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Dangerous Gifts: Ideologies of Marriage and Exchange in Ancient Greece

The fateful gift that passes between a woman and a man is a familiar theme in Greek literature. Among these dangerous exchanges are the poisoned robe Deianeira sends to Herakles, the necklace for which Eriphyle trades the life of her husband Amphiaraos, the golden lamb given by Atreus' wife Aerope to his brother Thyestes, the precious cloth Klytemnestra spreads for Agamemnon. In all of these examples, drawn from Greek myth and its tragic elaborations, precious objects of metal or textiles enter into circulation on account of women. No matter whether they are givers or receivers, disaster follows. The message seems clear: while any exchange has the potential for danger, women and gifts are a particularly deadly combination.¹

And yet, Greek traditions going back to Homer place gift-giving at the center of human relationships, and show both men and woman as participants.² A careful examination of these exchanges must take into account not only the gender of the parties, but also the nature of the objects exchanged and the genre of the work in question. As I will argue, analysis along these lines reveals a complex system in which not only the givers but also the objects they give are conceived of as gendered. The gendering of exchange-objects and the rules governing the separate spheres of men's and women's exchanges can be better understood with reference to the anthropological categories of *male* and *female wealth*. The distinction is almost always between hard durable goods and soft consumable ones. These categories are closely related to the roles of men and women in the production of the objects in question. Thus a consideration of men's and women's exchanges must take into account the gendered division of labor as conceptualized in archaic and classical Greek thought, according to which metals are the province of men and textiles of women. After outlining the workings of this gendered system of production and exchange, I will show how violation of the rules creates the dangerous gifts of my title.

Recent discussions of exchange in ancient Greece have made use of the concept of "transactional orders," ranked spheres of exchange characterized by mutual inconvertibility.³ Errington and Gewertz discuss the marriage practices of the Chambri of Papua New Guinea in terms that show how these ways of thinking incorporate both spatial metaphors and status distinctions: "The fundamental inequality between wife-givers and wife-takers is reflected in the cultural requirement that the exchanges between them be conducted through items of incommensurate nature.... Valuables move in one direction and women, food, and other representations of nurture move in the other."⁴ Here the gendering of objects and the transactional orders overlap. Other anthropological discussions of exchange focus instead on the distinction between alienable and inalienable goods.⁵ Mauss' discussion of "maternal" goods and "masculine" goods shows how the gendering of objects easily shades over into the distinction between alienable and inalienable wealth.⁶ Because these inalienable objects are

often associated with familial lineages, they may come to represent women. At the same time, the objects women control are generally quite distinct from (and less precious than) the inalienable objects that represent them. The Greek mythic material considered here concerns mainly objects of high rank, whose gendered associations are more at issue than the transactional order to which they belong. Spatial distinctions in these texts are entwined with gender distinctions, dividing inside from outside and thus distinguishing not only types of wealth, but also the differently gendered spheres of wealth-producing activities encompassed by the Greek *oikos*.⁷

The recurring theme of fateful exchanges between men and women in epic and later literature suggests that in archaic and classical Greek culture the anxiety connected with exchange—an anxiety which cross-cultural analysis reveals to be present in nearly all societies—is focused to an extraordinary degree on women.⁸ Moreover, as my opening examples indicate, this anxiety is tied most closely to women in their role as wives and to the institution of marriage. That each of these deadly exchanges takes place in the context of a disruption or crisis in the marital relationship makes clear the nature of the anxiety. In a society in some sense founded on the circulation of women, the possibility that a woman’s circulation will not end with her marriage remains an ever-present threat.⁹ At the heart of this anxiety is a fundamental conceptualization of women as *objects, not agents*, of exchange. Disruptions of the accepted codes of exchange coincide with an overturning of the norm by which women do not exchange but are exchanged. The perverted exchanges we will examine point to the possibility that once she is established in her marital household, a woman may lay claim to a new economic (and affective) power as wife and mother, no longer allowing herself to be a passively exchanged object. Conceptualized as both the original inalienable object and the original exchange object, women occupy an economic position in the family that is fraught with anxiety.

A further complication is the coexistence in Greek traditions of two diverging tendencies with respect to the economic and social contributions of women. In one, women’s contributions within their own sphere are recognized and even respected, while entry into the traditionally male sphere is regarded as unseemly if not dangerous. This tendency is typified by the scene in the *Iliad* in which Hektor admonishes Andromache to return home and attend to her weaving (*erga*) and leave military strategy to the men.¹⁰ In the other, typified by the Hesiodic tradition, women’s economic contributions are altogether denied, and even their traditional works (*erga*) take on a sinister meaning. As I aim to show in the final part of this article, tragic treatments of these themes bring together the two tendencies, to represent perverted reciprocities in which the violation of the separate spheres of men and women at times of conflict and crisis renders even the proper works of women treacherous and destructive.

My purpose in analyzing this material is neither to demonstrate once again the subordination of women in ancient Greece, nor is it to offer an “optimistic” account of occasions for women’s autonomy.¹¹ Rather, I am interested in the complex specificities of women’s place in Greek society. Given the difficulties of determining social realities, my aim here is instead to elucidate some aspects of gender ideology by examining the social and economic role of women as represented in some of the central literary and artistic documents of the archaic and classical periods.

Paradoxically, despite the recurrent mythic theme of women’s deadly gifts, a wealth of

literary and historical documentation from the archaic and classical periods represents women as having little or no economic power. A tradition going back to the *Iliad* portrays women not as economic actors—*agents* of exchange—but as the *objects* of exchange: gifts to be traded among men, prizes to be won in war or in an athletic contest, daughters to be given in marriage.¹² Whatever the value of the Homeric epics as historical evidence, they provide insight into the ideological assumptions not only of the age from which they emerged, but also to some extent of later centuries in which they continued to function as cultural touchstones.¹³

It has long been assumed that women were completely excluded from economic influence throughout the classical period almost everywhere in Greece, and particularly in Athens.¹⁴ (The exceptional number of female landowners in Sparta was held by Aristotle and other ancient writers to account for the decline of that society.¹⁵) This view of the economic exclusion of women, based largely on literary representations, has recently been challenged by social historians of classical Athens who argue that a degree of power was available to some aristocratic women through the institution of the dowry.¹⁶ Such power would in any case have been available only to the daughters of wealthy families, and would have found its expression entirely within the domestic sphere. It would thus have presented little threat to the official gender ideology of classical Athens, which was not entirely different from that expressed in the earliest Greek texts.¹⁷ Yet fear of women's power animates a number of Attic tragedies. Why this should be is a question to which we will return.

The case for women's economic power has been made by social historians relying on non-literary sources, particularly orations delivered in court cases, and their conclusions are contested. The orations, although serving different purposes from those of Athenian drama, are not unmediated transcriptions of social realities but rather *representations* of social realities every bit as ideologically conditioned as the scenes presented on stage.¹⁸ My use of them, as of the mythic material, is intended not to establish the "facts" of daily life, but to provide evidence for the ideological constructs with which this article is concerned.

In the mythic examples with which I began, the locus of anxiety about women and their powers, economic and otherwise, is marriage and the role of the wife. That becoming a wife was the expected *telos* of women is perhaps reflected in the fact that a common word for wife in ancient Greek (as in many other languages) is the same as the word for woman: *gunê*. To see how fundamental this association is, I turn now to an archaic tradition in which the creation of woman and the invention of marriage are presented as one and the same (evil) thing.

