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Marital Ruptures and Ritual Space in Classical Greece

DISSERTATION

submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in Classics

by

Teresa Yates Scott

Dissertation Committee:
Associate Professor Andromache Karanika, Chair
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Professor Thomas Scanlon

2017

DEDICATION

To

My boys, Daniel and Tristan,
without whom I'd be lost

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CURRICULUM VITAE

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Marital Ruptures and Ritual Space in Classical Greece

By

Teresa Yates Scott

Doctor of Philosophy in Classics

University of California, Irvine, 2017

Associate Professor Andromache Karanika, Chair

This dissertation investigates adultery and the appropriation of ritual space in Classical Greece, focusing on the portrayal of women and adultery in Greek literary and material sources. It is the first study which analyzes in detail both the extant literary and epigraphic sources for presentations of adultery, its multiple frames, the responses to adultery, and its tight and pervasive connections to ritual. Such representations show how the male portrayal of female sexuality, and ultimately maternity, seeks to problematize adulterous sexual contact. The creation and control of gendered space, which included both ritual and domestic spheres, allowed men to restrict female mobility and to protect their own lineage by ensuring the legitimacy of their children.

Each chapter focuses on depictions of female movement and action in different literary genres and other types of sources (tragedy, comedy, oratory, the catalogues of oracles and curse tablets, and tragic fragments). Similar themes surrounding female sexuality appear in each of these sources alongside the ubiquitous ritual frame; most notably, conspicuousness, tactility, and the manipulation of time and space are all

presented as ways in which women could express their own autonomy. It is this self-expression, which is frequently connected to ritual, that the authors of the above genres portray as destructive to both the *oikos* and the *polis*. In addition, I make use of contemporary sociological, anthropological, and feminist theoretical perspectives to explain the purpose behind these portrayals; in essence, to show why female sexuality is negatively portrayed and so often associated with ritual space. I am particularly interested in ritual as spectacle and the presentation of adultery within these parameters in a variety of different sources, from the theater to curse tablets.

INTRODUCTION

Ancient Greek women, not unlike women of other eras throughout history, existed in a world of externally imposed social structures designed to restrict their activity, sexuality, and mobility. In Classical times, and especially within the Athenian context, adultery was often perceived as the result of women working against these socially promulgated restraints and was therefore framed by male authors as an act injurious to the *polis*. There have been several substantial and enlightening studies undertaken on the topic which I briefly review in the following paragraphs. In my investigation of diverse sources that present adultery, which include rhetorical, poetic, and historical works and archaeological material, I detect a consistent intersection of women, adultery, and ritual. It is this heretofore unexplored association that provides the focal point of this dissertation. Another departure from previous studies is the breadth of sources that I explore; instead of focusing solely on the legal-rhetorical corpus, I examine a wide variety of texts from the Classical period, ranging from the theater to curse tablets, which involve marital ruptures. This dissertation builds upon the legal-historical foundation and unearths previously undetected patterns and connections in the various portrayals of adultery that invite further questions and investigation.

Contemporary scholarship about adultery in ancient Greece is largely found as a section of a larger study; for example, about the family and marriage or sexual violence and its legal implications. Studies of the family in ancient Greece include brief summaries of adultery, as it affected the marital bond. William Lacey's book, for example, investigates the effect that adultery had on the family; this section takes up no more than three pages, and, in addition to enumerating its punishments, focuses on the domestic and civic importance of legitimacy.¹ Furthermore, his methodology rejects the use of tragedy as evidence for the family and urges caution when considering oratory (orators were "prepared to be liars", so Lacey does not consider the "exact truth" of what they say); he argues that comedy, on the other hand, should be considered a valid source for evidence, since comic figures are "normal human beings in comic situations."²³ Similarly, Sarah Pomeroy's book gives an excellent overview of marriage and heredity in Classical Greece, but she, too, refers to adultery only in passing. Cynthia Patterson, on the other hand, devotes two chapters to adultery in her book on the Athenian family; one that defines adultery and gives basic legal guidelines, and another which deals with adultery as it was performed onstage and in courts.⁴ Her tragic focus is limited to Clytemnestra, both in the *Oresteia* and the *Electras*, and her discussion of adultery in comedy is limited to a few paragraphs discussing Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazousae*. She turns to adultery in court, focusing on a pair of fragmentary speeches by Hyperides and Lysias' paradigmatic *On the Murder of*

¹ Lacey 1968: 113.

² Lacey 1968: 10. Sarah Pomeroy similarly claims that the use of tragedy as evidence by historians is problematic; she does, however, concede that tragedy was a "representative element of popular culture at Athens." She further claims that Lacey uses comedy too liberally, which I agree with, and does not fully take into account the exaggerations and other stylistic elements inherent to comedy. (Pomeroy 1998: 2-2)

³ Pomeroy 1998: 2-3.

⁴ Patterson 1998: Chs. 4-5.

Eratosthenes.⁵ Like many other historically-focused studies on the family, Patterson uses the aforementioned literary sources as evidence to support legal remains. I, on the other hand, use the literary corpus as representative of social history and, more specifically, the female experience; the law alone does not and cannot fully reveal the experiences and mentalities of the everyday Athenian.

David Cohen, perhaps the most influential scholar of adultery, approaches adultery as its own topic within a larger socio-legal inquiry. As the titles of his two books make clear (*Law, Sexuality, and Society* and *Law, Violence, and Community in Classical Athens*), Cohen's focus is primarily legal. He provides an invaluable summation of the extant legal statutes concerning adultery, using philosophical, historical, and rhetorical sources to bolster his arguments.⁶ *Law, Violence, and Community* briefly touches on adultery in a broader discussion of the regulation of sexual violence in Athens, citing it as an act of *hubris* and a slight to both male and female honor committed by the adulterer.⁷ *Law, Sexuality, and Society*, on the other hand, devotes two chapters in order to provide a comprehensive picture of adultery. Cohen gathers the legal remains, which include the law of justifiable homicide and the various punishments for adultery, in attempt to create as extensive an account of the laws involving adultery as possible. He cites the civic implications of adultery, claiming that these laws were designed to control "public violence and disorder" rather than sexual misconduct.⁸ He further argues that adultery, repeatedly described as an

⁵ Patterson 1998: Ch. 5 *passim*.

⁶ The pertinent chapter in each book has an earlier journal article associated with it that articulates the major points. The material in Cohen 1989 ("Seclusion, Separation, and the Status of Women in Classical Athens") is a forerunner to *Law, Sexuality, and Society* (1991a), while Cohen 1991b ("Sexuality, Violence, and the Athenian Law of Hubris") previews material from *Law, Violence, and Community in Classical Athens* (1995).

⁷ Cohen 1995: Ch. 7 *passim*.

⁸ Cohen 1991a: 124.

assault to male honor, bred a society-wide need for the supervision of women. Cohen convincingly suggests that the contradictory status of Athenian women and the resulting social and spatial separation was a result of this desired social control.⁹ Both of these studies provide a foundational starting point for my own research, especially as regards the idea of a desired separation between the two sexes for the male-decreed ‘protection’ of female chastity.

Most other discussions of adultery form part of the commentary on a specific speech or legal point, and I discuss these as needed in each chapter. The only one I will elaborate upon here, as it is the most important of these specifics, is the definition of the Greek term for adultery, ‘*moicheia*’. The LSJ defines it simply as ‘adultery’; however, as Ugo Enrico Paoli’s seminal study claims, “anche il commercio carnale con una donna non maritata può configurarsi come adulterio”, citing evidence from Apollodorus’ *Against Neaera* to support his claim.¹⁰ I treat this speech further in Chapter 3, but Paoli’s assertion that the Athenian characterization of adultery included sexual contact with either an unmarried or a married woman challenges the notion that adultery could only be committed within a marriage and further problematizes attitudes to female sexuality. This argument has been met with approval by several scholars, including Kenneth Dover, Christopher Carey, Konstantinos Kapparis, and Mirko Canevaro.¹¹ Notably, Cohen is one of the few dissenters. He argues that adultery and seduction were two separate crimes with the same punishment, and that a marriage was essential for *moicheia* to occur.¹²

⁹ Cohen 1991a: Ch. 6 *passim*.

¹⁰ Paoli 1953: 126.

¹¹ Dover 1974: 209; Carey 1995: 407-8; Kapparis 1999: 297; Canevaro 2013: 195.

¹² Cohen 1991a: 104-8.

Comparanda from other Greek *poleis*, however, lend support to Paoli's claim. For example, Douglas MacDowell's discussion of Spartan law relates that while fixing a concept of adultery in Sparta was problematic, the concept of *moicheia* "covered wrongful intercourse with either an unmarried or a married woman."¹³ Beyond the Athenian paradigm, which makes up most of our evidence, Ronald Willetts' examination of the Gortyn code leads to a similar conclusion; namely that seduction and adultery were considered "offenses of the same category" and therefore required no further distinction.¹⁴ I find Paoli's claim, together with the ancient evidence, compelling and approach adultery similarly in my study. From an ancient legal perspective, women were perceived as having several *kyrioi* in the course of their lives; therefore, it stands to reason that *moicheia* would impact any *kyrios* and encompass any sexual act outside of marriage, regardless of the marital status of the woman.¹⁵ As such, female sexuality is problematized throughout the Greek literary corpus. I am interested in uncovering adultery and other breaches as subjective experiences rather than searching the literary corpus for cases of legal adultery; in other words, how women are portrayed to perceive certain ruptures, and how, depending on their situation, they are able to commit or respond to them.

Literature through the centuries demonstrates that sexuality is projected onto women by male authors and the strictures of male-dominated society alike. This, in turn, allows any bodily reactions to women to be held against the women themselves; in the words of Susan Bordo, female bodies, even when silent or acting to the contrary, "are seen

¹³ MacDowell 1986: 87.

¹⁴ Willetts 1967: 28.

¹⁵ Foxhall discusses the example of Demosthenes' mother – she had multiple *kyrioi* and played them against one another to manipulate them into doing her bidding (1996: 150).

as “speaking” a language of provocation.”¹⁶ This repeated and deleterious characterization of women as seductresses in ancient literature is mirrored by the prevailing opinion that a ‘good’ woman, according to the socio-political hierarchy, was one who was both silent and unseen. The subsequent control, according to Edwin Schur, “over female appearance, autonomy, and sexuality – this might indeed serve as a capsule statement of what male domination entails.”¹⁷ This desire for suppression of female expression in antiquity is substantiated, for example, by Perikles’ funeral oration, in which he claims that unspoken-of women were the most desirable.¹⁸ Supervision of women in antiquity was transferred from their fathers to their husbands, and the socially fabricated and perpetuated pressure to remain a virgin before marriage was deemed as important as the husbands’ strongly-held desire that their wives be faithful within marriage.¹⁹ To this end, men attempted to seclude their wives just as fathers did with their daughters, although this sequestration is perhaps less absolute than once believed.²⁰ Furthermore, these social and spatial norms attempted to isolate women from being near other men, or even being seen by them, under the pretext of the supposed corruptibility of the female mind and body. Consequently, female autonomy was tightly suppressed, both spatially and ideologically; as Marilyn Skinner argues, biology came to serve as the reason for the ‘disadvantaged’ position of women in society.²¹ To my mind, depictions of adultery within literature provide an apt

¹⁶ Bordo 1993: 6.

¹⁷ Schur 1983: 52-3.

¹⁸ Thuc. 2.45: μεγάλη ἡ δόξα καὶ ἥς ἂν ἐπ’ ἐλάχιστον ἀρετῆς πέρι ἢ ψόγου ἐν τοῖς ἄρσεσι κλέος ᾗ. Other examples are in oratory (virtuous women remained unnamed), and Euripides’ *Medea*, in which Medea’s very outspokenness was characterized as “male” and therefore unbecoming,

¹⁹ Pomeroy 1997: 15.

²⁰ See Cohen 1989. He convincingly argues that women were not secluded, but instead operated within a sphere separate to that of men, and that they had “public, social, and economic spheres of their own.” (1989: 3).

²¹ Skinner 2014: Introduction *passim*.

characterization of this attempted seclusion and the imagined, and indeed feared, implications of the refusal to adhere to these outwardly imposed social constraints.

Because of the anxieties concerning fidelity and chastity outlined above, a *kyrios* (whether a father or husband) ultimately tried to limit female activity and mobility in order to assert his authority over sexual and reproductive abilities. This domestic scrutiny is reflected in the inequitable apportioning of public space and power as well as in legal and social codes. The resulting spatial partitioning is, therefore, created in order to highlight sexual difference and to condition gender-specific behavior.²² Most importantly, there is an attempt to assert dominion over what Shirley Ardener calls 'genealogical space', and what I also term 'biological' or 'epistemic' space; ancient women alone knew the true paternity of any children they bore and therefore had true knowledge of familial lineage. This social regulation of maternity, I argue, was created to allow men to reassure themselves of their own paternity.²³ In such a society, female adultery is a means of reclaiming one's own body and an assertion of maternal, sexual, and female autonomy.²⁴ The depictions of adultery in literature betray the aforementioned male preoccupation with paternity and female chastity, while at the same time showing ancient attitudes that believed women could work within these social constraints in order to assert their own agency and seize authority of their own bodies.

As I investigated adultery in the different texts and genres in this study, it became clear that there was a persistent, corpus-wide intersection between depictions of adultery

²² Powell 2013: 1.

²³ This desire to control female activity is a reaction to man's biological inability to give birth (Vianello and Caramazza 2005: 18), and thereby be assured of the paternity, and by extension legitimacy, of any children produced within their marriage.

²⁴ Chodorow 1978: 9.

and ritual, especially as they involved women. How are adultery and ritual related, and why should they be so consistently associated? First, I briefly touch upon ritual and its place within society. Definitions of ritual in current scholarly opinion are varied and contradictory, and I do not wish to rehash them in detail here. Louise Zaidman and Pauline Pantel's definition of ritual in ancient Greece perhaps outlines it best:

“A ritual is a complex of actions effected by, or in the name of, an individual or a community. These actions serve to organize space and time, to define the relations between men and the gods, and to set in their proper place the different categories of mankind and the links which bind them together.”²⁵

Furthermore, there are certain elements that were essential to ritual participation, according to Roy Rappaport's anthropological approach to ritual: the authority of tradition, formality, for which he gives a variety of meanings, performance, and invariance.²⁶ I am most concerned with performance, for, as Rappaport claims, “unless there is a performance there is no ritual.”²⁷ In addition, the instances of adultery or other ruptures that I investigate were often performed onstage or in the courtroom, adding another layer of performance to the ritual activity that circumscribes them.

Many of the ritual duties within a *polis* were undertaken by men, but women could and did take part in both civic and informal ritual activities and occasions.²⁸ As such, the allocation of space to men and women was designed to be as tightly controlling in ritual as it was in marriage; all of this was conceived with the intent to ensure that women should be

²⁵ Zaidman & Pantel 1992: 27.

²⁶ Rappaport 1999: Ch. 2 *passim*. Rappaport's use of formal “has, so far, subsumed decorousness, punctiliousness, conformity to form, repetitiveness, regularity, and stylization. The term “formal” is also meant to contrast with the “functional” or, to be more precise, with the physically efficacious.” (46)

²⁷ Rappaport 1999: 37.

²⁸ Goff 2004: 2.

“more religious, pure, and sexually chaste than men.”²⁹ Female agency and sexuality, therefore, was spatially controlled by ritual as well as social structures.³⁰ A woman’s chance at religious participation could be greatly damaged by even the rumor of promiscuity, as Thucydides’ retelling of the famous tyrannicide of Hipparchus in the 6th century B.C.E. makes clear; by citing the ‘unworthiness’ or ‘lack of dignity’ (τὸ μὴ ἀξίαν; 6.56) of Harmodius’ sister, Hipparchus publicly humiliated her, and by extension her family, and was killed for his efforts.³¹ Therefore, the ritual space allocated to women could indeed be as oppressive as its secular counterpart; at the same time, it too could be negotiated or contested, ultimately allowing for social empowerment.³² It is this intersection and negotiation that I investigate; more specifically, how women are portrayed as working within the socio-religious confines allotted to them by the dominant male social structures and how this improves our understanding of their place within society.

Practicing a ritual properly and living within one’s marriage according to custom was endorsed as beneficial to the city, even though by so doing, women were adhering to the social norms that kept them controlled by and subservient to men. A perceived failure to observe the standards of both marriage and ritual were framed by men as having a direct, negative impact on the entire *polis* as well as the *oikos*. For example, Phano of Apollodorus 59 had a central role in a festival called the Anthesteria. Her putative status as a foreigner would have endangered the ritual according to Athenian ritual custom; however, Apollodorus takes great pains to demonstrate that Phano is an adulteress in addition. By joining these two charges against her, he is able to argue that she poses a

²⁹ Belknap 2001: 231. See also Cole 2004: 3; Morin and Guelke 2007: xix.

³⁰ Morin and Guelke 2007: xxv.

³¹ Thuc. 6.56.

³² Bell 2009: 181; Morin and Guelke 2007: xxiii; xxv.

threat to both the religious and secular life of the city. In literature especially there is an emphasis on the purity of ritual which is reframed as a requirement for female purity; an assault on the purity of any part or participant of ritual, especially a central participant, affects its efficacy.³³ Women like Phano are characterized as the type of woman most threatening to the status quo; by committing adultery and by seizing control of ritual, they are portrayed as seeking an enhanced sense of control over their life or place in the community to the detriment of their *oikos* and *polis*.

Certain themes accompany these instances of rupture as they intertwine with ritual; most notably, spectacle or conspicuousness, tactility, and the control of ritual space and/or time.³⁴ Other related themes, typically those specific to a certain genre, are discussed in each chapter as appropriate. The aforementioned motifs are all shown by ancient authors to have been appropriated by women and used in an effort to express themselves through word or deed, and all are integral to ritual. Firstly, there was a need to have a central focal point in each ritual – what I classify in the following pages as ‘spectacle’ or ‘conspicuousness’. This need not be confined to a single act or person; the investiture of the statue of Athena Polias with the sacred *peplos* was meant to be just as conspicuous as the figures in the Panathenaic procession or the pouring of a libation in an act of personal piety. This focal point, both to the audience and presumably to the gods, was used by ancient authors in several different ways; however, the women associated with adultery are often shown to use the spectacle of a given ritual to negative effect, as I argue. In these instances, ritual itself is refashioned as a spectacle, as well as an expression of or a vehicle

³³ Cole 2004: 3.

³⁴ According to Jon Mikalson (2004: 27), the general pattern of public festivals is procession, hymn, prayer, sacrifice, special events (games, etc.), and banquet. Several of these elements are shared with private ritual, and not all are necessary to each festival or religious occasion.

for female action, whether in response to an adulterous spouse or in the attempt to commit adultery.

Next, most rituals incorporated a tactile act, which underlined the importance of the hands and handiwork within the religious setting. The crafting of a ritual object with one's own hands allows for the appropriation of the ownership of one's actions or creations, and more closely connects the creator to the ritual.³⁵ Similarly, a private offering or dedication had a tangible aspect to it, whether wine physically poured from a jug or a votive offering dedicated at a temple or sanctuary. In literature, women especially are associated with the creation of objects with their hands; however the women in the following chapters, who are portrayed as acting against the interests of their marriage and their *polis*, are shown to use their tactile authority and creations in order to cause destruction. Adultery is consistently associated with a tangible physicality, which provides deeper insight into ancient thinking.

Finally, the control of space and time is necessary to a given ritual occasion. Ritual activity needed to have its place and time established, whether by a community or individual, since, according to Gruenwald "rituals do not represent a meaning or truth, outside of their own performative dimensions".³⁶ In addition, Rappaport argues that the performance of rituals in specific contexts, which included both space and time, was an essential feature.³⁷ By generating the appropriate ritual setting, or even overlaying it with a time and space of their own, participants could take control of an aspect of ritual, or indeed the ritual itself, and fashion the results of the occasion to their own purposes. Overall, these

³⁵ Scheid and Svenbro 1996; Karanika 2014: 85-89.

³⁶ Gruenwald 2003: 3.

³⁷ Rappaport 1999: 33.

are aspects of ritual that women utilize – or are shown to utilize by Classical authors – in order to act or express themselves in ways that negatively affected their respective *poleis*.

Each chapter focuses on depictions of female movement and action in different literary genres and other types of sources (tragedy, comedy, oratory, the tragic fragments, and the catalogues of oracles and curse tablets). I analyze the extant sources for instances of what is presented as illicit female sexual activity, which are often framed by ritual space and activity, and show how the male representation of female sexuality, and ultimately maternity, seeks to problematize adulterous sexual contact. The different genres present female sexuality and enterprise in different ways. For example, Attic Old Comedy used contemporary topics and mocked them in a way that intended to resonate with the audience; therefore, many of the depictions of female sexuality are satirical.³⁸ The representation of women in Aristophanes differs from those in tragedy, which did not engage with contemporary issues as closely as Old Comedy.³⁹ The courtroom was a forum for male competition, and therefore the women portrayed in these speeches could, according to Lin Foxhall, be used as ‘weapons’ in this agonistic context.⁴⁰ Evidence from the material record, on the other hand, presents a rare and valuable picture of female agency and mobility that is undiluted by an authorial or editorial lens.

In addition, I make use of contemporary sociological, anthropological, and feminist theoretical perspectives to explain the purpose behind these portrayals; in essence, to show why female sexuality is negatively portrayed and so often associated with ritual space. I do not, however, investigate adultery as it appears in epic or other archaic sources,

³⁸ Rosen in Dobrov 2010: 242.

³⁹ McClure 1999: 205.

⁴⁰ Foxhall 1996: 137-141.

since it evokes different patterns as part of abduction narratives in the epic tradition and early historiography. Instead, I focus on the instances of adultery staged in Classical times. This is not to say that the appearance of adultery in epic is inconsequential to later sources; rather, Homeric epic in particular provides an important backdrop for much of Classical literature.⁴¹ Similarly, the depictions of adultery and marriage in Herodotus, although situated in the 'barbarian' sphere, nevertheless provide comment upon the Greek point of view towards the importance of marriage to society.⁴²

The first three chapters, which investigate tragedy, comedy, and rhetoric, examine literary depictions of presumed assaults on purity, marriage, and motherhood in general, and the abovementioned themes are particularly apparent in the following sources. Chapter 1 focuses on instances of adultery in Euripides' *Medea* and Sophocles' *Trachiniae*. In the two sections in this chapter, I focus on both female positions – both the spurned wife and the putative 'adulteress'. My investigation of *Medea* and *Deianira* looks at the actions and reactions of the wife suffering from what she believes to be an adulterous spouse and a new role, perceived or actual, within the *oikos*. This exploration takes more of a psychological approach; both characters react as though their marriage has been assailed even though it is unclear whether or not adultery, in its legal sense, has been committed. By appropriating ritual activity, *Medea* and *Deianira* both respond in an attempt to reverse their situation to a former moment in their lives. Next, I explore the role of *Iole* in the *Trachiniae*. She is a pivotal character without a speaking role; nonetheless, she is treated by the protagonists and other figures in the narrative as though she is an active adulteress,

⁴¹ Jenkyns 2016, *et al.*

⁴² See Wenghofer 2014, Sansone 2016, *et al.*

even though there is little substantiation of such action in the play, or indeed in her mythical history. She is nevertheless compared to a Fury, accused of having borne two Furies, and used as currency within the bounds of *xenia*.

The second chapter analyzes two of Aristophanes' comedies, the *Thesmophoriazusae* and the *Lysistrata*, in which women are assigned the role of active adulteresses. Despite the reversal in the female role from tragedy, there is nevertheless a conspicuous ritual element in these comic plays. Adultery is not the central focus of either of these plays; however, the female characters created by Aristophanes often comment upon their own extramarital sexual activity using sexually explicit language. In both of the plays, Aristophanes crafts the women of Athens as acting in ways that threaten the *status quo*; he portrays the women at the Thesmophoria freely discussing their sexual activities, perhaps in accordance with the prevailing male opinion of unsupervised female speech, and the women in the *Lysistrata* use their bodies to seize the Acropolis and force the Athenian men to stop the war with Sparta. Each of these depictions of resistance to male-propagated social norms is given a ritual frame, although the more readily apparent is in the *Thesmophoriazusae*, and is shown to present a danger to Athens. In both of these plays, the ritual forum gives a voice to Greek women and serves as a space in which they are able to break their silence regarding their own sexuality.

Chapter 3 investigates instances of adultery in the legal-rhetorical sources, and, like comedy, the focus is on women who are accused of being adulteresses. The husbands of these women, as well as the orators themselves, strongly and repeatedly refer to their own honor and status within the *polis*, which they charge their wives with having damaged as a

result of their adultery. I briefly touch upon the portrayal of adultery found in the legal remains, which largely enumerates its punishments. I then turn to two speeches: Lysias' *On the Murder of Eratosthenes*, and Apollodorus' *Against Neaera*. Adultery is the central theme of the former speech, and while often used as a case study of adultery, there are references to the importance of ritual in the commission of Euphiletus' wife's adultery which have not been fully investigated. *Against Neaera*, on the other hand, focuses more on issues of citizenship and the implications of falsified citizenship. It does, however, detail some actions of two accused adulteresses, and although there is not a great deal of information about their activities (and what is there is in service to a certain point of view), there is nevertheless a persistent reference to ritual inherent in the descriptions of adultery.

The fourth chapter, which investigates adultery and hybridity in the fragmentary plays of Euripides, is connected thematically to the three previous chapters to the extent that we can ascertain. This chapter focuses on the myth of Pasiphaë and the Cretan bull, whose bestial union and resulting birth of the Minotaur was the focus of Euripides' *Cretans*, and the story of the Centaurs, including their genesis and propagation, which seems to have been the subject of Euripides' *Melanippe Sophê*. I utilize other sources, both literary and archaeological, in order to more fully flesh out the backgrounds of these stories and show how ritual held an important place in each. Finally, I turn to the Cassandra of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, another fragmented voice who is herself bestialized by Clytemnestra following the perceived sexual contact between Cassandra and Agamemnon. Each of these stories illuminates the issues inherent in hybridity, which I argue is an analogue to the desired ethnic – and indeed familial – purity shown by the Periclean citizenship legislation of 451/450 B.C.E. Euripides makes use of such interspecies hybrid figures to emphasize the

destructive qualities of the implicit impurity and illegitimacy created by the aforementioned legislation.

The fifth chapter also portrays fragmented voices, this time in a practical application of the previously discussed ritual activity. This chapter investigates material sources, both oracles and curse tablets, which provide echoes of the autonomy and empowerment given to women in the literary sources outlined above. The catalogues of oracular questions and responses are replete with questions regarding paternity and the ability to have children, which showcases the social and familial importance of legitimate male heirs. In spite of the formal ritual setting, these catalogues provide an insight into the concerns of a large cross-section of Greek society. Curse tablets, on the other hand, were implemented privately and as such display personal concerns, including a desire to control the sexual activity of another person. These two *corpora* of material sources both complement the conclusions drawn in my chapters that discuss the literary evidence and provide a valuable first-hand account of the problems and anxieties facing the members of the ancient Greek *poleis*.

Overall, this study provides a new perspective on adultery as well as new insights into the texts which I analyze. Previous studies of adultery and other breaches of marriage typically focus on the rhetorical sources and the portions of law which remain within them. Mine is the first study which analyzes in detail both the extant literary and epigraphic sources for presentations of adultery, its multiple frames, the responses to adultery, and its tight and pervasive connections to ritual. In essence, I investigate why male authors persistently portray female sexuality negatively and so often associate it with ritual space. The answer lies in the socio-legal mechanisms of social control; put another way, men are

concerned with establishing and protecting the dominant male ideology as a means of controlling female sexuality and reproduction. The implications of sexual control in a pre-DNA testing world are clear: only by the seclusion of women did men believe that they could protect their own lineage by ensuring their children were indeed legitimate.

Why adultery? At a time in which women are arguably more liberated than they have been throughout most of history, adultery might seem to be an antiquated concept.⁴³ Upon closer inspection, however, women in modern and ancient societies alike are condemned much more heavily for adultery than men – if men are condemned at all. This deeply entrenched double standard, especially as regards sexuality, is as relevant today as it was in the ancient world; it is this firmly rooted gender inequality that motivated my study and urged me to uncover the ancient female experience in marital, sexual, and reproductive matters.

⁴³ I include the term ‘arguably’ here because although women do have more freedoms than in past eras, there is nevertheless increased regulation/legislation of the female body in recent times. Women leaving the home, and therefore the socially accepted care of their husbands, led to an increase in legal oversight (see, for example, Schneider in Kairys 1990).

1

AFFLICTED BY ADULTERY: WIVES AND CONSORTS IN GREEK TRAGEDY

I. Introduction

Some of the most famous adulteries of antiquity are featured in the tragedies still extant from the classical Greek dramatic corpus. These episodes include extramarital relationships by both men and women; members of the latter group are portrayed as both instigators of adultery and as passive objects. In this chapter, I focus on women who are suffering from the effects of adultery rather than those perpetrating it. Figures like Medea and Deianira are newly or potentially discarded wives who previously occupied the traditionally male-controlled domestic space, but their status has been further jeopardized by their husbands' infidelity. Such female characters often become 'self-canceling figures' and 'paradoxical presences,' in the words of Tony Tanner.¹ As Tanner argues, the adulteress is a figure whose presence society does not wish to accept or acknowledge, and therefore is an implicit threat to the world in which she lives.² While Tanner is referring to the figure of the active adulteress in early modern literature, this concept is nevertheless applicable to the tragic women encountering an adulterous husband; they do not express their agency in the commission of adultery, but rather in their decision to respond to it and

¹ Tanner 1979: 12-13.

² *Ibid.*

in the ultimate destruction their actions cause, which is an essential aspect of the tragic element. Along with their paradoxical status in their respective societies, these women are intersectional figures; namely, those who have multiple identities as members of one or more minority groups.³ In a socio-political sense, these female characters are traditionally disenfranchised members of society, but their presence in a foreign *polis* further complicates their standing.⁴ In addition, they constitute a minority of women with liminal status, due to their newly ambiguous station in the *gamos*, and their subsequent actions make their position in society more untenable. As such, these mythical figures are subject to poetic treatment that constructs them as self-canceling; due to the legal proscriptions and social structures of the time, they themselves are the individual who is most profoundly affected. Once cast aside, they neither belong to their fathers' *oikos* nor that of their husband, and therefore it became necessary that they operate within a paradoxical frame. This directly affected their options; the only viable choice, to the female tragic mind, is to react in an attempt to salvage their situation.

In the first section of this chapter, I focus on Deianira and Medea, of Sophocles' *Trachiniae* and Euripides' *Medea* respectively. I take a more psychological approach in this section; my focus is not on attempting to somehow reconcile these adulterous unions with those depicted in the legal remains. Rather, I show how these instances of adultery function in addition to them, and how the characters' belief that adultery has occurred conditions their responses to it. Both women are fashioned as the spurned partner in their marriage and both take action in order to remedy their circumstances. Euripides and Sophocles show how each character portrays her own marriage; Deianira, on the one hand, is still

³ For more on intersectionality, see especially Crenshaw 1989 and 1991.

⁴ Daly 1975: 65.

married to Heracles, but lives in a world constructed of fear and uncertainty. Therefore, when Heracles returns to Trachis with Iole, she immediately assumes that Iole is to supplant her role as wife. Medea, on the other hand, repeatedly refers to Jason's new wife, albeit not by name, while at the same time referring to Jason as her husband (πόσιw τ' ἔμόwv; 375). This inconsistency in the portrayal of Jason and Glaukē's connubial circumstances, which is undertaken by Medea alone, suggests that Euripides is primarily concerned with Medea's reaction to this union, and perhaps even with her inability to reconcile their marriage. In sum, she approaches Jason as though they are still married, and she accordingly views his union with Glaukē as adultery. The tragic poets endow the female characters' reactions to adultery with a ritual frame; namely, a setting in which it was traditionally acceptable for women to function. Both Deianira and Medea use ritual contexts and activity to reroute their situation, whether this involves renewing, reinstating, or obliterating their former status and selves. By employing such ritual social structures, Sophocles and Euripides fashion these women as working within male-sanctioned social systems – while at the same time rewriting them – to seek a remedy to their newly liminal social positions.

Iole, discussed in the second section of this chapter, is also a self-canceling figure; in her case, however, agency is projected onto her by the other characters in Sophocles' *Trachiniae*. She is not a legitimate wife, nor is she anywhere near her fatherland; therefore she has been placed in a similarly liminal and intersectional status and, notably, Sophocles has suppressed any mode of expression, both verbal and physical. Because of her silence and inability to act, agency is transposed onto Iole, and her tragic presence ultimately signifies the collapse of the *gamos*. Her seizure by Heracles as a spear-wife has changed her

status to an ambiguous one; she has neither the legitimate *oikos* of a husband nor the refuge of her father's home. As such, she is objectified and dehumanized by other characters in the play even as she is implicated in the actions that bring about the destruction of Heracles' household. In this section, I do not discuss Glaukē, Iole's Euripidean counterpart, because she does not occupy the same liminal social space. As the princess of Corinth, her place in society is assured and in the representation of her marriage to Jason, she seems to be portrayed as more of a historical bride. Therefore, the ambiguities of status do not apply to her and the only objectification she suffers at the hands of Euripides is that of the stereotypical Athenian female.

The aforementioned women are fashioned as presenting a constant threat to the society in which they lived, and the ancient tragic poets, in their retelling and staging of ancient myths, construct them as characters responding to their circumstances, whether by actions or presence alone.⁵ The situation of adultery, and the resulting tenuousness of their social standing, gives them an opportunity to employ their own agency, or allows other characters to project destructive agencies onto them, which in turn generates the disintegration of the marriage and the *oikos*. As I show, the creation of adultery is expressed using ritual paradigms; feminine tragic figures are placed within a ritual setting and employ the tools of ritual to renegotiate their presence in the *oikos*.

⁵ Tanner 1979: 13. Tanner, discussing active adulteresses in 18th and 19th century French literature, argues that these women are "virtual nonbeing(s) offering a constant implicit threat to the being of society." While I apply his argumentation to those women *affected* by adultery, the Greek playwrights nevertheless portray these women as figures who, once they have begun to take action, similarly threaten the societies in which they live.

II. The Transgressive Ritual Locus in Sophocles' *Trachiniae* and Euripides' *Medea*

a. Introduction

In Sophocles' *Trachiniae* and Euripides' *Medea*, the physical space of the *oikos* is reappropriated, or even renegotiated, as a response to male infidelity. Deianira and Medea, figures undergoing a change both in status and in domestic space, react and respond to their husbands' perceived adulterous unions with another woman. They both face the realization that their position in the *oikos* has been supplanted; both of their husbands have become involved with a younger woman, with the implication that these figures will soon become, or have already become, new wives. Therefore, they both create a new ritualized dimension of existence in which they attempt to regain control of their status or *oikos* due to their inability to exist outside this newly forged space. In order to construct this new sphere, they rewrite ritual norms that will enable them to carry out their plans against their husbands. By doing so, these characters erase their previous existence within the *oikos*; by acting against their husbands, they ultimately necessitate their own removal from the society in which they live.

There is, however, an essential difference between the situations of Medea and Deianira: that of intent. While Deianira uses this new ritual dimension in an attempt to restore her *oikos* and status as a wife, Medea equally uses ritual means in order to ensure the ruin of Jason's *oikos* and any potential successors, marking her shift from a self-cancelling figure to an all-erasing persona. Similarly, the women's premarital pasts affect their response to their situations. Medea, portrayed as a self-reliant woman both before and during her marriage to Jason, is able to conceive of and carry out her own means to

seek retribution. Deianira uses a *pharmakon*, complete with explicit instructions, given to her by the centaur Nessus; this is more in line with her character, shown to be fearful even as a child.⁶ In what follows, I analyze how adultery creates the forum that facilitates this change in scene.

This creation of a bounded ritual space is made possible because both Medea and Deianira employ the parameters of gift exchange to correspond with their own desires and intentions. A social institution going back as far as Homeric epic, gift exchange initially formed a social bond between the elite soldiers during the Trojan War. The work of Victoria Wohl further expands upon the dynamics of the gift exchange as it involved women, claiming that the “transfer of a woman between two men constitutes the social world, generating bonds between the men and defining their social identities.”⁷ In the *Trachiniae* and the *Medea*, however, this traditional ritual is corrupted because the gender dynamics of the gift exchange shift. Those engaging in the traditional forms of gift exchange, termed the ‘subjects’ by Wohl, were almost exclusively men.⁸ In these two plays, however, the subjects shift from male-male to male-female, thereby rendering the transaction imbalanced because the very nature of ancient Greek society made gender equality in such a situation impossible. Deianira, in participating in a traditionally male-dominated transaction with Heracles, is positioning herself as flawed subject, a characterization which equally applies to Medea and her negotiations with Jason.⁹ Medea’s exchange is similarly problematic in that it, too, involves murder; her response, however, is

⁶ In recounting her youth, she refers to the clash between Heracles and her suitor Acheloüs at the very beginning of the play. She feared both Acheloüs and marriage, and was unable to watch the battle itself.

⁷ Wohl 1998: xiii. For more on gender and gift exchange, see Lyons 2012.

⁸ Wohl 1998: xiii ff.

⁹ Wohl 1998: 38.

far more premeditated and intentionally destructive. Because of the nature of their misdeeds, both of the characters become conflicting figures whose existence in society is unstable, but whose actions merited response nevertheless. These women, therefore, participate in what is ultimately shown to be a dubious gift exchange; in the following pages, I discuss the implications of this imperfect gift exchange and how it affects the portrayal of these female subjects in their respective plays. Moreover, I trace this gift exchange in conjunction with the ritual frame in which the response to the adulterous union is crafted.

In this section, I first explore Deianira's creation of a new ritual realm by her manipulation of ritual space and time. Current scholarship about Deianira's character presents two main views in the analysis of the *Trachiniae*. Earlier views in scholarship have focused on character portrayal and regarded Deianira as indecisive or lacking agency; Richard Jebb, among others, described Deianira as “a perfect type of gentle womanhood” who is tender, delicate, and devoted to her husband.¹⁰ These assessments of Deianira are easy to understand if one takes the play as a straightforward depiction of character and setting, without any nuance or undertone. The characterization of Deianira as a genteel woman is true in a sense, perhaps, but her actions later in the play indicate that she is not completely without self-sufficiency. Her comparison of Heracles with a farmer (31ff.) indicates that she did not have much occasion to depend on him due to his repeated and protracted absences from home. Her actions, like those of Medea, enable her to construct a

¹⁰ Jebb 1892: xxxii. Marsh McCall, following Jebb's example, characterizes Deianira as “a meek and lovely wife, resigned to her lot.” (1972: 144). Cecil Bowra takes a similar viewpoint, asserting that Deianira's story is a ‘tragic mistake’, taking her assertion that her actions were innocent at face value. She is weak-willed, Bowra argues, and her lack of conviction leads to her downfall; she has no conviction because “she is used to depending on a husband whose will is far stronger than her own.” (1994: 121-3)

representation of herself as a woman of action and agency, precipitating the idea that agency can also deviate from the expected norms.

Perhaps the most long-lasting and influential scholar of the *Trachiniae* is Charles Segal, whose scholarship on the play spans 20 years. Most importantly to this study, his work on the *Trachiniae* helps situate the play in mytho-historical time and discusses the importance and perversion of the typical Greek marriage bond. His description of the play as a conflict between the more cultured realm, in which Deianira belongs, and the mythological and uncivilized sphere, in which Heracles resides, helps the modern reader better understand how the play may have been received by the fifth-century Athenian audience.¹¹ He then more specifically discusses marriage as the *Trachiniae's* "major field to exhibit the tragedy of human passions, violence, and mistake or miscalculation," which is nearly as succinct a summation of the play as possible.¹² He further explores the violations of marriage, which drive the play due to the effects these violations have on honor and status. It also portrays the negative implications that a problematic marriage could have on a wife suffering the potential loss of status that could accompany an adulterous union. The institution of marriage itself supports male-organized social constructs, but Deianira nevertheless must operate within this frame.

Edwin Carawan, in a seminal article which discusses Deianira's guilt, challenges these traditional assumptions that the Athenian audience would have judged Deianira completely innocent. He cites court cases and philosophical treatises that discuss adultery and intent, and as he convincingly argues, Deianira "acts without intending to kill, but not

¹¹ Segal 1995: 26-7.

¹² Segal 1995: 69.

without awareness that her magic will endanger her husband.”¹³ Her actions were deeds of vicious daring (κακὰς δὲ τόλμας, 582), to which she was driven by her loss of status in the *oikos*, which provides an explanation for her sudden action after an extended period of inactivity.¹⁴ While I generally follow aspects of Carawan’s assessment of the play, it is largely considered one of the more radical appraisals of the play. Christina Kraus also challenges the traditional description of the play as one of late learning, instead characterizing the play as one of premature decision.¹⁵ She separates the play into a series of *logoi*, and thereby shows how the *telos* of each situation is somehow subverted by a lack of knowledge or misinterpretation of information. The aforementioned motives, misinformed though they may be, all play a part in the control and manipulation of the ritually-inscribed realm created by Deianira.

A similar situation faces the eponymous character of Euripides’ *Medea*; Medea, scorned by her husband, similarly creates her own ritual space and takes part in a gift exchange which she then perverts with a product of her own handiwork. Medea, spurned wife of Jason, has found herself in a similar, if somewhat more dire, situation to Deianira. Her status is less ambiguous and more liminal; in Euripides’ play, Jason has married Glaukē, the princess of Corinth, and Medea’s checkered past as a magic-practicing murderess complicates her continued presence. Creon’s recent decree limits the time for Medea’s revenge to a single day, a day which Medea fully utilizes in her pursuit of retaliatory action. According to the extant literary record, Euripides was the innovator of the most startling

¹³ Carawan 2000: 190. The court cases to which he refers show that typically the use of magic was intended to put the husband out of commission, thereby cementing the affection for the wife and, more importantly, necessitating her presence as she nursed him back to health.

¹⁴ Carawan 2000: 209ff.

¹⁵Kraus 1991: 76.

occurrence of the play: Medea's murder of her and Jason's children. As such, Medea's history, both mythical and literary, is especially important in this play. Because there are several different versions of the deaths of Medea's children (the Corinthians, a failed sacrifice) that predate the *Medea*, this invention of Euripides – which became canonical after the *Medea* was produced – has been the subject of much scholarly attention.¹⁶ There are precedents for maternal infanticide, though none are as calculated and monstrous as Medea's.¹⁷ Anne Burnett claims that Medea's murder of her children forms a 'middle ground' between the earlier tradition of the Corinthians as the murderers of the children and the Euripidean innovation of Medea as the murderer. Medea, by using her children as the bearers of the poisoned gifts, redirects action onto herself because her boys eventually pay the price for Glaukē's death.¹⁸ Rather than allowing her sons to be killed by her now-enemies, she kills them "as a woman cornered, as any mortal may be, by past time, actions, and causality."¹⁹ Medea's decision to murder her children, even though it means she will become the most wretched of women (ἀθλιωτάτη γυνή; 818), is a representation of

¹⁶ Mastrorarde 2002: 52. For alternate versions of Medea's time in Corinth and the death of her children, see also Gantz 1993: 365ff. Several scholars have attempted to connect this innovation to Medea and/or Jason's literary history. Lora Holland, for example, connects the murder of Medea's sons to Jason's lineage, as a member of the House of Aeolus. "Jason's family", she says, "the House of Aeolus, was replete with murderous acts, including maternal infanticide." (1974: 256) By claiming that Medea and her sons are part of Jason's lineage, according to Greek custom, she is able to use this lineage as a reason for Medea's decision to kill their children, thus accounting for Euripides' departure from the previous literary tradition. Ino, who is referenced in the *Medea* (499-500), also murdered her son, Melicertes; she is used as a paradigm for Medea's murder in the course of the play. Ino is included not only as a familial connection to Jason's ancestral House, but also as a paradigm for infanticide. Her use as a paradigm has been investigated by Rick Newton, who investigates the unusual nature of Ino's inclusion in the narrative. She is presented as a sole parallel for a mother's murder of her children purely to stress that there is "no parallel: Medea's crime, lacking precedent, is truly ἀνήκουστον." (1985: 502).

¹⁷ Ino commits suicide out of grief, after having been driven mad by the gods. (Morford and Lenardon 2007: 324 n.3)

¹⁸ Burnett 1998: 216. This idea of Medea killing her boys from a moral standpoint – after all, she does repeatedly express her wish that her sons not be laughed at by her enemies – is also taken up by Christopher Gill. Gill believes that Medea's infanticide "expresses an ethical stance in her quarrel with Jason," locating the shift in her plan of vengeance in her first quarrel with Jason. (1996: 154)

¹⁹ Burnett 1998: 206.

Medea's unwillingness to accept Jason's revamped life and breaking of their ties as *philoï*. Each of these conclusions about Medea's motives inform my research in different ways; what I wish to expand upon, however, is the way in which Medea, as a self-canceling figure, constructs a ritually-bounded space that is by necessity spatially and temporally separate from the time and space of the rest of the play. It is this space that will enable to her to successfully get revenge upon Jason for breaking his oath to her, thereby resulting in the rupture of her civic and domestic ties.

Recent scholarship about the *Medea* has focused on Medea as a masculine, heroic figure who is locked in a battle of words and status with her husband, Jason. Laura McClure analyzes Medea's appropriation of invective and blame speech (ψόγος γυναικῶν) in the *Medea*, both of which were traditionally associated with male-dominated discourse. Medea is the character primarily utilizing this tradition of blame speech, which "suggests a transgression of normative gender roles that prefigures her elevation to semi-divine status at the end of the play."²⁰ At the same time, Medea makes use of the more traditional female means of persuasion, such as supplication, in order to seem as womanly as possible to the male characters with whom she comes into contact throughout the play. By employing both male and female means of persuasion, Medea is an intersectional figure who has access to both male (to the extent that she is able) and female discourse, and thereby is able to assume roles to which she should have no real claim. The work of Melissa Mueller similarly casts Medea as a paternal figure over Jason and Glaukē, citing Medea's giving of her own

²⁰ McClure 1999: 373. For example, McClure posits that her assumption of an extremely feminine persona in the reconciliation section with Jason "culminates in her assertion that he should have offered to preside over his impending nuptials, like the mother of the bride." (1999: 391).

marital gifts to Glaukē as a duty belonging to the father.²¹ For Mueller, however, Medea's motives are borne from her frustration at Jason's failed reciprocity and his unwillingness to respect the bonds of *philia*. The implication, then, is that Euripides is casting Jason as "a failed husband as well as a failed aristocrat," and serves to show how Euripides' characterization of Jason was intended to appear to the audience.²² Since Medea is not biologically male, she is not able to fully assume the essence of an aristocratic male and thereby is unable to escape from her status as a woman and a mother. Shirley Barlow's research investigates the heroic part of Medea's nature as it clashes with the hyper-feminized stereotypes that ancient Greek men assumed about women. She is a woman "who stands far outside the stereotypes and is also not above showing her ultimate contempt for them by manipulating them to suit her own ends."²³ Her adherence to the male ideals of oath-keeping – and thereby her consummate, heroic anger when such oaths are broken – is more characteristic of the heroic tradition. As do the other scholars mentioned above, Barlow casts Medea as a liminal figure who does not fit in with the ancient Greek stereotypes about women.

Indeed, Medea is anything but a typical Greek housewife. In Euripides' play, Medea's revenge is twofold; unlike Deianira, whose revenge can be located in a single act, namely the anointing and sending of the poisoned robe, Medea resorts to extreme action and punishes Jason by killing his betrothed as well as his children. Medea is able to work within the framework of gift exchange, discussed above, but all of the 'gifts' she gives to Jason are

²¹ Mueller 2001: 499. She further argues that the purpose of Medea's assumption of the characteristics and ideals of aristocratic males is to show how the reciprocity between Jason and Medea has failed at two levels – both in the *oikos* and the civic reciprocity between *xenoi*.

²² Mueller 2001: 477.

²³ Barlow 1989: 160.

intended to result in his obscurity and the destruction of his *oikos*. Her gift to Jason is much more severe than that which she received; in return for his abandonment, she murders their sons, depriving him of any chance at succession from their *oikos*, and she kills Glaukē, which ensures his inability to sire any new heirs from that union either. In a final punishing 'gift', Medea prophesizes that Jason will end his life in ignoble obscurity – rather than flourishing in another Greek city, he will instead die ingloriously, struck on the head by a timber of the Argo (1386-8). Medea's ability to prophesy the end of Jason's life is a rare feature for a tragic character, according to Sarah Iles Johnston's accounts of ancient divination.²⁴ She is able, by her use of magic and witchcraft, to directly affect the lives of humans, but her ability to cast prophecy, and not simply as a mouthpiece of the gods, allows her to affect the workings of the divine.²⁵ This ability, along with her other attributes, gives her a more nuanced representation as an intersectional character, highlighting how dissimilar she was from the traditional Greek ideal female. To this end, Medea, after the murder of her sons, goes from being a wife and mother, which should have been a secure social position, back to being a foreign woman with no standing in the Greek world, which in turn highlights her extremely liminal status. This marks a complete return to her pre-marital, virginal state; she no longer has children or a husband and is essentially a maiden once again. She constructs herself as a paradox, negating her own motherhood and Jason's fatherhood by murdering her own progeny. This reading of her revenge

²⁴ Johnston claims that "Magic-workers, on the other hand, were arguably too extraordinary to fit easily within the world of myth – they claimed not only to be in contact with the divine (as did *manteis*), but to be able to affect it. Greek myth characteristically focuses on exactly the opposite problem – how the gods affect humans and what constitutes the proper human response to being affected." (2005: 114) Medea is one of these rare figures who has magical capabilities along with mantic powers.

²⁵ Johnston 2005: 114.

harmonizes with the importance of reciprocity, one of the main themes that precipitates the action of the play.

Alongside the creation and control of ritual space and time, as I further argue, tactility plays a crucial role in the merging of two categories of ritual norms – both public female ritual and privately practiced rites. The coalescence of these ritual customs redefines female agency that clearly manifests itself through the representation of tactility, which is prevalent throughout tragic discourse. Tactile control plays an important part in the assertion of control over these manufactured ritual spaces, but it is also independently important as an attestation of the female self and the ability of women to act within their male-established social roles in order to respond to situations, like adultery, in which they otherwise had little or no recourse.

b. Control and Manipulation of Ritual Time and Space

Deianira and Medea, of Sophocles' *Trachiniae* and Euripides' *Medea* respectively, are both tragic characters reacting to spouses who they believe to have committed, or to be about to commit, adultery. Their reactions include an attempt to return to their former lives, perhaps in an endeavor to revert to better or more secure times. For Deianira, the advent of Iole in the *Trachiniae* prompts her to try to restore her marriage with Heracles to what it was before his enslavement by Omphalē. Similarly, the newly commissioned marriage of Jason and Glaukē leads Medea to act with a view to returning to her pre-married, pre-maternal self. As they seek to reclaim their former selves, these women create a manufactured ritual space. In these new realms, they alone control time, space, and activity despite their absence, which ultimately allows their wishes to be carried out. Why

should these women create a ritual space specifically? In both ancient and modern times, ritual space was one of the few places that allowed for female agency and expression. In keeping with this tradition, Deianira and Medea draw upon the ability to create a space in which their wishes, in the name of ritual custom, will not be challenged by others. By appropriating the guise of ritual activity, both women are able to realize their plans; both through the formation of a realm in which they alone control space and time and through a demand that their intermediaries uphold ritual custom and purity. In order to control time, which is crucial to each of their plans, Deianira and Medea must work within the temporal and spatial constructs allotted to them by society in order to disrupt them, just as Penelope disrupted time by unweaving Laertes' funeral shroud.²⁶ This new sense of time becomes impenetrable, in each case by a connection to ritual, and allows for a domain in which the women are in complete control.²⁷ These manufactured ritual settings provide the focal point of this chapter. I investigate the dynamics of these created spaces, focusing on how these tragic figures manipulate the aspects therein to their own will with the ultimate goal of restoring themselves to a prior state. In the female tragic mind, the reversal of time is a key facet of ritual restoration processes that are at the heart of the mythical presentation in these tragedies.

In Sophocles' *Trachiniae*, Deianira must create a ritual space that will allow her to come into contact with Heracles, via the robe, in this fabricated realm. Just as the tangible robe is a constructed artifact, so the intangible time will be managed as a constructible entity. She wishes to have sole access to Heracles to attempt to reinstate herself as his sole

²⁶ Cavarero 1995: 16.

²⁷ For more on impenetrable time, see Cavarero 1995: Ch. 1.

companion within his *oikos*. In order to ensure her domination over this setting, she gives Lichas implicit instructions, most notably ordering him to keep the robe isolated from contact with anyone except Heracles at the ritually appropriate time. The robe, she states, should also remain untouched by a ray of the sun, a sacred enclosure, or a festal flame (μήτε φέγγος ἡλίου μήθ' ἔρκος ἱερὸν μήτ' ἐφέστιον σέλας; 606-7); an order which Easterling deems appropriate, because it “would not arouse suspicion, but rather emphasize the ritual propriety of preserving the robe in its pure new start until the day of sacrifice.”²⁸ Certainly this is exactly what Deianira wishes; that it remain pure until the proper time according to Deianira; i.e., its grand unveiling at Heracles’ hecatomb at Cape Ceneaeum. The underlying benefit to claiming ritual purity, something that the Greeks would have taken seriously in Classical times, is that its sanctity would have been preserved and the efficacy of the ritual itself would have also been protected. Deianira's instructions to Lichas are, therefore, centered on ritual space and activity, and the inclusion of these specific prescriptions has remained largely uninvestigated. Her reference to light (φέγγος ἡλίου; 606) and its potentially destructive qualities is intriguing because Sophocles does not use imagery or terminology that deals with light very often in the play; in fact, the few uses of the words φέγγος and ἡλιος are in some way associated with destruction in a surprisingly twisted fashion.²⁹ Most of the references to the light and sun are connected with the burning of the tuft of wool and Heracles himself, thereby indicating, in accordance with Nessus’ instructions, that it is an avoidance of the sun and rays of light

²⁸ Easterling *ad loc.*

²⁹ There are similarly references to light and darkness at the beginning of Aeschylus’ *Oresteia*, in which the watchman casts the night as the source of his troubles. The beacon, itself a form of light, is supposed to bring good tidings in the form of Agamemnon’s return and ostensibly brings a relief from his watch and the nightly troubles that plague him. Instead, this instance of light similarly brings further troubles on the house. (Fraenkel 1950: *ad loc.*)

that would keep the potion potent and destructive until the proper time. Deianira herself refers to the night as a time of concern and distress for her; the sun, it would seem, has a similarly destructive quality in the *Trachiniae*.³⁰ Sophocles, it seems, is implicitly casting female activity undertaken in the light as destructive, which further connects female activity, especially ritual activity, with darkness.³¹

In this context, the sacred precinct (ἔρκος ἱερὸν, 606) and the festal flame (ἑφέστιον σέλας, 607) are inherently ritualized; this description has received no more than mere explanatory notes in modern commentaries.³² Deianira, in ordering Lichas as she does, reinforces her intention that this *pharmakon*-anointed robe is to be saved for one occasion alone. What is further intriguing is that she does not ban its presence in any secular locations, since surely Lichas would have passed through such regions on his journey to Ceneum. Instead, she focuses exclusively on the ritual space and the integral elements of ritual action – fire, in the case of the hecatomb about to be performed by Heracles. It is essential that the besmeared robe be associated with a specific ritual space – more specifically, the one she engineers for their ‘meeting’ later in the play – and focuses on the elements of the ritual frame that will bend Heracles to her will. Deianira is also using this robe as her gift in exchange for Iole, a sphere in which Lichas, as a herald, would have had some experience. He therefore would have been aware of the importance of the institution

³⁰ See Holt 1987 and Scodel 1984: 39ff. Philip Holt equates light and knowledge with life and darkness with death- which does not account for the destructive nature of the sun as the ‘activator’ of Nessus’ *pharmakon*- and the destruction of the wool is equated with misleading knowledge. He instead focuses on the cyclical, symbolic nature of human fortune being associated with light and dark, a theme mentioned by the chorus in the play. Ruth Scodel equates heat and *eros*, and discusses the destructive qualities of both.

³¹ Eva Parisinou discusses the connection of lamps and female activity, indicating that a large portion of female enterprise, which included ritual, took place in the darker portions of the house. She does not go so far as to say explicitly that female domestic activity was carried out in secret, but the implication is there. 2000: *passim*.

³² Jebb 2004; Davies 1991; *et al.*

among men, thereby further implicating him in the customs of this social transaction, ensuring he would protect the physical and ritual integrity of the poisoned robe.

Deianira's insistence on the robe's ritual importance becomes more meaningful once it is established that the present Heracles is situated within a ritual setting throughout the course of the play. The timeline of the *Trachiniae* is extremely complex; the amount of speech reporting both the near and distant past is monumental, and most of the references to Heracles detail his past actions. When he is mentioned in the present, however, he is located within an exclusively ritual setting. In fact, in the so-called 'Deianira drama', which covers nearly the first two-thirds of the play, references to Heracles in present time are strikingly few.³³ Emphasis is placed on his past action, which is fitting, since it is precisely because of these actions that Deianira makes disastrous suppositions about her new status in Heracles' *oikos*. Lichas, the only character who reports Heracles' present action before he is poisoned by the robe, announces that Heracles preparing the altars in Euboea (ἀκτὴ τις ἔστ' Εὐβοίης, ἔνθ' ὀρίζεται βωμοὺς τέλη τ' ἔγκαρπα Κηναίῳ Δί; 237-8) and assembling a holy sacrifice for Zeus (αὐτὸν δ' ἐκεῖνον, εὔτ' ἂν ἀγνὰ θύματα ῥέξῃ πατρώω Ζηνὶ τῆς ἀλώσεως, φρόνει νιν ὡς ἤξοντα; 287-9).³⁴ No further mention of Heracles' activities is offered until Hyllus comes to report the gruesome effects of Deianira's poison, at which point Deianira and Heracles have already 'met' in the ritual space manufactured by Deianira. It is onto this ritual space that Deianira is able to graft her own intentions and control onto Heracles' more common ritual context; she transforms Heracles' reintegration sacrifice into her own dramatic ritual intended to reassert her status as Heracles' wife.

³³ Kraus (1991) goes into great detail about the *logoi* of the play, separating them into distinct phases with distinct outcomes (*teloi*) that are based on premature decision.

³⁴ There is a comment upon Heracles' action by the chorus, but the κλήζεται (559) shows that this information is secondhand.

The implications of the construction of this ritual space become more significant when considered alongside the fact that Deianira is able to appropriate control of that setting, which is antithetical to her complete lack of command outside that space. In regulating the access to the contents within the chest – they are intended to be accessible to Heracles alone at the point of sacrifice – Deianira controls when the chest will be opened and when the *pharmakon*-smearred robe will take effect. There are several instances of travel imagery throughout the episodes leading up to the time when Heracles dons the robe, indicating that the actions of Deianira, and Heracles for that matter, are all leading up to this one crucial point in time: the ‘meeting’ of Heracles and Deianira via the robe.³⁵ This failed ‘meeting’ of Heracles and Deianira has been the subject of much scholarly attention.³⁶ As previously stated, Segal postulates that this interaction between Heracles and Deianira can only fail because they inhabit different spheres, unable to be penetrated by the other.³⁷ He further asserts that “Heracles and Deianira meet, in fact, only through the poisoned robe,” which supports the idea that any other type of contact would be impossible.³⁸ What has not been investigated is that Deianira, who is actively seeking to regain Heracles’ affections, acts as though the robe must be her first contact with Heracles and therefore creates a new ritually bounded dimension in which she intends that they ‘meet’. They would not have been able to meet otherwise, as there is a throng of people keeping Heracles from re-entering his house, as indicated in lines 194-5 (κύκλω γὰρ αὐτὸν Μηλιεὺς

³⁵ Segal 1975: 615.

³⁶ Dora Pozzi describes their ‘reunion’ as a perverted marriage that ends with Heracles’ torture, death, and implied *apotheosis*. (1994: 583). Kraus views Heracles’ and Deianira’s final ‘meeting’ more as an end to their marriage, recalling the journey that they took from Pleuron; the main difference in this situation is that this ‘journey’ ends in death. (1991: 93).

³⁷ Segal 1995: 39-44. The male inhabits the external, natural world more indicative of the heroic realm, while the female inhabits the internal, domestic sphere more associated with the 5th century *oikos*.

³⁸ Segal 1975: 615.

ἅπας λεῶς κρίνει περιστάς, οὐδ' ἔχει βῆναι πρόσω); the import of this is that he will not be able to come into physical contact with Deianira. It is also significant that this space which Deianira creates for their meeting will be completely free from Iole, whom Deianira has come to view as the interloper. When Deianira hears of Heracles' return, Lichas reports that he is in Euboea, preparing altars for his reintegration sacrifice to Cenean Zeus (237-8), and Iole remains in the city. Deianira therefore wishes to contact and bewitch Heracles, via the robe, before he returns to the city and can be struck anew by desire for Iole. She hopes that they can recreate the initial consummation of their marriage, which she believes has turned sour due to the presence of Iole, by regaining her erotic control over Heracles before Eros strikes him again with love for Iole.

Hyllus, by adopting the role of the messenger in Heracles' drama, makes the metatheatrical and metapoetic resonance in this scene especially strong. The *Trachiniae's* audience would have been familiar with the elements of the interior drama taking place onstage: the fallen, lamenting hero as the focal point, the messenger's speech detailing one character's suicide and another's impending death, the chorus and spectators watching in immobilized awe. This drama, however, takes place within a manufactured setting in which space and time do not reflect the reality of the rest of the play's action. According to Segal, "with respect to time, as with respect to space, Deianira and Heracles live in different worlds," a contention supported by the fact that Deianira is living in the house, representative of the 5th century Athenian *oikos*, and Heracles is an active representation of the wild, unknown mythical world.³⁹ Here, 'male' time is conflated with 'female' time, and the male sphere is connected with mythical action, while female time seems to embody

³⁹ Segal 1995: 31. See also Seaford 1986: *passim*.

historical activity. With respect to time, Deianira is a slave, stagnating in the house and waiting for Heracles' implied return, while Heracles' life is goal-oriented and separated into well-defined entities.⁴⁰ Any mention of an explicit period of time within the play is connected to Heracles; the 15-month period demarcated by the oracle and the one-year enslavement by Omphalē, for example.⁴¹ By contrast, Deianira is always worrying about him (ἀεὶ; 28) because he has been gone for so long (οὕτω δαρόν; 65), and she only refers to distinct units of time as they relate to Heracles. These spatial and temporal differences do not reconcile themselves, as one would expect, by Heracles' return to his *oikos* and his re-consummation of his marriage to Deianira. They are, in fact, incapable of reconciling themselves, which is why Deianira and Heracles are unable to come into physical contact in the course of the play. As a self-cancelling figure, Deianira cannot come into contact with Heracles, who legitimized her status in society through the institution of marriage, outside her manufactured space and time.

This new sphere, which is by necessity a-temporal and a-spatial, both facilitates the performance of the unfolding tragedy and transcribes it onto a newly-defined ritual space. Deianira's ritual performance, carried out by her crafting and anointing of the robe, merges with Heracles' tragic performance as the sacrifice and sole 'actor' onstage in front of a crowd of spectators. Deianira's own ritual performance requires further comment. There are several different layers because Deianira enacts her own tragedy by transcribing her actions onto a ritual act and ritually-associated space; and by doing so, she is ensuring that Lichas will not question her actions or motives. In a sense, Deianira is acting out her own

⁴⁰ Segal 1995: 31.

⁴¹ χρόνον προτάξας ὡς τρίμηνος ἡνίκ' ἂν χώρας ἀπειή κἀνιαύσιος βεβώς (164-5); ἐνιαυτὸν (253).

drama with Lichas, manipulating him into following her orders without question.⁴² In her dialogue with the chorus, Deianira stresses the need to make Heracles fall in love with her again because she cannot stand her new nebulous status in her *oikos*.⁴³ To Lichas, however, she only stresses the ritual importance of her gift in order to help further legitimize it; namely because it is supposed to be the central feature of a religious ritual, her orders to Lichas that the chest remain unopened until the sacrifice are heeded. She also emphasizes its importance as a part of the reciprocal relationship between husband and wife, as well as of a gift exchange between equals, which further cements Lichas' crucial involvement in her exchange with Heracles. Deianira performs ritual action on the robe firstly by weaving it specifically for the sacrifice in a manner similar to that of the *peplos* of Athena Polias, thereby endowing it with a more authoritative status. In so doing, she appropriates elements of public ritual – that of Heracles' hecatomb and the weaving of the cloak – for her own private use. Furthermore, Deianira's anointing of the robe with Nessus' blood is representative of deeply rooted ritual actions, such as those prescribed in the magical papyri, which is again reflects the blending of public and private ritual. The association of a magical ritual with the violently dead, i.e., Nessus, and anointing objects with a substance intended to endow the object with magical power or to increase its' efficacy is inherent in Deianira's actions.⁴⁴

The expression of time in Euripides' *Medea* is similarly structured so as to focus on the finite temporal references, and spatial references to a lesser extent, during the Medea's

⁴² Cf. *Medea*, who is able to manipulate both Aegeus and Creon.

