

Leaving War Behind: War, Return, and Survival in
Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* and *Persians* and Euripides' *Trojan Women*

By

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For my grandmother Viola,
may her memory be for a blessing,
who loved learning, teaching, singing, and celebrating
and cried when Achilles died

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ABSTRACT

In this dissertation, I look at three Greek tragedies that are set in the period immediately after war: Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* and *Persians* and Euripides' *Trojan Women*. I define this set of tragedies as "crossing from war" plays, since all three involve the experience of transitioning from war to what comes after war. Focusing on the physical and emotional movement between these two spheres, I examine how these three tragedies portray the impact of war on soldiers and their families, particularly how and why these narratives depart from the epic model of Odysseus' homecoming in the *Odyssey*. In the *Odyssey*, Odysseus' homecoming is not complete until he has achieved three things: 1) returned to his homeland Ithaca, 2) reclaimed his throne and status as king among men, and 3) reunited with his family. I show how these tragedies, conversely, deny such a restoration to one's land, society, and family after war and expose the permanent damage that persists. These "crossing from war" stories depict the irreversible separation of the hero—and, indeed, every warrior—from his homeland, the inability of the warrior and others to regain their former status within their community upon return, and the permanently broken familial relationships caused by war. Through analysis of imagery—especially that of the physical land and youth—I demonstrate that the "crossing from war" tragedies are not simply stories of an individual's successes and failures, but also those of entire families, cities, and peoples. The effects of war are widespread, and they touch the men who fight and return, as well as the communities that are left behind. These plays bring to fulfillment what in the *Odyssey* are only temporary threats. Furthermore, I show how Greek tragedy enabled fears about war to be acted out on stage while at the same time bringing together the community in a way that might counteract those fears.

INTRODUCTION

The aftermath of the Trojan War and the homecomings of the Greek heroes are common subjects of Greek poetry. Scholars have only recently begun to explore the nature of combat trauma in this literature and, in particular, to investigate how the trauma of war may be portrayed in a soldier's homecoming. Much of this work stems from Jonathan Shay's two books, *Achilles in Vietnam* (1994) and *Odysseus in America* (2002). Shay, a clinical psychologist and thus a relative outsider to Classics, draws upon his work with Vietnam veterans to explore Homer's Achilles and Odysseus, finding parallels across time in the way that betrayal and loss of trust affect soldiers and in the value of a community for a soldier's recovery. He then uses this insight to offer critiques of modern American military structures and philosophy.

Scholars in Classics have expanded upon Shay's work, though the trend remains to use the modern world as a source of comparison. Lawrence Tritle's *From Melos to My Lai* (2000) finds connections between the ancient and modern worlds across genres, extending the exploration into combat trauma beyond Homer and the Trojan War heroes. Paul Woodruff's *The Ajax Dilemma* (2011) looks particularly at how Ajax's struggle with honor and justice parallels modern systems of rewards. Growing from a conference that was part of the Aquila Theatre's Ancient Greeks/Modern Lives program, Peter Meineck and David Konstan's edited volume *Combat Trauma and the Ancient Greeks* (2014) focuses especially on Greek drama. The essays in this book again have a significant modern component, presenting correspondences between passages from Greek literature and the personal accounts of 20th and 21st century veterans or drawing distinctions between the social and cultural environment of the Greeks and that of modern Americans. Most recently, Victor Caston and Silke-Maria Weineck's edited volume *Our Ancient Wars* (2016) considers how recent history and modern fields like psychology can inform

our understanding of the ancient world, as well as how stories from the past can influence how we approach current issues in warfare. These authors have contributed to our understanding of Greek literature and the Greeks by showing the ways that war affected not only the characters in literature but also the Greeks who were writing, watching, and reading this literature. For example, both Shay (2002) and Meineck (in Caston and Weineck 2016) argue that Athenian tragedy was a means of “cultural therapy” for the Greek audience.

Greek tragedy, in particular, is preoccupied with the question of how the Greeks understood and portrayed the impact of war on warriors and their families. The scholars mentioned above, who consider the ancient world in light of recent psychological research and modern experiences of war trauma, can help frame an investigation into this question; yet their approaches have limitations, especially when scholars attempt to diagnose characters with disorders such as PTSD. Contradictions between competing theories of trauma and conflicting understandings of the nature of PTSD can hinder our ability to map these ideas onto the ancient world and diminish the value that such an endeavor has. Without disregarding the important research that has been done on trauma in Greek tragedy, I take a more philological and cultural perspective, considering the patterns of traumatic homecoming and the importance of these stories to the Greek audience with regard to the genre of tragedy and the mythological tradition. In the 5th century, tragedians and their audiences had experienced war—whether the Persian Wars or the Peloponnesian War—and tragedy reflects in its language and content the fears and risks that surround sending men into combat. In my analysis, I engage with scholarship beyond the scholarship that I list above, which considers modern experiences of combat, war, and homecoming. I will provide a review of this relevant scholarship at the beginning of each chapter.

In this dissertation, I look at three plays that are set in the period immediately after war: Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* and *Persians* and Euripides' *Trojan Women*. These tragedies present images of war from several perspectives, including the experience of men in battle and upon return and the suffering of women and family members, both those who are left behind and those who experience war firsthand. I define this set of tragedies by their setting, since all three involve the experience of transitioning from war to what comes after war, with a focus on the physical and emotional movement between these two spheres. I call these tragedies the “crossing from war” plays to emphasize that moment of transition. The tragedians were certainly engaging with the *Odyssey* and its tradition as they composed their tragedies. In examining how Greek tragedy portrays the impact of war on warriors and their families, I focus on particular passages where these three tragedies present similar themes to the *Odyssey*, as well as on how and why they depart from their epic influence.

The *Odyssey* is a successful homecoming story, establishing both the potential challenges faced by the returning hero and what is required for the hero to overcome those challenges. Early in the epic, Telemachus has a conversation with Athena, disguised as Mentos, that defines the themes of Odysseus' homecoming journey. He imagines what has happened to his father and laments the state of the house in Odysseus' absence (1.231-51):

“ξεῖν’, ἐπεὶ ἄρ δὴ ταῦτά μ’ ἀνείρεαι ἡδὲ μεταλλάξ,
 μέλλεν μὲν ποτε οἶκος ὅδ’ ἀφνειὸς καὶ ἀμύμων
 ἔμμεναι, ὄφρ’ ἔτι κεῖνος ἀνὴρ ἐπιδήμιος ἦεν·
 νῦν δ’ ἐτέρως ἐβόλοντο θεοὶ κακὰ μητιόωντες,
 οἳ κεῖνον μὲν ἄϊστον ἐποίησαν περὶ πάντων (235)
 ἀνθρώπων, ἐπεὶ οὗ κε θανόντι περ ὧδ’ ἀκαχοίμην,
 εἰ μετὰ οἷσ’ ἐτάροισι δάμνη Τρώων ἐνὶ δήμῳ,
 ἡδὲ φίλων ἐν χερσίν, ἐπεὶ πόλεμον τολύπευσε.
 τῷ κέν οἱ τύμβον μὲν ἐποίησαν Παναχαιοί,
 ἡδὲ κε καὶ ᾧ παιδὶ μέγα κλέος ἦρατ’ ὀπίσσω. (240)
 νῦν δέ μιν ἀκλειῶς Ἄρπυιαι ἀνῆρέψαντο·
 οἷχετ’ ἄϊστος ἄπυστος, ἐμοὶ δ’ ὀδύνας τε γόους τε

κάλλιπεν· οὐδέ τι κεῖνον ὀδυρόμενος στεναχίζω
 οἶον, ἐπεὶ νύ μοι ἄλλα θεοὶ κακὰ κήδε' ἔτευξαν.
 ὅσσοι γὰρ νήσοισιν ἐπικρατέουσιν ἄριστοι, (245)
 Δουλιχίῳ τε Σάμῃ τε καὶ ὑλήεντι Ζακύνθῳ,
 ἢ δ' ὅσσοι κραναὴν Ἰθάκην κάτα κοιρανέουσιν,
 τόσσοι μητέρ' ἐμὴν μνῶνται, τρύχουσι δὲ οἶκον.
 ἢ δ' οὐτ' ἀρνεῖται στυγερὸν γάμον οὔτε τελευτὴν
 ποιῆσαι δύναται· τοὶ δὲ φθινύθουσιν ἔδοντες (250)
 οἶκον ἐμόν· τάχα δὴ με διαρραίσουσι καὶ αὐτόν.”

“Guest, since you inquire and ask me about these things, this house once was destined to be wealthy and blameless, as long as that man was at home. But now the gods wished it otherwise, devising evils, and they made him vanish beyond all men, since I would not have grieved so much at his death if he had been subdued with his companions in the land of the Trojans or in the hands of his dear ones after finishing the war. Then all the Achaeans would have made a grave for him, and he would have taken back great glory, and for his son, too. But now the whirlwinds have drawn him up without glory. He is gone, neither seen nor heard of, and he left pains and lamentation behind for me. Nor do I, mourning, groan for that man alone, since now the gods have produced other evil cares for me. For all the best men holding power on the islands—on Dulichium and on Same and on wooded Zacynthus—and all the kings on rocky Ithaca, all these men court my mother and wear out my house. And she neither refuses the hateful marriage nor is she able to make an end to this, but they, eating away my household, waste it away. And quickly they will destroy even me myself.”

Telemachus’ words demonstrate the importance of being restored to one’s land, society, and family after war, three themes that will be developed throughout the epic. His wish that Odysseus had died fighting at Troy and his fear that Odysseus instead met his fate at sea suggest a glorified perception of war while revealing the natural dangers that confront the returning warrior. Furthermore, Telemachus emphasizes Odysseus’ complete departure from Ithaca—he has gone and there has been no sight of or word from him (οἶχετ’ ἄϊστος ἄπυστος, 242).¹ These natural dangers and the potential for permanent loss are highlighted within the “crossing from war” plays. In addition to the threats to Odysseus’ life since he departed from Ithaca and the possibility that he will never set foot in his homeland again, Odysseus also faces challenges to his social status and familial relationships. Telemachus explains how Odysseus’ status in the

¹ The specific use of οἶχομαι to express permanent departure will be discussed in Chapter Two.

house is jeopardized: he has not brought back glory (κλέος, 240) but has apparently died ignominiously in the sea (ἀκλειῶς, 241). The former king of Ithaca no longer controls his household and possessions, but they are overrun by other men from Ithaca and the surrounding islands. Likewise, in the tragedies characters lose their positions of status during and after war. Moreover, relationships between Odysseus and his family are threatened by his absence. Telemachus is full of pain and grief (ὀδύνας τε γόους τε...ὀδυρόμενος στεναχίζω, 242-43) and Penelope is constantly wooed by the suitors (τόσσοι μητέρ' ἐμὴν μνῶνται, 248). Telemachus fears that he and his mother will not be able to bear the suitors much longer. The importance of the father-son bond is clear when Telemachus says that Odysseus would have brought back glory for his son, too (ἦδέ κε καὶ ᾧ παιδὶ μέγα κλέος ἦρατ' ὀπίσσω, 240) and when Telemachus takes ownership of the house (οἶκον ἐμόν, 251). His father's disappearance threatens that bond. Disruption of family relationships is also prominent within the "crossing from war" tragedies. Odysseus' homecoming is therefore not complete until he has achieved three things: 1) reached his homeland Ithaca, 2) reclaimed his throne and status as king among men, and 3) reunited with his family.

The *Odyssey* sets up obstacles to Odysseus' successes and shows how Odysseus overcomes each one. I show how the "crossing from war" tragedies, instead, claim that such a restoration to one's land, society, and family after war is essentially impossible. The plays focus on the same challenges as the *Odyssey* but develop them to extend beyond individual heroes and beyond the moment of homecoming. They depict the irreversible separation of the hero—and, indeed, every warrior—from his homeland, the inability of the warrior and others to regain their former status within their community, and the permanently broken familial relationships caused by war. Examining the three tragedies' treatments of war and return with an eye toward the *Odyssey* as a

model illuminates the distinctions between the epic and tragic genres. Whereas the *Odyssey* presents these problems but offers solutions through Odysseus' eventual homecoming, the "crossing from war" tragedies expose the permanent damage that persists after war. Furthermore, compared to the *Odyssey*, the plays afford perspectives and greater voice to figures beyond the hero and his immediate family.

My first two chapters look at the failed homecomings of Agamemnon in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* and Xerxes in his *Persians*. I begin with *Agamemnon* in Chapter One. This play offers a more direct parallel to the *Odyssey*, elaborating upon a story summarized by various characters within the epic and showing the contrasting unsuccessful return of a Trojan War hero. Though victorious in the Trojan War, Agamemnon returns to slaughter at the hands of his own wife. In this chapter, I first demonstrate how the characters in *Agamemnon* who wait at home during the war, like the Chorus and Clytemnestra, continuously reflect upon the departure of the army and the distances the army has traveled, even as some of these men are expected to return. This focus reinforces the difficulties of physical return to the homeland for all members of the army, Agamemnon and others. I then consider the perspectives of the army, demonstrated especially through the Herald's account of the challenges that the army face as they try to survive in a harsh environment both during war and after their victory. These disasters during war and upon return highlight again the army's distance from home, and they are presented as indiscriminate destruction, underscoring the more universal perspective of tragedy. Finally, I look at the collision of perspectives when those who have been abroad arrive home. I show how the disruptions that have occurred because of the army's absence, especially the breaking of familial relationships and loss of status, cannot be restored through physical return. The

confrontations between Clytemnestra and Agamemnon during the carpet scene and between Clytemnestra and Cassandra especially reinforce these themes.

In Chapter Two, I turn to *Persians* to demonstrate how these same themes emerge in a play that has quite a different context and setting from *Agamemnon*. Not set in the age of Greek heroes, *Persians* is about the contemporary events of the wars between Greece and Persia and dramatizes the return of a defeated enemy king. Xerxes returns to Persia not as a hero, but in disgrace, having lost the entire Persian fleet. Despite these differences, the play follows similar themes that reinforce the conception that war causes permanent destruction: characters at home like the Chorus reflect upon the departure of the army, the Messenger recalls indiscriminate destruction abroad during war and return, and perspectives of home and abroad collide upon Xerxes' return. Within this chapter, I especially explore scenes that develop perspectives on youth and old age, the conflict between divine and human understanding, and the use of clothing as a marker of status. These scenes support the portrayal of war as causing permanent and unnatural harm to communities and the message that humans who suffer through war cannot recover their former lives.

I argue that Greek tragedy presents the impossibility of successful homecoming as an outcrop of war itself. Although the tragedies of Agamemnon and Xerxes can be viewed as individual cases of hubris, vengeance, or divine intervention, they also speak more broadly to the communal fear of loss at war. War, as presented in these tragedies, requires that homecoming fails because it destroys the fabric of the home and community both for the soldiers abroad and for the families who await their return. It reconfigures the social identity of both men and women, preventing a successful return to prewar conditions.

My final chapter studies a third play, *Trojan Women*, which reveals the other side of the aftermath of war. Instead of men returning home, Euripides presents women being carried away from their homes as slaves after the war. Although from a different perspective—particularly the suffering of women—the play similarly reveals the destructive power of war upon a community and the impossibility of recovering former life at home once a community has undertaken war. I first look at how the characters in *Trojan Women* recall repeatedly the entrance of the Greek army into Troy. Instead of a focus on the departure of an army as in *Agamemnon* and *Persians*, this focus on arrival shows the moment of transgression from a different perspective but with a similar emphasis on the permanence of the act. I then examine the forced removal of the Trojan women from their land and the damage done to relationships in the aftermath of war. Lastly, I give particular attention to how *Trojan Women* portrays the deaths of young people, especially from the perspective of women, as the destruction of an entire city and people's future. This play completes the picture of the various groups affected by war—soldiers and families, both at home and at war. Furthermore, *Trojan Women*, along with the two plays of homecoming, portrays how war is not solely a matter of individual heroes and their immediate relations, but rather encompasses and threatens whole communities.

This examination of how the Greek tragedians treated the transition out of war illuminates the ways the Greeks thought about war and tragedy. Greek tragedy is consumed with stories of homecoming and the aftermath of war, particularly the death and destruction that follows. I respond to existing scholarship on such tragedies by showing that the act of waging war, and especially the critical moment of the soldier's return, should be considered alongside ideas such as justice and divine retribution as a primary cause for an individual's downfall. Furthermore, I demonstrate that these tragedies are not simply stories of an individual's successes and failures,

but also those of entire families, cities, and peoples. The effects of war are widespread, and they touch the men who fight and return, as well as the communities who are left behind. Each play that I examine contributes to this picture: *Agamemnon* looks at a victorious Greek king's failed return to his former status as husband and ruler; *Persians* provides insight into a contemporary war and the return of a defeated foreign king; and *Trojan Women* flips the script with a portrayal of female captives. These plays bring to fulfillment what in the *Odyssey* are only temporary threats: the separation from one's homeland, the loss of one's status among peers, and the destruction of one's family and community.

In addition to the thoughts, speech, and actions of characters within these three plays, the war experience of contemporary Greeks and the performance context of tragedy at communal festivals are important. Between the Persian Wars and the Peloponnesian War, the audience of the Greek theater would have had firsthand experience of war and its risks. The way that *Persians* can be studied in parallel to the tragedies about the Trojan War indicates the ways that the portrayal of war in tragedy and the war experience are intertwined. Tragedy enabled fears about war to be acted out on stage while at the same time bringing together the community in a way that might counteract those fears. Though my focus is the Trojan War plays, I show that tragedy expresses the fears of the Athenian audience surrounding war, particularly the threat to one's home and social identity.

CHAPTER ONE

THE VICTORIOUS GREEK'S RETURN IN AESCHYLUS' *AGAMEMNON*

Introduction

Although Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* is the homecoming story of a Greek king who has been at war for ten years, few details of the Greeks' experiences at Troy emerge during the play. Three main passages describe the war—that period between the sacrifice of Iphigenia at Aulis and Agamemnon's actual return to Argos:² First, Clytemnestra's account of the sack of Troy (320-50); second, the middle of the Chorus' first stasimon (420-74); and, third, the Herald's report of the conditions for the army abroad (551-82 and 636-80). These descriptions are nearly always in negative terms, adding a sense of foreboding to Agamemnon's imminent return and providing justification for his fate. Supplementing these direct descriptions of the war are other conversations between characters that further reveal the negative consequences of the war for both those who depart and those who remain at home. In addition to elucidating themes of justice and retribution within the trilogy, these negative depictions of the Trojan War paint a more general picture of war apart from the House of Atreus. In particular, the focus on the loss of the comforts of home for both the soldiers and their families points to the threat of waging war abroad to any community.

Scholars have often read the pessimistic presentation of the Greek victory at Troy in terms of its reflection of the mechanisms of justice within the play as a whole, and this is not an incorrect interpretation. Leahy argues that these scenes reveal to the audience Agamemnon's

² Though one could define the beginning and end of the war differently (for example, starting at Paris and Helen's departure or ending at the sack of Troy), such prominence is given to the sacrifice of Iphigenia as an initiatory act and to the ties between this act and Agamemnon's murder that I see these two events as the frame of the war within *Agamemnon*. Winnington-Ingram (1983: 78-89) sees a connection between these two events as framing Agamemnon's story.

guilt in a cycle of retribution; there is a pattern of cities and families who are guilty of hubris continuing to commit acts that lead to their own destruction (1974: 17-18). Similarly, Anderson (1997) sees a pattern of retribution in the images of war, arguing that these scenes are parallel to Clytemnestra's murder of Agamemnon. He notes, for example, that Clytemnestra describes her plot as a net that is too high to outleap (ὄψος κρεῖσσον ἐκπηδήματος, 1376) just as the Chorus had described ensnaring Troy with a net impossible to overleap (ὕπερτελέσαι, 359) (1997: 126). Lebeck (1983) also finds recurrent imagery within the fall of Troy and the death of Agamemnon, imagery that she argues shows the theme of "the doer suffers" (73). The ominous tone with which the Herald, Clytemnestra, and the Chorus describe the war can, indeed, be read as foreshadowing Agamemnon's death upon his return, yet the speeches contain limited references to specific characters and actions, giving the words broader applications, as well. The discomforts of war are experienced not just by Agamemnon and the Trojans, who are characterized as guilty parties, but also by unnamed soldiers and their families, whose precise connection to any cycle of retribution is unclear. For these men, it is simply leaving home for war that leads to their destruction and their families' pain.

The conflict between individual and community has often been explored in terms of the political atmosphere of Athens and the relationship between aristocratic families and democracy. For example, MacLeod (1982) argues that both individual crimes and their corresponding justice—manifesting as retribution within the *Agamemnon*—affect the entire community, and thus the play is relevant to the external political audience of Athens. In addition, both Crane (1992) and Griffith (1995) consider Agamemnon's role as an aristocratic leader, the former arguing that Aeschylus presents Agamemnon as a problematic ruler who does not show appropriate generosity to his community, and the latter claiming that the play reinforces the

essential role of aristocratic leadership within Athenian democracy. Finally, Sailor and Stroup (1999) recognize a trend over the course of *Agamemnon* of crimes shifting from those against the *oikos* to those against the *polis*, a pattern that they argue corresponds with a shift from aristocracy to democracy. My intent is to examine how such relationships between individuals, their families, and their societies relate to the understanding specifically of war and homecoming by Aeschylus and his Athenian audience.

Reinforcing the ways that war impacts entire communities, there is a clear distinction between the homeland and the land abroad in *Agamemnon*: the irreversible action of going to war is illustrated by the emphasis on departure and geographical distance, the indiscriminate influence of environmental hazards, and the close human bond with the land in which natural relationships and processes are destroyed. The environment abroad where men venture for war is a dangerous place with no regard for heroism. This depiction is intensified by the emphasis on the physical house and its emptiness in contrast to the attempts to find domestic comforts abroad at war. Throughout the play, all characters place stress on the physical distance separating those at home and those abroad. As the war proceeds, Clytemnestra “travels” around the world through her language, while Agamemnon and his men find “home” abroad, distortions of the typical household roles and relationships. Aeschylus’ imagery shows that when men depart for war and bring elements of home abroad, the war, in turn, invades the confines of the home. When Agamemnon sets foot back in Argos, these military and domestic spheres collide, demonstrating the losses that cannot be recovered.

In this chapter, I will trace the theme of home and abroad within *Agamemnon*, examining how war affects those at home, those abroad, and the relationship between these parties. First, I consider the perspective of those who remain at home—the Chorus and Clytemnestra—who

must imagine what is happening abroad while they mourn their empty homes; second, I focus on the perspective of the Herald, a representative of those soldiers who traveled to war and a product of the dangerous and deathly experiences away from home; and third, I examine the collision of these two perspectives—home and abroad—with the arrival of Agamemnon and Cassandra and the welcome they receive. I argue that the descriptions of war in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* suggest that abandoning the home for war comes with risks and consequences that continue even through the homecoming of the soldiers, eliminating the possibility of a return to normalcy. For Agamemnon this is extreme—death at the hands of his wife. Even for other men and their families, however, the war has lasting negative effects. In addition to showing an alternative disastrous homecoming of a Trojan War hero, in contrast to Odysseus' cautious return, Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* also expands the view of homecoming to include the experiences of an entire community.

The View From Home

The Chorus and Clytemnestra are the main speakers who provide the perspective of those who remain at home during war. Their language demonstrates the vast effects of war upon families and communities. The Chorus set the stage for the rest of the play, using imagery that reinforces the themes of departure and return and creating an atmosphere in which to consider the return of Agamemnon and the Greek army. The perspective of the Chorus fills out the portrayal of war within the play by providing a communal and human perspective. Gantz (1983) has shown how the limited understanding of the Chorus within *Agamemnon* and their conflicted views toward the war and victory reveal human concerns surrounding the events of the play. In addition, Fletcher (1999) has similarly recognized the multifaceted perspectives of the Chorus, especially how they appear to have divine authority in some instances but at other times speak as

narrators, the voice of the present people. I examine how the Chorus' role affects the presentation of war and homecoming within *Agamemnon*. They, like the Herald and Clytemnestra later, reveal the universality of the effects of war, often carrying a negative attitude toward departure to wage war. The homecoming of the army is considered in terms of the departure and loss of men. In addition, as a group of elders, the Chorus are especially concerned with the effects on families, including parents, when young men die at war. Furthermore, the Chorus reflect on the political and social instability caused by war. Their speech is consistently tinged with anxiety about Agamemnon's position, even after they learn that the Greeks have been victorious and that Agamemnon has returned, revealing how the negative effects of war last beyond the end of the fighting.

The Chorus' *parados* contains imagery that clearly establishes one pattern of traumatic homecoming: a continuous emphasis on the distances men travel to wage war and on the separation of the family that results. Although the play begins with a Guard catching sight of the beacon signal he has been waiting for—a light that announces the sack of Troy—the Chorus' first response to this news is not elation at the army's return, but a reflection on their departure. The Chorus have been marking the time since that departure, evident from their first words: “it is the tenth year” (δέκατον μὲν ἔτος..., 40) since the army left Argos.³ This signals the void in both space and time left by the army, as well as the Chorus' constant measurement of all things in relation to that moment of departure. In addition, the departure is consistently connected to its purpose—war. The Chorus recall how Agamemnon and Menelaus set sail from the land with an expedition of 1000 Argive ships (στόλον Ἀρείων χιλιοναύτην / τῆσδ' ἀπὸ χώρας / ἦραν, 45-47). The expedition is a military aid (στρατιῶτιν ἀρωγὴν, 47), and the leaders depart crying out a war cry from their hearts (μεγάλ' ἐκ θυμοῦ κλάζοντες Ἄρη, 48). Moreover, the marching anapestic

³ Greek text follows Raeburn and Thomas (2011). All translations are my own.

meter at the beginning of the *parados* adds to the military feeling of the Chorus' lines. The two distinct spheres that the Chorus define here—the domestic and the military—are separated by physical distance; yet throughout the remainder of the play, it becomes evident that the departure of the army actually causes these spheres to come into conflict, bringing permanent negative consequences.

As the Chorus reflect on the military expedition departing from their homeland, they also reveal the losses this causes to the home. Aeschylus' natural imagery reinforces this point. For example, the Chorus compare the war cry of the Atreidae to the cry of eagles whose young have been snatched from the nest (49-54):

τρόπον αἰγυπιῶν οἷτ' ἐκπατίοις
 ἄλγεσι παίδων ὕπατοι λεχέων (50)
 στροφοδινοῦνται
 πτερύγων ἐρετμοῖσιν ἐρεσσόμενοι,
 δεμνιοτήρη
 πόνον ὀρταλίων ὀλέσαντες·

...like eagles who whirl back and forth high over their nest out of excessive distress for their children, rowing with their oars of wings, having lost the work of watching the beds of their chicks.

If we take the simile at face value, as Raeburn and Thomas do (2011: *ad loc*), we will see the young chicks as Helen, who has been snatched from her home by Paris, and the parent eagles as the Atreidae. Thus, when the Chorus later say that a god will hear the cry of the birds and send an avenging fury against the transgressors (55-59) and that Zeus likewise sends the sons of Atreus to Troy (60-62), Raeburn and Thomas conclude, “As a god sends the Erinyes against the chick-hunters, so Zeus sent the Atridae to punish Paris (Alexandros) concerning Helen” (2011: *ad loc*). This interpretation creates the expectation that the war will result in the family being reunited.

Heath (1999), however, has noted the ambiguity of possible identifications in this scene, giving particular attention to the disturbing ways that human and animal are intermingled. For example, Heath notes that the word κλάζω can be used for both the human war cry and the cry of animals, e.g., in Homer, but argues that in this scene (κλάζοντες, 48) there are not distinct components of beast and human; the world is “confused” (22). He further shows the potential danger of such entanglement through the word λεχέων (50); for Heath, the word is “polyvalent and ambiguous by nature, a place of love and life, treachery and deceit, death and burial. Its appearance as a vulture’s nest, now empty of offspring, a site of mourning and the source of war, should make us take notice” (23). Whereas Heath goes on to explore this lack of differentiation between beast and human as a commentary on the proper structure of the *polis*, it also has significance for the experience of war and homecoming for the characters of the play. In the context of the army’s departure for war, the eagle simile is more ominous, a reminder of the homes left behind by the soldiers. It is not just the two leaders, Agamemnon and Menelaus, who depart seeking vengeance, but also the entire fleet whom they take with them. The brothers have essentially plundered the Greek homes of their men just as the eagles’ nest is left without young. The imagery creates a negative atmosphere surrounding the departure for war, one that continues throughout the play as we learn of men who have not returned and as we hear parents grieve their lost sons with cries just like those of the eagles here.

The Chorus’ reflection on departure introduces the theme of the universality of the effects of war while also demonstrating the disruption of families that results from war. Although the simile may allow for the specific identification of figures like Agamemnon, Menelaus, and Helen, the juxtaposition of the departure for war with the image of the empty nest connects the war to all Greek families, beyond simply the House of Atreus. We might compare this simile to

one that appears in the *Odyssey*, when Odysseus and Telemachus weep at their reunion (16.215-19):

ἀμφοτέροισι δὲ τοῖσιν ὕφ' ἥμερος ὄρτο γόοιο· (215)
 κλαῖον δὲ λιγέως, ἀδινώτερον ἢ τ' οἰωνοί,
 φῆναι ἢ αἰγυπιοὶ γαμψώνυχες, οἷσί τε τέκνα
 ἀγρόται ἐξεῖλοντο πάρος πετεηνὰ γενέσθαι·
 ὥς ἄρα τοί γ' ἐλεεινὸν ὑπ' ὀφρύσι δάκρυον εἶβον.

And a longing for tears rose up in both of them. They cried shrilly, more loudly than birds, vultures or eagles with crooked talons, whose children have been taken by a hunter before they were able to fly. Thus they pitifully let a tear fall from under their brow.

Similes tend to be places in the *Odyssey* where we see something like in tragedy: a potential understanding of experiences outside the hero's. The "crossing from war" plays, however, provide this perspective more consistently throughout. In both avian similes, a reversal is evident between the moment of return and the grief of departure. The simile in the *Odyssey* is placed in the context of Odysseus and Telemachus' reunion and provides detail primarily about the hero's family and the pain at his absence. On the other hand, the pain demonstrated in *Agamemnon*, situated next to a reflection on the departure of the whole army and spoken by a Chorus of elders, encapsulates the entire Argive society who have sent men to war and are left with empty homes. Furthermore, the *Odyssey* presents Telemachus and Penelope as the embodiment of home, outnumbered by the suitors who are the "bad" young men who did not go to war. In contrast, the number of empty mourning households is multiplied in *Agamemnon*, with Aegisthus as the sole shirker from war.

When considering patterns of homecoming, the voice given to the Chorus, a group of old men, further reinforces the emphasis on the collective within *Agamemnon* in addition to the individual's return. Similarly, when the Chorus in *Agamemnon* says that Zeus sent the sons of

Atreus to Troy as avengers and describe the acts of war that these men have been sent to initiate, all parties are equally, and negatively, affected (63-67):

πολλὰ παλαίσματα καὶ γυιοβαρῇ,
 γόνατος κονίαισιν ἐρειδομένου
 διακναιομένης τ' ἐν προτελείοις (65)
 κάμακος, θήσων Δαναοῖσιν
 Τρωσὶ θ' ὁμοίως.

(Zeus sends them) to place many struggles that weigh down the limbs, with the knee leaning in the dust and the spear scraping it in the preliminary rituals, for the Greeks and the Trojans alike.

The weighty struggles of war are many (πολλά, 63) and, strikingly, both sides experience them alike (ὁμοίως, 67). Not only are the Chorus concerned with the effects of war on Greeks beyond the heroes Agamemnon and Menelaus, but they even recognize the effects on their enemy. There is no clear victor here.

The emphasis on departure and distance in the parados of the Chorus also underscores the threat of waging war to familial relationships and societal structure. One primary disruption is the unnatural death of young men before old. In speaking about their own old age and how they have remained at home because of it, the Chorus set up a contrast between themselves and the departed army, drawing attention to the youth of the men who are absent. The Chorus emphasize their own old age, calling themselves dishonored because of their old flesh (ἀτίται σαρκὶ παλαιᾷ, 72) and describing how they lean on their staffs (ισχὺν / ἰσόπαιδα νέμοντες ἐπὶ σκῆπτροις, 74-75). The old men draw particular attention to the distinction between those not capable of fighting (children and the elderly) and those who are (young men) by paradoxically labeling their own strength as “childlike” (ἰσόπαιδα, 75) and the marrow in their own breasts as both “young” (νεαρός, 75) and “elder-like” (ἰσόπρεσβυς, 78) (Raeburn and Thomas 2011: *ad loc*). Moreover, the Chorus continue to think about the relationship between place, war, and

social position when they state that Ares is not present there (Ἄρης δ' οὐκ ἐνὶ χώραι, 78). The words ἐνὶ χώραι could refer both to their own breasts, indicating that war is not a matter for old men, and to the land of Argos, drawing attention to the war that is happening far from home and the soldiers who have been fighting there. Similarly, the Chorus mention that a consequence of their old age is that they were left behind from the expedition and remain in Argos (τῆς τότ' ἀρωγῆς ὑπολειφθέντες / μίμνομεν, 73-74). The Chorus' focus on their own static position again puts in relief those who *did not* remain, the army, as does the repetition of the word ἀρωγή, which was used just fifteen lines earlier to describe the departing forces (cf. 47). Even as they anticipate the return of these men, the Chorus are still wrapped up in their departure, a theme that persists throughout the play and demonstrates the difficulty of a complete return.

The natural imagery that the Chorus use to portray themselves in contrast to the soldiers prepares the audience for the untimely deaths of these young men, which will be described by the Herald and mourned by the Chorus later in the play. For example, the Chorus next describe their old age as a withering plant (79-82):

τό θ' ὑπέργηρων φυλλάδος ἤδη
κατακαρφομένης τρίποδας μὲν ὁδοὺς (80)
στείχει, παιδὸς δ' οὐδὲν ἀρείων
ὄναρ ἡμερόφαντον ἀλαίνει.

And the very old thing with foliage already withering away walks on three-footed ways, and he wanders no better than a child, a dream appearing in the daytime.

Much of this imagery used by the Chorus is consistent with their earlier language, with the three-footed ways referring to the staffs they have already mentioned (τρίποδας μὲν ὁδοὺς, 80, cf. σκήπτροις, 75) and with the comparison of an old man to a child (παιδὸς δ' οὐδὲν ἀρείων, 81, cf. ἰσόπαιδα, 75). The addition of the image of a withering plant suggests that the old men are experiencing a natural decline and eventual death, something expected for a “very old thing”

(ὕπεργηρων, 79). This brings to the surface the state of the men who have departed—they are, instead, in the prime of their youth—and anticipates later descriptions of the men as the flower of Argos and later language of blossoming and ripening that are ironically used to describe their deaths. The men are young enough to have the physical strength to fight, but not old enough to die, yet so many end up deprived of their homecomings.⁴

At the end of the *parados*, the Chorus still dwell on the departure of the army as they recall one of the key moments of that departure: Agamemnon's sacrifice of Iphigenia. Natural imagery appears again, in this case, the storm winds that prevent the fleet from sailing from Aulis. Peradotto has detailed the instances of natural imagery within *Agamemnon*, arguing that the hostility of nature at this moment parallels the problematic moral situation in which Agamemnon sacrifices his daughter (1964: 383). The natural imagery goes beyond the immediate situation of Agamemnon and his family, however, by distinguishing the military and household spheres. The Chorus focuses on the distance from home that the army travels, while they once again demonstrate how war puts those spheres into conflict with each other. For example, the environment into which the army travels is marked by dangerous natural forces in contrast to the comforts of home (192-98):

πνοαὶ δ' ἀπὸ Στρυμόνος μολοῦσαι
κακόσχολοι, νήστιδες, δύσορμοι,
βροτῶν ἄλαι,
ναῶν <τε> καὶ πεισμάτων ἀφειδεῖς, (195)
παλιμμήκη χρόνον τιθεῖσαι
τρίβωι κατέξαινον ἄνθος Ἀργεί-
ων·

And the blasts coming from the Strymon, producing bad delays, famine, and bad anchorage, causing wandering for mortals, unsparing of the ships and ropes, and placing a doubly long time, were wasting away the blossom of the Argives by wearing them down.

⁴ I can't help but wonder if ἀρείων (81) is meant to evoke Ares in this passage and continues to tie all of the Chorus' thinking to the war happening abroad.

The environment that the army attempts to enter is filled with perilous winds and lack of food or a place to comfortably settle. Agamemnon fights against these forces, taking any step to bring his men to war. Ironically, in taking steps to stop the storm and travel to Troy, Agamemnon actually brings his men into contact with these very dangers like hunger and physical wandering, detailed later in the Herald's and Clytemnestra's accounts. The Chorus also uses natural imagery to demonstrate the unnatural effects of war on families, characterizing the men in the expedition as the blossom of the Argives (ἄνθος Ἀργείων, 197-98). The expression reinforces the soldiers' youth in contrast to the Chorus' age, while foreshadowing the dangers these men will face at war.

Scholars have debated the necessity of Agamemnon's sacrifice, especially in relation to the omen of two eagles eating a pregnant hare that the prophet Calchas interprets as the sons of Atreus sacking this city of Priam (115-38). Calchas also reveals Artemis' displeasure with the eagles' attack, and the Chorus implies that Agamemnon's sacrifice is in response (198-204). West (1979) and Lloyd-Jones (1983) provide comparanda for the connection between the omen and the sacrifice. West argues that Aeschylus incorporates an Archilochean idea of divine justice for animals and claims that the eagles symbolize how the powerful defeat the weak by nature, while the weak have divine protectors, too, in time (4-5). Lloyd-Jones suggests that the motive for Agamemnon's sacrifice comes from hunting rituals that have been transferred to war: Agamemnon must sacrifice something of his own to make up for his future action of taking victims. These scholars present Agamemnon's sacrifice as part of the order of the world. On the other hand, Peradotto (1969), Gantz (1983), and Heath (1999) find the sacrifice more problematic. As in the case of the earlier eagle's nest simile, Heath again sees the conflation of human and bestial worlds leading to a dangerous result—a "corrupted" sacrifice (27), while

Peradotto and Gantz argue that Agamemnon is not forced to sacrifice at all—it is a choice he makes. Peradotto importantly points out how the killing of the young and innocent in the omen translates to the massive destruction at Troy of people from all generations, even children (1969: 247-48), and Gantz recognizes that success at sacking Troy is not necessarily a desirable result (1983: 75). These scholars suggest that Agamemnon’s decision has wide-ranging effects.

I argue that Agamemnon does make a choice when he sacrifices Iphigenia, one that is set up initially as a conflict between the interests of war and the home, but ultimately affects all people. When Agamemnon decides to sacrifice Iphigenia, his debate is between successfully launching the war effort and preserving his daughter’s life, showing a clear distinction between the interests of the military and the home. Although he is distraught at the prospect of killing his daughter (207-11), he nevertheless is swayed by maintaining his status as the fleet’s commander, asking, “How can I be a ship-deserter and do wrong to my alliance?” (πῶς λιπόνανυς γένωμαι / ξυμμαχίας ἀμαρτών; 212-13). Whereas Sailor and Stroup (1999: 155-56) argue that Agamemnon’s choice is an aristocratic one, that it is not for the sake of the public and offends only the *oikos*, Iphigenia’s death has become an action in the context of war, therefore affecting those beyond Agamemnon’s household and those outside of his aristocratic family relationships. For example, Sailor and Stroup argue that the word ξυμμαχίας (213) does not reflect the common soldiery (1999: 156n11), yet the Chorus repeats language from earlier accounts of the masses of departed men as they describe Agamemnon (224-27):

ἔτλα δ’ οὖν θυτὴρ γενέ-
σθαι θυγατρός, γυναικοποί- (225)
νων πολέμων ἄρωγὰν
καὶ προτέλεια ναῶν.

And he dared to be the sacrificer of his daughter, an aid for the woman-avenging war and a preliminary sacrifice for the ships.

The word ἀρωγή has already been used twice to describe the expedition (47, 73), an expedition that has brought men from all the households of Greece. And the Chorus has used the word προτέλεια in a metaphor that presents the fighting at war as a wrestling match (65). By sacrificing Iphigenia, Agamemnon thus takes command of the expedition while attempting to uphold his status. Once again there is irony to his actions, since they cause him to leave his position in Argos vulnerable while he is away and, in the end, his status will be entirely lost. The Chorus, thus, introduce a play about homecoming with continual reflections on departure, creating an atmosphere in which successful homecoming seems ever more unlikely and difficult and drawing out the extent of suffering across the entire Argive society.

Clytemnestra's conception of what has happened during the war is similar to the Chorus'. She emphasizes the departure of the army through language of travel and environmental imagery, and she provides the perspective of another party left at home during war—wives. Although feigning loyalty to Agamemnon, Clytemnestra's words still reveal the potential suffering for wives whose husbands are at war and the risks that this absence poses for the family structure and stability. In her speech, Clytemnestra moves not just throughout the home but even around the world, showing an understanding of the processes of war and conquest. She uses the language of war in a way that is uncommon for Greek wives, such as Penelope. This violation of gender codes reinforces the danger to the home and the disruptions during wartime. In addition, Clytemnestra's account of the sack of Troy is not as specific to Agamemnon and the particular details of his campaign as one might expect, lending a universality to her description that gives further attention to those people beyond the hero. The home remains shaken even through the end of the play, when Clytemnestra proclaims herself victorious.

Clytemnestra's first speech, her "beacon speech," establishes her narrative perspective within the play in geographical terms, demonstrating Clytemnestra's masculine ability to "travel" through her language. Others have noted how this scene gives Clytemnestra a powerful masculine role, contrary to the typical expectations for a Greek woman. For example, Goldhill argues that Clytemnestra gains power by giving meaning to the beacon signal through "her manipulation of the exchange of communication" (1986: 10). Such ability to control signs and language is not one associated with typical Greek wives. In addition, Bowie finds a parallel between the beacon chain described by Clytemnestra and the lampadedromia of the Panathenaea, suggesting a reversal in roles as a woman leads a city ritual (1993: 29). Bednarowski takes a different tack, claiming that Clytemnestra is portrayed ambiguously, and sometimes even positively as in this case, to add suspense to the play. Bednarowski supports this claim by noting that the Chorus "does not regard her as an anomaly, a monster, or a tyrant. She is a defender and potential healer of the city" (2015: 189). Nevertheless, even if Clytemnestra does not rise to the level of monster or tyrant in the Chorus' view, I argue that her masculine characterization—for example, as the "defender" and "healer of the city" within Bednarowski's explanation of the Chorus' understanding—would certainly be an anomaly to the Athenian audience. In studying the beacon speech, I expand upon the masculine characterization of Clytemnestra by focusing primarily on the language of travel that she uses. I examine both the male qualities of the language and also how this language connects to the themes of distance and separation introduced by the Chorus.

In her speech (281-316), Clytemnestra continues the language of travel used by the Chorus as she catalogues the path of flames being lit in a relay chain from Troy to Argos. These flames announce the victory of the Greeks at Troy. Clytemnestra names many specific locations in this

speech: Ida, Lemnos, Athos, Macistus, the Euripus strait, Messapion, the river Asopus, Cithaeron, Gorgopis, Aegyplactus, the Saronic strait, Arachnus, and finally the house of Atreus. She has inside knowledge of the beacon's passage that is unusual for a wife, especially her awareness of geography and military practices. Raeburn and Thomas note that such a relay of beacon lights was "probably a familiar military procedure to the Athenians" (2011: *ad loc*), but as a Greek wife, Clytemnestra would never have traveled to the places she mentions, nor would she have been involved in setting up or viewing such a chain. Although Quincey argues that the emphasis in Clytemnestra's speech "falls upon the rapidity and continuity of the signal's progress and not upon the distances traversed" (1963: 123), Clytemnestra's naming of over a dozen individual locations helps to create a map in the reader's mind—whether real or fictional—that connects to the experience of departure emphasized by the Chorus. The audience would have been engaged in the actual appearance of the beacon chain approaching Argos because of the setting of the production; they would have witnessed Argos on stage while viewing the Athenian landscape surrounding the theater (Weiss, 2018: 181). By showing in reverse the distances traveled by the army to get to Troy, Clytemnestra reinforces how far these men have been separated from their homes.

In addition, Clytemnestra's description of the beacon chain has negative overtones, even when announcing a victory. Peradotto identifies how light within *Agamemnon* in general is "corrupted," pointing to the beacon's light as one example of a light that introduces not life but revenge and destruction (1964: 388-89). Focusing in particular on fire as a source of light, Gantz makes a connection between the beacon fire and both the sacrificial fires at Argos and the fire of the Troy's destruction, thus arguing that the beacon speech represents the spread of retribution (1977: 29-31). Furthermore, Clytemnestra refers to the beacon as an ἄγγαρος (282), "a Persian

word used by Herodotus (8.98) to describe their system for carrying dispatches by horse in day-long relays” (Raeburn and Thomas 2011: *ad loc*). This word, along with the audience’s recent experience of witnessing Athens sacked by Persia, would have cast the victory at Troy in a negative light. Messages like the one from Troy to Argos would similarly have been sent from Athens to Persia.⁵ In addition, such language further reflects Clytemnestra’s unusual masculine characterization in comparison, for example, to other wives like Penelope since Clytemnestra’s knowledge extends to military processes and procedures. Moreover, this masculine characterization also highlights patterns of homecoming seen within tragedy. War separates the family and causes the spheres of home and abroad to cross. Though physically stationary, Clytemnestra’s thoughts and speech are immersed in the atmosphere of war. Such crossing of boundaries sets up homecomings that cannot restore the home to its former order. Agamemnon’s absence at war allows Clytemnestra to take on these masculine attributes and assume a new position within the house.

Within Clytemnestra’s speech, the beacon makes a homecoming journey of its own, one that anticipates the homecoming of Agamemnon and the army and draws attention to the separation between the army and the home. Though the beacon seems to effortlessly pass from one location to another, even across distances that seem physically impossible and to places that are unidentifiable to modern audiences (Raeburn and Thomas 2011: *ad loc*), the men who return

⁵ Tracy (1986: 258) identifies the same example as Raeburn and Thomas of a relay of riders in Herodotus (8.53-54) as well as Mardonius’ beacon in Herodotus 9.3.1. Weiss (2018) connects the relay of the beacon’s light to the relay of messengers on horseback by showing the agency of the beacon as it makes its own movements across the landscape and the power of the beacon to influence human events in Argos: “The beacon is not so much a viewed object as an active subject” (179).

from Troy will not have such easy passage.⁶ The catalogue of specific place-names reinforces the distance traveled by the army—both to get to Troy and to return home. The beacon speech sets up not just the actual arrival of Agamemnon, but also the account of the Herald, who describes the perils faced by all the soldiers throughout their return journey. Furthermore, although Clytemnestra has remained at home during the ten years of Agamemnon's absence, she shows vast knowledge of the places that separate herself from her husband. The impossibility of her speech would certainly be noted by a Greek audience and thus highlights again the physical separation between home and the war abroad. The beacon is traveling ever closer to home in her speech, but Clytemnestra is actually static, like the Chorus. The image is a reminder of how far the men have traveled to go to war, bridging once again the return with the departure.