HESIODIC WOMAN AS THE ORIGINAL DANGEROUS GIFT

The very origin of woman, according to Hesiod, is traceable to an act of deceitful and treacherous gift-giving.¹⁹ J.-P. Vernant has analyzed both Hesiodic versions of the conflict between Zeus and Prometheus, of which the creation of woman is a part, as a series of deceitful gifts given and refused, or withheld and taken by stealth.²⁰ The woman (Pandora, "All-Gifts," in the *Works and Days*) brings not gifts but troubles to men, specifically through the institution of

marriage. Moreover, the account in the *Theogony* (590-612) essentially conflates the origin of women with the origin of human marriage.²¹

Like so many other gifts of the gods that are joyously received but later prove to be the source of misery, this dangerous creature is carefully crafted by the divine master craftsman, Hephaistos.²² Not only a divine artifact, albeit one made of earth (*gaiês gar sumplasse*, *Theog.* 571; *ek gaiês plassen*, *WD* 70), the woman created by the gods bears a name that hints at a hidden divinity. Pandora, the name she is given in the *Works and Days*, is glossed as “All-Gifts,” a reference to the gifts given her by all the gods and goddesses who created and adorned her (*hoti pantes Olumpia dômat’ echontes / dôron edôrêsan*, *WD* 81-82). The name can, however, be read in an entirely different way, as the “All-Giving,” elsewhere used as an epithet of the goddess Gaia.²³ In fact, Hesiod’s implied etymology is unique—all other surviving uses of *pandôralos* and the related *pandôteira* are active: all-bounteous, giver of all.²⁴ In the Hesiodic account, however, the newly created woman causes not plenty but scarcity, keeping men enslaved to agricultural labor, and to a threatening and destructive fertility.²⁵

In the account in the *Theogony* of the same episode, the ancestor of all women brings as a “gift” the ambiguous institution of marriage (589-612). The lines that follow reveal once again an ambivalence about this institution. Hesiod admits that a man who does not marry has a miserable old age and even more grudgingly allows the possibility of finding a good wife (608), but he nonetheless insists that a wife will consume precious resources without making any contribution to household wealth.²⁶ The likely role of a wife as producer is suppressed, hidden like the gifts of the earth or like hope in the jar. When Hesiod uses the phrase *erga gunaikôn* at line 603, he means something quite different from the usual sense of that phrase in Homeric diction, where it refers to the woven garments produced by women.²⁷ Here unusually coupled with the word *mermera* (baneful, anxiety-producing), the *erga* of women are no longer contributions to the household wealth, but the source of undefined troubles, perhaps sexual in nature.²⁸ As with the very name of the first woman, this phrase evokes—only to dismiss—a positive aspect of women’s role. Not only is women’s production devalued, but possibly also their role as sexual companions.

Even the wife’s reproductive potential elicits a similar ambivalence. The *Works and Days* recommends strictly limiting the number of offspring to one son (*mounogênes pais*, 376) to preserve the inheritance. Women’s reproductive potential is thus a double-edged sword.²⁹ While several later authors also recommend leaving a single heir, this advice is less obviously suited to an agrarian life.³⁰ The poet seems to recognize this tension, as he follows up immediately (379-80) with the apparently conventional observation that having many children allows one to amass more wealth.³¹

Despite these grudging admissions, the poet’s precepts obscure the value of woman as producer, casting her instead as a highly dubious object of exchange. Her childbearing potential no longer strengthens the household but threatens to overwhelm it with unwanted progeny.³² Her potential for agricultural labor is denied; instead she lives off the labor of men. Her role as keeper of the household goods is reversed to that of devourer of its substance.³³ Even her *erga*, the paradigmatic work of women at the loom, are unraveled, transformed into a sexual threat.

She stands—clothed in deceit but denuded of traditional female virtues—as a figure for the mystification of women’s economic contribution.³⁴ Created to be given in revenge for an act of “negative reciprocity,” Prometheus’ theft of fire, she embodies the negation of every possibility of reciprocity between husband and wife.³⁵

THE WORTH OF A WOMAN IN GREEK EPIC

If the extreme pessimism of the Hesiodic view of women was not shared by the Homeric tradition, it nevertheless finds its analogues there.³⁶ Like the woman created in the *Theogony* or the *Works and Days* to serve as a deceitful gift in a transaction between two gods, Helen is offered to Paris by Aphrodite as a bribe that allows the goddess to triumph over the other contestants in the divine beauty pageant.³⁷ Each of these gifts of a woman is offered as part of a power struggle among immortals, while the price is paid by mortals.³⁸ Like Epimetheus’ heedless embrace of Pandora, Paris’ ill-fated abduction of Helen is only a means to a divine end to which he is largely irrelevant. Beginning with Helen, the theme of the exchange or circulation of women pervades the *Iliad*, but the corresponding Hesiodic contempt is not to be found.³⁹ The old men of Troy, and Paris himself, replay the part of Epimetheus, accepting the hollow but beautiful image of a woman, all the while unaware of the evil she will bring.⁴⁰ The poet of the *Iliad*, however, chooses to present Helen as a figure of some sympathy, a fully drawn character with her own subjectivity.⁴¹ Other women whose mobility causes trouble, like Briseis and Chryseis, are treated with respect and compassion. On the other hand, the anonymous women skilled in handiwork (*amumona erga iduias*) and offered as prizes or compensation, are assigned no more moral value, and no more subjectivity, than a gold tripod or iron ingot.⁴² Yet their economic worth—both use-value and exchange-value—is clearly reckoned as with any other object of exchange.⁴³

The peacetime setting of the *Odyssey* allows greater scope for the activities of women. Here, their economic contribution is clear: female slaves are shown doing the work of the household and even goddesses work at the loom.⁴⁴ At the same time, the notion of woman as an object of exchange or a piece of property is by no means foreign to the poem. Women are acquired by purchase or capture.⁴⁵ Meanwhile the critical question of the potential exchange-value of Penelope is allowed to hang in the balance throughout the poem. Will she go to whoever offers the best gifts, as is often stated? It is unclear who is to receive these gifts, and who—her son, her father, or she herself—will decide on the winner. It is similarly unclear whether the successful suitor can expect to receive in addition the riches of Odysseus’ household, which by rights should go to her son Telemachos, or even rule over Ithaka.⁴⁶

In marked contrast to the *Iliad*, however, the *Odyssey* represents women not merely as objects, but also as participants in gift exchange. Here we find both positive and negative attitudes towards women’s economic contribution and fitness as exchange-partners. Foregrounded in the narrative, women like Arete and Helen give textile gifts in conformance with the gendered code, to no ill effect.⁴⁷ But the *Odyssey* also makes explicit for the first time

the notion that women and gifts are a combination deadly to men. The potential treachery of women in exchange relations is signaled in several passing allusions, which do not tally with the exchange activities of the female characters in the poem. In this way, the poem allows women entry into the network of exchange relations, but not without expressing a certain anxiety about their role.

The sign of this anxiety is a phrase which appears twice, once to explain the treachery of Eriphyle who betrayed her husband for a golden necklace (*Od.* 15.247) and a second time to introduce Astyoche's betrayal of her son for a golden vine (*Od.* 11.521). In each case, betrayal consists of sending the man off to war and certain death.⁴⁸ The phrase γυναικῶν εἵνεκα δῶρων is difficult to translate because of an ambiguity that may by now seem familiar. It can mean "on account of a woman's gifts," "on account of gifts to a woman," or "on account of womanly gifts." As with Pandora, a misogynist tradition interprets ambiguous phrases as passive rather than active, casting women not as givers but as receivers, and with terrible results for men.

The association of women, gifts, and danger suggested here is a mythic staple, to be played out in full in tragic drama, but to make sense of it we will first need to consider how the gender of both persons and objects shapes the protocols of exchange.

THE GENDERED NATURE OF THE GIFT-ECONOMY

The codes governing women's (and men's) economic behavior form part of what one might call the "economics of gender." By this phrase I mean a whole range of relations and transactions conditioned by the different status of men and women. Primary among these transactions is marriage, which provides the context for the production and reproduction that women engage in within the *oikos*. Marriage is not symmetrical—ideologically, functionally, or even linguistically—for the two sexes. When a man marries a woman, he does so in the active voice, while the same transaction places a woman in the middle voice.⁴⁹

Marriage transactions arranged by a woman's male kin almost always involve a complex series of exchanges. Bridewealth and dowry, while the most conspicuous of these, are often accompanied by a range of reciprocal obligations that may last for the duration of the marriage or beyond.⁵⁰ Sometimes the bride herself is regarded as the most valuable of the gifts that change hands between two families connecting themselves through marriage: the verb δίδωμι is regularly used with the meaning "give in marriage."⁵¹ While the woman is sometimes thought of as being given to her husband, he is never thought of as a gift to his wife.

Once integrated into the new household, the wife is expected to bear legitimate children, produce textiles (or oversee their production), and to guard over the husband's possessions. That this does not seem to have changed much over time can be seen from a reading of works as far apart in date as the *Odyssey* and Xenophon's treatise on household management, the *Oeconomicus*.⁵² That the faithful execution of these duties was conceptually intertwined is clear from the words of Odysseus in the Underworld, when he asks Teiresias if his wife still remains

safe with their son and watches over his possessions (*Od.* 11.178-79). Penelope herself repeats this formulation at 19.525-27, where she describes herself as “keeping everything (i.e. the household goods) safe” and “honoring the marital bed.”⁵³ In Semonides’ misogynist account of the races of women, the only good kind of woman he allows is the “bee-woman” who “causes [a man’s] property to grow and increase” and “gives birth to beautiful children of good repute.”⁵⁴ A fragment from Euripides’ lost *Melanippê Desmotês* says, “Women manage homes and preserve the goods which are brought from abroad. Houses where there is no wife are neither orderly nor prosperous.”⁵⁵ Xenophon, writing in the early to mid-fourth century, similarly represents Ischomachos as setting great store by training his inexperienced young wife to keep all the possessions of the household in order.⁵⁶ Similarly, the speaker of the oration *Against Neaira* in the Demosthenic corpus ([Dem.] 59.122) says that the function of wives (*gunaiikes*) is “to bear us legitimate children and to be the faithful guardians of our households.”