⁴³ *Trach.* 550-1.

⁴⁴ References to the βιοθάνατος, translated by Hans Dieter Betz as those who have “died a violent death”, and the untimely dead are extremely common in the *PGM*. Examples of references to the βιοθάνατος are I.248, II.48, IV.1945, *et al.*

last day in Corinth. Jason's new marriage necessitates the creation of a new space onto which Medea is able to transcribe her own agency via ritual. As in the *Trachiniae*, this ritually-bounded space is by necessity spatially and temporally separate from the rest of the play, and it will enable to her to successfully get revenge upon Jason for breaking his oath to her. She ultimately kills Glaukē and her children, thereby resulting in the rupture of her civic and domestic ties and marking a return to her virginal origins.

The first mention of time in the play is made by the Nurse, and is perhaps the most telling about how time functions within the play. The play opens with a past counterfactual, wishing that the chain of events that brought Medea to Greece would never have happened. Euripides, by signaling the past, foreshadows Medea's eventual restoration at the end of the play. Soon thereafter, the Nurse says that Medea spends all of her time crying and abstaining from food (κεῖται δ' ἄσιτος, σῶμ' ὑφεῖσ' ἀλγηδόσιν, τὸν πάντα συντήκουσα δακρύοις χρόνον ἐπεὶ πρὸς ἀνδρὸς ἦισθετ' ἠδικημένη; 23-5), indicating that Medea is essentially lost in time until she takes revenge on Jason. This is similar to Deianira's representation in the *Trachiniae*; like Deianira, Medea is wasting away until she is presented with a stimulus for revenge.⁴⁵ Therefore, once Medea hears that Creon is intending to banish her from Corinth out of fear for his daughter's life, her world is now extremely narrowly defined. Her 'life' now consists of one day, and in this day, she creates a ritually bounded dimension in which she can carry out her nefarious plans.

Medea alone controls the time and space in the dimension which she has created. When she considers the various ways by which she might exact her revenge, she decides to

⁴⁵ Soph. *Trach.* 29-30. The same is true of Phaedra, who is characterized similarly until she acts against Hippolytus (Eur. *Hipp.* 176-185).

wait a short amount of time (μείνας' οὖν ἔτι μικρὸν χρόνον; 389) in the event that someone might appear as her savior. Otherwise, dramatic time does not necessarily present an obstacle to her plans; should nobody come to her rescue, she will kill her enemies nevertheless in the day allotted to her by Creon. Space within the play is not a hindrance either, since she believes that her cleverness will allow her to bridge any gap between herself and her targets. She describes the manner of murder she eventually decides upon – namely, *pharmaka* because she is extremely skilled (σοφοὶ μάλιστα; 385) in them – the ‘straight path’ (τὴν εὐθεΐαν; 384), ultimately breached by her children and her own hand. This indicates that these drugs, which she later smears on the bridal gifts, will provide an unobstructed avenue by which she can destroy her enemies. Medea confirms her command over the situation when she says that her targets (at this point, Jason, Glaukē, and Creon) are already dead (καὶ δὴ τεθνᾶσι; 386). Denys Page, following John Denniston, claims that the use of the perfect tense in this exclamation is a “development from *actual* realization [...] to *imaginary* realization.”⁴⁶ While there is a perfectly reasonable grammatical explanation for the perfect, it is also possible that Medea, because she is in control of this manufactured space, is confident that her *pharmaka* will be successful, as they have been many times in the past. In effect, her targets are as good as dead. She seems perfectly confident that she can manipulate the other characters in the play, a feat which she accomplishes until she settles on infanticide as the best revenge against Jason.

The creation and manipulation of time and space all lead to a sharp change in status and self, which Medea undergoes throughout the course of the play. By murdering her children and leaving her husband, bereft and without an *oikos*, in Corinth, Medea is

⁴⁶ Page 1938: 101.

reverting to her pre-maternal and pre-marriage state. It is precisely her bearing of Jason's sons that gave her status in the *oikos*; in order for a woman to establish herself in her new family, she had to bear her husband a son, and "only the birth of a child gave her full status as a *gyne*, woman-wife."⁴⁷ By murdering her children, Medea negates this status as a wife and mother and returns to her 'virginal' state. The chorus, once they have learned that Medea is resolute in her decision to kill her sons, ask Medea:

μάταν μόχθος ἔρρει τέκνων,
μάταν ἄρα γένος φίλιον ἔτεκες, ὧ
κυανεᾶν λιποῦσα Συμπληγάδων
πετρᾶν ἀξενωτάταν ἐσβολάν.

"Vain waste, your care of children, was it in vain you bore the babes you loved, after you passed the inhospitable strait between the dark blue rocks, the Symplegades?" (1261-4)⁴⁸

The juxtaposition of these two periods in Medea's life signals the rupture from her Colchian identity to the new portion of her life in Greece.⁴⁹ Her life, then, is separable into two distinct parts – namely, the pre-and post-Jason eras – one of which Medea is intent upon destroying.

Allusions to Medea in her virginal state, i.e., before Jason arrived in Colchis, are found throughout the play. The Nurse, who opens the play with a long, explanatory monologue about Medea's current situation, begins her first sentence with a past

⁴⁷ Demand 1994: 17.

⁴⁸ Trans. Warner.

⁴⁹ Jason suggests a similar idea- namely, that Medea's life can be separated into two parts: the pre-Greece portion, and the part of her life once she has reached Greece and benefitted from the laws and customs of the Greeks. (536-8)

counterfactual statement, expressing a desire that Medea and Jason's initial meeting would never have happened. This foreshadows Medea's state at the end of the play, which is one without Jason or their children, and will take place away from Corinth, and which thereby negates her actions during her time with Jason. The tone set at the beginning of the play is one of "strong regret and introduces the note of heroic achievement gone sour," and Medea, along with several other characters in the play, continuously reinforce this fact when they mention Medea in Colchis.⁵⁰ Medea invokes her fatherland, lamenting her betrayal of her father and brother (502-4), and also connects herself to her divine ancestors, most notably Hecate (397) and Helios (406, 746, 954, 1321). Once the chorus understands that Medea will avenge Jason – at this point, there is no reference to murdering her children – they sing a long choral ode that laments her current lot (410-45). She has no father to shelter her, as a divorced Greek woman would have, no native land to which she can return, and the chorus, at the beginning of this ode, orders the rivers to flow back to their sources, thus reversing the natural order of things (ἄνω ποταμῶν ἱερῶν χωροῦσι παγαί, καὶ δίκαια καὶ πάντα πάλιν στρέφεται; 410-11) and creating a notion of restoration. Their use of the word πηγή, explained by modern commentators as meaning 'springs', can also be interpreted as the source, more in the sense of 'origin'; the chorus, therefore, can be seen as exhorting Medea to return to the time when she was not connected to ill-sounding fame (δυσκέλαδος φάμα; 420).⁵¹

Medea's final interaction with her two sons, which is the focal point of her revenge against Jason, is largely an enumeration of the children's 'misfortunes lying in secret'

⁵⁰ Mastronarde 2002: 161.

⁵¹ LSJ. A.II.2.

(κακῶν ὡς ἐννοοῦμαι δὴ τι τῶν κεκρυμμένων; 899-900); namely, their impending death. She now asserts complete control over the stages of their lives that she has been or would have been involved in, namely the birthing pangs that she felt as she bore them (στερρὰς ἐνεγκοῦσ' ἐν τόκοις ἀλγηδόνας; 1031), their betrothals and marriages to their future wives (λουτρὰ καὶ γυναῖκα καὶ γαμηλίους εὐνάς ἀγῆλαι λαμπάδας τ' ἀνασχεθεῖν; 1026-7), and their care of her in her old age and death (γηροβοσκήσειν τ' ἐμὲ καὶ κατθανοῦσαν χερσὶν εὔ περιστελεῖν; 1033-4). Ironically, these are all things which she herself renders impossible by the murder of her children. Her address to the children at 1021ff. is reminiscent to Andromache's lament of the still-living Hector in *Iliad* 6, but here with more sinister and destructive undertones. Because she will not be able to lament her sons after their death, she is "discharging such emotion in order that it not interfere with the intention to murder that generates it."⁵² By lamenting before her children are dead, she undermines traditional lament norms and effects a total restoration by acting like a non-mother after her children's death. She takes a prophetic stance and distances herself from motherhood and lament; this manifests itself in the final scene of the play, in which Medea matter-of-factly tells Jason that she will bury their sons, and she then proceeds to make a prophecy about his inglorious and obscure death. Both lament and prophecy, which are very similar speech genres, are utilized in this scene. Because the children's death severed any familial connections between Jason and Medea, she is no longer bound by Jason's authority, which is in stark contrast with the disempowered picture of women's lot that Medea describes to the chorus (214-66). By the end of the play, she has undergone a

⁵² Levett 2010: 63.

restoration; namely, she has completely reverted to her pre-marital state of action and agency, as inherent in her murders of Apsyrtus, Talos, and Pelias.

Unlike Medea, Deianira did not necessarily intend this performance to end tragically. Intent, control, and mastery over ritual differentiate these two female figures. Even if Deianira intended the poison to negatively affect Heracles, she likely did not intend that he die, but rather she wanted him to get very sick so she could nurse him back to health and reaffirm her importance to him.⁵³ Deianira acts in the assumption that she has all the knowledge needed to make reach a decision about the proper course of action, which validates Kraus' contention about the *Trachiniae* being a play of premature decision-making.⁵⁴ In reality, however, she does not possess complete knowledge of any situation, instead treating her previous experiences as measures of true knowledge. Deianira is essentially falling prey to her own assumptions; because of this her agency is subverted. Instead of the positive outcome she imagined, her premature, untested sending of the robe accomplished the direct opposite of what she had hoped.

Medea's command over the situation is more complex and ultimately complete; she is in possession of all the requisite information and has been able to manipulate the men in the play in order to get them to go along with her plans. Her eventual domination over the male characters allows her to create the ritual space and time which she needs to execute her revenge against Jason. At the same time, she is nevertheless forced to work within the temporal and spatial parameters defined for her by Creon, and by social norms more generally, in order to create a ritually charged sphere in which she is able to fully utilize her

⁵³ Carawan 2000.

⁵⁴ Kraus 1991: 76. For a discussion of the play as one of late learning, see Whitman 1951, Ch. 6; Easterling 1982, *et al.*

own considerable skills and intellect. Both Medea and Deianira, in the commission of their ritual acts, make the objects of their actions a spectacle, both within the text and to the audience.

Spectacle

Spectacle had an important place within Greek civic ritual historically; for example, the participants in a procession or the presiding priestesses were fashioned as the centerpiece of that ritual. The attention of the other ritual participants would have naturally been directed at that person or group of people, who were chosen because they were seen as outstanding citizens and were portrayed as such in literature. Similarly, the objects of both Medea's and Deianira's revenge were turned into a spectacle as both characters responded to their adulterous spouses. In Deianira's case, she wishes to turn Heracles into a spectacle at the point of his sacrifice at Ceneum. In order to ensure that this occurs as she wishes, Deianira almost obsessively repeats the importance of Heracles' conspicuousness in her instructions to Lichas: she wants Heracles to appear as a spectacle in the robe she has made for him. In the same way that the *peplos* given to Athena Polias was to be seen 'by everyone watching' (ὕπὸ πάντων θεωρούμενον), Deianira wished that Heracles, 'standing clearly visible' (φανερὸς ἐμφανῶς σταθεὶς, 608) in front of everyone, would perform his sacrifice with the robe as the focal point.⁵⁵ By controlling the events leading up to the time when the chest is opened, Deianira has put Heracles on a stage upon which his sacrifice – now recast as a drama of its own – is to be performed. In his report, Hyllus mentions that there are spectators present (ἅπας λεώς; 783), indicating that

⁵⁵ Pherecydes, *Fragm.* 5.13.

Deianira's manufactured theater had a "crowd of spectators watching in terror."⁵⁶ Heracles, standing on the steps of the altars at Cenaeanum, is the sole actor in this drama and is also physically and theatrically separated from the spectators, just as an actor would be separated from his audience in the theater.

In his newly begun drama, Heracles addresses the steps of the altar at Cenaeanum (ὤ κρηναία κρηπὶς βωμῶν; 996), which serve as both a ritual and dramatic boundary. In respect to this new ritual space, anybody who is tangential to the unfolding of the drama is not allowed inside. As an example of keeping this ritual and dramatic purity, Lichas, who is not part of Heracles' *oikos*, is forcibly ejected and murdered; only Hyllus and Deianira, personified by the robe, are allowed. Further reinforcing this idea is the use of the term κρηπὶς (996), which is attested in an inscription from Delos as meaning 'tiers of seats in a theatre';⁵⁷ this indicates a linguistic association between ritual and dramatic space at the very least. By conceiving of the altar and its steps as a pseudo-stage, it insulates Heracles from anybody who is not part of the ritual or dramatic action. Lichas' role as a go-between, which was of paramount importance in the beginning of the play, becomes inconsequential once Hyllus assumes the role of mediator between Heracles and Deianira. Hyllus becomes the only character who can bridge the verbal and physical gap between Heracles and Deianira, the two protagonists dying within their respective spheres.

Similarly, Medea makes both her children and Glaukē spectacles within the text, again by their gruesome deaths. The death scene of Jason's and Medea's children, which is shocking because it is committed by Medea herself, is conspicuous because of the pre-death

⁵⁶ Easterling 1982: *ad loc.*

⁵⁷ LSJ s.v.II.2.

lament scene discussed in the previous section. Lamentation was an integral part of funerary ritual in the ancient world, and was primarily performed by women within a male-sanctioned ritual and civic context.⁵⁸ The women taking part in the lament of a corpse would have been distinguished from other funeral participants and bystanders by their display of grief; these exhibits seem to have been the target of legislation, from as early as the Solonian period, attempting to control such demonstrations of bereavement.⁵⁹ Similarly, Medea, who intends to slaughter her children with her own hands, undertakes a lamentation of her own before the children are dead. I will discuss the importance of Medea's decision to use her own hands in the following section, but the entire scene becomes a spectacle as it subverts social and biological norms. If Greek legislators sought to curb the excesses of lamentation during funerals, it stands to reason that such emotionally charged displays would have been seen as distasteful in the absence of a corpse to mourn. Similarly, women were supposed to be their children's primary caregivers; killing them, therefore, would have been unthinkable to the Athenian public. By the aberrant nature of the whole situation, the children were fashioned as conspicuous figures within the text, despite their nearly silent roles. That the tragic text would have been presented onstage makes their presence in the performance even more intriguing.

The death of Glaukē, on the other hand, is the subject of a very detailed messenger speech that spans nearly one hundred lines. Glaukē's death is reminiscent of Heracles' death in the *Trachiniae* because of the similarities in the effects of the poison smeared on the death-bringing gifts. The sheer length of the scene makes her death a spectacle within

⁵⁸ Suter 2008: 6.

⁵⁹ Stears in Suter 2008: 142-3.

the confines of the text, since surely the death could have been reported much more concisely. Why, then, does Euripides choose to spend so much time describing Glaukē's macabre death? Firstly, Euripides takes this opportunity to reveal something of Glauke's character from an otherwise neutral character; her initial desire to reject Medea's children shows her jealousy at Jason's previous marriage, but her eventual acceptance of the gifts hints at a shallow, somewhat material, character.⁶⁰ Perhaps this is intended to discharge some of the audience's horror at her coming demise; it certainly is telling that Euripides chooses to devote so much time to a character who is otherwise unnamed and talked around during the course of the play. The destruction of Jason's potential future lineage, therefore, needs to be showcased.

Within the ritually inscribed scene that Medea has created, there are hints that Glaukē has an audience as she dons the bridal crown and dress given to her as a gift. Certainly, the Messenger narrates the scene as though he himself were present, and otherwise, there is reference to 'some old woman' (τις γεραία; 1171), 'one maid set out to her father's house, another to her recently [married] husband to report the misfortune of the bride' (ἡ μὲν ἐς πατρὸς δόμους ὤρμησεν, ἡ δὲ πρὸς τὸν ἀρτίως πόσιν, φράσουσα νύμφης συμφορὰν; 1177-9), and to her parents (1195-6). By the time that Glaukē is dead, the Messenger reports that 'all of us feared to touch her corpse' (πᾶσι δ' ἦν φόβος θιγεῖν νεκροῦ; 1202-3). This audience does not seem to be as large as that of Heracles' sacrifice at Cenaean, but she nevertheless dies as the centerpiece of the scene just as Euripides makes her the centerpiece of the text. This ritual scene, while not as public as that of Heracles, is reminiscent of the bridal ceremony, including the spectators and the bridal finery given to

⁶⁰ Headlam 1934: 97; Page 1961: 157; Elliott 1969: 96.

her by Medea. This bridal ceremony, however, has been appropriated by Medea and turned into forum within which she is able to take revenge upon Jason for his infidelity.

In both of these plays, Medea and Deianira engineer their ritual scenes to be centered primarily around a single figure or set of figures. These ritual spaces are reflective of the sanctioned ritual settings in Athenian society; the only difference is their outcome. The seizure of control by these spurned wives results in a somewhat public end for Glaukē and the children, and an extremely public demise for Heracles. The protagonists' appropriation of such ritual scenes allows the magnitude of their responses to their husbands' adultery to be made manifest – both to the internal audience of the text and to the Athenian audience watching the play.

c. Tactility

The creation and control of these ritual scenes is also marked by tactility and the inscription of tactile agency onto the actions of Medea and Deianira. While tactility plays an important part in the control of ritual, it also marks a more general seizure of control by these spurned wives; a physical connection between the doer and the outcome is created. Both Deianira and Medea seal their actions with the work of their own hands, thereby appropriating the ownership of their actions as well as creating a ritual venue in which their revenge can be carried out. Deianira especially is an heir to a tradition of complex female characters' representation. Although she seems subdued and restrained in the beginning of the play, she later becomes more active; for example, she gives explicit and imperious instructions to Lichas as she hands him the chest to bear to Heracles (600-19).

These instructions provide the starting point for the creation of her new ritual scene. She has made, she says, a *peplos* for Heracles with her own hands (τῆς ἐμῆς χερός, 603) that can touch nobody's skin before it touches his own (μηδεὶς βροτῶν κείνου πάροιθεν ἀμφιδύσεται χροῖ, 604-5).

The act of weaving in Greek literature is ideologically charged, and Deianira's weaving of a *peplos* for sacrificial purposes resembles the weaving of the *peplos* given to Athena in the *Panatheneia*.⁶¹ The maidens who wove the *peplos* then proceeded up to the statue of Athena Polias on the Acropolis, and concluded the festival with the presentation of this robe, which was “to be admired by spectators and worn by a much larger than human statue of the goddess.”⁶² The emphasis lies on the deep connections between the creator and the product itself, a concept which is reflected throughout the Greek ritual and literary tradition, most notably in the aforementioned ritual weaving.⁶³ The use of a *peplos* in tragedy, rather than another type of garment, is often used as “an ideologically charged literary symbol of feminine *metis*.”⁶⁴ Indeed, both of the *peploi* given by Medea and Deianira to their respective spouses have disastrous effects on their marriage, or former marriage, in Medea's case, and this physical piece of female handiwork is marked as its source, as well as the site of gender negotiation.⁶⁵ Deianira's destructive *peplos* is different than Medea's in that it is woven by her hands, rather than a gift from Helios. Just as Penelope used the loom in order to influence her fate, so too does Deianira use weaving as an attempt to ensure her

⁶¹ According to Jon Mikalson, the *peplos* was woven by four young maidens from the ages of seven to ten who were appointed by the *athlothetai* (2005: 74).

⁶² Aristotle *Ath.Pol.* 60; Pomeroy et al. 2012: 201; Mikalson 2005: 74.

⁶³ Scheid and Svenbro 1996; Karanika 2014: 85-89.

⁶⁴ Lee 2004: 253.

⁶⁵ Lee 2004: 254, 262.

own authority over her current situation.⁶⁶ Indeed, Deianira's weaving of the cloak allows her to affect more than just her own domestic sphere; her actions have dire implications for the male sphere as well, carried out by Deianira's ability to affect Heracles via ritual action.⁶⁷ The robe Deianira weaves for Heracles, which is described with a focus on the physical labor performed by Deianira's hands as well as the intention of the robe – and therefore Heracles – therefore functions as the centerpiece of the ritual action. As she describes to Lichas the course of action he must take when he presents the robe to Heracles, she is weaving an image of him as a god-like, spectacular figure to be admired by his spectators. As previously discussed, the gesture of presenting a robe to someone is largely modeled on the ritual investiture of a deity's statue with a robe, woven by the hands of aristocratic women in many Greek *poleis*.

This robe, which Deianira stresses is hand-crafted, occurs amidst plentiful references to hands and handiwork in the *Trachiniae*. This relationship between weaving, handiwork, and tactility would have reflected the female sphere of action, both secular and ritual. This play is replete with tactile aesthetics; the importance of Deianira's touching of the robe – both in the crafting and anointing – is dependent upon Heracles' body becoming tangibly joined to the robe. Without a physical connection between Heracles and the robe, Deianira's initial contact with the robe becomes invalidated. As the creator of the robe and the plan, she has an important connection to it and its ultimate purpose. Furthermore, just as the robe is clearly associated with Deianira's hands, the association of certain objects with the hands indicates a proprietary connection in the play in general; for example, it is

⁶⁶ Bertolín 2008: 94.

⁶⁷ Bertolín 2008: 100.

explicitly stated that Heracles sacked Oechalia with his hands (χεροῖν; 488), Deianira committed suicide with her impetuous hand (συντόνω χερὶ; 932), and that Heracles wants Hyllus's hands to bring Deianira to his hands, presumably so he can murder her for causing him disgrace (δός μοι χεροῖν σαῖν αὐτὸς ἐξ οἴκου λαβὼν ἐς χεῖρα τὴν τεκοῦσαν; 1066-7). P.E. Easterling interprets this last example as placing "brutal emphasis on 'hands'", and is in sync with other references which focus on the hands as the instruments of destruction.⁶⁸ As an inverse example of this, Hyllus refuses to touch his father's funeral pyre with his hands (μὴ ποτιψάυων χεροῖν; 1214), indicating that any tactile assistance in the physical assembly of the pyre would implicate him in the following actions, i.e., his father's death and his new status an object of interest to the Furies as a committer of patricide.

In a similar fashion, Deianira's explicit mention of the robe as something she created with her hands suggests that she wishes to control the outcome of the ritual; namely, that the reintegration sacrifice will be successful and Heracles will love no other woman, thereby assuring her status as Heracles' wife. It is significant, then, that Deianira does not use any hand-related vocabulary or imagery when she is describing the anointing of the robe. This suggests – and rightly so – that she does not assume any agency in the creation of the *pharmakon*, but rather utilizes the *pharmakon* as an additive to the robe, upon which her tactile authority has already been ascribed.⁶⁹ She stresses that she has followed Nessus' instructions, but the implication remains that the *locus* of Deianira's own handiwork is the *peplos* itself. Deianira transcribes her own agency and will onto the robe, which is a

⁶⁸ Easterling 1982: *ad loc.*

⁶⁹ The *pharmakon* bears Nessus' agency as it was physically connected to his body.

common feature of nonpublic ritual in general, and erotic magic in particular.⁷⁰ In employing these aspects of ritual custom, she merges the ritual norms of the public sphere, i.e. the public investiture of the *peplos*, with private practices, namely the use of personally directed magic or charms. The majority of the remaining references to hands in the *Trachiniae* are negative, which further supports the idea that physically touching or crafting something will lead to a negative outcome, with the *toucher* generally more explicitly associated than the *touched*. Deianira wishes that nobody except Heracles come into physical contact with the robe, indicating that she desires her agency be limited to him alone.

In the discussion of Medea's response to Jason's adultery, many of the same motifs appear in the *Medea* that are found in the *Trachiniae*, and may be able to shed further light on Medea's revenge. Many of the references to tactility and handiwork focus on the use of the hands in supplication and the breaking of oaths. While this is a central theme in the *Medea* – after all, her revenge is motivated by Jason's inability to keep his oath – Medea asserts a greater level of ownership over the murder of the children by her tactile references to the murder. Euripides' "significant repetition marks the hand also as the agent of violence," as Donald Mastronarde argues, and he thereby designates the hands solely as the *locus* of destructive activity, since the play lacks positive references to the hands.⁷¹ Each reference to Medea's hands is connected to the murder of the children or failed supplication, and other references to hands are connected with Medea's exile or

⁷⁰ For example, certain magical spells sought a divine assistant, and the will of the caster of the spell generally transfers his or her will, and thereby what is postulated as agency, onto the physical medium in the hopes that it will eventually be carried out. One such example is Nestor's cup; the creator of the cup transferred his will – and therefore agency – onto the cup itself. Faraone 1999: 19.

⁷¹ Mastronarde 2002: 30.

Glaukē's death. This suggests that Medea does not attach the same importance to Glaukē's murder as she does to that of her children because her hands are not explicitly referred to.⁷² It is almost as though she views Glaukē's murder as a necessary by-product of the situation; indeed, Medea planned to murder her from the very beginning of the play (νεκρούς θήσω, πατέρα τε καὶ κόρην πόσιν τ' ἔμόν, 374-5). Medea conceives of Glaukē's murder, therefore, as a further suppression of Jason's lineage, although at this juncture, their progeny are presumed rather than definite. Even after her exchange with Aegeus, Medea claims that she intends to murder Glaukē purely because she wants to prevent her from bearing any of Jason's children (τῆς νεοζύγου νύμφης τεκνώσει παῖδ'; 804-5). Her motive changes, it would seem, from simply wishing to avenge Jason's oath-breaking to desiring to utterly destroy Jason and any possibility of a functioning *oikos*.

In order to achieve this goal, it is imperative that Medea gain access to Jason's new bride, and her status as a sorceress well versed in the deathly arts reasonably precludes this.⁷³ The difficulty, then, is how Medea can successfully employ her *pharmaka*-smeared gifts. In this case, she manipulates Jason by casting her gifts, a bridal robe and crown, as religious objects that not even the gods would refuse (πεῖθειν δῶρα καὶ θεοὺς λόγος; 964), thereby securely implicating him in the social institution of gift exchange. Jason's new

⁷² This is similar to how Deianira does not consider the *pharmakon*, given to her by Nessus, as her own creation. The murder of Glaukē is almost incidental in this case – the true targets of Medea's revenge are the unborn children that she could have borne to Jason.

⁷³ The Nurse, who is ostensibly Medea's ally, fears that her anger might harm a friend (ἐχθρούς γε μέντοι, μὴ φίλους, δράσειέ τι; 95); Creon explicitly states his fear for his daughter's life (μὴ μοί τι δράσις παῖδ' ἀνήκεστον κακόν; 283); and Glaukē herself couldn't even bear the sight of the children, who were an extension, and therefore a reminder, of Medea and Jason's marriage (παίδων μυσσάττομαι εἰσόδους; 1149). Creon states that he fears some evil from Medea, though interestingly alludes "rather vaguely to her magic powers, which Eur. downplays to the extent possible." (Mastronarde 2002: 220). At this stage during the play, Medea can still be seen as a sympathetic character, and mentioning her connection with the occult would have been counterproductive. Page and Mastronarde note that the verb μυσάττομαι only occurs rarely in classical poetry.

marriage allows for the creation of a new space onto which Medea is able to transcribe her own agency onto a religious ritual. She also uses their children as messengers – and a peace-offering of sorts. These bridal gifts, which she emphasizes were formerly Medea’s own and a gift from Helios, are therefore invested with a divine lineage, which would have been a source of great pride to whoever wore them.⁷⁴ Furthermore, the female ritual of giving wedding gifts generally had a tactile component. In the play, this is marked by Medea’s physical anointing of the robe and crown and the necessity of Glaukē to physically touch the tainted objects.⁷⁵ She further ensures that Glaukē will receive her children by recommending that they approach her as suppliants (ικετεύετ’; 971), an act designed to religiously bind Glaukē into accepting them into her chambers. She is, therefore, reappropriating a sanctioned public ritual – namely, supplication and the exchange of bridal gifts – for her own private purposes. As such, Medea needs to transfer her own agency to the *pharmaka*-smeared gifts via the children, since she would not been permitted to enter the palace herself. This explains why the only reference to hands in Glaukē’s murder is to Glaukē’s own; the children are to specifically place the gifts into her hands (τοῦδε γὰρ μάλιστα δεῖ, ἐς χεῖρ’ ἐκείνην δῶρα δέξασθαι τάδε; 972-3). This is fitting, as Glaukē turns out to be not only the object of Medea’s *pharmaka*, but also the transmitter, due to her unwitting murder of Creon.

Euripides’ crafting of Medea’s infanticide, however, employs tactile activity in a different way. As several scholars have discussed, Medea does not decide to murder her

⁷⁴ According to Walter Lacey, these objects would also have had an important function in the marriage ritual itself, since giving marriage gifts was a common occurrence in ancient Greece (1968: 110). The reference to Helios is significant, not least because Helios was a divinity conceived of as a public space, whereas much of Medea’s activity is hidden.

⁷⁵ This is mirrored by the Deianira’s anointing of the robe and Heracles’ need to touch it in order to complete the cycle required to ensure the efficacy of the spell.

sons until after Aegeus has shown her how important children are to men.⁷⁶ Her children, both boys and therefore potentially Jason's heirs, symbolize Jason and Medea's once-healthy *oikos*. By her murder of the children, who "validate and confirm the legitimacy of a marriage", Medea is completing the destruction of the once-harmonious *oikos* which Jason's new marriage began.⁷⁷ Even though he offers her material support, she deems it worthless because "material generosity cannot replace the continuity of the relationship of patronage and dependency on which familial reciprocity, in the ancient Greek sense, is based."⁷⁸ In her dialogue with the chorus, Medea reverses the traditional stereotype of the unrestrained and unfaithful female, by crediting "her domestic trouble to men's access to sexual partners outside of marriage and to an overvaluation of ἔρωϝ characteristically associated with women."⁷⁹ Medea's murder of her sons, then, is a parallel, albeit extreme, representation of what she believes Jason has already done to their marriage. In his exchange with Medea, Aegeus also condemns Jason's actions as a most shameful act (ἔργον ἀΐσχιστον; 695) because it devalues Medea's all-important contribution to the marriage; namely, the successful procreation of children.⁸⁰

Medea closely associates the murder of her children with her hands, thus claiming sole personal ownership of the children's fates. That she never lets Jason touch their dead bodies, despite his repeated pleadings, further indicates the shift in control that takes place throughout the play.⁸¹ Medea is the only person able to touch her children, and the chorus, which discusses Medea's murder of her children at length, only associates the hands with

⁷⁶ Kovacs 2008: 303, *et. al.*

⁷⁷ Mueller 2001: 477.

⁷⁸ Mueller 2001: 478.

⁷⁹ McClure 1999: 387.

⁸⁰ McClure 1999: 388.

⁸¹ Eur. *Med.* 1377, 1404, 1411-12.

the children; no mention of Jason's handiwork is made, and because of this, among other attributes, he appears as a rather ineffectual character.⁸² Thus Jason is given no agency; Medea even describes his marriage to Glaukē as contracted by Creon (ἐξέδου κόρην ὅτωι σε θυμὸς ἦγεν; 309-10). Jason is a character of words, not action. Medea's handiwork, on the other hand, is referred to throughout the course of the play, mostly by the chorus and Medea herself. In fact, she calls upon her hand to take the sword which will murder her children (ἄγ', ὦ τάλαινα χεὶρ ἐμή, λαβὲ ξίφος, λάβ', ἔρπε πρὸς βαλβῖδα λυπηρὰν βίου; 1244-45). Therefore, in both of the murders committed by Medea, there are references to handiwork, but Euripides highlights those connected with Medea's killing of her children. Even though Medea's murder of her children was his innovation, her physical, hand-based connection to their murder and her use of a sword makes it all the more terrible and awe-inspiring.

Euripides' *Medea*, notorious for Medea's infanticide, blends the themes of revenge and ritual, ascribing Medea's agency to the ritual sphere until the end of the play. The nuanced references to tactility in the descriptions of the murders committed in the play lend a greater understanding to how Euripides conceived of Jason's adulterous insult and Medea's revenge. Her murder of Glaukē and Creon is insignificant to that of her children, but at the same time, the invocations and repeated allusions to tactility show the burden that the infanticide places upon Medea. This infanticide, appalling both by ancient and modern standards, nevertheless allows Medea to revert to the status of an unmarried woman, unfettered by the bonds of the *oikos*. The presence of ritual and religion within the

⁸² Page's assessment of Jason's character is the most concise and applicable to Euripides' play: "Here is a husband whom his wife regards no longer as a hero, but as a rather ordinary middle-aged man trying to shuffle out of an embarrassing position." (1938: xvi).

scene allows Medea to successfully obliterate Jason's *oikos*, thus leaving him (instead of Medea) without any family, or even the promise of one. As a self-canceling figure, Medea is not quite as extreme as Deianira; she does not die, but she becomes self-canceling from the perspective of the Corinthian *polis*, which she ultimately leaves.

Tactility, a common trope in the adultery narratives of the Classical Greek world, plays an important part in the assertion of the female self within male-sanctioned social structures. Both Deianira and Medea inscribe their deeds with their own tactile authority in order to assert a close connection with the outcomes of their respective plans. Tactility does play a part in the creation of their own ritual spheres, and in both cases lends their own authority to these spaces. The hands and handiwork are cast as agents of violence, which feature prominently in both Medea's and Deianira's plans to regain a former status.

d. Conclusion

Driven to extremes by her husband's infidelity, Deianira merges magical and ritual means in an attempt to salvage her station as Heracles' wife. She projects her own agency onto a physical medium, one which she has endowed with her own tactile agency, and along with her carefully created 'meeting' space, she hopes to rectify her situation. Deianira's appropriation of ritual space and time ultimately destroys Heracles, and leads to her suicide, thus reinforcing that her agency had an extreme, even deviant, consequences.⁸³ Deianira makes herself a paradox; she makes unsubstantiated assumptions about her and Iole's status which leads to destruction. Similarly, Medea finds herself in a situation in

⁸³ Schur 1983: 47.

which her social status is no longer clearly defined. Her motives are more sinister than Deianira's, but the outcome of her actions is the same. By creating her own ritual sphere, which includes objects or actions that have tactile associations, she is able to retaliate against Jason's destruction of their once-unified *oikos* by destroying the promise of a successful *oikos* that exists with Glaukē. Like Deianira, Medea's actions have extreme consequences, and these similarly render her a contradictory figure who can no longer exist within Corinthian society.

II. Blank Space and Captive Voicelessness: The Spear-Wife of Sophocles' *Trachiniae*

a. Introduction

The spurned wife and the 'active' – to the extent that the ancient Greeks believed that a woman could be active – partner in an adulterous union are figures who were present in Greek thought and are reflected in the extreme response to adultery that is portrayed in Greek literature. Less commonly examined, however, is the captive 'adulteress', a woman forcibly removed from her *polis* and with no choice in her new station or *oikos*. Perhaps the most well-known figure in this category is Cassandra, who features as an important character both in the epic tradition, as well as in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*. I discuss Cassandra in the final chapter, for reasons expressed in the introduction. Sophocles' *Trachiniae* includes another such character: Iole. Iole was a princess who was captured in Heracles' campaign against Oechalia and compelled to join

her captor as a slave in his household, ostensibly to displace his wife at home. She, too, becomes a self-canceling figure; she belongs nowhere in society and is portrayed as assisting in the destruction of the *oikos* to which she has come, despite the fact that she does not speak or act within the course of the play. Iole's most notable attribute is, in fact, her silence in the face of Deianira's questions. This silence transforms Iole into a blank space onto which thoughts, emotions, and even agencies can be projected. Iole's presence provides Sophocles with an opportunity to insert contemporary attitudes into the play, thereby reflecting upon the marginalization of the adulteress and investigating the complexity of agency in a union oppressed by adultery.

Iole, who is coming to her new land and *oikos* as an intersectional foreigner whose status is in flux, is systematically dehumanized and objectified by other members in the play. She finds herself in a situation similar to that of 5th and 4th century metics in Athens; namely because she is a woman and foreign, she would have been conceived of what Rebecca Futo Kennedy terms as "doubly Other."⁸⁴ These newly-arrived metic women were frequently sexualized, or at the very least their sexual availability was emphasized, just Deianira accentuates the sexuality and presumed fertility of Iole.⁸⁵ Iole had the potential of being a 'wife' in practice, albeit without the same status. Such characters are therefore treated by other characters as slaves, animals, or even objects. This slide from human to beast and/or object has been explored in contemporary theoretical studies in various fields, and helps better portray the similarities in the depiction of these captive

⁸⁴ Kennedy 2014: 28. In contemporary sociological theory, they are intersectional figures because they have multiple identities, one or more of which belong to a minority group. (Crenshaw 1989, 1991).

⁸⁵ This is reflected in the lawsuits against metic women in the classical period, *Against Neaera*, for example.

adulteresses in Greek tragedy.⁸⁶ The portrayals of captive women shows that “being human is not an absolute condition but rather a gradual one, on a sliding scale on which some humans approach the status of things, of objects.”⁸⁷ Captive Iole is treated by her fellow characters as though she is in a post-human state, and her humanity is stripped from her by various characters in the play. This is in part due to the fact that she is a marginal figure who does not belong to anyone’s *oikos* or *polis*, thereby complicating her presence in society.

Iole emerges as a compelling character despite her continued speechlessness. Naomi Rood identifies Iole as an important, albeit silent, character in tragedy, one who is notable because although her arrival is the major catalyst in the *Trachiniae*, she never breaks her silence.⁸⁸ Rood’s work is part of a recent trend in scholarship that fully investigates Iole’s importance; after all, her mere presence is enough to begin the chain of events that eventually leads to the death of the greatest of the Greek heroes. Because Iole is a mute character, it is difficult to analyze her direct impact on the characters in the play. Everything the audience knows about her is either based upon her place in traditional mythology or learned from the speech, some unreliable, of other characters in the play. Because none of the other characters in the play, Deianira included, can account for her presence, she is given the agency that renders her contradictory. Because of her voicelessness and seemingly ambiguous status, many scholars see Iole as a minor character, and therefore as a literary figure, she has attracted less scholarly attention. A

⁸⁶ Susan Crane claims that the “the founding human/animal dichotomy is so unstable that it has migrated all too easily *within* the human, to define as bestial certain slaves, women, colonials, criminals, and foreigners.” (2013: 4).

⁸⁷ duBois 2003: 6.

⁸⁸ Rood 2010: 345.

large amount of the scholarship focuses primarily on Iole's role as a 'double' of Deianira's younger self and cites the similarities between their physical attributes and their eventual journey to Trachis.⁸⁹ This redoubling of Deianira's experience is crucial to her decision to act to try to regain control over her position in her own *oikos*, and perhaps explains her decision to objectify Iole, while at the same time blaming her for occurrences over which she could have had no control. Her presence on the stage, whether physical or disembodied, provides an impetus for Deianira's actions in the play.

As Rood argues in her investigation of silence in the *Trachiniae*, Iole functions as a spectacle; namely, she is someone who is seen but does not see, and at the same time is the "fulcrum" of the play.⁹⁰ Although she does not actively participate in the play, her initially unexplained presence nevertheless shapes both the action and the dialogue of the play because of the rife speculation it invites, causing the characters of the play to raise questions about her identity and intended status in Heracles' *oikos*. Because she is incapable of speaking for herself, "others speak for her to the extent that her silence becomes the indeterminate sources of the play's words and deeds."⁹¹ In essence, Iole is a blank slate, allowing other characters to project their own emotions onto her, as Deianira does, or even allowing them to endow her with agency, as Hyllus does. Building upon Rood's characterization of Iole as an important character in the play, I will investigate how the other characters project their own thoughts and feelings onto her and how her reduction to an object ultimately effaces her *logos*. Her silence is a crucial part of the play

⁸⁹ Beer 2004: 90ff; Segal 1995: 72; Kraus 1991: 86; *et al.* Essentially, Deianira is being replaced by a younger version of herself, a woman whose beauty has caused her to suffer and be taken far away from her home to the *oikos* of new man.

⁹⁰ Rood 2010: 358.

⁹¹ Rood 2010: 359.

that other characters build upon and exploit, and as such, she becomes the epitome of how the compelled 'adulteress' could be understood by the Athenians. In other words, just as communities considered an adulteress to be a figure that presented a danger to the *polis* and therefore should be ostracized, Sophocles fashions Iole as a blank space onto which the characters in the play were able to project such ideologies.

Iole's silence is also investigated in Christina Kraus' work, which characterizes Iole as "a mute, non-speaking sign that is clearly significant but that by itself transmits no meaningful message."⁹² In my reading of the play, Iole is an important figure whose ability to speak is suppressed and who showcases the marginalization of the adulteress in the dominant ideology. As such, she is an extremely strong presence in the plot and staging of the play, the details of which I will analyze in the following pages. Building on the idea of Iole's silence as something that the other characters in the play were able to manipulate, Kraus characterizes the figure of Iole as something that is able to be controlled; namely, she does not only consider Iole a vacant verbal space, but conceives of her physical presence as something onto which other people's opinions and feelings can be transcribed.⁹³ Iole's presence in the *oikos* compels Deianira to reassess her situation and position in Heracles' *oikos*, showing that "the *λόγος* about Iole is as physical an object as the girl herself."⁹⁴ As with Rood's article, the idea that Iole is a blank space onto which the thoughts and feelings of other characters can be cast provides the starting point for my analysis. How the speaking characters in tragedy project their own attitudes and thoughts onto the captive

⁹² Kraus 1991: 86.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

partners in an adulterous union helps to shed light on general attitudes toward adultery in the ancient world.

Her silence, which remains unbroken even as Deianira interrogates her, allows Euripides to portray a certain mental and emotional state. The audience would likely expect her to respond in the course of her questioning, but the fact that she does not reply indicates “a sudden, and sinister, transformation of one’s being.”⁹⁵ Indeed, the status of this high-born woman has changed to one of captivity and potential servitude, even though Iole did not come to her new home willingly. The portrayal of Iole, marked by her silence, is yet another way in which her agency and power of speech is eliminated by Euripides. Her lack of *logos* is made more severe in the face of her new status, which is almost post-human in its inability to interact socially and transmit any meaningful message to the other characters. She is, therefore, a character who is consistently projected upon by other characters, most notably Deianira, who goes as far as to re-imagine her as an object. Contemporary studies of post-humanity are able to shed light on how Iole, who functions as a statue within the play, may have been conceptualized by Sophocles. By effacing her ability to speak and act, Iole is featured as a figure that is, according to Pramod Nayar, “arguably human but minus the several cognitive, intellectual, and emotive abilities we have associated with the ‘normal’ human.”⁹⁶ While Nayar’s work focuses on contemporary literature and more heavily treats the merging of human with forms of artificial intelligence or other fantastical creatures, it nevertheless aptly portrays what he terms “traditional

⁹⁵ Montiglio 2000: 221. In a further discussion of silence (*aphôniê*), Silvia Montiglio investigates the significance of silence to the Hippocratics, concluding that silence “appears to them as the most telling sign of death as well as of a pathological disturbance of the mind.” (229)

⁹⁶ Nayar 2014: 1.

humanism's exclusionary strategy".⁹⁷ Deprived of her ability to speak and interact with the characters around her, Iole is indeed stripped of her status as a 'normal human'. When this is considered alongside her dehumanization within the body of the text, characters like Iole are better able to reflect the status of captive women or otherwise compelled adulteresses in Greek society.

b. Projected-Upon Adulteress

Iole's characterization as a post-human figure has its origins in her mythological narrative, but the *Trachiniae* takes it a step further by making Iole a blank slate, able to be filled with the emotions and opinions of other characters. That Iole's character even appears in the storyline is a Sophoclean innovation. Bacchylides, for example, follows the then-traditional mythical narrative; namely, that Deianira never came into physical contact with Iole, but rather learned of her existence from a letter.⁹⁸ Sophocles invents this detail and makes it crucial to his storyline, allowing him to explore the dynamics of marriage and fidelity in the society for which he is writing. That he suppresses her speech signals a sharp change in her character – surely, she was not silent in her former existence – which stems from her newly captive status, and allows him to reflect upon the social reality of a woman in Iole's position.⁹⁹ It also allows him to explore the reaction of the spurned wife when she comes into physical contact with her potential displacer. Therefore, when Iole is brought to Deianira as a member of a band of captive maidens from Oechalia, it is necessary that she

⁹⁷ Nayar 2014: 7.

⁹⁸ Carawan 2000: 198-9.

⁹⁹ Montiglio 2000: 224.

immediately capture Deianira's attention. Distinguishing her from the rest of the maidens, Deianira immediately tries to discern Iole's identity and, interestingly enough, her marital status, which hints at the forthcoming struggle. She inquires whether Iole is ἄνδρος, ἢ τεκνοῦσα (308), which is a projection of Deianira's young life; in the opening lines of the play, Deianira explains the situation in which she has found herself. In these lines Deianira only mentions her pre-married self, who was the object of attention to several suitors, and her current station as a wife and mother. This collapsing of the other parts of her life – such as her childhood or her experience as a new wife – is projected onto Iole in those three short words.

Because of her inability to respond to Deianira, Iole's identity is not immediately revealed to the characters in the play. Deianira has differentiated her from the rest of her companions, for reasons that have been much-debated, stating that Iole is the only one of the captive women who knows how to think like a noble (φρονεῖν οἶδεν μόνη; 313). In this scene, Iole becomes a spectacle, someone who is differentiated from her companions by her looks alone. In trying to explain Deianira's immediate disassociation of Iole from the other captives, Jebb claims that “while the other captives are comparatively callous, she appears to Deianira as one whose sense of the calamity is such as might be looked for in a maiden of noble birth and spirit.”¹⁰⁰ Easterling rejects this reading, stating that the only conjecture supported by the text is that Iole ‘looks noble’.¹⁰¹ The text does not express any reason for the distinct nature of Iole's bearing, but it certainly necessitates Iole's status as a

¹⁰⁰ Jebb 2004: 51. Jan Kamerbeek makes a similar claim about why Iole might appear so different from her companions, asserting that Iole was remarkable self-controlled in contrast to “the unrestrained lamentations of her companions.” (1959: 89)

¹⁰¹ Easterling 1982: 117.

figure to be gazed upon and scrutinized. Deianira also projects her own experiences and emotions onto Iole when she explains to the chorus that she cannot bear to share a roof – and a husband – with Iole. She tells the chorus of her own experiences as Heracles' wife, imagining Iole replicating these experiences alongside her. Most striking is that Deianira fears sharing a bed with Iole and Heracles (καὶ νῦν δὴ οὔσαι μίμνομεν μιᾶς ὑπὸ χλαίνης ὑπαγκάλισμα; 539-40). The bed, as the *locus* of sexual union and childbearing, symbolized a harmonious union between husband and wife.¹⁰² This image, however, is perverted by the intrusion of Iole into the bed, and Deianira's designation of her as the new wife both mirrors her own experience and projects her role as Heracles' wife onto Iole. Deianira transfers the blame to Iole, thus casting her as the guilty party in what has happened.¹⁰³ She further overshadows her own guilt with that of Iole, a defenseless character who is unable to refute any charge of blame associated with her.

In addition to having other characters' emotions and motives projected onto her, Iole is also the victim of having other characters' agencies projected onto her. Despite Josh Beer's contention that "Iole is not technically a stage prop", she nevertheless functions as just that: an unspeaking, statue-like character whose voice is suppressed throughout the course of the play, rendering her a spectacle.¹⁰⁴ Indeed, Iole's role would have been played by an actor, not a 'prop' in the purest of senses, but as an emotionless character without dialogue, she has no agency or willpower in the 'reality' of the play. Why, then, does Deianira attribute the destruction and enslavement of Oechalia, as well as that of Iole herself, to Iole? Certainly, Heracles is the besieger of the city and Iole's captor, but Deianira,

¹⁰² Parca 1992: 187.

¹⁰³ Wohl 1998: 41.

¹⁰⁴ Beer 2004: 90.

in characterizing the fate of Iole and her fatherland, uses active verbs to assign the agency of those deeds to Iole (ὄτι τὸ κάλλος αὐτῆς τὸν βίον διώλεσεν, καὶ γῆν πατρώαν οὐχ ἔκοῦσα δύσμορος ἔπερσε κάδούλωσεν; 464-7). The use of active verbs, when the passive is warranted, “is striking: Iole the victim is also the destroyer and enslaver.”¹⁰⁵ She becomes both object and agent by virtue of her beauty, further highlighting the spectacle, but also the inherent danger caused by her presence.

A similar attribution of agency to the agency-less Iole occurs at the end of the play, in the scene in which Heracles commands his son, Hyllus, to marry Iole. This scene has been the subject of some attention by scholars, mainly because Heracles’ final request to Hyllus is so unorthodox.¹⁰⁶ Because at this point Iole is a concubine, she would have been considered an inheritable possession, therefore it is significant that Heracles explicitly request her marriage to Hyllus.¹⁰⁷ Hyllus is aghast at the suggestion that he marry his father’s αἰχμάλωτος, especially because of the destruction that her appearance has caused, and in questioning his father’s order, he charges her with the sole blame of killing his mother and father (τίς γάρ ποθ’, ἦ μοι μητρὶ μὲν θανεῖν μόνῃ μεταίτιος, σοὶ δ’ αὖθις ὡς ἔχεις ἔχειν; 1233-4). Eduard Fraenkel, in a comparison of Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon* to the *Trachiniae*, holds that the use of μεταίτιος is a softening of blame; since Deianira, who took her own life, “was primarily αἰτία τοῦ θανεῖν so that the person who, through being her rival, has driven to death appears only as μεταίτιος.”¹⁰⁸ The use of μόνῃ seems contradictory in this passage, but instead it seems to be a more poetic, periphrastic way of

¹⁰⁵ Easterling 1982: *ad loc.*

¹⁰⁶ Easterling 1982; Jebb 2004; Davies 1991 (quote from Fraenkel 1950 on *Ag.* 811).

¹⁰⁷ The marriage of Hyllus and Iole is traditional, “for Hyllus and Iole were believed to be the ancestors of the famous Heraclidae.” Easterling 1982: 17.

¹⁰⁸ Fraenkel 1950: 371.

describing Iole as αἰτίος. Hyllus claims that Iole is to blame because her presence brought about the destruction of his *oikos* and the death of both of his parents.¹⁰⁹ It is notable that Hyllus accuses Iole of the murders of his parents, even though Heracles has just informed him that his death was foretold by Zeus. The now-dead Nessus, with the unwitting cooperation of Deianira, was the instrument in Heracles' death, yet Hyllus persists in blaming Iole for these actions. This ascription of agency to Iole, especially given the severity of the crimes for which she is being blamed, is striking, not least because of her dialogue-less character and absence from any of the scenes in which these crimes were perpetrated.

c. *Objectification*

While Deianira and other characters transmit emotions and instrumentality onto Iole, Deianira takes it a step further by reinventing her as a physical object. Iole's traditional mythical background plays a significant role in Sophocles' portrayal of Iole as an object in the *Trachiniae*.¹¹⁰ The importance of this mythical background has been overlooked by many scholars, likely because it does not have an overt impact on the action of the play. It does, however, provide a more nuanced understanding of Iole's character and helps account for some of the Sophoclean adaptations of the myth. This tradition likewise turns Iole into an object, a prize to be given to the victor of an athletic contest. Therefore,

¹⁰⁹ Jebb 2004: *ad loc.* Easterling comes to a similar conclusion: "Hyllus knows very well that D killed herself (1132) and that Heracles is dying through the Hydra's poison, the Centaur's trick and his wife's decision to send the robe, but this does not lessen his horror at the particular role of Iole, hence μόνη." (1982: *ad loc.*)

¹¹⁰ Kraus 1991: 85; Gantz 1993: 431ff.; Carawan 2000: 198. According to tradition, she was intended to be the prize of an archery contest held by her father, Eurytus. Heracles, desiring Iole, took part in the contest and eventually won it, expecting to receive Iole as his prize. Eurytus denied Heracles his fair reward, which began a chain of events that led to Heracles sacking Oechalia and leading the captive Iole to Trachis, where the action of the *Trachiniae* begins. Morford and Lenardon 2014: 577.

even before she was a spoil of war, she was conceived of as the first-place trophy of an archery competition.¹¹¹ Additionally, Sophocles' innovations to Iole's traditional mythical story, which I discussed in the previous section, further help explain Sophocles' intended depiction of Iole's character.

Iole is consistently dehumanized and depersonalized by Deianira throughout the *Trachiniae*. Once Deianira learns Iole's identity and guesses her purpose, she begins to recast her as a physical object, perhaps in an attempt to distance herself from the woman who, in Deianira's mind, is vying for a place as Heracles' wife. This casting of Iole as an object, as previously discussed, is at the forefront of her mythological history; previously considered by her father as the prize (τό ἄθλον) in an archery contest, she is now similarly objectified by Deianira.¹¹² Iole's objectification is a typical, albeit extreme, case of a common occurrence of Sophocles' plays, in that "women are never the authors of their own text; they are not the writers, but the written-on."¹¹³ This is not necessarily the case for characters such as Antigone, who expressly does not allow other characters in the play to take control over her life, but it certainly applies to characters like Iole, who "all spectacle" and "pure exterior."¹¹⁴ Thus, Sophocles himself effaces her speech and reduces her to a stock character – both with respect to the play and the external Athenian reality – whose

¹¹¹ This connection to Iole's mythical history has been referenced by other scholars, including Jebb, but the treatment of Iole as an object in her mythical past, and one to be traded at that, has generally been overlooked by modern commentators of the *Trachiniae*.

¹¹² Apoll. *Bibl.* II.127.3-4. Apollodorus retells the story of Heracles and Iole, and in explaining the series of events that led her to Trachis, he characterizes Iole as τό ἄθλον, a term commonly used of the prizes given in the Olympic Games and similar athletic competitions. Although Apollodorus is writing much later than Sophocles, "the *Library* has given us a convenient summary of the traditional Greek mythology without making the smallest attempt either to explain or to criticize it." (Frazer 1921: x).

¹¹³ Bowman 1999: 346.

¹¹⁴ Rood 2010: 358; Wohl 1988: 41.

identity is completely bound up in being the unfairly maligned prize of a man who already has a wife.

Deianira certainly views Iole as an interloper, and almost immediately afterwards makes it clear that her own status as Heracles' wife is under contention. Once she has learned Iole's identity, she objectifies her, along with her fellow captives, characterizing them as 'gifts'. Deianira is operating within the parameters of reciprocal gift-giving, which I discussed in the previous section; she knows she must give a gift to Heracles in return for giving Iole and the other captive women to her (ἄ τ' ἀντὶ δῶρων δῶρα χρὴ προσαρμόσαι, καὶ ταῦτ' ἄγης. κενὸν γὰρ οὐ δίκαιά σε χωρεῖν προσελθόνθ' ὧδε σὺν πολλῷ στόλῳ; 494-6), and thereby reduces Iole to the object that has been exchanged.¹¹⁵ Sophocles, in employing the importance of the gift exchange in this scene casts Iole as a possession to be exchanged between men, much like the reciprocity required by *xenia* and other relationships of mutual exchange.¹¹⁶ In this case, Iole is an expensive gift, given the chaos that her presence ultimately brings.¹¹⁷ The importance of the gift exchange in this section is not only clear because of Deianira's reference to custom (οὐ δίκαια; 495), but it has also been noted by several scholars.¹¹⁸ In this line of scholarship, Beer characterizes her as "Heracles' thankless gift to Deianira in return for her years of patient suffering of their marriage."¹¹⁹ He further claims that she is not a stage prop, as was Deianira's cloak, even though she is dehumanized in such a way as to render her a physical object. Iole is no longer onstage at the point which Deianira refers to her need to reciprocate Heracles' gift, thereby operating

¹¹⁵ Wohl 1998: 38.

¹¹⁶ Segal 1994: 62.

¹¹⁷ Kamerbeek 1959: *ad loc.*

¹¹⁸ Easterling 1982; Kamerbeek 1959; *et al.*

¹¹⁹ Beer 2004: 90.

within the parameters of a gift exchange, but Deianira has learned of Iole's identity and Heracles' intentions for Iole from Lichas. Her characterization of Iole as a gift has ironic undertones, since by this point it has been made clear that Iole is not to be a mere slave (οὐδ' ὥστε δούλην; 367) and that Deianira's station in Heracles' *oikos* is being threatened. Iole's continued presence in the *oikos* after leaving the stage is symbolic; her 'gift' to the household, namely the deaths of the two protagonists, is unable to be expelled.

Deianira's characterization of Iole as a gift is also significant in that it creates an instance of true reciprocity. The gift that Deianira chooses to complete this gift exchange is a destructive cloak, smeared with the *pharmakon* made from Nessus' blood. Similarly, Iole is presented as a calamitous force in the course of the play, being characterized by the Chorus as having birthed a Fury for Heracles' *oikos* (ἔτεκ' ἔτεκε μεγάλην ἀνέορτος ἄδελφὴν δόμοισι τοῖσδ' Ἐρινύν; 893-5). What Iole brings to the *oikos* is disaster, expressed in the inclusion of the Fury.¹²⁰ The redoubling of the ἔτεκε in the Chorus' song mirrors the twin deaths that her presence generates. The ruin of the house is thereby ascribed to Iole; at this point in the play, Deianira has killed herself and Heracles is in the excruciating throes of the poisoned cloak. In addition, the like-for-like exchange of gifts extends beyond its destructive nature to having ritual associations. I have already analyzed the ritual importance of the cloak in the previous section, but Iole's connection to the Erinyes also has ritual significance. The Erinyes, commonly known as the Furies, pursued individuals who committed an impious murder, and were especially vengeful when a murder was

¹²⁰ Segal 1995: 83.

committed within a family.¹²¹ As such, they were concerned with blood guilt and impurity, both of which barred the guilty party from ritual activity.¹²² Both the cloak and Iole, therefore, are connected to a destructive element of Greek ritual life.

When Deianira comes to terms with the realities of her altered position in the *oikos*, she decides that she is unable to live under the same roof as Iole, and therefore, that she must act, which is in direct contrast to her state at the beginning of the play. Before revealing her plans to the chorus, however, Deianira again dehumanizes Iole, this time equating her to a baneful freight (φόρτον ὥστε ναυτίλος, λωβητὸν ἐμπόλημα τῆς ἐμῆς φρενός; 537-8). Deianira degrades Iole not only out of her own insecurity, but also because it will likely prove more palatable to eliminate an object than a person, especially a woman with whom Deianira identifies her younger self. Deianira cannot account for Iole's presence, and therefore the implications of the metaphor are also clear: Iole is "an extra cargo, surreptitiously brought aboard, ruinous for ship and master."¹²³ In this same scene, Deianira also indulges in bitter irony when she calls Iole her 'rewards for keeping house' (οἰκούρι'; 542).¹²⁴ Deianira's unique usage of this term, which is employed in this way in only this instance, showcases the bitterness that she feels that she would be given this woman as a reward for faithfully maintaining the *oikos* in Heracles' absence.¹²⁵ Even though Deianira objectifies Iole, she nevertheless defines Iole as a destructive character at

¹²¹ M&L 797. Iole here is characterized as a Fury (*Erinys*), the singular form of the more common Erinyes, found most prominently in Aeschylus' *Eumenides*. The use of the singular here is not uncommon in Classical tragedy, but is perhaps intended to hark back to Homeric days, when there was only one Fury. This, according to the LSJ, eventually expanded to a group of three Furies in Classical times, and is perhaps why the term is more commonly found in the plural.

¹²² At Aesch. *Eum.* 174-7, the Furies discuss the nature of those they pursue:

κάμοι γε λυπρός, καὶ τὸν οὐκ ἐκλύσεται, ὑπὸ δὲ γᾶν φυγῶν οὔποτ' ἐλευθεροῦται, ποτιτρόπαιος ὧν δ' ἕτερον ἐν κάραι μιάστορ' εἴσιν οὐ πάσεται.

¹²³ Kamerbeek 1959: *ad loc.*

¹²⁴ LSJ: *ad loc.*

¹²⁵ Easterling 1982: *ad loc.*

the same time. Iole is dehumanized, but she is still endowed with a destructive quality that leads Deianira to react in an extreme fashion. That Sophocles characterizes the situation in this way indicates further how the adulteress, even one who has no control over her situation, was marginalized and dehumanized by more ordinary members of society. Throughout the play, Iole functions as an object; something transferrable, both able to be touched or manipulated and easily discarded.

d. Concluding Iole

The complexity of agency in the *Trachiniae* escalates in such a way that divides the scholarly readings with reference to characters' actions, agency, and willpower. The fact that oracles and prophecies frame the more significant events of the play does not seem to stop the characters from projecting agency onto Iole, who has ironically been divested of most of her human qualities throughout the play.¹²⁶ Most notably, Hyllus ascribes to Iole the blame for his parents' death, despite Zeus' prophecy about Heracles' death. Also ironic is the fact that Heracles, who did sack and enslave Oechalia and bring back Iole, thereby precipitating the events of the rest of the play, is divested of his agency in these deeds. Both the messenger and Lichas repeatedly confirm that Eros was the driving force behind his actions ("Ἔρως δέ νιν μόνος θεῶν θέλξειεν αἰχμάσαι τάδε; 354-5), and even Deianira herself says that she places no blame on Heracles in this situation, since he has committed similar

¹²⁶ There are two oracles in the play that outline the time and method of Heracles' death: (1) the contents of the first, which came from the oracle of Zeus at Dodona, proclaim that Heracles would either die or live a life without grief fifteen months after he left Trachis (165ff.) and (2) the second, which came from Zeus himself, claimed that Heracles would die "by nothing that draws breath but by someone dead, and inhabitant of Hell." (1160 ff.; trans. Jameson)

acts in the past (οὐχὶ χιτῆρας πλείστας ἀνήρ εἷς Ἡρακλῆς ἐγημε δὴ; 459-60). Heracles is presented as the helpless victim of Ἔρως while Iole is portrayed as the besieger of cities, despite the fact that she does not speak during the course of the play, but rather is a conspicuous stage prop, to be looked at and projected upon.

Iole, therefore, is the voiceless representation of the unwilling, almost unconscious, forced, or even raped adulteress. The text of the *Trachiniae* does not indicate that she is in any way complicit in Heracles' dishonoring of his marriage to Deianira, but rather characterizes her as a mute figure who has no agency or control over her life. Her objectification and dehumanization by Deianira and the other characters in the play reflect the attitudes and responses of the ancient Greeks regarding adultery; namely, that the adulteress was a person to be avoided, shunned, and even discarded because of the harm adultery caused to the *polis* as a whole. Iole is no exception, despite the fact that she is an unwilling party in the adulterous union, and is treated as such throughout the course of the play.¹²⁷ A post-human figure, devoid of speech and impotent of action, Iole is all the more tragic in her inability to respond to her current situation. By the end of the play, this character, whose appearance led Deianira to comment upon the humanity, or perhaps inhumanity, of her situation, becomes a statue; albeit a statue who is assigned blame for destruction because of her beauty.

¹²⁷ The obvious exception to this is Heracles' command to Hyllus that he marry her and carry his line. Hyllus' reaction to this request, however, shows his feelings about a union with his father's lover.

IV. Conclusion

Medea and Deianira are characters facing an adulterous husband; therefore the implication of their situations is largely the same. They are both wives and mothers, which should have assured their status in the *oikos* of their husbands, but the threat of being supplanted by a younger woman drives them to action. Because they are both the marginalized figure within their marriage, there is a physical and metaphorical distance between them and their husbands that needs to be, but is unable to be, crossed. Their social status, which is newly in doubt, renders them paradoxical. Deianira, in her weaving and anointing of the robe that ultimately killed Heracles, uses the robe as a way to 'meet' with her husband; in her desire to return to her virginal or newly-married state, it is almost as if she desires to remarry him. Her delivery of the robe to Heracles is couched in ritual importance; she knows that Lichas will not question her motives in sending the cloak because she tells him that she wishes her robe to become the centerpiece of a religious ritual. She wishes to make Heracles fall back in love with her so that she might retain her status as Heracles' wife.

