

Dr. Kim Shelton: Good morning, everyone. I have had some issues with my electricity this morning with my power. So just in case if it craps out on me again and we lose connection, I will record the rest of the lecture whenever I can and post that. So it may end up appearing on bCourses in two sections, but let's hope not. Let's hope it will just appear as the one and everything will hold out and be alright, okay. But just a, just a fair warning. Okay, so today we continue on both with the returns, the no story, the returns after the Trojan War. But this also gives us an opportunity to talk about one of the sagas that we haven't talked about yet and that is technically the House of Atreus, although we can go all the way back to the House of Pelops, or even before that, the House of Tantalus. So let's do that. You read for today the Oresteia, the trilogy by Aeschylus, in which he very much examines one of the most spectacularly dysfunctional families in all of Greek mythology. So we will also delve into that and what that means. Now, the House of Atreus for our most immediate purposes are Agamemnon and Menelaus, who we've just gotten to know so well through our look at the Trojan War and reading about them and their deeds and misdeeds in the Iliad. The House of Atreus and, so Atreus himself, his brother's Thyestes, and all of the sons, they are in fact unrelated to Perseus, who was the founder of Mycenae, right, so that's where Perseus's dynasty starts. And his dynasty ends with the death of Eurystheus, remember who is the King of Mycenae and was the one who gave, assigned the laborers to Heracles. So that's the Perseid Dynasty or the House of Perseus. That's how far that goes. And then we find out that that Mycenae is left without a king. Let's see, first of all, I have the so-called Mask of Agamemnon which is also behind me today in my Zoom. This was found in the excavations at Mycenae and was believed by the excavator, Heinrich Schliemann, to be the face of Agamemnon. It's much too early for that. It's even too early to be Atreus if we go that route. But it seems to have been an early leader of some sort, an early king of some sort whose name we don't know from Mycenae. But he will in our hearts be thought of as the Mask of Agamemnon. So we'll go with that for now. So the new line that we're going to meet and talk about begins outside of Greece with Tantalus of Lydia. And Lydia is over in this area here in what is today Turkey and what was Asia Minor in the past in the ancient period. And so this is where the story is said to come from, which is interesting, like Cadmus, starting in the Eastern Mediterranean. Here too, we have a very essential important line that's going to start in Asia Minor. And again, there were, there was a very strong Bronze Age presence there of multiple cultures. So it's interesting to understand how that concept translated into these stories later in time. So Tantalus of Lydia lived in the very early times when men and others and gods interacted on Earth. He dined with the gods. But during this dining with the gods, he stole nectar and ambrosia from them, in part to perhaps make himself divine, but also attempted to trick the gods into eating meat, which of course they don't do. And not any meat but in fact his son Pelops. So he had taken his son and he had chopped him up into pieces and made a stew out of him. This was not the, this is not the first and only son stew that we have. We've seen father stew also in myth so far. But then this just even today, this will be first of a couple of different son stews. So Pelops is chopped up into the stew. The gods, of course, can tell and know not to eat it, except for Demeter who's still in mourning from Persephone, and she know what's going on. She's very distracted, and she accidentally eats the shoulder of Pelops. So Zeus will, in revenge for Tantalus, two things happen. One is that Tantalus is sent off to Tartarus to be tantalized, to ever be, have food and water just outside of this reach. So he'd always be hungry and thirsty and never be able to satiate that. So that comes from this interaction with them and the dining, it was involved in the dining. Meanwhile, Zeus restores Pelops. It restores him though without his shoulder because Demeter ate it. So Hephaestus makes him a shoulder of ivory. Now what's interesting is that Tantalus's descendants will go on to be very worthy of him in the sense that they commit horrible crimes, treachery, adultery, cannibalism, incest, rape and murder. You find all of these terrible sins in these multiple generations, a very unfortunate family. And as we will see, is pursued over and over and over again. Meanwhile, back in Greece, we have, we meet King Oenomaus and the area of Pisa. He's the king of Pisa, which is in the region of Elis that we see here in the northwestern part of the Peloponnese. And specifically near the later sanctuary of Zeus at Olympia. That's where, it's just right here, Pisa was nearby there. They were really the founder of the games in the historical period. So this is a kind of a foundation and part of foundation myth for that area and in particular some of the history of what happens at Olympia. So Oenomaus, this king, he has a daughter by the. Name of Hippodamia. And

Hippodamia is, she is his daughter, and he is in love with her. Now he is required, society requires him to marry off his daughter and to marry her off well, which he of course wants to do, plans to do but kind of doesn't want to do because he doesn't want to see this, see her married to anyone else. So he creates a situation and creates a, what do you call it, a contest so that he can act like he's trying to marry his daughter but that no one actually will be successful, and he won't have to give her away to another man. That's the sort of underlying cause of this. The contest is a chariot race, and it is a chariot race against King Oenomaus and his chariot team, which is totally stacked and unwinnable because his horses are fired by the wind. So the wind is their father. And these were given to him by Aries. So very strongly endorsed and important, both chariot and horses, and no one believes that they could win this race. So he would always give, the idea was this race that potentially even to race along the northern part of the Peloponnese towards Corinth. And in doing that, then they would carry off the woman, Hippodamia. It would be kind of like, it's King Oenomaus is his name. Carrying her off, it's a little bit like a wedding abduction. It has that sort of feel about it. He would give the suitors a head start, but he always caught them. And when he did catch them, he would spear them from behind and cut