A more detailed parallel is provided by Lysias’ oration *On the Murder of Eratosthenes*. Here the defendant Euphiletos says that early in his marriage he watched his wife rather closely, but once she had born him a son he began to trust her more with the management of the household. “But 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. It is true that in the early days, Athenians, she was the most excellent of wives; she was a clever, frugal housekeeper, and kept everything in the nicest order.” Alas, the trust he placed in her merely provided her with the opportunity to take a lover.⁵⁷

The connection between offspring and possessions is not fortuitous. In a society that reckons descent through the male line, it is of the utmost importance that heirs be the legitimate sons of their mother’s husband.⁵⁸ By taking a lover, a woman risks interfering with succession, potentially transferring her husband’s goods to the descendant of another lineage.⁵⁹ This anxiety about legitimacy, repeated in many ways in Greek literature, finds expression also in the notion that the unfaithful wife may hand over, in addition to her own person, the keys to the storeroom. In fact, the speaker of Lysias 1 argues that a seducer is traditionally judged more harshly than a rapist, for the rapist has presumably given in to a sudden passion, while the seducer has gained the confidence of the wife, and with it, access to “the whole house,” i.e. the husband’s stores and possessions, as well as causing confusion about the paternity of the children. This claim is clearly a rhetorical exaggeration, but nonetheless, the idea was presumably one that might sound plausible to a jury.⁶⁰ These ideas, current in late fifth- and early fourth-century Athens, can already be found in the earliest Greek texts we have, and figure prominently in the myths and tragic dramas to which we will return.

While the integrity of the household wealth was seen as bound up in the wife’s fidelity to her husband, her own economic power was limited in a variety of ways. In Athens, women did not own property and supposedly could not contractually carry out any other than the smallest financial transactions without the aid of the male relative acting as their *kyrios*, although as Hunter, Foxhall, and others have recently pointed out, they may well have exercised some considerable economic power in the context of the *oikos*.⁶¹ The existence of the “law of the medimnus,” according to which women could not transact more than the amount needed to buy a measure of grain large enough to feed a family for a week, has also recently come under question

as an ideological construct.⁶²

In the pre-monetary world of the heroes and heroines, restrictions on women's economic power express themselves quite differently. Here, the issue is the nature of the objects that women may give and receive. Cross-culturally, access to goods and the freedom to dispose of them are at least partially related to production. As the anthropologist Ernestine Friedl has observed, "[t]hose who work to produce goods have a greater chance to be assigned the control of distributing them, but do not automatically gain the right to do so." She proposes that "it is the right to distribute and exchange valued goods and services to those not in a person's own domestic unit (extradomestic distribution) which confers power and prestige in all societies."⁶³ I would add that the greater the prestige of the objects produced and controlled, the greater the power conferred. Although cloth could at times achieve the status of a precious object, for the most part—when not further embellished—it occupies a more humble place.⁶⁴

In the literary record, a strict division of labor along gender lines prevails, according to which textile production—carding, spinning, and weaving—is women's work. This production of textiles is closely related to women's role as providers for the needs of the household. The absolute division of labor by gender is not entirely paralleled in the historical record, which shows that "industrial" textile production, such as the making of canvas for sails, was carried on by men.⁶⁵ By the same token, women may at times have had some part in other kinds of manufacture. The fact remains, however, that over the centuries, from Helen in the *Iliad* to the women on fifth-century vases, the one productive activity consistently associated with women, and especially with the aristocratic wives of myth and epic, is weaving.⁶⁶ Consequently, the few unmarked (and unremarkable) transactions in which mythic women take part are those in which they give gifts of cloth.⁶⁷ In the *Odyssey*, women and goddesses are shown frequently giving cloth and garments to Odysseus and to his son, and these gifts appear benign.⁶⁸ Although cloth, as a feminine—and domestic—product, can be given by women without constituting a scandal, not all gifts of cloth by women are "safe." (We will turn later to instances in which women when wronged use cloth to fight back.⁶⁹) On the other hand, women's access to *agalmata*, objects usually made of precious metals, bronze and gold, would normally be extremely limited.⁷⁰ Men, however, frequently exchange metal objects, for the most part without baneful consequences.⁷¹ Since men generally also control the labor of women and its products, there is no taboo on male gifts of textiles, although these are less common.⁷²

Because of the division of labor, the production of textiles and metals is distinctly gender-coded. As Ian Jenkins succinctly puts it, "Weaving in ancient Greece was a feminine art, while metalworking was a male preserve. This is true in the divine realm as well as in the mortal world..."⁷³ Athena Ergane is patron of crafts, especially weaving, although she also takes an interest in pottery and sculpture, while the arts of metallurgy are the realm of Hephaistos. Interestingly, among the gods we find a "class" division which is inflected by gender just as it is among mortals. While many of the goddesses are shown at the loom, indeed the only god ever to undertake the "banal" activity of metalworking is Hephaistos, who is stigmatized both as a cripple and a cuckold, and thus relegated to a lower status among the male gods of Olympus. While the sources discussed here, ranging from early epic to classical orators, show women of all classes engaged in textile production, we see very little metalwork going on at all, aside from the

activities of Hephaistos on Olympos. Unlike Helen or Penelope, who are shown at their looms, few epic or tragic heroes and few Athenian citizens are seen putting a hand to any kind of production.⁷⁴ Gernet speaks of the “industrial production” of *agalmata* as the work of specialists.⁷⁵ It seems that a separate work ethic existed for men and women of the aristocratic class.⁷⁶

Sally Humphreys makes a direct connection between textiles and women’s power: “Myths in which textiles play a prominent role seem to represent women in a position of power— fittingly enough, since weaving was the activity through which they autonomously produced wealth for the household.”⁷⁷ The correspondence between production and the freedom to dispose is not, however, altogether simple. We recall that in Friedl’s formulation, while the ability to dispose of prestige objects confers prestige, this ability is not automatically assigned to the producers. While the code of exchange is represented as working along lines of gender rather than class, this obscures the fact that women’s domestic production is taken for granted at all levels of the social hierarchy. (Equally obscured is the alienation of labor in the case of slaves and women of lower status.) Ultimately, the centrality of the male/female divide to the binarism so prevalent in Greek mythic thinking leads to a mapping of gender onto the division of labor, even in contexts where this may not reflect social realities. As textiles occupy a lower place in the hierarchy of values, they are consistently associated with women (even if historical evidence shows that not all textile producers were female). Within the logic of this system, then, textiles are shown as freely controlled by women, usually aristocratic ones.⁷⁸

In this way, it becomes clear that the wealth associated with women is generally of a lower rank than that associated with men. In many cultures we find that certain objects, usually endowed with high ritual significance, are characterized as men’s wealth. Items classified as women’s wealth may also be ritually important, but more often they are quotidian items such as clothing. The widespread connection of women with the production of textiles is well known, as is the complementary association of men with metal- and stone-working.⁷⁹ (The association of women and textiles is so widely generalized that Sigmund Freud in his 1932 lecture on “Femininity” went so far as to suggest that the invention of weaving was women’s sole contribution to the history of civilization.⁸⁰) Although the nature of male wealth changes from one society to another, the dichotomy between hard male wealth and soft female wealth is widespread if not quite universal.⁸¹ This same dichotomy underwrites the codes of cloth and metal that govern gift-giving in Greek myth.⁸²

A scene in Book 15 of the *Odyssey*, in which Helen and Menelaos select guest-gifts for Telemachus, neatly illustrates the complementarity of textiles and metals:

ἀλλ’ ὅτε δὴ ῥ’ ἴκανον ὅθι κειμήλια κείτο,
Ἄτρείδες μὲν ἔπειτα δέπας λάβεν ἀμφικύπελλον,
υἷον δὲ κρητῆρα φέρειν Μεγαπένθε’ ἄνωγεν
ἀργύρεον Ἐλένη δὲ παρίστατο φωριαμοῖσιν,
ἔνθ’ ἔσαν οἱ πέπλοι παμπούκλιοι, οὓς κάμεν αὐτή.
τῶν ἔν’ ἀειραμένη Ἐλένη φέρε, δῖα γυναικῶν,

ὄς κάλλιστος ἔην ποικίλμασιν ἠδὲ μέγιστος,
ἀστὴρ δ' ὡς ἀπέλαμπεν· ἔκειτο δὲ νείατος ἄλλων.