Clytemnestra's understanding of the world abroad extends beyond her knowledge of the beacon's journey; she also provides a detailed description of the Greeks at Troy, almost as if she is an eyewitness to the army's sack of the city. She announces the victory at Troy with only the beacon's light as evidence, and her speech actually anticipates the arrival of the Herald by over 150 lines; yet her visualization of the Greeks at the moment of victory proves to be interconnected with the Herald's later speech about the experiences of the Greeks before their victory, especially through her emphasis on the comforts of home in contrast to the environment abroad. The scene depicted by Clytemnestra, in which she shows how the Greeks are unable to sufficiently find through victory at war what they lost when they left home, could face any army at war and after victory. Clytemnestra's imagining of the Greek victory at Troy emphasizes how the abandonment of home is an essential part of the war experience. Like the Chorus, who also

⁶ Quincey (1963) provides explanations for some of the unexpected and unidentified places using mythological and historical context. For example, that Cithaeron is included as a compliment to the Plataeans for their service to Athens.

view the war from a distance at home, Clytemnestra focuses on the distinction between home and abroad and the universality of suffering caused by war.

Clytemnestra paints a picture of war as something that is not dependent on heroes or justice but rather affects all equally. She begins her account of the sack of Troy with an apparent distinction between the victors and the defeated (320-25):

Τροίαν Ἀχαιοὶ τῇδ' ἔχουσ' ἐν ἡμέραι. (320)

οἶμαι βοὴν ἄμεικτον ἐν πόλει πρέπειν·
 ὄξος τ' ἄλειφά τ' ἔγγεας ταυτῷ κύτει
 διχοστατοῦντ' ἄν οὐ φίλῳ προσεννέποις·
 καὶ τῶν ἀλόντων καὶ κρατησάντων δίχα
 φθογγὰς ἀκούειν ἔστι, συμφορᾶς διπλῆς. (325)

The Achaeans hold Troy on this day. I think that an unmixed shout is loud and clear in the city. Having poured both vinegar and oil into the same jug, you would say that they, not being friends, stand apart. And it is possible to hear the two voices of those captured and of those who conquered them, a twofold fortune.

With her first two words (Τροίαν Ἀχαιοί), Clytemnestra juxtaposes the city Troy with its captors, the Greeks, who now hold the city. The image of oil and vinegar that Clytemnestra uses to describe the Greeks and Trojans seems appropriate in the context of the end of a war—one party is victorious and the other has been destroyed. Indeed, we might expect two distinct fortunes, one for each side (συμφορᾶς διπλῆς, 325). Yet even as she distinguishes the cries of the victors from those of the defeated, Clytemnestra's language demonstrates a universal perspective; she shows the common suffering of both sides. First, she gives sympathetic attention to the grieving Trojans (326-29):

οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἀμφὶ σώμασιν πεπτωκότες
 ἀνδρῶν κασιγνήτων τε καὶ ἴφυταλμίων
 παῖδες γερόντων ἢ οὐκέτ' ἐξ ἐλευθέρου
 δέρης ἀποιμώζουσι φιλτάτων μόρον·

For those ones, having fallen around the bodies of their husbands and brothers, and the children of nourishing old men, no longer bewail from a free throat the fate of their dearest ones.

Clytemnestra considers the broken family relationships that we have already seen from the Chorus' perspective, especially the mourning for dead young men such as husbands and brothers (327). The presence of old men, still alive, once again highlights the youth of those who have died. Moreover, she introduces the fate for those who do not die—capture and slavery (328-29). Certainly a devastating fate for the Trojans, it is also, as we will see later when Agamemnon returns with captive Cassandra, a disruption to Greek homes as well. Clytemnestra compassionately renders the Trojans' suffering as their homes and families are torn apart, using images that resonate with the experiences of the victorious Greeks.

Now that Clytemnestra has described the “vinegar,” so to speak, one might expect her to move on to the “oil,” or the Greeks, with a contrasting description of joy and victorious celebration; however, this expectation is dashed. Clytemnestra does indeed proceed to imagine the Greek response to victory, but not in a positive way. For example, Clytemnestra's “polyphonic” description of the shouts on both sides, which mix with images and actions of the people involved, shows the disruption of the world (Nooter 2017: 134-38). Moreover, in addition to giving continued attention to the common soldiers, Clytemnestra also focuses on departure, the distance between those at home and the soldiers fighting abroad, and the negative consequences of this distance. After the battle, according to Clytemnestra, the Greeks are concerned with the necessities of survival: food, shelter, and bodily safety. These are things that would be taken for granted at home, but not here. Arrayed by fortune and out of order, the Greeks are driven by hunger and the wandering toil of the night to eat whatever the city offers (330-33):

τοὺς δ' αὖτε νυκτίπλαγκτος ἐκ μάχης πόνος (330)
 νήσταις πρὸς ἀρίστοισιν ὧν ἔχει πόλις
 τάσσει, πρὸς οὐδὲν ἐν μέρει τεκμήριον,

ἀλλ' ὥς ἕκαστος ἔπασεν τύχης πάλον.

But the other men—toil after battle, causing wandering in the night, arrays them, hungry, for the breakfasts the city can offer, not in turn by tokens, but as each drew the lot of fortune.

The word νυκτίπλαγκτος (330) characterizes the soldiers as driftless and is a reminder of their distance from home—they are no longer rooted there.⁷ In her description of the men lining up for meals by τύχη rather than in order (332-33), Clytemnestra shows that the war affects all the men indiscriminately; whether they are kings, leaders, or average foot soldiers, the men all experience hunger and depend on fortune for their food. Clytemnestra introduces this new element of chance that will appear again in the Herald's description of the army's fighting and return.

Furthermore, we see the soldiers attempting to make a home abroad, an effort shown to be impossible. That they are free from the open air and from frost and dew (τῶν ὑπαιθρίων πάγων / δρόσων τ' ἀπαλλαχθέντες, 335-36) will contrast with the Herald's later depiction of exposure to the elements, but at the same time, the men are living in the captured Trojan houses, not their true homes (ἐν <δ> αἰχμαλώτοις Τρωϊκοῖς οἰκήμασιν / ναίουσιν ἤδη, 334-35). It is a distorted vision of safety. Their good fortune comes simply from being able to sleep the whole night without guard (ὥς δ' εὐδαίμονες / ἀφύλακτον εὐδήσουσι πᾶσαν εὐφρόνην, 336-37). Even when the Greeks are victorious and appear to have found an equal substitute abroad for what they left at home, Clytemnestra's description reminds the audience of the suffering these men have experienced away from home and the transience of their newfound comfort. Troy is only a temporary replacement for the Greeks' home cities.

⁷ Later in the play, Clytemnestra shares that men doubted her confidence in the beacon signals, saying that she seemed “wandering” to them (πλαγκτός, 593). The expression is likely used metaphorically to mean that Clytemnestra is out of her mind and incorrect, yet the word also fits with the language of movement throughout the play. It is reminiscent of the νυκτίπλαγκτος πόνος (330) that afflicts the soldiers at Troy in Clytemnestra's account. Indeed, Clytemnestra herself has shown evidence of her own wandering, describing places far away from her physical location. The image is a reminder, however subtle, of the distances traveled by the army.

Clytemnestra's concluding prayer that the Greeks not overstep their place as victors and that they return home safely is a further reminder that the risks of war do not end with victory.

Her prayer reinforces the potential permanence of the army's departure (338-44):

εἰ δ' εὐσεβοῦσι τοὺς πολισσούχους θεοὺς
 τοὺς τῆς ἀλούσης γῆς θεῶν θ' ἰδρύματα,
 οὗ τ' ἄν ἐλόντες αὐθις ἀνθαλοῖεν ἄν· (340)
 ἔρως δὲ μή τις πρότερον ἐμπίπτῃ στρατῶι
 πορθεῖν ἅ μὴ χρή, κέρδεσιν νικωμένους·
 δεῖ γὰρ πρὸς οἴκους νοστήμου σωτηρίας,
 κάμψαι διαύλου θάτερον κῶλον πάλιν.

And if they worship the city-protecting gods of the captured land and the temples of the gods, having taken the city they might not be captured in return. I fear that some desire will come too soon upon the army to destroy what is not necessary, conquered by profit. For the house needs a homecoming deliverance, and it is necessary to turn and run the other leg of the race back.

Just as Clytemnestra earlier described the victorious Greeks entering captured Trojan homes (αἰχμαλώτοις Τρωϊκοῖς οἰκήμασιν, 334), here they have captured the land and the city (τῆς ἀλούσης γῆς, 339 and ἐλόντες, 340). There is an irony to Clytemnestra's statements. She refers to the city-protecting gods of Troy (πολισσούχους, 338) even as she describes the city's fall, which lends an ominous tone to her hope that the Greeks not be captured themselves as they capture the city (340). In addition, Clytemnestra's general statements that the dangers are not over yet not only serve as a reminder of the justice that awaits Agamemnon, but also bring attention to all the men at Troy who are at risk. In praying that the men show reverence to the gods of the city and that they not violate what ought not to be violated, it is clear that Clytemnestra is aware of details from the traditional story of the sacrilege at Troy: the murder of Priam and the abduction of Cassandra, both of which happened at sacred locations (Raeburn and Thomas 2011: *ad loc.*). Nevertheless, she only alludes to these events. Risk faces all the soldiers, in part because of the fact that they cannot claim Troy as their new home. Clytemnestra's fear of

the Greek men's capture foreshadows the pain of the Chorus and the families in Argos who mourn the young Greeks buried at Troy and deprived of a true homecoming (cf. 452-55). Although they are the conquerors who can either worship the gods of the city as their own (εὐσεβοῦσι, 338) or take the city in passion (ἐλόντες, 340), in either case, those who survive must return home. Therefore, the foreboding in this scene, generally attributed—and correctly so—to Clytemnestra's impending retribution against Agamemnon individually (e.g., Lebeck 1983), additionally casts the entire Greek victory in a negative light, showing how even the victors in this war face risks, particularly when what is foreign has the potential to become home.⁸

In addition, once again we see homecoming framed in terms of the departure, and there is an emphasis on the home throughout Clytemnestra's description, which makes sense given her position at home while Agamemnon has departed. Even when she speaks of things she cannot have specific knowledge about—the experience of the Greeks in Troy after the city has fallen—she describes Troy as a new home for the men. Her concern for the army's safe return emphasizes their distance from home. In requesting a safe return to the house (πρὸς οἴκους, 343), rather than to the city or the land, Clytemnestra shows that households have been broken in the absence of Agamemnon and other men. She depicts the return as the final leg of a race (344), drawing attention to the distance the men have already covered in the first leg. The return is directly parallel to the departure. One might think of Odysseus, whose journey home lasted as long as his time abroad at war, yet this comparison will prove false. The rest of the tragedy emphasizes how different Agamemnon's return is from Odysseus' and how many other men are deprived of the happy homecoming.

⁸ A similar idea appears in *Persians* (Chapter Two) and *Trojan Women* (Chapter Three) that transgression can be undertaken by an individual but affect a much broader swath of society.

The final voice that we hear at home before the return of an actual eyewitness to the war and Troy's destruction is the Chorus'. In their first stasimon, the Chorus progress through the same pattern seen before: a focus on departure leading to the intermingling of war and home, with that interference causing universal damage. The Chorus first recall the impetus for their current war: Paris' theft of Helen (Πάρις...κλοπαῖσι γυναικός, 399-402). The Chorus describe Helen leaving Argos, and the effects of that departure, in much the same way as they describe the whole army's departure and its effects. For example, although Helen's movement from Argos to Troy is initially termed a theft (402), it becomes an active departure in the Chorus' account (403-8):

λιποῦσα δ' ἀστοῖσιν ἀσπίστορας
 κλόνους λοχισμούς τε καὶ
 ναυβάτας ὀπλισμούς, (405)
 ἄγουσά τ' ἀντίφερνον Ἰλίῳ φθοράν,
 βεβάκει ρίμφα διὰ
 πυλᾶν ἄτλητα τλᾶσα.

Having left behind to the townsmen the turmoil and treachery of shielded warriors and the arming of seamen, and having led destruction instead of dowry to Ilium, she went lightly through the gates having dared undarable things.

Not only is Helen the subject of the multiple verbs in this passage, giving her the ability to travel like Clytemnestra, but the specific language also suggests a masculine military role. The Chorus hold Helen responsible for introducing military arms and conflict to the people, and the same word τλάω is used to describe Helen's entrance through the gates of Troy as Agamemnon's choice to sacrifice Iphigenia (408, cf. ἔτλα δ' οὖν θυτὴρ γενέ- / σθαι θυγατρός, 224-25). Both instances mark a moment of transgression and the beginning of conflict. Like Clytemnestra, Helen takes on a transgressive role in the eyes of the Chorus here, as she is given agency but only to do wrong. Her characterization is improper for a Greek woman and, therefore, reinforces that this action will have negative consequences as well.

Moreover, we see here the intrusion of home into war and war into home. Helen's dowry, a typical marriage exchange, is instead the destruction of a city (406). Furthermore, she has left all the weapons and actions of war to the people of the city (ἄστοῖσιν, 403), not to the army or to military leaders. Finally, Helen's departure is presented as permanent, much like the departure of the army, especially through the pluperfect βεβάκει (407), which suggests completion. The Chorus next dwell on the emptiness of the home and the grief this causes, similar to the effects of the army's absence. They recall much groaning (πολὺ δ' ἀνέστενον, 408), noting especially grief over the bed left empty (ἰὼ λέχος, 411), the silence in the house (σιγῇ, 412), and the separation by sea (πόθῳ δ' ὑπερποντίας, 414). Though seen in reverse—a woman leaving her husband's bed empty and traveling across the sea—the scene prepares the audience for a mirror-image of pain as the Chorus turn to the departure of the army and its effects on the women and families left in Argos. The portrayal of Helen—atypical and transgressive for a Greek wife—draws attention to the damage caused to typical family relationships at home by the departure of the army for war.

When the Chorus next describe how Menelaus has longed for Helen in her absence and has imagined a phantom of her in the house (413-26), they provide a picture of the loss that is happening in all the Argive homes. Though it is not until a few lines later that they shift to the homes beyond Menelaus', the grief is comparable. Fletcher has shown how even a supposed inconsistency in tense in this passage, where the Chorus speaks in the present tense about Menelaus' past loss of Helen, is actually a way that the Chorus as narrator "blurs the boundaries between past and present" and speaks of current Argive pain through the pain of Menelaus (1999: 39-40). Thus, the Chorus can transition to the men who have died at war and the effects upon their family members. Several scholars have noted contradictions within the Chorus' first

stasimon, especially between private and public, the individual and the communal. For example, Gantz points out that the Chorus are comfortable praising the victory at war but are unsettled, and even frightful, because of the deaths that resulted (1983: 79-80). Likewise, Scodel suggests that “as victory creates an obligation to praise, the needless deaths demand a response” (2007: 129). Furthermore, Sailor and Stroup argue that within the Chorus’ refrains, we witness a “transformation of private hearthside lamentation into an escalating, collective anger toward the Atreidai” (1999: 158). These scholars all recognize how Aeschylus presents war as encompassing an entire community. Individual actions, like Paris’ abduction of Helen or Agamemnon’s sacrifice of Iphigenia, cannot be separated from their effects on the entire society when they lead to war. Similarly, Aeschylus demonstrates how what might appear as private grief is actually shared by all members of a community.

The Chorus provide a perspective on what is going on at home during the war and the extensive consequences of war: while the men endure travails abroad, their households are also torn apart by their departure. The Chorus shift from the pain of Menelaus at the absence of Helen to the loss experienced by all Greek homes (427-36):

τὰ μὲν κατ’ οἴκους ἐφ’ ἐστίας ἄχη
τάδ’ ἐστὶ καὶ τῶνδ’ ὑπερβατώτερα·
τὸ πᾶν δ’ ἅφ’ Ἑλλανος αἴας συνορμένοισι πέν-
θεια τλησικάρδιος (430)

δόμῳ ἕκαστου πρέπει.
πολλὰ γοῦν θιγγάνει πρὸς ἡμᾶρ·
οὓς μὲν γάρ <τις> ἔπεμψεν
οἶδεν, ἀντὶ δὲ φωτῶν
τεύχη καὶ σποδὸς εἰς ἑκά-
στου δόμους ἀφικνεῖται. (435)

Grief is throughout the house and at the hearth, and these pains go beyond the others. And for all those who set out from the Greek land, enduring grief is clearly seen in the house of each. Many of these things touch the heart. For each knows the men whom they sent, and instead of men, urns and ashes arrive at each home.

The anguish in the Greek households is, in fact, even worse than the grief of Menelaus that the Chorus have just described (ὑπερβατώτερα, 428). The Chorus specify the hearth, the core of the house, as the locus of this pain and loss (ἐφ' ἐστίας, 427), showing clearly that even though the war takes place abroad, it affects the home deeply as well. The phrases δόμωι ἕκαστου (431) and, similarly, ἑκάστου δόμους (435) highlight again that pain dwells in the home. Furthermore, in these lines, the Chorus emphasize the universality of the loss through words like πᾶν (429), ἑκάστου (431, 435), and πολλὰ (432). There is enduring grief for every family of every soldier who set out from the whole Greek land. At the conclusion of this stanza, the Chorus turn from departure to return, but even this brings pain to the house. The homecoming is painfully distorted and causes grief to persist: urns and ashes return instead of living men (433-35).⁹ This image vividly conveys the finality of the men's departure. They are no longer men when they return home, and the house remains broken. The ironic image sets the stage for Agamemnon's return. Even those men who are fortunate enough to return alive do not find their former positions easy to restore.

The Chorus continue in this vein, considering the fate of the men who have traveled to war and the problems the war causes at home. They next present the men who have died as the victims of Ares, whom they depict as a money-changer of bodies (438-44):

ὁ χρυσαιομοιβὸς δ' Ἄρης σωμάτων
καὶ ταλαντοῦχος ἐν μάχῃ δορὸς
πυρωθὲν ἐξ Ἰλίου (440)
φίλοισι πέμπει βαρὺ
ψῆγμα δυσδάκρυτον ἀντ-
ήγορος σποδοῦ γεμί-
ζων λέβητας εὐθέτου.

⁹ Ashes sent home in urns instead of burial on the battlefield “is only attested in Athens from 468 BC onwards” (Denniston and Page 1986: xxi). Even if this is a newly familiar practice, the image created by the Chorus emphasizes the dehumanizing quality of this practice.

And Ares, exchanging bodies for gold and holding the balance in the battle of the spear, sends from Ilium heavy dust refined by fire that produces tears for friends, filling full the easily-stowed urns with ash instead of men.

Once again, the men receive a homecoming, but not the homecoming that they want, a precursor to the account of the Herald and the arrival of Agamemnon. War is the obvious actor here, shown through an image of the god of war holding the fortunes of battle on his balance and sending home urns full of ashes instead of men, the same image from a few lines earlier. There is no individual or family singled out, and the urns are generic to all men. One can imagine these “easily-stowed” urns arranged indistinguishably on a ship back to Greece. Fletcher argues that the substitution of urns and ashes for men is a “more poignant” replacement to the phantom of Helen replacing the physical Helen in Menelaus’ imagination (1999: 41). Such an image stresses the pain across Argos. The ashes are described as *δυσδάκρυτον* (442), adding to the sense of loss for these men who are no longer even human. The loss also causes those who hold them dear to suffer.

The metaphor of the money-changer Ares could resonate with the modern Athenian audience. Sailor and Stroup believe Ares is presented as turning men into an aristocratic medium of exchange (1999: 158-59). Indeed, it would have been unsettling for the Athenian audience to see men treated as money, yet I believe the audience would tie this metaphor more closely to their own war experience. The Athenians would have seen the operations of war become tied to financial remuneration, demonstrating parallel experiences between the Trojan war and the Persian wars of the 5th century. Specifically, Bakewell (2007) suggests that the metaphor of *chrysamoibos* Ares emphasizes Athens’ disconcerting financial ties to war during the 5th century. Through increased citizen conscription, the institution of pay for military service, and financial support for war orphans, Bakewell sees a parallel in the exchange of men for money.

Though expressed in an obscure metaphor typical of Aeschylus, such realism conveys an actual risk for men setting out for war. The risk that one will not return is not particular to those fighting at Troy.

The grief of the Chorus and the Greek families at Argos is put into relief by the Chorus' description of the eulogies given by the living for the now deceased men who had fought and died at Troy (445-49; 452-55):

στένουσι δ' εὖ λέγοντες ἄν- (445)
 δρα τὸν μὲν ὡς μάχης ἴδρις,
 τὸν δ' ἐν φοναῖς καλῶς πεσόντ',
 ἀλλοτρίας διαὶ γυναι-
 κός·

...
 οἱ δ' αὐτοῦ περὶ τεῖχος
 θήκας Ἰλιάδος γᾶς
 εὖμορφοι κατέχουσιν, ἐχ-
 θρὰ δ' ἔχοντας ἔκρυψεν. (455)

And they groan, eulogizing the man, how he was experienced in battle, how he fell beautifully in the slaughter, on account of a woman who belonged to another... And the others, beautiful in form, hold down tombs here around the wall of the Ilian land, and the land, hateful, hid those holding it.

The disjunction between words glorifying the experienced fighter (μάχης ἴδρις, 446) who dies beautifully on the battlefield (ἐν φοναῖς καλῶς πεσόντ', 447) and the pain at such deaths emphasized throughout the Chorus' refrains is striking. This shift is an example of what Fletcher describes as a turn from the epic to the realistic within the first stasimon (1999: 30). The idea of a beautiful death in battle and prizing excellence in fighting are familiar from the *Odyssey*. For example, when Telemachus fears that Odysseus has died at sea, he wishes that his father had, instead, died on the battlefield, saying that he would have grieved less if this were the case (ἐπεὶ οὐ κε θανόντι περ ᾧδ' ἀκαχοίμην, / εἰ μετὰ οἷς' ἐτάροισι δάμη Τρώων ἐνὶ δῆμῳ, 1.236-37). Although the Chorus of *Agamemnon* say that the people praise those who died at Troy, they also

reveal that such deaths are no less painful for those who survive. As Nooter argues, the ambiguities of the Chorus here demonstrate the “dangerous work of voices” (2017: 165). An apparently “epic” death is no comfort for parents, wives, and children, and their laments indicate possible future dangers. Even more grievous, these men do not receive a proper burial in their homelands with their families. Families have been permanently scarred by the war, and the men no longer have any resemblance to the men who were fighting so bravely at Troy.

By expressing that the families are upset at the loss of good men for the sake of a single other man’s wife (ἀλλοτρίας διαὶ γυναῖ- / κός, 448), a clear reference to Helen, the Chorus draw attention to the extent of the damage. Helen might provoke the war, but the widespread departure of men and the fighting abroad equally affect all Greek homes. The permanence of loss is demonstrated by the foreign land becoming a resting place for the dead. Poignantly, the Chorus state that the ground of Troy now holds captive the men who captured it (452-55). The burial of Greek men at Troy realizes the fear that Clytemnestra voiced earlier that the Greek men would be captured by the city even as they are the captors of it (cf. 340), with a similar ironic reversal. The Chorus call the land hateful (ἐχθρά, 455), showing how distorted this burial away from home is. Furthermore, the Chorus evoke the youth of the men who have died through the word εὔμορφοι (454), conveying their youthful beauty through emphasis on their bodily form (cf. 72-82) and, once again, underscoring the untimeliness of their deaths. By focusing not on victory but on the deaths of soldiers, the Chorus reveal the way that war disrupts entire communities, and they reflect a fear that would have relevance to the Athenian audience. Athenians, with Athens recently sacked by Persians, would recognize the terror of war at home, but Aeschylus’ descriptions show an equal threat of waging war abroad. These men are deprived of any

homecoming, returning neither alive nor dead to their homeland but, instead, permanently ensconced in the foreign Trojan earth.

The parados and first stasimon of the Chorus, as well as Clytemnestra's beacon speech and imagining of the sack of Troy, establish the perspective of those at home in *Agamemnon*. The characters dwell in the past, continually reflecting on the departure of the army and the distinctions between home and abroad. They demonstrate how this departure has physically harmed the men who traveled to war and disrupted the home life of those who remained behind. Both the individual family of Agamemnon and all families across Argos are affected by these changes. Similar difficulties will be seen in the perspectives of the army, and they cannot be solved simply through a safe physical homecoming.

The View From Abroad

Although news of the sack of Troy has reached Argos through the beacon chain, the Herald provides the first eyewitness account of the war. The Herald returns to Argos to proclaim the Greek victory, yet much of his account confirms the fears of Clytemnestra and the Chorus. He recalls both the fighting abroad and the loss of men on the return journey, recounting in particular the possible transgressions that come with waging war abroad and the dangers of the natural environment for the men who leave their home. The suffering of the soldiers extends even after their victory, and the men share equal risks that are not dependent on their individual actions. Overall, the Herald in *Agamemnon* paints a picture of war as a universal experience of departure that entails suffering even for those who return.

Upon his entrance, the Herald first greets the land, prays to the gods, and announces Agamemnon's victory and future arrival, all speech that suggests the possibility of a happy return home after the dangers of war. The *Odyssey* provides a precedent for this favorable view

toward home and homecoming. The homeland bears significance for the soldier who travels abroad as a place of stability and safety, and the desire to return home drives these men. For example, both Calypso's island and the land of the Phaeacians have the potential to keep Odysseus away from his home permanently, yet the focus on the hero's desire for his homeland is evident in each case. Two descriptions of Odysseus on Ogygia, with some repetition, illustrate his longing for his homeland (5.81-84, 151-58):

οὐδ' ἄρ' Ὀδυσσεῖα μεγάλητορα ἔνδον ἔτετμεν,
 ἀλλ' ὃ γ' ἐπ' ἀκτῆς κλαῖε καθήμενος, ἔνθα πάρος περ,
 δάκρυσι καὶ στοναχῇσι καὶ ἄλγεσι θυμὸν ἐρέχθων.
 πόντον ἐπ' ἀτρύγετον δερκέσκετο δάκρυα λείβων.

[Hermes] did not find great-hearted Odysseus within, but he was sitting on the shore crying, as before, breaking his heart with tears and wails and pains. He was looking out upon the barren sea, pouring forth tears.

τὸν δ' ἄρ' ἐπ' ἀκτῆς εὔρε καθήμενον· οὐδέ ποτ' ὄσσε
 δακρυόφιν τέρσοντο, κατεῖβετο δὲ γλυκὺς αἰὼν
 νόστον ὀδυρομένῳ, ἐπεὶ οὐκέτι ἦνδανε νύμφη.
 ἀλλ' ἥ τοι νύκτας μὲν ἰάυεσκεν καὶ ἀνάγκη
 ἐν σπέσσι γλαφυροῖσι παρ' οὐκ ἐθέλων ἐθελούσῃ· (155)
 ἤματα δ' ἄμ πέτρῃσι καὶ ἠιόνεσσι καθίζων
 δάκρυσι καὶ στοναχῇσι καὶ ἄλγεσι θυμὸν ἐρέχθων
 πόντον ἐπ' ἀτρύγετον δερκέσκετο δάκρυα λείβων.

[Calypso] found him sitting on the shore: his eyes were never dry of tears, but his sweet life was flowing for him, mourning for his homeland since the nymph was no longer pleasing. By night he was sleeping by necessity in her hollow cave, unwillingly, beside a willing partner; by day, he was sitting on the rocky seashore, breaking his heart with tears and wails and pains, and he was looking out upon the barren sea, pouring forth tears.

Odysseus' state of mind is characterized by two things: his immense grief and his attachment to his homeland. Although the sea has presented terrible dangers to Odysseus, he does not shrink from it. Hermes does not find him within Calypso's home, as might be expected, but instead finds him on the shore of the sea. This location, looking out over the sea, reinforces both his distance from home—Ithaca or even other lands are not visible to him—and his desire for return.

In addition, although Odysseus did find Calypso pleasing at one point, his mourning for home is certainly not a one-time occurrence. He cries as before (ἐνθα πάρος περ, 5.82), his eyes are never dry of tears (οὐδέ ποτ', 5.151), and now he only sleeps with Calypso by necessity (ἀνάγκη, 5.154) and unwillingly (οὐκ ἐθέλων, 5.155).

Odysseus' desire to reach Ithaca is most apparent when he later says to the Phaeacians, "Nothing is sweeter than one's fatherland and parents, even if someone should live far away in a rich house in a foreign land far from one's parents" (9.34-36). His language suggests the value of the homeland, as well as the connection between the place and the people. He recognizes that even if someone obtains wealth and a beautiful house, it cannot replace a home, just as the Greeks in Clytemnestra's speech could not find a true home at Troy. Unlike others who present immediate dangers to Odysseus, the Phaeacians offer him safety and comfort; Odysseus welcomes the land upon his arrival, even kissing the earth (5.463). Yet he is still wistful for his homeland. He describes Ithaca and says he cannot think of any place sweeter to look upon (οὐ τοι ἐγώ γε / ἧς γαίης δύναμαι γλυκερώτερον ἄλλο ἰδέσθαι, 9.27-28).

The Herald in *Agamemnon* shares a similar sentiment on the importance of the homeland in his first words (503-9):

ἰὼ πατρῷον οὐδας Ἀργείας χθονός,
δεκάτου σε φέγγει τῶιδ' ἀφικόμην ἔτους,
πολλῶν ῥαγείσῶν ἐλπίδων μιᾶς τυχών· (505)
οὐ γάρ ποτ' ἠὔχουν τῇιδ' ἐν Ἀργεΐαι χθονὶ
θανὼν μεθέξειν φιλτάτου τάφου μέρος.
νῦν χαῖρε μὲν χθών, χαῖρε δ' ἡλίου φάος,
ὑπατός τε χώρας Ζεὺς ὁ Πύθιός τ' ἄναξ...

Oh fatherly earth of the Argive land, I have reached you on this day of the tenth year. After many hopes were broken, I happened upon this one. For I never thought that I would have a share in a most beloved burial, having died in this Argive land. Greetings now, land, and greetings, light of the sun and Zeus, supreme in the land, and the Pythian lord...

The Herald addresses the land directly, immediately identifying the place with its people, as Odysseus does, by calling the earth πατρώιον (503) and repeating the words Ἀργείας χθονός twice in his address (503 and 506). Furthermore, the homeland appears to be a positive and welcome place, shown by the imagery of daylight—the Herald arrives during the day (φέγγει, 504) and hails the light of the sun alongside the land and the gods (χαῖρε δ' ἡλίου φάος, 508). Unlike when Odysseus arrives on Ithaca and the land is disguised to his sight (*Od.* 13.187-96), the Herald has a clear view of Argos and immediately recognizes his homeland. Nevertheless, even as the Herald seems to expect safety now that the war is over, his words suggest that not all is restored. Once again, light is a symbol of false good fortune.¹⁰ Though the Herald anticipates that his own death and burial will take place properly in Argos (506-7), his pleasure that this one hope will be fulfilled reveals how many of his hopes have been dashed (505), while at the same time reminding us how many other men have not achieved even this one hope; they have died and been buried abroad (cf. Clytemnestra in 340 and the Chorus in 452-55) or have returned as ashes, not men (cf. Chorus in 433-55). The Herald reinforces how important a burial in one's homeland and among one's family is. He is an unnamed character, representative of the whole Greek army and a reminder of how many families wish for the same.

In addition, the Herald's prayers for safety that follow his initial greeting contain negative overtones, suggesting that all is not well with this homecoming. When he asks that Apollo no longer send arrows upon the Greeks, the Herald puts forward to the god that he was hostile enough to the army near the Scamander (510-11), a reminder of the perils faced abroad by the army.¹¹ Moreover, in greeting his own patron deity Hermes and the local hero cults, the Herald

¹⁰ Cf. Peradotto (1964: 388) who argues that in *Agamemnon*, we see “a corruption of light as the natural symbol of life, joy, and safety into a symbol of vengeance, death, and destruction.”

¹¹ Raeburn and Thomas (2011: *ad loc*) suggest a specific allusion to the plague-bearing arrows sent by Apollo in *Iliad* 1.43-52.

recalls their role in sending forth the army (πέμψαντας, 516). Even the actual arrival is consistently seen in reference to the departure for war, just as in the Chorus' anticipation of the army's return. The Herald also recognizes here the discrepancy between the number of men who were sent off and those who return. He asks those who said farewell to the army to welcome those who remain after the fighting (τὸν λελειμμένον δορός, 517), reinforcing that a safe return is not guaranteed. The word λελειμμένον suggests a randomness to the distinction between those who survive and those who die. The Herald does not praise the battle prowess of any individuals and those who return are merely remnants, a theme that continues throughout his account of the war and return, showing a different perspective on homecoming from the heroism seen in the *Odyssey*.

Finally, the Herald turns to Agamemnon and, once again, his speech conveys joy but with ominous language, adding a question as to whether this homecoming is wholly positive (522-33):

ἦκει γὰρ ὑμῖν φῶς ἐν εὐφρόνῃ φέρων
καὶ τοῖσδ' ἅπασιν κοινὸν Ἀγαμέμνων ἄναξ.
ἀλλ' εὖ νιν ἀσπάσασθε, καὶ γὰρ οὖν πρέπει,
Τροίαν κατασκάψαντα τοῦ δικηφόρου (525)

Διὸς μακέλλῃ, τῇ κατείργασται πέδον.
βωμοὶ δ' αἵστοι καὶ θεῶν ἰδρύματα,
καὶ σπέρμα πάσης ἐξαπόλλυται χθονός·
τοιόνδε Τροίαι περιβαλὼν ζευκτήριον
ἄναξ Ἀτρείδης πρέσβυς εὐδαίμων ἀνὴρ (530)
ἦκει· τίεσθαι δ' ἀξιότατος βροτῶν
τῶν νῦν· Πάρις γὰρ οὔτε συντελὴς πόλις
ἐξεύχεται τὸ δρᾶμα τοῦ πάθους πλέον·

For he has come bearing light in the night to you and to all these people together, lord Agamemnon. But greet him kindly, for that surely befits him, who dug down Troy with the mattock of justice-bearing Zeus, with which he worked over the plain. And the altars and temples of the gods are annihilated, and the seed of the whole land is utterly destroyed. And having thrown this sort of yoke around Troy, our lord, the elder son of Atreus, a fortunate man, has come. And of all mortals, he is the most worthy of honor, for neither Paris nor the city associated with him boasts that he did more than he suffered.

The Herald's address begins positively. Just as the homeland is a welcome light, Agamemnon, too, brings light to the people (φῶς, 522). The Herald then provides a justification for greeting Agamemnon favorably—he has sacked Troy and enacted justice upon that city (525-33). As the Herald says, Paris and Troy got what was coming to them and nothing more (532-33). Yet the description of the sack of Troy is not entirely optimistic and contains foreboding images. The Herald's agricultural imagery of the mattock digging up the land of Troy in destruction (525-26) is a distortion of the typically productive role of agriculture (Raeburn and Thomas 2011: *ad loc.*). Were the people not at war, they likely would have been participating in agriculture, and this image turns the usual peaceful life on its head, mixing it with war.¹² Furthermore, the destruction of altars and temples (527) seems to fly in the face of proper treatment of the gods, a potential overstepping of one's human place that could have reminded the Athenian audience of the Persians' actions in Athens (Tracy 1986: 259).¹³ By throwing the yoke around Troy (ζευκτήριον, 529), Agamemnon takes potentially transgressive action.¹⁴ Thus, even the Herald's initial arrival home, which to some extent is full of joy and relief, foreshadows his later revelations of the suffering experienced by the Greek army abroad.

After the Herald makes his proclamation of the Greek victory, he engages in a conversation with the Chorus in which we see the mutual suffering of those at home and abroad. Both those at home and those abroad in *Agamemnon* grieve for each other, experiencing similar pains and

¹² Achilles' shield (*Iliad* 18.478-608) might offer a source of comparison for the different spheres of the Greek world. The shield, an item of war, depicts agricultural activities in detail, demonstrating the importance of such activities to the society and providing a look into war's alternatives.

¹³ Raeburn and Thomas (2011: *ad loc.*) note that this line is perhaps suspect, but also fitting here: suspect because "it interrupts the agricultural imagery and closely resembles *Pers.* 811 βῶμοι δ' ἄϊστοι δαιμόνων θ' ἰδρύματα" and fitting because the Herald "unwittingly confirms Clytemnestra's ominous warning at 338-47...from which θεῶν ἰδρύματα is repeated." They suggest that the word εὐδαίμων (530), as well, connects to Clytemnestra's earlier speech and conveys a man "tempting fate" (125 n. 530).

¹⁴ As does Xerxes in *Persians*, where the yoke is a prominent symbol, discussed in Chapter Two.

sharing similar thoughts despite their distance from each other. According to the Chorus this emotional experience is “a delightful sickness” (τερπνῆς... νόσου, 543), an oxymoron that the Herald finds confusing. The Chorus’ explanation does not clarify their statement so much as reveal the equal longing of the characters for each other (544-46):

Χο: τῶν ἀντερόντων ἰμέρῳι πεπληγμένοι.
 Κη: ποθεῖν ποθοῦντα τήνδε γῆν στρατὸν λέγεις; (545)
 Χο: ὥς πόλλ’ ἀμαυρᾷς ἐκ φρενός <μ’> ἀναστένειν.

Chorus: (You are) struck by desire for those desiring in turn.

Herald: Are you saying that the land longed for the army while the army longed for it?

Chorus: So that from my dark mind I groaned for many things.

The Chorus describe both the Herald, here representing all the men who went to war, and themselves as desirous (544). The Herald puts this reciprocity into even more obvious terms, immediately juxtaposing forms of the word ποθέω to describe both parties—the army and the land. The Herald and Chorus’ exchange expands upon the perspectives offered in the *Odyssey*. Though we do see grief and longing from two sides in the *Odyssey*, it is primarily confined to the hero Odysseus and his own family, Penelope and Telemachus. In the conversation in *Agamemnon*, a voice is given to the entire departed army and to all the Greeks left behind in Argos, even when they are not all present in the scene. Furthermore, just as we saw emphasis placed on receiving burial within one’s own homeland, the Herald creates a strong connection between the land and her people by making the earth the subject of ποθεῖν. A similar personification of the land will be seen again in *Persians* and *Trojan Women*, when the land mourns for her lost people, emphasizing the extent of the effects of war.

Furthermore, even though the Herald is happy to arrive home, the lasting effects of war are evident in the miscommunication between the Herald and Chorus. For example, both the Herald and the Chorus express a willingness to die, but in different ways. The Herald’s wish expresses a

satisfaction at arriving home—he will no longer deny the gods his death (τὸ τεθνάναι δ’ οὐκέτ’ ἀντερῶ θεοῖς, 539).¹⁵ Yet when the Herald asks the Chorus about their fears when their leaders were away, the Chorus suggest that these fears lead them *even now* to wish for death (ὥς νῦν, τὸ σὸν δῆ, καὶ θανεῖν πολλὰ χάρις, 550). In articulating a similar willingness to die as the Herald, the Chorus expresses an entirely different motivation—fear not happiness—one that the Herald then proceeds to misunderstand as he replies that, yes, things happened well (εὖ γὰρ πέπρακται, 551).¹⁶ Not only are the Chorus’ fears unassuaged by the victory of the army and the announced return of Agamemnon, but there is also a disconnect that persists between the Herald and Chorus. Both have experienced suffering due to war, and through conversation, they reveal the universal pains of the soldiers and Greek families. But even after the war has ended, their reunion is strained and not all is happily restored.

It is after this reunion that the Herald finally gives an account of the war; however, the Herald describes the Greeks’ suffering with details not of the fighting, killing, and engagement with the enemy, but of the quality of life for the soldiers. The Herald’s account demonstrates the risks of leaving home through its emphasis on the environment that the Greeks faced abroad. Like in the *Odyssey*, there is a clear distinction between the safety and comfort of home and the risks of the natural world. Yet whereas Odysseus is able to overcome these challenges in the *Odyssey*, man’s inability to fight against nature is emphasized in the “crossing from war” tragedies like *Agamemnon*. The Herald describes how the Greeks are forced into this inhospitable environment when they leave for war. Much like in his initial proclamation, the Herald begins on a positive note (551-54):

εὖ γὰρ πέπρακται. ταῦτά δ’ ἐν πολλῷ χρόνῳ

¹⁵ Compare lines 506-7, in which the Herald expresses his relief that he will die and be buried in Argos (οὐ γάρ ποτ’ ἤρχουν τῇδ’ ἐν Ἀργεῖαι χθονὶ / θανὼν μεθέξειν φιλτάτου τάφου μέρος).

¹⁶ See Raeburn and Thomas 2011: *ad loc.*

τὰ μὲν τις ἂν λέξειεν εὐπετῶς ἔχειν,
τὰ δ' αὖτε κἀπίμομφα. τίς δὲ πλὴν θεῶν
ἅπαντ' ἀπήμων τὸν δι' αἰῶνος χρόνον;

For it ended up well. And in much time someone could say that some things happened well and others were unlucky. But who except the gods lives unharmed throughout his whole life?

The Herald provides a reasoned perspective: Yes, there were good things and bad things, but we can't expect everything to be good, right? We're not gods, after all.

Yet the Herald immediately launches into a narrative of the army's hardships (μόχθους, 555), notably focusing on the basic needs of the soldiers—food, shelter, and health (555-66):

μόχθους γὰρ εἰ λέγοιμι καὶ δυσανλίας, (555)

σπαρνὰς παρήξεις καὶ κακοστρώτους, τί δ' οὐ

στένοντες, οὐ λαχόντες ἡματος μέρος;

τὰ δ' αὖτε χέρσῳ καὶ προσῆν πλέον στύγος·

εὐναὶ γὰρ ἦσαν δαΐων πρὸς τείχεσιν,

ἐξ οὐρανοῦ δὲ κἀπὸ γῆς λειμώνια (560)

δρόσοι κατεψάκαζον, ἔμπεδον σίνος,

ἐσθημάτων τιθέντες ἐνθηρον τρίχα.

χειμῶνα δ' εἰ λέγοι τις οἰωνοκτόνον,

οἶον παρεῖχ' ἄφερτον Ἰδαία χιῶν,

ἢ θάλλπος, εὔτε πόντος ἐν μεσημβριναῖς (565)

κοίταις ἀκύμων νηέμοις εὔδοι πεσών·

For if I should speak of toils and inhospitable places, sparse gangways and badly strewn beds—what did we not groan? What did we not obtain as our day's lot? As for the things on land, there was even more disgust in addition. For the beds were near the walls of the enemy, and from the sky and from the land, dew of the meadow drizzled, a continuous plague, infesting the wool of our clothes with lice. And if someone should speak of the bird-killing winter, what sort of unbearable thing the Idaean snow offered, or the heat, when the waveless sea sleeps at midday, having fallen quiet, in windless beds—

The soldiers experience cramped sleeping conditions with poor beds (556), suffer the constant grievance of wet clothes and lice (560-62), and endure extreme cold in the winter and heat in the summer (563-66). They sleep in the open air—without the protection of a house—along with the sleeping sea (565-66). The description of the elements is comparable to Clytemnestra's vision of

the soldiers abroad (cf. 330-37). In both instances, suffering is inescapable, and there is no chance for heroism. The men receive whatever weather and circumstances are given to them by lot (οὐ λαχόντες ἡματος μέρος; 557), rather than earning their safety or comfort, showing the universal conditions experienced across the whole army. Whereas the *Odyssey* develops a pattern in which Odysseus repeatedly survives storms at sea to reach the safety of land, here in *Agamemnon*, the threats only increase as the Herald turns from the sea to the land (τὰ δ' αὖτε χέρσῳ, 558). The army's beds lie near the walls of the enemy (εὖναι γὰρ ἦσαν δαΐων πρὸς τείχεσιν, 559), not only outside of their own homes where they should belong but also as far as possible from familiar territory. The location emphasizes the separation from home during war. Even when the sea falls quiet, the Greeks suffer (565-66). What remains consistent throughout the Herald's account is the absence of combat; he is entirely focused on the soldiers' environment, further conceptualizing war in terms of distance and departure from home.¹⁷

The Herald attempts to frame his recollection of the war with a positive tone. Just as he began with the justification, "What human doesn't experience some pain?" (554), he later breaks off from his description of the miseries to focus on the present pleasures of victorious survival (567-73):

τί ταῦτα πενθεῖν δεῖ; παροίχεται πόνος·
παροίχεται δέ, τοῖσι μὲν τεθνηκόσιν
τὸ μήποτ' αὔθις μηδ' ἀναστῆναι μέλειν,
ἡμῖν δὲ τοῖς λοιποῖσιν Ἀργείων στρατοῦ (570)
νικᾷ τὸ κέρδος, πῆμα δ' οὐκ ἀντιρρέπει.
τί τοὺς ἀναλωθέντας ἐν ψήφῳ λέγειν,
τὸν ζῶντα δ' αλγεῖν χρὴ τύχης παλιγκότου;

¹⁷ We have seen evidence already that the Chorus and Herald have trouble relating to each other's experience. Perhaps the Herald chooses to shift the focus away from combat in an effort to connect with the Chorus better and to avoid speaking about experiences that he feels the Chorus and others who were at home during the war would not understand. A parallel can be found in modern combat veterans' reluctance to share stories of combat with non-veterans and even with non-combat veterans.

Why is it necessary to suffer these things? For the work has passed for us. And the work has passed for them, so that it is no longer a care for those who died to rise again, and profit prevails for us, the remnants of the Argive army, and suffering does not balance the scale. Why is it necessary for those alive to speak of those who died in exact detail and to feel pain at fortune hostile again?

The Herald once more speaks of weighing the negatives and positives of life against each other (ἀντιρρέπει, 571), and he tries to suggest that it is best for the living not to dwell on the dead.

Yet, at the same time, the Herald *does* dwell on death, twice mentioning those who died (τοῖσι...τεθνηκόσιν, 568; ἀναλωθέντας, 572). This reinforces the permanence of that loss despite the Herald's claim that the work has passed (παροίχεται πόνος, 567). Furthermore, as he does in his initial proclamation, the Herald again refers to those who return alive as the remnants of the army (τοῖς λοιποῖσιν, 570; cf. τὸν λελειμμένον, 517). It appears that those who have died and those who survive reach this point merely by chance, and, indeed, τύχη also makes an appearance in these lines (573). Thus, even when the Herald makes a more formal declaration of victory and praise to the gods, his forced optimism throughout his speech only further highlights the suffering.¹⁸ Both the emphasis on the painful trials faced abroad and the fact that chance, rather than heroic action, leads to survival contribute to the negative and universalizing portrayal of war in the play. Adding to this conception, the Herald does not mention any specific actions taken in the war or any specific characters here. His suffering and that of his companions is presented as timeless, the distress that would happen to anyone leaving home. In *Agamemnon* anonymity demonstrates the pervasiveness of suffering—it is not simply one man and his family whose lives are affected and who receive the focus, but an entire people.