off their heads, and they would nail their heads to the door of the palace just to warn off any other suitors who might attempt. And yet, 12 suitors tried, and 12 suitors failed to win the hands of Hippodamia by beating Oenomaus in a chariot race. Until, of course, we have Pelops. And this is actually, this is a reconstruction, just a model of the pediment, the sculpture at the end of the temple of Zeus and Olympia, which shows the preparations for what will turn out to be the last chariot race between King Oenomaus and a suitor of his daughter. And we have Zeus in the center as kind of the patron god, the sanctuary of the temple but also very much the judge in any kind of contest. So this this works out for that as well. And we have King Oenomaus and his daughter and his chariot. And we have the charioteer who's important. And then we have Pelops and others and his chariot on the other side. So this is, again, the preparations for this. So Pelops travels there. He asked for the hand of Hippodamia. He says he has to be in this chariot race. Great. He himself has come from Lydia with a special chariot, a chariot that was given, which was a gift of Poseidon. So gift of Aries, gift of Poseidon. This feels more evenly matched to start out with. But Pelops, again, has not far, fallen far from the tree, uses trickery. And he bribes Oenomaus's chariot driver, Martellus, to do something really dastardly. And that is to replace the bronze axle pins, so the little pins that are made out of bronze that hold the wheels of the chariot to the axle, to remove the bronze pins and replace instead with solid wax pins. Which will hold it together and allow it to function for a while. But as they are running and the axle heats up, the wax will melt and the wheels will come flying off. And this is exactly what happens. And Oenomaus will be tangled in the reins and dragged to his death. The reason that Martellus did this is also important. He was offered, let's call them first night rights, the belief being that Pelops was going to win Hippodamia, but before he slept with her, Martellus would be able to. So that seemed very appealing to Martellus, and he betrayed King Oenomaus and eventually led to his death. So our three people that are left in this race, Pelops, Hippodamia, Martellus, do not return to Olympia. They obviously, Oenomaus is dead. They keep going. They travel on their way. They stop for a rest, and Pelops goes off to find water. Meanwhile, Martellus decides to get a head start on his reward and attempts to rape Hippodamia. But Pelops comes back, stops him and throws him off a cliff. So off the cliff along the road, the northern road to the Peloponnese, which is that there's, it's all very, very cliff like here. So you can imagine somewhere along here, he's said to be throwing him off the cliff. Now, as Martellus is going down the cliff, he yells out a curse on Pelops and all of his line. So giant curse number one happening specifically to Pelops and then but also to his descendants. Pelops, eventually he and Hippodamia will return to the area to Pisa, where he becomes king. And of course eventually the entire southern part of Greece is named after him. It is the island of Pelops, the Peloponnese, which means the island of Pelops. So foundation story for the entire southern part of Greece not only this northwestern part of that area. The two of them have four sons, two that we've kind of met before. Pittheus is Theseus's grandfather, it's important. The second one is Chrysippus, who we met because he was the one who was raped by Laius when Laius was in exile in Pelops's court, and this caused the curse of Laius's House, which will end up with Oedipus, right. And then the other two Thyestes and Atreus, the fathers of our three Trojan War period individuals, Aegisthus, Menelaus and Agamemnon. So that's how we get to that line. Meanwhile, at Mycenae, Eurystheus is killed by the legendary

sons of Heracles who returned to avenge the things that had happened to him. And this leaves Mycenae without an heir, without someone in line. They consult the Oracle who says choose a child of Pelops for king. And the choices, of course, are Atreus or Thyestes. Atreus is the older. He's the better choice for numbers of reasons. However, Thyestes makes a run for the kingdom and suggest an idea. He says he should be king. Whoever can produce the fleece of a golden lamb. So obviously something very rare. Atreus jumps on it though, because he knows that secretly he has one of these golden fleeces from years past when he was supposed to sacrifice it to Artemis and instead hid it away for, I don't know, future use of when you want to prove that you can be king of Mycenae. And the only person who knows about this is his wife Aerope. Now Thyestes suggests this because it turns out that he and Aerope had been having an affair, and she had given him the fleece. So when Atreus tries to produce it, he cannot. It's gone. But Thyestes can produce it, and Thyestes becomes the king of Mycenae. Atreus though is not going to let this go. He believes he is the one that should have been and should be king of Mycenae. Then he believes and even states that Zeus wants this, that this is Zeus's plan, this is his desire. And so he says that Zeus will make the sun rise in the West and set in the East to prove it. And it actually happens apparently, according to this story. So Thyestes has to give up the throne and is banished, banished into exile. Later on, obviously the Atreus figures out that his wife has been unfaithful, and this is how the golden fleece ends up with Thyestes. And but he is particularly upset and out for revenge. And he invites Thyestes back under the guise of reconciliation, which is very insincere and very treacherous, of course, because in fact it's revenge, and he's planning to kill him. He puts on a great banquet for Thyestes, and in preparation for the banquet, he kills Thyestes three young sons. And, you guessed it, makes a stew out of them. He feeds that stew to Thyestes himself. And once he's eaten, then he asks him, do you know what you ate and reveals to him what he had, what he had consumed. Thyestes in return curses the House of Atreus. So another very serious curse on this particular generation, laying on top of the previous curses that still are ongoing generation to generation. When he flees back into exile, he's told by the Oracle that in order to redeem himself, to get back what he lost to get revenge, he must sleep with and have a child with his daughter, Pelopia. Which he doesn't, thinks is ridiculous. He doesn't particularly want to do that. On the other hand, do you follow the Oracle, right? Well, this is a recurring