But when they came to the place where the treasure was stored,
the son of Atreus took a two-handled cup
and told his son Megapenthes to take a mixing bowl
of silver. Helen went to the chests, which held
beautifully adorned robes that she herself had made.
And choosing from among them, Helen, brightest of women
picked the most beautifully adorned and largest.
It shone like a star from the bottom of the pile.

Od. 15.101-108

Helen's gift of a *peplos* is the counterpart to the metal gifts given by her husband and stepson. Note that while Helen is explicitly said to have made the textile she offers Telemachos, the producer of the metallic gifts is not mentioned, and is certainly not the same as the royal giver.⁸³ For the *peplos*, Helen foresees a future as treasure (*keimêlion*), lying (*keîsthai*) in a chest until the day when it will once again serve as a gift (*dôron*):

...Ἐλένη δὲ παρίστατο καλλιπάρης
πέπλον ἔχουσ' ἐν χερσίν, ἔπος τ' ἔφατ' ἐκ τ' ὀνόμαζε·
“δῶρόν τοι καὶ ἐγώ, τέκνον φίλε, τοῦτο δίδωμι,
μνημ' Ἐλένης χειρῶν, πολυηράτου ἐς γάμου ὥρην,
σῆ ἀλόχῳ φορέειν· τῆος δὲ φίλη παρὰ μητρὶ
κεῖσθαι ἐνὶ μεγάρῳ. σὺ δέ μοι χαίρων ἀφίκαιο
οἶκον εὐκτίμενον καὶ σὴν ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν.”

...Beautiful Helen approached with the robe
in her hands. She addressed him with these words:
“I too give you this as a gift, dear child,
a remembrance of the hands of Helen, for your wife to wear
on your much-desired wedding day. Until then, let it lie
in the hall in the care of your mother. And I wish you
a happy return to your well-built house and native land.”

Od. 15.123-29

GENDERED CODES OF EXCHANGE IN GREEK MYTH

Any discussion of the economy of the gift in ancient Greek culture must take into account Louis Gernet's fundamental article on the “mythic idea of value” in ancient Greece.⁸⁴ This essay

centers on the concept of *agalмата*, artfully wrought objects such as tripods, weapons, or jewelry, which in a pre-monetary economy carried not only economic and social value, but also, in a line of thought going back to Marcel Mauss, a kind of sacred charge. Originally, an *agalma* indicated simply an adornment or precious object, although it later came to mean a statue, particularly that of a god.⁸⁵ While these precious objects correspond to the high rank of the transactional orders discussed above, for our purposes it is also worth considering their status at times as inalienable wealth. If we consider them as such, the disastrous consequences of their alienation in some of the following examples will perhaps become clearer.

The mythic examples used by Gernet to elucidate the meaning and power of *agalмата*, such as the tripod of the Seven Sages, the necklace of Eriphyle, and the lamb with the golden fleece, are prestige objects with long and complex genealogies. While he was primarily interested in the circulation of *agalмата*, I propose to use these same examples to demonstrate the importance of women for that circulation. Gernet himself noticed “the significance of the theme of the woman’s role in the transfer of a talisman or other precious object from one person to another,” but he confined this observation to a brief mention in a footnote.⁸⁶

In fact, the pattern is even more striking than Gernet seems to have noticed. I will argue that the circulation of these precious objects is intimately connected with the circulation of women, and in some cases only becomes possible when women themselves circulate. For in these myths, as in many others, a disruption or crisis in marriage relations allows women to transcend their usual role as *objects* of exchange, becoming instead *agents* of exchange. The myths locate fears about women’s role in exchange within the context of marriage, or rather its failure, showing how deeply these fears are entwined with anxiety about women’s fidelity. The exchanging woman is assimilated to the adulterous woman (or occasionally the scorned and vengeful wife). Her involvement in the circulation of objects is tied to the potential for illicit circulation of her own person. As if to demonstrate women’s fundamental inability to act as legitimate exchange-partners, these myths play out against a backdrop of perverted reciprocity characterized by the violation of established codes governing the economic and social spheres of women and men.

In some of these myths, the motif of the wife’s seduction is explicit, as in the case of the lamb with the golden fleece, a symbol and guarantor of sovereignty. When the brothers Thyestes and Atreus are engaged in a fight over the throne, Thyestes gains his advantage, and possession of the magic lamb, by seducing Atreus’ wife, Aerope.⁸⁷ Here once again we find the notion that the faithless wife gives her lover access to the property of her husband. In this case, however, it is no ordinary property, but control of the kingdom. As in the *Odyssey*, there is a nod to the motif of kingship acquired through possession of the king’s wife.⁸⁸

The necklace of Eriphyle illustrates what Marcel Mauss called the “coercive power of the gift.”⁸⁹ The expedition of the Seven against Thebes requires the participation of Eriphyle’s husband Amphiaros if their attack on the city is to be successful, but as a *mantis*, he knows that all who take part are fated to die. In order to compel him to take part, they give a gift, or bribe (the word *dōron* covers both meanings), to his wife—a golden necklace that was originally a gift from the gods to Harmonia on the occasion of her marriage to Kadmos. Seduced by this gift, Eriphyle betrays her husband in favor of her brother Adrastus, who will head the expedition. Her power to determine her husband’s participation is the result of a prior agreement that she would

adjudicate any disagreement between her husband and brother. Thus her actual perfidy consists in her choosing to privilege her brother's interests over those of her husband, rather than in an act of physical infidelity.⁹⁰

Although it is not an explicitly sexual seduction, the bribing of Eriphyle is accomplished by means of a traditional seduction strategy, the gift of gold. It functions similarly in the myth, leading as surely to the downfall of her husband as any sexual seduction. At the same time, by stripping away the familiar erotic motif, it throws into relief the danger inherent in the gifts themselves.⁹¹ We find a more explicitly sexual seduction in an obscure account in Apollodoros, where the heroine Prokris, although married, was seduced by means of a golden crown.⁹² Certainly, jewelry was intended to be owned by women, and their control of it is not inherently problematic.⁹³ The technical term for the personal items that a woman brings with her to a marriage is *himatia kai chrysia*, robes and gold jewelry.⁹⁴ What is problematic, however, is when women accept gifts of jewelry from outside the familial context, from men who are not husbands or kin.⁹⁵ The contexts in which it does occur, as when Penelope shows herself to the suitors in *Odyssey* 18, are those in which the fear, if not the reality, of female infidelity looms.⁹⁶

This interpretation of the bribing of Eriphyle as a variant of sexual seduction is confirmed by another kind of evidence. Several Athenian vases from the second half of the fifth century depict the scene between Eriphyle and Polyneikes in ways that are remarkably similar to contemporary depictions of erotic courtship.⁹⁷ On these vases, a standing Polyneikes dangles a necklace in front of the seated Eriphyle. These scenes are quite similar to many traditionally identified as "Hetaira with Customer," in their focus on the hands of the man extending a gift and the woman reaching out to take it.⁹⁸ Although details of the interpretation of these vases have been hotly debated, it is nonetheless clear that these scenes depict an erotic courtship in which gifts change hands.⁹⁹

In two of the scenes representing Eriphyle, the male figure holds a chest or basket from which he extracts the necklace. This detail is striking because in nearly all other scenes in vase-painting in which a similar chest appears, it is held either by the matron herself or by her maid. In fact, this would become a common iconographic detail on Athenian funerary stelai of the fourth century. The rare appearance of a man holding the chest, an object so thoroughly associated with women, and invading a space marked off as female, reinforces the suggestion of seduction.¹⁰⁰ The congruence of these scenes, therefore, suggests that the persuasion directed at Eriphyle and her responding complicity could be conceptualized as seduction and adultery.¹⁰¹ (Not only is Eriphyle's betrayal analogous to adultery, she meets with the same retribution as Klytemnestra, death at the hands of her son to avenge his father.)