¹⁸ Leahy (1974: 7-8) identifies the Herald as one who speaks with contemporary realism, and therefore exposes the negative aspects of the war. Scodel (2007) and Yoon (2012) both recognize a tension in the Herald's speech as he wavers between realism and idealism. Scodel attributes this to the opposition of "private memory and open discourse" (123), whereas Yoon distinguishes the Herald's dual role as a "individual soldier" and "official herald" (48). I believe the Herald's forced optimism could be both for the sake of his audience and to protect himself from reliving traumatic memories. A comparison with modern veterans is again possible.

The Herald's next lengthy speech (636-80) has similar features, though in it he describes the troubles that face the Greeks *after* victory. The Herald continues to focus on the risks of departure that indiscriminately face the soldiers and threaten a successful return. Just as in his previous report, the Herald is conflicted about sharing terrible news when he has arrived to report a victory. He begins by saying that it is not right to stain a fortunate day by speaking evil (εὐφημον ἥμαρ οὐ πρέπει κακαγγέλωι / γλώσσηι μαιίνειν, 636-37). He then continues to imagine what it would be like to bring the report of a fallen army, news that would affect the city twice: once for the defeat of the army as a whole and again for the loss of each man (638-43):

ὅταν δ' ἀπευκτὰ πῆματ' ἄγγελος πόλει
 στυγνῶι προσώπῳ πτωσίμου στρατοῦ φέρηι,
 πόλει μὲν ἔλκος ἐν τὸ δῆμιον τυχεῖν, (640)
 πολλοὺς δὲ πολλῶν ἐξαγισθέντας δόμων
 ἄνδρας διπλῇ μάστιγι, τὴν Ἄρης φιλεῖ,
 δίλογχον ἄτην, φοινίαν ξυνωρίδα·

And whenever a messenger with a gloomy face should bring the un hoped-for pains of the fallen army to the city, it is one public wound for the city to happen upon. And the many men driven out as sacrifices from many homes with the double whip, which Ares loves, these make a twofold ruin, a bloody pair of horses.

What makes the Herald's situation interesting is that he has arrived to bring the report not of a fallen army, but of a victorious one. Yet what he goes on to describe is the exact twofold ruin he mentions here—a disaster for the city and for each individual man. The repetition of *πολύς* to describe the men leaving their homes emphasizes the numbers of men lost and families affected (641). We will see, as the Herald continues, that the perils do not upset the House of Atreus alone, but many homes, from which many men have been killed. Furthermore, whether the *hapax* ἐξαγισθέντας (641) means these men are driven out as accursed (from ἄγος) or taken as sacrificial victims (from ἀγίζω), in either case the word focuses on the departure of the men and

reinforces the lack of any chance to return.¹⁹ Just as in the Chorus' refrains, Ares is responsible (642, cf. 438-44), stressing how war inflicts pains on everyone. His punishment is different from the punishment and revenge enacted, perhaps, by Zeus and Artemis. For the Herald, his own successful return and the welcome he receives in Argos cannot outweigh the suffering he has witnessed and the fate of his comrades. At his return, he is only reminded of the unrealized homecomings of those who departed with him. The Herald wonders how he can mix the good news with the bad, knowing he comes to a city that rejoices because of the victory (646-49).

The Herald launches into a narrative of the storm that has destroyed the Greek fleets, painting a picture in which the natural elements, and particularly the sea, are a great risk to the soldiers trying to return home. The Herald begins with an alliance of former enemies—fire and sea (πῦρ καὶ θάλασσα, 651), then describes the evils that arose from the stormy sea at night (δυσκύμαντα...κακά, 653), the Thracian blasts that shattered the ships against each other (ναῦς...Θρήικαι πνοαὶ / ἤρεικον, 654-55), and the strong storm of a whirlwind and the surge of rain that buffeted the ships (κεροτυπούμεναι βίαι / χειμῶνι τυφῶ σὺν ζάλῃ τ' ὀμβροκτύπῳ, 655-56).²⁰ This storm is reminiscent of the conditions for the men as they besieged Troy; they are completely exposed to winds and rains, but now, instead of the calm, sleeping sea, the sea's waves rise at night. When the sea settles and light returns, not all is restored. Again, the light of day is a false marker of happiness and good fortune within the play; it instead reveals the true destruction: the sea blossoming with dead men and the ruins of ships (658-60). The metaphor of

¹⁹ The religious language might recall the sacrifice of Iphigenia. Just as in that instance, the religious framing of death here cannot counteract the pain at the loss.

²⁰ Peradotto (1964: 383) argues that the alliance of fire and water is an example of the “unnatural inclemency” that appears in the *Agamemnon* to reflect moral circumstances. Similarly, Gantz (1977: 32) argues that “cosmic order is disrupted” as the ships leaving a burning city themselves burst into flames. I believe that the extreme natural environment is not always tied to a moral judgment. In this case, the entire army is indiscriminately affected with no indication of wrongdoing on their part.

the blooming sea (ἀνθοῦν πέλαγος, 659) is reminiscent of the imagery used earlier in *Agamemnon* when the young men who depart for war are described as the flower of the land or people (198). Once again here, the image reinforces the distorted quality of the scene: death is expressed with the language of emerging life and youths are dying before their time. Furthermore, the syntactical parallelism between the corpses of men and the wreckage of ships dehumanizes the men (νεκροῖς / ἀνδρῶν...ναυτικοῖς τ' ἐρειπίοις, 659-60). Like the men who return as ashes in urns, these men have lost their selves and their humanity after departing. The storm is a reminder of the dangers of leaving the safety of one's city and the way that these dangers do not diminish even as one is trying to return after victory.

Furthermore, the negative tone of the Herald's account universally covers all men and actions. The Herald focuses on those who died and whose homecomings are lost; no hero emerges to save the men, and even the Herald does not celebrate a victory despite his survival. The whole army faces equal risks and each man has an equal chance of returning alive. For example, safety is out of the men's hands as the Herald attributes the escape of his own ship first to a divinity and then to fortune (661-66):

ἡμᾶς γε μὲν δὴ ναῦν τ' ἀκήρατον σκάφος
 ἦτοι τις ἐξέκλεψεν ἢ ᾗτιτήσατο
 θεός τις, οὐκ ἄνθρωπος, οἶακος θιγών,
 Τύχη δὲ σωτήρ ναῦν θέλουσ' ἐφέζετο
 ὥς μήτ' ἐν ὄρμῳ κύματος ζάλην ἔχειν (665)
 μήτ' ἐξοκεῖλαι πρὸς κραταίλων χθόνα.

And someone either stole us away along with our unharmed ship or demanded us, some god, not a man, holding the tiller. And Fortune, our savior, willingly sat near the ship so that neither did the surge of the wave hold us in anchorage nor did we run aground against the rocky land.

Even though a god brings the ship away, the Herald qualifies that divine being with *τις*, showing uncertainty of who is actually performing this action. The Herald stresses primarily that survival

is not dependent on human action (θεός τις, οὐκ ἄνθρωπος, 663). There is no justification given for the god's interest in this ship in particular, no reason for the Herald to survive over others. Furthermore, the escape from this disaster is not complete without Τύχη, whom the Herald calls a “savior” and who allows the ship safe passage all the way to Argos (664-66). This acknowledgment of fortune suggests an equality between all the Greeks and indicates that a man's life is not dependent on any previous action or special relationship with the divine, as was the case for Odysseus in the *Odyssey*. The men survive the storm on the journey home by chance, just as those who make it out of the war alive in the Herald's earlier report (cf. lines 570, 573). Indeed, the Herald expresses later that he and his companions could not believe their good fortune (οὐ πεποιθότες τύχῃ, 668). There is nothing deserving about their survival.

Moreover, even as the Herald describes how he and his companions have escaped the metaphorical Hades of the sea (Ἄϊδην πόντιον πεφευγότες, 667) and now sail through the bright daylight (λευκὸν κατ' ἥμαρ, 668)—clear imagery of life prevailing over death—, the Herald's pessimism persists. It is evident that he could just as easily have been one of the ones who died. Survival has only brought a new pain (νέον πάθος, 669) for the men as they recall the suffering and destruction of the army. In addition, the Herald realizes that just as he and his companions believe the others to be dead, so might the others think that he and his companions did not survive (671-73). His question “why not?” (τί μήν; 672) reveals the true chance nature of survival. It is not until the end of his account that the Herald finally mentions an individual, Menelaus, whose fate is also uncertain. The Herald suggests first that he has survived (674-75) and then, with a shift indicated by the words δ' οὖν (676), less optimistically that there is “some hope” (ἐλπίς τις, 676) that Menelaus will reach home. Though he is singled out and has some potential for a safe homecoming, Menelaus is not portrayed as a hero like Odysseus. The Herald

has spent the majority of his account focused on the masses of men who comprise the army and does not get to Menelaus until the final seven lines of this 45-line speech, despite the fact that the Chorus had specifically asked about Menelaus in lines 617-19.²¹ Thus, Aeschylus portrays the treacherous sea with an emphasis on the countless deaths of men there rather than the success of a hero. The storm that the Herald vividly describes can be viewed independently from the cycle of retribution within *Agamemnon*, and instead the terms he uses suggest the risks of leaving home for war and trying to return.

The arrival of the Herald introduces a new perspective within *Agamemnon*, the view of a soldier who has traveled abroad for war. The Herald's initial victory proclamation, his account of the struggles of the Greek army to survive during the war, and his tale of devastation during the army's return all reinforce themes introduced by the Chorus and Clytemnestra earlier in the play. Like these characters, the Herald portrays the army's departure for war as one that permanently affects the society, both through the deaths of men abroad and the suffering of those at home. Furthermore, the Herald expands upon the idea of chance, only briefly mentioned in Clytemnestra's account of the sack of Troy. By depicting survival during and after war as a matter of chance, rather than heroism, the Herald demonstrates how widespread the effects of war are. He is not telling a story about himself, as Odysseus does to the Phaeacians in the *Odyssey*, nor is he narrating the story of a heroic Agamemnon, as one might argue Homer is narrating the heroic return of Odysseus in the *Odyssey*. Instead, the Herald's account provides a perspective familiar to all Greek families and shows the universal difficulties of homecoming. Finally, the exchange between the Herald and the Chorus and the misunderstandings evident there give a glimpse of the ways that home and abroad collide during and after war, and how

²¹ In immediate reply to the Chorus, the Herald only says that he does not know what happened to him.

these conflicts prevent the restoration of former order and the return to normal family and community life. This collision of home and abroad is the subject of the next section.

Homecoming: The Collision of Home and Abroad

The moment that the characters and audience have been waiting for finally arrives: Agamemnon's homecoming. Agamemnon, himself, though the victorious warrior, does not actually recall the war in any detail as the Chorus, Clytemnestra, and the Herald have done; however, his words and actions within the play, and their consequences, still give insight into the potential risks of waging war abroad. Even a victorious king is not guaranteed a happy homecoming. Agamemnon's return shows the fall from status that can befall any man who goes to war. From the sacrifice of Iphigenia at Aulis recalled early in the play, it is clear that Agamemnon is driven by war. And in his first interactions with the Chorus upon his return, it becomes evident that this campaign has left him vulnerable at home. The excessiveness of luxuries in the "carpet scene" further emphasizes this fall from status. Here, too, the play does not confine itself to its hero Agamemnon. The captive Cassandra, who accompanies him, also experiences a loss of status—from princess to slave. Thus, once again, we see tragedy exposing the consequences of war for those beyond the male soldier. Agamemnon's homecoming and his failed reintegration into his home and community demonstrate the persistent themes of homecoming seen throughout the play. Although Agamemnon has physically closed the distance between home and abroad, we continue to see a distinction between the domestic comforts of home and the treacherous conditions abroad, as well as the misunderstandings and distortions of typical relationships caused by that separation.

Agamemnon's arrival invites comparison with the homecoming of Odysseus in the *Odyssey*. His situation appears similar—both Odysseus and Agamemnon are victorious kings

returning home—, yet Agamemnon suffers disgrace whereas Odysseus recovers his former status. Agamemnon’s lack of caution demonstrates his expectation that when he returns home, he will easily slip into the position that he left and be able to maintain the same relationships with his family and community. The other characters in *Agamemnon*, however, continue to express concern over the deaths caused by the war and anxiety over Agamemnon’s position as king. Sailor and Stroup recognize how Agamemnon needs to balance the *kleos* of war with the appearance of tyranny in a “‘competition’ between two distinct and definitively incompatible visions of social and political reintegration” (1999: 165). Whereas they argue that Agamemnon is a threat to the community as an aristocrat, I will show that his struggle to reintegrate into his home and social life is a challenge facing all soldiers returning from war. Agamemnon’s evident misunderstanding emphasizes the continued disjunction between home and abroad.

At Agamemnon’s return, it is clear that his position as king is not secure, despite his victory at war and his successful physical return. For example, although saying that people will often pretend to share in another man’s sadness or happiness (790-94), the Chorus state their honest opinion of the war (799-804):

σὺ δέ μοι τότε μὲν στέλλων στρατιὰν
 Ἑλένης ἔνεκ’, οὐκ ἐπικεύσω, (800)
 κάρτ’ ἀπομούσως ἦσθα γεγραμμένος
 οὐδ’ εὖ πραπίδων οἶακα νέμων,
 θράσος ἐκ θυσιῶν
 ἀνδράσι θνήσκουσι κομίζων·

But when you were then equipping the army on account of Helen—I will not conceal it—you came painted very unfavorably in my opinion, not guiding the tiller of your mind well, conveying confidence from sacrifices to dying men.

The Chorus are upset that Agamemnon led the army to Troy, feeling that it is especially unfair that Agamemnon is responsible for the negative effects of war but gets to arrive home safely (Gantz 1983: 81-82). In addition to offering criticism of Agamemnon’s decision-making, the

Chorus' metaphor of Agamemnon handling the tiller of his mind badly (802) is suggestive of both the actual expedition by boat and the return journey that the Herald recounted. Furthermore, the dying men of line 804 not only refer to the men whom Agamemnon attempts to save by sacrificing Iphigenia, but also bring to mind all the men who have since died at war and during the return. The sacrifice has only delayed their eventual deaths. In addition, the Chorus suggest that Agamemnon determine who was loyal in his absence, demonstrating again the control Agamemnon relinquished when he left Argos and the possible disruption at home (807-9):

γνώσῃ δὲ χρόνῳ διαπευθόμενος
τόν τε δικαίως καὶ τὸν ἀκαίρως
πόλιν οἰκουροῦντα πολιτῶν.

And you will know having inquired in time which citizens managed the city justly
and which improperly.

The king's position is not secure because of his absence at war abroad. Moreover, his lack of contact with home means that he has no knowledge of what has occurred there in his absence, much like Odysseus' situation.

Agamemnon's response, however, does not acknowledge the negative consequences of the war, as recognized by both Steiner and Yoon. Steiner (2010) suggests that Agamemnon returns like a hero in an epinician ode, victorious but not overly hubristic until his characterization is distorted in Clytemnestra's response. Yoon (2012) notes that Agamemnon reflects only the impersonal and formal parts of the Herald's speech, referring only to the losses on the Trojan side. Such interpretations of Agamemnon's character reveal how ignorant he is of others' reactions, including those of Clytemnestra and the Chorus before him, as well as those of the general population of Argos and, by extension, the Athenian audience. To others, Agamemnon's speech reveals that he has not yet returned and reintegrated with his family and society. If we consider Odysseus' arrival on Ithaca in the *Odyssey*, we see Odysseus react very differently to

his homecoming. When Athena tells Odysseus that he is, indeed, in Ithaca, Odysseus does rejoice at seeing his homeland (γήθησεν δὲ πολύτλας δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς, / χαίρων ἢ γαίῃ πατρώῃ, *Od.* 13.250-51), yet he keeps these feelings inside. Instead of offering praise to the land and the gods, he continues to conceal his identity from Athena (οὐδ' ὅ γ' ἀληθέα εἶπε, πάλιν δ' ὅ γε λάζετο μῦθον, *Od.* 13.254). Agamemnon, on the other hand, with his first words greets the land and thanks the gods for their share in helping him sack Troy and achieve his homecoming (810-13):

πρῶτον μὲν Ἄργος καὶ θεοὺς ἐγχωρίους (810)
 δίκη προσειπεῖν, τοὺς ἐμοὶ μεταιτίους
 νόστου δικαίων θ' ὣν ἐπραξάμην πόλιν
 Πριάμου·

First it is right to address Argos and the gods of this place, the accessories for me of my homecoming and of the just things which I exacted upon the city of Priam.

Agamemnon's words suggest that he has safely completed his journey. He places great importance upon arriving in his homeland, indicated by his immediate address to Argos and to the gods who belong specifically to that land. In addition, he makes the claim that he has completed his homecoming after justly sacking Troy, demonstrating satisfaction and an apparent completion of his journey.

The word νόστος, however, calls to mind other return journeys that are not as certain. For example, the Herald has already revealed that the fate of his comrades, including Menelaus, is as unknown to him as his own fate is to them (671-76). Agamemnon's speech exposes his overconfidence and hints at the instability that has arisen in his absence. When Agamemnon mentions Odysseus later in his speech, he calls him his only reliable trace-horse (μόνος δ' Ὀδυσσεύς.../ζευχθεῖς ἐτοῖμος ἢ ἐμοὶ σειραφόρος, 841-42), but then echoes the Herald's sentiment about comrades returning home, saying that he does not know if Odysseus is alive or

dead (εἴτ' οὖν θανόντος εἴτε καὶ ζῶντος πέρι / λέγω, 843-44). By specifically naming Odysseus, Agamemnon even more strongly suggests a comparison between himself and the Homeric hero and calls to mind Odysseus' actual return—one cautious but eventually successful unlike Agamemnon's. With no knowledge of the circumstances of Odysseus' return, Agamemnon is ignorant of the challenges that might await himself at Argos. He believes he has made a successful homecoming, yet arriving in Argos is not the end of his journey toward restoring his former life.

Agamemnon's ignorance is underscored by Clytemnestra's greeting. Even as she feigns loyalty and joy at his safe return, Clytemnestra emphasizes the pains a wife would experience in her husband's absence and the uncertainties caused by distance. Such experience is similar to Penelope's in the *Odyssey*: Penelope must test Odysseus even after he arrives home since she has spent twenty years in his absence during which she was pressured to accept him as dead. Clytemnestra particularly highlights the risks to the home when men depart for war by describing, for example, the grief that plagued her while Agamemnon was away (858-94). Weiberg (2016) has shown how Clytemnestra's speech is the fullest performance of the loyal waiting Greek wife within Greek tragedy. Weiberg outlines the six ways that Clytemnestra, in a single speech, parallels the tropes of the model trustworthy wife Penelope: 1) loneliness, 2) negative and false reports, 3) suicide, 4) concern for a son, 5) nighttime insomnia and bad dreams, and 6) hope that the husband's return will solve the problems at home.²² As she cycles through these elements one by one, Clytemnestra uses language that emphasizes how separation has led to these negative effects.

²² Weiberg (2016: 94-100) compares these elements of Clytemnestra's speech to Penelope's 1) confinement in the upper rooms of the house (*Od.* 1.328-36), 2) endurance of a false report even from Odysseus himself (*Od.* 14.126-30, 19.185-202), 3) prayer for a quick death (*Od.* 20.79-82; cf. 18.201-5), 4) concern for both Telemachus' and Odysseus' welfare (*Od.* 4.703-5), 5) insomnia and bad dreams (*Od.* 20.83-87), and 6) positive reunion with her husband (*Od.* 23.233).

Clytemnestra begins by clearly marking Agamemnon's distance from home, saying that her life has been grievous as long as he was at Troy (ὅσονπερ οὗτος ἦν ὑπ' Ἰλίου, 860) and lamenting how great an evil it is for a wife to sit deserted at home, away from her husband (τὸ μὲν γυναῖκα πρῶτον ἄρσενος δίχα / ἦσθαι δόμοις ἐρήμον ἔκπαγλον κακόν, 861-62). Even when Agamemnon is standing right in front of her, Clytemnestra dwells on his departure and absence, as well as the hole it has left in their home. Although she is lying about her feelings toward Agamemnon, Clytemnestra's language must carry some truth, as well as some familiarity to the Athenian audience, to be a convincing lie. She describes messenger after messenger arriving with news that Agamemnon had been murdered or killed (861-73), and she says that she has tried to take her own life in grief (874-75) and spent nights awake crying (887-94). We know that Agamemnon, in fact, has not died, yet we have already heard from the Chorus about the grief striking households across Argos as they learn of their loved ones' deaths (427-55). The reports that Clytemnestra claims to have heard (we are not sure if she is lying only about her reaction to them or to having received them at all) cannot be total fabrications, since others have certainly received these reports or even seen their loved ones return in urns. Furthermore, it is clear that any reports that do arrive cannot always be trusted. Even when word arrives from abroad, those at home cannot truly know what has happened until, if they are lucky, they meet their loved ones face-to-face upon their homecoming. The difficulty of this situation is magnified for the audience, who have some idea of what is to come but are placed in a similarly uncertain position. The doubt caused by distance continues to be at the forefront of the minds of those at home. We can, therefore, imagine that the anxiety and grief Clytemnestra describes are similar to what other wives would have experienced as they awaited word of their husbands' safety.

A further parallel with the *Odyssey* is found as Clytemnestra continues to offer excessive praise of Agamemnon in a series of metaphors that, at the same time, draw attention to the lasting dangers of war. Clytemnestra calls Agamemnon, for example, the guard dog of the stables (τῶν σταθμῶν κύνα, 896), the pillar of a lofty hall (ὑψηλῆς στέγης / στῦλον, 897-98), and the lone heir to a father (μονογενὲς τέκνον πατρί, 898). These are domestic metaphors that relate, especially, to the protection and preservation of the home. The dog protects the house from outsiders, the pillar sustains it from within, and the heir ensures the future life of the home. Clytemnestra suggests that now that Agamemnon is home, the household will be properly supported. Nevertheless, there is irony in her mention of the lone heir to a father, which brings to mind Orestes. Clytemnestra has already claimed that she sent Orestes to a friend to protect him from the threat of overthrow, revealing a further disruption of the family caused by Agamemnon's absence at war (877-86). Unlike the homecoming in the *Odyssey*, in which Odysseus' son Telemachus is one of the first people whom Odysseus meets on Ithaca and to whom he reveals his identity, Agamemnon never reunites with his son Orestes. The importance of young people as the future generation that will carry on a community appears again in *Persians* and *Trojan Women*, where we see that potential destroyed by war.

Most strikingly in her series of metaphors, Clytemnestra uses imagery of travel and the environment to describe how welcome Agamemnon is (899-901):

ὁδοιπόρῳ διψῶντι πηγαῖον ῥέος,
καὶ γῆν φανεῖσαν ναυτίλοις παρ' ἐλπίδα, (900)
κάλλιστον ἥμαρ εἰσιδεῖν ἐκ χειμάτος.

(This man is) a flowing stream to a thirsty traveler, and a land appearing to sailors against all hope, a beautiful day to see from out of winter.

These positive scenes that Clytemnestra creates are things that would be welcome to the wandering soldier. Her mention of thirst, the sea, and the winter recalls the threats abroad that

the Herald described in his account of the expedition to Troy and the return journey to Argos. These lines are also reminiscent of a simile in *Odyssey* 23.231-40 in which Odysseus appears to Penelope like land to a shipwrecked man: ὥς δ' ὅτ' ἄν ἀσπᾶσιος γῆ νηχομένοισι φανήη...ὥς ἄρα τῇ ἀσπαστὸς ἔην πόσις εἰσοροῶση (23.231-39). Like the simile of birds whose nests have been abandoned, which appears in both texts, here too a simile within the *Odyssey* shows a difficulty of homecoming. Both *Agamemnon* and the *Odyssey* tell of a similar moment in the hero's journey—his reunion with his wife—and offer a similar reversal of roles with their imagery, yet these similarities between them highlight their differences. In reminding us of the journey of the soldier home, the *Odyssey* prepares us for a happy reunion between husband and wife and restoration to the normal household, whereas *Agamemnon* prepares us instead for a false homecoming.²³ Clytemnestra might welcome the sight of Agamemnon, but he is welcome not as her husband but as the victim of her plot.

The infamous “carpet scene” is the culmination of misunderstandings between soldier and wife and a demonstration of the broken relationships of the home. Some scholars have viewed this scene in terms of economics and exchange. For example, Crane uses comparative evidence from Kwakiutl Indians to argue that Agamemnon “does not understand the ethics of generosity” and that he satisfies no one when he hesitates but eventually steps on the fabric (1993:129). McNeil (2005) argues that the fabric Clytemnestra lays on the ground is a bridal cloth—both the nuptial robe and the coverlet of the marriage bed—and therefore is tied to the *charis* between husband and wife. These two interpretations draw attention to Agamemnon's mistaken attitude

²³ Foley (1978) suggests that the simile demonstrates a “like-mindedness” between Odysseus and Penelope, while it fits into a pattern of negotiated gender roles within the epic. She states that in the period leading up to the final recognition, “Odysseus and Penelope recreate a mature marriage with well-defined spheres of power and a dynamic tension between two like-minded members of their sex” (21). In *Agamemnon*, however, the female and male spheres are no longer well defined and collide in tandem with the collision of home and abroad.

toward the wealth displayed before him. Others have viewed the carpet scene in terms of gendered power dynamics between Clytemnestra and her husband. Morrell argues that Clytemnestra controls Agamemnon's social integration through her authority over the domestic sphere (1997: 147-48), and McClure highlights how Clytemnestra deceptively combines masculine and feminine language—including military and magical language—to coax Agamemnon across the cloth (1999: 79-89). With respect to gender, Lee (2004) focuses in particular on how the label of *peplos* marks the fabric as an object of female *metis* and a challenge to the established masculine order. I will show that such representations of conflict and gender go beyond the individual relationship between Clytemnestra and Agamemnon and are tied to the problems that generally emerge when men travel abroad to war. The language Clytemnestra uses reinforces themes of separation and the general difficulties of both physical homecoming and social reintegration.

Throughout this scene, Agamemnon is physically deprived of a homecoming since, at Clytemnestra's direction, his foot never touches the earth of his homeland (μὴ χαμαὶ τιθεῖς / τὸν σὸν πόδ', ὦναξ, Ἰλίου πορθήτορα, 906-7). His homecoming journey instead continues over a tapestry dyed purple with ink from the sea. The emphasis on sea-dye in this scene (ἁλουργέσιν, 946; πορφύρας, 957) underscores how this textile has become a new body of water that Agamemnon must cross, even after he has already traversed the Aegean on his return to Argos.²⁴ Clytemnestra develops the image further (958-60):

ἔστιν θάλασσα, τίς δέ νιν κατασβέσει;
τρέφουσα πολλῆς πορφύρας ἰσάργυρον
κηκίδα παγκαίνιστον, εἰμάτων βαφάς· (960)

²⁴ Morell compares Agamemnon's crossing of this "sea" with the crossing from Aulis to Troy, thus paralleling the sacrifice of Iphigenia with a new "killing" of stepping on the carpet (1997: 161). Agamemnon's return is again tied to his departure and never entirely complete.

There is the sea—and who will quench it?—which nourishes the ever-fresh ooze of much purple, worth its weight in silver, the dippings of clothing.

Clytemnestra's question, "who will quench it?" (τίς δέ νιν κατασβέσει; 958), and her description of the dye as "ever-fresh" (παγκαίνιστον, 960) emphasize the never-ending extent of the sea, further highlighting the separation between Agamemnon and his home. Agamemnon is on an endless journey toward his home even after reaching the land where he resides. Furthermore, the language of nourishment (τρέφουσα, 959) presents the sea as a fertile place that maintains life, a stark contrast to the dangerous seas that the Herald and Agamemnon crossed and to the death that awaits Agamemnon inside his home. This irony of the image draws attention to the perils just faced, including the dead men who litter the sea's surface in the Herald's account.

In addition to the theme of distance and separation, the luxury of the carpet also underscores Agamemnon's fall from status that he just now experiences on his return. As Clytemnestra again uses metaphors of the restoration of the home, the dissonance between what she describes and what Agamemnon experiences continues.²⁵ She portrays Agamemnon as the root of a tree whose leaves provide the house shade in the summer and as the master of the house who is a source of warmth in the winter (966-72). By protecting the house from the elements that he and the army have just experienced and have been unable to escape even at Troy, as recalled in Clytemnestra's and the Herald's accounts, Agamemnon is characterized as the completion of

²⁵ According to McClure, the repetition of the words for house is "heightening the incantatory effect and identifying Clytemnestra with the house, its past, and the events about to unfold within it" (1999: 89). Raeburn and Thomas argue, "The constant references to the house (961?, 962, 964, 968, 971, 972) emphasize [Clytemnestra's] excitement at the thought that Agamemnon will never replace her as its master" (2011: *ad loc*). These scholars emphasize how Clytemnestra has taken up leadership in the home along with everything that this position embodies. To me, Clytemnestra's repetition of "house" and her control of the home are emblematic both of her individual distorted masculine characterization as leader of the home and of the vulnerability of any Greek home in the absence of men. Her focus on the home underscores the persistent difficulties for those at home and those returning, especially when these people try to reconcile after their differing experiences of war.

the house, the figure who distinguishes the home from the environment abroad. Furthermore, his presence at the hearth in Clytemnestra's visualization places him at the source of life for the home. Yet in demonstrating the safety that the house provides, Clytemnestra adds further irony to Agamemnon's fate at her hands. His impending death is known to the audience, who would also be aware of the difficulty of reintegration back into the home.

In *Agamemnon*, the fall from status is not just confined to the Greek king; we also witness Cassandra's fall from status in much the same way as she is forced from Troy to Argos. The former princess is now a slave, a fact pointed out by both Clytemnestra (1039-46) and herself (1226). The shift is marked by a Cassandra's change in location—she is now in a new home. Though Clytemnestra, in fact, has other plans for Cassandra, she describes how Cassandra will be a partner in the purification rituals in this new house (δόμοις / κοινωνὸν εἶναι χερνίβων, 1036-37) and will serve the altar specifically of Ζεὺς κτήσιος, the protector of the household (1038). What is supposed to sound reassuring actually reinforces the way Cassandra is forced into an inferior role by being stripped of her own true home. Cassandra is now among the many slaves (πολλῶν μετὰ / δούλων, 1038-39) in another's house.

Furthermore, Cassandra's loss of status is shown by her initial silence at Clytemnestra's welcome, which leads the Chorus to say she is like a newly captured animal (θηρὸς ὥς νειρέτου, 1063), the same language used by Clytemnestra two lines later to describe Troy.²⁶ Cassandra's home is captured and she, too, loses her former identity and is dehumanized, just like the Greek soldiers who return as ashes in urns (434-44) or who scatter the sea like the timber of ships (659-60). As Clytemnestra had expressed, Cassandra later recognizes that Agamemnon is her master now that she bears the yoke of slavery (...δεσπότηι ἐμῶι· / φέρειν γὰρ χρὴ τὸ

²⁶ Heath shows two sides to Cassandra by arguing that her silence makes her both human—because it is her choice when to use language—and bestial (1999: 45).

δοῦλιον ζυγόν, 1225-26). Most vividly, when Cassandra removes her scepter and prophetic clothing (1264-76), it is a physical and visual manifestation of her loss of status.²⁷ She is no longer the person she was at Troy. The isolation of Cassandra in this scene, as MacLeod (1982: 142) argues, demonstrates the social significance of the preceding events. The recognition of Cassandra's loss of status—a woman and a foreigner—demonstrates a universal perspective toward war within *Agamemnon*, one that will be seen again in even stronger form in *Trojan Women* where soon-to-be-captured women like Cassandra are given the focus.

In addition to providing a glimpse of the damage caused to the opposing side in the war, Cassandra's entry into the home also reflects the permanent disruption of the family because of war. When Agamemnon introduces Cassandra to Clytemnestra, he shows a complete misunderstanding of how she might be received, calling her a blossom, a gift of the army (ἄνθος, στρατοῦ δώρημ', 955). With the word ἄνθος, Agamemnon echoes the language used by the Chorus to describe the young men in the Argive expedition (197-98) and the Herald's description of the sea blossoming with dead men (658-60), as well as other language of youth used throughout the play to highlight the untimely deaths of soldiers and even Iphigenia as a “young shoot” later in the play (ἔρνος, 1525). Thus, at least to the ears of the audience, who are knowledgeable of what is to come, Agamemnon's language anticipates Cassandra's death and encourages sympathy toward her and her parallel premature death. Furthermore, Agamemnon's attitude toward Cassandra demonstrates a practice acceptable and common in accounts of the Trojan War—receiving gifts of captive women from the army—that in turn causes problems in the home. Despite her loss of status, Cassandra is also a threat to domestic sphere and especially Clytemnestra's position within it. McClure demonstrates that through her silence and

²⁷ The use of clothing as a marker of status will be thoroughly discussed in Chapter Two, including a look back at the “carpet scene” in *Agamemnon*.

lamentation, Cassandra contrasts with Clytemnestra and conforms to female social norms to become a loyal wife (1999: 92-93). Advancing a similar argument, Debnar suggests that Cassandra may still be a virgin and that she and Agamemnon arrive in Argos like a bride and groom (2010:134-35). Cassandra is, thus, both an example of the devastating effects of war upon the losing party as well as the lasting influence of war upon the victors.

In her own speech, Cassandra demonstrates the other side of the coin: how Agamemnon has lost his former status (1223-26):

ἐκ τῶνδε ποινάς φημι βουλεύειν τινὰ
λέοντ' ἄναλιν ἐν λέχει στρωφώμενον
οἰκουρόν, οἷμοι, τῷ μολόντι δεσπότηι (1225)
ἐμῶι·

I'm saying that because of these things, some strengthless lion turning in the bed,
a housekeeper, ah me, plans vengeance for my arriving master.

Although Cassandra presents the vengeance (ποινάς, 1223) plotted by Aegisthus and Clytemnestra as punishment for the crimes of generations past in the House of Atreus, nevertheless the language she uses emphasizes Agamemnon's absence at war and the effects of that absence on his own household.²⁸ Kyriakou (2011: 89-142) notes that multiple causes are put forward for Agamemnon's death throughout the play, especially the sacrifice of Iphigenia suggested by Calchas and the Thyestean banquet explained by Cassandra. While I agree with Kyriakou's argument that "no clear, comprehensive picture of causality emerges" (89), she is wrong to dismiss the war as a primary cause for the troubles in the household (116-18). The consistency of imagery across the mourning for soldiers lost at war, the descriptions of life at

²⁸ The words ἐκ τῶνδε (1223) refer to the previous lines (1215-22) in which Cassandra imagines children holding their own flesh as food, an allusion to Atreus serving Thyestes his children to eat. Schein (1982) argues that in Cassandra's "mad-scene" she transcends a human boundary by seeing and experiencing her own death, thus linking the human and divine worlds to express a truth. The ability for certain characters to escape human experience will be discussed further in Chapter Two in reference to Darius' ghost. These characters can highlight human challenges that cannot be resolved.

home and abroad during war, and the homecoming experiences of soldiers and their families demonstrates the importance of this separation to the play. Cassandra, for example, especially focuses on the locations of Aegisthus and Agamemnon and how they have taken up different roles during war. The perspective is different from the one in the *Odyssey*. In the *Odyssey*, Telemachus and Penelope—the core of the household—fight off the masses, whereas in *Agamemnon*, Aegisthus is a lone figure at home who contrasts with the scores of men from the devastated Argive households who are lost abroad. This critical perspective toward Aegisthus puts the audience into the role of the group who have suffered through war, rather than in the role of the single returning soldier, allowing greater empathy and universalizing the war experience.

Cassandra refers to Aegisthus who has taken Agamemnon's place in his bed (ἐν λέχει, 1224), showing him in the most private part of the home—the bedroom. The bed is, for example, the source of recognition between Odysseus and Penelope, a proof of identity only ever seen by the couple and a single slave (ἐπεὶ ἤδη σήματ' ἀριφραδέα κατέλεξας / εὐνής ἡμετέρης, τὴν οὐ βροτὸς ἄλλος ὀπώπει, / ἀλλ' οἷοι σύ τ' ἐγὼ τε καὶ ἀμφίπολος μία μούνη, *Od.* 23.225-27). Another has taken Agamemnon's place in this most private space reserved just for him and his wife—he has fully lost his role as a husband. Furthermore, Cassandra specifically marks Aegisthus as an οἰκουρός (1225), a word typically used to describe women or slaves (Raeburn and Thomas 2011: *ad loc.*). Aegisthus' presence in the home and in the bed contrasts with the empty beds mourned by the Chorus earlier in the play (cf. 50, 411) and the makeshift beds of the army near the walls of Troy (cf. 555-59), drawing negative attention to the fact that Aegisthus has stayed at home rather than fight at war like other men of his age. In stark contrast, Cassandra next refers to Agamemnon as the leader of ships and the sacker of Troy (νεῶν δ' ἄπαρχος Ἰλίου

τ' ἀναστάτης, 1227), fully identifying him with his warrior role, yet Agamemnon is unaware of the treachery of his wife at home (οὐκ οἶδεν, 1228). Agamemnon seems to have taken on a great leadership role and has gone to fight like a proper Greek man, but in fact he has left a space at home for another to capture his status, even though that usurper is portrayed as undeserving. The distinction between the spheres of home and war in Cassandra's speech continues to highlight the dangers of war and the problems of restoring life in its aftermath.

Clytemnestra's murder of Agamemnon obviously prevents the house from being returned to its condition before the war, when Agamemnon and Clytemnestra were the leading couple. Yet even with a potential new ruler in Aegisthus, the roles in the house remain problematic, particularly due to the disruption caused by war. Even at the conclusion of her plot, Clytemnestra remains wrapped up in the events of the war, conjuring images of what happened abroad that emphasize the physical separation of husband and wife and the infidelity left in its wake.

For example, the threat to the husband-wife relationship is seen again when Clytemnestra gloats over killing Agamemnon and Cassandra. As she describes the scene, using sexual imagery throughout, Clytemnestra highlights the reversals that have happened in the household due to war, using language similar to Cassandra's. She especially emphasizes locations—she and Aegisthus at home, and Agamemnon and Cassandra abroad. For example, Clytemnestra says that there is no expectation of fear in her halls (μέλαθρον, 1434) as long as Aegisthus is tending the hearth (αἶθρι πῦρ ἐφ' ἐστίας ἐμῆς, 1435), proving false her metaphor of Agamemnon as the hearth of the home (cf. 668-69). On the other hand, according to Clytemnestra, Agamemnon has soothed the daughters of Chryses at Troy (ὕπ' Ἰλῑωι, 1439) and Cassandra has shared a bed with him there (κοινόλεκτρος, 1441). Clytemnestra suggests that Agamemnon has taken up a separate bed abroad, abandoning the one he had shared with her at home. This emphasis on location

underscores the permanent damage to the house, especially through the focus, once again, on the bed.

Furthermore, the reversals are consistently intertwined with war. Clytemnestra calls Aegisthus a shield of courage (ἀσπίς...θράσους, 1437), injecting a war image into the household scene she has created. In addition, she describes Cassandra as a captive of the spear (αἰχμάλωτος, 1440) and says she has worn away the rowing benches of the sailors (ναυτίλων δὲ σελμάτων / ἰσοτριβῆς, 1442-43). The sexual innuendos throughout Clytemnestra's speech reinforce the threat to the house that comes with departure for war: the Greek soldiers might sleep with and return with foreign women, and their wives might, likewise, be unfaithful in their absence. When Clytemnestra describes the now dead Cassandra as a side-dish to her bed (εὐνῆς παροψώνημα τῆς ἐμῆς γλιδῆι, 1447), the spheres of home and abroad disturbingly collide, revealing how the house is permanently destroyed by Agamemnon's departure for war. Rather than restoring order, Agamemnon's eventual return only makes this destruction more evident.

The Chorus' interactions with Clytemnestra and Aegisthus after the murders reinforce the permanent damage done to the home. The characters focus on the House of Atreus, recalling episodes from the family's past like Atreus feeding his brother Thyestes' own children to him and Agamemnon sacrificing Iphigenia. Even so, their language underscores patterns seen throughout all the homes of Argos. For example, imagery of the household as birds and of the house as a protector against the outside world appear again but with distortions. The Chorus accuse Clytemnestra of standing over her husband's dead body like a raven (1472-74):

ἐπὶ δὲ σώματος δίκαν
κόρακος ἐχθροῦ σταθεῖσ' ἐκνόμως
ὕμνον ὕμνεῖν ἐπεύχεται < >.

And standing over the body, like a hateful raven, she boasts to sing a discordant song.

Earlier in the play, birds were shown in the role of parents, mourning for lost chicks and demonstrating the pain in the Argive households when men went away to war (cf. 49-54). Here, the bird is instead a scavenger and the simile is especially extreme because of the relationships involved. Instead of mourning her broken family, Clytemnestra is enjoying it in an unsettling way and sings a discordant song (ἐκνόμως, 1473). Her “crowing” over Agamemnon’s dead body, according to Nooter, shows her “efficacy” in contrast to the lamentation of the Chorus, who have been transformed from a body able to speak the words of others to one whose song carries no influence (2017: 178-80). The image is, thus, the fulfillment of the fears expressed through the previous avian simile: permanent loss and ignoble death, a distortion of a happy family home that demonstrates the impossibility of recovery.

The Chorus also depict the home as falling and fear the house will not withstand the deluge of bloody rain (1530-34):

ἀμηχανῶ...

...

ὅπαι τράπωμαι πίτνοντος οἴκου.
δέδοικα δ’ ὄμβρου κτύπον δομοσφαλῇ
τὸν αἵματηρόν· ψακὰς δὲ λήγει.

I am at a loss...where to turn, with the house falling. And I fear the bloody crash of rain beating the house; the drizzle is ceasing.

The home is meant to be a place of safety, protected from the elements and from other dangers abroad. The collapse of the house under the pounding of bloody rain calls to mind earlier images of the environment threatening the home: Clytemnestra’s imagining of the Greeks attempting to find comfort at Troy after their victory (330-33), the Herald’s accounts of the Greek army’s hardships living exposed to the elements while at war (555-66) and during their stormy return (651-56), and Clytemnestra’s description of Agamemnon as the protector of the house from heat

and cold (966-72). The image of bloody rain that the Chorus depict not only represents the actual blood flowing from the murders that took place in the house, but also the intrusion of the outside world into the home. The experience of war brings these spheres into conflict, and homecoming cannot undo the damage. Indeed, it causes such conflict to persist.

In addition to repeated imagery of the home, these final interactions within the play also dwell on broken family relationships, including those between husband and wife and the loss of youths. For example, Clytemnestra denies that she is Agamemnon's wife but is rather the phantom of the wife (1499-1500), and she claims that her actions took the life of an adult to avenge the sacrifice of a child (τόνδ' ἀπέτεισεν / τέλεον νεαροῖς ἐπιθύσας, 1503-4). Clytemnestra uses language to suggest that this is appropriate: Agamemnon has brought his life to completion (τέλεον) in contrast to youths like Iphigenia. Given the plural form of νεαροῖς, we might also think of the young soldiers whose deaths at war have been mourned from the opening parados of the play. Clytemnestra later again emphasizes the youth of Iphigenia, calling her a young shoot (ἔρνος, 1525). Youth is also introduced by the Chorus as they describe Ares pressing on to provide justice for the blood of eaten children (μέλας Ἄρης, ὅποι δίκαν προβαίνων / πάχνηαι κουροβόρῳ παρέξει, 1511-12). Though referring specifically to Thyestes consuming his own children, the presence of Ares as the enforcer of justice demonstrates the ways the individual conflicts can consume entire societies. War results from a family conflict, but it cannot help but have permanent consequences for all involved.

The only potential solution to these disruptions of the family is presented by Clytemnestra, who imagines Iphigenia greeting and kissing her father in the underworld (1555-59).

ἀλλ' Ἰφιγένειά νιν ἄσπασίως (1555)
 θυγάτηρ, ὥς χρή,
 πατέρ' ἀντιάσασα πρὸς ὠκύπορον
 πόρθμευμ' ἀχέων

περὶ χεῖρα βαλοῦσα φιλήσει.

But with glad welcome his daughter Iphigenia, as is necessary, having met her father near the swift-flowing passage of pain and having thrown her hands around him, will kiss him.

This apparently joyful scene is a warped homecoming reunion, taking place not in the palace at Argos but near the river Acheron (πρὸς ὠκύπορον / πόρθμευμ' ἀχέων, 1557-58) and between two shades who have permanently lost their former lives. It is also a distortion of a proper burial. Clytemnestra responds to the Chorus' question of who will bury Agamemnon by saying that her dead daughter will meet him in the underworld.²⁹ Instead of a daughter who can provide a burial for her father and pay respects at his grave, Iphigenia has prematurely died and cannot fulfill that proper role. That Iphigenia will welcome Agamemnon gladly (ἄσπασίως, 1555) and embrace and kiss him (περὶ χεῖρα βαλοῦσα φιλήσει, 1559) feels wrong given how Clytemnestra has just described Agamemnon killing Iphigenia. The juxtaposition suggests that such a reunion will not be as happy as it seems.³⁰ Furthermore, Hame points out that Clytemnestra takes on the role of a “victorious military general standing over the slain body of Agamemnon; because the general controls the battlefield, he determines whether the enemy can recover its dead and perform burial rites for them” (2004: 522). This portrayal of Clytemnestra not only further masculinizes her character, but also makes plain how the military and domestic spheres have collided. Even when Clytemnestra claims that justice has been fulfilled, the problems of the war have not been entirely resolved.

Finally, the Chorus place Aegisthus within the home, hostilely criticizing him, just as Cassandra did, for staying at home during war (1625-27):

²⁹ Hame (2004:516-18) shows that even the question itself from the Chorus demonstrates the broken state of the household, since the Chorus asks not with the goal of ensuring that the rites be done correctly but out of fear and uncertainty that the funeral could properly take place at all.

³⁰ A similar sentiment that a complete homecoming reunion can only happen after death, and therefore remains problematic, appears in *Trojan Women*, discussed in Chapter Three.