theme that we've seen in other sagas as well. Meanwhile, he doesn't know where Pelopia is. He doesn't know what's happened to her. We find out that she is not in Mycenae. She is in fact elsewhere. And as he is returning to Mycenae, he stops in the northern part of the Peloponnese and meets a girl who he doesn't know who she is and rapes her near the town of Sichuan. Of course, this is Pelopia. Of course it is. They don't know. She doesn't know it's her father. He doesn't know it's her, but he rapes her and then leaves his sword behind when he flees the scene. Atreus, who's out looking for Thyestes to continue his revenge, because he wants to kill ultimately, meets Pelopia and takes her back to Mycenae and marries her to replace Aerope, who obviously had stepped out on him. And then she produces a son, Aegisthus, who Atreus believes as his son, but in fact is Thyestes's son. So that's how we end up with Atreus. Thyestes is ultimately, will be caught in exile but visiting the sanctuary in Delphi. And this is a place that we will come back to again several times in the story. It is a place, it is a place where murderers can go for absolution, so this is one reason why this family may frequent it. The adult Agamemnon and Menelaus have tracked him down and capture him and take him back finally to Mycenae. Atreus summons his third son, Aegisthus, to execute Thyestes. When he pulls the sword to behead him, Thyestes recognizes his sword and realizes who this is. They call Pelopia. She recounts the story of the rape and the that person is the father of Aegisthus. She now though realizes that this was her father. There was incest. That her father had raped her and that she produced his son. And she commits suicide by throwing herself on that very sword. Aegisthus, though, rejoices at meeting his real father, always feeling like he didn't belong in Atreus's family and had lots of issues with Agamemnon and Laius, his brothers. He takes the bloody sword to Atreus and produces that as evidence that he has, that he has beheaded Thyestes. Atreus offers sacrifice too, thanks to the gods, that is revenge has finally happened. But instead, Aegisthus stabs Atreus in the back. Thyestes then comes to the throne. Agamemnon and Menelaus will then go into exile. They go to Sparta to the Kingdom of Tyndareus, and as we know. there Agamemnon will be given Clytemnestra as his wife, and Menelaus will marry Helen after the oath of Tyndareus is sworn by all of those who are her suitors. And this, of course, will set off what's going to lead into the Trojan War. So that's how

we come back to the story where we were. Meanwhile, though, with the help of Tyndareus and his army, and this is part of, I think, the Agamemnon Clytemnestra union, is that he helps them regain Mycenae. Take it back from Thyestes and ultimately, Agamemnon will take over. So this is, I didn't explain this, this is of course Mycenae. This is the fortified palace area on top of this hilltop flanked by two mountains. We have a number of different places. It's been heavily excavated for over 125 years, and we see houses and structures of all kinds culminating in the palace at the very top of the hillside, which we'll see in a moment. And this is famous gateway into the fortification walls, the so-called Lion Gate. Which will be the setting of the next part of our story, the return of Agamemnon Mycenae from the Trojan War. And we hear about this, first of all, and maybe best of all in Aeschylus's play *The Agamemnon*, the first of a trilogy, which we call the *Oresteia*. Aeschylus himself was born in the late Archaic period in the very last part of the 6th century but produced his plays at the beginning of the classical period in the 5th century. And he was part of a new flourishing of arts in Athens at this time. His great innovation is that he adds two more actors to the theater. Prior to that, it was just a single actor at a time, and Thespis is said to be the first, and there's may be a few others that their names haven't survived, but Aeschylus is the first to really make it more of an interactive type of art. He wrote over 70 plays and won the first prize 13 times at the Great Dionysia Festival. He had fought against the Persians, so served in the army and fought against the Persians and was very proud of this and had had that engraved on his gravestone rather than something about his winning all these times at this arts festival. That in fact it was his role at Marathon, the Battle of Marathon and his, the Greeks defeated the Persians. His participation in that was, brought him the honor that he sought in immortality. So *Oresteia* was produced in 458 BCE. And we of course know the background. We just talked about the background and what leads up to it. Aeschylus suggests, and I guess we could, should think of it this way. That in fact, Atreus's sons seem for the most part to do okay, even though, again, curses coming down on them and piling up on them. They don't cook each other's kids, they don't have affairs with each other's wives. So right there, we're already right there ahead of the game. But while Agamemnon is away at the Trojan War, Aegisthus, of course, who doesn't go to the war, seduces Agamemnon's wife, Clytemnestra. And together they plot to kill him on his return. So that's pretty bad. So we have this string of curses provide us with the divine motivation for what is going to happen to Agamemnon. But Aeschylus makes it clear to us that Agamemnon, in sacrificing his daughter, right, Iphigenia, brings the curse on himself. So he becomes an evil doer of his own free will. Although I would say he comes by it naturally as well, because of we've seen all of these types of acts against one's own children and one's nieces and nephews, and so on. That the idea of killing your daughter might not be as foreign to him as it would be to others. But yet the point that Aeschylus is making is this is more of a choice than genetics. We'll see how we feel about that. So in the first play, the *Agamemnon*, we have two themes that come out that will run through the trilogy. One of those is that the issue of justice and who is meant to administer it. And the relationship between men and women, which is actually very intriguing. We've seen probably our best female characters in Euripides, which is still a long way away in relation to Aeschylus this time, or feels a long way away. And then also, you know, Homer's take on women who we've seen some, we will see more of course in the *Odyssey*. But as we've discussed with our heroines and Greek myth and all of that. It's not, women don't come off well. And a lot of the characters are window dressing, and they are helper maidens. And