

SHOULD AESCHYLUS' "AGAMEMNON" BE CALLED "CLYTAEMNESTRA"?

In considering whether the play should be titled Clytaemnestra, one must try to look at how important Clytemnestra is in the development of the play and without argument; Clytaemnestra does play a prominent role in unravelling the plot of the play.

There is no doubt that Clytaemnestra contributes inevitably to the development of the play. This, in my opinion is due to the fact that her character is presented the most times through out the play; similarly to Electra, who unlike her, is named after the play. This thereby allows her to portray her feelings more than that of any other characters in the play. We are able to see this through her use of language which most of the time, consists of elements of sarcasm and irony. For example, "I could see you suffer more than all; the hours that slept with me could ever bear". This is ironic in the sense that she has obviously not been missing Agamemnon, as she was bedding with another man, Aegisthus.

Secondly, the uniqueness of Clytaemnestra is also a justifiable reason for making her character, the title of the play. Clytemnestra is presented as a contrast to a typical Greek woman. In other words, she sorts of takes over the role of the man in the play which is very bold and courageous, as gender was a big issue in the time of the ancient Greeks. This is exemplified by her strive for justice (The vengeance of her daughter, Iphigeneia), which she finally achieves with little or no help from Aegisthus, the tone in which she addresses people and the way in which she is able to rule and control the palace. She is said to "manoeuvre like a man" by the watchman at the beginning of the play. In addition, in the dialogue with her husband, Agamemnon she adapts a tone, which portrays them as equals. "And *you* fear the reproach of the common men"

Furthermore, a reason why the play should be called Clytaemnestra is that she contributes to all the main Greek themes in the play. First, she contributes to the typical Greek theme of revenge and justice, which runs through the play As Agamemnon has sacrificed her young and innocent daughter, Iphigeneia, Clytaemnestra sees it as her duty to avenge her death by murdering her husband. When trying to justify her actions in a debate with the chorus, she refers to the revenge as "an act for an act, wound for wound" and her view of the "killer paying the price" makes evident her need for justice. Secondly, Clytaemnestra also delineates the theme of the continuity of family generation in this play. Her presence as a character in the play serves as an evidence of the continuity of the generation in the Greek times, as she is the sister of the cause of this commotion, Helen of Troy. In addition, to an extent, she portrays elements of peripeteia because she has been suffering mentally from the grief of her daughter's death, but by murdering Agamemnon, she is fulfilled.

Lastly, Clytaemnestra should be the title of the play because she contributes to the development of all the other characters in the play. I personally noticed that she interacts with all the other characters present in the play, thereby acting as a build up in one way or the other. This can be exemplified by her conversation with Agamemnon and the chorus. In relating to Agamemnon, she acts as a form of temptation as she lures him into committing Hubris by convincing him to walk on the crimson tapestries. In relation to the chorus, she arouses ambiguity with her actions (the vengeance of Iphigeneia by killing of Agamemnon). This is due to the fact that she creates a form of contradiction in the beliefs of the Greek; Loyalty to the gods and vengeance, which would not

have occurred if she did not carry out her intentions. In other words, her action is what makes up the main function of the chorus through out the play.

However, one can still say that the present title, "Agamemnon" is the most suitable for the play as the other characters events in the play centre around him. In other words, all the actions and discussions of other characters are basically about him. For example, from the most dominant character, Clytaemnestra, to the character with the least interaction, the Watchman, relate all their speeches to the character of Agamemnon. "Just bring home. My King, I'll take your loving hand in mine and then ..."

In conclusion, in determining whether the play should be called Clytaemnestra or not, one should bear in mind, the period to which the play belongs in order to be able to result in an unbiased conclusion that is not influenced by the era, which we find ourselves in today.