above; the idea of Zeus as a god of death is discussed below in Chapter 3 'The Nature of Zeus'.

gadfly (309) on a long journey until she settled by the Nile (311-12). From the union, Io brought forth a son, Epaphos (313-15).

For the two hundred lines or so between *Supp.* 320 and 523, the prominence of the Io myth recedes in favour of repeated reference to the need to pay heed to Zeus, the god of suppliants, and the wrath of the god should the Danaids not be received by Pelasgus and the city (*Supp.* 347, 385-6, 478-9). The position of Zeus as the god of justice also comes to the fore in these lines (cf. *Supp.* 359-60, 381-6, 402-4, 437). When Pelasgus states that he cannot make the decision about accepting them as suppliants because of the possibility of causing a war with the Egyptians (*Supp.* 397-401), the Danaids respond: ἀμφότερ', ὡς ὁμαίμων,[24] τάδ' ἐπισκοπεῖ | Ζεύς, ἑτερορρεπής,[25] νέμων εἰκότως | ἄδικα μὲν κακοῖς, ὅσια δ' ἐννόμοις. 'Both of these options, as one kindred in blood, Zeus watches over, holding the balance nicely poised, as ready to incline this way as that, fittingly distributing injustice to the evil, prosperity to the law-abiding' (*Supp.* 402-4). The question of what is considered just and unjust, and in whose eyes, is raised here. The Danaids do this by acknowledging that Pelasgus' decision is, pragmatically, a difficult one, but that this is all the more reason to do what is just in the eyes of the highest and most powerful god. In so doing, the Danaids wish to place before Pelasgus what Zeus considers just, what Zeus holds dear and important: *i.e.* the rights of the suppliant.

Once Pelasgus leaves the stage at *Supp.* 523, the Danaids sing an ode which develops the Io myth further. But, before the chorus give another account of the myth, they address Zeus directly: ἄναξ ἀνάκτων, μακάρων | μακάρτατε καὶ τελέων | τελειότατον κράτος, ὄλβιε Ζεῦ, 'Lord of lords, most blessed of the blessed ones, most perfect power of the perfect ones, Zeus giver of prosperity,' (*Supp.* 524-6) The language the chorus uses to invoke Zeus is quite alien to the way Greeks usually speak of their gods. It is more reminiscent of the way the Persians and Egyptians spoke – or are perceived and portrayed to speak – of their kings.[26] Nevertheless, while the titles the Danaids bestow upon Zeus may be more akin to the style of 'eastern' peoples, the thought behind the words is not in itself so very different from

[24] Following the reading of FJW (1980) 2. 318-20 for line 402.
[25] See Tucker (1889) 88 for meaning of ἑτερορρεπής.
[26] The title ἄναξ ἀνάκτων is rarely found elsewhere; the best attested close analogue is βασιλεὺς βασιλέων, which is the standard translation of the Persian King's title 'King of Kings'. The latter title is also found on the tombs of Egyptian kings and is the form used by Plutarch of Antony and Cleopatra's children (Plu. *Ant.* 54.4). See FJW (1980) 2. 408-10 for further discussion of this title.

the way Zeus is referred to in the other plays of Aeschylus by Greek characters (cf. *Th.* 117-18; *Ag.* 973-4, 1485-8).[27]

When the ode does move on to address the myth of Io, it first presents little that is new or of significance concerning Zeus and his role in the affair. The Danaids claim to be descended from the race of Zeus (536) and that Io came to the grove of Zeus near the Nile (558). It is not until the fourth verse that we come across anything which affects our understanding of the god. The Danaids say: δι' αἰῶνος κρέων ἀπαύτου | <* * * * *> | Διὸς[28] δ' ἀπημάντῳ σθένει | καὶ θείαις ἐπιπνοίαις | παύεται, δακρύων δ' ἀπο- | στάζει πένθιμον αἰδῶ. | λαβοῦσα δ' ἔρμα Δῖον ἀψευδεῖ λόγῳ | γείνατο παῖδ' ἀμεμφῆ, ... 'Ruling throughout time unceasing, she was stopped by the unharming might of Zeus and by his divine breath, and she let fall drop by drop the mournful shame of tears. Taking on the cargo of Zeus, by no false word, she brought forth a blameless child, ...' (*Supp.* 574-81). Friis Johansen and Whittle see this description as an implicit assertion that Zeus has turned Io back into a human being and thus of the kindness of Zeus.[29] They say that αἰδώς and πένθος are human characteristics, and that the shedding of δάκρυα by animals is not recorded before the fifth century, except in the case of Achilles' horses at the death of Patroclus (*Il.* 17. 437-9). But Io is described as weeping without any indication that she has actually been turned back into a human. The question is really why we need assume that Io has been changed back into a human here at all when this is not made explicit.[30] Indeed, there is a real similarity between the horses of Achilles and Io, because both possess a state transcendent of that of mere animals. They possess a

---

[27] See Chapter 3 'The Nature of Zeus', which further demonstrates that the exalted manner in which the Danaids refer to Zeus is not unique to them, this play or to foreign, non-Greek peoples in Aeschylus.

[28] Following West (1998), who follows the emendation by Pearson, J. (1612-86); see FJW (1980) 2. 460-1 for further discussion of the textual problem.

[29] FJW (1980) 2. 462-3; see Cairns (1993) 187-8, who also assumes that Io is transformed back into a human during this scene. He states that it is significant that Io expresses αἰδώς at the moment she is transformed back into human form, because αἰδώς is the 'human emotion *par excellence*'. However, Cairns overlooks lines 562-4, which state that Io is able to feel dishonour in her toil as well as the painful goads: πόνοις ἀτίμοις ὀδύναις τε κεντροδαλήτισι (*Supp.* 562-4). She is thus able to feel human emotions before she has sexual congress with Zeus at 574ff. Indeed, it would seem natural to make the assumption that the severity of Hera's punishment rests on Io herself understanding the horrid nature of her punishment and transformation. So, Io seems rather simply to be a human in cow-form and the way that Io is presented before these two verses, as a human in mind (though not form), implies that she can thus experience αἰδώς without being human in form. See the further arguments made in the subsequent main text.

[30] Tucker (1908) 12-13, ad 42, also makes this argument, saying that 'nowhere in Aeschylus [or in the *Prometheus*] is Zeus said to have restored Io to her human shape.'

supra-animal status, with Achilles' horses being semi-divine and Io herself part human, part cow (569-70). This may mean that neither Achilles' horses nor Io should be treated as just animals, and in this respect Friis Johansen and Whittle may be correct to say that no (mere) animal is recorded weeping before the fifth-century. Thus, it may be better to judge Io by a different set of criteria, one outside of the parameters of what is traditionally expected of an animal. And so, as a consequence, we are still left with the question why it is necessary to make the leap that Io has been 'delivered' by Zeus from her animal state in this scene.

Moreover, in imagining Io as part human, part cow we need not think of her exterior as part human, part cow or that it implies a process of transformation. It is just as conceivable that the human aspect of her was her mind and the animal her form. First, her wanderings naturally suggest quadrupedality and 539-40 seem to preclude a human head. Such a depiction of Io the cow indicates that she is not some minotaur-esque creature, at the very least, before her encounter with Zeus. Secondly, when she is said to be a strange sight ὄψιν ἀήθη (half human, half cow) for the inhabitants of the land at which she has arrived (565-73), she is said to be these things before Zeus comes upon her. Indeed, in keeping with the implied quadrupedality already stated, the strange sight which the inhabitants see can easily be understood as the mad, raving cow described in the lines directly before (562-4), and not a minotaur-esque creature. There is a clear break in the story at 571 with the use of the collocation: καὶ τότε δὴ, which denotes a temporal change and thus that it was then, at that time that Zeus came to Io, not before.[31] The position of καὶ τότε δὴ here, therefore, indicates that the description of Io as half human, half cow was not a description of Zeus' transformation of her back into human form. Up until this point at 571 there had been no reference to the god himself[32] in the retelling of Io's wanderings.

Even if we could say that this scene offers a depiction of Zeus transforming Io back into human form,[33] Io's tears of πένθιμον αἰδῶ indicate that this scene hints

[31] The collocation καὶ τότε δὴ does not occur elsewhere in tragedy, but is frequent in epic: cf. *Il.* 1.92, 9.590.

[32] Zeus' name does appear at 558 to refer to the 'all-nurturing grove of Zeus' Δῖον πάμβοτον ἄλσος, but this is, of course, not the same as the god himself being spoken of.

[33] Tucker (1889) 13 points out that nowhere in Aeschylus does Zeus restore Io to human form. It may just be that the god put an end to her wanderings, impregnated her and restored her senses. It could thus be these which are referred to in lines 586-9.

at something other than Zeus' kindness.[34] It has been pointed out that there is an ambiguity concerning whether Io's tears are the result of her treatment by Hera or at her present position as the object of Zeus' erotic affections.[35] Indeed, while the lines: Διὸς δ' ἀπημάντῳ σθένει | καὶ θείαις ἐπιπνοίαις | παύεται (*Supp.* 576-8), can be read as similarly euphemistic as those descriptions of the rape of Io encountered before in the play, the subsequent lines depict the effect of the act on Io – something which until now has not been developed by Aeschylus: δακρύων δ' ἀπο- | στάζει πένθιμον αἰδῶ (*Supp.* 578-9). That the scene details a sexual assault is made all the more plausible by describing the child as παῖδ' ἀμεμφῆ, because by stressing that the child carries no blame – and one presumes, because of the context, none of the hereditary connotations or associations of the act by which he came into being – it could imply that the father's actions are thus in some way blameworthy. So, it is possible to read this choral ode up to this point as suggesting that the tale is not a completely kind one, that Zeus is not wholly kind and that Io has not been transformed back into human shape.

The following verses of the stasimon continue to focus on the Danaids' descent from Zeus. The chorus, having just described the conception of Epaphus in lines 574-82, declare that: φυσιζόου γένος τόδε | Ζηνός ἐστιν ἀληθῶς. | τίς γὰρ ἂν κατέπαυσεν Ἥ- | ρας νόσους ἐπιβούλους; | Διὸς τόδ' ἔργον. καὶ τόδ' ἂν γένος λέγων | ἐξ Ἐπάφου κυρήσαις. 'Truly this is the offspring of Zeus, the begetter of life! Who else could have put a stop to the sufferings caused by Hera's plotting? It was the act of Zeus. And if you say that our race springs from Epaphus, you will hit the mark.' (*Supp.* 584-9). This statement of the chorus gives more information about the interaction between Zeus and Io. The stopping of the diseases of Hera suggests that Zeus has effected a cure, but must we assume that this is anything more than what we are already told at 578, which implies that Zeus stopped Io's ravings and wanderings?

---

[34] For readings that only see this scene as a demonstration of Zeus' kindness, see R. D. Murray (1958) 40; Conacher (1996) 92-3. Such readings may be the result of a misinterpretation of line 532, which has the chorus refer to the tale they are about to tell as a 'kindly tale', εὔφρον' αἶνον. Taken literally, this would suggest that all the following stasimon is a pleasant retelling of events and that Zeus' actions with Io are something kind too. However, such a reading ignores the fact that the sexual union between Zeus and Io had, on the whole, been referred to euphemistically and in a way that indicates violence and sexual agression on the part of Zeus. So, reference to the story as a 'kindly tale', εὔφρον' αἶνον can also be seen to fall into the category of euphemism.

[35] So, FJW (1980) 2. 464-5; Cairns (1993) 187-8.

Then, having firmly established their lineage, the Danaids give an indication about why they have laid out in detail the story of Io and Zeus and their child Epaphus (*Supp.* 590-9):

> τίν' ἂν θεῶν ἐνδικωτέροισιν
> κεκλοίμαν εὐλόγως ἐπ' ἔργοις;
> <αὐτὸς ὁ> πατὴρ φυτουργὸς αὐτόχειρ ἄναξ,
> γένους παλαιόφρων μέγας
> τέκτων, τὸ πᾶν μῆχαρ, οὔριος Ζεύς.
>
> ὑπ' ἀρχᾷ δ' οὔτινος θοάζων
> τὸ μεῖον κρεισσόνων κρατύνει·
> οὔτινος ἄνωθεν ἡμένου σέβει κράτη,
> πάρεστι δ' ἔργον ὡς ἔπος
> σπεῦσαι. τί τῶνδ' οὐ Διὸς φέρει φρήν;
>
> 'On what god could I appropriately call on account of actions that give me a juster claim? The Lord and Father himself, with his own hand, was my engenderer, the great, wise, ancient artificer of my race, the all-resourceful one, Zeus who grants fair winds.
>
> Sitting beneath the rule of no-one, he exerts a power no smaller than mighty rulers; there is no one seated above him whose power he reveres, and he can hasten the deed as fast as the word. What of all this can the mind of Zeus not bring to pass?'

These lines juxtapose the Danaids' familial ties with Zeus with the over-arching power of the god and his ability to fulfil his will. He is Epaphus' father and theirs, the begetter of their race and the conductor of things to a happy end. There is no-one mightier, and there is nothing which his mind does not possess.[36] In the Danaids' eyes, Zeus truly is the correct god that they should be calling on for help: he is their progenitor and he is the ultimate fulfiller (cf. *Supp.* 92, 525-6, 824).

When Danaus re-enters the stage at line 600, he relates what happened at the council of Argives and that they came to the decision to protect the suppliant

[36] The image of Zeus' *phrēn* in line 599 recalls the famous lines of the parodos at 86-103, as well as *Ag.* 1485-9, both of which will be discussed in detail below in Chapter 3 'The Nature of Zeus'.

Danaids. In relating the events of the council, he highlights that Pelasgus persuaded the assembly of Argive citizens to protect the Danaids by pronouncing that the wrath of Zeus of suppliants (Ζηνὸς ἱκεσίου κότον) should not be increased (*Supp.* 616-18). When the Argives ratified the decision to receive the Danaids as suppliants, Danaus concludes his retelling of events with the line: Ζεὺς δ' ἐπέκρανεν τέλος. 'Zeus fulfilled this end.' (*Supp.* 624) Lines 616-18 recall those references to the wrath of Zeus of suppliants at 347, 385, 478-9 and line 624 reaffirms the conviction of Zeus as the great fulfiller of events.

The following passage presents the Danaids' response to the news that they will be protected by the Argives. Their first thought is to give thanks to their new protectors and they wish Zeus Xenios to look kindly on them (*Supp.* 625-9). This is the first mention of Zeus with the epithet Xenios in the play and it is possible that it indicates a shift in the dynamic of the relationship between the Danaids and the Argives. On reception, it seems that the Danaids feel they are no longer simply suppliants, but are now also guest-friends and as guest-friends they wish Zeus will look kindly on the Argives, giving in return the kindness the Argives have shown in protecting them. It is worth noting that the prominence of the Io myth disappears almost completely once the Danaids have been received as suppliants.

In the next strophe, the Danaids say that the Argives did not cast their votes in favour of men,[37] being fearful of Zeus and respecting his suppliants. In describing the fear the Argives have of Zeus, the chorus pronounce: Δῖον ἐπιδόμενοι πράκτορ' ἀεὶ σκοπὸν | δυσπόλεμον, τὸν οὔτις ἂν δόμος ἔχων | ἐπ' ὀρόφων ἰαίνοιτο· βαρὺς δ' ἐφίζει. 'They heeded Zeus' avenger, an eternal watcher against whom war is impossible. No house can be safe that has him on the roof: he sits there as a heavy burden.' (*Supp.* 646-50). The image touches on the justice of Zeus and recalls a passage from Hesiod that speaks of the eye of Zeus and the daimones who watch over mortal men, recording their deeds and reporting back to Zeus (*Op.* 248-85). As Vürtheim notes, σκοπόν in all likelihood, stands for ὀφθαλμόν.[38] The image here of an avenger of Zeus, sitting on top of a house also echoes presentations of Eriny(e)s,

[37] For a discussion of the male-female contrast in the play, see R. D. Murray (1958) 27-31.
[38] Vürtheim (1928, 1967) 198.

Alastor and other daimonic powers elsewhere in Aeschylus (cf. *Th.* 699-701, 720-6; *Ag.* 763-72,[39] 1468-74).[40]

The chorus continue to sing of Zeus and justice, drawing on the relationship between a citizen body who honours Zeus and how the god sets the fate of the city's laws on the right track if it does so (*Supp.* 670-3). The god is then later described as bringing fruits to perfection for a city (*Supp.* 688-90), thus being seen as responsible for the prosperity of the city both in the laws it upholds and in the fertility of its crops.

The Danaids' invocations and references to Zeus change again with the imminent arrival of their Egyptian cousins (*Supp.* 710ff). With Pelasgus nowhere in sight and Danaus having left to find help, the Danaids have no-one to whom they can turn. First, they wish to become as smoke, the neighbour of Zeus' clouds, to escape their pursuers (*Supp.* 779-80). They then revert to calling on Zeus, asking him to honour his suppliants and to look unkindly on violence (*i.e.* of the Egyptians), referring to him as παγκρατές 'all-powerful' and γαιάοχε 'holder of the earth' (*Supp.* 811-14). Following up this invocation to Zeus as the all-mighty god and bestower of justice, the Danaids say: σὸν δ' ἐπίπαν ζυγὸν ταλάν- | του· τί δ' ἄνευ σέθεν θνατοῖσ<ι> τέλειόν ἐστιν; 'Your beam of balance is universal; what without you is fulfilled by/for mortals?' (*Supp.* 822-4; cf. 402-6; *Ag.* 1485-8). Zeus is thus seen in light of his position as the god of suppliants, as the bestower of justice and the great fulfiller of events.

In the final scene of the play, the Danaids are accosted by the Egyptian Herald and call on Zeus, child of Earth,[41] to protect them (*Supp.* 890-2, thus 900-2). After Pelasgus has arrived and removed the initial threat posed by the Herald, the chorus of Danaids are joined by a demi-chorus,[42] which is most commonly thought to be a group of Argives (which is how I will subsequently refer to them), whether Danaus' bodyguard or the Danaids' newly-appointed handmaidens.[43] The demi-chorus of Argives act as a counter-point for the Danaids and point out that the

---

[39] Compare the phrase ἄμαχον ἀπόλεμον in the *Agamemnon* which is used to describe a δαίμων with the use of δυσπόλεμον in the *Suppliants* to describe the avenger of Zeus.

[40] See previous chapter on δαίμων in Aeschylus, as well as Chapter 4 'The Justice of Zeus'.

[41] Aeschylus was not alone in identifying Earth as the mother of Zeus and as Rhea/Cybele, S. *Ph.* 391, 392.

[42] There is some debate about whether the chorus of Danaids is divided in two or whether another, separate chorus is added. See FJW (1980) 3. 306 for a summary of the possible options.

[43] See FJW (1980) 3. 306-8 for discussion of the play's *exodos* and the distribution of lines.

Egyptians may not be as impious, unjust or unfavoured by the gods as the Danaids make out: why else did they have such a good journey to Argos? (*Supp.* 1045-6) Having cast doubt on the relative justice of the Danaids' and Egyptians' cases, the demi-chorus, in words which resonate with the famous lines 86-103 of the play's parodos, effectively rest the issue with Zeus, saying: ὅτι τοι μόρσιμόν ἐστιν, τὸ γένοιτ' ἄν· | Διὸς οὐ παρβατός ἐστιν | μεγάλα φρὴν ἀπέρατος. 'Whatever is fated, this will be; not to be overcome or surpassed is the great mind of Zeus.' (*Supp.* 1047-9; cf. 93-5, 599, 1057-8). The Danaids, however, respond by asking Zeus to ward off marriage. The remaining references to Zeus are versions on the themes already introduced in the final scene. So, the demi-chorus refer to the mind of Zeus as unfathomable (*Supp.* 1057-8) and the Danaids close the play with an invocation to the god to give them protection (*Supp.* 1073). In-between these lines, the Danaids also ask Zeus to (again) ward off marriage (*Supp.* 1062-4), but do so by referring to the myth of Io,[44] suggesting that as he released Io from her torment, he can do the same now for them.

Zeus in the *Agamemnon*

In the *Agamemnon* we first encounter Zeus as a symbol of kingship and then in an image of retributive justice, where it is said Apollo, Pan or Zeus sends an Erinys against transgressors (*Ag.* 55-9). The image is then extended in reference to Zeus Xenios alone, who sends the sons of Atreus against Alexander-Paris on account of the abduction of Helen (*Ag.* 60-2). A hundred lines elapse before Zeus is mentioned again, and it is in the Hymn to Zeus (*Ag.* 160-83) that the god is then spoken of, with the Hymn's opening line the much discussed phrase: Ζεύς, ὅστις ποτ' ἐστίν, 'Zeus, whoever he is,' (*Ag.* 160).[45] In the first strophe of the Hymn, the chorus muse on the name and nature of the god, saying that they have nothing to liken the burden of their minds to except Zeus. As will be discussed at length below, this strophe is inspired by the sacrifice of Iphigeneia and the role of Zeus in it.[46] The

[44] This is the first time since line 592-4 that the myth of Io has been referenced in any explicit way. See R. D. Murray (1958) for use of imagery which implicitly recalls key themes of the myth, although even such imagery is far rarer after line 594.

[45] See Chapter 4 'The Justice of Zeus' for a discussion of the phrase and for references to secondary literature.

[46] See Chapter 4 'The Justice of Zeus' for a discussion of the passage and for references to secondary literature.

second verse seems to move away from the immediate concern of the vain burden weighing on the chorus's mind, by going back into the mythic past of Zeus and focusing on the ascent of the god and the generational battles which preceded his rise to the throne. The antistrophe then moves seamlessly into the final strophe, which places Zeus as the establisher and enforcer of justice for mankind. The references to Zeus in the prologue and parodos of the *Agamemnon* thus focus primarily on the god's position as the highest and most powerful god and as the overseer of justice.

In the following scene (*Ag.* 258-354), only one reference to Zeus is made and that is in relation to Mount Athos belonging to the god (*Ag.* 285). It is only when we reach the first stasimon at 355 that anything of note is again said about Zeus. At line 355 Zeus is referred to as King Zeus and is said to have brought about Troy's destruction with Kindly Night; then at 362 Zeus is spoken of as the great god of Guest-Friendship, who strained his bow against Alexander. The first strophe of the choral ode then opens with the concisely worded line to describe how Troy fell: Διὸς πλαγὰν ἔχουσιν εἰπεῖν· 'They can say it is the stroke of Zeus.' (*Ag.* 367) So, just as in the parodos, Zeus is again connected with the fulfilment of retributive justice. In the final antistrophe of the first stasimon, which is concerned with the fortune of individuals, justice and the negative effects of excessive praise, the chorus say that a thunderbolt can be cast by the eyes of Zeus (*Ag.* 469-70) and they thus judge a life without envy as blessed (*Ag.* 471).[47]

With the entrance of the Herald, the presentation of Zeus as the god of justice and as the destroyer of Troy continues. Troy is destroyed by the axe of Zeus, bringer of justice (*Ag.* 525-6); and the grace of Zeus accomplished the victory for the Greeks and brought about punishment for Troy (*Ag.* 582). The Herald, who sees the god's involvement in the events at Troy so explicitly, extends the influence of Zeus to seemingly incorporate almost every aspect of men's lives, by saying that if there is any news of Menelaus, then it is by the art of Zeus (*Ag.* 677).

The second stasimon (*Ag.* 681-809) goes through the origins of the Trojan War again. In spite of their often negative view of the war and, in particular, of Helen's role within it (*Ag.* 681-716), the chorus are aware of the justice and underlying causes of the conflict. They say that a wrath, exacting late payment for

[47] Compare this with the chorus' thoughts at *Ag.* 750-63, where they reflect on what they consider to be the nature of justice, arguing that it is not prosperity that angers the gods, but impious deeds: see discussion in the chapter on the Justice of Zeus below.

dishonouring the guest-table and for dishonouring Zeus guardian of the shared hearth drove Helen to Troy (*Ag.* 700-4). The wrath exacting late-payment for Zeus recalls the Erinys sent by Zeus at *Ag.* 56-62, and the idea of the transgression of guest-friendship and the laws of Zeus is again brought out by Aeschylus. Similarly, in the third strophe of the stasimon, Helen is said to have brought an Erinys, the escort of Zeus of Guest-Friendship, with her when she married Paris (*Ag.* 744-9).

In the following scene, Agamemnon makes his long-awaited entrance. Zeus is only mentioned twice: Zeus is first spoken of at line 970 in relation to making wine from grapes. This is an allusion to the god's position as the sky god and the bringer of rain. It has little significance for the play as a whole, except to remind the audience of the Zeus' all-pervading influence. More importantly, Clytemnestra says a short prayer to Zeus the Fulfiller to bring her prayer (and her mission to kill Agamemnon) to pass (*Ag.* 973-4).[48] A brief, four-verse choral interlude follows Clytemnestra's prayer in which the chorus only mention Zeus in connection with crops and the curing of famine (*Ag.* 1015) and as stopping a man who had learned how to rise from the dead (*Ag.* 1022-4). The final reference to Zeus before Agamemnon's death is spoken by Clytemnestra to Cassandra, stating that the latter's enslavement is a gift from Zeus (*Ag.* 1036).

It is not until the final scene of the play 300 lines later that the god's name recurs, when Clytemnestra exits the palace revelling in the murder of Agamemnon. She declares that: καὶ πεπτωκότι | τρίτην ἐπενδίδωμι, τοῦ κατὰ χθονός | Διὸς νεκρῶν σωτῆρος εὐκταίαν χάριν. 'And when he had fallen I added a third stroke, in thanksgiving to Zeus of the underworld, the saviour of the dead.'[49] (*Ag.* 1385-7). Just as with *Supp.* 157, 231 Zeus' name seems to be used to denote the traditional god of the dead, Hades.[50] In lines 1485-9, the chorus present a notion that has seemingly lain dorment since Clytemnestra's prayer at 973-4: that is, the role of Zeus in the lives of men as the ultimate fulfiller of events. So they say: ἰὼ ἰή, διαὶ Διός |

[48] See Rosenmeyer (1982) 278-9 for Zeus the Fulfiller. While I do not fully subscribe to Rosenmeyer's conclusions about how Zeus the Fulfiller acts as a dramatic tool for Aeschylus, presiding over significant moments of revelation, Rosenmeyer does importantly highlight the over-arching power of Zeus both as a dramatic plot device for the poet and as a figure that holds real religious significance. See also the overview of the *Suppliants* above for references to the god's role as the fulfiller of events and Chapter 3 'The Nature of Zeus'.

[49] See Fraenkel (1950) 3.652 on Zeus the Saviour for further secondary literature.

[50] See Chapter 3 'The Nature of Zeus' for further discussion of the use of the name Zeus for the god of the dead.

παναιτίου πανεργέτα· | τί γὰρ βροτοῖς ἄνευ Διὸς τελεῖται; | τί τῶνδ' οὐ θεόκραντόν ἐστιν; 'Oh, oh! And all by the will of Zeus, the cause of all things, the effector of all effects; for what comes to pass for mortals, except by Zeus' doing? What of all this is not divinely ordained?'[51] The chorus' inclusion of Zeus as a cause of Agamemnon's death presents the possibility of an over-arching divine dimension for the king's death.[52] The final reference to Zeus in the play refers to the nature of the god's justice and his over-arching power and involvement in the lives of men. The chorus recount the ordinance of Zeus that while the god remains on the throne it is for the doer to suffer (*Ag.* 1563-4), which recalls the notion of πάθει μάθος initially spoken of in lines 176-8 and 250. The law of retributive justice and the synonymity of Zeus with the rule of justice, which is brought out by lines 1563-4, complements the picture of the god as the fulfiller of events in his over-arching position as the highest and most powerful of gods seen before in lines 1485-9. As in the parodos, so in the closing lines of the play: the *Agamemnon* is framed by Zeus, his rule and conception of justice.[53]

Zeus in the *Libation Bearers*

As Zeus is marked out as the god of suppliants and god of justice in the early stages of the *Suppliants* and *Agamemnon* respectively, so Zeus is connected with the notions of vengeance and retributive justice in the *Libation Bearers*. Within the opening twenty lines of the play, Orestes prays to Zeus to be his ally in avenging the death of his father, Agamemnon: ὦ Ζεῦ, δός με τείσασθαι μόρον | πατρός, γενοῦ δὲ ξύμμαχος θέλων ἐμοί. 'O Zeus, grant me vengeance for my father's death; be my willing ally.' (*Ch.* 18-19; cf. *Il.* 3.351). After Electra acknowledges Orestes as her brother, the siblings' thoughts turn to the plot to avenge their father. Orestes invokes Might, Justice and Zeus, and he asks the god to watch over his deeds in the act of vengeance (*Ch.* 244-6). Moreover, with the use of the double vocative in the line: Ζεῦ Ζεῦ, θεωρὸς τῶνδε πραγμάτων γενοῦ. 'Zeus, Zeus, be a spectator of these deeds.' (*Ch.* 246; cf. 382), Orestes unwittingly recalls Clytemnestra's own invocation of Zeus at *Ag.* 973.

---

[51] See below for further discussion of this passage. For etymologising wordplay on διαὶ Διός, see Fraenkel (1950) 2.333-4, 3.704-5; West (1978) 138-9; Garvie (1986) 220.

[52] For the significance of this passage in relation to the will of Zeus and the justice of Agamemnon's death, see Chapter 4 'The Justice of Zeus'.

[53] Compare with *Suppliants* and how Zeus is the first and last thing under consideration in the play.

Once again, Orestes recalls the words of his mother in the *Agamemnon*: Ζεῦ Ζεῦ, κάτωθεν ἀμπέμπων | ὑστερόποινον ἄταν | βροτῶν τλάμονι καὶ πανούρῳ | χειρί· τοκεῦσι δ' ὁμῶς τελεῖται. 'Zeus Zeus, who sends up from below late-avenging destruction for the overly-bold wicked hands of men. For both my parents alike, there will be payment.' (*Ch.* 382-5). Again the double vocative is used, just as at 246; but in contrast with 246, Zeus here appears in connection with the chthonic realm, with which we saw the god associated in the *Suppliants* and the *Agamemnon*.[54] The closely related ideas of the nature of Zeus and justice are again brought out in Orestes' words, and this time he recalls how the Erinys was spoken of at *Ag.* 58-9, with Aeschylus using the same word ὑστερόποινον 'late-avenging' (in the same case) to describe the manner of justice which is sought after. The passage is further reminiscent of Clytemnestra's words at *Ag.* 973, by developing the image of Zeus as the fulfiller through use of τελεῖται within just a couple of lines of the double vocative.

The interconnected relationship of Zeus, the Eriny(e)s, the chthonic realm and justice is prevalent in this play, and is exemplified between lines 380-409 where supernatural entities are called upon one after the other in quick succession. First, chthonic Zeus is asked by Orestes to send justice from below (*Ch.* 382-5); Electra then asks Zeus to bring about justice from injustice in the same breath as calling on Earth and the powers beneath the earth (*Ch.* 395-9); the chorus in turn pronounces how the Erinys brings destruction upon destruction (*Ch.* 402-4); and Orestes calls on the rulers of the underworld to look upon the family of Atreus (*Ch.* 405-9), before finishing his invocation with the question: πᾷ τις τράποιτ' ἂν ὦ Ζεῦ; 'Where can one turn, O Zeus?' (*Ch.* 409) This passage recalls the final scene of the *Agamemnon* in the way Orestes here and Clytemnestra in the former play attempt to bring the Olympian and chthonic realms together as aids or accomplices in an act of vengeance.

Over two hundred lines elapse until the next reference to Zeus is made, when the chorus raise concerns about how justice is threatend, saying: τόδ' ἄγχι πλευμόνων ξίφος | διανταίαν | ὀξυπευκὲς οὐτᾷ | διαὶ Δίκας, τὸ μὴ θέμις, {γὰρ οὐ} | λὰξ πέδον πατουμένας – | τὸ πᾶν Διὸς σέβας παρεκ- | βάντες οὐ θεμιστῶς. 'The sword pierces, sharp and penetrating, right to the lungs, because Justice, against what

[54] Cf. *Supp.* 156-8, 231; *Ag.* 1386-7. See also Garvie (1986) ad loc.

is right, is trampled to the ground underfoot, when someone, against all right, has utterly flouted the majesty of Zeus.' (*Ch.* 639-45). The close relationship between Zeus and justice is again clear, and just as at *Ag.* 1485-9 there seems to be etymologising word-play on διαὶ Δίκας and Διὸς.[55]

The god is next mentioned in a metaphor concerning the changing nature of fortune: ἀλλ' εἰ τροπαίαν Ζεὺς κακῶν θήσει ποτέ; 'Well, what if Zeus is at last about to change the wind of disaster? (*Ch.* 775). The image plays on Zeus as the dispenser of good and ill for mankind – something naturally bound up with his position as the fulfiller of events. In the choral ode that follows, the chorus call on Zeus repeatedly to help, assist, aid and protect Orestes in his clandestine mission to avenge his father's death (*Ch.* 784, 789, 791).

The final two references to Zeus in the play continue to draw on the connection between the god and justice. The first of the two is an appeal to Zeus for the correct words to address the gods in a prayer to help gain goodwill for Orestes in his mission (*Ch.* 855). Following the *agōn* between Orestes and Clytemnestra (*Ch.* 892-930), the chorus declare in the subsequent ode that Clytemnestra was justly killed, because punishment came to her by the true daughter of Zeus, Justice, touching Orestes' hand in battle: ἔμολε δ' ᾇ μέλει κρυπταδίου μάχας | δολιόφρων ποίνα· | ἔθιγε δ' ἐ<ν> μάχᾳ χερὸς ἐτήτυμος | Διὸς κόρα – Δίκαν δέ νιν | προσαγορεύομεν | βροτοὶ τυχόντες καλῶς | ὀλέθριον πνέουσ' ἐπ' ἐχθροῖς κότον· 'Punishment, crafty in mind, came to her who cared for clandestine battle. The true daughter of Zeus touched his hand in battle – we mortals, hitting the mark well, address her as Justice, and she breathed her destructive wrath upon the enemy.' (*Ch.* 946-52). The etymological word-play regarding Justice and Zeus, which has been a feature of the trilogy thus far, appears again in this passage. This time the relationship between Zeus and justice takes on a genealogical form.[56] The relationship is no longer simply a functional one, whereby justice does the god's work working through and/or because of him. The bond is now reaffirmed by familial ties and recalls the Hesiodic image (cf. *Op.* 256).

---

[55] See Garvie (1986) 220 for etymological play of διανταίαν... διαὶ Δίκας... Διὸς. Cf. *Ag.* 1485-9 (discussed above) for similar word-play, and indeed *Ch.* 789, 949. See also Garvie (1986) 220 for ambiguity of διαί + gen. as instrumental or causal in Aeschylus.

[56] See Garvie (1986) 308-10.

Zeus in the *Eumenides*

In the *Eumenides*, Zeus is as prominent a figure as he was in both the *Agamemnon* and the *Libation Bearers*. The god is established within the thematic framework of the play by the twentieth line, when we are told by the Delphic Prophetess that Zeus divinely inspired the *phrēn* of Apollo and set him on the seat at Delphi to be his father's prophet: τέχνης δέ νιν Ζεὺς ἔνθεον κτίσας φρένα | ἵζει τέταρτον τόνδε μάντιν ἐν θρόνοις· | Διὸς προφήτης δ' ἐστὶ Λοξίας πατρός. 'And Zeus, having endowed his phrēn with a god-given skill, sat this seer as the fourth upon the throne: Loxias is the prophet of his father Zeus.' (*Eu.* 17-19). The implication of Apollo being the prophet of Zeus is that it places Zeus behind the order to send Orestes to avenge the death of Agamemnon and so places him at the centre of the contention within the play. So, although the god is not a *dramatis persona* in any of the three plays of the trilogy, it is his instigation of Orestes to commit matricide and it is his conception of justice which are at issue and come to the fore in the final play.

The next references to Zeus add little to our overall understanding of the god, recalling notions from previous plays. First, the Prophetess calls Zeus τέλειον and ὕψιστον (*Eu.* 28; cf. τέλειον: *Supp.* 525-6, *Ag.* 973-4, *Ch.* 382-5; ὕψιστον: *Ag.* 55-6, 509); Apollo then assures the distressed Orestes that he is safe, not least because Zeus honours outcasts and suppliants (*Eu.* 92; cf. *Supp.* passim). Shortly after, the chorus of Erinyes call Apollo παῖ Διός (*Eu.* 149).

In the continuing exchange between Apollo and the Erinyes, Apollo accuses the Erinyes of deeming marriage worthless and in so doing refers to the bonds of marriage as the pledges of Hera, the Fulfiller, and Zeus: ἦ κάρτ' ἄτιμα καὶ παρ' οὐδὲν ἠργάσω | Ἥρας τελείας καὶ Διὸς πιστώματα· 'Truly, you dishonour and reduce to nothing the pledges of Hera, the Fulfiller, and Zeus.' (*Eu.* 213-14) The chorus of Erinyes then sing an ode concerning their position within the divine apparatus and how that, in spite of carrying out their office as goddesses of vengeance who had previously worked alongside the Olympians (cf. *Ag.* 59), Zeus nevertheless considers them unworthy of his notice (*Eu.* 360-6). With the conclusion of the ode, Athena enters the stage (*Eu.* 397), and as with Apollo and Hera, her connection with Zeus is stressed. Just as with Apollo, the Erinyes first establish Athena as the child of Zeus, calling her Διὸς κόρη 'daughter of Zeus' (*Eu.* 415).

Furthermore, due to the significant role Athena comes to play in the ensuing trial and the delivering of justice, it is quite possible that Aeschylus is playing a similar etymological word-game to the one at *Ch.* 949 with the goddess Justice, with the eponym Διὸς κόρη suggestive of the role Athena will play in presiding over the trial to come.

During the trial scene, several references are made to Zeus. Apollo claims never to have said anything on his oracular throne which Zeus himself did not ordain (*Eu.* 616-21; cf. 17-19). This connection between Zeus and Apollo is then repeated at line 713. The Erinyes, seemingly in disbelief at the declaration, reiterate the statement that Zeus sent Orestes to kill his mother (*Eu.* 622-4). They then continue by saying that Zeus must honour the death of the father more than that of the mother – and yet he cast his own father, Kronos, in chains (*Eu.* 640-1). Angry at the Erinyes, Apollo responds by declaring that Zeus can release the fetters binding his father, but no-one can ever bring the dead back. He also states the ease with which Zeus can do anything, causing himself no loss of breath (*Eu.* 644-51), a notion which recalls *Supp.* 86-103.[57] It is here that the debate concerning the respective rights and honours due to the father and mother, man and woman, begins and finds its answer in Athena herself, who is not only the child of Zeus, but is the child of Zeus alone (*Eu.* 664).[58]

Once Orestes has been freed by the votes cast by the jury and Athena,[59] he declares that he owes his liberty to the will of Pallas, Loxias and the third, Zeus the Saviour who accomplishes all (*Eu.* 754-60). The passage highlights the inter-connected nature of the actions of Apollo, Athena and Zeus in the play. Indeed, seemingly aware of Zeus' role in the killing of Clytemnestra and his protection, Orestes says of Zeus: ... ὃς πατρῷον αἰδεσθεὶς μόρον | σῴζει με, μητρὸς τάσδε συνδίκους ὁρῶν. '... [it is] he who has had regard to my father's death and has saved me, seeing these advocates of my mother.' (*Eu.* 760-1). The will of Zeus is also referred to by Athena who tries to explain to the Erinyes that it is because of the incontrovertible nature of the will of Zeus that Orestes was freed (*Eu.* 795-9). Two references then follow which give a clearer understanding of the relationship

[57] Cf. Aesch. fr. 99. 2-3; Xenophanes Fr. 25-6; Soph. *Tr.* 147; Eur. *Archel.* Fr. 14. 2. Also see chapter on the Nature of Zeus for discussion of *Supp.* 86-103.
[58] See Chapter 4 on the Justice of Zeus for discussion of the trial scene in the *Eumenides.*
[59] See Chapter 4 on the Justice of Zeus for discussion of the Vote of Athena.

between Zeus and Athena. First, the goddess states that she obeys Zeus and that she alone among the other gods knows the key to the house in which the god's thunderbolt is sealed (*Eu.* 826-9). Secondly, Athena states how her father gave her understanding. So, just as Apollo's mind was possessed by Zeus, so the god has given Athena her keen mind (*Eu.* 850).

In the closing scene of the play, the Erinyes, having relented of their anger towards Athena and her city, declare that Zeus, the all-powerful, dwells in Athens (*Eu.* 918). Athena, in turn, praises Zeus of the Agora for watching over her words and deeds in helping to free Orestes and protect the city (*Eu.* 974). The Erinyes again mention the close relationship between Zeus and Athena, stating that those who have learnt wisdom and sit by Athena (i.e. the Athenians) are in turn revered by Zeus for doing so (*Eu.* 996-1002). The final reference to Zeus refers to him as the all-seeing god and does so in conjunction with Moira (Fate) and how both together aided the citizens of Pallas (*Eu.* 1044-7).

