The conception of women in Athenian drama

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THE POSITION AND CONCEPTION OF WOMEN IN CLASSICAL ATHENS

THE POSITION of women in classical Athens has been much debated by scholars for some years. The nature of the evidence is fragmentary and contradictory. All our sources are male, and therefore represent a limited view of a complex reality.[1] While the contradictory evidence does not break precisely along the lines of genre, prose texts tend to give us one picture of women's lives and personalities, and poetic texts another.[2] Each source — the physical evidence unearthed by archeologists (including inscriptions), the prose texts written by historians, orators, philosophers, popular moralists, and medical writers, the fine arts and poetic texts — represents a distorted or partial conception of Athenian women and their lives.

The historians' views are shaped by their conception of what events are worthy to be recorded as history and what causes historical events to take the form that they have. Hence the historian Thucydides, who confined himself primarily to political history, barely mentions women, while Herodotus, whose history includes both public and private life and is more anthropologically oriented, includes women frequently (for an evaluation of his perspective on women see Dewald in this volume). The philosophers' testimony subordinates fact to argument and logical system, the

medical writings are shaped by their "scientific" conceptions of the female body and its purposes, while the rhetoricians select and color their testimony concerning women to convince an audience of their cause. The fine arts idealize or romanticize, and it is frequently difficult to draw the line between depictions of life and representations of myth. Drama often represents women as far more powerful and prominent than in the prose texts; while the prose texts emphasize women's confinement to the private sphere, drama frequently gives them an important role in public social crises. As A.W. Gomme said in 1925: "There is, in fact, no literature, no art of any country, in which women are more prominent, more carefully studied and with more interest, than in the tragedy, sculpture, and painting of fifth-century Athens."[3]

All of this diverse and contradictory evidence must, of course, be included in our final fragmentary picture of women in classical Athens. For, as one scholar has recently argued, woman is a "cultural product" and an "ideological formation" which we must "situate . . . within the semantic field formed by Athenian society."[4] Our aim must be to clarify the relations between systems of thought, representations, institutions and practices, and to discover how the concept of woman is articulated throughout.

Recent articles have brought a new methodological sophistication to the problem of women in classical Athens and its articulation in the minds of Athenian writers, and have eliminated many previous misconceptions.[5] These articles reach a convincing consensus on the major if tentative conclusions to be drawn from the prose evidence (although they do not not include the medical texts) concerning the social and legal status of women in Athens and the effect that this social status may have had on the conception of women in these texts. When they turn to the question of poetic texts or "myth," they offer preliminary insights only. My purpose here, then, is to summarize briefly the evaluation of the evidence drawn from physical remains and the prose texts concerning the social and legal status of women in Athens made by previous scholars, and then go on to treat at some length the conception of women in the poetic texts, and specifically in Greek drama. I do this with the conviction that considerably more progress has been made in formulating and explor-

ing these issues than much recent work on the position and conception of women in Athens allows. My own effort will be to summarize and evaluate the state of the research on the conception of women in Athenian literature at this time, to deal specifically with the methodological problems involved, to consider the strengths and weaknesses of the major approaches that have been employed up to this time, and to offer a number of suggestions of my own which develop these lines of research and propose directions for future research. The evaluation of the evidence from the fine arts has not reached the stage where it can be used with precision to complement or modify the interpretations of myth by drama, and it is in any case too large a topic for this brief study.

II EVIDENCE FROM THE PHYSICAL REMAINS AND PROSE TEXTS FOR THE LEGAL AND SOCIAL POSITION OF WOMEN; THE CONCEPTION OF WOMEN IN THE PROSE TEXTS

In so far as women's legal status gives us an indication of her social status, our sources give us some basis upon which to understand women's place in Athenian society.[6] Women in Athens were lifelong legal minors, who exercised no positive political and financial rights. The female Athenian citizen was legally excluded from participation in the political (legislative, judicial, and military) life of the city, and this exclusion was of particular importance in a radical democracy which placed great importance on the participation of the male citizen in public life.

In the private sphere, women spent their lives acting under the authority of a male guardian (*kurios*). Women could not choose their husbands, who were often much older than themselves (the bride was 12 to 18, the groom usually over 30), manage their dowries, divorce without the support of a male relative willing to be their guardian, or conduct financial transactions over the value of one *medimnos* of barley (enough to sustain the average family for several days). A woman's consent to the way her property was managed was not only not required, but the law court cases indicate that the guardian sometimes abused his privileges in this respect.[7] The dowry, which had

to be returned to her natal family with her if she left the marriage, offered the women financial security if not freedom, and every effort was made to dower even the poorest of respectable women. If her father's household was left without a male heir, the daughter, as an *epikleros*, "inherited" her father's property. This meant that she acquired the right to transfer the ownership of the family property to a male member of the immediate family; she was legally obligated to marry the next of kin on her father's side — even if she was already married to another man — in order to produce a male heir for her father's *oikos* (household). Because a woman was in essence lent (*ekdosis*) in marriage by her natal household, a father often retained some influence in the life of a married daughter. In sum, the Athenian citizen woman's status was derived entirely from kinship with males, and her primary function was to produce a male heir for the *oikos* of her husband, or, as an *epikleros*, for the *oikos* of her father. Adultery was for this reason a severe offense; the adulterous woman was divorced and banned from participation in religious festivals. While respectable women were expected to be chaste above all things, men sought sexual gratification from both sexes primarily outside the household (Peudo-Dem. 59. 118–22). Woman's social status also affected her health and life span. Girl children ate less and less well than their brothers, and many female children were exposed at birth.

Respectable women were, ideally at least, confined as much as possible to the interior of the house and to the women's quarters within it. Men, by contrast, spent relatively little time indoors. In the house women wove, cooked, and supervised the running of the household and the rearing of children with the help of female slaves. Poorer women may have participated in agriculture, and certainly sold goods at markets. Respectable women left the house only to visit neighbors, to aid in childbirth, or to attend religious rituals — marriages, funerals, and festivals. As Pericles stressed in his Funeral Oration, respectable women should have no public reputation, whether for good or bad (Thuc. 2. 46). Orators praise the modesty of female relatives who were embarassed even to dine with male kinsmen (respectable women did not attend male dinner parties and symposia even in their own households);[8] in some law court cases

witnesses had to be produced to certify the existence of a respectable wife, a woman who was referred to only by the name of her husband or father. In fact, the names of living women were rarely mentioned in the courts, unless the orator intended to cast suspicion on the woman.

Women did, however, have an active religious life. They were the primary mourners at funerals, central actors at weddings, and participated in an enormous range of rituals and festivals, both public and private. Young women were initiated into religious life by participation in the cult of Artemis at Brauron, by serving as basket bearers, water carriers and corn grinders in religious processions. A group of chosen girls, the *arrhephoroi*, began the weaving of the *peplos* for Athena Polias and performed secret rituals for Athena on the acropolis. Married women participated in exclusively female fertility rituals like the Thesmophoria, and in numerous public festivals throughout the year. It seems likely that this included attendance at the dramatic festivals. Women gave the ritual cry (*ololugê*) at sacrifices, and received their share of the sacrificial meat. All women, slave and free, could be initiated into the Elusinian Mysteries. Women acted as priestesses in the cults of goddesses; the Basilinna, the wife of the Archon Basileus, performed an annual sacred marriage with the god Dionysus. Women also participated in ecstatic cults which were not part of the state religion, such as those for Dionysus.

The exclusion of women from political life did not, of course, preclude them from influencing family life, or even, through their husbands, public life. Pseudo-Demosthenes' *Against Neaira* (59. 110–11) refers to a possible adverse female reaction to the acquittal of the notorious Neaira, who had committed a number of crimes by pretending illegitimately to Athenian citizenship. The education of Athenian women was probably limited, and most were probably illiterate (see Cole in this volume). Yet court cases refer to women who mediated between kin through their knowledge of matters of finance and inheritance, and took considerable initiative in family affairs.[10] If they attended the dramatic festivals, their level of oral education in literature may have been quite sophisticated. Again, arranged marriages and the considerable age difference between husband and

wife did not preclude in some cases affectionate relationships between spouses.[11] Most women had at least one slave to assist them in domestic work, which would have offered them some leisure and an opportunity in wealthy households to manage a complex household economy. I have deliberately not examined here our fragmentary evidence concerning non-citizen women, slaves, courtesans (*hetairai*) and prostitutes because our knowledge of non-citizen women is not particularly relevant to our comparison between the evidence of prose sources and drama.

The major picture that emerges from prose texts is of a sharp division between political and domestic life, with respectable women confined to domestic spaces, and men dominating exterior space except during religious occasions, and of a concept of female virtue and of male honor which depended on the respectability, public silence and invisibility of the Athenian wife. The legal minority of women was justified in the literature by allegations that women were naturally lacking in the self control, emotional stability, rationality and personal authority required for exercising virtue in a manner appropriate to a free citizen. Socrates seems to have been virtually alone in arguing that the virtue of men and women was the same (*Meno* 72d–73b). The medical writers too found woman's instability in her physical nature.[12] Women were subject to "hysteria" — a disease in which women's womb wandered to various parts of her body to cause physical and emotional disturbances. Such diseases could only be cured by recurrence of menstruation, intercourse and pregnancy. Women's physical and mental health was thus dependent on her reproductive system, and her reproductive function justified her exclusion from public life. Theories of conception, which in all cases represented the woman's contribution to the child as inferior to the male's, also justified patrilineal inheritance.

III THE CONCEPTION OF WOMEN IN ATHENIAN LITERATURE

The conception of women in Athenian literature poses special problems. How is one to deal with a literary and artistic tradition which borrows from and is shaped by earlier Greek literature and myth,

a tradition which does not seem to reflect directly our fragmented and tentative picture of the social life and status of women in classical Athens drawn from physical evidence and the prose texts? While women in daily life appear to have been confined to the internal spaces of the household, to public silence, and to non-participation in the political life of Athens, women play an exceptionally prominent role in drama. They speak for themselves, lay claim to a wide-ranging intelligence, criticize their lot, and influence men with their rhetoric. They leave the household and even take action in the political sphere denied to them in life.