The third of our mythic objects, the tripod of the Seven Sages, although clearly marked as male wealth, nevertheless has particular resonance for the theme of the circulation of women. This tripod, destined for "the wisest," was given to Thales, who modestly passed it along to another sage, who in turn passed it along to another, and so on, until it came back to Thales. He in turn dedicated it to the god Apollo (Diogenes Laertius 1.28-29).¹⁰² The earlier circulation of this tripod, according to one version originally made by Hephaistos as a wedding present for Pelops, turns out to be linked to the circulation of Helen. It was among the possessions stolen by

Paris from Menelaos' house when he abducted Helen, and according to Diogenes Laertius, she threw it into the sea, for she said it would be a cause of strife (*perimachêtos*, 1.32). Although Diogenes' account emphasizes the peaceful circulation of the tripod from one sage to another until it had come full circle, the Helen of Diogenes' account sees in it a cause of strife, as it was soon to be.¹⁰³ In her description of the object as *perimachêtos*, Diogenes suggests a certain affinity between the object and the woman who will soon be the cause of strife. Her abduction will soon provoke the Trojan War, and like the tripod, she herself will come full circle, having been passed from hand to hand until she is returned to her husband Menelaos.¹⁰⁴

A visual analogue for the circulation of Helen is provided by a skyphos by Makron.¹⁰⁵ This skyphos is unusual in depicting the abduction and the return of Helen on two sides of the same vase.¹⁰⁶ On one side is Paris' abduction of Helen, with Aphrodite and Peitho (Persuasion) attending the bride (fig. 1). On the other side is her reclamation by Menelaos (fig. 2). He draws his sword intending to attack her, but is restrained by desire, represented again by Aphrodite and her entourage. Makron's composition emphasizes continuity, linking two critical episodes in Helen's life by means of the power of the goddess Aphrodite.¹⁰⁷ Several features of the vase decoration reinforce the idea of the circulation of Helen.¹⁰⁸ The two scenes seem almost to flow into one another, without any framing devices that might isolate them.¹⁰⁹ Under the handles additional figures fill out the gap between the two scenes. Depending on which side the drinker preferred to have facing him, those viewing the cup would see either a scene of seduction or one that emphasized the husband's authority, although even the seduction is presented in terms of traditional wedding iconography. Finally, the two handles on the skyphos suggest a correspondence between the very form of the vase, one that could be passed hand to hand, and the theme depicted on its sides. Thus the symposiast would reproduce the circulation from man to man of the figure of Helen as depicted on the vase itself, in a gesture that mimics the circulation of the tripod of the Seven Sages in the text of Diogenes Laertius.

In these myths, three precious objects, all in some way metallic, change hands through the fickleness of women. Aerope's infidelity, like that of the Athenian housewife, gives her lover access to her husband's wealth, in this case the golden lamb that signals kingship. In an episode with overtones of a seduction, Eriphyle accepts a golden necklace from a man not her husband. In the case of Helen, the tripod is only one of the precious objects (the *ktêmata* repeatedly mentioned in the *Iliad*) that Paris steals along with her. Theft of the lamb is the motive for the seduction of Aerope, while the theft of objects from Menelaos merely adds further insult to the abduction of Helen. All of these metal objects have as their normal condition that they are controlled by men. Women's inconstancy puts the objects, as well as the women, into circulation. Before long, however, both women and objects generally find themselves back in the hands of men, although not the same ones as before.

The most remarkable of these circulating objects is the lamb with the golden fleece, a prodigious creature that combines within itself two kinds of wealth distinguished in Greek: *keimêlia* and *probata/probasis*: that which is stored away inside, like precious metals, and that which wanders around outside on the hoof ("la richesse qui marche," in the words of Émile Benveniste).¹¹⁰ Like a *keimêlion*, the woman remains for the most part within the house, while the man (although not her aristocratic male counterpart) wanders the countryside in the company

of the herd. There is even more to say about the spatial disposition of these two kinds of wealth, which stand in a sort of chiasmic relation to one another. For the animal that wanders outside in the male domain is the source of the raw material for the domestic production of textile wealth by women, while the golden lamb kept hidden inside the house, like the wife, may be counted as male wealth, like the precious vessels from which Menelaos chooses a *xeneion* for Telemachos.

Not all stored wealth is male wealth. Once the raw wool is converted to cloth it may either become an object of daily use or it may be laid up (*keisthai*) in a chest and treated as a precious object, a *keimêlion*. Even when treated as a *keimêlion*, however, cloth remains largely at the disposal of women, as in the passage from *Odyssey* 15 cited above. Atreus' lamb partakes, at least as raw material, of both metal and textile, which is to say, both male and female, wealth. The golden animal, however, unlike its more ordinary fellows, is hidden in the house as if it were a precious but inanimate object (or a woman). The complexities of these overlapping categories indicate a difficulty in the use of terms such as domestic and extra-domestic or inside and outside, when speaking of male and female wealth. If the inside of the house is marked as female territory, and the site of the production of female wealth, this does not mean that all the valuables stored within it are counted as female. A case might even be made that according to this schema, women—kept safely inside except when circulated between men—are the ultimate form of male wealth.¹¹¹

In all these examples, the gendered dichotomy between metal and textile functions as expected. Women enter into exchanges involving cloth with no obvious ill effects, although when metal objects change hands in transactions with men, disaster ensues.¹¹² In these cases, as in the Homeric context, exchange involving women is baneful or benign depending on whether or not the gendered protocol of exchange is respected. Tragic exchange, however, is almost always destructive. The tragedians seem to hark back to the pessimism of Hesiod: all the *erga gunaikôn*, and particularly cloth—in this genre explicitly linked to women's malign sexuality—can be dangerous. In fact, horrific episodes from the myths of Herakles and Medea suggest that when textiles are used destructively they are even more deadly in women's hands than precious metal objects.

In contrast to the raw misogyny of the Hesiodic accounts, however, the tragedians go to some lengths to show that these disastrous exchanges are not always the fault of women, and that they take place in an atmosphere of marital breakdown and perverted reciprocity. Sophokles has Deianeira destroy her husband in all innocence, believing that she is using a love potion which will restore her to his affections. Euripides' *Medea*, on the other hand, sends a poisoned robe and crown as wedding presents for her husband Jason's new bride in full knowledge of their deadly qualities.¹¹³ (That she makes use of both textile and metal, male and female elements, points not only to her transgressive nature, but also to the degree to which that transgressive nature is encoded as a violation of gendered norms. As we shall see, a similar technique is employed by Aischylos in his depiction of Klytemnestra.) Once again, moreover, in the texts to which we now turn, the context for the deadly exchange is a crisis in a marriage relationship. It is at such moments of crisis that the usual reciprocity between husband and wife fails, setting up the possibility of what Marshall Sahlins has called "negative reciprocity"—theft, violence, and other violations of expected norms.¹¹⁴

PERVERTED EXCHANGE PROTOCOLS IN THE *ORESTEIA* AND THE *TRACHINIAI*

We have already discussed the relationship between adultery and the alienation of property, as presented in myth and in oratory. It is in tragedy, however, that this theme finds its most complete expression. To quote Patterson, “In the work of the Athenian playwrights, we can witness the tragic paradigm of adultery represented as a complex crime of betrayal which corrupts the entire household and its relations of person to person and person to property.”¹¹⁵ In tragedy, moreover, the pattern of destructive gift-giving can be directly connected with the overturning of the gendered codes of which I have been speaking. I now turn in this final section to an analysis of two such examples, from Aischylos’ *Agamemnon* and Sophokles’ *Trachiniai*. I begin with the *Agamemnon*, in which textiles, both metaphoric and literalized on the stage, play a central role in a violent overturning not only of the gendered code of gifts, but even of the traditional gendered division of labor.¹¹⁶

THE AGAMEMNON

Before the arrival of Agamemnon, Klytemnestra proclaims her faithfulness to her husband by claiming to know as little about infidelity as she does about “the dipping (or dyeing) of bronze” (*chalkou baphas*, 612). This opaque phrase has given rise to various attempts to understand the exact technological process described, and most have assumed either tempering or some other technique associated with the making of weapons.¹¹⁷ Having failed to clarify the exact nature of the process, critics have tended to content themselves with the observation that metalworking was indeed far from the normal expertise of a woman, even one as formidable as Klytemnestra.¹¹⁸

The noun βάρη and the related verb βάπτω are used both to refer to the tempering of metal (usually for making weapons) and the dyeing of cloth. Thus the root contains within it a microcosm of male and female wealth, men’s and women’s pursuits. A third, more metaphorical meaning, of staining a blade with blood, brings together the ideas of weapons and changing color. The exact nature of the metallurgical process described here is not the point. Klytemnestra may be referring (accurately or not) to processes of which a woman would have little direct knowledge. At the same time, the use of a word associated with textiles seems deliberately to invoke the idea of imbuing with color. Already at line 239 this connection is made in the phrase *krokou baphas*, describing the saffron-dyed garments of Iphigeneia, while the context—a description of her sacrifice—hints at the larger complex of meanings.¹¹⁹ Indeed, later in the trilogy, all the meanings of *baptô* will be brought together explicitly.¹²⁰ In the *Choephoroi*, 1010-11, Orestes holds up a garment, “dyed by the sword of Aegisthos,” proclaiming it as a witness against his mother.¹²¹ Thus the confusion of codes is worked into the very language of the drama itself. Klytemnestra, the man-minded (*androboulon*, Ag. 11), speaks of a male art, but in such a way as to invoke its female equivalent while at the same time hinting at the darker meaning that will become apparent when her weapon is dipped in Agamemnon’s blood. The connection with textiles will be reinforced later in the play, when Klytemnestra in the context of

the so-called carpet scene again uses the word in the phrase *heimatôn baphas* (960): “dyeings of clothing.” Ultimately, the murder itself will further this conflation, when Klytemnestra reverses the gendered terms yet again by turning a garment, the robe without armholes, into a murder weapon.¹²²