Summary Remarks

From the information gathered above concerning where Zeus is spoken of and referred to in the plays, it is possible to conclude preliminarily that Zeus is presented in a consistent fashion by Aeschylus in the *Suppliants* and the *Oresteia*. There is nothing which suggests in any real way that Aeschylus was presenting a completely different character (with the same name) in each play, in spite of there being different emphases on different aspects of the god's nature to suit the thematic purposes of individual plays. Zeus is consistently presented as the king of the gods, all-powerful, the ulitmate fulfiller of events, the dispenser and overseer of justice, the protector of suppliants and strangers, in addition to being the god of guest-friendship. It is on this basis that a discussion of the nature of Zeus will be conducted in the following chapter.

3: THE NATURE OF ZEUS

Having discussed the character of Zeus within the *Suppliants* and the *Oresteia* and seen that it is a reasonable working hypothesis to understand the god as being presented in an altogether consistent manner, the following pages will give consideration to those qualities which make Zeus the god he is in Aeschylus, how this presentation compares with those of the god in earlier literature and what effect Presocratic conceptions of divinity may have had on the poet. Particular attention will be given to qualities such as omnipotence, omnipresence, invariance, detachment and unknowableness in order to see what impact they have on the Aeschylean depiction of Zeus and the poet's theology.

THE POWER AND LIMITATIONS OF ZEUS

In a polytheistic system, one does not expect any one god to possess the quality of omnipotence. The existence of a multiplicity of gods would seem, in itself, to limit the dominion and potency of any one deity, regardless of their position within the divine hierarchy. This is, of course, if we place to one side the possibility that other, lesser gods are just manifestations of the will of one higher god. Nevertheless, if we look at early Greek literature, the extent to which Zeus appears to be conceived of as all-powerful is striking.

But, first of all, before entering into this discussion, an explanation needs to be provided about what is meant by all-powerful here. The quality of being all-powerful as ascribed to Zeus in early Greek literature is not as we, a modern audience, may automatically understand it now. For an ancient Greek to think of Zeus as all-powerful, παγκρατής, is not to say that he was thought of as omnipresent, responsible for every event on earth, as the Judaeo-Christian God has sometimes been conceived. Rather, Zeus is considered all-powerful because he is more powerful than all the other gods and because if he wants something it would (eventually) happen or come to pass.[1] His power, κράτος, is greater than all the gods and he rules over gods and men as a result. In this regard, the potency and authority of Zeus is something which is effectively absolute.

[1] So, Lloyd-Jones (1971) 82-6, Burkert (1985) 125-31.

Statements concerning the all-powerful nature of Zeus can be seen in all the plays of Aeschylus, ranging from descriptive and self-evident epithets to more oblique statements of the god's over-arching power as the ultimate fulfiller of events.[2] For example, the chorus of Theban women in the *Seven Against Thebes* beseech the god: ὦ παγκρατὲς Ζεῦ, τρέψον εἰς ἐχθροὺς βέλος. 'All-powerful Zeus, turn the arrow upon the enemy.' (*Th.* 255); Eteocles states that: κοὔπώ τις εἶδε Ζῆνά που νικώμενον. 'Never yet has anyone seen Zeus conquered.' (*Th.* 514); and the chorus of the *Seven* also see the god as able to bring about any and every event. Thus, they call on him, fearful of the pending Argive attack: ἀλλ' ὦ Ζεῦ πάτερ, παντὸς ἔχων τέλος,[3] | πάντως ἄρηξον δαΐων ἅλωσιν. 'Father Zeus, you who possess the fulfilment of all events, at all costs defend us from capture by the enemy.' (*Th.* 117-19). In the *Suppliants*, the Danaids speak of Zeus in exalted terms as: ἄναξ ἀνάκτων, μακάρων | μακάρτατε καὶ τελέων | τελειότατον κράτος, ὄλβιε Ζεῦ, 'Lord of lords, most blessed of the blessed ones, most perfect power of the perfect ones, Zeus giver of prosperity,' (*Supp.* 524-6);[4] and later on, the Danaids also ask Zeus (again) to protect his suppliant descendents: σεβί|ζου δ' ἱκέτας σέθεν, γαιάοχε παγκρατὲς Ζεῦ. 'Honour your suppliants, holder of the earth, all-powerful Zeus.' (*Supp.* 814-15). Similarly in the *Oresteia*, the chorus of the *Agamemnon* call on Zeus, seeing him involved intimately in the lives of men: ἰὼ ἰή, διαὶ Διός | παναιτίου πανεργέτα· | τί γὰρ βροτοῖς ἄνευ Διὸς τελεῖται; | τί τῶνδ' οὐ θεόκραντόν ἐστιν; 'Oh, oh! And all by the will of Zeus, the cause of all things, the effector of all effects; for what comes to pass for mortals, except by Zeus' doing? What of all this is not divinely ordained?' (*Ag.* 1485-9).[5] And the chorus of Erinyes in the *Eumenides* also speak of all-powerful Zeus: δέξομαι Παλλάδος ξυνοικίαν, | οὐδ' ἀτιμάσω πόλιν, | τὰν καὶ Ζεὺς ὁ παγκρατὴς Ἄρης | τε φρούριον θεῶν νέμει, | ῥυσίβωμον Ἑλλάνων ἄγαλμα δαιμόνων· 'I will accept a residence with Pallas, and I will not dishonour the city in which there dwell also Zeus the almighty and Ares – the guard-post of the gods, the protector of their altars, the delight of the Greek daimones,' (*Eu.* 916-20).

---

[2] See Rosenmeyer (1982) 278-83 for a discussion of τέλειος; and cf. discussion of τέλος in Chapter 4 'The Justice of Zeus' below.
[3] See discussion of τέλος in Chapter 4 'The Justice of Zeus' below.
[4] See Chapter 2 above for evaluation of this passage.
[5] For a detailed discussion of this passage, see Chapter 4 'The Justice of Zeus' below.

The depiction of the all-powerful nature of Zeus was not unique to Aeschylus, nor was it something which found its origins in Presocratic speculation: it is possible to see Zeus presented as an all-powerful deity from the *Iliad* onwards. While Zeus is never straight-forwardly called παγκρατής in Homer, as we find in Aeschylus, his overarching power is nevertheless presented clearly and consistently throughout the poem. The power and position of Zeus as the supreme god is established in the first lines of the first book of the *Iliad* and clearly depicted in the presentation and fulfilment of the Διὸς βουλή 'will of Zeus'[6] (*Il.* 1.1-7); and in Book 15 the god's will can be seen in the knowledge Zeus possesses of future events, through which he is able to outline the course of the Trojan war (*Il.* 15.57-71). Zeus' power is even acknowledged and heeded by his brother Poseidon, aware of his brother's seniority in age and wisdom (*Il.* 13.354-60). So, when Zeus tells Poseidon to stop assisting the Achaeans, in spite of the latter's chagrin, Zeus gets his way (*Il.* 15.184-217).

In Homer, the will of Zeus is reinforced by his might and physical power. Although there is the consideration that the will of Zeus is supported and sustained by the need for divine order and harmony,[7] there is always the more prosaic concept of brute force lying behind it, propping up his rule. We are alerted to this consideration in the first book of the *Iliad*, where Zeus, angered at Hera's questioning concerning his conversation with Thetis, threatens her by saying: ἀλλ' ἀκέουσα κάθησο, ἐμῷ δ' ἐπιπείθεο μύθῳ, | μή νύ τοι οὐ χραίσμωσιν ὅσοι θεοί εἰσ' ἐν Ὀλύμπῳ | ἆσσον ἰόντ', ὅτε κέν τοι ἀάπτους χεῖρας ἐφείω. 'But, sit down in silence, and do what I say, lest as many gods as there are on Olympus are unable to ward me off as I draw closer to you and lay my irresistible hands on you.' (*Il.* 1.565-7). Then shortly after, Hephaestus warns Hera not to rile Zeus, lest he strike all the gods from their seats on Olympus, since he is much the strongest god of them all (*Il.* 1.580-1; cf. 8.17-27).[8]

---

[6] Lloyd-Jones (1971) 82-5 rightly sees Zeus' ability to determine events as one of the key aspects of the god's depiction in Homer, one which he argues makes the Homeric Zeus similar (if not identical) to the Aeschylean Zeus.

[7] See Chapter 4 'The Justice of Zeus' for a discussion of the inter-relationship between Zeus, the other Olympians and the Erinyes; cf. Allan (2006), esp. 27-8, on the issue of cosmic order and divine justice in early Greek epic. For discussion of the limitation of Zeus see below in this chapter.

[8] These two statements of Zeus' power over the rest of the gods are seemingly contradicted by lines 1.394-406, which describe the aid Thetis and the hundred-hander, Briareus, provided Zeus when the Olympians wanted to bind him. There is, however, no story which depicts the Olympians trying to

In addition, the consistent use of epithets which Homer gives the god throughout the poem further reinforces Zeus' supreme power and position. Thus Zeus is called, ὑπερμενής 'exceedingly powerful' (*Il.* 2.350; 7.315, 481); ὕπατος 'the highest' (*Il.* 5.756); and ὕπατε κρειόντων 'the highest of all lords' (*Il.* 8.31). But, it is in the echo of Zeus' role as the sky-god that his power is most frequently expressed.[9] He is the god who thunders on high (ὑψιβρεμέτης) (*Il.* 1.354, 12.68); who delights in thunder (τερπικεραύνος) (*Il.* 1.419, 8.2, 11.773); who is the loud-thundering (ἐρίγδουπος) (*Il.* 7.411, 12. 235) who is the lightning-maker (ἀστεροπητής) (*Il.* 1.580, 609, 7.443); who is far-sounding/far-seeing (εὐρύοπα[10]) (*Il.* 1.498, 5.365, 8.206); who is of the dark cloud (κελαινεφής) (*Il.* 6.267, 11.78); and who is the cloud gatherer (νεφεληγερέτα) (*Il.* 1.511, 7.280, 10.552). Through these images, Zeus is presented as all-encompassing as the limits of the sky and as powerful as the thunder and lightning it produces.[11] As the sky and all it includes, thus is Zeus.

In the lyric poets this theme continues, where Zeus is depicted as bringing about the rain: οὐδὲ γὰρ ὁ Ζεύς | οὔθ' ὗων πάντεσσ' ἀνδάνει οὔτ' ἀνέχων. 'Not even Zeus, whether he rains or no, can please them all.' (*Th.* 25-6, trans. M. L. West (1993); cf. Anon. Fr. 854). There is also one passage in Aeschylus, from the *Suppliants*, in which a trace of Zeus' sky-god nature can be detected. In it the Danaids wish vainly to become smoke to escape the clutches of their cousins, referring to the clouds of Zeus found in the sky: μέλας γενοίμαν καπνός | νέφεσ<σ>ι γειτονῶν Διός. 'Would that I could become black smoke, neighbour of Zeus' clouds.' (*Supp.* 779-80). On the other hand, Aeschylus refers six times to Zeus'

---

bind or overthrow Zeus in any other extant source. Briareus is, however, mentioned in Hesiod (*Th.* 617-719) as helping Zeus overthrow the Titans. It is possible that Homer formed this tale and introduced it into the *Iliad* as a plot device to place Zeus in the debt of Thetis. While it is interesting and perhaps strange to see Zeus in the debt of another deity, we must bear in mind that Zeus' power is limited in other ways too – which is discussed below.

[9] The etymology of the name of Zeus is clear and its etymological connection with the sky can be traced throughout the Indo-European languages. The name of Zeus has the same root as the Indic sky god *Dyaus pitar*, the Latin *deus* (god) and *dies* (day). For a fuller philological exposition and bibliography, see Burkert (1985) 125-6; West (2007) 166-71.

[10] See Pulleyn (2000) 247-8, who argues in favour of 'far-sounding'; West (2007) 171, who argues in favour of 'with wide vision'. But, whichever translation one employs, the sense of Zeus' far-reaching power is evident.

[11] See West (2007) 238-63, for a discussion of Zeus' role as the god of thunder within the Indo-European tradition. He suggests that the role of the sky-god and the bearer of thunder and lightning are two separate functions and that Zeus took over the latter function in addition to his already established role as the sky-god (cf. Hes. *Th.* 501-6). This runs counter to the view established by Cook (1925) 2.11, who argues in favour of the synonymy of the two functions: 'Now, if the lightning-flash was part of the aither or burning-sky, it was part and parcel of Zeus.' But, be that as it may, such arguments have little bearing on the present discussion.

thunderbolt in the plays, four times in the *Seven* (*Th.* 427-33, 444-5, 512-13, 629-30), once in the *Agamemnon* in reference to the envy and justice of the god being a thunderbolt cast by his eyes (*Ag.* 469-70), and once in the *Eumenides*, where Athena is trying to persuade the Erinyes not to wreak havoc on Athens, and she declares that she alone has knowledge of the key to the house that keeps the thunderbolt of her father (*Eu.* 827-8). In this way, Zeus thus seems very powerful and one against whom no one can succeed.

While it is possible to see that from Homer onwards Zeus is presented in possession of attributes which can be easily understood as those of an omnipotent god, there are many instances where this all-powerful nature comes into question, where gods act in opposition to Zeus' will or his power seems limited by their actions. First, in *Iliad* 14, for example, Poseidon comes to the aid of the Achaeans once Hera has lulled Zeus to sleep through her trickery; or at *Od.* 5.286-90, Poseidon attacks Odysseus' raft on its way to Scheria, acting against the decision of Zeus taken in Book 1. Also, in the *Theogony*, Prometheus deceives Zeus when he gives fire to men (Hes. *Th.* 565-9). Secondly, in the *Theogony* there are several examples of Zeus needing, or relying on, other gods to achieve and maintain power. Thus, Zeus is given the thunderbolt by the Cyclopes, which is arguably the greatest symbol of his power (Hes. *Th.* 501-6); and the god distributes honours accordingly to all those who helped him overthrow the Titans (Hes. *Th.* 881-5).

Moreover, Zeus' will is constrained by *moira* and a need for divine harmony. The *Iliad* presents the notion that there is a force which transcends or supercedes Zeus' will. There are three times in the epic when Zeus is seen as potentially coming into conflict with *moira*, where the god seems to be considering whether he should transgress the boundaries of *moira* to come to the aid of the Trojans. The first instance is said seemingly in jest by the god in order to antagonise Hera and Athena (*Il.* 4.5-19), but the second and third are pronounced in all seriousness and present a potential conflict of interests between *moira* and the will of Zeus and thus have the potential to cause a rift in cosmic order and divine justice.[12] In Books 16 and 22 Zeus considers saving Sarpedon and Hector respectively, going against what has been fated for the two Trojan heroes. But, each time Zeus is warned and admonished by other gods lest his decisions to save Troy and the Trojan heroes result in others

[12] See Allan (2006) 1-35 for further discussion of this issue.

saving their own favourites from death, with divine harmony and order being reduced to chaos (*Il.* 16.431-57, 22.166-181). These warnings thus act as a demonstration regarding how Zeus' will is tempered by concerns about the need for divine harmony and cosmic order.

There are similar examples in Aeschylus. In the *Agamemnon*, for example, the chorus inform us that Zeus sent the Atreidae to Troy in order to exact vengeance against Alexander and the Trojans for the theft of Helen (*Ag.* 60-2).[13] It is thus Zeus' will that the expedition is sent to Troy, and this is confirmed when we are told of Zeus' involvement in the fall of Troy on other occasions by other parties (*Ag.* 355-84, 525-6, 580-2, 699-708, 744-9). But, in spite of this, Artemis prevents the expeditionary forces from leaving Aulis and exacting Zeus' will, which she does by sending contrary winds (*Ag.* 133-8, 198-202). Her will therefore acts in direct opposition to Zeus' and prevents – at least for short a period of time – his will from being exacted.[14] Moreover, at the heart of the *Eumenides* we are presented with a contention between Zeus and the Olympians on one side and the chthonic Erinyes on the other. As a consequence of this conflict, serious questions are raised concerning the respective legitimacy and authority of two conceptions of justice and two sets of deities,[15] which in effect means that Zeus' will comes under scrutiny because of his decision (through Apollo) to send Orestes to kill his mother. Indeed, what is also striking about the presentation of Zeus' will and the nature of justice in the *Eumenides* is that we witness a *human* court giving a decision concerning Zeus' will and its validity as a means of controlling and arbitrating upon an individual's actions and judgement.

With the depiction of Zeus, we are presented with a balance between, on the one hand, absolute power and a will that always comes to fulfilment: Troy eventually falls to the Greeks; Odysseus reaches Ithaca; Agamemnon and the Greeks sail to Troy; and Orestes is freed. And, on the other hand, the wills and power of other gods limit (at least temporarily) the power and will of Zeus. But, what we are left with is

[13] See Chapter 4 'The Justice of Zeus' for a fuller discussion of this passage and the related question of whether Zeus did in fact send the sons of Atreus to Troy.
[14] See Chapter 4 'The Justice of Zeus' for a discussion of the anger of Artemis and the sacrifice of Iphigeneia.
[15] See Chapter 4 'The Justice of Zeus' for a discussion of this contention.

the underlying truth that any instance that runs *contra* to Zeus' will merely acts as a temporary diversion from his ultimate designs.

ANTHROPOMORPHISM AND INVARIANCE

Although the power and will of Zeus seem almost absolute, there are other considerations outside of the existence of other gods which have the potential to limit the potency of the god. Arguably it is the form in which Zeus is presented that is truly restrictive. Anthropomorphism places limits on the knowledge and movement of Zeus; he can feel pain at the loss of someone dear to him; he is often overcome by sexual urges; and he is situated within the temporal space of the mortal realm, because although he does not die, he is nevertheless born and must exist within this world and the temporal laws which bind it.

As has already been discussed, though Zeus is often presented as omnipotent in Homer, it has already been shown that Zeus' power and will are restricted by the existence and desires of other gods. The god's omniscience has also been touched on when outlining the force of the Διὸς βουλή, where at *Il.* 15.57-71 he shows the seemingly limitless extent of his knowledge by explaining how the course of the war will develop. But, nevertheless, while it is the case that Zeus displays a limitless knowledge of the future, the god is not omniscient, as is demonstrated by the fact that he is not aware that Hera's seduction of him is a ruse designed to keep his attention from the intervention of Poseidon on the Trojan planes (*Il.* 14.292-15.5).[16] Also, when Zeus turns his attention to the Thracians and the Mysians, Poseidon again takes the opportunity to intervene on behalf of the Achaeans (*Il.* 13.1-9).

The movements of Zeus are similarly paradoxical. The omnipresence of the god is intimated in the concept of prayer. Integral to the act of prayer is the consideration that the gods are not limited by spatial concerns as humans are and can always hear the prayer[17] when they are addressed.[18] It is not a requirement of any god to be within earshot of the person praying to be able to hear it. Of course, it is

[16] Indeed, while Hera's seduction of Zeus demonstrates the limitations anthropomorphism places on his mind, it is also demonstrative of the limitations of his power in the face of anthropomorphised sexuality.

[17] Kearns (2004) 63.

[18] Pulleyn (1997) 14, highlights the importance of address in the act of prayer, because though gods can hear from afar, he argues, that they cannot read minds or know one's innermost thoughts.

another matter whether the god cares to act on the prayer or not.[19] But, anthropomorphism limits Zeus' movements. So, in the first book of the *Iliad*, Thetis cannot contact Zeus until he and the rest of the gods have returned from a banquet in the land of the Ethiopians (*Il.* 1.423-7); and although Zeus never sets foot in the human sphere on the planes of Troy and always has the gods come to him (and not the other way around), he does flit between Olympus and Ida (*Il.* 8.41-52, 8.438-9). Moreover, the anthropomorphic presentation of Zeus extends to the emotions the god exhibits: he feels grief at the loss of his son, Sarpedon (*Il.* 16.450-61), and at the death of Hector (*Il.* 22.169-76). So, while Zeus' power seems supreme and boundless, it is always tempered by the existence of other gods, their wills and by the form in which the god is given by the poet. It is thus the very make-up of Greek religion as polytheistic and anthropomorphic that limits the power of Zeus. And while one may raise the objection that Zeus is only given these anthropomorphic qualities because the plot demands it, the plot does not necessitate that the poet depict the gods in any way that he did not believe to be true to their nature. Indeed, that Homer's presentation of the gods was not untrue to their nature is demonstrated by the significant position he held within the collective Greek consciousness,[20] and this hold is as true with regard to his presentation of the gods as with anything else in his works.

In Aeschylus, there are similar apparent contradictions in the god's depiction. While Zeus is depicted in an anthropomorphic way, pursuing his sexual desires by approaching and having sexual congress with Io in the *Suppliants*, or fighting and overcoming his father as he is said to in the parodos of the *Agamemnon*; it also seems, however, that Zeus lacks many of the anthropomorphic characteristics which so mark out the Homeric and Hesiodic portrayal of him. It is, of course, the case that in Aeschylus Zeus retains many, if not all, of the same characteristics and mythology associated with him in Homer and Hesiod. But, in contrast with the Homeric and Hesiodic presentation, Aeschylus seems to depict Zeus in a way that echoes thought expressed in Presocratic thinkers.

---

[19] See *Il.* 2.419-20, 12.173-4 for Zeus not listening to prayers; cf. Chapter 4 'The Justice of Zeus' for the importance of Zeus not listening to prayers in the *Oresteia*.

[20] See, for example, Xenophanes Fr.10, 11 and the discussion of these fragments below.

In the parodos of the *Suppliants*, the Danaids[21] call on Zeus and describe his nature (*Supp.* 86-103):

εὖ θείη Διός, εἰ παναλα-
θῶς Διός, ἵμερος. οὐκ εὐθήρατος ἐτύχθη·
δαῦλοι γὰρ πραπίδων
δάσκιοί τε τείνου-
σιν πόροι, κατιδεῖν ἄφραστοι·

πίπτει δ' ἀσφαλές οὐδ' ἐπὶ νώ-
τῳ, κορυφᾷ Διὸς εἰ κρανθῇ πρᾶγμα τέλειον.
πάντᾳ τοι φλεγέθει
κἀν σκότῳ μελαίνᾳ
ξὺν τύχᾳ μερόπεσσι λαοῖς.

ἰάπτει δ' ἐλπίδων
ἀφ' ὑψιπύργων πανώλεις βροτούς,
βίαν δ' οὔτιν' ἐξοπλίζει·
πᾶν ἄπονον δαιμονίων·
ἥμενος ὃν φρόνημά πως
αὐτόθεν ἐξέπραξεν ἔμπας ἑδράνων ἀφ' ἁγνῶν.

May the desire of Zeus be set well, if in all truth it is Zeus'. It is not easy to trace. For, the pathways of his mind stretch out dark and thickly shaded, impossible to understand.

[21] It is possible that this passage has been formulated by Aeschylus especially for the Danaids, and represents a 'foreign' take on Greek religion, one quite alien to a typical Greek view of Zeus. But this does not seem to be the case. The Danaids' language is not stilted in Aeschylus to appear foreign or unnatural. This is made all the more apparent when the Egyptian messenger enters toward the end of the play, where his words are distorted and made to appear foreign. This is not to imply that the Danaids appear wholly Greek. Their costumes are notably un-Greek, as Pelasgus makes clear (*Supp.* 234-7), and this would have been a constant reminder for the audience from first to last. Nevertheless, in spite of their odd appearance, the Danaids not only speak Greek like a Greek, they also behave in a customary Greek fashion, as suppliants. Moreover, the ideas which they present in relation to Zeus are not outlandish or unprecedented to those familiar with Greek philosophical thought concerning the nature of the divine. We need not, I think, be concerned about the 'Greekness' of the Danaids' notion of Zeus and the divine. See also Hall (1989) 148. For further discussion of the presentation of the Danaids and the myth of Io see above, Chapter 2 on 'The Characteristics of Zeus'.

It falls safely, not upon its back, if a deed is brought to perfection by the nod of Zeus. It flares up in all places, even in the shade, with black fortune for mortal men.

He throws men from high-towered hopes to utter destruction, but uses no armed force; all is without effort for daimones. From that spot, seated on that august throne, he nevertheless somehow fulfils what he has in mind.

In the first strophe, the Danaids sing of the unknowable nature of Zeus' will, explaining that it is difficult to trace: οὐκ εὐθήρατος ἐτύχθη (*Supp.* 87), with his mind dark and thickly shaded, unspeakable to tell of: δαῦλοι γὰρ πραπίδων | δάσκιοί τε τείνου-|σιν πόροι, κατιδεῖν ἄφραστοι (*Supp.* 93-5). In the following antistrophe, the Danaids' mind moves on to consider the god's ability to fulfil events even with a nod: κορυφᾷ Διὸς εἰ κρανθῇ πρᾶγμα τέλειον (*Supp.* 91). This theme continues in the next strophe, where Zeus is said to fulfil acts without recourse to movement, seated in one place: ἥμενος ὃν φρόνημά πως | αὐτόθεν ἐξέπραξεν ἔμπας ἑδράνων ἀφ' ἁγνῶν (*Supp.*101-3). Here, the presentation of Zeus as an invariant, omnipotent deity is concomitant with the description of his violent and awesome power, striking men down and using no armed force to do so: ἰάπτει δ' ἐλπίδων | ἀφ' ὑψιπύργων πανώλεις βροτούς, | βίαν δ' οὔτιν' ἐξοπλίζει (*Supp.* 96-8).[22] The god is far removed from mortal man, where his will remains hidden from intelligent perception; he is invariant, remote and unknowable to mankind. With such a description of the inscrutable nature of Zeus and his will, it is perhaps understandable how F. M. Cornford came to the conclusion that, 'the Zeus of Aeschylus has withdrawn to the heights far removed from the summit of Homeric Olympus.'[23] Indeed, the presentation of an invariant, detached and unknowable deity who can cast men down without effort perhaps seems, on the surface of things at least, a far cry from the Homeric anthropomorphised Zeus who flits from Olympus to Ida in the *Iliad* and can be distracted by the cunning wiles of his wife.

The thought and imagery seen in *Supp.* 86-103 is, however, reminiscent of fragments attributed to Xenophanes of Colophon.[24] In spite of the objections raised

[22] Compare the similar image at *Ag.* 182-3, where daimones are seated in violence upon their thrones.
[23] Cornford (1952) 145.
[24] It is known from the anonymous *Life* that Aeschylus travelled to Sicily. Despite the notorious unreliability of all ancient biographical information, there is also no reason to doubt the report that Xenophanes, although originally from Colophon in Asia Minor, lived part of his life in Sicily (A1).

by Lloyd-Jones that Aeschylus was not influenced by Presocratic thought, but only by Homer, Hesiod and Solon,[25] the similarity between the passage in the *Suppliants* and Xenophanes' Fr. B25-6, 34 seems clear and has been highlighted by scholars on numerous occasions.[26] Xenophanes says of his *one god*: αἰεὶ δ' ἐν ταὐτῳ μίμνει κινούμενος οὐδέν, οὐδὲ μετέρχεσθαί μιν ἐπιπρέπει ἄλλοτε ἄλλῃ· 'always he abides in the same place, not moving at all, nor is it seemly for him to travel to different places at different times...' (Fr. B26) ἀλλ' ἀπάνευθε πόνοιο νόου φρενὶ πάντα κραδαίνει. 'But completely without toil he shakes all things with the thought of his mind.' (Fr. B25). And then casting doubt on man's ability to comprehend the nature of divinity, he says, καὶ τὸ μὲν οὖν σαφὲς οὔτις ἀνὴρ ἴδεν οὐδέ τις ἔσται | εἰδὼς ἀμφὶ θεῶν τε καὶ ἄσσα λέγω περὶ πάντων· | εἰ γὰρ καὶ τὰ μάλιστα τύχοι τετελεσμένον εἰπών, | αὐτὸς ὅμως οὐκ οἶδε· δόκος δ' ἐπὶ πᾶσι τέτυκται. 'And of course the clear truth no man has seen nor will there be anyone who knows about the gods and what I say about all things. For even if, in the best case, someone happened to speak just of what has been brought to pass, still he himself would not know: but, opinion has been given to all.' (Fr. B34) The *one god* is invariant, able to shake all things with his mind, and true knowledge of the god is effectively impossible. Thus, as Zeus remains seated on his august throne never moving (*Supp.* 101-103), so the *one god* always abides in the same place (Fr. B26); as Zeus fulfils whatever he has in mind (*Supp.* 101) so the *one god* can shake all things with his mind (Fr. B25); and as all things are accomplished without toil for Zeus (*Supp.* 100), so it is also for the *one god* (Fr. B25). Even the scepticism which Xenophanes casts over man's ability to comprehend fully the nature of the gods is echoed at *Supp.* 86-7, 93-5, where the Danaids proclaim that the will of Zeus cannot be understood by mankind. For these reasons, the theological philosophy of Xenophanes warrants further investigation.

While this is, of course, not conclusive evidence that Aeschylus was influenced by Xenophanes, it does nevertheless strongly suggest that Aeschylus would have at the very least heard of Xenophanes and would have had some acquaintance, at least, with his thoughts concerning the gods and anthropomorphism. It has been consistently pointed out by scholars that evidence regarding the exact chronology of the Presocratics is uncertain. But, it is generally accepted that Xenophanes lived for about ninety years (see Fr. B8), from c.560-c.470. For further discussion on the chronology of the Presocratics, see Reinhardt (1959, 2nd ed.) (however, the arguments put forth in this work were rejected by almost all subsequent scholars); Guthrie (1962); Barnes (1982); Graham (2010). For the dating of Xenophanes, see also the introduction to Lesher's commentary (1992) 3-7.

[25] See Lloyd-Jones (1956) 55-67, (1971) 79-103.

[26] See, for example, FJW (1980) 2. 90; Guthrie (1962) 374-5; Jaeger (1947) 45-6; KRS (1983) 167, 170-1; Lesher (1992) 107.

But, before entering into this discussion, it is first necessary to see whether aspects of *Supp.* 86-103 can be traced in works earlier than Xenophanes and thus what aspects can be thought of as unique to Xenophanes. So, while *Supp.* 86-103 does indeed echo Xenophanes Fr. B25-6 in the presentation of an invariant god staying in one place and able to fulfil what he has in mind without recourse to movement, it is also possible to see traces of the Homeric Zeus in Aeschylus' presentation of the god. First, the notion that Zeus' will is not easy to trace, which is expressed in lines 86-7, 93-5, is already present in Homer and Hesiod (*Il.* 8.143, *Od.* 23.81-2, Hes. *Op.* 483-4) before Xenophanes takes up the idea. Secondly, the image of Zeus fulfilling his will with a nod of his head, which is seen in lines 91-2, is – in extant literature – imagined first in Homer (*Il.* 1.524-30). In the passage, the efficacy of Zeus' will is presented as concomitant with the nodding of his head. So, the god says: οὐ γὰρ ἐμὸν παλινάγρετον οὐδ' ἀπατηλὸν | οὐδ' ἀτελεύτητον, ὅ τί κεν κεφαλῇ κατανεύσω. 'Nothing of mine can be recalled, nor deemed false, nor be left unfulfilled, to which I have nodded my head.' (*Il.* 1.526-7). Strictly speaking, the image is not identical with the one found in the passage from the *Suppliants*: in the *Iliad*, the god's will is not fulfilled by the nodding of his head, but the nodding of his head is a sign of affirmation that his will shall come to pass. In spite of this difference, that Zeus' will shall be fulfilled once he has bowed his head effectively makes the nodding of his head an equvialency for Zeus fulfilling his will. The two images are close enough to conclude that the similarity is more than simply circumstantial and that Aeschylus was, if not inspired by the Homeric image, then at least drawing from the same well from which Homer had drawn. The image of the god's will flaring up in all places with black fortune for mortals is reminiscent of the image of Zeus' thunderbolt in Homer and Hesiod. Indeed, it is only lines 96-103 that seem to be suggesting something different in Aeschylus' depiction of Zeus. In these lines, the ease with which the god is said to fulfil his will in lines 91-2 appears to be developed or qualified to indicate Zeus' invariance. It is here that Aeschylus may be tapping into a wider discourse concerning the nature of the divine.

Bearing this in mind, it is necessary to consider Xenophanes' philosophical theology in its own right. For Xenophanes it was of primary importance to highlight the incongruity of an anthropomorphised supreme deity. This he did by critiquing and deconstructing the traditional presentation of the gods, as exemplified in the

Homeric epics; and then by constructing his own god in opposition to the gods of established religion. He says of the depiction of the gods in Homer and Hesiod: πάντα θεοῖς ἀνέθηκαν Ὅμηρός θ' Ἡσίοδός τε | ὅσσα παρ' ἀνθρώποισιν ὀνείδεα καὶ ψόγος ἐστίν, | κλέπτειν μοιχεύειν τε καὶ ἀλλήλους ἀπατεύειν. 'Homer and Hesiod have attributed to the gods everything that deserves reproach and censure among men, theft, adultery and deception of his fellow man.' (Fr. B11). And of the nature of the traditional anthropomorphic gods of Greek religion: ἀλλ' οἱ βροτοὶ δοκέουσι γεννᾶσθαι θεοὺς | τὴν σφετέρην ἐσθῆτα <τ'> ἔχειν φωνήν τε δέμας τε. 'But men seem to think that the gods are born, and have clothes, voice and form just like their own.' (Fr. B14) Αἰθίοπές τε <θεοὺς σφετέρους> σιμοὺς μέλανάς τε | Θρῆκές τε γλαυκοὺς καὶ πυρροὺς <φασι πελέσθαι>· 'The Ethiopians say that their gods are round-nosed and black, and the Thracians that theirs are blue-eyed and red-haired.' (Fr. B16) εἰ <δέ> τοι <ἵπποι> ἔχον χέρας ἢ βόες ἠὲ λέοντες | ἢ γράψαι χείρεσσι καὶ ἔργα τελεῖν ἅπερ ἄνδρες, | ἵπποι μέν θ' ἵπποισι, βόες δέ τε βουσὶν ὁμοίας | καί <κε> θεῶν ἰδέας ἔγραφον καὶ σώματ' ἐποίουν | τοιαῦθ' οἷόνπερ καὐτοὶ εἶχον ἕκαστοι. 'But, if oxen had hands and horses and lions, or could draw with their hands and do the works which men do, horses would draw the forms of their gods like horses, oxen like oxen and they would make their bodies such as they each have themselves.' (Fr. B15).

Xenophanes' objections are not simply that the gods depicted are anthropomorphic, but that they often perform acts which demonstrate the very worst qualities of humanity (B11). Indeed, Xenophanes would possibly have had less reason to make these criticisms had Homer (and Hesiod) not had such a hold on the consciousness of the Greeks. As he says: ἐξ ἀρχῆς καθ' Ὅμηρον ἐπεὶ μεμαθήκασι πάντες. 'From the beginning all have since learned according to Homer.' (Fr. B10) But, the attacks go further than criticisms of the gods' action. They also highlight the absurdity of anthropomorphism itself. So, Xenophanes says that Ethiopians see their gods as black and round-nosed and the Thracians as blonde and blue-eyed (Fr. B16), before extending the attack *ad absurdum*, claiming similar thought processes among animals (Fr. B15). Thus, when we read these fragments in conjunction with Fr. B25-6, greater light is shed on what is 'seemly' or 'fitting' ἐπιπρέπει for the supreme god to do or not to do and to be like or not to be like.

As an answer to the criticisms he raises concerning the Homeric and Hesiodic conception of the gods, Xenophanes posits his own god:

> εἷς θεός ἐν τε θεοῖσι καὶ ἀνθρώποισι μέγιστος,
> οὔτι δέμας θνητοῖσιν ὁμοίϊς οὔτε νόημα.
> 'There is one god greatest among gods and men, unlike mortals in form and thought.' (Fr. B23)

> οὖλος ὁρᾷ, οὖλος δὲ νοεῖ, οὖλος δέ τ' ἀκούει.
> 'He sees as a whole, thinks as a whole, and hears as a whole.' (Fr. B24)

> αἰεὶ δ' ἐν ταὐτῳ μίμνει κινούμενος οὐδέν,
> οὐδὲ μετέρχεσθαί μιν ἐπιπρέπει ἄλλοτε ἄλλῃ·
> 'He always abides in the same place, not moving at all, nor is it fitting for him to travel to different places at different times.' (Fr. B26)

> ἀλλ' ἀπάνευθε πόνοιο νόου φρενὶ πάντα κραδαίνει.
> 'But completely without toil he shakes all things by the thought of his mind.' (Fr. B25)

Let us first consider B23. The fragment is often understood as espousing a form of monotheism.[27] Fragment B23 has been the subject of repeated discussion and the positions either side, between those who see an expression of monotheistic thought in the lines and those who do not, remain deeply entrenched. For this reason and for its potential impact on the presentation of the gods in Aeschylus, it is necessary to examine the fragment again, highlighting the main arguments on either side and stating my own understanding of the fragment.

The contention rests primarily (if not entirely) on what Xenophanes means by θεοῖσι in the expression ἐν τε θεοῖσι καὶ ἀνθρώποισι, whether we are to understand that along with the one greatest god, εἷς θεός... μέγιστος, there exist other gods; or whether ἐν τε θεοῖσι καὶ ἀνθρώποισι is some form of 'polar expression' and thus,

[27] Burnet (1930) 128-9; Hussey (1972) 11-14; Fränkel (1975) 331; Barnes (1982) 89-92; KRS (1983) 170; McEvilley (2002) 49; Graham (2010) 1. 131.

because it is merely a turn of phrase,[28] does not entail any actual 'belief' in the existence of other gods.[29] In support of this latter interpretation, it has been argued that, 'In fact Xenophanes wrote of 'gods' in other places... this was no doubt a concession, perhaps not a fully conscious one, to popular religious terminolgy. It seems very doubtful whether Xenophanes would have recognized other, minor deities as being in any way related to the 'one god', except as dim human projections.'[30] Indeed, that the fragment professes a belief in monotheism may also be seen to be supported by the primary position of εἷς θεός in the line, which lends itself to emphasising that this god is the one and only god.[31]

But, although these commentators are correct to highlight the obvious significance of the *one god* in Xenophanes' philosophical theology and in philosophical debates more generally, they do so bound by monotheistic considerations that are not applicable to the age in which Xenophanes was writing. First, it is reasonable to raise the question whether Xenophanes – in a society unfamiliar with monotheistic religion – would have unnecessarily complicated his 'revolutionary' thesis by using a term traditionally employed to denote the existence of a plurality of divine beings, regardless of whether such usage is merely a 'concession'.[32] Indeed, Xenophanes not only refers to the existence of a plurality of gods in B23, but elsewhere too – even when we discount those instances where he is attacking the traditional gods (cf. B1, 18, 34). So, if Xenophanes were a monotheist and trying to present his ideas to a society in which polytheism was so deeply ingrained in the public consciousness, would he use theological terminology so loosely? Might he not have developed a method of stratifying theological terminology in a way similar to Plato, Xenocrates or the Christians later in antiquity?

---

[28] Such use of θεοῖσι in a 'polar expression' is, indeed, not so very far detached from how Zeus is referred to commonly in Homer as the 'father of gods and men' or the interchangeable way that θεός, δαίμων and Ζεύς are used in the 'indefinite mode of expression', where any one term seems to denote in a similar way a loose, general idea of the divine. See Chapter 1 above on δαίμων in the plays of Aeschylus.

[29] Among those who adhere to idea that Xenophanes uses ἐν τε θεοῖσι καὶ ἀνθρώποισι as a 'polar expression' are Burnet (1930) 129; KRS (1983) 170. To state that the phrase is a polar expression does, in itself, of course, not say anything about the content or status attached to the two individual terms.

[30] KRS (1983) 170; cf. Fränkel (1975) 331-2.

[31] So, KRS (1983) 169; cf. Fränkel (1975) 331.

[32] See Stokes (1971) 76, citing Freudenthal (1886) for this argument. Cf. also Guthrie (1962) 375 who points out that for a monotheist the use of θεοῖσι would be surprisingly careless.

Rather, what is significant in the thought of Xenophanes is not whether there is only one god, but that there is one god among all the other gods who is unlike the gods of Homer and the traditional anthropomorphic pantheon. It is the differentiation between what a god should and should not be. So, in B11, 14-16 Xenophanes states his criticisms of the Homeric presentation of the gods and their anthropomorphic nature; while in B23-6, he states what the greatest god should be conceived of as being. In B23, the *one god* has none of the anthropomorphic qualities criticised in B11, 14-16: he is unlike mortals in form and thought (*i.e.* not anthropomorphic). In B24, the *one god* is said to be omniscient, able to see, think, hear as one, and so will never be blind-sided as Zeus in Homer.[33] The god is given completely the power of sight, hearing and thought. Of course, Zeus was given similar qualities of knowledge, sight and hearing in Homer and Hesiod,[34] but what is different from Zeus is that the *one god* has shed all of those qualities and instances which limit Zeus' power.