Some of these anomalies are to be expected in a literature based on a mythological tradition whose inherited plots emphasize intrafamilial crises. The informal power that women exercise within the domestic sphere should not come as a surprise in any culture. But the continued popularity and privileged public place in democratic Athens of these mythical stories of aristocratic families and intrafamilial conflicts still demand further explanation, particularly since the role of women in these stories is often expanded, radically transformed and accentuated in comparison to the pre-classical versions available to us.

We have only to compare, for example, the titanic Clytemnestra of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, who takes full responsibility for the murder of her husband, to her Odyssean counterpart, who obeys the will of her seducer Aegisthus, or to consider the difference in the treatment of the adulterous Helen in the *Iliad* and in Greek tragedy. The Helen of the *Iliad* is a victim of Aphrodite (*Iliad* 3. 165), a creature of such divine beauty that the old men of Troy feel inclined to agree that a war fought for such a woman is by no means worthy of blame (*Iliad* 3. 155); in tragedy, the various Helens are generally envisioned as morally responsible for a disastrous war. Furthermore, Greek drama, while it often deals with familial crises, calls attention to the public nature and significance of its actions in every possible way. Production — the use of masks, the rare staging of interior scenes — brought women into the outside world and de-emphasized (except in Euripides) the interior and private self. The presence of the chorus, representing various forms of communal reaction, and the formal rhetoric of the speeches reinforce the public tone of the

drama.[13]

Most recent scholarship has agreed on the necessity to adopt an appropriately eclectic approach to the problem of women in Athenian literature. Many have used contemporary anthropology and in particular Levi-Strauss' dichotomy, female:nature as male:culture to provide analytical openings. Despite her confinement within the household in Athenian life, woman in Greek myth is associated with animals and the wild; the untamed female must submit to the civilizing effects of the marriage yoke before she can begin to be envisioned as cultured. Woman's association with nature is linked with the natural irrationality, lack of control and irresponsibility attributed to her in the entire range of our Athenian evidence. Hence women in Athenian literature and Greek myth are seen as naturally inimical to culture, a source of anarchy in the male-controlled *polis*. Their fearfulness may arise in part from their position as outsiders brought into a household primarily to produce legitimate children, and in part from the fear and dependence produced through the Athenian male's problematic infant psycho-sexual experience analyzed by Philip Slater or other psychoanalytic critics.[14] Analyses of individual plays have offered a wider range of specific and suggestive insights, but there has been no systematic attempt to confront the methodological problems involved in reaching a general understanding of the conception of women in Attic drama.[15]

Nevertheless, it seems to me that recent work on woman in classical Athenian literature, taken collectively, offers the possibility of establishing more specific methodological guidelines for approaching these problems than such useful preliminary insights suggest. First of all, we are not dealing simply with an unwieldy category, "myth." To be sure, Athenian poets use and re-use the same plots, a series of stories or "collective representations" handed down from their predecessors in epic, lyric, and the fine arts. Most of these myths are non-Athenian, and many are located in the homes of Athens' greatest enemies. In Athenian drama we are dealing with interpretations of these mythical stories made by poets who are composing in new genres — comedy and tragedy — and who are adapting their material to create a complex public dialogue between the interpretation of myth in earlier poetic genres and the contemporary Athenian democracy.[16] Drama, then, sets out to challenge, change and re-inter-

pret past myths. It deliberately takes on the question of sex roles, and uses them to ask important public questions before an audience which includes the whole citizen population. We must not fall into the methodological trap of using non-Athenian literature to analyze the conception of women in Athenian drama.[17] The nature of drama as a genre, the way that this specifically Attic literary form treats myths, and the social and historical context in which these myths are interpreted must be central to our analysis.

Second, we cannot isolate the problem of women in drama from the general difficulties posed by the genres, or from a careful reading of individual texts as a whole. Zeitlin's contribution to this volume, for example, shows the importance of analyzing the problem of women in relation to the larger problems of genre and poetic imitation posed in a text from old comedy; the sexual dialectic of drama is always part of a larger one which concerns the contradictions posed by the social and philosophical systems of Athens as a whole.

Most scholars agree that the relationship of tragedy and comedy to daily life in Athens is distorted and oblique. The male tyrants of tragedy differ from contemporary democratic statesmen — a fact which has, with others, posed considerable difficulty to those who wish to evaluate possible political allusions in the texts. Nor did small farmers take over the world and regenerate themselves like the heroes of Aristophanes. Similarly, women step out of the household in drama and act and speak publicly in a manner apparently denied them in life. Many traces of the norm of Athenian life for women appear in the admonitions to female characters to stay in their proper place within, in the horror expressed by male characters when confronted with a female challenge, or in the categorization of unusual female behaviour as "masculine."[18]

Tragic women are certainly subject to limits in their actions, pay for their transgressions of those limits, and remain in the end subordinate to men, although the range and details of these limits may differ in degree from those we find in Athenian life. Hence we must begin by accepting all of the complex distortions of life which belong to the genre. Then we must go on to categorize the precise nature and range of these distortions in the context of the symbolic systems presented in Athenian literature, systems in which sex roles obvi-

ously play a central part. In short, we must investigate how the concept of woman operates in the symbolic systems of drama as a whole. At the same time we should not despair of uncovering comprehensible — if oblique — relations between life and literature. While attempts to use Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* as a comment on the life and career of Pericles make very little sense, the Athenian audience certainly brought their experience of Pericles to their understanding of Oedipus.[19] Similarly, the Athenian audience must have brought to their experience of the remarkable women of drama a way of understanding these characters which grew out of their psychological, religious, political, and social lives and problems.

To summarize, then, the methodological points we have raised so far: an adequate analysis of the conception of women in Attic drama must account for the way Attic drama interprets Greek myth, for the nature of the comic and tragic genres and the ways in which each represents human action, character and reality, and for the relation between drama and the social context in which it is presented. Finally, we must establish a methodology which allows us to read sex role conflicts in tragedy in relation to the larger social and philosophical issues they are used to explore, and to put the insights gained to the test of a full reading of individual texts.

Recently, the attempt to pursue the analysis of women and their symbolic role in classical literature has proceeded primarily — if not exclusively — from two directions. One approach grows out of Freudian psychology and sociology, the other finds its theoretical basis in structuralist anthropology and linguistics. Each group assumes that drama reflects in its battle of the sexes a deeper and broader set of cultural tensions. I will deal briefly with the first and extensively with the second, which seems to me to offer a particularly promising line of research. Certainly the anthropological approach has been the dominant one in current research on women in Athenian literature and in my own work, and it is in this area that I can offer the most extensive insights and proposals for further research.

IV THE PSYCHO-SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH

Psychoanalytic critics of classical literature have long been examining the role of characters of both sexes on Greek literature. But few have addressed the question of the relation between the sexes and the powerful women of Greek drama on as extensive and ambitious a scale as the sociologist Philip Slater.[20] His work has directly influenced all subsequent psychoanalytically-oriented papers on male–female conflicts in drama, and thus, although many of Slater's predecessors and followers offer readings of individual texts which avoid many of the weaknesses of Slater's analysis, it seems appropriate to concentrate in this brief review on his work alone.

Slater tries to explain the powerful females of Greek literature and myth as psychological projections which find their origins in the psychosexual experience of the Greek male child. "All a playwright requires for drama is a vivid memory for his own childhood and family — especially Greek drama, which is intensely concerned with intrafamilial conflict." (p. 10) For Slater the narcissism, pedophilia, obsessive competitiveness, and gynephobia of the classical Athenian male are a result of a problematic mother–son relationship. The Greek mother, due to her extreme social and political seclusion, was alternately hostile to her son because of his impending freedom, and seductive to him. The Greek father, who was rarely at home, was simultaneously idealized by his son because of his remoteness, and resented, through the mother's presentatation of him, as capricious and hostile. At seven the Athenian boy was initiated into the world of men and was eventually nursed to maturity by competition with his peers, or in many cases, by homosexual relations with older men. He remained, however, unsure of his identity and abnormally ambivalent towards mature women, whom he both wished to depend upon and feared. If correct, Slater's theory offers an attractive explanation for the unusual degree of authority and power vested in so many dramatic heroines, their prominence in drama, and the threatening nature of many of their actions.

This theory, as I have tried to show in some detail elsewhere, relies primarily on evidence from poetic rather than prose sources.[21] As a result, Slater ignores some contrary evidence which suggests

that the estrangement of the father from early child-rearing in Athens may have been less extreme in practice than in the ideal. It entirely ignores the question of female psychosexual development.[22] By using as an implicit model the modern American suburban mother–son relationship and contemporary case studies of pedophilia, he is almost certainly failing to evaluate correctly similar practices in a different cultural context. Most important of all, Slater's decision to pay only cursory attention to the larger historical, political and social context in which Greek family life took place, and to abjure any attempt to analyze myths in the context of a particular literary work, leads to misreadings or narrow readings of the texts.

Attic dramas are concerned with something more than intrafamilial conflict, and Slater's theory fails to account, for example, for the action of women in drama in the political sphere denied to them in life. It does not provide an explanation for the precise ideological form in which male–female conflicts are presented — the symbolic equation between domestic, state and divine order such as we find at the close of Aeschylus' *Eumenides*. It does not explain why Aeschylus plays down the psychological conflicts between mother and son in the *Libation Bearers*, while Euripides emphasizes them in his *Orestes*. We can only suggest an explanation for these different treatments of the myth by examining the political world of the plays in which these familial crises take place and the point that each playwright wishes to make about them. Aeschylus must downplay the element of guilt in Orestes' matricide, since he will found the Athenian system of justice on Orestes' acquittal in the final play of the trilogy, while Euripides makes suggestive analogies between his Orestes' neuroses and the deteriorating political world of his play. Or, to use the analogy between contemporary and Greek experience preferred by Slater, both Portnoy and Orestes may suffer from an ambivalent mother–son relation; but we would be hard put to make any further meaningful comparisons between the two characters without considering the very different cultural contexts within which the two works were composed.

Nor does Slater's theory allow for the conscious manipulation of myth by Athenian playwrights to justify or deconstruct the nature of Greek family life and prevailing Athenian political ideology. By allowing Medea to make powerful speeches on the crippling confine-

ment of women to childrearing and marriage, and by showing her inability to take action which does not also destroy herself, Euripides — who apparently invented Medea's deliberate killing of her children — is not so much reflecting his unconscious fears of maternal hostility as using this plot to explore the contradictory nature of the Greek ethics of revenge which Medea adopts, and perhaps even the inherently problematic nature of the marital relationship. As in this play, it is the male characters in drama who consistently provoke the dangerous female to action by an act of hostility towards or neglect of his children.