Medea, on the other hand, speaks of her marriage to Jason using contractual language. She also wishes to punish Jason for his intended adulterous union with Glaukē, both by killing her and Creon, as well as both of their children. This extinguishing of the *oikos* is presented as a fate worse than death for Jason, but almost as a reawakening for Medea, who travels to Athens and marries Aegeus, thereby restarting her cycle of marriage and death. Both women, to try to set their respective situations right by using ritual; Deianira maps her own motives onto a previously existing ritual space, while Medea create

a new space. It is onto these spaces that each character ascribes her own agency in order to achieve her ends. Through strong vocabulary of tactility, they create a new sense of temporality, as though they are returning to their pre-marriage state. This tactility also allows them to merge public ritual and private rites as they respond to their newly conflicting place in society. What separates them is their intent: while Deianira seeks to rebuild, Medea strives to destroy. The consistent dehumanization and objectification of Iole, as well as her ritual representation, is something that has gone relatively unexplored by scholars. The poets portray her, the object in a gift exchange between men, so as to reflect the social realities of the unwilling partner in an adulterous union. She is part of female traffic in which women are treated as disposable entities. All three of these women are portrayed as transactional figures, not able to be accounted for anywhere in the legal or socio-cultural constructs in which they lived, and therefore presented as posing a threat to the society in which they lived by virtue of their presence alone.

2

ARISTOPHANES' EXPLORATIONS OF FEMALE ADULTERY

I. Introduction

While tragic authors focus on the responses of the women who are affected by adultery, comic author Aristophanes portrays the actions of women who commit, or are accused of committing, adultery. Even though the roles of women in comedy are often reversed, many of the threads that are present in tragedy can also be found in the presentation of adultery in comedy. Aristophanes, by parodying the depiction of women who are shown to have run amok in the private sphere, displays the threats inherent in an *oikos* in turmoil, as do tragic figures Medea and Deianira. Just as in tragedy, there is also a conspicuous ritual element, especially in the *Thesmophoriazusae*, which frames references to adultery in a distinct manner. Aristophanes portrays female ritual space, which in comedy facilitates unrestrained female speech and action, in order to comment upon female activities using female characters. In addition, comedy allows for expanded human autonomy; the gods are conspicuously absent in Aristophanes' works, which ensures that

any agency is exclusively located in the human realm.¹ This enhanced performative role allows for a greater presentation of female autonomy and expression, thereby allowing Aristophanes to place stereotypes about women in the speech of his female characters. Also present in the representation of adultery in comedy are the motifs of spectacle, physicality, and control of space and time; all of which I explored in tragedy. Aristophanes parodies these common themes, both in the action of the *Lysistrata* and *Thesmophoriazusae* as well as in the paratragic scenes in the second half of the *Thesmophoriazusae*, allowing for a different type of expression of adultery and its implications.

A mix of humor and commentary upon contemporary activity – in this case, literary activity – is found in Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae*, likely produced in 411 B.C.E.² In this play, Euripides convinces his relative (κηδεστής) to dress up as a woman and infiltrate the festival of the *Thesmophoria* in order to defend Euripides against the wrath of the Athenian women.³ The women assert that Euripides portrays only their negative attributes and believe that his death alone will be enough to break his control over the minds of the Athenian men, who are convinced by these representations.⁴ Mnesilochus assumes a female persona, and once he has successfully snuck into the festival, he describes an imaginary illicit affair, in which his female persona was involved, at great length. He intends that this speech convince his fellow ritual participants that the characterization of women

¹ Given 2009: 108.

² According to Jeffrey Henderson, there are no concrete notices for the production of this play, but other evidence indicates that it was likely performed at the Dionysia of 411 B.C.E. (Henderson 2000: 444)

³ The relative is not named in the play, but is referred to as ancient commentators as Mnesilochus. Hereafter, I follow Niall Slater's example, and will be referring to the relative as Mnesilochus because "he is so fully realized and significant a character in the play that it seems to be better to use this personal name rather than a functional designation (such as the "Old Relative")." Slater 2002: 151.

⁴ Bobrick 1997: 178.

in Euripides' plays is appropriate.⁵ The description of this affair, which I will discuss at greater length below, comes in an exchange with Mika, one of the 'real' female characters (i.e., a woman not in disguise) in the festival, and takes the form of a pseudo-court case, with Mnesilochus providing a rebuttal to Mika's charges against Euripides. In addition to this highly magniloquent performance, which includes a fantastically detailed yet fictional affair, the second half of the play consists of parodic re-enactments of four of Euripides' plays, most of which have connections to abandoned spouses or spurned unions in their mythical narratives. Although the central theme of the play is not adultery, but rather the struggle between new and old types of play writing, as evidenced by the women's rejection of their depiction in Euripides' plays, adulterous situations nevertheless make up much of the speech spoken by Mnesilochus' female *persona* and feature heavily in the paratragic sections.⁶

Aristophanes' commentary upon contemporary political and military affairs continues with the *Lysistrata*, perhaps one of Aristophanes' best known plays. The focal point of this play is the ongoing war with the Spartans, which reflected upon contemporary events at the time of performance. As it included the themes of war and peace, it would have been especially relevant to the Athenians when it was produced onstage. Although war is a topic generally viewed from the male point of view, Aristophanes approaches the struggle from the female perspective: the women describe the difficulties they face at home while their husbands are on campaign. The general theme of war is in tune with the contemporary political climate; it is nevertheless unusual that Aristophanes chooses to

⁵ Ar. *Thesm.* 466-519.

⁶ Stehle 2002: 370; Slater 2002: 170.

represent the female condition in a wartime setting. In true Aristophanic fashion, the idea of the left-behind wife is satirized to the extent that sex, and female sexuality in particular, is one of the central issues in the play. *Lysistrata* has gathered together the women of Greece, not only the Athenian women but representatives from Sparta and Boiotia as well, in order to share her master plan with them. They must, she says, abstain from sex completely in order to force their husbands and lovers (μοιχοί) to negotiate peace. In doing this, Aristophanes creates the illusion that a female experience is communicated to the audience, despite the fact that the author and all the performers are men, which must have added to the overall humor of the play. *Lysistrata*'s allies are initially hesitant to accept her proposition, but she forces them to swear an oath to abstain from sex until they have successfully regained peace – and the company of their husbands and lovers.

In contrast to tragedy, Aristophanic comedy more clearly and vividly portrays the female body; this leads, inevitably, to the sexualization of the bodily representation of the female characters. His portrayal of women's bodies, which is more explicit than that found in any of the other publicly performed genres, can be further illuminated by contemporary theories about the sociology of the body. Aside from the body's essential nature as a physical object, it is, perhaps more importantly, "the site for the articulation of all our identifications of gender, class, sexuality, race, ethnicity, and religion."⁷ Indeed, the way that female corporeality is portrayed, both in isolation and in relation to the male body, sheds light on Greek culture and imagination as they relate to the aforementioned topics. The body, and how it is conceived and displayed, is constructed by social and cultural

⁷ Richardson and Locks 2014: ix.

norms and affects how these models are implemented within society.⁸ Women, traditionally seen as homemakers, wives, and mothers, are therefore inherently sexualized, likely due to their sexual and reproductive capacities that are consistently highlighted in the Aristophanic *corpus*.⁹ This emphasis on the procreative ability of women has led men, since antiquity, to seek biological foundations to underpin and legitimize the existing social inequality.¹⁰ Aristophanes often portrays the female body acting contrary to social expectation, thereby showing the possibilities of danger inherent in not controlling the female body, and the behavior of the characters in his plays reflect this.

In both of these plays, Aristophanes constructs a representation, often parodic, of female subversive activity as it was understood, assumed, and perhaps expected, by men of his time.¹¹ In the *Thesmophoriazusae*, all of the parties are portrayed as acting contrary to social expectation to some extent, although Mnesilochus' fabricated exposé of female behavior is far more at odds with social norms than the activities discussed by the female characters. Rather, his excursus illuminates how the female disregard of accepted social norms is something that is perceived; what is socially acceptable is classified by men as

⁸ Adelman and Ruggi 2016: 907.

⁹ Bordo 1993: 6.

¹⁰ Schiebinger 2000: 9-10; Schilling 2007: 7.

¹¹ An application of contemporary sociological theories of deviance can help to further accentuate the import of these plays in better understanding adultery in the Greek imagination. Mary Daly's general contention that women form a subgroup that can be classed as deviant is applicable to ancient Greek society, where to be male was the norm – something understood and defined, both socially and legally. (1975: 65) This is perhaps why legal and social norms in ancient Greece dealt almost exclusively with female concerns as they related to male interests. This point of view allows deviance to be biologically defined; therefore female actions, while not necessarily deviant in and of themselves, can be classed as deviant according to the interests of the dominant socio-political group; namely, the men. (Schur 1983: Ch. 1) The classification of what is deviant can also changed based upon the existing power structures; see Margaret Mishra (2016) for the impact of colonializing powers on female procreative capacity in Fiji. Deviant activity can also be socially prescribed (it doesn't necessarily have to be legal); for example, see Linda Arthur (1998) and her discussion about the social import of the dress and physical appearance of Handelman Mennonite women.

such in an effort to impose control.¹² By defining women's actions – whether real or imagined – as extreme, he is perpetuating male stereotypes and implicitly reinforcing male control mechanisms in the city. In the *Lysistrata*, the women are likewise portrayed as acting against the interests of the men; not only do they take over the Acropolis and seize the war treasury, they also, and perhaps more importantly, refuse to engage in sexual intercourse with their husbands and thereby hinder the propagation of children. Because lawful and legitimate succession was such a crucial part of Athenian thought and society, the necessity of controlling maternity was likewise very important. Maternity was “implicated in the construction and reproduction of male dominance itself” and therefore was subject to stringent regulation by the male population.¹³ The sex strike, which is by nature an act of defiance to socio-cultural norms, is an explicit threat to paternity and the mechanisms of male control. By considering the portrayal of the women in the plays as Aristophanes' construction of a potentially threatening subgroup, we are able to see a clearer picture of male perceptions of the perpetration of female adultery and the responses it evoked.

In the second half of the play, Mnesilochus is discovered as an illegal presence by the women of the Thesmophoria and he lacks an escape plan and any allies present at the festival. He decides to play the part of the protagonist from four of Euripides' recent plays – *Telephus*, *Palamedes*, *Helen*, and *Andromeda* – in order to attempt to escape from the threatening situation which now exists at the festival. Of these four plays, only the *Helen* is extant, but by considering together the mythical tradition, textual fragments, and parodies

¹² Schur 1983: 8.

¹³ Chodorow 1978: 9; Schur 1983: 81.

in Aristophanes' plays, we are able to more fully understand the mythical tradition from which Aristophanes is drawing. Each of these parodies has two contexts in which it is important – the present context of the *Thesmophoriazusae* and its Euripidean original – which allows it to “convey multiple messages, including each time some reflection of its status as a theatrical artifact.”¹⁴ These myths repeatedly appeared in literature which drew upon the mythical tradition; therefore, the audience would likely have been aware of more elements of the myths and would have had a more nuanced understanding of the characters parodied by Mnesilochus. In the following pages, I investigate the mythical backdrop to the plays which Aristophanes chose to parody and show how they relate to adultery and the themes that appear alongside adultery in other literary genres and how ritual circumscribes these scenes in distinct ways.

Aristophanes' use of tragedy represents a central focus in modern scholarship on the *Thesmophoriazusae*. These tragedies are split into two groups; the first two have male protagonists, while the second two have female protagonists, and are stories in which these women, women whose actions could be considered abnormal, or even destructive, are rescued by men.¹⁵ The purpose of these parodies, Mnesilochus says, is to enact an escape plan using Euripides' tragedies, all of which ultimately fail, thereby rendering both male action and tragic narrative inadequate. The first set of plays feature male figures that are, in some way, in a situation in which they have no control, leading them to use desperate means as they attempt to extricate themselves. The second set of plays are indebted to the rescue scenes of their respective original plays (Helen by Menelaus and Andromeda by

¹⁴ Zeitlin 1981: 312.

¹⁵ Zeitlin 1981: 311; *et al.*

Perseus), but each of these parodies ends in failure.¹⁶ The *agōn* between tragedy and comedy is a sub-theme that Aristophanes explores and utilizes to his own purposes. The plot that allows Mnesilochus to successfully escape is, ironically, a comic plot, which indicates comedy's dominance over tragedy as "the more encompassing and flexible art form."¹⁷ The language and diction throughout the parodies is highly tragic, thus sharply defining the boundary between comedy and tragedy, and therefore, the action of the Thesmophoria and that of the parodies. In the end, Euripides and Mnesilochus are able to escape, humiliated but unscathed, due to the presence of a dancing girl, a plot feature commonly found in comedy.¹⁸ Another main focus in scholarship is the inversion of gender and gender norms that occur throughout the play; this can be seen most clearly in the characters of Agathon, Mnesilochus, and Cleisthenes.¹⁹ The reversal of gender stereotypes manifests itself most clearly in the feminizing of Mnesilochus and the masculinizing of the female celebrants. Because, as Froma Zeitlin has remarked, it "gives the women, as always, an opportunity to redress the social imbalances between male and female in an open comic competition with men for superior status," it is one of the main features of the play.²⁰ The women, who form the focus of the play, are anomalous in their discourse as well as in the subject matter discussed during the festival. The way in which Aristophanes depicts the women taking advantage of their newly unfettered ability to speak sheds further light on female discourse and the types of activities in which women collectively engaged, but attempted to keep hidden from their husbands.

¹⁶ Tzanetou 2002: 347.

¹⁷ Stehle 2002: 370; Tzanetou 2002: 340; *et al.*

¹⁸ Zeitlin 1981: 304;

¹⁹ See especially Zeitlin 1981; Stehle 2002; McClure 1999: Ch. 6; Bobrick in Dobrov 1997; Slater 2002.

²⁰ Zeitlin 1981: 304.

I argue that each of parodies, as they are situated in their mythical tradition, is connected to characters or situations that signify unstable marriages or other tragic themes that are connected to adultery as explored in tragedy. The fragmentary nature of three of the four Euripidean tragedies is problematic, but by investigating the mythical tradition and the extant fragments, I contend that the socio-political implications and depictions of adulteries can be more deeply and fully understood. Mnesilochus, assuming center stage within both the play and the parodies, makes a spectacle of himself as he tries to escape. The characters that, through Mnesilochus' playacting, rise to the center of the action in some way are connected to adultery or exhibit actions which are common to women in tragedy who find themselves faced with adultery. As he seeks a way to escape from his current plight, Mnesilochus assumes the role of a male protagonist as he parodies these first two plays. These escape attempts recall Mnesilochus' need to escape from the angry band of women using Euripidean plot devices and situations in order to do so.²¹ Another important ritual element is the shift from male to female protagonists, which is effected by Mnesilochus' assumption of female protagonists, is intended to be representative of the "transition from Dionysian rescue plots to the female rescue scenario of Persephone and Demeter," as Angeliki Tzanetou has argued.²² That there is a lack of final gender triumph is indicative of two of the main themes of the play; namely the triumph of comedy over tragedy as an art form and the ambiguity of gender, shown by the constant fluctuation of Mnesilochus' costume and character.

²¹ Tzanetou 2002: 344.

²² Tzanetou 2002: 345.

Lysistrata, believed to have been produced in the same year as the *Thesmophoriazusae*, is another play in which Aristophanes depicts women as having seized a position of power.²³ Rather than having their action confined to a female religious festival, as in the *Thesmophoriazusae*, the women of Greece physically and symbolically take over the Athenian *polis* as a whole. Most importantly, they take over the Acropolis, which was Athens' most sacred precinct and symbolic of "Athenian-ness", as seen by its significance in the Persian and Peloponnesian Wars. The historical background of this play sets the stage for much of the action; the women, because of the absence of the Athenian men, stage a sex strike in order to try to effect peace between the men of the *poleis* involved in the Peloponnesian War.²⁴ He uses the women as a mouthpiece to project a desire for peace after many long years of war, whether held by the poet himself or a segment of the Athenian population, onto the sex-starved women of Athens. This focus on wartime and the industrious nature of Athenian resistance constitutes another key element of the plot of the *Lysistrata*. In addition to the wives of Athens withholding sex from their husbands, the old women of Athens, who were no longer considered sexually desirable, took over the Acropolis and seized control of the treasury which funded Athens' wartime effort. Many scholars have focused on the incongruity of these two main lines of the plot; namely, the lack of men against whom a sex strike could be staged and the eventual takeover of the Acropolis by *all* the women, not just the old women.²⁵ However, the women cite their right to speak their opinions to the Athenian men because they have provided their sons for the

²³ The date of the *Thesmophoriazusae* is less certain (see n. 2 above), but the *Lysistrata* can be more firmly dated to the Lenaia of 411 B.C.E. (Henderson 2000: 445)

²⁴ As Maurice Croiset points out, the play was produced in the wake of the disastrous Sicilian expedition, which makes its push for peace all the more unusual, since "the energetic spirit of Athens reacted almost at once" with a view towards resistance and renewed fighting. (1973: 133)

²⁵ Vaio 1973; MacDowell 1995: 230-2.

Athenian war effort and because they have filled meaningful religious offices since they were young girls, both of which are done in service to the city.²⁶ The women's attack is doubly defiant, since the sex strike is located in the domestic sphere, while the seizure of the treasury is situated in the civic sphere.²⁷ In the *Lysistrata*, as in the *Thesmophoriazusae*, public and private ritual are in an intense interplay onstage. The focus of the play, therefore, is how wartime circumstances can negatively affect domestic life and relationships.²⁸ Indeed, the play focuses on the loss of *philia* between a husband and wife, whether because a wife has taken a lover or because she refuses to engage in sexual relations with her husband.

This strike, which is represented by both the men and the women as damaging to the *oikos*, and the capture of the Acropolis, which is damaging to the *polis*, is mirrored by the women's appropriation of the male political sphere. This feature of the play has been much investigated by modern scholars, and allows for a temporary space in which the women in Athens have control over the traditionally male spheres of political and military service.²⁹ As in the *Thesmophoriazusae*, Aristophanes represents women as adulteresses from the beginning of the play. The sex strike which the women pledge to undertake not only refers to the desire for their husband's return, but also laments the absence of their lovers.³⁰ There are two main passages in the play which directly and unequivocally reference the infidelity of the Athenian wives: the swearing of the oath to abstain from sexual contact, and a section in which the *proboulos* locates part of the blame for the wives'

²⁶ Bowie 1993: 180.

²⁷ Vaio 1973: 371.

²⁸ Vaio 1973: 370.

²⁹ Foley 1982; Vaio 1973; MacDowell 1995: Ch. 10; Bowie 1993: 183ff; Croiset 1973: 134ff.; Konstan 1995: 45ff.; *et al.*

³⁰ Janse & Praet 2012: 166.

infidelity in the male sphere. Many of the same themes, therefore, are present in the staging of adultery and female agency in the *Lysistrata* as in the *Thesmophoriazusae*. Unlike the *Thesmophoriazusae*, which makes greater use of situational comedy, the 'spectacle-ization' of certain characters or situations in the *Lysistrata* is typically found alongside other themes, and as such, I analyze them in conjunction with these themes rather than allotting them a separate section for discussion.

Other themes that play a major role in Aristophanic comedy are similarly found in tragic adultery narratives. First, I will discuss the importance of tactility within Aristophanes' representations of adultery, in which he assigns control or efficacy to those with tactile agency or authority. This is expanded to include descriptions of sensory experiences more generally, and these scenes would have included aspects intended to be familiar to the Athenian audience. Closely related to these themes is a general depiction of female roles in both marriage and motherhood. In both of these functions, Aristophanes portrays women as failing, or at the very least, their contributions are parodied. Finally, as in tragedy, the female characters are shown to be able to control space and time, which includes ritual settings, in order to assert their autonomy and express themselves in an uninhibited forum.

II. Tactility

Contrary to tragic norms, tactility in Aristophanic comedy is not only assigned to women. Aristophanes also employs male tactility, both in the paratragic scenes and in the comic narrative overall. In his utilization of female tactility, the effects of tactile authority are parodied, and, like their tragic counterparts, are shown to have negative effects. The paratragic section begins with a parody of Euripides' *Telephus*, as reenacted by Mnesilochus, is one of the few existing sources for the now fragmentary tragedy, which was performed in 438 B.C.E. and won a second place prize. According to Apollodorus, Telephus was a son of Heracles and the king of the Mysians, whose kingdom was mistakenly assumed to be Troy. His city was subsequently attacked by the Achaean host in their first futile attempt to capture Troy, and in this attack, Telephus was wounded by Achilles.³¹ Telephus was later healed by Achilles, but Euripides' play focuses on Telephus while he is still wounded and in Argos, having been directed there by an oracle in order to heal his wound.³² Because Telephus has become desperate because of his inability to heal the wound inflicted by Achilles, he has seized the baby Orestes from his cradle, most likely according to Clytemnestra's advice (ἄνασσα πράγους τοῦδε καὶ βουλευμάτων; 699).³³ It follows logically that Clytemnestra, who herself uses tactile means to destroy Agamemnon, would recommend that Telephus commit a physical act of violence. It is significant that this act of male tactility does not end in destruction, as do many of the instances of female tactility in tragedy. Telephus then threatens to kill baby Orestes in order to force somebody to help him heal his wound, and the climactic part of the play seems to have centered on

³¹ Apoll. *Epit.* 3.17ff.

³² Eur. *Frag.* 696 gives the first 15 lines of the Telephus' prologue speech, which sets the scene for his presence and actions in Argos.; Collard, Cropp, & Lee 1995: 27.

³³ Eur. *Frag.* 699.

Telephus' threatening of Orestes at an altar.³⁴ After this, Odysseus, who is in Argos because of an oracle that Telephus' presence in Troy is necessary to Achaean success, realizes that Achilles' spear is the only thing that can heal his wound, providing an early literary description of sympathetic magic.³⁵ Telephus' wound is healed and Orestes' life is spared, at which point the Achaeans, along with Telephus, sail to Troy to wage war against the Trojans.

Using the climactic moment of the altar-sacrifice scene as the focal point, Aristophanes parodies the abduction of Orestes by Telephus. Mnesilochus, after he has been 'outed' by the arrival of Cleisthenes and discovered by the women at the festival, suddenly assumes the character of Telephus, seizing and threatening to sacrifice Mika's child. The seizure of the child is an instance of tactility, albeit failed tactility, because Mnesilochus is unable to escape by snatching Mika's child as planned. Aristophanes, however, transforms the entire situation; Mika's child is female, and even though Mika claims that it is her only child, the legal ramifications of a daughter's death do not carry the same implications as Orestes' would have, thus rendering the situation less serious.³⁶ Alan Sommerstein attempts to explain the changed gender of the child by claiming that a male child would not have been allowed entry into the festival.³⁷ While this is certainly a valid point, the fact that Telephus has connections to Clytemnestra gives the situation a new significance. In the mythical narrative, as in Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, Agamemnon's sacrifice of

³⁴ Collard, Cropp, & Lee 1995: 18. This climactic moment is also depicted on vase paintings, perhaps further indicating its import as the central focus of the play.

³⁵ Apoll. *Epit.* 3.30. With reference to Telephus' wound, "only 'the one that had wounded him' could heal him". (Collard & Cropp 2009: 186)

³⁶ The use of τήν at 717 indicates that Mika's child is female, and her description of the child as τοῦ μόνου τέκνου at 697-8 shows that this is her only child.

³⁷ Sommerstein 1994: 200.

Iphigenia provides Clytemnestra with a motive to destroy the *oikos*. Mnesilochus, who at this point has been clean-shaven and is still wearing remnants of his female costume, is sacrificing a *female* child, an act which mirrors the story that serves as the background of the *Telephus*: Agamemnon's sacrifice of Iphigenia and Clytemnestra's subsequent destruction of the House of Atreus.³⁸ This sacrifice is also referred to in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, in which Agamemnon's concubine, Cassandra, is likewise treated as a sacrificial victim. By employing the *Telephus* as one of the parodies that Mnesilochus enacts, Aristophanes is indirectly referencing not only one of the most notorious adulteresses in Greek myth, but also the iconic sacrifice that allowed the Achaeans to sail to Troy.

After he realizes that the 'sacrifice' of Mika's child will not help him to escape from his current dilemma, Mnesilochus turns to a parody of the *Palamedes* to attempt escape. Sommerstein characterizes this parody as a "Euripidean pastiche with comic elements incorporated" because it is neither as long nor as involved as the other parodies and it includes elements that would likely not have been performed in the Euripidean original.³⁹ Euripides' *Palamedes* focuses on the character who, upon arriving at Ithaca, reveals Odysseus' feigned madness in his attempt to avoid going to Troy.⁴⁰ While in Troy, Odysseus repaid Palamedes by faking a letter from Priam to Palamedes and thereby making him appear to be a traitor, which resulted in Palamedes being stoned to death (καταλεῦσαι).⁴¹

³⁸ There is the suggestion in Hyginus that Euripides' Clytemnestra may have been acting in concert with Telephus as a response to Iphigenia's sacrifice by Agamemnon. (Collard, Cropp, & Lee 1995: 20).

³⁹ Sommerstein 1994: 204. There are certain elements of the Euripidean play, according to Sommerstein, that would have not been performed onstage. The wood-carving scene, which is the focus Aristophanes' parody, is one such element, but is performed by Mnesilochus nevertheless.

⁴⁰ Apollodorus, *Epit.* III.7.

⁴¹ Apollodorus, *Epit.* III.8.

As such, Palamedes seems to have been generally conceived of as a character who, in the words of Plato, lost his life through an unrighteous judgment (διὰ κρίσιν ἄδικον τέθνηκεν).⁴² This is ironic, given that Mnesilochus is masquerading as a woman in order to participate in an all-female festival; as such, his ‘death’ would be anything but unjust, as his mere presence severely transgresses religious prescription. Palamedes is also cast as the inventor of writing, along with and numbering and board games, by Sophocles and Plato.⁴³ The remains of the play itself are more fragmentary than even the *Telephus*, and Aristophanes’ parody of the play amounts to only about twenty lines and is immediately followed by the *parabasis*. Euripides’ play does not end at the death of Palamedes, however. His brother, Oiax, had accompanied him to Troy and inscribed his brother’s death upon oar blades in order to report it to his father.⁴⁴ It is the character of Oiax, rather than Palamedes himself, that Mnesilochus reenacts in the play.

The most important element of this parody is another instance of the failed efficacy of an act of male handiwork. Tactility and handiwork allowed for the expression of female agency, and many of the women portrayed in tragedy facing a situation of adultery act using tactile means. Mnesilochus, realizing that simply performing – as he does for the character of Telephus – in order to extricate from his predicament is insufficient. He therefore turns to physical action as he entreats his hands to resourceful or inventive action (ὦ χεῖρες ἐμαί, ἐγχειρεῖν χρῆν ἔργω πορίμω; 776-7). The invocation of the hands in the attempt to increase efficacy is a common feature, found in Euripides’ *Medea* and Sophocles’ *Trachiniae* and discussed in Chapter 1, which enables these otherwise

⁴² Plato *Apol.* 41b.

⁴³ Collard and Cropp 2008: 46.

⁴⁴ Collard and Cropp 2008: 48.

disempowered women to get revenge on their husbands. Mnesilochus, in this attempt to escape, wishes to inscribe an entreaty to Euripides so that Euripides might help extricate him from his current predicament. The invocation of his hands using the adjective πόριμος characterizes his action thus far as useless. Whereas the women in tragedy are typically successful when they invoke their hands, Mnesilochus' invocation of his hands ensures that his male characters are unsuccessful and leads him to eventually switch into female roles.⁴⁵ This instance of male tactile agency is not destructive, as it commonly was in tragedy, but merely unsuccessful.⁴⁶ Because the male protagonists he has chosen to impersonate are unsuccessful, he then attempts to mimic tragic figures that are rescued by another character in the play, hoping that the presence of an ally will make him more successful.

An instance of male handiwork outside the paratragic frame is found in the depiction of Agathon, a gender-ambiguous playwright whose skills are likened to the crafting of physical objects. Agathon's slave equates his creation of poetry to several different types of physical handicraft; namely, shipbuilding, carpentry, and metalwork (δρυόχους τιθέναι δράματος ἀρχάς. κάμπτει δὲ νέας ἀψίδας ἐπῶν, τὰ δὲ τορνεύει, τὰ δὲ κολλομελεῖ, καὶ γνωμοτυπεῖ κἀντονομάζει καὶ κηροχυτεῖ καὶ γογγύλλει καὶ χοανεύει; 52-7), all of which were offices or endeavors common to men. The slave further characterizes Agathon's poetry as something that is to be bent and twisted into shape (κατακάμπτειν τὰς στροφάς; 68), indicating that Agathon's ownership of his poetry includes an element of physical control. Agathon, while his character and historical model are male, is comfortable with taking on the guise – and therefore mindset – of a woman. The clothes, razor, and

⁴⁵ Stehle 2002: 390.

⁴⁶ Traditional male spheres of tactile control are military and athletic, which are also overwhelmingly cast as positive.

breast band that Mnesilochus uses to transform into a woman are all Agathon's accessories, which he uses because he claims that the assumption of the female form allows for a better understanding of the things which women suffer (αὐτίκα γυναικεῖ ἦν ποιῆ τις δράματα, μετουσίαν δεῖ τῶν τρόπων τὸ σῶμ' ἔχειν; 151-2). Mnesilochus, who at this point is about to take on the physical appearance of a woman, should, according to Agathon's logic, be able to understand the female experience by taking on the façade of a woman.⁴⁷

This connection of handiwork to agency is not limited to the paratragic males or the ambiguous male figure of Agathon in the beginning of the play; however, while Agathon's dramatic creation is overall positive, that which the women create, or are imagined to create, with their own hands is generally far more destructive. Mika, during her account of the women's newly degraded domestic experience due to Euripides' slander, explains that the Athenian husbands have started to assign destructive and adulterous agency to actions as simple as plaiting garlands (ὥστ' ἐάν τις <καὶ> πλέκη γυνὴ στέφανον, ἐρᾶν δοκεῖ; 400-1).⁴⁸ The inclusion of this image is likely pointing to a reference in a play of Euripides, possibly the *Stheneboia*.⁴⁹ In Euripidean tragedy, handiwork and agency are intimately intertwined because the creation of a special object with one's own hands allows for a transference of agency and willful action that would not have otherwise been possible, as discussed in Chapter 1. By appropriating the tragic motif of handiwork as it relates to agency, Aristophanes is redefining a normal domestic action as one that is indicative of adulterous behavior. In this line, his use of the verb πλέκω, which is closely connected with

⁴⁷ The fact that Euripides refuses to take on the guise of the female celebrants (189-192) suggests that he is unable to fully understand the female experience.

⁴⁸ See Slater 2002: 161-2.

⁴⁹ Sommerstein 1994: *ad loc*; Austin & Olson 2004: *ad loc*.

weaving and plaiting baskets, indicates the importance of the hands in depicting the active component of the shameless actions of the women at the festival.

In the same section, female agency is similarly connected to the destruction of tangible objects, parodically connecting the touching of any object – whether constructive or destructive – with negative female action. In this instance, the destructive element again takes the form of an allusion to a Euripidean play, this time certainly the *Stheneboia*. The *Stheneboia* is another fragmentary Euripidean tragedy, which draws on the myth of Stheneboia and Bellerophon. Stheneboia unsuccessfully attempted to seduce Bellerophon despite her marriage to Proetus, king of Tiryns.⁵⁰ The reference in the *Thesmophoriazusae* is to a wife in the kitchen who drops a pot, which is a commonplace occurrence with comic effects, and her husband immediately assumes that she wishes to turn the event into a positive event by protecting her lover (ἀνήρ έρωτᾶ· “τῷ κατέαγεν ἡ χύτρα; οὐκ ἔσθ’ ὅπως οὐ τῷ Κορινθίῳ ξένῳ.”; 403-4).⁵¹ The *Stheneboia* was centered on the love and attempted seduction of Stheneboia and Bellerophon, another of Euripides’ plays that addressed attempted adultery.⁵² The dropping of the pot within this highly fragmentary play is hypothetical, but the import of the remark by Stheneboia’s husband, Proetus, is that she will look for any occasion to wish good fortune upon her would-be lover. By appropriating this image from the myth, Mika is conveying the sense of paranoia that men feel when they suspect that their wives’ affections lie elsewhere. This tragic fiction has now become a

⁵⁰ Collard, Cropp, and Lee 1995: 79.

⁵¹ According to Sommerstein, in ancient times, it was seemingly customary, when a pot or other piece of earthenware broke, to wish that it be to the benefit of another person, “i.e. may the destruction of the pot be a substitute for, and so avert, any evil that might otherwise have come upon that person.” 1994: *ad loc.*

⁵² Collard & Cropp 1995: 79.

reality for the Athenian wives because Euripides has engendered a sense of obsessive suspicion about the health and legitimacy of their *oikos*.

In contrast, *Lysistrata* employs an elaborate metaphor (565-588) in which she relates the conducting of political affairs to the working and weaving of wool, shows the positive benefits to female tactile activity. Because of the extensive scholarship on this metaphor, I refrain from further discussion; it is sufficient to note that women not only perceive the beneficial quality of their own tactile creation differently than men do, but they also understand the practical applicability of the skills required by domestic tasks to the political sphere.⁵³ Similar to their performance of the oath, the negative nature of female handiwork presumed by men is voiced by the leader of the men's chorus during his dialogue with the women, indicating that female creation of objects and agency are both viewed negatively by the Athenian men. In his diatribe at 671-681, he says that essentially anything women touch is immediately given a negative cast, especially when it has connections to the male sphere. His examples show how, from the male perspective, the influence of women in traditionally male spheres would be destructive – just as their attempt to take over the political realm in the course of the play is similarly portrayed negatively by the men. If women were to build warships, he says, they would use them to attack the male population of Athens, as Artemisia did during the Persian Wars (ἀλλὰ καὶ ναῦς τεκτανοῦνται, κάπιχειρήσουσ' ἔτι ναυμαχεῖν καὶ πλεῖν ἐφ' ἡμᾶς, ὥσπερ Ἀρτεμισία; 674-5), or if they decided to get involved with the cavalry, they would eventually take the role of Amazons (ἦν δ' ἐφ' ἵππικὴν τράπωνται, διαγράφω τοὺς ἱππέας; 676). This

⁵³ For discussions of the wool-working metaphor, see Henderson 1987: 141ff.; Bowie 1993: 184ff.; Croiset 1973: 135ff.; Vaio 1973: 372ff.; MacDowell 1995: 230ff; *et al.* This stands in stark contrast to the destructive effects of female tactility imagined by men, as displayed in Chapter 1 and in the discussion of the *Thesmophoriazusae*.

association of the women of Athens to the Amazons is especially apt, given the failed attempt of the Amazons to capture the Acropolis during Theseus' mythical tenure as king of Athens.⁵⁴ I will further analyze the connections between female activity and Theseus in my discussion of the oath-swearing scene, but Aristophanes' portrayal of the Amazon-female-barbarian and Athenian-male-civilization dynamic allows for a more nuanced understanding of the importance of the female undertaking within the play.

This negative portrayal of female handiwork and tactility is also present in Aristophanes' depiction of the sex-strike oath that Lysistrata forced the Greek women to swear. The content of the oath is, in true Aristophanic style, graphic and full of bodily and sexual imagery. Henderson claims that the episode is "entirely farcical," which is true insofar as the scene is a parodic representation of a traditional military oath. It does, however, allow for deeper understanding of the importance of tragic paradigms and Greek autochthony, both of which are important elements in the oath. In this oath, the women promise to abstain from sexual contact with their lovers and husbands (οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδεις οὔτε μοιχὸς οὔτ' ἀνήρ; 212). It is significant that they are mentioned in the oath in that specific order because it brings the socially unacceptable aspect of female behavior to the fore. It implies that either it is a greater hardship to go without their lovers than their husbands, or that the sexual experiences imparted by the *moichoi* are more memorable or addicting than that of the Athenian husbands. That the *moichoi* are mentioned before the husbands ensures that adultery and unsanctioned physical contact form the highlight of the vow, affirming the traditional stereotypes and anxieties held by Greek men. The oath itself is modeled after a male sacrificial rite that Lysistrata claims to have taken from Aeschylus,

⁵⁴ For more on the Amazons, see duBois 1991 and Mayor 2014.

and in itself invites a discussion among the women of what is appropriate for an oath whose goal is peace. This also follows the implicit *agōn* between tragic and comic fusion that Aristophanes creates throughout this play. Helene Foley shows that ironies abound in the oath, because “the women use wine to make peace treaties, religious powers to restore public order and fertility, sexuality to restore marriage, and words and clothing to protect the men from folly and mockery.”⁵⁵ This focus on the restoration of marriage, which is one of the main themes of the play, ignores the prominence that Aristophanes gives to adultery within the oath. Although adultery is a stereotypical male concern, the possibility of unfaithful wives will exist again when the men return from war; not only will the husbands return from military service, so will the *moichoi*. This ritual action, although satirized, has an important tactile element, which recalls the importance of ritual tactility in tragedy.

Once the women have decided upon ritual action that is appropriate to the situation and their goal, they perform the sacrifice using the pouring of wine into wine vessels in order to imitate the blood spilling out of a sacrificial victim onto a shield. As they take hold (προσλαμβάνω; 202) of the wine jar, they imagine it to be a boar (ὁ κάπρος; 202), which has associations with the wineskins which were used as far back as the Homeric period. Elderkin’s describes that in Homeric times, wineskins were typically made from the hide of boars, and “later the *askos* was “translated” into clay,” indicating that clay was typically used for the creation of wine vessels beginning in Classical times.⁵⁶ Therefore, by using the term *askos*, the vessel utilized by the women is invested with associations with wineskins in addition to its practical function as a clay vessel. Aristophanes’ utilization of wineskin

⁵⁵ Foley 1982: 10.

⁵⁶ Elderkin 1940: 389.

imagery, which similarly appears in the *Thesmophoriazusae* in connection with the foundation of the Athens and the pride of Athenian autochthony, also has more significant civic associations. In the *Lysistrata*, other connections to Theseus – such as the comparison of the women to Amazons – make the image of the wineskin that is opened seem to be even more strongly connected to the loosened wineskin that led to Theseus' birth.⁵⁷ This connection with the foundation of Athens is employed by Aristophanes elsewhere, but the reference to the *askos* that Aegeus prematurely loosened as a centerpiece to the oath is striking. In this scene, male sexuality and reproductive capacity are subtly ridiculed, while also creating a layer of humor. *Lysistrata* makes the women physically take hold of the wineskin, recalling Athenian autochthony and Theseus' varied mythical history, and it is this act that forms a centerpiece to the sacrifice.

After the libation has been poured, each of the women must then take a drink from the cup in order to completely seal the oath. The oath, then, includes features “both of the *sphagia*, blood sacrifice, associated with oaths and the opening of hostilities, and of the *spondai* that closed them: their actions are both a declaration of war and an attempt to make peace.”⁵⁸ The product of this oath is both affirming and destroying the solidarity and health of the *oikos*; by refusing to have sex with adulterers, there is no longer any threat to the purity of the lineage, but by refusing to have sex with their husbands, they are effectively blocking any potential for the production of children, which negatively impacted both the *oikos* and the *polis*. The fact that it is crucial to *Lysistrata* that each woman touch the ‘victim’ and drink the sacrifice at the end solidifies their collective and tactile agency

⁵⁷ For more on the connection of the women to Amazons, see Bowie 1993: 183-5.

⁵⁸ Bowie 1993: 182.

and actions in the play, and brings both the oath and their purpose into sharper focus. Lysistrata further makes the women into spectacles by referring to sexual positions within the oath (οὐ πρὸς τὸν ὄροφον ἀνατενῶ τὰ Περσικά; 229; οὐ στήσομαι λέαιν' ἐπὶ τυροκνήστιδος; 231), which had no real bearing on the oath and its intent but likely captured the attention of the Athenian men in the audience. This pornographic layer, which operates beyond ostensible humor to the Athenian audience, adds to the diversity of spectacle, including Aristophanes' graphically alluded spectacle, within the comic performance.

The potential effects of this oath – namely the abstinence from marital and extra-marital relations – are described by the women using visually and sexually evocative language. Lysistrata weaves a scene in which their husbands enter the household, ready to engage in sexual relations, and they are purposefully groomed and dressed in a manner meant for seduction, only to eventually deny any sexual contact to their husbands as far as they are able. They ask Lysistrata what they should do if their husbands force sexual contact on them (ἐὰν λαβόντες δ' εἰς τὸ δωμάτιον βία ἔλκωσιν ἡμᾶς; 160-1), and she responds that they should submit unenthusiastically because men do not enjoy it when their wives are unwilling (οὐ γὰρ ἔνι τούτοις ἡδονὴ τοῖς πρὸς βίαν; 163). This image recalls the story of Helen, perhaps the most famous adulteress from antiquity, who is briefly alluded to above as a woman who could be successful in negotiating peace by her sheer beauty alone. The women hope to accomplish a similar feat by sitting at home, wearing make-up (ἐντετριμμένα; 149), wearing costly purple robes (τοῖς χιτωνίοισι τοῖς Ἀμοργίνοις; 150) and having depilated their nether regions (δέλτα παρατετιλμένος; 151) in order to be as alluring as possible to their husbands. This image which Lysistrata creates is

one that seems to be immediately recognizable to the women, and perhaps to the majority of the male audience by extension. The physical characteristics and conspicuousness of the women are the central focus of this section, evoking an image of wifely seduction in which the men are ultimately prevented from sexual contact.

Aristophanes' use of tactility in his plays is, unlike tragedy, not limited to female activity alone. He shows male figures attempting their own acts of handiwork – even going so far as to address their hands as they do so – which unequivocally end in failure. Even though female acts of tactile authority are shown to be effective, they are often portrayed in a way that is destructive to the specific context, or in the case of the *Lysistrata*, to society in general.

a. Evocation of the Senses and Sensory Qualities

Closely related to the theme of tactility is Aristophanes' continued exploitation of sensory details in his descriptions of the behavior of women and the 'female' Mnesilochus, both of which are fashioned as deviating from male expectation. In tragedy, Euripides' method of delivery for his slander against his female characters is typically dramatic representation; he is, by nature, satisfying the senses of sight and sound; the audience would have both seen and heard these women, portrayed as shameless and committing varying misdeeds, both from messenger-figures and from the characters themselves. By contrast, Aristophanes' comedies employ descriptions of adultery that are intended to appeal to more of the senses. Aristophanes' use of the senses and the impact on their reception by the audience can be further illuminated by contemporary anthropological studies of the senses. Traditionally, the senses have been hierarchically schematized; the

'male' senses, and therefore the most privileged, are sight and hearing, while the 'female' senses, often conceived of as more basic, are that of touch, smell, and taste.⁵⁹ This duality is represented in Aristophanes' portrayal of the senses and has been historically employed so as to reinforce the basic structures of power and influence inherent in society.⁶⁰ More specifically, the association of women with smell, touch, and taste served to legitimize the idea that "the women's place was in the home, cooking, sewing, and taking care of their families."⁶¹ These so-called feminine senses, which the female characters are depicted as twisting to fit their own purposes, are used by the male characters in the play, and perhaps even Aristophanes himself, in order to describe situations of adultery as well as to validate the existence of the predominant social organization.

Aristophanes' comedies attempt to focus on more of the senses in order to provide an all-encompassing, sensory expression of adultery that would have made it more authentic and therefore more immediately relatable. As such, Mika, in her long speech in the *Thesmophoriazusae* which details the day-to-day effects of Euripides' defamation, focuses on the physical appearance of the young, unmarried maiden whose pallor immediately raises suspicions that she might be pregnant (κάμνει κόρη τις, εὐθύς ἀδελφὸς λέγει· "τὸ χρῶμα τοῦτό μ' οὐκ ἀρέσκει τῆς κόρης."; 405-6). This image is taken from another of the non-extant Euripidean tragedies, possibly *Aeolus* or *Scyrians*, in which an illness was used as a pretext for a young maiden's otherwise unexplained pallor.⁶² Colin Austin and Douglas Olson maintain that there are two possibilities for the young girl's

⁵⁹ Classen 1998: 6-7; van Ede 2009: 63; *et al.*

⁶⁰ Classen 1997: 409.

⁶¹ Classen 1998: 6-7. The perceived male facility with sight and hearing, on the other hand, "empowered them to travel, to read and write, to conquer and govern." (Classen 1998: 7).

⁶² Sommerstein 1994: *ad loc.*

change in color: lovesickness or morning sickness.⁶³ It does not logically follow, however, that in a dialogue centering on illicit action, something as chaste as lovesickness would feature, since the pain from lovesickness is predicated upon chastity, distance, and self-control. By focusing on the pallor of the maiden likely caused by nausea, the use of τὸ χρῶμα suggests a physical manifestation of an extramarital affair which would have produced an illegitimate child.⁶⁴ Women in pre-modern Europe were often connected with color, which was in turn representative of their primarily decorative or seductive capacities, both seen as potentially disruptive to society.⁶⁵ Here, too, it is the young girl's *lack* of color that calls her fertility into question; normally, she may have been expected to be rosy-cheeked or bronzed by the sun. The maiden's seemingly atypical appearance makes her a spectacle, and through a subtle reference to color, Aristophanes conjures the image of the effects of a premarital affair, which would have similarly ended in an illegitimate child and would have been considered to damage the *polis*.

This use of sensory imagery is not only employed by the women in their descriptions of clandestine sexual contact, but also by Mnesilochus while he is still undiscovered as an imposter and is elucidating the fictive affair that he engaged in as a newlywed. Because Mnesilochus is an infiltrator who is not completely aware of and attuned to the female experience, he is not completely able to reject the stereotypically male beliefs about female misbehavior.⁶⁶ The way in which he describes the conduct of his female persona, conduct which he expected the other women in the festival to be aware of or to have perpetrated themselves, showcases the guile and artifice that men expected of

⁶³ Austin & Olson 2004: *ad loc.*

⁶⁴ Austin & Olson 2004: *ad loc.*

⁶⁵ Classen 1998: 65. Men, on the other hand were associated with "light and form".

⁶⁶ Bobrick 1997: 183; Zeitlin 1981; 305.

women. Many of the actions which Mnesilochus describes appeal to the senses in order to create a complete, sensory representation of the entire scene which Mnesilochus is describing. This manufactured memory of Mnesilochus' depicts several of his misdeeds, as well as several more general, typically female transgressions. He begins when 'she' is a newlywed woman who still wishes to engage in secret trysts with her long-time lover. Mnesilochus' performance of this scene, and the message that he is trying to convey, is twofold: to the internal audience of the play, Mnesilochus is still a woman addressing fellow female participants in the festival and is attempting to express a message that he believes is part of a shared experience. To the external audience of the play, Mnesilochus is an actor playing a male character who is pretending to be a female character. The external, Athenian audience would have seen Mnesilochus weaving a scene that exploits and parodies female adultery. He employs imagery and vocabulary that evoke a sensory response in order to make it as corporeal and physical, and therefore relatable, an experience as possible.

Mnesilochus' part of the dialogue begins with his evocation an image of the marriage bed as the focal point (ὁ δ' ἄνῆρ παρ' ἐμοὶ καθηῦθεν; 479). As shown in Chapter 1, a faithful and undisrupted marriage bed in tragedy is the *locus* of a happy and productive marriage and by extension, ensured the continued preservation of the *polis*.⁶⁷ In this scene, marital relations fail, or at the very least are shown to be unsatisfactory, because Mnesilochus' younger self leaves her new husband's bed to rendezvous with her lover. This scene, which ends with the sacrilegious union of Mnesilochus' female persona and her boyfriend in a sacred precinct of Apollo, shows the potential for unsatisfactory marital relations, and

⁶⁷ Parca 1992: 187.

thereby showcases the male concern with the willingness of women to seek pleasure elsewhere if not satisfied within their marriage.⁶⁸ In Mnesilochus' dialogue, the younger woman realizes her boyfriend is scratching at the door (κνυεν; 481), so she decides to go outside and engage in sexual activity with him rather than remaining in bed with her husband. In her attempt to sneak out, she cites bowel issues and stomach pain as a pretext for going outside to meet her longtime boyfriend (στρόφος μ' ἔχει τὴν γαστέρ', ὤνερ, κώδύνη; 484). This evocation of a common physical sensation is relatable, and showcases the opportunities women may have had to be unfaithful. As her speech continues, she recounts the necessity of women to mask any sound – in this case by pouring water over the door hinge – that might make her husband aware of her attempts to leave the house to meet her lover outside (ἐγὼ δὲ καταχέασα τοῦ στροφέως ὕδωρ ἐξῆλθον ὡς τὸν μοιχόν; 487-8).⁶⁹ This sound, which likely would have been one that the majority of the audience members could have immediately called to mind, is therefore recreating something audible and easily recalled in the larger scene that Mnesilochus is trying to create.

Mnesilochus, in his wider description of female misdeeds that marks the end of his dialogue, invokes two senses within one single image; that of smell and taste. He explains how women who have been in the company of other men while their husbands have been away need to mask the scent of their lovers. Garlic (σκόροδον), he claims, is used to provide an all-encompassing scent (οὐδ' ὡς ὅταν μάλισθ' ὑπὸ τοῦ ληκώμεθα τὴν νύχθ', ἔωθεν σκόροδα διαμασώμεθα, ἴν' ὄσφρόμενος ἀνήρ ἀπὸ τείχους εἰσιῶν μηδὲν κακὸν δρᾶν ὑποτοπῆται; 493-6) which would have concealed any other smell. Smells had a crucial

⁶⁸ Parca 1992: 187, *et al.*

⁶⁹ Cf. Lysias 1, in which "it is the unaccustomed sound of the doors to the narrator's courtyard and house opening by night that makes him realize that his wife was in fact visited by a lover." (Austin & Olson 2004: 201.)

place in ritual life, since perfumed herbs and spices were often used in sacrifices, and therefore, the “existence of a bad smells indicates that something unusual is afoot.”⁷⁰ In this case, the pungent scent of garlic should have served to warn their husbands that something was awry. Because a woman intending to sleep with another man would not have eaten garlic, her use of a highly pungent spice would have instead served to avert the suspicions of her husband.⁷¹ Mnesilochus, therefore, creates a scene in which he implicitly accuses women of using the senses to distort the truth, rather than to convey it. The senses are humanity’s primary means of receiving information about the world, and Mnesilochus weaves a scene in which he imagines women manipulating sensory experiences in order to deceive their husbands.⁷²

The importance of the sensory experience that Mnesilochus creates is twofold. On the one hand, it attempts to forge a sense of kinship with the women, and his addition of several sensory and very specific personal details attempts to create a sphere of shared expression with them. He includes precise details that he assumes will convince them of his fraudulent experience, and therefore his counterfeit womanhood. Although the women are aware that their husbands look upon them as perpetrators of behavior not accepted by society, as evidenced by the use of ὑποβλέπω at 396, the minute details which Mnesilochus attempts to provide are intended to prove that he is a legitimate part of the female community at the festival.⁷³ To the spectators of the play, Mnesilochus is intended to appear to have access to a special and limited female viewpoint. As Agathon indicates at the

⁷⁰ Bowie 1993: 188.

⁷¹ Sommerstein 1994: *ad loc.*

⁷² Goody 2002: 21-2.

⁷³ On ὑποβλέπω: in this case, the verb means “‘give a narrow glance at’ + acc.; usually an expression of hostility or suspicion.” Austin & Olson 2004: *ad loc.*

beginning of the play, the assumption of a female costume allows for a more nuanced and in-depth understanding of the female experience.⁷⁴ That this sentiment is communicated at the beginning of the play is intended to satirically lend Mnesilochus more credibility in his lampooning of the women in his attempt to defend Euripides' from the wrath of the women. Due to Mnesilochus' comical assumption of the female form, it is ironic that there is a repeated emphasis on the term λάθρα and the verb λανθάνω. His female character attends the festival of the Thesmophoria expressly to take a stand against the whole of the female population, ensuring that he will be conspicuous by necessity, the exact opposite of Agathon's and Euripides' claim that he needs to remain hidden. In fact, as Mnesilochus is assuming his costume, he asks Euripides whether he would be hidden or conspicuous (πότερα φανερόν ἢ λάθρα;92), to which Euripides responded that he would be hidden, dressed in female clothes (λάθρα, στολήν γυναικὸς ἡμφιεσμένον; 93). This seemingly simple question has two levels of interpretation; in one, Mnesilochus is attempting to keep his male identity hidden, while in the other, he is ironically going to become more conspicuous than anybody else in the festival, as the lone voice supportive of Euripides' tragedies. Mnesilochus, then, becomes a sort of hidden spectacle until it has been found out that he is, in reality, a man. Even before the women realize that he is a man, his pro-Euripidean speech makes him a spectacle to the women at the festival even as he tries to blend in by adopting female dress. The female characters, upon hearing his *apologia Euripidou*, immediately otherize him, characterizing him as a monster (τό χρῆμα; 521) whose speech is audacious (θρασεῖαν; 523 and ἀναιδῶς; 525) to the extent that she cannot possibly be an Athenian woman (χῆτις ἐξέθρεψε χώρα;522). The creation of Mnesilochus

⁷⁴ “αὐτίκα γυναικεῖ ἦν ποιῆ τις δράματα, μετουσίαν δεῖ τῶν τρόπων τὸ σῶμ' ἔχειν” (151-2). Agathon's assumption of female garb allows him to more fully communicate the female experience.

as a spectacle, both latent and visible, differs greatly from tragedy, in which most of the action is narrated. Instead, in comedy a character is made a spectacle by situation, and certain costume choices and situational circumstances are exploited in order to make a character stand out more.

A similarly sense-oriented scene is employed in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, in an episode in which Myrrhine attempts to avoid sexual congress with her husband, Kinesias. When it seems as though Myrrhine is about to give into Kinesias' pleadings and agree to have sexual intercourse with him, she instead leads her husband on, jumping at any pretense to halt the lovemaking process. In this performance, Myrrhine builds a verbal and visually evocative bedroom in her enumeration of the objects she needs Kinesias to bring. First, she claims that they need a bed (κλινίδιον; 917), a mattress (ψίαθος; 921), a pillow (προσκεφάλαιον; 926), and a blanket (σισύρα; 933). The description of the sleeping implements evokes an image of the marital bed and chamber, with which the majority of the audience members would have been familiar. After she verbally conjures the elements necessary for a bedroom, Myrrhine then further delays their coitus by deciding that Kinesias, who is clearly exasperated by this point, needed to be anointed with perfume (μύρον; 940). Kinesias, by proclaiming that he does not like the scent (οὐχ ἡδὸ τὸ μύρον; 942) wishes to expedite the long-delayed lovemaking process, but instead he allows Myrrhine to delay further.⁷⁵ Myrrhine uses the unpleasantness of the perfume in order to repel her husband's advances, which are not in the best (i.e., the male) interests of the state, given the intent of the women's abstinence.

⁷⁵ Sommerstein 1990: 203.

The majority of Kinesias' speech in the play is focused on his physical pain from being without his wife, and therefore, the fact that he is continuously and painfully erect. Several of his remarks give the impression that Myrrhine has been neglecting her marital 'duties' for more than just the day, even though this defies the temporal reality of the play. Myrrhine's absence from her household could not have lasted six days, as Kinesias claims (αὕτη, τί πάσχεις; οὐδ' ἐλεεῖς τὸ παιδίον ἄλουτον ὄν κάθηλον ἕκτην ἡμέραν; 880-1), since the women's oath took place earlier that day. In this case, Kinesias is expanding time in order to make his point more vivid, and he even brings their child along in order to more fully represent the implications of Myrrhine's absence and, in a larger context, the women's rebellion. He furthermore states that because Myrrhine is gone when he arrives home, he feels so empty – and aroused – that he does not even get pleasure from food (τοῖς δὲ σιτίσις χάριν οὐδεμίαν οἶδ' ἐσθίων; 868-9). This type of affliction is not only found in tragedy – for example, Medea lies without food because of Jason's betrayal (κεῖται δ' ἄσιτος; *Med.* 24) – it is also reminiscent of the language found in the curse tablets that wish for two people to be separated.⁷⁶ This type of intense pain caused by physical separation and suffering is common to ritual and magical prescriptions, and indicates that there is a response to being spurned by a lover that is independent of genre. Aristophanes, in employing the image of the bedroom, the scent of the perfume, and the physical pain that accompanied his constant arousal, is creating a sensory experience that would have been immediately relatable to the members of the audience. Myrrhine's rejection of her husband's advances goes against the

⁷⁶ The caster usually wishes that the object of his or her affection will not be able to eat or sleep until they come to the caster; the implication is that the desire is usually of a sexual nature. One such love spell of attraction wishes that the girl whom he desires will stop engaging in everyday activities, including eating (εἰ ἐσθίει, μὴ ἐσθιέτω; 1516) until she becomes attracted to him (ἴνα μοι ἄξις αὐτήν; 1509-10). *PGM* IV. 1496-1595.

purpose of marriage in Athens, namely childbearing, and Kinesias' reaction to her repudiation showcases the importance of familial harmony and conclusive paternity.

Perhaps the most resonant instance of physicality in the play is the figure of *Diallagē*, or Reconciliation, a naked woman onto whose body the Athenians and Peloponnesians map out their respective demands. Much of the scholarly research on *Diallagē* focuses on her personification of Hellenic unity and the return to gender stereotypes; for my purposes, *Diallagē* is important because, for the women, she visually and corporeally marks a return to the female status quo, established by the vocabulary in the oath at the beginning of the play.⁷⁷ In historical reality, a society could never return its 'normal' state before a war spanning twenty years, but in dramatic reality, that is exactly what happens. Wives and husbands have been reunited (ἀνὴρ δὲ παρὰ γυναῖκα καὶ γυνὴ στήτω παρ' ἄνδρα; 1275-6), and the entire Athenian population is feasting with the carefree attitude of a *polis* at peace. According to Foley, *Lysistrata* ends "in peace and a return to the status quo – marriage – in sexual relations."⁷⁸ What goes unnoticed, however, is that because all the men are now present in Athens, the women's sexual relations will not be limited to their husbands; women will indeed be able to have sex with their husbands, as society dictates, but they will also be able to return to their *moichoi*. The first complaint that they seek to air in their oath is the lack of access to their *moichoi*, and therefore, a return to the normal state of affairs is not as beneficial to marriage as it would immediately seem, a detail that Aristophanes leaves for further exploration. The women do not swear off adulterous trysts after the war, therefore the oath protects the house from adulterers

⁷⁷ Foley in Revermann 2014: 270; see also Konstan 1995: 46ff; Bowie 1993: 203ff; Croiset 1973: 139ff.

⁷⁸ Foley 1982: 5.

more than the lack of constraint during peacetime does. This subtly adds to the humor of the play, while at the same time allowing Aristophanes to create an anthropological commentary on marital and extramarital relations in ancient Greece.

Although the central focus of the *Lysistrata* is not adultery, there are nevertheless several scenes which allude to adultery and its impacts upon Greek society. The oath, for example, allows Aristophanes to employ several different types of parody and commentary. The women, with Lysistrata at their center, form a collective unit of women whose agency is no longer suppressed, and the language of the oath makes their priorities clear. The seizure of the Acropolis by the older women of Athens allows them to reminisce about their younger days, in which they took place in the festivals for unmarried girls, providing a glimpse of the female importance to Athenian religious life. Many of the scenes describe actions which are contrary to the best interests of the *oikos*, most notably the exchange between Myrrhine and Kinesias. These scenes, many of which implicitly refer to Theseus or some of his famous contributions to Athens, provide an opportunity for Aristophanes to situate these themes within the contemporary Athenian reality. The fact that women are consistently made into spectacles, either by their language or physical attributes, calls their opinions and experiences into focus; especially when the men present another opinion of the same situation.

Aristophanes' use of sensory details would have made his representations of adultery and illicit sexuality seem more immediately present and embodied by the words of the actors onstage. He utilizes these extra details in order to further employ and perpetuate male stereotypes about female activity, thus showing the dangers inherent in trusting the senses. The characters in the plays, by using perfectly reasonable pretexts for

their adulterous actions, would have served to confirm the male-held views about unsupervised female activity.

III. Failed or Parodied Motherhood and Marriage

Along with tactile and sensory and control, Aristophanes shows women neglecting their wifely and maternal duties, which creates yet another layer of subtle social commentary amidst humorous scenes. These instances of neglect or caricature occur in both plays, although it is far more prevalent in the *Thesmophoriazusae*. An implicit reference to Clytemnestra in the *Telephus* forms yet another part of the play that is replete with references to adulteresses and oath-breaking women. The comic part of the parody, however, is that Mika's 'child' turns out to be a full wineskin, reinforcing the stereotype of women as uncontrollable, impulsive creatures who delight in partaking of drink and men.⁷⁹ The wineskin itself, called an *άσκός* by Mnesilochus, draws connections with Theseus, the mythical founder of Athens. Aegeus, Theseus' father, was told by the Delphic oracle that he should not open the wineskin before he arrived back in Athens, but he failed to follow the oracle's edict and thus Theseus was borne to Aethra in Troezen.⁸⁰ The use of the image of the wineskin, then, functions on several different levels; it both reinforces the gender stereotypes traditionally held by men, but also emphasizes the Athenians' pride in their autochthony. Theseus' mythical history is studded with not only conquests against

⁷⁹ This view of women is even satirically espoused by Mnesilochus in the play itself: ὦ θερμόταται γυναῖκες, ὦ ποτίσταται κάκ παντὸς ὑμεῖς μηχανώμεναι πιεῖν, ὦ μέγα καπήλοις ἀγαθόν, ἡμῖν δ' αὖ κακόν, κακὸν δὲ καὶ τοῖς σκευαρίοις καὶ τῇ κρόκη, 735-8.

⁸⁰ ἄσκοῦ με τὸν προύχοντα μὴ λῦσαι πόδα... πρὶν ἂν πατρώϊαν αὐθις ἐστίαν μόλω (Eur. *Med.* 679, 681)

mythical beasts and monsters, but contact with several women who are portrayed as violating their marriages. His associations with Crete and the Minotaur recall the extra-marital lust with which Pasiphaë was inflicted, and his later marriage to Phaedra is fraught with her incestuous and extra-marital desire for Theseus' son, Hippolytus. Another, perhaps lesser-known, aspect of Theseus' mythical history is his abduction of Helen, adulteress *par excellence*, which was likely referred to in the non-extant version of Euripides' *Hippolytus*. Although Theseus' positive contributions to Athens are manifold, his varied and consistent connection with adulteresses allows for another lens through which the scene with Mika and Mnesilochus can be viewed.

Given her fury at Mnesilochus' slander against deceitful women, it is ironic that Aristophanes portrays Mika as one of these devious women, pretending to have a baby just so that she could keep her wineskin close by. What is more interesting to consider, however, that Aristophanes is essentially negating Mika's motherhood by rendering her child – a feature essential to the *oikos* in tragedy and to the civic and domestic spheres historically – an object used for personal, debauched, stereotypically female pleasure. Earlier in the play, the women discuss how they present the children of maids or slaves as their own, essentially creating an heir for their husband where there was none (ἑτέραν δ' ἐγῶδ' ἢ ἴφασκεν ὠδίνειν γυνὴ δέχ' ἡμέρας, ἕως ἐπρίατο παιδίον.; 502-3). Instead of affirming the necessity of women as mothers, Aristophanes parodies his own characters within the frame of the play, subordinating their status as mothers to their need to drink and act audaciously. The negation of motherhood in this scene is accompanied by a suppression or rejection of paternity, which appeared in Chapter 1 when Medea killed Jason's children and refused him access to their bodies. If the aforementioned quote about

substituted children is indicative of the necessity of male virility, then the metamorphosis of a child into a drinking vessel is the embodiment of the fear of impotence. The fact that Mnesilochus actually does 'sacrifice' Mika's 'child' into a mixing bowl, so as to not waste even a drop of the wine, only adds to the overall farce and reinforces traditional stereotypes held by Athenian men.

Mnesilochus' switch to parodying female characters leads him to make use of two Euripidean plays which feature a central female character. Both are considered to end in the successful rescue of these women by their husband, or eventual husband in Andromeda's case. That Mnesilochus is playing the part of the female protagonist in these two parodies necessitates a reversal between gender and costume, thereby giving him a status inferior to that of the female celebrants.⁸¹ The transition from mother and wife, embodied by the figure Helen, back to a virginal state, personified by Andromeda – a common feature of women responding to adultery in tragedy – has already been investigated in modern scholarship.⁸² Aristophanes' parodies of Helen and Andromeda, according to Elizabeth Bobrick, "momentarily reverse the women's relationship to their sacred space from actors to audience, so that even the city's legitimized forms of female separateness and initiative are rewritten and hence controlled."⁸³ The connection of this return to a pre-marital or virginal state with the festival of the Thesmophoria has also been investigated in reference to the presence of potentially anaphrodisiac plants.⁸⁴ There also seems to have been a requirement of chastity, which, when paired with the use of plants that were intended to suppress the libido, suggests what Angeliki Tzanetou terms "a

⁸¹ Zeitlin 1981: 312.

⁸² Tzanetou 2002: 349-50; *et al.*

⁸³ Bobrick in Dobrov 1997: 185.

⁸⁴ Johnston 2013: 375; Tzanetou 2002: 334.

symbolic reversal of women's social status from wives to virgins for the sake of promoting fertility."⁸⁵ This restoration of the virginal or pre-married self, which is treated in Chapter 1, is a common trope in tragedy with women faced with an adulterous spouse.