The *one god* is also invariant (B26); and able to move all things with just his mind (B25). The latter fragment is important to this discussion because of its similarity with the presentation of Zeus in Homer, who can fulfil whatever he has in mind with a nod of his head, shaking Olympus in the process (*Il.* 1.526-30).[35] However, the images of the two mighty gods differ in one telling aspect: in B25 it is the internal processes of the mind which are described, in contrast with the external movement of the head in the *Iliad*: as Zeus shakes things with a nod of his head, the *one god* does so with the thought of his mind. Anthropomorphism is kept to an absolute minimum in Xenophanes' presentation of the *one god*, with anthropomorphic vocabulary seemingly only employed due to an inability to express the concept of his god in any other way. So, in B26 there is recourse to describe movement, but only in order to state the *one god's* invariance; and in B24, the anthropomorphic processes of sight, thought and hearing are described, but only in order to stress the difference between humans who see with their one pair of eyes, think with their mind, and hear with their ears and the *one god* who sees, thinks and

[33] See the discussion above in the section *The Power and Limitations of Zeus*.
[34] See the discussion above in the section *The Power and Limitations of Zeus*.
[35] The similarity between Fr. B25 and *Il.* 1. 526-30 has been well noted. See Lesher (1992) 110 for an overview of the respective interpretations of Fr. B25, between those who see it as a distinctive religious outlook and those who see it as echoing Homer and early poets.

hears as a whole. The *one god* is thus a direct response to the Homeric gods criticised and rejected in fragments B11, 14-16. But, significantly, while Xenophanes criticises their human qualities and their human fallibility, he does not contend the existence of a plurality of gods.[36]

So, how does Xenophanes' view concerning the nature of divinity affect our understanding of the passage at *Supp.* 86-103? At *Supp.* 86-103, it seems that Aeschylus is tapping into the dialogue surrounding the image of Zeus enthroned and exacting his will with a nod of his head, first found in the *Iliad*, then picked up and critiqued by Xenophanes. Aeschylus does not seem to adhere strictly to either the Homeric or the Xenophanic image of the supreme god in his presentation of Zeus. At *Supp.* 91-2, Zeus nods his head to exact his will, in an image comparable to that of Zeus at *Il.* 1.526-30;[37] but, within a few lines at *Supp.* 101-03, great stress is placed on the invariant nature of the god with three descriptions of Zeus remaining in one place within as many lines: ἥμενος... αὐτόθεν...ἑδράνων ἀφ' ἁγνῶν which can in turn be compared with the thought found in Xenophanes B26. The similarity with the thought of both Homer and Xenophanes continues at *Supp.* 96-9, where the Danaids say that Zeus throws men down to destruction, but does so without recourse to armed force. The image of Zeus casting men down to destruction is reminiscent of both Homer and Hesiod and the violence of the god, especially evident in the *Theogony*, while the absence of armed force (and thus of anthropomorphism) seemingly recalls Xenophanes. Aeschylus can be seen to start from the image of Zeus found in Homer, in which he is anthropomorphised, sitting on his throne and able to effect his will with a nod of his head (*Supp.* 91-2), but then develops the presentation of the god to one in which the god is framed in the language of invariance (*Supp.* 96-103).

In the *Eumenides*, Apollo speaks of the effortlessness with which Zeus can fulfil deeds: τούτων ἐπῳδὰς οὐκ ἐποίησεν πατήρ | οὐμός, τὰ δ' ἄλλα πάντ' ἄνω τε καὶ κάτω | στρέφων τίθησιν οὐδὲν ἀσθμαίνων μένει. 'My father has made no charm against these things; but all the rest he orders, turning it both up and down, without being any effort for him.' (*Eu.* 649-51). This example has been seen to echo many of the sentiments found in the passage from the *Suppliants*.[38] Nevertheless, while these

[36] See also Stokes (1971) 78-9, Lesher (1992) for this point.
[37] See discussion of this passage above in this chapter.
[38] See, for example, FJW (1980) 3.90; Sommerstein (1989) 204-5.

lines hint at ideas found at *Supp.* 86-103, it is debateable whether they strictly refer to the invariance of Zeus and not simply to the ease with which he can fulfil deeds.[39] In the passage from the *Suppliants*, stress is laid on the fact that Zeus can not only bring men to utter destruction without recourse to armed force, but that he remains in one spot, invariant. In the *Eumenides*, Apollo only speaks of the lack of effort that deeds cause Zeus, with no mention of the god's movement or lack of movement. As a result, it is difficult to conclude that we are dealing with a conception of Zeus in any way distinct from how we see the god presented in Homer. Rather, what we see in Apollo's words is a common depiction of how Zeus is able to exact his will with great ease.

Although there are no clear examples of Zeus being depicted as invariant elsewhere in Aeschylus, the fact that the god never appears on-stage as a fully-fledged character could suggest that there was a more broadly conceived conception of Zeus as an invariant god, as well as both a remote and unknowable one. Zeus' absence from the plays has been enough for one scholar to say that 'there was some sort of inhibition against impersonating Zeus himself on the tragic stage.'[40] While it will not be argued here that there was an 'inhibition' against presenting Zeus on-stage in Aeschylus (or in the extant works of the other two tragedians), consideration needs to be given to the potential effect that Zeus' absence has on the conception of the god, because it is, at the very least, noteworthy that a god whose name is spoken more than any other in Aeschylus and whose will is often integral to the plot never appears as a *dramatis persona.*

However, before a discussion of the potential effect that Zeus' absence has on our understanding of the god's presentation in Aeschylus, we need first to consider the evidence surrounding the playwright's (now very fragmentary) play, *Psychostasia*, in which, it is said, Zeus appears. It is rather surprising to find that for all the significance scholars[41] have placed on the tragedy in determining whether or not Zeus appears on-stage in Aeschylus (and thus the potential likelihood of his appearance in Greek tragedy as a whole), we possess only two or three words from the play itself (279, 280, 280a, Radt), from which nothing can be deduced. Reasons

[39] Cf. Aesch. Fr. 99 for the ease with which Zeus can accomplish deeds.
[40] Taplin (1977) 432.
[41] See, for example, Taplin (1977) 431-3; Sourvinou-Inwood (2003) 463-4; Parker (2005) 147. See also Sommerstein (1996) 23, 56, who assumes, without any discussion, that Zeus appears in the play.

for believing that Zeus appears on-stage in this play, in fact, derive from two testimonia, both of which date from centuries after its initial production. The first comes from Plutarch, who in discussing the weighing of the souls of Achilles and Hector in *Iliad* 22, goes on to say: τραγῳδίαν δ' Αἰσχύλος ὅλην τῷ μύθῳ περιέθηκεν, ἐπιγράψας Ψυχοστασίαν καὶ παραστήσας ταῖς πλάστιγξι τοῦ Διὸς ἔνθεν μὲν τὴν Θέτιν, ἔνθεν δὲ τὴν Ἠῶ, δεομένας ὑπὲρ τῶν υἱέων μαχομένων. 'Aeschylus put on a whole tragedy concerning the myth, naming it Psychostasia and placing by the scales of Zeus, on the one side Thetis and on the other Eos, who both make pleas on behalf of their warring sons.' (*Mor.* 16f-17a) The second from Pollux: ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ θεολογείου ὄντος ὑπὲρ τὴν σκηνὴν ἐν ὕψει ἐπιφαίνονται θεοί, ὡς ὁ Ζεὺς καὶ οἱ περὶ αὐτὸν ἐν Ψυχοστασίᾳ. ἡ δὲ γέρανος μηχάνημά ἐστιν ἐκ μετεώρου καταφερόμενον ἐφ' ἁρπαγῇ σώματος, ᾧ κέχρηται Ἠὼς ἁρπάζουσα τὸ σῶμα τὸ Μέμνονος 'On the theologeion above the skene gods appear on high, just as Zeus and those around him in the Psychostasia. The crane is a mechanical device that bears things down from on high as with the taking of a body, as was used by Eos in taking the body of Memnon' (4.130).

If we consider the evidence as it is from the information supplied by Plutarch and Pollux, it would seem that Aeschylus produced a play entitled *Psychostasia* and that in it Zeus plays a part, although for how long he makes an appearance and whether he has a speaking role is not clear. It is also not clear how accurate these accounts of Aeschylus' play are. Pollux's statement does not mention Aeschylus as the composer of the play; nor can we be sure that Zeus is in fact the god holding the scales.[42] For example, Taplin argues that Plutarch may have merged two myths in which the weighing of Achilles' soul occurs, because Plutarch was first discussing the account of Zeus weighing the souls of Achilles and Hector in *Iliad* 22, and then he moves on to discuss Zeus weighing the souls of Achilles and Memnon in Aeschylus' *Psychostasia*.[43] Indeed, the pictorial record indicates that there was a more established tradition which has Hermes weighing the souls of Achilles and Memnon, rather than Zeus.[44] Of the nine extant vase paintings dating down to about

[42] So Taplin (1977) 432.
[43] Taplin (1977) 431.
[44] Of course, the pictorial record does not in itself demonstrate categorically whether Aeschylus would have presented Zeus or Hermes in his version of the weighing of the souls, because the relationship between vase-painting and tragedy is sometimes difficult to determine and we cannot be

450 B.C. which show the weighing of the souls of Achilles and Memnon (not Achilles and Hector) from the Aethiopis myth (and not the *Iliad*), only one depicts Zeus holding the scales, while the rest depict Hermes holding them.[45] But, it is important to note that while this argument could be seen to diminish the odds of Zeus appearing in the tragedy, it does not remove the possibility entirely.

Indeed, Taplin's view of the testimonia is not the prevailing one; most accept the sources as they are as evidence that Zeus appears as a character in Aeschylus.[46] Sourvinou-Inwood, for example, finds it hard to dismiss two different (although not necessarily independent) testimonia that claim it was Zeus – and not Hermes – who weighs the souls of Achilles and Memnon.[47] Also, we should be careful not to dismiss the sources on ideological grounds, with the conviction that there was some 'inhibition' against presenting Zeus on the classical tragic stage, especially as both the ancient testimonia suggest that there was not. Indeed, it would be very odd for there to be such an inhibition among the tragic writers when the Greeks so freely depicted Zeus in other forms of literature and plastic art.

Rather, perhaps a better question to ask is what type of role Zeus had in the play, whether speaking or otherwise, and not whether the god actually appeared in it. If we accept the testimonia of Plutarch and Pollux and thus the premise that Zeus appeared in Aeschylus' play *Psychostasia*, it would not be an unreasonable stance to take if we argued that the god did not have a speaking role. As Parker puts it: 'It can scarcely be a coincidence that Zeus himself apparently never 'theologizes' in tragedy (though he made a remarkable appearance in Aeschylus' *Psychostasia*); the ultimate explanation cannot itself be dragged on stage and required to give an account of itself.'[48]

While Greek tragedy couples the divine and the mortal spheres to the extent that, for the most part, no significant event can be determined as purely human or

---

sure from where the vase-painters got their inspiration. For a recent discussion of this issue, see Taplin (2007) 28-46. Nevertheless, for the purposes of the discussion here, the interaction between tragedy and vase-painting is not of utmost importance, since all that needs to be shown here is whether before and during Aeschylus' time there was an established tradition which shows Zeus weighing the souls of Achilles and Memnon, and how prevalent it was in relation to Hermes holding the scales.

[45] For Zeus holding the scales: see *LIMC*, Achilleus 797; for Hermes: *LIMC*, Achilleus 798-804, Hermes 625.

[46] Cf. Sommerstein (1996); Sourvinou-Inwood (2003); Parker (2005).

[47] Sourvinou-Inwood (2003) 463.

[48] Parker (2005) 147.

divine alone, Greek tragedy is nonetheless the tragedy of the human 'condition'. For Zeus to appear on-stage and to supply an over-arching explanation for the often terrible events that have occurred in the play would reduce the action to the level of the banal and the insipid. As Zeus' will is often considered the underlying cause or reason for events, for the god to supply an explanation and to confirm such beliefs in the efficacy of his will would run this risk. Of course, gods do appear to sort out events in Greek tragedy, often citing the will of Zeus for their intervention. But, it is one thing to cite the will of Zeus, it is quite another for it to be spoken by the god himself. While, of course, Athena and Apollo in the *Eumenides* are intimately connected with Zeus and his will, there is still a degree of separation between humanity and Zeus himself: Zeus remains detached from the events themselves.

To sum up, in Aeschylus, Zeus is not conceptualised as a fully invariant deity, in spite of how he is presented at *Supp.* 86-103. There are notable descriptions of the god within the plays which indicate that there are differences in Aeschylus' presentation from what we find in Homer and Hesiod, but there is no rounded theory. Indeed, there are too many mythological descriptions in which Zeus is anthropomorphised, too many instances where the god seems to have a share in common, traditional tales. Aeschylus seems to interact with philosophical speculation of his age concerning the nature of divinity, but does so without fully relinquishing traditional, Homeric and Hesiodic conceptions of the god.

ZEUS AS A 'PRIMAL SUBSTANCE'

The potential influence of Presocratic thought on Aeschylus' presentation of Zeus can also be seen elsewhere in the plays. In a fragment generally considered to be from the *Heliades*, some[49] have seen the expression of an exalted and pantheistic conception of Zeus (Fr. 70):

> Ζεύς ἐστιν αἰθήρ,[50] Ζεὺς δὲ γῆ, Ζεὺς δ' οὐρανός,
> Ζεύς τοι τὰ πάντα χὤτι τῶνδ' ὑπέρτερον.

[49] See, for example, Nilsson (1967, 3rd ed.) 707-11; see Lloyd-Jones (1956) 55 for criticisms.
[50] For Zeus as the sky-god and his connection with the aither, see Cook (1914) v.1; West (2007) 166-73.

> Zeus is the aither, Zeus is the earth, Zeus is the heaven, indeed Zeus is all things and whatsoever is above and beyond these things.

When examining these lines, all the relevant caveats need to be stated outright. We do not know the context in which the lines were spoken and we do not know the tone in which they were said. However, these lines should not be dismissed out-of-hand simply because we do not know their precise context; nor should we deem them to mean 'much the same as the concluding line of the *Trachiniae*: κοὐδὲν τούτων ὅ τι μὴ Ζεύς.'[51] First of all, the comparison Lloyd-Jones makes is a false one. The line from Sophocles' play is a statement referring to the preceeding events of the play and is a reference to Zeus' will and its role in the play as a conducting force.[52] Fr. 70, on the other hand, identifies Zeus with the heaven, earth and all that is in-between and above. While Lloyd-Jones says that 'other evidence for pantheism in Aeschylus is lacking'[53] – which seems to be the case – what I want to discuss and consider here is whether it is possible to deduce that the *Heliades* fragment makes allusions to Presocratic debates regarding what may, slightly anachronistically, be referred to as primal substances and their divine, all-pervasive nature. It is perhaps worth interjecting here and reiterating that I am not imputing to Aeschylus any dogmatic notion of Zeus as some proto-Christian deity, who is omnipotent, omniscient or omnipresent. Rather, it is the interaction of religio-philosophical concepts of divinity that is under discussion here and not any single, rounded theory about the all-pervading nature of Zeus.

Both Anaximenes of Miletus and Diogenes of Apollonia seem to equate air with the material principle of the universe, as something divine and as the substance from which all things are derived.[54] Empedocles too espoused a view of the natural

---

[51] Lloyd-Jones (1956) 55.

[52] Cf. Davies (1991) 266-7 rightly compares the passage with (among others) *Ag.* 1485-8, and says that it 'recalls the Homeric Διὸς δ' ἐτελείετο βουλή.' See Chapter 4 'The Justice of Zeus' for discussion of *Ag.* 1485-9.

[53] Lloyd-Jones (1956) 55 n.7.

[54] For Anaximenes see, Aristotle *Met.* A3, 984a5; Theophrastus *ap.* Simplicium in *Phys.* 24, 26; Hippolytus *Ref.* 1, 7, 1; Cicero *de natura deorum* 1, 10, 26; Aetius 1, 7, 13; Augustine *de civ. Dei* VIII, 2. For Diogenes see, Fr. 3, 4, 5 Simplicius *in Phys.* 152, 13, 18, 22; Fr. 7, 8 Simplicius *in Phys.* 153, 19, 20. It is likely that Diogenes flourished somewhere in the region of twenty years after the death of Aeschylus, and as such this may be enough to conclude that his work should not be considered in a discussion of Aeschylus. However, the philosophical link between the much earlier Anaximenes and Diogenes himself creates a nexus of thought, which does seem to suggest the prominence of this particular line of enquiry (at least in some intellectual circles) during the first half

world which can easily be understood as pantheistic, seeing four roots as the underlying material elements of the world: τέσσαρα γὰρ πάντων ῥιζώματα πρῶτον ἄκουε· | Ζεὺς ἀργὴς Ἥρη τε φερέσβιος ἠδ' Ἀιδωνεὺς | Νῆστις θ' ἣ δακρύοις τέγγει κρούνωμα βρότειον. 'Hear first the four roots of all things: bright shining Zeus, life-bearing Hera, Aidoneus and Nestis who wettens with tears the springs of mortal men' (Fr. 6, Aetius 1, 3, 20; cf. Aristotle *Met.* A4, 985a31-3, DK 31, A37). While there is some debate about which of the four elements the four gods denote, the arguments and their respective conclusions are not important for the present discussion and so will not be gone into here. All that needs to be understood from the Empedocles fragment for the purposes of this investigation is that there are four underlying elements which are a reinterpretation of four divine beings.[55] This is equally true and important when looking at Anaximenes, Diogenes and Fr. 70, because although the precise details differ, the manner of conceiving and presenting the nature of divinity is very similar, however much or little these Presocratrics may have thought of themselves as speaking 'allegorically'.

In the *Heliades*, it is the language in which the highest and most powerful god is conceived, as a being equated with the all-encompassing and principal substances of the universe, in particular the aither and the earth, which hint at and are suggestive of the philosophy of Anaximenes, Empedocles and Diogenes. While Aeschylus states that Zeus is the aither, the earth, the heaven and more besides and does not strictly make reference to the substances of air, fire, water or earth, the manner in which the god is referred to does nonetheless seem to allude to the philosophical methods of investigation of his age. However, we must be careful how and to what extent we apply this fragment to the rest of the Aeschylean corpus, because nowhere else in Aeschylus is Zeus presented in the way he is in Fr. 70, and as we do not possess the rest of the play it is impossible to contextualise the lines. For this reason, we should be content simply to note the further similarity of thought in Aeschylus' work to that of certain Presocratic philosophers.

---

of the fifth-century B.C. As a result, I think it is worthwhile to consider Diogenes in this debate. On the other hand, the ultimately Aristotelean form of the summary of the thought of these Presocratics put forward in the text is not meant to endorse the historical accuracy of the Aristotelean presentation, but is to be considered merely as short-hand adequate for the present purpose.

[55] See Guthrie (1965) 144-6 for a good discussion of the conflicting views; cf. also KRS (1983) 286, Graham (2010) 1. 423.

ZEUS AND HADES

If we return to the main extant body of Aeschylus' work, it is possible to see the name of Zeus used also as a synonym for the god of the dead, Hades. In the *Suppliants*, for example, fearing for their safety and seeking protection as suppliants of Zeus, the Danaids threaten to pollute the sacred precinct by killing themselves, should they not receive sanctuary in Argos. They say (*Supp.* 156-61):

> τὸν πολυξενώτατον
> Ζῆνα τῶν κεκμηκότων
> ἱξόμεσθα σὺν κλάδοις
> ἀρτάναις θανοῦσαι,
> μὴ τυχοῦσαι θεῶν Ὀλυμωπίων.
>
> With boughs we will approach as suppliants the host of very many, Zeus of the departed, having died by the noose, unless we meet with the Olympian gods.

The most natural way to understand τὸν πολυξενώτατον Ζῆνα τῶν κεκμηκότων is to read it as a synonym for Hades, the traditional host of spirits in the underworld. It was not uncommon for poets in the archaic and classical periods to use the name of Zeus in this way (cf. *Il.* 9.457, Hes. *Th.* 767, *Op.* 465, S. *Aj.* 571). If this is so, Zeus' position as the king of the gods reflects Hades' own position in the afterlife as the king of the dead, relying on the transference of what is effectively the most basic characteristic of Zeus on to his underworld counterpart, that of the highest and most powerful god in his domain.[56]

The idea of justice may also have been a contributing factor for Aeschylus to refer to Hades as the Zeus of the underworld. This is suggested at *Supp.* 229-31, where the Danaids declare:

> οὐδὲ μὴ 'ν Ἅιδου θανών
> φύγῃ ματαίων αἰτίας πράξας τάδε.
> κἀκεῖ δικάζει τἀ<μ>πλακήμαθ', ὡς λόγος,

[56] In addition, at *Supp.* 156-61 Aeschylus also seems to be hinting at something more than just this transference. As FJW (1980) 2.130 say in reference to πολυξενώτατον, 'Here the allusion to his [Hades'] indiscriminate 'hospitality' has a special point: he at least will receive the Danaids. There is no doubt also a veiled ironical ref. to Zeus Xenios, who is later named by the Chorus (627).'

Ζεὺς ἄλλος ἐν καμοῦσιν ὑστάτας δίκας.

After doing such a thing he will surely not escape the punishment of his folly, even in Hades after death: there too, so they say, there is another Zeus who pronounces final judgement on the dead for their evil doings.

Here it seems clear that 'another Zeus who pronounces judgements on the dead' acts as a synonym for the traditional god of the underworld, Hades, just as we had seen at *Supp.*156-61 with the phrase τὸν πολυξενώτατον Ζῆνα τῶν κεκμηκότων. However, in contrast with the example at *Supp.* 156-61, the idea of justice becomes a telling aspect in the description. Elsewhere in the play, Zeus is presented as the highest and most supreme judge on earth (e.g. *Supp.* 402-4, 437), as he is in all of Aeschylus.[57] This function of Zeus is mirrored in the afterlife where the other Zeus among the dead also makes judgements; but, in contrast with the 'normal' Zeus in the upper world, it is telling that the other Zeus only makes final judgements over the deceased. The depiction seems to balance two prevailing views of the underworld during this period:[58] one in which the underworld is seen as a mirror of life on earth (cf. *Od.* 11.484-6, 11.568-75; *Ch.* 354-62); the other sees a distinct split between the two worlds, with the afterlife a reflection and judgement of the acts committed during one's lifetime (cf. *Eu.* 273-5; Pindar *O.* 2.56ff; Plato *Grg.* 523a-527a, *R.* 330d-331b). The Zeus of the dead, Hades, thus seems to be presented at one and the same time as the mirror of the 'normal' Zeus who presides over mortals' actions on earth and as distinct from him, making only the final judgements upon mortals in the underworld.

It is also possible to see Aeschylus as playing etymological word games, connecting Zeus with life and its converse, death, by punning on the Ζην- element of Zeus' name and its similarity with that of the verb ζῆν (to live). The first indication that this may be the case comes at *Supp.* 156-61, when the Danaids threaten to hang themselves and the name of Zeus, in the accusative form Ζῆνα, is juxtaposed with the qualifying noun τῶν κεκμηκότων.[59] While, of course, it is a common occurrence

[57] See Chapter 4 'The Justice of Zeus' below.
[58] See FJW (1980) 2.184.
[59] It is worth noting that neither Vürtheim (1928, repr. 1967) nor FJW (1980) pick up on the etymological word-play at *Supp.* 156-61, in spite of the fact that the latter notes the word-play on the

for Hades to be referred to as the Zeus of the dead, it is nevertheless the case that the similarity between the Ζην- root of Zeus' name and that of the verb ζῆν 'to live', together with the apparent contradiction – whether a poetic turn of phrase or not – for the name of Zeus to be conceptualised as the god of the dead offers the opportunity for word-play. This is made all the more plausible a quarry for word-play when we consider that one of the Danaids' major pre-occupations is to establish their position as the descendents of Io and Zeus, which is alluded to from the opening of the play (*Supp.* 15-19, 40-48) and with great frequency throughout the first half of it.[60] The Danaids do not lose any opportunity to mention their connection with their ancestral father Zeus, placing Pelasgus and the Argives under no illusion that they do not just claim Zeus' support as suppliants (if that were not enough), but as his own flesh and blood too. In the fourth antistrophe of the second stasimon, after the Danaids have described the rape of Io by Zeus, they say that the Earth declares of the child born from the relationship and its descendents: φυσιζόου γένος τόδε | Ζηνός ἐστιν ἀληθῶς. 'Truly this is the offspring of Zeus, the begetter of life.' (*Supp.* 584-5) While I do not claim that every reference to Zeus with the the Ζην- root is playing on its etymological similarity with the verb ζῆν 'to live', if one takes into consideration the stress that the Danaids place on their descent from Zeus and the meaning of the two lines at *Supp.* 584-5, it is not unreasonable to claim that Aeschylus is playing on Zeus' name as a producer of life here. So, in turn, if we observe the ancestral link the Danaids wish to establish between Zeus and themselves as his descendents, when they then refer to Hades as another Zeus beneath the earth or as Zeus among the dead with the Ζην- root, Aeschylus could thus be intentionally punning on the god's name: the name of the god who is the font of life for the Danaids is also the name used for the god of the dead.[61]

Furthermore, playing on the name of Zeus was not uncommon in archaic and classical Greek literature. Aeschylus himself does so elsewhere, calling Justice the

---

root of Zeus' name at *Supp.* 584-5, as well as giving parallel examples from other authors (though not Heraclitus B32, see below).

[60] See Chapter 2 'The Characteristics of Zeus' above.

[61] The apparent paradox is to some extent reminiscent of – but at the same time more profound than – Heraclitus' play on the sound, meaning and import of *bios* in Fr. 48. Cf. the following paragraph for further potential significance of Heraclitus in this context.

daughter of Zeus[62] and that which occurs through or because of Zeus.[63] Plato also etymologises the name of Zeus and its root Ζην- in the *Cratylus*, as Aeschylus had in the *Suppliants*, saying that Zeus is so-called because he is the cause of life (*Crat.* 396a-b, 410d). But, even before Aeschylus and Plato, Heraclitus seems also to have picked up on the similarity between the root of Zeus' name and the verb ζῆν 'to live'. Fragment B32 reads: ἕν τὸ σοφὸν μοῦνον λέγεσθαι οὐκ ἐθέλει καὶ ἐθέλει Ζηνὸς ὄνομα. 'One is the only wise thing, it is unwilling and willing to be called by the name of Zeus.' In this fragment, the concern is the correct naming of the one wise thing – and in this alone it can be compared with the thought expressed by Aeschylus at the opening of the Hymn to Zeus in the *Agamemnon* in the phrase: Ζεύς, ὅστις ποτ' ἐστίν 'Zeus, whoever he is'.[64] Within the context of Heraclitus' work, it seems odd that he would feel the need or the desire to say that it is acceptable for the One Wise to be called by the name of Zeus, because as with Xenophanes, he ridicules conventional religion and religious practises (B5, 14, 15), saying such things as: καὶ τοῖς ἀγάλμασι δὲ τουτέοισιν εὔχονται, ὁκοῖον εἴ τις δόμοισι λεσχηνεύοιτο, οὔ τι γινώσκων θεοὺς οὐδ' ἥρωας οἵτινές εἰσι. 'And they pray to these statues, as if one were having a conversation with their house, not at all understanding what gods or heroes actually are' (Fr. B5). Indeed, Heraclitus also says that the One Wise is only wisdom and understanding, implying that it has nothing to do with the conventional religious paradigm connected with fallible anthropomorphic deities: ἓν τὸ σοφόν· ἐπίστασθαι γνώμην, ὅκη κυβερνᾶται πάντα διὰ πάντων 'One is the wise thing: knowing correct judgement, how all things are steered through all' (B41).

So, why does Heraclitus declare that the One Wise is unwilling and willing to be called by the name of Zeus? The answer, I think, rests on two points. The first of which relies on Zeus' position as the highest and most powerful god of the traditional Greek pantheon, as the closest approximation in terms of power and position to the One Wise. In what appears to be a concession to conventional religious ideology, Heraclitus seems to be suggesting that if there were any god with

---

[62] *Ch.* 949-50: Διὸς κόρα – Δίκαν. See Garvie (1986) 308-10 and Chapter 2 'The Characteristics of Zeus' above for discussion.

[63] *Ag.* 1485-9, *Ch.* 639-45, 789. Where the word-play is on variations of the phrase: διαὶ Διὸς.... Δίκας. For *Ag.* 1485-9, see Fraenkel (1950) ad loc; for *Ch.* 639-45, see Garvie (1986) 220.

[64] For a discussion of the Hymn to Zeus and its position within the parodos, see Chapter 4 'The Justice of Zeus' below.

which the One Wise can be compared or to which it can be likened, then it is the god who conducts events with, by and because of his will and fulfils deeds with a nod of his head: Zeus. But, at the same time, it is telling that the One Wise is both unwilling and willing to be called Zeus (λέγεσθαι οὐκ ἐθέλει καὶ ἐθέλει Ζηνὸς ὄνομα), because in spite of the concession to traditional religion in naming Zeus here, the position of οὐκ ἐθέλει before ἐθέλει suggests a subtle rejection of the name, or at least a rejection of common associations and connotations, such as those connected with cult and poetry (cf. B5, 14, 15).[65] The second point comes back to the discussion of the etymology of Zeus' name, the use of Ζηνός over Διός and the similarity of the root Ζην- with the verb ζῆν 'to live'.[66] While such a connection may be considered tenuous, it should be borne in mind that, as has been stated above, playing on the etymology of Zeus' name was not uncommon in antiquity and Heraclitus was himself no stranger to word-play.[67] So, if we accept the possibility that Heraclitus was punning on Zeus' name, does such word-play enhance our reading of the fragment in any way? I think it does, because Heraclitus may be indicating that the name of Zeus is not an inappropriate denotation for the name of the One Wise, due to the fact that Zeus, whose name can be 'etymologically connected' with the verb ζῆν 'to live', is, in this way at least, suggestive of the 'everliving fire' with which the One Wise is associated (cf. B30, 31, 64, 78).[68]

If we now return to Aeschylus' presentation of Zeus of the dead, the reasonable assumption is that when the poet refers to this god and Zeus the Olympian, he is denoting two separate and distinct deities, Hades and the Olympian god respectively. This manner of conceptualising the gods is supported by other references to Hades in Aeschylus where though the word Hades is used primarily as a way of referring to the place (*Per.* 923, *Th.* 323, *Supp.* 416, *Ag.* 667, 1291, 1527), there are two instances in separate plays where the god is unambiguously referred to (*Supp.* 791, *Eu.* 273). But, it may also be the case that there is another way of conceptualising Zeus of the dead and that is to see the denotation as a description of one of many aspects of the same god, in a way comparable to how we understand

[65] Kahn (1979) 269-70; Stokes (1971) 106-7.
[66] Kahn (1979) 270 picks up on the possibility that Heraclitus was playing etymological word-games; the possibility is denied by Kirk (1954) 392, Marcovich (1967) 445-6.
[67] See, for example, the discussion of Fr. B119 in Chapter 1 on δαίμων.
[68] Kahn (1979) 270.

Zeus Sôter, Zeus Xenios or Zeus Hikesios.[69] While there are no unambiguous examples in Aeschylus to help demonstrate this point, there is an instance in Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus* which has been thought to do so.[70] At *O. C.* 1456-1471, Zeus is repeatedly said by Oedipus and the chorus to have thundered in the sky. But, then at 1604-6, the Messenger reports that Zeus of the Earth thundered (κτύπησε μὲν Ζεὺς χθόνιος) as a response to Oedipus' departure from the mortal world.[71] This presents the problem that we must either accept that Hades has dominion over the sky, which would be unprecedented to say the least; or that the Messenger is referring to the same god which Oedipus and the chorus spoke of before. In either case, we are presented with a depiction of Zeus and Hades which is not found – at least explicitly – in Aeschylus. This is, however, if we accept the reading of κτύπησε as 'thundered' at 1606, a direct parallel to the use of ἔκτυπεν at 1456, which is used in reference to the thunder of Zeus in the sky. But, it is also possible to read the verb κτύπησε as 'resounded' or 'crashed'. Without any reference to the thunder produced in the sky. Indeed, the noun κτύπος is used both to denote the sound of thunder and the sound of horses' hooves upon ground. So, if we read κτύπησε in line 1606 as 'resounded' or 'quaked', the potential problems raised by Hades thundering in the sky are removed; rather what we are presented with is a repetitive and interesting use of the verb κτυπέω by Sophocles as a marker of divine involvement throughout the scene of Oedipus' death.

The ambivalence and ambiguity concerning the naming of Zeus and the god of the underworld is also potentially demonstrated in a fragment of Euripides (Fr. 912. 1-8):

> σοὶ τῷ πάντων μεδέοντι χλόην
> πελανόν τε φέρω, Ζεὺς εἴθ' Ἅιδης
> ὀνομαζόμενος στέργεις· σὺ δέ μοι
> θυσίαν ἄπυρον παγκαρπείας
> δέξαι πλήρη προχυταίαν.
> σὺ γὰρ ἔν τε θεοῖς τοῖς Οὐρανίδαις
> σκῆπτρον τὸ Διὸς μεταχειρίζεις

[69] See Winnington-Ingram (1983) 163-4.
[70] West (1978) 276.
[71] West (1978) 276.

χθονίων θ' Ἀιδῃ μετέχεις ἀρχῆς.

To you who is the ruler of everything I bear young green branches and honied libations, Zeus or Hades you care to be named. You, receive my sacrifice, unburned, consisting in a libation full of offerings of all sorts of fruits. Indeed, you among the gods in heaven have the sceptre of Zeus in your hand and you possess a share of the chthonic rule in Hades.

The god goes by the name of either Zeus or Hades[72] and rules over everything, extending his reach from the heavens down and throughout the underworld. Zeus and Hades are effectively both one and the same deity, with the name Hades acting as an appropriate synonym for Zeus in this context and *vice versa*. A few lines later the god is said to have a share of the rule in Hades, with Hades spoken of more as a place than a deity. But, we should not be too concerned by this, because it was not uncommon to refer to the underworld and the god who presides over it both by the name Hades (cf. *Ag.* 667, 1527). So, if we accept that this latter reference to Hades denotes the underworld, the references to Zeus and Hades in line 2 still indicate that the god being referred to in the fragment can be called by either name and that Zeus and Hades are one and the same god in this instance.

However, this does not necessarily mean that the traditional Greek gods Zeus and Hades are thought of here. Rather the way the names Zeus and Hades are used in this fragment indicate that it is an altogether different divinity that is under consideration. Indeed, the way in which the names of Zeus and Hades are used bear greater similarity to the way Heraclitus speaks of the One Wise as unwilling and willing to be spoken of by the name of Zeus in B32 or how Xenophanes refers to the *one god* in B23. The Zeus and Hades in this fragment of Euripides carry very little of the mythological baggage that their names usually bear. So, as a consequence, while both the examples from Sophocles and Euripides, on the surface of things, seem to add an extra dimension to our understanding of how Aeschylus presented Zeus and Hades in his plays, they in fact consolidate the investigation already undertaken above. Thus, to take an example from another play this time, the *Agamemnon*: when Clytemnestra dedicates the third strike of her sword upon Agamemnon to the Zeus

[72] The question of naming Zeus is dealt with below in the discussion of *Ag.* 160 in Chapter 4 'The Justice of Zeus'.

beneath the earth, the protector of the dead, τοῦ κατὰ χθονός | Διὸς νεκρῶν σωτῆρος[73] (*Ag.* 1386-7), it may be reasonable to suggest that there may be a wider concept of the highest divinity being thought of by Aeschylus, as is also evident in some Presocratic thought and Sophocles and Euripides.

SUMMARY REMARKS

In many respects, the Zeus of Aeschylus is similar to the Zeus of Homer: he possesses much, if not all, of the same mythological baggage, is omnipotent and his will always comes to fulfilment. However, there are passages which also hint at key differences in Aeschylus' depiction of the god. Most notable among them is *Supp.* 86-103, which seems to interact with Presocratic conceptions of divine invariance. Also, in a more general and over-riding fashion, the Zeus of Aeschylus can be seen as a more detached and unknowable god than the one we find in Homer. Although there is one instance where Zeus did, in all likelihood, appear in one of the plays, it is far from certain that he had a speaking role. Indeed, the essence of tragedy as the depiction of man's sufferings and the conflict between human and divine causation would be undone should the greatest god appear on-stage to account for his will and the misery it may have caused. More than anything, what this chapter hopes to have shown is that there is interaction between the thought of Aeschylus and Presocratic philosophy, which can be seen where Zeus, at times, appears to be a god that encompasses far more than the Homeric and Hesiodic conceptions of the god, where Zeus is a universal, underlying principle and where he has assimilated (though not completely) the functions and role of the god of the underworld.

[73] In contrast with the MSS gloss that reads Ἅιδου at 1386-7.

4: THE JUSTICE OF ZEUS

THE GUILT OF AGAMEMNON?

INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter has put forward an examination of the nature of Zeus by highlighting and discussing certain key aspects of the god's character within the context of the plays and fragments by Aeschylus, as well as in relation to the dialogue into which Aeschylus entered with Presocratic philosophers, such as Xenophanes and Heraclitus, concerning the nature of divinity. On the foundation supplied by the discussion put forward in the previous chapters, this chapter will consider the god 'in practice', with a close discussion of the justice of Zeus. I will examine the *Oresteia* trilogy and in particular one issue, from which many others arise, the question of Agamemnon's guilt.

Irrespective of how one interprets the guilt or otherwise of Agamemnon, what is understood by guilt is sometimes far from clear in studies of the term in the *Agamemnon*, and as a result it will be worthwhile to spend a moment clarifying what is meant by it here. Among some of the key factors in discussions concerning the guilt of Agamemnon have been the question of inherited guilt and the role of the curse of the House of Atreus.[1] While these considerations have an important part to play in the interconnected nature of divine and human causality throughout the play and trilogy, what is under discussion in this chapter regarding Agamemnon is his personal response to the unfolding of events, his decisions, and whether it is possible to determine at any point whether his actions provoke, or give clear indication of having provoked, divine anger.[2] As a consequence, what I take as a working definition of the term of 'guilt' is that someone, in this instance, Agamemnon, has committed an act which is seen as unjust and by having committed the injustice has become 'guilty' in the eyes of a third party. In the context of this study, the third party with whom we are concerned are the Olympians gods, especially Zeus. And by transgression, I understand the act by which someone may become guilty, *i.e.* having

[1] See Lloyd-Jones (1962) 187-99, (1971) 79-93; Sewell-Rutter (2007) 15-77.

[2] For the issue of choice and decision-making in Aeschylus see, among others, Dover (1973) 58-69; Rosenmeyer (1982) 284-307; Sewell-Rutter (2007) *passim*; Herrmann (2013) 39-80. For further bibliography on specific passages in the *Agamemnon*, see below throughout in this chapter.

transgressed the boundaries of what is thought of as just by the gods. It is with these definitions in mind that the following discussion of the justice of Zeus and the guilt of Agamemnon will begin.

How the nature of justice and the role of the divine are understood in the thought of Aeschylus depends, to a large extent, on the way in which one incident in one play is interpreted. It is for this reason that the problems surrounding the death of Agamemnon, its antecedents and its consequences – notably the deaths of Iphigeneia and Clytemnestra, and the trial of Orestes – have been the subject of continuing debate for a century, or more.

It is still often held that Zeus first sent the Atreidae to Troy[3] and that Zeus, or one of the Olympians, then had Agamemnon killed for sacrificing Iphigeneia,[4] or for some other transgression committed in the course of exacting vengeance on Troy.[5] There are also those who state that Agamemnon was punished for the 'guilt' he incurred when sacrificing Iphigeneia, or for the 'guilt' he acquired in the course of exacting vengeance on Troy, but who do so without making clear in whose eyes Agamemnon is 'guilty' – whether in Clytemnestra's eyes, in Zeus' and the Olympians', or in the eyes of both, or indeed, in the eyes of the author or the audience.[6] However, the language of 'guilt' and 'sin' employed in these latter studies suggests that underlying their arguments, there exists an implicit acceptance of a religious dimension to Agamemnon's death and that he was, by consequence, punished by Zeus and the Olympians.

In contrast, the following discussion will attempt to show that Agamemnon, in spite of appearances and common (mis)conceptions, did not commit any act of transgression that earned him the wrath of the gods, and that his death was consequently neither sanctioned and ordained, nor desired by Zeus or any of the

---

[3] Peradotto (2007) 211-44, esp. 230, does, however, contest this issue. Though he raises an important question about how we should interpret the chorus' statement that 'Zeus sent the Atreidae,' (*Ag.* 60-2) Peradotto neglects the obligation of an offended party to exact retribution or restitution and the effect the position of Zeus as the god who presides over *xenia* has in Agamemnon's decision to go to Troy. This issue will be dealt with in greater detail in the course of the chapter.