γύναι, σὺ τοὺς ἦκοντας ἐκ μάχης μένων (1625)
οἰκουρὸς εὐνήν ἀνδρὸς αἰσχύνων ἅμα
ἀνδρὶ στρατηγῶι τόνδ' ἐβούλευσας μόρον;

You woman, while awaiting those coming from battle as a housekeeper and
shaming the bed of the man of the house, were you planning this death for the
general, a man?

Aegisthus is again presented as a woman whose role is to stay at home and wait for those who are doing the fighting abroad. As old men and veterans of war, the Chorus are particularly unsympathetic toward Aegisthus. They have spent years mourning for the young men who are absent at war or who have returned dead, and they have detailed in this play the countless Greek homes that are empty of men, a seemingly universal pain spread across all Greece (cf. 427-36). Aegisthus is the exception. The Chorus place him in contrast with Agamemnon, a man (ἀνὴρ, stated twice in 1625 and 1626) and war leader (στρατηγῶι, 1627). At the same time, however, Aegisthus has taken Agamemnon's place in the bedroom (like Cassandra suggests in 1224) and usurped the role of master of the house even as he is portrayed as a coward. In addition, Aegisthus' rulership is later questioned through his tyrannical nature in not treating the opposition well (1639-41, 1649-50) and accepting bribes (1638-39), demonstrating the ambiguity of the future of Argos under his and Clytemnestra's leadership (Bednarowski 2015: 198-99). While war opens the opportunity for heroism and leadership for Greek men, it also exposes their homes to threats.

Agamemnon's homecoming in Argos is not one of reunion, reconciliation, or restoration. Instead it exposes the extensive damage that has been done to the household in his absence. Both Agamemnon and Cassandra experience a loss of status because of what has occurred during the war. In addition, although Agamemnon has overcome the potential hazards of homecoming presented by the Herald earlier in the play, his physical return is not enough to reestablish his

position. The play concludes with particular focus on the individual story of Agamemnon, just as it began with the experience of Clytemnestra in the house. Yet through the continuation of imagery, like the threats of nature and the contrast of youths and elders, the story becomes more than a story of a single family's struggle for justice and retribution. The distinction between the comforts of home and the dangers abroad persists even after Agamemnon's arrival, as do the broken relationships between husband and wife, parent and child. The fears that were expressed by the Chorus, Clytemnestra, and Herald earlier in the play come to fruition with Agamemnon's return.

Conclusion

Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* offers an alternative view of homecoming to Odysseus' journey in the *Odyssey*. Whereas the epic presents certain challenges for the returning warrior, such as the great distances that separate soldiers from their families and the difficulties of reintegrating into one's family life, *Agamemnon* expands upon these challenges, and different patterns appear. Instead of a single hero emerging, who earns his way back home and reorders his household, in this "crossing from war" play all men and women are negatively affected. We see Clytemnestra and the Chorus suffering at home, the Herald and the Greek army experiencing disaster abroad, and the inability of these two perspectives to be reconciled at the homecoming of Agamemnon. Even as Clytemnestra believes she has enacted justice for Agamemnon's sacrifice of Iphigenia, the effects of war are widespread and permanent. The final lines of the play are particularly ironic as Clytemnestra instructs Aegisthus that they will manage the house together as masters of the house: καὶ σὺ θήσομεν κρατοῦντε τῶνδε δωμάτων <καλῶς> (1673). The house, however, is completely overturned and nothing has been properly restored to order with Agamemnon's

return. *Agamemnon*, as the story of another Greek hero returning from the Trojan War, provides a valuable source of comparison to the *Odyssey*.

The patterns we see in *Agamemnon* are consistent throughout tragedies of homecoming, even those from other wars and from other perspectives. One such tragedy, Aeschylus' *Persians*, provides a tale of homecoming from the perspective of a defeated king and his society. This play will be the focus of the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

THE DEFEATED FOREIGNER'S RETURN IN AESCHYLUS' *PERSIANS*

Introduction

Aeschylus' *Persians* puts on display the homecoming of a king defeated at war; nevertheless, the play is in many ways a story of departure, not return. Much of the dialogue, therefore, is consumed with recalling, reporting, and lamenting what has already happened. Images of departure from the homeland and descriptions of suffering at the hands of the natural world reinforce a negative conception of war within the tragedy. War permanently tears apart the Persian society, and the empire cannot recover, even with the return of Xerxes. Much like *Agamemnon*, *Persians* thus presents war as a permanent departure from the homeland, emphasizing the risks of leaving home for war and the ways that this separation causes damage to the entire community.

Scholars have approached *Persians* from multiple directions. Several have examined the play with attention to the sociopolitical importance of Aeschylus' portrayal of a foreign people, emphasizing the contrasts between democratic Athens and autocratic Persia. For example, Goldhill (1988) believes the play's depiction of hoplite fighting and the collective identity of the Greeks shows the victory of Athenian democracy over tyranny. Likewise, Hall (1989) argues that the tragedians portrayed non-Greeks—and especially the Persians—as the antithesis to Greek democracy to reinforce Athenian political ideology and alliances. Kantzios (2004) shows how fear plays a role in contrasting Greek and Eastern political life in *Persians*. According to Kantzios, whereas the Persians possess fear of a quasi-divine, absolute ruler and act out of necessity, the Greek authority belongs to the people, and they act from their own will out of discipline and fear of shame rather than fear of a sole ruler.

These scholars suggest clear distinctions between the Greeks and Persians, yet it is also necessary to consider Aeschylus' sympathetic portrayal of the Persians within this play and the universal nature of their suffering. Even though Aeschylus might emphasize (as Hall notes) the Persians' hierarchical society, opulence, and excessive emotion, nevertheless their destruction and grief bring other considerations to the fore. Indeed, Goldhill (1988) does suggest that the juxtaposition of praise of the Athenian victory with the mourning of the defeated enemy might encourage the audience to question the Athenian response to victory. In the same vein as Hopman (2013), who suggests that the Chorus cut through the binary of Greek versus Persian by transcending time and space, I argue that *Persians* provides an even more universalizing look at the experience of war than others have acknowledged, one that stresses the disastrous and widespread consequences of waging war. This is especially evident in the treatment of the land, including the emphasis placed on geographical distance, environmental hazards, and the human bond with the homeland. Just as in *Agamemnon*, we view war and return from multiple perspectives within *Persians*, the perspectives of both those who remain at home and those who have traveled abroad. And we again see the collision of these two spheres at the return of a king who is unable to regain his former role within his household. Although the context is different, the patterns of traumatic homecoming in *Persians* are consistent with those in *Agamemnon*.

The View From Home

Within *Persians*, nearly all the losses experienced by the Persian people are tied to the departure of men from their homeland for war. In many ways, war is defined not through combat against an enemy but through departure into enemy territory and attempted survival there. The play dwells on this departure from its very first lines, spoken by the Chorus: τὰδε μὲν Περσῶν τῶν οἰχομένων / Ἑλλάδ' ἐς αἶαν πιστὰ καλεῖται (1-2), "We are called the trusted ones for the

Persians who have gone away to the Greek land.” With these words, the Chorus immediately situate themselves and others geographically: the Chorus are in Persia, while the other Persians (that is, the younger men of fighting age) have gone to Greece. Furthermore, the Chorus identify themselves in terms of their relationship to those at war. The phrasing reminds us that the Chorus, comprised of old, Persian men, would already have been to war and returned safely.

But although the past might be filled with successful campaigns, the current story emphasizes the permanent loss of men to war. The word οἶχομαι suggests a departure from which one will never return (Stanford 1942: 36, Avery 1964: 175-76), highlighting the contrast between the men currently abroad and the Chorus who have already returned. This is especially evident since Aeschylus’ first line is a near repeat of the opening lines of one of Phrynicus’ plays (τὰδ’ ἐστὶ Περσῶν τῶν πάλαι βεβηκότων), but with a change in verb from βαίνω to οἶχομαι, a difference that stresses departure rather than simply “going” (Garvie 2009: *ad loc*, Sommerstein 2010: 45).³¹ Furthermore, the Chorus’ perspective at the beginning of the play demonstrates the universal losses for the Persian people. According to their opening lines, the Chorus are both individuals selected by Xerxes and a group representing all of Persia, shown through the neuter (τάδε...πιστά, 1-2) and the third person (καλεῖται, 2) (Schenker 1994: 285).

Important to this question of separation and distance is the way Aeschylus focuses not on Xerxes’ absence alone, but on the absence of all men. We have already seen the Chorus reflect on departure in the parados. In apparent contrast with that theme, the Chorus soon wonder about the homecoming of Xerxes and the Persian army, but here, too, the Chorus have little hope for its fulfillment (8-11):

ἀμφὶ δὲ νόστῳ τῷ βασιλείῳ
καὶ πολυχρύσου στρατιᾶς ἤδη

³¹ Sommerstein describes the word οἶχομαι as “a verb which has a strong tendency to imply ‘never to return’” (2010: 45).

κακόμαντις ἄγαν ὀρσολοπεῖται (10)
θυμὸς ἔσωθεν·

And concerning the king's homecoming and that of the army rich in gold, already
my heart, prophetic of evil, is very much disturbed from within.³²

One might think of the νόστοι of the Trojan war heroes, especially Odysseus, who returns from war safely to eventually reclaim his wife and throne but loses his army to monsters and disasters throughout the journey. The play's concern for the absence of men early on in the parados is even more striking when contrasted with the proem of a model homecoming story, the *Odyssey*. Looking at the first lines of the *Odyssey*, we see immediate differences between the expectations set up for Odysseus' νόστος and those set up by the Chorus for the Persian army's return. From the very first word, ἄνδρα, the *Odyssey* is the account of one man's journey. Though Odysseus might have concern for his men's homecoming (ἀρνύμενος...νόστον ἑταίρων, 1.5), he is consistently distinguished from his companions. Already in the first ten lines of the epic they are fools (νήπιοι, 1.8) who die by their own recklessness (ἄτασθαλία, 1.7). Thus, the proem of the *Odyssey* places Odysseus in a key position as a hero who will earn his homecoming in contrast to his men who deserve their deaths. The *Odyssey* consistently deals with the loss of young men in this way, emphasizing Odysseus' heroism over the grief felt for those who die, if the issue is even addressed at all.

In the parados of *Persians*, on the other hand, the Chorus is concerned equally with the return of the hero Xerxes and the entire army, making no claims of guilt on the part of those who have not returned. If anything, the anxieties of the Chorus throughout the parados show a possibility of Xerxes' responsibility for the disaster and a potential critical eye toward the king.³³

³² Greek text follows Garvie (2009). All translations are my own.

³³ Dworacki (1979: 103-4) suggests that the Chorus implies Xerxes' responsibility by discussing actions—such as yoking the Hellespont—that could only have occurred under the direction of the king and by giving Xerxes divine qualities, showing his supreme power. I believe that the

Any responsibility attributed to Xerxes only adds to the effect that homecoming in *Persians* is not deserved as it is in the *Odyssey*, since so much of the army dies abroad while Xerxes returns alive. The situation is similar to that in *Agamemnon*, where the Chorus mourns Greek men who died at war and the Herald recalls the Greek corpses scattering the seas upon return, all while Agamemnon, on whom at least some of the responsibility for the war rests, returns alive. Much as at the beginning of *Agamemnon*, already in the parados of *Persians* there is a sense of foreboding when the Chorus describe how their θυμός has been physically affected by their fear of future evils (10-11).³⁴ The description shows the Chorus' intuition about the danger facing the army through unhindered emotions that will later be realized in a more rational form (Thalmann 1986: 493-95). Whereas the *Odyssey* sets up expectations for a heroic return for Odysseus, the prophetic Chorus of *Persians* create an atmosphere of anticipated loss that will come to fulfillment throughout the play.

Adding a sense of permanence to the men's departure, and again highlighting the more universal concerns of the play, the Chorus vividly describe how they are physically cut off from the men who have left for war. They stress that Persia is devoid of any knowledge of what has happened to the departed army (11-20):

πᾶσα γὰρ ἰσχὺς Ἀσιατογενῆς
οἷωκε, νέον δ' ἄνδρα βαῦζει
< >
κοῦτε τις ἄγγελος οὔτε τις ἱππεὺς
ἄστυ τὸ Περσῶν ἀφικνεῖται· (15)

Chorus attributes responsibility for the fate of the army to Xerxes without creating a one-to-one correspondence between action and punishment. A firmer statement of transgression and retribution will, instead, be offered later by Darius.

³⁴ Gantz (1983: 69) claims that the parados of *Persians* sets a different mood from the parados of *Agamemnon* because the *Agamemnon* Chorus are concerned with previous events and the circumstances of leaving for Troy, while the *Persians* Chorus praise Xerxes and are concerned with the outcome of the war. Gantz, however, neglects many of the parallels between the two plays, including how both choruses emphasize the distance separating themselves from the army abroad and the negative consequences of this distance.

οἷτε τὸ Σούσων ἤδ' Ἀγβατάνων
καὶ τὸ παλαιὸν Κίσσιον ἔρκος
προλιπόντες ἔβαν, τοῖ μὲν ἐφ' ἵππων,
τοῖ δ' ἐπὶ ναῶν, πεζοὶ τε βάρην
πολέμου στίφος παρέχοντες· (20)

For the entire Asian-born strength has gone away, and [each wife] laments her young husband. Neither any messenger or horseman arrived at the city of the Persians, who left behind the enclosure of Susa and of Ecbatana and the ancient Kissian enclosure, and who went, some on horses and others on ships and others on foot, step-by-step, serving as the closely arrayed ranks of war.

Again, a form of οἶχομαι describes the absent men (13) as earlier in the *parados*.³⁵ Moreover, no one has returned yet, not even a messenger, contributing to the apprehension in the scene and revealing the dangers of war and the risk of no return. A similar fear is evident in *Agamemnon*, especially when Clytemnestra portrays herself as the loyal waiting wife (*A.* 855-94). In that play, fear is also caused by ignorance at home of what is truly happening abroad.

Based on evidence from Herodotus, Garvie has noted that the historical Persians actually *would have* received word from Greece, such as reports of the sack of Athens (2009: 54). He suggests that Aeschylus intentionally creates a dramatic atmosphere in which there is no possibility of Xerxes' success. I would add that Aeschylus creates a distance between home and abroad to emphasize the total absence of men—not just of Xerxes—due to war. The geographical separation of the soldiers as they departed from home has now created a gap in knowledge and human connection that is no longer bridged. Although Xerxes has connected the two lands by yoking the Hellespont, that bridge ironically serves to create distance as the army departs in one direction but no one has yet to return in the other. The play is effectively set in

³⁵ Anderson (1972: 169) catalogues instances of the emptiness of the land in this play (lines 12, 59, 546, 126, 119, 548-49, and 730). He argues that Aeschylus' imagery, including the empty land, is connected to his religious thought, especially the "contrast of order and disorder, of divine foresight and human blindness" (172). I believe that, even without consideration of the divine, this image reinforces the real, practical risks of a people engaging in war abroad and the indiscriminate effects of this decision.

Homeric times. Aeschylus creates a context like that in the *Odyssey* and *Agamemnon*, where no word has reached home although rumors circulate. Aeschylus, thus, heightens the anxiety of those at home through this gap in knowledge.

Moreover, the Chorus in this passage define the departure in terms of war, and all types of soldiers are abroad: the cavalry, the navy, and the infantry all leave for war and become the πολέμου στίφος (18-20). Thus, the departure is caused by a military expedition. Furthermore, the Chorus describe the emptiness of all Asia and, therefore, the magnitude of the war and its effects. It is not just the men of Susa but every Asian-born man who has gone to war (11).³⁶ Schenker (1994: 286) draws attention to the contrast between the description of the army as the sons of Persia here (πᾶσα γὰρ ἰσχὺς Ἀσιατογενής, 11) and the description of Xerxes as the son of Darius a few lines earlier (Δαρτιογενής, 6). Whereas Saïd argues that many become one within the commander of the army in these epic portions of the tragedy and that the large numbers serve to highlight the magnitude of reversal (2007: 79-80), I believe this phrasing demonstrates the collective identity of the army and, therefore, the extensive and lasting loss to the entire Persian people. Likewise, the Chorus mention various cities and regions that the men have left behind—Ecbatana and Kissia in addition to the Chorus' home of Susa, previewing the catalogues that will appear later in the play. Within the first 20 lines of the play, then, the Chorus have already established a major concern of the play: the departure of all men from Persia for war and their failed return.

As in *Agamemnon*, those at home also abundantly recognize the contrast between the civilized structures of society and the harsh environment abroad, creating a separation between those who have traveled for war and those at home. In *Agamemnon*, the Herald describes the

³⁶ Avery (174: 1964) catalogues all the forms of πᾶς in the play, noting that Aeschylus uses this word “more often in the *Persians* than in all the other extant plays and almost as often as in all the lines attributed to him.”

dangerous conditions for the men at sea, including the exposure to winds and stormy waters (636-80). Likewise, the metaphors and similes in this lyric section of the parados of *Persians* emphasize the difference between home and abroad, contributing to the sense of distance and permanent separation. The Persian men are compared to the unassailable sea (87-92):

δόκιμος δ' οὔτις ὑποστὰς μεγάλῳ ρεύματι φωτῶν
ὄχυροῖς ἔρκεσιν εἴργειν ἄμαχον κῦμα θαλάσσης· (90)
ἀπρόσοιστος γὰρ ὁ Περσᾶν στρατὸς ἀλκίφρων τε λαός.

No man is so experienced as to ward off with firm defenses the invincible wave of the sea, having withstood a great torrent. For the Persian army and the stouthearted people are unapproachable.

Sommerstein notices the contradiction between this passage, which emphasizes the invincibility of the sea, and later passages where the army conquers the sea by crossing over it (2010: 46-47). On one hand, the Chorus claim the Persians are as invincible as the sea, a point in favor of their strength as they head to war. But on the other hand, the Chorus draw attention to the demanding environment that the Persian army has entered and the hazards they face there. If no one is capable of defending against the sea (89-90), then even the Persians may not be strong enough. The separation becomes more evident when the Chorus describe the intrusion of human invention into the dangerous natural world for the purpose of war (108-14):

ἔμαθον δ' εὐρυπόροιο θαλάσσης
πολιαινομένης πνεύματι λάβρῳ (110)
ἔσορᾶν πόντιον ἄλσος,
πίσυνοι λεπτοδόμοις πείσμασι λαοπόροις τε μηχαναῖς.

And they learned to look upon the sea-precinct of the wide-wayed sea that is made gray by the furious blast of the wind, trusting on cables of fine strands and devices for transporting men.

The wind riling up the sea reveals the risks of departing from home, and we will hear further descriptions of the destruction that the sea can wreak when the Messenger arrives later in the

play (250-514).³⁷ The men have put their faith in mere man-made devices—cables whose fragility is demonstrated in the phrase λεπτοδόμους (112).

Finally, animal imagery in the parados suggests distance from civilized society when the men depart for war. In *Agamemnon*, the launch of a different war effort was accompanied by a similar conflation of man and beast with the war cry of the Atreids compared to the cry of birds over their plundered nest. In *Persians*, too, those departing for war are likened to animals. Xerxes glares with the dark glance of a murderous serpent (κυάνεον δ' ὄμμασι λεύσσων φονίου δέργμα δράκοντος, 81-82) and the cavalry and infantry depart like a swarm of bees (σμῆνος ὧς ἐκέλειπεν μελισσῶν, 128-29). Just as men suffered dehumanization after leaving their homes in *Agamemnon*, returning as ashes in urns (*A.* 438-44) or littering the sea like timber (*A.* 659-60), the men in *Persians* must take on inhuman attributes to enter the harsh environment abroad. No longer a place to demonstrate heroism as it was in the *Odyssey*, in *Persians* the wild nature of the sea and the dangers it presents reinforce the distances traveled and the losses experienced by the Persian army.

The loss experienced by those who remain at home is magnified by the personification of cities and lands as mourners. The perspective of the land as a mother and a mourner reinforces the irreparable damage that has been done to the society. Already seen in the parados, when the land of Asia—the nurturer (θρέψασα, 62) of the soldiers who have departed—groans with longing, personification of the land shows the vast extent of grief that afflicts the Persians and the true disruption of the natural environment.³⁸ For example, the Chorus describe the cities of

³⁷ In addition to the emptiness of the land, Anderson also catalogues images of the power of the sea in lines 50, 72, 88, 90, 105ff., 272f., 275ff., 302ff., 353ff., 418ff., 433, and 599 (1972: 171-72).

³⁸ The representation of the land as a mother especially reinforces the broken family relationships. This element will be discussed more thoroughly with respect to Euripides' *Trojan Women* in Chapter Three.

Persia echoing to each other in grief, merging the shouting people with the cities themselves (115-25). The Chorus are mourners; their φρήν is clothed in black and torn by fear (μελαγχίτων φρήν ἀμύσσεται φοβῶ, 115) and they let out a cry for the Persian army, “ὄᾶ Περσικοῦ στρατεύματος” (117). But it is the city that has the potential to hear their cry (τοῦδε μὴ πόλις πύθεται, 118), the great city of Sousa that the Chorus fears has been emptied of men (κένανδρον μέγ’ ἄστρῳ Σουσίδος, 119), ironic given the city’s power to hear and learn. Furthermore, the Kissian city sings in response (τὸ Κισσίων πόλισμ’ ἀντίδουπον ἔσεται, / “ὄᾶ,” 120-22). Once again, the personified city is tied closely to her people. The women—an abundant crowd (γυναικοπληθὴς ὄμιλος, 124) that pointedly contrasts with the absence of men from Persia—release the same cry. Just as the Chorus mourned a few lines earlier, they imagine the women tearing their own clothing in grief (125). The scene creates a strong sense of connection between the cities and their people, while at the same time drawing attention to the absence of men and the permanent harm this has caused to the society.

The Chorus’ recollection of those who have departed reveals further the connection between men and their homelands and the disruption experienced by those Persians who remain at home. The Chorus, in an epic catalogue of sorts, enumerate the Persian generals and their homelands, reconstructing the environment and shifting the places involved. Michelini (1982: 77) has suggested that this passage creates an atmosphere of an epic “saga,” but with a hint of irony since the play is about barbarians and not Greeks and since the warrior ethos of the fifth century is different from that of epic warriors. Aeschylus, however, has already demonstrated that the events of *Persians* are taking place within a heroic context through the absence of reports from abroad, and thus this epic catalogue creates a greater connection between the story of Xerxes and those of the Trojan War heroes. Indeed, even in *Agamemnon*, a catalogue appears

early on in Clytemnestra's beacon speech. Following a different direction of thought, others have suggested that the effect of this catalogue is another way to emphasize the magnitude of loss and the reversal of fortune for the Persians (Avery 1964: 176-77; Conacher 1996: 10; Saïd 2007: 80-84); the departure parallels the later catalogue of the dead who do not return. I develop these views to show that the Chorus' catalogue is not just about a great loss but about a certain kind of loss—the vast, indiscriminate, permanent destruction due to war.

I focus here on the descriptions afforded to the men within the catalogue. This catalogue differs from *Agamemnon*, in which anonymity demonstrated universality. In *Persians*, we see instead an abundance of proper names of people and places in accounts of departure, fighting, and return from war, but the effect of this technique remains similar. The extensive catalogue of names in *Persians* highlights the vast territory that is touched by the war and the great numbers of people whose lives and relationships have been destroyed. Here, each man is identified in two ways—by a distinguishing feature, often related to his fighting style or prowess, and by his place of origin. The quantity of names shows the extent of damage, creating a geography of sorts, and reveals the cause of this damage, war. The men depart on horseback, by ship, and on foot (18-19); there are those identified by their mode of transit, like sailors (39, 54) and horseman and charioteers (26, 29, 32, 46-47), and those identified by their weaponry, such as the archers (26, 30, 55) and those carrying a spear, javelin, or saber (51, 52, 56). The qualities attributed to the soldiers as they depart the land are continuously tied to their role as warriors, reinforcing the purpose of this expedition.

Furthermore, specific cities and territories are named: Sousa, Ecbatana, and Kissia in Persia; the Nile, Memphis, and Thebes in Egypt; Sardis in Lydia; and Tmolos, Mysia, and Babylon. Like Sommerstein (2010: 15), I believe that this emphasis on nationality underscores

the vast geographical expanse whose men have gone to war. The lists of men in the army shows not the strength of the army but how many have left and the resulting grief at home (Sommerstein 2010: 46). Moreover, twice the land is personified and actively sends the men to war, first the Nile (Νεῖλος ἔπεμψεν, 34) and then Sardis along with her kings (Σάρδεις...ἔξορμῶσιν, 45-46). As when the Persian cities mourn along with their residents in the Chorus' later passage (115-25), this personification contributes to the deep connection between the land and the people. It will make the later suffering of the land more poignant. The conclusion of the passage extends the personification further: the whole land of Asia has nourished these men and now groans with fierce longing for them in their absence (οὗς περὶ πᾶσα χθὼν Ἀσιῆτις / θρέψασα πόθῳ στένεται μαλερῶ, 61-62). The Chorus demonstrate how the army's departure for war causes broad damage to those left behind, highlighting the extent of this damage by connecting the people to the lands that have been deserted.

The departure of men causes deep pain in the households of Persia, especially among the women who are left behind, evidenced by both the Chorus and the entrance of the Queen. The Chorus prepares the audience for the Queen's arrival as they consider the broken ties between husbands and wives, showing the extent of suffering in this play across the entire Persian society. For example, the Chorus state that parents and wives, counting the days, shudder at the time that is stretching out (τοκέες τ' ἄλοχοί θ' ἡμερολεγδὼν / τείνοντα χρόνον τρομέονται, 63-64). The distance between family members is reflected in both space and time, which is extended as the army travels farther away. In addition, after imagining the women of Kissia and Susa tearing their own clothing in grief (120-25), the Chorus turn from their fears to describe the present situation in Persia (133-39): marriage beds filled with tears and wives left behind as bedmates yoked alone (μονόζυξ, 137). The image of the yoke is distorted, illustrating not connection or

expansion but rupture and isolation. The consequences of war, especially the absence of men, are shown through the impact on the wife, who is filled with πόθος (134) for her husband. Spoken by the Chorus of old men about each and every Persian woman, the sentiments reveal the effects of war on the entire Persian society.

The Queen presents a more specific perspective, that of a mother, and introduces considerations beyond survival and physical return, including status. Many have considered the role of the Queen in contrast to the role of the Chorus. Ireland (1973) and Schenker (1994) argue that the Queen demonstrates a personal perspective whereas the Chorus is concerned with all of Persia, a more political perspective. Ireland further states that the Queen's focus on Xerxes alone "not only contrasts with the wider political interest of the Chorus but also overshadows it" (1974: 166).³⁹ Harrison (2000) and Griffith (2007) specify the Queen's position within a political scheme. Harrison calls the position of the Queen "royalist" (2000: 82), and Griffith argues that she is the stereotype of an "elite mother" in her disregard for national interest (2007: 117). Even though the Queen has a different perspective from the Chorus, the imagery that she uses, especially her emphasis on geographical distance, reinforces the themes seen earlier in the *parados*. Furthermore, the Queen introduces a new challenge to homecoming within *Persians*—the social reintegration after losing status—that was also seen in *Agamemnon*.

At her entrance, the Queen shares with the Chorus a dream that has troubled her, in which Xerxes attempted to harness two women, one in Greek clothing and the other in Persian, to his chariot (176-99). When one woman resisted, smashing the yoke and overturning the chariot, Xerxes' father Darius appeared, at whose presence Xerxes tore his own clothing. In some ways, the Queen's dream parallels the imaginings of Clytemnestra in *Agamemnon* (A. 281-316, 320-

³⁹ Unlike Ireland, Schenker (1994) believes that this tension between these two sides is released through the *kommós* at the end of the play.

44). In a demonstration of the effects of war upon the household, both characters envision what is happening abroad and express distress at these possible events, even though they are not present to witness them. Furthermore, both women consider the physical distances traveled by men at war, indicating the difficulties of such journeys. Just as Clytemnestra describes the lengthy beacon chain that relayed the fall of Troy point by point to Argos, so does the Queen's dream reflect the spanning of distance. For example, the connection of the two geographical territories of Greece and Persia is visible metaphorically in the bodies of the two women, who are identified by their distinctive dress (ἡ μὲν πέπλοισι Περσικοῖς ἡσκημένη, / ἡ δ' αὖτε Δωρικοῖσιν, 182-83) and by their native lands (πάτρην δ' ἔναϊον ἡ μὲν Ἑλλάδα / ... ἡ δὲ βάρβαρον, 186-87). The connection between the people and their lands, already demonstrated by the mourning cities of Persia, is further shown by each woman possessing a native land (Wilson 1986: 55). In addition, while some argue that the Queen's dream and later questions convey the superiority of Athens and Greece, the fact that the two women are sisters suggests instead equality between them and that the defeat happened by chance rather than inherent superiority (Sommerstein 2010: 48-49).

The Queen's lack of knowledge and her use of yoke imagery again reinforce connections to the Chorus' earlier anxieties. For example, the Queen asks the Chorus where Athens is located (231) and other questions about the Athenian society. Some suggest that her questions indicate the difference between the political systems of Persia and Athens; nevertheless, they also demonstrate her isolation from this foreign land, something seen already in the Chorus' static position in the *parados* and in the figure of the Greek wife in *Agamemnon*.⁴⁰ The Queen's

⁴⁰ Harrison (2000: 56) argues that these questions about Athens would cause "patriotic stimulation" in the Athenian audience, and Kantzios (2004: 5-6) claims that the questions show the difference in wealth between Persia and Greece, as well as a significant difference in the relationship between ruler and ruled. With specific reference to the Queen's statement that

ignorance of actual geography coupled with her visualizing these territories in her dream is similar to Clytemnestra's beacon speech. Furthermore, through the image of the yoke (ζεύγνυσιν, 191; ζυγόν, 196), the Queen's dream makes literal the language the Chorus had used earlier to describe the bridging of two territories across the Hellespont.⁴¹ The Queen's dream demonstrates, then, the anxiety that faces those at home concerning the physical safety of those who have traveled abroad into foreign territories.⁴²

The Queen suggests even further concerns than the Chorus does, however. Whereas the Chorus are occupied with the absence of men from the land and the families who have permanently lost children or spouses, the Queen is concerned not just with the physical safety and return of Xerxes but also with his status among his people. For example, Xerxes' defeat within the Queen's dream is not solely his failure to yoke the two women and his physical ejection from the chariot but also the aftermath of this event (197-99):

πίπτει δ' ἐμὸς παῖς, καὶ πατὴρ παράσταται
 Δαρείος οἰκτίρων σφε· τὸν δ' ὅπως ὀρᾷ
 Ξέρξης, πέπλους ῥήγνυσιν ἀμφὶ σῶματι.

And my son fell, and his father Darius stood by him, pitying him. And Xerxes, at the sight of him, tore the clothes around his body.

Xerxes would not be accountable to the city in failure (κακῶς δὲ πράξας—οὐκ ὑπεύθυνος πόλῃ, 213), Goldhill (1988: 190-91) argues that the contrast between Persian ideology and the ideology of the democratic polis amounts to praise of Athens. Nevertheless, Sommerstein (2010: 49) correctly argues that the audience is misled by this statement, since Xerxes does face consequences later in the play.

⁴¹ In enumerating the various images within the play, Anderson (1972: 168) claims that the yoke image “works not upon the reason, but upon the imagination.” Conacher (1996: 15) believes the yoking of the Hellespont and the yoking of the women are tied by showing the relationship between Persian pride and ruin.

⁴² Perhaps a hint of the divine nature of dreams is evident in the Queen's knowledge here. McClure (2006: 79) likens the Queen's prophetic knowledge to Thetis' in the *Iliad*. The difference between the human and divine perspectives will be discussed later in Chapter Two in reference to Darius' appearance.

The physical damage to Xerxes—his torn clothing—is not the result of his struggles to restrain the two women under his chariot nor is it caused by his fall from the vehicle. Instead, it comes from his own hands, a reaction of shame as he looks upon his father and sees his father looking upon him. Xerxes receives no physical help from Darius, only his pity (οἰκτίρων, 198), showing how failures cause irrecoverable loss of status in the eyes of others. The Queen is concerned with Xerxes' survival, but especially with the conditions of that survival. As we have seen in *Agamemnon*, even a victorious king who physically survives and returns home can lose his status, and Xerxes, as a defeated king, will certainly have challenges to regaining his position. The fulfillment of the Queen's fears will be seen upon Xerxes' return, again in tattered clothes. Indeed, as a mother who exhibits concern but can offer no actual aid to her son, the prominence of the Queen's character adds to Xerxes' disgrace (McClure 2006).⁴³ Her dream confirms that homecoming from war requires both a safe physical return to the homeland and some kind of reintegration into society through reclamation of status.

The view from home in *Persians* has much in common with the view from home in *Agamemnon*. The play's focus on distance and departure adds to the permanence of loss experienced by characters at home. The physical distance is, for many, impossible to cross. In addition, the sense that something is missing—either because of a physical absence or a lack of knowledge—persists throughout the homeland. Imagery of the land, cities, and the environment highlights the grief experienced by those at home. Personification of the land demonstrates the depth of loss felt by wives for husbands and, especially, parents for lost youths. Finally, the extensiveness of suffering incurred at home and the recollections of the masses of men that

⁴³ McClure (2006) suggests that the Queen's maternal role and imagery of motherhood throughout the play reinforce the mortality and disgrace of Xerxes—a distinction from Clytemnestra's role as a wife. She argues that the Queen's dream foreshadows Persian destruction, the blame placed upon Xerxes, and Xerxes' return to his mother in feminized disgrace (88).

departed reinforce how war affects all families and suggest that survival is not dependent upon any scheme of justice or heroism. These themes continue in the next section of the play, when a Messenger arrives in Persia, presenting a different point of view on the same experience of loss.

The View From Abroad

As in *Agamemnon*, in which the Herald reports the fates of returning soldiers to Clytemnestra and the Chorus, the main view from abroad in *Persians* comes from a returning soldier, in this case a Messenger who has witnessed the Battle of Salamis as well as the army's return journey. The Messenger reinforces the earlier ideas of separation and distance that were expressed by the Chorus. In addition, his report shows the fulfillment of the Chorus' fears as he describes death and destruction abroad. Unlike the Herald in *Agamemnon*, the Messenger provides an actual depiction of combat, yet the message is quite similar: the army faces indiscriminate misfortune and chance survival.

For example, in the Messenger's reports, as in the Chorus' lines, Aeschylus conveys the distance from the home and the permanent loss of men. He relies on depictions of foreign lands as final resting places for the dead. And, indeed, these places are not very restful. The descriptions of death reinforce the dangers that face the soldier on departure and in battle; they also further show the men changing nature and the fundamental changes to the environment wrought by warfare. An early conversation between the Chorus and Messenger about the battle at Salamis makes clear that the men who departed for war are not returning (268-77):

Χο: ὁτοτοτοῖ, μάταν
τὰ πολλὰ βέλεα παμμιγῇ
γᾶς ἀπ' Ἀσίδος ἦλθεν, αἰαῖ, (270)
δάαν Ἑλλάδα χώραν.

Αγ: πλήθουσι νεκρῶν δυσπότηως ἐφθαρμένων
Σαλαμῖνος ἀκταὶ πᾶς τε πρόσχωρος τόπος.

Χο: ὁτοτοτοῖ, φίλων
 πολύδονα σώμαθ' ἄλιβαφῇ (275)
 κατθανόντα λέγεις φέρεσθαι
 πλαγκτοῖς ἐν διπλάκεσσιν.

Chorus: Ahh, in vain the mixed multitude of weapons came from the land of Asia, alas, to the hostile Greek land.

Messenger: The shores of Salamis and every neighboring place are full of corpses destroyed in a wretched fate.

Chorus: Ahh, you're saying that the bodies of our friends, driven about and drowned in the sea, are carried dead in their folded cloaks wandering around them.

The Chorus exclaim with woe that the men have departed from Asia and arrived in Greece. They expose the extent of men who have departed and the purpose of their expedition—war—by defining the men by their many and varied weapons (τὰ πολλὰ βέλεα παμμιγῇ, 269). The Messenger's response confirms the final fate of these men: filling the shores of the Greek land with their dead bodies (272-73). This is a horror to the Chorus, who, although they were not witnesses, still imagine these corpses being battered by the sea with their cloaks streaming around them and create a similar visual effect for the audience. As Garvie (2009: *ad loc*) notes, following Seaford (1994: 339 n. 31), the cloaks are reminiscent of funeral shrouds, while the word φέρεσθαι evokes the ἐκφορά of a corpse for burial. The image is one of permanence; there is no hope for recovering these men or even their bodies. They, instead, are laid to rest in a warped burial—at sea and in a foreign territory, just as the Chorus of *Agamemnon* recall the many men who were lost at sea or buried far from their homelands in Troy (452-55). The multitude of deaths shows not only the scale of the disaster, but also dehumanizes the men. The unindividuated deaths at sea in battle demonstrate the dangers of the landscape for anyone who leaves, especially because the army originally left by sea. The change to the environment

produced by Xerxes' crossing of the Hellespont is paralleled in the pollution of nature by the corpses of his army.

At the end of his report of Salamis, the Messenger again makes clear the finality of the battle and emphasizes once more the masses of Persian men that have died in Greece. According to the Messenger, the wreckage of ships and bodies (ναυαγίων πλήθουσα καὶ φόνου βροτῶν) was so great that the sea itself could not be seen (419-20). The grammatical equivalence of the words ναυαγίων and φόνου gives equal treatment to the dead men and the lifeless timber of the ships, underscoring the loss experienced (cf. *A.* 659-60). Furthermore, the Messenger recalls how the shores and the reefs were full of corpses (ἄκται δὲ νεκρῶν χοιράδες τ' ἐπλήθουν, 421) and how, as the Persians tried to escape, the Greeks would strike as if the fleeing Persians were tuna or a net full of fish (τοὶ δ' ὥστε θύννους ἢ τιν' ἰχθύων βόλον, 424), another dehumanizing depiction.⁴⁴ Once again, the war parallels the departure. The Persians departed for war like a swarm of bees and end their journey as another animal—helpless fish. Their corpses become part of the shoreline, just as Xerxes manufactured land to cross the Hellespont.

The Messenger concludes his account by saying that, even if he had ten days to do so, he would not be able to tell fully the multitude of evils suffered (κακῶν δὲ πλῆθος...οὐκ ἂν ἐκπλήσαιμι, 429-30), and he declares that never before had so great a number of men (πλῆθος τοσουτάριθμον, 432) died in one day. In this short passage, the Messenger frequently uses words showing multitude (πλήθουσα, ἐπλήθουν, πλῆθος, ἐκπλήσαιμι, and πλῆθος τοσουτάριθμον

⁴⁴ Garvie (2009: *ad loc*) suggests that this simile could be influenced by Homeric similes of fishing, including *Od.* 10.124, 12.251-53, and 22.384-87, though he concludes that Aeschylus' own observations are a more likely source. The similarity between this simile and those in the *Odyssey* still suggests a comparison. In the case of the *Odyssey*, the similes describe the Laestrygonians, Scylla, and the heaped up suitors after their slaughter, thus moving from monsters abroad to the deaths that conclude the epic and that are presented as deserved. In the case of *Persians*, however, such movement toward any form of justice or even retribution is not present.

above). Avery (1964: 176) suggests that the effect of these words of magnitude and multitude shifts throughout the play: “At the beginning they magnify the might and power of the Persian empire. After the defeat at Salamis has been announced, they emphasize the magnitude of the disaster.” Yet whereas Avery argues that this shift illuminates the totality of the Persian defeat and thus glorifies Greek victory, I suggest that these words show not just that the disaster itself is of terrible magnitude but also the extent of those whom this disaster strikes. Much like the Chorus of Agamemnon mourning the many houses left empty of men (430-36), this language draws attention to figures beyond the hero Xerxes and his family and to the suffering that those people experience.

The extent of suffering and the concern for ordinary Persians is seen not just through the deaths of men abroad, but also through the connection between these men and their homelands. This relationship makes the men’s deaths abroad especially painful because they are so distant from home. Such a link was established through the Chorus’ catalogue of men early in the play (16-64), and the theme continues in the Messenger’s account of the deaths of the commanders of various peoples (302-30). Like the Chorus earlier, the Messenger again associates the loss of men with their homeland and the grief of entire nations. Goldhill (1988) argues that the lack of mention of Greek names within *Persians* is part of the collectivity of democratic ideology that stands in opposition to the individual listing of Persian names, whereas Ebbott (2000: 92-96) suggests that the Messenger’s speech is a disturbing twist on the Athenian casualty lists that creates a “shared sense of connection” between the Athenians and Persians. Even if the Greek audience would not have recognized the democratic form of the casualty list in this passage, the attention Ebbott gives to the naming of individual homelands and weaponry reveals an effect similar to that of the Chorus’ catalogue that begins the play. Again individuals are defined by

their nationality: Bactrian, Egyptian, Chrysian, Arabian, Sardian, Mysian, Lyrnaean, Cilician. And they again span the range of military roles: commanders of tens of thousands of men or horsemen (302, 315, 318); leaders of ships, sometimes in the dozens (313, 323); and those wielding a spear (320-21). The Messenger's account reveals the extensive and communal loss of men due to war.

The negative and widespread consequences of waging war are also demonstrated in *Persians* through an emphasis on the universal dangers of the natural world. Because the initial situation is so similar, but the end result so different, the *Odyssey* once again offers a fruitful source of comparison with *Persians*. In addition to the potential influence of Homer in the fish simile, another direct comparison with the *Odyssey* is possible at the beginning of the Messenger's speech. When the Messenger says he did not expect to return home alive (καὐτὸς δ' ἀέλπτως νόστιμον βλέπω φάος, 261), Hall sees "a clear adaptation of the Homeric expression 'to see the day of homecoming' (νόστιμον ἦμαρ ιδέσθαι, *Od.* 5.220)" (1996: *ad loc.*). The connection highlights the way that the *Odyssey* establishes the potential challenges faced by the hero returning from war, challenges seen again in *Persians*, yet also provides a model of a successful heroic homecoming, thereby setting in relief the ways that *Persians*, instead, stresses permanent absence, lack of heroism, and universal suffering. The indiscriminate nature of this misfortune is especially noteworthy within the Messenger's account of the journey back to Persia. Even those who survive the loss at battle abroad must make this dangerous return journey before they can be reunited with their families and communities. While both the account of Odysseus' homecoming and that of the Persians' return describe natural threats, there is another feature of Odyssean thought, the distinction between the hero and others, that is not maintained in the same way in *Persians*. Odysseus' success is paramount throughout the *Odyssey*, and the

loss of his crew is experienced only through his eyes. Even then, their deaths are considered deserved, the result of a transgression that earns divine punishment or a necessary sacrifice that enables Odysseus' return.

Several scholars have viewed the Persian army's departure from their homeland similarly to actions in the *Odyssey*, as a transgression that instigates divine retribution. Anderson (1972), for instance, considers images such as the yoke, the emptiness of the land, mourning, wealth, and the powers of the sea, arguing that they illustrate how ἄτη is the consequence of overconfidence. He believes there is a divine component, as well, with these images revealing the contrast both between order and disorder and between divine foresight and human blindness. Conacher (1996) also finds ἄτη significant, arguing that the main theme of *Persians* is "simply the demonstration of divine nemesis answering the overreaching ambition of human greed and puffed-up confidence in power and wealth, the old sequence of *koros-hybris-atê*..." (8). Furthermore, Wilson (1986) ties these ideas of divine retribution to the geographical landscape, examining "territoriality," which he defines as "the sacred connection between the polis as a social organization and the land on which it is founded" (51). Wilson suggests that this is a key theme in *Persians* and that territoriality in this play goes beyond the polis to include sea boundaries—Xerxes and the Persians violate territoriality by yoking the Hellespont. I will build on these arguments by examining how the cycle of transgression and divine retribution identified by these scholars in *Persians* is different from that seen in the *Odyssey*, although both works recall a return from war. Not simply a matter of Xerxes' hubris or the overreaching of the Persians, the potential transgressions are presented as inescapable acts of waging war abroad. Mechanisms of justice and divine retribution thus serve to emphasize the risks of leaving home for war and, once again, highlight the negative and wide-spread consequences of this action.

Both the *Odyssey* and *Persians* deal with struggles against the environment. Within the *Odyssey*, such scenes demonstrate Odysseus' superiority and deserved survival. Unlike his crew, Odysseus is able to resist the natural threats that face him. First, he can withstand exhaustion and the hard work of sailing: he does not tire (σχέτλιος, 12.279), his limbs do not weary (οὐδέ τι γυῖα κάμνει, 12.279-80), and Eurylochus suggests that he is made of iron (σοί γε σιδήρεα πάντα τέτυκται, 12.280). In addition, Odysseus is able to endure hunger beyond his crewmen. Odysseus never mentions eating the cattle of Helius himself, describing only how his companions feasted on the meat for six days (12.307-8). The transgression of eating the cattle is immediately evident when the skins crawl and the meat roasting on the spit bellows like the sound of cattle (12.395-96). In addition, the storm is clearly framed as a punishment against Odysseus' crew, making their deaths at sea a less shocking and grievous loss. Odysseus recalls Zeus' promise to Helius to destroy the ship in retribution for the killing of the cattle (12.374-88). Finally, the destruction of Odysseus' men in a storm at sea is brief and turns quickly to Odysseus' own survival. The men are described as sea-crows carried in the waves around the ship (12.418-19), a dehumanizing description like those that are even further developed in tragedy. Yet Odysseus quickly moves on to the fact that the god took away their homecoming (12.419)—a deserved punishment for a conscious transgression—and then shifts to himself with a strong "But I..." (αὐτὰρ ἐγώ..., 12.420). The total account of the storm is forty-four lines, with only seventeen dedicated to the suffering of the entire crew and a full twenty-seven illustrating Odysseus' skillful escape.

The episode of Helius' cattle and the storm that follows truly encapsulates the Odyssean attitude toward the natural world, first by revealing the dangers of leaving the comforts of home and then by distinguishing Odysseus from his crew. On their return journey, Odysseus and his crew confront environmental challenges that present both a system of divine justice and the

difficulties of homecoming. When Odysseus heeds the warnings of Tiresias and Circe and advises that his men sail by the island of Helius, Eurylochus complains that the men are tired with work and sleep and that Odysseus will not allow them to make a proper meal on land but, instead, forces them through the stormy sea (12.281-85). The exhaustion and hunger are grueling for a crew whose home is now a ship rather than a house on land. Even once they moor on Helius' island, the men are forced to hunt for sustenance after the provisions in their ship run dry, and hunger wears away their stomachs (12.327-32), another risk when away from home. The discomfort of living on the sea and the threat of hunger also appear in *Agamemnon*, when the army suffer in their ships, exposed to the elements, and seek out food at Troy (*A.* 320-50, 551-81).