Euripides' treatment of the myth is completely different than the version found in Homeric epic. In Homer's treatment of Helen, who is the archetypal adulteress of antiquity, her culpability is not made ambiguous, even if her intent to leave Menelaus for Paris is unclear.⁸⁶ Helen is "the mistress of many voices, the mistress of mimesis, linked in both stories to secrecy, disguise, and deception" and is a figure portrayed from several points of view.⁸⁷ Euripides' play, which is a further exploration of the reinvented Helen myth composed by Stesichorus, focuses on the time that Helen spent in Egypt at Proteus' kingdom during the Trojan War. In this version, the Helen that is in Troy is a mere *eidolon*, and therefore this version of the myth attempts to remove Helen's culpability for the Trojan War and locates it in the realm of the gods. Despite her lack of culpability in that realm, there is nevertheless a hint of infidelity even in Euripides' version. Theoclymenus, Proteus' son and successor, wishes to marry Helen, who, by her own account, has remained faithful to Menelaus during her stay in Egypt. She does, however, attempt to exploit Menelaus' absence to her own ends; namely, she tells Theoclymenus that Menelaus is dead and promises to marry him instead.⁸⁸ And although she seemingly does not wish to marry him, she nevertheless promises to do so, and therefore the situation bears striking similarities with that of Paris. Helen, in both instances, is married to Menelaus yet sought

⁸⁵ Tzanetou 2002: 334.

⁸⁶ Priam does not consider her to blame, but Helen's self-referential vocabulary shows she feels some guilt over her circumstances, using epithets such as 'dog-faced', etc.. She blames Aphrodite for her presence in Troy, which can be seen in the scene in which she lambasts Paris for being a coward.

⁸⁷ Zeitlin 1981: 321.

⁸⁸ Blondell 2013: 207.

after by a powerful man. Even in the *Iliad*, she maintains her innocence and redirects the responsibility for the war and her actions by claiming that Aphrodite is to blame, yet emphasizes her disgrace, which also features in her opening speech in Euripides' *Helen*.⁸⁹

In his assumption of Helen's character, Mnesilochus exploits a play which explores the possibility of Helen's innocence. At this point, Mnesilochus reverts back to a female character, and it is at this point that Euripides reappears, having assumed the role of Menelaus. Critylla and the rest of the women, however, are unaware that Euripides is the actor playing the role of Menelaus; she treats him as though he is simply a wandering sailor.⁹⁰ Helen's role as a sought-after paramour of Theoclymenus is an important feature of the three-way dialogue between Mnesilochus (as Helen), Euripides (as Menelaus), and Critylla, a celebrant of the Thesmophoria but who Euripides and Mnesilochus refer to as Theonoe, daughter of Proteus. Her casting by the two men as a third character in the play, and a misinterpreted one at that, intends to further highlight Helen's desire to remain chaste and faithful to her husband, shown by 'her' assertion at 900-901: "οὐ γὰρ γαμοῦμαι σῶ κασιγνήτῳ ποτὲ προδοῦσα Μενέλεων τὸν ἔμὸν ἐν Τροίᾳ πόσιν."⁹¹ Thus her depiction in this parody, as in Euripides' play, is directly opposite to her portrayal in the traditional Homeric version, namely the adulterous, disloyal wife who left home to be with another man.⁹² Her repeated insistence of chastity would have seemed ironic compared to Helen's more traditional depiction, and her situation of being forced (βιάζομαι; 890) into an adulterous union with Theoclymenus seems to parallel her abduction by Paris.

⁸⁹ Eur. *Hel.* 60-67.

⁹⁰ Sommerstein 1994: 214.

⁹¹ "Theonoe's role in Euripides' play was totally different (she was an ally, not an enemy, of Helen and Menelaus)" Sommerstein 1994: *ad loc.*

⁹² Zeitlin 1981: 315.

Furthermore, Menelaus' appearance conspicuously depicts the spurned husband, and even though in this case his marriage remains unsullied, his representation in Euripides' play as a bumbling simpleton and his limited action in the parody renders the whole situation even more farcical. Furthermore, Mnesilochus-Helen treats Euripides-Menelaus as the figure of her husband as he appears in the play, rather than treating him as a *de facto* spouse, further separating tragic action and reality and increasing the metatheatrical effect of the parody.⁹³ The happy reunion of the couple, while successful in the play, does not allow Mnesilochus and Euripides to escape, but rather necessitates a fourth and final tragic parody.

The restoration of maidenhood is vital because of the activities of the married women depicted in the play; and perhaps even mirrors the women at the festival, who become 'virgins' for the duration of the rites due to their vows of chastity and the potential consumption of anaphrodisiac plants. This inversion from mother and wife to virgin is completed by Mnesilochus' final assumption of a Euripidean character – this time, Andromeda. Euripides' fragmentary play seems to follow the traditional mythical narrative, in which Andromeda's mother, Cassiopeia, boasted that her beauty surpassed that of the Nereids, which led to Andromeda being bound to a rock as a sacrifice to the monster, Glaucetes.⁹⁴ As she lay there, chained and exposed, Perseus came upon her and fell in love, promising to slay the monster if Cepheus, Andromeda's father, would promise him her hand in marriage. Perseus fulfilled his end of the bargain, slaying the monster, Glaucetes, and saving the city from the stain placed upon it by Cassiopeia's sacrilegious boasting. According to the mythical narrative, Andromeda had been betrothed (ἐγγυάω) to Phineus,

⁹³ Sommerstein 1994: 215.

⁹⁴ Apoll. *Bibl.* II.iv.3.

Cepheus' brother, but these terms were broken after Perseus dispatched Glaucetes.⁹⁵ The betrothal (ἐγγύη), while an essential step in the marriage process, does not seem to have been binding in and of itself in Athenian law, but constituted the pre-marriage agreement contracted by the bride's father and intended husband.⁹⁶ Euripides' version, however, presents an added twist in the eventual marriage of Perseus and Andromeda; instead of Andromeda's betrothal being broken by Cepheus, it seems as though Andromeda herself ignored her parents' betrothal contract and lived with Perseus, eventually founding the kingdom of Mycenae.⁹⁷ Andromeda's willful defiance of her parents' wishes by rejecting a previously contracted betrothal in order to marry a young hero adds her to the category of empowered women who escaped a marriage to which they had been promised. Her inclusion in this group adds another dimension to her parody in Aristophanes' play, again referencing the woman's active breaking of her promised marriage.

This parody is by far the longest of the four, and includes Euripides, who has assumed the character of Perseus, and an elderly goddess called Echo, a self-described and extremely loquacious mimicker of words (λόγων ἀντῳδὸς ἐπικοκκάστρια; 1059).⁹⁸ The Scythian archer, one of a group of men who enforced the will of the *prytaneis*, makes an appearance at various intervals in the exchange, which allows Aristophanes to switch between the paratragic action and the setting of the play itself.⁹⁹ It is in this part of the play

⁹⁵ Apoll. *Bibl.* II.iv.3.

⁹⁶ Lacey 1968: 105; Pomeroy 1991: 177. According to Walter Lacey, the "betrothal, though obligatory, did not itself make a marriage, since we can attest at least two cases in which a bride was pledged, but no marriage took place." Despite the lack of legal contract, there was great care taken to ensure that the betrothal process was contracted legally, and it therefore stands to reason that these betrothals were generally carried out. (Lacey 1968: 105)

⁹⁷ Collard & Cropp 2008: 124.

⁹⁸ Austin & Olson 2004: *ad loc.*

⁹⁹ Austin & Olson 2004: 292. "There were fifty Prytaneis at any one time and probably three hundred Scythian archers who performed police functions under their direction or that of other public officials." Sommerstein

that we first hear that Mnesilochus has a wife, mentioned both by himself and by Euripides, to whom he wishes to return. There is not only a shift from the marital to virginal state in the second half of the tetralogy, but also within the hybrid character of Andromeda-Mnesilochus. Aristophanes juxtaposes Mnesilochus speaking in his own character, praying that he might be able to go home to his wife, and Mnesilochus acting as Andromeda, a maiden chained to a crag and awaiting murder by a huge monster. The seamless transition from male to female, old age to youth, post- to pre-nuptial status is a feature of tragedy, and is further parodied here. In both of the female parodies Mnesilochus mistakenly employs male case endings, further blurring the boundaries between the tragic play and his reality within the *Thesmophoriazusae*.¹⁰⁰

The physical position of Mnesilochus, who has been bound on a board by the Archer, renders him a physical spectacle, not least because it further mirrors the physical position of Andromeda in the myth. He claims that he assumes the character of Andromeda because he already has the chains (πάντως δέ μοι τὰ δέσμ' ὑπάρχει; 1012-3), and then proceeds to lament her inability to do the things that any normal woman would be able to do; namely, taking part in choral dances and holding a voting-urn.¹⁰¹ Instead, she is enmeshed in bonds (έν πυκνοῖς δεσμοῖσιν έμπεπλεγμένη; 1032), a fact which is repeated by Mnesilochus and Euripides, and mirrors his physical position, bound to a board by the Archer. His disguises, used continuously throughout the play, are not only “produced through costume change and changes in verbal claims (pitch of voice and specific claims of identity), they are also

1994: 216. In this scene, there is a sense of meta-metatheater, since Mnesilochus is taking part in three different levels of performance: that of the Athenian performance context, his performance as a former festival participant, and his performance as Andromeda.

¹⁰⁰ McClure 1999: 234.

¹⁰¹ Eur. Fragm. 122.

effected by alterations in a character's mask, alterations which take place on stage and in full view of the audience."¹⁰² These costume changes, which have been occurring throughout the play, reach their apex when Mnesilochus assumes the character of Andromeda, since he mirrors both her dress and physical pose.

In the *Lysistrata*, Aristophanes parodies the female need for sexual contact; Lysistrata and some of the more dedicated women catch several women trying to escape to their respective homes under false pretenses. The passage begins with a reference to Orsilochus, whose identity is debated by modern commentators' readings of the play and scholia.¹⁰³ A recent article by Mark Janse and Danny Praet, however, claims that Orsilochus was an adulterer both by reputation – they argue that his name would have been recognizable to the audience – and by name, which they claim to be composed of ὄρνυμι and ἄλοχος.¹⁰⁴ Orsilochus, or 'Wife-Stirrer' according to Janse and Praet's analysis, immediately sets the tone for the women's actions; namely, they are trying to sneak off to engage in sexual relations, and not necessarily with their husbands.¹⁰⁵ The excuses used by these women are both domestic in nature and patently sexual in nature: one woman wishes to protect her Milesian wool from moths (οἴκοι γάρ ἐστιν ἔριά μοι Μιλήσια ὑπὸ τῶν σέων κατακοπτόμενα; 729-30), and another insists she must go home and strip her flax (ἀλλὰ νῆ τὴν Φωσφόρον ἔγωγ' ἀποδείρασ' αὐτίκα μάλ' ἀνέρχομαι.; 738-9).¹⁰⁶ These images provide

¹⁰² Dane 1984: 84.

¹⁰³ Sommerstein lists several possibilities for the identity of Orsilochus - a brothel-keeper, an adulterer, or an effeminate man - (1990: 195), while Henderson claims that his name was otherwise unknown, save for a mention in a *scholion* (1987: 165).

¹⁰⁴ Janse and Praet 2012.

¹⁰⁵ Another possibility for the composition of Orsilochus' name is the conflation of ὄρνυμι and λέχος, which would render the translation of his name "Bed-Stirrer". This has similar connotations to "Wife-Stirrer", but means that the connotations of adultery specifically disappear; Orsilochus could have been more of a womanizer of unmarried or widowed women.

¹⁰⁶ Bowie 1993: 199.

a negative counterpart to Lysistrata's wool-weaving metaphor, which itself implies that the sex these women desired was "disguised in the form of household tasks, tasks that were the basis of Lysistrata's political program when combined with sexual abstinence."¹⁰⁷ In a similar vein, a third woman asserts that she needs to leave the Acropolis in order to give birth to her baby (ὦ πότνι' Ἰλείθυ', ἐπίσχεσ τοῦ τόκου ἕως ἂν εἰς ὄσιον μόλω ἄγω χωρίον.; 742-3), which ultimately turns out to be a helmet, an image reminiscent of Mika's wineskin in the *Thesmophoriazusae*. Aristophanes, in employing this familiar representation of female deception, is again neutralizing the motherhood of this woman, which was one of the main values that woman carried in Athenian marriage. He is also, as he was in the *Thesmophoriazusae*, suppressing paternity as well; and although this woman is not named, but simply designated ΓΥΝΗ Γ, it symbolizes a rejection of the paternity that was so prized, and therefore guarded and regulated, in Athenian male thought.

Similarly, the Myrrhine-Kinesias scene in the *Lysistrata* depicts Myrrhine neglecting her procreative duties, which negatively affects the marriage and the propagation of society generally. This image of long-delayed, or even neutralized, gratification is made manifest in the rather lengthy exchange between Myrrhine and her husband, Kinesias, which spans over one hundred lines (845-952). Myrrhine, Kinesias says, has not tended to her maternal and spousal duties for days, and he enters into the action in order to entreat her to have sex with him. Myrrhine's thwarting of his attempts to have sex with her forms the comical center of this exchange, with both husband and wife getting increasingly flustered and sexually aroused. Myrrhine, however, keeps true to her vow and successfully fends off Kinesias' pursuit. The underlying theme of this exchange, then, is the pain that the

¹⁰⁷ Vaio 1973: 376; see also MacDowell 1995: 247.

men feel at their wives' absence – both sexual and physical, since the women are now on the Acropolis. Kinesias describes his sexless predicament as the same as the torture applied to slaves in order to extract evidence from them (ἐπὶ τροχοῦ στρεβλούμενος; 846), and he describes his body as being wracked with spasms and cramps (οἷος ὁ σπασμός μ' ἔχει χῶ τέτανος; 845-6).¹⁰⁸ The double entendre in this section would have rendered the situation more comical to the audience, since ὁ τέτανος has 'erection' as an alternate meaning.¹⁰⁹ The amount of pain Kinesias describes himself to be in is considerable, and probably would have been somewhat relatable to the major part of the audience, who indeed would have been away from home on military campaign – and therefore without sexual contact with their wives – for a large part of the year.

As defined by legal codes and social norms, a woman's primary civic function was to tend to domestic affairs, which included the production and care of offspring. As such, women who would have been considered proper wives would have been prized by men, and the importance of the legitimacy of offspring seems to have generated both legislation as well as social attitudes that attempted to control female activity and mobility in general and maternity more specifically. Aristophanes parodically reinforces stereotypically male fears about female infidelity by showing women shunning their socially dictated duties or neglecting their children.

¹⁰⁸ LSJ *s.v.* II.2.; This torture “involved binding the victim, face upwards, to the rim of a wheel-like apparatus and then pulling his/her limbs downwards with cords: Antiphon 1.c. calls this an especially severe form of torture.” (Henderson 1987: 175).

¹⁰⁹ LSJ *sv* II.

IV. Control of Space and Time

Women are also shown to control space and time, which includes both secular and religious settings and further aids their autonomy in the commission of adultery. In the *Thesmophoriazusae*, much of the dialogue in the play centers on the shameless actions and speech of the women at the festival. The Thesmophoria, because it was a festival open to women only, provided an ideal forum for women to air their grievances or plot machinations against their husbands. These historical strictures on domestic life led to male authors presenting women as indulging in socially unacceptable behavior, even if their depictions are somewhat overstated. Historical studies of the Thesmophoria indicate that the speech of women was indeed uninhibited at this festival, and Aristophanes utilizes this sphere to imagine and portray a setting in which women graphically and candidly admit to the wrongdoings that men imagined them to commit.¹¹⁰ They were protected by ritual custom, and this festival served as a 'safe zone' for women to speak without any fear of detection by the men of the city. The elements of male vs. female speech in Greek drama have been much investigated, but the presence of Mnesilochus as an interloper in a sphere that should have been open only to women allows Aristophanes to blur the lines between male and female discourse.¹¹¹ Since the use of obscenity by women virtually vanishes when it is discovered that men are present, which I explore in the following pages, the overarching domination of speech by men is still present. Nevertheless, the comic setting allows women to use obscenities that would not have been permitted in tragic discourse, but Laura McClure's separation of primary from secondary obscenity illustrates that,

¹¹⁰ Faraone 2011, *et al.*

¹¹¹ McClure 1999: 205ff.

although women use extremely vulgar speech, there is still a body of language to which the poets did not allow them access.¹¹² Mnesilochus, however, has access to this body of language appropriate to men, and this is supported by the fact the woman characterize his speech as different from theirs, even while they are unaware that he is male.

Although the complicated and fluid possibilities of discourse employed in comedy allows for a more nuanced expression of adultery, Aristophanes employs many of the same metaphors and motifs that are employed in tragedy. The ritual component of adultery is far more conspicuous in the *Thesmophoriazusae*, providing as it does the backdrop of the entire play. The ritual action of the festival itself is not exposed, which is in keeping with ritual custom, despite the mockery made of the women in the play.¹¹³ Using the Thesmophoria as the setting of the play allows for a shift of agency from the male sphere, typically located in the law courts, assemblies, and other public positions, to the female sphere. Aristophanes parodies elements of the *ekklēsia*, the law courts, and even the *symposia* as he depicts the gathering of the women at their exclusively female festival. By transposing the agency traditionally held by men onto the female sphere, Aristophanes gives these women a similar level of control in their own sphere, which has been characterized essentially as a female *demos*.¹¹⁴ Even though the women have total control over their own sphere while men are absent, they do not exhibit a desire to take over the male sphere; rather, they are most concerned with stopping the male interference in the

¹¹² McClure 1999: 210.

¹¹³ Tzanetou 2002: 335. According to Christopher Faraone and other scholars, the bulk of the ritual action seems to have been located in the first and third days of the festival. Therefore, the only breaking of religious law is the presence of men in the audience and at the festival (Mnesilochus, Cleisthenes, *et al.*).

¹¹⁴ Tzanetou 2002: 335-6.

oikos.¹¹⁵ As such, the Thesmophoria allows for female agency, albeit a carefully controlled and limited one, and limits male presence, and therefore male agency, inside this female sphere. In the *Thesmophoriazusae*, female agency manifests itself most clearly through uninhibited female speech. If the unhindered activities of women remain unspoken, it is almost as though they have not happened; while at the same time, the only place in which they can be freely expressed is a female-only religious context. The female characters within the play are aware of this, citing the festival as a place where there is free speech (οὔσης παρρησίας; 540-1). *Parrhēsia* is the equal right to speech, and was considered one of the hallmarks of Athenian democracy.¹¹⁶ The Thesmophoria is a space which allows for the expression of female agency and the partial suppression of male agency and speech.

The female participants perceive their speech to be uninhibited at the beginning of the festival, an idea ironically echoed by Mnesilochus (ὅμως δ' ἐν ἀλλήλαισι χρῆ δοῦναι λόγον· αὐταὶ γάρ ἐσμεν, κούδεμί' ἔκφορος λόγου; 471-2). The fact that these women are only able to speak when they are alone (αὐταὶ), shows that their agency and expression are directly controlled by their religious context. As alluded to above, the amount of obscenity and vulgar speech, i.e., that which deviates from the cultural norm, that exists when they believe that they are alone is considerable. This licentious expression, however, greatly diminishes when they perceive that they are in the company of men.¹¹⁷ This is best demonstrated by the choral songs that take place throughout the play, since they are obscene and audacious when no men are present, but as soon as men are in attendance, the songs become more pious and ritually appropriate. The first choral song (355-367) focuses

¹¹⁵ Tzanetou 2002: 336.

¹¹⁶ LSJ s.v. A. See also Sluiter and Rosen 2004.

¹¹⁷ McClure 1999: 210.

on the necessity of women to protect their wrongdoings from men and any women who might wish to do them harm by telling their secrets. By the end of the play, the choral song (1137-1159) takes the form of an invocation to several goddesses, which is far more ritually appropriate. This shift from unfettered to more restrained speech is indicative not only of female discourse in tragedy, but also of the diminished agency available to women outside of a religious context.

Such situational conspicuousness leads to Mnesilochus standing in front of the assembly of women, wearing a *stephanos*, which renders him even more of a spectacle. This crown, which is never named as such in the play, but is described as something that will physically demarcate, and therefore separate, the speaker from the rest of the women in the festival (περίθου νυν τόνδε πρῶτον πρὶν λέγειν; 380). Aristophanes does, however, make use of this same type of crown in the *Ecclesiazusae*, where it is explicitly called a *stephanos*.¹¹⁸ These garlands also appeared in sympotic contexts, indicating that they had sanctioned roles in the male-dominated civic sphere.¹¹⁹ Therefore, there is a social and political import that is attached to this crown, and its inclusion in the all-female assembly further strengthens the image of the scene of the female *ekklēsia*.¹²⁰ Each person who speaks is further rendered a spectacle by this crown that visually differentiates the speaker from the rest of the crowd. This crown, along with Mnesilochus' contradictory, pro-Euripidean speech, all the more renders Mnesilochus a spectacle, as well as a 'hidden spectacle' due to his still-hidden masculinity.

¹¹⁸ Arist. *Eccles.* 131.

¹¹⁹ Edmonds 2011: 276.

¹²⁰ Bobrick in Dobrov 1997: 182-3.

The representation of Mnesilochus as a spectacle corresponds with the setting of the Thesmophoria as a spatially and temporally controlled setting in which female speech is unable to be inhibited and controlled by the men of Athens. The stage is set directly after Mnesilochus assumes female garb; it is at this point that the audience is told that the action of the play will take place on the second day of the festival. The import of the specifically expressed timing is that on the second day, the women had the most leisure time of any of the festival days (ἢ μάλισθ' ἡμῖν σχολή; 377) because on this day, there seems to have been a lapse in ritually prescribed activities, rendering the day one of mourning and fasting.¹²¹ As such, it is the most logical day for the women to hold the trial of Euripides, since the historical focus of this day seems to have been “adjudication and conflict resolution, both among the women themselves, but also regarding men who could not be present at the festival.”¹²² The emphasis on an excess of spare time, which mirrors the timeframe of an actual court case, thus allows the action of the play to be controlled by the constraints of female ritual. Furthermore, Mika, one of the first speakers, says that she has been waiting for a long time (πολὺν ἤδη χρόνον; 385) to air her grievances about the women’s newly worsened home situation. Mika illustrates the female control of time; more specifically, she showcases her ability to bide her time until she and the other women might be in a position to control Euripides’ fate.

Within this carefully controlled, exclusively female sphere, Aristophanes also presents the situation as rendering the specific time of life of the female participants null and void. This is in direct contrast of the women’s inability to control time, as it affects them, outside the bounds of the festival. The space gives the impression that there is

¹²¹ Sommerstein 1994: *ad loc*; Faraone 2011: 42.

¹²² Faraone 2011: 37.

homogeneity of age amongst the female participants of the festival, and this is supported by the fact that every woman is called *gunē*, which is logical given the attendance requirements for the women at the festival.¹²³ None of the women are presented as older than each other; rather the focus seems to be upon the fact that all of these women are married and have kids; beyond that, age is irrelevant. Since the purpose of women in a marriage was to bear children, these women are portrayed as being part of a group of citizen wives who have fulfilled their minimum duty as a wife. The scene which Mnesilochus recounts before he is discovered to be an intruder recalls the actions which she perpetrated only three days after her marriage to her husband (ὄτε νύμφη μὲν ἦν τρεῖς ἡμέρας; 478), emphasizing the fact that even young women could be crafty and merciless when it came to marital fidelity. Because he was grey-haired as a man, Mnesilochus' female persona likely appears much older than a recently-married maiden. Nevertheless, he is presenting information that, if taken as a truthful account from a true character, would have happened decades before as though it is real and viable proof of female action. When the women question her about her age, she wavers between being a mother nine times (κάπειτ' ἀποδύσεται ἑννέα παίδων μητέρα; 637) and not ever (πώποτε; 641), but each of these give the impression of someone of significantly greater age than a woman who has been married for only three days.¹²⁴ The idea that any woman, at any age, was capable of committing adultery is one expressed throughout the play by placing faithless and *oikos*-destroying action in both pre-married maidens and those who had been long married.

¹²³ Only married women could participate, and it seems likely that most of the participants would have borne a child by this point in their lives. (Johnston 2013: 375).

¹²⁴ When the story happened, Mnesilochus' character would have been in her teens, which stands in stark relief to her advanced years at the festival.

Much of the pre-parody dialogue in the play centers on adultery or attempted or desired infidelity. The women in the play function as an implicitly threatening collective, and it is assumed that the women share experiences and desires, and their newly monitored domestic existence has brought them to an impasse. While they are describing their daily activities, there is a sense that their age is insignificant; since they are all women operating under the same circumstances, their experiences are communal. The stories which they tell to their fellow celebrants share tendencies for physicality and tactility, and often focus on sensory details or descriptions. The inclusion of Mnesilochus in this group of women allows Aristophanes to give a voice to the male impression of female activity; though Mnesilochus also employs a multitude of sensory features and a similar disregard for accurately representing age and time. By allowing both genders to speak about the subject, Aristophanes is able to present adultery as it was viewed by both parties.

As in the *Thesmophoriazusae*, measures of time and space within the *Lysistrata* are emphasized and compressed, and at times even shown to be unrealistic. In certain situations, the treatment of these features is certainly for comic effect or crafted in the name of dramatic feasibility. In essence, however, the women of Athens, Sparta, and Boiotia have created their own distinct, albeit temporary, space in which their own agency shows itself to be more powerful than that of the men. Within this space, much of the female activity is either overtly religious or has connection to ritual action or religious space. The play begins with Lysistrata, standing alone in Athens and seemingly unrestricted by domestic restraints, awaiting the arrival of her comrades, all of whom are late to the

meeting that Lysistrata had called.¹²⁵ Because she is standing by herself, unsupervised and seemingly unaccompanied by a slave or other household overseer, Aristophanes makes her a spectacle. This is further borne out by her purpose; namely, she wishes to put an end to the Peloponnesian War despite her status as a woman with no authority. She differentiates herself from the other Greek women, citing their willingness to engage in the more stereotypical female behaviors, behaviors from which Lysistrata holds herself aloof, and their unwillingness to meet to discuss their current plight (εἰρημένον δ' αὐταῖς ἀπαντᾶν ἐνθάδε βουλευσομέναισιν οὐ περὶ φαύλου πράγματος, εὔδουσι κούχ ἤκουσιν; 13-15).¹²⁶ This meeting, as it was not a prescribed occasion for religious assembly, seems to have been a transgression of normal female activity, both religious and secular.¹²⁷ Female importance in religious and ritual action in Athens has been the subject of much inquiry in recent scholarship, and although this meeting is not one of these sanctioned religious occasions, its purpose is nevertheless beneficial to the *polis*.¹²⁸ Lysistrata is, therefore, reappropriating traditionally secular space for a meeting with a religious frame; namely, the parodic oath she insists her comrades swear.

This appropriation of a small portion of Athenian secular space is mirrored by the much larger seizure of the Acropolis by Lysistrata and her companions. The Acropolis, by this point in Athenian history, was largely a ritual space; however, as the site of the Athenian public treasury in times of war, its importance to the Athenian men, at least, would have been mostly civic. In the play, therefore, it serves a dual role – as both the site of the military coffers and a religious setting – but both of these roles are

¹²⁵ Konstan 1995: 59.

¹²⁶ Henderson 1987: 66; Konstan 1995: 59.

¹²⁷ Bowie 1993: 182.

¹²⁸ See especially Suter 2008; Connelly 2007; Dillon 2002; Pomeroy 1995; *et al.*

uncharacteristically controlled by the women. Several scholars have shown that Aristophanes depicts Lysistrata in the mold of a priestess of Athena Polias, further strengthening the ritual connections of the women's plan to the Acropolis.¹²⁹ From the beginning of the play, therefore, Aristophanes casts her as a character who is respected, listened to, and more importantly, easily recognizable to the other female characters in the play; similarly, the priestess of Athena Polias would have been respected by other women because she held the highest office, religious or otherwise, available to a woman in Athens.¹³⁰ The association of Lysistrata to the most venerable priestess in Athens conjures other links between the Athenian women and Athena. Most important is the connection of ritual action and tactile activity, embodied in the image of the weaving of the *peplos* for the statue of Athena. The seizure of ritual and secular space in Athens allowed the women to utilize their newfound power over the Athenian men, and the Acropolis especially allowed for more potent employment of female agency.

Along with this appropriation of space is the compression and manipulation of time by the group of Greek women in Athens. The women for whom Lysistrata is impatiently waiting, for example, are said to have left their own *poleis* in the early hours of the morning (ἀλλ' ἐκεῖναί γ' οἶδ' ὅτι ἐπὶ τῶν κελήτων διαβεβήκασ' ὄρθρῃαι; 59-60) in order to attend a meeting which is taking place that same morning.¹³¹ When considered geographically, this trip would have taken the better part of the day for the closer travelers in Corinth and

¹²⁹ See especially MacDowell 1995: Ch. 10. According to Foley, Lysistrata may have been modeled after a historical priestess named Lysimache, who was the priestess of Athena Polias when the play was produced. (Foley in Revermann 2014: 270.) Their names have similar meanings – 'Looser of Armies' – and as such, Aristophanes may have wanted the audience to call Lysimache to mind when considering Lysistrata's character.

¹³⁰ MacDowell 1995: 241.

¹³¹ Lysistrata claims that the women are not present at their assembly because they are sleeping (εὐδουσι; 14).

Boiotia.¹³² For Lampito, who is described as having traveled to and from Sparta twice within the course of the play, the one-way trip to Athens would have taken at least a day. While this is typically dismissed as a dramatic necessity, this compression of female activity solidifies the sense of unity and solidarity between the women. In their own dramatic reality, they do not have to travel far to call a meeting which will ultimately benefit all of the women and their respective *poleis*. Here, the lines between *poleis* are blurred in the sphere of female activity, even while they are solidly in place in the male military sphere. Once the other Greek delegations have arrived in Athens, Lysistrata reveals that she feels the situation in which the women now find themselves has been untenable for some time, citing hypothetical discussions in which she attempts to learn about the workings of the polis from her husbands, attempts which are unequivocally rebuked.¹³³ Even though historically, the war would have been going on for nearly twenty years at this point, Lysistrata has nevertheless waited until this specific point in time – a point at which all of the major players have come together – to stage this short-lived assault on the male constituents of the military and domestic spheres. The women, both Athenian and non-Athenian, have suffered “years of silence and self-control” and have decided to act in order to reestablish the status quo in their respective *poleis*.¹³⁴

The men of Athens are clearly aware of the potential for female infidelity, and indeed, they even locate a portion of the blame in their own actions due to their long and repeated absences from their wives and homes. A speech, given by the *proboulos*, details how the men of Athens invite craftsmen, in this case a shoemaker and a goldsmith, into

¹³² These calculations were made according to my rough estimates using Google Maps – driving vs. walking time – and my personal experience of Greek geographical and spatial relations.

¹³³ E.g. *Lys.* 507-516.

¹³⁴ Foley 1982: 8.

their homes unsupervised in order to fix some part of their wives' *toilette*. The shoemaker and goldsmith are stock characters that serve as cuckolds, and the husbands' invitation of these craftsmen into their homes is sheer complacency by the husbands.¹³⁵ The language used in this section is filled with obscenity and double entendre, with the overall implication being that the ambiguous language used by the husbands of Athens is giving them implicit permission to engage in sexual relations with their wives. The most important part of this speech is that the man in this hypothetical dialogue claims that he is away from home because he is needed in Salamis (έμοί μέν οὔν ἔστ' εἰς Σαλαμίνα πλευστέα; 411). It is interesting, then, that Aristophanes provides two perspectives on the same reality – that of the men's absence from the city and the women's experiences during this absence. The women have already communicated their feelings about the situation in which they find themselves: they miss the physical pleasure afforded by having their husbands at home during the year. The men, on the other hand, do not mention the lack of sexual relations with their wives until Kinesias' exchange with Myrrhine later in the play. Instead, their concern with providing unsupervised access to their wives while they are on military duty manifests itself as an obsession.

The ability of these men to get to Salamis on short notice is possible, given its relatively short distance to Athens. However, the situation which the *proboulos* posits is nevertheless unrealistic. At the beginning of the play, the women share their individual experiences as they commiserate with each other about the length of their husbands' absences and the brevity of their appearances back at home. The women explain that their husbands and lovers are gone, fighting in various places in Greece for months at a time;

¹³⁵ Henderson 1987: 121; see also Sommerstein 1990: 174.

Kalonikē's husband has been in Thrace for the last five months (ὁ γοῦν ἐμὸς ἀνὴρ πέντε μῆνας, ὧ τάλαν, ἄπεστιν ἐπὶ Θράκης φυλάττων Εὐκράτη; 102-3), Myrrhine's husband has been in Pylos for the last seven months (ὁ δ' ἐμὸς γε τελέους ἑπτὰ μῆνας ἐν Πύλῳ; 104), and Lampito's husband is home rarely, but when he does come home, he leaves immediately after (ὁ δ' ἐμὸς γὰρ καὶ κ' ἐκ τᾶς ταγᾶς ἔλση ποκά, πορπακισάμενος φροῦδος ἀμπτάμενος ἔβα; 105-6).¹³⁶ Even though these women are communicating their own experiences, it is likely that the rest of the Greek women would be having similar experiences. Therefore, their husbands would have been gone for months at a time – without the benefit of modern transportation, these voyages would have been very long – and the issues cited by the *proboulos*, namely, a broken sandal strap or piece of jewelry, would likely have been infinitesimal and of virtual unimportance to the men. The *proboulos'* examples, then, are stereotypical exaggerations of the current situation in the *oikoi* of Athens, but they nevertheless disclose the anxiety held by the men regarding illicit access to their wives.

The contraction of time in the play is not only connected to spatial relations, but also manifests itself in the compression of the lives of the old women. Aristophanes employs this same type of compression in the *Thesmophoriazusae* by depicting the women at the festival as an ageless constituency. Lysistrata has deployed the oldest women (αἱ πρεσβύταται; 177) to seize the Acropolis, and these women are sent presumably because they are no longer sexually attractive and their participation in the sex strike is therefore unnecessary. That the old women are able to gain access to the Acropolis under pretense of

¹³⁶ The lines of Myrrhine and Kalonikē are switched in the Sommerstein version and the OCT. This is a minor point, since the overall import of this passage is unchanged- the husbands of all the Greek women present have been gone for months at a time.

ritual action may also a compression of their age, and a reimagining of their younger selves by the old men. According to Bowie, old women were not participants in civic sacrifice, but Henderson claims that the designation *πρεσβύτατη* may have “included both active priestesses and priestly personnel and those who had retired, that is, those whose positions were not hereditary.”¹³⁷ In either case, the old women’s ritual access to the Acropolis evokes a memory of their younger selves, as they used to be involved in public ritual, and an image of their younger counterparts who are making the oath in the secular space of Athens.

These old women, who are by this point in the play barricading the men from entry to the Acropolis, detail their religious contributions to the city in a choral song at 638-646. Their involvement in ritual spans their pre-married life, from the time they could have been chosen to take part in the *Arrephoria* festival to the time they could have been selected as basket-bearers (*κανηφορέω*; 646), which took place when the girls were of marriageable age.¹³⁸ I have already discussed the importance of women in ritual in Chapter 1 and above in Chapter 2, but in this part of the choral song, the women detail their ritual and maternal importance to the *polis*.¹³⁹ The women would have held these religious stations probably thirty or forty years before the time of the play, when they were still young maidens. Nevertheless, they use this religious involvement, the details of which are obscure to modern readers, to associate themselves with Athenian ritual and religious tradition.¹⁴⁰ Some of these festivals are generally considered to have been exclusive to

¹³⁷ Bowie 1993: 1990; Henderson 1987: 89.

¹³⁸ Henderson 1987: *ad loc.* Henderson further adds that the girls who were chosen would have been members of distinguished families, both the *Kanephoroi* and likely the other main religious stations.

¹³⁹ Henderson 1987: *ad loc.*

¹⁴⁰ MacDowell 1995: 240.

women, but others would have allowed for a reasonable amount of visibility of the girls taking part in them. For example, involvement in the Panathenaic procession was one of the most prestigious positions for Athenian girls, and would have allowed the girls to be made into spectacles of virtue and nobility. The female contribution to the war effort by giving birth to soldiers is also referenced several times throughout the play. The older women, by referencing their 'glory days' as ritual participants and their younger selves while of childbearing age, are alluding to a common feature of tragedy – the return to the pre-married, virginal self. All major stages of female life are represented in the play, with the focus being placed on the married women because of the threat posed to the Athenian status quo due to the absence of the Athenian soldiers.

The control of space and time allotted to the women by Aristophanes allows the women to form a unified collective, sanctioned in the confines of the Thesmophoria and unauthorized in the case of the *Lysistrata*. These groups of women, who have seized control in a manner presented as dangerous to society, utilize their setting to share stories of their illicit activities with each other. Their control over time specifically allows for the contraction of the female life to the two important phases – virginal and married.

V. Conclusion

The Euripidean tragedies used by Aristophanes as fodder for his parodic invention are, on the surface, employed in order to try to facilitate Mnesilochus' escape from the

enraged women of Athens. These parodies, which focus on a specific character or action within the tragedy, can be better understood by an investigation of the mythical narrative in which they are situated. They illustrate the themes and motifs that seem to accompany women whose circumstances involve adultery, and they also seem to be independent of genre. The *Telephus* and *Palamedes* show how instances of male tactility are either positive or failed, but not destructive; when read alongside the destructive or negative instances of female tactility in tragedy and comedy, it provides a more nuanced picture of the male view of female agency. The *Helen* and *Andromeda* both involve adulteresses or intended adulteries, and the themes of spectacle and physicality are emphasized alongside these plays.

The women in these two Aristophanic comedies are portrayed as the overly aggressive perpetrators of adulterous unions. Because of the overall subordination of women by civic law, one of the most destructive activities that women could engage in was extramarital sexual relations. According to a Byzantine essay, *de Comoedia*, "Old Comedy had a social and political function in the city, in that it called bad individual behavior to public attention in order to censure it".¹⁴¹ In the two plays that feature in this section, it seems as though Aristophanes wishes to call to attention the male preoccupation with the female body and sexuality, parodying it to illuminate the existing social order in Athens. In the *Thesmophoriazusae*, the subversive activity is mainly located in the appropriation of male discourse in a festival context and the discussion of the extramarital activities which the women have engaged in. While these activities are largely related by men, and are therefore projecting a male point of view about female activity, they nevertheless show that

¹⁴¹ Olson in Dobrov 2010: 41.

the women are dangerous when they lack male supervision. The *Lysistrata* showcases two different types of female behavior, one which is cast as the norm, i.e., the taking of lovers, and the other is temporary, i.e., the refusal of women to have sexual contact of any kind with their husbands. In taking part in the latter, they are refusing to support normative marital behavior, which includes the procreation of children. The women, as depicted in both plays, are parodically represented as being unable to engage in behavior that is socially acceptable from a male perspective. Their bodies are sexualized and graphically depicted, in certain instances, and used by the male characters in the play to implicitly reinforce the existing social norms. They are displayed as though they are acting in a subversive manner, both in the appropriated, controlled spaces which they inhabit in the play, and in the historical framework that provides a backdrop to the plays.

3

ADULTERY IN RHETORIC AND LAW

I. Introduction

The laws regarding adultery are found in the legal-oratorical sources, and therefore, scholarship has largely focused on untangling the evidence and recreating the statutes and their penalties. The set of laws as it remains is fragmentary, and as such does not convey an explicit legal definition of what adultery, or μοιχεία, entailed. There are, however, other pieces of information that help to give a fuller picture of what *moicheia* meant to the Greeks, since there does not seem to have been an all-encompassing piece of legislation that covered all aspects of adultery.¹ An important facet of adultery was that any citizen, not only the affected parties, could initiate proceedings against an alleged adulterer.² Adultery also fell under the law of justifiable homicide; namely, a husband who caught another man *in flagrante delicto* with his wife could legally put the adulterer to death.³ This part of the law was thought to date back to the days of Draco, or potentially Solon; however, the murder of a *moichos* does not seem to have been the standard course of action even though it was legally allowed.⁴ There were less punitive, and thereby likely more common, alternatives, which included ransom, abuse, and turning the adulterer in to

¹ Kapparis 1995: 97.

² Cohen 1991a: 115. It is interesting to consider whether or not a male defendant was necessary for prosecution, or if a woman could hide the identity of her lover and remain unpunished.

³ Cohen 1991a: 100.

⁴ Kapparis 1995: 110, Carey 1997: 2. Aeschines (1.183) claims that these adultery laws date back to Solon.

the appropriate authorities.⁵ It was also perceived as an assault to a husband's honor, which may have meant that many instances of adultery remained unreported and are therefore suppressed from the literary and historical records.⁶ References to the more extreme reactions and punishments – to both ancient and modern sensibilities – emerge from the rhetorical presentations of adulterous scenes. In this section, I first explore how these scenes are staged as representative cases of legal action while they remain paradigmatic moments of male status within the *polis*. Furthermore, I explore what this ritual setting adds to the narrative and analyze how these adultery narratives utilize and represent the ritual frame within which they are staged.

The remainder of the legal remains delineates the punishments that had to be meted out to the adulteress. It is worth noting, however, that the concept of an adulteress – in the sense that a woman was the active party in the adulterous union – is not explicitly expressed within the extant legal *corpus*. Nevertheless, the punishments for a woman caught in adultery include immediate divorce, disbarment from participation in public religious activity, and banning them from adornment (κοσμεῖσθαι).⁷ Despite this oratorical evidence, Cristiana Franco claims that “a husband's treatment of his seduced wife is a private matter, something that the law has no concern for.”⁸ However, the inclusion of these laws, both in the legal collection and in the court cases, shows how the female body was conceived of by the *polis* and its lawmakers, and gives insight into what controlling the female body might have entailed. The existence of these laws reflects how significant purity

⁵ Cohen 1991a: 117. The option to ransom the adulterer seems to have been exploited by some husbands who “sought to derive financial benefit from their wives' illicit sexual activity.” (Cohen 1991a: 130).

⁶ Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1373a; Cohen 1991a: 129.

⁷ Aeschines 1.183; Apollodorus 59.85-86.

⁸ Franco 2014: 104.

was to lawmakers, and this is showcased in the seriousness of these penalties. Finally, there most likely exists an evolving stance towards adultery; it may have gradually transformed from a private matter, as suggested by Franco, into a civic concern.

With respect to the punishments themselves, the female body is presented as a spectacle; at the same time, certain women could have been conspicuous in their *absence* from certain festival and ritual activities. Anthropological theories of absence claim that it is, in most cases, a male-initiated phenomenon constructed with a view to “social oppression and moral control,” although only men are able to define and establish it.⁹ This female absence is directly related to social and ritual conspicuousness, discussed especially in chapter 2, which I showed to be fashioned by male authors as potentially dangerous, especially given the male-propagated presentation of the connections between female visibility and sexuality. Literary *exempla* provide possible explanations for this; Iole, for example, has been treated in the previous pages as a statuesque figure presented as lacking interiority, yet still conspicuous in her silence and lack of action. If a woman, then, is represented as only having an exterior, and lacking the capacity for independent thought, her husband or *kyrios* need not concern himself with her capacity to act contrary to his wishes. The *Thesmophoriazusae*, for example, shows how men framed the potential issues with women who they believed to entertain these ‘dangerous’ thoughts, and therefore these dramatic figures were intended to serve as negative *exempla* to their historical counterparts. By controlling their own conspicuousness, whether by being visible or absent or by controlling their appearance, women were able to seize control within their own confines by acting contrary to male expectation. More specifically, their self-presentation as

⁹ Baum 2003: 19-20.

a spectacle, or not, made them conspicuous as it allowed them to construct their own activity or passivity.

A close picture of female participation in domestic and ritual space is presented in Lysias' first speech, which features a situation of adultery closely aligned with legal remains; namely, one in which the role of the *kyrios* is filled by the adulteress' husband. This oration, called *On the Murder of Eratosthenes* and dating to sometime in the early 4th century, is one of the main oratorical sources for adultery and domestic life.¹⁰ This speech is short, simply-written, and relatively straightforward, which has led scholarly opinion to classify it as a rhetorical exercise, rather than a *de facto* courtroom speech, used to exhibit Lysias' skill in logography.¹¹ The lack of biographical and practical information in the speech supports this claim; however, the speech would have had to be convincing and historically plausible in order to impressively display Lysias' technique. A main feature of Lysias' craft is his characterization of Euphiletus, which showcases his artistry in *ethopoiia* by creating a convincing character. In this case, he constructs Euphiletus as a simple man who appears to be incapable of ensnaring Eratosthenes in a detailed trap.¹² Certain inconsistencies in his character do exist, however, since by killing Eratosthenes, rather than taking ransom for example, he casts Euphiletus as a civic official carrying out an execution in the name of civic justice.¹³ This persona does not harmonize with Lysias' earlier depiction of Euphiletus as a simple, straightforward citizen. Also interesting is that Euphiletus' wife remains unnamed throughout the speech, given that she is one of the key players in the adultery. Citizen women remaining unnamed in oratory is expected of a

¹⁰ Carey 1997: 27.

¹¹ Porter 2007: 82.

¹² Carey 1992: 10; Porter 2007: 61.

¹³ Herman 1993: 408-9.

woman of good reputation – see Neaera and her daughter as examples of the opposite – but as an alleged adulteress and soon-to-be-divorced woman, it is striking that Euphiletus kept her identity anonymous.¹⁴ By choosing not to assault his wife’s character, it serves to further highlight that this speech depicts an idealized version of marriage, albeit one which has deteriorated in a way that is portrayed as ultimately threatening the legitimacy of the institution.

Pseudo-Demosthenes 59, on the other hand, is universally considered to be a real speech delivered in a courtroom, an assessment borne out by its length and depth of descriptive detail. According to Christopher Carey, it is two separate speeches delivered by two different men in the middle of the 4th century B.C.E.; the bulk of the speech, comprised of §§16-126, were delivered by Apollodorus, while the first part, §§1-15, was delivered by Apollodorus’ kinsman, Theomnestus.¹⁵ It is generally agreed that the speech was written by Apollodorus (therefore I will characterize it as such in the following pages), who was embroiled in a bitter, litigious dispute with Stephanus.¹⁶ Given the contentious relationship between the two men, one might expect Stephanus to be the target; instead, he charges an aging, non-Athenian former prostitute named Neaera. The pretext is that the two were unlawfully living as married citizens, which is likely a pretense, given that the couple’s living situation had ostensibly been in place for several years.¹⁷ The main issue of the oration, therefore, is citizenship and the legal and social repercussions of passing someone

¹⁴ Schaps 1977.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* Hereafter, I refer to the speech as Apollodorus 59; as Carey states in his introduction, Apollodorus deserves proper billing as the author after all these centuries. (Carey 1992: intro.) For the date, see Murray 1939: 349.

¹⁶ Carey 1992: 1-2, *et al.*

¹⁷ Noy 2009: 404 discusses Phano’s age, which would have been in the teens; definitely old enough to be presented as an Athenian citizen.

off as an Athenian citizen. Even so, this speech is useful to this study because it outlines the exploits of Phano, who is Neaera's daughter, according to Apollodorus, or Stephanus' daughter, as stated by Stephanus.¹⁸ Phano, whose parentage, and by extension civic status, is under contention, is accused of adulterous activity on at least two occasions, a charge only applicable to citizens.¹⁹ The speech is complex and even somewhat contradictory in certain respects, but it is useful in that the references to adultery are again inscribed by ritual space and activity.

Both of these works provide a unique insight into domesticity and family life in 4th century Athens. As such, women feature prominently in both narratives, although such depictions of family dynamics are stylized and focus upon certain aspects of domestic life according to the author's agenda. On the surface, the rhetorical treatises present marriage as it is legally defined; Lysias 1 depicts, at least initially, a picture of a congenial marriage and the means by which it could be destroyed, while Apollodorus 59 shows a pseudo-marriage between Stephanus and Neaera and the unsanctioned marriages of Phano, both with Phrastor and Theogenes.

a. Theory

The traditional interpretation of *moicheia* holds that it is only possible in a marriage. The way that the adultery law is organized, however, showcases the fact that adultery is

¹⁸ Noy 2009. Noy further argues that it is possible that Stephanus indeed had a daughter who may have died, thus making it possible for Neaera's daughter, previously called Strybele, to take her identity, and thereby become a legitimate Athenian citizen. There were no declarations about female identity until marriage, so this is a compelling conclusion.

¹⁹ Vrellis 2004: 465.

rather an act of sexual *hubris*, aimed at destroying the *philia* of an *oikos*.²⁰ This is supported by the previously noted punishments, which included the debarment of women from civic – and thereby ritual – participation and the expectation that a man divorce a wife taken in adultery.²¹ Some scholars, however, contend that *moicheia* should be translated as something closer to ‘seduction’ as opposed to adultery in the conventional sense, as I stated in the introduction. The original argument comes from Ugo Enrico Paoli, who claims that *moicheia* could also be applied to unmarried women, since the insult was directed against her *kyrios*, a role not only limited to husbands.²² For an unmarried woman, her *kyrios* would have been her father or other close male relation, while that of a married woman would have been her husband.²³ David Cohen disagrees, claiming that seduction and adultery were two separate concepts with the same punishment.²⁴ It does not, however, seem necessary that they be legally differentiated. The importance of chastity and fidelity in women overall is presented in such a way that it is reasonable that *any* seduction would be considered destructive and therefore punishable by the man in charge of the ‘corrupted’ woman. Apollodorus 59.64-5 is perhaps the best attestation of this because Phano was taken in adultery while unmarried and vengeance was sought by her *kyrios*, Stephanus, who is in this case ostensibly her father. According to Lin Foxhall, women could – and did –

²⁰ Cohen 1991b: 172ff. Cohen elaborates more on the hubristic nature of adultery, claiming that it was the women who were the victims of *hubris* stained the honor “which it is their duty to embody, the men’s duty to guard.” (1991b: 176; see also Cohen 1995: Ch. 7). According to MacDowell, the Spartan concept of adultery was much more ambiguous, but likely closer to general ‘seduction’ rather than the more specific ‘adultery’ because “it covered wrongful intercourse with either an unmarried or a married woman.” (MacDowell 1986: 87). Notably, in Willett’s discussion of the law code of Gortyn, “rape, seduction and adultery are all treated in the Code as offenses of the same category, not viewed as criminal and public wrongs but as matters calling for private monetary compensation.” (Willett 1967: 28). This stands in sharp contrast to adultery’s depiction in Athenian law, since it was believed to affect the *polis* as it did the *oikos*.

²¹ Lacey 1968: 115.

²² Paoli 1950: 126.

²³ Canevaro 2013: 195; Kapparis 1999: 297.

²⁴ Cohen 1991a: 104-8.

have more than one *kyrios*, which provides further support for the assumption that *moicheia* could be more broadly interpreted than its traditional definition, since any *kyrios* could have legitimately punished a *moichos* for what he considered to be unsanctioned contact.²⁵ I will investigate this passage more closely in the following pages, but the Phano episode described above supports Paoli's claim that *moicheia* could be applied to unmarried citizen women as well as married.

The control of the domestic and ritual spheres, which were analogous to each other in many respects because they were arenas in which women could work to find agency and expression, was tantamount to controlling the maternal and reproductive capacities of women.²⁶ The similarities between domestic and ritual activity in the ancient world has been noted by Joan Breton Connelly, who argues that the care of a temple required many of the same things as did care of the domestic space; namely, weaving, cooking, cleaning, washing, decorating, *inter alia*.²⁷ Contemporary sociological theory explores gendered space, both physical and socio-cultural, as a mechanism of male social control. Space has traditionally been imagined as being separated into two spheres: the public, male-dominated realm, and the private domain, which was primarily overseen by women. Contemporary thinking rejects this dichotomy as an oversimplification, and that women had more access to the public realm than originally supposed.²⁸ These conceptual spaces are "central both to masculinist power and to feminist resistance," but they are constantly

²⁵ Foxhall 1996: 150. She gives the example of Demosthenes' mother, who played her *kyrioi* against one another in order to gain her own ends.

²⁶ For more on the analogy between domestic and religious space, see Connelly 2007: Ch. 1.

²⁷ Connelly 2007: 5-6, 9.

²⁸ For example, women of low socio-economic status have been forced to work outside the home to help support themselves and their families; a fact that was true even in the ancient world. Scholars of the ancient world: Cohen 1991a: 151ff., *et al.*; scholars of modern societies: Belknap 2001: 322, *et al.*

being negotiated because the dominant ideology does not necessarily operate according to the ideal.²⁹ The unsanctioned female presence outside the male-assigned 'female' space threatened male authority and social constructs, and this presence is constructed as subversive, or even criminal, due to the presence of laws and social codes created to perpetuate this gender divide.³⁰

The male desire to keep women within the space deemed socially appropriate has manifested itself in the genres I explored in the previous chapters and will continue to be evident in my investigation of rhetorical texts. The ideological control over women was promoted by the male ideology because paternity, and by extension masculinity, was deemed to be at risk by female sexuality.³¹ This necessitated the male attempt to refashion marriage "as an institution that both expresses men's rights in women's sexual and reproductive capacities and reinforces these rights."³² Despite this presumed fragility and need to be protected, women "are seen as potentially powerful enough to dismantle a seemingly healthy society by "shirking" their "womanly duties" and not staying home".³³ Although this concept applies to the 'breaking out' of working women in the United States in the 20th century, it nevertheless applies to the women of ancient Greece. Because men created and perpetuated such socio-legal codes, women were reduced almost solely to their capacities to serve as wives and mothers.³⁴ Maternity, however, is no more an innate concept than paternity, according to Mino Vianello and Elena Caramazza, and is "is a social

²⁹ Blunt & Rose 1994: 1, 3. See also Haddad & Findly 1985: xxi: "Religion has been an instrument of liberation for women. But religion has just as often become an instrument of women's social oppression."

³⁰ Belknap 2001: 320.

³¹ Greene 1998: xii-xiii. "It is not surprising, then, that this [i.e., motherhood] is an area in which women's behavior is subject to considerable normative regulation." Chodorow 1978: 81.

³² Chodorow 1978: 9.

³³ Belknap 2001: 325.

³⁴ Belknap 2001: 323-326.

and therefore historical phenomenon, with an ideology that is the expression of the ruling masculinist ideology.”³⁵ The following speeches both feature attempts to control female sexuality and reproductive ability – in Lysias 1, by Euphiletus’ desire to protect the legitimacy of his children and in Apollodorus 59, by Stephanus’ ransoming of Epainetus for adultery with Phano and the tenuous status of Phano’s children with Phrastor. Both of these speeches display what the male view presents as a violation of the rights of the *kyrios*, the male figure in charge of controlling female conduct.

Why was this all-pervasive attitude toward women, which manifests itself through cultural and legal codes, deemed necessary? These divisive spatial customs can be explained by Shirley Ardener’s concept of genealogical space, in which the “woman’s fertility determines the success and continuation of her husband’s patrilineage (not her own).”³⁶ Although this genealogical space was of crucial importance to male succession, it was controlled exclusively by women, especially in the ancient world, when women had complete epistemic control of their procreative situations. Attempting to isolate women from other men, especially men not related by family, was essentially the only way that men could seek to control this space and ensure the success of their own lineage. This desire to sequester women has its roots in religious doctrines, many of which held that “the only purpose for women was reproduction and marriage, while men were meant for loftier purposes.”³⁷ The religious tendency to characterize ‘good’ women as chaste women ties religion, sexuality, and space together, because women were held to higher standards of

³⁵ Vianello and Caramazza 2005: 47.

³⁶ Ardener 1993: 10.

³⁷ Belknap 2001: 321.

purity, chastity, and religious attachment than men.³⁸ Furthermore, it legitimized the limited access of women to both religious and secular domains, whereas men had complete access to both public and domestic worlds.

II. Children, Marriage, and Domesticity

Both Lysias 1 and Apollodorus 59 provide valuable indications that there was more to the institution of marriage than recognized or regulated by legal and social codes. This includes, sometimes through negative examples, how women were expected to move and act and how they may have circumvented social constraints in order to assert their own autonomy. Euphiletus, the defendant in Lysias' first oration, perhaps gives the most succinct account of the male ideal of marriage in the introduction to his speech when he says, "when a child was born to me, thenceforward I began to trust her, and placed all my affairs in her hands, presuming that we were now in perfect intimacy" (ἐπειδὴ δέ μοι παιδίον γίγνεται, ἐπίστευον ἤδη καὶ πάντα τὰ ἑμαυτοῦ ἐκείνη παρέδωκα, ἡγούμενος ταύτην οἰκειότητα μεγίστην εἶναι, 1.7). Since male sources convey that legitimate children were the ultimate goal of marriage, Lysias portrays this as a justifiable, if somewhat naïve, action on the part of Euphiletus.³⁹ The use of the compound verb παραδίδωμι ('to hand over to another, to give to another's hands'), rather than a more straightforward term like δίδωμι ('to give'), bears more examination. The former verb illustrates the importance of

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ According to Vrellis in his discussion of [Demosthenes] 59, "this is what living with a woman as one's wife means – to have children by her and to introduce the sons to the members of the clan and of the deme, and to betroth to husbands as one's own." (2004: 465.)

the hands and handiwork, which, as I have shown in the previous chapters, is directly connected with agency and action.⁴⁰ It also contains resonances of gift-exchange and exhibits the pervasive importance of reciprocity at *all* levels of social interaction.

Euphiletus' wife has presented him with offspring, and that Euphiletus responds with the grant of management over household affairs shows that he equates the two. He thereby cements their relationship with a deed that resonates with an extremely meaningful principle of ancient Greek society. This suggests that once a legitimate child – at least a child presumed to be legitimate – had been introduced into the family, Euphiletus deemed his wife trustworthy and therefore allowed her to have a greater influence within the confines of their marriage. Traditional claims cite children as the crucial component of a marriage considered successful by the *polis*.⁴¹ As noted by David Cohen, this is an oversimplified conclusion, and does not explain the well-attested importance of *philia* between a husband and wife.⁴² Euphiletus assumes that the *philia* in his marriage is healthy and intact after the birth of a child, as supported by the avowal that he and his wife were living in the 'greatest intimacy/ domesticity/ friendship' (οἰκειότητα μεγίστην). This sense of *philia* does seem to directly follow the production of children in Lysias' household, suggesting a close connection between the two in the male representation. Therefore, he claims, he did not have any reason to doubt his wife's commitment to his *oikos* and their marriage. Together with his newfound inability to keep a constant watch over her, which I

⁴⁰ LSJ s.v. 1.2.

⁴¹ See esp. Lacey 1968: Ch. 1; Demand 1994: Ch. 8; Pomeroy 1997: Ch. 1; *et al.*

⁴² Cohen further discusses the range of emotion possible in a marriage – from sexual attraction and emotional devotion to marriages completely lacking *philia*. A marriage lacking *philia*, he claims, could lead to an adulterous relationship in the attempt to seek romantic or erotic fulfillment. (1991a: 167-70).

discuss in the following pages, Euphiletus argues that it is this trust in his wife's fidelity that leads to her ability to have an adulterous affair with Eratosthenes.⁴³

This familial harmony and the presumed legitimacy of Euphiletus' offspring came to an abrupt end once Euphiletus learns that his wife has been unfaithful. Their children, to whom he refers in his introduction as ancillary victims of Eratosthenes' misdeeds, are portrayed in the speech as 'dishonored' along with Euphiletus' wife (ἐμοίχευεν Ἐρατοσθένης τὴν γυναῖκα τὴν ἐμὴν καὶ ἐκείνην τε διέφθειρε καὶ τοὺς παῖδας τοὺς ἐμοὺς ἥσχυνε καὶ ἐμὲ αὐτὸν ὕβρισεν εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν τὴν ἐμὴν εἰσιών, 1.4). The verb αἰσχύνω, which is commonly translated as 'dishonored', can also be translated as 'tarnished'.⁴⁴ This gives a completely different cast to the authenticity of Euphiletus' children; it can be argued that Euphiletus implicitly calls their presumed legitimacy into question while still more generally using the discourse of honor, which was strongly in place from early archaic times.⁴⁵ He claims that the children were innocent bystanders who suffered unfairly because of the situation, and any aspersions cast upon their legitimacy could have had serious civic repercussions.⁴⁶ John Porter claims that the inclusion of the children was intended to underscore Euphiletus' indignation and to evoke *pathos* in the jury, and further highlights the severity of his dishonor at the hands of Eratosthenes.⁴⁷

⁴³ The recent death of his mother means that when he is in the country, as he claims he is in the speech, there will be nobody to keep watch on her, especially given the duplicity of his maid.

⁴⁴ LSJ s.v. I.2.

⁴⁵ Carey 1989: *ad loc.*

⁴⁶ As shown by the issues inherent in Apollodorus 59.

⁴⁷ Porter in Carawan 2007: 68.

Euphiletus' wife, however, is not the only one who is accused of committing sexual misdeeds. There is a discussion between Euphiletus and his wife in which she accuses him of sexually harassing one of their household maids:⁴⁸

ἡ δὲ τὸ μὲν πρῶτον οὐκ ἤθελεν, ὡς ἂν ἀσμένη με ἑορακυῖα ἤκοντα διὰ χρόνου· ἐπειδὴ δὲ ἐγὼ ὠργιζόμεν καὶ ἐκέλευον αὐτὴν ἀπιέναι, ἵνα σύ γε' ἔφη 'πειρᾶς ἔνταυθα τὴν παιδίσκη· καὶ πρότερον δὲ μεθύων εἴλκες αὐτήν'.

“At first she refused, as though delighted to see me home again after so long; but when I began to be angry and bade her go – “Yes, so that you,” she said “may have a try here at the little maid. Once before, too, when you were drunk, you pulled her about.” (1.12)

The above text gives a unique view of the anthropology of marital relations in antiquity. This was not adultery (μοιχεία) as it was defined by the Athenian legal system, but it was nevertheless clearly a point of contention within the marriage. Euphiletus' wife treats their exchange as a joke (προσποιομένη παίζειν; 1.13) and she leaves, locking the door behind her. Euphiletus claims that his wife locks the door in order to prevent him from catching her with Eratosthenes. This exchange highlights an important aspect of household spatial dynamics; namely, the physical space within the house that was allotted to each of the sexes. As recent scholarly reconstruction of household space has shown, the women's quarters tended to occupy the upper floors of the building. Lysias gives a glimpse of the male rationale behind such an arrangement: to prevent situations such as this; namely, with the men's quarters below as a buffer zone between their wives and any unsanctioned

⁴⁸ Because the household staff members were not citizens, there was no legal issue with any sexual contact between them and their master. This probably does not extend to women, since protection of the lineage was of tantamount importance.

activity in the male view.⁴⁹ His wife requested to change quarters with him, and by acquiescing, Euphiletus allows for a shift in the spatial control.⁵⁰ Lisa Nevett further cites other examples from Greek literature that suggest the women's quarters (*gunakōnitis*) were distinct areas within the domestic space: Penelope, in the *Odyssey*, seems to have occupied a room on an upper floor, from which she could see her prospective suitors.⁵¹ Similarly, Xenophon's *Oikonomikos* describes the female quarters as being protected by a bolted door, claiming that the isolation of women served as a further safeguard against the production of illegitimate children.⁵² In the male perception, the removal of this line of defense leads to the shift of the spatial dimension within the house, and therefore, entire house would have been seen as having weakened security. What is within the house is more susceptible to outside people or forces, as evidenced by Euphiletus' account of Eratosthenes' newly gained ability to enter the house.

It is further significant that Euphiletus describes his wife as neglecting, and even tampering with, her motherly duties in this scene. He cites how his wife instructed the servant to 'make it [the baby] peevish' (ἐδυσκόλαιεν; 1.11) by pinching it, in order to make the baby cry so she would have an excuse to leave Euphiletus' presence. This shows how being a wife and mother is often portrayed as lacking in mobility, since Euphiletus'

⁴⁹ Hunter 1994: 80ff. Nevett 1999: 19. Nevett makes it clear that these examples, including the citations from the *Odyssey* and *Oikonomikos*, may not have been representative the spatial division of all houses in Athens, or even in the rest of Greece. In the city of Olynthus, for example, there is evidence that women may have been able to roam the entirety of the house at will, due to the absence of an "obviously identifiable *gunaikōn*." (See Nevett 1999: 70ff.)

⁵⁰ The child must have been an infant, since the reason for the switching of living quarters was because the baby needed to be washed and suckled frequently. "When the child was born to us, its mother suckled it; and, in order that, each time it had to be washed, she might avoid the risk of descending the stairs, I used to live above, and the women below." (ἐπειδὴ δὲ τὸ παιδίον ἐγένετο ἡμῖν, ἡ μήτηρ αὐτὸ ἐθήλαζεν· ἵνα δὲ μή, ὅποτε λοῦσθαι δεῖοι, κινδυνεύῃ κατὰ τῆς κλίμακος καταβαίνουσα, ἐγὼ μὲν ἄνω διητώμην, αἱ δὲ γυναῖκες κάτω., 1.9-10).