[4] Lloyd-Jones (1956) 63, (1962) 187-99, (1971) 90-2, (1983) 102; Kitto (1964) 1-5, (1966) 58; Denniston and Page (1957) xv, xx-xxix; Otis (1981) 3-65, esp. 64-5; Cohen (1986) 132-4.

[5] West (1979) 4-5.

[6] Fraenkel (1950) 2.98-9, 441, 625; Lesky (1983) 13-23; Nussbaum (1986) 34; Conacher (1987) 13, 76-96; Sommerstein (1996) 275-87; Dodds (2007) 255-64; Peradotto (2007) 237.

Olympians.[7] This will be done by showing how passages commonly thought to indicate Agamemnon's guilt can in fact be read to show otherwise, and that there is at least greater ambiguity in the play than previously thought.

ORESTES *δικηφόρος* – A TEST CASE

In order to understand issues relating to the justice of Agamemnon's death, the deaths of Iphigeneia and Clytemnestra, and the role or roles which Zeus and the gods play in all three, it is necessary to come to some understanding about the concept of justice applicable to Aeschylus' *Oresteia.* To do this, I shall start by looking at the actions of Orestes and the role the gods play in determining and supporting them. It is uncontroversial that Orestes is sent by Apollo – through whom Zeus speaks (*Eu.* 17-19, 614-21, 713-14) – to avenge the death of Agamemnon. This we are told several times in both the *Libation Bearers* and the *Eumenides* (*Ch.* 260-305, 555-60, 831-7, 900-2, 939-41, 1026-33; *Eu.* 64-6, 84, 203, 465-7, 579-80, 593-4). We are left in no doubt about the position of these gods in the decision to see Clytemnestra punished for the death of Agamemnon. Due to the explicit role of Apollo (and Zeus), it is possible to see Orestes' act of killing Clytemnestra as a just act in the eyes of the highest and most powerful Olympian deities. If Orestes' act is just in the eyes of the gods, Clytemnestra must therefore be seen to have acted in a way that deserved or required punishment. Punishments by their very nature act, at least in part, as retribution or restitution for damages suffered or incurred.[8] An initial transgression is thus necessary for there to be a punishment, because punishments attempt to reset and realign a balance upset by a transgression, by acting as a counter-balance for the transgression. Clytemnestra's killing of Agamemnon is, of course, the reason supplied by Orestes and by Apollo for her death, which in turn implies that Agamemnon's death requires vengeance.

So, although Orestes, like Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, has killed, his act is categorically shown to be just *in the eyes of the Olympian gods* once he is

[7] The first in recent decades to question the validity of the traditional view that sees or implicitly accepts Zeus as sanctioning, ordaining or even desiring the death of Agamemnon was Fontenrose. In spite of the seriousness of the questions raised in his article, Fontenrose's arguments have met with little resonance. See Fontenrose (1971) 71-109; cf. Tyrrell (1976) 328-34.

[8] See Gagarin (1986) 100-6; Rawls (1973) esp. 3-17 for this discussion; cf. Hugo Grotius (2005). Indeed, this manner of conceiving justice as a balance between transgression and punishment can be detected on a universal level in Anaximander B1.

protected by Apollo and freed by Athena's vote in the *Eumenides*.[9] If the cycle of revenge had continued, we could not say this, because either the acts of killing would be unjust, or alternatively just from one perspective and unjust from another. But, by ending the cycle of revenge and acquitting Orestes, Aeschylus has shown that irrespective of how anyone judges any of the previous killings, at least Orestes' act of killing his mother was just in the eyes of the Olympians. It is for this reason that Orestes' retributive and restitutive killing of Clytemnestra and his subsequent protection and release at the hands of the Olympians can be seen as a model of justice applicable to the *Oresteia* as a whole, and one according to which it may be possible to judge and to understand the respective justice of Agamemnon's and Clytemnestra's acts of killing.[10] This is not to say that Agamemnon should automatically be considered innocent just because Clytemnestra is killed for killing him. What is highlighted here is that there is a consistent thread through the narrative of the trilogy with regard to the presentation of justice, and what will be demonstrated throughout the rest of this chapter is how it is possible to read the *Agamemnon* in a way that brings into question whether Agamemnon's death was desired by the gods and thus whether he was killed in line with their justice: *i.e.* whether he is guilty or not.

THE KILLER OF AGAMEMNON

Clytemnestra's hatred of Agamemnon is well documented in the play. We need neither speculate whether she actually killed Agamemnon, nor do we need to ask too many questions concerning her motives. But, we should not simply lay sole blame at the feet of Clytemnestra. First, she names four reasons that have a bearing on Agamemnon's death:

i) Iphigeneia's sacrifice (*Ag.* 1412-25, 1431-7, 1525-9; cf. 154-5);

[9] There are other factors to consider with regard to the nature of justice more widely in the *Eumenides*, particularly in relation to the conflict between the Olympians and the Erinyes, the split vote of the court and Orestes' pollution, which is discussed below in the section *Zeus, the Erinyes and the Vote of Athena*. But for now it is enough to note that Orestes' act of killing is perceived by the Olympians as just.

[10] I am aware that questions have been raised about whether what applies in a later scene is applicable to an earlier scene in the same play or trilogy (see T. von Wilamowitz (1917)). But, due to the interconnected nature of themes and issues in the *Oresteia*, as well as the thread of causality and linearity of events, such arguments do not apply in this case.

ii) The accursed House of Atreus and the pollution connected with it (*Ag.* 1397-8);

iii) The Alastor/δαίμων of the House (*Ag.* 1497-1504);

iv) Agamemnon's infidelity (*Ag.* 1438-47).

Secondly, the chorus give two reasons:

i) The δαίμων of the House (*Ag.* 1468-74);

ii) The will of Zeus (*Ag.* 1475-81).

Thirdly, Aegisthus involves himself in the murder-plot to avenge the death of his brothers, and makes known the curse of Thyestes (*Ag.* 1600-2).

But, while there are seven potential reasons that have a bearing on Agamemnon's death stated by three characters, we are faced with only two agents that are said to be directly responsible for the act itself:

i) Clytemnestra;

ii) The Alastor/δαίμων of the House.[11]

Clytemnestra does not hide that she killed Agamemnon; indeed, she initially flaunts the fact (*Ag.* 1379-98). There is no attempt by her to conceal the murder once it has been committed. One could argue that there is even an element of relief in her openness and the way she freely outlines her reasons for killing Agamemnon. Clytemnestra presents the death of Iphigeneia if not as the origin of her resentment of Agamemnon, then at least as the catalyst without which she would have been unlikely to commit the murder. The sacrifice is also the reason she dwells on most during the final scene of the play, and it is repeated on three separate occasions. Her resentment and brewing anger are even hinted at in the parodos when the chorus narrate the sacrifice of Iphigeneia at Aulis (*Ag.* 154-5).

The association of Clytemnestra with the δαίμων of the House complicates any explanation of who is responsible for Agamemnon's death. The dual agencies, one human, one supernatural, blur the distinctions between the two to the extent that it becomes difficult to pin-point or to direct sole blame at either alone. Indeed, the insidious and somewhat unclear manner in which the δαίμων operates only exaggerates this difficulty. As has been said, Clytemnestra at first exults in her place within the cycle of destruction, and she does not seem to comprehend fully the

[11] Aegisthus is excluded, because although he is involved in the plot, he is not involved directly in the murder.

implications of her association with the δαίμων and the cycle of destruction. She makes it clear that she and no one else slew Agamemnon (*Ag.* 1379-87), and that it was from her perspective by Justice, Atē and Erinys that she killed him (*Ag.* 1432-3). The association of Clytemnestra with supernatural agencies comes to the fore at this moment. It gradually builds over the course of the next two hundred lines, and it is from this moment that she begins to shift her position with regard to Agamemnon's death and her responsibility for it. At 1468-74, when the chorus mention that the δαίμων of the House is falling upon it, Clytemnestra follows their statement by saying that they are right in their judgement to speak of its involvement. The implicit shift in position, begun at 1432-3, here becomes explicit, and this movement toward dissociation reaches its climax shortly after, when Clytemnestra says outright that Agamemnon's death was not her deed, but was exacted through her by the Alastor, which took revenge on Atreus by sacrificing Agamemnon as a victim for the children Atreus had killed a generation earlier (*Ag.* 1497-1504):

> αὐχεῖς εἶναι τόδε τοὔργον ἐμόν·
> μὴ δ' ἐπιλεχθῇς 'Αγαμεμνονίαν εἶναί μ' ἄλοχον·
> φανταζόμενος δὲ γυναικὶ νεκροῦ
> τοῦδ' ὁ παλαιὸς δριμὺς ἀλάστωρ
> Ἀτρέως χαλεποῦ θοινατῆρος
> τόνδ' ἀπέτεισεν, τέλεον νεαροῖς ἐπιθύσας.
>
> You say with confidence that this deed is mine; but you shouldn't deem me to be the partner of Agamemnon. Only appearing as the wife of this corpse, the ancient bitter avenging spirit of Atreus, the cruel host, has taken vengeance upon this one here, sacrificing (him as) a perfect victim for the young offspring.

The act serves the dual purpose of functioning as an act of vengeance for two sets of killings. As Agamemnon had sacrificed Iphigeneia, the spirit manifesting itself through Clytemnestra has 'sacrificed' Agamemnon, avenging one act of sacrifice with another; and as Atreus had slain the children of Thyestes so the son of Atreus is slain in turn. This latter interpretation points to Aegisthus' role in the plot, as well as to the larger framework of familial child-killing that has beset the House over the course of three generations, which Clytemnestra now sees as being finished

by herself and by the Alastor. Indeed, the word τέλεον which Clytemnestra uses, and which is here translated 'perfect', inherently possesses connotations which lend themselves to the context and to the multi-layered nature of Agamemnon's death and the differing ways in which it can be interpreted.[12] So, Agamemnon is not just the 'perfect' victim in the literal sense of being an entire victim without blemish as a good sacrificial victim should be, he is also τέλεον in the sense of being a fully-grown victim, contrasting the youth of the previous victims with the age of the present one. Thirdly, τέλεον can take on the meaning of 'valid' in a qualitative sense, which is thus suggestive of the aptness of sacrificing a child of Atreus for/to the children of Thyestes. More than this, τέλεον can take the meaning 'final', arguably the original sense of the word, so that Agamemnon is not just the most apt fully grown adult victim without blemish, but is also the final victim in the long chain of victims. Agamemnon, in all these senses, is truly τέλεος.[13]

However, in spite of trying to distance herself from involvement in Agamemnon's death and the cycle of killings, Clytemnestra's initial openness and apparent joy in it undermines her later statements which attempt to distance herself from it. She is caught between pride as an avenger of previous wrongs and all the potential, yet very real, consequences that come from being connected with the House of Atreus and its destructive spirit of vengeance.

Although we cannot dismiss without due consideration the involvement of the avenging spirits Atē, Alastor, Erinys or the δαίμων of the House in the death of Agamemnon, we also cannot take the line Clytemnestra would have us take when

---

[12] τέλεον echoes Clytemnestra's call to Zeus τέλειος in line 993-4, where she asks the god to fulfil (τέλει) her prayer. For a discussion of τέλειος, see Rosenmeyer (1982) 278-83; and for Zeus as the ultimate fulfiller within the context of his presentation as an all-powerful deity, see discussion above in Chapter 3 'The Nature of Zeus'.

[13] τέλεον can even take on yet another meaning, referring to someone who is fully accomplished in a qualitative sense. Agamemnon could be seen as being at the acme of his life, having just returned from leading a successful expedition to destroy Troy and having reclaimed Helen for his brother. Denniston and Page (1957) read τέλεον as 'fully-grown', as does Groeneboom (1966) *ad loc*, who reads 1503-4, 'den volwassene offerend na de knapen ...d.w.z. Agamemnon na en ter vergelding van de kinderen van Thyestes.' Both Denniston and Page and Groeneboom thus intimate in their translations of τέλεον the contrast in age between Agamemnon and the children of Thyestes, while also potentially implying the sacrificial aspect of an entire, full victim. However, in both translations this latter, sacrificial aspect of the word is left unclear, in spite of the sacrificial meaning inherent in the Greek ἐπιθύσας. Verrall (1904), on the other hand, makes explicit the sacrificial meaning of τέλεον as well as the age aspect implied in the word. Only Fraenkel (1950) gives any indication of other meanings the word can carry in this passage. He translates the lines, 'rendered this full-grown man as payment to the young, a crowning sacrifice.' In the word 'crowning' we are of course met with notions of finality and accomplishment in the qualitative sense, which qualify the meanings already supplied by 'full-grown'.

she claims it was not her deed but the Alastor's, appearing in her form. It would be reasonable, given these prior considerations, to conclude as the chorus do when they say (*Ag.* 1505-8):

> ὡς μὲν ἀναίτιος[14] εἶ
> τοῦδε φόνου τίς ὁ μαρτυρήσων;
> πῶ πῶ; πατρόθεν δὲ συλλήπτωρ γένοιτ' ἄν ἀλάστωρ.
>
> Who will bear you witness that you are not responsible for this murder? How can you not be, how can you not be? But an avenging spirit of the father may well be your accomplice.

The chorus accept that the Alastor may have had involvement in the death of Agamemnon, but they also express that, though this may be the case, Clytemnestra cannot be cleared of all, or indeed the main, responsibility for it. As the Alastor may be Clytemnestra's συλλήπτωρ, one may be justified in calling him συναίτιος; but Clytemnestra is the one who remains in a true sense αἴτιος. The death of Agamemnon is thus connected with both Clytemnestra's anger at the sacrifice of Iphigeneia and with the House of Atreus' spirits of vengeance. It is important to note that while we are presented with this twofold reasoning concerning who or what is responsible for Agamemnon's death, we are *not* faced with Zeus and the Olympians in Clytemnestra's reasoning or justification. Clytemnestra, in contrast with Orestes in the *Libation Bearers*, never asserts that she was ordered by Zeus or any other god to kill Agamemnon. As already stated, she supplies four reasons for her involvement in his death, none of which include divine instruction or a divine imperative issued by an Olympian god. If she had been ordered by Zeus, or by any other Olympian, to kill Agamemnon – or even if she had just felt that she could reasonably claim that this was so – it is reasonable to expect that she would have said as much, and Aeschylus would have had to mention such an injunction in the absence of any earlier version of the story containing such information. Indeed, if she had been ordered to kill Agamemnon it is also possible that she would not have been so

[14] Compare ἀναίτιος at *Ch.* 873; cf. Pl. *Ti* 42d. Cf. also the discussion of αἴτιος by Sedley (1998) 114-32, which highlights that, when coupled with the genitive, the adjective designates a cause or assigns responsibility for a thing. The discussion also draws attention to the word's legal associations.

concerned with the δαίμων during the final scene of the play, because her act would have been intrinsically linked with a being higher and more powerful than the δαίμων, which would supersede it in importance. The chorus even draw attention to the potential role and will of Zeus in the death of Agamemnon (1481-8), which only seems to emphasise that Clytemnestra does not do so. Or, if we cannot say that Clytemnestra would not have been so concerned with the δαίμων should Zeus or an Olympian god have ordered Agamemnon's death – as Orestes is pursued by the Erinyes in spite of being ordered by Apollo (and Zeus) to kill Clytemnestra – it would nevertheless be expected that she would mention their involvement, if only to deflect attention from herself for a moment, or to gain the gods' help. But, Clytemnestra does not mention Zeus or any other Olympian at all during this final scene. And while Clytemnestra does invoke Zeus at 973-4 shortly before she kills Agamemnon, such an invocation does not imply, or even just suggest, that the god will fulfil the act.[15] So, as she does not mention Zeus after the killing, we are justified in concluding that Zeus and the Olympians had no part in Agamemnon's death, or, at the very least, that they were not thought by Clytemnestra as having any part in it.

ZEUS *XENIOS*

Although it has not been possible to find evidence of Zeus', or any other Olympian's, being involved directly or indirectly in the death of Agamemnon through ordaining or sanctioning the actions of the killer herself, it might nevertheless be possible to elicit information from the text which indicates that Agamemnon committed some transgression that earned him the wrath of Zeus or some other Olympian; or it might even be possible to determine whether Agamemnon's death in some way fitted the will of Zeus or one of the Olympians. At this juncture of the investigation, it is important to state outright that the will of Zeus or that of any other Olympian in Aeschylus is not depicted as arbitrary, but in fact as perfectly consistent. The arguments laid out here will work towards showing this conviction to be correct and justified.

[15] See, for example, Hom. *Il.* 2.419-20, 12.173-4 for Zeus not listening to prayers and appeals for help.

On several occasions, Zeus is said to have been directly involved both in sending the Greeks to Troy and in the city's destruction. First, the chorus explicitly state that Zeus Xenios sent the Atreidae against Alexander Paris: οὕτω δ' Ἀτρέως παῖδας ὁ κρείσσων | ἐπ' Ἀλεξάνδρῳ πέμπει ξένιος | Ζεὺς πολυάνορος ἀμφὶ γυναικός, 'And thus, the one who is stronger, Zeus of Guest-friendship, sends the sons of Atreus against Alexander for the sake of a woman of many husbands' (*Ag.* 60-2). The chorus also see Zeus involved as much in the fall of Troy as they had previously seen him involved in sending the Atreidae to the city (*Ag.* 355-60, 367-84); they see the fall of Troy as Διὸς πλαγὰν 'the stroke of Zeus' (*Ag.* 367). For the chorus, Zeus is a constant force working for the punishment of Paris and the fall of Troy (*Ag.* 361-6), and shortly before Agamemnon's entrance, they reiterate this view confirming their belief in the efficacy of Zeus' will (*Ag.* 699-708, 744-9). The Herald, too, indicates awareness of Zeus' involvement in the war, saying that Agamemnon destroyed the Trojan land with the axe of Zeus, bringer of justice (*Ag.* 525-6), and that the war was fulfilled by the grace of Zeus, χάρις Διὸς (*Ag.* 580-2).[16] Moreover, Agamemnon himself sees the gods playing their role in the destruction of Troy, recognising divine involvement in the expedition (*Ag.* 810-16, 851-3). It is, thus, clear that the expedition to Troy and the city's destruction are presented as in line with the desire of Zeus, and that Agamemnon is aware of the god's involvement.

THE ANGER OF ARTEMIS AND THE SACRIFICE OF IPHIGENEIA

Though it is possible to establish that Agamemnon was sent to Troy in line with the will of Zeus, and as such that the expedition to Troy was not in itself a breach of justice, that does not, of course, remove the possibility that Agamemnon committed some transgression in the process of exacting punishment on Troy. In line with the accusations supplied by Clytemnestra after his death (*Ag.* 1412-25, 1431-7, 1525-9; cf. 154-5), the sacrifice of Iphigeneia at Aulis is commonly seen as an example, if not the primary example, of Agamemnon's transgressing the boundaries of justice.[17] But although the sacrifice constitutes the taking of a life, it is nevertheless unclear how we should understand the sacrifice and what it constitutes a

[16] For a discussion of the grace of Zeus and the gods and its ambivalence, see the section *Hymn to Zeus* below and, in particular, on *Ag.* 182-3.

[17] Lloyd-Jones (1956) 63, (1962) 187-99, (1971) 90-2, (1983) 102; Kitto (1964) 1-5, (1966) 58; Denniston and Page (1957) xv, xx-xxix; Otis (1981) 3-65, esp. 64-5; Cohen (1986) 132-4.

transgression of, because although it is a transgression of the father/mother-daughter bond, it is not necessarily a transgression of the will of Zeus and the Olympians. So, therefore, if we want to see Agamemnon as an impious and unjust man in the eyes of Zeus and the Olympians, it is necessary to find evidence that he has transgressed the boundaries of divine justice imposed by Zeus and in so doing angered the gods. It is not enough simply to find an act we, as a modern audience, may consider unjust (no matter how abhorrent or cruel) – or for that matter an act which an ancient audience considered abhorrent – and to assume automatically that it is a transgression of the justice of Zeus. So, if we are to determine whether Agamemnon is guilty in the eyes of Zeus, we must first determine whether he has committed an act which transgresses the will and justice of Zeus.

When adverse winds are sent by Artemis, Calchas puts forward a remedy for stilling them – the remedy being the sacrifice of Iphigeneia – ἐπεὶ δὲ καὶ πικροῦ | χείματος ἄλλο μῆχαρ | βριθύτερον πρόμοισιν | μάντις ἔκλαγξεν, | προφέρων Ἄρτεμιν, ... 'And when the seer cried out to the leaders, putting forward another remedy heavier even than a bitter winter-storm, making known Artemis (as the cause)...' (*Ag.* 198-202). Agamemnon is faced with the decision either to sacrifice his daughter for the sake of the expedition and appease the winds and Artemis who sent them, or to forsake the expedition and all it entails in order to preserve his daughter's life. He chooses to sacrifice his daughter (*Ag.* 205-47).

Some have questioned Agamemnon's own personal awareness of his role in fulfilling the will of Zeus.[18] If Agamemnon is not conscious of the will of Zeus at the moment of deciding to sacrifice Iphigeneia, the sacrifice could be seen purely as a decision to glorify himself at any cost and as an act of hubris. The yoke of necessity which he puts on, ἀνάγκας ἔδυ λέπαδνον (*Ag.* 218), would thus not refer to a pre-existing or external divine compulsion placed upon him by divine necessity, but could either refer to the compulsion placed upon him by the duty he feels towards his fleet or the necessity of subsequent events. At this moment, I do not wish to get into a full discussion of free will, determinism, over-determinism or compulsion concerning Agamemnon's decision at Aulis to sacrifice Iphigeneia,[19] as my main

[18] See, for example, Lesky (1983); Conacher (1987) 89; Dodds (2007) 256-64; Peradotto (2007) 226-43.

[19] The issue of free will and decision making permeates many studies of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* and the question of Agamemnon's guilt (see n.1&2 for bibliography). The notion of what constitutes free

argument is not dependent on any one interpretation regarding this issue. I will now, however, discuss the extent to which the gods, in particular Artemis and Zeus, may or may not have been a consideration in Agamemnon's decision, and attempt to shed light upon the possible causes which led to Iphigeneia's sacrifice, so as to determine whether Agamemnon did in fact transgress the boundaries of justice.

Shortly before Agamemnon dons the yoke of necessity he is reported to have said (*Ag.* 206-17):

> βαρεῖα μὲν κὴρ τὸ μὴ πιθέσθαι,
> βαρεῖα δ' εἰ τέκνον δαΐξω, δόμων ἄγαλμα,
> μιαίνων παρθενοσφάγοισιν
> ῥείθροις πατρώιους χέρας
> πέλας βωμοῦ· τί τῶνδ' ἄνευ κακῶν;
> πῶς λιπόναυς γένωμαι
> ξυμμαχίας ἁμαρτών;
> παυσανέμου γὰρ
> θυσίας παρθενίου θ' αἵματος ὀργᾷ
> περιόργως· ἀπὸ δ' αὐδᾷ
> Θέμις. εὖ γὰρ εἴη.
>
> Grievous is the fate if I am not obedient, and grievous it is if I slay my child, the glory of my house, defiling the hands of a father with streams of blood from a slaughtered maiden at an altar. Which one of these things is without evil? How can I desert the fleet, doing wrong by my alliance? Indeed, it swells with excessive anger for a sacrifice and for a maiden's blood to still the winds: Themis forbids it. May it be well!

Before commencing with a discussion of the interpretation of this passage, it is first necessary to undertake a discussion of the text, lines 214-17. It is possible to see the main contention resting primarily with whether we read the phrase ὀργᾷ | περιόργως·

---

will and the ability to make a decision freely can be seen to lie at the heart of Greek tragedy, with the essence of any plot relying on action and the ability of the protagonist to choose. However, the introduction into the debate of an idea such as free will perhaps raises more questions than it answers, because what can truly be considered a free choice, when are characters in tragedy ever not acted upon by some form of external necessity? As has been said, (Herrmann (2013) 72): 'Decision as a free, spontaneous act presupposes a mental faculty, such as 'the free will'.... whose capacities are in no way determined by external factors, by considerations of necessity and constraint.'

ἀπὸ δ' αὐδᾷ | Θέμις or ὀρ|γᾷ περιόργως ἐπιθυ|μεῖν θέμις, and the two words: αὐδᾷ (which West reads following M$\gamma\varrho$ T, Keck (1863)); and ἐπιθυμεῖν (following Ω, thus Fraenkel), which is found in an alternative tradition to the reading given above. The more common reading of 214-17 (following Ω, thus Fraenkel, Page *OCT*) is given here:

> παυσανέμου γὰρ θυσίας
> παρθενίου θ' αἵματος ὀρ-
> γᾷ περιόργως ἐπιθυ-
> μεῖν θέμις. εὖ γὰρ εἴη.

The first issue which casts suspicion on these lines is with the 'presence of the unexplained variant αὐδᾷ for ὀργᾷ';[20] the second is that ἐπιθυμεῖν is a regular gloss for ὀργᾷ and that περιόργως ἐπιθυμεῖν seems rather an extreme phrase and does not appear elsewhere in Aeschylus – though, as Fraenkel *ad loc* points out, it does appear elsewhere in tragedy (S. *Trach* 617, E. *Alc.* 867). West argues that ἐπιθυμεῖν is likely a gloss and that with its removal it is possible to explain the presence of the variant reading of αὐδᾷ without amending or removing ὀργᾷ.[21] One must point out that by reading ἐπιθυμεῖν, it is necessary to have ὀργᾷ taking the genitive object. While it is not impossible for the verb to take the genitive, the construction is not found anywhere else.[22] But, in spite of this, West's reading gives greater and fuller an account of these two key textual problems.

Nevertheless, while I agree with West's text here, my interpretation of it differs. In reading these lines, I understand as the object of ἀπὸ δ' αὐδᾷ |Θέμις, the subject of the previous question λιπόναυς γένωμαι. In so doing, I understand that ἀπὸ δ' αὐδᾷ |Θέμις is the response to the former question, which seems reasonable not least because ἀπὸ δ' αὐδᾷ |Θέμις seems in this context to be some form of definitive answer or statement. The basis for this conviction is, first, the use of γὰρ in line 214, which indicates that lines 214-16 are a continuation of thought and suggest why if Agamemnon were to desert the fleet, he would be doing wrong by the alliance. What

[20] West, M. L. (1990) 179.
[21] West, M. L. (1990) 179-81.
[22] Fraenkel (1950) 2.124. The closest examples, given by LSJ, are found in Aristophanes' *Lys.* 1113, *Birds* 462 and do not have an explicit object.

Themis forbids is for Agamemnon to desert the fleet, not the sacrifice. But, more importantly, if we take into consideration Zeus' role in the build up to the war (*Ag.* 55-62) and Themis' connection with Zeus and his will (Hes. *Th.* 901), it is natural that Themis would forbid Agamemnon to desert the alliance and war against Troy, a war which has been sanctioned by Zeus and one which requires Agamemnon to take vengeance on Paris' transgression of the laws of *xenia*. This reading of 206-17 is also supported by the rest of the passage, which I will discuss now.

Another contention lies in how we interpret line 206, βαρεῖα μὲν κὴρ τὸ μὴ πιθέσθαι, 'Grievous is the fate if I am not obedient.' To *whom* must Agamemnon be obedient? The first two lines of Agamemnon's decision speech weigh up two considerations: whether to disobey something unnamed or to kill his daughter. The unnamed something is likely to be relatively simple to deduce, even if it is not immediately self-evident, because if it were not, Agamemnon's decision would lose much of its poignancy, purpose and meaning. Most have seen the unnamed something as that consideration named a few lines later, namely deserting the fleet, πῶς λιπόναυς γένωμαι ι ξυμμαχίας ἁμαρτών; 'How can I desert the fleet, doing wrong by the alliance?'[23] This I think, however, misreads the sense of the passage. There is nothing that necessitates reading the deserting of the fleet as the weighty unnamed consideration of line 206. Rather, deserting the fleet seems to be a connected supplementary consideration that is a corollary of the unnamed something of line 206 and killing his daughter of line 207. So, when Agamemnon asks the question, τί τῶνδ' ἄνευ κακῶν; 'Which one of these things is without evil?' he is referring to those two considerations he has just stated: the unnamed something and the killing of his daughter. And when he asks the question, πῶς λιπόναυς γένωμαι ι ξυμμαχίας ἁμαρτών; 'How can I desert the fleet, doing wrong by the alliance?' in the next line he is referring to an additional, though not independent, third consideration in addition to the previous two.

Agamemnon's decision to sacrifice Iphigeneia should be seen as a choice between incurring divine wrath and killing his daughter.[24] It has already been established that Agamemnon was sent to Troy by Zeus Xenios and that he was

[23] Fraenkel (1950) 2.212; Lawrence (1976) 101; Tyrrell (1976) 323; Lesky (1983) 16-18; Conacher (1987) 12-13; Sommerstein (1996) 363-4; Dodds (2007) 259.

[24] See Fontenrose (1971) 82, who correctly asserts that the fleet could hardly bring a heavy heart upon Agamemnon. Denniston and Page (1957) xxvi, also understands 206 as Zeus' divine command.

conscious of divine involvement in the expedition.[25] With this in mind, it seems more plausible that the unnamed something of line 206 is related to the gods, and it is likely – because of the prominent position of Artemis and Zeus in the parodos – that it is one or both of these gods that is playing on Agamemnon's mind. And so, when he chooses to sacrifice his daughter, Agamemnon should be seen as making a conscious decision to subordinate the bond and connection that exists between himself and his daughter in favour of following the will of the gods. This in turn supports my reading of the text at 216-17: ἀπὸ δ' αὐδᾷ |Θέμις as referring to Agamemnon's concern about deserting the fleet and the divinely sanctioned expedition, not the sacrifice.

What of the presentation of the sacrifice itself? What of the moment when Agamemnon decides to sacrifice his daughter? Is there any indication in this scene that Agamemnon has acquired 'guilt' that would bring about the anger of the gods? The passage reads (*Ag.* 218-27):

> ἐπεὶ δ' ἀνάγκας ἔδυ λέπαδνον
> φρενὸς[26] πνέων δυσσεβῆ τροπαίαν
> ἄναγνον ἀνίερον, τόθεν
> τὸ παντότολμον[27] φρονεῖν μετέγνω.
> βροτοὺς θρασύνει γὰρ αἰσχρόμητις
> τάλαινα παρακοπὰ πρωτοπήμων· ἔτλα δ' οὖν
> θυτὴρ γενέσθαι
> θυγατρός, γυναικοποίνων
> πολέμων ἀρωγάν
> καὶ προτέλεια ναῶν.
>
> And when he put on the yokestrap of necessity, the wind of his *phrēn* veering in a direction that was impious, impure, unholy, he thereupon turned to a mindset that would stop at nothing. The fostering of base designs, a wretched madness, the first cause of ill, emboldens men. And so he dared to be the sacrificer of his daughter, to

[25] See above section *Zeus Xenios*.
[26] For a recent discussion of psychological terminology in Aeschylus, see Darcus Sullivan (1997).
[27] παντότολμον = πάντολμον, here translated as 'stop at nothing', elsewhere always refers to a negative character in Aeschylus: *Ag.* 1237 refers periphrastically to Clytemnestra; *Ch.* 431 to Clytemnestra; *Th.* 671 to Polyneices.

give help to a woman-avenging war and to perfom the preliminary sacrificial offering for the fleet.

This scene has commonly been taken as an example that demonstrates the criminality of Agamemnon's actions in killing Iphigeneia, and the religious wording employed by the chorus δυσσεβῆ... ἄναγνον ἀνίερον is often cited as evidence that Zeus wanted to see Agamemnon killed.[28] These lines have also been highlighted as the moment when Agamemnon becomes overcome by a divine madness,[29] when his 'wits' have been taken from him.[30] It is at this moment that Agamemnon is understood to be altered irrevocably, and it is this change in his nature which is taken to account for the decision he makes to step on the purple cloths when yielding to Clytemnestra's desires (*Ag.* 956-7).[31]

However, it is not necessarily the case that the scene shows Agamemnon putting himself on the wrong side of divine justice by sacrificing his daughter; nor does it necessarily demonstrate a permanent change in his mind under the influence of a divinely-sent madness. This is not to make the claim that the act is not horrific, abhorrent or worthy of condemnation. The chorus are, obviously, disgusted that a father could perform such a deed as sacrificing his daughter, and this is indicated clearly in the chorus' choice of words throughout the strophe (e.g. παντότολμον in line 221) as well as the vivid and moving depiction of Iphigeneia's death in the following verses (*Ag.* 228-47). Agamemnon also demonstrates his own awareness of the ethically dubious nature of sacrificing his own daughter at 206-11. But, an act that seems to break the laws of nature, nurture, familial care and paternal love is, nevertheless, not necessarily the same as an act which breaks the laws and justice of Zeus, especially in a trilogy of plays in which different types of natural and divine justice are at issue. It is necessary to be careful how we read this scene and not to confuse the chorus' human disgust at the sacrifice with statements (let alone the author's statement) of religious transgression. So, when the chorus say that

[28] See Lloyd-Jones (1956) 63, (1962) 187-99, (1971) 90-2, (1983) 102; Kitto (1964) 1-5, (1966) 58; (1957) xv, xx-xxix; Otis (1981) 3-65, esp. 64-5; Cohen (1986) 132-4; Fraenkel (1950) 2.98-9, 441, 625; Lesky (1983) 13-23; Nussbaum (1986) 34; Conacher (1987) 13, 76-96; Sommerstein (1996) 275-87; Dodds (2007) 255-64; Peradotto (2007) 237.
[29] Conacher (1987) 14-15.
[30] Lloyd-Jones (1962) 197. Lloyd-Jones draws a comparison between this scene and *Iliad* 19, in which Agamemnon's behaviour is accounted for as the result of Atē.
[31] Conacher (1987) 37.

Agamemnon breathed forth an air irreverent, impious and unholy, it is possible to see this as exhibiting a subjective, human response to the killing of a daughter by a father, without necessarily understanding the words as a reflection of the position of Zeus, because although the chorus employ religious terminology, there is nothing in the text that suggests the sacrifice of Iphigeneia runs counter to the divine will of Zeus (or any other god) or that the god sent a divine madness upon Agamemnon. Indeed, all that is indicated in the parodos (and the play and trilogy as a whole) is that Artemis (*Ag.* 134-8, 198-202) desires the sacrifice and Zeus (*Ag.* 60-2) requires the punishment of Paris and Troy.

Moreover, there is nothing which necessitates that we should understand this scene as a demonstration of lasting madness (divine or otherwise) overcoming Agamemnon, by which his subsequent decisions are affected. While the chorus refer to a wretched madness (τάλαινα παρακοπὰ), the madness to which they refer is context-specific and does not seem to extend to Agamemnon outside of the scene. It is the act of fostering of base designs (αἰσχρόμητις) which is called a wretched madness; Agamemnon is not himself called mad; and the chorus' conviction can thus be understood as referring to the act of sacrifice alone. While it may be possible to argue that the chorus' statement that 'the act of fostering base designs is a wretched madness' can be considered a universal truth applicable to Agamemnon's character and decisions generally, its inspiration is nevertheless Agamemnon's decision to sacrifice his daughter in favour of going to war. This is indicated not least by the position of lines 222-3 in the middle of a whole stanza concerned solely with the sacrifice and directly after Agamemnon is said to turn his mind to the deed.

Also, the language used in lines 222-3 does not in itself give any clear indication that Agamemnon was overcome by any lasting madness. The moment at which Agamemnon is said to change or alter his mind reads: τόθεν τὸ παντότολμον φρονεῖν μετέγνω, 'he thereupon turned to a mindset that would stop at nothing'. The use of the aorist μετέγνω suggests that the change of mind was a simple completed action and not an on-going process; while the present infinitive φρονεῖν implies that the thought-process was on-going, which indicates that the madness could in itself be a lasting affliction. However, the on-going process implied by the present infinitive φρονεῖν is placed in direct relation to the all-daring act τὸ παντότολμον, which thus implies that φρονεῖν need not be understood to have any reference outside of this

specific context. So, the αἰσχρόμητις to which the chorus refer in line 222 can be seen to refer directly to and pick up on the thought process φρονεῖν μετέγνω described in the previous line. While the chorus present Agamemnon's decision to sacrifice Iphigeneia as an act of madness, the madness which they ascribe to him need not be read as a lasting affliction. In this way, the stanza can be seen to present not so much a lasting change in Agamemnon's nature, as to depict how, in the chorus' mind, he could possibly steel himself to complete the sacrifice of his daughter. The madness seems therefore to be used as an *ex post facto* rationalisation by the chorus of how a father could possibly kill his daughter in order to wage a war: *i.e.* 'How could Agamemnon sacrifice his daughter? He must have been overcome by some kind of madness.'[32]

While it is possible to determine that Agamemnon sacrificed his daughter because of the desire not to incur the anger of the gods and that he did so without incurring any 'guilt' or being overcome by any lasting madness, it has not been established why the sacrifice of Iphigeneia is necessary, in accordance with whose justice it is exacted, and how these considerations in turn affect the framework of justice within the *Oresteia*. It is easy enough to deduce that Artemis requires the sacrifice, and that it is she alone who desires it (*Ag.* 134-8, 198-202). Artemis behaves as a 'separate godhead'[33] and, though constrained by the overarching power of Zeus and the need for cosmic balance, she nevertheless acts independently of Zeus in this case.[34] The sacrifice itself is an act of requital that needs to be paid if Agamemnon is going to exact vengeance on Troy.[35] The blood Agamemnon is to shed at Troy is denoted by the much-discussed omen of the eagles, which depicts a pair of eagles devouring a hare pregnant with young, while Iphigeneia will provide the blood Agamemnon gives in payment to Artemis (*Ag.* 131-8).

Without getting diverted from the central issue of this chapter with discussions of various readings of the portent, it is sufficient here to state that, as the interpretation of the omen in the text suggests, the eagles signify the Atreidae and the

---

[32] This is also true of the Hymn to Zeus. See the section below for this argument.
[33] Tyrrell (1976) 331.
[34] Fontenrose (1971) 79; see also Allan (2006) 1-36.
[35] There is no mention here of the alternative version of the story that sees Agamemnon kill a sacred stag belonging to Artemis. This version would probably have been known to Aeschylus' audience not least from the *Cypria*, which we can also see reflected in Sophocles' *Electra* 566-76. See also Fraenkel (1950) 2.97-8.

pregnant hare Troy.[36] The first thing which needs to be drawn from the passage is that it is foreseen that Agamemnon will be responsible for the destruction of Troy and the deaths of many Trojans. He will shed blood. The second thing which needs to be observed in this passage is the anger of Artemis at the death of the hare and its young. She pities the pregnant hare and hates the eagles' feast and what they denote. As a consequence of what Artemis sees as the future destruction of Troy, the goddess sends winds which detain the Greek fleet. In order for the Greeks to be released from the ship-detaining winds, Agamemnon is required to sacrifice Iphigeneia for Artemis (*Ag.* 198-202).

It has been argued that the 'fundamental maxim δράσαντι παθεῖν cannot be supplanted by a δράσοντι παθεῖν'[37] and thus that Agamemnon could not be seen as paying in advance for the destruction of Troy, which the portent denotes. However, this argument neglects the direct connection between the sack of Troy (*Ag.* 126-33) announced by the seer and the omen of the eagles (*Ag.* 134-8) which is said to have angered Artemis, with one spoken directly before the other and with the former leading into the latter as one continuous and uninterrupted thought. The argument also overlooks the fundamental nature of prophecies as bringing the future into the present and that (in Greek tragedy, at least) they are always proven correct.[38] In this way, as an event is foreseen, thus it will come about, and because it is foreseen so it has occurred. The infallible nature of prophecy in the Greek tragedy of Aeschylus and Sophocles means that, in many respects, the event prophesied is fulfilled the moment the prophecy is pronounced, and that it can be treated as such. Indeed, the first thing Calchas is reported to say in the parodos is that the expedition *will* capture Troy (*Ag.* 126-33). There is no doubt that this will happen.

Also, although the actual destruction of Troy and the omen at which Artemis is angry are separated by ten years, by mustering the troops at Aulis Agamemnon has embarked on the action that will lead to the destruction of the city. Agamemnon has set events in motion. This telescoping of events, moving what is ostensibly the future into the present, is strengthened by the fact that the omen is spoken of in the present tense: Artemis *hates* the feast of eagles, στυγεῖ δὲ δεῖπνον αἰετῶν (*Ag.* 138). It seems

[36] See also Fraenkel (1950) 2.96.
[37] Fraenkel (1950) 2.97.
[38] See, Kamerbeek (1965) 29-40; Mikalson (1991) 88-101. Mikalson (1991) 94 also provides a detailed list of prophecies in Greek tragedy.

that for Artemis her anger and hatred belong to the present and that Agamemnon can be and is culpable for the destruction of Troy, because the mustering of the Greek forces at Aulis belongs to the causal nexus that will bring about – and that is – the fall of Troy.