Finally, conflicts in drama often seem to address similar political and social issues (we will examine the nature of these issues in Part V). Yet the family structures which give rise to these conflicts seem to be less consistent in their form than the recurring social issues which they are used to express. Antigone and Clytemnestra threaten the stability of the state and take public action to challenge abuses of family interests by male rulers. Both are defined in the language of the play as threatening, as usurping male prerogatives. Clytemnestra's actions and the threat she poses to Orestes could be analyzed as a projection of the Greek family tensions examined by Slater. But Antigone is a virgin. Her relations to her parents are apparently untroubled, while her brothers' deaths were the result of hostility between Oedipus and his sons (in Slater's theory the father is idealized by the son, except insofar as the mother distorts and taints the image of the father), not between these sons and their mother, or between Oedipus and Jocasta. In order for a Slaterian analysis of Greek drama to be effective, then, the critic would have to be armed with a more extensive theory which would show how the sex/gender system of Athenian society was reproduced not only by the family structure in isolation, but by the conscription of the individual psyche into the Athenian kinship system and into the social and economic system of the *polis* as a whole.

Space does not permit a detailed discussion of this complex point, but as Gayle Rubin has recently suggested in a general essay on women and society, a synthesis between the work of Claude Levi-Strauss and Jacques Lacan could provide the theoretical groundwork for making the connections between Freudian theory and anthropology necessary for a fuller analysis of the role of women in

Athenian thought and literature.[23] In other words, we need a theory which can explain the making of Athenian consciousness in terms which would allow us to understand the precise ideological terms in which familial conflicts are described in drama, and to identify with more confidence the relation between these intrafamilial conflicts and the larger social issues which these conflicts are used to explore. As Plato argued in the *Republic*, the nature of the soul and the state is reciprocal; the nature of the one can only be understood in relation to the other, and an examination of the soul can offer a beginning point for understanding the larger structure. Certainly the dramatists shared the philosophers' sense that man was in essence a political animal, that the exploration of the private aimed at an understanding of the public. Thus, while Freudian critics other than Slater may meet some of the criteria established in this paper for an adequate reading of the conception and role of women in Attic drama that he did not — a precise awareness of the limits of the evidence, a sophisticated sense of genre, and a careful reading of individual texts — a fully satisfactory reading must bridge the gap between the artist's consciousness and his unconscious, between the individual and his particular society.

V FEMALE:NATURE AS MALE:CULTURE

The second approach to women in classical literature has applied theoretical insights drawn from structural and symbolic anthropology to readings of individual literary texts.[27] Such readings see the conception of women in drama in relation to larger social questions posed through the structure of these texts and the symbolic systems of thought which shape them. Critics who adopt this approach tend to stress either the structuralist equation female:nature as male:culture or female:domestic and male:public. I will examine the application of these two equations in order, emphasizing the latter, which seems to me to offer a more promising, if problematic line of analysis.

Sherry Ortner has offered the most extensive defense and exploration of Levi–Strauss' nature/culture dichotomy in relation to the

sexes.[25] She begins with the assumption that human cultures universally devalue women in relation to men and that women are nearly always excluded from that part of the society where its highest powers are felt to reside. Human consciousness is engaged in an attempt to separate itself from the world around it and thereby to control its environment; what is above culture is defined as divine, what is below it is defined as nature. Woman is identified with or becomes symbolic of those orders of existence which are external to culture, and especially with what is inferior to it. Hence she represents principles of transcendence on the one hand, or is linked to the world of beasts on the other. Through her relatively closer position to nature, woman also mediates for man between nature and culture. Woman's affinity with nature and hence her cultural inferiority derive from her greater identification with sexual reproduction, early child care and the unruly world of infancy that culture is designed to control and eventually to repress. Women's lives are dominated by intrafamilial ties and emotional relationships, while men are linked with interfamilial relations and abstract and integrative cultural systems. Qualities attributed to woman — irrationality and subjectivity — derive from her primary association with the family and reinforce her associations with "nature". Woman is conceptually both a part of culture and what culture is designed to tame or suppress. For our purposes, the origins of woman's greater association with "nature" and her mediating role between nature and culture are unimportant; we are primarily concerned with the questions of how such conceptual categories operate, consciously or unconsciously, in Greek thought.

A group of French classicists headed by J.-P. Vernant, Marcel Detienne and P. Vidal-Naquet have been engaged for some time in applying structuralist anthropology in a modified form to ancient Greek culture.[26] In their analysis, Greek texts locate man between God and beast, and systematically oppose those institutions which are particular to culture — marriage, agriculture, sacrifice, and life in the enclosed *oikos* — to the promiscuity, eating of raw meat, allelophagy and living in the open characteristic of nature. Woman is defined as cultured insofar as she accepts these institutions by consenting to marriage and chastity, remaining within the *oikos*, cooking

and weaving, and as closer to nature when she aligns herself, as a maenad in the cult of Dionysus for example, with the wilds, eating raw meat, and escape from marriage and the *oikos*. The pervasive organization of Greek life and thought and sexual ideology by structural polarities is characterized with particular precision in the Pythagorean table of opposites, which aligns female with unlimited, even, plurality, left, curved, darkness, bad, and oblong, and male with limit, odd, one, resting, straight, light, good and square. As Froma Zeitlin has recently noted, the Greek woman in her role as maenad also embodied those characteristics attributed to her in the Pythagorean table, as she rushes, head thrown back, often at night, in a group trance which violates her normal cultural limits and responsibilities.[27]

The nature/culture dichotomy certainly provides us with a way of analyzing some aspects of Greek poetic texts. It corresponds to some degree with the difference between "good" and "bad" women in drama. The former align themselves with marriage, or, as virgins, sacrifice themselves for the preservation of family, state or nation, while the latter (e.g. Clytemnestra, Medea, the Theban women of the *Bacchae*) resist marriage and confinement to the *oikos*, behave irrationally, and uphold private interests. Indeed, women can even achieve *kleos* and heroic status — a reputation generally reserved for men — through the dedication of their lives to culture. Alcestis will win celebrations in festal song for her sacrifice of her life for her husband; Admetus regains a meaningful life through a symbolic remarriage with his wife. Iphigeneia at Aulis, as I have recently argued, comes to accept her sacrificial death for Greece through envisioning it in terms of the marriage she was expecting to make with Achilles.[28] Both women achieve heroism through enacting the myth central to Greek marriage — the symbolic death and rebirth of Persephone, who is raped by Hades, the god of the underworld. On the other hand, other "good" women who align themselves with the cultural status-quo like Ismene in Sophocles' *Antigone* and Chrysothemis in Sophocles' *Electra* receive an ambivalent and perhaps even a negative treatment in comparison with their iconoclastic sisters Antigone and Electra.

The nature/culture dichotomy also rationalizes woman's association, despite her actual confinement within the *oikos* in life, with ani-

mals and the wild in Greek myth. Here, however, we should be cautious. Men in Greek literature have no primary and stable association with Greek culture. Mythical warriors are often indistinguishable from beasts, and they are subject, like Ajax, Heracles, or Pentheus, to bouts of madness, erotic seizures and other anti-cultural outbursts. The partners of maenads in the wild are male pans and satyrs; Amazons are paired with Centaurs. From this perspective culture occupies a precarious position between nature and the divine, and its instabilities are located in the roles, actions, and psyches of both genders. One could still argue that women retain their role as relatively more anti-cultural, relatively closer to "nature" than men. But is Euripides' *Bacchae*, for example, primarily a play about the threat posed by the more "natural" female to culture? Certainly this is a cliché which Pentheus accepts. Certainly the women succumb to the lure of the Dionysiac more quickly than the men, and their alternative world on the mountains, although it is far from natural and includes elements of culture, could be viewed as simultaneously closer to beast and god than their world within culture, and offering an unstable mediation between nature and culture.

This world has its own order — the women divide themselves into three *thiasoi* with leaders and their activities have an uncanny unity and harmony. They play the roles of hunters and nurturers — they give their breasts to wild animals — simultaneously. They drink raw milk, and wine, Dionysus' gift to culture. But does Agave's fantasy that she has become a successful hunter pose a greater threat than Pentheus' partially willing transformation into a woman? Why is woman most dangerous when she becomes a man? Does this dangerous transformation reflect more on women than on men?[29] Are we to interpret this transformation as a reflection of women's repressed and undervalued status in Greek society, which results in a state of trance and in an absorption of the qualities of the dominant group?[30] Or is Euripides also consciously exploiting and subverting a set of cultural assumptions about sex roles and their place in the cultural system? That is, when Dionysus removes normal cultural limits, we confront the ways in which cultural norms warp and dangerously confine human beings of both sexes, and create cultural instabilities.

Certainly the play seems to be suggesting that the relation bet-

ween nature and culture is dialectical (a suggestion incomprehensible to Pentheus) and that culture must absorb "nature" and the inversions of culture brought to it in the shape of Dionysus.[31] That is, as is the case with all polarities in Greek thought, the relation between nature and culture is simultaneously one of opposition and of complementarity. Culture separates itself from nature while simultaneously imitating it. Marriage is a symbolic ploughing or acculturizing of nature; but in the women's festival of the Thesmophoria the women ensure birth, as Plato says, not by imitating the earth, but by making the earth imitate them.[32] Women mediate between nature and culture as a part of culture; but culture as a whole is always accomplishing such mediations. The precepts of the chorus of barbarian women are not designed simply to expose the threat of female religious movements to culture, but also to strike the audience forcibly with the similarity of their ethics and actions to that of the contemporary Athenian male-dominated democracy.[33] It is difficult to be certain whether the play challenges or reinforces those distinctions which culture makes in establishing its differences from nature. Certainly we cannot read this self-conscious and iconoclastic text as an example of the Levi-Straussian precept that "myths think through men" and their *unconscious* minds. The nature/culture dichotomy certainly reveals something important about the way women are envisioned in the *Bacchae*. But by itself it only illuminates assumptions that the play seems to throw into question. It cannot offer us an adequate reading of the play, or of the way in which sexual polarities are used to investigate larger cultural issues for which Greek men were primarily responsible. It does not provide us with a way to shift from one level of the action and meaning of the play to another, but confines us to a literal reading which poses the problems of the play entirely in terms of sex roles.