they are just moms and sisters and daughters. So it's interesting that looking into of the relationship between men and women is an important theme. It's also an important theme because of Clytemnestra who is an archetype of one of these female heroines and one that is the strong heroine, the strong character, but also represents danger, right, like Medea. So another example here. So the play starts out with a watchman who notices a beacon fire. And this is super interesting. I'm going to go back for just a second to an image we saw just a minute ago that this is this a little gem that, it's something I should explain. Because of course when you read the plays, it is set in Argos. Which in the archaic period in Athens when Aeschylus was writing, Argos must have been on the one hand better known than Mycenae, which wasn't, it was just a tiny village at the time. And Argos was a major city state. It was also politically important. And they were what we call *medisers* [phonetic]. They were sympathetic to the Persians. So following the Persian Wars, they had a very bad reputation. And it may have seemed, been a way to dig at them as well by setting this story in Argos itself and of course being these elder men of Argos rather than Mycenae itself. It's so, it's a

confused location of confused setting. The things the way that it's described though, even in the play itself, is more like Mycenae than it is Argos, which is in fact off in the distance. So here we can look across, and Argos is over here in the distance from Mycenae itself, but still in the Argolin [phonetic]. So what, the point I wanted to make was that at the start of the play, there is this watchman who is looking for sign, a beacon of a signal fire, to receive the news from Troy of whether there had been a victory. And this is a system we believe actually existed in the ancient world where from mountain peak to mountain peak, there could be different fires set. And then when it would be seen, the next one would be set. And they would signal across a whole chain of mountaintops all the way from Troy to Mycenae is the idea. And whether that actually worked or actually happened, we can't say for certain. But we can say that there are remains of a building of Mycenaean a Bronze Age construction up at the top of this hill that suggests that there could have been a signaling system. Not only this far but also that would have continued on through the rest of the Peloponnese potentially reaching the site of Pelops in the southwestern part of the Peloponnese. So the signal comes. It means that Troy has fallen. And we would expect the return of our generals and our soldiers following upon that. The chorus explains that, let me go back to the, there we go, back to the Lion Gate. The chorus explains a bit for the viewers, a little bit about the Trojan War, a bit about themselves. They question Clytemnestra and what she's done as leader of Mycenae in Agamemnon's absence. They give us the important points of the sacrifice of Iphigenia. And this, and we start to see how this is a catalyst for Clytemnestra and the things that are being plotted. In this play, Agamemnon will show up in two scenes that really amplify and emphasize his hubris, his, you know, excessive pride and things that are the downfall of the Greeks, right. The first has to do with his decision to sacrifice Iphigenia for the war for his brother and his brother's life, right, at the expense of his daughter. That's the first. The second one is the scene where he returns actually to the site to Mycenae, and we see that, we see that play out. So in the first, discussing Iphigenia, We hear about the horrors of killing her. That she's like a sacrificial animal. And how that was, you know, that seemed to be more important than the shame of losing the faith of your warriors, right. And that he chooses his men to avoid the loss of honor to me. That that would be, that's worse. This is this is eating away at Clytemnestra. The judgment on what he has done is clear as we hear in the play itself. He changed, and from the heart the breath became bitter and sacrilegious, utterly infidel. But Greek society did value success in war and necessitated the increase of honor. So when Agamemnon returns home, even though the chorus has been sympathizing with Clytemnestra out of one side of their mouth, all is forgiven because he returns victorious and has increased his honor and does done what Homeric society in this case has expected him to do. But society also puts a check on outrageous excess with the concept of divine punishment for being too hubristic. So this is, I guess you could say it leads to a schizophrenic mentality when the imperative is to achieve but to not achieve too much. A very difficult line to walk. And we see the back and forth and the fall from that difficult walk in this character and the character of Agamemnon in this setting. So Clytemnestra tells the chorus of the beacon fires and that victory has been secured. Agamemnon will surely soon return. The chorus rejoices about that and sings about retributions against Paris. But also reveals discontent in Argos, discontent in Mycenae, discontent at home. We do hear about other things, back stories, things that are going on, including the difficulties in the victory, the suffering of the troops, the fact that apparently Menelaus has disappeared and no one knows where he is. We know, of course, he's off in Egypt at the moment, stuck on his way home, securing Helen, or Helen with him, depending on which version of the story you follow. This allows us to also hear about the destructiveness of Helen, sort of the demonization of Clytemnestra's sister, the hubris and the justice and where that's located in this character and the acts that she brought on. It also points to things about Clytemnestra that are important for the story. And then this culminates with Agamemnon entering triumphantly with Cassandra, you remember his war booty, in his chariot. And he's led into the house by Clytemnestra. And this is where we have this very interesting scene where we can imagine it taking place at the entrance to the Citadel where the chariot would arrive. And the chariot doesn't drive inside. You would descend from the chariot, and everyone would enter the fortified area and then ultimately ending up at the palace. And we see that Clytemnestra, who again is, everything is part of her plot. There's a reason for everything, motivation for everything. She invites Agamemnon to step out of his chariot onto purple carpets that she has strewn in his path that she has, you know, put as a great honor for him, but also a great trap. He