It is not only here in the parodos that events are telescoped. Internally within the time-frame of the events of the play we have already had a signal of Troy's capitulation before we have even come to the omen itself (*Ag.* 22). The certainty of Troy's destruction which is confirmed by the Watchman, as well as by Calchas, foreshadows the omen of the eagles. Within the internal structure of the play Troy is known to have been taken by line 22, and within the time-frame of the events at Aulis, Troy's impending capture by the Greeks is pronounced before the omen is related. Within both time-frames Troy is known to be taken, in spite of the event not being fulfilled in the strict linear time-frame while Agamemnon is still at Aulis and yet to set sail for Troy.

But, even if the arguments regarding prophecy and the telescoping of events, and the different time-frames of prophecy and those of the internal structure of the play are dismissed, it cannot be dismissed that there exists a causal and logical connection between what Calchas says in Antistrophe α (*Ag.* 126-38) concerning the sack of Troy and the anger of Artemis at the eagles' feast. One event signifies the other, and the destruction of Troy (portended by the omen) is the transgression which is to be punished and reset by Agamemnon's sacrifice of Iphigeneia.

At first glance it may seem difficult to see how the sacrifice could possibly be construed as just and why Artemis should desire it. First, there appears striking contradictions in Artemis' desire for the sacrifice. In her anger at the deaths of many she requires yet another; she is said to care for young animals (*Ag.* 140-4), yet requires the death of one; she is the virgin goddess, but desires the death of one like her. But, in spite of this, we should not be diverted or indeed overly concerned by the contradictory nature Artemis appears to possess here in the *Agamemnon*. For, she strikes a contradictory figure throughout most of early Greek literature, and her contradictions seem to be inherent in her very nature.

In giving Artemis the epithet ἁγνά ('pure', 'holy' and 'chaste'), Aeschylus follows Homer (*Od.* 5.123, 18.202, 20.71). The epithet captures both her sexual chastity and her traditional natural habitats of untouched mountains, fields and

woodlands. Her care for the untouched state of the natural world seems to be bound up with her own inviolable nature. In the *Iliad*, Artemis' care for the untouched state of nature is also implied by the epithet πότνια θηρῶν 'Mistress of Animals' (*Il.* 21.470). But while this epithet may imply a caring maternal attitude towards animals, just as the passage from the *Agamemnon* also suggests (*Ag.* 140-4),[39] Artemis is more often depicted in early Greek literature as an archer or huntress exhibiting her dominance over the natural world and mankind (*Il.* 5.53, 5.447, 6.428, 16.183, 19.59, 20.39, 24.606; *Od.* 6.102-4, 11.324-5, 15.409-411, 15.477-9, 20.61-3; *h. Hom.* xxvii; Hes. *Th.* 14, 918). Her maternal care lies in direct opposition to her pure, virgin state. So, while being a virgin goddess, sympathetic to young creatures, Artemis is also a powerful, wild deity who presides over nature and young creatures as protector and destroyer at one and the same time.

It is the sphere of nature and hunting that is hers; the protection of life and its taking is hers.[40] Artemis' vested interests in the hunting and protection of life can thus be seen to indicate that Agamemnon's future destruction of Trojan life, as signified by the portent, should be construed as a transgression of the boundaries of her sphere of power. Indeed, there are real-life parallels of animal sacrifices being offered to Artemis before battle, which suggest that there was a need to propitiate the goddess and secure protection before blood was shed in battle, in a way comparable to Agamemnon sacrificing Iphigeneia to secure the goddess' consent for the destruction of Troy.[41] So, if Agamemnon is to take life at Troy, which is here portended in the omen of the eagles, he needs first to repay the goddess by sacrificing Iphigeneia for infringing upon the boundaries of her ordinance and upsetting her. In so doing, Agamemnon is able to quell the contrary winds and calm the wrath of Artemis by conforming to the goddess' desires.

The death of Iphigeneia also presents a problem because she is 'innocent' and because it is required by a goddess who is, in Homer at least, considered a member of the Olympian order. So, how can the sacrifice of Iphigeneia fit within the nature of divine justice? If we consider the role of Artemis in the parodos, we are confronted with two 'innocents', each treated in a contrasting way to the other. The

[39] See also Otto (1954) 82-4.
[40] See Nilsson (1925) 28-9, 82, 112; Otto (1954) 80-90; Lloyd-Jones (1983); Burkert (1985) 149-52.
[41] See Otto (1954) 86; Lloyd-Jones (1983) 101; Burkert (1985) 151-2. Cf. Call. *Fr.*114.

first is the image of the hare's unborn young in Calchas' prophecy, which are killed by the eagles together with the hare itself. The unborn young, because of the natural connotations of 'innocence' associated with the unborn, can be seen to denote in a broad and general fashion those Trojans who are not directly responsible for or involved with Paris' actions in transgressing codes of *xenia*. They would thus be 'innocent' of the act committed by Paris and would not be responsible for bringing Agamemnon to Troy in order to exact revenge.

The second 'innocent' is Iphigeneia. In contrast with the death of the unborn young in the omen, her death is required by Artemis and does not elicit any anger. The demand for this sacrifice, seemingly inconsistent in the respect it pays to 'innocents' and 'innocence', could easily be charged with the claim that it represents the arbitrary nature of the goddess, and even the Olympian gods as a whole.[42] However, such a charge misses what appears to underlie the concept of justice applicable to the gods of Aeschylean tragedy. Though both examples involve what we might call 'innocents', their respective contexts are quite different. The omen signifies an infringement upon Artemis' sphere of power, while the sacrifice is something required by the goddess for the infringement. What is at issue in the two examples is the respect owed to the deity and compliance with her will, and not the 'innocence' of any individual animal or person *per se*. While Artemis may be angry at the death of an unborn (or what it symbolises), it is not the death in itself that angers her, nor the 'innocence' of the animal – for let us not forget that she seems equally angered by the death of the hare as by the death of the unborn – rather, it seems she is angered by the omen, because it denotes a breach of her sphere of power and thus a lack of respect owed to her particular divinity and the areas over which she presides – something which Agamemnon needs to repay, something which he repays with the sacrifice of Iphigeneia.

There are other occasions when 'innocence' and 'innocents' seem of no interest to the Olympian gods in the *Oresteia*. For example, when Agamemnon and Cassandra are killed by Clytemnestra in the *Agamemnon*, Apollo – through whom Zeus speaks (*Eu.* 17-19, 614-21, 713-14) – sends Orestes to avenge only his father, and no thought is given by the Olympians to avenging the 'innocent' Cassandra – though according to Cassandra, Apollo is the only one in whose eyes she is certainly

[42] Cf. Cohen (1986).

not innocent, especially of transgression against him.[43] However, whether we consider Cassandra as innocent or not in the eyes of Apollo, her death nevertheless has no weight or worth, and this is confirmed by the fact that her death is forgotten as soon as it is accomplished and mentioned no further in the subsequent plays of the trilogy. Indeed, Cassandra's role seems almost to be confined to the function she fulfils within the dramatic structure in the *Agamemnon*. Conversely, Agamemnon, who is responsible for many deaths, including his daughter's, and even the razing of a city, is avenged by his son at the behest of Apollo (and Zeus). Thus, the act of killing does not in itself carry a 'moral stigma' in Aeschylus.

Rather, there must be some other criterion by which we judge what is just or otherwise in Aeschylus. The Olympian gods seem to be more concerned with the respect paid to their power and position.[44] In this way, Artemis' reaction to Agamemnon's expedition to Troy bears similarity to Zeus' reaction to Paris' disregard of *xenia*. Zeus sanctions the destruction of Troy because of Paris' transgression, just as Artemis requires the death of Iphigeneia because of Agamemnon's transgression. Before we even come to the sacrifice of Iphigeneia required by Artemis, punishment by means of death for the transgression of a god's sphere thus has a precedent in the play (in the form of the Greeks' sanctioned siege and destruction of Troy). It is not what might be termed through Christian/post-Christian eyes the 'moral worth' of either the Trojans or Iphigeneia that concerns Zeus or Artemis in either case, but the respect the gods feel is due to their position as divinities. What may be perceived as the moral worth of the victims seems of no concern to the deities. Indeed, what seems of greater concern to the gods in the *Oresteia* is the choice of punishment and how it fits the transgression. The sheer scale of Zeus' punishment of Paris with the destruction of Troy and everything in it reflects the god's power and position within the divine world, and arguably the complicity of the Trojans as a whole in Paris' rape of Helen, indicating the gravity of Paris' transgression, while the characteristics of Artemis establish a natural parallel between herself and Iphigeneia, and suggest the latter, on one level, as the fitting

[43] Of course, Cassandra is not family, which is a significant factor in the trilogy and has a role to play here as well as in the *Eumenides*. But, it is still worth here bringing out the role that innocence plays (or does not play) in the nature of justice in the *Oresteia*.

[44] For the importance of τιμή in the trilogy and its significance for the resolution at the end of the *Eumenides*, see further the discussion of the Erinyes in the section *Zeus, the Erinyes and the Vote of Athena* below.

sacrifice which Agamemnon must make in order to achieve the destruction of Troy. The justice of Artemis' requirement of Iphigeneia's sacrifice can therefore be seen as consistent with the justice presented by Zeus' desire for retribution against Troy for Paris' actions. These two acts demonstrate the need for compliance with the gods' will and how if such compliance is not forthcoming it is treated as a transgression of the boundaries of justice, and as such will be punished. Both the sacrifice of Iphigeneia and the destruction of Troy should thus be seen as just acts and Agamemnon as a just man for executing them, because in each instance his exacting of the gods' will resets and realigns the balance of justice. This is not meant to prejudge the issue of the relation between the justice of Zeus and the justice of Artemis, but merely to demonstrate that there is a consistent line taken by either god in these two examples about what is and is not considered just, and what is required should an imbalance be created by a transgression.

THE HYMN TO ZEUS

It has been argued above that, when it comes to the sacrifice of Iphigeneia, Artemis acts independently of Zeus. This raises questions about what role (if any) Zeus had in the sacrifice, outside of his position as a significant motivating force behind Agamemnon and the Greeks going to Troy. It will be argued here that in spite of the prominent position of the Hymn to Zeus in the choral ode, the striking thing about the sacrifice of Iphigeneia and the parodos as a whole is the absence of Zeus. In addition, it will be suggested that while the god remains a figure detached[45] from the events narrated in the parodos, Agamemnon's decision to sacrifice Iphigeneia, nevertheless, reflects Zeus' ordinance of πάθει μάθος (the meaning of which will be discussed in the course of this section, as will choral authority) and further demonstrates the king's awareness of the god's desire to see Troy and Alexander punished for the theft of Helen.

First, it is necessary to consider exactly what the Hymn to Zeus says about the god and how it fits within the context of the parodos. Having cut-off from pronouncing the prophecy of Calchas, the chorus turn their attention to the nature of Zeus, saying (*Ag.* 160-83):

[45] For a discussion of the detached and invariant nature of Zeus, see Chapter 3 'The Nature of Zeus' above.

Ζεύς, ὅστίς ποτ' ἐστίν, εἰ τόδ' αὐ-
τῷ φίλον κεκλημένῳ,
τοῦτό νιν προσεννέπω·
οὐκ ἔχω προσεικάσαι
πάντ' ἐπισταθμώμενος
πλὴν Διός, εἰ τὸ μάταν ἀπὸ φροντίδος ἄχθος
χρὴ βαλεῖν ἐτητύμως.

οὔθ' ὅστις πάροιθεν ἦν μέγας
παμμάχῳ θράσει βρύων,
οὐδὲ λέξ<ετ>αι πρὶν ὤν·
ὅς τ' ἔπειτ' ἔφυ, τριακ-
τῆρος οἴχεται τυχών·
Ζῆνα δέ τις προφρόνως ἐπινίκια κλάζων
τεύξεται φρενῶν τὸ πᾶν,

τὸν φρονεῖν βροτοὺς ὁδώ-
σαντα, τὸν πάθει μάθος
θέντα κυρίως ἔχειν.
στάζει δ' ἀνθ' ὕπνου πρὸ καρδίας
μνησιπήμων πόνος· καὶ παρ' ἄ-
κοντας ἦλθε σωφρονεῖν.
δαιμόνων δὲ ποῦ[46] χάρις,
βιαίως σέλμα σεμνὸν ἡμένων;

Zeus, whoever he is, if this is dear for him to be called, this is how I address him; if it is necessary, in all truth, to cast off the vain burden from my mind, weighing all things in the balance, I do not have anything to which to liken the vain burden on my mind except Zeus.[47]

[46] Following manuscripts MV. For the significance of this reading on the meaning of the Hymn to Zeus and the justice of Zeus, see the discussion below. Cf. Pope (1974) 100-13.

[47] This is one of the most troubling passages grammatically in Aeschylus, and arguably in the whole Greek corpus. The crux of the problem rests on how we translate the verb προσεικάσαι 'to liken something to something else'. It requires both an accusative direct object and a dative, neither of which is overtly supplied in the Greek. However, I think some information can be inferred from the Greek itself, and the rest can be supplied from the context. First of all, the accusative direct object, as has been translated, is 'anything'. This reading is based on the assumption that οὐκ ἔχω..., 'I do not

> The one who was previously great, swelling with a boldness that would enter battle with all, will not be spoken of as having been before. And then he who sprung forth met his over-thrower and is gone. But the one who willingly cries out victory songs for Zeus will achieve understanding of everything,
>
> Zeus, the one who set men on the course to comprehension, established the ordinance to be held good that understanding comes through painful experience. And remembrances of sufferings past drip before the heart instead of sleep. Even to the unwilling temperance comes. How can this be the grace of the daimones, seated by force upon their august thrones?

As with *Supp.* 86-103, the Hymn to Zeus presents the Aeschylean chorus entering into a speculative and revelatory discourse about the nature of the highest and most powerful god.[48] Although the formula in lines 160-2 is itself traditional,[49] the Hymn to Zeus is not a traditional prayer or invocation,[50] as Zeus is not addressed directly in the second person. From the opening statement at line 160 we are confronted with what appears to be a statement expressing the unknowable nature of Zeus: Ζεύς, ὅστίς ποτ' ἐστίν, εἰ τόδ' αὐ- | τῷ φίλον κεκλημένῳ, | τοῦτό νιν προσεννέπω. This tentative naming of the god indicates that the chorus cannot frame Zeus' nature in a single name. It seems as if Zeus is of such a nature that we as humans cannot possibly or successfully conceive of him fully.[51]

---

have (anything) ...', in line 163 are read as a direct result of the everything that is weighed in the balance (πάντ' ἐπισταθμώμενος) in the following line. So, here I think we are supposed to take πάντ', the direct object of the participle ἐπισταθμώμενος, as the 'everything' from which the chorus determine that they have nothing to which they can liken (προσεικάσαι) the burden weighing on their mind. The assumption is thus that having weighed all things in the balance, πάντ' ἐπισταθμώμενος, one then uses that which has been weighed as one variable to which another is to be likened. This then deals with the direct object; the implied dative of that to which the referent of the direct object is to be likened is, however, more elusive. It seems best to take *its* referent from the subordinate clause. This is, as I have translated, the 'vain burden weighing on my mind', and this translation of the Greek is more easily rendered into English if the subordinate clause is read before the main clause, because it gives greater clarity to the dative object of προσεικάσαι by the very fact it is spoken of before the 'likening' is mentioned. For an examination of the meaning of προσεικάσαι, see Smith (1980) 8-12.

[48] For a discussion of *Supp.* 86-103, see Chapter 3 'The Nature of Zeus'.

[49] So, Fraenkel (1950) 2. 99; Norden (1956) 144-63. Cf. Heraclitus Fr. 32; E. *Tr.* 884-7, *Ba.* 274-6.

[50] See, primarily, Norden (1956) 163-6; see also Pulleyn (1997) 101-3.

[51] So, Fraenkel (1950) 2.100. Cf. discussion of *Supp.* 86-103 in the above chapter on the Nature of Zeus, where the chorus of Danaids also profess an inability to know or understand the nature and will of Zeus. It is important to note here that what the chorus are indicating in the Hymn is distinct from the unknowabililty of divine names, which is at the heart of Heraclitus Fr. 32 and E. Fr. 912; for a discussion of these fragments, see above Chapter 3 'The Nature of Zeus'.

After this opening address to the god, the chorus move on to express their desire to be rid of the vain burden that weighs upon their mind, saying that they have nothing to which they can liken it, except Zeus: οὐκ ἔχω προσεικάσαι | πάντ' ἐπισταθμώμενος | πλὴν Διός, εἰ τὸ μάταν ἀπὸ φροντίδος ἄχθος | χρὴ βαλεῖν ἐτητύμως. But, whether or not the reading of *Ag.* 163-7 is accepted in line with the translation and explanation provided above, the question still remains what exactly the vain burden is. Scholars have put forward various answers to this question which fall into three broad groups. Within these groups, opinions are more often than not dependent on the scholar's outlook concerning the position and role of Zeus and the gods both in the Hymn and in the *Oresteia* as a whole. The first of these groupings, sometimes referred to as the optimistic tradition, sees the Hymn as a statement of the positive and benevolent power of Zeus. Working in line with this tradition, Fraenkel, for example, argues that: 'τὸ μάταν ἄχθος is the burden of the folly which induces men to believe that Zeus is not the almighty ruler, who directs all that is done among mankind.'[52] In opposition to this tradition, Lloyd-Jones writes that: 'The 'vain burden' is presumably a burden which the chorus is seeking to cast from its own mind... [and that] whatever it is, I doubt if this expression has any religious implication.'[53] With a different line of attack and without strictly falling into any particular tradition, Gagarin sees the vain burden as ignorance of the fate of the Greek expedition and the anxiety of Agamemnon's safe return.[54] By contrast, in the pessimistic tradition, which finds little or no comfort in the power and justice of Zeus, P. M. Smith argues that the vain burden is the chorus' inability to account for the sacrifice of Iphigeneia or, indeed, 'to understand it as an effect corresponding in some way to an adequate cause.'[55]

While the Hymn has resonance beyond its immediate context and its contemplative subject-matter could tempt one to see something of the set-piece about

---

[52] Fraenkel (1950) 2.103. The optimistic tradition is by far the most prevalent and can also be seen expressed by Kitto (1961) 70, (1964) 6; Lesky (1965) 74-5; and more recently Conacher (1983) 163-6, (1987) 11, who responds directly to the more recent pessimistic tradition and, in particular, to the arguments put forward by Smith (1980).

[53] Lloyd-Jones (1956) 62; cf. Denniston and Page (1957) 83-6 for a similar view that sees no 'profound philosophy' in the Hymn to Zeus.

[54] Gagarin (1976) 140.

[55] Smith (1980) 16; cf. Pope (1974) 100-13. Smith (1980) 26-30, however, later abandons the pessimistic view of the justice of Zeus in discussion of the Hymn's second strophe, where he argues that the sacrifice of Iphigeneia, the destruction of Troy and the great loss of life is a grace of Zeus and the gods. See further discussion of the second strophe below.

it, and while the Hymn does break up the narrative structure between lines 160 and 183, not least with a change in the metre,[56] there is not a complete change in the flow of the parodos and the shift in focus may not be as dramatic as some have suggested.[57] First, on a structural level, the Hymn does not have a strophe, antistrophe, epode format as we may expect from a set-piece that disrupts the narrative. Such a format could thus be seen to separate the Hymn off from the surrounding verses through both its content and structure. Rather, it continues the strophe, antistrophe, strophe format throughout its three verses and fits neatly with the surrounding verses and the resumption of the retrospective account of the sacrificial scene at line 184. Indeed, there are further reasons to believe the Hymn to Zeus is something other than a set-piece not, or only loosely, connected to its context, and this can be seen in the meaning of the vain burden of line 166.

The chorus begin the Hymn to Zeus in line 160 having previously been relaying Calchas' pronouncement of the anger of Artemis and how the ship-detaining winds can be calmed. After the Hymn is finished in line 183, they revert back to the story at Aulis which moves on to describe the sacrifice of Iphigeneia. The position of the Hymn within the parodos, the chorus' desire to cast the vain burden from their mind and the unknowable, detached nature of Zeus are placed in direct relation to the concern the chorus exhibit over the death of Iphigeneia within the retrospective account of the mustering of the Achaean forces at Aulis.[58] While, of course, from the chronological perspective of the play's internal structure, the sacrifice of Iphigeneia has not been mentioned by the time the Hymn is sung, it must be taken into account that the parodos is a retelling of events and the chorus know what is to come, and one can presume (from a knowledge of the canonical myths revised and retold throughout antiquity) that the audience in this case do too. So, when the chorus weigh all things in the balance and they have nothing to liken the vain burden of their minds to expect Zeus, it is possible to determine what they have on their mind from the surrounding lines and from the event they are considering before and after the Hymn: the sacrifice of Iphigeneia. It seems that the chorus, concerned and dismayed by the events that they are relating, cannot find any other

[56] See Goldhill (1984) 25-6.
[57] E.g. Fraenkel (1950), Kitto (1961, 1964).
[58] So, Smith (1980) 1-7, 30-35.

cause or reason for what happened to Iphigeneia at Aulis, except in the highest and most powerful god.[59] What the vain burden thus denotes[60] rests on the knowledge that Zeus is the almighty god and the fact that he allowed the sacrifice of Iphigeneia to be completed through what is at the very least a passive acceptance of the events played out at Aulis.

The chorus' unwavering belief in the power and position of Zeus as the greatest of all the gods that have ever been is depicted in the antistrophe (*Ag.* 168-75), where the chorus firmly situate Zeus at the top of the divine world as the strongest and most powerful god. They sing of the succession myths, starting with Kronos' win over Ouranos: οὔθ' ὅστις πάροιθεν[61] ἦν μέγας | παμμάχῳ θράσει βρύων,| οὐδὲ λέξ<ετ>αι πρὶν ὤν· 'The one who was previously great, swelling with a boldness that would enter battle with all, will not be spoken of as having been before;' (*Ag.* 168-70) before moving on to Zeus' victory over Kronos: ὅς τ' ἔπειτ' ἔφυ, τριακ-| τῆρος οἴχεται τυχών· 'And then he who sprung forth, met his over-thrower and is gone.' (*Ag.* 171-2), concluding the verse with the lines: Ζῆνα δέ τις προφρόνως ἐπινίκια κλάζων | τεύξεται φρενῶν τὸ πᾶν, 'But the one who willingly cries out victory songs for Zeus will achieve understanding of everything,' (*Ag.* 173-5).

By outlining the succession myths, which leaves Zeus as the sole ruling deity, the antistrophe demonstrates that the chorus cannot see how Zeus can be absent or uninvolved in the sacrifice when he is such a powerful and omnipotent god.[62] It must be stated here that while the chorus find Zeus culpable, this does not necessarily mean that within the framework of the play as a whole we, the audience, are meant to think so as well. Although Zeus is omnipotent, he is not responsible for every single event – in spite of the chorus' desire to see him as such.[63] The Hymn is a statement of Zeus' power and position over gods and men, and not a conclusive or unambiguous pronouncement of the god's involvement in the sacrifice. It expresses

---

[59] So, Smith (1980) 34.
[60] See below for discussion of why the burden is 'vain'.
[61] It is also possible to read this as Ouranos here and then Kronos at 171 (ὅς τ' ἔπειτ' ἔφυ), thus Fraenkel (1950) 2.103. However one interprets these lines, what matters is a recognition of the violence of the intergenerational familial feuds between the three consecutive ruling gods.
[62] See Chapter 3 'The Nature of Zeus' for a discussion of the power and limitations of Zeus.
[63] Such a belief in the over-arching power of Zeus is intimated elsewhere in the play, not least at *Ag.* 1485-9; see the discussion below, as well as the section *The Power and Limitations of Zeus* in Chapter 3.

more the chorus' desire to see the god involved in the lives of men, rather than an unequivocal insight into his workings in this and every event. This, nevertheless, does not mean we should discount everything the chorus say about Zeus. Though we should be careful not to view everything the chorus say as 'gospel' when it comes to the workings of the divine within the internal structure of the play – because as human characters with no special connection with the gods it is possible that they may be mistaken – their views about the nature of divinity, nevertheless, still present a genuine, valid belief in the nature and workings of the god, and it is this belief in the god which is of interest for this discussion. It is thus their view of the over-arching power of Zeus and their concern regarding his apparent absence surrounding the sacrifice which inspires them to sing of Zeus, since Zeus must, in their mind, have some involvement in the sacrifice and the events surrounding it.

The question of choral authority and reliable access to knowledge underlies almost any discussion of the Hymn to Zeus and the question has significance for much of this chapter, if not the thesis as a whole.[64] The role and position of the chorus within the narrative of tragedy and its relation to the authorial voice has also been the subject of scholarly debate over the last couple of decades, a debate which has been aimed at developing and critiquing the traditional view of the chorus as being in some way the voice of the author or an ideal spectator. Among the first to reassess the role and position of the chorus in tragedy were Vernant and Vidal-Naquet. They postulated that the chorus were representatives of the *polis*, who were an 'anonymous and collective being whose role is to express, through its fears, hopes and judgements, the feelings of the spectators who make up the civic community.'[65] This view of the chorus, however, runs into problems when one considers that the 'chorus, with only two exceptions in the surviving plays, enacts the response to events, not of representatives of the citizen body, but precisely of those ... marginal or simply excluded from the controlling voice of 'the people'.'[66] So, if the chorus are not characters that would play a key driving role in the democratic process of the *polis* as part of the core citizen body of male citizen-hoplites, but are old men, women or foreigners (whether non-Athenian or non-Greek) that are in some way

[64] What follows picks up the discussion at the beginning of Chapter 2 on 'choral authority.' The discussion here adds to, clarifies and applies to context what is said before.
[65] Vernant and Vidal-Naquet (1988) 24.
[66] Gould (1996) 220.

marginalised from this integral group, how can such a collection be representative of the 'civic community'? Gould, in fact, argues that the chorus are not in any way detached from the action, representative of the people's voice or the poet's voice, but are characters whose 'otherness' has a role within the structure and plot of tragedy. The chorus present another view of the action unfolding before our eyes, one that, because of their 'otherness' as slaves, women or old men, acts as a counterpoint to the main protagonists.[67] Indeed, at the heart of Gould's argument is that the chorus 'exists completely within the tragic fiction'[68] and does not stand detached from the action: the chorus are characters just like any other *dramatis persona* and possess no special channel between themselves, the poet or the gods.

In response to Gould's hypothesis, Goldhill argues against this position and instead adheres to Vernant's view (with modifications). While Goldhill concedes that the context of each play is important, he also states that it is essential for the chorus to speak with 'collective authority' because at the heart of tragic drama is the need to question and explore 'authority, knowledge, tradition with the dynamics of democracy's ethics of group and individual obligations'[69] and that being socially marginal figures who are 'other' should not detract from the chorus' authority. As a result, the chorus, for Goldhill, has a privileged position, but is not a mouth-piece for the poet – in much the same way suggested by Vernant. But, to my mind at least, it is difficult to see how the chorus can speak with collective authority, yet not be in some way similar to an authorial presence within the play. What distinguishes 'privileged presence' from 'authorial voice'? It seems far more plausible to see, with Gould, the chorus as characters within the narrative, as distinct *personae*, as Egyptian women, Erinyes, old men of Argos, or serving-women who exist within the fictional framework. This is not to say that what the chorus say should be dismissed. Goldhill correctly stresses the need for tragedy to question, comment on, critique authority and received traditions and that the chorus is a significant vehicle by and through which views can be expressed: 'the chorus both allows a wider picture of the action to develop and also remains one of the many views expressed.'[70] But what the chorus says should be treated in much the same way as what the protagonist says and

[67] Gould (1996) 224.
[68] Gould (1996) 232.
[69] Goldhill (1996) 253.
[70] Goldhill (1996) 255.

to possess as much 'authority'. So, Electra and the chorus of the *Libation Bearers* can discuss the justice of the gods to act as avengers of murder (*Ch.* 119-23); or Orestes, Apollo and Athena and the chorus of Erinyes can debate the relative justice of murder in the *Eumenides*. While the poet creates a fictional world, this fiction is not immune from views on justice and the divine or any other issue being expressed, discussed or considered. The chorus is as much a privileged presence as any other character and as detached from the play. So, when the chorus in the Hymn to Zeus consider the role of Zeus in the sacrifice of Iphigeneia they possess as much knowledge concerning it as any other character. For the chorus, Zeus must have had some involvement since he is all-powerful, but in their song they cannot find any trace of the god's involvement – outside of 'sending' the Atreidae to punish Paris. Indeed, the absence of a definitive or clear-cut answer and the speculative nature of the Hymn seems only to support the view expressed here that the chorus possess no special knowledge, have no special authority and have as much or as little a privileged presence as any other character.

The 'vainness' (μάταν) of the burden also provides a clue that Zeus is in some way responsible for the burden which the chorus need to cast from their mind. With the exception of Fraenkel, who highlights the foolishness of those who do not believe Zeus to be the almighty ruler, the issue of why the burden should be a *vain* burden, τὸ μάταν ἄχθος, is rarely addressed by scholars. The noun μάτη, with which the adverb μάταν is etymologically connected, means fault or folly and, in this way, μάταν denotes the false or wrong way in which something is done. This could thus imply that the burden the chorus need to cast from their minds is that of wrong thinking or false thought: the burden is a weight on their mind that need not be there; it is a false, pointless burden. Indeed, it seems that the reason why the chorus deem the burden a false or futile one is because they know what the burden is: it is the belief that Zeus must in some way be culpable for the sacrifice of Iphigeneia, because he is the highest and most powerful god, ruling over humankind. This seems to be confirmed when the chorus proceed in the Hymn's antistrophe to outline Zeus' dominance and superiority over the divine and human spheres, removing any other (higher) power from consideration. Zeus is where the buck stops. How could he not be in some way responsible?

Having isolated Zeus as the almighty ruler of the universe, the chorus then describes the manner in which Zeus rules over mankind. They say: τὸν φρονεῖν βροτοὺς ὁδώ- | σαντα, τὸν πάθει μάθος | θέντα κυρίως ἔχειν. 'Zeus, the one who sets men on the course to comprehension, establishes the ordinance to be held good that understanding comes through painful experience.' The meaning of these lines, especially the ordinance of πάθει μάθος and to whom it refers, is a problem which has as varied an interpretative history as to what or whom the vain burden refers or denotes. It was once common for the three lines to be interpreted, broadly speaking, with an optimistic and quasi-Christian tilt (whether conscious or not) whereby Zeus sets men on the path to wisdom (φρονεῖν) having established the doctrine which dictates that understanding comes through suffering (πάθει μάθος).[71] While this does not take into account every nuance of the 'optimistic' way of interpreting these lines, it does highlight one very important aspect in this strand of thinking, which is the stress placed on the connection between wisdom and suffering in the path that Zeus lays out for mankind. Such an understanding of the ordinance laid down by Zeus often implicitly draws comparisons with the Christian doctrine of Penance, and it was in opposition to such readings that scholars such as Lloyd-Jones and Denniston and Page first raised objections.[72] Thus, Denniston and Page translate the lines: 'He who set men on the path to understanding, who laid down the law "learning through suffering", to hold good.'[73] Though Denniston and Page still maintain the reading of 'through suffering' for the word πάθει, it is not in conjunction with gaining the virtue of wisdom, but rather with acquiring understanding. And it is in this vein that over the past fifty years or so scholars have tended to take a more neutral approach by finding terms other than 'wisdom' or 'suffering' to translate φρονεῖν[74] and πάθει[75] respectively.

But, does this reading with its variants, and do those translations of φρονεῖν and πάθει μάθος do justice to the text? First, following Pope,[76] it is perhaps best not to read anything more into φρονεῖν than the notion of thought, comprehension or

[71] For example, Weir Smyth (1926) *ad loc*, Fraenkel (1950) *ad loc*, Lattimore (1953) *ad loc*, Kitto (1956) 7.
[72] Lloyd-Jones (1956) 61-3; Denniston and Page (1957) 83-4.
[73] Denniston and Page (1957) 84.
[74] For example, Gagarin (1976) 142.
[75] Thus, Ewans (1995), Collard (2002).
[76] Pope (1974) 107-10.

understanding, as that process which makes humans more than simply animals, rather than claiming anything so grand or exalted as wisdom.[77] As Pope says: 'φρονεῖν used by itself and without an adverb meaning 'rightly' never implies wisdom elsewhere in Aeschylus.'[78] He goes on to state that the significance of φρονεῖν rests on what it is to be human: 'Thus φρονεῖν βροτοὺς [at *Ag.*176] implies not only that we have consciousness but that we also have something which, without being too philosophical about it, we may call free will.'[79] So, what Pope brings out in his interpretation is the ability of humans to take control of their actions, because Zeus gave mankind the ability to think, to comprehend, φρονεῖν.

By reading φρονεῖν in this way, it places stress on the actions of the individual human characters in the trilogy, not least within the immediate context of Agamemnon and his decision to sacrifice Iphigeneia. The focus on the explicit role of Zeus and Artemis in the build-up to the Greeks going to Troy could easily make one overlook the human element in the sacrificial scene. But, the Hymn to Zeus and the path which Zeus lays out for mankind highlights the individual's responsibility for their decisions and shows that although Zeus is an almighty god, he has nevertheless given to mankind the ability to reason, to make their own decisions and to come to their own conclusions based on rational thought processes. So, no matter how intertwined the human and the divine may be in any given circumstance, humans are no less culpable for any decision or action, because they have the ability to come to a rational, reasoned conclusion themselves: they are no mere puppets of the gods.

But, understanding/comprehension (φρονεῖν) does not come easily to humankind. As the chorus say, Zeus establishes the ordinance that learning comes through painful experience, πάθει μάθος.[80] It has been a matter of contention and confusion to whom the law of πάθει μάθος refers and whether Agamemnon is subject to it, because it is easy enough to see what Agamemnon suffers or

---

[77] This is, of course, not to deny or dismiss the significance of these lines, but to move interpretation away from unjustified Christian connotations.

[78] Pope (1974) 109; cf. 107. For passages see: *Th.* 807, *Supp.* 176, 204 (being rational, avoiding panic); *Ch.* 517 (synonym for being alive); *Eu.* 115 (to wake up, be alert).

[79] Pope (1974) 109-10.

[80] The law of πάθει μάθος is in many respects a simple doctrine and one which is not new by the time Aeschylus employs the doctrine in his plays. Aeschylus' use of the notion can be seen as comparable to (though not identical with) what Hesiod says at *Op.* 218. See West (1978) 211 for further similar passages and notes on *Op.* 218.

experiences, but it is far more difficult to see what he learns.[81] There are two points which need to be clarified straightaway. The first is the far-reaching and universal nature of lines 176-8, because Zeus sets *mankind* as a whole on the path to comprehension (φρονεῖν βροτοὺς) by establishing the rule that understanding comes through painful experience (πάθει μάθος). It is thus a doctrine which is not limited to any one individual in the play or trilogy. As Conacher states: 'It is important to note, too, the generalizing power of the passage... [it] need not be limited to any particular 'sufferer', be it an Agamemnon, a Clytemnestra, a Paris, or an Orestes.'[82] It is, also, possible to extend the generalising power of the doctrine beyond not only any one 'sufferer', but beyond any one single event in a sufferer's life. Understanding, comprehension, is a continuous process which Zeus has put mankind on, a process which is not limited to one painful experience. The second point which needs to be made about the doctrine of πάθει μάθος is that due to the proximity of the statement to the narrative of the sacrifice of Iphigeneia, it can be seen to have particular resonance for Agamemnon and his actions – though, as stated, the significance and reach of it is not limited solely to Agamemnon and his actions.

So, what does Agamemnon suffer and what does he learn? He can be seen to suffer many things, not least his own death at the hands of his wife on his arrival home from Troy, as well as the death of his daughter, which he exacts as a result of the complusion he feels placed upon him by divine imperative and the necessity placed on him by the forces mustered. For the time being, if we consider just the 'painful experience' of the sacrifice of Iphigeneia, the pain which this decision causes Agamemnon is clearly related by the chorus and can be seen from the moment the remedy to still the winds is named (*Ag.* 202-17). But, what Agamemnon learns (μάθος) is a slightly more difficult matter to determine. Is it enough to conclude: 'he shall learn that man cannot escape the punishment imposed by Zeus on crime; what he does, he must pay for.'?[83] Does Agamemnon learn that he must pay for the crime he commits in sacrificing Iphigeneia or for the many deaths he causes in the course of the Trojan War? This cannot be it. As is argued at length in this

[81] See Denniston and Page (1957) 85-6; Conacher (1987) 12, 83-5.
[82] Conacher (1987) 12. Indeed, Conacher can be seen not to go far enough in stating the generalising power of the passage, because it is possible to argue that each 'sufferer' suffers and learns in a plurality of different instances. And further, if men learn through suffering, is this confined to their own suffering?
[83] Denniston and Page (1957) 86.

chapter, Zeus has nothing to do with the death of Agamemnon: the god neither ordains it nor does it fit his will.[84] Rather, what Agamemnon is depicted as learning seems to rest on his coming to a fuller understanding of the nature and justice of Zeus. That the king makes a conscious decision to subordinate the paternal bond between himself and his daughter in order not to incur the wrath of Zeus has been argued and shown at length above.[85] Indeed, this decision seems to be confirmed during his speech at *Ag.* 206-17, which he concludes by acknowledging the role and position of Themis (Right). So, having worked through the choices open to him, Agamemnon is then reported to say: παυσανέμου γὰρ | θυσίας παρθενίου θ' αἵματος ὀργᾷ | περιόργως· ἀπὸ δ' αὐδᾷ | Θέμις. εὖ γὰρ εἴη. Indeed, it swells with excessive anger for a sacrifice and for a maiden's blood to still the winds: Themis forbids it. May it be well! (*Ag.* 214-17).

In Agamemnon's mind, what makes his decision ultimately the correct one is that Themis forbids, ἀπὸ δ' αὐδᾷ Θέμις, him to desert the fleet and to do wrong by the alliance. This presents us with the indication that there is some form of divine sanction for what Agamemnon is about to do in sacrificing Iphigeneia – or at least that Agamemnon believes there is.[86] More than this, due to the already long-standing tradition by Aeschylus' time which connects Themis with Zeus and Justice,[87] a connection can also be seen between the sacrifice of Iphigeneia and the justice of Zeus, and by extention between Agamemnon's decision to fulfil the sacrifice and the law of πάθει μάθος which Zeus has established for humankind. In this way, it can be seen that Agamemnon's actions and behaviour conform to the paradigm of πάθει μάθος, because, first of all, he goes through the terrible experience (πάθει) of being faced with the impossible decision of either sacrificing his daughter or defying the will of Zeus; and, secondly, in so doing, he seems to come to some understanding (μάθος) concerning the nature of the divine, recognising that it is Themis and Zeus who stand behind the course set out for him, seeing that there is no other path open to him in the face of the supreme divine being Zeus and his rule. So, it is not only possible to see how these lines fit thematically with the surrounding verses, but how

[84] See further arguments about Agamemnon's excesses at Troy and the will of Zeus below.
[85] See the above sections: *Zeus Xenios* and *The Anger of Artemis and the Sacrifice of Iphigeneia.*
[86] See Fraenkel (1950) 2. 126 and Hogan (1984) 85 for two examples of the view that Agamemnon's claim that his act is in accordance with Themis goes against what the divine sphere would deem 'right'.
[87] For the relationship between Zeus, Themis and Dikē, see Hes. *Th.* 901-2; cf. *Od.* 2. 68.

Agamemnon's decision to sacrifice Iphigeneia is influenced by his own awareness of the justice of Zeus.