The choral odes of the *Bacchae* take up the contemporary sophistic debate over *nomos* and *physis*, a debate which put the categories "nature" and "culture" into a deeply uncertain relation to each other. We would expect such shifts in the conceptual relation of nature and culture to destabilize as well the ideological relation between the sexes. In other words, women might retain their position as relatively closer to nature, or as mediators between nature and culture, but

what this would mean in a specific context would obviously depend on what the categories nature and culture meant in that context. Hence, applying the nature/culture dichotomy to a specific text as if it were some easily defined universal will result in a simplistic analysis. In the *Odyssey* or Hesiod, the just kingship aligns itself with nature (*Od.* 19. 108–14 and Hesiod, *Erga* 225–47); the people of a good ruler flourish, while under an unjust ruler they wither and die. Penelope in the *Odyssey* is so thoroughly acculturated that she shares thoughts, goals, and even similes with her husband; it is she who is compared by Odysseus to the image of the good king described above.[13] There would be little point in trying to locate in the *Odyssey* the ways in which the text showed Penelope as relatively closer to nature than her husband, even though she is barred from a full public role by the limits of her sex. In contrast to the *Odyssey*, the Thebes of the *Bacchae*, which is not, of course, the Dionysus-worshipping Athens before whom the play was presented, walls itself off from nature, rather than aligning itself with it, and views its women as the central source of instability. The different views of the relation between nature and culture seems to reverberate in the relations between the sexes in these two texts, although we would need a much more complex social and historical analysis to explain fully the presence of these ideological divergences. One would expect (and I believe closer analysis of the sexual ideology of the period will bear out this assumption) a similar shift during the Hellenistic period, where mystery religions, Dionysus, and Aphrodite acquired a new cultural prestige, and the natural world was no longer viewed as antithetical to culture.[35] In Stoic philosophy, for example, a rational and moral life was lived in conformity with a nature which was animated by a supremely rational divine being.

Greek literature does offer examples which seem to resist, or at least to make extremely complex, the application of the nature/culture dichotomy. A non-Athenian example is Hesiod's myth of Pandora, the first woman.[34] In Hesiod, man's origin is not described. Apparently, prior to his fall into culture, he lived a golden age existence with the gods. Culture imposed upon man the institutions of sacrifice, agriculture and marriage, which emerged with the creation of the first woman. In this myth it is the female sex which has the

primary association with culture (and even, if the analysis of P. Pucci is correct, with the origin of human language),[37] while men are originally outside it, victims who can only hope through a laborious struggle to return to a pale imitation of the earlier existence they shared with the gods. In so far as culture is a fall from a better state, women are more strongly aligned both with culture and what culture must control than men.

Hesiod's unwillingness to align men fully with "culture" reappears in a different form in Athenian literature. Here too men struggle simultaneously to uphold culture and to resist its limitations. On the one hand every Greek male is attracted by the *kleos* and the competition for *kleos* through which he can achieve immortality and a partial escape from the limits of human existence. But the fact that this *kleos* is primarily achieved through competition and war can threaten as well as defend culture, and especially a democratic culture.[38] If Clytemnestra in the *Agamemnon* is a female monster who slays her husband in a gesture which explicitly undermines and perverts marriage, sacrifice, and agriculture, the Greek army led by Agamemnon turns into a monstrous beast which destroys helpless animals (the image of the pregnant hare torn apart by the eagles and of the monstrous and bestial creature who leaps over the walls of Troy in lust for blood at *Ag.* 115–20 and 823–28) and the shrines of the gods. Agamemnon returns with a remnant of his army, and with few spoils to compensate for the sacrifice of his people in the name of the adulterous Helen except his mistress Cassandra. This last prize is viewed by Clytemnestra as an insult to her status as legitimate wife.

While Xenophon celebrates agriculture as the only work suitable for an Athenian citizen, since it promotes the qualities needed by the state (*Oec.* 11. 13ff.), Athenian political life celebrated and promoted the transcending of marriage and agriculture in the relation of the citizen to the state. Pay was introduced for many civic duties, and Aristophanes frequently makes a mockery of this new dependence on the state for a livelihood. Xenophon in his *Ways and Means* offers a plan by which no citizen will have to work, but all will be enabled to devote full time to public affairs through public funds derived from the working of the silver mines by slaves. The Athenian empire

with its reliance on the navy also resulted in a new separation of the citizen from his land. Plato in the *Republic* is attracted to the Spartan model of the state and the community of women and children precisely because it transcends completely the need for the highest class of citizens to reproduce their individual households through marriage and agricultural labor. The demands of Athenian political life sometimes put the male citizen in opposition to "culture" as defined by the institutions of marriage, sacrifice, and agriculture. The result was a split (in actuality if not in the ideal) in the concept of "culture" itself, between the political and the private realm. Marriage and agriculture moved relatively closer to "nature", and the concept of women, who were excluded from politics, and the definition of *aretai* for both sexes shifted accordingly. In other words, while marriage, sacrifice and agriculture can be said roughly to define culture in the epic world, the world of the Athenian *polis* puts these institutions — and hence women — into a separate and subordinate position to the political world which both serves and transcends it.

Fantasies of cultural transcendence (of abandoning marriage and agriculture altogether in favor of the pursuit of non-biological immortality) and the tensions and contradictions produced by these fantasies beset male characters in Greek drama in a variety of forms. Euripides' Hippolytus wishes to withdraw from politics and marriage into a world of hunting and asexuality. Echoing the wish of other male characters in tragedy, he longs for a world in which women are unnecessary for reproduction. The Athenian myth of autochthonous birth from the earth, and their patron goddess Athena, a female born from the male, offered further opportunities to express these desires. As J.-P. Vernant points out, the cult of Hestia in the household perpetuates an ideal of asexual reproduction and endogamy, in which the male line is reproduced through the virgin goddess of the heart, and not through the female stranger who must in reality be imported to perform this task.[39] My point here, then, is that "nature" and "culture", as culturally defined rather than natural concepts, are unstable, historically relative assumptions.[40] The meaning of each term can shift in relation to the other; contradictions and divisions may occur within these concepts which we can see reflected in the sexual and other conflicts in drama, or in the

intellectual debates concerning nature and convention in human law also reflected in dramatic debates. Each sex in drama can be responsible for anti-cultural gestures which bring them closer to "nature", and dramas do not simply reflect the nature/culture dichotomy in the relations of the sexes, but use this dichotomy as a cultural cliché to explore larger cultural questions, or to turn such clichés on their heads. The nature/culture dichotomy, however correct at one level of analysis, becomes a blunt and unilluminating tool for understanding the role of women in the poetic texts without a clear understanding of the dialectical relation between nature and culture in Athenian life and ideology. More important, it does not provide us with a precise way of understanding the way sex roles are used in drama to explore political, ethical and philosophical issues, or to bridge successfully the gap between the world of drama and that of the prose texts.

VI FEMALE: DOMESTIC AS MALE: PUBLIC

The second structuralist equation for reading the symbolic role played by women in culture assumes that women are primarily associated, because of their affiliation with children and with the economic reproduction of the household, with the domestic sphere and the expressive, affective and nurturant values appropriate to this sphere.[41] Women's extra-domestic contributions to the society are rarely made explicit, and their goals are shaped by a lack of access to political privilege, authority and esteem. Men, by contrast, are primarily linked with those activities, institutions and forms of organization that link, rank, organize or subsume mother-child groups. Their work is viewed as public, intellectual, rational, and instrumental, as belonging to a larger sphere of complex and carefully articulated social relations, which ultimately controls and demands compliance from the domestic sphere. This opposition does not determine sexual assymetry in a culture, but it underlies the general association of female with domestic, and male with public in most cultures. Women's status appears to be "lowest", however, in cultures where the division between the public and domestic sphere

is most articulated, and where women are isolated from each other and placed under one man's authority. Nevertheless, as Michelle Rosaldo has recently argued in a re-evaluation of her initial articulation of the domestic/public question, while biological sex may be used to organize and articulate sexual roles, opportunities and kin networks and the ideology which grows out of these arrangements, the precise way in which the domestic/public dichotomy is expressed in any one particular social system depends on the specific ways in which such social roles, kin networks, or economic and political opportunities are organized and articulated by that society.[42] Hence, for example, the domestic/public dichotomy will be explicitly affected by shifts in the relations of the two realms such as we find emerging at the close of the fifth-century in Athens, where there was an increasing withdrawal into and revaluing of private life.

This second structuralist equation for reading the symbolic relations of the sexes in Greek drama, female:domestic as male:public, has the initial advantage of reflecting directly Greek conceptions of their own culture and its organization. The relation of *oikos* (household) to *polis* (city) was openly debated in the philosophical texts, and the life of the Athenian *polis* was clearly organized to create a sharp division between public and private space.[43] Xenophon's formulation in the *Oeconomicus* of the division of space and labor between the sexes in the household seems to have represented a cultural ideal, if not necessarily a reality. Respectable wives were in principle confined to the interior spaces of the household, where they wove, cooked, and supervised children and household, while men were active on the outside, performing agricultural labor and protecting the position of the household in the larger world of the *polis*. Women were not confined to the domestic sphere in their religious life, where they participated in public festivals; but J.-P. Vernant has shown how the sexualization of space within the domestic sphere pervades the organization of space in public religious and political life as well.[44] If the differentiation between domestic and public were shown to provide a useful reading of the battle of the sexes in Greek drama, then, we would be able to shift more easily from the evidence of the prose texts to a reading of the plays.