refuses to do this to glorify himself in something that's meant for the gods and not for man. He says all the right things, but he does give in. Why does he give in? Well, Clytemnestra tempts his pride, and he can't resist. By mentioning Priam, she's in effect saying you are the conqueror. So don't you have the right to do this? And her answer to his fear of being envied is he who goes unenvied is not admired. So she is exactly honing in on those elements that we, of course, also know and the audience would certainly know about Agamemnon and Achilles and what that led to. Again, a lot of that because of Agamemnon's pride and his I'm the guy. I'm the general. I deserve all of this. No one else does. Regardless if that other person's going to save us all. So this is feeding into a well-known character of Agamemnon. So his walking on the carpet, which of course is what he does, is very much symbolic of sacrilege. That he has trampled on this sort of godly honor, the same way that he abused his father-daughter relationship, right, by killing his daughter. The carpets are also a metaphor for further along in Clytemnestra's trap where she will use a net to snare him, to kill him. We then go into this very interesting part of the story where there's great foreboding. The chorus is sort of doom and gloom and what's going to happen. And then of course, Cassandra comes in and reveals her own past, which, again, everyone knows, but it's important for that to be heard at this moment. So we understand that what she's going to tell us is the truth, but no one's going to believe it. That she also is a great vehicle for revealing the past of the House of Atreus and understanding the deeper context of this character in this family and in this place for that matter. And then she of course, foretells the murders that are to come, including her own, her own fate. And then she enters, as they say, into the palace, in this case, into the Citadel. This is a view of the palace at Mycenae, the archaeological site, what's left of it. Which is where we imagine the rest of the play sort of taking part in, this is the throne room, the main room. Really, this is the administrative part. I don't have an image, but up above just uphill from here is where the residential area would have been and where we have the off stage in the theater. But where we can imagine this would have the next part of the play takes place. So Cassandra is interesting too, I just say because she knows, she sees her fate, she knows what she's going into, but she does it anyway. And that shows she's not always, she's undersold in some ways when we think about the female, importance of female characters versus male characters in this play, because we mostly look at Clytemnestra. Because she's a badass in this play. But so is Cassandra. Like I said again, she's resolved her fate over and over again. But now she's making decisions for herself. And that gives her a kind of agency that she hasn't seen since she first met Apollo really. So her, you know, her life is just about over, but she at least really shines in the last moments. So off stage, we have screens that emanate. The chorus responds by telling us about the death of Agamemnon. And of course, Cassandra as well. We have Clytemnestra then draped in blood coming out, revealing the corpses, revealing the dead bodies to the audience. And she justifies her actions. She talks about her plot with Aegisthus and justifies that this, because of the sacrifice of her daughter, Iphigenia, she could do this. Aegisthus enters and argues with the chorus, and Clytemnestra ends that argument recalling the curse of the House of Atreus because of Thyestes and how all of the, there were reasons for all of this. It was all justified. Now this isn't the end of it, as we know. This is just the first of the three plays that continue the storyline. But it is, there are of course different versions of who is to blame. They plot together. Some versions say that Clytemnestra did the killing. Others said Aegisthus did the killing for her. We see both of those things happen in art as well. We see both characters hold the sword, as it were, for doing the killing. Regardless, though, the miasma of murder is going to go on both of them. And it means different things to each of them based on their relationship to the victims, whether they are blood relations or whether they are married relations, let's say, let's say that way. So ultimately, these deaths will need to be avenged, and we will see that happen. Meanwhile, though, before we do that, I just want to again highlight this message that we get in the portrayal of these characters and the telling of this story and other similar versions to it is the threat of, let's call them clever women. So there is this problem of the relationships between men and women. And that in general, Greek women are subjugated. That they do not have agency. They are often considered no more than property but that they don't know what to do with strong women. This comes over again and again and again. We talked about it. I think most recently with Medea. So Clytemnestra really personifies this. She is every Greek man's nightmare. She is characterized in this play as being particularly masculine. And it's not physical. It's more about her way that she holds herself and presents herself and the ability that she has to

lead, to run, to be the king in essence. She governs a household which every Greek woman is expected to be able to do. But she's governing a kingdom, not just any household. And she has mastered the art of speaking in public. And we see that with these interchanges with the chorus. She's a masterful speaker. She's able to argue her case. And again, this is not, this is totally something that only men would have done in society. The chorus even comments that spoken like a man full of self-command the way that they're describing Clytemnestra. When she, then on the other hand, right, she tells the truth to the chorus, and she's very, you know, commanding and convincing, Odysseus-like in some ways. And then, also a little bit Odysseus-like, when she greets her husband, it is with bold faced lies. And of course, the purpose is to deceive him. That's what she plans to do, and that's what she does. Now, deception might be characterized as a feminine trait according to the Greeks. But the boldness with which she does it, the planning, the intent, the carrying it out is not. So and the point of the deception is actually also not usually characterized as something a woman would do. She means to kill him. And again, that sets her off as being very different from our other women in myth, in these other stories for the most part. So part of her reason, of