⁵¹ Nevett 1999: 19.

⁵² Nevett 1999: 17.

wife required an excuse to leave the room. Once her movement through the house has been approved, Euphiletus' wife is shown as seizing this newfound control and refashioning it to her own purposes. Male argumentation interlaces illicit seduction and its effects on motherhood, in this case, inattention to the (potentially) legitimate child. This bears close resemblance to the laws and social codes put in place in America in the 20th century in order to keep women at home and out of the workforce. Employers and lawmakers cited harm to children, whether through the fetus' exposure to toxic chemicals or by neglect during infancy or early childhood, as one of the main reasons why women should stay at home, in ways that predominantly seek to limit female movement.⁵³ This physical neglect during childhood is similar to the importance of the 'moral purity' of a child's parents in English law, which is a different but equally severe type of neglect; in fact, until the late 19th century in Britain, a woman taken in adultery could be disqualified from custody of, or even access to, her children.⁵⁴ The mother, therefore, was seen as the prime protector of the children, and as such, the father sought to ensure her status as a controlled fixture, one who upheld his conception of 'moral purity', in the domestic sphere. Since men required 'loyal' women to bear heirs, and therefore expected sole reproductive access to them, it perhaps better highlights the paternal concern over a mother's neglect of her children. It allowed for the possibility of negative implications for the succession of the family; for example, the child coming to some sort of harm through neglect, or, as in the case of Apollodorus 59, a morally bankrupt mother providing a negative example for her children.

⁵³ Belknap 2001: 324-5. Belknap further argues that the type of work available to women of low socio-economic status mirrored the type of work expected in their own house (namely, they were 'cleaning ladies'), and for this work, they were underpaid and underappreciated. (325) See also Atkins & Hale (1984); Ardener 1993: Ch. 9; *et al.*

⁵⁴ Atkins & Hale 1984: 92.

The presence of members of the husband's family, however, could present a problem to this perceived female dishonesty. Men often engaged in business that took them out of the house or into the country; therefore their absence from the home was framed as an opportunity for their wives to act contrary to male expectation. The existence of a mother-in-law or other member of the husband's family, however, made the surveillance of a wife possible even in her husband's absence. A husband's mother became his ally; the mother-in-law figure in Lysias 1, for example, essentially became an enforcer of male ideology. A new wife was an unknown quantity with uncertain character, and therefore the production of a male heir would have been an important step in being fully integrated into the *oikos*.⁵⁵ The female assumption of a male *ethos* has a literary precedent in inter-female dynamics, most often employed when an older woman is faced with a younger woman who needs advice as to her course of action. For example, the figure of the Nurse in tragedy is often depicted as imparting a pragmatic (and therefore more masculine) point of view to her younger, less experienced mistress.⁵⁶ Male authors, it seems, are comfortable assigning masculine characteristics to women who are older and more experienced in societal expectations, making them more sympathetic to the 'dishonored' male. These women were also less likely to be seduced, but, more importantly, they espouse a stance that supports the overarching social culture cultivated by men.⁵⁷ Consequently, it is crucial to protect blood relatives and thereby ensure that the genealogical space – along with the physical space – is well protected.

⁵⁵ Lacey 1968: 16.

⁵⁶ Cf. the figure of the Nurse in *Medea*, *Hippolytus*, *Trachiniae*, et al.

⁵⁷ In Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, the women on the Acropolis were past the point of sexual attractiveness (αἰ πρεσβύταται, so their presence on the Acropolis was not problematic, but nor did it make sense for them to take part in the sex strike. (*Lys.* 177-9).

A completely different picture of marital relations is presented in Apollodorus 59. The relationship between the defendant, Neaera, and Stephanus, who is essentially a co-defendant, is not portrayed consistently throughout the play.⁵⁸ Apollodorus claims that Neaera and Stephanus behave as though they are married, while paradoxically stressing that she is a foreigner when it suits his purposes. He follows the same pattern with his portrayal of Neaera's (or Apollodorus') daughter, Phano, claiming that the manner in which these parties appeared in public was only befitting of a citizen.⁵⁹ As such, the speech depicts issues with legitimacy, especially as they affected women, and the ways by which citizenship laws could be circumvented or manipulated. Apollodorus portrays Neaera and Stephanus, against whom the speech is directed, in whatever manner best suits his narrative. The pseudo-marriage between Neaera and Stephanus is only an issue when they passed Neaera off as a citizen woman, which they did in order to exact ransom from young 'adulterers' who fell prey to their trap.⁶⁰ More information remains in the speech about the marriages of Phano, both of which ended because of the allegations that she was not an Athenian citizen.⁶¹ In her marriage with Phrastor, she is cast as a younger double of Neaera, living a dissolute and licentious lifestyle. The depictions of the 'marriages' of Neaera and Phano, therefore, represent what was portrayed as the worst prospect of marriage in Athenian society.

The above instances of domestic and married life are invaluable to our understanding of ancient male-female dynamics. They also provide an insight into how

⁵⁸ This speech is the product of a bitter enmity between Apollodorus and Stephanus. For more on their litigious history, see Kapparis 1999: 28ff.

⁵⁹ Vrellis 2004: 465.

⁶⁰ Apollodorus 59.41.

⁶¹ Apollodorus 59.63, 81.

women could function within the allotted domestic constructs to assert their own sense of autonomy in a world otherwise controlled by men. At the same time, male authors depict the fixation with controlling wives, casting women as neglecting or otherwise impairing their households in order to show why they believed these overarching social structures were necessary.

a. Tactility and Physicality

In both comedy and tragedy, the assumption of tactile or physical control allowed women to assert themselves within their own sphere. In the rhetorical sources, too, female tactility and physicality are shown as having the potential to affect men negatively. Interestingly enough, Lysias provides an example of female physicality that directly results from *male* physical action, which is also portrayed as potentially destructive in the speech. In Lysias 1, Euphiletus is supposedly uncovering his wife's scheming, and he claims that she, in turn, teased him by claiming that he was actively flirting with one of the household maids. Euphiletus' wife's implicit charge of sexual activity is also accompanied by references to physical sexual aggression in this section, inherent in the verbs ἔλκω ('to drag about esp. with lewd violence') and πειράω ('to make an attempt on a woman's honor'), suggest that Euphiletus' conduct toward the maid was unrestrained. Christopher Carey translates εἴλκες as 'manhandled', and takes it to assume that the situation is one of rape or, at least, attempted rape.⁶² He further assumes that Euphiletus' response, which is laughter (κάγῳ μὲν ἐγέλων, 1.13), is an implicit admission of her charge, though the textual evidence

⁶² Carey 1989: *ad loc.*

is not conclusive either way.⁶³ The use of ἔλκω to denote physical force appears as early as Homer, and in this case, the physical dragging about of the maid involves the hands as the locus of physical exertion, of Euphiletus physically bending the maid to his will. In much the same way, Euphiletus' wife is afforded an increased agency when Euphiletus characterizes her as having closed and locked the door, also using a compound form of ἔλκω. Euphiletus says she 'dragged/pulled the bolt (in the lock)' (τὴν κλεῖν ἐφέλκεται; 1.13), which seals her illicit union with a physical, tactile act. By controlling the physical location of her husband, she is asserting her agency and inscribes her deed with a tactile challenge to her husband's authority.

Double entendre also features in this passage; in wrenching the door shut, she not only denies Euphiletus entry to the rest of his house, but also from invading her womb. Along these same lines, Euphiletus fashions his own relegation to a locked room as an act that exposed the rest of the house to Eratosthenes, who is thereafter allowed to gain unsanctioned sexual contact with his wife. Therefore, Lysias constructs Euphiletus' wife's physical hauling of the door as mirroring her husband's deed; more specifically, the verb ἔλκω is used to describe alleged sexual contact between Euphiletus and the maid just as it is used to describe the deed that Euphiletus' wife performed in order to have a clandestine affair with Eratosthenes. The dragging of the maid, as a female body that is vulnerable to male violence, is subliminally equated with the reference to the door, which can typically be opened and closed, and therefore controlled, by Euphiletus. Domestic space, which women occupied much of the time, allowed for supervision of women by a husband or other family member. There were, however, indications that women could, and did, have

⁶³ *Ibid.*

close relationships with other women, especially neighbors.⁶⁴ While domestic space was indeed controlled by men to an extent, it could also be manipulated from within. These mechanisms of control, such as the isolation of women and the restriction of access to them, were likely more part of the dominant, male-sought and proliferated ideology than a historical reality. Comedy especially supports this, since the female characters are portrayed as being able to act by working *within* these socio-cultural restrictions. As treated in Chapter 2, these women mask their activities with normal household activities in order to divert their husbands' suspicions. Euphiletus' wife is portrayed as renegotiating the space of the *oikos* in an attempt to seize control and assert agency within the domestic sphere, using physical means to do so, just as in the religious sphere.

III. Law Inscribed in Ritual

The importance of ritual in these legal speeches has been largely unexplored, since ritual has traditionally been treated as being of secondary importance to the abundance of evidence crucial to understanding the Athenian legal system. The adultery law (νόμος μοιχείας) and the law of justifiable homicide feature in some form in these speeches, as well as in a speech of Aeschines, and provide vital information about adultery as it was defined by the legal system.⁶⁵ The implications of adultery were so severe that it legally justified murder. The notion of purity, therefore, is part of the underlying structure on which both the marriage and the *polis* are predicated.

⁶⁴ Cohen 1991a: 155; Cohen 1989.

⁶⁵ Aeschines 1.183.

The instances of ritual are extremely useful in providing greater insight into ancient perceptions and constructions of adultery. Many contemporary religions spatially separate men and women within their organizations at all levels, from the structural hierarchies to those attending services.⁶⁶ Tova Hartman Halbertal's experience in being physically segregated from the men of her synagogue will be discussed below; suffice it to say here that men and women were physically separated in her synagogue, although not a religious necessity. This type of segregated worship was also a feature of Catholic worship in 18th century China, suggesting a commonality in dominant ideologies across space and time.⁶⁷ Similarly, various religious structures bar women from positions as officiants, for example, which showcases the disparity in power between the sexes in a religious setting and grants men access "to exclusive sites of power (and "the sacred") within a religious building".⁶⁸ Many socio-religious hierarchies exist in which gender is a more important distinction than religious or non-religious, and therefore male secular and religious stations are dominant to their female counterparts (i.e., monks ← lay-men ← nuns ← lay-women).⁶⁹ This religiously engendered control of female presence and movement within 'male' space reinforces the separation of men and women in society, which in turn emphasizes the access that men had to any space and the desire to consign women primarily to the domestic sphere. Domestic and ritual space, therefore, were rendered analogous to each other, and women worked to find agency and expression within religious spaces just as they did within their homes. This suggests that the dominant ideology deemed the 'safest'

⁶⁶ Morin and Guelke 2007: xix; Halbertal 2002: 1-2.

⁶⁷ Jaschok and Shui 2011: 130.

⁶⁸ Morin and Guelke 2007: xix.

⁶⁹ Ardener 1993: 3. There are, Ardener continues, societies in which gender is less important than one's affiliation to religion, and the redistribution of space is as follows: monks ← nuns ← lay-men ← lay-women.

roles for women were those associated with caretaking – more specifically, of readying the domestic or religious space for male occupation and activity – and therefore, these were the roles allotted to women.

The Greek legal *corpus*, therefore, includes reference to female activity that can be judged as having some ritual or religious significance. Firstly, there seems to have been a legal preoccupation with women fashioning themselves as spectacles, which I briefly discussed in Chapter 2. Female conspicuousness has been unduly associated with the ability of women to attract attention, especially sexual, from other men. Featured more prominently in these speeches is the male interpretation of the impact of adulteresses on ritual, more specifically festival, participation. Apollodorus especially makes note of the civic repercussions, most notably because women serving as the centerpieces in ritual provided an *exemplum*, albeit one that is male-defined, that they expected other women to follow.

a. Spectacle

Classical rhetoric seeks to project an ideology of control, and highlight the importance of civic identity and purity, even though female presence was ubiquitous in rhetorical texts. In keeping with the discourse of female purity and fidelity, both Lysias and Apollodorus often inscribe their female personae with a ritual frame. Lysias especially connects the ritual setting with what he describes as the ‘corruption’ of Euphiletus’ wife. Perhaps the most discussed of these ritual involvements is the appropriation of the funeral context, which Eratosthenes exploited in order to gain access to Euphiletus’ wife:

ἐπειδὴ δέ μοι ἡ μήτηρ ἐτελεύτησεν, ἡ πάντων τῶν κακῶν ἀποθανοῦσα αἰτία μοι γεγένηται—ἐπ’ ἐκφορὰν γὰρ αὐτῇ ἀκολουθήσασα ἡ ἐμὴ γυνὴ ὑπὸ τούτου τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὀφθεῖσα χρόνῳ διαφθείρεται, 1.7-8).

“When my mother died, her death was the cause of all my troubles, for while attending her funeral, my wife, after she had been seen by this man, was in time corrupted.”

This passage indicates that men interpreted ritual space as one of the main fora for other men to gain visual access to their wives. By attempting to limit the appearance of women in public, they were further attempting to limit female sexual agency and unsanctioned activity. Even so, the involvement of women in male-sanctioned ritual activities rendered these women spectacles, especially in funerals where they were the center of attention. There is, therefore, more to the visibility of women than merely allowing them to be physically outside: they function as the focal point of a very public display.

The capacity of women as central figures in funeral rites is a feature common to early modern and contemporary societies. A prevalent component of funeral activity in general is that of conspicuousness; in many societies, there existed a desire to be seen while mourning or preparing for the funeral of a family member, which was often not limited to men. In João José Reis’ discussion of funeral rites in 19th century Brazil, for example, he stresses the fact that “everything was done to be seen”.⁷⁰ Very often, women were central figures in the funeral preparations; their specific roles and activities, however, were dictated by the society in which they lived. For example, the death rituals in many societies included very public laments, in some cases carried out by professional female mourners alongside the family members, which serves to highlight the conspicuity of

⁷⁰ Reis 2003: 113.

women, even if they were unrelated to the deceased.⁷¹ In fact, in contemporary rural Greece it is “the women of the family who actually fulfill the family’s obligations to its dead”.⁷² This is because, according to Loring Danforth, proper attention to funerary practice is an expected social obligation that allows for a public display of solidarity by the family of the deceased.⁷³ This attitude towards death as a forum to publicly express respect and piety is not limited to rural Greece, but seems to figure in several other societies, ancient Greece included. By contrast, the conservative attitudes toward funeral practices in Victorian England applauded the widow who had tight control over her emotions.⁷⁴ She is, nevertheless, a spectacle to the other funeral-goers, although they seem to have sought her lack of action and emotion rather than the opposite.⁷⁵ The importance of communal participation in these societies, as well as in ancient Greek society, gave a social dimension to funerary activity. The death of the mother-in-law is especially symbolic of the patrilineal presence in funeral custom, even though the women of the family carried out much of the activity. There is furthermore an interesting fusion of the matriarchal and patriarchal within the death of the mother-in-law, and this is especially clear in Lysias 1. Euphiletus’ mother’s death signaled a lack of supervision in the household, which, Euphiletus argues, made it easier for his wife to smuggle Eratosthenes into the household.⁷⁶ He fashions his mother’s death as the end of restraint, fidelity, and the ‘expected order’ of the household,

⁷¹ For example, the women in rural Greece made their neighbors aware of their loyalty to the care of the dead (Danforth 1982: 125ff.). This is similar to 19th century Brazil, in which (professional and non-professional) female mourners would be visibly performing their ritual obligation by displaying obligatory feelings toward the dead (Reis 2003: 91ff.). Similarly, the Nyakyusa people of Tanzania had wailing as a prevalent part of their funerary practice. (Metcalf & Huntington 1991: 57).

⁷² Danforth 1982: 119.

⁷³ Danforth 1982: 125.

⁷⁴ In fact, women in the early- and mid-Victorian periods often did not attend funerals precisely because it was believed they could not control their emotions. Jalland 1996: 221.

⁷⁵ Jalland 1996: 221.

⁷⁶ Wolpert and Kapparis 2011: 22; Porter 2007: 75.

which allowed for and facilitated his wife's adultery. What is more crucial, however, is the important social role that women played in the proper execution of funeral rites and how Lysias fashions this to his own rhetorical needs.

In Lysias' presentation, Euphiletus' wife did not only breach funerary custom by being seduced at her mother-in-law's funeral; she is further portrayed as failing to adhere to common practice following the death of her brother by ostensibly wearing cosmetics before the end of the mandated thirty-day mourning period.⁷⁷ Euphiletus says that he was struck by her painting her face with white lead (ἐψιμουθιῶσθαί; 1.14), but, according to the narrative, he remained silent about this indiscretion. That Euphiletus includes this fact in the list of inconsistencies in his household is significant for two reasons; firstly, because it is not able to be substantiated by anybody except Euphiletus himself, and therefore has no real function outside the literary narrative and Lysias' rhetorical purpose; and secondly, because it shows that Lysias was aware of comic adultery narratives.⁷⁸ It is likely that this is a case of stereotyped adultery, since the theme of adornment, along with physical and sensory spectacle, is indeed found in comedy as an indicator of an adulterous wife.⁷⁹ More importantly, the female body is recast as a space that can be controlled by men. As Cristiana

⁷⁷ See Carey 1989: 71 on the appropriate mourning period in Athens (30 days) vs. Sparta (11 days).

⁷⁸ Porter in Carawan 2007: 72. Along with several other elements in the speech, Porter convincingly sets out to show the similarities between comedies and the speeches, and how the comic art form influenced oratorical writings.

⁷⁹ The following situations found in Aristophanic comedy, however, do not exactly mirror the indecorous use of powder by Euphiletus' wife. In the *Thesmophoriazousae*, the only reference to a woman's face being a problematic color is the reference to a hypothetical maiden whose complexion suggests morning sickness (*Thesm.* 406). There is, however, an instance of sensory adornment in order to *hide* the evidence of adultery, rather than to suggest it as in Lysias 1. This instance, explored in more detail in Chapter 2, is the one in which Mnesilochus cites the necessity of eating garlic after a night spent with a lover in order that their husband remain ignorant (*Thesm.* 493-6). The embellishing of one's physical appearance in order to attempt to seduce a husband, or a *moichos* as the play implicitly suggests, is found in the *Lysistrata*. Lysistrata suggests that the women, in their attempt to beguile their husbands into ending the war between the Greek *poleis*, dress up in alluring clothing, wearing makeup and with their nether regions plucked, only to reject their husbands once they are about to have sexual relations.

Franco notes, and as I discuss in chapter 2, the women in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* use their ability to seduce their husbands in order to persuade them to capitulate to their demands.⁸⁰ This overall visual seducibility, and the women's perceived willingness to use it to their own ends, is portrayed as problematic by the men, whose primary means of seduction is verbal.⁸¹ The adornment of women is closely connected to tactility, since putting on makeup required tactile activity and allowed women to express their agency in self-presentation. The male speaker frames physical embellishment as problematic, since it represented the failure of male authority over the body.

That Lysias employs an image of Euphiletus' wife with cosmetics on her face is significant, especially when it is considered alongside the fact that one of the punishments an adulteress suffered was that she was no longer allowed to adorn herself (κοσμεῖσθαι). This in turn suggests, at the first level, that men perceived female adornment as something that led to their debauchment by making them attractive to the opposite sex, and as such, legal and social proscriptions sought to bar it. Tova Hartman Halbertal has written of her own experience in her synagogue that bears striking similarities to this one. Purely because they are women, she says, she and her daughters are forced to pray in the 'women's section' of the synagogue, which is separated from the male congregation by a curtain.⁸² Upon asking her rabbi to move the women's section next to the men's, a configuration admissible by Jewish law, he responded that he feared the men would not be able to concentrate on their prayers.⁸³ In this case, even the *sight* of a woman was claimed to serve as a distraction to a man, and therefore visual access to women needed to be controlled by

⁸⁰ Franco 2014: 138.

⁸¹ Cf. Helen in Euripides' *Troïades*.

⁸² Halbertal 2002: 1-4.

⁸³ Halbertal 2002: 2.

clearly creating and demarcating an otherwise unnecessary gendered space. Similarly, Lysias' citing of a legal prescription against adornment further shows an attempt to prevent female initiative in self-presentation, and the ability to be conspicuous or to make oneself a spectacle is the mechanism which male social structures attempt to control. Lysias' speech exhibits the male desire for women to be like statues, gazed upon and inoperative outside her normal parameters, which inevitably renders women objects. Since Euphiletus argued that his wife, for example, controverted this social norm in her quest to take a lover, her punishment reflected her infraction by barring her from adorning herself in public in the future. This episode could also have been utilized to substantiate the male concern with spousal loyalty, highlighting the importance of taking precautions, such as restricting access to one's wife, including restricting female mobility and action.

A less-mentioned instance of ritual intertwining with adultery occurs when Euphiletus' maid supplicates him in order to avoid any reprisal for her involvement in his wife's relationship with Eratosthenes. The messenger of Eratosthenes' former paramour approached Euphiletus in the market and the maid was cast as the member of the household who was supporting the adulterous union between Eratosthenes and Euphiletus' wife. Until Euphiletus approached the maid with concrete knowledge about Eratosthenes, he portrays her as protecting the affair until she was threatened with corporal punishment. Supplication was a religiously binding act, often utilized by a disempowered person in order to enlist the aid of a superior person who is in a position to help them. Supplication was a common feature in ancient tragedy especially; for example, the Nurse in Euripides' *Hippolytus* supplicates Phaedra in order to make her reveal the

source of her as yet mysterious ailment.⁸⁴ As it turns out, in the *Hippolytus* as in this oration, the secret which needs revealing is about adultery and the desire to hide it. In like terms, supplication, as it is staged in Lysias' rhetoric, seeks to hide adultery. The physical act of kneeling veils the misdeed with a ritual act.

These depictions of women utilizing ritual means in order to perpetrate or hide adultery highlight how rhetoric itself served as a spectacle. After all, courtroom speeches were themselves performances, and the vividness of descriptive detail would have made the content of the speeches come alive within the courtroom. By recreating various aspects of ritual activity, and using these to convince the jury of female wrongdoing, Lysias and Apollodorus fashion their female characters as spectacles. These women are presented as acting within the dominant social structures in order to express their autonomy, which leads the men to interpret them as presenting a danger to marriage, paternity, and by extension, society.

b. Festivals

The male literary account often portrays religious festivals as the ritual *locus* for seduction or other inappropriate sexual contact. Both of the speeches feature female participation in a religious festival, which enabled women to leave their domestic sphere and at which there was a perceived breach of ritual custom. In Lysias 1, Euphiletus names the Thesmophoria as the festival at which his wife was seduced. The maid tells Euphiletus that when he was in the country, his wife went to the Thesmophoria and into the temple

⁸⁴ Euripides, *Hipp.* 325-35.

with Eratosthenes' mother (ὡς Θεσμοφορίοις ἔμοῦ ἐν ἀγρῷ ὄντος ᾤχετο εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν μετὰ τῆς μητρὸς τῆς ἐκείνου, 1.20). The Thesmophoria, discussed in Chapter 2, was a festival only open to female participation, a fact which remains crucial. Just as in the *Thesmophoriazusae*, this ritual is portrayed as appropriated and perverted, although in this case, it is cited as one of the *loci* of seduction rather than a forum for discussion of previous illicit action. Just as in the inclusion of the funeral that gave Eratosthenes access to Euphiletus' wife, scholars have focused solely on the festival setting as an uninterrupted means of access.⁸⁵

This potential for contact, while certainly important, is only one of the reasons that the Thesmophoria, an unsupervised female festival, is employed as the site of seduction. The fact that Eratosthenes' mother is implicated in the seduction likely serves to reinforce the stereotype that women could be dangerous if they were without male supervision. To attend this festival, it was necessary to travel outside the confines of the city, which traditionally symbolized the exit from law and order to a place of wilderness. The women, therefore, are shown to distance themselves from their *oikoi* and the constraints that bound them while in the domestic setting. The Thesmophoria, which honored Demeter and Persephone, marked a symbolic return to a pre-marital or virginal state, which is supported by the conjecture that aphrodisiac drugs were present during the course of the festival.⁸⁶ This festival operated within a male-controlled setting (i.e., men must have allowed their wives to be alone and away from home for three days), and this is probably due in no small part to the fact that chastity likely played a role in some of the ritual

⁸⁵ Carey 1989: *ad loc.*

⁸⁶ Johnston 2013: 375; Tzanetou 2002: 334.

activity. That this ritual setting is framed as helping to initiate sexual activity, especially unsanctioned activity, is underscored further because the contamination of ritual processes were thought to have negative implications for the entire city. Lysias' portrayal of the perversion of ritual mirrors the corruption of marriage and therefore, of Euphiletus' *oikos*.

Apollodorus' characterization of Phano likewise allows him to suggest that adulterous women had no compunction about perverting ritual custom and activity. Phano, according to Apollodorus, desecrates the Anthesteria, a three-day festival in honor of Dionysus which celebrated the opening of new wine and included elements of death and rebirth. The evidence for the Anthesteria is scanty, which is problematic because the festival seems to have been relatively complex, and may actually have been a collection of two or more festivals.⁸⁷ Instead, I will focus on Apollodorus' portrayal of the Dionysian rituals which he claims had taken place on 12 Anthesterion.⁸⁸ The twisting of this ritual and its connection to adultery and the dishonoring of marriage are less clear than in Lysias 1, but since Apollodorus argued that Phano, Neaera's daughter, had taken been taken in adultery, she should not have been allowed to participate in the festival. Apollodorus makes her conspicuous to the jury by highlighting that she should have been absent; more specifically, he differentiates her from the rest of the priestesses by reiterating that she should not have been involved in the ritual. At the time of the festival, she was married to Theogenes, the *archon basileus*, although the wife of the king was supposed to have been 'pure and unstained by all else that pollutes and by commerce with man' (καθαρὰ καὶ ἀγνή) ἀπό <τε> τῶν ἄλλων τῶν οὐ καθαρευόντων καὶ ἀπ' ἀνδρὸς συνουσίας; Apollodorus

⁸⁷ Hamilton 1992: Ch. 2 *passim*.

⁸⁸ The literary and epigraphic evidence that remains for the Anthesteria is convoluted, and therefore I focus on Apollodorus' portrayal of the festival as a literary artifact with specific motivations.

59.78), according to the oath she had to take as priestess. As she had been previously married to Phrastor, she did not fit this qualification, but that this is emphasized indicates that Apollodorus wishes to do anything he can to assault the character of Neaera's daughter.⁸⁹ The corruption of the festival is again employed in order to show that Phano, and by extension Neaera, committed offenses against the gods and the entire city.⁹⁰

Phano's role in the festival was to be given as the 'bride' of Dionysus (ἐξεδόθη δὲ τῷ Διονύσῳ γυνή; 59.73), a role only given to the wife of the year's eponymous archon. As such, she would have formed the focal point of certain aspects of the festival. There is an implicit theme of a virginal wife, even though she was already married to the archon, who was to be newly appropriated by the divine. The stress placed on a wife who had never been previously married is significant, since casting Phano as the bride of Dionysus marks a symbolic return to virginity. Phano, however, had been previously married and was furthermore accused of several adulterous unions; it was impossible, Apollodorus argues, for her to be successful in symbolically regaining her virginity for the sacrifice. The ritual is established, or at least framed, in such a way that prized female loyalty and fidelity and put it on an extremely public display, thereby weaving the male-constructed ideologies directly into female ritual space and activity.

This explains the male-driven desire to exclude a woman who was taken in adultery; in this festival particularly, Phano is shown to have been polluting the bond between the *polis* and the divine with suspicions of infidelity. Apollodorus objects to a woman like Phano being a spectacle in an important ritual environment, and he further protests to her

⁸⁹ Canevaro 2013: 191.

⁹⁰ Wolpert and Kapparis 2011: 212.

having access to unspeakable ritual knowledge (τὰ ἄρρητα ἱερὰ; 59.73) because it should have remained out of her reach, an adulteress and potentially a foreigner.⁹¹ Her name, Phano, related to the verb 'φαίνω' ('to make clear, reveal, show'), has associations with visual perception and conspicuousness.⁹² What is interesting is that Apollodorus reveals that her name used to be Strybele, but was changed to Phano, ostensibly in order to make her seem more respectable.⁹³ Apollodorus decides to call her Phano, and indeed by choosing this name, he reiterates that she should be a spectacle in the confines of the speech just as she would have been a spectacle as she performed her ritual duties at the festival. If she was a citizen and had been taken in adultery as Apollodorus claims, she would not have been qualified to attend, let alone administer, any public sacrifice, which makes her all the more visible to the jury.

Phano's connections to adultery are repeated and stressed throughout the play. The first instance is during her marriage to the tight-fisted Phrastor, and this accusation features as part of the assassination of Neaera's character. This is more of an implicit accusation, saying that Phano 'sought her mother's habits' (ἐζήτει τὰ τῆς μητρὸς ἔθη; 59.50), which, as Apollodorus argued, included adultery by trade, i.e., the entrapping and subsequent ransoming of a young foreigner under the *graphē moicheias*.⁹⁴ He implicitly argues that she duplicated the depravity which characterized her mother's lifestyle, and

⁹¹ This is obviously contradictory, since *moicheia* was not an issue with non-citizen women. Apollodorus manipulates Phano's legitimacy to suit his own ends, which suggests that his main objective is to attack Stephanus in any way possible.

⁹² Carey claims this name is "an apt name for a *hetaira*" because "its connotations of visibility make it an unlikely one for a citizen female." (Carey 1992: 112). It is not necessary that she be a *hetaira*, since Apollodorus is the one choosing which name to call her. It's just as likely that her name was Strybelê, and Apollodorus' use of Phano intended to cast aspersions on her character.

⁹³ Wolpert and Kapparis 2011: 206.

⁹⁴ Apollodorus 59.41.

extramarital affairs and unrestrained sexual activity were a large part of this. Phrastor and Phano eventually divorced because Phrastor discovered her dubious civic status, and it was after this divorce and before her next marriage that the next claim of an adulterous episode occurred. According to Apollodorus, Stephanus and Neaera ensnared a man called Epainetos, an old friend of Neaera, to the country 'under the pretense of a sacrifice' (ὡς θύων; 59.65). Several scholars have interpreted this passage as indicative that *moicheia* was not limited to married women, but that the penalties could be exacted by the *kyrios* of the woman who had been debauched.⁹⁵

In addition to this, it is significant that Apollodorus employs this ritual setting as a pretext for the seduction of Phano by Epainetos, one of Neaera's old friends. That it took place outside the city, where Stephanus would have Epainetos at his mercy, is also significant.⁹⁶ The couple exploited Epainetos' piety by luring him 'to the countryside under the guise of sacrifice' (εἰς ἀγρὸν ὡς θύων; 59.65), and Epainetos' prior connection to Neaera likely made it so that his request would go unquestioned. Therefore, Neaera and Stephanus enticed Epainetos to a space, which they created, in order to manufacture a situation in which they could orchestrate 'adultery' between him and Phano. If Apollodorus' claims were true, any actual sacrifice which took place in this setting would have been polluted, used as it was to bring about adultery. They were isolated in the countryside, free from the restraints of the city just as Euphiletus claims his wife was free from her domestic ties as she got seduced at the Thesmophoria. It is also noteworthy that the specifics of this episode are not substantiated by tangible evidence or external proof.

⁹⁵ Kapparis 1999: 297ff; Paoli 1953: 126; Canevaro 2013: 195.

⁹⁶ Carey 1992: 119.

Epainetos himself does not appear on Apollodorus' behalf, so it is clear that this is part of an attempt to establish a model of behavior within Neaera's family, but also form a part of the broader pattern of using ritual activity or space as a forum for adultery.

Ritual space, as shown by the exempla from Lysias 1 and Apollodorus 59, could encompass both public and private settings. Public ritual authorized increased female visibility and conspicuousness within the civic sphere. It also allowed for the construction of rhetoric that controlled the type of woman who could gain the most visibility through the few religious offices available to women. For example, as Apollodorus describes the qualities that should disqualify Phano for the principal religious office in the Anthesteria, through negative implication, he describes the characteristics expected of a proper Greek woman. The priestess or other major ritual participant was a spectacle, to be beheld by the Greek public, and as such she needed to embody and reflect the male-propagated morals and ideologies of the *polis*. This is similar to the inclusion of young girls in religious festivals; for example, it was considered a mark of honor to be one of the maidens who wove the *peplos* for Athena Parthenos or otherwise prepared or oversaw religious implements.⁹⁷ This was true to the extent that the famous exclusion of Harmodius' younger sister from the Panathenaic procession, which implicitly questioned her virginity, led to the assassination of Hipparchus and the eventual overthrow of the Pisistratid tyranny.⁹⁸ This episode was a turning point in Greek politics and serves to highlight how damaging it could be to be even touched by the suspicion of sexual activity outside of marriage. What is important is that the women and girls chosen to have these prestigious religious offices

⁹⁷ Cf. the women in the *Lysistrata* bragging about their involvement in numerous religious festivals. (*Lys.* 638-47)

⁹⁸ Pomeroy 202: "This rejection was an unforgivable insult, since only virgins were qualified to carry the baskets that held the knife and other equipment for the sacrifice."

were expected to represent the dominant social ideology, thereby sending an implicit message to the rest of the female populace as strategically selected *exempla*.⁹⁹

The aforementioned rituals did not only have a public form, and therefore indicate the complexity of ritual space and activity. There were female-only ritual activities associated with the Panathenaic procession; the Arrephoria, for example, included private preparations for what was required in the public ritual.¹⁰⁰ The festival of Artemis Brauronia, which seems to have been limited to pre-marital girls, seems to have consisted of the maidens 'playing the bear' to appease Artemis, which was important to the state as a whole.¹⁰¹ These festivals, along with others, were available only to women, so women controlled that specific space to the extent that men were barred from entry. Furthermore, certain rituals were conducted outside the physical space of the city, although the participants still would have been operating inside the Greek socio-cultural constructs. It was necessary for women to function within the mechanisms of male control, fashioning them to their own intentions in order to express their agency.

Another example of such a festival is the Haloa, a festival to Dionysus which seems to have had a segment open only to women. Our only source on the Haloa is a *scholion* of Lucian, and thereby is a much later version and interpretation of the events, but the separation of women from men seems to have been acceptable to the culture of religion. Sexuality seems to have been an inherent, if not necessarily central, part of these rites, and although the scholiast adopts a moralizing tone, he indicates that a priestess urged the

⁹⁹ This is supported by Apollodorus' testimony (59. 81-3) that Theogenes, the *archon basileus*, divorced Phano once he realized that she may have been an adulteress and her status as a citizen was in doubt.

¹⁰⁰ Mikalson 2005: 148-9.

¹⁰¹ Mikalson 2005: 151. Mikalson further suggests that participation in the Arkteia may have been required of every girl before marriage, though this is unclear.

female participants to commit adultery (κλεψιγαμίας). Within the κλεψιγαμίας ritual, women were literally intended to 'steal a marriage', which indicated a desire to take control of the boundaries of marriage. This was a part of the larger festival which celebrates Dionysus as a god of wine, which was a gift to humanity, in part because of its function as a sexual stimulant. Wine seems to have been a central component of the Anthesteria as well, although sources are scarce and contradictory, which seems to indicate that sexuality was celebrated at some level at that festival as well.¹⁰² The evidence for what occurred at these rituals is complex, varied, or even severely lacking, but there nevertheless emerges a general picture of the culture of ritual in ancient Greece; namely that there were aspects of ritual allotted to women in which there is evidence of sexual nuance. The manner in which male authors portray the negative aspects or outcomes of these festivals is intended to substantiate their need to control female activity in these spheres, as in society in general, to the extent possible.

The misuse of aspects of ritual practice is shown by both Lysias and Apollodorus as something that could be manipulated by women in their commission of adultery. Women's self-fashioning as conspicuous figures within the ritual setting was something that men – and indeed, the legal codes – tried to prevent. More explicitly dangerous to marriage and society as a whole, however, was the perception that a 'dishonored' woman taking part in a civic ritual or festival had more concrete civic repercussions. These portrayals, therefore, seem to be designed to legitimize the legal ramifications of adultery and the overarching social structures that were designed to curb the sexuality, activity, and mobility of women in general.

¹⁰² The day that seems to have comprised the 'opening of the jars' – double entendre?

IV. Conclusion

Why was it necessary that the male constituency of Athens attempt to control the social space to this extent? This problem seems to have been motivated by the belief in female seducibility, which corresponds with the generally problematic representation of persuasion and beguilement in the ancient world. The ability to speak persuasively seems to have had a complex reception in classical Greece. Ancient philosophers separated them into two groups: those who could persuade people of what was just or moral (τὸ δίκαιον) and those who could use seductive speech to persuade someone that anything was true.¹⁰³ Members of the latter group could be described as a *goēs* (γόης), a charismatic person capable of convincing people of many different ideas or courses of action. One of the main and potentially most destructive characteristics of a *goēs* is that he “manages souls through spellbinding words.”¹⁰⁴ Interestingly enough, this shares common ground with the attraction spells found in the curse tablets, which fall under the broad category of *goeteia*.¹⁰⁵ More specifically, just as a sophist could twist somebody’s soul to his own purposes, so could a practitioner of magic.

This also holds true of the portrayal of seduction in literature. Euphiletus, for example, claims that “those [i.e., adulterers] who use persuasion therefore corrupted their victims’ souls” (τοὺς δὲ πείσαντας οὕτως αὐτῶν τὰς ψυχὰς διαφθείρειν, *Lys.* 1.33), equating Eratosthenes’ corruption (διαφθείρω) of his wife with a perversion of her soul and his *oikos*. Spell-binding persuasion is also present in the descriptions of adultery’s

¹⁰³ Gellrich notes the similarities between philosophers and sophists, citing their shared ability to lead the soul of others through charismatic words; de Romilly 1975; Gellrich 1994; Dickie 2001; Ogden 2009.

¹⁰⁴ Gellrich 1994: 277.

¹⁰⁵ Dickie 2001: 405.

outcomes. Neaera and Phano are cast as having fought to win Phrastor's soul (ψυχαγωγία; Apollodorus 59.55) through flattery and cajolery; the end result is that Phrastor accepts a child whose citizen status is in doubt. Apollodorus carefully describes the child's situation, claiming that the boy was the son of Phano, who returned to her mother from Phrastor's house while still pregnant.¹⁰⁶ He never claims that the child is Phrastor's son, implying both that the child may not have been Phrastor's and re-emphasizing his assumption that Phano imitated her mother's licentious behavior. Medea similarly charms nearly every character in Euripides' play in order to achieve her nefarious ends; namely to carry out vengeance against Jason's adultery with Creusa. Medea herself is a figure with strong connections to magic, indicating that her knowledge of the magical arts and that of persuasive speech are intimately interwoven. She further blames Jason of sophistry, saying that 'he stops at nothing, confident in his tongue's power to adorn evil.' (γλώσσηι γὰρ ἀύχων τᾶδικ' εὔ περιστελεῖν τολμᾷ πανουργεῖν, *Med.* 582-3). The fact that Jason appears as a relatively disempowered, weak character indicates that, unlike Medea's persuasive speech, his is ineffective. More specifically, his 'seduction' of Medea is impotent in the face of her superior rhetorical and magical powers.

The problem of seduction and seducibility is further tied in with the presentation of love in Greek literature, which commonly integrated persuasion and enchantment.¹⁰⁷ Seduction of women in particular had negative implications for chastity and loyalty. Cristiana Franco's work highlights the inherent problems in the male conception of marriage: namely, that a woman was seduced into marriage, and the paranoia stemmed

¹⁰⁶ Apollodorus 59.56.

¹⁰⁷ Gellrich 1994: 279

from the fact that a woman seduced once could be enticed by another man.¹⁰⁸ It is for this reason that fidelity was so important: in being (legitimately) 'seduced' into marriage with her husband, she is, in a sense, switching alliances from her father's *oikos* to that of her husband. Furthermore, the fact that women were an indispensable part of the household because of the procreative capacity made men uneasy; they were "distinct from male humans yet intrusively situated in the heart of humanity."¹⁰⁹ Their reproductive and epistemic abilities regarding the legitimacy of heirs were the source of this strain.

The portrayal of adultery in the rhetorical sources has often been limited to the study of the legal excerpts of the adultery laws that are cited by the orators. Investigating the ritual frame of these accounts of adultery has shown the similarities in themes, motifs, and even ideologies to the portrayal of adultery in other genres. The women featured in these speeches, although stylized, are nevertheless shown as operating within the male-structured social frame in order to assert themselves and some form of control over their situation. They are shown to negotiate space and setting – most notably funeral space by Euphiletus' wife and ritual space by Phano and Eratosthenes' mother – and their conspicuousness within these spaces is cast in a negative light. Male authors further show how they believed that female adornment played an important role in the corruption of ritual space, since it allows the women to make themselves more conspicuous within these male-sanctioned settings. Domestic space is similarly affected, and tactile agency and handiwork play an important role in female expression within this sphere. Many of the legal and social codes were created in order to control female operation within space,

¹⁰⁸ Franco 2014: 102-3.

¹⁰⁹ Franco 2014: 158.

whether domestic, religious, physical, or even genealogical. There was a systematic attempt to control female agency and expression, but more importantly to assert reproductive control over women. Women channeled their response to this through tactility, spectacle, the manipulation of space and time, which included the reappropriation of space (epistemic, gendered, and ritual), which is why, in spite of this overarching male control, women were still fashioned as potentially threatening members of society. Although the adultery narratives within these sources were written by men, we are nevertheless able to glean a more nuanced understanding of how women could react and respond to these situations, especially when there is an attempt to ostracize the wife from the *oikos*, rendering her a foreigner to her home – both her house and her city at the same time.

4

INTER-SPECIES ADULTERY IN EURIPIDES' *CRETANS*: HYBRIDITY AND CIVIC REPRESENTATION IN ATHENIAN THOUGHT

I. Introduction

In this chapter, I focus on the instances of adultery, or presumed adultery, which include sexual contact between humans and animals. Relationships between animals and humans are well documented in Greek literature. For example, the close bond between Odysseus and his faithful old hound, Argus, even after years apart, indicates a Homeric view of a strong bond between humans and animals.¹ Sexual relationships between humans and animals were also present in the mythical imagination, though such representations have received little scholarly attention. Different cultures have explored the mythical and narrative potential of the theme of bestiality; this is especially true of the Medieval Period following the onset of Christianity. One of the very few sources that investigates bestiality in the Classical Greek world focuses on bestial rape, and as such

¹ *Od.* 17.290ff. Cristiana Franco's research investigates the bond between humans and dogs specifically, because dogs, which had the most intimate association with domestic life, occupied a unique place in the household. Animals have a wide range of functions within human existence, and therefore varying levels of contact with humans. This leads to a hierarchy within the animal kingdom: for example, dogs live in the house with their masters and therefore have a closer relation to them than draft animals, which often occupy a space farther away from the house. Franco 2014: 15.

analyzes the many unions between the gods, often in animal form, and mortal women.² My interest is instead on how adultery conditioned human relations and socio-legal codes; therefore, these god-human relations are of little use to the present inquiry. Despite the clearly delineated spaces, functions, and capacities of animals, their portrayal within literature is rather complex; different aspects of their characters are employed depending on the portrayal desired by the author. Dogs, for example, are paradigmatically loyal and obedient; yet to call someone a dog is a grave insult, even in contemporary cultures.³

These sometimes contradictory facets of animals' characters are often employed metaphorically within the literary context. Analogies between humans and animals were common in antiquity; men could be described as lions, as a metaphor for courage and strength, or even as wolves, which had a "strong, straightforward, independent, and steady nature."⁴ By contrast, the comparison between women and animals is often not favorable.⁵ The lyric poet, Anacreon, for example, refigures a woman as a horse to be tamed and subjugated.⁶ The Nurse in Euripides' *Medea* describes her as casting a 'bullish eye' (ὄμμα ταυρουμένην; *Med.* 92) at her children, intimating that she fears for their safety. Helen's self-abuse in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* takes a similarly animal cast; she calls herself 'dog-eyed' (κυνώπις), capitalizing upon the negative traits of dogs.⁷ The comparison between women and dogs insinuates notions of weakness, since women in antiquity, like dogs, were often portrayed as "weak, fickle, incapable of self-control and autonomy,

² In Latin literature, more stories of zoophilic unions remain, but often the animal is portrayed as the party with which the erotic desire originates.

³ Franco 2014: Ch. 1.

⁴ Franco 2014: 12; 159.

⁵ Counterargument: Euripides' *Bacchae*, adherents shown as benevolent animals, then go wild upon their discovery. This animal depiction is not positive in the sense that the actions do not befit them.

⁶ Anacreon PMG 417. For further discussion, see Griffith 2006: 325-6.

⁷ *Il.* 3.180, *Od.* 4.145.

excluded from the manly morality of open conflict and given instead to devious and treacherous action.”⁸ Because of the close human-animal affiliation, the relationships and boundaries between humans and animals are common themes in Classical literature, and the instances in which these barriers are breached help to more acutely define them.⁹ Literature explores these themes, often blurring them by equating people to animals or, rather less frequently, by describing sexual contact between humans and animal figures. The similarities between a married woman’s station and that of horses or other draught animals have already been discussed; it is striking, therefore, that this analogy between women and animals did not lend itself to more frequent depictions of bestial sexual relations.¹⁰

Perhaps the best known and most fully elaborated story of bestiality in antiquity is that of Pasiphaë and the bull, a union which resulted in the birth of the famed hybrid creature, later called the Minotaur. This story represents a unique instance of bestiality in Classical Greek literature; it not only showcases a rare instance of ‘true bestiality’, it also casts the female partner as the instigator of interspecies sexual contact, which is contrary to most legal and stereotypical representations of adultery. As a result, Pasiphaë is often depicted as lacking morality and self control rather than the victim of divine retribution. Her tale includes not only bestial sexual contact, but more importantly, an adulterous union between Pasiphaë and the Cretan bull. At the time of her union with the bull, Pasiphaë was married to King Minos of Crete, which increases the severity of her actions. Furthermore, Pasiphaë is portrayed as the aggressor, even though she was made to fall in love with the

⁸ Franco 2014: 159.

⁹ Williams 2013: 201.

¹⁰ Griffith 2006: 324.

bull by Poseidon, and the product of that union was a man-bull hybrid. Although the *coitus* between the bull and the Cretan queen was described as a divine affliction, Euripides, in his fragmentary *Cretans*, problematizes the myth through Pasiphaë's speech and actions. According to the extant fragments, there seems to have been an emphasis placed on the neglect or transgression of ritual, in this case, by Minos. As explored in Chapter 1, typical tragic narrative depicts female ritual transgression and its negative repercussions for men; in this case, however, Euripides inverts tragic conventions by stressing that it is the *male* neglect of proper ritual action that results in Pasiphaë's punishment. Pasiphaë also appropriates male argumentation and attempts to justify her adultery by arguing that Minos' ritual neglect is worse than her transgression, albeit rather unconvincingly. In addition, Pasiphaë's offense resulted in a permanent physical manifestation of her union with the bull – namely, the Minotaur.

Another mythical tradition that features adultery and zoophilic unions is that of Centaurs, which includes the oft-represented Centauromachy, the story of attempted rape by the Centaurs at the wedding of Perithoos. In this instance, hybrid animals (rather than *de facto* beasts) are the aggressors, but as in the story of Pasiphaë and the bull, adultery is a repeated feature of the mythical narrative. Even the genesis of the Centaurs includes a complex instance of adultery, which connects the Centaurs to the repudiation of marriage, and therefore civil order, from their inception.¹¹ This is further supported in stories of individual Centaurs; for example, the Centaur Nessus' attempt to rape the newly-married Deianira in Sophocles' *Trachiniae*. The myth of the Centaurs and their exploits includes hybrids by necessity, although in this case, it is the hybrid creatures who perpetrate the

¹¹ Pindar, *Pythian* 2.21-48; DuBois 1991: 28.

sexual contact with women. The story of the Centauromachy in particular is frequently represented in the extant material sources, since it was found in the decoration of several temples that occupied a central location in both Greek and Athenian socio-religious space; these include the sculptures on the south metopes of the Parthenon in Athens, the west pediment of the temple of Zeus at Olympia, and the frieze of the temple of Apollo at Bassai, and a painting within the Hephaestion in the Athenian *agora*.¹² Within these depictions of the Centaurs, it is clear that they were a species with a malleable identity and status in society; in mid-fifth century representations, for example, the Centaurs' humanity is emphasized in order to adhere to the ideological scheme of the temple, and therefore of the city.¹³ In general, the physical conspicuity of the mythical reference shows its status as a means of communicating official ideology, since these depictions informed the current socio-political context.¹⁴ Portrayals of the Centaurs, hybrid creatures who were often depicted as raping women and disrupting social order, are often understood as imparting anti-Persian rhetoric. In addition, I contend, following the research of David Castriota, that the depiction of Centaurs on civic architecture symbolizes "man's internal struggle to suppress his own bestial tendencies."¹⁵ More generally, representations of the Centaurs form part of a rhetoric of Athenian purity, both with respect to birth and ideology, and further show the negative impacts of their hybrid status to Athenian society in the 5th century B.C.E.

The genesis of the Minotaur and the race of the Centaurs introduces another problem; namely, that of hybridity. Pericles' citizenship law of 451/0 B.C.E. indicates that

¹² Castriota calls the Hephaestion the Theseion; for more on this, see Castriota 1992: 33ff.

¹³ Castriota 1992: 9; Schwab in Neils 2005: 178; *et al.*

¹⁴ Castriota 1992: 12.

¹⁵ Castriota 1992: 152.

hybridity – and racial (ethnic?) hybridity in particular – was a problem even in Classical Athens. By stipulating that only children with two Athenian parents could be citizens, the legislation effectively outlawed marriage between Athenians and members of other *poleis*.¹⁶ In essence, “hybridity and/or fusion has no place in either the discourse or practice of Athenian citizenship,” which indicated how essential both racial – and by necessity, human – purity were to Athenian ideology.¹⁷ Most contemporary studies of hybridity tend to focus on racial hybridity rather than interspecies hybridity, but these theoretical discussions of hybridity shed light on what it means to be a hybrid and on the potential problems that hybridity can pose. A hybrid implies “contrafusion and disjunction (or even separate development) as well as fusion and assimilation,” and this complexity is present within the wide range of descriptions of the Minotaur in particular.¹⁸ As John Hutnyk explains in his discussion of contemporary racial and hereditary hybridity, the implications of hybridity in general are exclusionary: “the fear is not of winged goat-men but of black people claiming white privileges thorough the spurious accident of ‘paternity’.”¹⁹ This is similar to what is at stake in Athenian ideology: a desire that Athenian property and cultural capital be possessed by Athenians alone. Because ethnic purity was an issue for Athenians at the time the *Cretans* was produced, which could have been as early as 438 B.C.E., it is natural that Euripides would take it a step further and use an interspecies hybrid figure to emphasize the destructive qualities of the implicit impurity created by the Periclean legislation. The depiction of the Centaurs in Pindar’s second Pythian ode and in

¹⁶ Lape 2010: 23.

¹⁷ Lape 2010: 26.

¹⁸ Young 1995: 18.

¹⁹ Hutnyk 2005: 90.

the sculptural remains conveys a similar message.²⁰ After all, the contemporary concerns of the *polis* manifested themselves in tragedy and civic art despite the fact that they used the mythical past as a frame for their action.²¹

In this chapter, I explore interspecies adultery and the neglect or perversion of ritual or sacred domain, along with the themes of hybridity, tactility, spectacle, and the manipulation of biological space. I then investigate Centaurs as an interesting counterpoint to the Pasiphaë myth, since these hybrid creatures occupy a broad spectrum, including opposite extremes, seen through the figures of Cheiron and Nessus. Pasiphaë's action, it seems, is afforded less complexity and is framed as having more severe repercussions than deeds of the Centaurs. Finally, I investigate the representation of Cassandra in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*. While the *Agamemnon* itself presents a sustained narrative, Cassandra's speech is unintelligible to the Chorus and is fragmented in the sense that it is unable to convey comprehensible meaning. Furthermore, Cassandra, whom Clytemnestra characterizes as her husband's lover, is bestialized, refashioned as an animal both because of her incoherence and her new status as a slave. I argue that Aeschylus' portrayal of Cassandra renders her a hybrid, which is done in several different ways, and this affects both her portrayal in the text and her reception by the Chorus, and perhaps even by the Athenian audience.

²⁰ There is a chronological gap between the works of Euripides, Pindar, and the architectural remains that I discuss. The similarities in depiction across time and space suggest that there was an ongoing identity struggle for Athenians.

²¹ Beer 2004: 3. For the problematic dating of the *Cretans*, see Collard & Cropp 1995b: 58.

II. The Myth of Pasiphaë and the Bull

The sexual love between Pasiphaë and the bull, which produced the legendary Minotaur, captured the imagination of ancient authors and artists alike. Much of the ancient literary material that remains about this union is found in Roman sources; there are however several fragmentary accounts, including fragments from a classical tragedy in which Euripides investigates this bestial union and its consequences. The story of Pasiphaë presents a strikingly unique situation in Classical Greek literature in that the sexual contact between Pasiphaë and the otherwise anonymous bull is, in contrast to other depictions of illicit love, orchestrated by Pasiphaë. In other stories, it is common that the vector of desire is directed from animal to human, rather than the opposite; and it is in this vein that Pasiphaë's story becomes increasingly atypical.²² A less considered aspect of the story is that Pasiphaë is married to King Minos of Crete, which adds adultery to her transgressions. Also noteworthy is that Pasiphaë goes to great lengths in order to create a situation in which physical consummation is even possible. Enlisting the help of master architect Daedalus, Pasiphaë's betrayal of Minos goes farther than mere adultery; not only does she actively attempt to turn her husband into a cuckold, she compounds the act by committing adultery with an animal. It is further significant that Daedalus, Pasiphaë's accomplice, is an Athenian, exiled for committing murder. His role in the commission of Pasiphaë's adulterous, bestial activity has civic repercussions for Athens, symbolically reinforcing the inherent problem with hybrid offspring within the Athenian context and showing the dangers – and resulting destruction to the Athenians in particular – that could come from these hybrid unions.

²² Williams 2013: 255.

The focus of this section is the little-explored portrayal of ‘true bestiality’ and its implications in Greek literary and material culture as shown primarily through Euripides’ portrayal of Pasiphaë and the Minotaur. In contrast to the Classical period, discussions of interspecies sexual contact seem to have gathered momentum after the advent of Christianity.²³ This resulted in the forceful rejection of any Greco-Roman authors or stories that treated the subject of zoophilic love, as well as severe legal and social ramifications for those who became involved in such unions themselves. From Latin authors such as Aelian, who often utilized classical sources as a supply for his own literary material, the early church fathers saw a picture of animals that was not altogether different from humans, especially, their capacity for ‘human’ emotions. In an attempt to reject such similarities, legislation which condemned bestiality outright was created.²⁴ Attributions of blame to the animals reflected the ambiguity of these ideologies, and likely led to the eventual disintegration of the idea that animals and humans were fundamentally different. For the Classical context, Robson convincingly argues that bestial myths helped define sexual norms for women overall, claiming that “a woman must submit to an appropriate male, and must not herself be the instigator of the sexual act.”²⁵ Pasiphaë fails to abide by both of the aforementioned criteria. Not only does she instigate sexual contact with the bull, the bull is not an ‘appropriate male’ for two reasons; firstly, it is not human and therefore cannot be

²³ Joyce Salisbury provides a succinct explanation for the onset of such examinations: “In the course of this identity formation, they [i.e., Christians] repudiated many classical beliefs, including attitudes toward sexuality, entertainment, bathing, and other social and cultural practices. In this process, they also rejected a classical view that saw humans and animals as closely related, with plenty of opportunity for crossing the borders between the species.” (Salisbury 2011:3)

²⁴ In some cases even the animal participant was put to death. It is striking in that these laws paradoxically equate the blame, and therefore the capacity for intent, of animals and humans in a way that blurred the separation between humans and animals which the church fathers so desired to emphasize. (Salisbury 2011: 74).

²⁵ Robson in Deacy & Pierce 1997: 81.

appropriate as a mate. Secondly, a fact perhaps less considered, Pasiphaë is directly spurning sexual contact with her husband, Minos, in favor of an adulterous, bestial union with the bull. Pasiphaë's story, therefore, is not only a story of zoophilic love but also of adultery, even though the bestial aspect of the union seems to have captured more attention by ancient and contemporary scholars alike.

In order to highlight the unique qualities of the Pasiphaë myth, I first investigate Euripides' fragmentary *Cretans*, focusing on how Euripides portrays Pasiphaë's relationships with Minos and the bull, as well as the ramifications of each of these unions. I then explore other ancient versions of Pasiphaë's story, *comparanda* from other forms of literature, and accounts of monstrous offspring in order to contextualize Euripides' play within the socio-cultural norms of his time period and, where necessary, how these were received and reimagined in the Roman period. It is important to restate that these representations of bestial adultery were performed within a specific Athenian civic context. If the 438 B.C.E. dating of the play is correct, the play was produced a mere twelve years after the Periclean citizenship legislation, when the purity of the Athenian citizen body was fashioned as having great importance.²⁶ The importance of this purity was stressed through tragic representations of impure objects and beings, with the emphasis placed on the difference, and inferiority, to the 'anterior pure'. Pasiphaë, deviating from this legislated purity through unsanctioned sexual contact, was furthermore straying from her role as a wife and mother. Her union and procreation with the bull mirrors her previous union with Minos; as his wife, she bore him at least three children successfully. Her redoubling of the

²⁶ The point holds whether the play was produced in the 430s or the 420s. Legislation does not necessarily bring about rapid social change, and during the Peloponnesian War, which began in 431 B.C.E., Athenian racial purity would have been all the more important (see Perikles' funeral oration in Thuc. 2.35-46 as an example of the benefits/cultural capital held by Athenians alone).

natural course of a wife and mother marks a failed attempt to return to her younger, newly married self and shows how deviation from Minos 'pure' lineage proved problematic. In particular, I focus on neglect and transgression of ritual and marriage, tactility, which surprisingly differs from the conventional tragic portrayal of tactility, and Pasiphaë's dubiously successful control of her own biological space in her desire to copulate with the bull.

a. Euripides' Cretans

One of the earliest extant literary sources for the highly problematized union between Pasiphaë and the bull is Euripides' *Cretans*, a fragmentary play which seems to have included the following key events: the report of Pasiphaë's desire for the bull and Daedalus' subsequent construction of the wooden bull, the birth of the Minotaur and Minos' realization of the Minotaur's paternity, and Minos' imprisonment and intended execution of Pasiphaë. Minos' plan to kill Pasiphaë was a Euripidean invention, perhaps intended to be indicative of both the seriousness of Pasiphaë's crime as well as the degree to which it, and the Minotaur, dishonored Minos.²⁷ Ancient commentators of the myth often wished to account for how Pasiphaë came to desire the bull, citing the possibility that she angered one of two separate deities – either Poseidon or Aphrodite – but what remains of Euripides' play seems to forgo this line of inquiry, focusing instead on the effects of Pasiphaë's bestial infidelity.²⁸ Although the play did not appear to focus unduly on the external cause of

²⁷ Collard & Cropp 1995b: 54.

²⁸ Apollodorus, at *Bibl.* 3.1.3-4, similarly focuses on how Minos disobeyed divine wishes, which resulted in Pasiphaë's love for the bull as punishment.

Pasiphaë's desire for the bull, Pasiphaë certainly blames Minos for his failure to show proper piety to Poseidon. On the surface, this can be read as Pasiphaë's attempt to deflect blame from herself to Minos, but a more nuanced reading of the extant fragments, and Pasiphaë's dialogue in particular, shows that Euripides reframes Pasiphaë's guilt with more subtlety. The few contemporary scholars who have studied this play often focus on Pasiphaë's morality and her seemingly unsuccessful attempts to assign blame to Minos.²⁹ Otherwise, Pasiphaë's union with the bull is merely described as monstrous, both in and of itself and because it produced interspecies offspring.³⁰

The first extant references to the Minotaur within the play do indeed focus on its hybridity, describing it as an entity of mixed form (σύμμεικτον; 472a), one in which 'two natures are mingled, that of bull and man' (ταύρου μέμεικται καὶ βροτοῦ διπλῆι φύσει; 472bc).³¹ At this point, the Minotaur is yet an infant (βρέφος; 472a), and is treated, quite understandably, as a completely unknown quantity. The hideous outward appearance of the infant is mirrored in the monstrosity of his parents' union, i.e., Pasiphaë's human form and the bull's animal form, but also serves as a permanent physical manifestation of her actions. Especially in this case, the production of a hybrid is representative of transgressive sexual activity.³² The Minotaur, therefore, is a permanent spectacle, a constant reminder of Pasiphaë's deed and Minos' subsequent marginalization within his own marriage, by virtue of its very form. This child, as the illegitimate son of a queen, would have been conspicuous under any circumstances, but since it physically embodied Pasiphaë's act, it was subjected

²⁹ Robson in Deacy and Peirce 1997: 81; Reckford 1974: 322; *et al.*

³⁰ Williams 2013: 230; Robson in Deacy and Peirce 1997: 81.

³¹ The designation 'Minotaur' here is an anachronism; this name doesn't seem to have been in use until Palaephatus, although it is possible that the name was found in the missing excerpts of the *Cretans*.

³² Young 1995: 104.

to invisibility by its imprisonment in the labyrinth. The Minotaur, in a perennial prison, becomes conspicuous in its absence, meaning that it is imagined rather than seen and its representation is subject to the imagination. In the Middle Ages, there is a similar story of an 'Irish Minotaur', a half-man, half-bull who was allowed to live amongst the inhabitants of the castle where he was born.³³ Ridiculed and rejected, it was despised as a "discordant mixture of identities, of differences not amenable to easy synthesis."³⁴ In this case, the Irish Minotaur was a myth likely borne of negative English attitudes toward the Irish during the Middle Ages, and it more specifically frames sexual proclivities in order to portray them negatively.³⁵ The Cretan Minotaur is a similar amalgamation of individualities: it is "simultaneously both and neither of its parents," thereby existing in a realm where its identity is both malleable and indefinable.³⁶ This inability to define the Minotaur represents Euripides' exploitation of Greek mythology in order to portray contemporary Athenian ideology about purity and racial exclusivity.

It is also significant that the unidentified speaker of fragment 472a further describes the baby Minotaur as made 'in vain' or, according to Collard and Cropp's translation, 'without purpose' (κάποφώλιον), signaling the fact that this creature has no place in either of the worlds to which it belongs.³⁷ This quality of being born in vain, or at least to an ambiguous status, is further borne out during the Nurse's conversation with Minos, in which Minos interrogates the Nurse as to the corporeal qualities of the infant, as though to gauge the humanity of the Minotaur by an examination of its physical form. From the

³³ Cohen 2006: 88-90.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Cohen 2006: 99.

³⁷ Collard & Cropp 1995b: *ad loc.*

Nurse, Minos learns that the Minotaur has a ‘bull’s head resting on its chest’ (στέ]ρνοις ἔφεδρον κρᾶτα τ]αύρειον φέρει; 472bc.31), that it walks on two feet (δίπους; 472bc.33) – in response to Minos’ question of whether it walks on four legs or two (τετρ]ασκελής γὰρ ἢ δίβαμ[ος ἔρχεται; 472bc.32) – and that it has a tail (κέρκον; 472bc.35). The use of the term ‘four-footed’ (τετρασκελής) evokes images of distinctly animal creatures or other hybrid beings, as it is found in Euripides’ much-later *Heracles* as a descriptor of the Centaurs and is uncommon elsewhere.³⁸ It is as though the head and ambulatory capacities are prime identifiers of the humanity of a being. Unlike Centaurs, who have a human head and therefore are capable of some degree of human reasoning capabilities, the Minotaur’s bull head likely intends to classify his thought processes as markedly animal.³⁹ This inquiry into the humanity of the Minotaur is reminiscent of Sophocles’ *Oedipus Tyrannos*, which similarly investigates the Protagorean maxim “Man is the measure of all things.”⁴⁰ The image of the Minotaur that the Nurse and Minos weave together is one of paradox; the infant certainly has human qualities, but the reference to a bull’s head and a tail clearly and physically demarcates the baby’s status as subhuman. The hybrid nature of the creature is not static; hybridity in and of itself can be employed to describe many categories, and this process of definition is occurring as Minos questions specific aspects of the baby’s humanity.⁴¹ The result is that the line between human and animal is blurred within the Minotaur itself.

One of the main ways in which this blurring between human and animals makes itself the most evident is the belief that it was possible for human-animal intercourse to

³⁸ Eur. *Her.* 181, 1272.

³⁹ Nash 1984: 274.

⁴⁰ Beer 2010: 98ff.