On his return from Troy, Klytemnestra insists that Agamemnon tread the crimson cloth.¹²³ In the end, her appeals to his vanity win out, but Agamemnon at first resists for fear of committing hubris and offending the gods.¹²⁴ He expresses the conflict between them in gendered terms, seeing the offer of the red cloth as an attempt to feminize him: “Do not spoil me according to the ways of women” (918ff.), and accusing her of unwomanly behavior—“Surely this desire for conflict does not befit a woman” (940).¹²⁵ The unspoken source of conflict is Klytemnestra’s unwillingness to relinquish the control over the house which she has held during his ten-year absence. As Taplin has observed, Klytemnestra, as the “watchdog of the house” (607), controls the threshold, only allowing Agamemnon access under her conditions.¹²⁶ This struggle for command of the *oikos*, as will become clear, is a prelude to the struggle over the life of Agamemnon.

The cloth, originally within her purview as wife, seems no longer to belong entirely to the category of female wealth.¹²⁷ By virtue of being dyed a royal crimson, it has become an *agalma* in Gernet’s terms, a royally, and even sacrally, charged object.¹²⁸ As Morrell observes, Agamemnon’s phrase “weavings bought with silver” (*argurônêtous*, 949) “places the garments in the context of the extra-domestic economy.”¹²⁹ But Klytemnestra counters, attempting to allay Agamemnon’s anxiety and to reassert her jurisdiction over the object by stressing the inexhaustible riches of the house and equating them with the riches of the sea, source of the purple murex dye: “There is the sea, and who can drain it dry?” she asks. She speaks of the sea not as a medium of trade, as her husband has done, but as a bountiful force of nature. By thus appealing to the sea as a source of riches, she allies herself with the outside, the world of men and their wealth, rather than the inside, site of female domestic production. At the same time, by invoking the treasures of the *oikos*, she reasserts her claim, which she has made unceasingly from the moment of Agamemnon’s arrival, to the role of good housewife, and stresses her faithfulness, as evidenced by the continued good order of the household. But her own reference to the purple dye as “worth its weight in silver” (*isarguron*, 959), gives the game away, as this external standard of value undermines her appeals to the self-sufficiency of Agamemnon’s *oikos*.¹³⁰

In fact, her claims about the good order of the household are disingenuous. Despite her claim not to have broken the seal (*sêmantêrion*, 609) during Agamemnon’s absence, she has in fact allowed another man access to herself and by extension to the household wealth.¹³¹ As an unfaithful wife, she is not a good housewife, but is preparing to be as profligate with her husband’s blood as she is with the crimson cloth.¹³² Disposing of the cloths as she wishes is the sign of her infidelity, rather than an honor she bestows on her victorious husband. Ultimately, the murder of Agamemnon in the bath involves another ambiguous use of textiles, as Klytemnestra throws a robe over her husband which has no holes for arms or head. As he struggles to emerge from the impossible garment, the deathblow is struck. These two pieces of textile link the dramatic actions of the plot with the *leitmotif* of binding and trapping metaphors that runs

throughout the trilogy.¹³³ A gift that is no gift, a garment that is no garment, a bath in his own blood—by means of these perversions of the woman’s role, the unfaithful wife destroys her husband.¹³⁴

Klytemnestra’s transgressions go yet a step further. Having turned traditional womanly arts to deadly new uses, she now turns to the manly ones. Displaying the corpse of Agamemnon, she exults, “this is the work of my right hand, a just workman” (οὗτός ἐστιν Ἀγαμέμνων, ἐμὸς / πόσις, νεκρὸς δέ, τῆσδε δεξιᾶς χερὸς / ἔργον, δικαίας τέκτονος, 1404-1406). Here a woman’s *erga* take on their most sinister meaning yet. Klytemnestra points to the body of her murdered husband as her *ergon*, and calls her own hand a *tektôn*, a worker in wood, but also by extension any craftsman. This word only rarely appears as feminine, and by applying it to her hand in this way she attributes to herself masculine prowess in a masculine art.¹³⁵ By describing her action in terms that suggest a more mundane transgression of the norms of gender, she calls attention to her divergence from standards of female behavior. No longer does she proclaim her ignorance of masculine arts, as when she claimed to know nothing of “dyeing bronze.” This speech is the perfect counterweight to that earlier one, for not only does she now claim to be a good workman, but she has demonstrated, in the end, ample knowledge of “dyeing bronze”—in the blood of Agamemnon.

But her action has gone far beyond mere violation of the gendered division of labor, for this “making” is not the productive exercise of a craft but the slaughter of her own husband. Indeed, killing is man’s work, and Klytemnestra the man-minded is the rare woman in Greek tragedy who wields an ax. That however does not begin to approach the horror of the spectacle of a husband-murdering wife. That this heinous deed should be described using the language of craft further emphasizes the perversion of the gendered protocols of labor and exchange. No longer simply the weavings with which women clothe the members of their households, the *erga* of Klytemnestra are both the cloth used to ensnare Agamemnon and the corpse she has made of him. From productive contribution to the household, to vague sexual threat, to utter ruin—here is a sinister devolution of the notion of women’s work.

TRACHINIAI

If the language cleverly manipulated by Klytemnestra in the *Agamemnon* bespeaks a deliberately perverted gift-economy, that of the *Trachiniai* presents destructive exchanges unwittingly enacted by characters in the grips of erotic desire and jealousy.¹³⁶ The central female figure, Herakles’ wife Deianeira, presents an interesting foil to Klytemnestra, for her destructive act, also marked by the arrival of a new woman in the house, arises out of her love for her husband—and her own inability to recognize the fierceness of her jealousy and desire when faced with a rival. As Segal puts it, “It is an essential part of Deianeira’s tragedy that she is by nature more a Penelope than a Clytaemnestra but is drawn into the destructive pattern against her will.”¹³⁷ Although she recognizes that by bringing a concubine into the house her husband offers a poor reward for her steadfastness, she is represented as too innocent, perhaps willfully so, to recognize the potentially destructive power of her own jealous desire. Despite the very different motivations of the two figures, the weapons remain much the same, as changes are rung

on the usual gendered patterns of exchange.¹³⁸

Deianeira, upon receiving her husband's new lover into her house, in a scene that is clearly modeled on Klytemnestra's reception of Cassandra in Aischylos, complains that this is a poor recompense for her years of devotion to him.¹³⁹ The word she uses for recompense, *oikouria* [sc. *dôra*], indicates the "housewife's payment" or "gift in return for services" (542). She has just described the situation in language that calls to mind the housewifely duty to clothe the members of the household. "We are," she says, "two women waiting under a single cloak for a single embrace" (καὶ νῦν δὺ' οὔσαι μίμνομεν μιᾶς ὑπὸ / χλαίνης ὑπαγκάλισμα, 539-40). The image of two people under a single cloak or blanket, conventionally used of harmonious lovers, is here used to show that something is very wrong in the domestic economy of Herakles' household.¹⁴⁰ It is he who imposes a distortion of the marriage arrangement, an inappropriate gift which Deianeira, for all her innocence, nevertheless sees as a perversion of the reciprocity expected between husband and wife. Her response to this situation is also couched in the language of gift exchange.¹⁴¹ She tells Lichas that she will give him gifts to take back to his master in exchange for what he has given her: *anti dôrôn dôra* (494). The metaphor of the cloak will now be transmuted to real textile, as Deianeira translates the usual domestic duties into an enactment of reciprocity. "It is not right for you to leave empty-handed, having come so well provided" (σὺν πολλῶ στόλῳ, 496). As Wohl has noted, she speaks as though Iole had been given to her as a present, and the use of *stolos* with its multiple meanings ("equipment, fleet, army, etc.") is well suited to the elision of persons and things.¹⁴² She introduces her plan to use the "love potion" by saying, ἦν μοι παλαιὸν δῶρον ἀρχαίου ποτέ / θηρός, λέβητι χαλκέῳ κεκρυμμένον (555-56). ("I have had now for a long time a gift of an ancient beast, hidden in a bronze urn.") While keeping is a woman's proper role, the metal container is a signal that something is wrong. The dying centaur Nessos directed her to take some of his blood mixed with poison from the arrow that killed him and to save it for use as a love potion should Herakles ever turn to another woman.¹⁴³ Merely accepting a gift from Nessos is a violation of the norm, that a woman should not accept gifts from a man who is neither kin nor spouse. The full implications of this transgression are played out explicitly in Apollodoros' version (2.7.6) in which the substance contains the Centaur's semen.