Second, given the historical developments which molded the rela-

tion between household and state in democratic Athens, and created various real tensions between these two spheres, it would not be surprising if the sexual conflicts of drama reflected these problems. As Marylin Arthur in particular has argued,[45] the Athenians saw their society as deliberately constructed to ensure the survival of the individual *oikos* and hence of an egalitarian society; at the same time the legal system separated the state from civil society, and the interests of the individual household were ultimately subsumed in those of the state. Once the aristocratic society of early Greece was overturned in Athens, the new "middle class" society held property in the form of small, inviolable household units, and the nuclear family became an economic and political as well as a biological and social unit. Laws protected the household as an economic unit through restrictions on the sale of family property, and as a social unit through marriage laws concerning the *epikleros*, which guaranteed a male heir to each *oikos* (Aristotle considered that female inheritance would lead to a consolidation of property not conducive to the perpetuation of a middle class society). Pericles' citizenship law of 450–451 restricted citizenship to children of two Athenian parents, thus transferring to the public arena the dream of endogamy reflected in private inheritance patterns.[46]

The function of women in this system was to produce legitimate male children for the *oikos*, and to guarantee its integrity by cooking, weaving, childrearing and the supervision of household goods. By contrast the aristocratic women of early Greece had some share in the political life of the community and the division between domestic and public spheres was considerably less radical. Arete in the *Odyssey* arbitrates quarrels outside the household (7. 73–74); women give gifts (19. 309–11), and the use of their dowries to support their new household was unrestricted. Clytemnestra is said by the chorus of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* to have the authority to preside over Argos in the absence of her husband (259–60). Aristocratic men could produce heirs from concubines as well as wives. Hence the concern with adultery and controlling female sexuality is relatively less intense in the Homeric poems. The frequent references in all Athenian sources to fear of adultery, to justifications of or criticisms of the subordination of women in Athenian society, reflect a consciousness of these

historical shifts in women's role and an uneasiness concerning this aspect of the new democratic society. Because the single-family household had emerged relatively recently from a clan-based society, the *polis* only gradually gained the loyalty which had previously been paid to family and tribe. The radical separation of the domestic sphere from the political sphere, and the relatively greater subordination of household to state and of female to male undoubtedly posed more problems in reality than it did in the ideal. Too radical a privatization and cultural isolation of the female accompanied by extensive public demands on the male created a potential imbalance between the values, needs and interests of the two spheres.

When we come to try to analyze Greek drama in relation to the equation female:domestic as male:public, however, we confront multiple problems. Women in drama do not confine themselves to the domestic and religious spheres to which they were relegated in reality. They not only take action in the political sphere denied to them in life, but they rarely defend the household and its interests, or support affective, nurturant, non-competitive values. The rare exceptions — Alcestis, Megara, Macaria, and perhaps Antigone and Lysistrata — prove the rule. While Clytemnestra in the *Agamemnon*, for example, is initially propelled into action over the sacrifice of her daughter, her motives by the end of the Trojan war have become considerably more complex. She rejects her husband and chooses her own mate, and acts to secure political power for herself. She tempts her husband to trample upon the wealth of his household, a wealth which it is her duty as a wife to guard. Instead, as she herself says, she relies on this wealth to consolidate her power. Clytemnestra's rebellion masculinizes her and turns her against her own children; she is repeatedly described in the language of the play as playing a male to Aegisthus' female. Her thinly disguised relief at Orestes' "death" in the *Libation Bearers*, which is contrasted to the distress of the nurse, emphasizes her sacrifice of maternity.

This masculinization of the female, and her rebellious rejection of the interests of the *oikos* is not uncommon in those women who intrude into public life in Greek drama. Medea, openly declaring her lack of feminine *sophrosyne* in her uncontrolled passion for her husband, takes revenge in an explicitly male heroic style (with the ex-

ception of her weapon), makes political alliances for herself with Athens, and destroys her husband's *oikos* by killing her sons.[47] Like many other female characters she possesses rhetorical powers and a forceful intelligence feared by the men around her, and admired by the chorus of women, who lament the historical lack of a poetic voice for women. Medea describes the painful restrictions which marriage places on the woman, forced to buy a husband upon whom she may not be able to rely, confined to the interior of the household, a stranger in a lonely world in which she needs prophetic powers to survive (*Medea* 288–40); and she is not alone in explaining why women are unlikely to be the ideal representatives of the interests of an institution which is not designed primarily to serve her interests. Feminine rejection of marriage is not infrequent in Greek drama (e.g. Sophocles' *Tereus*, frag. 524 Nauck, or Aeschylus' *Suppliants*). The *Agamemnon* opens with Helen's and Clytemnestra's challenge to the institution; the disastrous results of this rejection are only rectified at the close of the *Eumenides*, where the Erinyes, who represent the female side, agree to accept marriage sacrifices and to use their powers of fertility for the state. In the *Oeconomicus* Xenophon plans to *educate* his young wife to think that both sexes will benefit from a common and active devotion to the *oikos* (7. 13). Frequently, in contrast to Herodotus, where wives' devotion to the interests of their husbands can often prove dangerous, female characters in drama are more likely to show an active devotion to their natal households (e.g. Antigone, Electra, Macaria).[48]

While women in drama frequently fail to perform the social duties assigned to them in the *oikos*, men in drama often initiate female rebellion, as Michael Shaw has pointed out,[49] by abusing their responsibilities to household and state. Creon in the *Phoenissae* abandons the interests of the state when he discovers he must sacrifice his son to preserve it (919). In the *Ecclesiazusae* men are criticized for making the legislature an organ to serve private rather than public interests (395ff.). Other male characters ignore the interests of the household in an over-eager pursuit of war (e.g. men in the *Lysistrata*, *Iphigeneia at Aulis*, or *Agamemnon*), ignore the welfare of their families (Jason), or violate the sanctity of the household by bringing home a mistress (Agamemnon with Cassandra, Heracles with Iole). Male over-in-

terest in private concerns is often represented in the language of the text as feminine or feminizing. Blepyrus in the *Ecclesiazusae* must adopt female clothing and call on the goddess of childbirth to deliver a wild pear (369–71); Cinesias in the *Lysistrata* must play the nurse to his neglected child (and phallus, 880–81 and 956), while the magistrate is forced to experience womanhood as the women thrust the badges of the female and her tasks upon him — veils, baskets, girdles and wool (531–37); Aegisthus gives up authority to Clytemnestra, and Jason surrenders his heroism to Medea. She claims his deeds for herself, and mockingly prophesies for him an ignominious death from a piece of his old ship Argo.

Up to this point, we could see the sexual confrontations of drama as representing an inversion of the norm female:domestic as male:public, an inversion which indirectly confirms the importance of the ideal. Violators of the cultural norm are generally punished, and women are often returned to silence, death or suicide, and the domestic interior where they "belong". But women in drama also act for the *polis*. Euripides' Iphigeneia agrees to be sacrificed for Greece, and Praxithea in Euripides' *Erectheus* offers her daughter's life for the city (frag. 360N2). Lysistrata claims to be acting in the interests of both household and state. Jocasta in the *Phoenissae* defends the interests of the state against her sons, who are prepared to sacrifice their own city to acquire power for themselves (528–85). Antigone in the *Antigone* is an ambiguous case. Knox has argued that she acts for the *oikos* against Creon, who represents the *polis*.[50] Yet surely in defending the unwritten laws she is touching on an issue of public policy, the burial of traitors, while Creon's view of the state is shown to be inadequate. Teucer, a male character, makes a comparable defense of burial for Ajax, and Pericles in his Funeral Oration defends the importance of the unwritten laws to the public life of Athens. On the other side, characters like Heracles in the *Heracles* celebrate their retirement from public life to defend the interests of the household (575–6).

Perhaps what we need here is to emphasize the dialectical aspects of the relation between public and private, male and female in our initial set of equations. Clearly, both men and women share an interest in the *oikos* and in the values which help it to survive. But each

sex performs for the *oikos* a different function, each requiring different virtues, and acts in separate spaces, one inside, one outside. Each sex also shares an interest in the *polis*, and performs different public functions which help to perpetuate the state, the male political and military functions, which exclude women, the female religious functions. In each sphere the male holds legal authority over the female. When men and women participate in state religious festivals, each sex supports the communal values necessary for the welfare of the state. *Oikos* and *polis* are organized on a comparable and complementary basis, although they differ in scale. As Aristotle says at the close of his discussion of the relation between family and state in *Politics* I, "For, inasmuch as every family is part of a state, and these relationships are part of a family, and the virtue of the part must have regard to the virtue of the whole, women and children must be trained by education with an eye to the constitution, if the virtues of either of them are supposed to make any difference in the virtues of the state. And they must make a difference; for the children grow up to be citizens, and half of the free persons in the state are women" (1260b, 10–20, trans. Jowett). What this means is that the simple equation female:*oikos* as male:*polis* does not hold fully even at the level of an ideal. Any situation in which the female alone defends the *oikos* is counter to the norm, while to assume that woman has no avenue for exercising her powers positively for the state is to dismiss her public religious function. Ideally, as Pericles' Funeral Oration demonstrates (Thuc. 2. 36ff.), women can be excluded from the political sphere because men bring a balanced sense of their private interests to bear on public policy. Men act as citizens and fathers simultaneously. They treat the unwritten laws with respect, and in their eagerness and opportunity to serve the state they treat their neighbors without jealousy. They conserve and expand public funds, just as the women of the *Ecclesiazusae* claim to practice thrift in the household (236–39; cf. also 600).

This dialectical relation between *oikos* and *polis*, in which each institution defines the other, puts household and state into a relation which is simultaneously antithetical and complementary. The political needs of the state can run counter to those of the household, and the household does not offer to men the chance of living a full human

existence. This dilemma is particularly well demonstrated in the *Agamemnon*, in Agamemnon's choice concerning the sacrifice of Iphigeneia. The king's choice to kill his daughter is forced upon him by Zeus' injunction to defend the laws of hospitality and his own eagerness for glory in war, but the sacrifice redounds equally in its negative effects on the private and public spheres.