⁴¹ Hutnyk 2005: 80.

generate offspring. The female body, in this case, is itself refigured as a vessel of monstrosity by its sheer capability of producing offspring with fused natures.⁴² In the Medieval period, women were thought capable of giving birth to half-humans as well as other types of monstrous progeny (i.e., those with externally manifested birth defects), which Christian ideology seems to have turned from anti-female rhetoric into literal fears.⁴³ Since the female body is the sole site of gestation, any irregularity found in a child was referred back to the *locus* of its generation; as Sarah Miller argues, “monsters shed light on the secrets of women; teratology illuminates gynecology.”⁴⁴ The female body, however, was pervasively viewed as a source of destruction.⁴⁵ It furthermore highlights the fear of how vital women were to society as well as the increasing need to control and legislate the female body to the extent possible. The dominant male culture in the Medieval Period, as in the Classical Period, cast female reproductive capability as inherently corruptible and dangerous despite its indispensability to human procreation.⁴⁶ What began

⁴² In such a tradition, it was strongly felt that the female womb was solely responsible for producing human monsters, i.e., those born with abnormalities, even without sexual contact with animals or demonic forces in animal form.

⁴³ Salisbury 2011: 76; Miller 2010: 144ff.

⁴⁴ Miller 2010: 86.

⁴⁵ This is likely why there was such a strong anti-feminist sentiment in this period, which appeared alongside the increasing necessity of celibacy among clergymen. Alongside theories of negative impacts of womb positioning, menstruation, and universal phenomena, a later commentator even hypothesizes that the mere thoughts of women at the point of conception could affect the form of the fetus. This ironically affords women more control over the production of children and the physical forms that these children could take, which is similar to the paradoxical view, discussed above, that animals (in addition to humans) had the capacity of intent in bestial unions. (Miller 2010: 7, 86-8).

⁴⁶ Salisbury 2011: 77-9. By the late Medieval Period, the belief that anthropomorphic demons, in the form of *incubi* or *succubae*, could impregnate women arises alongside the view that the devil and his followers took animal forms that were capable of sexual contact with women.

as a social belief in the Classical Period transformed into dogma, supported by religious texts, social norms, and accompanying legislation, in the Medieval Period.⁴⁷

Minos concludes his exchange with the Nurse with an intriguing query: “is it nursed by its mother’s breasts, or by that of a bull” (μαστ[ός] δὲ μ[η]τρὸς ἢ βοῶς σ[] ; 472bc)? This question probes the Minotaur’s very humanity – and at the same time, its animality – by questioning the practicalities of its feeding and the source of its food, while at the same time implicitly challenging Pasiphaë’s capacity as a mother. The term μαστός (‘female breast’) is used frequently in Euripidean tragedy, most commonly in reference to breastfeeding or the bond that nursing was thought to create between mother and child. The other two classical Greek tragedians, on the other hand, use the term only a few times each. Most striking, and most useful to my understanding of the term’s significance, is one of the three instances of μαστός employed by Aeschylus in his *Choephoroi*.⁴⁸ At line 897, Clytemnestra implores Orestes to ‘respect/regard [her] breast’ (ἀΐδεσαι μαστόν), which nourished him as an infant; essentially, she invokes the bond between mother and child, which provided life for baby Orestes, in order to try to persuade him to spare her life following her murder of Agamemnon. This scene is referred to in various instances by Euripides in his *Orestes* and *Electra*, thereby reinforcing the idea that breastfeeding created a powerful bond between mother and child. Larissa Bonfante, in her discussion of breastfeeding in Classical art, claims that wealthy Athenian women would have had wet nurses, which would result in a weaker bond between wealthy mothers and their

⁴⁷ This view further supports the implicit assumption that humans and animals were not fundamentally different, and therefore legislation and social consequence was required in order to keep the two species separate.

⁴⁸ The other two instances appear at Aesch. *Choe.* 531 and 545, and give details about Clytemnestra's dream that she is suckling a snake and blood runs from her breast instead of milk.

children.⁴⁹ While it is possible, and maybe even likely, that this was the case, there does not seem to be any concrete evidence as to how prevalent this practice was, especially in the eras that predated the 4th century B.C.E.⁵⁰ Far more evidence for the use of wet nurses comes from the Roman period, which is to be expected given how much more clearly the social strata were defined.⁵¹ What remains central is, whether or not it is symbolic, this maternal connection was utilized, or even exploited, by Classical authors. An Etruscan *kylix*, dating to the turn of the 4th century B.C.E., depicts Pasiphaë nursing a baby Minotaur, indicating that the reception of the myth in Italy attributed somewhat normal maternity to Pasiphaë and typical baby-hood to the Minotaur.⁵² This dilemma does not seem to have been solved in the Classical period in Greece, however, and it is equally possible that the Greeks would have rejected the idea of Pasiphaë nursing the Minotaur.

To this end, Socrates, in Plato's *Republic*, claims that denying the bond between mother and child can be achieved by 'using every contrivance so that no mother will recognize her child' (πᾶσαν μηχανὴν μηχανώμενοι ὅπως μηδεμία τὸ αὐτῆς αἰσθήσεται; 5.460c8-d1), mostly brought about by the use of wet nurses. Similarly, Euripides' accounts of the conquered Trojan women clearly showcase an intimacy between mother and child, usually ending with the child being 'torn from the mother's breast' as an indicator of the pain the separation causes.⁵³ This is intensified in Pasiphaë's case, since it is altogether

⁴⁹ Bonfante in Koloski-Ostrow and Lyons 1997.

⁵⁰ Bonfante uses an excerpt from Lysias 1 to support her argument, claiming that Euphiletus was not a wealthy enough man to have been able to support a wet nurse for his wife. There is, however, no explicit indication that the absence of a wet nurse in this case was unusual or suspect. More compelling evidence, however, is the inclusion of a freedwoman's career (in this case, a wet nurse) in a list of freedwomen from the 4th century B.C.E. (Lefkowitz and Fant 2005: 221).

⁵¹ For more see Lefkowitz and Fant 2005; Pomeroy 1995.

⁵² Brendel 1995: 344. Paris *Kylix* 1066.

⁵³ Eur. *Hecuba* 142; Eur. *Troïades* 570. A negative example of this is found in Euripides' *Ion*, in which repeated remarks, from both Ion and Creusa, reveal that Creusa never breastfed Ion, and it is this that reinforces the

possible that she would be unable to nurse the Minotaur, even if she wished to do so. Moreover, there is a tension between this maternal element and the more sexual quality of the breast. One such instance, found in Euripides' *Andromache*, highlights the more sexualized function of the female breasts. Peleus accuses Menelaus of allowing Helen to remain unpunished once he saw her breasts (ἀλλ', ὡς ἐσεῖδες μαστόν, ἐκβαλὼν ξίφος φίλημ' ἐδέξω, προδότιν αἰκάλλων κύνα; 629-30).⁵⁴ There is, therefore a tension between the female breasts as a practical site of nourishment for infants and as objects of sexual attraction even in antiquity.

The tension between the female body as a site of motherhood and as an object of sexual desire remains prevalent in contemporary societies. Breastfeeding is the “most ‘natural’ part of motherhood” and “the first natural act of a mother towards her child the world over.”⁵⁵ It is, therefore, been considered an integral part of womanhood throughout history, and as such, directly promotes the division of labor along sexual lines.⁵⁶ Women who do not to breastfeed are often branded as ‘bad’ mothers by advocates of breastfeeding, although the exposure of breasts in order to feed children has been met with disdain even in areas in which it is legal.⁵⁷ The desire to limit a woman’s right to breastfeed in public serves as a direct attempt to control female sexuality, and therefore there are those who

importance behind Creusa’s earlier decision to abandon him and their lack of a bond years later. (See Eur. *Ion* 319, 962, 1372, 1492).

⁵⁴ Other such examples are more common in comedy, but there is another such reference to the breasts as sexual entities in Euripides *Cyclops* at 170.

⁵⁵ Oakley 1975: 201; Bonfante in Koloski-Ostrow and Lyons 1997: 174.

⁵⁶ For control of maternity and early motherhood, see Belknap 2001: 324; Chodorow 1978: intro; Schur 1983: 81-92. Even though science has proven that breastfeeding is much healthier and nourishing for the child, breastfeeding rates are decreasing in Western societies. (Oakley 1975: 194).

⁵⁷ Davis 2004.

believe that breastfeeding should only occur in the home.⁵⁸ In today's society, women are able to decide whether or not to breastfeed at all, and many women who choose to refrain from doing so are working against legally and culturally instituted social norms; rather than allowing their gender or status as mothers to define their actions, they interpret their role as mothers as they see fit. Pasiphaë's situation is somewhat more extreme in that her ability to nourish her offspring is biologically dictated, and this is completely independent of her desire to do so.⁵⁹ Her capacity as a mother, callously questioned by Minos, is completely in doubt at this juncture. Because her sexual transgression has resulted in offspring, her motherhood is now controlled by that act. Either possibility of the Minotaur's nourishment implicitly degrades Pasiphaë. Essentially, if the Minotaur is found to be unable to nurse from a human breast, Pasiphaë is cast negatively for producing a half-breed son as well as being a failure as a mother in the Classical context (since only a mother, or other lactating woman, could provide nourishment for a newborn); on the other hand, if the Minotaur is indeed able to nurse from Pasiphaë, it affirms her maternity, but degrades her humanity.

After what seems to be a substantial lacuna, the action resumes with a dialogue between Pasiphaë and Minos in which Pasiphaë defends her actions using rhetorical arguments. The extant fragments suggest that this play reverses traditional tragic gender roles in a couple significant ways. Her line of reasoning is, in fact, very similar to that used by Jason in Euripides' *Medea* and of Heracles' actions in Sophocles' *Trachiniae*; she, too, claims that 'she went mad because of an assault from the god' (ἐκ θεοῦ γὰρ προσβολῆς

⁵⁸ Davis 2004: 54. Wholesale rejection of breastfeeding is also common amongst feminists who do not wish to conform to the male-dominated social structures that dictate breastfeeding as a maternal necessity.

⁵⁹ In antiquity, authors did not seem to think it impossible that animals nurse human babies- see, for example, Euripides' *Wise Melanippe*, the story of Romulus and Remus, *et al.*

ἐμηνάμην; 472e.9).⁶⁰ By locating the blame for her infidelity in the divine sphere, she aligns herself with male argumentation as found in tragedy. Like Clytemnestra, Pasiphaë is one of the few women in tragedy who actively seeks an extramarital union, albeit one which is marked as extreme.

Not only is the female party the active seducer, the zoophilic union is achieved by a rather atypical act of male, rather than female, handiwork.⁶¹ Male handiwork is traditionally cast as positive, while female handiwork, outlined in more detail in Chapter 1, usually has more disastrous effects.⁶² In what is likely a fragment from the end of the play, Minos accuses another character of being ‘a builder who was not practicing carpentry’ (τέκτων γάρ ὢν ἔπρασσεσ οὐ ξυλουργικά; 988), with the implication that it was his artistry alone that allowed the sexual union between Pasiphaë and the bull. This other character is generally considered to be Daedalus, who later authors cast as the constructor of the wooden cow in which Pasiphaë hides in order to mate with the bull.⁶³ This ‘impossible coupling’, to borrow a phrase from Ephraim Lytle, is only made possible by the wooden contraption built by Daedalus, but ancient authors have taken issue with this problem.⁶⁴ Scholars in antiquity cited the physiological impossibility of an interspecies union such as this; Apollodorus, for example, claimed that Daedalus affixed a cow’s skin to the exterior of the wooden device in order to trick the bull into thinking he was mounting a member of his

⁶⁰ Soph. *Trach.* 475ff.

⁶¹ In Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon*, both Clytemnestra and Agamemnon engage in extramarital affairs, so both are dishonored and dishonorable. Euripides’ *Cretans* is the only extant play in which the husband is faithful and the wife is not.

⁶² For examples of positive male handiwork, see the Homeric heroes and *iatroi* and the emphasis on Heracles and Theseus’ hands for ultimately civilizing purposes.

⁶³ Collard & Cropp claim that “the attribution is probable: Minos accuses Daedalus with the artificial cow.” (1995b: *ad loc.*)

⁶⁴ Lytle 2003: 354.

own species.⁶⁵ This concern for physiological acuity in mating practices is appropriated in a similar scene by Apuleius in his *Metamorphoses*. In this story, as in Pasiphaë's myth, there is a woman desirous of zoophilic sex, and has made elaborate preparations to lead "Lucius, the donkey, into a union for which he is physiologically incapable of arousing himself."⁶⁶ This, too, is an instance of impossible coupling, and Apuleius himself acknowledges the bull and Pasiphaë as mythical paradigms for his satire, having the donkey claim based upon the *matrona's* response to the *coitus*, "I understood how it was that the mother of the Minotaur found pleasure in her bovine lover" (*Minotauri matrem frustra delectatam putarem adultero mugiente*; Met. 10.22). Similar to the *matrona*, Pasiphaë takes an active role in devising a means by which she is able to engage in sexual intercourse with the bull, she is ironically passive at the same time, this time out of biological necessity. Her assumption of both active and passive roles makes her an ambiguous figure, as it did for Clytemnestra. Her argumentation and resourcefulness in achieving her ends align her with other tragic males, but the fact that she was the physically passive partner in the union and ultimately became pregnant reinforces her connection to tragic women.

Pasiphaë's rather pragmatic defense of her union with the bull is, as previously stated, reminiscent of tragic male characters defending their actions from their wives. Not only does she assign the bulk of the blame to the gods, she gives a fairly lengthy description of what the bull lacks in terms of physical attributes, such as being 'comely in his robes' (εὐπρεπῆς μὲν ἐν πέπλοισιν; 472e.13), having 'fiery, flowing hair' (πυρσῆς δὲ χαιτή; 472e.14) or having 'eyes shining with brilliance or a chin dark like a ripening grape' (παρ'

⁶⁵ *Bibl.* 3.1.3-4.

⁶⁶ Lytle 2003: 355.

ὀμμάτων σέλας οἴνωπὸν ἐξέλαμπε περ[καί]νων γένυιν; 472e.14-15). In essence, Pasiphaë creates a verbal spectacle of her ideal man, implicitly suggesting that it would be acceptable, or at least understandable, to seduce this fictional man despite her status as a married woman. It is furthermore significant that this ‘perfect’ male specimen nevertheless has animal traits himself; the term *χάιτης*, used here to express long or flowing locks, is also used to describe the mane of a horse or lion.⁶⁷ This ambiguous language perhaps serves to portray Pasiphaë as more culpable than she intends, implicitly suggesting her desire to have an element of bestial beauty even within her human lovers. Her claim that the bull lacks these physical characteristics allows her to enumerate the attributes of a man who *could* turn her head; since the bull has none of these qualities, she claims, it is preposterous that she could be attracted to the bull. Within this twelve-line fragment, Pasiphaë uses the verb *μαίνομαι* (‘to rave, be mad’) and the noun *νόσος* (‘sickness’) twice each, stressing that her consummation with the bull was a sickness, rather than a voluntary act. Robson’s claim that the myth of the Minotaur is one of “female passion in extreme form – women falling in love with animals” underscores the extreme nature of her act.⁶⁸ In spite of the fact that Pasiphaë is extremely clear that she had sex with the bull under divine madness, her consummation with the bull nevertheless exists on the extremes of human passion.

Alongside her strange, antithetical description of a handsome lover and the arguments in which she wishes to absolve herself of any guilt, it is striking that Pasiphaë uses bridal imagery to describe her union with the bull (i.e., the union that was ultimately

⁶⁷ Franco 2014: 12.

⁶⁸ Robson in Deacy and Peirce 1997: 81.

consummated). In contrast to the spectacular man described above, the ‘body of her bridegroom is not graceful’ (οὐ μὴν δέμας γ’ εὔρ[υθμον ν]υμφίου; 472e.16), and, a fact that is equally important, she did not ‘make him her husband for [the sake of] children’ (ἀλλ’ οὐδὲ παίδων [] πόσιν θέσθαι; 472e.19-20). She furthermore uses the term ‘τό λέκτρον’ to denote their physical union, and this term is significant in that its post-Homeric definition is primarily a descriptor of the marriage bed. Why should Pasiphaë, even though she is not portrayed as being ashamed by her infidelity, call the bull her husband and her bridegroom? In addition to her assertions that the bull is physically unattractive, she claims that she did not unite with the bull for the sake of procreation. This is significant, probably because she did not expect any offspring from her bestial union; in a strange way, then, she is symbolically the wife of the bull by virtue of the child she bore him, which is supported by her use of the noun πόσις (‘husband’). Even though it is a physical and legal impossibility for the bull to become her husband within her socio-cultural reality, there is nevertheless an inherent ambiguity in her status as Minos’ wife, even though she had borne him children.

The phrase πόσιν θέσθαι also bears more investigation, since it is another instance in which Pasiphaë subverts the traditional, male-instituted expectation of female passivity. Grammatically, πόσιν is the direct object of the verb, and is therefore the party being acted upon, which mirrors the bull’s lack of complicity in its physical union with Pasiphaë. Not only, therefore, does this signify the perversion of the sexual act (by virtue of its inclusion of a bull), but it also twists the traditional union of marriage by casting the male as the passive partner. In addition to her designation of the bull as a πόσις, Pasiphaë further calls the bull her νυμφίος. This showcases her repudiation of Minos himself as well as her

implicit rejection of their marriage. Furthermore, while Pasiphaë's description of the bull as a bridegroom is likely ironic, it nevertheless indicates, to some extent, that her marriage with Minos has been displaced by her 'marriage' to the bull, successful in the sense that it has produced offspring, albeit subhuman offspring, in an act of adultery.

Euripides' depiction of the union between Pasiphaë and the bull and its subsequent consequences for her marriage to Minos is unique in the classical Greek canon. He arms Pasiphaë with male argumentation and enterprise, while still highlighting her female passivity. Out of practical necessity, Pasiphaë has seized control over her biological and genealogical space by manipulating an animal into unnatural sexual union and producing an impossible infant. The play furthermore includes themes of hybridity, tactility, ritual neglect, and spectacle, just as other tragedies that include adultery. Euripides' interpretation of the myth serves to illuminate the contemporary social importance of marriage and childbearing, while at the same time showing an extreme example of how they can be subverted. This stress on the purity of marriage and lineage is in tune with the Athenian ideological point of view at this time, as shown through legal and social representation.

b. Other Representations of Pasiphaë in Classical and Hellenistic Traditions

While the treatments of Pasiphaë's myth are not common in the Classical period, there are nevertheless a few literary sources that help further elucidate the ancient Greek mindset towards bestiality and interspecies offspring. What is interesting is that the accounts that are not straightforward and lacking nuance, transgression of ritual norms is

common. For example, the lyric poet Bacchylides includes the story of Pasiphaë and Minos in his fragmentary 26th dithyramb.⁶⁹ Bacchylides, one of the first fully ‘professional’ lyric poets, is often considered inferior to his contemporary, Pindar; like Pindar, however, most of his extant poems are *epinikia*.⁷⁰ As such, it is unsurprising that, even within his dithyrambs, he adheres to the conventions of the genre by placing emphasis upon Minos’ military accomplishments, using epithets such as ‘subduing with the bow’ (τοξόδαμος; 26.12) and ‘general of the Knossians’ (Κνωσσίων στρατα[γέταν; 26.13). Similarly, Daedalus is referred to by his patronymic, a common feature of *epinikia*, and classed as τεκτόνων σοφωτάτῳ (‘most clever of builders’). In this dithyramb, as in Euripides’ *Cretans*, Daedalus is credited with building a contraption, which Pasiphaë used to have sexual relations with the bull.⁷¹ The vocabulary used here is very similar to that of the *Cretans*; the verb μείγνυμι, which is often used of the Minotaur, is employed in order to describe Pasiphaë’s sexual union with the bull, suggesting that the ‘mixing’ inherent in the sexual offspring is also physically manifested in the offspring.

In this poem, however, Pasiphaë binds Daedalus by an oath (ὄρκια πισ[τ’ ἔλαβε; 26.8) in order to ensure that he not reveal anything about her ‘unspeakable illness’ (ἀσ[πετον] νόσον; 26.7-8) and to guarantee that he build her the wooden cow necessary for sexual contact. The use of an oath to try to effect silence has both ritual and civic implications. Because Zeus Orkios was viewed as the protector of oaths, a broken oath could, and in this case did, spell disaster for the entire *polis*.⁷² This bears resemblance to Phaedra’s malady in Euripides’ *Hippolytus*, in which supplication is used twice in

⁶⁹ Loeb numbering is used here.

⁷⁰ Dihle, et al.

⁷¹ In this fragment, unlike the remaining portion of the *Cretans*, Daedalus is not referred to by name.

⁷² Cf. Medea.

connection to Phaedra – first to evoke speech, and second to ensure silence. Supplication was a religiously binding act, and Daedalus seems to have observed it, given the consummation of Pasiphaë's love. It is interesting, however, that Pasiphaë seeks to hide herself from Minos while she is inside the wooden bull (κρύπτουσα σύννο[μον εύναν] Μίνωα; 26.11-12) This detail is unnecessary in the *Cretans*, because within Euripides' tragic narrative, the Minotaur has already been born, and it would be impossible to hide her pregnancy and the resulting infant from Minos. In contrast, the remaining portion of this hymn does not refer to any offspring, although the fragment ends with Minos being afraid of something involving Pasiphaë once he found out that she had coupled with the bull. It is unclear what he feared, as the narrative breaks off at this juncture, but it is possible that he feared she would indeed bear a bull-child or he feared that a report of Pasiphaë's infidelity might become public knowledge. In either case, Minos would likely believe that Pasiphaë's actions would reflect negatively on him, especially given the contemporary views of male honor and how it could be affected by female transgressions.

Another ancient Greek source to treat the story of Pasiphaë was written by a somewhat mysterious, albeit unimaginative, author called Palaephatus. Not much is known of his biographical information – indeed, even his name is called into question, since it means something like 'of ancient fame' – but it seems as though he wrote during the 4th or 3rd century B.C.E.⁷³ His work, titled *Peri Apiston*, or 'On the Unbelievable', rationalizes versions of myths that Palaephatus deemed unimaginable, and was considered by early Christian writers to have been a debunker of classical myths.⁷⁴ Indeed, Palaephatus'

⁷³ Stern 1996: 1-2.

⁷⁴ Stern 1996: 4. For more on 'mythological rationalization', as Stern calls it, see Stern 1996: 7-16.

account of Pasiphaë and the Minotaur begins with an extremely abbreviated account of the myth. Immediately following is an explanation of the physical impossibility of Pasiphaë conceiving and giving birth to the Minotaur, in which Palaephatus cites the differences in genitalia and the physical issues inherent in giving birth to an infant with large horns. Interestingly, this seems to align more with the early Christian argumentation about monstrous offspring than the Classical, and conveys a desire to depart from mythical tradition and to logically justify any supernatural elements within.

Since Palaephatus deemed it impossible to conceive from intercourse with an animal, he rationalizes the accounts of other authors by claiming that they confused the bull (ταῦρος) with a handsome youth called Tauros, and that Pasiphaë bore a child to Tauros rather than an actual bull (2.20ff). Minos found out that the child borne from that union was not his, and sent him to the countryside to grow up among shepherds. When the child, whom Palaephatus calls Minotaurus, grew up, he became unruly and Minos returned him to the city and locked him up. This is how the story of the labyrinth begins, he tells us: Minotaurus, a rather savage youth, would execute any man thrown to his chamber, which took the form of a deep tunnel.⁷⁵ Theseus, coming upon the youth with a sword given to him by Ariadne, was able to kill this youth, but the poets turned the account into a mythical one. Palaephatus' account, while unimaginative and explicitly rejecting any literary license, nevertheless expresses certain points of view or trends of inquiry about the time in which he wrote (probably the 4th or 3rd century B.C.E.). Firstly, the importance placed upon the impossibility of the birth of a bull-human hybrid seems to imply a focus on the mechanics

⁷⁵ Stern 1996: 33. This is the first extant literary use of the term 'Minotaur' to describe Pasiphaë's illegitimate child.

of the body's capabilities and reproductive possibilities of both humans and animals. Not only is it physically impossible for Pasiphaë to bear the traditional Minotaur, it is also impossible for her to have intercourse with an animal because 'their genitals do not conform' (μη ὁμοίως ἔχον τὴν μήτραν τοῖς αἰδοίοις; 2.7-8). There is, therefore, a complete rejection of bestiality and monstrous progeny in the story of Pasiphaë. Adultery, on the other hand, is completely within the realm of possibility; and indeed, Minos' only reaction to Pasiphaë's infidelity, according to Palaephatus, is to send the illegitimate child away from the city. In Palaephatus' version, as in other versions that cite Minos' desire to hide away the Minotaur, he showcases Minos' desire to rid the city of any visual proof that he has been marginalized within his own marriage.

The authors who explicitly treat the myth of Pasiphaë and the Minotaur illustrate certain socio-cultural ideologies about the times in which they live. Earlier accounts, namely those by Euripides and Bacchylides, are unfortunately fragmentary, but they both feature the importance of ritual obligation and its effect on adultery. In Euripides' case, Pasiphaë cites Minos' failure to show due respect to the gods as the cause of her interspecies love affair and the subsequent birth of the Minotaur. The hybrid offspring of this illicit union renders her deed conspicuous, and the meticulous discussion of the Minotaur's physical form makes the infant a spectacle within the text, but also as a visible artifact in the broader literary and artistic context. Bacchylides recounts Pasiphaë's supplication of Daedalus in the creation of the wooden contraption that allowed for the consummation of their union, reinforcing the fact that Pasiphaë is able to seize control of her reproductive space by ritually securing Daedalus' cooperation and silence. Even Palaephatus, who eschews the more fantastical elements of the myth, indirectly comments

upon the civic implications of adultery by relating that Pasiphaë's child with Tauros – even though a human child in his version – likewise needed to be hidden from public view. All of these retellings of the myth show how the products of adulterous unions were, either by form or existence, cast as a public spectacle and how this conspicuity showcased civic and social ideologies about marriage and reproduction.

III. Centauromachy and Other Human-Equine Offspring

The mythical tradition of the Centaurs can shed more insight into the representations and repercussions of bestiality and the generation of hybrid creatures in the ancient world. The Centaurs were half-man, half-horse hybrid creatures whose origins and subsequent actions include such socially destructive actions as attempted and intended adultery. The Centaurs were a species with a complex literary and material representation; to use the classification of Patricia Miller, the Centaurs function as 'hyper-icons', or more specifically as paradoxical figures "in which animal and human forms were conjoined *and* in which contrary or different readings co-existed in a single figure."⁷⁶ The race of Centaurs has members on both extremes of action, best manifested in the antithetical nature of Cheiron and Nessus, and this has already been investigated. The representations of

⁷⁶ Miller 1996: 225.

Centaurs in general, however, often include actions that destabilize marriage or are disruptive to society on a broader scale.⁷⁷

The myth of Ixion introduces such a disturbance to the divine sphere. This story includes attempted adultery between Ixion and Hera and seems to have captivated ancient authors, since fragments from plays entitled 'Ixion' remain from Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, and it further appears as a title in the list of plays by the comedian Eubulus and the tragedian Callistratus.⁷⁸ Ixion has a rather impressive *curriculum vitae* for a figure who does not figure heavily in the extant literary corpus; together with his fully intentional lustful attentions to Hera, he is one of the famed wrongdoers in Tartarus, bound to an ever-revolving wheel, and he is further the king of the Lapiths, the race of men who fought against the Centaurs in the Centauromachy.⁷⁹ In this section, I focus on the literary description of the creation and propagation of the Centaurs, including the myth of Melanippe, and the material representations of the Centauromachy on civic architecture. In particular, I analyze the Parthenon metopes, focusing on the civic and spatial implications of the iconography rather than the architectural details. The Parthenon occupies the same geographical and ideological space as many of the previously discussed literary and material sources, as it is situated in the center of Athens and dates to the mid-5th century B.C.E. All of the above trace the representation of adultery, hybridity, conspicuousness, and any transgressions of ritual space or activity, presenting literary and material representations of the complexity of the interspecies union.

⁷⁷ For the opposite natures of Cheiron and Nessus, see Johnson 2005: 194-5; Nash 1984: 274, DuBois 1991: 29.

⁷⁸ TLG search.

⁷⁹ Morford, Lenardon, & Sham 2014: 379-82.

The most fully elaborated story of the genesis of the Centaur race is described in Pindar's second Pythian ode, which is thought to date to the 470s B.C.E.⁸⁰ This ode seems to be something of an anomaly, since instead of praising the positive attributes of mythical predecessors and comparing these qualities to the contemporary athletic victor, the second Pythian ode instead utilizes the story of the Centaur's birth as a negative paradigm.⁸¹ Pindar begins the story with a reference to the repercussion Ixion suffered for his crime: 'in his raving mind, he fell in love with Hera' (μαιομέναις φρασίν Ἡρας ὄτ' ἐράσσατο; 26-7). In his first attempt, 'he tried to seduce Hera in her own bedchamber' (ἐν ποτε θαλάμοις Διὸς ἄκοιτιν ἐπειρᾶτο; 33-4) and failed, so in response, Zeus set a trap, 'fashioning a cloud in the form of Hera' (εἶδος γάρ πρέπεν θυγατέρι Κρόνου; 38-39) with which Ixion ultimately had sexual relations, fully believing that Hera was his sexual partner. Pindar then restates that Ixion's intended transgression of Zeus and Hera's marriage resulted in grave punishment, which included banishment to the depths of Tartarus, domain of those who had committed the worst crimes in Greek mythology. The severity of his action was compounded when the cloud bore him a son, Centaurus, 'who was overbearing and respected neither among men nor in the ways of the gods' (γόνον ὑπερφιάλον οὔτ' ἐν ἀνδράσι γερασφόρον οὔτ' ἐν θεῶν νόμοις; 42-3). This figure, like his progeny, did not belong to either of the realms from which he is created, and therefore 'mated with Magnesian mares [...] and from them issued a wondrous herd of offspring similar to both parents, with the mother's features below and the father's above' (ὅς ἵπποισι Μαγ'νητίδεσσιν ἐμείγνυτ', ἐκ δ' ἐγένοντο στρατός θαυμαστός, ἀμφοτέροις ὁμοῖοι τοκεῦσι, τὰ ματρόθεν μὲν κάτω, τὰ δ' ὑπερθε πατ'ρός; 44-8). These creatures, called 'Centaur' after

⁸⁰ Sandys 1915: 168.

⁸¹ Castriota 1992: 4.

their father, similarly did not have a secure place in either of the so-called anterior pure categories. Therefore, they became true hybrid creatures, whose actions, tendencies, and traits could be manipulated in order to serve an author's or artist's specific ideological or rhetorical aims.

The portrayal of the Centaurs' origin suggests that at the time Pythian 2 was written, likely sometime in the 470s B.C.E., keeping marriages intact was of utmost importance, and the seduction of another man's wife should be punished most severely.⁸² Indeed, Pindar claims that Ixion 'received a message meant for everyone' (τὰν πολύκοινον ἀνδέξατ' ἄγγελίαν; 41), indicating that Zeus wished to make an example out of a man who dared sexual contact with a married woman. Therefore, Ixion's punishment and subsequent placement in Tartarus alongside infamous characters like Tantalus and Sisyphus suggest that adultery and the seduction of a married woman could be as disastrous as the violation of *xenia* and murder, though his punishment is so severe likely because Ixion dishonored Zeus' *oikos* and attempted sexual contact with the queen of the gods.⁸³ This is similar to the portrayal of adultery in Lysias' first oration, discussed in the previous chapter. Like Zeus, who consigns Ixion to an eternity in Tartarus, Euphiletus is able to make the decision to kill Eratosthenes after catching him *in flagrante delicto* with his wife. This was legally allowed, if not necessarily socially approved, and suggests that Ixion's violation of Zeus' *oikos* in the divine sphere had similar ramifications in the civic sphere. A main difference in the story of Ixion is that Zeus was able to block any actual contact between Hera and Ixion by refashioning a cloud into Hera's likeness, whereas Euphiletus putatively suffered from

⁸² Sandys suggests a *terminus post quem* of 477 B.C.E., and scholarly consensus places the ode between 477 and 470 B.C.E. (1915: 168).

⁸³ This double standard is mirrored in the human civic context.

Eratosthenes' actions. Nevertheless, in both myths, there is a desire to protect the marital bond and the related socio-cultural structures by punishing the wife's seducer in a manner that may have been considered somewhat extreme to Athenian sensibilities.

Pindar's account of the production of a new, interspecies race as a result of transgressive activity fits within the contemporary historical context; in the 470s, the Greeks were recovering from recent Persian attacks on Greece, and were in the process of trying to expel the remaining Persian forces from Thrace and Ionia.⁸⁴ The prevalence of Centaurs in Greek thought and iconography is often explained as an allegory for the Greek vs. barbarian (more specifically, Greek vs. Persian) dichotomy, but it seems as though there is a more general desire to protect purity in general.⁸⁵ Hellenic purity is certainly important, but this eventually manifests itself as a more localized phenomenon, seen in Athens through the implementation of the Periclean citizenship legislation in 451/50 B.C.E. The Centaurs, borne from an action that threatened marriage, therefore come to be represented as symbols of the destruction of marriage and ultimately of the destruction of social order.⁸⁶ Page DuBois describes the Centaurs as "beings on the threshold between human and equine nature; they marked the limit between animal and human being, between *anthrôpos* and *thêrion*."⁸⁷ Therefore, they blend the hypersexual and violent nature of horses with the male virility, resulting in a hypermasculine figure with vicious and savagely carnal capabilities, which is manifest in their often brutal representation.⁸⁸ Centaurs are also shown to have had the intellectual capacity of men, which, when paired

⁸⁴ Pomeroy, *et al.* 2012: 234ff.

⁸⁵ Castriota 1992: 165; Johnson 2005: 196; DuBois 1991: 54ff.; Barringer 2005: 220; *et al.*

⁸⁶ Tersini 1987: 152; DuBois 1991: 28; Schwab in Neils 2005: 178.

⁸⁷ DuBois 1991: 27.

⁸⁸ DuBois 1991: 31.

with their animal violence and savagery, allows them to be portrayed with more complexity and refashioned to suit a wide array of ideologies.⁸⁹ This collective problematization of hybridity and hybrid beings leads to closer exploration of human and animal boundaries, and what they meant for Athenian society, as the fifth century progresses.

Another story within the mythical tradition of the Centaurs is the famed Centauromachy, the battle between the Lapiths and the Centaurs at the wedding of Perithoos and Deidameia, or in some traditions, Hippodameia. This battle seems to have occupied a central place in the collective Greek ideology, since it forms a part of the sculptural decoration of some of the most important and conspicuous temples of the mid-fifth century B.C.E. For the purposes of this section, I will focus on the ornamentation of the temple of Athena Parthenos because of its spatial and ideological centrality to Athenian thought; the Parthenon was one of the most conspicuous temples in the cultural and intellectual center of the Classical Greek world. This temple was also built within the Classical Period, at the height of Athenian imperialism and artistic expression, and use of the famed sculptor, Pheidias, for the cult statue suggests the desire for grandiose monumentality.⁹⁰ That the Centauromachy was part of the ornamentation of this temple shows that the potential destructiveness of hybrid figures was present within the Athenian cultural consciousness, and the myth was presented and interpreted in a specific way in order to fit the ideological scheme of the Parthenon.

⁸⁹ Johnson 2005: 195; Miller 1996: 219-20.

⁹⁰ Mikalson 2005: 71, 117.

The metopes on the south side of the Parthenon, which faced the side of the Acropolis into which the theater of Dionysus was carved, depicted the battle of the Lapiths and Centaurs at the wedding feast of Peirithous. The south metopes are some of the better preserved of the Parthenon, and the surviving sculptures show the Centaurs locked in battle with the Lapiths; in addition, five of the extant metopes show a Centaur attacking or abducting a Lapith woman.⁹¹ This type of interaction between the Centaurs and the Lapith women specifically seems to have been a recent development in Greek art, since the appearance of women in portrayals of the Centauromachy occurs for the first time on the temple of Zeus at Olympia, which dates to slightly earlier than the Parthenon.⁹² Explicit sexual violence is similarly found on the pediment of the temple of Zeus Olympios, since one of the Centaurs is depicted as grasping the breast of a hapless Lapith woman, and this is further echoed in at least one roughly contemporaneous Attic red figure vase.⁹³ The fact that not all of the thirty two metopes are extant has resulted in speculation about what the missing metopes could have depicted, especially given their central placement on the structure. The most common theory is that these absent metopes included iconography from Peirithous' wedding, which would have been surrounded by the surviving images of Lapiths fighting off the Centaurs.⁹⁴ This would allow for a coherent representation of the myth, including the event which sparked the battle; although Castriota claims that perhaps two of the metopes may have included an etiological element, depicting Ixion's attempted seduction of Hera; overall, it is significant that the missing metopes may have included

⁹¹ Schwab in Neils 2005: 176.

⁹² Barringer 2005: 234.

⁹³ For the breast-grabbing Centaur, see Tersini 1987: Plate V; for the Attic red-figure vase (Florence 1997), see Castriota 1992: 36ff.

⁹⁴ Castriota 1992: 158-9; Schwab in Neils 2005. Conversely, Stuttard claims that the missing metopes likely portrayed iconography especially representative of the Panathenaia, although this theory does not allow for the same unity as in the theories of representations of the Centaur myths. (Stuttard 2013: 120).

images of the genesis of the race of the Centaurs in general, and the present conflict more specifically.⁹⁵

A common observation of the Centaurs depicted upon these metopes is that some of their visages are more human than in earlier representations.⁹⁶ This broad range of representation stresses their importance as a hyper-icon; namely, because Centaurs have a wide range of literary and material representation, their appearance on the Parthenon as more human-looking likewise allows for broader interpretation of the temple's iconography.⁹⁷ This breadth of portrayal exists even within the Parthenon metopes, as evidenced by the "inclusion of some Centaurs with a more manly facial aspect".⁹⁸ These Centaurs, while clearly referring to the recent war against the Persians, are at the same time embodying the danger of the bestial aspect within the humans – and more specifically, the Athenians – themselves.⁹⁹ Their assault at a wedding, which allowed for the continued stabilization of social order, indicates their incapability of adhering to the tenets of reciprocity, and shows a departure from the harmonious effects of successful marriages upon society.¹⁰⁰ More generally, it depicts the danger that non-Athenian values, both from within Athenians and from external influences, could have to Athenian society. Stuttard conjectures that Theseus himself may have been among the figures within the ornamentation of the metopes, which, whether an explicit connection or not, would have been implicit in any case, given his associations with Peirithous and their adventures in the

⁹⁵ Castriota 1992: 158.

⁹⁶ Dubois 1991: 62; Johnson 2005.

⁹⁷ Miller 1996: 227.

⁹⁸ Castriota 1992: 164.

⁹⁹ For more on the Centaurs as representative of Persians, see footnote 85 above.

¹⁰⁰ Schwab in Neils 20015: 168.

Underworld.¹⁰¹ Theseus' involvement in this event, in which a hybrid species was successfully overcome, mirrors his involvement in the slaying of the Minotaur. Theseus is therefore implicitly cast as the protector of female virtue and fertility, and guardian of Athenian purity and humanity, and on a monument which was conspicuous, and of great religious and ideological importance, to the Athenians. This scene is also found on the decoration of the shield of Athena Promachos, thereby indicating its importance to both Athens at large and the religious and cultural context of the Parthenon more specifically.¹⁰² Theseus and therefore the Athenians, as his descendants, triumph over the Centaurs, figures who existed beyond "the lawful limits and foundations of society."¹⁰³

This brutish and uncultured depiction of the Centaurs does not extend to Cheiron. A staple in Greek myth as the wise tutor of gods and heroes, Centaur is atypical in another way: contrary to today's knowledge about hybrids, he is portrayed as being capable of biological reproduction. The myth of Melanippe, Cheiron's granddaughter, suggests that in antiquity it was not necessary that hybrids be sterile, or at least the Greeks were not concerned with portraying them as such. Melanippe, protagonist of Euripides' *Melanippe Sophē*, as a granddaughter of Cheiron, is a descendant of Cronus and Philyra, in the form of a horse, rather than one of Ixion's brood.¹⁰⁴ Nevertheless, it is striking that Cheiron has propagated, and perhaps less surprising is the fact that her mother, Hippe, herself took on the physical form of a horse sometime after Melanippe was born. The etymology of both of the names, which include a form of the word 'horse' (ἵππος), immediately signals their connection to the bestial realm. Hippe, which literally translates to 'female horse', is called

¹⁰¹ Stuttard 2013: 120.

¹⁰² Stuttard 2013: 91.

¹⁰³ Castriota 1992: 40.

¹⁰⁴ Gantz 1993: 43.

a horse even while she is still human, and gestures to her given her eventual transformation to an animal. Melanippe's name is a compound of the word 'horse' with 'black/dark' (μέλας). The term μέλας also has metaphorical connotations that mean 'obscure, enigmatic', and Melanippe's ambiguous status and the mistaken identity of her children further bear this out.

The theme of Euripides' fragmentary *Melanippe Sophē* seems to have centered on monstrous or ambiguous offspring, which coheres with the Centaurs' mythical narrative. This tragedy is extremely fragmentary, and it is unclear whether certain fragments should be assigned to this play or to Euripides' similarly named *Melanippe Desmotis*, but the hypothesis nevertheless provides crucial insight into how Euripides approached and portrayed unnatural progeny. The plot of the tragedy only remains in the form of a later hypothesis, but according to this account, Melanippe was impregnated by Poseidon and gave birth to twin sons. She hid her infant sons, born without her father's knowledge, in a barn, where they were seen suckling a cow. Shepherds came upon the infants and believed them to be the cow's progeny, thereby marking them as monstrous offspring. Melanippe claims to be wise (νοῦς δ' ἔνεστι μοι; 483), a fact which seems to be true given her reasoned defense of herself and her infants, but at the same time she is connected with animals by virtue of her ancestry; in her prologue speech, she claims that 'Cheiron's daughter bore her to Aeolus' (Χείρωνος δέ με ἔτικτε θυγάτηρ Αἰόλω; 665a-c.13-14).¹⁰⁵ Her connection to Cheiron, the famed tutor of such heroes as Achilles and Jason, connects her both to the bestial realm and to his intelligence; similarly, her mother became known as the prophetess Hippo 'owing to the alteration of her body' (σώματος δι' ἀλλαγάς; 665a-c.21)

¹⁰⁵ Collard & Cropp 1995b: 240.

from human to horse. There are, therefore, several instances of historical relation between Melanippe's family and animals, but there is also precedent for members of Melanippe's family metamorphosing into animals themselves or otherwise having animal parts or features. This perhaps accounts for the shepherds' inability to accurately classify Melanippe's children. It is also significant that their father, Poseidon, was the patron divinity of horses, thereby enhancing their liminal status and their separation from humans.

While Melanippe's sons, who are named Aeolus and Boeotus, are not physically metamorphosed into cows or horses, their ability to (presumably successfully) feed from a cow aligns them, to a certain extent, with the Minotaur. The Minotaur's very humanity was cast into doubt when Minos questioned his feeding capabilities, and it is this dubious humanity that led to his eventual imprisonment. Similarly, although these children were borne of Melanippe's union with Poseidon, their physical location – i.e., their presence in the stables – leads the ox-herds to classify them as 'the monstrous progeny of the cow' (βουγενῆ τέρατα; 665a.11). The king ultimately decided to burn them, indicating their presence, just like that of the Minotaur, was somehow dangerous to society. Within the Athenian context, this desire to flush out any specious offspring parallels the Athenian desire to legislate against inter-*polis* marriages among Athenian citizens. This play, if the tentative dating of the 420s B.C.E. is correct, would have been produced during the first decade of Peloponnesian War when Athenian purity would have been of utmost importance.¹⁰⁶ Such statements of Athenian superiority, in cultural, political, and military terms, are represented in the historical accounts, such as the funeral oration of the

¹⁰⁶ Collard & Cropp 1995b: 247.

statesman Perikles after the first year of the Peloponnesian War. In a time where Athenian-ness was crucial to their belief of superiority over their opposition, uncertainties regarding parentage would have been unacceptable.

These representations of the Centaurs, their offspring, and their exploits show the importance of Athenian purity within fifth century B.C.E. Athens. Both the beginning and the end of the fifth century were marked by large-scale wars, which had a lasting transformative effect on the Hellenic world. These wars produced, and perhaps even necessitated, the continuing rhetoric of purity, which, by the middle of the century, narrowed into the need for pure Athenian bloodlines more specifically. It also seems as though the Athenians recognized that the threat of contamination was not only external; more specifically, there seems to have been a growing awareness of the potential for humans to give in to certain elements of the animal natures inside of them. While this manifests itself more literally in literary and material culture, as seen through depictions of the hybrid Centaurs, it nevertheless shows the dangers inherent in capitulating to savagery and immoderate behavior.¹⁰⁷ That these themes are found on the Parthenon, perhaps the most conspicuous of the Athenian monuments at that time, shows an intentional manifestation of “official policy and action by equating it with traditional morality and law.”¹⁰⁸ The breach of marriage and the *oikos*, together with attempts upon female virtue, show the Centaurs to be figures dangerous to Athenian social order, and any offspring of these hybrid figures seem to be portrayed as specious and potentially threatening to the society in which they live.

¹⁰⁷ Castriota 1992: 152.

¹⁰⁸ Castriota 1992: 13.

IV. Cassandra

Cassandra is perhaps best known as the prophetess of Apollo, gifted with the ability to prophesy but unable to transmit these prophecies in a meaningful way. She is also a captive 'adulteress', who has been forcibly removed from her *polis* and has no choice in her station in her new *oikos*. Like Iole discussed in Chapter 1, Cassandra was captured in war and compelled to join Agamemnon in his household, ostensibly to displace his wife at home.¹⁰⁹ Even though she remains silent while in Clytemnestra's presence, Cassandra engages in a long exchange with the chorus, consisting of prophecies that appear to the chorus to be frenzied ravings.¹¹⁰ Even though Cassandra is a semi-muted character, her ambiguous speech nevertheless prevents her from commenting on her situation in a way that is comprehensible to the characters in the play, and therefore her speech has the same value as silence. Like Iole, Cassandra provides Aeschylus an opportunity to insert contemporary attitudes into the play, thereby reflecting upon the marginalization of the adulteress and investigating the complexity of agency in a union oppressed by adultery.

Cassandra is consistently dehumanized and bestialized by other members in the play, most notably by Clytemnestra and the Chorus. Cassandra is treated by their fellow characters as though she is in a post-human state, and as such, her status is not absolute; she is portrayed as a character whose hybridity is accentuated. Firstly, she is a Trojan woman, yet one who is suspected of having sexual contact with Agamemnon. She has also been granted access to divine knowledge, but has been cursed with speech that is interpreted as subhuman which does not allow her to convey any meaningful speech to her

¹⁰⁹ Scholars have noted the similarities between these two figures, including Montiglio 2007: Ch. 7; Wohl 1998: Ch. 6; *et al.*

¹¹⁰ Schein 1982: 11ff.; Debnar 2010: 130; Wohl 1998: 111; Montiglio 2000: 213; *et al.*

fellow humans. Furthermore, her social status, presumably now that of a slave, allows her to be compared to an animal, thereby obscuring her status as a human and leading her to be treated as a creature. When confronted by Clytemnestra upon her arrival in Argos, Cassandra remains silent. It is this silence that leads Clytemnestra to question her intelligence and mark her as a figure that is less than human. That Cassandra eventually does speak, and her cries seem to the chorus to be the frenzied rantings of a madwoman, indicates a condition equivalent to her previously silent state. Since she is not able to speak in a way that is intelligible to any other character in the play, her “silence and cries are thus homologous, rather than opposite, phenomena, because both signify the collapse of logos.”¹¹¹ Cassandra's portrayal, first as a silent figure then as a disempowered and post-human woman, shows an elimination of Cassandra's speech and autonomy; the fact that the other characters are not able to comprehend her speech means that, like Iole, emotions, thoughts, and agencies are able to be projected onto her.

A royal prophetess cursed by Apollo and brought to Argos as Agamemnon's war spoil, Cassandra is another example of a captive spear-wife who has virtually no control over her present situation. She arrives at Agamemnon's *oikos*, where Clytemnestra has been living, and which Clytemnestra has ostensibly administrating, for a long time. Cassandra enters as a silent character, and her silence in the face of Clytemnestra's questioning makes her conspicuous onstage; this is the first instance in which we see Cassandra as a character who is perceived by the other characters in the play as lacking

¹¹¹ Montiglio 2000: 255.

logos.¹¹² Her eventual speech makes her more of a spectacle, since the audience would have been expecting her to prophesy at some point in the play. Even though Cassandra's reception is more hostile and she has divine knowledge of the inner workings of the house, she is nevertheless unable to comment upon the situation in a way that is perceived as logical by the other characters in the play. This renders her a paradox in a couple of different senses; not only can she see her death and not act upon it, she also occupies a liminal and complex space within Agamemnon's house. Her seemingly frenzied speech and wild ravings make her tragically conspicuous, and the fact that the audience likely would have known that her ravings were authentic would have made her seem all the more conspicuous as a character.

The implications of Cassandra's status as a captive spear-wife have not been fully investigated by scholars; instead, she is often analyzed as a figure relative to other characters in the play or trilogy.¹¹³ In addition to being seen as a double of Iphigenia, she has also been compared to Orestes, in that they have both been marked by Apollo's favor.¹¹⁴ This favor, she claims, comes with great responsibility, but if Apollo is obeyed, it also comes with great reward, as can be seen in the case of Orestes. Cassandra's prior relationship with Apollo casts her sexual status into doubt. Whether or not she is a virgin has been the subject of several studies, and scholars have been forced to assume her

¹¹² Montiglio 2000: 225. Montiglio's work maintains that the silence that Iole keeps makes her more of a spectacle than Cassandra, who is secondary to the conflict between Agamemnon and Clytemnestra. (2000: 213) Rood's work emphasizes the divine knowledge that Cassandra possesses, allowing her to comment upon the realities that exist in Agamemnon's house. (2010: 358)

¹¹³ Wohl 1998: 110-11; Debnar 2010: 139. Most commonly compared to Iphigenia, Cassandra's status as a sacrificial object has been much investigated by modern scholars. Clytemnestra's repeated lamentation of Iphigenia's sacrifice by Agamemnon makes it clear that "Cassandra is killed in part to avenge Iphigenia," and Cassandra's sexual ambiguity allows for this comparison.

¹¹⁴ Morgan 1994: 123.

virginity, or lack thereof, in order to complete any study that centers on Cassandra's relation to the members of Agamemnon's *oikos*.¹¹⁵ This assumption that Cassandra is married, and to two husbands no less, if she can be characterized as a bride of Apollo, is in direct contrast to those who believe the text offers no evidence that Cassandra is no longer a virgin. Debnar's work concludes that "it is likely, if not entirely provable, that she enters the palace as a virgin."¹¹⁶ Clytemnestra's assumption, while understandable, does not necessarily express any truth, but it is more important that Cassandra is *portrayed* as a sexual being than whether or not she actually is, and this portrayal of Cassandra as a figure who is oversexualized by others provides a starting point for my analysis.

Instead of only being conceived of as a physical object lacking *logos*, Cassandra is most often compared to an animal, and the aforementioned emphasis on her sexuality likely provides the impetus for Clytemnestra to characterize her as such. This is perhaps reflective of the realities that exist for Cassandra; namely, Clytemnestra shows no indication that she wishes to regain the affections of Agamemnon, as Deianira does for Heracles. Because Clytemnestra has taken a lover of her own, she chooses to bestialize Cassandra – that is, conceptualizing of her as a being lesser than humans, but still being capable of feeling pain and other emotion – rather than to imagine her as an object with no emotion. Aside from describing Cassandra as a creature, which I investigate in the following pages, Clytemnestra emphasizes Cassandra's sexuality. This sexualizing of foreign women was common in Athenian society, because as a non-citizen, a

¹¹⁵ The work of Mitchell-Boyask investigates Cassandra's portrayal as both the bride of Agamemnon and Apollo, which allows her to become "a perfect complement to the broader disruptions of conjugal structures in the House of Atreus." (2006: 272). Debnar investigates Clytemnestra's role in the evaluation of Cassandra's sexual status. Clytemnestra emphasizes her sexual availability, assuming that she has had sexual contact with Agamemnon, at the very least. (2010: 138).

¹¹⁶ Debnar 2010: 138.

hypersexualized woman could present a danger to the *polis*.¹¹⁷ Clytemnestra, in making use of this historical reality, portrays Cassandra as the ‘other’ by emphasizing her sexuality and ‘other-ness’. Therefore, Clytemnestra reframes Agamemnon’s presumed sexual contact with Iole as a union between a human and a beast.

The passage in which Clytemnestra most clearly underscores the qualities which would have appeared dangerous to the Athenian audience is that following her murder of Agamemnon and Cassandra:

κεῖται γυναικὸς τῆσδ’ ὁ λυμαντήριος,
Χρυσηίδων μείλιγμα τῶν ὑπ’ Ἰλίῳ,
ἢ τ’ αἰχμάλωτος ἦδε καὶ τερασκόπος
καὶ κοινόλεκτρος τοῦδε, θεσφατηλόγος,
πιστὴ ξύνευνος, ναυτίλων δὲ σελμάτων
ἰσοτριβῆς· ἄτιμα δ’ οὐκ ἐπραξάτην,
ὁ μὲν γὰρ οὕτως, ἡ δὲ τοι κύκνου δίκην
τὸν ὕστατον μέλψασα θανάσιμον γόον
κεῖται φιλήτωρ τοῦδ’· ἐμοὶ δ’ ἐπήγαγεν
εὐνῆς παροψώνημα τῆς ἐμῆς χλιδῆι. (1438-1447)

And this woman here, the captive and soothsayer and bedfellow for him, the trusty prophetess who shared his couch, the public harlot of sailors’ benches! They have not failed to get the honor due them. For he lies as I have described, and she after singing like a swan her last lament in death lies beside him, his lover; when he brought in a side-dish for his bed, he pandered to my delight!”¹¹⁸

In calling Cassandra a μείλιγμα, along with Chryseis, she emphasizes Cassandra as a ‘soothing’ figure, although the use of such an image here is an exaggeration, likely designed

¹¹⁷ Kennedy 2014: 38.

¹¹⁸ Trans. Lloyd-Jones.

to make Clytemnestra feel better in light of the slight done to her by Agamemnon.¹¹⁹ Clytemnestra further attempts to justify her actions by referring to her as κοινόλεκτρος, literally translated as the 'sharer of his bed.' Again, she has no proof of Cassandra's sexual activity; references to Cassandra by Agamemnon and the chorus give no indication of any sexual contact between the two characters. She is, nevertheless, referred to as a *gunē* (1438), and is treated by Clytemnestra as though she has already had sexual contact with Agamemnon.¹²⁰ Even though any questions into Cassandra's sexuality are deftly deflected, Clytemnestra assumes the position of the injured wife despite the ambiguity that characterizes Cassandra's sexual status.

Beyond simply sexualizing Cassandra, Clytemnestra hints that Cassandra may even be the active seducer of Agamemnon. Her use of φιλήτωρ at 1446 is intriguing, and may have been employed by Aeschylus to hint that Cassandra was the seducer rather than Agamemnon.¹²¹ She is, therefore, presents Cassandra as sexually deviant according to Athenian socio-legal prescriptions; women, after all, were legally perceived to be only the objects of an adulterous liaison. The use of -τωρ as a suffix was typically masculine and denoted agency, but the attachment to a feminine adjective here indicates that Clytemnestra is attempting to locate the blame for Agamemnon's adultery in Cassandra.¹²² Deianira, even though she attributes agency to Iole in other matters, places the blame on Eros for the union of Heracles and Iole. It is likely that Clytemnestra can conceive of a woman as the seducer because she herself is portrayed as an active participant in her adulterous affair with Aegisthus, even though the possibility that Cassandra actually

¹¹⁹ Fraenkel 1950: *ad loc.*

¹²⁰ Wohl 1998: 111.

¹²¹ Headlam 1910: *ad loc.*

¹²² Smyth 1920: 839 a.3.

seduced Agamemnon is infinitesimal. Also unlikely is Clytemnestra's veiled comment about Cassandra's sexual promiscuity when she characterizes her as 'ναυτίλων δὲ σελμάτων ἰσοτριβής' (1442-43). The literal translation of this phrase is unclear, since ἰσοτριβής is an extremely uncommonly used adjective, but it seems to mean something like "wearing out the ship's benches."¹²³ This declaration seems out of place in context, but when understood figuratively, the implication that she was "the sailors' whore," makes more sense in the context of the Clytemnestra's self-satisfied description of her murders.¹²⁴ This emphasis on not only Cassandra's sexuality but also her sexual agency allows Clytemnestra to provide a pretext for the two murders; namely, if she presents Cassandra as a predatory female, it legitimizes her wish to neutralize Cassandra's threat to her *oikos*.

After Clytemnestra has provided justification for her murders of both Agamemnon and Cassandra, namely the sacrifice of Iphigenia and Cassandra's depiction as a seductress, she then explains that murdering Cassandra brought her joy (ἐμοὶ δ' ἐπήγαγεν εὐνῆς παροψώνημα τῆς ἐμῆς χλιδῆι; 1446-47). This is perhaps the best indication of Clytemnestra's vengeful nature. She repeatedly dehumanizes and sexualizes Cassandra, attempting to make her seem as though she is to blame for the tragedies that have befallen her *oikos*, even though Cassandra occupies an ambiguous space. The ferocity of a term such as παροψώνημα, a *hapax legomenon* which literally translates to 'a side-dish', shows her disdainful nature and her willingness to lower herself to less dignified modes of discourse.¹²⁵ The pleasure that Clytemnestra finds in Cassandra's fate "by her commerce with Aegisthus and murder of her victims [shows] she has not only avenged her daughter

¹²³ Denniston & Page 1960: *ad loc.*

¹²⁴ Debnar 2010: 137.

¹²⁵ Fraenkel 1950: *ad loc.*

but repaid her husband's infidelities."¹²⁶ The coarse depiction of Cassandra by Clytemnestra speaks more to Clytemnestra's nature than it does to Cassandra's, and at the same time it is the ultimate dehumanization of the captive woman, rendered in terms of public ritual space, as I will argue. Cassandra becomes a sacrificial victim for everyone to witness, just as Iphigenia was. Thus Cassandra, as another 'virgin' who enters the palace, is the anti-Iphigenia according to Clytemnestra's depiction. Just as Iphigenia exited the palace as a sacrificial victim, Cassandra enters as such.

This continual animalizing of Cassandra, in order that Clytemnestra might provide some sort of justification for her actions, is accompanied by consistent references to Cassandra as an sexual object. By employing these sub-human, animal metaphors, Clytemnestra is able to portray Cassandra either as a weak creature over whom Clytemnestra has dominion, or as a tortured, wounded animal. Clytemnestra does not begin her questioning of Cassandra until after Agamemnon has left the stage. Her comparison to a slave, by both Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, is in itself a comparison to an animal that is compelled by a yoke (ζυγῶι; 953). This is a common image when discussing slavery, because slaves were often depicted as beasts, the not-quite-human realities of everyday life in the ancient world.¹²⁷ Clytemnestra takes the bestial imagery further, however, when she connects Cassandra with the sacrificial altar and sprinkling of water (κοινωνὸν εἶναι χερνίβων, πολλῶν μετὰ δούλων σταθεῖσαν κτησίου βωμοῦ πέλας; 1037-38). It is easy, then, to imagine Cassandra, standing by the altar as a victim waiting to be sacrificed, and indeed, this is her fate. This reference to χερνίβων, which "introduced the actual sacrificial

¹²⁶ Conington 1848: *ad loc.*

¹²⁷ Crane 2013: 4; DuBois 2003; 6.

process and which ‘begins with the wetting of the hands and ends with the sprinkling of the holy-water,’” would have allowed the audience to view Cassandra as a victim-animal hybrid, which serves as a reimagining of Iphigenia.¹²⁸ The sacrificial victim, usually an ox or another animal, was led to the altar as part of the sacrificial ritual. Clytemnestra is both foreshadowing her future actions and making sure that Cassandra is clear that she is part of a flock of many slaves.¹²⁹ This emphasis on ritual serves a dual purpose. Clytemnestra is able to dehumanize Cassandra, likening her to a being with no agency, but at the same time, she is perverting a normal ritual action. The use of a human as a sacrificial object is not something that was deemed acceptable in ancient Greek consciousness; Clytemnestra's outrage at Iphigenia's sacrifice provides one such example.

After having portrayed Cassandra as a sacrificial victim waiting to be slaughtered, Clytemnestra further objectifies her by effacing her ability to speak. The ability to communicate verbally is one of the most basic distinctions between animals and humans, and Clytemnestra is firmly locating Cassandra among the beasts, characterizing her as a swallow (χελιδών; 1050).¹³⁰ This passage has received significant attention from commentators because of the impossibility of communication that exists between the two women.¹³¹ The first implication of Cassandra's comparison to a swallow is her identification with her status as a barbarian, since the Greeks considered barbarians to have “incoherent speech, which was sometimes compared to the twittering of swallows.”¹³² The comparison to a swallow goes beyond the production of speech, however; it also

¹²⁸ Fraenkel 1950: *ad loc.*

¹²⁹ Denniston & Page 1960: *ad loc.*

¹³⁰ Crane 2013: 59.

¹³¹ Fraenkel 1950; *ad loc.*; *et al.*

¹³² Lloyd-Jones 1979: 85.

means that Cassandra is incapable of receiving speech as well. This is supported by Clytemnestra's next imperious demand to Cassandra to acknowledge her statements, if not with words, at the very least with a gesture (εἰ δ' ἄξυνήμων οὔσα μὴ δέχηι λόγον, σὺ δ' ἄντι φωνῆς φράζε καρβάνωι χερσί; 1060-61). Because Cassandra does not respond to Clytemnestra in any way, either verbally or physically, it renders her verbally unassailable.¹³³ Her silence during the exchange between Clytemnestra and the chorus, especially when Clytemnestra is attempting to draw her into responding in some fashion, does not mean that she is in control of her fate; in fact, Cassandra's subsequent exchange with the chorus shows that she knows she is not. It would have, however, made Cassandra a more conspicuous character, simply because she would have been expected to make some sort of response, given the barrage of abuse that Clytemnestra is hurling at her. Her expressionless silence onstage allows Clytemnestra to strip her of her humanity and portray her as a helpless figure.

Cassandra's characterization as a defenseless character takes a violent turn when Clytemnestra compares her to a horse who has been worked and abused until the bit is bloody (χαλινὸν δ' οὐκ ἐπίσταται φέρειν πρὶν αἱματηρὸν ἔξαφρίζεσθαι μένος; 1066-67). This image portrays Cassandra as an animal, fighting against her current circumstances in vain, but does not harmonize with the figure of Cassandra onstage. A horse is a noble, valuable animal made useless by the mistreatment of its master; this metaphor is extremely apt for Cassandra's fall from importance. Thus far, she has neither spoken nor moved, and has been talked about as though she is not present. This bestializing of Cassandra reveals more about Clytemnestra than it does Cassandra, because although it fits

¹³³ Fraenkel 1950: *ad loc.*

in with the standard practices of ancient Greek horsemanship, it is unusual for a woman to employ such a brutal image.¹³⁴ Upset because Cassandra has completely ignored Clytemnestra's attempts at conversation, she presents the captive woman as a madwoman (μαίνεται; 1064) fighting against her current situation. In reality, however, Cassandra both knows and has fully accepted her fate.

After she has stoically endured Clytemnestra's abuse, Cassandra begins her shift from silence to speech as soon as Clytemnestra has left the stage. The chorus, a band of Argive elders, has maintained a stance of pity (ἐποικτίρω; 1079) toward Cassandra throughout the play. While the chorus still uses animal imagery to describe Cassandra, the images they employ portray Cassandra as a pitiable animal, unaccustomed to her captivity (τρόπος δὲ θηρὸς ὡς νεαρέτου; 1063; εἴκουσ' ἀνάγκηι τῆιδε καίνισον ζυγόν; 1071). These images, interspersed with Clytemnestra's more merciless characterizations, indicate that even though Clytemnestra wishes to portray her as an inhuman, hypersexualized figure, the chorus is more sympathetic to Cassandra's new status as a captive. Cassandra, who begins to speak the instant Clytemnestra leaves the stage, invokes Apollo and remains in a frenzied state until she leaves the stage for the last time (1330). Her prophetic statements, known to be true by the audience, are tragically treated as mad ravings by the chorus. They are clearly aware of her association with Apollo and her association with prophetic power; indeed, the characters in the play seem to be well of aware of Cassandra's identity, as indicated by Clytemnestra's ability to address Cassandra by name at 1035.¹³⁵ Her

¹³⁴ Fraenkel 1950: *ad loc.* Greek horsemanship in general offered the possibility for brutality: "If the horse ever failed to obey, or if the rider were unsympathetic or impatient, then the spiked rolls and the disks of the bit would in a moment tear the membrane of the lower jaw and the tongue and draw blood." (Fraenkel 1950: 486).

