

Anna SILVERSTEIN, Princeton University

“GOOD MOURNING APOLLO”

Aeschylus' *Oresteia* has long been recognized for its extensive use of 'musical themes and imagery', from the watchman's 'introductory dance' in the first lines of the *Agamemnon* to the processional song with which the *Eumenides* is brought to a close, the trilogy is saturated with references to song to a degree unparalleled elsewhere on the Attic stage. Amidst this more general interest in song, and the categories of song, is found the famous admonition of the chorus to Cassandra not to sing a *threnos* to Apollo (Ag. 1074-5). The injunction comes at the beginning of a dynamic exchange between the singing Cassandra and the speaking Chorus, an asymmetry which is inverted in the course of the exchange, when Cassandra shifts to trimeter and the Chorus take up the lyric. Although the epirrhematic *amoibaion* is found elsewhere in Aeschylus (*Suppl.* 347ff., *Pers.* 256ff., *Sept.* 203ff), both the singing actor and the inversion of roles found here are exceptional in the extant corpus.

Using the identification of Cassandra's song as a *threnos* as a case study, this paper will explore the significance of the bifurcation of sung and spoken expression in the representation of generic song categories in the *Oresteia* and their unique role within the greater rubric of the metaphoric program of the trilogy. I will argue that such 'generic' identifications occupy both a literal and metaphoric position within the *Oresteia*, and thus provide a particularly rich vantage whence to examine Aeschylean metatheatricity.