course, is that he insulted her and their marriage by killing their daughter. He has returned after being away for 10 years with a concubine in his chariot next to him. Not bound with the rest of the physical objects and booty that he's hauling with him back from Troy. She is standing with him. That's very symbolic. That's a king and queen kind of situation. And a big part of her though is upset because she's a woman who clearly despises male domination. She has proven that she can do what a man does and actually, according to the chorus, maybe even better. And that's just scary. So she kills him. And it's not only vengeance but also a blow for her personal freedom. So both of those things are true. The current, a little bit more about the carpet scene I would just say that, you know, she must in her own defense, like she's anticipating what she's going to need to do to defend her actions. Because she, of course, has already decided she's going to kill him. Is that she has to prove publicly his hubris. So he's come back the conquering hero. Okay, but guess what, he's gone too far. Let me show you. Let me set everyone why we have to, why this is okay, why this has to be done. She also wants to win a verbal duel, right, to be the more dominant in honor. And she does that. Agamemnon even pushes back and tries to suggest that she's taking the male role, and she's trying to put him in the female role. But that's not all that she does. So, yeah. And she says this wonderful line which has a great double meaning. Let their spring up into the house. He never hoped to see where justice leads him in a crimson path. So the color of the carpet but also the color of blood and the things that are going to come. And of course, we remind ourselves that she's been having this affair with, I guess this all this time, although yet very much in command of everything that's going on. And that's definitely not something that society would have you be doing. And we wonder why, if she doesn't want to be male dominated, why Aegisthus. Well, exactly, because he is not a man who will dominate her. And she characterizes him in a way that we understand that in fact, she's useful to him, but that she's very much in command. So at the very end of the play, we have the foreshadowing of the return of Orestes by the chorus but also Aegisthus. And that's what we're going to see in the next play, the Libation Bearers, who are in fact liberation bearers themselves, the [INDISCERNIBLE] are Trojan slaves. So just for that information. So the background, this of course is that we have eight years have gone by. Eight years have gone by. And Orestes comes home because he's been ordered by Apollo, again, recurring figure. Has told him that he must take vengeance for his father. Now, where is Orestes, right? He was sent into exile because he is the rightful heir, and Clytemnestra needed him to be away, to not be there. But she's not going to kill her son either. So she is sent into exile. He grows up in exile in the Kingdom of Strophius who is the king of Phocis, which is up in near, it's in the area of Delphi. So it's up around in that sort of central Greece but the southern part across from the Peloponnese in that area. And of course, where there where Thyestes has gone, and so there's a recurring relationship here. And it's natural that Apollo would be advising Orestes since, again, this is sort of Apollo's area as well. Strophius's son Pylades is Orestes's best friend and also will act as his companion on his way to Mycenae to revenge for his father's death. We also meet Electra, the sister, the younger sister, who has been sent by her mother during the start of the play to offer libations at Agamemnon's grave. Clytemnestra did this because she had a dream that she gave birth to and suckled a snake. And that that snake bit her and drew blood. Now, of course, this means Orestes, because this is, again, it's a forewarning that Orestes is going to draw blood, that he's going to come and avenge the death of his father. So we see this,

this is a vase painting that is very likely representing, it's this scene, so it may well be inspired by the scene from the play as well that we are at what a classical period tomb looks like in Athens. Would look like this with the pillar marking the tomb. In the grave marker we have a crater up on top and this sort of stepped, stepped area where we have the different votives and these ribbons which very much recall snakes. The ribbons are typical to tie around the tube, but I think it's very interesting that this loose ribbon as well, very, recalls the snake. It's not a snake, but it recalls a snake. And we see our travelers with their little traveling hats, excuse me, show up also, to perform a libation where we have Electra there at the front of the tomb. And so we have Orestes entering with Pylades and leaving a lock of hair on Agamemnon's tomb. The chorus brings the libations to the Trojan prisoners that are there in Mycenae. They bring the libations. They sing about blood guilt and what that means. We then have Electra enter and finds the lock of hair and then Orestes. And we have a very important recognition scene that happens under the view of the father, as it were. It's at least Agamemnon's tomb or proxy for him overseeing the reunion of his children. Electra and Orestes have this way that they that they understand who the other one is. And Electra's purpose is to, in this story, is to serve as a foil for her mother. So she's the positive female image as opposed to Clytemnestra continuing the bad, the evil female image. And it works to some extent. Electra though is also problematic in a number of ways, being the youngest child, growing up with the parents that she's grown up with, or the lack thereof. So we see her own issues and neuroses as well. The children sing to their father, and the chorus sing to their father to Agamemnon and his ghost as it were to his remembrances. Orestes is told about Clytemnestra's dream that she had with the snake and reveals what his plan actually is. The chorus then justifies what's going to happen by citing other mythological examples of female crimes. And that this is just one of many that this is, that these things happen. And we will have Clytemnestra let Orestes and Pylades into the house, which of course is [INDISCERNIBLE] showing herself to be the good leader that she is. She is going to, at least to start with, enter in and take care of the people that have come from outside. She of course is doing this without knowing initially who she's inviting in. The chorus prays for Orestes's success, of course. And that is particularly important at that point. We have this ruse, as it