The final issue of the Hymn that will be discussed here in relation to Agamemnon and the justice of Zeus is the meaning of the closing lines of the second strophe. The lines read: δαιμόνων δὲ ποῦ χάρις, | βιαίως σέλμα σεμνὸν ἡμένων; 'How can this be the grace of the daimones, seated by force upon their august thrones?' (*Ag.* 182-3). There are two different interpretations of line 182, already reflected in the manuscripts: namely, δὲ ποῦ in MV and δέ που (with που as an enclitic) in TrF.[88] This latter reading would make the sentence a statement rather than a question and would thus supply a very different tone and meaning to the Hymn, especially to the interpretation of the doctrine of πάθει μάθος and the justice of Zeus. This is because the chorus would not be questioning whether the justice of Zeus outlined in the previous lines is a grace of the daimones (δαιμόνων χάρις), but would be stating outright that it is a grace. The TrF tradition of interpreting the text is far more widely supported by modern commentators and editors than the MV reading. This has far more to do with individual interpretative tendencies than any textual consideration concerning the various manuscripts. Arguments have been made against the TrF readings based on textual concerns,[89] but it is not on grammatical or linguistic grounds that arguments will be raised here. Indeed, it has been stated convincingly that ultimately the decision between the two traditions must be made on interpretative reasons. As Conacher says: 'the decision between ποῦ interrogative and που enclitic must finally be based on our view of the comparative appropriateness to the context of the two quite different meanings which result.'[90]

Those commentators who read που enclitic, following manuscripts TrF, fall within what has above been referred to as the optimistic tradition, which interprets the Hymn in a way that finds comfort in the power and justice of Zeus.[91] By reading lines 182-3 as a statement, the nature of justice outlined at the opening of the second strophe of the Hymn is asserted as δαιμόνων χάρις, 'a grace of the daimones'. The

[88] For this tradition, see: Fraenkel (1950) 2.112; Denniston and Page (1957) 85; Smith (1980) 28-30; Conacher (1976) 328-36, (1987) 85.
[89] For a discussion of the textual merits of reading δὲ ποῦ in line with manuscripts MV, see Pope (1974) 100-13.
[90] Conacher (1976) 330. Of course, in the original text there would have been no accents, which left room for greater ambiguity and personal interpretation.
[91] See also above discussions of τὸ μάταν ἄχθος and πάθει μάθος for the optimistic and pessimistic readings of the Hymn to Zeus and the nature of justice depicted by Aeschylus.

justice of Zeus and the gods is thus stated without any equivocation as a good thing for mankind.[92] This way of reading the lines has been supported by comparing 'the juxtaposition of mercy and absolute power... [found in] the earlier collocation of πάθει and μάθος' as well as in the formulation: καὶ παρ' ἄκοντας ἦλθε σωφρονεῖν. 'Even to the unwilling temperance comes'.[93] What lies at the base of the optimisitc view of these two lines (as well as the Hymn and trilogy as a whole) is that Zeus and the present order of gods have mankind's best interest at heart, because they will bring understanding (μάθος) even if it is sometimes by painful means (πάθει) or is unwanted (ἄκοντας).

However, to my mind, it does not seem that the chorus do, in fact, find comfort in the justice of Zeus or that they are attempting to show Zeus as a benevolent figure. Rather, it seems that the chorus have doubts concerning the nature of Zeus' justice and that while they accept Zeus and his rule as a fact of life, they do not see it as something ultimately kind. Indeed, if one accepts the premise that the *Oresteia* enters into a discourse about the nature of justice, about the role and position of the gods and mankind within this framework, then the position of the Hymn to Zeus in the opening choral ode in the opening play of the trilogy could be seen as a perfect spot to pose questions about the nature and justice of the highest and most powerful god, setting into motion a dialogue that may or may not be satisfactorily resolved by the end of the trilogy's final play.

The interpretation that lines 182-3 are not a statement, but rather pose a question about the χάρις of the gods and Zeus[94] rests on several key points. First, in optimistic interpretations of the Hymn, the line, στάζει δ' ἀνθ' ὕπνου πρὸ καρδίας μνησιπήμων πόνος· 'And remembrances of sufferings past drip before the heart instead of sleep.' (*Ag.* 179-80) is often ignored, neglected or simply overlooked. But, if we take the lines into consideration together with the next one, it can be seen to create a more negative and tempered picture of the justice Zeus has established for

[92] It is also possible to read the statement as ironic, which would thus question the justice of the gods as something other than beneficial for mankind. This adds further to the idea of being able to read the text both ways and that all is interpretation.

[93] Fraenkel (1950) 2. 112.

[94] The phrase δαιμόνων χάρις is read here, as Fraenkel (1950) 2.111 puts it, as 'in essence no other than χάρις Διός.' This is simply because the entire content of the three verses is concerned almost solely with Zeus and his nature. It seems that Aeschylus has extended Zeus' power and reach to refer to the whole divine world, thus making δαιμόνων χάρις a periphrastic way of denoting Zeus' all-encompassing nature. For further discussion of δαίμων, δαίμονες as denotations of a god or gods, see above chapter on δαίμων as deity.

mankind. Lines 179-81 form two halves of a whole, separated between πόνος and καὶ, and can be seen as revising or rephrasing of the formulation of πάθει μάθος. Within the context of the strophe, it is possible to equate μνησιπήμων πόνος with πάθει a few lines before. If we accept this premise, one could see that memories of past miseries are a way of leading man on the way to understanding (μάθος). In this way, we may expect to find something about understanding or comprehension in the next line or two. However, there is nothing about μάθος or φρονεῖν mentioned in this line or the next; rather, we are presented with something quite different and this is the idea of σωφρονεῖν, which means something like, 'to be modest, temperate' or 'to show self-control or discretion'.[95] It does not mean 'to be wise'. So, instead of wisdom, σωφρονεῖν here means something like a form of control which is imposed on mankind by Zeus and the gods. Modest thought and behaviour will come to everyone, even to those who do not necessarily want it.

Such an imposition of moderation and temperance by the gods on mankind can be seen as comparable to instances where an individual is brought low by the gods for excessive actions. It is in such a context that Aeschylus uses the verb σωφρονεῖν to describe Xerxes in the *Persians* as needing to exhibit greater self-control in order not to bring further misfortune upon himself: Ζεύς τοι κολαστὴς τῶν ὑπερκόμπων ἄγαν | φρονημάτων ἔπεστιν, εὔθυνος βαρύς. | πρὸς ταῦτ' ἐκεῖνον σωφρονεῖν κεχρημένοι | πινύσκετ' εὐλόγοισι νουθετήμασιν | λῆξαι θεοβλαβοῦνθ'[96] ὑπερκόμπῳ θράσει. 'Zeus is there after the deed as the punisher of those with overly arrogant thoughts, a weighty judge. With regard to this, urging him to show prudence, correct him with kindly-worded admonitions to stop doing harm against the gods with his arrogant impetuosity.' (*Pers.* 827-31). Although it is not Zeus or any other god who will bring σωφρονεῖν to Xerxes, but (it is hoped) gentle words of warning, it is the potential threat that Zeus bears which is the impetus behind the words of warning.[97]

---

[95] For parallel instances of σωφρονέω elsewhere in Aeschylus see, e.g.: *Pers.* 829, *Ag.* 1425, *Eu.* 521.

[96] θεοβλαβοῦν(τα) usually means 'stricken by the gods', but here is clearly active and means 'doing harm against the gods'. Cf. Broadhead (1960) 207, Garvie (2009) 318. However, it is possible that Aeschylus uses the word, more commonly found in its passive sense, because it suggests and hints at the possibility that if Xerxes does not stop offending the gods, the gods will turn the tide and do harm against him.

[97] The reading of σωφρονεῖν as 'moderation' is supported by the use of the verb elsewhere in Aeschylus (cf. *Supp.* 1013, *Ag.* 1425, 1620, *Eu.* 521, 1000). In all but the example from the *Suppliants*

The form of justice depicted in the Hymn to Zeus, especially in its final verse, can be seen to depend upon a balance between the human and divine worlds and the respect humans pay the gods. The path that Zeus puts mankind on is that of comprehension, of understanding what it is to be human and what position humankind holds in relation to the gods. But, while this may not be a wholly pessimistic view of the justice of Zeus, it is not a completely positive or optimistic one either. Zeus is great and powerful, he is not altruistic or benevolent, and this depiction of the god is played out through the three verses of the Hymn. In the first strophe, the chorus are unable to see how Zeus cannot have had some involvement in the sacrifice of Iphigeneia, even if it is only through passive acceptance. In the antistrophe, the chorus describe Zeus' final victory over his father Kronos, showing that Zeus is the highest and most powerful of all the gods. In the second strophe of the Hymn, with Zeus' victory having been outlined, the chorus then describe the manner in which the god is to rule over mankind. Just as was indicated with his (in)action regarding the sacrifice of Iphigeneia in the first strophe, the justice which Zeus establishes for mankind is not that of kindness, but of painful experience (πάθει) and suffering (πόνος), which will bring about understanding for mankind concerning their position in relation to the gods and moderation in their behaviour, even if they are unwilling to do so.

The concept of justice outlined in the final verse is, as stated above, a general one and applicable to all mankind. So, in order to demonstrate the applicability of the concept to the *Agamemnon* and its significance to the events surrounding it in the parodos, we have focused on the actions of Agamemnon (as we have throughout this chapter so far).[98] As has been discussed and demonstrated above, Agamemnon is very aware of the role of both Zeus and the gods in the expedition to Troy and in the sacrifice of Iphigeneia. He is aware that he must sacrifice Iphigeneia for Artemis in order to go to Troy and exact retribution against Paris for his transgression of *xenia*, a custom over which Zeus presides. The desires of the gods are clearly presented throughout the parodos, and when Agamemnon makes the choice between his daughter and the gods, among the last words of his decision speech are, ἀπὸ δ' αὐδᾷ |

σωφρονεῖν is also employed in reference to either learning or justice, which, of course, fits neatly with the context in which it is used in the Hymn to Zeus.

[98] The applicableness of the doctrine of πάθει μάθος and the conception of justice outlined in the Hymn is picked up on below in the section *Zeus, Erinyes and the Vote of Athena.*

Θέμις 'Themis forbids it.' The divine will of Zeus is foremost in his mind and takes precedence over any other concern. Agamemnon is all too conscious of his position in relation to the gods, exhibiting moderation and prudence in the face of the god's power and justice. It is thus when confronted with this horrible event, with the effectively impossible decision of sacrificing his daughter or disobeying the gods that Agamemnon can be seen to come to a true understanding of the justice of Zeus.

AGAMEMNON'S EXCESSIVE ACTIONS AT TROY?

In spite of the arguments advanced here that Agamemnon's execution of the sacrifice, as desired by Artemis, should not be interpreted as an act that infringes upon divine law, we cannot exclude the possibility that Agamemnon at other times acts in an excessive or unjust fashion in the eyes of Zeus and the other Olympians. Indeed, Agamemnon's actions in destroying Troy could easily be seen as excessive and a transgression of justice, even though, as has been seen, he is sent to Troy by Zeus to destroy the city (*Ag.* 60-2, 355-60, 367-84).[99] There are several passages which could be adduced to support this allegation. The passages in question are *Ag.* 456-74, 750-82, 1331-42,[100] and they have been variously interpreted as evidence to support the view that Agamemnon acted in a transgressive manner which brought about his downfall at the hands of the gods.[101] But before we turn to a detailed interpretation of what the chorus say, preliminary consideration should be given to the context of these utterances in the overall structure of the play.

For, even if these three passages *could* be shown to be directly concerned with Agamemnon and with his excessive actions, and the gods' desire for his death, the chorus' statements should not be treated as impartial or unambiguous. The chorus' knowledge of the fall of Troy and the potential excesses of Agamemnon during the expedition do not have their origin in the Herald's announcements, but are formed from Clytemnestra's interpretation of the beacon fires (*Ag.* 338-47). During the interpretations of the beacon-fires, when Clytemnestra is asked by the chorus to elaborate on how she knows that Troy is taken (*Ag.* 317-19), she does not explain the mechanics of the beacon-fires as she did in her first speech (*Ag.* 281-316), instead

[99] At *Ag.* 822, I read ὑπερκόπους instead of ὑπερκότους/ως, folllowing Heath's correction (1762), in line with the general consensus.
[100] For the texts, translations and detailed interpretations see below.
[101] See, for example, Otis (1981) 30, 34; Sommerstein (1996) 275-8; Dodds (2007) 256-7.

she gives a fictional, and only potentially accurate, account of the immediate aftermath of the fall of Troy (*Ag.* 320-50). While it is possible that Clytemnestra's account of the sack of Troy is accurate, there is no possible way for her to know whether or not it is, because she, like the chorus, has no fail-safe way of knowing for certain what is going on at Troy. All she knows is that it is taken.[102] Rather, Clytemnestra takes advantage of the beacon-fires and the chorus' ignorance by manipulating the fires' true meaning. She places concerns within the chorus' mind about Agamemnon's safety and about his character, and she suggests that he and the Greeks have desecrated temples and sanctuaries in the course of sacking the city (*Ag.* 338-47). She warns the chorus that conquered by greed and impiety the expeditionary forces may put their safety in jeopardy and compromise their return home. By raising concerns about the army as a whole, Clytemnestra is able to direct these concerns upon Agamemnon as leader of the forces. This amounts to nothing more than character defamation of Agamemnon. By manipulating certain aspects of this fictional tale of the fall of Troy, Clytemnestra can thus use them for her personal gain. So, when, at the climactic moment of the play, Agamemnon treads on the purple cloths, it may be seen to confirm the notion formed in the interpretations of the beacon-fires of Agamemnon as an arrogant and destructive man loathed by the gods for his excessive and transgressive behaviour. The decision of Agamemnon (under the persuasive coercion of Clytemnestra) to tread on the carpets, when coupled with Clytemnestra's manufactured portrayal of him, supplies what Clytemnestra wants the world to see as a religious dimension for his death, which she clearly presents later after killing Agamemnon (*Ag.* 1431-3), a reason the chorus will understand and may even agree with.

The chorus' knowledge of the fall of Troy is thus not based on any first-person account. Indeed, the Herald's own accounts of the fall of Troy and the return home do not suggest that Agamemnon has acted in any excessive or transgressive way. Even before the Herald's entrance at 503 and before any first-person account of Troy's overthrow, the chorus have sung an ode concerning Troy and the respective fortunes of the besieged and besiegers (*Ag.* 355-487) – a passage traditionally seen as

[102] Strictly speaking, Clytemnestra does not *know* that the city is taken. But this issue is not exploited in the play. See Goldhill (1984) 38-9, (1986) 9-10 for interpretation, misrepresentation and manipulation of signals in the beacon-fire scene.

demonstrating Agamemnon's excessive behaviour.[103] But, if the chorus sing an ode about the fall of Troy without any factual, first-person account of it, how can we use their words at 355-487 as evidence of Agamemnon's actions at Troy? Moreover, if the Herald does not say anything about Agamemnon committing crimes of excess, how can we take the chorus' statements at 750-62 or at 1331-42 as examples of Agamemnon behaving in a transgressive fashion at Troy?

But, before we can pursue this line of enquiry, a few words need to be said concerning line 527. If the line is not considered an interpolation, the Greeks' destruction of the altars and temples of the gods could indicate excessive and transgressive actions. Giving the passage in full, it reads (*Ag.* 524-8):

> ἀλλ' εὖ νιν ἀσπάσασθε, καὶ γὰρ οὖν πρέπει,
> Τροίαν κατασκάψαντα τοῦ δικηφόρου
> Διὸς μακέλλῃ, τῇ κατείργασται πέδον
> {βωμοὶ δ' ἄϊστοι καὶ θεῶν ἱδρύματα}
> καὶ σπέρμα πάσης ἐξαπόλλυται χθονός.
>
> But, greet him with kind words, as is only fitting: by utterly destroying Troy with the axe of Zeus, bringer of justice, he worked over the land with it {and the altars and temples of the gods disappeared} and the seed of the whole earth perished completely.

Fraenkel, following Salzmann[104] and Headlam,[105] argues that line 527 does not belong to this passage and, as he says, 'intrudes like a foreign substance.'[106] Fraenkel supplies four reasons to support this conviction. First, the line interrupts the agricultural metaphor which extends from κατασκάψαντα to χθονός. Secondly, the line is an almost exact copy of *Pers.* 811, βωμοὶ δ' ἄϊστοι, δαιμόνων θ' ἱδρύματα, which could suggest a scribe copied in the line from the *Persians* by error whether or not it had previously been added as a gloss in the margin. Thirdly, for the Greeks

[103] Cf. Lloyd-Jones (1962) 193-9; West (1979) 4; Otis (1981) 29-30; Lesky (1983) 19; Winnington-Ingram (1983) 88-93; Sommerstein (1996) 277; Dodds (2007) 256.
[104] Salzmann (1823).
[105] Headlam (1898) 245-9, (1902) 434-42.
[106] Fraenkel (1950) 2.266.

'the destruction of holy places by the enemy seemed an unparalleled atrocity'[107] and thus it is unlikely that the Herald in describing the triumph of the Greek victory would refer to the sacrilegious behaviour of the army, if indeed there had been any. Indeed, it is when describing such atrocities and their religious consequences that the passage at *Pers.* 811 is used by Darius to explain why the Persian expedition failed. The fourth reason, which, to my mind, deserves more attention than it has received by scholars,[108] argues that had those who defend authenticity of line 527 are all too willing to find more evidence of Agamemnon being a 'godless villain'.[109]

Concerning this issue, Denniston and Page raise objections against Fraenkel and state that 'of these arguments the third alone seems considerable.'[110] For what reason the other arguments are not 'considerable' is not explained. Denniston and Page in turn argue that it is reasonable to assume that the Herald would speak of the destruction of the temples and altars for two main reasons.[111] The first is that Clytemnestra mentioned the possibility that sacrilege could be committed by the Greeks and that without this line the possibility she raises would not be answered. But, as has been demonstrated above (and will be further below), Clytemnestra's words cannot be taken at face value, and indeed one wonders why her words need an answer anyway. The second reason is that if the Greeks did utterly destroy the land, how can the destruction of temples and altars not be included within it too? This may seem a reasonable question to pose, except that it is our ignorance concerning the precise details of the sack of Troy which is at issue here and so to assume the presence or existence of any one particular aspect of the aftermath of the overthrow of Troy seems really to be pre-judging the issue. For, it is entirely possible that the Greeks left the temples and altars untouched and undesecrated, or at least there is an element of ambiguity surrounding the whole issue.[112]

There is an issue which could support the notion that the Greeks committed acts of impiety at Troy before sailing home. It is that Cassandra, as a priestess, is

---

[107] Fraenkel (1950) 2.266.
[108] It is neglected by Denniston and Page (1957) 120-1, even though they raise the first three reasons supplied by Fraenkel.
[109] Fraenkel (1950) 2.267; cf. Denniston and Page (1957) xx-xxxvi, 120-1.
[110] Denniston and Page (1957) 120.
[111] Denniston and Page (1957) 120-1.
[112] Indeed, were one allowed to add speculatively how characters in literature could have reasoned, one could say that the Greeks were no doubt aware that they still had a long trip home over the treacherous sea, and in light of the delays at Aulis on the outward journey the Greeks may have realised the problems that can be caused by the gods.

brought home with Agamemnon as a prize. If we can use intertextual evidence to inform our readings of the play, it seems that she was taken from her temple by the lesser Ajax – something which caused offence to Athena (cf. E. *Tr.* 70-86). But, it is difficult when using evidence from other texts to know what Aeschylus intended the audience to be aware of and what not, or at least the reasons behind certain events. For instance, in Euripides Athena is the goddess whom Cassandra attends, while in Aeschylus it is Apollo; also in Aeschylus there is no mention of the actual theft of Cassandra from the temple, which is, at the very least, strange, bearing in mind all of the horrors and torments she relates before her death. One may argue that this particular version is hinted at by the dispersal of the Greek fleet on the way home, if not by her very presence in Argos. But, the use of intertextual evidence is particularly dangerous concerning the Agamemnon myth, because of the variations regarding his killer. So, in an earlier source, Homer's *Odyssey*, it is related that Aegisthus killed Agamemnon (1.28-43), but in Aeschylus it is Clytemnestra.[113] If Aeschylus' version of the myth varies in such key details from what appears in Homer, how can we be entirely sure what details he wanted assumed and what not? Is not Aeschylus' silence concerning the presence of Cassandra deliberate? Are we rather supposed to be left in ignorance, with our attention focused on those details we are supplied with?[114] Or, if the presence of Cassandra is enough to draw our attention to the reasons behind her being there, can we be sure that Agamemnon is responsible for any act of sacrilege or that Aeschylus wanted us to think so? Perhaps, indeed, the point is that Cassandra's presence raises doubts over the piety or impiety of Agamemnon in the same way Clytemnestra's 'beacon speeches' did, but with no answer forthcoming or supplied by the end of the play.

So, Denniston and Page's objections offer little that can be seen to detract from the arguments Fraenkel raises concerning the likely spurious nature of line 527. It seems that Fraenkel's concerns, especially regarding the unnatural interruption of the agricultural metaphor, the similarity of the line with *Pers.* 811 and the almost universal desire by scholars to see Agamemnon as an impious man (as opposed to a just and pious individual) present far stronger arguments and supply a far stronger

[113] See Sommerstein (1996) 190-204 for discussion of the Agamemnon/Orestes myth and whether Aeschylus was original in his treatment.
[114] See Taplin (1977) *passim* for an extensive discussion of this issue.

position for understanding the line as an interpolation, rather than those arguments which defend the line.

Although we are presented with several accounts of Agamemnon's supposed transgressions, it is only his act of treading on the purple cloths that happens before the audience's eyes. It is this act that seemingly confirms or reaffirms notions of Agamemnon as a character inclined to commit excessive and impious deeds.[115] It has also been seen as confirming his state of mind overcome by Atē, a state initially formed by his decision to sacrifice Iphigeneia;[116] as well as being in some way an act symbolic of the guilt he has accrued since the sacrifice.[117] But, it is also the case that these arguments, which see Agamemnon's act of treading on the cloths as being indicative of his guilt or of him being on the wrong end of divine justice, highlight the type of reasons Clytemnestra wants to bring to the fore before killing Agamemnon. So, the significance of this scene does not lie in confirming Agamemnon's prior transgressive actions as much as in demonstrating Clytemnestra's effective character defamation of Agamemnon.

This much can be said on the assumption that the chorus intend to suggest that Agamemnon's actions at Troy were excessive. However, a close reading of the text does not even seem to suggest this. The three passages under consideration are all similar in tone and meaning, all hinting at the dangers of lives lived at the extremes. The first example comes in the third antistrophe of the first stasimon (*Ag.* 456-74):

βαρεῖα δ' ἀστῶν φάτις ξὺν κότωι,
δημοκρά‹ν›του δ' ἀρᾶς τίνει χρέος·
μένει δ' ἀκοῦσαί τί μου
μέριμνα νυκτηρεφές·
τῶν πολυκτόνων γὰρ οὐκ
ἄσκοποι θεοί, κελαι-
ναὶ δ' Ἐρινύες χρόνωι
τυχηρὸν ὄντ' ἄνευ δίκας
παλιντυχεῖ τριβᾶι βίου

[115] Cf. Denniston and Page (1957) 151-2.
[116] Cf. Lloyd-Jones (1962) 196-7; Conacher (1987) 38-9.
[117] Cf. Taplin (1977) 311; Otis (1981) 12-65.

τιθεῖσ' ἀμαυρόν, ἐν δ' ἀΐσ-
τοις τελέθοντος οὔτις ἀλκά.
τὸ δ' ὑπερκόπως κλύειν εὖ
βαρύ· βάλλεται γὰρ ὅσσοις
Διόθεν κεραυνός.
κρίνω δ' ἄφθονον ὄλβον·
μήτ' εἴην πτολιπόρθης,
μήτ' οὖν αὐτὸς ἁλοὺς ὑπ' ἄλ-
λων βίον κατίδοιμι.

Weighty is the rumour of citizens with anger in it. It repays the debt of a curse ratified by the people. My thought waits to hear something shrouded by night. For, the gods do not fail to see those who have caused many deaths. But in time the dark Erinyes place obscurity upon the man who is fortunate without justice, with the reversal of fortune wearing away his life. There is no help when a man is among the unseen. Being excessively well spoken of has a heavy consequence. Indeed, a thunderbolt is thrown by the eyes of Zeus. And I decide in favour of prosperity without envy: May I never be a sacker of cities; may I never look upon my life as conquered by another.

The passage contrasts the life of those who are the target of vicious rumours, βαρεῖα δ' ἀστῶν φάτις ξὺν κότωι, 'Weighty is the rumour of citizens with anger in it,' with the life of those who are held in very high esteem, τὸ δ' ὑπερκόπως κλύειν εὖ | βαρύ· 'Being excessively well spoken of has a heavy consequence,' warning of the dangers of both. It warns of the gods' awareness of those who kill many; that Zeus can throw a thunderbolt upon those who are excessively praised; and that Erinyes can destroy those men who have no justice. This passage is qualified later in the play at 750-82, where the chorus contrast the common view that good fortune in itself brings about misfortune with their own view that impious deeds bring about misfortune.

Although these passages warn of lives lived at the extremes of praise and fortune (*Ag.* 456-74) and warn of the result of ill deeds (*Ag.* 750-82), neither strictly relate to Agamemnon.[118] Rather than being statements of fact about Agamemnon's

[118] Indeed, the first stasimon as a whole (*Ag.* 355-487) is primarily concerned with Paris; cf. Fontenrose (1971) 75-8.

crimes and the crimes of his descendents,[119] they are considerations that are brought about as a result of the chorus' own apprehension concerning Agamemnon's return to Argos.[120] The chorus do not know what has happened to their king and there is uncertainty about the truth of the reports concerning Troy's fall (*Ag.* 475-8). Their words are not informed by anything concrete, but are expressions of their own concerns about the safety of their king, because they fear that any excessive actions of his at Troy could result or may have resulted in the gods bringing about retribution (*Ag.* 461-2, 472).

The third of the three passages warning against excessive behaviour, in contrast with the other two which come before it, comes after Agamemnon's safe return to Argos. The position of this passage directly before Agamemnon's death hints at an implicit connection between his death and the chorus' concerns about excessive and transgressive actions and what has been termed Agamemnon's 'abnormal prosperity'[121] (*Ag.* 1331-42):

> τὸ μὲν εὖ πράσσειν ἀκόρεστον ἔφυ πᾶσι βροτοῖσ<ιν>,
> δακτυλοδείκτων δ' οὔτις ἀπειπὼν εἴργει μελάθρων,
> "μηκέτ' ἐσέλθηις", τάδε φωνῶν.
> καὶ τῶιδε πόλιν μὲν ἑλεῖν ἔδοσαν μάκαρες Πριάμου,
> θεοτίμητος δ' οἴκαδ' ἱκάνει·
> νῦν δ' εἰ προτέρων αἶμ' ἀποτείσει
> καὶ τοῖσι θανοῦσι θανὼν ἄλλων
> ποινὰς θανάτων ἐπικρανεῖ,
> τίς ἂν <ἐξ>εύξαιτο βροτῶν ἀσινεῖ
> δαίμονι φῦναι τάδ' ἀκούων;
>
> It is natural for all men to be insatiable when it comes to prosperity, and no one shuts it from the walls barring the way with pointed finger, saying, 'you may no longer come in.' And the blessed ones gave to this man the capture of Priam's city and he has returned home honoured by the gods. But now, if he should pay for the blood of people before and dying for those who died complete requital for other deaths, hearing this, what man could boast to be born with a harmless daimon?

[119] See Dodds (2007) 255-64 for this view.
[120] See Fontenrose (1971) 75-6.
[121] West (1979) 4.

The passage offers opposing ideas of Agamemnon and the justice of his actions. On the one hand, Agamemnon is bestowed with divine favour, which has seen him sack Troy and conducted back home safely; on the other, we are presented with his potential death, its justice in the eyes of the dead and what appears to be the complete absence of divine favour for him. But what are the reasons for this apparently contradictory view of Agamemnon, the justice of his actions and the position of the gods? At first glance, it seems that at some point during the expedition against Troy divine favour has been retracted. But this does not explain why he is conducted back home still honoured by the gods. It thus seems incorrect to approach the passage in this way. Indeed, rather than hinting at Agamemnon's change of fortune in the eyes of the gods, the passage can be seen to present something quite different. The lines, καὶ τῶιδε πόλιν μὲν ἑλεῖν ἔδοσαν μάκαρες Πριάμου, | θεοτίμητος δ' οἴκαδ' ἱκάνει· 'and the blessed ones gave to this man the capture of Priam's city and he has returned home honoured by the gods,' are statements of what appear to be accepted truths, either in the eyes of the chorus, or in the eyes of both the chorus and Aeschylus. In either case, the divine favour bestowed on Agamemnon at Troy and the honour he received seems not to be in question in these lines.

However, the lines, νῦν δ' εἰ προτέρων αἶμ' ἀποτείσει | καὶ τοῖσι θανοῦσι θανὼν ἄλλων | ποινὰς θανάτων ἐπικρανεῖ, | τίς ἂν <ἐξ>εύξαιτο βροτῶν ἀσινεῖ | δαίμονι φῦναι τάδ' ἀκούων; 'But now, if he should pay for the blood of people before and dying for those who died complete requital for other deaths, hearing this, what man could boast to be born with a harmless daimon?' do not reflect the views of the chorus in the same way. First, they relate a possibility, whereas the previous statement relates accepted truths, statements of apparent facts. Secondly, these lines are focalised in a different manner, spoken through the eyes of the dead, whose passing was in some way seen by them to be caused by Agamemnon. The chorus here do not state their own view, but what they imagine the dead would feel. Indeed, the chorus interject their own understanding of events in the final line by asking the rhetorical question that if Agamemnon dies, thus fulfilling the prayers of the dead,

who could claim to be born with an ἀσινεῖ δαίμονι.[122] In spite of the potential ambiguities surrounding the precise meaning of ἀσινεῖ δαίμονι, the general idea of the sentence is nevertheless fairly clear. If a man favoured by the gods, as Agamemnon is, should be killed for the deaths of those who have died in the course of exacting the gods' will, then what man could say he was born with a harmless guiding spirit or an unhurt fortune? So, the underlying notion of ἀσινεῖ δαίμονι within the context of the passage could be seen to suggest that no one will have or can be seen to have an untroubled course through life even if they are favoured by the gods, because even they can be killed or come unstuck in some way.

The focalisation of the passage, therefore, indicates not the *justice* of Agamemnon's death should he now die, but rather the misfortune of it. What the latter sentence implies is not the anger of the gods at Agamemnon, nor indeed their displeasure at him for the many deaths he may have caused in exacting their will; rather the sentence speaks of the gods' absence in his death should he die and the prayers of the dead be answered.[123] It is this that seems to be behind the concluding line of the question, 'hearing this, what man could boast to be born with a harmless daimon?' It is also important to note that although Agamemnon may die seemingly unprotected by the gods who previously favoured him, it does not necessarily mean that he is killed by them or at their behest. While his death will answer the prayers of those whose death he may have caused, it will not fulfil the gods' desire. Indeed, if Agamemnon should die at the gods' order or by their desire, what purpose would there be in Apollo (and Zeus) sending Orestes to avenge his death? It would make no sense, or at least a sense which is not explored in the trilogy, if they send someone to avenge a death they caused or wanted. The prayers of the dead should thus not be equated with the desires of the gods here, in much the same way as the desire of the Ghost of Clytemnestra in the *Eumenides* who wants to see Orestes killed in requital for her death is not equated with the will of the Olympians who sent Orestes to kill her and who subsequently protect him.

We can see that it is at least questionable whether the chorus at any point pronounce Agamemnon's actions to be excessive. But even if this interpretation does

[122] ἀσινής can take either the meaning 'unhurt' or 'harmless' in this context. The complexities of what δαίμων means are discussed above in Chapter 1.
[123] This can be compared again with Artemis' lack of intervention at the end of Euripides' *Hippolytus*.

not convince, it has nevertheless been demonstrated above that Agamemnon is not shown to have incurred divine anger at any point. It has also been shown that the fears of Agamemnon's actions at Troy can be traced back to Clytemnestra, who forged and manipulated them during the beacon speeches, and that they are, to say the least, not based on any first-person account. Without an example of a transgression or an excessive action which can be seen to incur the anger of the gods before the so-called 'tapestry scene', it is thus difficult to see how the tapestry scene can be interpreted as *confirmation* of any prior 'guilt'. What is more, the act of treading on the cloths is not shown in itself to provoke any divine wrath or punishment, in spite of Agamemnon's fears of the gods' jealous gaze (*Ag.* 921-5, 946-7); and as has been shown before, Clytemnestra does not speak of the gods' involvement at any point in her act of killing.

In the 'tapestry scene', there are three moments when Agamemnon demonstrates awareness that should he step on the tapestries he could bring about anger against him. First, Agamemnon tells Clytemnestra not to spread the tapestries on the floor for him to walk on, honouring him as if a god, because for him as a mortal man, such actions are not without fear (*Ag.* 921-5). Secondly, Agamemnon states that he fears the voice of the people should he agree to Clytemnestra's wishes and step on the cloths (*Ag.* 938). Thirdly, the fear Agamemnon relates before (*Ag.* 921-5) is reiterated at *Ag.* 946-7, when he says that he hopes no god will cast envy from their eyes. So, it is possible to see that concern about offending the gods by treading on the tapestries is presented as a significant factor for Agamemnon during the verbal tussle with his wife. In spite of the act seeming like an example of excess, there is no indication outside of Agamemnon's concern not to anger the gods by treading on the tapestries that the gods are angered by the act. To see divine desire for Agamemnon's death on the basis of the act seems, at best, tenuous.

Moreover, as has been shown before, Clytemnestra does not speak of the gods' involvement at any point in her act of killing and there is no other indication in the text that the gods wanted him dead. Indeed, the fact that Apollo (through whom Zeus speaks) sends Orestes to avenge Agamemnon's death in the *Libation Bearers* may be seen to suggest the opposite, that they did not want him dead – or, at least, as an *ex post facto* indication that there is greater ambiguity concerning the guilt and death of Agamemnon than has often been seen. It can also be argued that the fear

Agamemnon exhibits during the carpet scene demonstrates sensitivity to the gods' desires and his position as a mortal in relation to them, more than a lack of sensitivity or a desire to commit transgressive acts. Parallels can be drawn with his concerns immediately before the sacrifice of Iphigeneia, where thoughts of the gods weigh heavily upon him when he makes his decision. Agamemnon presents awareness of and sensitivity to his own position with respect to the gods in this scene, as he does before, and the absence of any clear evidence showing divine anger at him both before and after his death, coupled with the absence of the gods in Clytemnestra's reasoning for her decision to kill Agamemnon, indicate that his death was neither desired nor exacted by the gods.

A FITTING END?

Though Agamemnon cannot be shown categorically to have committed any act that incurs the wrath of the gods, there may be evidence to suggest that Agamemnon's death fits the will of Zeus. Arguably the most significant passage that sees Agamemnon's death as divinely ordained comes at *Ag.* 1485-8:

> ἰὼ ἰή, διαὶ[124] Διὸς
> παναιτίου πανεργέτα·
> τί γὰρ βροτοῖς ἄνευ Διὸς τελεῖται;
> τί τῶνδ' οὐ θεόκραντόν ἐστιν;
>
> Oh, oh! And all by the will of Zeus, the cause of all things, the effector of all effects; for what come to pass for mortals, except by Zeus' doing? What of all this is not divinely ordained?

This statement of Zeus' power, which has parallels with the endings of other tragedies (e.g. Soph. *Trach.* 1278), must of course be read against the background of a religion in which even the highest god is not omnipotent in a way comparable to the Christian God.[125] So then, how are we to interpret this statement of Zeus' power? What effect does it have on how we view Agamemnon's death? Does it affirm the

[124] See Garvie (1986) 220 for ambiguity of διαί + gen. as instrumental or causal in Aeschylus.
[125] For a fuller discussion, see the above section *The Power and Limitations of Zeus* in Chapter 3 'The Nature of Zeus'.

belief that Zeus willed Agamemnon's death? Are those who see this passage as proof of Zeus' desire for Agamemnon's death right to do so?[126] The proximity of the passage to Agamemnon's death, the chorus' repeated statements concerning excessive actions and Agamemnon's stepping on the tapestries together present apparently strong cumulative circumstantial evidence for Agamemnon's death being divinely desired, ordained or executed. But as has been argued, each instance in itself does not present a strong case against Agamemnon, or is at least open to being interpreted as ambiguous. The same is true here. In spite of the passage's proximity to Agamemnon's death, the language is general and abstract and is not necessarily or specifically directed at Agamemnon – though, of course, this does not preclude reference to him. Indeed, one commentator has seen this passage as a statement of Zeus' intent to have Clytemnestra and Aegisthus killed rather than Agamemnon.[127] While I do not think that enough evidence can be found in the *Agamemnon* to support this view either, there is at least an abundance of evidence supplied in the subsequent plays of the trilogy which can support it (cf. *Ch.* 260-305, 555-60, 831-7, 900-2, 939-41, 1026-33; *Eu.* 64-6, 84, 203, 465-7, 579-80, 593-4), quite unlike the evidence which can(not) be supplied to demonstrate that Agamemnon's death was desired by Zeus.

Rather, the passage presents an absence of understanding about religious workings on the part of the chorus. The chorus are upset: they have just witnessed the return of their king, absent for over ten years, about whom they have worried since hearing reports of the capture of Troy, and are now faced with his death. They do not understand why this has happened, and they question Clytemnestra about the act and condemn her for it. As in the parodos, where they are faced with Iphigeneia's death and a series of events beyond their comprehension, they see Zeus as the cause of all and the way to understanding for all (*Ag.* 160-83).[128] Lines 1485-8 echo such a view here. They do not express categorical confirmation of Zeus' desire for Agamemnon's death, but an inability to understand why bad things happen to good people (cf. *Ag.*1331-42). Although, of course, Agamemnon can by no means be viewed as a perfect man, he has acted in accordance with divine justice in sacrificing

[126] See Lloyd-Jones (1956) 63, (1962) 187-99, (1971) 90-2, (1983) 102; Denniston and Page (1957) xv, xx-xxix; Kitto (1964) 1-5, (1966) 58; Otis (1981) 3-65, esp. 64-5; Cohen (1986) 132-4.
[127] Fontenrose (1971) 101.
[128] See the section *The Hymn to Zeus* above for further discussion.

Iphigeneia and in going to Troy, and in so doing has not committed a transgression of the boundaries of divine justice. The chorus, aware of the favour the gods have granted Agamemnon (cf. *Ag.*1331-42), are faced with what on all accounts is the complete opposite of divine favour. What the passage at 1485-8 thus presents is the chorus' inability to understand why Agamemnon has died. In their ignorance or disbelief concerning divine workings (or lack of divine workings) surrounding Agamemnon's death, they present it as 'over-determined'[129] by needing to see Zeus as somehow involved not only in the over-arching fate of mankind but also in the fate of each individual. As a result, we should be careful not to take the chorus' words at 1485-8 as a genuine insight into divine workings in the *Oresteia*, as if the chorus were some form of collective authority or privileged presence,[130] nor should Agamemnon thus be seen as having incurred the wrath of the gods on the basis of what the chorus say here.

So, Agamemnon's death should therefore be seen as far from being divinely ordained or desired, or as fitting the will of Zeus. The favour Agamemnon receives from the gods is indicated by their role in Troy's fall (*Ag.* 60-2, 355-60, 367-84, 525-6, 580-2, 699-708, 744-9, 810-16, 851-3); in seeing that he gets home safely (*Ag.* 661-6, 851-3); and in the gods' desire to see his death avenged (*Ch.* 260-305, 555-60, 831-7, 900-2, 939-41, 1026-33; *Eu.* 64-6, 84, 203, 465-7, 579-80, 593-4).[131] Even during the sacrificial scene at Aulis he decides it is better to shed the blood of his daughter than to risk incurring the wrath of Zeus for not going to Troy.

SUMMARY REMARKS ON THE GUILT OF AGAMEMNON?

As I have tried to demonstrate throughout the course of this chapter so far, Agamemnon can be seen never to transgress the boundaries of justice and never to anger the gods in any way. His behaviour purposefully and deliberately attempts to keep the gods on his side. Even when his actions could indicate that his judgement has lapsed, such as when he treads on the purple cloths, there is no evidence in the plays that the gods are angry with him for it. The peculiar thing about the deaths of

[129] Cf. Dodds (1951) 1-18, (2007) for 'over-determinism'.
[130] See the section *The Hymn to Zeus* above for further discussion of the role and authority of the chorus.
[131] The chorus also hint at the favourable position Agamemnon has in the underworld, further indicating that Agamemnon is far from being despised by the gods (*Ch.* 354-62).

Agamemnon and Cassandra is the inactivity of the gods and their silence during the scene and immediately after it. When contrasted with the death of Agamemnon, the death of Clytemnestra and the overtly involved divine forces behind Orestes' actions, as discussed toward the beginning of the chapter, support the line taken here that Agamemnon's death was neither desired nor ordained by the gods.

If we trace the gods' will throughout the three plays, a consistent pattern emerges. First, Agamemnon goes to Troy and punishes Paris' transgression in line with the will of Zeus. Secondly, on the way to Troy, Agamemnon must restore balance within the separate Artemisian sphere by sacrificing Iphigeneia for and to the goddess. Artemis relents of her anger once the sacrifice is performed and balance is restored. Contrary to a belief still widely held, the sacrifice, far from being an example of a transgression, is in fact an example of restitutive justice. Indeed, in completing the sacrifice, Agamemnon is able to go to Troy and punish Paris' transgression in accordance with Zeus' will. Thirdly, Clytemnestra is punished by Orestes for murdering Agamemnon with the loss of her own life in accordance with Apollo's (and Zeus') demands. The last major example of justice being exacted in the play is the trial scene of the *Eumenides*, where Orestes is protected by Apollo and freed by Athena's vote. By Orestes being allowed to go free, his act of killing is shown categorically to be just. As outlined earlier, if his act of punishment had itself been punished it should not be seen as a restitutive killing, because no balance would have been restored and the cycle of revenge would have continued. But, by Orestes being acquitted and the cycle of vengeful killing being ended, Aeschylus shows that Orestes' killing of Clytemnestra is categorically a just act that accords with the will of Zeus.