"I dipped (or dyed) the cloak" (χιτῶνα τόνδ' ἔβαψα, 580), she reports to the chorus, using the same word, *baptô*, which played such a prominent role in the *Agamemnon* scene.¹⁴⁴ Although the Centaur died at the hand of Herakles, who killed him for attempting to rape Deianeira, it does not occur to her until it is too late that the Centaur's gift could in fact be a treacherous one. We however have been alerted to this possibility a few lines before (μελαγχόλους / ἔβαψεν ἰοὺς θρέμμα Λερναίας ὕδρας, 573-74), where the mention of the Lernaean hydra must arouse the suspicions of the audience, if not the speaker.

Unlike Klytemnestra, whose claims to know nothing of dishonorable behavior are expressed in the indicative, Deianeira expresses a wish in the optative: "May I know nothing of evil daring nor may I ever learn, for I hate women who dare such things" (κακὰς δὲ τόλμας μήτ' ἐπισταίμην ἐγὼ / μήτ' ἐκμάθοιμι, τὰς τε τολμώσας στυγῶ, 582-83). Her fear of wrongdoing mingles with hope of resolving her difficulties, and the chorus reinforces her self-delusion. As she hands over the garment, she stresses both its status as a gift, a *dôrêma* (603),

and its manufacture, calling it a “long and finely woven” robe (*tanaügê peplon*). (That she herself was the weaver is only implicit in these lines.) Moreover, she says, this represents the discharging of a promise that upon hearing of Herakles’ safe return she would send him a new cloak in which he would appear properly arrayed for the thanksgiving sacrifice to the gods.¹⁴⁵ She tells Lichas that her husband will recognize the authenticity of the gift by the impress of her seal (*sêm’ sphragidos*, 614-15). The *sphragis*, which could also be used to seal off a storeroom, recalls the role of the housewife in keeping safe the wealth of the household, while elsewhere sealing is also a metaphor for the wife’s sexual fidelity, as was the *sêmantêrion* for Klytemnestra.

Shortly, the doubts she had tried to shake off are to be confirmed, and the sacrifice will take on a different meaning. She returns to tell the chorus that she has discovered that the bits of wool she had used to anoint the cloak, exposed to the light of the sun, have all shriveled up into nothing. Too late, she reviews the Centaur’s motives, and remembers how according to his instructions the potion has been kept hidden from the light in a bronze container, deep in the recesses of the house, like a *keimêlion*, a precious treasure. This potion and the circumstances both of its concealment and of its discovery as a deadly poison, bring together once again the elements of male and female wealth, as well as the categories of inside and outside discussed above in relation to the golden lamb.

At the same time, the contents of the container and their location suggest female sexual secrets of a potentially threatening nature.¹⁴⁶ The poison is kept hidden in the inmost recesses of the house (*en muchois*, 686), a space that is unmistakably coded as female. A mixture of secretions—the Centaur’s blood and the Hydra’s bile, it contains both male and female elements. Through the trickery of Nessos, the potion combines the destructive power of his long-suppressed and unlawful lust with Deianeira’s own insufficiently recognized desire. The deadly object has been contained—but only so long—in the bronze container, in the possession of a woman. When she releases it, as she must eventually do, a kind of latter-day Pandora releasing the evils for men, it will destroy first the symbol of female domesticity, the tufts of wool, before going on to destroy both woman and man, and then the household, which was to have contained and regulated the wife’s sexuality, if not that of the husband. Once again, as in Hesiod, the *erga gunaikôn*—in this case the woven garment sent to Herakles—become *mermera erga*: the baneful and sexually threatening behavior of women.

As is perhaps in keeping with the more retiring nature of Deianeira, this threat is never confronted head-on by Herakles, who unlike Agamemnon never meets his wife face-to-face within the drama. Nonetheless, the death that fells Herakles is almost a domestic one. He dies not in the manly way, by the sword, but rather by the use of a potion or poison, a feminine weapon, and by means of a feminine delivery system, the robe woven by his wife’s own hand. After facing so many far-off dangers, he dies in sight of his own home. It is hard to imagine a greater violation of the code: the manliest of heroes is killed by a woman, and without a sword. His language emphasizes his incredulity at this development, ringing changes on this transgression of gender roles: γυνή δέ, θῆλυς οὔσα κούκ ἀνδρὸς φύσιν, / μόνη με δὴ καθεῖλε φασγάνου δίχα (1062-63). “A woman, being female by nature and not having the nature of a man, a lone woman killed me without a sword.” It does not, perhaps, require a post-Freudian sensibility to hear a phallic complaint in the climactic phrase, *phasganou dicha* (“without a sword”).¹⁴⁷ As he

will soon make explicit, Herakles conceives of his death as an emasculation. In the zero-sum world of masculine competition he inhabits, it is hard for him to conceive suffering such an indignity at the hands of one who lacks the phallus.

Herakles' language also suggests an invocation of the *Agamemnon* model: Deianeira has fastened around him a woven snare, in which he will die (καθῆψεν..., ὑφαντὸν ἀμφίβληστρον ᾧ διόλλυμαι, 1051-52). *Amphiblêstron* is precisely the term used for the garment that ensnares Agamemnon before the fatal blow (*Ag.* 1382; *Choe.* 492). The use of the garment is not only fatal, however, but this feminine weapon also has the effect of feminizing Herakles: he describes himself as crying like a girl (*parthenos*) and says that his suffering makes him a woman.¹⁴⁸

Deianeira's response to her inadvertent murder of her husband is suicide, but in this she violates the codes once more. Just as Herakles' death is figured as a feminization of the hero, Deianeira's death also reverses the expected gender categories. She, the timid retiring wife, chooses a most un-feminine way of killing herself, by the sword (*amphilêgi phasganô*, 930). As Nicole Loraux has shown, the usual method of suicide for women in tragedy is hanging, an ignominious death.¹⁴⁹ At times, the noose is a veil or other article of women's clothing, as in Sophokles' *Antigone*, or when the *Suppliant Maidens* of Aischylos threaten to make use of their sashes to hang themselves.¹⁵⁰ Loraux's analysis of tragic suicide suggests that the gendered code of textile and metal for which I have argued holds even in death and that the few deviations from it that occur are significant. Wohl has used the phrase "transgendered death" to describe the same event.¹⁵¹

Additional details both highlight the metallic code and complicate our reading of it: in order to expose the place where she will strike with the sword, Deianeira must remove a golden pin (*chrusêlatos / ...peronis*, 924-26) that holds her garments together.¹⁵² In this way, not one but two metal objects mark the site of her suicide. Although one is coded as masculine, the other—the clasp or pin—is a traditional female adornment that can be used as a weapon.¹⁵³ Herodotos tells of an episode in which the women of Athens used their brooches to kill the sole survivor of a battle with the Aiginetans. This outrage led the Athenians to decree a change in female dress to eliminate the use of brooches.¹⁵⁴ In Deianeira's death scene, the implement of potential female violence against men is pushed aside to make way for a masculine form of violence visited by a woman on her own person.¹⁵⁵ Here is the sword that was missing in Herakles' outcry at line 1063. Although the perverse exchanges in this play continue, for Deianeira this is the end of the line. Trading the *peplos* for the *phasganos*, she has effected a symbolic exchange between the textile-entwined death of Herakles and her own death by the sword. Deianeira overturns the code to the very end.

Sophokles' treatment of the character of Deianeira shows a complex alternative reality behind the hasty conclusions of her son Hyllos, the passion of whose curses is answered only by his passionate regret when he learns the truth. Some have seen in his precipitous denunciations a reflection of his father's brutality, which will soon be visited upon him.¹⁵⁶ While this works very well structurally with the end of the play, there is no previous hint of brutality in Hyllos' character and, unlike his father, he is shown to be capable of second thoughts. Given this, why should it be so instantly plausible to Hyllos that a wife should cruelly betray her husband? And

not just any wife, but his own mother whom he knows to be his father's loving spouse? Here Hyllos serves temporarily as a mouthpiece for traditional male assumptions about women that transcend any individual experience or prior relationship. Summed up in Agamemnon's diatribes in the Underworld (*Od.* 11.427-34 and 24.199-202), the common misogynist wisdom would keep all wives under suspicion of treachery.