were, that Orestes is reporting that Orestes is dead. We have a nurse, the nurse that's mourning Orestes and carries the news ahead that's altered to Aegisthus to come along and see what's happened. But then also the chorus prays for the success and encourages Orestes in the next move. Aegisthus will enter the palace. And ultimately, Clytemnestra learns of Aegisthus's death and is then dragged into the palace where she too is killed. Now this is a scene. This is, we'll see, I'm going to show you a slew of them actually. This is a popular story in the visual arts in part because it is dramatic and violent. It also is such a stunning scene that it's one thing for Clytemnestra to kill her husband. It's another thing for a son to kill his mother, right, the one who gave birth to him, who created him. And so that becomes not only the reason for the third play, right, for The Eumenides, the Furies, but it also is one of the things that fascinates the Greeks their storytelling. Because again, it is this, it is the killing of one's own blood that is takes on a whole different stakes. It's bigger stakes. It's different intensity. It's even further taboo than just regular old murder. And even though, again, Clytemnestra is killing her husband, which is family, they're not blood relations. It is a different, it is different. But a lot of things will be important in this story too. And something that will be debated in the third play is which is more important, your father or your mother? Because Orestes has to make that choice. He is making that choice. He's made that choice. He's been instructed to do that by the god, and that's important. But it emphasizes that this seems to be the rule of the land, that idea that the male life is more important, that he must avenge his father as a son. He must avenge his father, even if that means killing his mother. So it really does, it really does fascinate. And in this one here in this red figure vase we see Orestes actually labeled up here. And we have Aegisthus of course being killed first. Clytemnestra seemingly witnessing it and running away in this version. As we know, she too will be murdered. And of course, in the in the play, all of that violence is happening off stage. So it's interesting that the visual culture decides to actually show what the play itself does not, since all of that type of violence always happens off stage. So this is another version of that same story. And one going back very early, probably the late 9th century, early 8th century we have, this is a whole, this is actually a bronze foot from a tripod which has a number of different sort of violent acts. But the one right here in the center is Orestes holding Clytemnestra by her throat and stabbing her in her breast. So pretty dramatic stuff. He does,



of course, the plans with the Orestes entering with the corpses and the robe and justifies himself. And he's of course, driven off by the Furies. And the Furies are, as we will learn, this special group that is coming after him for vengeance because he killed his mother, he killed his own blood relation. And that's one of the things that the Furies have to account for because it is, it is really not allowed. And we presented this confrontation. So there is the theme of justice that parallels are set up between the murder scenes of the Agamemnon and the murder scenes in The Libation Bearers. We'd have verbal confrontation before the murder between a man and a woman. That happens in both places. The murders both represent vengeance, vengeance for lives taken. The murder of the woman is the son of the man murdered, right. Say that three times fast, And in both of these plays you get a man and a woman murdered, Aegisthus, excuse me, Agamemnon and Cassandra. In the first Clytemnestra and Aegisthus in the second. And this lends to the visual effect of the various tableaux, murderers standing over the dead couple holding bloodied swords and a net that was used in the murders. So the robe was, actually I forgot to mention the robe, and the second one in the net in the first one But again, was Orestes's act different or better than Clytemnestra? Escalus likens Orestes to a snake that's going to kill his mother, just as Clytemnestra had been a snake in killing Agamemnon. So there's more parallels than there are differences, but Orestes does have the god Apollo on his side. Does this matter? We're better prepared to answer this, of course, when we get to the end of the trilogy. But we know that Apollo convinces Orestes that to kill his mother by saying that the Furies of his father will in fact haunt him and chase him. So instead he ends up with the Furies of the mother. I'm doing exactly that same thing. So for our male versus female man versus woman theme, we have a, we've said quite a bit about them, but I would just add that a few interesting things. One is that Clytemnestra in her defense calls for a man killing axe, which is interesting that she's caught off guard. But she still tries to use her skills of persuasion. We see again the talk that the, that intelligence and that drive that she has that's considered unusual. She calls Orestes my child and shows him her breast that she, that she nursed him with, and that proves quite effective. But Pylades, he has very little to do and the story, but he does pop in and intervenes and says with his only words of the entire play to remind Orestes of what Apollo threatened. But Clytemnestra of course is not going to give up easily. Orestes threatens her life as Agamemnon has threatened her liberty. So in this, they have this amazing verbal back and forth in which Orestes does not fully understand his mother's motivations and character. So there are things that he's clearly unaware of. She actually argues against herself when she brings up Agamemnon's sacrifice of Iphigenia. Like she gives it, here's my justification if blood demands blood. But then she's arguing she, too, should have to be killed. Orestes resents having to be cast aside by his mother, and that also comes into play. You know, he's been sent away. He's not been with his mother. And we see that psychologically he's damaged in that and to that extent. And then, of course, there's the double standards, the thing that clinches the argument for Orestes. That Clytemnestra claims that Agamemnon's affairs should be remembered too. But Orestes's response that clearly that's not the way things, the way things are. Orestes was impressed by the strength of the Father Furies but does not, but seems to be unaware of the power of the Mother Furies. So that's what we're going to see in The Eumenides. Chased by the Mother Furies, The Eumenides, Orestes goes to Apollo, to