As economic institutions, however, *oikos* and *polis* are organized in a more complementary fashion.[51] Each aims at self-sufficiency, thrift, a pooling of common resources, and production for use rather than exchange. Xenophon's Socrates, for example, argues that the economic management of household and state differ mainly in scale (*Mem.* 3.4.12 and *Oec.* 8.22 and 9). When women in the *Lysistrata* and *Ecclesiaszusae* claim to be able to manage public affairs, because of their knowledge of household management, the poet plays on the complementarity of *oikos* and *polis* as economic institutions.[52] It should be emphasized that in neither play do the women actually take over the legislative, judicial and military functions of the city; the utopia of the *Ecclesiaszusae* will eliminate the need for a political sphere, slaves will run the farms, and the women will control a state which, as I argue in a forthcoming article, is primarily an enlarged *oikos*.[53]

Finally, women's role in public religion helps us distinguish between positive heroines in drama who act publicly to defend the *polis*, and those heroines who intrude into the public sphere to make a political challenge to male authority. Clytemnestra pays for her desire to usurp male power; Antigone is simultaneously condemned and celebrated. She dies for her challenge to the edict, but is acclaimed for her defense of the unwritten laws, which have a primary association with the religious sphere, and which are more "natural" than conventional. Jocasta in the *Phoenissae* also defends the state with an appeal to natural law (528–85). Lysistrata in the *Lysistrata*, a character whose name clearly identifies her with the contemporary priestess of Athena Polias Lysimache, can save household and state and create a positive compromise between the interests of the sexes through her legitimate religious authority.[54] Praxithea in Euripides' *Erectheus*, who argues the case for sacrificing her own daughter to save the state (frag. 360N2), was also the first

Athenian priestess of Athena. The chorus in the *Lysistrata* lay claim to symbolic "citizenship" not only through their payment of "taxes" to the state in the form of sons (65, 589–90), but through the state's demonstrated concern in their participation from girlhood on in public religious life (638–48). Euripides' captive Melanippe makes the most eloquent defense of women on these grounds:

> They manage the home, and guard within the house the sea-borne wares. No house is clean or prosperous if the wife is absent. And in religion — highest I judge this claim — we play the greatest part. In the oracles of Phoebus, women expound Apollo's will; and at the holy seat of Dodona, beside the sacred oak, woman conveys the will of Zeus to all Greeks who may desire it. As for holy rites performed for the Fates and the Nameless Goddesses — they are not holy in the hands of men; among women they flourish all. So righteous is woman's part in holy service. How then should her kind be fairly abused? Shall they not cease, the vain reproaches of men; and those who deem too soon that all women must be blamed alike, if one be found a sinner? Let me speak on, and distinguish them: nothing is worse than the base woman, and nothing far surpasses the good one. Only their natures differ . . .[33]

Ideally, then, *oikos* and *polis* are mutually defining institutions; order in one sphere is inextricably related to order in the other, and each sex has legitimate functions to perform in support of each. On the other hand, contradictions can arise within each part of the system and the interests of the one institution can conflict with that of the other. The political and religious aims of the state are not always in harmony, as the many debates in drama concerning conventional and natural law attest. Similarly, the *oikos* is ideally designed as to perpetuate the patrilineal line; but in order to do so, a female stranger must be introduced to reproduce children and to protect the material interests of the *oikos* in the absence of the male, a stranger who does not receive in exchange anything more than the pleasure of supervising and nourishing that which is not her own.

We do see in drama rare instances of an adherence to the ideal in characters like Alcestis, Lysistrata, Iphigeneia at Aulis, or Macaria. But the relation of drama to life and to cultural ideals tends to be obscured by its self-conscious and deliberate obsession with cultural contradictions and crises. Some dramas can be understood as explicit inversions of the ideal. Women commit adultery and sacrifice children and the material resources of the household to their

own desires to rebel and attain power for themselves, and men sacrifice their households for fame, or divert public resources to private gain. The boundaries between household and state becomes spatially and ideologically blurred. Women take on masculine vices, and men female vices and limits. Men pervert their political authority to conflict with the survival of household and state. Women pervert their religious powers to serve anarchy and destruction.

The state of inversion produced is well characterized in the *Agamemnon*, where the masculinized Clytemnestra subverts all her functions in the household and "sacrifices" her husband and perverts prayer to destroy him, while Cassandra, who rejected Apollo, cannot use her prophetic powers to communicate the truth. Agamemnon, on the other hand, sacrifices the youth of the state and its resources, and piety towards the gods for victory in war; he falls victim to the will of a woman and his own desire for oriental and hence feminizing luxury. In the *Eumenides*, by contrast, the Erinyes accept for women an important role in cult which serves the state. Women will be removed from the political sphere and confined in the *oikos*, as the Erinyes are confined underground. The Erinyes accept for women their subordination in marriage, and their role as secondary parent. The male regains political authority with a new system of justice and distribution of wealth; wars will be fought only to counter external aggression, and the fear of the Erinyes will be remembered in the political sphere. The trilogy closes with an assertion of the norm in sexual and social relations expressed in the prose texts.

Many dramas, however, do not reflect the tensions between *oikos* and *polis* in the battle of the sexes by creating an outright inversion of the norm. Yet we can still read the male/female relationship in such plays as Sophocles' *Trachiniae*, Euripides' *Phoenissae*, or Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes* against the implicit ideal relation between *oikos* and *polis* suggested earlier. Sophocles' *Trachiniae* offers a poignant example of a failure of communication between the sexes which is reflected in a failed relation between the spheres in which each operates. Dejaneira, the ideal wife, is chaste to the point that she fails to understand the true nature of sexuality. The victim of a near marriage with a monster and an attempted rape by a centaur,

she has closed off her mind from the implications of male lust altogether; she was unable to experience the battle for her hand between Heracles and the river god Achelous objectively (21–25). Nor does she fully understand the implications of her own feelings of jealousy towards the young Iole. Her isolation in her confinement to the *oikos* is extreme. Heracles returns home only to sow children; she compares his behaviour to that of a farmer who occasionally visits an outlying field (32–33). She receives indirect information about her husband from messengers who do not always tell the truth, and is oppressed by her fears over the ambiguous oracles concerning Heracles' fate left behind by the hero. Given her isolation from both the outside world and her limited knowledge of human nature, it is not surprising that she disastrously misinterprets the motives of the Centaur in giving her a "love charm" through which he in fact intended to destroy Heracles. Full of explicitly constructive intentions to preserve the *oikos*, she falls victim to her wifely virtues and the limited vision imposed on her by her social role.

Heracles has spent his existence not only outside, but on the borders of civilized life. He has subjected his family to constant movement and life in foreign lands. His entrance into culture is explosive. He sacks a city to win the girl Iole, and then introduces her into his own household with no thought for convention and his wife's feelings. He was subject to a foreign queen for a treacherous killing, which violated host/guest relations. He forces his son to marry his own mistress at the end of the play. He catches fire while sacrificing to the gods, overturns the ritual, and murders his companion Lichas. This play carries to an extreme the division between the sexes, by showing the dangers of extreme masculinity and extreme feminity, and of the spatial and functional divisions in the lives of men and women. As Arthur's paper in this volume argues, Hector and Andromache in *Iliad* 6 can temporarily reach a state of full communication at a point in space which lies between the domestic and public worlds, a point at which the complex reciprocal relationship between male and female and their separate spheres can be fully revealed; then their social roles carry them off to permanent and tragic separation. But in the *Trachiniae* husband and wife never meet on stage, and neither enters the world of the other or shares in the value

and perceptions belonging to their spheres. Reciprocity between the sexes and their worlds is severed. Heracles, remaining outside to the last, ignores Dejaneira and her suicide in his self-absorption during the final scenes, while Dejaneira remaining within the *oikos* she has never left, chooses a silent but strangely masculine death by the sword. In the final scene Heracles authoritatively restores the institutions of marriage and sacrifice disrupted by the action of the play.[56] He is sacrificed in propitious silence on the mountain, and extracts a promise from his son Hyllus that he will marry his mistress Iole. Hyllus is visibly torn between his feelings of allegiance to both parents, and shocked at Heracles' requests that he assist his father to destroy himself and marry Iole. We are left with a feeling that cultural order has been recreated at too high a price, and that the problems raised by the play have been only superficially resolved.

Euripides' *Phoenissae* stresses in a similar fashion the drastic pressures which history can put on the sexual divisions in Greek social life. At the opening of the play the young Antigone emerges from the cloistered seclusion appropriate to a young Athenian maiden to look at the battlefield from a wall.. Chaperoned assiduously by her Pedagogue, she makes naive comments about the scene below, and romanticizes the incipient war. Eteocles, Polyneices and Creon abandon the city in favor of self-interest, while the defense of the public sphere comes to rest in the hands of Jocasta and Creon's young son Menoiceus, who sacrifices himself for the city. Finally, in the later part of the play, Jocasta, in an attempt to prevent her sons Eteocles and Polyneices from killing each other, drags Antigone roughly from her maiden seclusion (1264–69). From then on, Antigone, though unequipped to play the role of her powerful Sophoclean counterpart, nevertheless struggles bravely to do so, despite the protests of her uncle Creon and her father Oedipus, who want her to go back inside where she belongs (1636, 1747ff.). The result is simultaneously moving and monstrous. She threatens to kill Haimon on their wedding night like a Danaid (1675). In the concluding scenes she apparently fails to accomplish her traditional public role in burying her brother, but sacrifices her marriage and maiden seclusion to accompany her father into exile.

Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes* again plays on the sexual division of space and function in an ambiguous fashion.[57] Neither sex actually crosses the boundaries of cultural limits appropriate to their sex. At the opening of the play Eteocles initially shows himself to be the ideally efficient military leader, who is preparing to defend a ship of state which he imagines in his address as an exclusively male world (1–38). He then encounters a group of excited young virgins praying to the gods at the center of the city. He orders them back home, telling them that their presence is a dangerous disruption in the besieged city and that they should pray to the gods of the city in a more propitious fashion; he wishes that he could live entirely separate from women (187–88). The Greek audience would remember, however, that women's function in war was to pray to the gods on the acropolis. Hector returns to Troy in *Iliad* 6 to instruct his mother to do so. Furthermore, the women, as Seth Benardete has pointed out,[59] are praying, as they continue to do after Eteocles' departure, to a broader and older set of gods than those of the city to whom Eteocles' prays. Their gods, specified by name, are both male and female members of the family of Zeus, while Eteocles tells them to appeal to the anonymous gods of the city directly. Their prayers create a reciprocal relation between the separate worlds of *oikos* and *polis* ignored by Eteocles. When Eteocles departs, they do not follow his instructions precisely. No mention is made of the propitiatory *ololugmos*. Their meter is calmer, their gods are gods of the state. But in their song they bring within the city the war and strife which Eteocles is striving to keep outside. In so doing they implicitly remind the audience of the curse of Oedipus and the internal, familial tensions of the royal house of Thebes, of all that Eteocles regards as sub-political and unworthy of attention. Eteocles, by suppressing his own identity as a son of Oedipus until the fatal moment where he realizes he will meet his own brother at the seventh gate and eagerly goes out to destroy him, has forgotten his private self, and imagines himself as one with the autochthonous earthborn (rather than from human parents of both sexes) heroes whom he mobilizes against the enemy at the other gates. At the close of the shield scene, the roles reverse, and the women of the chorus now try to persuade the maddened Eteocles not to pollute the city with fraternal blood. Once

again the tragic conflict is played out against a sexual division in which Eteocles has separated himself irrevocably from the domestic and religious spheres presided over by the women, whom the play leaves to mourn in traditional fashion over a leaderless if free city.[59] The problem here is not so much the failure of either sex to perform its proper social functions, as a crucial lack of communication and reciprocity between their two worlds.