¹³⁵ Those back home likely would have known of the major players in the Trojan War (Fraenkel 1950: 467).

prophecies, which are believed to be false by the Argive elders, lead them to compare her to a keen-scented hound (ἔοικεν εὔρις ἢ ξένη κυνὸς δίκην εἶναι; 1093-94), searching for its quarry. This association of Cassandra with a dog is much more positive than any similar association by Clytemnestra; the chorus accentuates the positive attributes of the animal to which they are comparing her. When placed in contrast to Helen's dog-faced epithet in *Iliad* 3 (κυνῶπις; 180), the emphasis on the tracking qualities of a dog seem all the more benign, especially because the "essential qualities of a good dog include that of being εὔρις."¹³⁶ Despite this positive association, the chorus is still nevertheless ascribing subhuman attributes to Cassandra.

This bestializing of Cassandra, although more benign than that which she experienced at the hands of Clytemnestra, indicates that the chorus firmly locates Cassandra in a dehumanized state. They characterize her prophecies as vain (ματαίους; 1151), which shows reveals the essential lack of understanding by the chorus.¹³⁷ Because of her curse from Apollo, she is doomed to be misunderstood and therefore, knows that she is fated to die by Clytemnestra's hand. As such, her comparison to a nightingale (ξουθᾶ; 1143) by the chorus has easily been explained away by commentators.¹³⁸ This connection of nightingales to lament and mourning refers to the story of Tereus and Procne. Procne, fated to eternally mourn her dead son Itys, was turned into a nightingale.¹³⁹ This story, too, contains hints of sexual infidelity; Tereus, after all, seduced Procne's sister, Philomela. The connections therefore, are evident, and indeed, "the fate of the nightingale should appear to

¹³⁶ Fraenkel 1950: *ad loc.*

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ Fraenkel 1950: *ad loc.* Denniston & Page 1960: *ad loc.*

¹³⁹ Morford & Lenardon 2014: 595.

Cassandra as enviable in comparison with her own.”¹⁴⁰ The use of the nightingale is again a comment on how pitiable the chorus finds Cassandra's current plight, but the continued dehumanization signals the suppression of her ability to communicate with the other characters in the play despite the fact that she is now speaking.

Clytemnestra animalizes Cassandra a final time after she is dead. I have already discussed Clytemnestra's glee at having killed Cassandra, but her comparison of Cassandra to a swan, even after her death, has attracted much scholarly attention.¹⁴¹ Bird imagery in the *Agamemnon* seems to have initial associations with the way certain types of birds are portrayed in metaphor – the nightingale being one such example – and Cassandra's comparison to a swan is no different. The swan was believed to have “foreknowledge of its end and proclaims it in song,” and Cassandra's situation parallels that of a dying swan. The characterization of Cassandra singing a swan-song at her dying moment again signifies that she does not have a *logos*. Harris' work argues for the use of the swan as an image as having come from an earlier fable, “The Swan and its Owner,” that was orally transmitted and which centered on the theme of lament.¹⁴² In this fable, there is an indication that “rather than being merely *unwilling*, the swan is actually *unable* to sing except when it has intimations of its imminent mortality.”¹⁴³ This hints at the possibility that Cassandra may have continued to be silent, just as Iole was, if her death was not looming. Clytemnestra's comparison is an apt one; after all, she had not seen any trace of speech or emotion until her death. Juxtaposed with her exuberance at Cassandra's murder, Clytemnestra's comparison of Cassandra with a swan takes a more sinister cast. Cassandra is a helpless

¹⁴⁰ Denniston & Page 1960: *ad loc.*

¹⁴¹ Fraenkel 1950: *ad loc.*; Harris 2012.

¹⁴² Harris 2012: 554ff.

¹⁴³ Harris 2012: 555.

figure; not only is she unable to take any action even as she is being murdered, but she has borne the burden of knowing about it through the course of the play.

Cassandra's consistent portrayal as a post-human entity is a complex one, but ultimately both her silence and her speech are to no avail. Her speech is incapable of transmitting any meaningful message, thus allowing her no meaningful dialogue with any of the other characters in the play. She is also consistently sexualized by Clytemnestra, who uses her sexual availability in order to provide some sort of justification for her intended murder of both Agamemnon and Cassandra. Although the chorus is somewhat more forgiving in the type of imagery they employ, opting to accentuate the positive qualities of Cassandra's bestial state, they also conceive of her as post-human, perhaps due mainly to Apollo's curse. Since the curse renders Cassandra incapable of transmitting any meaningful message, it is almost impossible that she be seen on equal footing with any of the other characters in the play. Indeed, she cannot occupy any space within the *oikos* or within society. Scholars have attributed this to Cassandra's existence in a liminal state – a different reality that is between the human and divine sphere.¹⁴⁴ The characters in the play, however, do not have access to the divinely-inspired knowledge that Cassandra transmits, and therefore locate her in a different liminal state, an existence between that of humans and animals. Cassandra becomes a hybrid figure, defaced of meaningful speech and characterized and treated as though an animal throughout the course of the play.

¹⁴⁴ Fraenkel 1950; Schein 1982: 11-13; et al.

V. Conclusion

Hybridity, if viewed loosely, is at the root of adultery; one of the perceived implications of an unfaithful wife, for example, is adulterated offspring. This concern for familial purity is reflected throughout the extant sources, just as is the desire for civic purity. This began with a desire to reject anything that was different; the post-Persian War world brought about a wave of Hellenocentrism, just as growing tensions with Sparta and its allies seems to have generated an upswing in Athenocentric ideologies. Myths such as that of Pasiphaë and the Centaurs magnify the issues inherent in sexual unions in which the partners had differing statuses or identifications. The authors of these stories, in the case of Pasiphaë and Cassandra, focus on the destructive effects of female autonomy and uninhibited sexuality and, in the case of the Centaurs, they provide a comment on the catastrophic and anti-civilizing nature of 'barbarian' actions. These accounts, in displaying the dangers that they believed to exist within female or subhuman figures and casting them as deviant, implicitly promote and legitimize the normative male socio-cultural structures and legal codes. Hybrid figures, whether offspring or in and of themselves, are presented as potentially destabilizing these structures and are cast as presences to be avoided.

5

PATERNAL ANXIETY AND BREACHES OF UNION IN THE RITUAL RECORD

I. Introduction

The constructed and fictional empowerment given to women in literature fully emerges in the extant material and ritual sources, most notably in the catalogues of oracular questions and responses and in the contents of the surviving curse tablets.¹ These material artifacts provide a historical basis for the literary claims made in the preceding chapters; namely that reproductive matters and marital issues were a cause for concern to all cross-sections of Greek society. Women in ancient Greece seem to have been able to gain some control over their circumstances by utilizing the various religious outlets available to them – whether socially prescribed or not.² The oracles overall provided less access to women, which is evident from the restrictions on consultants at Delphi, one of the major centers of prophetic inquiry. There were, however, oracular centers that catered more to individuals, and therefore provided services to disenfranchised social groups, including women.³ The private nature of curse tablets, on the other hand, may have been a more

¹ This study only includes the published curse tablets. Eidinow and other scholars refer to the as yet unpublished curse tablets, which do not feature in the current catalogues.

² According to Connelly, women in the office of priestess could occupy a civic and political status equal to that of men. (Connelly 2007: 2-5). Outside of these prominent positions, women likely had to work within other ritual means in order to express themselves.

³ Burkert claims that at Dodona, “it is mostly private individuals who on the surviving lead tablets approach the god for advice on everyday problems.” (1985: 114); see also Eidinow (2007): Ch. 6.

readily available outlet to women in a situation requiring resolution. Contrary to the oracular remains, women appear to have composed a greater number of the recovered curse tablets, according to the language and gender-specific demonstratives found within. Individuals in a dire or threatening situation, more specifically one which required divine intercession, would have initiated or commissioned these curse tablets, which customarily included prayers or imprecations to chthonic divinities.⁴

The extant oracles and curse tablets both betray a male preoccupation with paternity and the necessity of motherhood, which is reflected in the literary sources of the previous chapters. The emphasis on legitimate parentage and mothering can better explained by contemporary sociological perspectives which investigate the importance of mothering as a means of reinforcing institutions of male socio-political control.⁵ As the work of Nancy Chodorow shows, “women’s mothering is a central and defining feature of the social organization of gender and is implicated in the construction and reproduction of male dominance itself.”⁶ Therefore, the prominence of reproduction as a concern in the oracles betrays the male fixation on securing legitimate heirs and thereby supporting the mechanisms of male control and state-executed sexual inequality. The curse tablets which seem to be authored by women, on the other hand, show the importance of a secure marriage bond to women, indicating an overall fear of being divorced or passed over for another woman, an issue which is found in literary representations of marriage. The dubious social status that came along with being divorced or widowed seems to have been a driving force among women who were facing the dissolution of marriage; as Sarah

⁴ Voutiras believes that Phila wrote, albeit under some direction, the Pella tablet. (1998).

⁵ Chodorow (1978): 7; Schur (1983): 81.

⁶ Chodorow (1978): 9.

Pomeroy has suggested, to be an unmarried woman was something to be avoided.⁷ The inability of women to have children seems to have been a common reason for divorce, since it violated the male-desire for legitimate heirs, and by extension the security of their lineage and inheritance.⁸ Therefore, women had few alternatives but to locate themselves within an institution that perpetuated male supremacy by controlling female reproductive and sexual abilities.⁹

An essential difference between curse tablets and the consultation of oracles informs my approach to this section of my study; namely, the various aspects of their respective performance contexts. The differences between ‘magic’ and ‘religion’ have been investigated by several scholars such as Esther Eidinow, Robert Fowler, Fritz Graf, and Einar Thomassen.¹⁰ However, the overall potential for accessibility of the oracular record and the presumed, and desired, inaccessibility of the curse tablets is crucial to the ranges and depths of concern found in each respective type of artifact. Oracles, on the one hand,

⁷ Pomeroy (1997): 171.

⁸ Similar to Schur’s assertion that “a married woman’s decision not to have any children constitutes a significant norm-violation” (with regards to contemporary marriage). (1983: 82). Since childlessness was considered a female problem, and a female problem alone, it is still a grave violation of socio-cultural norms.

⁹ Chodorow (1978): 9.

¹⁰ The differences between magic and religion are manifold. Eidinow frames the difference according to risk, and that “those who used oracles were uncertain and wanted to be sure they were making the right choice; those who turned to curses were usually already in a situation of danger and wanted to limit the damage their enemies might inflict.” (2007: 5). Oracles, then, imply pre-emptive action, while curse tablets are used after a situation has already occurred. Fowler contends that the difference between the type of ritual that accompanied oracles and that of curse tablets was in the social and cultural acceptability of the action. The difference was not “so much in the substance of the ritual acts as in their social context”, and the exact same ritual action – which in a private setting would be considered unsanctioned – could be performed in a religious setting and could be classified as sanctioned. (Fowler 1995: 2). Graf seems to approach the study of magic as a distinct subset of religion, and refrains from commenting directly on the debate about magic and religion. He asserts that it is necessary to “consider and analyze the ancient use of the term magic as it constitutes an element of the indigenous discourse on the relationship between the human and the supernatural.” (Graf 1997: 19). Thomassen’s discussion of the differences between magic and religion is similar to Fowler’s in that it is relative to the socially approved action, but unlike a priest taking part in a public ritual, “the magician refuses to submit to a common code, and the power generated in the ritual is not shared by a community. Instead, the ritual power is concentrated in the magician himself.” (Thomassen in Jordan, *et al.* 1999: 64). The emphasis, then, is on the fact that the magician caters only to personal interests while the priest is more focused on the communal benefit.

were consulted in a more public setting and with a formalized ritual procedure. Evidence from Delphi and Dodona shows that some part of the oracular consultation was preserved, and the potential recoverability of these concerns, therefore, would likely have influenced the way in which these questions were posed to the oracles.¹¹ This is likely because the inquiries openly addressing legitimacy of children had the potential to cast aspersions on the whole *oikos*, which in turn would have had severe social ramifications.¹² It is further significant that women were deemed responsible for sterility, which further reinforced sexual inequality by allowing men to discard women suspected of barrenness.¹³

Curse tablets, on the other hand, more frequently express implied adulterous intent or a desire to sever an already-married or otherwise sexually joined couple. Rather than asking the gods to intervene directly in their own life, as the oracles did, the purpose was to seek divine aid in subjecting “another human being to one’s own will, to make the person unable to act according to his or her own wishes,” as Graf has argued.¹⁴ The ‘binder’ (*defigens*, according to Emmanuel Voutiras’ work) of the curse tablet believed that by

¹¹ At Delphi, for example, part of the ritual for consultants took place in public, and the Pythia’s response itself, which by nature often reflected the question, was recorded by priests. At Dodona, the questions were written on lead tablets and given to a priest, who then took it to the oracle. Therefore, it is highly possible that the concerns of the consultant, whether as the original question or as part of the response, would be recoverable at a later time, due to the access given to people beyond the consultant him- or herself. Walter Burkert stresses the importance of recording oracular utterances, citing it as a likely cause of the onset of writing in the mid-800s B.C.E. (1985: 117).

¹² The lack of chastity by unmarried girls and the suitability of certain women for marriage also form the basis of some of the inquiries that appear in the catalogues. Similarly, the uncertainty of the parentage of the child of Phano and Phrastor in Apollodorus 59 led to Phrastor’s unwillingness to present his son to the phratry because of the suspicion that Phano had taken lovers while they were married. (59.59-60).

¹³ Sterility in antiquity seems to have been viewed as a female problem. In his *History of Animals*, Aristotle claims that sterility could be the fault of either the male or female partner, but spends the bulk of the section concerning procreative difficulties discussing potential female problems. For more on Aristotle’s discussion of sterility, see van der Eijk 1999.

¹⁴ Graf 1997: 120.

hiding the tablet, the agency sought by the tablet was unassailable until it was unearthed.¹⁵ These *katadesmoi* also often focused on a specific target or occurrence, and therefore the response that the binder sought was more spatially and temporally delineated. Generally, the binder wished to affect his or her own life by directly seeking a desired event or occurrence for another person. They were consciously placed in secret locations so that they would remain untouched, and their tangible authority could remain intact and unaffected by outsiders. I have discussed the importance of tangibility and tactile control in the previous chapters, but the necessity of *intangibility* by others was crucial to the efficacy of the tablets. The importance of a secret location has been instrumental in preserving these tablets, but at the same times, it has rendered several of the tablets highly fragmentary or illegible in certain areas. There does, however, remain enough evidence to gain some understanding about the role of adultery and infidelity in the ancient Greek imagination, as well as in practice.

Certain motifs found in the tablets are found in the depiction of adultery in other genres, such as tactility and conspicuousness, and these are able to further illuminate how adultery was considered and framed by members of Greek society. There are extant tablets of both professional and inexpert creation, and therefore the tablets illustrate a cross-section of concerns by an ostensibly wide sampling of society.¹⁶ The amateur tablets are especially helpful to this study since they shed more light on the personal thoughts of the individual who resorted to such action, as compared to the more stylized, professional

¹⁵ Eidinow 2007: 148. The frequent appearance of these tablets in graves further demonstrates this. (Graf 1997: 134; *et al.*)

¹⁶ And although “the use of repetitive formulae and the discovery of caches of curse tablets written, or tiny dolls shaped, by the same hand, suggest the activities of a salesman,” as Eidinow claims, there are some tablets that scholars believe to have been written by amateurs. (2007: 143).

tablets. Even though these two types of ritual processes may seem antithetical in certain aspects, they are nevertheless invaluable sources in that they show certain avenues available to ancient Greeks, most notably women, in an extreme or hopeless situation. The repeated occurrence of oracular material and curse tablets that dealt with marriage and children, sometimes referring to erotic desire, indicates that this was a central concern in Greek thought. This male concern was veiled or implicit because the charge of adultery, and therefore the potential for illegitimate children, could have been used as a means of discrediting a rival or enemy.¹⁷ The performance context and presumed recoverability dictated the manner in which these questions could be framed, and this manifests itself in the language of the respective sources.

II. Oracles

a. Introduction

The extant evidence regarding oracles and the different oracular centers presents a diverse context of its function within people's daily lives. The function of these oracles, nevertheless, is largely the same: the consultant wishes to seek divine help on a problem. Certain matters are more represented in the catalogues than others, and this suggests that "certain areas of life – the birth of children, continued good health, and prosperity – were

¹⁷ McCracken 1998: 10. For example, Apollodorus 59 provides such an example of character assassination via the charge of a citizen's illegitimacy.

considered to be more dependent on divine will than others.”¹⁸ In a description of Pythian consultation, Herbert Parke and Donald Wormell claim that the consultants would ask “to what gods or goddesses offerings should be made to achieve a specified object, and the Pythia's reply would prescribe the appropriate ritual. Thus the consultations were religious in form and not mere inquisitive speculations in the future or attempts to obtain practical shortcuts to success.”¹⁹ This was not limited to Delphi, but seems rather to have been an essential feature of the types of questions typically asked of the various oracles throughout Greece and on the Ionian coast.²⁰ What is important of our understanding of oracles in the ancient world is that their consultation seems to have been nearly universally accepted, “provided that one consulted them in the approved manner. But let an unlicensed oracle-monger appear, and watch him be pilloried by the comic poets for a fraud.”²¹ Because of the continued consultation of the better-known oracles, they were able to gain the authority and prestige that the itinerant *manteis* seem to have lacked.

The similarities between the workings of the different oracular centers, however, are often overstated. Delphi, the Panhellenic oracular authority, therefore provides the most extant evidence, both for individual and collective consultants; the majority of the

¹⁸ Eidinow 2007: 133. These consultants did not relinquish every aspect of their area of concern to the oracle, however. By the time they arrived to consult the oracle, they had typically “progressed in their decision, tackling the aspects they can know about,” although there could have been questions asked of an oracle out of desperation.

¹⁹ Parke and Wormell 1956: 2. The purpose of divination was not to gain divine information about the future, but rather to redirect a problem out of the world of the divine, according to Sarah Iles Johnston, “in which it seems to be rooted, and into the everyday world, where one is better able to solve it with human skills.” (Johnston 2005: 297; Scott 2014: 27; Eidinow 2007: 138).

²⁰ According to Eidinow, questions usually took the form of “Which god should I pray to?” or “Should I do x or y?”, and indeed, many of the entries in the various oracular catalogues take this form. 2007: 48.

²¹ Fowler 1995: 6; *et al.*

oracles, however, seem to represent the concerns of a certain *polis*.²² The archaeological remains as well as the literary evidence, most notably from Delphic priest Plutarch, have focused on the Pythia herself rather than the consultants and their inquiries.²³ Therefore, the consultants' questions seem to be more of a by-product, although sometimes they are recoverable due to the phrasing of the Pythia's replies.²⁴ The prestige that the Pythia enjoyed made access to her privileged, and it seems as though the *poleis* took precedence

²² Because Delphi was treated as a Panhellenic oracle, and even is shown to cater to non-Greek inquiries in literature, it was used a site of consultation for many of the Greek *poleis*, and eventually it became the most prestigious of all the ancient oracles. Cf. the consultation of the Pythia by Croesus in Book 1 of Herodotus' *Histories*, among others.

²³ Plutarch, *de Defectu Oraculorum*.

²⁴ Parke and Wormell, in one of the compilations of the Delphic oracle, classify the oracles chronologically, which is logical to the extent that the oracles can be dated with any certainty, though there are certain inherent problems with attempting to give a secure date for the oracles that cannot be historically situated. The assumption of the authenticity of the oracles included, however, is problematized by the work of Lisa Maurizio. The '*ipsissima verba*' of the Pythia are essentially unrecoverable, and as such, the classification essentially rests on plausibility; i.e., Parke and Wormell are operating on the assumption that they can remove all supernatural elements and that the words attributed to the Pythia are 'real'. (1997: 309-311). Maurizio's argument is that the oracular responses were originally orally transmitted just as Homeric epic was, and as such, very little of what exists is 'historical' or 'authentic' because of the very nature of oral transmission. (1997: 312) Therefore, the criteria used by Parke and Wormell do not necessarily give an accurate representation of what would have been considered authentic to the ancients and the possibility of recovering accurate speech after so many generations.

The classification scheme employed by Joseph Fontenrose, which he utilizes in both the Delphic and Didymaeon catalogues, has also been shown to be precarious. He classifies the oracles according to Historical, Quasi-Historical, Legendary, and Fictional subdivisions: The Historical oracles are "those which appear in contemporary records; that is, the accepted probable date of the response fell within the lifetime of the writer who attests it"; the Quasi-Historical oracles are "those which were allegedly spoken within historical times, i.e., after the legendary period, but which are, to our knowledge, first attested by a writer whose lifetime was later than the accepted or supposed date of the response"; the Legendary oracles are "those which belong to admittedly legendary narratives", using 800 B.C.E. as the cut-off between legendary and historical; and the Fictional responses are "those invented by poets, dramatists, and romancers to serve their creative purposes." These are based upon how probable it was that the person recording the oracle would have had reliable access to it. (1987: 7-9) Fontenrose, in attempting to distinguish between legendary and historical, studies the modes of language found in each of the categories listed above. Johnston's work questions this as an all-inclusive practice because it is unclear "whether all "real" oracles necessarily were so carefully recorded and also whether, indeed, all recorded oracles were recorded in exactly the same language as they were delivered – an assumption on which Fontenrose's arguments about modes of language depends." (Johnston 2005: 286). She further asserts that there is no reason "to assume that fiction presented a significantly different picture of what sorts of things Delphi was concerned with than did reality", and it is this assertion, along with Eidinow's and Maurizio's, that I use as a basis for my treatment of the oracles; namely, even because the oracles are stylized or form an inseparable part of a narrative, there is no reason to assume that they are not representative of the concerns which the consultants brought to the Pythia. The fact that the oracles even in literature are formulaic is likely representative, to a certain extent, of possible questions posed historically.

over individual citizens.²⁵ Despite these complications, it can be gleaned from the individual questions that remain that there was an implicit disquiet about paternity, fidelity, and other issues in marriage.

The oracles at Dodona and Didyma, on the other hand, have less extant evidence but seem to have dealt with more personal, everyday questions.²⁶ The remains from Dodona include inquiries from a diverse array of social groups, including men, women, married couples, and even slaves, allowing us to gain a deeper insight into the concerns of the different social cross sections of Greek society.²⁷ Furthermore, the questions asked by the consultants at Dodona were preserved because they were inscribed onto lead tablets and given to the oracle.²⁸ These questions are crucial to this study, since it enables a more accurate representation of the social unease about perceived female infidelity, without any interpretation or reimagining which often seems to characterize the Pythia's responses. Didyma, a sanctuary to Apollo located on the coast of Asia Minor, also provides evidence for the paternity concerns from individual consultants.²⁹ While Didyma was similar to Dodona in that it was more often consulted by individuals than *poleis* with pressing concerns, it is also reminiscent of Delphi in that the remains record the responses rather than the

²⁵ Furthermore, there were difficulties in expense and access made the Delphic oracle that much more difficult for the everyday Greek citizen to consult. See Parke & Wormell 1956: Ch. 1; Scott 2014: Ch. 1 (esp. 15-19); *et al.*

²⁶ Eidinow 2007: 137; Burkert 1985: 114. Consultations by *poleis* seem to have been conducted on a much smaller scale.

²⁷ Eidinow 2007: 130-1. Eidinow's catalogue of the Dodona catalogue classifies them topically, and although she concedes that there is some overlap in certain situations, it serves as a user-friendly guide to the concerns of the consultants of Dodona.

²⁸ Burkert 1985: 114; Johnston 2008: 68-9. It is possible "that what was written on a question tablet was also communicated to the oracle verbally." (Eidinow 2007: 129)

²⁹ Morgan 1989: 18. The responses detail the concerns not only of the colonists, but also the Ionians living in Asia Minor. Because Didyma was under the control of a single city, Miletus, it had a more central function as the oracle of its patron city, and any consultations by members of other *poleis* were likely secondary to the concerns of the Milesians.

questions asked by the consultants.³⁰ Fontenrose asserts that when the inscriptional record about a certain consultation at Didyma is complete, “we learn who was consultant, what question he asked, and what caused him to ask the question, besides the response itself.”³¹ One would expect, therefore, that the questions would resemble those from Dodona, rather than separating the constituent bits of information – the name, occasion, etc. – as Fontenrose does for the Didyma oracles. However, little is known about mantic practice at Didyma before 334 B.C.; there seems to have been a period of inactivity before this, after which the revived oracle at Didyma was modeled after the Pythia.³² Because of this, the specific workings of the Didymaean priestess are in dispute. What is not in dispute is that the mechanisms of recording the responses meant that there would have been the potential for the inquiries to be accessed by someone other than the consultant and priests.³³

Because of the extent of the evidence that remains for Delphi, “undue attention has been paid to superficial comparison of Greek oracles”; in reality, because of its prestigious nature and Panhellenic importance, it is likely not at all representative of the workings of the more localized oracular sites.³⁴ What they do have in common is that the consultation was intended to “extend the range of their [i.e., the consultants’] agency.”³⁵ Sarah Iles Johnston applied this extension of agency to those consulting at Delphi, but female

³⁰ This may have been a feature of Apollonian mantic practice, as opposed to that of Zeus, but it may also be that the classification style favored by Fontenrose presents the extant evidence in a concise, yet rigidly classified manner.

³¹ Fontenrose 1988: 97. Fontenrose provides a catalogue of Didymaean responses; for the classification and presentation of these responses, see FN 24 above.

³² Fontenrose 1988: 78-9.

³³ Fontenrose 1988: 79-80. For Fontenrose’s discussion of differing opinions on the manner of consultation, see Fontenrose 1988: Ch. 5 (esp. 79-80).

³⁴ Morgan 1989: 17.

³⁵ Johnston 2005: 301.

autonomy would have been expanded at centers such as Didyma and Dodona as well.³⁶ The agency given to women in drama exists only in controlled or artificial settings; however, a female consultant could, ostensibly at least, ask anything she wished, although not necessarily without any repercussions.

Of the extant oracles from each of the corpora, I focus primarily on those that deal with marriage and the ability to have children, both of which can be interpreted to betray an implicit anxiety about adultery. Many of the so-called historical inquiries date to the late 5th and 4th centuries, which is reasonable given the institution of the Periclean citizenship law of 451 B.C.E. Furthermore, the sheer number of Greeks that died in the Peloponnesian War likely increased the concern about procreation and inheritance rights, which provides a historical basis for the proliferation of oracles that address these issues. Nevertheless, there are several historical and legendary/literary oracles, concerning similar topics, which indicate the continued importance of procreation and unsullied lineages in the ancient world. There are also several inquiries about men who are about to take a wife, or are on the point of choosing between two women. The language of these oracular questions and responses indicate the importance of choosing what men considered to be the 'right' woman as a wife; namely, one who would stay faithful and produce children.

³⁶These sanctuaries seem to have allowed women to consult the oracles; at Delphi, on the other hand, it was forbidden. (Scott 2014: 17)

b. Concerns about Marriage and Spouses

One of the extant tablets from Dodona explicitly expresses a concern about the paternity of an *in utero* child. This tablet dates to the 2nd century B.C.E., and is therefore one of the later tablets from the catalogue and not representative of its earlier counterparts; nevertheless, it directly addresses Lysanias' suspicion that his wife was involved in an adulterous union and the child which she was carrying was not his. This type of reference to adultery is not made explicit in the published oracular tablets from the Classical Period, which instead are characterized by subtlety and implicit suggestion. Lysianias, on the other hand, wanted to be undeniably sure that his wife, Annyla, was being faithful to him:

Ἐρωτῆ Λυσα-
νίας Δία Νάον
καὶ Δηώνα(ν) ἧ οὐ-
κ ἐστὶ ἐξ αὐτοῦ
ΘΙ-τὸ παιδάριον
ὃ Ἀννύλα κυεῖ

Lysanias asks Zeus Naos and Dione whether the child with which Annyla is pregnant is not from him?³⁷

The symbol at the beginning of the fifth line may be a mistake, with the enquirer writing an 'OI' and then erasing them, or it may be an ithyphallic symbol.³⁸ Although it is impossible to know the intentions of the caster, the presence of a symbol that can be construed as being obscene in a consultation such as this is intriguing. It is reminiscent of the phallic symbols displayed in public settings – on the Herms in ancient Greece and outside of houses and in

³⁷ Eidinow 2007: 120.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

paving stones in Roman times, for example – as an assertion of masculinity. Because adultery and impotence pose an assault to masculine virility, it may well be that Lysanias includes this symbol in an attempt to reassert what he perceived to be his battered masculinity. This oracular question showcases the risk inherent in marrying; namely, in a time without paternity testing, only the woman herself could determine the father of the children she bore with any reliability. This lack of epistemic agency was the cause of much of the male anxiety about any unsupervised access to their wives by other men. They were embroiled in a perpetual paradox: without wives, there was no possibility of heirs, but the untrustworthy nature of women, as broadcast by social stereotypes, enabled men to cast doubt over the paternity of any children that were born to their wives.

Other oracular tablets in the Dodona catalogue are far less explicit, but nevertheless betray a varying level of anxiety about the possibility of having children or being married to the ‘right’ woman, presumably one that was both loyal and fertile. Loosely following Eidinow's categorization of the published oracles, I analyze them in two different groups: those relating to wives and those inquiring about children. The questions that pertain to women generally relate somehow to their perceived suitability for marriage, a key ingredient of which would have been their ability to produce heirs. Therefore, the men deciding between two women would likely have had two concerns – their ability to produce children and their willingness to remain faithful – and they would have consulted the oracle in order to ascertain which woman better suited their needs. The following example does not name a specific woman, which is not characteristic of all the tablets, and reads thus:

Ὀνασίμοι ἄμει-
νον τὰν γυναῖκα
κομίδεσται

Will it be better for Onasimos to marry the woman?³⁹

In this oracle, which dates to the 5th century B.C.E., the consultant names himself and not the woman who is under consideration. The wording of this oracle is representative of several of the other oracles that ask similar questions: there is a reference to degree, shown by the comparative adjective 'better' (ἄμεινον or λώϊον). A similar but undated oracle shows this same idea by asking whether he will be fortunate (τυγχάνοιμι) if he takes a woman, Kleolais, as his wife.⁴⁰ The 'benefit' or 'fortune' that the prospective wives can give is children - legitimate children, more specifically - and this is attested by the extant oracles from several oracular centers. What is interesting about the oracles that address the marriage of the consultant is that it is reliably certain that they are all asked by men.⁴¹ Even in the unpublished tablets, according to Eidinow's findings, there do not seem to be tablets from Dodona by women concerned about their own marriages, likely because social codes stressed that female fidelity - not male - was crucial to a successful marriage, and they had the epistemic control within their marriages. They did not, however, have much choice in the selection of their husbands; this was the responsibility of their father, and therefore the only stake they would have had in their marriage is the production of legitimate children during the marriage.

³⁹ Eidinow 2007: 84. All translations of oracles taken from the Dodona catalogue are Eidinow's.

⁴⁰ Women, 1.

⁴¹ Eidinow 2007: 82.

This idea of women being suitable for marriage takes an interesting turn in a question asked of the Dodona oracle by a father about his daughter's sexual status. This same obsession is present in the *Thesmophoriazuae*, in which the women lament because any young girl who is slightly off-color is suspected by her family of morning sickness or another complaint associated with pregnancy.

[Πε]ρ[ὶ] τῆς κόρ[ης] ἀγνείαν πῶς κα ταύ
[τα] λ[ώ]ιον καὶ ἄμεινον πράσοι

About the chastity of the girl/my daughter how would s/he do these things better and more well⁴²

This oracle seems to be unique in that it explicitly casts aspersions on the chastity (ἀγνεία) of the daughter in question. Other inquiries by fathers ask questions about how acceptable certain men would be as husbands, but none of them so openly take issue with their daughter's suitability for marriage. Similar questions exist in the unpublished tablets, though asked by mothers rather than fathers, which indicates an overall concern with the chastity of unmarried girls.⁴³ The abovementioned question, then, is presumably more than a moral one. It is also a pragmatic question concerned with the practical aspects of marriage, because it is less likely that any child born to virgin right after marriage will be the product of someone other than her husband; she would have been kept under close watch by her parents before moving into her new *oikos*. This does not preclude the possibility of adulterous action during the marriage, however, but indicates the socially-presented importance of giving a chaste bride to her husband. The importance of pre-marital chastity can be seen in the language of the betrothal agreements, as shown in some

⁴² Eidinow 2007: 85.

⁴³ Eidinow 2007: 82.

of Menander’s fragmentary comedies.⁴⁴ Along with farming and plowing imagery that describes the fertility of the maiden, there is an explicit mention of legitimate (γνήσιος) children that the wife is expected to bear.⁴⁵ The assumption that a man will enter into a marriage with a girl who is chaste and virginal was clearly important, as reflected by repeated instances in literature and the material record.

One of the so-called legendary oracles from Delphi, found primarily in the literary tradition, discusses inability of a woman called Kydippe, who has pledged to marry another man, to marry someone other than her betrothed. What is interesting about this situation is the projection of the problem onto the divine or natural sphere; the maiden, Kydippe, fell ill whenever she was about to be married to a man to whom she was not pledged. Her father, after she had fallen ill four times, asked the Pythia why his daughter continued to fall ill, to which she responded:

τέτρατον [ο]ύκέτ’ ἔμεινε πατήρ ἐ[....]φ[..]ο[
 Φοῖβον· ὁ δ’ ἐννύχιον τοῦτ’ ἔπος ἠύδάσατο·
 Ἄρτεμιδος τῇ παιδί γάμον βαρὺς ὄρκος ἐνικλᾷ·
 Λύγδαμιν οὐ γὰρ ἐμὴ τῆμος ἔκηδε κάσις
 οὐδ’ ἐν Ἀμυκλαίῳ θρύον ἔπλεκεν οὐδ’ ἀπὸ θήρης
 ἔκλυζεν ποταμῷ λύματα Παρθενίῳ,
 Δήλω δ’ ἦν ἐπίδημος, Ἀκόντιον ὀππότε σὴ παῖς
 ὤμοσεν, οὐκ ἄλλον, νυμφίον ἐξέμεναι.
 ὦ Κήυξ, ἀλλ’ ἦν με θέλης συμφράδμονα θέσθαι,
 ..][ν..] τελευτήσεις ὄρκια θυγατέρος·⁴⁶

‘The fourth time her father could endure it no more, but (set off to Delphian?) Phoebus, who in the night spoke and said: “A solemn oath by Artemis frustrates your child’s marriage. For my sister was not then vexing Lygdamis, neither in Amyclae’s shrine was she weaving rushes, nor in the river Parthenios was she

⁴⁴ Legitimate use of comedy, since it’s New Comedy- not as envelope-pushing.

⁴⁵ Men. *Per.* 1012-15; Men. *Dysk.* 841-5.

⁴⁶ Callim. *Ait.* 75.20-29, also in Aristain. *Epist.* 1.10; Parke and Wormell 383.

washing her stains after the hunt; she was at home in Delos when your child swore that she would have Acontius, none other for bridegroom. But Ceyx, if you will take me for your counselor, you will fulfil the oath of your daughter.”⁴⁷

Fontenrose cites the question put to the oracle as “What god hinders my daughter’s marriage?”; although the direct attribution of Kydippe’s illness to a god is neither found in this passage nor in the version of the story found in Aristaenetus’ tenth epistle. Parke and Wormell, on the other hand, state that the reason for the oracular consultation is “for a cure for Cydippe’s illness,” which is closer to the story as portrayed by the ancient authors.⁴⁸ What is important in this representation of the oracle is that even though the story is stylized, it nevertheless shows the importance of keeping oaths and the role the gods had in ensuring that such oaths were kept, something also found in the literary corpus. Kydippe’s oath to marry Akontios is reminiscent of a betrothal agreement, and this story indicates that the ancients thought the gods had a stake in mutually beneficial marriage. In both of the extant versions, the focus is on the oath made to Artemis, and Kydippe, by remaining willing to hold fast to the oath she made, is presented in a positive light.

c. Questioning the Ability to Bear Children

There are significantly more inquiries about the likelihood of the enquirer having children. The inability to have children was typically thought to be the fault of the woman; namely, if a couple was unable to conceive, the man would often assume it was some problem with his wife, and this was one of the scenarios in which a man could legally

⁴⁷ Trans. Trypanis.

⁴⁸ Parke & Wormell 1956: 155.

decide to take another woman as his wife.⁴⁹ As such, this specific concern seems to be at the heart of some of the oracles, most of which were asked by men. Although the political and domestic implications of childlessness for a man have been established, there is far less physical evidence that suggests childlessness was as major of a concern for women.⁵⁰ It is striking, therefore, that there exists in the Dodona catalogue an instance of a woman asking about the likelihood that she will be able to have a child:

Πότ[ερ]ον ἐμ[οῖ]
χρωμένη γίνεται
αὐτῆι τέκνα

Whether there will be children for me, if I consult the oracle?⁵¹

The feminine ending on the end of the participle χρωμένη and the reflexive pronoun αὐτῆι indicates that this oracle was written by a woman doubting her own ability to have a child. In this oracle, Eidinow claims the “combination of gender and concern is rare,” which is somewhat unexpected given the assumption that only the woman could be infertile.⁵² This tablet, then, shows a concern about children that is likely more connected to the domestic security a child brought to the *oikos* rather than an interest in succession. This concern is expressed in the *Thesmophoriazusae*, in which the women describe the lengths to which they will go to have a child, even if it means stealing the child of a slave; similarly, in the *Medea*, Medea insistently repeats that the children she bore to Jason should have precluded

⁴⁹ Eidinow 2007: 89.

⁵⁰ The explicit evidence exists mainly in comedy, especially in the *Thesmophoriazusae*, in which Mnesilochus argues that women attempted to pass off ‘counterfeit’ children (i.e., those taken from slaves or other women) as the legitimate heirs of their husband. This evidence, however, is given by a man in women’s clothing, so may not be representative of historical female concerns.

⁵¹ Eidinow 2007: 91.

⁵² Eidinow 2007: 131. There are other instances of inquiries such as these in the unpublished tablets, but they are rare.

any legitimate claim of divorce.⁵³ This tablet, therefore, is a unique display of female concern about childlessness – as present in the oracular collection. When considered alongside the literary representation of the implications that a legitimate child had on the *oikos*, this oracle perhaps shows the desire for women to have children in order to legitimize their place within the *oikos*.

Far more common are the tablets written by men that express a desire for children. Some tablets are extremely short and indicate a desire for children in general, while other inquiries directly refer to the desire for a male child, which highlights the importance of legitimacy and succession. The following oracular tablet from Dodona is one of the longest extant published oracles and expresses a desire for a son who is hale and hearty:

Θιὸς τύχα ἀγαθὰ : Βοκόλο κῆ Πολυμνάστη
τί κα δρᾶοντοιν ἡυγία κῆ γενιὰ κ' ἀνδρογένεια
γινύο[ι]το κῆ παραμόνιμος ἰοιὸ[ς] κῆ χρεμάτων
ἐπιγγ[ύ]ασις κῆ τῶν ἰόντων ὄνασις

God, good luck. Bokolo and Polymnaste (ask) what they should do for there to be health and offspring like their father and a male child that will survive and security of things and enjoyment from things to come.⁵⁴

This inquiry not only refers to a desire for a male child, but a healthy one; and the importance of male children and their effect upon the stability of the *oikos* is well documented in the literary genre. There are other inquiries that wish specifically for a male child, but many of them simply express concern over whether or not a couple will be able to have any children. This tablet is also notable in that Polymnastē is given equal primacy

⁵³ *Med.* 490ff.

⁵⁴ Eidinow 2007: 92.

within the tablet, perhaps indicating that her marriage with Bokolo is marked by good *philia*. The use of ἀνδρογένεια in this tablet is striking, but Eidinow’s translation, as she concedes in the introduction to her section on children, is not wholly representative of the Greek. Rather than translating it as “offspring like their father,” it is more precisely translated as ‘children descended from their father’, and the inclusion of a term as specific ἀνδρογένεια “may indicate concerns about paternity.”⁵⁵ As stated above, there were inherent issues with directly referring to any suspected adultery by a wife because of its implications for inheritance and succession. Therefore, the appearance of ἀνδρογένεια as a descriptor of the desired children may be a way of circumventing this problem, thereby allowing the consultant to express concerns about the paternity of his children without doing so directly. Even within this unique presentation of an ostensibly unified *oikos*, this inquiry nevertheless betrays the insecurities associated with an *oikos* that lacks a legitimate child.

The one extant question from Didyma regarding potential sterility is more stylized than those found at Dodona; indeed, it seems more reminiscent of those extant questions from Delphi that concern paternity and sterility issues.⁵⁶ Even though Fontenrose classifies oracle number 57 as legendary, it nevertheless imputes concerns with childlessness to those consulting at Didyma as well:

χρόνου δὲ πολλοῦ προϊόντος, ὡς τῶ Λύρκῳ παῖδες οὐκ ἐγίνοντο, ἦλθεν εἰς
Διδυμέως χρησόμενος περὶ γονῆς τέκνων· καὶ αὐτῶ θεσπίζει ὁ θεὸς παῖδας
φύσειν, ἧ ἄν ἐκ τοῦ ναοῦ χωρισθεὶς πρώτη συγγένηται

⁵⁵ Eidinow 2007: 88.

⁵⁶ Fontenrose L57.

After much time had passed and no children were born to Lyrkos, he went to the temple of Didymeus to ask about birth of children; and the god told him that he would impregnate the first woman with whom he lay after leaving the temple.

This oracle strongly resembles that given to Aegeus after his consultation of the Pythia, and references to the Aegeus episode are found in Euripides' *Medea* and the story of his conception of Theseus with Aethra. As in that story, the Lyrkos described in the oracle above similarly believes childlessness is a serious enough issue so as to prompt him to visit Didyma to attempt to remedy it; the civic implications of not having an heir are similarly treated in Euripides' *Medea*. Also interesting is that Lyrkos will be able to reproduce with 'whichever woman he meets' (ἢ ἄν συγγένηται) upon leaving the temple. This addition to the oracle hints at systemic attitudes toward the father as the more important of the two parents.⁵⁷ The implicit suggestion here is that mothers are interchangeable – presumably Lyrkos was married, or his first course of action would have been to take a wife rather than consult the oracle – and this further disempowers the female place in society. Aside from the above observations, this oracle is representative of male attitudes about the importance of paternity and the essential nature of children within Greek society, showing that these concerns existed across time and space in Greek thought. There also exists the transference between literary motifs and those present in historical oracular speech. What is striking is that there is evidence of both literary and historical attempts to solve problems with childlessness or other concerns about procreation by using ritual practice, with the expectation that these consultations would yield a positive outcome.

While the above oracle focuses on an inability of a father to marry off his daughter, the extant oracular responses from Delphi, like Dodona and Didyma, include several

⁵⁷ This sentiment is echoed by Athena in Aeschylus' *Eumenides*; women here are characterized as incubators, while men are the 'true' parents.

questions about the ability of certain men to have children; this implicitly addresses the necessity of a procreative and unadulterated union. One of the more famous consultations in this category comes from the mythical narrative of Aegeus and his subsequent impregnation of Aethra, the daughter of Pittheus of Troezen. Aegeus is that he is king of Athens but remains without an heir (παίδων δεόμενος), a situation described in Euripides' *Medea* and Plutarch's *Life of Theseus*.⁵⁸ As such, he travels to Delphi to consult the oracle to try to remedy his childlessness. The mythical narrative here is complex, but the versions seem to agree that the oracle that Aegeus received in Delphi read thus:⁵⁹

Ἄσκοῦ τὸν προὔχοντα πόδα, μέγα φέρτατε λαῶν,
μὴ λύσης πρὶν δῆμον Ἀθηνέων εἰσαφικέσθαι.⁶⁰

You should not loosen the foot of the wineskin which you hold before you come to the land of the Athenians, by far bravest of all men.

This response points to Aegeus' need to restrain his sexual impulses until he reaches Athens, the land over which he has dominion and in which his wife is living. Even in the mythical accounts of the Greek heroes, the lack of an heir was especially problematic for a king. Aegeus, who is portrayed in an extremely positive manner in Euripides' *Medea* because of his faithfulness to his as-yet infertile wife, actually commits adultery – in a moral sense if not a legal one – in his quest to produce an heir. Despite the complex nature of the mythical narrative, Aegeus fathers Theseus, who is born out of wedlock according to Euripides' version. Theseus was given his rightful place as the king of Athens, because he

⁵⁸ Plut. *Thes.* 3.5-6.

⁵⁹ In Euripides' version, he leaves Corinth immediately, which would not have left him with any time to travel to Troezen to consult Pittheus, as he planned.

⁶⁰ Parke & Wormell 1956: 100.

was a hero and the mythical founder of Athens, but also likely because Aegeus remained childless – to his own knowledge – until his later union with Medea produced a son, Medus.

These so-called legendary oracles are found primarily in the literary tradition, and the Aegeus oracle especially would have been familiar to the Athenian dramatic audience because of its centrality to the mythical history of Theseus, and by extension Athens. The problems in authenticating the historical oracles have been discussed above, but of those that remain, a fair number of them deal with a desire for legitimate children. This shows that even though Delphi's primary capacity in the classical period was as the oracle mainly of the *poleis*, the problem of childlessness was a wide-ranging concern from men all over the Greek world, reinforcing the male-held belief that childless unions or illegitimate heirs had negative implications at the level of the *polis* as well as at the domestic level. Of the extant Delphic oracles, only one that is classed as historical refers to this desire. This oracular response dates to the middle of the 4th century, and although the question is not included, it remains embedded within the Pythia's response. The extant inscription about this incident is a later report of the successful fulfillment of the Pythia's directions:

[- - - - Φοῖ]βος γενεὰμ μαντεύμασι δῶκεν
εὐχῆς ἐξαΐων, κομίσαι τε κόμας προσέταξεν.⁶¹

After he heard his prayer, Phoebus gave children to the consultant, and ordered him to offer hair.

Other oracular responses in the Delphic corpus include questions of the ability to bear children, but these are classed as quasi-historical and further identified as not

⁶¹ Parke & Wormell 1956: 334.

genuine.⁶² Nevertheless, the proliferation of questions, whether historical or in a literary setting, asked by men who are seeking children suggests that this was a very real concern for men of all *poleis*. In addition, the sheer inaccessibility of the Pythia to individual consultants and the expense required for consultation highlights further the urgency that accompanied concerns such as these.

d. Conclusion

The extant oracular questions and responses show the relatively common desire of men to have children, and the desire that any children they beget are able to be considered legitimate by society. While there are far fewer oracular remains about children and marriage that were asked by women, this body of evidence is nevertheless significant in that it showcases male concerns. This is especially useful because it betrays a male awareness that the social and legal underpinnings of Greek society, which were, after all, implemented by men, were not infallible – rather, they were quite the opposite.

III. Curse Tablets

⁶² The other oracles that concern the necessity of childbirth are PW6, PW43, PW107, and PW249.

Female agency is much more clearly and distinctly portrayed in the curse tablets than in the oracles, even though there are only a few published curse tablets that discuss marriage and other erotic matters. One of the main difficulties in analyzing these tablets is the diversity of historical and chronological circumstances in which they are found, and there are furthermore very few studies that treat the curse tablets as distinct from the magical papyri, which are also difficult to locate historically. Although there are several shared characteristics that may indicate a common origin or shared influence, I treat these tablets as a separate body of historical and literary material which helps to inform us about the mindsets of the people who lived in the Classical and Hellenistic periods.⁶³ Because many of these tablets have been relatively recently unearthed, initial research has largely focused on an accurate identification of the text, historical circumstances, and archaeological context.⁶⁴ These tablets continue to be published, and although there remain a large number of unpublished tablets, recent finds and analyses help contribute to the understanding of certain areas of Greek life. More recent scholarship has begun to build upon the studies about the tablets, in order to explore what Eidinow terms the “darker, more vicious side of ancient daily life” alongside the more traditional studies of public institutions.⁶⁵

⁶³ Therefore, while there are several tablets that come from later times or geographically distant regions, they cannot reliably contribute to an understanding of marriage and the transgression of it in the Classical period and its underpinnings in the ritual frame.

⁶⁴ The identification of the text is crucial because the tablets, made of lead, folded, and pierced with a nail, often presented fragmentary or somewhat unintelligible texts.

⁶⁵ Eidinow 2007: 155.

Despite their practical and historical importance, many of these tablets seem to have been manufactured from scrapped or discarded materials.⁶⁶ Given their importance in the lives of the individuals who crafted them, the material of the tablets is at odds with their significance. Contemporary perspectives of materiality help to account for the use and appearance of these meaningful objects, despite their objectively unassuming outward aspect. The work of Tim Dant, useful to this study although it focuses on late modern societies, stipulates that the socio-cultural relations between individuals in these societies are “mediated via material objects.”⁶⁷ And although his argument is that this mediation is ever-increasing in modern times, it nevertheless helps highlight the fact that, especially in the case of the *katadesmoi*, the importance of the tangible object surpassed its physical and material qualities.⁶⁸ This transcendental quality of the tablets affects how they are viewed by scholars, since the tablets were designed to allow a course of action otherwise unavailable to the caster. The inability of the *defigens* to personally carry out their own wishes necessitates the crafting of the tablet as an assistant or intermediary, typically divine but sometimes in the form of the untimely dead, in order to ensure that their wishes be carried out satisfactorily. The object of the curse itself can also be seen as a quasi-addressee; even though those targeted by the curse were not verbally addressed, the *defigens* nevertheless intended that they be affected. Therefore, since the tablet was crafted for a purpose beyond its physical form, what it was composed of was ultimately of secondary importance.⁶⁹ This secondary capacity nevertheless had a practical and

⁶⁶ For example, the Kovs. 3 tablet, which I investigate in the following sections, was made from a piece of metal which was cast off from a goldsmith’s shop. (Kovacovics 1990: 146).

⁶⁷ Dant 2006: 290.

⁶⁸ Miller 2005: 5.

⁶⁹ Pierre Lemonnier’s work focuses on such objects, which were extremely important to people’s lives, but were “nevertheless very similar, in form and apparent function, to quite ordinary things of the same

meaningful purpose, and, by addressing a divinity as an intermediary, was intended to affect the *defigens*' life in a positive way.

This new wave of investigation into the tablets has helped facilitate a broader understanding of the potential for female agency in the ancient world. Instead of the formalized and ritually prescribed consultation of the oracles, the curse tablets allowed for relatively uninhibited manifestation of one's personal agency in an attempt to assert control in a personally chosen ritual space, and ultimately some form of restoration of the *status quo*. While some of the tablets show guidance from a professional magician or may have been prefabricated, the binding process itself nevertheless seems to have been undertaken alone and in secret. These tablets, which were to remain untouched by everybody except the *defigens*, showcase the more malevolent and therefore latent impulses and desires, ones which do not manifest themselves quite so clearly in the mainstream literary genres.

The tablets which I investigate are concerned with matters of marriage, lust and/or control, and generally exhibit a desire to curb a person's sexual appeal or agency. This control of autonomy is engineered so that the *defigens* and the object of the tablet somehow operate within the structures of society. While the tablets do not definitively portray clear-cut cases of adultery or adulterous action, they nevertheless depict a desire for separation, typically between a man and a woman who is classified as his γυναίκα. Some of these tablets speak, whether explicitly or implicitly, to the desire for the joining of the *defigens* with the target of the tablet. Others illustrate a desire, sometimes latent, to deprive women of

categories." (2012: 14). Therefore, what may have had a practical function to a goldsmith at one point was repurposed by the *defigens*, or perhaps even a professional *defixio*-salesman, to have a different function.

successful marriage or children; all of which attempt to thwart the natural mechanisms of marriage and legitimate procreation. This obstruction of the social structures which dictated marriage and paternity inevitably portends a desire for the restoration of these same social structures; however, this restoration would have had to conform to the desires of the *defigens*, thereby rendering it potentially idealistic or unrealistic.

What needs more attention is the investigation of these tablets as literary artifacts. Eidinow especially has conducted initial analysis in this vein, but a large portion of the research focuses on the more historical aspects of these tablets. By studying the language, syntax, and vocabulary choices employed by the *defigens*, we are able to gain a greater and broader understanding of the mindsets that these *defigentes* may have had. Moreover, we also see what these binders would have conceived of as a reasonable punishment or means of recourse for the situation which they address. Therefore, there are certain thematic similarities within the tablets, and among the most important are that of tactility and conspicuousness, which manifests itself most clearly through the use of deictic markers. These tablets, in addition to their literary richness and similarities to other written genres, would have also included an oral element, as Eidinow's work claims.⁷⁰ Thus the performative aspect of these texts provides a further means of understanding why they were written or composed as they were and therefore, helps to recover the situation in which these binders would have found themselves, to the extent possible. The importance of the performance element cannot be overstated, especially because of the inseparable nature of the speech from its performance.⁷¹ Just as in the Homeric epics, as the work of

⁷⁰ Eidinow 2007: 141ff.

⁷¹ Martin 1989: 11.

Richard Martin has shown, these tablets form unassailable directives, inciting the audience of the tablet to a certain type of action.⁷² In addition, the invocation to the gods, which was a standard element of the curse tablets, adds another element of authority. Michèle Lowrie's work on Augustan Rome suggests that speech, especially divinely-influenced speech, had more of a performative force than its written counterpart.⁷³ The importance of the written element, on the other hand, "figures the immutability of the word".⁷⁴ The combination of the two, as was necessary in the creation and implementation of the curse tablets, endows the ritual act with two levels of authority. Just as in epic, it seems as though performing the ritual action would have increased the performer's expectation that the ritual action would be realized, and the added written element was thought to further increase the efficacy of the act. The various aspects of the ritual – including the creation of the tablet, the performance of the words on the tablet, and the deposition of the tablet into its final setting, all of which seem to have been common to the binding process – meant that the *defigens* was operating within defined modes of ritual conduct with the assumption that the binding act would have been effectively carried out.⁷⁵

Perhaps one of the most salient differences between curse tablets and the genres of the literary works discussed in the previous chapters is that curse tablets have no external audience; that is, there is no theater full of citizens waiting to be entertained by a literary masterpiece or jury members awaiting the delivery of a courtroom speech. It is easy, therefore, to forget that these tablets are more than just historical relics. Eidinow's work

⁷² Martin 1989: 31ff.

⁷³ Lowrie 2009: 4. Lowrie uses the example of Aeneas at 6.76, in which he requests that the Sibyl speak, rather than physically record her utterances.

⁷⁴ Lowrie 2009: 6.

⁷⁵ Karanika in Dillon, et al. 2016: 33-4.

has presented evidence that the creation of these curse tablets grew from a ritual that was originally oral, and therefore, as a piece of performative craft, these tablets do have an audience, whether internal or implied.⁷⁶ However, they were, in all likelihood, part of the ritual consumption of many of the same people who would have been the historical audiences of drama, which helps to account for the similarities in motifs and other threads. Certain tablets, such as those which explicitly address the *daimones* or the chthonic manifestations of gods such as Hermes, have an internal audience; namely, what Lillian Doherty's work defines as "an audience consisting of characters within the work itself."⁷⁷ Doherty's work applies the concept of an internal audience to Homer's *Odyssey*, but the explicit address to certain people or divinities, primarily signified by the frequent use of the vocative case. This suggests that there was indeed an intended audience, even though the tablets were primarily private pieces of writing. The tablets which do not contain a personal address, which was a convention of many early tablets, have instead an implied audience.⁷⁸ Wolfgang Iser defines an implied recipient as a "textual structure anticipating the presence of a recipient without necessarily defining him."⁷⁹ This implied audience was the same overall as the intended audience; namely, these tablets were consigned to, or intended to be consigned to, the *daimones* or other gods with chthonic associations. This performative element was closely connected to the crafting of the tablet, which included a tactile component; that of writing or inscribing.

⁷⁶ Eidinow 2007: 141.

⁷⁷ Doherty 1991: 146.

⁷⁸ According to Gager, it is a convention of the period that the tablet leaves out an explicit verb of binding or a direct address to the *daimones*. (1991: 92).

⁷⁹ Although Iser's work investigates the act of reading and the way in which works are received by its readers, whether hypothetical or historical, the orally performed Greek literature was received in much the same way as readers receive a text, albeit with external visual and oral components added. (1978: 34).

In the following sections, I investigate the extant curse tablets in two categories: those that are designed to inhibit marriage or sexual activity more generally, and those that create an image of a fragmented female body in order to assert an expanded sense of control over the object of their spell. In both instances, the authors of the tablets indicate a desire to focus their control on the female body; while few of the tablets definitively portray the gender of its creator, this seems to be true of both male and female *defigentes*.

a. Inhibition of Marriage or Sexual Activity

Female Agency

The extant curse tablets which can be clearly defined as having been authored or commissioned by a woman provide a unique perspective on their lives, concerns, and activity. Since the other genres which I have treated communicate a male understanding of the female experience, they do not provide the same type of uncorrupted account as expressed in the curse tablets. Unfortunately, only a very small number of the tablets can be definitively classed as female-authored. One of the tablets that I investigate is characterized as male-authored, but the majority of the extant tablets were written by an unnamed person of ambiguous gender, and I will discuss the differences between these tablets in the following sections.

Perhaps the single most important and fully elaborated piece of evidence about the female plight is the so-called Pella tablet, which dates to early-4th century B.C.E. and was

found in the grave of a Macedonian man, likely called Makrōn.⁸⁰ This tablet has attracted a great deal of scholarly attention in recent years, precisely because it communicates a deeply-held and extremely personal female perspective, and is most comprehensively explored in the monograph of Emmanuel Voutiras. Most likely written by a woman, whom Voutiras' work has dubbed 'Phila', the tablet portrays a woman in a dire situation who took action to better her plight by employing a curse tablet.⁸¹ Phila's tablet exhibits a strongly-held fear of being abandoned by a man, and by extension, the social institution that would have ensured her security and a lack of autonomy. The text of the tablet, although fragmentary on the edges of the tablet, is nevertheless a relatively well preserved example:

[Θετί]μας καὶ Διονυσοφῶντος τὸ τέλος καὶ τὸν γάμον καταγράφω καὶ τᾶν ἀλλᾶν πασαν γυ-
 [ναικ]ῶν καὶ χηρᾶν καὶ παρθένων, μάλιστα δὲ Θετίμας, καὶ παρκαττίθεμαι Μάκρωνι καὶ
 [τοῖς] δαίμοσι. καὶ ὁπόκα ἐγὼ ταῦτα διελ<ί>ξαιμι καὶ ἀναγνοίην πάλ(Λ)ιν ἀνορ<ύ>ξασα,
 [τόκα] γᾶμαι Διονυσοφῶντα, πρότερον δὲ μή. μή γὰρ λάβοι ἄλλαν γυναῖκα ἀλλ' ἢ ἐμέ,
 [ἐμέ δ]ὲ συνκαταγηρᾶσαι Διονυσοφῶντι καὶ μηδεμίαν ἄλλαν. ἰκέτις ὑμῶ<ν> γίνο-
 [μαι· Φίλ?]αν οἰκτίρετε δαίμονες φίλ[ο]ι, ΔΑΓΙΝΑΓΑΡΙΜΕ φίλων πάντων καὶ ἐρήμα· ἀλλὰ
 [- - -] α φυλάσσετε ἐμὴν ὄ[π]ως μὴ γίνηται τα[ῦ]τα καὶ κακὰ κακῶς Θετίμα ἀπόληται.
 [- - -]. ΑΛ [- - -]ΓΝΜ .. ΕΣΠΛΗΝ ἐμός, ἐμέ δὲ [ε]ὕ[δ]αίμονια καὶ μακαρίαν γενέσται.

Of Thetima and Dionysophōn the ritual wedding and the marriage I bind by a written spell, as well as (the marriage) of all other women (to him), both widows and maidens, but above all of Thetima; and I entrust (this spell) to Makrōn and to the *daimones*. And were I ever to unfold and read these words again after digging (the tablet) up, only then should Dionysophōn marry, not before. Let him not marry any other woman but me, but let me grow old by the side of Dionysophōn and no one else. I implore you: have pity for [Philia?] dear *daimones*, [for I am indeed bereft] of all of my dear ones and abandoned. But please keep this (piece of writing)

⁸⁰ This tablet was found in a grave, which paleographical evidence suggests was likely its original deposition site. The tablet itself was dedicated to a man called Makron, and since it does not seem to have been moved from its original location, the man in the grave may have been the Makron listed in the tablet. (see esp. Voutiras 1998: 4).

⁸¹ Voutiras uses the name Phila because "it is attested in Macedonia already from the 4th cent. B.C. and fits well into the available space," even though all that remains of the name of the *defigens'* name is '-αν' (Voutiras 1998: 9).

for my sake so that these events do not happen and wretched Thetima perishes miserably. [- - -] but let me become happy and blessed.[- - -] ⁸²

One of the most striking and immediately apparent aspects of this curse tablet is its duality. The language of the first half is formulaic and likely professionally influenced, but the second half of the tablet takes the form of an extremely personal, heartfelt appeal to the gods for an escape from the current situation.⁸³ This biformity has led Voutiras and other scholars to believe that the spell was personally written, although perhaps under the direction of a professional magician, which accounts for the differences between the first and second half of the tablet.⁸⁴ It is clear that Phila is writing the spell because she is in desperate circumstances; more specifically, she stresses her wish that Dionysophōn will marry her and nobody else (μηδεμίαν ἄλλαν) – especially not Thetima, who seems to be her rival. Phila’s crafting and deposition of this tablet suggests that there are two possible reasons for her fear: either that it is highly likely that she will fail to win Dionysophōn, or she has a great deal to lose should she fail to ensnare Dionysophōn. In either case, she would be forced to occupy a liminal space, one lacking the security of marriage and motherhood.⁸⁵

The language of the spell simultaneously showcases its presumed unassailability and refers to the physical crafting and initial deposition of the tablet. The verb καταγράφω, which is commonly used in binding tablets and is therefore easily overlooked as a

⁸² Trans. Voutiras 1998.

⁸³ Voutiras 1998: *passim*; Eidinow 2007: 143-4, 215; Ogden 2009: 228.

⁸⁴ Voutiras 1998: *passim*; Eidinow 2007: 215; *et al.*

⁸⁵ As discussed in Chapter 1, I believe that, despite the legal strictures regarding marriage, adultery, and divorce, society in general considered a marriage that resulted in childbirth one that should have been unassailable. It stands to reason, then, that the production of children should have gone a long way in ensuring a secure union.

convention of the genre, has more basic meanings that relate to physical scratching and engraving. Voutiras attempts to include these resonances by translating the verb as “to bind by a written spell”, but, when considered alongside the other verbs which describe Phila’s physical activity, there appears to be more to the inclusion of καταγράφω than to merely express a written element. This term serves as a physical representation of the ritual production of the tablet, and since engraving on lead seems to have been a difficult task, it highlights the physical exertion required for the process and indicates that she is inscribing her own tactile authority over the object.⁸⁶ This reference to the physical crafting of the tablet is further recalled in the provision that the spell can be broken only if Phila decides to dig it up and break it of her own accord. The inclusion of διελιξαίμι, from the rarely attested verb διελίσσω, is significant beyond the fact that it means ‘to unfold’ or ‘to deploy (in a military sense)’. It is firstly indicative of Phila’s autonomy and mobility, since it directly refers to the ability of Phila to regain access to her spell. More importantly, however, it recalls the creation and ritual assembly of the spell itself. The verb διελίσσω is a compound of the prefix ‘διά’ and the verb ἐλίσσω (‘to roll, turn’), with ἐλίσσω denoting the initial folding action required to physically seal the spell before it could be deposited. The same holds true for the verb ἀνορύσσω (‘to dig up’); the addition of the prefix ἀνά reinforces the idea that the tablet could be dug up again, taken out of the earth in which it was buried during the initial binding process. These different terms indicate the tactile control that Phila had over her tablet as well as the physical exertion required and her ability to revisit the tablet if she desired to. They also recall the initial crafting of the

⁸⁶ Voutiras claims that Phila’s handwriting suggests that she was “not particularly well trained in the task of engraving a text on lead”, which in turn implies that this was a difficult task and one that required some practice. (1998: 4).

spell and the creation of the physical object, reproducing the specific type of work done to the physical tablet as well as showing the effort that Phila expended as she sought an all-encompassing sense of control over her circumstances.