Delphi so that he can be cleansed of the murder and escape the Furies. I imagine also to say to Apollo, what dude, you said I had to do this in order to escape the Furies. And here the Furies are chasing me. Apollo will perform the ritual, but he cannot get rid of the Furies. So they ultimately have to go to Athens for help. And that brings this play into the context of where it was being performed, right. We've been in all these other places, and now suddenly we're into Athens and where the viewers are actually watching the play take place. And there are two things that happen. The rights of men are put over the rights of women, that's established. And that there is a way out of the personal blood feud is now invented by the goddess Athena, the wise goddess Athena. The image we see here, which is also very likely a stage, the image of the production of the play. But it is meant to be from the props, is meant to be Delphi. And we know this because first of all we recognize Apollo with his bow and his laurel leaves. And we see there's obviously some kind of classical architecture. There's a couple of tripods just to help you understand we're at Delphi. We also have once again the omphalos, the belly button. Here it is. In fact Orestes grabbing on to it for dear life seeking refuge from the omphalos itself. And we even have Artemis here watching over next to this Laurel tree, another symbol of Delphi. So we're in Delphi, and this is one of the Furies who Apollo is repelling and

sending away as part of this, this first part of, part of the story. We learn about Delphi at the beginning of the play. We hear from Pythia. She describes herself. We have the shock of the Furies, and then ultimately he's not able to totally expunge and get rid of the Furies. And so the, everything moves, sends Orestes, sends Orestes and Hermes to Athens with the shade or the ghost of Clytemnestra pushing on the Furies to continue haunting Orestes. We have some anger at Apollo for not, sort of everything that's going on and what he's unable to finish himself. And the chorus will argue with Apollo. Then we change our scene to Athens. Athenians, the Athenians will be the jury. The judge is Athena. The defense is Apollo, and the prosecutors of the Furies. We have a good Athenian court system on display here in this part of the play. We have, ultimately, the different cases will be argued and played out. They're presented to Athena acting as judge, who proposes that a proper trial take place. The result of the trial is that the jury is tied. They're deadlocked, which means that Athena ultimately as judge casts the vote one way or the other. And she votes in favor of acquittal. And at his acquittal Orestes goes off with Apollo. Athena will offer the Furies a place in Athens, and the plans of a grand procession. The Furies are appeased, and they change from being called the Furies, the feared ones, to being the blessed ones, which is what The Eumenides means. And at that point, the curse is ended. So this play not only, concludes our story and brings many of these questions and plot lines to a close. It also represents a kind of development of law as the vehicle of justice instead of blood guilt inventions. So that's an important new moral and religious principle that is introduced and differs from the age of myth and the age of the heroes to the more contemporary democratic law abiding days. So we do have the final resolution of the man versus woman problem. Because Orestes admits to his crime, the Furies are perfectly justified in pursuing him. While they had not pursued Clytemnestra exactly because the mother is tied to the child by blood but not to her husband by blood. So this is the big distinction, and Orestes can't argue against it. And that's why he turned the argument over to Apollo. So the killing of the mother does not outweigh the killing of the husband and the father. But the son's duty to his father outweighs all other relationships. And I want to emphasize that because this is going to be a theme in the Odyssey as well. The responsibilities of fathers and sons but especially what the son's duty to the father is. So Apollo's response, of course, is that man's death is worse than a woman's death. The male is worth more than the woman. So there are other various questions and things that are resolved in that book but that's, that's the heart of it. And finally, I just want to, let's see, is there anything I wanted to say for sure? Yeah. So that Orestes's murder is not really more justified than Clytemnestra. And that's why the jury is shown evenly split because it's not obvious. It is still very much in contention. But the Furies are disregarding this tie of marriage while Apollo disregards the tie of blood, and both are important. So that's sort of kind of the ultimate takeaway. And we have this sort of establishment of a new order, which I mentioned that in which justice through the court system is, rather than blood justice. Now Orestes, once he's cleared, will return to Mycenae as king. And he marries, he marries Hermione after Neoptolemus is killed at Delphi. So we go back to Delphi one more time and we see Neoptolemus here, I think I showed you this before, who as you remember had taken Hermione as his wife, although he was betrothed to Orestes. And then ultimately Orestes, and again, there's the [INDISCERNIBLE] that Orestes will kill him there in Delphi and take Hermione and take her as his queen. So he becomes king of Mycenae, king of Argos and King of Sparta, all of those things. After his death, his bones are kept as a relic. His bones are kept as a relic at the site of Tegea in the southern part of Arcadia, so important there also in the later historical period. Their son, Tisamenus, will carry on the House of Atreus, as it were, continues on. Electra is going to marry Pylades, and they will have two sons, Strophius and Medon. And we see the representation of these stories continue on among others, including by Euripides. And we will go on and learn other things about these characters when we go on into the other returns. So that will, that leads us to really to the end of the House of Atreus, the end of the Bronze Age. We have a few other stories that tell us about a couple of other generations that happened at this point following the Trojan War but not much after that before we have the end of the Bronze Age, as it were. And the end of most of our mythological stories don't go much beyond this time. So that will conclude us for today. We will carry on on Tuesday with the Odyssey, the first of three days. So I hope everyone's looking forward to that and yeah, you guys have a good and I hope more dry weekend. Thank you.