To summarize my point then. The simple equation female:*oikos* as male:*polis* does not hold on the Greek stage. Yet occasionally we catch a glimpse of a more complex, reciprocal model of the relation between public and private, male and female, which helps us to define a norm against which to read the inversions and aberrations of drama. The end of the *Oresteia* is one. *Lysistrata* is another. Here the married women's sex strike puts women back into their homes and marriages and restores men to public dominance without a violation by the female of the social limits imposed upon her.[60] In general structural polarities present in dramatic texts are obscured precisely because drama deals with social crisis, with the exposure of contradictions in the social system. At the same time, the reciprocal relation between the two institutions, and the parallel ways in which each is organized, allows the dramatist to make complex symbolic links between these two apparently separate spheres. Hence domestic crises can be used to delineate public ones, and public crises can be signs of abuses to the domestic sphere.

The radical privatization of the female except in the religious sphere offers, as we can see from any one of the standpoints presented in this paper, the most central question and source of unease in drama. Slater's model of the ambivalent mother/son relation depends first and foremost on the woman's ambivalent reaction to her social confinement. Her role as outsider in the social system, both within marriage and in relation to the political sphere classifies her as a more "natural" being to be controlled by this system and potentially hostile to it, although this is a problem she sometimes shares with the men of her society. As a problematic social link between households (see for example, Hermione in Euripides' *Andromache*, whose father Menelaus remains an officious mediator in the sterile and tension-filled marriage of his daughter to Neoptolemus, while the con-

cubine Andromache displays a wifely subservience to the interests of her master) and a stranger who threatens the household from within, she is nevertheless crucial, particularly in view of the frequent absence of the male, to the biological and economic survival of the household. In the public sphere the religious values associated with women must be kept separate from the political sphere to serve as a counterbalancing force; but women can use these religious powers in cultural or anti-cultural ways.

Finally, the democratic *polis* made extraordinary demands on the male citizen to subordinate private interests to public, while simultaneously encouraging ambition and competition. The result, drama seems to suggest, is a constant failure of the male to stay within cultural limits. Female characters often make a radical intrusion into the breach, either to expose and challenge this failure, or to heal it with transcendent sacrificial or other religious gestures. If the female uses religious powers to serve household or state, or to mediate between "nature" and "culture" as these two terms are defined by a specific text, the result can be positive. Otherwise the intrusion of a being ill-equipped for political life can be as dangerous as the disasters which provoked it, the female becomes the locus of oppositions between "nature" and "culture", household and state, and the dramas close with a punishment of the female intruder which implicitly reasserts the cultural norm. The relatively more limited and defined role in which the female is confined by Athenian culture can thus be used to define the more inclusive male role by contrast.

The preliminary suggestions made here about the symbolic role of women in classical drama, and the approaches which might be taken to illuminate this problem, do not begin to touch on a number of crucial aspects of the question. We have not considered any of these questions in relation to the ethical, philosophical and aesthetic issues which are central to drama; it would be interesting to discover, for example, what relation debates over *nomos* and *physis* have to confrontations between the sexes. We have ignored female characters who cannot be successfully analyzed by any of the means considered here. We have not made a sufficient distinction between the treatment of male–female relations in the comic and tragic genres,

or between the three tragic playwrights, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. We have not given an interpretation which puts these insights into the context of a full reading of a drama. We need to understand considerably more about the role of women in Greek religion or the Greek conception of honor in order to analyze women's role in drama.[61] We have not made any adequate theoretical alignment between the psychological and structuralist interpretations, or between the two difference structuralist polarities explored. Nevertheless, it seems to me that we have made a beginning, a beginning which locates the problems posed by a myth-based literature in a specific social and cultural context, and shows us that social theory can offer us some avenues to open up and illuminate these problems. As Levi-Strauss observes, women are like words which must be "communicated" and exchanged in a cultural system; yet they are also speakers as well as signs:

> But women could never become just a sign and nothing more, since even in a man's world she is still a person, and insofar as she is defined as a sign she must be recognized as the generator of signs. In the matrimonial dialogue of men, woman is never purely spoken about; for if women in general represent a certain category of signs, destined to a certain kind of communication, each woman preserves a particular value arising from her talent, before and after marriage, for taking her part in a duet. In contrast to words, which become wholly signs, woman has remained at once a sign and a value. This explains why the relations between the sexes have preserved that affective richness, ardour and mystery which originally permeated the entire universe of human communications.[62]

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Notes

1. See E. Ardener, "Belief and the Problem of Women", in J.S. La Fontaine ed., *The Interpretation of Ritual* (London 1972) 135–158, for a thoughtful dis-

cussion of the unrepresented female point of view in anthropological studies of women.

2. Marylin Arthur points out in her review essay on women in the classics (*Signs* 2.2 (1976) 382–403) that the evidence concerning women in the prose and poetic texts often coincides. This is certainly true, but for the purposes of this paper the distinction will remain useful, since there are certain areas where the dramatic texts offer a consistently different picture
3. "The Position of Women in Athens in the Fifth and Fourth Centuries", *CP* 20 (1925) 4.
4. Roger Just, "The Conception of Women in Classical Athens", *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford* 6.3 (1975) 157.
5. The two most recent are Just, note 4 above, 153–70, and John Gould, "Law, custom and myth: aspects of the social position of women in Classical Athens", *JHS* 100 (1980) 38–59. I deliberately ignore in this article previous misconceptions concerning the question of the status of women in classical Athens (the "optimists" versus the "pessimists"; culturally relative judgments on how the Greeks treated women) which have been well treated by Gould, Just, and Pomeroy. For other important essays on this topic see A.W. Gomme, note 3 above, H.D.F. Kitto, *The Greeks* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex 1950) 219–236, and D. Richter, "The Position of Women in Classical Athens", *CJ* 67.1 (1971) 1–8; Sarah Pomeroy treats both the literary and historical aspects of these questions in several chapters of *Goddesses, Whores, Wives,* and *Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity* (New York 1975). On the historical side of the issue see also W.K. Lacey, *The Family in Classical Greece* (Ithaca, N.Y. 1968). Other helpful works are V. Ehrenberg, *The People of Aristophanes* (Oxford 1943), Marylin Arthur, "Early Greece: The Origins of the Western Attitude Towards Women", *Arethusa* 6 (1973) 7–58, "Liberated Women: The Classical Era", in R. Bridenthal and C. Koontz eds., *Becoming Visible: Women in European History* (Boston 1977) 60–89, and the *Signs* article cited in note 2, and P. Vellacott, *Ironic Drama: A Study in Euripides Method and Meaning* (Cambridge 1975).
6. On women's legal and social status in Athens see especially Lacey, note 5, A.R.W. Harrison, *The Law of Athens: The Family and Property* (Oxford 1968), D.M. McDowell, *The Law in Classical Athens* (Ithaca, N.Y. 1978), H.J. Wolff, "Marriage, Law and Family Organization in Ancient Athens", *Traditio* 2 (1944) 43–95, and D.M. Schaps, *Economic Rights of Women in Ancient Greece* (Edinburgh 1978).
7. For a guardian's abuse of property see Aeschines I 95–99; for a husband's mistreatment of his wife see Andocides' I 124–77. Concerned male relatives of such women could obviously bring cases into court in their interest, so that women did not necessarily go unprotected even if they could not exercise legal rights on their own behalf.
8. Lysias 3.6; for dining practices see Isaeus 3.13–14 and Lysias 1.22.
9. For court cases which question the existence of respectable women see Dem. 43.29–46 and Isaeus 8.9–10; for the naming of women in court see D.M. Schaps *CQ* 25 (1975) 53–57. For general discussions of the court evidence see especially Lacey, Gould and Just (note 5 above).

10. For female initiative in family affairs see esp. Lysias 32 and 13, and Dem. 36.14.
11. For affectionate relations between spouses see Gould (note 5 above) 50.
12. See especially the "Diseases of Virgins" in the Hippocratic corpus for hysteria; for a discussion see B. Simon, *Mind and Madness in Ancient Greece* (Ithaca, N.Y. 1978) 238–70. For ancient theories of conception see the section on "The Seed" in the Hippocratic writings, and Aristotle, *The Generation of Animals* esp. 727 a–b. For a discussion see James Hillman, *The Myth of Analysis* (Evanston, Ill. 1972) 215–246.
13. A recent article by John Gould, "Dramatic characters and 'human intelligibility' in Greek tragedy", *PCPS* N.S. 24 (1978) 43–67, stresses the consequences of the public nature of Greek drama for characterization, and emphasizes the distortions of "life" that it may bring.
14. *The Glory of Hera: Greek Mythology and the Greek Family* (Boston 1968).
15. In this paragraph I stress particularly the insights given in recent general articles on the conception of women in Athens such as those by Gould and Just cited in note 5 above. Pomeroy's chapter (note 5 above) treats the individual playwrights, and emphasizes the importance of women's representation of family and religious interests, and the masculinization of many tragic heroines to be discussed in section VI. The remaining sections of the article will develop these and other perspectives, and note some of the many other helpful contributions made in pieces on individual plays or playwrights to our understanding of the conception of women in Attic drama. Many articles emphasize the victimization of women in drama by war and the patriarchal system, and the capacity of women for noble suffering. In this paper I intend to concentrate on the anomalous aspects of women's role in drama (those which cannot be easily explained on the basis of the prose evidence), and how the conception of women is articulated in the action of drama on the broadest scale.
16. For an excellent treatment of this dialogue between past myth and the Attic present in drama see J.-P. Vernant, "Greek Tragedy" in *The Structuralist Controversy*, ed. R. Macksey and E. Donato (Baltimore and London 1970) esp. 283ff. On Greek myth in general and the problem of treating the sophisticated literature of Greece as myth see G.S. Kirk, *Myth: its Meaning and Function in Ancient and Other Cultures* (Berkeley 1970), B. Vickers, *Towards Greek Tragedy* (London 1973) 166ff. and 617ff., and J. Peradotto, "Classical Mythology: An Annotated Bibliographical Survey", *APA* (Urbana, Ill. 1973).
17. I stress the methodological importance of using Athenian literature as evidence for the Attic conception of women because J. Gould (note 5 above) and P. Slater (note 14 above), for example, use Athenian and non-Athenian texts indiscriminately.
18. For examples of commands to women to stay within see *Eur. Pho.* 88ff., 193ff. or *Electra* 341ff.; for male resistance to a female challenge see among many examples, Soph. *Ant.* 484–85. On the masculinity of tragic women see esp. Pomeroy (note 5 above) 98–101 and B.M.W. Knox, "The Medea of Euripides", *YCS* 25 (1977) 192–226.