The problems are similar across the *Odyssey*, *Agamemnon*, and *Persians*, but the results and emphasis in the *Odyssey* stand apart. While Odysseus goes off to pray to the gods and falls asleep, Eurylochus convinces the men that death by hunger is truly the worst death (12.340-51):

κέκλυτέ μευ μύθων κακά περ πάσχοντες ἐταῖροι. (340)
 πάντες μὲν στυγεροὶ θάνατοι δειλοῖσι βροτοῖσι,
 λιμῶ δ' οἴκτιστον θανέειν καὶ πότμον ἐπισπεῖν.

...
 εἰ δὲ χολωσάμενός τι βοῶν ὀρθοκραιράων
 νῆ' ἐθέλῃ ὀλέσαι, ἐπὶ δ' ἔσπονται θεοὶ ἄλλοι,
 βούλομ' ἅπαξ πρὸς κῦμα χανῶν ἀπὸ θυμὸν ὀλέσσαι, (350)
 ἢ δηθὰ στρεύεσθαι ἐὼν ἐν νήσῳ ἐρήμῃ.

Companions, listen to my speech, although you suffer evils. All deaths are hateful for miserable mortals, but it is most pitiful to die and meet one's fate by hunger...But if Helius, angry over his high-horned cattle, wishes to destroy our ships, and the other gods follow him, I would rather lose my life once and for all, gulping in the waves, than be drained of life drop by drop over the course of time on a desolate island.

By this point in the epic, drowning in the sea has consistently been characterized as the worst possible death, yet here Eurylochus argues that famine surpasses even that fate. Eurylochus'

words prove prophetic, and the men, save Odysseus, all drown in a storm (12.403-19). The actions of the crew in landing on Thrinacia and eating Helios' cattle show how an extended time abroad can push men to try to seek the comforts of home, even when that means a serious transgression against the gods. They also reveal that, in addition to battles bringing men into the environment away from home, the return, too, poses risks for men.

The threats of the natural world—exhaustion, hunger, and stormy weather—are seen again in *Persians*, yet they are treated differently, with more focus on the inability of *all* men to survive, regardless of their actions. Odysseus is able to overcome challenges that in this “crossing from war” tragedy will be crushing. Although the risks may be similar for returning warriors in the *Odyssey* and *Persians*, nevertheless, the emphasis and tenor of *Persians* differs from its epic predecessor. Unlike the *Odyssey*, *Persians* is the story of a failed return, stressing the deaths that keep men from ever returning home as well as the failures even for those who physically survive. Before returning to the Messenger's account of the retreat to Persia, I will first look at how the Persians' transgression is perceived and its connection to war. Blame for the destruction of the Persian army falls upon Xerxes throughout the play, unlike in the *Odyssey*, where the consequences of Odysseus' actions fall largely upon his men. In addition, Xerxes' blame is typically also tied to the war abroad. The departure from one's homeland to go to war is, in and of itself, a transgression. For example, after hearing the account of the Messenger, the Chorus repeat Xerxes' name three times as they exclaim that Xerxes led the men away, Xerxes destroyed them, and Xerxes foolishly drove everything on (550-54). Xerxes is to blame, but for what action? The answer comes when the Chorus follow this statement with a parallel one. Employing anaphora again, this time the Chorus repeat that it is the ships (and notably the ships of *both* sides of the war) that led the Persian men away and ruined them (560-64). Even as they

find fault with Xerxes, the Chorus attribute the destruction of the Persian fleet also to the mechanisms of war—the Persian ships that brought the Persians to Greece and the Greek ships that faced them there.

The threats of the environment, and the difference in their effects between the *Odyssey* and *Persians*, are most clearly demonstrated in the massive destruction of the Persian military forces as they attempt a return to Persia. The description of the Persian retreat is similar to the account of Odysseus and his crew on their final return to Ithaca. Both crews face extreme peril at sea, far from home. In *Persians*, the Messenger's description of the extensive journey he and others took back toward Persia reveals the dangerous natural threats away from home (480-514) and, thus, the difficulty of actually returning to one's homeland. Just as in the *Odyssey*, it is not only the departure and the war that contain dangers, but also the return home. Yet *Persians* presents a more complicated view of the causes of these dangers. In the *Persians* episode, we see not clear, targeted divine retribution, but indiscriminate misfortune and chance survival.

Within his account of the return, the Messenger specifies each geographical territory the defeated troops traverse and the landmarks they pass: Boeotia, Phocis, Doris, the Melian gulf, the Spercheus river, Achaea, Thessaly, Magnesia, Macedonia, the Axios river and Bolbe marsh, Mount Pangaeum, Edonis, the Strymon river, and Thrace. The mention of each territory reinforces the distance of the men from Persia and thus from their families and homelands, in another catalogue similar to Clytemnestra's beacon speech (*A.* 281-316). In addition, the Persian men die off over the course of their attempt to reach Persia, all suffering from afflictions due to their environment. They are exposed to harsh elements and suffer without the usual amenities of home. Many die from hunger and thirst (δίψῃ πονοῦντες, 484; ὑπεσπανισμένους / βορᾶς, 489-90; ἔνθα δὲ πλεῖστοι θάνον / δίψῃ τε λιμῶ τ', 490-91), threats that Odysseus' men encountered, as

well. Others drown in the Strymon, when the blazing sun melts their safe ice-passage across (φλέγων γὰρ αὐγαῖς λαμπρὸς ἡλίου κύκλος / μέσον πόρον διῆκε, θερμαίνων φλογί, 504-5). The men lack any means of protection from the hostile sun, which seems to be making an attack on the river and, thus, the men, in a different kind of battle from those they faced at war. The basic needs of food, shelter, and health are denied to the men on this journey home, the same conditions that the Greek army experiences at war according to the Herald in *Agamemnon* (555-66). Demonstrating further the distance between home and abroad, the Messenger describes the Persian land as “possessing a hearth” (ἔστιοῦχον, 511). In contrast to the places that the men crossed on campaign, Persia is the site of the home and all its comforts and protections. Just as Clytemnestra describes Agamemnon as the source of warmth in the winter to show that he is essential to the home (*A.* 968-69), so does the image of the hearth here indicate that the Persian land is the source of life for the Persian people. Thus, separation from the land puts the entire people at risk.

Although Darius later claims that the destruction of the Persians is divinely sent, describing how the Persian army destroyed the altars and temples of the Greeks (800-22), the Messenger’s description (480-514) of the Persians’ failed return suggests that this rationalization cannot explain the whole defeat.⁴⁵ Horsfall (1974) argues that the Persian disaster while crossing the Strymon is an act of divine retribution for the Persians’ earlier hubris when crossing the Hellespont, and he suggests that the Messenger’s use of the word θεός (lines 495, 502, and 505) shows the hostile reaction of the gods toward the Persians. Conacher, likewise, believes the disaster to be the “clearest demonstration of divine temptation and human overstepping” (1996: 19). Nevertheless, the Messenger makes no pointed connections between human actions and divine reactions like those we saw in the *Odyssey*. The Persians receive no warning that they

⁴⁵ Darius’ perspective will be discussed later in this chapter.

have done something wrong and, though they are inexperienced at praying to the gods (497-500), there is no indication that the gods have actively dismissed their prayer. Though Horsfall claims that emphasis and repetition are at play, even he acknowledges that referring to the sun as θεός is common in tragedy (1974: 505). For the Messenger, the gods are merely a means of explaining occurrences that seem beyond natural.

Instead, in the Messenger's account of the extensive journey back toward Persia, those who die do not deserve their deaths nor are those who survive more heroic than those who perish. Hunger and thirst afflict all equally, and it is simply those who cross the river most quickly who survive (502-3). Indeed, the only "fortunate" ones (ηὐτύχει, 506) are those who have the good luck of dying swiftly (506-7). Similarly, those who reach Persia are called the remnants (λοιποί), who only happen upon safety (κάτυχον σωτηρίας, 508) rather than achieving homecoming through their strength and wits or with divine help, as Odysseus does. Instead, these surviving soldiers are like those in *Agamemnon*, who are described by the Herald with similar language (cf. τὸν λελειμμένον δορός, *A.* 517; τοῖς λοιποῖσιν, 570). A supremely unheroic return, the few survivors of the Persian army arrive in flight, with much suffering, and scarcely having made it out (μόγις πολλῷ πόνῳ / ἤκουσιν ἐκφυγόντες, οὐ πολλοί τινες, 509-10). In addition, the suffering distresses the entire Persian people. Though the Queen has asked the Messenger to recall what happened to the surviving fleet with an eye toward her son's safety, the Messenger does not distinguish Xerxes or any other individual men in his response, and the whole Persian city mourns as a result (ὥς στένειν πόλιν / Περσῶν, 511-12).

Finally, the Messenger's accounts of war and return, along with the Chorus' response, highlight the tearing apart of familial relationships. For example, as in *Agamemnon*, war has the potential to upend the normal cycle of generations, evident from uses of the ἄνθος metaphor (cf.

A. 197-98, 658-60, 955) and by parents grieving children (429-36). In addition to the Chorus' mourning at the end of *Persians*, the word ἄνθος also appears in the parados as the Chorus conclude the catalogue of departed men (τοιόνδ' ἄνθος Περσίδος αἴας / οἴχεται ἀνδρῶν, 59-60), and in the Messenger's first words (τὸ Περσῶν δ' ἄνθος οἴχεται πεσόν, 252). In both cases, the word is the subject of οἴχεται, echoing the verb in the very first line of the play and demonstrating the permanent loss of youths. The ἄνθος metaphor is not new to Aeschylus, as Garvie notes: "The men of a country, esp. its fighting men, are regularly described collectively as its 'flower'" (2009: *ad loc*). Here, when attached to the permanent loss of young men in their prime, however, the word is especially poignant. Much as we saw in *Agamemnon*, the image reinforces the young age of those who have died and underscores how this untimely loss of men at war contributes to the destruction of the entire state.

Furthermore, the play emphasizes wives mourning for husbands and parents mourning their children, again with distortions of typical relationships and with natural imagery, demonstrating the impact of war on the community. The Chorus respond to the Messenger's speech when they realize their fears have come to fulfillment (537-45):

πολλαὶ δ' ἀπαλαῖς χερσὶ καλύπτρας
κατερεικόμεναι
διαμυδαλέους δάκρυσι κόλπους
τέγγουσ' ἄλγους μετέχουσαι· (540)
αἱ δ' ἀβρόγοι Περσίδες ἀνδρῶν
ποθέουσαι ἰδεῖν ἀρτιζυγίαν,
λέκτρων εὐνὰς ἀβροχίτωνας,
χλιδανῆς ἥβης τέρψιν, ἀφεῖσαι,
πενθοῦσι γόοις ἀκορεστοτάτοις.

And many women, rending their veils with their soft hands, wet their drenched laps with tears, having a share in pain. And the Persian women, wailing in female mourning, desiring to see their newly-married husbands, leaving behind their softly-spread beds, the joy of their luxurious youth, grieve with insatiate wailing.

The loss of youth is emphasized, since the women can no longer share a bed with their husbands as they did in youth (543-44). The word ἀρτιζυγίαν (542), with its image of a yoke, highlights how the men have been unnaturally taken away and disjoined from their wives, and ironically points to the yoking of the Hellespont and the army's departure to far-away territory as the cause.

Moreover, in their reaction to the Messenger's report, the Chorus cry out their distress at the deaths of men at sea (576-83):

κναπτόμενοι δ' ἄλῃ δεινᾷ
 φεῦ
 σκύλλονται πρὸς ἀναύδων
 ἡέ
 παίδων τᾶς ἀμιάντου.
 ὁᾶ.
 πενθεῖ δ' ἄνδρα δόμος στερη-
 θεῖς, τοκέες δ' ἄπαιδες (580)
 δαιμόνι' ἄχῃ
 ὁᾶ,
 δυσρόμενοι γέροντες τὸ πᾶν δὴ κλύουσιν ἄλγος.

And mangled by the terrible salt sea—alas!—they are torn by the voiceless children—ah!—of the undefiled sea. Ah! The bereaved house mourns for its men, and childless parents, aged and bewailing these divine ills,—ah!—recognize every pain.

The normal cycle of parents bearing children who then grow up to bear further children is entirely upset here. The men who have gone to war are torn to bits by fish, described as voiceless children (ἀναύδων / ...παίδων, 577-78), a personification that highlights the distortions in this scene. Earlier in the play, these men were like fish being caught in nets for food (424); now, they have been diminished to the food for fish. In addition, the juxtaposition of the word τοκέες, at its root “begetter,” with ἄπαιδες, “childless” (580), a seemingly impossible but nevertheless true circumstance, reveals how the deaths of men abroad have destroyed the societal roles of those at home. Not only are the men deprived of a proper burial at home, but their parents, too, are not able to share in their roles of burial. Men who ought to have visited their parents' graves instead

die abroad before their time. The age of the parents is stressed by γέροντες (583), further showing the upending of generational cycles. As the Chorus in *Agamemnon* stress their own old age in contrast to the youth of the soldiers who have left for war (*A.* 72-82), so does the Chorus of *Persians* focus on the age of those left behind by the army.

The Messenger's report finally brings word from abroad to those waiting at home. His words confirm many of the themes introduced earlier by characters like the Queen and Chorus, who initially have no actual view of the war. According to the Messenger, the soldiers faced the dangers of the environment when they were at war and experienced the difficulties of a physical return to their homeland. The Messenger's account demonstrates especially how homecoming within "crossing from war" tragedies differs from that in the *Odyssey*. He recalls the masses of men who die and the few who survive, seemingly for no reason other than chance, reflecting the indiscriminate nature of death at war and upon return. His message is mournful rather than heroic, despite his attempts at positivity. In addition, the Messenger makes clear that the unnatural disruptions to family relationships that those at home had grieved earlier have now come to fruition. He shows the dehumanization of the soldiers in battle and death. The Chorus respond with recognition of the young age of the men who are now lost. Nevertheless, a distinction remains between the spheres of home and abroad even when the Messenger has returned physically and stands on Persian soil communicating with those who stayed home. The collision of these two perspectives, and the unresolvable challenges that still remain even after physical reunion, will be examined in the next section.

Homecoming: The Collision of Home and Abroad

As we have seen in *Agamemnon*, in which Agamemnon cannot restore his place as king despite his victorious return, a physical return is not all that is necessary for a successful

homecoming. After viewing the war from the perspective of those at home and those abroad in *Persians*, we see the two spheres collide with the return of Xerxes, who attempts reconciliation with his family and community. Unlike Agamemnon, whose wife has been plotting against him, Xerxes returns instead to a loving mother. Even so, his status is permanently damaged, and he cannot reintegrate into his former role. The connection between men and their homelands was broken by the army's departure for war and by the disastrous results of their campaign. This broken connection is paralleled by the damaged relationships between family members.

The collision of perspectives and the difficulties of reintegration are demonstrated first by a scene in which the Queen and Chorus converse with Darius, Xerxes' father and the former king of Persia. In preparation for Xerxes' return, the Queen and Chorus raise the specter of the former king, who is presented as a successful military commander. An important distinction emerges between Darius' view of Xerxes and the perspective of the other characters, highlighting Darius' quasi-divine position as a former king who has arisen from the dead in contrast to the fully human Chorus, Messenger, and Queen, who experience more deeply the suffering of the losses. For example, although the Queen's dream is perhaps divinely sent and provides some insight into what is happening abroad, it still depends on interpretation by humans. Darius, on the other hand, has inherent insight into the divine. Other characters beyond Xerxes have attributed successes and failures to a divine source, but none except Darius makes an explicit connection between an irreligious action on the part of the Persians and their defeat; moreover, Darius' explanation appears after the account of the Messenger, making it difficult for him to influence the opinions of the Chorus and Queen. Having already heard what things were like for the army abroad from a first-hand account, the audience recognizes more easily the difference in

perspective between Darius and those alive at home. The influence of the divine does not fully explain the suffering of the Persian people.

The necromancy scene in *Persians* is parallel in many ways to Odysseus' conversations with the dead in the *Odyssey*, especially with the shade Tiresias, and these similar features emphasize themes of transgression and punishment within the play. Although the position of the characters who speak to the dead differs in each work—it is the returning hero Odysseus in the *Odyssey* and those who have remained at home in *Persians*—, nevertheless, both scenes reveal the unique perspective of the divine through the presence of souls who have perished. Holding conversation with the dead is not an easy occurrence, as marked in both the *Odyssey* and *Persians*. Odysseus is given instructions to travel to a specific location, make a specific sacrifice, and allow the shades to drink the blood of the sacrifice in a specific order. The shades crowd around him with a divinely sounding cry (θεσπεσίη ἰαχῇ, 11.43) and Odysseus reacts with fear (ἐμὲ δὲ χλωρόν δέος ἦρει, 11.43), demonstrating that meeting these dead companions is foreign to typical human experience. Likewise, in *Persians*, a ritual is followed to raise the dead, with the Queen and Chorus providing libations and song to invite Darius to them. Darius reveals that the sight of his wife near his grave frightens him (λεύσσω δ' ἄκοιτιν ἐμὴν τάφου πέλας / ταρβῶ, 684-85) and says that it is not at all easy to escape the underworld (ἐστὶ δ' οὐκ εὐέξοδον, 688). The typical physical separation of those who have died from those still alive parallels the difference in perspective of the characters. Both Tiresias and Darius are able to comment on transgressions against the gods that have already occurred and explain the subsequent punishments. Furthermore, just as the dead Agamemnon and Achilles give Odysseus wise advice based on their life experiences and their perspectives as shades, so does Darius give the Queen and Chorus advice for the future.

Further separation between Darius and the human characters is evident from his initial ignorance of what has happened to the Persians. In his first address to the Chorus, Darius observes that the Queen and Chorus are experiencing some kind of pain but asks twice why they are suffering (682 and 693), showing his lack of knowledge of current events. The Chorus respond with words of reverence toward him (σέβομαι...σέβομαι, 694-95). In trying to put himself on equal footing as the Chorus, Darius actually draws attention to his different standing. He addresses the Chorus as the comrades of his youth (ἤλικες θ' ἥβης ἐμῆς, 681) and dismisses their awe and fear (τὴν ἐμὴν αἰδῶ μεθείς, 699), yet the Chorus are unable to consider themselves the peer of a deceased king of Persia. Furthermore, when Darius moves on to conversation with the Queen (703-38), he is repeatedly in the role of questioner, at first unaware that the Persians had undertaken a campaign at all and that Xerxes was the leader. He asks about the movement of troops and the destruction of the forces—all new information to his ears. Even with divine powers, Darius is entirely unaware of the events of the human world he left behind and is especially disconnected from the human suffering of his family and people. The Queen must provide this insight for him.

Despite his lack of awareness, Darius nonetheless possesses divine knowledge and offers a complete explanation for the human suffering he has just learned about. The treatment of Xerxes' yoking of the Hellespont provides one example of his more informed perspective. Both Darius and the other characters recognize the transgression of yoking the Hellespont and the unnatural crafting of a connection between lands, yet Darius' focus on Xerxes' arrogance and offense toward the gods is unique to him. The Chorus, conversely, twice depict the yoking of the Hellespont—first, the construction of a bolted bridge of boats connecting the lands on opposite sides of the strait (65-72) and later, the whole army passing over the yoked sea-promontory (126-

32). To the Chorus, bridging the strait was not by itself an irreligious act, nor would it have been seen that way by the Greeks (Garvie 2009: *ad loc*). The Chorus do make reference to the divine, but the gods are both a positive and negative force, and the Chorus do not speak of a religious transgression. For example, they compare both Xerxes and his men to gods—Xerxes is described as ἰσόθεος (80) and the army is his divine flock (ποιμανόριον θεῖον, 75). Furthermore, according to the Chorus, divine destiny (θεόθεν...Μοῖρ', 101) taught the Persians to make war and overthrow cities (101-7).

Yet the gods not only inspire war but also cause ruin. The Chorus wonder what mortal can escape from the crafty trick of a god and tell how a conniving *Ate* drives mortals into inescapable nets (93-100). In the eyes of the Chorus, therefore, the gods give favor and take it away, but we find no indication that they believe that Xerxes has committed a religious transgression. Moreover, in his account of the defeat at Salamis and the army's return journey to Persia, the Messenger mentions divine influence only in general terms, not as direct retribution for an offense. For example, he states that some god destroyed the Persian army by weighing down the scales with unequal fortune (ἀλλ' ὧδε δαίμων τις κατέφθειρε στρατόν, / τάλαντα βρίσας οὐκ ἰσορρόπῳ τύχῃ, 345-46).⁴⁶ He uses this reasoning to explain the defeat of a Persian army that massively outnumbered the Greeks, not to explain any misdeeds on the part of the Persians.

In contrast to the Messenger and the Chorus, who also speak of the Persian military forces crossing over the yoked Hellespont, Darius emphasizes divine punishment for Xerxes' actions, which he characterizes as foolishness. To Darius, Xerxes acts against the gods: Darius asserts that the ruin of the Persian army is the fulfillment of oracles (χρησμῶν πρᾶξις, 739) and specifically names Zeus as the force who fulfills such prophecies (Ζεὺς ἀπέσκηπεν τελευτὴν

⁴⁶ Cf. *Agamemnon* 662-63: ἤτοι τις ἐξέκλεψεν ἢ ῥηιτήσατο / **θεός τις**, οὐκ ἄνθρωπος, οἶακος θιγών.

θεσφάτων, 740). On one hand, Darius touches upon the play's earlier themes of permanent departure and distance. He shows Xerxes making a permanent change to the landscape, altering the form of the stream (πόρον μετερρύθμιζε, 747) and creating a road where there was once an uncrossable barrier (πολλήν κέλευθον ἤνυσεν, 748). Just as within the Chorus' and Messenger's accounts, especially the catalogues of geographical places, this environmental imagery reinforces the separation between the army and their homeland and suggests the possible difficulties of return.

Yet at the same time, Darius' difference in perspective from other characters is clear. In Darius' depiction, the bridging of the Hellespont becomes an act of mortal hubris against the gods. He describes the Hellespont as sacred (ἱρόν, 745) and the Bosphorus as a divine stream (ῥόον θεοῦ, 746). Furthermore, according to Darius, Xerxes' flaws also bear some of the blame. Darius claims that Xerxes acted ignorantly and out of youthful recklessness (οὐ κατειδῶς ἤνυσεν νέῳ θράσει, 744), and he concludes that a sickness must have held Xerxes' mind, since as a mortal man he foolishly thought he could overpower all the gods, even Poseidon (749-52). Darius' explanation demonstrates the gods responding to the actions of mortals. Although Darius was expecting the oracles to be fulfilled far in the future (διὰ μακροῦ χρόνου, 742), he recognizes that Xerxes' haste led the divine response to come sooner. This is much like how Tiresias confirms Odysseus' transgression against Poseidon even after it had already occurred (*Od.* 11.101-3). Both Tiresias and Darius provide those seeking their advice with an explanation of events that depends on transgression and retribution.

The Queen's response to Darius ties Xerxes' action instead to war-making, returning to a different, human perspective. She says to Darius (753-58):

ταῦτά τοι κακοῖς ὁμιλῶν ἀνδράσιν διδάσκεται
 θούριος Ξέρξης· λέγουσι δ' ὥς σὺ μὲν μέγαν τέκνοις

πλοῦτον ἐκτήσω ξὺν αἰχμῇ, τὸν δ' ἀνανδρίας ὕπο (755)
 ἔνδον αἰχμάζειν, πατρῶον δ' ὄλβον οὐδὲν αὐξάνειν·
 τοιάδ' ἐξ ἀνδρῶν ὄνειδη πολλάκις κλύων κακῶν
 τήνδ' ἐβούλευσεν κέλευθον καὶ στράτευμ' ἐφ' Ἑλλάδα.

Impetuous Xerxes learned these things in the company of evil men. They said that you acquired great wealth for your children with your spear, but that he, out of cowardice, played the warrior at home and did not increase his paternal wealth. Often hearing such reproaches from evil men, he planned this expedition and campaign against Greece.

Scholars have offered various readings of how this passage fits in with the attribution of responsibility and blame within the rest of the play. Michelini (1982: 149-50) suggests that the idea of counsellors providing poor advice is inconsistent with the blame placed on Xerxes' own faults throughout the play, while Rosenmeyer (1982: 291) argues that the Queen's explanation is "ludicrously out of step with the massive intimations of divine delusion and Oriental turbulence suggested earlier in the play." Garvie (2009: *ad loc*) acknowledges that "the late appearance of this explanation casts doubt on its sufficiency" but emphasizes that all the explanations given in the play are retrospective. As he says, "If Xerxes had won the battle, the advice would have been considered good" (298). Finally, Griffith (2007: 122) points out that the portrayal of Darius as a victorious king is misleading. These potential discrepancies and insufficiencies, however, make sense within the context of the play. It matters not whether the Queen's justification is the actual explanation for Xerxes' failure, or even whether this is the message of the play as a whole, but rather that she decides to defend Xerxes' expedition in this way at all. Her character shows human concerns and a typical mother's perspective. The Queen reveals that waging war was considered a typical means for Persia to gain wealth and acknowledges the pressures facing Xerxes to continue this tradition. She recognizes Xerxes' need to leave home to prove himself, and she demonstrates her support for her son through this defense.

The difference between Darius' divine perspective and the human concerns, especially those of a mother, is evident here; moreover, the tension between the Queen and Darius demonstrates the deep divisions created by war within the human world. Even Darius, who had campaigned and returned successfully, is not of one mind with his wife, who has witnessed the effects of war upon those at home, including her son. The separation within the family is not solely a division between the divine and human, but also between a warrior and his family, exposing the suffering of those outside of the returning hero. Looking at the Queen's perspective more broadly, many have viewed her as representative of the personal tragedy of Xerxes against the defeat of the Persian state (e.g., Ireland 1973, Garvie 1978, Dworacki 1979, and Schenker 1994). Others have focused more specifically on her role as a mother: McClure (2006) suggests that the Queen's motherly role, in contrast to both male figures and female figures like the wife Clytemnestra, underscores Xerxes' mortality and disgrace, while Griffith (2007) maintains that the Queen's presentation as an elite mother who is too involved reinforces the father-son, monarchical structures of power. I believe that the concerns of the Queen, through their personal rather than political tone, reflect the concerns of all family members who have been waiting in Persia. These families, including the Chorus and the wives and parents of whom the Chorus speak, all need to negotiate either the loss of their loved ones or the reintegration of their sons and husbands into family and social life.

Darius' response to the Queen shows some understanding of the difficulties that arise when men depart for war, including the permanent damage to the Persian people. He is consistent with the Queen and the Messenger in his particular emphasis on the environment abroad as the site of this damage, reinforcing how physical separation leads to familial and societal collapse. Darius tells the Chorus and the Queen that the Persians will do best if they no longer lead an army onto

Greek land, which he calls an ally (ξύμμαχος) to the Greek people (790-92). The image of the Greek land as a participant in war highlights the deep connection between peoples and their lands. At the same time, Darius also implicates the choice to wage war abroad in the Persians' downfall since they chose to invade Greece. In addition, even for the survivor Xerxes, Darius' condemnation of his youthful recklessness reminds the audience that, although old men might be wiser, young men are responsible for the actual combat of war and face the risk of death (781-86). Indeed, Darius has already called the allies youths (ἥβην, 733). He suggests the same themes—departure for war and the loss of young men—as other characters when he describes the downfall of the Persians, yet Darius provides a different rationalization from the Messenger or the Queen. He, instead, reinforces his claims of transgression and retribution with a detailed account of the Persians' crimes and the appropriateness of their punishments. Darius' advice for the future is backed up by his ability to explain past events. Although Darius had initially been ignorant of the defeat of the Persian forces, he solidifies his divine perspective by describing what is happening to the army at this moment and what will happen to them in the future. He says that misery will meet the troops as the price for hubris and godlessness (ὑβρεως ἄποινα καθέων φρονημάτων, 808), showing an offense to the gods much like Odysseus' offense against Poseidon and his crew's offense against Helios.

Furthermore, Darius details actual actions against the gods (809-12):

οἱ γῆν μολόντες Ἑλλάδ' οὐ θεῶν βρέτη
 ἠδοῦντο συλᾶν οὐδὲ πιμπράναι νεώς· (810)
 βωμοὶ δ' αἵστοι, δαιμόνων θ' ιδρύματα
 πρόρριζα φύρδην ἐξανέστραπται βάθρων.

Having come to the Greek land they were not ashamed to carry off the images of the gods nor to burn the temples; altars gone from sight, and temples of the deities were turned upside down from their foundations by their roots in utter confusion.

Once again, Zeus is in charge of the entire scheme of justice, and Darius names him the punisher (κολαστής, 827). The actions of the Persians in Darius' account are similar both to those Clytemnestra claims she fears in *Agamemnon* (*A.* 338-44) and to ones that the actual Greek army is said to have taken at Troy, demonstrating their universality. Moreover, Darius' account provides entirely new information to the Queen that she could not obtain otherwise in her limited position of a mother waiting at home; none of these details of sacrilege were included in the Messenger's report, despite his presence in battle, showing the potential discrepancies and misinformation that those waiting at home receive during war. Once again, the Queen's position in *Persians* is comparable to Clytemnestra's in *Agamemnon*. Both can only imagine what has happened and must rely on reports of uncertain veracity from men. Just as Clytemnestra professed hearing tale after tale of Agamemnon's death (*A.* 858-94), in *Persians* the Queen hears multiple reports of the disaster of the Persian fleet. This time, the audience witnesses and shares in the painful experience of receiving devastating war stories from abroad, causing the effects of war to become even more all-encompassing.

Darius' final statement reinforces the permanence of these effects upon the soldiers who die violently abroad or who return having experienced ruin, as well as the impact upon the community that is irrecoverably broken apart as a result. Darius presents the Persians' punishment as parallel to their offense, reinforcing the theme of transgression and retribution, but this punishment remains in line with those experiences of loss relayed by the Messenger and Chorus earlier in the play. The army is permanently separated from their families and homelands and their humanity is lost through their deaths. Darius suggests that the punishment is equal to the crime, saying the suffering they experience will be no less than the suffering caused (813-14). Darius then describes the piles of corpses in Plataea (816-22):

τῶςος γὰρ ἔσται πελανὸς αἵματοσφαγῆς
 πρὸς γῇ Πλαταιῶν Δωρίδος λόγχης ὕπο·
 θῖνες νεκρῶν δὲ καὶ τριτοσπόρῳ γονῇ
 ἄφωνα σημανοῦσιν ὄμμασιν βροτῶν
 ὥς οὐχ ὑπέρφευ θνητὸν ὄντα χρὴ φρονεῖν· (820)
 ὕβρις γὰρ ἐξανθοῦς' ἐκάρπωσε στάχυν
 ἄτης, ὅθεν πάγκλαυτον ἐξαμᾶ θέρος.

For so great will be the gore of bloody slaughter on the land of Plataea because of the Doric spear; the heaps of corpses, voiceless, will make clear to the eyes of mortals, even in the third generation, that it is necessary for someone who is mortal not to have thoughts too excessive; for blooming hubris bears the fruit of ruin, from which it reaps a most lamentable harvest.⁴⁷

Darius presents the battle as permanently modifying the landscape in a way that parallels Xerxes' action of altering the natural Hellespont. He emphasizes that the slaughter will be visible even three generations into the future (τριτοσπόρῳ γονῇ, 818), showing its permanent effects. The men are dehumanized bodies that no longer have a voice (ἄφωνα, 819), like the voiceless fish that rip at the bodies of the Persian soldiers who died at sea (cf. 577-78). Instead of a proper burial they are piled up on top of the earth in heaps (θῖνες, 818) and on a foreign land (πρὸς γῇ Πλαταιῶν, 817). The dehumanizing depiction of corpses that become part of the landscape is reminiscent of the Messenger's account of bodies covering the sea at Salamis, where they were stabbed like fish by the Greeks (419-24). Thus, in a punishment appropriate to their offenses, the fate of the Persian army is lasting separation from their homes and a grotesque monument for future generations to witness that allows no possibility for the community to recover.

The importance of geography to the portrayal of war's permanent negative effects is evident when the Chorus recall Darius' previous leadership (853-906). The Chorus emphasize the extent of territory conquered while Darius remained at home. They list the Acheloian cities;

⁴⁷ Cf. *Agamemnon* 750-60: παλαίφατος δ' ἐν βροτοῖς γέρων λόγος / τέτυκται, μέγαν τελε- / σθέντα φωτὸς ὄλβον / τεκνοῦσθαι μηδ' ἄπαιδα θνήσκειν, / ἐκ δ' ἀγαθᾶς τύχας γένει / βλαστάνειν ἀκόρεστον οἰζύν. / δίχα δ' ἄλλων μονόφρων εἰ-/μί· τὸ δυσσεβὲς γὰρ ἔργον / μετὰ μὲν πλείονα τίκτει, / σφετέραι δ' εἰκότα γένναι· / οἴκων γὰρ εὐθυδίκων / καλλίπαις πότμος αἰεῖ.

the Strymon; Thrace; the river Helle; the Propontis and Black Seas; the nearer islands of Lesbos, Chios, Paros, Naxos, Mykonos, Andros, and Tenos; and the farther islands of Lemnos, Ikaria, Rhodes, Cnidos, Cyprus, Paphos, Soloi, and Salamis. Like other catalogues in the play, this list covers vast distances, yet instead of showing the distances traveled by the army for war and the separation from home, the Chorus says that Darius instead commanded such conquest without crossing the Halys, without even leaving his hearth (ὅσας δ' εἴλε πόλεις πόρον οὐ διαβάς Ἄλυσος ποταμοῖο / οὐδ' ἄφ' ἐστίας συθείς, 865-66). This characterization is, of course, untrue. Rather than reflecting the actual circumstances, the Chorus further shows the connection between the absence of men and the ruin of a society that they have emphasized throughout the play. By associating the king with the physical space at home, the hearth, the Chorus demonstrate the risks when people are separated from their homelands.

The spheres of home and abroad have already collided after the Queen and Chorus hear the Messenger's report and consult Darius. When Xerxes himself returns physically, he faces the challenge of reintegrating into his family and community and regaining his former status, even though he has physically survived and arrived in Persia. A key way that this difficulty is manifested in *Persians*, as well as in *Agamemnon* and the *Odyssey*, is through clothing. It is worth looking in detail at how clothing represents status within these works, both the potential that clothing offers for restoring one's status and the limits of clothing and its failures. We have already seen clothing as a marker of status within the Queen's dream, when Xerxes tears his clothing in shame in front of Darius after failing to successfully yoke the two women of Greece and Persia to his chariot (197-99). Xerxes' clothing is not damaged by his fall from the chariot, but rather the torn clothes are a sign of his sense of inferiority and failure in the eyes of his father. Indeed, his ruin causes distress to the Queen. Xerxes' accountability for his failures

continues beyond his action itself, just as the actions taken to go to war and at war continue to influence men's lives upon their return, especially in the eyes of others.

Another similar example of clothing as an indication of Xerxes' status appears in the Messenger's account of the defeat at Salamis (465-71):

Ξέρξης δ' ἀνώμωξεν κακῶν ὀρῶν βάθος· (465)

ἔδραν γὰρ εἶχε παντὸς εὐαγῆ στρατοῦ,

ὑψηλὸν ὄχθον ἄγχι πελαγίας ἁλός·

ρήξας δὲ πέπλους κἀνακωκύσας λιγύ,

πεζῶ παραγγείλας ἄφαρ στρατεύματι,

ἦσ' ἀκόσμῳ ξὺν φυγῇ. τοιάνδε σοι (470)

πρὸς τῇ πάροιθε ξυμφορὰν πάρα στένειν.

And Xerxes wailed, seeing the depth of evils, for he held a seat with a clear view of the whole army, on a lofty hill near the salty sea. And having torn his clothing and having let out a shrill wail and having given an order straightaway to his foot soldiers, he sent them out in disorderly flight. Such a misfortune for you to lament alongside the one before this.

Before this point, we have primarily seen the Chorus mourning for men who have died and are never to return, yet the Messenger claims that there is a second misfortune, one distinct from the defeat of the army: the effects of that defeat upon those who survive.⁴⁸ Xerxes only witnesses the defeat (ὀρῶν, 465) and is not part of the fighting forces (παντὸς εὐαγῆ στρατοῦ, 466), but in the eyes of the Messenger, the lasting effects upon him are a misfortune worth lamenting alongside the defeat (471). Xerxes' anguish is evident from his wailing, and his disgrace and loss of status are emphasized by the feminizing depiction of that mourning (ἀνώμωξεν, 465; κἀνακωκύσας λιγύ, 468). He tears his clothing (ρήξας δὲ πέπλους, 460), a physical manifestation of grief and a visible sign of his defeat. Although Xerxes still commands his troops (παραγγείλας, 469), their disorderly flight contrasts with the appropriate organized arrangement of the army (ἀκόσμῳ ξὺν

⁴⁸ Many scholars focus on this scene as an example of the distinctions drawn between Greek and Persian ideology (e.g., Anderson 1972: 172, Goldhill 1988: 92-93, and Kantzios 2004: 15), but I see similarity within this scene to the uses of clothing within the *Odyssey* and tragedy as a marker of status.

φυγῇ, 470). The adjective ἄκοσμος brings to mind adornment and reinforces the way that physical appearance is reflective of one's standing and reputation. Moreover, the Messenger tells the Chorus directly: this is a misfortune *for you* to lament (σοι, 470). The Messenger suggests that the community has been damaged, even as they did not experience the war firsthand. People like the Chorus, who have been at home and who did not witness the failure in battle, will still see evidence of the disaster through Xerxes' clothing, a physical symbol of the lasting effects upon the community.

The *Odyssey* provides a precedent for the treatment of clothing as a marker of status and shows how regaining that status is a necessity of a successful homecoming. When Odysseus arrives on Scheria with no clothing, he has been stripped of his human roles of king and soldier. He is compared to an animal, a mountain-bred lion (ὥς τε λέων ὄρεσίτροφος, 6.130). His lack of clothing is evidence of the difficulties he has endured, being beaten by rain and wind (ὅς τ' εἶσ' ὕμενος καὶ ἀήμενος, 6.131), much like the army in *Persians* suffered upon their return to Persia. Odysseus' nakedness is a potential hindrance—he emerges *although* being naked (γυμνός περ ἐών, 6.136). Furthermore, his appearance is terrible to look upon, covered as he is with the salt of the sea, and the young women flee in fear at the sight of him (σμερδαλέος δ' αὐτῇσι φάνη κεκακωμένος ἄλμη, / τρέσσαν δ' ἄλλυδις ἄλλη ἐπ' ἠϊόνας προὔχουσας, 6.137-38). Without his clothing, Odysseus appears savage, not at all the intellectually shrewd and capable leader of men.

The ability of clothing to transform a human's status is further evident within the *Odyssey* when Odysseus explains to Telemachus his sudden change of appearance at the hands of Athena after his arrival on Ithaca (16.208-12):

ἦ τέ με τοῖον ἔθηκεν ὅπως ἐθέλει, δύναται γάρ,
 ἄλλοτε μὲν πτωχῷ ἐναλίγκιον, ἄλλοτε δ' αὖτε
 ἀνδρὶ νέῳ καὶ καλὰ περὶ χροὶ εἵματ' ἔχοντι. (210)
 ῥηϊδίον δὲ θεοῖσι, τοῖ σὺρανὸν εὐρὺν ἔχουσιν,

ἡμὲν κυδῆναι θνητὸν βροτὸν ἡδὲ κακῶσαι.

[Athena] makes me however she wants, for she is able, at one time similar to a beggar, at another time similar to a young man who has beautiful clothing around his skin. And it is easy for the gods who hold wide heaven both to glorify a mortal man and to ruin him.

Odysseus draws a direct connection between physical appearance, especially through clothing, and status. The gods can glorify a man through youth and beautiful clothing and can degrade him through the appearance of a beggar—both costumes that Odysseus adopts in the process of regaining his home and reintegrating into his former life. Significantly, Odysseus says that this power is divine and comes easily to the gods, suggesting that the ability of mere humans to truly affect their own status through clothing might have limits.

Clothing in the *Odyssey* is representative of status, but two recognition scenes demonstrate that a change in clothing is not enough for a complete restoration to one's former position. First, Eurycleia recognizes Odysseus by his scar when bathing his feet, not by any added accoutrements. It is a physical marker, an unchangeable part of Odysseus, that proves his identity. Eurycleia says herself that she did not recognize Odysseus until she had actually felt all of him (ἧ μάλ' Ὀδυσσεύς ἐσσι, φίλον τέκος· οὐδέ σ' ἐγώ γε / πρὶν ἔγνω, πρὶν πάντα ἄνακτ' ἐμὸν ἀμφαφάσθαι, 19.474-75). She calls Odysseus “dear child” (φίλον τέκος, 19.474) and “lord” (ἄνακτα, 19.475), showing both her familial closeness to Odysseus and her recognition of his status within the house. Block (1985) has argued that disguise and revelation form a process of recovering Odysseus' identity and that Odysseus' concealment is a necessary way of showing his real self.⁴⁹ For example, she states that Odysseus' homecoming is finished after he is bathed and dressed by Eurynome and his beauty is restored by Athena: “His *nostos* complete, Odysseus dons new clothing and his selfhood (Athene's mist of beauty) as one act...Only now that he is

⁴⁹ Block also provides an interesting discussion of clothing and disguise as a means of negotiating status between Odysseus and Eumaeus (1985: 4-8).

himself, newly and fitly covered as himself, can he be recognized by Penelope” (1985: 10). Nevertheless, even if Odysseus’ appearance is a helpful step toward his recognition by Penelope, his *nostos* is not actually complete. Their conversation about their shared bed (23.152-206), which Odysseus built himself and defends passionately, is a further and necessary step to Odysseus’ *nostos*. These are the signs that convince Penelope that Odysseus is indeed her husband (ὥς φάτο, τῆς δ’ αὐτοῦ λύτο γούνατα καὶ φίλον ἦτορ, / σήματ’ ἀναγνούση, τά οἱ ἔμπεδα πέφραδ’ Ὀδυσσεύς, 23.205-6). Thus the false trappings of clothing and the potential markers of status that it conveys are evidence of the difficulty of return—not simply the difficulty of arriving in one’s homeland, but also the difficulty of acquiring again one’s former status and position within the household and community.

In the “crossing from war” tragedies, we see these steps beyond recognition—the reintegration and restoration—fail. For example, the importance of clothing is paralleled in *Agamemnon* by the tapestry that Clytemnestra lays at Agamemnon’s feet when he arrives home. The luxurious fabric is a marker of status with its purple color (πορφυρόστρωτος πόρος, 910; ἀλουργέσιν, 946; πολλῆς πορφύρας, 959) and its associations with the gods. Clytemnestra emphasizes the expensive dye of the fabric—worth its weight in silver—and speaks of the cloth as a garment (τρέφουσα πολλῆς πορφύρας ἰσάργυρον / κηκίδα παγκαίνιστον, εἰμάτων βαφάς, 959-60). Agamemnon states that the path would invoke jealousy from other mortals (ἐπίφθονον πόρον, 921) and that it is fit for the gods (θεοὺς τοι τοῖσδε τιμαλφεῖν χρεών, 922; τοῖσδέ...θεῶν, 946). Moreover, both Clytemnestra and Agamemnon interpret walking upon the tapestry as a sign of kingly status and superiority. Clytemnestra asks what Priam would have done if he had accomplished what Agamemnon had, and Agamemnon responds that Priam would have walked upon the cloths (935-36). In addition, as he removes his sandals, Agamemnon calls them the

trodden slave of his feet (πρόδουλον ἔμβασιν ποδός, 945), suggesting his superior status as master to anything that he walks upon. By walking on the carpet, then, Agamemnon accepts a position as king, the ruler of his city with a luxurious status, but this status comes with a pitfall because of all that has taken place since he first made an attempt to sail from Argos to Troy. Acquiring his former status has now become dangerous because he is too prideful and unaware of the damage he has caused to his household. The trappings of a king cannot ensure Agamemnon's smooth reintegration and, in fact, even hinder it.

The situation in *Persians* presents similar conclusions to the *Odyssey* and *Agamemnon*: clothing is a possible step toward a complete homecoming, but it is also a marker of the difficulties, and perhaps impossibility, of a complete return to normalcy. We see how difficulties will persist for Xerxes even after his arrival in Persia because of his lost status. Darius places emphasis on Xerxes' torn clothing and the need for the Queen to restore him to his former self (832-36):

σὺ δ', ὦ γεραιὰ μητέρα ἢ Ξέρξου φίλη,
 ἐλθοῦς' ἐς οἴκους κόσμον ὅστις εὐπρεπῆς
 λαβοῦς' ὑπαντίαζε παιδί. πάντα γάρ
 κακῶν ὑπ' ἄλγους λακίδες ἀμφὶ σώματι (835)
 στημορραγοῦσι ποικίλων ἐσθημάτων.

And you, dear aged mother of Xerxes, having come to the house and having taken whatever adornment is fitting, meet your son. For because of his pain at these evils, all of his decorated clothes are torn to shreds around his body.

Once again, clothing is a marker of Xerxes' state in the aftermath of disaster, not a physical result of the disaster itself (κακῶν ὑπ' ἄλγους, 835). His decorated garments (ποικίλων ἐσθημάτων, 836) reveal his kingly status, and the rending of his clothing and the destruction of their former beauty is a visual sign of his debasement. That Darius sends the Queen to retrieve Xerxes fresh clothing, specifically addressing her as the "dear mother of Xerxes" (μητέρα ἢ

Ξέρξου φίλη, 832), demonstrates that Xerxes' homecoming is a familial matter.⁵⁰ His return is not just about military victory or defeat, but also about his absence from the home and reintegration into his family and community. This is also evident by the location of Xerxes' clothing—Darius instructs the Queen to go within the house to retrieve it (ἐλθοῦς' ἐς οἴκους, 833). Finally, Darius asks that the clothing be fitting for Xerxes (κόσμον ὅστις εὐπρεπής, 833), suggesting that Xerxes' current torn garments are not reflective of his identity and demonstrating his hope that this new clothing will restore Xerxes' former status. In his account of the Persians' flight from battle, the Messenger had used the phrase ἀκόσμῳ ξὺν φυγῇ (470) to describe the disordered fleet, immediately before he recounts Xerxes tearing his clothing. The repetition of the word κόσμος by Darius to refer to Xerxes' new clothing shows his hope that clothing can correct the previous disorder.