The primary purpose of the spell, however, is not to harm Dionysophōn, nor necessarily Thetima, except perhaps indirectly by preventing the benefits that may have come along with their union. Instead, she is binding the marriage (γάμος), which is probably unfulfilled at this point, by *anyone*, Thetima included. In his assessment of the spell, Voutiras interprets γάμος in a completely straightforward manner, stressing that it does not have any sexual connotations and that it is clear that Phila feels that any affairs that Dionysophōn may have had would not jeopardize her status.⁸⁷ In other love spells, however, the verb γαμέω has more sexualized associations, signifying sexual contact rather than denoting what can be definitively classed as marriage proper.⁸⁸ Therefore, her intention to bind a union between Dionysophōn and any other woman (τὸ τέλος καὶ τὸν γάμον καταγράφω) and to stop him from taking another woman (μὴ γὰρ λάβοι ἄλλαν γυναῖκα ἀλλ' ἢ ἐμέ) may indeed also be a wish to stop Dionysophōn from having any sexual contact with a woman aside from her; that is, just because the more common denotation of γάμος fits well within the interpretation of the text, it need not exclude any of the more sexualized connotations of the term. The implications of binding marriage and/or sexual activity with another woman are the same, in this case; that Phila wishes to locate herself within the security promised by the traditional marriage bond. In addition, Phila's desired

⁸⁷ Voutiras 1998: 72-4. These other love affairs may have included slaves, *hetairai*, or *pallakai*.

⁸⁸ Examples of *gameō* meaning sex, rather than marriage, according to LSJ, can be found in Odyssey 1.36 and Euripides *Tr.* 44.

sexual monopoly over Dionysophōn would have precluded the possibility of him having children with any other woman, and perhaps therefore the incentive to leave Phila.

The end of the tablet, namely the unprofessional, personal section believed to have been authored by Phila herself, may further explain my conclusion that Phila does indeed wish to bind any contact between Dionysophōn and Thetima, or any other woman, in a more forceful way. She wishes that ‘miserable Thetima die/perish wretchedly’ (κακὰ κακῶς Θετίμα ἀπόληται), and the use of ἀπόλλυμι here, especially because it is used in reference to Thetima, suggests that she does in fact wish for more severe action. This is even more compelling because this language comes from the intimate part of the tablet, and therefore, unlike the formulaic sections of the tablet, provides a more direct insight into the motives and anxieties that Phila had. Nevertheless, the ultimate goal of the spell is likely her own marriage, since marriage provided security for women in ancient Greece, but, it is also possible that Phila may have desired social and financial legitimization through marriage, as well as having had sexual motives.⁸⁹ This scholarly tendency to separate love, or other love-generated emotions as evidenced by the use of ἀπόλλυμι, from marriage in the ancient world is not necessarily supported by ancient texts. In *Lysias 1*, for example, the picture that Euphiletos paints in his speech is one of perfect domesticity, in which his supposedly docile wife chastises him for ‘drunkenly pulling the maid about’ (μεθύων εἴλκες αὐτήν).⁹⁰ This scene of domestic conflict exhibits the jealousy that a wife may have had because of her husbands’ lewd misconduct with a servile member of the household, a situation which could have been rather common in antiquity. Furthermore,

⁸⁹ Ogden 2009: 228. See the reactions of Deianira and Medea, for example, when faced with a broken or threatened marriage bond.

⁹⁰ *Lys.* 1.12.

the use of the verb ἔλκω, which in this context means to ‘drag about with lewd violence’, indicates that there may have been an element of physicality in oft-used sexual vocabulary. This helps to account for the use of λάβοι (‘to take, seize’) as a sexually and physically charged term in Phila’s wish that Dionysophōn take no other woman than her.⁹¹

Another important factor in this tablet is its archaeological context; like the majority of the other curse tablets dating to the 4th century B.C.E., the Pella tablet was found in a grave. Because women performed an essential part of funerary ritual in Greek tradition, their connection to the dead was especially strong.⁹² And while Phila may have had more freedom to visit the cemetery in secret because of her seemingly hopeless situation, it seems as though women may have had more of an occasion to visit cemeteries in general.⁹³ Although there is a dearth of information about the social workings of Macedonia in the 4th century, likely because it was undergoing a period of rapid population growth, Athenian funerary custom prescribed rites up to 30 days after the burial of the corpse.⁹⁴ Phila most probably made her initial visit to Makrōn’s grave by herself and in secret, since it is likely that the Phila read the spell aloud as she deposited it into the grave, and it was this reading that would have contributed to the spell’s efficacy.⁹⁵ And, given the extremely personal contents of the tablet, it is most likely that she visited the grave by herself in an attempt to avoid being overheard by anyone except her internal audience, the *daimones* and Makrōn.

⁹¹ LSJ s.v. II.3.

⁹² For more on Ancient Greek funerary customs, see especially Stears in Suter 2008.

⁹³ According to Stears’ discussion of Athenian funerary ritual, there were prescribed visitation times, such as at the one month and one year stages, which required women to visit grave sites. She also states that women may have been able to visit the grave more often than on just these prescribed occasions. Stears in Suter 2008: 149-50.

⁹⁴ Stears in Suter 2008: 142.

⁹⁵ Voutiras 1998: 90.

This access to the gravesite is further supported by the line in the tablet which presupposes Phila's ability to revisit the grave whenever it seemed necessary. She says that should she dig up and read the spell (ὀπόκα ἐγὼ ταῦτα διελίξαιμι καὶ ἀναγνοίην πάλιν ἀνορύξασα), it will trigger its dissolution, but this stipulation only seems reasonable if Phila can visit the cemetery relatively easily.⁹⁶ It is unclear whether or not this situation would be true of other women attempting to complete their binding spells, but the connection of women with the mourning process and therefore presumably the cemetery is compelling when placed alongside the gravesite as a common repository for curse tablets. In this case, there is a twofold ritual significance; the original, i.e., the traditional, and heavily prescribed funerary custom, and the secondary, which usurped the normal rites and reinscribed them for a different, more individual purpose. This blending of public and private ritual, along with the tactile control that Phila had over the tablet, allowed her to rewrite and redirect the ritual to support her own desires. And because she had exclusive control over the site of the tablet and its efficacy, the secondary ritual act supplanted the primary rite in importance; it was no longer a mere grave, it became the repository and protector of Phila's ritual creation.

The other tablet which expressly asserts female agency in sexual or marital matters is classified as *DTA 78*, which is a 4th century B.C.E. tablet found in Attica. In contrast to the Pella tablet, the authoress of this tablet does not explicitly name herself, nor does she give any personal information. Instead, she focuses her short spell on the man whose action and agency she wishes to bind:

⁹⁶ Unless, of course, Phila is being ironic by including this stipulation knowing that she will never again have access to Makrōn's gravesite. It does, however, seem more likely that Phila would have been able to re-enter the gravesite if she wished to do so.

Ἀριστοκύδη καὶ τὰς φανομένας
αὐτῶι γυναῖκας·
μήποτ' αὐτὸν γῆμαι ἄλλην γυναῖ(κα) μήτε παῖδα

I bind Aristokydēs and the women who let themselves to be seen by him. Do not ever let him 'marry' another woman or a youth.⁹⁷

The absence of a verb of binding was typical of curse tablets of this period; the act of binding was mirrored by the physical binding of the tablet, which was folded and bound with a nail.⁹⁸ The phrase 'another woman' (ἄλλην γυναῖ(κα)) indicates that the author herself was female; if the author was male, the qualifier ἄλλη would have been unnecessary.⁹⁹ Furthermore, scholars agree that the *defigens* was likely Aristokydēs' lover, wife, or fiancée; in any case, the wording of the spell seems to bear out the idea that the caster either has a dedicated relationship with Aristokydēs, or at the very least the expectation of one.¹⁰⁰ The *defigens*' desire for Aristokydēs to stay away from other women, which is twice-expressed, expresses the desire for separation from any other woman, thereby giving her sexual primacy and potentially securing her own spot in the marital frame. Also interesting is the use of γῆμαι in this spell; Eidinow's translation, unlike that of Voutiras in his discussion of the Pella tablet, indicates that γαμέω here is likely ambiguous.¹⁰¹ There is no reason to suppose that the *defigens* does not wish to enter into a

⁹⁷ Trans. Eidinow 2007.

⁹⁸ Gager 1992: 91.

⁹⁹ Ogden 2009: 228; Eidinow 2007: 215.

¹⁰⁰ Gager 1992: 91; Ogden 2009: 228; Eidinow 2007: 215-6.

¹⁰¹ Ogden 2009: 228. These are more commonly found in the spells of the *PGM*, which are often thought to date to a much later time period.

marital union with Aristokydēs; after all, marriage came with security.¹⁰² It is clear that the woman wishes to ensure sole sexual control over her target.

This curse tablet furthermore seems to showcase the emotions associated with sexuality, and perhaps even self-preservation; therefore, the jealousy in this tablet is palpable. The women targeted in this curse were probably not considered socially respectable women, because those who made themselves visible (φαίνομαι) to men were deemed to pose a danger to society, just as Euphiletus' in Lysias 1 argues that his wife's conspicuousness led to her debauchment by Eratosthenes.¹⁰³ That these women are characterized as φανομένης requires more attention. The *defigens* is not merely explicitly describing the women whose actions she wishes to bind, thereby attempting to ensure the efficacy of the spell. She is also presenting these women – who have made themselves a spectacle to Aristokydēs – as a spectacle within the language of the spell, which in turn renders them an exhibition to the unnamed divinities who form the implied audience of the spell. In certain philosophical texts, the verb φαίνω is often used in order to designate a sensory experience, which is what is happening within the tablet: the *defigens* conjures an image of these women before the divinities through whom she attempts to bind them.¹⁰⁴ The mention of boys (παῖδα) indicates the degree to which the author of this tablet wishes to control Aristokydēs' sexual contact, although it seems as though the γυναῖκας, referred to twice, present a more immediate threat. Therefore the *defigens* creates the tablet in order to gain sexual control, and therefore reproductive control, over Aristokydēs in order to secure her own position.

¹⁰² A lack of marriage came with a lack of security – see Medea and Deianira in Chapter 1.

¹⁰³ Eidinow 2007: 216.

¹⁰⁴ LSJ s.v. II.2.

DTA 78 further expresses a desire to control male sexual agency and activity, likely in an attempt to secure her place in the traditional female social role. It is one of the few that is rather undoubtedly written by a woman, albeit a woman of indeterminate social status, but it is also uncommon in that it explicitly desires to control the sexual functioning of a man – and only a man. This tablet displays one of the purest examples of female jealousy, and perhaps even of a woman’s fierce desire to protect her marriage – if indeed the caster is Aristokydēs’ wife – or the potential thereof. It provides a unique insight into the female mind and a non-stylized depiction of the implications of an unfaithful husband or lover. Also fascinating is that the *defigens* clearly believed that her own agency could trump that of a man, albeit with the help of the *daimones*. While Phila’s tablet expresses similar aims, she appears to have a rival, Thetima, which makes her situation seem all the more uncertain and urgent. This tablet, on the other hand, seems to be more of a preventive measure, which betrays a more general anxiety about the sexual activity of Aristokydēs with anyone but herself.¹⁰⁵

Together, these two tablets provide a rare insight into the minds of ancient Greek women who were in a threatening or untenable situation. In these cases, the threat seems to be the lack of protection that accompanied marriage. Phila’s entreaty to the *daimones* provides a particularly unadulterated glimpse into the mind of a Greek woman of the 4th century, something which is nearly impossible to encounter elsewhere. And even though the tablet which targeted Aristokydēs is extremely short compared to several of the extant tablets, it nevertheless betrays the latent or suppressed anxieties that may have affected women in this time period. The amount of information that these tablets furnish is

¹⁰⁵ Eidinow 2007: 219.

invaluable; however, the amount that we are not able to glean from the tablets or their archaeological contexts is considerable. What is important is that these tablets show an undiluted picture of female agency as they attempt to claim control over their lives.¹⁰⁶ Both communicate the wish that the object of their desire neither marry nor have sexual, perhaps adulterous, involvement with another woman, and by so doing, they attempt to neutralize or manipulate the man's sexual or procreative agency. By creating these pieces of literary and material craft, the *defigentes* attempt to assert control over their own situations by fashioning male agency to their own ends in order to secure their place in society. Their wish to restrict access of their desired men was an attempt to protect their own epistemic agency, which should have protected the domestic status they likely desired.

Male Agency

In contrast to the tablets that explicitly express female points of view, there is one tablet that undeniably communicates the male perspective, and is marked by a focus on sexual control and a desire to suppress female autonomy. This man, who calls himself Pausanias, wishes that a woman, called Simē, be chaste and unable to participate in ritual activity unless she engages in sexual contact with Pausanias alone.¹⁰⁷ According to Ogden, this 'attraction curse', which stipulates that Simē be unable to engage in normal activity until she should come to Pausanias, was created about three hundred years before any

¹⁰⁶ Eidinow 2007: 224.

¹⁰⁷ According to Eidinow, Pausanias' naming of himself as well as his target "rarely happens in more traditional *katadesmoi*." (Eidinow 2007: 214)

viable *comparanda*.¹⁰⁸ This unique tablet dates to the 4th century B.C.E. and was found in Akanthos, Macedonia:¹⁰⁹

- 1 Πασσανίας Σίμην τὴν Ἄν-
- 7 Ταῦτα δεῖ μηδεὶς ἀναλύσαι ἀλλ' ἢ Πασσανίας.
- 2 φητρίτου καταδεῖ, μέχρι ἂν Πασ-
- 3 σανίαι ποήσῃ ὅσα Πασσανίας βούλεται.
- 4 Καὶ μήτι ἱερείου Ἀθηναίας ἄψασθαι
- 5 δύναιτο, μήτηι Ἀφροδίτῃ ἰλέως αὐτῇ
- 6 εἶη, πρὶν ἂν Πασσανίαν ἐνσχῆ Σίμη.¹¹⁰

Pausanias puts a binding spell on Simē, daughter of Amphitritos, until she does for Pausanias whatever Pausanias wants. And neither may she be able to touch a victim sacrificed to Athena nor may Aphrodite be gracious for her, before Simē embraces Pausanias. And may no one other than Pausanias undo these things.¹¹¹

Pausanias wishes that Simē might not be able to ‘touch a victim sacrificed to Athena nor may Aphrodite be gracious for her’, which indicates inhibited ritual and sexual activity, before she embraces (ἐνσχῆ) Pausanias.¹¹² That these two stipulations appear together in one curse – or even separately – is unheard of at such an early date.¹¹³ There may be a reason that Pausanias lists these two very specific provisions in the spell; namely, because he wishes to restrict Simē from the religious and sexual spheres – those in which women had increased mobility and autonomy. I have investigated the importance of ritual and epistemic agency in the previous chapters, and it does not seem to be a coincidence that Pausanias reduces Simē’s activity to these two spheres, only to bar her from participation in them. I do not, however, wish to suggest that Pausanias intends to bar Simē from sexual

¹⁰⁸ Ogden 2009: 231.

¹⁰⁹ This tablet has a side B, but one that is more ambiguous with regards to gender. If the object of the spell on side B is a man, it does not speak to marriage or the production of children.

¹¹⁰ In his publication of this tablet, Jordan provides a picture of the tablet, which shows that line 7 was inserted between lines 1 and 2 because there was no more space at the bottom of the tablet for him to finish the spell.

¹¹¹ Trans. Jordan 1999.

¹¹² Jordan in Jordan *et al.* 1999: 120.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

action because he is conscious of his own epistemic lack, or that he is thinking about the potential of infidelity; rather, it seems that Pausanias simply wishes to bind Simē from the spheres in which she may have had any freedom of expression. Instead, Pausanias wishes to bind Simē's agency in order that she submit to his own sexual desire. This submission is further indicative of the sexual inequality found in the society at large, since there was an institutionalized desire for male control over the "female reproductive capacity".¹¹⁴

Pausanias' spell, whether consciously or subconsciously, articulates a desire for sole sexual, and therefore procreative, autonomy over Simē.

The vocabulary of this spell bears out the previous statement. The control that Pausanias desires manifests itself in the limitation of Simē's action in the sexual and ritual spheres. He specifically states that he wishes Simē 'not be able to touch' (μήτι ἄψασθαι δύναιτο) a 'sacrificial victim or offering' (τό ἱερεῖον), and this limitation of Simē's activity would have been the same as barring her from civic participation. That the loss of ritual participation was one of the legally prescribed penalties for adultery speaks to its importance to the Athenian female population.¹¹⁵ It is striking, therefore, that Pausanias wishes to implement a similar 'punishment' on Simē to what was prescribed for adulteresses. His sanction, encapsulated in the phrase μήτι ἄψασθαι, is more explicit than the νόμος μοιχείας found in Apollodorus 59, since it explicitly recalls the tactile craft that formed such an important part of female ritual agency.¹¹⁶ This tactile technique, discussed especially in Chapter 1, manifested itself most clearly in the weaving of the *peplos* for the

¹¹⁴ Chodorow 1978: 9.

¹¹⁵ On the punishments for adultery, see [Demosthenes] 87.5-7; for a contemporary analysis of adultery and its punishment, see especially Cohen 1991: Chs 5 and 6.

¹¹⁶ The section of the law, according to Apollodorus 59, that dictated the penalties for adulteresses reads thus: "μηδὲ τῆ γυναικὶ ἐξέστω εἰσιέναι εἰς τὰ ἱερά τὰ δημοτελεῖ, ἐφ' ἧ ἂν μοιχὸς ἀλῶ· ἐὰν δ' εἰσίῃ, νηπινοῖ πασχέτω ὅ τι ἂν πάσχη, πλὴν θανάτου" (Apollodorus 59, 87.5-7).

Panathenaic procession, which formed a crucial part of one of the largest and most important Athenian festivals. As I explored in Chapter 2, women were associated with touch as one of the ‘baser’ senses, and by seeking to limit Simē’s ability to execute her socially-prescribed, gender-coded activities, Pausanias seeks to limit all of her activity – both domestic and ritual. Furthermore, he indirectly seeks to restrict her ability to physically make herself attractive to any other men, as the seductresses of Aristophanes’ comedies and Euphiletus’ wife are portrayed as doing.

This desire for the suppression of female autonomy in the ritual and domestic spheres, more specifically, those apart from Pausanias, directly contrasts with Pausanias’ desire to incite Simē to action in his own sexual sphere. He displays a desire for control, albeit a warped sense of control, because he aims to bar Simē from productive female activity. This control, however, is an idealized version of the restoration of traditional gender roles; Pausanias, according to social and cultural norms, should have expected some level of authority over a woman, but the lack of ritual and sexual activity (unless, of course, Simē is unmarried) in fact subverts these same norms. It is also significant that, despite Pausanias’ desire to strip Simē of all agency, he wishes that Simē herself ‘embrace’ (ἐνσχιῖ) him. According to the tablet, the only activity that she is allowed to carry out of her own volition is to come to Pausanias. The verb ἐνέχω (‘to hold fast’), while not uncommon overall, is relatively rare in the active voice, a fact which becomes more striking when considered alongside the fact that Pausanias wishes Simē to be active in her embracing of him. The scarcity of this verb in antiquity exists in the literary corpus, but may have been common in colloquial expression, especially within a ritual discourse such as that which existed in the curse tablets. It is furthermore ironic that Simē be placed as the agent of the

verb when, in fact, Pausanias is attempting to control her action with the creation of the tablet. In this case, the ritual practitioner is actively seeking to displace Simē's autonomy, which is part of his mechanism to gain control over her, both sexually and with reference to her ritual and civic participation.

Pausanias' desire for Simē to capitulate, seemingly via sexual action, is accompanied by the idea that Simē is somehow beholden to him. The spell does not explicitly state that Simē has had any contact with Pausanias, but before she can return to normal activity, she must yield to Pausanias' desires (ποίησι ὅσα Πασσανίας βούλεται).¹¹⁷ Ogden believes that Pausanias exploits the "language and ideas of the prayers-for-justice curse category in conditionally debarring the beloved from propitiating the gods until she does what the curse-maker wishes," and in so doing he equates himself to the goddesses he mentions in his spell because he also requires propitiation (ἰλάσκομαι).¹¹⁸ This becomes important when the public role of women in divine placation and appeasement is considered. Pausanias is, therefore, expressing a wish that public propitiation be repurposed for his own private ritual. Women and young girls took part in some of the most important Greek festivals, for example, the Panathenaea, and Pausanias attempts to redirect female religious duty to his own benefit. This is similar to Deianira's appropriation of Heracles' reintegration sacrifice, which I discussed in chapter 1, in order to alter the course of action according to her wishes. The only 'ritual' activity in which Simē is free to take part is her propitiation of Pausanias, and only then can she resume normal endeavors. This fits into the frame of male domestic control via sexual control, since it seems as though sexual activity is a prerequisite for any other activity.

¹¹⁷ Eidinow 2007: 214.

¹¹⁸ Ogden 2009: 231.

This spell illustrates the male desire for social control and shows a potential mechanism for upholding this domination. As John Winkler states, sex “was basically a way for men to establish their social identities in the intensely competitive, zero-sum formats of public culture.”¹¹⁹ The tablet is an example of the desire of Pausanias to acquire or maintain sexual authority over Simē, which essentially reinforced or reestablished the *status quo*; that is, the *status quo* which Pausanias creates for himself through the tablet. The traditional view, such as that espoused by the work of David Cohen, is that male honor lies in the preservation of female chastity, which is reasonable given the previously discussed importance of pure lineage.¹²⁰ Pausanias, however, is not interested in Simē’s chastity; rather, he seems more concerned with ensuring her sexual activity, but with himself alone, which is why he is explicitly named as the person whom Simē must embrace. But if he is able to assert himself over her sexual activity, he desires a skewed manifestation of the *status quo*. This spell, therefore, represents the desired restoration of male domination over female sexual agency, albeit a potentially idealistic or unrealistic one.

This curse tablet furnishes a rare male point of view in matters of love and lust. Interestingly, there is no reference to marriage in this tablet, and Pausanias’ desire for sexual activity in general is portrayed by the existence of another spell on the other side of the tablet. Scholars disagree as to whether the target of the spell on Side B is male or female, and as such I will not utilize it in an attempt to furnish conclusive evidence about male-female dynamics and relationships.¹²¹ While this is a single tablet and therefore

¹¹⁹ Winkler 1990: 11.

¹²⁰ Cohen 1991: Ch. 6.

¹²¹ Jordan 1999: 120-3. The target of the spell on Side B is named Ainis, which has precedent as both a masculine and a feminine name. Ogden treats Ainis as a female target, but the other scholars (mainly Jordan and Eidinow) do not classify Ainis as definitively male or female. The language of the spell is similar to that on Side A, which perhaps explains Ogden’s willingness to assume a female target on each side. According to

should not be used to make generalizations about other tablets that may have male authors, it is nevertheless significant that Pausanias desires control over Simē to the extent that she does whatever he might want (ὅσα βούλεται). Because Greek men did not experience many domestic and civic limitations, there is not the same desperate concern for marriage that is displayed in the curse tablets that were definitively written by women. It is almost as though sexual possession indicates a level of control analogous to that found in marriage. Since Simē is essentially barred from activity until she embraces Pausanias, it is reasonable that this embrace may have included some sort of security – marital or otherwise – for Simē.

Ambiguous Agency

Far more of the tablets are authored by a person of uncertain gender, with the *defigens* forgoing their own identity in order to designate their victim by name. Nevertheless, these tablets intend to assert control over an individual or couple, often using vocabulary that betrays the intent to sever a married or otherwise united pair and thereby secure the institutions that upheld gender domination. For example, both ἀνὴρ and γυνή, which are found on several of the tablets, have a basic gender designation, but are also commonly used to denote one's spouse. It is difficult, then, to determine which use is being used in the respective curse tablets, and to an extent, other context clues can facilitate this process. Because of the fragmentary nature of some of the spells, the amount of scholarly

Ogden, Pausanias is “hedging his bets” because he attempts to attract two different people on the same tablet. (2009: 231)

comment on them greatly varies, but due to the generally straightforward and sometimes formulaic nature of the tablets, some meaning can nevertheless be extracted from them.

The target of *Kovs.* 3, Glykera, is identified and distinguished by her relationship to her husband, Dion. This tablet, dated to the 4th century B.C.E. and found in the Kerameikos, is much shorter and far less sexually explicit, and perhaps therefore less researched, than other spells from the corpus, but it explicitly states a wish that Glykera's marriage be unsuccessful:

Γλυκέραν τή Δίωνος
γυναῖκα κατωδῶμεν
πρὸς τοὺς χθονίους
ὅπως τιμωρηθεῖ
καὶ [ά]τε[λ]ῆς γάμου

We bind Glykera, the wife of Diōn, in the presence of the underworld (gods), so that she might be punished and unsuccessful in marriage. . .

The explicit desire that Glykera's marriage (γάμος) be 'unaccomplished' or 'without end' (άτελής) is intriguing. One reading of άτελής may suggest that this tablet may be "concerned with inhibiting fertility, as well as binding sexual desire."¹²² Since one of the main goals of marriage was the production of children, the lack thereof might have been a way to render it unfulfilled. The term άτελής can also be construed as 'unmarried', so the phrase 'άτελής γάμου' could also mean that the *defigens* wishes that Glykera either remain unmarried – if she is not yet married to Dion – or it could mean that the *defigens* wishes that the marriage between Glykera and Dion be unsuccessful to the point of dissolution; after all, childlessness was one of the primary grounds for divorce in classical Athens. The

¹²² Eidinow 2007: 206.

tablet expresses a desire to break a seemingly healthy marriage, or at least one that has the potential to be strong, and thereby negates the benefits of a successful marriage. Either way, the desire that Glykera and Dion's marriage end (or never be allowed to begin) is clear. The author of the curse is again not named, nor is the gender explicit; or it may be one of the fragmentary names in the nominative case on the bottom of the tablet.¹²³ The publication of this tablet is standard, focusing mainly on the archaeological context and a detailed description of the tablet. Kovacsovics does, however, attempt to historically situate Glykera and Dion based on the names of certain individuals on grave *stelai* in the Kerameikos.¹²⁴ Despite a lack of scholarly attention, this tablet is a valuable indicator of the types of reactions the ancient Greeks may have had to their own desire to nullify a marriage or other union.

The above tablet, despite the gender of its author, refers to a desire to control or inhibit female marriage or sexuality, presumably so that the *defigens* could promote their own. The more reliably female voices expressed within the tablets show a desire to restrict other women from access to a man onto whom they have attempted to establish primary control using ritual means. In the remaining tablets, the restriction is placed almost exclusively on the female target, with the *defigens*, sometimes explicitly, wishing to obstruct another woman from marriage.

¹²³ Kovacsovics 1990: 146.

¹²⁴ Kovacsovics 1990: 145-7.

b. Fragmented Female Bodies

The following tablets are all ones in which it is nearly impossible to ascertain the gender of the author. Another, and perhaps a more salient, similarity is that the tablets within this section all display the *defigens'* attempt to control the female body by fragmenting it, thereby denoting the sites that he or she believed to be endowed with the most power. Such fragmentation of the female body is also a phenomenon of modern film, and as such, has been a major area of inquiry in contemporary feminist perspectives on film. Laura Mulvey, a long-standing commentator on the depiction of women in film, argues that this fracturing of the female body flattens it, giving it "the quality of a cut-out or icon, rather than verisimilitude."¹²⁵ The displayed woman, therefore, is no longer representative of her true self, but is instead turned into a one-dimensional creature. This fragmentation in the depiction of women leads to their oppression; since they are diametrically opposite to men, the isolation of certain female body parts disempowers them.¹²⁶ This deconstruction of the body allows the female form to be demystified, according to Stanley Kaufmann, which gives the viewer a sense of power over the female figure.¹²⁷ Something similar occurs in the curse tablets; certainly it is no accident that the male form is rarely fragmented or sexualized in this way.¹²⁸ The *defigentes* in this section focus on the sites of the female body that are deemed to have the greatest hold over them, and by isolating them, they attempt to render them less powerful than their real-life counterparts. The

¹²⁵ Mulvey 1989: 20.

¹²⁶ Stacey 1994: 206-7.

¹²⁷ Kaufmann in Knopf 2004: 167.

¹²⁸ Tablets that focus on specific part of the male body often focus on the tongue, and are likely judicial curses in which silence is the desired outcome, or the hands and workshop, probably indicating some sort of commercial curse. The exception to this is *DTA 77*, which I do not discuss in this chapter. In this tablet, the male genitalia are bound alongside the female genitalia – perhaps the author intends to more comprehensively restrict sexual activity of the pair in general.

attempted seizure of female autonomy and sexual capacity occurs through this fracturing of the body, thereby stripping the female body as a whole of its power and efficacy.

It is immediately apparent that in the tablets that have female targets, the *defigens* not only designates them by name, but also further identifies them by their husband. While this is likely intended to ensure the correct target is affected by giving as much identifying material as possible, this trend is extremely useful to my study because it exhibits the target's marital status and therefore any potential desire for adultery or the breach of a marital union. For example, *DT 86* is directed at Zois, the wife (γυνή) of Kabeira, and the *defigens* desires to separate the two from each other, focusing heavily on Zois' individual body parts:

Side A:

παρατίθομαι Ζο-
ίδα τὴν Ἐρετρικὴν
τὴν Καβεῖρα γυναῖκα
- [τ]ῆ Γῆ καὶ τῷ Ἑρμῆ, τὰ βρώ-
ματα αὐτῆς, τὸν ποτᾶ, τὸν ὕ-
πνον αὐτῆς, τὸν γέλωτα,
τὴν συνουσίην, τὸ κιθ{φε}άρισ[μα]
αὐτῆς κὴ τὴν πάροδον αὐ-
[τῆς], τὴν ἡδον<ήν>, τὸ πυγίον,
[τὸ] (φρό)νημα, {ν} ὄφθα[λμοὺς]
- - ἀαπηρη (?) τῆ Γῆ.

Side B:

καὶ τῷ Ἑρμῆ τὴν
περιπάτη(σι)ν μοχθη
ρ[ά]ν, ἔπεα [ἔ]ργα, ῥήματα
κακὰ
καὶ τὸ - - -

Side A: I assign Zois, the Eretrian wife of Kabeira, to Earth and to Hermēs. I bind her food and her drink, her sleep and her laughter, her meetings and her cithara playing, her entrance, her pleasure, her little buttocks, her thoughts, her eyes . . .

Side B: And to Hermēs (I assign) her wretched walk, words, deeds, evil statements and the ...¹²⁹

Eidinow's scholarship contends that Zois is not so much the wife of Kabeira as a *hetaira*, a stance not necessarily taken by other scholars.¹³⁰ The designation of Zois as Kabeira's γυνή bears further investigation. Eidinow cites the reference to her cithara playing, eating, and drinking as indicators of her social class.¹³¹ It is possible that the above activities could have been viewed during a festival or within the bounds of other ritual participation; sacrifices often included feasts in which the sacrificial victim would have been consumed by the community.¹³² The playing of the cithara, however, proves more problematic, although there is evidence of women playing the cithara at home or during bridal processions, for example.¹³³ Neaera of Apollodorus 59, however, is historically characterized as a *hetaira* but is never referred to as a γυνή, despite the fact that she ostensibly lived with an Athenian man as his wife.¹³⁴ In this speech, Apollodorus only refers to Neaera using forms of the demonstrative αὐτή, reserving the more traditional

¹²⁹ Trans. Eidinow 2007.

¹³⁰ Ogden (2009: 229) and Gager (1992: 85) assume that Zois was Kabeira's wife, indicating that they believe their relationship is more traditional than Eidinow assumes.

¹³¹ Eidinow states that playing the cithara was a common occupation for a *hetaira*, and that eating and drinking similarly point to her status as a courtesan. The cithara playing aside, the reference to eating and drinking may have a different intention. Some of the spells found in the *PGM*, IV.296-466, for example, bind the eating and drinking of their victim in order to weaken their target's resolve. The reference here may have similar aims, rather than suggesting that Zois was eating and drinking in public. (2007: 217)

¹³² Mikalson 2005: 26.

¹³³ Maas and Snyder 1989: 202. Dillon refers to cithara playing at large-scale festivals such as the Panathenaia, though the remaining evidence points to this as a male activity within this setting. Dillon 2013: 101.

¹³⁴ Eidinow 2007: 217.

appellation for Athenian women and others who are indisputably married. The import of this is that even though the *defigens* designates certain activities that can traditionally be connected with *hetairai*, the use of γυνή as a designator for Zois hints at a more traditional union, according to a quasi-contemporary source. The tablet contains no concrete indications of Zois' status; therefore, I hesitate to definitively designate her as a *hetaira*.¹³⁵ Zois' status aside, what scholars do agree on is that this Zois was “frustratingly alluring” and that she “presented the client with a formidable challenge.”¹³⁶

The direct references to parts of her body – her ‘entrance’ (πάροδον), her posterior (πυγίον), her eyes (όφθαλμούς), and her mouth (via references to food (τὰ βρώματα) and drink (τὸν ποτᾶ)) – are not uncommon in binding spells, but that they are coupled with references to her more ethereal aspects – her sleep (ὕπνον), her laughter (γέλωτα), her thoughts (φρόνημα) – shows that Zois' hold over the *defigens* is more than just physical or sexual. This spell further provides a spatial map and a ritual recreation of the desired effects of the binding spell. These deictic markers, because Zois is not physically present at the ritual binding of the spell, are “transferred *in toto* to “imagined space”, to the realm of the somewhere or other of pure phantasy,” according to Bühler’s theory of language.¹³⁷ This evocation of the different body parts – likely the ones that were especially alluring – allows an image of Zois to be projected onto the tablet and therefore into the domain of its internal audience, Gaia and Hermes. This bodily map recalls that represented in Sappho 31, where the parts of the body specifically mentioned create a ring around the body. This further indicates the all-encompassing nature of the spell, and thereby the level of control

¹³⁵ For example, the claim of a woman having an *ergasia*, as in DT 68, seems as though it would be a more definite indicator of a woman’s status as a *hetaira*.

¹³⁶ Ogden 2009: 229; Gager 1992: 85.

¹³⁷ Bühler 1990: 142.

desired by the *defigens*. Through this employment of *deixis*, we are able to see a recreation of the desired ritual process, thereby furnishing an example of ritualized action rarely seen elsewhere.

While there is no information about the author of the tablet and it is clear that Zois is the target, the specific motivation behind the curse is inconclusive. The explicit description of Zois' sexuality transforms her into a passive object of the curse and the targeted areas "are surely bound because the agent of the curse perceived them as being the sources of her erotic power," and as such indicate an attempt to reclaim erotic control.¹³⁸ The fragmentation of Zois' body here both calls attention to the captivating regions on her body, while at the same time deconstructing her and reframing her as a set of body parts, rather than a unified person, to be overcome. The *defigens* clearly wishes that Zois' alluring qualities be neutralized, but it is unclear whether the *defigens* is a woman who wishes to nullify Zois' control over Kabeira because she herself desires Kabeira, or whether the *defigens* is a man who desires Zois for himself and wishes that she be bound from activity, as it relates to Kabeira or other men. This highly sexualized depiction of Zois provides a rather specialized account of what the ancients considered the sources of a woman's erotic power, and furthermore, because of its use of *deixis*, bears close resemblance to the later spells found in the *PGM*. There is again a yearning for sexual control, and likely sexual exclusivity. This is true whether the *defigens* was male or female, because a secure, productive marriage was better for each party, despite the fact that it continued to support the male interests as they related to marriage.

¹³⁸ Eidinow 2007: 217.

Another tablet which uses this deictic and spatial designation to outline the intended effect upon the target of the spell is *DTA 93*.¹³⁹ It has received little scrutiny in modern scholarship, despite its similarities with other curse tablets and resonances with the spells of the *PGM*. In this tablet, the *defigens* may be referring to two different women, but the use of deictic markers indicates a desire to concentrate on specific sites on the body:

Side A:

Ἑρμῆ [χθόνιε· λά]βοι ψυχὴν
 Ἑρμ(ῆ) δόλιε· τῆς Πύρρου γυναι(κός)
 Ἑρμ(ῆ) κάτοχε· μαμμίας Ἱερούς
 τά]ς χεῖρας καρδίας πόδας
 .. μαμμί(α) Ἱερ(ώ) ...
 ... Τ Ι κάτοχ[ε]
 Τ Ι Ο.....

Side B:

Κα[ταδῶ ...] λια τὴν
 Πύ(ρ)ρο(υ) γυν[αῖκα] ψυ[χ]ῆν πό-
 δας χεῖρας σῶμα καρδίαμ
 βίον τὰ ῥήματ[α] εἰ
 . Α Ε Σ . αὐτ(ῆ)ι ... αρα
 Λ
 Γ

Side A: Hermes of the underworld; may you take the spirit, Hermēs the Trickster, of the wife of Pyrrhos, O Hermēs the Binder. The titties of Hieres, the hands, hearts, feet, titties of Hieres ... O Binder ...

Side B: I bind ... -lia the wife of Pyrrhos, her spirit, feet, hands, body, heart, life, the words ... to her ...¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ The spell designated *SGD 57*, a 4th century piece found in Nemea, is extremely similar to *DTA 93* in that it is comprised almost exclusively of a catalogue of body parts. Previous scholars have considered the gender of the target is ambiguous – Gager 1992 believes that the target is a man, while Eidinow 2007 and Graf 1997 believe that it is a woman. The tablet contains an unusual combination of body parts (including the anus (πρωκτός) and a word elsewhere exclusively used of female breasts (τιθίαν), all of which seemingly refer to Aineas, and make the spell difficult to interpret because the deictic markers seem to refer to highly divergent parts of the body. As such, I will refrain from discussing the tablet in further detail.

¹⁴⁰ Trans Eidinow 2007.

This tablet, which targets the γυνή or γυναῖκες of Pyrros, similarly uses deictic markers in order to consign specific parts of the body to the chthonic incarnations of Hermes, who again comprises the internal audience.¹⁴¹ The language used on Side A speaks to Hieres' maternal potential. This is most explicit in the binder's twice-expressed desire to bind Hieres' μαστήρας ('breasts'), which, although Eidinow opts for a more sexualized translation, is associated with women and breastfeeding in each of its attested appearances. The desire to bind the breasts ultimately represented a desire to restrain or restrict motherhood, thus jeopardizing the security of any type of bond that Pyrros may have with Hieres. The breasts, which are biologically important in that they provide nourishment for infants, are arguably an extremely important site of female power.

Contemporary feminist perspectives about the breasts and motherhood have shown how breastfeeding, particularly, has become a matter of public concern, in which there is a great deal of pressure placed upon mothers to breastfeed to ensure their child is 'properly' brought up.¹⁴² At the same time, breast augmentation is the second most performed cosmetic surgery in the United States, second only to liposuction.¹⁴³ This suggests a social tension between the increasing pressure on women to breastfeed, using their breasts for biological purposes, and a desire for women to alter their physical appearance according to implied social constructions. The above theoretical viewpoints concern the contemporary United States, but a similar tension seems to exist in ancient Greece. Ancient authors

¹⁴¹ The highly fragmentary nature of these tablets makes it unclear whether or not the *defigens* is targeting more than one woman, both classed as the γυνή of Pyrros. The text seems to support that each side designated a different woman, the Hieres of side A and the fragmentary -lia of side B.

¹⁴² Blum 1999: 2-3.

¹⁴³ Davis 2013: 9.

portray the production of children and motherly duties as the female function within marriage, while at the same time authors like Aristophanes refer to parts of the bodies as operating as sexual spectacles. Clytemnestra especially refers to her breasts as signifiers of motherhood in Aeschylus' *Choephoroi*, exhorting Orestes to spare her life because she nursed (τρέφω) him as a baby (*Ch.* 908, 928). In this instance, Clytemnestra indulges in self-fragmentation, reducing her body to her breasts alone in order to convince Orestes to spare her because of her utility to him as a mother. She further attempts to portray her own autonomy as limited, albeit unsuccessfully, perhaps in an effort to minimize her crimes as adulteress and murderer. The isolation of the breasts, both because of the preservation of human life and their sexual appeal, is yet another instance in which the female body is fragmented in order to assert control over female autonomy.

The appearance of another woman on Side B, discussed below, indicates that Pyrrhos was likely not married to both of these women, but he may have been unfaithful to one of them. Nevertheless, that the 'wives' of Pyrrhos were the targets on each side indicates that the *defigens* wished to limit sexual access to Pyrrhos or to negate his sexual agency and that of his wives. It is striking that the reference to the breasts and motherhood appears alongside the other bodily designations that are referred to in the spell. These labels are similarly found on Side B, which targets another 'wife' of Pyrrhos, whose name is fragmentary except for the last three letters (-λια). These deictic markers, just as in *DT* 86, transmit an image of Hieres and '-lia' onto the tablet and create a projection of their bodies into an imagined space. Unlike that of Zois in *DT* 68, the image of both women is much more fragmented, focusing more on the breasts, hands, feet, heart(s), and spirit than other external organs. I examined the importance of the breasts above, but the importance of the

hands especially bears more consideration. I have discussed tactility and tangibility in Chapters 1 and 2, but the repeated appearance of the hands on each side of the tablet, suggests that the *defigens* wishes to not only restrict the sexual agency of Pyrrros' 'wives', but also that s/he wishes to restrict their agency.

Another example of a spell which wishes to bind the action of its targets by limiting the activity of certain parts of the body is *DT 85*. The language of this tablet, which dates to the Hellenistic period, suggests that the *defigens* created the spell mainly out of sexual jealousy, expressing a desire for Antheira and Zoilos to remain apart from each other:

Side A:

Ὡσπερ τύν, Θεόνναστε, ἀδύνατο[ς] εἶ χειρῶν, πο[δ]ῶν,
 σώματος πράξι τι ἢ <οί>κονομήση τι, φίλιμεν παργίνη κακά
 ἴδεμεν, οὔτως κῆ Ζώϊλος ἀδύνατος μένει, δι' Ἄνθειρ(α)ν
 βαίνιμεν κῆ Ἄνθειρα Ζωίλον τὸν αὐτὸν τ<ρ>όπον·
 φιλατα κῆ Ἑρμᾶ κατὰ φυλαατ χιπυτα
 ἀλλαλοφιλίαν κῆ εὐνὰν κῆ λάλησιν κῆ φίλησιν
 Ἄνθείρας κῆ Ζωίλω κῆ ατο· ουναν τὰ [πὸ]τ' ἀλλάλως
 συναλλάγματα· ὥσπερ κῆ ὁ μόλυβδος οὔτος
 ἔν τινι (τόπωι) χωριστῶ ἀπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων
 οὔτως Ζωίλος (κε)χωρισμένο(ς) παρ' Ἄνθήρας τὸ σῶμα
 κῆ ἄψιν (κ)ῆ τὰ φ(ι)λείματα κῆ τὰ (σ)υνουσιάσματα
 τὰ Ζωίλου κῆ Ἄνθείρας κῆ φ(ό)βον Ζωίλω ἐνεγίνειν (?)
 καταγράφω κῆ ἀπορίαν κατὰ σφραγῖδα.

Side B:

γρ . . . γ. .ακο τοιαύταν
 μισ.ο . . . τεσ αλλα αλωσαι αν
 κ(ο)ύχ ἀλίσκοις, θιέ, Ἄνθειρ(α)ν κῆ Ζωίλο(ν)
 . . . σ . τάνδε νύκτα κῆ ετινιταν
 [μῆ] μετ' ἀλλάλων γίνεσθ(αι) κῆ αφ..ας
 ε Τιμκολῆν τὸ αὐτὸ εωθογεα· λατ
 ωσ περιφιμμίαση ἀνθρώπους ἐνδέρσας·
 . . . παμφοιρντο κατάδεσμον
 .εδεμ.μμ.π . . τω, οὔτως κῆ Ζωί-
 λ[ος] . κει αμπερισωφιω κι . .

μ .ν εἰ κῆ ἐπιτελεῖ π . εἰς α τετον
 ο . . κατάδεσμον οὔτον κῆ λιτοψεῆχ
 . τ .απαλοχ αὔτις ἔστω
 λαλῶντα [π]ονφό{γ}λυ[γας]
 . . , [κ]ῆ ἀμναστ(α) βαστ εο
 ὡσπερ ὁ μόλυβδος ὀρώρυχτ(αι) π[ά]ν
 παν κατορωρυγμένος πῆ οτει . α
 αμ .νζμμ, οὔτως κῆ Ζωίλωι
 α κατορύχοις κῆ ἔργα[σ]ία κῆ
 τὰ λοιπὰ πάντα.

Side A: Just as you, Theonnastos, are without power in any action or exercise of your hands, feet, body . . . so let Zōilos remain powerless, to come* to Antheira, and Antheira to Zōilos in the same way. And beloved Hermēs . . . love between them and bed and chat and love of Antheira and of Zōilos and . . . and any other dealings between them. And just as this lead is in a certain place separate from men, in the same way let Zōilos be kept in another place from Antheira, her body, and touch and the kisses and the couplings of Zōilos and Antheira, and let fear spring up in Zōilos. And I register this spell of obstruction with a seal.¹⁴⁴

Side B: Much of this is untranslatable: (ll. 2-3) But may you not catch, O god, Antheira and Zōilos (l. 4) . . . on this night and . . . (l. 5) let . . . not become between them and (l. 6) . . . Timokles . . . (l. 7) . . . thus . . . men (l. 8) . . . binding curse (l. 9) . . . Thus also (l. 10) Zōilos . . . (l. 12) . . . this binding curse and . . . (ll. 16-17) and just as this lead tablet is buried, utterly deeply buried . . . (ll. 18-21) thus also may you utterly bury Zōilos and the works and household and love and all the rest.¹⁴⁵

The scholarly consensus is that the primary target is Zoilos, mainly because of the last decipherable line of Side B (οὔτως κῆ Ζωίλωι α κατορύχοις κῆ ἔργα[σ]ία κῆ τὰ λοιπὰ πάντα.) because of the reference to Zoilos' extra-sexual activities.¹⁴⁶ The *defigens* clearly wishes to bind Antheira's actions as well because of how often her name is repeated. This is implied because the tablet contains a striking three – rather than just one – examples of the

¹⁴⁴ The βαίνμεν of line 4 on Side A is translated differently by Gager. Rather than Eidinow's decision to treat the verb as coming from βαίνω , he instead treats the verb as coming from βινέω, which he translates as 'to screw'.

¹⁴⁵ Trans. Eidinow 2013.

¹⁴⁶ Gager 1992: 88; Eidinow 2007: 217; *et al.*

similia similibus formulae, which are essential to controlling the actions of Zoilos and Antheira.¹⁴⁷ The first instance of this is visible in other tablets, such as the Pella tablet, and makes reference to the inability of the corpse, Theonnastos, to move his body (σώματος) and extremities (χειρῶν, ποδῶν), just as the *defigens* wishes that the bodies of his targets be similarly impeded. The second and third instance make reference to the lead (μόλυβδος) onto which the tablet was inscribed (indicated by the verb καταγράφω), which was kept far away from other human beings (ὁ μόλυβδος οὔτος ἔν τινι (τόπω) χωριστῶ ἀπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων), giving this use different function than the aforementioned use of the formula.¹⁴⁸ These two separate uses of the formula have a redoubling effect on the targets, almost as though both are included as a safety net, in case only one should work. The *defigens* wishes to make the targets' extremities ineffectual, and if this does not work, then they should at least be kept apart from each other, just like the *katadesmos* itself is kept away from other humans.

Aside from discussions of the spell's target and the unusual number of instances of the *similia similibus* formula, the literary qualities of this tablet have been largely overlooked. The appearance of hands, feet, and body have already been discussed with reference to the tablets, but the phrase 'κῆ ἄψιν (κ)ῆ τὰ φ(ι)λείματα κῆ τὰ (σ)υνουσιάσματα τὰ Ζώϊλου κῆ Ἀνθείρας' bears more investigation. The binding of the συνουσιασμός between the two lovers is intriguing. It not only contains the more overt sexual connotations, but it quite literally wishes to block the 'being together' of the two

¹⁴⁷ Perhaps this is a feature more common to tablets from the Hellenistic period, but many of those that deal with love or marriage from the Classical period usually refer to one (or the same) person/object in the *similia similibus* formula.

¹⁴⁸ The third use of the formula, found on Side B, is a fragmentary one, reading "ὥσπερ ὁ μόλυβδος ὀρώρυχ(αι) π[ά]ν / παν κατορωρυγμένος πῆ σται". The ὥσπερ recalls the text of Side A, which reads "ὥσπερ κῆ ὁ μόλυβδος οὔτος..."

lovers. Coupled with the idea that the sense of touch (ἅψις) of both of the lovers, rather than just the woman, is similarly being blocked, there is a sense that any means of coming together is being limited. This blocks their general tactile agency (ἅψις), then narrows the scope to anything relating to their lovemaking (φιλείματα), and finally blocks their lovemaking (συνουσία) specifically. This attempts to limit any possibility of sexual contact on the part of both parties, thereby wishing to negate both the paternity of Zoilos and the maternity of Antheira. More likely, it is a direct attack on Zoilos, as the primary target of the tablet, and plays a part in the destruction of every aspect of his life as detailed on the second side of the spell.

Another feature of the spell that is not found on the earlier Classical models is the use of a seal (σφραγίς) to bind the spell to an even greater extent. The final line of Side A reads, according to Eidinow's translation, "I register this spell of obstruction with a seal" (καταγράφω κὴ ἀπορίαν κατὰ σφραγιῖδα). The characterization of the spell as one of obstruction, or 'blocking', according to Gager, does not accurately capture the sense of ἀπορία, which, used as a substantive adjective here, means something more like 'being at a loss, being in an impossible or difficult situation'. The implication here is that the two targets of the spell, by being separated from each other, will be in untenable circumstances; that is, presumably, until Zoilos, the primary target of the spell, comes to the *defigens*. The seal is an intriguing addition to the spell. It seems to be reduplicating both the desired effects of the spell, namely the immobilization of the targets' extremities and their

separation from each other, as well as the physical act of folding and binding the *katadesmos*.¹⁴⁹

c. Concluding Curse Tablets

Although some of the tablets focus on controlling male sexual activity, these tablets overall seem most concerned with female sexual agency – whether suppressing it, or, in Pausanias’ case, with inflaming it. The concern with marriage and ἀτέλεια is surprisingly frequent, and while there are some cases that seem to portray personal sexual jealousy, the inhibition of marriage seems to be a common trope in the catalogues. Despite the fact that the tablets have several different types of creators, there is still a common concern with the quashing of sexual activity. In some cases, this desire seems to point to marriage, and thereby the security brought about by mothering within a marriage institution is undermined.

IV. Conclusion

By examining the oracles and curse tablets alongside each other, we are able to more closely see non-stylized depictions of the concerns that plagued all cross-sections of society. Since legitimate parentage and the health of the *oikos* was an issue that had the potential to affect every member of Greek society, it is comprehensible that such matters

¹⁴⁹ It is interesting that this tablet twice includes references of itself as a *katadesmos*, both found on Side B. The classical models do not seem to include this self-referential designation.

would manifest themselves even in the non-literary record. Both *corpora* showcase a desire to control the female body, whether by limiting sexual access to it, or by inscribing control of it onto a lead tablet. The authors of the curse tablets, which were intended to remain hidden, seem to illustrate these concerns in a much more personal and straightforward manner, attempting to physically bind the bodies of their targets in order to ensure that their will be done. In some cases, female bodies are fragmented in order to further disempower them, isolating each of the alluring zones in order to render them less powerful than their double. Overall, the ritual remains complementary to what can be found in the literary genres; namely, the male control of paternity and female procreative ability and the legitimization of the social structures that attempted to curb female activity, autonomy, and maneuverability.

CONCLUSION

Now that I have examined the intersection of adultery, women, and ritual in the ancient Greek literary and material *corpora*, I posit an explanation for why this occurred in Classical Greece. Before coming to my final conclusions, I locate my research in contemporary perspectives on adultery from studies in the past five years, which helps me to frame my final argument by showing how adultery functions in literature and historical contexts from non-Classical eras.

Many of the contemporary studies that address adultery take the form of legal and/or historical inquiries that investigate adultery and its implications in various historical circumstances.¹ Fewer directly treat adultery in literary or theatrical contexts; they do, however, provide a glimpse of how sexuality, especially that which is presented as transgressive, was coded in these diverse social frames.² Most of these studies show that adultery was perceived to be a threat to marriage and/or the predominant social structures present in their respective historical contexts, and several of them further show how adultery was presented as an assault to male honor. These points are also true of the Classical Greek corpus and since I have addressed these in previous chapters, I refrain from enumerating them again here. The desire to protect the male-constructed state of affairs is

¹ For example, see: Abasili 2016; Carey Jr. 2015; Eltantawi 2017; Harper 2012; Matthews-Grieco 2014; McDougall 2014; Meiu 2016; Miller 2007; Rhode 2016; Rickman 2016; Russell 2012; Sauer 2015; Scheidner 2015; Stol 2016; Wieben 2017, *et al.*

² For example, see: Amend 2015, Bouzaglo 2012; Russell 2012.

also visible in a desire to protect economic concerns, again to female detriment. An interesting repercussion of adultery, and one that I had not previously considered in precisely these terms, is shown in Carey Jr.'s study of adultery in twentieth-century Guatemala. He revealed that "men who pursued adultery litigation generally only did so long enough for the legal system to restore their honor and chastise their wives" because female labor within the household was indispensable to the success of the family.³ This gave women a measure of power in the household, and this self-constructed empowerment allowed women to seize sexual autonomy as well.⁴ The preponderance of slaves and slave labor in Classical Greece may have made it so that female labor was not essential in all cross-sections of society, but the instrumentality of the wife to the household, along with the damage done to a husband's public image, may account for the dearth of reported adulteries in the Classical Greek literary and material record.⁵

A similar connection between adultery and monetary concerns is the orchestration of adultery to generate financial gain. The blackmailing episode in Apollodorus' speech, which I discussed in Chapter 3, provides evidence that this occurred in Classical Greece; however, it seems as though the desire to use one's wife to win monetary damages was not limited to ancient Greece.⁶ A court case in Late Georgian Britain remains in which a husband was awarded minor compensation for his wife's adultery because he was found to have orchestrated a situation with the intent to profit from it; this case set the precedent for husbands conniving with their wives to profit from adulterous liaisons, suggesting that

³ Carey Jr. 2015: *passim*.

⁴ *Ibid.* This is not to say that some Guatemalan women were not terrorized by their husbands and suffered because of their husbands, or even their own, sexual liaisons.

⁵ Cohen 1991a: 129.

⁶ Cohen 1991a: 130.

such a fear was common in Late Georgian society.⁷ In cases such as these, the woman involved becomes a transactional figure designed to generate income for her family. A more extreme example is related in Martin Stol's study of women in the ancient Near East, which suggests the possibility that husbands and wives even colluded to arrange the execution of the lover – execution of the man involved being the punishment for adultery.⁸ In essence, she becomes little more than an object to be 'stolen' by another man in furtherance of her husband's designs, and her body becomes the *locus* for the negotiation of the abused male honor or even for his financial gain.

Certain scholarly perspectives also classify female adultery as an expression of female agency, and these studies provide valuable theoretical insight into my study.⁹ Gillian Russell's investigation into the actress and adulteress in Late Georgian Britain provides an interesting insight into the theatricality of adultery and how adultery was essentially a drama to be played out in the theater, society, and even the law courts.¹⁰ Adulteresses were made to be spectacles "that threatened the public order and decency, gender hierarchy and sexual difference, and ultimately the stability of the state."¹¹ She concludes that the visibility and mobility of an actress lent itself to the circumstances needed for adultery.¹² Tracie Amend's study of Early Modern Spanish drama similarly investigates the portrayal of adultery onstage, in which the audience recognizes "the adulteress as a corporeal and psychological threat to male honor."¹³ The mere suggestion of adultery was enough to

⁷ Russell 2012: 421.

⁸ Stol 2016: 241.

⁹ Amend 2015; Carey Jr. 2015; McDougall 2014; Meiu 2016; Russell 2012; Stol 2016; Weiben 2017; *et al.*

¹⁰ Russell 2012: 420.

¹¹ Russell 2012: 421.

¹² Russell 2012: 434ff.

¹³ Amend 2015: 7.

constitute adultery in the court of public opinion, which was loath to accept women outside the traditional sphere.¹⁴ Both of these studies show that adultery is a discourse that made a spectacle of women who were represented as transgressing their socially-mandated spaces and activities, making them conspicuous social and theatrical figures that were constructed as potentially damaging to society.

The connection between adultery and ritual, magic, and/or religion, on the other hand, is much less studied. Sarah McDougall's study about adultery prosecution in Late Medieval France, for example, claims that "both church and secular powers claimed the responsibility, to the community and to God, to maintain order and punish crimes that might invite God's wrath," and adultery was one such crime.¹⁵ Even in societies with both secular and religious authorities, adultery was still presented as an infraction in both spheres, and was ultimately perceived as a religious offense. This is supported by the anthropological study undertaken by Beverly Strassmann and her colleagues, which concludes that social behavior, especially those that put paternity in doubt, outside of the religious sphere is nevertheless controlled by fears of divine retribution.¹⁶ This is echoed by Apollodorus' claim, which I discuss in Chapter 3, that an adulteress involved in ritual activity had negative ramifications for all of Greek society.

Corinne's Wieben's study of magic and adultery in Late Medieval Italy exhibits the male fear of female appropriation of ritual. She argues that "the power of magic – especially when combined with sexual desire – to destroy public order" was taken seriously,

¹⁴ Amend 2015: 10, 194.

¹⁵ McDougall 2014: 213.

¹⁶ Strassmann, *et al.* 2012: 9784.

especially by the social, political, and religious elite.¹⁷ Adulterous love magic in particular was considered to be the result of unbridled, unsupervised female sexuality, which “threatened to overturn hierarchies of social status and gender.”¹⁸ Wieben concludes that Late Medieval Italian society did not fear magic so much as the ability of women to *use* magic to engage in behavior that was framed as contrary to the prevailing social norms; magic allowed women to control male action, thereby inverting the hierarchies of power perpetuated by the authorities of the church and community.¹⁹ Similarly, Classical Greek women acting in ritual settings in a manner unbefitting their given social roles were framed negatively. George Meiu’s ethnographic study presents an interesting counterpoint: in this case, the constructive use of ritual in postcolonial Kenya; in this case to *end* adultery rather than generating it. This ritual, called *lopiro*, acknowledged adultery and symbolically sought to “reinforce patrilineal values by concluding adultery.”²⁰ This is a unique intersection of ritual and adultery; instead of ritual or magic generating adultery, as it was in Classical Greece, here it is used to end it and bring society back to order. The concept of sexual mobility is inherent in the term for adultery, *loloito*, which derives from a verb that means ‘to go’ and therefore “connotes a perpetual state of movement.”²¹ The ritual, which takes adultery and female movement for granted, sought to retroactively curb this ability to move, and it did so by the manipulation of ritual time, which was “a way of repairing the past and revitalizing the present.”²² This use of ritual as a way of recalling past states also

¹⁷ Wieben 2017: 142. Wieben treats both women and priests, “groups whose habits often remained a mystery to laymen” (150). Wieben makes a compelling argument about priests, who occupy a liminal space between masculinity and femininity, and their potential to create disorder by using magic.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Wieben 2017: 153.

²⁰ Meiu 2016: 221.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Meiu 2016: 219.

figures in Greek drama, and shows the power of ritual to allow women to return to a former stage of their lives.

The aforementioned studies have helped me to underline certain characteristics between of representations of adultery across time and space. The same general tenets and prevailing rhetoric seem to accompany female adultery in several of the eras discussed above: (1) the pro-patriarchal assertion that it is damaging to marriage, and therefore society. More specifically, the socio-political elite constructed female adultery, and those responding to adultery, as a potential threat to the very social structures that they created and continued to perpetuate using various legal, social, and cultural codes; (2) the perception that adultery damages male honor and (3) that female adultery allows for expanded female autonomy, while at the same time can also be an instrument of female oppression if the consequences of that adultery result in realignment with the prevailing socio-political ideologies. Studies that show a connection between women and magic and ritual largely stem from the third point, and show how ritual, often intimately intertwined with the fabric of most societies, presents a possible avenue for uninhibited, less controlled female activity.

How does this add to our current understanding of women, adultery, and ritual in ancient Greece? Adultery narratives show that the above three points prevailed in social attitudes and literary representation, and this further is supported by the evidence of the material record. The female experience that is preserved in the literary and material record is conditioned by the prevailing social codes. This explains the preponderance of adultery narratives that include an intersection of adultery and ritual. Ritual provided a space in

which female agency was expanded, and the evidence in the oracular remains and curse tablets suggest why male thought considered ritual as a possible avenue to sexual and reproductive freedom.

The distinct lack of inquiry into adultery, and more specifically female adultery, by modern scholars encapsulates one of the main problems with this study. The ancient sources rarely address or attempt to communicate the female point of view; what remains of the female experience must be gleaned from the material record, and this undertaking, which I explained in Chapter 5, is not without its own set of problems. Ancient authors, even those that purport to communicate the female experience (Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae*, for example) are influenced by social codes and this is apparent in their representation of female activity. Similarly, much of contemporary scholarship focuses on historical contexts that are steeped in Judeo-Christian ideology, in which female subservience is deeply ingrained. As such it is nearly impossible to uncover the female point of view in these societies; similarly, it is difficult to divorce female sexuality from the social structures that define it. These sources often approach female activity and sexuality from the male viewpoint, enumerating how they affect legal, political, social, and/or religious hierarchies rather than addressing female enterprise without any bias or ulterior motives.

In most disciplines, including those with a feminist perspective, there are few studies about adultery, and the reason is apparent after having conducted my own research into the topic. In addition to the lack of scholarship treating the female point of view, it seems as though we lack the female point of view *itself*, even in modern societies. Perhaps it

is because most acts of female sexuality, excepting those that produce legitimate children, are branded as negative; as such, women themselves are silent about adultery, a subject with an abiding and pervasive stigma attached. Even the presentation of women as willing to engage in sexual activity carries with it the possibility of sexual exploitation and social blemish.²³ One can easily conjecture that adultery must have been common practice, despite our lack of concrete references; it is often clouded with personal, familial, and civic silence for reasons that are easily understood. It is likely that men would have had a different approach to adultery within their lives and the discourse they used among other males, but our sources do not give accurate descriptions of such situations. On the other hand, the silence that women keep regarding their own adulterous activities, and indeed that of other women, is an active decision, made for a number of possible reasons including complicity, solidarity, and the desire to keep one's private affairs private. The representation of adultery in the extant literary sources, therefore, seem to be preemptive, a knee-jerk response to what must have happened in society with some degree of regularity.

Women's silence concerning adultery is an action, or at the very least a deliberated inaction, and this marks it as a sub-speech act in and of itself. Just as words convey significance, an absence of words can similarly be "communicatively meaningful."²⁴ According to Silvia Montiglio, silence is an essential feature of endurance and the mark of a body with self-control.²⁵ While her arguments detail the varied silences of Odysseus, women, too, must have engaged in such tacit self-preservation, although this is not a

²³ Miriam 2012: 263.

²⁴ Griffiths & Cummins 2017: 147.

²⁵ Montiglio 2001: 262-3.

temporary phenomenon as it was for Odysseus. This collective silence, which is mirrored by female complicit silence in drama, required an outlet: ritual.²⁶ Female ritual performance, which includes a material *locus* and elements of spectacle, is an antidote to silence. This is shown in the representation of ritual occasions in which women could break this silence without fear of reprisal, such as the Thesmophoria. In Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae*, for example, a festival participant suggests that she has waited 'a long time' to speak (πολὸν ἤδη χρόνον; 385), presumably because the context of the all-female festival represented a 'safe space' which allowed for unmonitored speech. While the viewpoints expressed in comedy should be approached with caution, there is material evidence that supports this conjecture. In that vein, personal ritual, such as the implementation of curse tablets, is perhaps more of a performative remedy to the silence that goes along with adultery, since the concomitant secrecy may have allowed for a fuller presentation of one's situation. There is, however, a similar kind of silence that attends, and even necessitates, the actualization of these types of ritual acts. In the end, ritual is something that can be controlled, and the presentation of adultery within a ritual frame further presents a case for the 'controllability' of adultery via ritual. The literary performance of ritual similarly renders ritual a spectacle, especially when it is used to respond to adultery.

In Classical Greek literature, therefore, the often negative association of women, adultery, and ritual both informs and is informed by social practice. Female literary characters, whether portrayed as committing adultery or suffering its effects, are often

²⁶ For example, the chorus in Euripides' *Medea* agrees to keep their silence when Medea promises vengeance for her mistreatment at Jason's hands. For more examples, see Montiglio 2001: 253.

associated with instruments of female enterprise; these included tactility, conspicuousness in ritual, and control over the space and time in the spheres in which they existed. These come to represent female autonomy and thereby, what is presented as their 'misuse' or 'exploitation' threatened the control created and perpetuated by the social, cultural, and legal codes of elite males. By employing these in literature, male authors problematize female agency especially and show how this agency could have been deployed to negative effect. Although the adultery narratives within these sources were written by men, the historical sources do show women using ritual to expand their agency and mobility. By taking these sources together, we are nevertheless able to glean a more nuanced understanding of how women could react and respond to these situations, especially when there is an attempt to ostracize the wife from the *oikos*, rendering her a foreigner to her home – both her house and her city at the same time. In addition, the deafening female silence regarding adultery in society allowed women to be treated as rhetorically transactional figures, by socio-political codes and male authors alike.

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