19. This point was made by James Redfield in his Gildersleeve lecture of January 1981. On the relation between Pericles and Oedipus see B.M.W. Knox, *Oedipus at Thebes* (New Haven 1957).
20. See Slater, note 14 above. For a sophisticated Freudian interpretation of women in tragedy which uses Slater see, for example, R. Caldwell, "The Misogyny of Eteocles", *Arethusa* 6, 197–231.
21. H.P. Foley, "Sex and State in Ancient Greece", *Diacritics* 5.4 (1975) 31–36. See also Arthur (note 2 above) and Pomeroy (note 5 above).
22. For female psycho-sexual development see especially N. Chodorov, *The Reproduction of Mothering* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1978).
23. Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex", in R. Reiter ed., *Towards an Anthropology of Women* (New York and London 1975) 157–210. I borrow the term "sex-gender system" from her persuasive discussion.
24. For individual articles on women in Greek literature which make use of structuralist methodology see especially the articles by Foley, Sussman, Loraux, du Bois, Zeitlin and Segal in *Arethusa* 11 (1978), the paper by Arthur in this volume, the papers by Arthur, Foley and Zeitlin in the forthcoming issue of *Arethusa* in honor of J.-P. Vernant (1982), the papers by Rosellini, Said and Auger in "Aristophane, les femmes et la cité", *Les Cahiers de Fontenay* no. 17 (1979), and my paper, "The Female Intruder Reconsidered: Women in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* and *Ecclesiazusae*", forthcoming in *Classical Philology*. For further background on this methodology see the ensuing discussion in this paper.
25. Sherry Ortner, "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?", in M. Rosaldo and L. Lamphere, eds., *Woman, Culture, and Society* (Stanford 1974) 67–88.
26. For particularly useful examples of the work of this group which state their general theses and refer specifically to the problem of women see esp., M. Detienne, *The Gardens of Adonis*, trans. J. Lloyd (Brighton 1977), with an important introduction by J.-P. Vernant, and "Violentes 'Eugénies' " in *La cuisine du sacrifice en pays grec*, ed. Detienne and Vernant (Paris 1979); J.-P. Vernant, *Mythe et société en Grèce ancienne* (Paris 1974) and "Hestia-Hermès: sur l'expression religieuse de l'espace et du movement chez les Grecs", in *Mythe et pensée chez les Grecs* (Paris 1969) 97–158; P. Vidal-Naquet, "Esclavage et gynecocratie dans la tradition, le mythe, l'utopie", in *Recherche sur les structures sociales dans l'antiquité classique* (Paris 1970) 63–70, and "Valeurs religieuses et mythiques de la terre et du sacrifice dans l'Odyssée", in M.I. Finley, ed., *Problemes de la terre en Grèce ancienne* (Paris 1973) 269–92.
27. F.I. Zeitlin, "Cultic Models of the Female: Rites of Dionysus and Demeter", forthcoming in *Arethusa* 1982.
28. Foley, "Marriage and Death in Euripides' *Iphigeneia in Aulis*", forthcoming in *Arethusa* 1982.
29. On this point see R. Girard, *Violence and the Sacred* (Baltimore 1972) 139–42. For Girard the myth attributes male violence to women as part of a mythical strategy which conceals the true nature of the religious violence lying at the heart of the drama.
30. On women in Dionysiac and ecstatic religion see Zeitlin (note 27 above), R.

Kraemer, "Ecstasy and Possession: the Attraction of Women to the Cult of Dionysus", *HThR* 72 (1979) 55–80, B. Simon (note 12 above), and I. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion* (Middlesex and Baltimore 1971).

31. On the nature/culture dichotomy in the *Bacchae* see C.P. Segal, "The Menace of Dionysus: Sex Roles and Reversals in Euripides' *Bacchae*", *Arethusa* 11 (1978) 185–202.
32. On this passage in Plato's *Menexenus* see E.D. Dodds, *The Ancient Concept of Progress and Other Essays on Greek Literature* (Oxford 1973) 146–47.
33. On this aspect of the odes see especially M. Arthur, "The Choral Odes of the *Bacchae* of Euripides", *YCS* 22 (1972) 145–181.
34. See my discussion in " 'Reverse Similes' and Sex Roles in the *Odyssey*", *Arethusa* 11 (1978) 7–26.
35. On this point see Arthur, "Liberated Women" (note 5 above) 73–78.
36. On Pandora see esp. J.-P. Vernant, "Le mythe prometheen chez Hesiode", *Mythe et société en Grèce ancienne* (Paris 1974) 177–194, and P. Pucci, *Hesiod and the Language of Poetry* (Baltimore and London 1977) 82–126.
37. Ibid., Pucci 100–101.
38. On the incompatibility of competition and democracy in the Athenian system see A. Gouldner, *Enter Plato: Classical Greece and the Origins of Social Theory*, Part I (New York 1966).
39. "Hestia-Hermès" (note 26 above).
40. I understand that Ortner is arguing on another level than I am here myself. Nevertheless, many have tried to apply this dichotomy without a recognition of the difficulty of using the concept in a particular cultural context. I was unable to acquire a recent book of critical essays on the nature/culture question (C. MacCormack and M. Strathern, *Nature, Culture and Gender* (Cambridge 1980)) by the time this paper went to press.
41. For a general expression of the domestic/public theory see Michelle Rosaldo, "A Theoretical Overview", in Rosaldo and Lamphere, eds., *Woman, Culture and Society* (Stanford 1974) 17–42. In classics this view has been expressed most explicitly, although by no means exclusively, by Michael Shaw, "The Female Intruder: Women in Fifth-Century Drama", *CP* (1975) 255–66; see also my forthcoming response in *CP* to this article, "The Female Intruder Reconsidered: Women in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* and *Ecclesiazusae*". My argument here borrows some theoretical points from that article. The general position was traditional long before structuralism. S. Freud, for example, remarked that "women represent the interests of the family and sexual life; the work of civilization has become more and more men's business." (*Civilization and its Discontents* (London 1957) 73.)
42. Rosaldo, "The Use and Abuse of Anthropology: Reflections on Feminism and Cross-cultural Understanding", *Signs* 5.3 (1980) 389–417.
43. On the relation between domestic and public space in Greek culture see Xenophon's *Oeconomicus*, and Vernant, "Hestia-Hermès", note 26 above. For an important modern treatment of the issue see P. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. R. Nice (Cambridge 1977).
44. See note 39 above.
45. See Arthur, note 5 above, both "Liberated Women" and "Early Greece".

46. For a discussion of the dream of endogamy and its contradictions see Vernant, "Hestia-Hermès" (note 26 above), and J. Pitt-Rivers, *The Fate of Shechem or the Politics of Sex* (Cambridge 1971) esp. 71–93.
47. On *Medea* see especially Knox (note 18 above) and P. Pucci, *The Violence of Pity in Euripides' Medea* (Ithaca and London 1980).
48. For a discussion of such passages (esp. IV. 145, VI. 137–140) see Dewald in this volume and Gould (note 5 above) 54–55.
49. Shaw, note 41 above.
50. B.M.W. Knox, *The Heroic Temper* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1964) 76–90.
51. For a more detailed discussion see my forthcoming paper, note 41 above. The polarity *oikos/polis* does not necessarily correspond precisely with the more general distinction domestic/public. I have chosen to explore the issue in terms of the former polarity because it is the one made by Attic authors. The larger distinction is more complex and would require a thorough exploration of prose texts and non-literary evidence as well as a broader study of the limits between public and private (/idios and /koinos) in Attic literature. As Pauline Schmidt has emphasized to me, the major and pervasive role of women in cult makes their supposed confinement to the /oikos more theoretical than actual.
52. *Ibid.*
53. *Ibid.*
54. *Ibid.* On the identity of Lysistrata see D.M. Lewis, "Notes on Attic Inscriptions II, XXIII. Who Was lysistrata?", *ABSA* 1 (1965) 1–13. See now also Jeffrey Henderson, "Lysistrate: the Play and its Themes", *YCS* 26 (1980) 153–218.
55. Translated by Denys Page, *Select Papyri* III (Cambridge, Mass. 1962) 113–114.
56. For this interpretation of the end of the play see C.P. Segal, "Mariage et sacrifice dans les *Trachiniennes* de Sophocle", *AC* 44 (1975) 30–53.
57. On male–female relations in the *Seven* see especially H. Bacon, "The Shield of Eteocles", *Arion* 3 (1964) 27–38, Caldwell (note 20 above), S. Benardete, "Two Notes on Aeschylus' *Septem*", Part I *WS* 80 (1967) 22–30, and F.I. Zeitlin, "Language, Structure, and the Son of Oedipus in Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes*. A Semiotic Study of the Shield Scene", forthcoming in *Filologia e Critica*, Editione di Ateneo e Bizarri (Roma).
58. Benardete, note 57 above.
59. The end of the *Seven* may not be genuine. I end my interpretation with the mourning by the chorus of the death of the brothers.
60. See Foley, note 41 above.
61. For modern Greek and Mediterranean concepts of honor see Pitt-Rivers, note 46 above, Bourdieu, note 43 above, and J. Peristiany, ed., *Honor and Shame: the Values of Mediterranean Society* (Chicago 1965).
62. C. Levi-Strauss, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (Boston 1969) 496.