Notably, after Darius has presented the massive defeat of the Persians, their struggles returning home, and the ill-will of the gods toward them, the Queen responds most strongly toward Xerxes' torn clothes (845-51):

ὦ δαῖμον, ὥς με πόλλ' ἐσέρχεται κακά (845)
 ἄλγη, μάλιστα δ' ἥδε συμφορὰ δάκνει,
 ἀτιμίαν γε παιδὸς ἀμφὶ σώματι
 ἐσθημάτων κλυοῦσαν, ἣ νιν ἀμπέχει.
 ἀλλ' εἴμι, καὶ λαβοῦσα κόσμον ἐκ δόμων
 ὑπαντιάζειν ἔμῳ παιδὶ πειράσομαι· (850)
 οὐ γὰρ τὰ φίλτατ' ἐν κακοῖς προδώσομεν.

Oh god, how many evil pains have come upon me, and most of all this misfortune stings me, to hear the disgrace of the clothing around my son's body that surrounds him. But I will go, and having taken the adornment from the house, I will try to meet my son. For I will not betray the dearest things amidst bad times.

The Queen says that this misfortune, most of all, stings her (μάλιστα δ' ἥδε συμφορὰ δάκνει, 846), providing again the perspective of a mother and her differing concerns from others like

⁵⁰ Cf. *Odyssey*, in which women are the ones who consistently provide clothing for Odysseus. Block (1985: 10-11) catalogues the various instances of female figures clothing Odysseus.

Darius. The realm of clothing and the home is her place of authority. Xerxes is disgraced (ἀτιμία, 847) by his torn clothing, showing the power of clothing as a visual symbol of status. In addition, the Queen uses language similar to Darius' as she says she will go to get clothing from the house (λαβοῦσα κόσμον ἐκ δόμων, 849). Xerxes' clothing offers the potential for his status as king to be restored, but through the end of the play, the Queen never returns and Xerxes never changes his clothes.⁵¹ There is no god, as there was in the *Odyssey*, to provide him with a new appearance, and he remains in the fully human realm. The Queen's efforts, at least within *Persians*, are in vain, and Xerxes' homecoming is never complete.⁵²

Darius' return to the underworld and the message he has left for the Queen and Chorus prepare the audience for Xerxes' entrance. Xerxes arrives at last within the final 200 lines of the play, but his physical presence in Persia is still not enough to achieve a happy reunion and homecoming. The first lines that we hear the king speak as he steps foot on his homeland are a lament (908-17):

ἰώ,
 δύστηνος ἐγὼ στυγερᾶς μοίρας (910)
 τῆσδε κυρήσας ἀτεκμαρτοτάτης,
 ὥς ὠμοφρόνως δαίμων ἐνέβη
 Περσῶν γενεᾷ: τί πάθω τλήμων;
 λέλυται γὰρ ἐμοὶ γυίων ῥώμη
 τήνδ' ἡλικίαν ἐσιδόντ' ἀστῶν. (915)
 εἴθ' ὄφελεν, Ζεῦ, κάμει μετ' ἀνδρῶν
 τῶν οἰχομένων
 θανάτου κατὰ μοῖρα καλύψαι.

Oh, I am wretched, having met this hateful and most obscure fate, that savage-minded fortune has stepped upon the Persian race. What should I suffer, steadfast? For my strength has been loosened from my limbs as I look upon the

⁵¹ Yoon (2012: 121-29) suggests that the Queen is unnamed to draw focus to Xerxes not to Persian grief, especially because she does not appear in the final scene. I argue the opposite—the Queen's absence in the final scene allows the common grief between Xerxes and the Chorus to emerge.

⁵² Avery (1964: 182-84) argues that Xerxes does put on new clothes in line 1038, but most scholars are in agreement that the king remains in rags through the end of the play.

old age of these citizens. Zeus, I wish that the fate of death had covered me up along with the men who are gone.⁵³

We might compare Xerxes' words to Odysseus' anguished cry while in the midst of a storm, along with his reaction to his safe landing on Scheria. Odysseus struggles to survive against the harsh winds and fierce waves that eventually shatter his raft, as well as the menacing coastline. Early in the storm, he puts up a cry that reveals a certain conception of death similar to one Telemachus had expressed when he feared his father had died at sea (*Od.* 5.307-13, cf. 1.231-51):

τρίς μάκαρες Δαναοὶ καὶ τετράκις, οἳ τότε ὄλοντο
 Τροίῃ ἐν εὐρείῃ χάριν Ἀτρεΐδῃσι φέροντες.
 ὥς δὴ ἐγὼ γ' ὄφελον θανέειν καὶ πότμον ἐπισπεῖν
 ἥματι τῷ ὅτε μοι πλεῖστοι χαλκήρεα δοῦρα (310)
 Τρῶες ἐπέρριψαν περὶ Πηλεΐωνι θανόντι.
 τῷ κ' ἔλαχον κτερέων, καὶ μεν κλέος ἦγον Ἀχαιοί:
 νῦν δέ λευγαλέῳ θανάτῳ εἴμαρτο ἀλῶναι.

Three and four times blessed are the Greeks who died then in wide Troy, bringing favor to the Atreidae. Thus I indeed wish I died and encountered my fate on that day when the most Trojans threw their bronze spears at me around the dead son of Peleus. And in this way I would have obtained funeral honors and the Achaeans would keep in their memory my glory: but now I am destined to be taken by a wretched death.

Odysseus separates the experience of war from that of return. He believes that death in the midst of fighting at war makes one blessed (μάκαρες, 5.307) and brings favor (χάριν, 5.308) and glory (κλέος, 5.312), whereas death at sea is wretched (λευγαλέῳ, 5.313) and lacks such honors. Yet Odysseus does not die in the storm but is able to reach land safely. The contrast between sea and land is evident when Odysseus arrives on Scheria and kisses the ground (κύσε δὲ ζεῖδωρον ἄρουραν, 5.463). Though he is still afraid of what people or animals he will find there, Odysseus

⁵³ Xerxes refers to his fate as ἀτεκμαρτοτάτης, or “without a mark or sign,” ironic given that Darius has just provided the oracles that were fulfilled by this fate. The discrepancy reveals the difference in perspective between the two parties and Xerxes' ignorance of any transgression.

rejoices (γῆθησε, 5.486) in finding a place sheltered from the sun and rain. He has physically arrived and begins his restoration.

Like Odysseus, Xerxes wishes to have died along with his companions, yet Xerxes' situation is significantly different from Odysseus'. First, Xerxes has actually attained what Odysseus is trying to achieve—he has arrived in his homeland and is not in the midst of a threat as Odysseus is. Xerxes' desire to have died, therefore, does not pit death in battle against death at sea, but rather any sort of death versus survival. The phrase ἀνδρῶν / τῶν οἰχομένων (916-17) might very well refer to the men who died from the elements on their return journey, not just those who had died in combat.⁵⁴ Furthermore, Xerxes makes no claims of glory for those who had died. His statement, instead, launches a series of back-and-forth cries of mourning between himself and the Chorus. Xerxes specifically names the age of the Chorus as the cause of his suffering (τήνδ' ἡλικίαν, 915), another reminder of the young people who died abroad while the old survived at home. Although he has reached Persia safely, Xerxes only mourns his losses, unlike Odysseus, who cherishes his own survival.

At this point in the *Odyssey*, Odysseus is the only man left alive from his crew, and it makes sense for the narrative to focus on his survival. Even so, his heroic qualities are especially emphasized, while Xerxes' are diminished in favor of mourning those who did not survive. The divine help that Odysseus receives during the storm signifies his heroic status: Leucothea provides him her veil and advice (5.333-53) and Athena restrains the storm winds (5.382-87). Once the storm has calmed, Athena saves Odysseus from being crushed on the rocks or dying in the waves before he can safely come ashore (5.426-27; 5.436-37). Thus, the storm before Scheria begins a pattern seen frequently in the *Odyssey* in which the hero experiences grave danger but is able to survive and reach safety due to skillful heroism and divine favor.

⁵⁴ Another example of οἶχομαι connecting departure to permanent loss.

In *Persians*, on the other hand, Xerxes' survival serves merely as a point of contrast with the masses of men lost. The Chorus' greeting for Xerxes' homecoming is not a welcoming cheer but an ill-omened shout (πρόσφθογγόν σοι νόστου τὰν / κακοφάτιδα βοάν, 935-36), the cry of a mourner (θρηνητήρος, 938) that is full of tears (πολύδακρυον, 940). Interspersed with their cries of woe, the Chorus go on to ask repeatedly about the other men who have not returned, listing them individually by name and showing their concern for those beyond Xerxes (956-61, 967-73, 978-87, 993-1001). Xerxes himself is not a hero because of his survival, like Odysseus is, but instead the source of blame for the misfortunes of an entire people—the Chorus call Xerxes the “packer of Hades” who has filled the underworld with Persian youth who were killed for his sake (ἦβαν Ξέρξα καταμέναν Ἄιδου / σάκτορι Περσῶν, 923-24) and Xerxes does not deny it, claiming he was born as an evil to his race and fatherland (γέννα γὰρ τε πατρώα / κακὸν ἄρ' ἐγενόμαν, 933-34).⁵⁵ The pattern set up in the *Odyssey*, in which the hero's return is the principal concern, is rejected in *Persians*. Here, even with the survival of the hero, the dozens, indeed the countless number (μυρία μυρία, 980), of other men take precedence.

In this homecoming play, we have seen instead a focus on departure and the dangers that come with this departure for the men who go to war. I turn now to the effect of that loss on the homeland. *Persians* presents the land itself as experiencing an irrecoverable loss, demonstrated by the death of men being equated to the death of an entire city or country and by the land itself experiencing grief. The very existence of the homeland is put at risk when her people depart, and *Persians* emphasizes the death of the city, society, and whole land. We see the Persian cities and earth mourn multiple times throughout the rest of the play, in many cases highlighting the youth of the men who are lost and, thus, the unnatural tearing apart of the society. For example, after

⁵⁵ Cf. *Iliad* 1.1-4: μῆνιν ἄειδε θεὰ Πηληϊάδεω Ἀχιλῆος / οὐλομένην, ἣ μυρὶ Ἀχαιοῖς ἄλγε' ἔθηκε, / **πολλὰς δ' ἰφθίμους ψυχὰς Ἄϊδι προΐαψεν** / ἡρώων. Unlike Xerxes, however, Achilles does not return home to deal with the potential aftermath of these deaths.

the Messenger recalls the many deaths suffered on the flight back to Persia, he states that this misery caused the Persian city to groan (ὥς στένειν πόλιν / Περσῶν, 511-12) and yearn for the land's dearest youth (ποθοῦσαν φιλτάτην ἥβην χθονός, 512). The city is personified as a mourner. Additionally, the lost men had belonged to the land, further emphasizing the extent of loss—it affects the earth itself.

The permanent effects of war are also seen when the land is physically changed. For example, the Chorus states that bloody, sea-washed Salamis holds the Persians (αἶμαχθεῖσα δ' ἄρουραν / Αἴαντος περικλύστα / νῆσος ἔχει τὰ Περσῶν, 495-97). By referring to Salamis as the island of Ajax, the Chorus again places the recent war within a Homeric context. Furthermore, the neuter τὰ Περσῶν suggests both the corpses now held by the foreign land as well as the entirety of the Persian society now lost. Much like the Greeks buried in the Trojan land away from home in *Agamemnon*, the Persians here are permanently broken and separated. Another example of the effects of war on the land takes place right in Persia, when Darius describes how the Persian land groans, has been struck, and is scratched (στένει κέκοπται καὶ χαράσσεται πέδον, 683). Garvie (2009: *ad loc.*) suggests that this is a result of the required procedure to reach the underworld and raise the dead. I believe, however, that the effects on the land, stated from the perspective of the land, are a direct reflection of the mourning that the Chorus would be doing—groaning, beating their breast, and scratching themselves.

Near the end of the play, in their exchange with Xerxes, the Chorus once again repeatedly refer to the mourning land.⁵⁶ First, they shout that the land bewails its native youth (γαῖα δ' αἰάζει τὰν ἐγγαίαν / ἥβαν, 922-23), showing the land as an active mourner. In this phrase, the word ἐγγαίαν, with its root in γαῖα, conveys just how deeply these native youth are connected to their

⁵⁶ Although Nooter (2017: 115-21) argues that Xerxes reclaims authority of the Chorus through voice at the end of the play, I see more commonality between their expressions and the persistence of brokenness that has not yet been healed.

land, while the word ἥβαν again shows the unnatural loss of youths before their time, especially as the Chorus go on to call those who were killed the “flower of the land” (χώρας ἄνθος, 925). They then say to Xerxes that the land of Asia has been brought to her knees (Ἀσία δὲ χθών, βασιλεῦ γαίας, αἰνῶς αἰνῶς ἐπὶ γόνυ κέκλιται, 929-30). In addition to being a sign of submission (Garvie 2009: *ad loc*), this depiction also further personifies the country of Asia, demonstrating how the departure of men for war has broken the land itself. Furthermore, by addressing Xerxes as the king of the land (βασιλεῦ γαίας, 929), the Chorus continue to reinforce the close ties between people and their lands. Later, the Chorus call their city a πενθητήρ (946), a mourner, and they again create a close relationship between people and place by identifying the city as the “city of their birth” (πόλεως γέννας, 946). Whereas the Chorus of old Persians are alive in their native city, the youths are absent, drawing painful attention to their premature deaths. Moreover, although Xerxes and the Chorus are mourning together, the separation between the two is evident in the way they address the land. When Xerxes tells the Chorus to tread lightly on the earth (γοᾶσθ’ ἄβροβάται, 1073), the Chorus reply that the Persian earth is difficult to tread on (Περσὶς αἶα δύσβατος, 1074), showing the deep effects of the war on the homeland.⁵⁷

The damage done when Xerxes and his men depart for war cannot be fixed upon his return. Broken relationships continue, even when the physical separation appears healed. As the Queen and Chorus prepare for Xerxes’ arrival and even once Xerxes steps foot on Persian land, it is clear that a permanent change has happened due to the war. The conversation between the Queen, Chorus, and Darius demonstrates the more limited perspective of humans and their susceptibility to loss. Whereas the raised specter of Darius proposes a divine scheme of punishment in which Xerxes earns his fleet’s destruction, to the humans still alive in Persia, the

⁵⁷ Garvie (2009: *ad loc.*) argues that the Chorus is explicitly correcting Xerxes’ language because of the suffering the land has endured.

damage appears indiscriminate, much like the destruction of the Greek fleet in the Herald's account in *Agamemnon*. In addition, the actual appearance of Xerxes contrasts greatly with Odysseus' survival since Xerxes is consumed with mourning for his losses. Xerxes suggests that he did not earn his own safety, and the multitude of men who died consistently outweighs Xerxes' own survival. This damage is further evident in the way the Messenger, Darius, and the Chorus speak about the land of Persia, personifying it and demonstrating that the destruction is so great that it affects the land itself. The rupture between men and their homes caused by war is manifested in both their physical separation and their broken relationships.

Conclusion

In one respect, *Persians* is an account of Xerxes' return from war, in disgrace and the exact opposite of a heroic Greek commander. In other ways, however, *Persians* is the story of an entire community being torn apart by war. In both respects, *Persians* contrasts with the *Odyssey*, in which a single figure Odysseus earns his homecoming through strength, cleverness, and respect for the gods. The play shows, instead, a figure whose homecoming is entirely undeserved and emphasizes the countless numbers of people whose lives have been destroyed. In doing so, *Persians* parallels the themes in *Agamemnon*, presenting the separation from one's homeland to go to war as a permanent departure that, in turn, damages typical societal relationships. Within *Persians*, this universal destruction is particularly highlighted through a focus on the rupture between home and abroad and the imagery of the environment that surrounds the characters. This includes the continuous ties made between people and their cities and nations, seen through catalogues of soldiers who departed for war and through personification of the landscape as a member of the community. It also includes imagery of the earth, sea, and natural environment, such as the soldiers fighting against the waves and sun that impose themselves equally upon all,

or the heaping of corpses upon the sea and its banks, or the blossoming youths and withering old men. All these images highlight the destructive power of war.

Both *Agamemnon* and *Persians* provide the perspective of families at home and abroad, but they are looking at wars that take place far from home. We will see in the next chapter how these themes persist in a different “crossing from war” tragedy, *Trojan Women*, where war and home are in the same place.

CHAPTER THREE

THE CAPTURED WOMEN'S DISPLACEMENT IN EURIPIDES' *TROJAN WOMEN*

Introduction

I have examined two stories of homecoming: the homecoming of a victorious Greek king in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* and that of a defeated Persian king in his *Persians*. In each case, the warriors physically arrive home but neither they nor those who remained can restore their former lives. To fully consider the impact of war on families and communities from multiple perspectives, I turn now to Euripides' *Trojan Women*. This third play takes place during the period of transition out of war, paralleling temporally the setting of *Agamemnon* and *Persians*, but it reveals the other side of the aftermath of war. *Agamemnon* and *Persians* are filled with reflections on the departure of an army and the anticipation and ultimate fulfillment of a leader's return. On the other hand, in Euripides' *Trojan Women*, the characters reflect upon the arrival of an army. Instead of men returning home, the arriving army is hostile and Euripides presents women forced to abandon their homes after the war. Although taking a different perspective—particularly that of the suffering of women—the play similarly reveals the destructive power of war upon a community and the impossibility of recovering former life at home once a community has undertaken war. This play completes the picture of the two primary groups affected by war—soldiers and families, both at home and at war. Furthermore, like *Agamemnon* and *Persians*, *Trojan Women* portrays how war is not solely a matter of individual heroes and their immediate relations; it also encompasses and threatens whole communities.

Many have viewed *Trojan Women* with regard to its political relevance. Staged in 415 BCE, shortly after Athens' extermination and enslavement of the Melians and while the Athenians prepared to launch their Sicilian expedition, the play is often considered a

commentary on Athenian ideology and wartime actions. Some, like Dover (2001) and Sidwell (2001) suggest that no connection to contemporary events would be felt by the Athenian audience, with Sidwell suggesting that the portrayal of Athens is positive within the play. Others acknowledge a connection but shift the focus away from any direct political message. For example, Poole (1976) suggests that *Trojan Women* is about how humans react to catastrophe not a commentary on specific political events, and Green (1999) argues that the play is not about the morality of the Melian affair but about justifications in terms of success and failure. Rabinowitz (2017) recognizes both positive and negative portrayals of Athens within the play, claiming that the portrayal of war is complicated and no single message emerges. Likewise, Garvie (2001) argues that although Melos would have been in the mind of the audience and audience members would have felt sympathy for the suffering of the Trojan women, the play does not have a clear supportive or subversive message toward the action. He states that “it is a play that could have been written at any time” (2001: 60).

Still yet others view the play as a direct commentary on the specific events within the Peloponnesian War or Athenian politics more broadly. Some scholars are quite direct: Raaflaub (2014) argues that *Trojan Women* presents “indictments of the war based on its excessively cruel impact on the noncombatant population” (21), and Suter (2003) suggests that the lament within the play is a lament for Athens because the city risks destruction on its future Sicilian campaign. Croally (1994) views *Trojan Women* as a didactic play on the material effects and ideological consequences of war for the Athenians. While arguing that these larger structures of the Athenian empire are critiqued within the play, Croally also suggests that Euripides “examines the didactic function itself” so that the audience is in the role of the questioner (254). Following Croally, Dué (2006), in her examination of the captive woman’s lament, claims that lament is

used to explore and challenge Athenian wartime ideologies, though not to the extent of an anti-war protest. She suggests that the Athenians are “implicated” in the suffering of the Trojan Women, and therefore the suffering of the defeated in their current war, but not “outright condemned” for their actions at war (150). I follow the scholars who argue for a more complicated relationship between the play and Athenian politics, rather than a one-to-one correspondence. I believe that the Athenian audience would have felt compassion for the Trojan women on stage and would have connected the play to their current circumstances, more through an examination of the effects of war more generally upon themselves and others than through a direct condemnation of current policies, since the play reflects the realities of life.

Another major theme within the play is the role of women. In *Trojan Women*, Euripides displays the suffering of the defeated Trojans through the voices of their women. While women such as the Persian Queen and Clytemnestra do play major roles in the plays by Aeschylus, Euripides shifts the focus even more strongly from the men of war to the women. The role of women within tragedy, and especially within the Trojan War dramas, has received much attention in scholarship. Rabinowitz (1993) argues that tragic women reinforce gender hierarchies through their sacrificial and vindictive roles, and Zeitlin (1985) suggests that the feminine is abundantly present in tragedy as a means to explore masculinity and male identity. Rabinowitz and others have examined more specifically the intersection between women and war within Greek life and within tragedy more broadly and *Trojan Women* in particular. Loman (2004) suggests that Greek women, even in Classical times, had more roles in defense and on campaign than are typically recognized, and O’Gorman (2006) resists even further the tendency for scholars to place women in the margins of war and outside the sphere of combat. She shows that in literature like *Trojan Women* women become complicit in a scheme in which war is “for”

and “because of” women. Rabinowitz (in Konstan and Meineck, 2014) explores how women in tragedy are not simply “collateral damage” but rather “used to represent all phases of military action” (201) and that there is a connection between war and the normalizing of extreme behavior like violence against women. Like other essays in that volume, Rabinowitz uses her discussion as evidence for how to approach the modern world, specifically that we ought to question the normalized violent actions against women that still occur today during war.

Zaidman’s chapter in Fabre-Serris and Keith’s edited volume *Women & War in Antiquity* (2015) reveals the extent to which our dichotomy of feminine and masculine in the context of war may be false, though she is looking at the Theban plays rather than those concerning the Trojan War. Finally, Scodel (1998) looks particularly at the problem that women face in the aftermath of war as they feel loyalty to their past families while they recognize that loyalty and acquiescence to their captives is necessary for their future survival.

Women, therefore, are essential to understanding the impact and experience of war in the “crossing from war” plays. Although specific characters in *Trojan Women* speak about their own losses—such as Hecuba on the loss of her son Hector and daughter Polyxena—there is a sense of shared mourning among the Trojan women. Unlike the Greek women, the Trojan women have been witnesses to war and have seen with their own eyes the destruction of their city and the deaths of their husbands and sons. The way that the entire city is affected and the firsthand accounts make *Trojan Women* a vivid depiction of the devastating effects of war, showing the worst possible outcome and expressing what would be the deepest fears of the Athenian audience for their own families. Most obviously, the play is the story of women being stripped from their homes, a clear manifestation of the power of war to harm a community. *Trojan Women* reveals particularly how families are destroyed by war and, interestingly, not just the families of the

named heroes or those of the losing side. The suffering of the Trojan women would evoke pity even from an audience of Greeks. Furthermore, *Trojan Women* shares parallels with the plays discussed in the first two chapters, particularly in its focus on parents grieving for children. In *Trojan Women* this is taken to the extreme. The death of Astyanax, a baby nowhere near fighting age, shows the extent of war's destruction. Finally, like *Agamemnon* and *Persians*, this play presents the death of men at war as the death of the entire city. *Trojan Women* thus evokes pity for the captive women whose husbands and sons have died, revealing the capacity of war to tear apart families and communities.

The previous two chapters were organized by the same principles: I. The View from Home, II. The View from Abroad, and III. Homecoming: The Collision of Home and Abroad. Offering new perspectives on similar themes, *Trojan Women* is less suited to that organization. Since the setting Troy is the site of both home and war for the main characters, we see both perspectives—home and abroad—colliding throughout the course of the play. Therefore, I have chosen to highlight recurring themes through a different, complementary structure. First, mirroring the focus on departure in *Agamemnon* and *Persians*, I look at how characters in *Trojan Women* view the arrival of the Greek troops at Troy and their invasion into the city. Next, in contrast to the soldiers returning to their homes after war within the two plays discussed earlier, I examine the forced removal of the Trojan women from their homes after war. Finally, I expand upon earlier discussions of youth, demonstrating how the death of young people at war is portrayed in *Trojan Women* as the death of an entire people and the destruction of any future society. Chapter Three is thus organized in terms of past, present, and future.

The Past: Arrival and Transgression

In *Agamemnon* and *Persians*, we see characters reflect upon the departure of the army as they await the army's homecoming. In doing so, characters express a fear that the army have transgressed in their actions. For example, in *Agamemnon*, Clytemnestra voices the fear that the Greek men will overstep their place as victors by not worshipping the gods and by destroying religious places (338-44). Likewise, the Herald recalls the destruction of altars and temples by the Greeks (527) and frames Agamemnon's victory as a yoke thrown around Troy (529). In addition, the Chorus of *Agamemnon* speak negatively about the daring of Agamemnon to sacrifice Iphigenia in order to enable the Greeks' departure (224-25) and the daring of Helen to enter Troy (408). In *Persians*, departure for war is similarly framed as a transgression, particularly by Darius, who scorns Xerxes' yoking of the Hellespont as a hubristic offense against the gods (739-52) and recommends never leading an army into Greek land again (790-92). He describes similar sacrilege to the Greeks at Troy as he recalls the Persians' defiling of religious places in the Greek land (809-12). These plays focus especially upon the departure of an army into foreign territory, and they provide the perspective of those family members who wait at home or the soldiers who participate in the invasions. In *Trojan Women*, however, the Trojans have not sent their men far away to war but have instead experienced the arrival of a foreign army into their own territory. Nevertheless, the idea of movement—the connection between arrival and departure—is found in *Trojan Women* as well, only in reverse. The action of war in another's land is again tied to the transgression of boundaries.

The play begins immediately after the capture of Troy with a prologue from Poseidon, who laments the sacrilege happening at Troy and begins to plot retribution with Athena.⁵⁸ Poseidon describes the walls of the city that he himself built and the wooden horse built by the Greeks that enters through them (4-14), emphasizing the boundary that has been crossed. His description of the horse as both pregnant (ἐγκύμον', 11) and deadly (ὀλέθριον, 12) draws attention to the way this object fertile with men will paradoxically cause the deaths of so many.⁵⁹ Though it is expected for women to birth fighters, the men who die are taken unnaturally before their time. Moreover, Poseidon gives particular attention to the sacking of religious sites in the city, emphasizing the transgressive nature of the Greeks' victory. For example, the sacred groves are now desolate (ἔρημα δ' ἄλση, 15) and the temples of the gods are flowing with blood (θεῶν ἀνάκτορα / φόνωι καταρρεῖ, 15-16). Poseidon mentions specifically acts only alluded to by Clytemnestra in *Agamemnon*, including the slaughter of Priam on the altar of Zeus Herkeios, called the protector of the household, demonstrating the magnitude of the offense (17; cf. *A.* 338-42).

Furthermore, it is not just the actions of the Greeks within Troy but also the lasting effects of them that harm the gods. Poseidon relates that he must leave behind his own altars and city, since once a city is deserted, the gods fall sick and lack worship (25-27). He shows how the war has wide-ranging effects upon the workings of society and the universe. The theme of abandonment and desolation persists throughout the play and is introduced by the abandonment of Troy by the gods in the prologue (Poole 1976).⁶⁰ Finally, Poseidon suggests that

⁵⁸ Suter (2003: 6-7) shows how Poseidon's prologue is, indeed, a lament because it contains a contrast between then and now, a list of the dead, an address to the dead, and the arrangement of punishment. She suggests that lament is the main organizing principle of the entire play.

⁵⁹ Greek text follows Kovacs (2018). All translations are my own.

⁶⁰ Poole specifically highlights the word ἐρημία (26) as a marker of "a place or state or relationship that *was* once full, rich, substantial, informed by presence, and that is now empty,

Agamemnon's claim to Cassandra fails to consider the gods and all that is holy (τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ τε παραλιπὼν τό τ' εὐσεβέες, 43) and that he leads her by force (γαμῆ βιαίως, 44) to a secret bed (σκότιον...λέχος, 44), not a true marriage. Poseidon's prologue demonstrates transgression from the perspective of someone whose property has been breached—a new viewpoint from those in *Agamemnon* and *Persians*.

It becomes even clearer that the Greeks have done wrong when Poseidon and Athena discuss proper retribution for the crimes, and the gods' punishment conveys the theme from *Agamemnon* and *Persians* of the permanent, widespread effects of war. Whereas Poseidon had always been on the side of the Trojans, Athena had previously supported the Greeks and her change of heart requires explanation. She confirms for Poseidon that she has come to him as an ally to gladden the Trojans, her former enemy, and that she wishes to make a bitter homecoming for the Greek army (τοὺς μὲν πρὶν ἐχθροὺς Τρῶας εὐφρᾶναι θέλω, / στρατῶι δ' Ἀχαιῶν νόστον ἐμβαλεῖν πικρόν, 65-66). As she is thinking about the Greeks' arrival at Troy, so is she thinking about their departure, the same association that is made in *Agamemnon* and *Persians*, but in reverse. Athena is outraged at the actions of the Greeks against the gods, once again involving Cassandra (69-71):

Αθ: οὐ οἶσθ' ὕβρισθεῖσάν με καὶ ναοὺς ἐμούς;
 Πο: οἶδ'· ἥνίκ' Αἴας εἴλκε Κασσάνδραν βίαι. (70)
 Αθ: κοῦ δεῖν' Ἀχαιῶν ἔπαθεν οὐδ' ἤκουσ' ὕπο.

Athena: Don't you know that they violated me and my temple?
 Poseidon: I know, when Ajax dragged Cassandra by force.
 Athena: And he neither suffered terrible things from the Achaeans nor heard anything from them.

Athena is upset not just at Ajax's rape of Cassandra but also at all the other Greeks, who did not stop him or punish him. There is no hero that stands apart as in the *Odyssey*. Instead, they are all

hollow, drained, inhabited only by absence" (1976: 265). The absence of what used to be there is still felt, perhaps like the empty beds in *Agamemnon* 411 and *Persians* 537-45.

complicit, and any individual's action within war is framed as a communal effort of the army and, thus, has communal effects.

These transgressions of the Greeks are not invented by Euripides. In *Agamemnon*, Clytemnestra alludes to the murder of Priam and rape of Cassandra when she expresses the wish that the Greeks worship the gods and not overstep their place by destroying more than necessary (338-42). Just as Clytemnestra states that even after the sack of the city, the Greek army must still run the other leg of the race to achieve homecoming (*A.* 344), so does Athena in *Trojan Women* recognize that the sack of Troy is only half the battle as she and Poseidon plot destruction for the Greek fleet. Moreover, Athena provides a new perspective from Clytemnestra that is more personal and forceful. She is a witness to the transgressions and her own territory has been violated. The focus on the named character Cassandra deepens the offense by showing the humanity of the other side. Nevertheless, these personal perspectives can only go so far. As Mastronarde (2010: 78 and 179) notes, the Trojan women cannot get comfort from the promise of vengeance, despite Athena's wish to gladden the Trojans (Τρῶας εὐφρᾶναι θέλω, 65), and only the Athenian audience is able to appreciate what is to come, further demonstrating the abandonment of the women.

When Athena and Poseidon hash out the details of their punishment, their plan follows a pattern similar to the homecoming disasters we saw in *Agamemnon* and *Persians*: they emphasize the mass casualties due to storms at sea and the physical distances traveled. Athena, for example, expects from Zeus rainstorms and hail (ὄμβρον καὶ χάλαζαν, 78), blasts of wind (αἰθέρος φυσήματα, 79), and thunderbolts to throw at the Greeks and to light their ships aflame (πῦρ κεραύνιον, / βάλλειν Ἀχαιοὺς ναῦς τε πιμπράναι πυρί, 80-81). She assigns to Poseidon to make the sea roar with trifold waves and whirlpools (τρικυμίαις βρέμοντα καὶ δίναις ἄλός, 83).

Though she has identified one man, Ajax, as the root of her suffering, Athena wishes for Poseidon to fill the hollow Euboean gulf full of corpses (πλήσον δὲ νεκρῶν κοῖλον Εὐβοίας μυχόν, 84). All of the Greeks are susceptible to her punishment, and she does not distinguish between individual actors.

The image of corpses crowding the banks of Euboea in perpetuity is similar to three dehumanizing depictions of death in *Agamemnon* and *Persians*: the Herald's depiction of corpses and ship timbers together blossoming over the sea (*A.* 658-60), the Messenger's account of bodies littering the sea at Salamis (*Pers.* 419-24), and Darius' description of the heaps of corpses at Plataea that will be visible three generations hence as a warning against hubris (*Pers.* 816-22).⁶¹ These examples demonstrate the extent of damage caused by battle and return, as well as the universal destruction of the armies after men have been indiscriminately killed. In all three cases, the bodies are no longer men but part of the landscape viewed by an outside party. There is no possibility of homecoming for the men nor any chance of recovery for their families and communities, who will always bear witness to their fates. In *Trojan Women*, Poseidon reinforces this point as he lists the various shores that will bear the bodies of dead men: Mykonos, Delos, Skyros, Lemnos, and Capherea (89-91). Though the people remain nameless, Poseidon's naming of territories highlights the distances crossed and, thus, the permanent separation of the army from their homelands. Athena states that this punishment will be a sign for the Greeks to respect

⁶¹ Xanthaki-Karamanou (2010) argues that *Persians* and *Trojan Women* share the same moral of punishment for hubris but in reverse. According to Xanthaki-Karamanou, the differing historical circumstances lead this moral to be demonstrated in *Persians* by punishment for the defeated and in *Trojan Women* as punishment for the victors. I believe the plays do not have such a straightforward moral, but do have commonalities between them.

her temples and worship the other gods in the future (τὸ λοιπόν, 85), showing the lasting effects of this destruction and the potential permanent influence on the society.⁶²

Poseidon's prologue and the subsequent conversation between him and Athena reverse the perspective of *Agamemnon* and *Persians*. Whereas characters in the two plays discussed earlier are at home and reflect upon the departure of their men and are eager for their return, the two gods in *Trojan Women* instead reflect upon the arrival of an army and their entrance into Troy, then turn to anticipation of the Greeks' departure, their future attempt and failure to return home. The themes of distance and possible permanent separation from one's homeland are apparent, but through a different lens—that of the women who must leave their home after invasion. This new perspective is especially present through Poseidon's emphasis on the suffering of the women rather than on the men who have been killed. In addition to Cassandra, Poseidon remarks specifically on Helen, Hecuba, and Polyxena and grieves the many other women held captive. These women, who have already lost husbands and sons to the fighting, are now to lose their homes as well. Having lamented the desolate state of the altars and temples in the city, Poseidon lists the places the women will be forced to travel as slaves to new masters—to Arcadia, Thessaly, or Athens (30-31). Just as the cities of Argos and Susa become empty of men when their armies depart for war (cf. *A.* 408-14, *Pers.* 115-19), now Troy becomes empty even of women as they are taken to locations across the Greek world. Women who have not yet been assigned a master wait in the tents for the same fate.

The stripping of women from their homes underscores the unacceptable crossing of boundaries, especially when Poseidon emphasizes the suffering of the women who witnessed the

⁶² Dunn (1993) argues for the finality of this scene, despite being the prologue. He shows how the prologue contains features of an epilogue—such as a *deus ex machina*, a prophecy, an *aition*, and an exit—and therefore gives no possibility for movement or change during the play itself, creating a sense of hopelessness surrounding the women. This finality is another demonstration of the permanent effects of the war.

destruction of their city. Although he says Helen has rightfully been taken captive (αἰχμάλωτος ἐνδίκως, 35), Poseidon does not view the Trojan women similarly. He says that Hecuba is crying many tears over many people (δάκρυα χέουσα πολλὰ καὶ πολλῶν ὕπερ, 38), using words that express multitude, similar words to those used by characters in *Agamemnon* and *Persians*. For example, the Herald of *Agamemnon* recalls the many men who were driven from many homes as sacrifices for war (πολλοὺς δὲ πολλῶν / ἐξαγισθέντας δόμων, 641-42), and the Chorus in *Persians* says that every Asian-born man has gone to war (12), while the Messenger could not tell the story of how many men died at Salamis even in ten days (419-32). Within these plays, the language that expresses multitude shows how great a disaster has befallen each society, but especially the extent of the suffering across the population. In *Agamemnon* and *Persians*, we see the grief over lost men, and in *Trojan Women*, we see the reactions of the women who have lost entire families from their own homes.⁶³ In addition, Poseidon says that Polyxena was killed secretly and miserably (λάθραι...τλημόνως, 40) at Achilles' tomb, showing both the gruesome treatment she received as well as the pain it causes her family.

Though he had some stake in the action at Troy, Poseidon is an outside observer of the war compared to the men and women on the ground. The Chorus serves a unifying role within *Trojan Women* by providing their personal experiences and by encompassing the experience of both young and old women within the play (Sienkewicz 1978). Their later account of the same sack of Troy, with their personal perspective, intensifies the themes that Poseidon has introduced. Like Poseidon, the Chorus emphasize the ritual places that are defiled by the Greeks, reinforcing the

⁶³ In her analysis of the language of andrapodizing in Greek historical memory, Gaca (2010) shows how what is often termed “enslavement” does not capture the essence of what happened to women and children in the Greek world after their city was conquered. She shows that despite “more restrained and decorous” words used to describe the process (like Poseidon’s αἰχμαλωτῖδων in line 28), the andrapodizing of captives would have involved significant violence against the whole population and the traumatic separation of loved ones (134).

sacrilegious nature of the Greeks' victory. They describe the wooden horse being dragged like a ship into the temple of Athena (538-41) and the murder of Trojans on the altars (σφαγαὶ δ' ἀμφιβώμιοι / Φρυγῶν, 562-63). Nevertheless, the Chorus focus not on the actions of the soldiers who emerge from the horse, but rather on the reactions of the inhabitants of Troy—women, children, and the elderly. The Chorus open their recollection of the sack of Troy with an invocation to the Muse (511-14), much like Homeric epics, creating an expectation for a description of war and battle. They turn quickly, however, to their own personal experience in the first person, saying “I will sing” (ἰαχήσω, 515) and “I was destroyed” (ὀλόμαν, 517).

Several scholars have shown how the invocation of the Muse and the recollection of the sack of Troy that follows are working with Homeric sources. In particular, Torrance (2013) compares this scene to the Demodocus scene in the *Odyssey*, in which Odysseus weeps like a woman as he hears the story of the Trojan horse (*Od.* 3.125-28). She shows that the Chorus' song is new (καινῶν ὕμνων, 512) because it is from the perspective of the victims and not the victors; the song “forces the audience to identify with the victims on their own terms, and not through the grief of a mediating character from the victorious camp” (221).⁶⁴ When the Chorus describe the entrance of the horse into the city, they again provide details about what is going on throughout the rest of the city, sharing that they were singing and dancing in the palace (ἐγώ... / τότ' ἀμφὶ μέλαθρα... / ἐμελπόμαν / χοροῖσι, 552-55). By speaking in the first person about their own experience as women and witnesses, the Chorus reveal the broader effects of the war.

⁶⁴ Pache's (2014: 74-75) analysis of Homeric women in relation to the “Lionesses,” five female American soldiers who accompanied men on raids in Iraq, is relevant here. She shows how women are marginalized in the *Odyssey* simile. Although a woman's perspective is shown there, Pache argues that the woman is anonymous and loses her identity. Other perspectives on the invocation of the Muse and the adaptation of epic include Munteanu (2010-11), Dué (2006: 18), and Visvardi (2011: 286). Although Munteanu claims that *Trojan Women* replaces the martial glory of epic with fame for women and immortal glory through suffering, I side rather with Dué, who says the song is “one of *penthos*, not *kleos*” (18), and Visvardi, who calls the song “memorable but not glorifying” (286).

The Chorus develop a picture of war that includes the entire society, not just the soldiers of each side. In *Agamemnon* and *Persians*, we saw mainly the perspectives of those waiting at home for their husbands and sons to return, with only brief mention of what happened to the families of the enemy, such as when Clytemnestra imagines the wailing of enslaved Trojans for their fallen family members (*A.* 326-29). Here in *Trojan Women*, we see the full picture of the dynamics of an entire community when war enters the homeland. First, the Chorus describe the immediate reaction to the appearance of the horse (527-32):

τίς οὐκ ἔβα νεανίδων,
 τίς οὐ γεραιὸς ἐκ δόμων;
 κεχαρμένοι δ' αἰοδαῖς
 δόλιον ἔσχον ἄταν. (530)
 πᾶσα δὲ γέννα Φρυγῶν
 πρὸς πύλας ὠρμάθη...

Who of the girls, what old man did not go out from their homes? And rejoicing in songs they brought in the deceitful ruin. And the whole race of Trojans rushed toward the gates...

The Chorus notably specifies people who would usually be quite distant from the action of war, young girls and old men. Significantly, the people leave their homes (ἐκ δόμων, 528), a place of safety, as they celebrate the entrance of the horse, perhaps foreshadowing how this horse will lead to the permanent abandonment of their entire homeland. Whereas the home is a place of safety, the world outside it is a dangerous place. Furthermore, the entire race of people rush the gates to welcome the horse into the city (πᾶσα δὲ γέννα Φρυγῶν, 531). The maiden choruses appear again later in the Chorus' account, dancing in the darkness (544-47). The Chorus not only show the welcome of the horse to the city but even give a glimpse inside the houses of the Trojans, where the torchlight enters (ἐν / δόμοις δὲ παμφαῆς σέλας / πυρὸς μέλαιναν αἴγλαν / ἦἔδωκεν ὕπνωι†, 547-50), showing the private spaces of the city.

The scene in *Trojan Women* provides an even more expansive view into the home than those in *Agamemnon* and *Persians*. In those two plays, the characters are waiting at home for their husbands and sons to return from war. Characters like Clytemnestra in *Agamemnon* and the Queen in *Persians* can only imagine what is happening abroad and do not witness battles and the journey home from war first-hand. Though missing its men, the home remains a place of security for these people. For example, in *Persians*, the Queen specifically goes into her house to retrieve clothing for Xerxes (*Pers.* 833 and 849), the possible preservation of normalcy. Even when the Choruses of *Agamemnon* and *Persians* mourn losses at home, these losses result from men going abroad and leaving behind empty beds. The danger itself lies outside the home. When Agamemnon is killed in his home, the terribleness of this event highlights the violation of this safe space. In *Trojan Women*, however, the home is the site of all the action of war and the characters who are living there are eye-witnesses to war's destruction, intensifying the magnitude of the effects. In both cases, the home is damaged, but in different ways.

When the tide turns, the Chorus do not even need to describe the army emerging from inside the horse; the horror is instead clear from the reactions of the Trojan families. Songs of joy turn to bloody shouts raised throughout the city (φοινία δ' ἀνὰ / πτόλιν βοά, 555-56) and even the very youngest of the Trojans throw their frightened hands around their mothers' clothing (βρέφη δὲ φίλι-/α περὶ πέπλους ἔβαλλε μα-/τρὶ χειρὰς ἐπτοημένας, 557-59). This transformation demonstrates the transgression of the Greek army, and the Chorus' song would evoke sympathy from an audience experiencing the transformation from joy to horror with them (Dué 2006: 18). Once again, the perspective of families who ought to be protected at home and not be involved in the fighting heightens the impression of violation. Having provided an even more intimate look

into the lives of the Trojans during the sack of Troy than Poseidon did, the Chorus conclude their account with a thought toward the future (563-67):

ἔν τε δεμνίοις
καράτομος ἔρημία
νεανίδων στέφανον ἔφερεν (565)
Ἑλλάδι κουροτρόφον,
Φρυγῶν δὲ πατρίδι πένθος.

And on the beds, a beheaded desert was bringing a prize of women, bearing sons for Greece, and a sorrow for the fatherland of the Trojans.

The previous image of the pregnant yet deadly horse from Poseidon's account is made literal in the women who will bear Greek sons. Thus, with only indirect reference to the Greek soldiers, the Chorus reflect the widespread impact of war upon their community. They show the transgression of the Greeks through the suffering of the women, children, and elderly who witness it—a perspective beyond that of the hero and one that suggests an unacceptable crossing of boundaries. Furthermore, the Chorus look toward the future children that the Trojan women will be forced to bear for Greeks, not for Trojans, demonstrating the lasting permanence of this widespread destruction.⁶⁵

Trojan Women differs from *Agamemnon* and *Persians* because it depicts what happens when a city is invaded by an outside army rather than what happens when a city's own army departs for war. Nevertheless, in both cases, there is movement spurred by war that causes permanent effects, and communities continue to reflect upon this movement even though it occurred in the past. Just as the Choruses of *Agamemnon* and *Persians* recall the departure of their armies for war, so does the Chorus of *Trojan Women* recall the arrival of the Greek army at Troy. Through the Chorus' recollection, and the similar account of Poseidon, the characters of *Trojan Women* demonstrate a transgression that continues to affect the entire society, even when

⁶⁵ The loss of youths and the extinction of the Trojan civilization is discussed later in Chapter Three.

the war is over. As we will see in the next section, the beginning of a war is always connected to its ending, and homecomings often entail another side that is damaged.

The Present: Capture and Forced Departure

Whereas the view from abroad in *Agamemnon* and *Persians* is seen through people arriving home, it is seen in *Trojan Women* through people departing from home. The presence of the Greeks at Troy and their breaching of the city walls is tied directly to the resulting seizure of the Trojans from their land. The Trojan characters continuously reflect upon the arrival of the Greeks as they consider their own departure, juxtaposing arrival with departure, homecoming with the displacement from home. These paired relationships demonstrate how war breaks apart communities through physical separation. In the two plays discussed earlier, the people who remain at home have similar perspectives. For example, early in *Agamemnon*, when the beacon signal announces the sack of Troy and the anticipated return of the army, the Chorus respond with a reflection on the army's departure (40). Similarly, Clytemnestra turns from the army's successful sack of Troy to concerns about their return home (343-44). Furthermore, Clytemnestra's first words to Agamemnon when he arrives in Argos are a complaint about the difficulties of being deserted in his absence (858-94). Likewise, within the first ten lines of *Persians*, the Chorus situate themselves in contrast to those who have departed from Persia (1-2) and also express fear regarding the homecoming of Xerxes (8). In *Trojan Women*, this juxtaposition of arrival and departure is reversed—instead of reflecting upon their own army's departure while expecting their return, the women in *Trojan Women* consider the arrival of a foreign army while fearing their own forced departure. The first Trojan we meet is Hecuba, and the imagery of ships and travel found in her individual lament and in her shared mourning with

the Chorus reflects the permanent damage done to her family and her society by the Greeks' arrival.

Hecuba begins her speech with an extensive nautical metaphor as she encourages herself to rise from the ground (98-104):

ἄνα, δύσδαιμον· πεδόθεν κεφαλὴν
ἐπάειρε δέρην· οὐκέτι Τροία
τάδε, καὶ βασιλῆς ἐσμεν Τροίας.
μεταβαλλομένου δαίμονος ἄνέχου.
πλεῖ κατὰ πορθμόν, πλεῖ κατὰ δαίμονα,
μηδὲ προσίστη πρῶϊραν βιότου
πρὸς κῦμα πλέουσα τύχαισιν. (100)

Up, wretched one, lift your head and neck from the ground. Troy is no longer nor are we queen of Troy. Although the gods have changed, hold yourself up. Sail along the strait, sail according to the divine powers, don't set the prow of your life against the waves, sailing with chance.