So, while Agamemnon, Clytemnestra and Orestes are all killers, it is Clytemnestra's act which is unjust in the eyes of the Olympian gods Zeus, Apollo and Athena, and thus worthy of punishment; both Agamemnon's and Orestes' acts of killing, however, are in line with the divine will, and it is for this reason that, in the *Oresteia*, Agamemnon should be considered a pious man who is not guilty of any act that transgresses the boundaries of divine justice.

ZEUS, THE ERINYES AND THE VOTE OF ATHENA

It has been argued in the preceding pages that the trial scene of the *Eumenides* helps to show conclusively that both Orestes and Agamemnon act justly and in accordance with the will of Zeus, and that the opposite is true for Clytemnestra. But, we have yet to discuss the events which unfold in the final play of the trilogy, in particular the trial of Orestes, the vote of Athena and the near fracture that is created in the divine world between the Olympians and the Erinyes, and what they tell us of the nature of justice presented in the *Oresteia.*

One of the most important issues that must be addressed when discussing the nature of justice in the *Eumenides* is whether a new form of justice is introduced during the play with the establishment of the court of the Areopagus. It is generally accepted that there is a progression during the *Oresteia* from simple eye-for-an-eye retribution – which is exemplified in the *Agamemnon* and the *Libation Bearers* – to a more 'advanced' court-based system, presided over by an impartial and neutral judge and/or jury, who deliver a verdict substantiated by concerns of motivation and reason, as well as cause, *i.e.* whether the defendant did or did not commit a crime.[132] Such a progression in the nature of justice is sometimes seen in conjunction with Zeus becoming a more sympathetic god,[133] which is, in turn, connected with the optimistic notion of the god as a benevolent force working for the benefit and betterment of humankind.[134] In contrast, however, it will be argued here that for the purposes of the play's plot and structure the court's significance has been greatly over-emphasised by scholars in its position as a departure from the manner of justice depicted in the previous plays of the trilogy and that, in fact, there is a consistent portrayal of divine justice throughout the *Oresteia.*

This is not to deny that a change of sorts is brought about by the establishment of the Areopagus court. It is not as an empty gesture that the court is set up. First of all, it serves an important aetiological function by suggesting that the

---

[132] Those who see a progression and development in the nature of justice are in the majority, and such views can be seen expressed, for example, by Kitto (1961) 91-5, (1964) 54-86; Podlecki (1966) 74-81; Conacher (1987) 166-9; Sommerstein (1989) 19-25, (1996) 282-3. For the opposing view, see Lloyd-Jones (1971) 91-5; Gagarin (1976) 74-9.

[133] Such a view is exemplified by Kitto (1961) 91-5, (1964) 54-86; Sommerstein (1989) 19-25. For an opposing and very interesting argument concerning the development of justice in the *Oresteia*, see Solmsen (1949) 163-224, who argues that in the '*Eumenides* it is the Erinyes who change, not Zeus' and that the justice of Zeus manifests itself equally in all three plays.

[134] For a discussion of the optimistic reading, see the section *The Hymn to Zeus* above.

murder-court had an ancient and divine heritage.[135] Secondly, it has also been argued[136] that if the type of justice upheld by the Erinyes was in itself sufficient for the purposes of settling the dispute concerning Orestes or if it was identical to the justice represented and practised by the Areopagus,[137] there would not have been any need for the court to have been established by Athena. The court can thus be seen to represent the gods' involvement in the affairs of humankind and is created purposefully by them as a means of assisting the settlement of cases in a way that will help bring an end to the cycle of vendetta (*Eu.* 471-5). In this way, it acts as a significant statement laid down by the Olympian gods regarding how they wish mankind to settle murder-cases from that moment on (*Eu.* 482-9, 683-4). But, while such considerations are important and while the justice upheld and represented by the Erinyes may not have been sufficient in this instance for the purposes of Orestes' case, it is questionable whether the establishment of the Areopagus necessarily signifies a change in the underlying nature of justice. There is, of course, a change in the delivery of justice and the manner of its conception with the introduction of the court, but what underpins this model of delivery in the trilogy is the same: the power and might of Zeus and the Olympians.

It is not, after all, the court which puts an end to the cycle of revenge killings, but Athena and Zeus. While the Areopagus acts as a significant statement laid down by the Olympian gods regarding how they wish mankind to settle murder cases from that moment on (*Eu.* 482-9, 683-4), it is not because of, or by means of, the court that Orestes is freed or indeed that the Erinyes are calmed and brought under the Olympian wing and into coalescence with the Olympian rule once again – the two key outcomes of the play. Rather, the manner in which acts and deeds are considered just or not is the same throughout the *Oresteia*. What the Areopagus represents and symbolises for the Athenians and for an audience with democratic ideals is, without question, of real importance – and, I think, it is because of this that scholars may have over-emphasised its function within the dramatic framework of the play. But, it is difficult, or rather impossible, to imagine the resolution of the play not resulting in the fulfilment of the Olympian will and their victory. So while the court has

[135] See Podlecki (1966) 74-100, Conacher (1987) 195-206, Sommerstein (1989) 1-32, Mitchell-Boyask (2009) 19-23, 97-107.
[136] See Conacher (1987) 168-9 for this objection.
[137] Such a view is argued for by Lloyd-Jones (1971) 94-5; Gagarin (1976) 74-9.

significance for later generations and the audience watching at the time, the court seems to perform a symbolic role which helps placate the Erinyes by giving the illusion of fairness.

But, before we enter into a discussion of the nature of justice and the significance of the Areopagus court in the settlement of Orestes' case, a few words need to be said concerning the political context of 458BC. Although the historical setting of the play is not strictly the concern of this chapter, it is nevertheless important to establish, at least in outline, my position regarding the newly reduced function of the Areopagus as solely a homicide court and Aeschylus' presentation of the institution in the *Eumenides*. It seems to me that the most obvious way of interpreting Aeschylus' depiction of the Areopagus in the play is that the playwright wishes his audience to see Ephialtes' and Pericles' reduction of the court's remit within the Athenian political and judicial system as in essence no radical change, but a movement back to the court's original function. Thus, Aeschylus is making the statement that jurisdiction of homicide cases was the Areopagus' original purpose, a purpose that was given divine sanction by the highest gods. In this way, Aeschylus can be seen either to be siding with Ephialtes and Pericles; or, at least, to proffer a declaration of reconciliation to the more conservative members of Athenian society with a message along the lines of: 'what is done is done, let us move on'.

So, to return to the play itself, let us first consider how and why the conflict between the Erinyes and the Olympians arises in the *Eumenides*. In both the *Agamemnon* and the *Libation Bearers*, the Erinyes appear as ministers of Zeus' justice (*Ag.* 59, 463, 645, 749, 992, 1119, 1190, 1433, 1580; *Ch.* 402, 577, 652) with their remit broader than the single issue of matricide, as it appears to be in the *Eumenides* (*Eu.* 210-12, 355-6, 421).[138] Indeed, as has been pointed out above in discussion of the guilt of Agamemnon, the Erinyes in the *Agamemnon* do not seem concerned about the death of Iphigeneia and the fact that she is 'kindred blood'. In the final play, the Erinyes can be seen as single-issue characters, while in the preceding two plays they act more generally as spirits of vengeance and act in accordance with the will of Zeus.[139] Nevertheless, in all three, the Erinyes are

[138] See Winnington-Ingram (1983) 165-70 on the narrowing and broadening of the Erinyes' presentation.
[139] See Dietrich (1967) 91-157, 232-40 for discussion of the origins of the Erinyes and the Erinyes in Homer.

reactive, single-visioned deities (whether 'single-issued' or not). They are concerned with the act committed and not the circumstances around and concerning which the action has arisen; while one could argue that Athena and the Olympians take into consideration the circumstances of the action, and as such Athena asks the Erinyes for what reason(s) Orestes killed his mother (*Eu.* 425-7) and sets up a trial so that both sides can relate their version of events. So, it is possible to see that the narrowing of the Erinyes' office and their single-visioned nature create the circumstances out of which a conflict could arise. Indeed, one could even argue that it was more a matter of when and not if the justice and over-arching power of Zeus and the Olympians came to an impasse with the narrow, single-visioned justice of the Erinyes. The Erinyes and the Olympians, as two independent sets of deities concerned with justice, seem to have co-existed harmoniously only while there were no conflicts of interest.

However, although the Olympians and the Erinyes can be seen to embody two different – though by no means independent – conceptions of justice, it is not the justice of Orestes' case which angers the Erinyes, but the dishonour they feel is done to them by the Olympians.[140] As is made clear when the Erinyes ask Athena to preside over the trial of Orestes, all that they require is for the goddess to show them due respect (*Eu.* 433-5). The Erinyes feel that the resolution of the trial does not give them, their office, or their sphere of influence the honour it deserves. They exclaim: ἰὼ θεοὶ νεώτεροι, παλαιοὺς νόμους | καθιππάσασθε κἀκ χερῶν εἵλεσθέ μου· | ἐγὼ δ' ἄτιμος ἡ τάλαινα βαρύκοτος, | ἐν γᾷ τᾷδε, φεῦ, 'Oh you younger gods, you have trodden upon the ancient customs and have taken him from my hands. I am dishonoured, the wretched, heavy wrath, in this land. Alas!' (*Eu.* 778-81) One could, of course, argue that it is the justice wrought by the Olympians which brings about the freeing of Orestes and, as a result, it is the justice of the case with which the Erinyes are angry. But, it seems that it is not the justice of the case in itself which angers the Erinyes, so much as the result and what it signifies for them. If they cannot exact or fulfil their will within their own sphere of power, their function within the divine world is all but worthless. And so, the Erinyes feel that with

[140] It is worth noting that for all the attention Lloyd-Jones (1971) pays to τιμή in the *Iliad*, he completely neglects its significance in the *Eumenides*. For the role of τιμή in the *Eumenides*, see Macleod (2007) 291-300.

Athena giving Orestes the deciding vote, the Olympian gods have interfered with and over-ridden their (the Erinyes') office. Indeed, it is necessary to bear in mind that within the cycle of familial killings and vengeance, 'an eye for an eye until everybody is blind' is a means and an end, though, of course, not a very satisfactory one. So, the Erinyes can rightly claim to be the ministers of a respected and legitimate mode of justice, which (at least) half of the Areopagus recognise as possessing a just claim.

The prominent role that the concept of honour (τιμή) plays within the final scene of the *Eumenides* is suggested by the greater frequency with which the word τιμή and its verbal and adjectival cognates – as well as the negative ἀτιμία and its respective derivatives – are used after the conclusion of the trial and the departure of Orestes at line 777. This is because, when the play reaches its climax in this scene, with the Erinyes about to wreak revenge upon the city of Pallas, creating a fracture within the divine world, it can be seen that what is at issue is the notion which is firmly on the protagonists' tongue: *i.e.* honour, τιμή. As the tension is increased during this scene, so is the frequency with which τιμή is used: in the *Eumenides*, τιμή and its cognates appear seven times before line 777, while they appear twelve times in the final 270 lines;[141] and ἀτιμία and its cognates also appear seven times before line 777, while they appear eight times from line 778 onwards.[142] What is more, the fact that there is no change in the frequency with which δίκη and its cognates occur after line 777 can also be seen to indicate that it is the negation of honour felt by the Erinyes and not the nature of justice practised during the trial which brings about the confrontation between the two sets of deities. Indeed, the Erinyes only relent of their anger when they are shown due respect by Athena. Her initial words of persuasion are of no use in stating that they are not dishonoured, as the Erinyes are not convinced that this is the case (*Eu.* 794-823). Even the not-so-veiled threat of Zeus' thunderbolt has no tangible impact of the Erinyes (*Eu.* 824-80). It is only when the goddess offers the Erinyes something concrete, some share of the city and its worship, that they finally give up their anger and threats of violence (*Eu.* 881-

[141] For τιμή and cognates: *Eu.* 209, 227, 228, 419, 624, 747, 773, 845, 853, 854, 868, 879, 891, 894, 915, 967, 993, 1029, 1037.
[142] For ἀτιμία and cognates: *Eu.* 213, 215, 324, 369, 394, 712, 722, 780, 792, 796, 810, 822, 824, 884, 917.

1047).[143] What matters to these powerful deities is neither words nor threats, but respect and honour which is their due as ancient ministers of divine justice. But, in spite of the case against Orestes and the tied vote of the court, their pursuit of Orestes and their case is ended by half of the court and the Olympians.

So, Orestes is freed and is allowed to leave Athens without being molested. Orestes' acquittal is a direct consequence of the role and actions of two Olympian gods: Apollo, who protects Orestes from the Erinyes and acts as his defender during the trial; and Athena, who casts the deciding vote in his favour to free him from punishment. Both of these two gods have an innate connection with Zeus in the *Oresteia*: Apollo, Zeus' son, is a mouth-piece for Zeus, speaking only what his father commands (*Eu.* 17-19, 614-21, 713-14); Athena is born of Zeus alone (*Eu.* 663-6, 735-8), knows the key to the house in which Zeus' thunderbolt is kept (*Eu.* 827-8), and is given keen understanding by him (*Eu.* 850). Indeed, Athena, just as Apollo, says and does what Zeus wills (*Eu.* 798-9, 826). It is thus possible to infer from this that Orestes is protected and freed in line with the will of Zeus – Zeus, who, of course, started (as well as finished) the (final) turn in this cycle of familial killings with the command given to Orestes through Apollo in the *Libation Bearers* (*Ch.* 269-305).

If we trace the will of Zeus through the *Oresteia*, we can see that it was the will of Zeus that punishment should be exacted against Troy for the theft of Helen;[144] that Agamemnon's death should be avenged; and that Orestes, as the minister of his justice, should be allowed to go free from any punishment. Although it is in many ways an obvious point to make that the will of Zeus is always fulfilled, it is important to note that just as with the 'guilt' of Agamemnon, the underlying justice of any act depends on how it corresponds to the will of the highest and most powerful god of the Greek pantheon. There is no greater authority than Zeus: he is the ultimate dispenser of justice and the justice of any deed must always be considered in relation to his will.[145] This is all the more significant in a discussion of justice in the *Eumenides* (and the *Oresteia* as a whole), because in contrast to other extant plays of Aeschylus such as the *Persians* or the *Seven Against Thebes*, the

[143] Compare the use of δαίμονες and θεαί in reference to the Erinyes as a mode of flattery in the above chapter on δαίμων.
[144] See section *Zeus Xenios* above.
[145] See Chapter 2 for further examples of Zeus as the god of justice.

Olympian gods have a tangible presence and direct involvement in the affairs being depicted on the stage: their will is presented right in front of the audience. It is thus in light of Zeus and his will that we should look at the decision of the court of the Areopagus and the vote of Athena.

The vote of Athena is determined by factors unrelated to the actual trial and, in spite of the goddess' appearance and bearing, she is far from being an independent or neutral adjudicator. After Athena enters the stage at line 397, she states that she does not know who the Erinyes are, saying that she has never seen their race before (*Eu.* 410-12). But the goddess then acknowledges that her inability to place the Erinyes among the spectrum of gods and men could be deemed disrespectful. In recognising this she opens the door for the chorus to speak, by saying: λέγειν δ' ἄμομφον ὄντα τοὺς πέλας κακῶς, | πρόσω δικαίων ἥδ' ἀποστατεῖ θέμις. 'That someone may speak ill of his neighbours without being blamed for it, that law stands far from what is just.' (*Eu.* 413-14) And it is in a good-natured vein that Athena and the Erinyes subsequently converse. Indeed, in their first dialogue, it is apparent that the Erinyes consider Athena a fair judge who will show them respect if given respect (*Eu.* 435), and as such they ask her to preside over the dispute between themselves and Orestes (*Eu.* 433-4). However, this is in spite of the manifest differences in their respective views on the nature of justice, which are indicated in an exchange about the ethical and legal position of Orestes as the killer of his mother (*Eu.* 425-7):

> ΧΟ: φονεὺς γὰρ εἶναι μητρὸς ἠξιώσατο.
> ΑΘ: ἀδμὴς ἀνάγκης, ἤ τινος τρέων κότον;
> ΧΟ: ποῦ γὰρ τοσοῦτο<ν> κέντρον ὡς μητροκτονεῖν;
>
> Chorus: Indeed, he thought it fair to be the slayer of his mother.
> Athena: Unsubdued by necessity, or fleeing from the wrath of another?
> Chorus: How can there be so great a goad that can force someone to kill his mother?

Athena at first appears to stay true to the picture the Erinyes have of her as a fair and neutral judge, because having heard the initial testimony of Orestes she considers the case to be too great a matter for her to pass judgement on, fearing the wrath the Erinyes may bring down upon her and her city (*Eu.* 470-4). Instead, Athena

establishes the court of the Areopagus, formed of the greatest Athenian citizens (*Eu.* 482-9) and the trial unfolds with both sides given the opportunity to state their case. But then there is a shift: on asking the judges to go and cast their votes, she declares that she will, in turn, cast a vote for Orestes should the court deliver a tied verdict (*Eu.* 734-41).[146] In so doing, Athena revises her prior statement that the matter is too great for her to pass judgement on alone. Indeed, the belief that she would bring the wrath of the Erinyes upon her and her city should she determine the verdict turns out to be correct – although, of course, the goddess is able to assuage their anger, bringing them within the pantheon of *polis* deities.

Athena's actions in the play indicate that she occupies an ambiguous position.[147] She is seen as trustworthy and fair-minded by the Erinyes, who believe her to be in some way neutral and independent, while in reality she is nothing of the sort, as is intimated even before she casts her vote in favour of Orestes (*Eu.* 425-7). It is, of course, true that the Erinyes never state outright that they consider Athena neutral or independent, but only that she will give them due respect. Nevertheless, in asking Athena to preside over the dispute as judge, it is expected that she will behave as, if not actually to *be*, a neutral and independent judge during the trial, otherwise the Erinyes would be placing themselves at an automatic disadvantage. But, in spite of this and although the goddess was not directly involved in the cycle of killings within the House of Atreus and can in this respect be seen as detached from the events, she is inherently connected with the death of Clytemnestra by being an Olympian and through her innate connection with Zeus. She has a vested interest in preserving the Olympian rule in which she is a leading player, and her own Olympian nature thus determines that she cannot be independent. So, when Athena comes to cast her vote at *Eu.* 735, she does not do so as a neutral or independent

[146] It has been a matter of some debate whether Athena's vote breaks a tie or causes a tie. The problem arises out of the perceived ambiguity in lines 734-41. I will not repeat the respective arguments here, because much has been written on the issue and the balance of the voting is not of strict concern for this discussion. All that matters for the purposes of my argument is that Athena votes, does so in favour of Orestes and in so doing determines the outcome of the case. For arguments in favour of Athena's vote breaking the tied vote of the court, see: Verrall (1908) ad loc; Hester (1981) 265-74; Conacher (1987) 164-6; Seaford (1995) 202-21. For arguments in favour of Athena's vote causing a tie, see: Gagarin (1975) 121-7; Goldhill (1984) 257-9; Vernant and Vidal-Naquet (1988) 418-20; Sommerstein (1989) 221-6. Taplin (1977) 395-401 side-steps the issue, but raises concerns over the corruption of the text between lines 574-777.

[147] That Athena occupies an ambiguous space has been highlighted in relation to her gender by Winnington-Ingram (1983) 125-31, Goldhill (1984) 258-61.

adjudicator as the Erinyes expect. It is generally accepted by scholars that Athena's vote is not arbitrarily cast in favour of Orestes,[148] with most pointing to considerations related to the tension concerning the gender-role of the goddess, who is introduced as saying that she favours the male in all things but marriage (*Eu.* 736-40), as well as highlighting her innate connection with her father.[149] But, while such arguments are no doubt correct in highlighting the importance of Athena's gender and her connection with her father in the way she votes, they nevertheless overlook that it is not purely the male-ness of Zeus (and Athena) which is a determining feature for the way the goddess votes, but what Zeus represents as the head of the Olympian order and that he is minister of justice. It is through Athena that Zeus is able to determine that Orestes goes free and it is the will of Zeus that underpins events from Agamemnon's decision to sacrifice Iphigeneia all the way through to the trial scene of the *Eumenides*. It is his will which ultimately determines what is just, not Athena and not the court. In this way, can we really say the nature of justice has changed?

But, what of motivation? Is not the ability of the defendent to state his case in front of a neutral and independent judge or jury a departure from the retributive, eye-for-an-eye paradigm employed in the previous two plays of the trilogy? Orestes does, of course, get the opportunity to state his reasons for killing his mother and he does not deny that he committed the act (*Eu.* 462-4). This could perhaps be seen as a notable departure from the way justice and the framework of transgression and punishment were portrayed in the earlier plays of the trilogy, where individuals can be seen to 'take the law into their own hands'. But, even then, to say that each individual took the law into their own hands is a misreading of events, because neither Agamemnon nor Orestes act without divine sanction, and neither went beyond the perimeters established by divine law;[150] only Clytemnestra can be seen to behave 'outside the law', by acting on her own desires and her own concept of what is right and wrong.

---

[148] Contrast with Lloyd-Jones (1971) 92, who sees no justifiable reason for Athena to vote in the way she does.

[149] See, for example, Thomson (1946) 288, Gagarin (1976) 10-3, Winnington-Ingram (1983) 125-31, Goldhill (1984) 258-61, Conacher (1987) 167-8, Sommerstein (1989) 229-30.

[150] Such a conception of justice is also explicitly related in Homer, *Od.* 1.32-43.

Also, we should not overlook the fact that the motivation of each individual plays an important part in the relationship between transgression and punishment throughout the trilogy. Agamemnon goes to Troy and sacrifices Iphigeneia in order to keep Zeus on his side and to placate Artemis. Although Clytemnestra does kill him (in spite of the divine will), his death is avenged in line with the divine will through Orestes. So, in spite of Agamemnon committing a heinous act in killing his daughter, which rightly horrifies the chorus and is an act which transgresses the familial bonds between father and daughter – an act (among many others) for which Clytemnestra does eventually kill him – it is due to his motivation to keep the divine will on his side that the gods do not want him killed – which is, of course, directly comparable with what happens with Orestes in the *Eumendies*. In contrast, Clytemnestra is punished by the gods, because her motives and actions were in opposition to the will of Zeus. So, although Agamemnon, Clytemnestra and Orestes are all killers, it is because Agamemnon's and Orestes' motives are in line with the will of Zeus and their actions designed to keep Zeus and the gods on their side that Orestes is sent to avenge his father's death and that Orestes is subsequently freed by the vote of Athena, while Clytemnestra is killed for the transgressive killing she commits and her death not avenged by any of the Olympians. Thus, an individual's motivation is of utmost importance in each of the three plays, and not just in the *Eumenides*.

Rather, what seems to be far more significant to the overall structure and plot of the *Eumenides* is the conflict that arises between the Erinyes and the Olympians and the contention that exists between the two sets of deities, and the honour (τιμή) due their respective strata of divinity (older/newer, chthonic/Olympian). This is not to say that the justice of Orestes' case is not important, but that it is of a secondary nature to – though by no means independent from – the conflict between the Erinyes and the Olympians. That the justice of Orestes' case is in some way superseded within the play by this conflict is seemingly confirmed by the fact that the play goes on for over 250 lines after Orestes leaves the stage.

SUMMARY REMARKS

The *Eumenides* can thus be seen as depicting the coming together of two sets of deities with two differing (though not independent) conceptions of justice. As has

been stated, it needs to be noted that it is not the case that the underlying nature of justice changes with the establishment of the Areopagus, just the manner of its delivery. The Olympians had existed before the start of the play and Zeus administers justice consistently throughout the trilogy. The two sets of gods, Olympians and Erinyes had existed before the opening of the *Eumenides* with their differing notions of justice and all that has changed is that their wills have come into conflict over the case of Orestes. Indeed, before the killing of Clytemnestra, the Erinyes had been agents working in harmony with the justice of Zeus. The Areopagus court, rather than being symbolic of a 'new' form of justice, signifies a confirmation of Zeus' will and justice, clarifying the manner in which justice is administered by Zeus, taking on board the Olympian ability to see further than the act itself and understanding the importance of motivation, just as occurs with Agamemnon and the sacrifice of Iphigeneia[151] and Orestes and the killing of Clytemnestra.

[151] It is interesting to note that the Erinyes do not seem concerned with the death of Iphigeneia, in spite of the fact that she is the daughter (and thus blood-kin) of Agamemnon.

CONCLUSION

Summary of Findings

On the preceding pages, we first examined the meaning and nature of three closely connected divine words and concepts: θεός, δαίμων and Zeus. In the first chapter, 'Δαίμων in the Plays of Aeschylus', it was argued that the meaning of δαίμων and what it denotes depends upon, and is determined by, the contexts in which it is used. For example, δαίμων is often found to present a meaning synonymous with θεός, where it denotes both a known, specified deity and an unknown, indeterminate fulfiller of events. In contexts when no known or specified deity can be seen as responsible for an event, δαίμων is used together with θεός and Zeus in what has been called 'the indefinite mode of expression', where each term is treated synonymously to refer to an unknown supernatural intervention. As has been seen above, such usage is especially prevalent in the Homeric epics, but is not restricted to them.

This is all quite straightforward and shows an easily demonstrable consistency in the usage of δαίμων between itself and other divine terms and between early Greek epic and classical tragedy. However, in Aeschylus, δαίμων is also employed to denote ideas quite different from what is denoted by θεός. For example, δαίμων can be used to refer to a deity or being that is in some way lesser than and/or distinct from θεός, where the two terms, δαίμων and θεός, are juxtaposed and seem to give meaning to one another. So it is, for example, that in the *Seven* Aeschylus juxtaposes Zeus and Typhon, calling the former a θεός and the latter a δαίμων, and in so doing uses the two terms as part of his characterisation of the two deities. Furthermore, δαίμων in archaic Greek even denotes something akin to the idea of an individual's personal deity and, by extension, someone's fortune or lot in life. In this way, δαίμων came to denote both an active and a passive idea that is closely connected with an individual's lot in life. In other words, δαίμων is that which determines a person's fortune or lot in life and that which is determined by his actions or nature. This particular aspect of the word's often ambiguous and many-faceted nature is highlighted by and exemplified in a fragment of Heraclitus (B119): ἦθος ἀνθρώπῳ δαίμων, '*Character for a man is his daimōn*' or '*A man's daimōn is his character*'. This chapter has shown the different ways δαίμων is used by Aeschylus and how the word came to mean different things in different contexts.

While the precise meaning of δαίμων is context-dependent, there is an underlying connection which is linked to the idea of the fulfilment of events and thus to the word's etymological root, *dai-*, 'distribute', whether δαίμων is that which brings about an event or is the result of the event completed. However, it has also been shown that δαίμων was sometimes used at specific instances to denote a deity distinct from and/or in some way lesser than the deity denoted by θεός.

Against this background, the remaining chapters of the thesis were concerned with the presentation of Zeus in Aeschylus as the highest and most powerful god. First, the second chapter of the thesis, 'The Characteristics of Zeus', establishes that Zeus is presented in a consistent fashion throughout the six extant authentic plays. This conclusion was reached by working chronologically through the *Suppliants* and the *Oresteia*, picking out how and where the god is spoken of, and identifying the key features ascribed to him. This chapter shows that while Aeschylus does use Zeus dramatically, by stressing certain aspects of his nature to fit the thematic purposes of individual plays, such as supplication in the *Suppliants* or *xenia* in the *Agamemnon*, there is a consistent thread running through all the plays of Aeschylus concerning the presentation of Zeus: Zeus is always the king of the gods, the god of justice and the ultimate fulfiller of events; he possesses the same mythology; he is still the all-powerful god.

In the third chapter, 'The Nature of Zeus', we examined those aspects of the god that make him who he is. Our conclusions were reached primarily by looking at the way Zeus is presented in the plays of Aeschylus themselves, but also by considering the nature of the god within the context of an age when philosophical speculation was prevalent, as well as within the context of an established literary tradition. The key areas focused on with regard to the god's presentation included the omnipotence and the limitations of Zeus' power; his invariance and anthropomorphism; the god as a primal substance; and Zeus' relationship and connection with Hades. The result of the discussion is that while the underlying nature of Zeus is similar to that in the Homeric depiction of the god, there are also noteworthy differences. For example, there are also indications that Aeschylus is interacting with Presocratic arguments and theories about the nature of the highest and most powerful god, such as can be seen clearly in the parodos of the *Suppliants*. But, such interaction with philosophical speculation should not be considered at all surprising or the result of a desire to see a simple progression from 'primitivism' to a

more 'advanced' monotheistic conception of the highest god. Instead, it is argued in this thesis that we should recognise that this aspect of the Zeus of Aeschylus is the product of an age in which philosophical speculation about the highest and most powerful god was prevalent.

In the fourth and final chapter, arguably the most significant aspect of Zeus' nature is discussed. 'The Justice of Zeus' examines how and by what 'laws' the god rules the world. This is done by initially asking one question: should Agamemnon be seen as guilty in the eyes of Zeus? In asking this question, we discussed whether the king should be seen as committing any act that transgresses the justice of Zeus. This chapter re-evaluates how the nature of justice and the relationship between the gods and men should be understood. By closely considering the framework of justice within the *Oresteia*, what justice is and how it is depicted by Aeschylus, and by putting to one side preconceptions about innocence, innocents and the inherent worth of life itself, that every life is 'sacred' or equally valued, this chapter examines the balance between transgression and punishments, looking at what is said and depicted in the *Oresteia* itself concerning the nature of justice. Indeed, by discussing the question of Agamemnon's so-called 'guilt' in light of the premise that the gods, including Zeus, may not actually be kind and benevolent forces working for the betterment of mankind, it is possible to see that the *Oresteia* is better understood and appears far more rational in its depiction of the gods and justice if Agamemnon is seen to have committed no act that transgresses the justice of Zeus. Moreover, it also seems to be the case after close examination of the *Agamemnon* that far from being impious and unjust, Agamemnon is a pious and just individual who tries to keep the gods on his side at all times, recognising the significance of their approval for his actions. In so doing, Agamemnon goes to Troy because of the transgression of *xenia* committed by Alexander Paris and sacrifices his daughter Iphigeneia in order to appease the anger of Artemis, with both acts ultimately working towards fulfilling the will of Zeus and avenging the transgression of guest-friendship.

Then, in the last part of the chapter it is argued that in the *Eumenides* the vote of Athena, the establishment of the Areopagus and the position of Athena and Apollo in relation to the Erinyes further indicate that the justice of Zeus does not change or develop into something kinder or more understanding than what we see in the first two plays of the *Oresteia*. Zeus remains the same as in the *Agamemnon* and it is the Erinyes who alter themselves by accepting the offer put forward by Athena

to be incorporated into the *polis* religion of Athens as the Eumenides. This is not to say that the way justice is delivered does not change with the establishment of the Areopagus court, just that the underlying nature of justice and Zeus' will remains. The last part of the chapter thus acts to confirm many of the conclusions drawn in the first, seeing Zeus as neither a kind nor a benevolent god who only has the best interests of mankind at heart. Rather, Zeus is still the same god whose will is always fulfilled so long as he remains the highest and most powerful god of the Greek pantheon.

The Significance of the Argument

On the basis of the conclusions drawn in this thesis, what changes when we now read Aeschylus or see his plays performed?

First, with such an ambiguous word as δαίμων, which can refer to – what appear at first glance as – quite disparate ideas that denote different things depending on where the term is used, this thesis has demonstrated the importance of drawing conclusions about the precise meaning of δαίμων from the context in which the word is used in the plays. By taking this approach with δαίμων, it has been possible to show that the meaning of the term often varies depending upon its relation with other divine terms, in particular with θεός. Furthermore, the context-driven nature of the discussion in this chapter enables us to see how Aeschylus' use of δαίμων fits within the broader framework of ancient Greek literature and religio-philosophical thought.

So, in Homer, there is no indication that δαίμων possesses any pejorative meaning or connotations, or that it is used to denote a deity in any way distinct from what is denoted by θεός. Whether this is a reflection of the manner of religious thought of the Homeric age, of poetic usage, or whether it is simply an accurate reflection of how people spoke about the gods, whether or not it mirrors the everyday religious beliefs of people at the time, does not strictly matter for the purposes of this thesis now. All that needs to be noted is that when δαίμων is used to denote a deity, it acts as a synonym for θεός. In Hesiod, however, when δαίμων is used to refer to a deity, the deity is in some way lesser than and/or distinct from the type of deity referred to by θεός. Of the three times δαίμων is used in Hesiod, twice it denotes beings that were once mortal, but have become immortal and are thus quite unlike the immortal gods denoted by θεός/θεοί (in the other instance, δαίμων denotes the idea of an individual's lot in life).

But, in Aeschylus, there seems to be a synthesis, so to speak, between Homer's and Hesiod's ways of conceiving of δαίμων; here it is used both as a synonym for θεός and as a way to distinguish between the respective divinities of two – often juxtaposed – deities, such as Zeus and Typhon in the *Seven*, where the latter is called δαίμων, while the former θεός. In writing toward the beginning of the classical era, Aeschylus can be seen to hold a significant position with regard to his use of divine terminology. His employment of δαίμων both as a synonym for θεός and to denote a deity distinct from θεός demonstrates that there was not a simple progression in the meaning and use of δαίμων throughout antiquity from a synonym for θεός to a term that is distinct from it. Rather, the development of the meaning of δαίμων is far more staggered and nuanced, because while Hesiod seems to have understood something quite different in his use of δαίμων from what is presented in Homer, there is no such clear-cut distinction made by Aeschylus (or indeed, by the lyric poets of the archaic and early classical periods). Indeed, it is conceivable that δαίμων possesses a range of meaning in Aeschylus because he works within the contexts of Homer *and* Hesiod, as well as the Presocratic philosophers, and is in many respects the sum of the collective Greek literary past, just as Attic tragedy brings together the choral aspects of lyric poetry and the narrative elements of epic poetry. While much of this, especially as presented in summary form, is not in itself new, it was necessary to argue for these results to provide the appropriate background to the subsequent discussion of the role of Zeus in Aeschylus.

In the chapters that deal with the nature and justice of Zeus, there was no attempt made to re-create the approach of the preceding chapter on δαίμων: indeed, as has been stated, such an approach would have been inappropriate for a fully-fledged and characterised god. But, this does not mean that any less attention was given to close analysis of the primary sources and the contexts they create. As has been demonstrated and argued for above, from a close textual-based (re-)examination and (re-)consideration of the plays of Aeschylus, it has been possible to see that the application of any grand or over-arching religious doctrine or theory to the nature and justice of Zeus is inappropriate. It is thus inadequate to see Aeschylus as a philosophising poet, who spreads his 'message' through the medium of his plays. But, this is not to claim that he was a mere copier with no ability to think for himself; nor does it mean that he was a hermit or recluse uninterested in or unaffected by the philosophical speculation and debate of his age going on about

him. Equally, this is not to down-play the underlying influence of Homer and Hesiod. Indeed, in Aeschylus' use of δαίμων we have seen what significant influence both these writers seem to have had on his works in just this aspect of his thought, not to mention the shared literary and mythological history upon which the poet bases his plays, as is seen most clearly in the *Agamemnon* and the *Libation Bearers*. Rather, what we see in Aeschylus is an underlying Homeric and Hesiodic conception of Zeus and the gods, but there is concomitant with this presentation interaction with Presocratic religio-philosophical speculation concerning the nature of the highest and most powerful god, which develops and plays with received notions about Zeus and his divinity.

In the chapter 'The Nature of Zeus', by looking at various characteristics of the god it is shown, in the first place, that Aeschylus presents Zeus at one and the same time as both all-powerful and yet limited by the existence of other gods in a way reminiscent of the Homeric depiction of Zeus. But, in the subsequent section, *Anthropomorphism and Invariance*, Aeschylus is seen as hinting at something more than is found in the Homeric presentation of Zeus. For example, at *Supp.* 86-103 we can find descriptions of Zeus' invariance and detachment which recall Xenophanes' ideas regarding his *one god.* Also, in the *Heliades*, Aeschylus may have depicted Zeus in a way that alludes to pantheistic notions of divinity, where the language used is reminiscent of the works of Presocratic thinkers, such as Empedocles, Anaximenes and Diogenes of Apollonia. Moreover, the presentation of Zeus and Hades further indicates that Aeschylus was conceiving of the god in ways not found in the works of Homer and Hesiod. What is argued for in this section is that when Aeschylus refers to the Zeus of the Dead he is not simply using the name as a synonym for Hades, but is thinking of the god in a far more over-arching and all-encompasing manner. So, therefore, what this chapter demonstrates is that Aeschylus was not bound by the received literary tradition epitomized in the works of Homer and Hesiod in the way he depicts Zeus. Rather, it is shown that Aeschylus was not a copier, that he was able to reflect on the nature of the highest and most powerful god and the arguments put forward by the Presocratic philosophers.

The argument that may have the most significance for a new understanding of the nature of Zeus and the theology of Aeschylus as a whole is the one made in the chapter 'The Justice of Zeus', in which it is argued that Agamemnon should not be seen as guilty of any transgression of the will and/or justice of Zeus. It is also

shown there that Agamemnon's death was neither divinely ordered nor desired. The implication of this argument is not only that Agamemnon should be seen as a just and pious individual, but also that we need to re-assess how we read and understand the justice of Zeus in Aeschylus. While, of course, what is said in this chapter has an impact on how we understand the role of Agamemnon within the play, there is a greater underlying significance for how we conceive of the nature of justice and thus the nature and will of Zeus. If we accept the conclusion that Agamemnon has done nothing wrong in the eyes of the highest and most powerful god – in spite of killing his daughter, who is presented as a young girl innocent of any crime – then it is necessary to re-examine how we understand the balance between right and wrong; transgression and punishment; and the role of the gods in the lives of men. We must ask ourselves what moral assumptions can be made (if any) in this pre-Christian world, where there is no religious codex acting as a moral or ethical guide.

How then should we view the relationship between men and the gods and what role does Zeus play within the framework of justice? As is stated at the opening of the chapter on 'The Justice of Zeus', one way to conceptualise justice is as a balance between transgression and punishment, and it is through this conceptual framework that we must consider what Aeschylus' presentation of justice means for our understanding of Zeus. But, to think along the lines that there was a single conception of justice is misleading. As there was no single text or set of laws sent down from on high to guide mankind in their moral judgements, and as there was also no single deity, but a plurality of gods, each with their sphere of power and own individual wills, it is necessary to think within a system where there is more than one conception of justice, and in so doing to establish a new framework by and through which to view the relationship between man and god, and to consider its implications for how we understand Greek divinity. With a polytheistic religion that has a multiplicity of competing and contrasting divine wills, such as is presented by Aeschylus, we must recognise that justice depends on the relationships both between the many gods themselves and between each individual god and each individual man. There is no grand, over-arching conception of justice presented by Aeschylus. The justice of any human action should only be considered in relation to the will of the god or gods to whom the particular issue is of concern. So, we can see these many different and individual relationships in action throughout the *Oresteia*, where the balance between competing divine forces is played out between Agamemnon and

Zeus and Artemis in the *Agamemnon*, where the king must act correctly by both deities within their spheres of power, and then in the *Eumenides* between the Olympians and the Erinyes.

The nature of justice in Aeschylus is further complicated from the perspective of a Christian/post-Christian audience or readership, because Zeus and the gods are not paragons of moral excellence. Zeus is not, as is the Platonic Demiurge, and as is the Christian God at least on one interpretation, beautiful and good as we may expect gods to be, especially the highest and most powerful god. But, if the killing of an innocent girl such as Iphigeneia does not bring with it the wrath of a god against the perpetrator and if the motivating forces of the gods rest only with a concern for their own honour, then it is reasonable to state that Zeus and the gods should not be thought of as kind or benevolent and we can question the underlying basis of the moral world which we are presented with, understanding that the will of Zeus and the laws he has imposed on men have not been established for mankind's own betterment.

Although Zeus is not presented as a kind god and although the laws he has imposed on mankind are not for their betterment, this does not mean that Aeschylus is presenting his audience with an amoral world-view or an early form of nihilism. Rather, the picture is more complex. Aeschylus is depicting a conflict between divine will and what we may understand as natural, innate human responses. This is particularly telling in the parodos of the *Agamemnon*, when Agamemnon is steeling himself to sacrifice Iphigeneia. In this scene, through the chorus' eyes, we are presented, on the one hand, with the horror of Agamemnon's action and the pain and torment of Iphigeneia's helplessness while she is cruelly slain at the altar in order to appease the anger of Artemis and in order to enable the Greeks to go to Troy and please Zeus by avenging Paris' transgression of *xenia*. But, on the other side, we are given no indication whatsoever that in the gods' minds there is any thought for the human cost involved in fulfilling their wills. Thus, in the thoughts of all the human characters depicted by Aeschylus we see the horror of what is to be done by killing Iphigeneia: in Agamemnon we see him effectively unable to choose between sacrificing his daughter or disobeying the gods; the chorus dwell on the innocence of Iphigeneia and the disgust of what Agamemnon does in order to carry out the gods' will; and, indeed, Clytemnestra is so outraged by the act that it drives her to murder her husband (or, at least, the sacrifice is the catalyst for her action). But, all the gods

care for is that punishment is exacted for the transgression of their will. For them, there is no objection to the killing of an innocent girl.