Hecuba imagines that she is a boat sailing through the waters that are the course of her life. She is at the whim of others—the currents, the gods, the waves—and tells herself not to resist these forces. In the next lines, Hecuba continues to describe her body as a ship, saying she wishes to rock side-to-side on the ground in grief, using the phrase εἰς ἀμφοτέρους τοίχους. Her metaphor is paralleled by her description of the arrival of the Greek forces at Troy. She addresses the ships who sailed to Troy (122-28):

πρῶϊραι ναῶν, ὠκείαις
Ἴλιον ἱερὰν αἶ κώπαις
†δι' ἄλλα πορφυροειδέα καὶ
λιμένας Ἑλλάδος† εὐορμούς
...
βαίνουσαι... (125)

Prows of ships, you who came to holy Troy with swift oars through the purple sea and the harbors of Greece that offer good anchorage...

Hecuba easily switches between her own situation in the aftermath of the war to the journey of the Greeks to Troy, using the same imagery for each and showing how closely tied her fate is to

the beginning of the war.⁶⁶ When Hecuba finally says that Helen has run her aground in ruin (ἐς τάνδ' ἐξώκειλ' ἄταν, 137), the metaphor is complete.

Just as the Greeks arrive on the shores of Troy, so is Hecuba run aground, yet Hecuba has no control over where she ends up. The images she creates suggest the lack of control that she and other women have as to where they travel and also the way that their lives are intertwined with the actions of men. Hecuba's speech corroborates the perspectives of other women, such as Clytemnestra in *Agamemnon* and the Queen in *Persians*. The women in these plays suffer because of their inability to know what is happening abroad and the potential loss of men at war. Though perhaps lying as far as her grief, Clytemnestra presents a picture of women influenced by the actions of men at war and without any means of control. She describes being at home deserted, hearing messages of Agamemnon's death, and staying awake in tears at night (861-94). Clytemnestra's account suggests that women's only knowledge of the war came from potentially false reports from abroad, and women could only stay at home and await news. Even if Clytemnestra herself did not grieve in the way she describes, Hecuba's speech in *Trojan Women* suggests that women, indeed, were in such a position during war.

Trojan Women also offers similarities to the *Persians*, where the Queen must also await news of her son and cannot help him when he actually arrives. She gains insight not through her actual presence at war, but through her dream (176-99), the reports of the Messenger (249-514), and the ghost of Darius (681-842). In addition, she is instructed to bring fresh clothing to Xerxes (832-36) and promises that she will do so (849), but never returns within the play. The portrayal of women as objects of war, who experience deep grief because of the effects of men's actions is common to all three plays. In *Trojan Women*, the war at Troy cannot exist in isolation and the

⁶⁶ O'Gorman (2006: 200) argues that when Hecuba imagines herself as a ship and the gulf of Troy welcoming a ship (Τροίας ἐν κόλποις, 130), her language turns war into a woman's body and implicates women in war-waging.

women cannot be independent from it; its effects are therefore abundant and lasting. Scodel's (1998) analysis is helpful for understanding the challenges that women face within the play, especially the "problem of surviving." Scodel shows, through imagery of rape transformed into imagery of marriage, that the captive women must negotiate their loyalty to their past lives—their commemorative value—and their loyalty to a new family—their sexual value. Hecuba, Scodel rightly points out, has no future of sexual value and therefore has no options for trade or exchange to affect her future. Even those who are able to affect their own futures are still constantly stuck within this "dilemma."⁶⁷

The juxtaposition of the arrival of the Greek army in Troy with Hecuba's being led away as a slave shows the transgression of the Greek forces who entered the Trojan homeland and the lasting effects on the entire Trojan community. Immediately after she recalls the Greeks' traveling by ship to Troy seeking Helen, Hecuba turns to her own situation. Though she has not yet left Troy, she says that she sits next to the tents of Agamemnon (σκηναῖς ἐφέδρους Ἀγαμεμνονίαις, 139), identifying her location through the enemy that has settled there. Even when Hecuba is physically in her homeland, it no longer belongs to her people. Her next lines again contrast the Greeks' motion toward Troy with her own situation as she says she is being led away from her home as an old woman and slave (δοῦλα δ' ἄγομαι / γραῦς ἐξ οἴκων πενθήρη, 140-41). This juxtaposition is similar to the way that characters in *Agamemnon* and *Persians* frequently would speak about the departure of the army in conjunction with their anticipation of the army's return or fears regarding their homecoming. For example, in their parados, the Chorus

⁶⁷ Foley (2001) and Suter (2003) consider how lament might give women authority and power. Suter rejects Foley's view that lament is only being suppressed during the 5th century and women's voices along with it. She argues that Euripides, instead, uses lament with *Trojan Women* to make women heard (21) so that they can "comment on activities in the public sphere that affect them" (28). I agree that the lament in this play is extensive, but the women's authority is frequently undercut or ironic and, therefore, it is difficult to conclude that this is a conscious commentary on lament in Athens at the time.

of *Agamemnon* respond to the beacon's light, which announces the return of the army, by recalling the army's departure in detail. They emphasize abandonment by comparing the Atreidae's war cry to the shrieks of eagles whose nest has been plundered (49-54) and by retelling the sacrifice of Iphigenia (192-227). Likewise the Chorus of *Persians* turn quickly from their fear concerning the king's homecoming (ἀμφὶ νόστῳ τῷ βασιλείῳ, 8) to the departure of the army from Persia (ἔρκος / προλιπόντες ἔβαν, 17-18). Hecuba's situation in *Trojan Women* is reversed. As she anticipates being forced to depart her homeland, she considers the arrival of the Greek army at Troy. The two opposing motions are intertwined.

Moreover, Hecuba compares herself to a mother bird crying for her young, a simile that brings attention to both the invasion of her home and the loss of it (μάτηρ δ' ὥσεί πτανοῖς κλαγγάν, 146). In *Persians*, we have seen the mother figure of the Queen represent the homeland and a safe return home. McClure, for example, has outlined the ways that the Queen acts as a Greek mother through her authority over Xerxes and her ultimate inability to change his fate (2006: 79). Though unfulfilled, the Queen is the one who would have been able to restore Xerxes' proper clothing to him. McClure also demonstrates how Persia and the Queen are identified through their feminization (2006: 79-80). The comparison of Hecuba to a mother bird, who ought to be the protector of her nest and young, brings attention to the depth of destruction at Troy. In addition, this simile is similar to the one in *Agamemnon* in which the Chorus compare the war cry of Agamemnon and Menelaus to the cries of eagles whose young have been snatched from the nest (*A.* 49-54). The *Agamemnon* simile draws attention to the homes left behind by soldiers who departed for war and the grief of parents who remained in Greece. In the case of Hecuba, not only youths—the men of Troy who died in the fighting—have been taken from their homes, but even the mothers of these men are being abducted from their homelands. Dué (2006:

143) shows how the resonance of these similes, as well as comparanda in the *Odyssey*, demonstrate the need for vengeance within Hecuba's lament. Yet even if vengeance is on the way in the form of the destruction of the Greek fleet, Hecuba is ignorant, another instance of painful irony in the play (Sienkewicz 1978: 88-89). Moreover, this vengeance will not actually improve the lives of the Greek women taken captive.

Hecuba's position throughout her whole first lament shows her deep connection to the land. Much like a mother bird who settles into her nest, Hecuba tries to exhort herself to lift herself from the ground of Troy, but remains lying close to the ground (ἄνα, δύσδαιμον, πεδόθεν κεφαλή· / ἐπάειρε δέρην, 98-99; νῶτ' ἐν στερροῖς λέκτροισι ταθεῖσ', 114). Her physical contact with the land deeply identifies her with her city. Such a connection between motherhood and the land is familiar from *Persians*, where, for example, the Chorus refer to the land of Asia as the nurturer (θρέψασα, 62) of the soldiers who departed. When Hecuba, the actual mother of Trojan men, is taken from her land, it symbolizes the final destruction of Troy.

The entrance of the Chorus expands the perspective, showing how the war has affected not just the queen but all Trojan women. The Chorus draw further attention to the suffering of the women leaving Troy by juxtaposing their departure with the homecoming of the Greeks. For example, when the Chorus learn from Hecuba that the Greeks are preparing their ships for sail, they consider the two purposes of that expedition (159-67):

Εκ: ὦ τέκν', Ἀχαιῶν πρὸς ναῦς ἤδη
κινεῖται κωπῆρης χεῖρ. (160)

Ημ: οἷ' γώ, τί θέλουσ'; ἦ πού μ' ἤδη
ναυσθλώσουσιν πατρίας ἐκ γᾶς;
Εκ: οὐκ οἶδ', εἰκάζω δ' ἄταν.
Ημ: ἰὼ ἰώ.
μέλεια, μόχθων ἐπακουσόμεναι, (165)
Τρῳιάδες, ἐξορμίζεσθ' οἴκων·
στέλλουσ' Ἀργεῖοι νόστον.

Hecuba: Child, the Greek oarsmen are already going toward the ships.

Half-Chorus: Ah me, what do they want? I suppose they will sail me away already from my father land?

Hecuba: I don't know, but I guess it's our ruin.

Half-Chorus: Oh, Oh. Miserable Trojan women, come out of your houses to hear the troubles. The Argives prepare their homecoming.

The Chorus recognize that the ships will serve two contrasting purposes: they will take the Trojan women away from their homeland (ναυσθλώσουσιν πατρίας ἐκ γᾶς, 162) and they will bring the Greek men to their homeland (στέλλουσ' Ἀργεῖοι νόστον, 167). The exact same action—preparing the ships to sail from Troy to Greece—has two vastly different results for the two different groups of people, calling into question whether *nostos* is a wholly positive thing. Homecoming is generally viewed from the perspective of those returning home (e.g., Odysseus in the *Odyssey*) or those at home awaiting someone's return (e.g., Penelope in the *Odyssey*, Clytemnestra in *Agamemnon*, and the Queen in *Persians*). Already we have seen that even in these cases, homecoming can be problematic as men attempt to regain their former roles and status, and those who had waited at home continue to experience grief because of their husbands' and sons' departures. *Trojan Women*, however, expands the boundaries of homecoming and the extent of problems encountered, developing the perspective of those who are taken away from their homes in the process of someone else's *nostos* and giving a fuller picture of the consequences. We have seen examples of homecomings that reveal underlying damage to families and communities. *Trojan Women* demonstrates that even in the happiest of homecomings, when all seems restored, there is another side that has been damaged.

Although they know that they will be taken from their homelands, the Chorus and Hecuba still are in a state of uncertainty; they do not know where exactly they will be taken. This uncertainty is familiar from other wartime situations within the *Odyssey* and tragedies, especially among those who stay at home while the army goes abroad to fight. These people are left with no

knowledge of who has been killed or who survives, and even with reports arriving from abroad, they cannot be certain of their loved ones' physical safety until they see them with their own eyes. For example, when the Herald in *Agamemnon* returns to Argos he cannot confirm the fate of Menelaus since the men took separate paths for their different homelands (674-76). Hecuba and the Chorus, on the other hand, have witnessed the deaths of their family members and know, for example, that Hector and Priam have been killed. Yet even though the war has ended, their future is still up for grabs. The Chorus do not even know if they will survive, asking Hecuba whether the army plans to kill them or to take them away (178-81), and Hecuba's response shows the effects of this uncertainty: her soul has been kept awake and she is struck with fear (ὀρθρεύουσιν ψυχὰν / ἐκπληχθεῖς ἦλθον φρίκαι, 182-83). The exchange that follows between Hecuba and the Chorus is comprised of a series of questions, demonstrating their insecurity and lack of control over their own selves. Each asks whose slave she will be and where she will be taken.

Moreover, Hecuba shows that the Chorus' original question—will the women live or die?—is not sufficient. She also considers what she will be forced to do even if she is taken alive, demonstrating her loss of status by describing herself in degrading terms: like a drone, wretched, the appearance of a corpse, a fleeting adornment for the dead (ὥς κηφήν, ἃ δειλαία, / νεκροῦ μορφή, / νεκύων ἀμενηνὸν ἄγαλμα, 191-93). For Hecuba, physical survival is not enough. The repetition of the words νεκροῦ and νεκύων emphasize how her new life will be like a state of death for her. She is entirely dehumanized. Much as the male heroes of war still face challenges returning home and reintegrating into their former lives, the women who live through the war, especially those on the losing side, also cannot recover their former lives and status.

The Chorus imagine all the places that they might go, emphasizing the extensive distances that will separate them from their homeland. They state that it is the last time they will look upon the homes of their parents (νέατον τοκέων δώματα λεύσσω, / νέατον, 201-2). Whereas the word τοκέων highlights the multiple generations that have lived in the same homes within Troy, the repetition of the word νέατον reinforces the permanence of the Chorus' impending separation.⁶⁸ As women, the Chorus would not have had actual experience traveling away from home. Such a situation for women is familiar from *Persians*, when the Queen asks the Chorus where Athens is located (231), and it will appear again in *Trojan Women* when Hecuba states that she has never been on a ship before (686-87). Much like Clytemnestra, who envisions the beacon chain crossing from point to point from Troy to Argos in *Agamemnon* (A. 281-316), the Chorus similarly imagine a geographical landscape without having previous firsthand experience traveling these distances. They consider their possible future homes, mentioning geographical features and places all across the Greek world (205-29): Peirene, Athens, Eurotas, Peneus, Olympus, Etna, Sicily, the Ionian Sea, and the river Crathis. Similar catalogues appear in *Agamemnon* and *Persians*. For example, in Clytemnestra's account of the beacon chain traveling from Troy to Argos, each relay point is a place that the Greek army must pass upon their return home. The journey's length and the physical challenges to recovering one's former life are emphasized by the naming of each place. In addition, the Chorus of *Persians* list the homelands and nationalities of the Persian army upon their departure (16-64) and the Messenger does the same for those who have died (302-30), showing the vast extent of war's negative influence. Likewise, when the Chorus of *Trojan Women* imagine their future homes—places they have never been much like Clytemnestra has never traveled the beacon's path—the list of possible

⁶⁸ This interpretation reinforces Scodel's "captive's dilemma" (1998).

places reinforces the distance they will travel, the potential dangers there, and the permanent loss of their former home.

Nevertheless, the Chorus show knowledge, whether accurate or not, of these faraway places by providing an identifying description of each location. Athens is the famous, favorable, holy, and sacred land of Theseus (τὰν κλεινὰν... / Θησέως εὐδαίμονα χώραν, 207-8; τὰν ἱερὰν / Θησέως ζαθέαν...χώραν, 218-19), the river Eurotas marks the most hateful dwelling of Helen (τὰν <τ> ἐχθίσταν θεράπναν Ἑλένας, 211), the land around Mount Olympus is heavy with wealth and blooming fruitfulness (ὄλβωι βρίθειν...εὐθαλεῖ τ' εὐκαρπεῖαι, 216-17), Etna is heralded for wreaths of virtue (καρύσσεσθαι στεφάνοις ἀρετᾶς, 223), and the land near Crathis has good men and is nourished and blessed by the river's holy streams (Κρᾶθις ζαθέαις παγαῖσι τρέφων / εὐανδρόν τ' ὀλβίζων γᾶν, 228-29). The descriptors the Chorus use—primarily positive with the exception of Helen and especially favorable toward Athens—are at odds with the mood of the scene.⁶⁹ Such a disjunction appears, too, in *Agamemnon* in the Herald's account of the war. Although he frames his account with optimism, asking “who doesn't experience pain?” (544) and saying he will speak of the positive benefits rather than the suffering (571-73), the Herald's forced positivity draws attention to the fleets that were destroyed and the men lost. Likewise, the Chorus' positive descriptions of the Greek lands in *Trojan Women* cannot outweigh the fact that the women will be leaving their true homes and be forced to work as slaves and concubines. In fact, it makes their fate even more distressing. Their best hope is a welcoming landscape, but the Chorus make no mention of their future slavery there.

⁶⁹ Some, like Sidwell (2001), argue that the positive portrayal of Athens here indicates that the play does not critique Athenian imperialism or Athenian actions in war, yet to me the scene is too ironic. Visvardi (2001: 276-79) calls this an “escape ode,” arguing that the ode is Panhellenic by mentioning places where the play could have been performed outside of Athens. She says that this ode would evoke pity for the Trojan women in citizens of these cities as they see the women talking about community and civic engagement, but know that the women will not participate in those experiences.

In addition to the juxtaposition of arrival and departure, *Trojan Women* also demonstrates how departure from home contributes to the destruction of communities through the consideration of the fates of Trojan men. Cassandra contrasts the Greeks, who have died for another man's wife and are buried in a foreign land, with the Trojans, who die for their own country and are buried appropriately in their own fatherland. She presents a similar picture to that in *Agamemnon* and *Persians*, where men are returning from campaigns into others' territory. In each of these other plays, we especially saw the fears of those at home that their family members would die and be buried (or remain unburied) abroad. The Chorus in *Agamemnon* imagine with grief the dead who are buried at Troy, taken by the very land that they themselves held (452-55), and the Chorus in *Persians* continuously mourn the permanent emptiness of their own cities (e.g., 1-12, 115-25). In addition, the Herald and Messenger in these plays report the massive casualties that took place in the fighting abroad and on the return journeys, especially the men left scattering the seas away from home (*A.* 658-60 and *Pers.* 419-24). These images reflect the permanence of destruction, as the men who die abroad are entirely deprived of their homecomings and those at home are left with incomplete families. Cassandra has the perspective of both these sides—she is a woman who has remained at home and she is also a witness to the action of war and the deaths on both sides of the fighting. This point of view enables her to provide greater insight into the effects of war upon entire communities.

The distinction Cassandra makes between the motives of the participants, especially between willingness and force, shows the transgression of the Greeks and the unstoppable effects of war. For example, after a long address to Hecuba in which Cassandra invites her to join in dancing and singing in celebration of her new wedding, Cassandra reveals that she is not actually embarking upon this marriage eagerly, asking her mother to thrust her by force into the marriage

if she does not seem willing (κἄν μὴ τὰμά σοι πρόθυμά γ' ᾗ / ὥθει βιαίως, 355-56).⁷⁰ In contrast to her forced marriage, Cassandra suggests that Agamemnon and the Greeks made a choice to travel to Troy for the sake of Helen. She states that Agamemnon's losses were for the sake of things he hated (ἐχθίστων ὕπερ, 370) and on account of a woman (γυναικὸς οὖνεκα, 372), who herself went willingly and was not carried off by force (ἐκούσης κοῦ βίαι λελητισμένης, 373). By claiming Helen as the reason for the Greeks' invasion of Troy, Cassandra presents the Greeks' actions as a choice rather than an obligation. She reinforces this point by emphasizing that the Greek land was not under attack: the Greeks were not being robbed of their land's boundaries nor of their lofty-towered fatherland (οὐ γῆς ὄρι' ἀποστερούμενοι / οὐδ' ὑψίπυργον πατρίδ', 375-76). In saying this, Cassandra suggests the contrary motives of the Trojans: they were compelled to fight, whereas the Greeks decided to wage war.

Cassandra's explanation for the Greeks' waging of war parallels the choices made by Agamemnon in *Agamemnon* and Xerxes in *Persians*. The Chorus of *Agamemnon* presents Agamemnon's sacrifice of Iphigenia as a decision, not an obligation, by recalling how he deliberated whether to kill his daughter or betray his alliance (207-13). In *Persians*, Darius condemns his son for his arrogance and youthful recklessness (744-52), while the Queen suggests that Xerxes set out on campaign because he had been taunted for being a coward (753-58). Both explanations make the campaign against Greece Xerxes' choice. Though her perspective is certainly biased, Cassandra reinforces the transgressive nature of the Greeks' action by focusing on the importance of the security of one's homeland and by intimating that the Greeks did not need to invade the Trojan city.

⁷⁰ Scholars like Scodel (1998: 147-48), Rutherford (2001), and Dué (2006: 143-45) have rightly recognized the distortions of the typical marriage in this scene, which add to the effect of continued suffering even as Cassandra claims to accept her fate. Rabinowitz (1998: 61-62) suggests that the sexual presentation of slavery in Cassandra's marriage speech serves to minimize the Greek male fear of enslavement by focusing enslavement on the female.

Relatedly, Cassandra distinguishes the deaths of the Greek forces abroad from the deaths of the Trojan men at home, both demonstrating the significance of physical separation as a negative effect of war and also revealing how this physical separation causes the breaking of family ties.

First, she describes what happens to the Greeks (376-79):

...οὓς δ' Ἄρης ἔλοι,
οὐ παῖδας εἶδον, οὐ δάμαρτος ἐν χεροῖν
πέπλοις συνεστάλησαν, ἐν ξένηι δὲ γῇ
κεῖνται.

And those whom Ares took, they did not see their children, they were not shrouded in cloths in the hands of their wives, but they lie in a foreign land.

Cassandra especially notes the absence of family—important even for the dead. The Greek men who die have not seen their children since they departed for war and they will not receive a burial from their wives as they should. Cassandra thus emphasizes the permanence of their absence in a foreign land. Such a distortion also appears in *Agamemnon*, as well, when the Chorus describe how all the men who set out for Troy return as ashes in urns and how Ares exchanges men's bodies for such dust (427-36). These men make a return, but they are no longer men and are, therefore, permanently lost. Even more so, the Chorus of *Agamemnon* say that other Greek men are buried in tombs around the walls of Troy (452-55), buried away from their homes and families. In *Persians*, we also have seen the effects on those at home when their husbands and sons are away at war—the cities grieve, having been emptied of men (115-25). Cassandra offers similar reflections in *Trojan Women*, yet she provides a further perspective by considering the future for the parents and wives whose family members have died (379-82):

τὰ δ' οἴκοι τοῖσδ' ὅμοι' ἐγίγνετο·
χῆραί γ' ἔθνησκον, οἱ δ' ἄπαιδες ἐν δόμοις (380)
ἄλλως τέκν' ἐκθρέψαντες· οὐδὲ πρὸς τάφοις
ἔσθ' ὅστις αὐτῶν αἷμα γῇ δωρήσεται.

And similar things happen to those at home: the widows died, and some died childless at home, having raised children in vain. There will not be anyone who will offer blood to the land before their tombs.

Beyond the grief that those at home experience *during* war, Cassandra also considers the effects on these people *after* the war has ended. Without their husbands and sons returning, wives are left to die as widows and parents die without children to continue their lines. Many are left without family to provide the proper grave-offerings. The effects of war are lasting and widespread.

Cassandra then attempts to show that the Trojan deaths are more glorious and less worthy of grief, yet her account continues to reveal the permanent damage done to families and communities during the war. First she describes what happens to the Trojan men during the war (386-93):

Τρῶες δὲ πρῶτον μὲν, τὸ κάλλιστον κλέος,
 ὑπὲρ πάτρας ἔθνησκον· οὓς δ' ἔλοι δόρυ,
 νεκροὶ γ' ἐς οἴκους φερόμενοι φίλων ὑπο
 ἐν γῇ πατρώϊαι περιβολὰς εἶχον χθονός,
 χερσὶν περισταλέντες ὧν ἐχρῆν ὑπο· (390)
 ὅσοι δὲ μὴ θάνοιεν ἐν μάχῃ Φρυγῶν,
 ἀεὶ κατ' ἡμαρ σὺν δάμαρτι καὶ τέκνοις
 ὠκοῦν, Ἀχαιοῖς ὧν ἀπῆσαν ἡδοναί.

First the Trojans died for their native land, the most beautiful glory; and those whom the spear took, their corpses were carried home by their family and have the covering of the earth in their fatherland, dressed for burial by the necessary hands. And however many of the Trojans did not die in battle, they lived always day by day with their wives and children, the pleasures of which were absent from the Achaeans.

Cassandra's main claim is that dying for one's homeland and at home is better than what has happened to the Greeks. She contrasts point-for-point the experience of the Trojan warriors with the experience of the Greeks that she has already presented. Whereas the Greeks die for another man's wife far away from their homes, the Trojans die for their native land (ὑπὲρ πάτρας

ἔθνησκον, 387) and are buried within the earth of their fatherland (ἐν γῇ πατρώϊαι περιβολὰς εἶχον χθονός, 390). And while the Greeks are not buried by their wives, the Trojans receive a proper burial: their bodies are carried home by their loved ones (φερόμενοι φίλων ὕπο, 388) and are clothed and buried by the proper hands (χερσὶν περισταλέντες ὧν ἐχρῆν ὕπο, 390). Finally, whereas the Greeks have not seen their children the whole time they are abroad, the Trojans live daily with their wives and children (ἀεὶ κατ' ἡμαρ σὺν δάμαρτι καὶ τέκνοις / ὄικουν, 392-93).

Cassandra's account demonstrates the potential benefits when soldiers do not travel abroad for war—they can remain with their families and earn glory through their deaths. She presents a potential counterpoint to the problems seen in *Agamemnon* and *Persians*, when men depart their homelands for war and leave behind parents, wives, and children. As specific examples, she claims that Hector's death might seem cruel, yet he earns the best reputation through it (δόξας... ἄριστος, 395), and she cites that Paris earned a famous bride in Helen, rather than an insignificant wife at home (398-99). Since communities are so closely tied to their lands, according to Cassandra, there is the potential for less damage to be done and even acclaim to be earned when families stay together in their homeland. She makes a concise statement on the nature of war based on this idea (400-2):

φεύγειν μὲν οὖν χρὴ πόλεμον ὅστις εὖ φρονεῖ· (400)
εἰ δ' ἐς τόδ' ἔλθοι, στέφανος οὐκ αἰσχρὸς πόλει
καλῶς ὀλέσθαι, μὴ καλῶς δὲ δυσκλεές.

On one hand, men should flee from war, but, on the other hand, if it comes to it, dying respectably is not a shameful reward for the city, while dying ignobly is inglorious for the city.

Cassandra makes the point that, first and foremost, war should be avoided, but offers an alternative for how war could be conducted to minimize damage if it must occur. Shame and glory, to Cassandra, are defined by one's country and family—fighting for them and dying with

them. Although she demonstrates this point through exact contrasts between the Greek and Trojan soldiers who die in battle, she nevertheless neglects to offer a parallel to the experience of the Greek wives and parents. Perhaps concerned mainly with preserving the Trojan reputation or even the existence of the Trojan people, Cassandra glosses over the pain of what happens to the Trojan families who survive the loss of their husbands and sons. Though she argues for the glory of the Trojan deaths, she brings no consolation to the grieving wives who are now being taken from their homes. Cassandra's emphasis on the location of burial for the Trojan men reinforces the atrocity of the women being forced to leave their homes. These women will be separated from their families and die in a foreign land—the exact experiences of the Greeks that Cassandra had earlier disparaged. As Rutherford, recognizing Cassandra's distorted rhetoric and unreasonable argument, says, "Euripides seems to show how futile such calculations of future compensation must be when the present suffering is real and undeniable and immediate" (2001: 102).

Furthermore, Cassandra acknowledges that she herself will only be reunited with her loved ones once dead. Her prediction of her own death demonstrates that she will have a fate as bad as, if not worse than, that of the Greek men who died abroad or their families who will die deserted at home. Even though Cassandra acknowledges that Agamemnon will be buried dishonorably (κακῶς ταφήσῃ, 446), her own fate is no better. She says that her body will be thrown naked into a ravine rushing with wintry water where she will become food for wild beasts to divide among themselves (κάμῃ τοι νεκρὸν φάραγγες γυμνάδ' ἐκβεβλημένην / ὕδατι χειμάρρῳι ῥέουσαι... / θηρσὶ δώσουσιν δάσασθαι, 448-50). In her prediction, Cassandra experiences a death typically feared by men at war or upon their return, a distortion of the proper experience, especially for women. We see this fear, for example, within the very first lines of the *Iliad* about

those who will die in the war (αὐτοὺς δὲ ἐλώρια τεῦχε κύνεσσιν / οἰωνοῖσί τε πᾶσι, 1.4-5) and near the end of the epic when Hector's body is divinely protected from such treatment (τὸν δ' οὐ κύνες ἀμφεπέοντο, / ἀλλὰ κύνας μὲν ἄλαλκε Διὸς θυγάτηρ Ἀφροδίτη / ἥματα καὶ νύκτας, 23.184-86).

In an attempt at consolation, Cassandra addresses her fatherland and dead brothers and father, reassuring them that she will see them again in death (458-61):

...ὦ φίλη πατρίς,
οἳ τε γῆς ἔνερθ' ἀδελφοὶ χῶ τεκῶν ἡμᾶς πατήρ,
οὐ μακρὰν δέξεσθέ μ'· ἤξω δ' ἐς νεκροὺς νικηφόρος (460)
καὶ δόμους πέρσας Ἀτρεϊδῶν, ὧν ἀπωλόμεσθ' ὕπο.

O dear fatherland, and my brothers below the earth and our father who begot us, you will receive me soon. And I will come to the dead bearing victory and having destroyed the house of Atreus, by which we were destroyed.

Cassandra's words fall empty given her earlier gruesome depiction of her own death and lack of burial. By specifically addressing the homeland and the fact that her family is buried there, Cassandra draws even more attention to the stark contrast between their deaths and her own. She frames her reunion with her family almost as a homecoming, but it is a twisted and painful arrival, much like the imagined reunion between Iphigenia and Agamemnon in the underworld in *Agamemnon* (A. 1555-59). Cassandra's predictions for the future show that there will be no actual reconciliation or restoration of Troy, only more death and destruction.

Trojan Women gives particular attention to communal grief and the common experience of the women of Troy. Already, we have seen how the aftermath of war affects Hecuba, Cassandra, and the Chorus of women who will be forced from their homes and distributed as slaves to the Greek men. The entrance of Andromache and her exchange with Hecuba and the Chorus reinforce the shared mourning of the women and the extent of suffering across the entire Trojan community. Nearly the first twenty lines of this exchange is stichomythia between Andromache

and Hecuba, in which each woman finishes the thoughts of the other and responds with cries of grief (578-96).⁷¹ Andromache asks her mother-in-law, “Why are you groaning my song?” (τί παιᾶν’ ἐμὸν στενάξεις; 578), recognizing her own suffering in the language of Hecuba. Not only are the women unable to complete a sentence, but they cannot finish a line, exchanging phrases of half-lines. The broken lines show the depths of their grief as they are unable to speak in complete thoughts, while the continuous back and forth demonstrates their shared emotional state. The common pain of the women is evident later in the exchange, as well, when the Chorus respond to Andromache, saying, “You have come to the same misfortune, and lamenting yours, you teach me at what point of misery I am” (ἐς ταῦτὸν ἦκεις συμφορᾶς· θρηνοῦσα δὲ / τὸ σὸν διδάσκεις μ’ ἔνθα πημάτων κυρῶ, 684-85). Though the main characters in the play are members of the royal family, they experience the same suffering as all the other women in Troy.

Hecuba draws further attention to her impending separation from her home, and the resulting destruction of her city and community by returning once again to a ship simile. She presents herself as a ship facing a storm that she cannot resist. Hecuba begins by stating that she has never been on a ship but knows about them from paintings and from hearing about them (αὐτὴ μὲν οὕτω ναὸς εἰσέβην σκάφος, / γραφῇ δ’ ἰδοῦσα καὶ κλύουσ’ ἐπίσταμαι, 686-87). This statement highlights how Hecuba’s entire life has been spent at Troy, that even when the Trojan men may have sailed abroad, she has been anchored at home, as we have seen already with Clytemnestra in *Agamemnon*, the Queen in *Persians*, and the other women within *Trojan Women*. The fact that she has lived in Troy her whole life reinforces the damage done by the Greeks, who are taking the women of Troy away from their homes for the first time by force.

⁷¹ McClure (1999: 44) notes that such interjections and cries of grief appear in tragedy but not epic, “suggesting, perhaps, that tragic laments more closely approximated the musical sounds or spoken language found in actual funerary practice.”

While the women in *Agamemnon* and *Persians* will suffer the consequences of war in their own homelands, the Trojan women do not even have that comfort.

In addition, Hecuba suggests that her journey will not be a peaceful one. She describes how sailors generally each work their own jobs to manage mild winds (688-91) but in an overwhelming storm, the men let the ship go with the wind and the waves (691-93). Hecuba is in the stormy situation, with so many troubles that she cannot express them in words or resist (οὕτω δὲ κἀγὼ πόλλ' ἔχουσα πήματα / ἄφθογγός εἰμι καὶ παρεῖς ἔχω στόμα, 694-95). By using the simile of a ship in a storm, Hecuba reveals the extent of her suffering and her powerlessness over her own future, while also underscoring the source of this pain—the separation from her homeland. Euripides, thus, gives attention to the other side of homecoming. Whereas the Greeks are attempting a victorious journey home after war, the Trojans are stripped of their home and forced to serve another far away as slaves.

The experience of Hecuba and the other women of Troy demonstrates the lasting effects of war that sometimes are not seen when considering homecomings. Homecoming is typically viewed as a return, but for these women, the homecoming of the Greek soldiers is actually an abduction from their own lands. Through the perspectives of Hecuba, Andromache, and the Chorus, Euripides demonstrates the uncertainty that women face even after the war is over, much like the uncertainty that persists at home for wives and family members during the war. In addition, the exchanges between characters reveal the universal suffering experienced by the women. Every woman will be sent to a new home, and every woman has lost someone dear to her. As Hecuba and Andromache are taken from Troy, they no longer are a queen and a princess, but they and all the other Trojan women have been equalized as slaves. The uselessness of former status will be explored more in the next section, which focuses on the loss of youths as a

symbol of the unfulfilled future of Troy. Just as the women's being taken from their homes ruptures the Trojan society, so does the death of young men and even children remove any possibility for the people to be restored.

The Future: Loss of Youths

In addition to showing the effects of separation from home upon the Trojan community, *Trojan Women* also reveals the destruction of relationships between generations. In *Agamemnon* and *Persians*, parents grieve for their children who died fighting or returning from abroad, and wives fear the loss of their husbands in these same ways. In *Trojan Women*, however, these fears are realized for all members of the Trojan community—no Trojan men of fighting age appear in the play. The wives and mothers are entirely abandoned. Furthermore, the slaughter of youths is taken to the extreme—it is not just soldiers who are killed, but even the very youngest boys are exterminated by the Greeks. The death of Astyanax, the son of Hector and Andromache, offers an example of how the war has prematurely torn apart generations of Trojans. Through Hecuba and Andromache's emphasis on motherhood, Talthybius' report of Astyanax's impending fate, the Chorus' reflections upon the first sack of Troy, and the eventual revelation of Astyanax's dead body, *Trojan Women* demonstrates the lasting effects of war upon the Trojan community into the future.

We might view the deaths of young people at war, leading to parents burying their children, within the context of the Peloponnesian War that Athens was in the midst of fighting. Thucydides presents one perspective from this time in Pericles' funeral oration (*Th.* 2.34-46), which he purports was delivered early in the war in 431 BCE. Among other statements on democracy, empire, and Athenian character, in this speech Pericles offers a few consolations for parents mourning children, including that those who died are fortunate and their deaths have

honor (τὸ δ' εὐτυχές, οἳ ἂν τῆς εὐπρεπεστάτης λάχωσιν, ὥσπερ οἶδε μὲν νῦν, τελευτῆς, ὑμεῖς δὲ λύπης 2.44.1); that those of the right age will be able to have more children who will bring them and the city benefit (καρτερεῖν δὲ χρὴ καὶ ἄλλων παίδων ἐλπίδι, οἷς ἔτι ἡλικία τέκνωσιν ποιεῖσθαι: ἰδίᾳ τε γὰρ τῶν οὐκ ὄντων λήθη οἱ ἐπιγιγνόμενοί τισιν ἔσονται, καὶ τῇ πόλει διχόθεν, 2.44.3); and that those who are old should be happy with the fortune of years before and the lasting honor of those who died in their old age (ὅσοι δ' αὖ παρηβήκατε, τόν τε πλέονα κέρδος ὃν ἡτύχεῖτε βίον ἡγεῖσθε καὶ τόνδε βραχὺν ἔσεσθαι, καὶ τῇ τῶνδε εὐκλείᾳ κουφίζεσθε. τὸ γὰρ φιλότιμον ἀγήρων μόνον...ἀλλὰ τὸ τιμᾶσθαι, 2.44.4). Within *Trojan Women*, however, such consolations will be rejected since the sorrows of the past can only continue into the future and there is no possibility of continuing on the Trojan line after the men have been killed.

In addition to demonstrating the universal effects of the war, Andromache and Hecuba introduce a theme that we also saw in *Agamemnon* and *Persians*: the loss of youth before their time. As the two women mourn the losses they have already experienced, with particular focus on their own motherhood, their words also point forward the ultimate death of Astyanax.⁷² Hecuba continuously defines herself and is defined by others as a mother. She mourns constantly for her children, crying out τέκεα (580) and ἐμῶν τ' εὐγένεια παίδων (583). She finds the death of her children a grief even beyond the loss of her city (ὃ τέκν', ἐρημόπολις μάτηρ ἀπολείπεται ὑμῶν, 603), demonstrating her priorities. In addition, when Andromache mourns for the loss of her husband Hector, Hecuba reframes his death as the death of her own son (βοᾷς τὸν παρ' Ἄιδαι / παῖδ' ἐμον, ὃ μελέα, 588-89; τέκνων δὴ ποθ' ἀμῶν / πρεσβυγενὲς Πριάμωι, 592-93) and Andromache later does as well (ὃ μῆτερ ἀνδρὸς ὅς ποτ' Ἀργείων δορὶ / πλείστους διώλεσ' Ἔκτορος, 610-11). Even when Andromache is condemning Paris as the cause of the war, she

⁷² The repetition of motherhood could be part of a pattern that Zeitlin (2008: 329-31) sees within Euripides of a new expression of intimacy and emotion between family members as well as a depiction of the child as the site of conflicts between public and private.

refers to him as “your son,” casting Hecuba again as the mother. Interestingly, Andromache identifies Paris by his initial escape from death, when Hecuba exposed Paris as a baby rather than allowing him to be killed (ὅτε σὸς γόνος ἐκφυγεν Ἴδαν, 597). This allusion to the early days of Paris’ life makes the deaths of children in this play all the more devastating, as here Hecuba again has no control and has ironically born the destruction for Troy.⁷³

Andromache and Hecuba mourn not just the men who have died in battle but also the young women who have been taken from their mothers. Hecuba grieves for Cassandra, who was torn from her by force (κάπ’ ἐμοῦ / βέβηκ’ ἀποσπασθεῖσα Κασσάνδρα βίαι, 616-17). But this misfortune is exceeded when Andromache informs Hecuba that Polyxena has been killed at the tomb of Achilles, a death that Hecuba calls an unholy sacrifice and an evil death (σῶν ἀνοσίων προσφαγμάτων / ...ὥς κακῶς διόλλυσαι, 628-29). Polyxena’s slaughter offers some comparison to the death of Iphigenia, a sacrifice of a woman for the war cause. Nevertheless, her death is even less justifiable—the war is over and Achilles is dead. As Andromache says, Polyxena is a gift for a soulless corpse (δῶρον ἀψύχῳ νεκρῷ, 623). With such an emphasis on the mothering role of women, the death of a woman demonstrates the end of the Trojan civilization even more vividly than the loss of men.

Moreover, Andromache and Hecuba consider the future generations of Trojans. When Andromache mourns for the loss of her home, she specifically identifies it as the place where she bore her children (ἐμὸν δόμον ἐνθ’ ἐλογεύθην, 602). In addition, she believes that she will still have her son Astyanax with her when she is taken as plunder to Greece (ἀγόμεθα λεία σὺν τέκνῳ, 614). Hecuba, too, encourages Andromache to accept her new situation for the sake of her children and the future of Troy (701-5):

κἄν δρᾷς τάδ’, ἐς τὸ κοινὸν εὐφρανεῖς φίλους

⁷³ This line would connect *Trojan Women* with the first play in Euripides’ trilogy, *Alexandros*.

καὶ παῖδα τόνδε παιδὸς ἐκθρέψειας ἄν
 Τροίαι μέγιστον ὠφέλημ', ἵν' οἳ ποτε
 ἐκ σοῦ γενόμενοι παῖδες Ἴλιον πάλιν
 κατοικήσειαν καὶ πόλις γένοιτ' ἔτι. (705)

And if you do these things, you will make your loved ones happy in common and you might raise this son of my son as the greatest help for Troy, so that at some time the children born from you might settle Troy again and the city might still exist.

Hecuba believes not only that Astyanax will survive and remain with Andromache but also that his survival means the survival of Troy. Her hope creates irony for the audience, who know that Astyanax will be killed, and her false expectation will make his eventual death that much more heartrending.

A second scene that demonstrates the loss of youth before their time is the second entrance of Talthybius. After Talthybius has reported where each woman has been assigned to go, he returns to give a further message to Andromache: she will not be able to bring her son Astyanax with her, but the boy will, instead, be killed. Andromache hears that her son will be separated from her at the moment when she is most close to him, holding him in her arms, and the child is ignorant of what awaits him, adding *pathos* to the scene (Dyson and Lee 2000: 20). Talthybius' manner in reporting this news and the language he uses reveal the excessive severity of this result. First, Talthybius has difficulty reporting the news and continues to distance himself from the action. For example, he begins by asking that Andromache not hate him and claims that he makes this announcement unwillingly (μή με στυγήσῃς· οὐχ ἐκὼν γὰρ ἀγγελῶ, 710). As he begins to state what will happen to Andromache's son, he cuts himself off, wondering aloud how he should say it (ἔδοξε τόνδε παῖδα... πῶς εἶπω λόγον; 713). His hesitation to speak the truth clearly continues as he euphemistically says that no Greek will be the master of Astyanax (οὐδεὶς

Ἀχαιῶν τοῦδε δεσπόσει ποτέ, 715) and that he does not know how to easily express the evil news (οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως σοι ῥαϊδίως εἶπω κακά, 717).

Talthybius draws out his report significantly longer than his other reports (such as his message about the assigned new masters for the Greek women), showing the extent of harm this news will cause. Moreover, when he finally reveals that Astyanax will be killed, Talthybius separates himself from the act, saying “they” will kill your son, not “I” or “we” (κτενοῦσι σὸν παῖδ', 719), despite his own membership among the Greek forces. He hands over the child to another (λαμβάνετ' αὐτόν, 786), saying that even to announce this type of thing a person must be pitiless and shameless, unlike himself, further distancing himself (τὰ δὲ τοιάδε χρὴ / κηρυκεύειν ὅστις ἄνοικτος / καὶ ἀναιδεΐαι τῆς ἡμετέρας / γνώμης μᾶλλον φίλος ἐστίν, 786-89). Talthybius' reluctance to report that Astyanax will be killed demonstrates the extreme harshness of the young boy's death. At the same time, the death draws attention to the youth of the many other Greeks, though older than Astyanax, who have been killed before their time.

The futility of the deaths of soldiers at war is evident in this conversation between Talthybius and Andromache. Astyanax is identified through his lineage, the son of the great warrior Hector, throughout their exchange. For example, Talthybius addresses Andromache as the wife of Hector, calling him the best of the former Trojans (Φρυγῶν ἀρίστου πρὶν ποθ' Ἔκτορος δάμαρ, 709). Nevertheless, Hector's battle prowess actually threatens Astyanax and cannot save him from his fate. Talthybius reports that Odysseus told the Greek assembly not to raise the son of such an excellent father, using the same word, ἀρίστος, to describe Hector (λέξας ἀρίστου παῖδα μὴ τρέφειν πατρός, 723). Andromache also recognizes this connection between father and son, mourning that Astyanax has been honored too much (ὧ̃ περισσὰ τιμηθεῖς τέκνον, 740) and that the goodness of his father has not been to his advantage (τὸ δ' ἐσθλὸν οὐκ ἐς

καιρὸν ἦλθέ σοι πατρός, 744). The expected—and failed—inheritance of military strength through one's father is familiar from *Persians*, when Darius lists Xerxes' predecessors one by one, glorifying their achievements and his own campaigns in contrast to Xerxes' defeat (759-86). Whereas Xerxes fails to live up to his father, Astyanax is deprived of even that chance.

When Andromache cries to Astyanax that Hector will not be able to save him, she is both mourning the impending loss of her son and the previous death of her husband. She states that Hector will not come out from the earth holding his famous spear (οὐκ εἶσιν Ἑκτώρ κλεινὸν ἀρπάσας δόρυ / γῆς ἐξανελθὼν, 752-53). Her words demonstrate the permanence of Hector's death—he will lie forever beneath the earth—and define Hector through his role as a soldier—he wields a famous a spear. Andromache's language, juxtaposing great might in battle with resulting death, closely ties war to permanent destruction. This damage continues through generations that were not even involved in the actual fighting, showing the lasting effects of war. Indeed, devastated as she is by the loss of her own son, Andromache prays that the same fate befall Odysseus' son (τοιαῦτα νικήσειε τῶν αὐτοῦ πέρι, 724).

Furthermore, Astyanax's death is the death of battle taken to the ultimate extent, representing the total destruction of Troy. Before Andromache knows that Astyanax is to die, she questions Talthylus about what will happen to him, proposing increasingly more devastating scenarios—that Astyanax will have a different master from her (714) or the boy will grow up in Troy as the last remnant of the Trojans (716). The description of Astyanax as λείψανον recalls the descriptions of surviving soldiers after war in *Agamemnon* and *Persians*. For example, the Herald in *Agamemnon* tells those in Argos to welcome those remaining after the fighting (τὸν λελειμμένον δορός, 517), and the Messenger in *Persians* calls those who returned home to Persia after war the "remnants" (λοιποί, 508). These depictions show the randomness of survival during

war rather than deservedness, much like Hector's excellence as a fighter could not preserve his own or his son's life.⁷⁴ Astyanax has the potential to at least continue the survival of the Trojan people as the "remnants" of the Greeks and Persians did, despite the damage done to their communities, but this potential is unfulfilled. When she learns the truth of Astyanax's future death, Andromache despairs that this is worse than her own marriage to Neoptolemus (720) and a disproportionate evil (722). In this exchange between Talthibius and Andromache, each highlights the evil that has come upon the Trojans. Within their thirteen lines of stichomythia, the word *κακός* appears five times as the emphatic final word of the line (712, 717, 718, 720, 722) and once as the penultimate word (*κακὸν μέγα*, 719).

Moreover, Andromache draws attention to the youth of Astyanax, reinforcing the excessiveness of this evil. We have seen youthfulness emphasized in *Agamemnon* and *Persians* to show the unnatural deaths of soldiers before their parents. For example, the Chorus in *Agamemnon* describe their own old age in contrast with the youth of the soldiers who went abroad (72-82), and in both plays, the soldiers are described as blossoms (*A.* 198, 658-60; *Pers.* 59, 252, 925). In *Trojan Women* this untimeliness is recognized and made even more jarring with the anticipated death of Astyanax. Andromache's focus on Astyanax's youth reveals the inappropriateness of his death. She uses a simile familiar by now when she describes Astyanax clutching her clothes like a young bird rushing under his mother's wing (*τί μου δέδραξαι χερσὶ κἀντέχῃ πέπλων, / νεοσσὸς ὥσεῖ πτέρυγας ἐσπίτνων ἐμάς*; 750-51). As when Hecuba compared herself to a mother bird crying for her young (146), here again we vividly see the natural family relationships between a mother and her children and, thus, what will be broken apart. Moreover,

⁷⁴ Gaca's understanding of andrapodizing in the Greek world suggests that the process involved the victors indiscriminately killing men to terrify, demoralize, and subdue the community before selecting and capturing some members. With this in mind, I believe the potential randomness of Astyanax's survival in *Trojan Women* makes the fear of the women even more palpable and his death even more devastating.

the adjectives Andromache uses to describe Astyanax—young, beloved, most dear to his mother (ὦ νέον ὑπαγκάλισμα μητρὶ φίλτατον, 757)—emphasize the youth of Astyanax and the bond between mother and son that the Greeks are trying to break. By mourning the sweet fragrance of Astyanax’s skin (ὦ χρωτὸς ἡδὺ πνεῦμα, 758), Andromache again draws attention to his youthfulness.

Andromache’s thoughts also wander to her marriage to Hector and the birth of Astyanax, revealing how youths are tied to the future of any city and how all hopes for Troy’s future have been dashed. She calls out to her marriage bed, calling it unlucky (δυστυχῇ, 745), and to her marriage, and she shares her expectation at the time that she would bear a son who would become king of Asia (745-48). Even Astyanax’s own name—Lord of the City—suggests a future for him that is no longer possible. Similarly, Andromache mourns how she bore and nursed Astyanax in vain (758-60):

...διὰ κενῆς ἄρα
ἐν σπαργάνοις σε μαστὸς ἐξέθρεψ’ ὅδε,
μάτην δ’ ἐμόχθουν καὶ κατεξάνθη πόνους. (760)

In vain this breast nursed you in your swaddling-clothes, and in vain I labored and was worn away by labor pains.

By recalling Astyanax’s birth and infancy, Andromache emphasizes the vulnerability of the boy and his dependence on his mother, making the idea of tearing him from her arms even more distressing. Finally, Andromache reiterates that the Greeks are killing a child, one who is not responsible for anything (τί τόνδε παῖδα κτείνειτ’ οὐδὲν αἴτιον; 765). The anticipated death of Astyanax and the continued emphasis on his youth, like the imagery in *Agamemnon* and *Persians*, reveal both the severity of the effects of war as well as the destruction of the entire society because of war. The death of the young is the death of a people’s future, here emblematic of the total loss of Troy.

The Chorus' second stasimon on the first sack of Troy offers parallels to the current situation at Troy. The Chorus recall the expedition of Telamon and Heracles from Greece to Troy, the sack of the city there, and the resulting abduction of Ganymede. Their refrains are inserted amidst the grief for Astyanax, at a moment in the play when a mother is mourning for her lost child. This setting allows certain themes to emerge from the Chorus' stories. They reintroduce themes of departure, physical separation, and the deep connection between people and their land, while underscoring the negative effects of war upon entire communities.

In portraying Telamon and Heracles departing for Troy, the Chorus give particular attention to the locations they leave and the places they pass along the way. They portray Telamon leaving his home of Salamis, giving a detailed description of the island in association with Athens (799-803). The repetition of the words ἔβας ἔβας (804) and Ἴλιον Ἴλιον (806), both at the beginning of the line, draws attention particularly to Telamon's departure from his homeland and his arrival in a new city—Troy. The Chorus are thinking both of the former Troy that Telamon sacked and also of their own home of Troy, saying that Troy was just previously their city (πόλιν ἀμετέραν / τὸ πάροιθεν, 806-7). The Chorus also describe the departure of Heracles, who led out the flower of Greece (Ἑλλάδος ἄγαγε... ἄνθος, 809). This description of fighting men as the blossom of their homeland, familiar from both *Agamemnon* and *Persians*, demonstrates both the youth of the men as well as their embodiment of their homelands. Furthermore, the description of Heracles stopping his travels at the river Simois and fastening his ship's cables to the stern of the boat offers a parallel view to the departure of the Persian army in *Persians* and the arrival of the Greek army in *Trojan Women*. The Persian army sets out into the sea, trusting in the cables of their ships to transport them (πίσυνοι λεπτοδόμοις πείσμασι λαοπόροις τε μηχαναῖς, *Pers.* 112), and the Greek army hangs such cables down from their boats

to anchor at Troy (πλεκτάς, Αἰγύπτου / παίδευμ', ἐξηρτάσασθ', <αἰαῖ> / αἰαῖ, Τροίας ἐν κόλποις, *Tr.* 128-30). In the Chorus' account, Heracles arrives on land and puts aside these devices he no longer needs (ἔσχασε ποντοπόρον καὶ ναύδετ' ἀνήψατο πρυμνῶν, 811). Just as earlier in *Trojan Women*, when the Chorus reflected upon the arrival of the Greek army at Troy as they considered the results of the war, here they also give attention to the arrival of foreigners to Trojan soil in the midst of their story about displacement from the land.

The Chorus' account of the first sack of Troy also parallels the current situation in its focus on youth through the figure of Ganymede. Ganymede is identified only through his lineage as the son of Laomedon (Λαομεδόντιε παῖ, 822), much like Astyanax is associated with his father Hector. On one hand, Ganymede offers a positive alternative in contrast to the fate of Astyanax. He is allowed to live and, indeed, lives among the gods in eternal youth. His step is light (ἄβρὰ βαίνων, 821) and, although he is a slave, that servitude is most beautiful (καλλίσταν λατρείαν, 824). The peacefulness of Ganymede's youth is especially emphasized: his young face is beautifully calm (πρόσωπα νεα/-ρὰ χάρισι... / καλλιγάλανα, 835-37). On the other hand, even with his survival and honors in heaven, Ganymede cannot prevent the destruction of his home. The Chorus say that his position as cupbearer for Zeus is "in vain" (μάταν ἄρ', 821), and his peaceful expression stands in contrast to the disappearance of his former bathing and exercise grounds—the places of his youth (τὰ δὲ σὰ δροσόεντα λουτρὰ / γυμνασίων τε δρόμοι / βεβᾶσι, 833-35). The Chorus meld the first sack of Troy with their own experience as they imagine Ganymede watching the Greeks destroy the land of Priam (Πριάμοιο δὲ γαῖαν / Ἑλλάς ὄλεσ' αἰχμὰ, 837-38). The account of Ganymede's forced service to Zeus highlights the extreme nature of Astyanax's death, but it also shows how even the best capture is not enough to sustain a community. Likewise, the Chorus allude to Dawn's marriage to Tithonus, another child of

Laomedon. Even after the first defeat of Troy, the Chorus suggest that a new connection was made for Troy through the marriage and potential for children, saying that Dawn took up a husband from this land (τεκνοποιὸν ἔχουσα τᾷσδε / γᾶς πόσιν ἐν θαλάμοις, 852-53) and calling Tithonus a great hope for the fatherland (ἐλπίδα γᾶι πατρίαι μεγάλην, 857). The hopes expressed for Tithonus are similar to those for Astyanax. Yet Troy falls again. If marriage to the gods is not enough to sustain the Trojan race, then certainly the women forced into new marriages to Greeks will fare no better.

Finally, the imagery of the landscape and youth are merged as the Chorus describe the seashores crying like birds for their young. This image emphasizes the close ties between the people and their land, as well as the resulting total destruction of the community when people are stripped from their homes (827-31):

ἡϊόνες δ' ἄλλαι
ἱακχον οἰωνὸς οἷ-
ον τέκνων ὕπερ βοῶσ',
αἱ μὲν εὐνάς, αἱ δὲ παῖδας, (830)
αἱ δὲ ματέρας γεραιάς.

And the shores of the sea shout, like a bird crying a song for its children, some for husbands, some for children, some for aged mothers.

Troy has been so profoundly harmed that the seashore itself seems to resonate with the mournful cries of the women that we have heard throughout the play. The scene recalls a moment early in the play, when Poseidon describes how the Scamander shouts with the wailing of the captive women being allotted to new masters (πολλοῖς δὲ κωκυτοῖσιν αἰχμαλωτίδων / βοᾷ Σκάμανδρος δεσπόταις κληρουμένων, 28-29). The pain of the women is deeply tied to their loss of home.

In addition, the image of a bird crying for its young once again reinforces the loss of youths before their time and, moreover, casts the homeland as the parent of the entire Trojan people (828-29). This demonstrates the intensity of the loss and the way that the Trojan identity is

located at the site of their homeland. Finally, though presumably many of the husbands and sons mentioned were of fighting age, the land and the people who survive mourn not just those who died in battle but all kinds of people, including children like Astyanax and even elderly mothers (830-31). Through their reflections on the first sack of Troy and their emphasis on the capture of youths from their homeland, the Chorus demonstrate the devastating effects of war upon families, communities, and entire societies.

When Talthybius returns at last with the body of Astyanax after the Chorus' interlude, the burial the boy receives is improper and entirely distorted.⁷⁵ Such a burial demonstrates the severity of Astyanax's death and the loss of the entire Trojan people. For example, the wrong people prepare Astyanax's body for burial, and Talthybius emphasizes the efficiency of the process rather than care for the boy. His first announcement is that all but one of the Greek ships have departed Troy, suggesting the eagerness of the Greek fleet to depart swiftly (1123-25). Most importantly, Talthybius reveals that Neoptolemus has already departed, taking Andromache with him and, thus, preventing her from providing a burial for her son. Talthybius especially notes the haste of Neoptolemus (οὗ θᾶσσον οὐνεκ', οὐ χάριν μονῆς ἔχων, 1129) and the way this speed prevented Andromache from preparing the burial (τὸ δεσπότητος τάχος / ἀφειλετ' αὐτὴν παῖδα μὴ δοῦναι τάφῳ, 1145-46), implying that it would have been appropriate, instead, for Andromache to be present. Indeed, it would be the custom familiar to the Greeks to have the female family members prepare the burial.

⁷⁵ Dyson and Lee (2000) argue that we should not limit our focus to the negative aspects of the funeral. I agree that the interplay of positive and negative within the scene helps us appreciate its complexity, yet I disagree with their statements that "it is a proper funeral" (28) and that the distorted features of the funeral "are pathetic because nature's norm has been subverted, not because ritual is perverted" (30). As I will show, both nature and the ritual are improper, especially through Talthybius' role in the funeral as a foreigner outside the family.

In her absence, Andromache has pursued the second-best option—asking Neoptolemus to give Astyanax’s body to Hecuba, the boy’s grandmother, for burial, a request that Talthybius is now fulfilling (1142-44). Nevertheless, the insufficiency of even this option is apparent.

Talthybius continues to push for haste in the burial: he tells Hecuba that they will set sail once she has buried the body (1147-48), and he asks her to complete the task as quickly as possible (ὥς τάχιστα πρᾶσσε, 1149). Moreover, Talthybius has even taken it upon himself to wash the body in the Scamander on his way there (1151-52). Although Talthybius frames this action as freeing Hecuba from a hardship (ἐνὸς μὲν οὖν μόχθου σ’ ἀπαλλάξας ἔχω, 1150), his initiative is misplaced. He violates the principle of women caring for the dead, and his action is especially inappropriate since he is a foreign enemy, not family.⁷⁶ Furthermore, Talthybius says that he and Hecuba will perform the necessary remaining duties at the same time so that they can sail home more quickly (ὥς σύντομ’ ἡμῖν τὰπ’ ἐμοῦ τε κἀπὸ σοῦ / ἐς ἐν ξυνελθόντ’ οἴκαδ’ ὁρμήσῃ πλάτην, 1154-55). The word οἴκαδε is jarring. Although Talthybius and Hecuba are performing their tasks in unison, it is only Talthybius who will return home, while Hecuba is forced to leave her home. Talthybius’ language shows that even though he has demonstrated compassion for Andromache and Hecuba, he still has the Greek mindset and cannot view things from Hecuba’s perspective. He, moreover, forces this perspective upon the Trojan women, and in his haste he provides an improper burial for the young boy.

In addition to the absence of Andromache from Astyanax’s burial, Astyanax’s death is also unnatural because of his young age. Hecuba’s lament and the Chorus’ interjections contain features typical of a Greek funeral: a direct address, a narrative of past or future, and a new

⁷⁶ After Clytemnestra kills Agamemnon, a transgressive act that violently betrays family ties, she says that she will bury Agamemnon and Iphigenia will meet him in the underworld (*A.* 1553-56), demonstrating the importance of female family members to the ritual of burial even when it is distorted by her own murderous act and Iphigenia’s death.

address that includes reproach and lamentation (Alexiou 174: 133; Dué 2006: 147). These recognizable Greek features blur the line between Greek and Trojan and would help the audience identify with the Trojans on stage (Dué 2006: 149). At the same time, Hecuba's response to Talthybius draws attention to the fact that, within the proper order of things, Astyanax would not yet be dead. For example, she imagines an alternative that would have been more typical (1168-70):

εἰ μὲν γὰρ ἔθανες πρὸ πόλεως ἥβης τυχὼν
γάμων τε καὶ τῆς ἰσοθέου τυραννίδος,
μακάριος ἦσθ' ἄν, εἴ τι τῶνδε μακάριον· (1170)

For if you had died for the city, having reached manhood, marriage, and godlike rule, you would have been blessed, if any of these things is blessed.

Astyanax has died before his expected time—before he has grown into the prime of life, before marriage, and before taking up any power (1168-69). But Hecuba's words also call into question the deaths of men like Hector, who did achieve these things. Though she says that Astyanax would be blessed if he had died for his country in a later stage of life, Hecuba then undercuts her statement, questioning whether any of those things is truly blessed and, thus, whether a death like Hector's would be as well. Through the extreme death of Astyanax, Hecuba draws attention to the fact that even the men who died in battle at Troy may, too, be worth mourning, for their deaths also came too soon.

Hecuba reinforces the untimeliness of Astyanax's death when she recalls a moment with her grandson and a promise he made to her (1180-86):

ὦ πολλὰ κόμπους ἐκβαλὼν, φίλον στόμα, (1180)
ὄλωλας, ἐψεύσω μ', ὅτ' ἐσπίπτων πέπλους,
ᾧ μῆτερ, ἡὔδας, ἣ πολὺν σοι βοστρύχων
πλόκαμον κερῶμαι πρὸς τάφον θ' ὀμηλίκων
κώμους ἐπάξω, φίλα διδοὺς προσφθέγματα.
σὺ δ' οὐκ ἔμ', ἀλλ' ἐγὼ σὲ τὸν νεώτερον, (1185)
γραῦς ἄπολις ἄτεκνος, ἄθλιον θάπτω νεκρόν.

Dear mouth, throwing out many boasts, you destroyed them, you deceived me, when falling upon my dress, you said “Oh mother, I will cut many a lock of hair for you and I will bring crowds of my age-mates to your tomb, having given you dear words of address.” But you will not bury me, but I, an old woman, city-less, childless, will bury you, too young, a miserable corpse.

In this memory of Hecuba’s, the scene that Astyanax predicts is appropriate—as the grandson of Hecuba, he expects that one day he will cut his hair in mourning for her and visit her tomb with others of his age. In her lament that these words can no longer come true, Hecuba shows how, in fact, the situation is perfectly reversed. Her parallel word order (σὺ δ’ οὐκ ἔμ’, ἀλλ’ ἐγὼ σὲ, 1185) demonstrates this. She especially contrasts her agedness with Astyanax’s youth, ending one line with the word νεώτερον (1185) to describe Astyanax and beginning the next with the word γράῤῥ (1186) in reference to herself. Hecuba has survived her son and grandson, an unnatural order of events. Her lament reveals the effects of these losses on her own life—she is both without a city and childless (ἄπολις ἄτεκνος, 1186). In fact, these two losses go hand-in-hand: it seems impossible for Hecuba—or any of the other women—to have one without the other. By portraying an aged woman preparing to actually bury her young grandson, *Trojan Women* develops the multiple perspectives introduced in *Agamemnon* and *Persians*, giving an intimate look into the emotions of women who survive war and showing what happens after the war has concluded and these women are faced with living with loss.

Moreover, as Talthybius and Hecuba prepare for the burial of Astyanax, they demonstrate that clothing and adornment are useless markers of status. The irony of a soldier’s death and burial for the young boy contributes to the message from *Agamemnon* and *Persians* that the damage of war cannot be fixed easily through such status markers. One marker of status is Astyanax’s lineage, and the continual connections made between Astyanax and his father Hector add emotional potency to the distorted burial. It is useful to contrast this scene with the famous

scene from the *Iliad* in which Hector expresses to Andromache his hopes for Astyanax's future, hopes that will ultimately be unfulfilled. Hector prays that his son be a warrior like himself and return to Andromache with the spoils of war (*Iliad* 6.476-81):

Ζεῦ ἄλλοι τε θεοὶ δότε δὴ καὶ τόνδε γενέσθαι
παῖδ' ἐμὸν ὥς καὶ ἐγὼ περ ἄριπρεπέα Τρώεσσιν,
ὥδε βίην τ' ἀγαθόν, καὶ Ἰλίου Ἴφι ἀνάσσειν·
καὶ ποτέ τις εἴποι πατρός γ' ὅδε πολλὸν ἀμείνων
ἐκ πολέμου ἀνιόντα· φέροι δ' ἔναρα βροτόεντα (480)
κτείνας δῆϊον ἄνδρα, χαρεῖν δὲ φρένα μήτηρ.

Zeus and the other gods, grant that this son of mine, too, be very distinguished, as I am, among the Trojans, thus as good in strength, and grant that he rule over Ilium with his might. And at some time may someone say that this man, coming back from war, is much better than his father. And may he bear bloody spoils having killed a hostile man, and may his mother be gladdened in her heart.

Hector wishes for Astyanax to be distinguished among the Trojans (ἀριπρεπέα Τρώεσσιν, 477), to have great strength (βίην τ' ἀγαθόν, 478), and to rule Troy with his might (Ἰλίου Ἴφι ἀνάσσειν, 477), all features that Hector himself once possessed. In fact, Hector believes that Astyanax will surpass him, especially in feats of war (479-80). Hector's prayer that Astyanax return to Troy after war victorious (ἐκ πολέμου ἀνιόντα, 480) is not only unfulfilled in *Trojan Women* but completely distorted. Astyanax returns dead, not as a joy to his mother as Hector had wished (χαρεῖν δὲ φρένα μήτηρ, *Iliad* 481), but as a pain to his grandmother, with Andromache already departed. Furthermore, he returns not with the spoils of arms bloodied with his enemies' blood (φέροι δ' ἔναρα βροτόεντα / κτείνας δῆϊον ἄνδρα, *Iliad* 479-80) but on his father's shield, stained with his own blood. He is still a child, not yet having fought on the actual battlefield; nevertheless, war has caused his death.

Although in the *Iliad* the shared laughter between Hector and Andromache (*Il.* 6.471) offers some levity and Hector's prayers for Astyanax provide some hope for the Trojan people, in *Trojan Women* all that Astyanax has inherited from his father ultimately fails him, his family,

and his city. Just as when Talthybius and Andromache identified Astyanax closely with his father, the language of Talthybius and Hecuba after Astyanax's body is returned contributes to the feeling of futility regarding his death. The clearest evidence of Astyanax's ironic treatment as a dead warrior is the shield upon which he is carried back to Hecuba by the Greeks, drawing attention to the injustice of his death. Talthybius demonstrates the exceptional status of the shield, which inspired terror among the Greeks (φόβον τ' Ἀχαιῶν, 1136) and defended Hector's body (ἦν πατήρ τοῦδ' ἄμφι πλεύρ' ἐβάλλετο, 1137). In addition, he shares how Andromache gave this item special attention by asking that it not be taken to the house of Peleus nor to the bedroom of her new marriage (μὴ νιν πορεύσαι Πηλέως ἐφ' ἐστίαν / μηδ' ἐς τὸν αὐτὸν θάλαμον οὗ νυμφεύσεται, 1138-39). Furthermore, Andromache asks that Astyanax be buried on this shield instead of in a wooden coffin or stone tomb (ἀλλ' ἀντὶ κέδρου περιβόλων τε λαΐνων / ἐν τῇδε θάψαι παῖδα, 1141-42), showing her desire to preserve her husband's memory and the glory of the Trojans. Astyanax would receive a burial worthy of a mighty soldier, yet this is at odds with the actual situation—a young child killed after war is already over. The shield is the first thing that Hecuba notices and comments upon, and she reacts to this irony, calling the shield a hateful sight and unpleasant to look upon (λυπρὸν θέαμα κοῦ φίλον λεύσσειν ἐμοί, 1157).

Adding to the distortions in this scene are the continual connections made by Hecuba between Astyanax and his father Hector. For example, in describing the physical defilement of Astyanax's body, Hecuba laments how the boy's hair has been shorn by his father's walls (1173-76). These walls that were once a sign of power and protection—built by Apollo himself (Λοξίου πυργώματα, 1174)—have now caused damage to their own people. The audience is forced to imagine the gruesome scene of a young boy tumbling against the stones. Hecuba reinforces the familial connection by describing the walls as πατρῶια (1174) and recalling Andromache. She

emphasizes Astyanax's youth in her description of his curls, which Andromache used to cherish and kiss (ὄν πόλλ' ἐκήπευσ' ἡ τεκοῦσα βόστρυχον / φιλήμασιν τ' ἔδωκεν, 1175-76). This moment of fondness between mother and child is likely similar to the one immediately following Hector's prayer in the *Iliad*, when Hector puts Astyanax into Andromache's arms, and she smiles and holds him to her breast (ἦ δ' ἄρα μιν κηώδεϊ δέξατο κόλποι, / δακρυόεν γελάσασα, *Il.* 6.483-84). But now, all hopes for Astyanax's future are gone, remaining only in happy but temporary memories. In addition, Hecuba remarks that Astyanax's hands are like his father's, but now lie limp in death (ὦ χεῖρες, ὡς εἰκοῦς μὲν ἠδείας πατρός / κέκτησθ', ἐν ἄρθροις δ' ἔκλυτοι πρόκεισθέ μοι, 1178-79), showing the failure of this inheritance. Hecuba points out all that Astyanax has in common with Hector, even as she is lamenting the death of both family members, demonstrating the futility of these physical markers of power and status.

When Hecuba adorns Astyanax's body for burial, these trappings also prove useless for the future of the Trojan people. Her attempt to provide status for Astyanax through physical adornment is similar to how we have seen such decoration be a useless status symbol in both *Agamemnon* and *Persians*. For example, Agamemnon steps on the luxurious cloth laid out before him by Clytemnestra, but he cannot see how he has already lost his position as king in the "carpet scene" of *Agamemnon* (905-74). In addition, Xerxes' torn clothing in the Queen's dream and upon his return marks his defeat (*Pers.* 176-214 and 832-36), and although the Queen promises to bring his royal robes to him (*Pers.* 845-51), Xerxes is never restored to his former status. In *Trojan Women*, Hecuba tries to enhance the prestige of Astyanax, but her efforts are in vain.

First, Hecuba comments on the shield that will serve as Astyanax's coffin: although the boy did not obtain an inheritance from his father, he will have this shield for burial (ἀλλ' οὖν

πατρώων οὐ λαχὼν ἔξεις ὅμως / ἐν ᾗ ταφήσῃ χαλκόνωτον ἰτέαν, 1192-93). The irony of a dead boy receiving a shield meant to be used to protect one's life continues as Hecuba juxtaposes a description of the shield's former life with Astyanax's young, lifeless body. For example, she calls the shield the protector of Hector's arm (σώζουσ', 1195), though now it shields a body no longer in need of protection against death. She then describes two marks on the shield: the sweet imprint of Astyanax's body (ἡδὺς ἐν πόρπακι σῶι κεῖται τύπος, 1196) and Hector's sweat, which wet the rim of the shield in fighting (ἵτυός τ' ἐν εὐτόρνοισι περιδρόμοις ἰδρώς, 1197). This battle connection to Hector shows the unsuitability of such a burial for a child.

Furthermore, Hecuba decorates Astyanax's body with the wrong kind of ornaments. She laments that Astyanax does not receive these rewards for victories in horses or archery, as he should have (οὐχ ἵπποισι νικήσαντά σε / οὐδ' ἥλικας τόξοισιν, 1209-10), demonstrating the corrupt nature of his death. Moreover, Hecuba decorates Astyanax's body with robes that he should have worn at marriage (ἃ δ' ἐν γάμοισι χρῆν σε προσθέσθαι χροῖ / Ἀσιατίδων γήμαντα τὴν ὑπερτάτην, / Φρύγια πέπλων ἀγάλματ' ἐξάπτω χροός, 1218-20), drawing attention to his young age and the life he will not be able to live. Instead of marriage to the best of Asian women, which will ensure the continuation of the Trojan race, Astyanax's death marks the end of the Trojan society. Finally, Hecuba calls the shield the mother of countless trophies (μυρίων / μῆτερ τροπαίων, 1221-22). The irony of naming the shield "mother" while it is buried alongside a dead child underscores all the distortions of this burial. A grandmother is burying her grandson—the wrong order of things—and there is no more hope for future generations of Trojans to be born. The Trojan mothers have all been taken away to Greek lands.

Despite all Hecuba's attempts to honor Astyanax through beautiful ornaments in death, these markers of status have no power. Hecuba even recognizes this fact (1248-50):

δοκῶ δὲ τοῖς θανοῦσι διαφέρειν βραχὺ
 εἰ πλουσίων τις τεύξεται κτερισμάτων·
 κενὸν δὲ γάρωμ' ἐστὶ τῶν ζώντων τόδε. (1250)

I think that it makes little difference to the dead if someone is prepared with wealthy funeral gifts. But this is an empty source of pride for the living.

Hecuba suggests that the dead do not care if they are decorated; it is simply the pride of the living that encourages this action. In acknowledging this, Hecuba demonstrates that, much like in *Agamemnon* and *Persians*, luxury and wealth, especially in the form of clothing and adornment, are not enough to restore the status of anyone after war. Even those who survive can only attempt to comfort themselves through such things, but in the end, they are in vain (κενὸν, 1250).

Youths, therefore, represent the future of a society. They carry on the lineage of their mothers and fathers and offer the promise that a people will endure. The death of all Trojan men in *Trojan Women*, culminating with the death of Astyanax, shows the true permanence of the damage war has done to the community. Distortions within Astyanax's death—his hasty burial, his youthful appearance, and his useless trappings of status—all reveal how this death is unnatural and undeserved. Once again, tragedy departs from its epic model, where Astyanax and Telemachus offer hope to their fathers. The Chorus' second stasimon, inserted between the exchanges of Talthybius and Andromache, reinforces this theme of youths lost before their time, showing how even in the best of circumstances—service to the gods—damage is still done to the society. Thus, the play reveals damage done in the past and the present, but also the lasting effects of this destruction into the future.

Conclusion

Talthybius returns one last time to announce to the Greek soldiers that they can set their final fire to the city and to tell the remaining Trojan women that the ships are ready to take them from their land. The scene that follows closes the play with an exchange of lament between

Hecuba and the Chorus, who mourn their own lives and the loss of the city at the same time (1287-32). Like in the stichomythia of mourning between Hecuba and Andromache earlier, Hecuba and the Chorus exchange lines and half-lines expressing their grief. Language breaks down as the women sometimes finish each other's sentences, sometimes react with cries of pain, and sometimes introduce a syntactically separate idea. As Wohl (2018: 30-33) argues, the breakdown of language parallels the destruction of the city as both the material and immaterial crumble into ashes and a smoke rises that is both alive and dead.

As expressed earlier in the play, the actual earth underneath Troy is the site of pain for the women. Hecuba addresses the land directly as the nourisher of her children (ἰὼ γᾶ τροφίμε τῶν ἐμῶν τέκνων, 1301; cf. *Pers.* 61-62), and both she and the Chorus throw themselves on the ground and beat the earth (Εκ: γεραία γ' ἐς πέδον μέλεα τιθεῖσα καὶ / χερσὶ γαῖαν κτυποῦσα δισσαῖς. / Χο: διάδοχά σοι γόνυ τίθημι γαίαι, 1305-7). Similarly, the Chorus address the city, saying it will fall to the ground nameless. As the women are taken to Greece, the city loses its identity, as well, and vice versa; when separated physically from the homeland, to which they have been connected from birth, the women lose something of themselves. Even if their story survives, they will not earn glory through it. Instead, as Torrance (2013: 243-44) argues, Troy will only live on through the eyes of the victors. The final lines of the play, spoken by the Chorus, show the women preparing to leave their land for the first time (1331-32):

ἰὼ τάλαινα πόλις. ὅμως
δὲ πρόφερε πόδα σὸν ἐπὶ πλάτας Ἀχαιῶν

Oh suffering city! But nevertheless bring your step to the Achaean ships.

It is appropriate that this play that constantly looks back to the arrival of the Greeks in Troy as the cause of extensive, permanent suffering ends with the very ships that brought the soldiers

there. The future will continue to be entwined with that past when the women climb aboard these ships, the vehicles of both homecoming and exile.

Trojan Women considers war from three sides—the past, the present, and the future—complementing the picture of war and homecoming that is painted in *Agamemnon* and *Persians*. Looking at the aftermath of war from the perspective of the defeated women who are forced to leave their city, *Trojan Women* continues the themes of permanent separation from homeland and indiscriminate, universal destruction. Euripides presents the arrival of Greeks in Troy and their actions inside the city with language of transgression familiar from *Agamemnon* and *Persians*. Furthermore, the Trojan women's forced departure from home and the emphasis on the distance they will travel shows their continued, shared grief and universal experiences, even with the different perspectives from Hecuba, Cassandra, Andromache, and the Chorus. Finally, the loss of children before parents, especially the example of Astyanax, and destruction of the city show there is no happy future for the people of Troy, even if they survive. The women pay the most severe price because they must live with that future full of pain and loss.

CONCLUSION

The three plays discussed in this dissertation—Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon* and *Persians* and Euripides’ *Trojan Women*—present patterns of homecoming that diverge from the model homecoming in the *Odyssey*. To be sure, the problems of homecoming that are introduced within the *Odyssey* appear again in these plays: first, soldiers who go to war are physically separated from their homelands by great distances and face difficulty surviving and returning safely; second, characters lose their status during and after war, including both their political and social standing; and third, the relationships within families and communities are broken due to transgressions and lengthy separations. The “crossing from war” tragedies, however, explore more deeply the lasting and irresolvable nature of these problems and the way that they affect every member of a community. No longer are the difficulties of homecoming an opportunity for a returning soldier to show heroism. Neither are they neatly resolved in the story’s conclusion. Instead, the plays demonstrate the continued suffering of all parties.

The problems of homecoming within the tragedies manifest themselves especially through certain patterns of imagery. Geographical catalogues and environmental imagery, such as Clytemnestra’s description of the territories crossed by the beacon’s light in *Agamemnon*, the Messenger’s account of the perils of crossing the Strymon in *Persians*, or the Chorus’ imaginings of the Greek lands where they might be forced to live in *Trojan Women*, all reinforce the difficulties of physical return to the homeland. In a similar vein, images of permanent changes to the landscape and of men becoming part of the environment, whether men inhabiting tombs in a foreign land, Xerxes yoking the Hellespont, or corpses heaping up at Salamis or Plataea, emphasize the lasting effects of separation and the future generations that will continue to bear witness to the struggles of war. Personification of the land, particularly through imagery

of the homeland as a mourner along with her people, which appears in all three plays, demonstrates the deep connection between people and their homelands and, thus, the deep loss that cannot be recovered when soldiers die abroad or women are stripped from their homes because of war. In the aftermath of war, tragedy focuses on departure and separation, even when some characters safely arrive physically in their homelands.

The problem of a physical homecoming is not the only one that persists within these tragedies. Other patterns demonstrate the continued effects upon status and relationships, patterns such as the repeated imagery of youth and old age and the focus on clothing and other artificial markers of status. Characters in all three plays repeatedly draw attention to the youth of the soldiers who die abroad and the old age of those who survive at home, emphasizing the unnatural deaths of young men before their time. Natural imagery, like the blossom of youth that appears across these plays or the withering plant of old age that appears in the parados of *Agamemnon*, highlights the distortions of familial and societal life caused by the death of young people. In addition, the failure of clothing and other adornments to restore the status of individuals—from Agamemnon and Cassandra to Xerxes to Astyanax—demonstrates again the tragic perspective toward homecoming: the effects of war are persistent and cannot be fixed by adopting external visual symbols.

These patterns appear in other tragedies, as well, and it is worth looking at an example from Sophocles to demonstrate the applicability of this direction of study. Sophocles' *Ajax* offers an answer to the question, "What happens if there is no homecoming?" The play is an interesting example of how the challenging aftermath of war as depicted in *Agamemnon*, *Persians*, and *Trojan Women* has an effect even in this situation. First, the same imagery of physical separation from one's homeland and the damage that this distance causes is evident. For example, the play

contrasts the security of an established home with the dangers of the wilderness—Ajax is safe only within his tent (741-42, 792-93). In addition, foreign lands permanently separate Ajax from his homeland. While men in *Agamemnon* attempt to find comforts of home at Troy but fail and the women in *Trojan Women* are forced to leave their home of Troy, in *Ajax*, Troy has truly become a new homeland, the site of Ajax's military identity. Ajax addresses Salamis, Athens, and Troy in his final farewell, saying that all three lands nourished him (859-63). The foreign land becomes a resting place for the dead, just as it did in *Agamemnon*, *Persians*, and *Trojan Women*. Ajax, though a child of Greece, never returns from Trojan soil. His death is even aided by the foreign land as he thrusts his sword into the earth before falling upon it (654-56, 817-20), and his story ends with burial in Trojan soil.

Furthermore, the loss of status experienced by characters like Agamemnon, Cassandra, Xerxes, Hecuba, and Andromache is experienced similarly by Ajax on account of war. Ajax is defined by his role as a soldier and Sophocles' play focuses on Ajax's warrior identity. Ajax and others constantly characterize him in terms of his prowess in combat during the Trojan War. For example, when Ajax comes out of his madness, he claims that he is now a mockery of his former courageous battle-ready self (364-67) and that Troy had never seen a man like him in battle (420-26). Now, however, he has been dishonored, both because the Atreidae spurned his greatness in battle when they awarded Achilles' arms to Odysseus (430-46) and because he has failed in his revenge, which he attempts to enact through battle-like slaughter (447-56). Ajax has lost his status as a warrior, illustrated by his disgrace both in his own eyes and in the eyes of others.

The Chorus, too, contrast Ajax's performances at war with his current state (612-20), highlighting the importance of war to how one is perceived upon return. Furthermore, the Chorus lament the endless years of suffering that war causes and curse the one who first introduced war

and weapons to the Greeks; according to the Chorus, war takes away all the pleasures of life—garlands, wine, music, sleep, and love—and even the greatest warrior Ajax cannot free them from fear (1185-1222). Just as Agamemnon’s war victory is not enough to sustain his status and Hector’s battle prowess cannot ensure his people’s future, so is Ajax unable to protect others from the harm caused by war. Moreover, the Chorus emphasize the lasting effects of war in spheres beyond the battlefield. The pleasures they list are part of life at home and at peace. *Ajax*, like *Agamemnon* and *Trojan Women*, also highlights the fall from status for female captives taken into slavery. In *Ajax*, Tecmessa imagines what will happen to her without Ajax: she will be dragged away by a Greek master who will mock how she is now a slave when formerly she belonged to one of the greatest men in the army (496-503).

Finally, *Ajax* also draws attention to the loss of youths before their time and the inability for families and communities to continue to prosper after war because of the harm done to young people. Like Astyanax in *Trojan Women*, Ajax’s son Eurysaces is denied the possibility to live up to his father in the way that Telemachus does. Although Ajax hands down his shield to Eurysaces, enjoining the young boy to live with the same fighting nature as his father (545-82), his son will not actually be able to fulfill Ajax’s desires. He is not the son of a Greek wife but of captured Tecmessa, and he faces dangers whether Ajax lives or dies. Tecmessa fears for his life when Ajax is in his madness, refusing to let Ajax see his son when he emerges (531-33). In addition, she dreads Ajax’s death, knowing that she and her son will become slaves (496-99). Ajax’s shield is a marker of power and protection in battle, but it is just as useless to Eurysaces as Hector’s shield is to the dead Astyanax. The child’s name—“with broad shield”—adds irony to the scene, as does the name of Astyanax. Ajax gives his son a hopeful name (574-75), but the

shield does not in fact serve any purpose after war, because Eurysaces will become a foreign slave.

The patterns of homecoming that have emerged in my analysis of *Agamemnon*, *Persians*, and *Trojan Women* leave us with a few takeaways about how tragedy approaches the aftermath of war. One is the exposure of the different effects that war has upon men and women. For the men in these plays, life depends on status and glory and their losses come within these spheres. For example, when Agamemnon returns, he finds he has lost some of the respect and trust of his community that he used to receive as king and has been replaced in the home by a new man who shares a bedroom with his wife. Similarly, the greatest defeat for Xerxes is his shame at not living up to generations of kings before him, including his father Darius, demonstrated especially by the clothing he tears to shreds with own hands. In *Trojan Women*, even those who die, like Hector, have the false hope of offspring who will carry on their line.

Women, on the other hand, are presented as paying the price of war for much longer. Whether or not the men come back with glory, the women lose much more since they live with the future consequences of war, including the broken prospects of future generations. For a society in which motherhood was essential to the identity of women, these losses are especially meaningful and painful. In *Agamemnon* and *Persians*, the possible losses women experience are presented as permanent—the deaths of their husbands and sons are shown with no signs to rebuild communities. The Choruses in each play repeatedly describe cities as empty of men and beds as empty of bedmates. *Trojan Women* gives the clearest example of the ways that women are entwined in the future of their communities. In *Trojan Women*, the women lose their husbands, children, and even future children: their sons either have died at war like Hector, will be killed after war like Astyanax, or will be born as Greek slaves to Greek men. The women will

be dragged from their homelands and serve foreign masters in foreign places. In addition, when men die at war, the women witness how their glory is not sustained by future generations, such as when Hecuba grieves over Astyanax and recognizes the futility of the great battle prowess of Hector.

Moreover, women are presented in these plays as unable to control entirely the effects of war. The women of *Trojan Women*—whether distraught with grief like Hecuba, who has trouble lifting herself from the ground, or attempting to put on a brave face like Cassandra, who makes an argument for the superiority of Trojan to Greek deaths at war—are all forced to leave their homelands and Trojan community, losing part of their identities in the process. In addition, the Queen in *Persians* is helpless to provide any substantial help for her son Xerxes. Even Clytemnestra—who exhibits masculine attributes in her knowledge and speech, shows dominance over Aegisthus, and takes matters into her own hands in killing Agamemnon and Cassandra—suffers lasting pain because of the loss of her daughter Iphigenia as a war sacrifice. The “crossing from war” tragedies, thus, expand on the *Odyssey*, giving insight into what comes after the homecoming reunion as well as developing the lasting consequences for women, who experience war both from a distance and as eye-witnesses.

Another takeaway from the patterns of homecoming identified in these three tragedies is that tragedy differs from epic in its development of the effects of war upon those beyond individual heroes and their families, giving insight into the political and social function of tragedy. Although the plots of *Agamemnon* and *Persians* center around the homecoming of an individual (Agamemnon and Xerxes, respectively), the dialogue of each play is consumed with the universal damage that war and homecoming have inflicted upon all soldiers and families. The Choruses in these plays express despair at the many households that have lost men, emphasizing

the widespread losses through words that express magnitude and multitude and showing that the situations for the royal families are not unique. In addition, the two men who bring reports from abroad—the Herald and the Messenger—describe destruction indiscriminately falling upon their armies during war and upon return. The field is leveled for the soldiers and all have equal risks and opportunities that are based on chance rather than any individual faults or virtues.

Trojan Women also demonstrates this more expansive view of the effects of war, giving voice especially to women and the defeated. The frequent stichomythic exchanges between women, including the Chorus, show the shared mourning experienced across the entire Trojan society. In addition, the play elaborates on the theme of lost youths, showing an expansive perspective both in the moment when youths have died and toward the future survival of the society as a whole. Finally, the emphasis on separation from the homeland, damage done to the land, and loss experienced by the land within all three plays exhibits the widespread and universal effects of war by presenting the land as a physical manifestation of the strength of an entire community. Whereas loss in the *Odyssey* goes only one way—Odysseus grieves for his homeland but the land itself does not grieve for him—, in the “crossing from war” tragedies the very existence of the homeland is put at risk when her people depart. The land does not belong to individuals within tragedy but to the community, and when it is harmed, it represents the suffering of the entire people.

The universal perspective of tragedy toward war and homecoming provides a political and social understanding of the function of tragedy, especially with regard to how the Athenian community recovered from war. Meineck argues: “Athenian tragedy offered a form of performance-based collective ‘catharsis’ or ‘cultural therapy’ by providing a place where the traumatic experiences faced by the spectators were reflected upon the gaze of the masked

characters performing before them” (2016: 185). He suggests that scenes from tragedy that display the violence of war—such as the sacrifice of Iphigenia in Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon*, the suicide of Ajax in Sophocles’ *Ajax*, and the Messenger’s report of Heracles’ madness in Euripides’ *Heracles*—allowed Athenian audiences to come to terms with their own war experiences. The expansive perspectives that tragedy offers reinforce the cathartic and therapeutic role of tragedy that Meineck endorses. The experiences of those beyond a single hero, including the masses of soldiers and their parents, wives, and children, would resonate with an audience of everyday citizen-warriors who had fought in combat and returned to their families, perhaps more so than heroic epics. In addition, the lack of relationship between crime and punishment that characterizes the seemingly random deaths at war and upon return in these plays would also aid audience members in coping with the inevitable violence of war and the associated lasting trauma that they may have experienced themselves.

Recognizing the ways that tragedy illuminates the experience of broader communities also reinforces Weiberg’s argument about communal support during and after war. Based on her examination of the *Odyssey*, *Agamemnon*, Sophocles’ *Trachiniae*, and *Heracles*, Weiberg concludes that these works stress “the importance of the support of a wider community as wives, husbands, and children confront the struggles that accompany the soldier’s deployment and return” (2016: 236). Weiberg conducts her examination primarily around the perspectives and experiences of individual waiting wives in these works: Penelope, Clytemnestra, Deianeira, and Megara. I would suggest that the emphasis that tragedy, especially, gives to the suffering experienced by all members of a society during and after war goes hand in hand with the importance of communal support in healing and recovery. This emphasis highlights not just the common identification that might happen between audience members and characters on stage, as

Meineck suggests, but also the recognition of common experience between audience members and each other. The recognition of communal experience and loss can encourage, in turn, communal responses and support.

Both Meineck and Weiberg make connections between ancient tragedy and the experience of modern veterans. My own experience leading four seasons of the Warrior Book Club at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum from 2016-2018 has suggested that the patterns identified in the preceding chapters and the messages about how war affects communities resonate with modern audiences. For example, even as an increasing number of women are accepted into formal military roles in the United States, participants noted a divide that persists today between the experiences of women and men during and after war, including how women—whether soldiers or not—are consistently viewed in the role of mothers and wives and, therefore, held responsible for holding together familial relationships after war. In addition, participants noted a pattern consistent from ancient works through modern literature and into their own experiences that women were forced to endure the consequences of the actions of men. When discussing *Lysistrata*, for example, a comedy often performed today as a feminist, anti-war play,⁷⁷ both female and male veterans responded immediately with both disgust and sighs of recognition at the misogynistic treatment of women as sexual objects. When reading *Ajax* and *Trojan Women*, however, even when noting a similar depiction of women as subordinate to men, especially as slaves who will be forced to bear children for new masters, participants identified with the suffering of the women and found validation in the way the plays drew compassion for the many groups that are deeply affected by war even when they are not warriors.

⁷⁷ Such as a 2019 production by the Broom Street Theater in Madison, WI, where audience members were invited to sign a petition rejecting the patriarchy as they entered the theater.

In addition, participants recognized the problems that persist after arrival back home in the tragedies we read and discussed. One participant reflected that reintegrating into civilian life after deployment was a process that took him about 10 years—an internal journey the same length as Odysseus’ physical journey home, as he noted. Other participants also shared how their own homecomings, like those in tragedy, entailed more than arriving home but also restoring relationships and regaining their social positions. We discussed the desire that some veterans have to recreate physical distance between themselves and others in order to justify their feelings of loss associated with war and homecoming—something seen in tragedy through the intertwined relationship between the vitality of the land and that of her people. The “crossing from war” tragedies present a pessimistic view toward these processes and suggest that a complete return is actually impossible. Nevertheless, as modern veterans identified with these stories, they also shared ways of accepting new circumstances and adjusting to new relationships after war, such as online communities where they can keep in contact with those they served with after returning home. The tragedies demonstrate the need for modern audiences to consider what permanent effects are still present in modern homecomings and how we might approach war and reentry today.

Furthermore, the consideration of the universal effects of war beyond those experienced by individual men and their independent families also resonated with members of the group. One way that the Warrior Book Club differs from some other initiatives is that it is open to any member of the public: veterans, service providers, family members, and those with little or no direct connection to the military. While there are topics and certain depths of discussion that might only be reached in a more exclusive group of veterans or even solely combat veterans, the open guidelines of the Warrior Book Club achieved other goals that relate to the more expansive

view of tragedy. Tragedy expands our view of the parties that are affected by war—women and men, victors and defeated, soldiers and family members, parents and children, fellow citizens and foreigners. Likewise, in the Warrior Book Club we realized the benefits of that sort of expansive view. The club urged participants to examine their own place within their local and global communities, and discussions encouraged each participant to bring his or her own experiences to reading and commenting on the literature, enabling participants to share their personal voice and perspectives with others from different backgrounds. The book club also built an empathetic community of participants, connecting people who might otherwise not be in conversation and bridging gaps in understanding, such as those between veterans and non-veterans and those between generations. Tragedy generates such conversations and recommends that these conversations take place by dramatizing situations in which war lasts beyond victory and in which the losses and challenges of war and homecoming are experienced across entire societies.

Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* and *Persians* and Euripides' *Trojan Women* present three sides of the aftermath of war. Through their emphasis on separation during departure and arrival, they reinforce the transgressions and physical losses that occur during war. Furthermore, these “crossing from war” plays highlight the indiscriminate and widespread destruction of war and, therefore, the effects of war on all members of the victorious and defeated communities—soldiers, wives, parents, and children. The three plays depart from the *Odyssey* by leaving no option for recovering former lives, relationships, and status after homecoming. Like modern veterans, the Athenian audience would identify with the experiences depicted on stage and find both communal comfort and a deeper consideration of war and its effects in their own lives.

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