Moreover, in spite of the fact that Aeschylus presents Zeus as presiding over justice and as behaving as a just god within the paradigm of justice depicted in his plays, this does not automatically suggest that Aeschylus himself considers Zeus as a god who is unequivocally 'just' or that he presides over a 'morally just' system. How can the disregard for human life ('innocent' or otherwise) be just? This is not to retract my earlier argument. Rather, I want to raise the point that Aeschylus seems to present in his plays a deliberate juxtaposition between the human and the divine conceptions of justice. Indeed, the playwright constructs this contrast without, to my mind, taking sides or favouring one conception of what is just over the other. On the one hand, Aeschylus shows the horror and disgust of the sacrifice of Iphigeneia; but, on the other, he shows the lasting and over-arching power of the Olympians and their ability to resolve the conflict between themselves and the Erinyes peacefully, as well as establishing a court of arbitration for posterity. In this way, Aeschylus does not show one conception of justice more worthy than the other, but that man and god may have different conceptions of what is just.

The nature of justice in Aeschylus should thus not be seen as a singular notion. Not only do gods play-off against one another in the divine sphere, each with their own conceptions of justice, as is seen between the Olympians and the Erinyes in the *Eumenides*, but there is also a constant under-current between human concerns about the inherent worth of life and the divine will of the gods, as is seen during the sacrificial scene of Iphigeneia between Agamemnon/the chorus and Zeus/Artemis. Moreover, while we, a modern audience, may value both the human and divine concerns equally (if not the human side more so), the power and position of the gods in Aeschylus entails that the will of the gods, and Zeus in particular, must take precedence over human concerns. It is for this reason that although there is a complex framework of competing wills, both human and divine, Agamemnon's decision to act in accordance with Zeus' will must ultimately be seen as just, in spite of his subordination of the natural human concern for the inherent value of human life.

But, the arguments made in this thesis also have a wider significance than simply helping to supply a greater understanding of the plays of Aeschylus themselves. First, in the area of theology, while I have argued against seeing a

simple linear progression from 'primitive' polytheism to 'advanced' monotheism in discussion of the theology of Aeschylus, it is nevertheless the case that Aeschylus falls at an interesting and telling point between our earliest extant literary sources (the epics of Homer), which depict fallible anthropomorphic gods, and the works of Plato who posits the notion that there was a good and beautiful creator god. So, although I do not think that Aeschylus' ideas of Zeus should be placed within the framework of a linear progression that 'naturally' ends up with Plato's Demiurge, let alone the Christian God, Aeschylus' position at the end of the archaic age and the start of the classical enables us to see what sorts of ideas about the highest and most powerful god were present within Athens during the middle decades of the fifth-century B.C.

Indeed, it is possible to argue that the works of Aeschylus possess a greater and more far-reaching importance than we may first expect from a work of drama. At the time Aeschylus was writing Athens had no real philosophical tradition, certainly not to anywhere near the extent the city would have only a short time after his death. There is, of course, some evidence that indicates Anaxagoras at some stage came to Athens, and although intellectuals in Athens would have had access to philosophical works, the city was not the hub of philosophical speculation that it would later become. It is, therefore, as is often argued, entirely possible that tragedy in some way performed an intellectual and speculatory function which came later to be filled and superseded by the philosophers, and which could be seen as a significant contributing factor in the way the great age of tragedy in Athens came to an end at the time philosophy in the city started to flourish. So, when we see that Aeschylus was depicting Zeus as somehow invariant and more detached than he appears in Homer and Hesiod, seemingly taking on board Presocratic notions of god, we should not assume that he was alone in Athens as one individual thinking and speculating on such ideas, but that he was part of a wider discourse within Athens at the time concerned with how we should understand the nature of the highest and most powerful god.

But, it was not just the nature of Zeus that was being speculated upon by Aeschylus in his plays, but also how the gods govern the universe, what in essence the justice of Zeus is. The political issues being played out in the *Eumenides* would naturally have had an immediate and direct importance for the Athenian audience regarding the radical democratisation of the city's political and judicial institutions.

As has been commented on in the main body of the text, the central position of the Areopagus court to the play's plot as simply a homicide court indicates that Aeschylus may have been supplying an *ex post facto* divine justification for the recent changes to it. But, there is also something far more fundamental to the presentation of justice in Aeschylus, something which underpins every one of his plays. This is that the gods are not kind or benevolent deities attempting to improve the lot of mankind, but only care for their own honour and the respect paid to their divinity. As we saw in discussion of the *Oresteia* above, Agamemnon's death is avenged because the gods did not want it and the king had acted in a just manner by consistently following their orders. Clytemnestra is killed for Agamemnon's death; and the Areopagus court – rather than being something strictly for mankind's betterment – is part of the Olympians' attempt to placate the Erinyes, which only happens when the Erinyes are given honours and subsumed within the order of *polis* deities. As has been argued, the gods seem to be motivated by their own desires and by their own sense of honour.

If we now take an example from another play, the *Persians*, the same pattern emerges. Aeschylus supplies both divine and human reasons for why Xerxes is defeated by the Greeks: not only is it because the Athenians are a free people fighting for their liberty, nor is it just their cunning to deceive Xerxes the night before the battle at Salamis; but, it is also Xerxes' arrogance and transgression of what is suitable for a mortal to do. So, he yoked the Bosphoros, trying to overpower Poseidon (*Pers.* 749-52), and he attempted to bring Greece under his domain. While Persia's destruction seems to have been prophesied by Zeus (*Pers.* 739-42), there is no time limit on it: it is Xerxes' own actions which bring it about there and then (*Pers.* 742). Xerxes' excessve and transgressive behaviour brings about his and Persia's ruin. The Greeks, however, are not depicted as having acted in any excessive or transgressive way. The gods in the *Persians* and in the plays of Aeschylus as a whole do not act out of kindness, and the rule of Zeus is not merciful. The justice of the gods is instead based around a framework of transgression and punishment, and Aeschylus seems all too aware of how easy it is to anger the gods. What is suggested by the destruction of Xerxes, thus, is that the Greeks' victory over the Persians at Salamis was due largely to the piety of the Greeks and, more importantly perhaps, the impiety of the Persians. Indeed, the recent real-life events depicted in the *Persians* seem also to serve a specific purpose for Aeschylus and for

his audience, because it can be interpreted as a word of warning to the Greeks not to forget the power and wrath of the gods and the need to keep them on their side at all times.

The plays of Aeschylus, therefore, do not present an optimistic idea of Zeus and his justice, but rather a pragmatic and pessimistic view, one which recognises that the gods are powerful beings in need of respect and honour whose wills must be carefully observed, because if they are not, it could bring about the destruction of not only an individual human, but an entire nation.

APPENDIX: The Theology of Aeschylus and the *Prometheus Bound*

It has been argued in the preceding pages that the rule of Zeus is not kind, and that the god cares primarily for the honour that is due to him. And it is uncontentious to say that this is how the Zeus of the *Prometheus Bound* is generally seen. Although it has been argued in the Introduction of this thesis that the *Prometheus Bound* is not part of the canon of Aeschylus and thus excluded from the discussion in this thesis, its (likely) proximity in terms of date of production (late 440s/430s) means that it may be worthwhile to give some brief consideration to the play, as it may be possible to see similarities in the presentation of Zeus with the uncontested corpus of Aeschylus. What will follow is a brief, cursory presentation (without discussion) of certain passages concerning Zeus from the *Prometheus Bound* that seem to share key details with the Zeus of Aeschylus (as has been presented in the thesis). This is not to back-track on the arguments presented in the Introduction, nor does it negate the discussions offered throughout the thesis. This 'appended' page or so merely offers a potential starting point for discussions and comparisons of Aeschylus' presentation of Zeus with those of the *Prometheus Bound*, because while there may be doubts over the play's authorship, there can be no doubt about the play as a work of art and as a play that has something significant to say about the presentation of the gods.

As has been said, it is uncontroversial to say that Zeus in the *Prometheus* is not kind, if not cruel. The play is concerned with Zeus' punishment of Prometheus, closely following the Titan's suffering, and the new rule of the Olympian god. From the beginning of the play we are presented with a clear depiction of the nature of the new divine regime. While he is still binding Prometheus (and even as an Olympian), Hephaistos fears to talk against, or indeed about, the rule of Zeus, stating: πάντως δ' ἀνάγκη τῶνδέ μοι τόλμαν σχεθεῖν, | εὐωριάζειν γὰρ πατρὸς λόγους βαρύ. 'Still, I have no alternative but to endure doing it, for it is dangerous to slight the Father's word.' (*Pr.* 16-17) As a clear indication of the power of Zeus and the fear his wrath induces in others, it is possible to compare such a image with Zeus in the *Suppliants* (*Supp.* 347, 385-6, 478-9, 615-7). Power then continues by urging Hephaistos on, warning: ὡς οὐπιτιμητής γε τῶν ἔργων βαρύς. 'For the overseer of our work is severe.' (*Pr.* 77) Here we are presented with the notion of Zeus watching over from above, judging deeds, recalling images from Aeschylus (cf. *Supp.* 381-6, 402-4).

Within the first 80 lines we are thus presented with several key features of the god, which help establish a clear picture of Zeus in the *Prometheus Bound* early on in the play. First, the god is described as wrathful, and others fear to provoke him; secondly, Zeus is a detached figure who watches over the actions of others, judging them, and is willing to punish those who do wrong by his rule. In both of the passages quoted so far, it is possible to see how the image of Zeus as a powerful and wrathful figure comes out strongly.

A little later and in an image that recalls the presentation of Zeus seen earlier and the presentation of the god in Aeschylus, Okeanos says that Zeus is a detached figure and wrathful when crossed: εἰ δ' ὧδε τραχεῖς καὶ τεθηγμένους λόγους | ῥίψεις, τάχ' ἄν σου καὶ μακρὰν ἀνωτέρω | θακῶν κλύοι Ζεύς, ὥστε σοι τὸν νῦν ὄχλον | παρόντα μόχθων παιδιὰν εἶναι δοκεῖν. 'If you go on hurling out such sharp and savage words, Zeus, though he sits far above, may well hear you, with the result that the crowd of miseries you have at present will seem like child's play.' (*Pr.* 311-14) Here, we are able to see that the picture of Zeus being created by the poet focuses again on the idea of the god as a detached figure, wrathful and powerful, and a god whom other characters fear to cross.

In discussion with Okeanos, Prometheus focuses on the power of Zeus and one of its key symbols, the thunderbolt. Prometheus urges Okeanos not to trouble himself in going to speak to Zeus on his behalf, because he fears Zeus may also punish him for doing so. In highlighting the wrath of Zeus, Prometheus draws on the example of Typhon who is brought low by Zeus' thunderbolt (*Pr.* 351-76). Of course, the thunderbolt is a common image in Greek literature, but it is also one which Aeschylus has drawn upon in his extant work, most notably in the *Seven Against Thebes* during the 'Shield Scene' in reference to Hyperbius' shield who is placed against Hippomedon who has Typhon on his shield (*Th.* 486-520), and in the *Eumenides* when Athena uses it as a threat against the Erinyes in an attempt to prevent them exacting revenge on Athens (*Eu.* 824-8). Indeed, in a further connection with the *Eumenides*, the chorus refer to the attitude of Zeus and his laws towards the older gods: ἀμέγαρτα γὰρ τάδε Ζεὺς | ἰδίοις νόμοις κρατύνων | ὑπερήφανον θεοῖς τοῖς | πάρος ἐνδείκνυσιν αἰχμάν. 'For Zeus, exercising this unlimited control under laws of his own making, is displaying the arrogance of power towards the gods of old.' (*Pr.* 402-5) So, the all-powerful will of Zeus is viewed in a negative light when it comes into conflict with the older generation of

gods. In the *Eumenides*, the conflict between the older gods, the Erinyes, and the younger gods, the Olympians, is something which is drawn upon heavily by Aeschylus in his play both in terms of imagery and in terms of language, as is shown in Chapter 1 with the use of the words δαίμων and θεός. But, in contrast with the presentation of the conflict in the *Prometheus Bound*, the depiction in Aeschylus's play of the Olympian gods is not negative.

The final passages to which I wish to draw attention focus on the all-powerful nature of Zeus and the efficacy of his will, but do so in a less negative way. So, the chorus wish: μηδάμ' ὁ πάντα νέμων | θεῖτ' ἐμᾷ γνώμᾳ κράτος ἀντίπαλον Ζεύς. 'May Zeus, the disposer of all things, never set his power in opposition to my will.' (*Pr.* 526-7) This passage hints again at the idea of the power of Zeus and the fear he creates in others, as is found in the examples from earlier on in the play. But, here there is a suggestion in these lines that the chorus is resigned to the way things are, that they have accepted the rule of Zeus. This apparent acceptance of Zeus' position as the king of the gods is then repeated, and in a way that is applicable to, and reminiscent of, Aeschylus too: οὔποτε | τὰν Διὸς ἁρμονίαν θνατῶν παρεξίασι βουλαί. 'Never will the schemes of mortals transgress the ordered law of Zeus.' (*Pr.* 550-1) These two lines first stress the ultimate power of Zeus and the futility of fighting him, something that is reinforced throughout the play. Secondly, it brings to the fore the notion of Zeus as the distributer and overseer of justice and order in the world, which is also touched upon earlier. The justice of Zeus is absolute and obedience to it is required absolutely.

Furthermore, towards the end of the play, the author of the *Prometheus Bound* presents us with another of the key aspects of Zeus seen in Greek literature from Homer onwards, which is the idea of the god being able to bring about any deed he wants. Hermes states that: ψευδηγορεῖν γὰρ οὐκ ἐπίσταται στόμα | τὸ Δῖον, ἀλλὰ πᾶν ἔπος τελεῖ. 'For the mouth of Zeus does not know how to lie; he fulfils every word he speaks.' (*Pr.* 1032-3) The notion of the unfailing will of Zeus and the impossibility of overthrowing him is something again which is found consistently in Aeschylus and which is discussed at length in Chapter 3. Indeed, the fact that the god is said to be unable to lie is comparable to how Apollo speaks of his prophecies and Zeus in the *Eumenides* (*Eu.* 614-21).

Irrespective of authorship, it is possible to see similarities between the presentation of Zeus in the *Prometheus Bound* and the plays of Aeschylus,

particularly concerning his power, his will and wrath. As has been demonstrated in this thesis, Zeus in Aeschylus is not a kind or benevolent deity who works towards the betterment of mankind and the same is true in the *Prometheus Bound* – although in the latter play this is an aspect of his character stressed to a far greater degree, especially in the first half of the play. The Zeus of Aeschylus and the Zeus of the *Prometheus Bound* are thus both depicted as a god who cares primarily for obedience to his will and as a god who punishes transgressions of his justice. So, if the authenticity of the *Prometheus Bound* was not disputed and was considered a genuine play of Aeschylus, it would be possible to achieve interesting comparisons with the Zeus of Aeschylus. Indeed, it would be possible to argue for a consistency in theology between the seven plays and for a more 'negative' understanding of the justice of Zeus, as has been argued for and demonstrated above in this thesis.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Editions, commentaries and translations of Aeschylus

Broadhead, H. D. (1960) *The Persae of Aeschylus* (Cambridge).

Collard, C. (2002) *Aeschylus: Oresteia* (trans.) (Oxford).

- (2008) *Aeschylus: Persians and Other Plays* (trans.) (Oxford).

Denniston, J. D. and Page, D. L. (1957) *Aeschylus: Agamemnon* (Oxford).

Ewans, M. (1995) *Aischylos: The Oresteia* (trans.) (London).

- (1996) *Aischylos: Suppliants and Other Dramas* (trans.) (London).

Fraenkel, E. (1950) *Aeschylus: Agamemnon*, 3 vols. (Oxford).

Friis Johansen, H. and Whittle, E. W. (FJW) (1980) *Aeschylus: The Suppliants*, 3 vols. (Copenhagen).

Garvie, A. F. (1986) *Aeschylus: Choephori* (Oxford).

- (2009) *Aeschylus: Persae* (Oxford).

Grene, D. and Lattimore, R. (eds.) (1953) *Aeschylus I* (trans.) (Chicago).

- (eds.) (1956) *Aeschylus II* (trans.) (Chicago).

Grene, D. and O'Flaherty, W. D. (1989) *The Oresteia by Aeschylus* (trans.) (Chicago).

Griffith, M. (1983) *Aeschylus: Prometheus Bound* (Cambridge).

Groeneboom, P. (1949) *Aeschylus' Choephoroi* (Groningen).

- (1952) *Aeschylus' Eumeniden* (Groningen).
- (1960) *Aischylos' Perser* (Göttingen).
- (1966) *Aeschylus' Agamemnon* (Amsterdam).
- (1966) *Aeschylus' Zeven Tegen Thebe* (Amsterdam).

Hall, E. (1996) *Aeschylus: Persians* (Warminster).

Headlam, W. (1909) *The Plays of Aeschylus* (trans.) (London)

Hogan, J. C. (1984) *Aeschylus: A Commentary on the Complete Greek Tragedies* (Chicago).

Hutchinson, G. O. (1985) *Aeschylus: Seven Against Thebes* (Oxford).

Keck, K. H. (1863) *Aeschylos: Agamemnon* (Leipzig).

Page, D. L. (1972) *Aeschyli Septem Quae Supersunt Tragoedia*[*e*] (Oxford).

Podlecki, A. J. (1987) *Aeschylus: The Eumenides* (Warminster).

- (2005) *Aeschylus: Prometheus Bound* (Warminster).

Radt, S. (ed.) (1985) *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta, Vol. 3, Aeschylus* (Göttingen).

Sommerstein, A. H. (1989) *Aeschylus: Eumenides* (Cambridge).

- (2008) *Aeschylus*, 3 Vols. (trans.) (Cambridge, MA.).

Thomson, G. W. and Headlam, W. G. (1938) *The Oresteia*, 2 vols. (Cambridge).

Tucker, T. G. (1889) *The Supplices of Aeschylus* (London).

- (1901) *The Choephori of Aeschylus* (Cambridge).
- (1908) *The Seven Against Thebes of Aeschylus* (Cambridge).

Verrall, A. W. (1887) *The Seven Against Thebes of Aeschylus* (London).

- (1893) *The Choephori of Aeschylus* (London).
- (1904) *The Agamemnon of Aeschylus* (London).
- (1908) *The Eumenides of Aeschylus* (London).

Vürtheim, J. (1928, 1967) *Aischylos' Schutzflehende* (Groningen).

Weir Smyth, H. (1922) *Aeschylus I* (Cambridge, MA.).

Weir Smyth, H. and Lloyd-Jones, H. (1926) *Aeschylus II* (Cambridge, MA.).

West, M. L. (1998) *Aeschylus: Tragoediae* (Stuttgart and Leipzig).

Criticism

Adkins, A. W. H. (1960) *Merit and Responsibility* (Oxford).

Allan, W. (2005) 'Tragedy and the Early Greek Philosophical Tradition', in Gregory, J. (ed.) (2005), 23-37.

- (2006) 'Divine Justice and Cosmic Order in Early Greek Epic', *JHS*, Vol. 126, 1-35.

Anderson, M. J. (ed.) (1965) *Classical Drama and its Influence* (London).

Barnes, J. (1982) *The Presocratic Philosophers* (London).

Barrett, W. S. (1964) *Euripides: Hippolytos* (Oxford).

Bees, R. (2009) *Aischylos. Interpretationen zum Verständnis seiner Theologie.* (München).

Bowie, A. (2007) 'Religion and Politics in Aeschylus' *Oresteia'*, in M. Lloyd (2007) 323-358, (First published in *Classical Quarterly* 43 (1993), 10-31).

Bremmer, J. N. (1983) *The Early Greek Concept of the Soul* (Princeton).

- (1999) *Greek Religion* (Cambridge).

Brill, S. (2009) 'Violence and Vulnerability in Aeschylus's *Suppliants'*, in W. Wians (ed.) (2009), 161-180.

Broadie, S. (1999) 'Rational Theology', in A. A. Long (ed.) (1999), 205-224.

Brunius-Nilsson, E. (1955) *ΔAIMONIE: An Inquiry into a Mode of Apostrophe in Old Greek Literature* (Uppsala).

Burian, P. (2007) 'Pelasgus and Politics in Aeschylus' Danaid Trilogy', in M. Lloyd (2007), 199-210, (First published in *Weiner Studien* 8 (1974), 5-14).

Burkert, W. (1985) *Greek Religion* (tr. John Raffan) (Malden, MA).

Burnet, J. (1930) *Early Greek Philosophy* (London).

Burnett, A. P. (1998) *Revenge in Attic and Later Tragedy* (Berkeley).

Buxton, R. (1982) *Persuasion in Greek Tragedy: A study of* peitho (Cambridge).

- (ed.) (2000) *Oxford Readings in Greek Religion* (Oxford).

Cairns, D. (1993) AIDŌS: *The Psychology and Ethics of Honour and Shame in Ancient Greek Literature* (Oxford).

Cairns, D. (1996) 'Hybris, Dishonour, and Thinking Big', *JHS*, Vol. 116, 1-32.

- (ed.) (2013) Tragedy and Archaic Greek Thought (Swansea).

Cairns, D. and Liapis, V. (eds.) (2006) *Dionysalexandros* (Swansea).

Chantraine, P. (1968) *Dictionnaire Etymologique de la Langue Grecque*, 2 vols. (Paris).

Cohen, D. (1986) 'The Theodicy of Aeschylus: Justice and Tyranny in the *Oresteia'*, *Greece & Rome*, Vol. 33.2, 129-141.

Conacher, D. J. (1976) 'Comments on an Interpretation of Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 182-183', *Phoenix*, Vol. 30.4, 328-336.

- (1983) 'Review: On the Hymn to Zeus in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* by Peter M. Smith', *Phoenix*, Vol. 37, 163-6.
- (1987) *Aeschylus' Oresteia: A Literary Commentary* (Toronto).
- (1996) *Aeschylus: The Earlier Plays and Related Studies* (Toronto).

Cook, A. B. (1914-1940) *Zeus: A Study in Ancient Religion*, 3 vols. (Cambridge).

Cornford, F. M. (1935, repr. 1997) *Plato's Cosmology* (Indianapolis).

- (1952) *Principium Sapientiae* (Cambridge).

Darcus, S. (1974) 'DAIMON as a Force Shaping ETHOS in Heraclitus', *Phoenix*, Vol. 28.4, 390-407.

Darcus Sullivan, S. (1997) *Aeschylus' Use of Psychological Terminology: Traditional and New* (Montreal & Kingston)

Davies, M. (1991) *Sophocles: Trachiniae* (Oxford).

Denniston, J. D. (1934) *The Greek Particles* (Oxford).

Diels, H. (1951) *Die Fragmente Der Vorsokratiker*. (6th ed. revised with additions and index by W. Kranz) (Berlin).

Dietrich, B. C. (1967) *Death, Fate and the Gods* (London).

Dodds, E. R. (1951) *Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley).

- (1973) *The Ancient Concept of Progress and other Essays of Greek Literature and Belief* (Oxford).
- (2007) 'Moral and Politics in the *Oresteia*', in M. Lloyd (2007), 245-64, (First published in *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 6 (1960), 19-31).

Dover, K. J. (1973) 'Neglected Aspects of Agamemnon's Dilemma' in *JHS*, 58-69.

Dowden, K. (2006) *Zeus* (London).

Easterling, P. E. (ed.) (1997) *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy* (Cambridge).

Edinger, H. G. (1981) *Index Analyticus Graecitatis Aeschyleae* (Hildesheim and New York).

Ehnmark, E. (1935) *The Idea of God in Homer* (Uppsala).

Else, G. F. (1949) 'God and Gods in Early Greek Thought', *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, Vol. 80, 24-36.

Farnell, L. R. (1921) *Greek Hero-Cults and the Idea of Immortality* (Oxford).

Fisher, N. R. E. (1992) *Hybris: a study in values of honour and shame in ancient Greece* (Warminster).

Fontenrose, J. (1971) 'Gods and Men in the *Oresteia*', *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, Vol. 102, 71-109.

Fowler, R. L. (ed.) (2004) *The Cambridge Companion to Homer* (Cambridge).

Fränkel, H. (1975) *Early Greek Poetry and Philosophy* (trs. Moses Hadas and James Willis) (Oxford).

François, G. (1957) *Le Polythéisme et L'Emploi au Singulier des Mots ΘΕΟΣ, ΔΑΙΜΩΝ dans La Littérature Grecque d'Homère a Platon* (Paris).

Frazer, J. G. (1918) *The Golden Bough* I-XIII (3rd ed.) (London).

Freeman, K. (1946) *The Pre-Socratic Philosophers* (Oxford).

Freudenthal, J. (1886) *Űber die Theologie des Xenophanes* (Breslau).

Frisk, H. (1954-70) *Griechische Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, vol. 1-3 (Heidelberg).

Gagarin, M. (1974) 'DIKÊ in Archaic Greek Thought', *Classical Philology*, Vol. 69.3, 186-97.

- (1975) 'The Vote of Athena', *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 96, 121-27.
- (1976) *Aeschylean Tragedy* (Berkeley).
- (1986) *Early Greek Law* (Berkeley).

Garvie, A. F. (2006) *Aeschylus' Supplices: Play and Trilogy* (Bristol).

Geisser, F. (2002) *Götter, Geister und Dämonen* (München and Leipzig).

Goff, B. (ed.) (1995) *History, Tragedy, Theory: Dialogue on Athenian Drama* (Austin).

Golden, L. (1961) 'Zeus, Whoever he is', *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, Vol. 92, 156-167.

- (1962) 'Zeus the Protector and Zeus the Destroyer', *Classical Philology*, Vol. 57.1, 20-26.

Goldhill, S. (1984) *Language, Sexuality, Narrative: the Oresteia* (Cambridge).

- (1986) *Reading Greek Tragedy* (Cambridge).
- (1996) 'Collectivity and Otherness – The Authority of the Tragic Chorus' in M.S. Silk (1996), 244-56.

Gomperz, T. (1901) *Greek Thinkers: A History of Ancient Philosophy* (trs. L. Magnus and G. G. Berry) (London).

Goodwin, W. W. (1965) *Syntax of the Moods and Tenses of the Greek Verb* (London).

Gould, J. (1996) 'Tragedy and Collective Experience' in M.S. Silk (1996), 217-43.

Graf, F. (1993) *Greek Mythology: An Introduction* (tr. Thomas Marier) (Baltimore).

Graham, D. W. (2010) *The Texts of Early Greek Philosophy*, 2 Vols. (Cambridge).

Greene, W. C. (1948) *Moira: Fate, Good, and Evil in Greek Thought* (Cambridge, MA).

Gregory, J. (ed.) (2005) *A Companion to Greek Tragedy* (Malden, MA. and Oxford)

Griffin, J (ed.) (1999) *Sophocles Revisited: Essays Presented to Sir Hugh Lloyd-Jones* (Oxford).

Griffith, M. (1977) *The Authenticity of Prometheus Bound* (Cambridge).

- (1978) 'Aeschylus, Sicily and Prometheus' in Dawe, R.D. (ed.), *Dionysiaca* (Cambridge).

Grotius, H. (2005) *The Rights of War and Peace*, 3 vols. (eds. R. Tuck and J. Barbeyrac) (Indianapolis).

Grube, G. M. A. (1970) 'Zeus in Aeschylus', *American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 91.1, 43-51.

Guthrie, W. K. C. (1950) *The Greeks and their Gods* (London).

- (1962-1969) *A History of Greek Philosophy*, Vols. I-III (Cambridge).

Haigh, A. E. (1907) *The Attic Theatre* (Oxford).

Hall, E. (1989) *Inventing the Barbarian* (Oxford).

- (2010) *Greek Tragedy: Suffering Under the Sun* (Oxford).

Halliwell, S. (1988) *Plato: Republic 10* (Warminster).

Hammond, P. (2009) *The Strangeness of Tragedy* (Oxford).

Havelock, E. A. (1978) *The Greek Concept of Justice* (Cambridge, MA).

Headlam, W. (1898) 'Aeschylea. (continued)', *The Classical Review*, Vol. 12, 245-9.

- (1902) 'Metaphor, with a Note on Transference of Epithets', *The Classical Review*, Vol. 16, 434-42.

Heath, B. (1762) *Notae sive lectiones ad Tragicorum Graec. veterum... dramata deperditorumque relliquias* (Oxford).

Heath, J. (1999) 'The Serpent and the Sparrows: Homer and the Parodos of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon'*, *The Classical Quarterly*, Vol. 49.2, 396-407.

Hedén, E. (1912) *Homerische Götterstudien* (Diss. Uppsala).

Herington, J. (1970) *The Author of the Prometheus Bound* (Texas).

- (1986) *Aeschylus* (Yale).

Hernandez, A.- C. (ed.) (2008) *Eschyle: À L'Aube du Théãtre Occidental* (Geneva).

Herrmann, F.-G. (2013) 'Eteocles' Decision in Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes*' in D. Cairns (2013), 39-80.

Hester, D. A. (1981) 'The Casting Vote', *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 103, 265-74.

Hussey, E. (1972) *The Presocratics* (London).

Inwood, B. (2001) *The Poem of Empedocles* (Toronto).

Ireland, S. (1986) *Aeschylus* (Oxford).

Italie, G. (1964) *Lexicon Aeschyleum* (Leiden).

Jaeger, W. (1945) *Paideia: the Ideals of Greek Culture*, vol. 1 (tr. Gilbert Highet) (Oxford).

- (1947) *The Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers* (Oxford).

Jones, J. (1962) *On Aristotle and Greek Tragedy* (London).

Jørgensen, O. (1904) 'Das Auftreten der Götter in den Büchern ι-μ der Odyssee', *Hermes*, vol. 39, 357-382.

Kahn, C. H. (1979) *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus* (Cambridge).

Kamerbeek, J. C. (1965) 'Prophecy and Tragedy', *Mnemosyne*, Vol. 18.1, 29-40.

Kearns, E. (2004) 'The Gods in the Homeric Epics', in Fowler (2004) 59-73.

Kerényi, C. (1975) *Zeus and Hera* (London).

Kirk, G. S. (1954) *Heraclitus: The Cosmic Fragments* (Cambridge).

- (1990) *The Iliad: A Commentary, Vol 2: books 5-8* (Cambridge).

Kirk, G. S., Raven, J. E., Schofield, M. (KRS) (1983, 2nd ed.) *The Presocratic Philosophers* (Cambridge).

Kittel, G., Bromiley, G. W., Friedrich, G., Pitkin, R. E. (eds.) (1964-1974) *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Michigan).

Kitto, H. D. F. (1961) *Greek Tragedy* (London).

- (1964) *Form and Meaning in Drama* (London).
- (1966) *Poiesis: Structure and Thought* (Berkeley).

Kouremenos, T., Parássoglou, G. M., Tsantsangoglou, K. (2006) *The Derveni Papyrus: Edited with Introduction and Commentary* (Firenze).

Laks, A. (1983) *Diogene D'Apollonie: La Dernière Cosmologie Présocratique* (Lille).

Laks, A., Most, G. W. (eds.) (1997) *Studies on the Derveni Papyrus* (Oxford).

Lawrence, S. E. (1976) 'Artemis in the *Agamemnon*', *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 97.2, 97-110.

Lesher, J. H. (1992) *Xenophanes of Colophon* (Toronto).

Lesky, A. (1965) *Greek Tragedy* (tr. H. A. Frankfort) (London).

- (1983) 'Decision and Responsibility in the Tragedy of Aeschylus', in E. Segal (1983), 12-23.

LIMC: Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae I-VIII (1981) (Zürich).

Lloyd, M. (ed.) (2007) *Aeschylus: Oxford Readings in Classical Studies* (Oxford).

Lloyd-Jones, H. (1956) 'Zeus in Aeschylus', *JHS*, Vol. 76, 55-67.

- (1961) 'The Guilt of Agamemnon', *The Classical Quarterly*, Vol. 12.2, 187-199.
- (1971) *The Justice of Zeus* (Berkeley).
- (1983) 'Artemis and Iphigeneia', *JHS*, Vol. 103, 87-102.

Long, A. A. (ed.) (1999) *The Cambridge Companion to Early Greek Philosophy* (Cambridge).

Lyons, J. (1967) *Structural Semantics* (Oxford).

Macleod, C. W. (2007) 'Politics and the *Oresteia'*, in M. Lloyd (2007) 265-301, (First published in *JHS*, Vol. 102 (1982), 124-144).

Marcovich, M. (1967) *Heraclitus* (Merida).

Marks, J. (2008) *Zeus in the Odyssey* (Cambridge, MA and London).

McEvilley, T. (2002) *The Shape of Ancient Thought* (New York).

Mikalson, J. D. (1991) *Honor Thy Gods* (Chapel Hill).

Mitchell-Boyask, R. (2009) *Aeschylus: Eumenides* (London).

Most, G. W. (2003) 'Philosophy and Religion', in D. Sedley (ed.) (2003), 300-322.

Murray, G. (1940) *Aeschylus: The Creator of Tragedy* (Oxford).

Murray, R. D. (1958) *The Motif of Io in Aeschylus' Suppliants* (Princeton).

Nilsson, M. P. (1925) *A History of Greek Religion* (Oxford).

- (1967) *Geschichte der griechischen Religion*, (Handbuch der Altertumwissenschaft, Teil 2, Bd. 1) (München).

Norden, E. (1956) *Agnostos Theos* (Stuttgart).

Nussbaum, M. C. (2001) *The Fragility of Goodness* (Cambridge).

Ogden, D. (ed.) (2007) *A Companion to Greek Religion* (Malden, MA and Oxford).

Otis, B. (1981) *Cosmos and Tragedy: An Essay on the Meaning of Aeschylus* (Chapel Hill).

Otto, W. F. (1954) *The Homeric Gods* (tr. Moses Hadas) (London).

Papadopoulou, T. (2011) *Aeschylus: Suppliants* (Bristol).

Parker, R. (1983) *Miasma: Pollution and Purification in Early Greek Religion* (Oxford).

- (1996) *Athenian Religion: a History* (Oxford).
- (2005) *Polytheism and Society at Athens* (Oxford).

Peradotto, J. J. (2007) 'The Omen of the Eagles and the *ΗΘΟΣ* of Agamemnon', in M. Lloyd (2007), 211-244, (First published in *Phoenix* (1969), Vol. 23.3, 237-263).

Pickard-Cambridge, A. W. (1927) *Dithyramb, Tragedy and Comedy* (Oxford).

- (1946) *The Theatre of Dionysus in Athens* (Oxford).

Podlecki, A. J. (1966) *The Political Background of Aeschylean Tragedy* (Ann Arbor).

Pope, M. (1974) 'Merciful Heavens? A Question in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon', JHS,* Vol. 94, 100-113.

Porzig, W. (1926) *Aischylos: die attische Tragödie* (Leipzig).

Pulleyn, S. (1997) *Prayer in Greek Religion* (Oxford).

- (2000) *Homer: Iliad I* (Oxford).

Rawls, J. (1973) *A Theory of Justice* (Oxford).

Reinhardt, K. (1949) *Aischylos als Regisseur und Theologe* (Bern).

- (1959, 2nd ed.) *Parmenides und die Geschichte der griechischen Philosophie* (Frankfurt).
- (1961) *Die Ilias und Ihr Dichter* (Göttingen).

Robinson, T. M. (1987) *Heraclitus Fragments: A Text and Translation with a Commentary* (Toronto).

Rohde, E. (1925) *Psyche* (tr. W. B. Hillis) (London).

Roscher, W. H. (1884-1937) *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie* (Leipzig).

Rösler, W. (2007) 'The End of the Hiketides and Aischylos' Danaid Trilogy' in M. Lloyd (2007), 174-198, (First published 'Der Schluss der Hiketiden und die Danaiden-Trilogie des Aischylos', *Rheinisches Museum* 136 (1993), 1-22).

Rosenbloom, D. (2006) *Aeschylus: Persians* (London).

Rosenmeyer, T. G. (1982) *The Art of Aeschylus* (Berkeley).

Ruffell, I. A. (2012) *Aeschylus: Prometheus Bound* (Bristol).

Salzmann, G. G. (1823) *Observationum in Aesch. Agam. specimen* (Berol).

Schenkeveld, D. M. (1988) 'Ancient Views on the Meaning of δαίμων in 'Iliad' Θ 166', *Hermes*, Vol. 116.1, 110-115.

Schmid, W. (1929) *Untersuchungen zum gefesselten Prometheus* (Stuttgart).

Seaford, R. (1994) *Reciprocity and Ritual* (Oxford).

- (1995) 'Historicising Tragic Ambivalence: The Vote of Athena' in Goff, B (1995), 202-21.

Sedley, D. (1998) 'Platonic Causes', *Phronesis*, Vol. 43.2, 114-132.

- (ed.) (2003) *The Cambridge Companion to Greek and Roman Philosophy* (Cambridge).

Segal, E. (ed.) (1983) *Oxford Readings in Greek Tragedy* (Oxford).

Sewell-Rutter, N. J. (2007) *Guilt by Descent* (Oxford).

Silk, M. S. (ed.) (1996) *Tragedy and the Tragic: Greek Theatre and Beyond* (Oxford).

Smith, P. M. (1980) *On the Hymn to Zeus in Aeschylus' Agamemnon* (Chico, CA).

Snell, B. (1953) *The Discovery of the Mind* (tr. T.G. Rosenmeyer) (Cambridge, MA).

Solmsen, F. (1949) *Hesiod and Aeschylus* (Ithaca).

Sommerstein, A. H. (1996) *Aeschylean Tragedy* (Bari).

- (2013) '*Atē* in Aeschylus' in D. Cairns (2013), 1-15.

Sourvinou-Inwood, C. (2003) *Tragedy and Athenian Religion* (Lanham, MA).

Stokes, M. C. (1971) *One and Many in Presocratic Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA).

Taplin, O. (1977) *The Stagecraft of Aeschylus* (Oxford).

- (2007) *Pots and Plays* (Los Angeles).

Thalmann, W. G. (1978) *Dramatic Art in Aeschylus' Seven Against Thebes* (Yale).

Thomson, G. (1946) *Aeschylus and Athens* (London).

Tyler, W.S. (1859, repr. 2006) *The Theology of the Greek Poets* (Michigan).

Tyrrell, W. B. (1976) 'Zeus and Agamemnon at Aulis', *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 71.4, 328-334.

Usener, H. (1896) *Götternamen* (Bonn).

Vernant, J.- P. and Vidal-Naquet, P. (1988) *Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece* (tr. Janet Lloyd) (New York).

Vickers, B. (1973) *Towards Greek Tragedy* (London).

West, M. L. (1966) *Hesiod: Theogony* (Oxford).

- (1971) *Early Greek Philosophy and the Orient* (Oxford).

- (1978) *Hesiod: Works and Days* (Oxford).
- (1979) 'The Parodos of the *Agamemnon*', *The Classical Quarterly*, Vol. 29.1, 1-6.
- (1990) *Studies in Aeschylus* (Stuttgart).
- (1997) *The East Face of Helicon* (Oxford).
- (1999) 'Ancestral Curses', in Griffin (1999), 31-45.
- (2007) *Indo-European Poetry and Myth* (Oxford).
- (2007a) 'The Prometheus Trilogy' in M. Lloyd (2007), 359-96, (First published in *JHS* 99 (1979), 130-48).

Whallon, W. (1961) 'Why is Artemis Angry?', *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 82.1, 78-88.

Wians, W. (ed.) (2009) *Logos and Muthos: Philosophical Essays in Greek Literature* (New York).

- (2009a) 'The *Agamemnon* and Human Knowledge', in W. Wians (ed.) (2009), 181-198.

Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, T. von (1917) *Die dramatische Technik des Sophokles* (Berlin).

Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, U. von (1955, 2nd ed.) *Der Glaube der Hellenen*, 2 bde. (Darmstadt).

Wilford, F. A. (1965) 'ΔΑΙΜΩΝ in Homer', *Numen*, Vol. 12.3, 217-232.

Williams, B. (1993) *Shame and Necessity* (Berkeley).

Winnington-Ingram, R. P. (1965) 'Tragedy and Archaic Greek Thought' in Anderson, M. J. (1965), 29-50.

- (1983) *Studies in Aeschylus* (Cambridge).

Zeitlin, F. I. (2009) *Under the Sign of the Shield: Semiotics and Aeschylus' Seven Against Thebes* (Lanham, MD).