* * * * *

It remains to consider the source of this persistent anxiety about women and exchange and to ask why marriage should so often be the locus of fears about female reciprocity. Jean-Pierre Vernant has pointed out the ambiguous position of the daughter in the family, as both the fixed point at the center of the house, the keeper of the hearth (as embodied in the figure of the goddess Hestia), and the one who must leave in order to enter a new family.¹⁵⁷ This figure functions as a kind of double agent, part of two families, that of her birth and the one she enters by marriage. In this way, she is part of each but belongs fully to neither.¹⁵⁸

What is more, the woman herself does not choose the *oikos* of which she will become a member. Instead, she is given by her father or other male relative, or (and here I am speaking of our mythic examples) acquired by other means by the husband-to-be. Recent writers on both the *Agamemnon* and the *Trachiniai* have stressed the role of both Klytemnestra and Deianeira themselves in these kinds of marriage exchanges.¹⁵⁹ Deianeira's speech about the contest between Herakles and Acheloos makes clear the character's alienated sense of being a prize in a marriage contest, while an alternative version of Klytemnestra's story recounted by Pausanias (2.22.3) makes her a prize that falls to Agamemnon after he has killed her first husband, Tantalus. Such abrupt transitions could only make the transfer of loyalties all the more uncertain.

Even in a situation in which the wife's loyalty is unquestionable, she may be described as an outsider. In Euripides' *Alkestis*, Admetos contrives to hide from his guest Herakles the identity of the woman for whom the household is in mourning. Herakles asks (532) if she is *othneios* (i.e. strange or foreign) or *sungenês*, a relative. Her husband replies that she is a stranger:

—ὄθνεϊός ἢ σοὶ συγγενῆς γεγῶσά τις;
—ὄθνεϊός, ἄλλως δ' ἦν ἀναγκαία δόμοις.

Herakles. Was she a stranger or one of the family?

Admetos. Foreign, but still essential to the house.

Eur. *Alkestis* 531-32

He is technically correct that *Alkestis* is not *sungenês*, since as his wife she is not related to him by blood. Euripides has Herakles use this word instead of the near-synonym *oikeios*, which would include affines, those related by marriage.¹⁶⁰ In his reply, Admetos continues to skirt the issue by using the ambiguous word *anagkaios*, which has a double meaning of "necessary,

essential” and “related by blood.” In this context, however, the second meaning seems to be excluded. The categorization of Alkestis as foreign to the household is used here as a dodge, to allow Admetos to offer Herakles his trademark hospitality. And yet, at the same time, it points to the curious position of a wife in the household. That she is an essential part of the *oikos* seems to occur to her husband only after she is gone.

That the wife’s presence is in any way *constitutive* of the *oikos* does not immediately occur to this husband, since she is conceived as fundamentally external, even extraneous, to it. The desolation he feels at her death suggests the gap that may exist between ideology and human experience. The notion of woman as “resident alien” calls to mind the flower-pot theory of human gestation proposed by Apollo in the *Eumenides*, according to which the mother is not the parent of the child she bears but “a stranger to a stranger” (ξένω ξένη, 660). Here also, the alienated view of women’s role is employed as a legal dodge, and should not be taken as the final word on social relations. Nonetheless, it exemplifies the tendency in Greek thought which we have traced as far back as Hesiod, which links a negative view of female fertility with the idea that woman is external not only to the family, but in origin even to “mankind.” At best she is kind of metic, a resident alien, in the *oikos*; at worst, like Pandora, a sort of robot programmed to create havoc.

The nature of Greek marriages, at least in classical Athens, usually contracted between a very young woman and an older man who may have been unacquainted with each other until the wedding, can have done little to counter this alienation.¹⁶¹ The like-mindedness of Penelope and Odysseus may have been an ideal not often realized. Men’s and women’s lives were lived rather separately from one another, in a way that may have been little conducive to the *homophrosunê* we see at the end of the *Odyssey*.¹⁶² While it is nearly impossible to recover the nature of affective relations in classical Athens, the language of Lysias’ oration is instructive. Marital happiness is expressed by the husband in these terms: “Until then, she had been the best of wives. She was a clever housekeeper and kept everything neat.” The Greek husband married a virtual stranger who might in some ways always remain one, and he relied on her for the continuance of his *oikos*.

At the same time, women could have an economic impact on the *oikos* into which they married, in several ways. Most obviously, the size of the dowry brought by the wife could make the family fortune, just as divorce, which would force a return of the dowry, could break it. The story of Alkibiades physically preventing his wife Hipparete from leaving him ([And.] 4.15; Plut. *Alc.* 8.1-5) has been cited to show how keenly this threat could be felt, although the very same episode suggests that divorce was not an option to which Athenian women could easily have recourse.¹⁶³ Whatever power, economic or moral, was conferred on the wife by the institution of the dowry could last beyond the marriage itself, as we see from Demosthenes’ account of his widowed mother Kleoboule’s efforts to regain the dowry appropriated by an unscrupulous guardian.¹⁶⁴

The dowry brings us back to the question of inalienable wealth, for the dowry is essentially that. In case of divorce it is returned to the woman’s family, and at her death it is inherited by her children. One could argue that like the dowry, women themselves are inalienable, in the sense that they are never completely lost to their lineage. This is another way of expressing the notion that women do not belong to the families into which they marry. Never to be fully possessed by

their husbands, they are nonetheless conceptualized as possessions. This is yet another part of the ambiguity of status that makes them so troublesome as both subjects and objects.

The two divergent receptions of women's economic role, which I have associated, loosely speaking, with the Homeric and Hesiodic traditions, may perhaps represent two different attempts to come to terms with the ambiguous relationship of the wife to the marital *oikos*. One of these, accepting the inherent limitations of the wife's incorporation into the husband's household, would see her as a productive member of the household as long as she remains within the appropriate spheres for female activity. The other, more pessimistic, tradition, seeing the wife as an eternal outsider, would therefore distrust and discount any contributions she might make. We have seen how the gender-coded spheres of production and exchange are closely linked to the control of women's sexuality. The texts which I have identified as belonging to two different traditions do not vary in their concern with these issues, but only in the degree to which they are able to conceptualize women's capacity for productive labor and sexual restraint.

In the myths and texts analyzed here, women are not represented as having on-going economic power. They may occasionally enter into exchange relations, but something of the commodity seems to cling inescapably to them. At the same time, they do not predictably remain *merely* commodities. As they oscillate between commodity and actor, between object and agent of exchange, the anxiety about this unsteady state becomes evident. Women may be tokens of exchange among men to establish relations of kinship or alliance, but they also enter into their own relations with others, relations structured equally by the exchange of gifts.¹⁶⁵ They are not only gifts but also givers.

Women's social and economic role finds its definition in marriage, and thus marriage becomes the site of greatest anxiety about women and exchange. Not coincidentally, it is within marriage that women exert what economic power they do have. Perhaps the greatest source of concern about women, however, is neither their economic power within the *oikos*, nor their oscillation between subject and object, but their ability to make gifts of themselves by making erotic choices that put them temporarily beyond the reach of the patriarchal marriage economy. Such choices have the potential for far-reaching impact on the *oikos*, even to the point of alienating the husband's property from within by inserting an illegitimate child into the lineage. Hence the repeated *topos* of women giving birth to children who do, or do not, resemble their fathers.

The *Agamemnon* points to an even more serious danger to the *oikos*, that of the adulterous wife whose betrayal leads to the murder of the husband and his supplantation by a rival. Klytemnestra's infidelity is underlined by transgressions and even perversions of gender roles, as she uses both cloth and metal to achieve her goal. In the *Trachiniai*, Sophokles has turned this situation on its head to show a man destroyed not by his wife's infidelity but in a sense by his own. But it is the near-circulation of Deianeira in the attempted rape by the centaur Nessos that provides the direct mechanism of Herakles' downfall. Blameless as she is, by entering into exchange relations with an extraneous male, Deianeira ends up as another husband-destroying wife whose violations of the gendered code accompany her own death as well. Whether deliberate or accidental, the deaths caused by these wives take place in a context of distorted reciprocity, in which even the traditional offerings of women become malign.

As I have argued here, the gendered code of exchange, with its implications for the control of women's sexuality, is closely tied to the desire to keep women from establishing economic or

sexual relations beyond the *oikos*. Not only does the division of labor keep women close to, if not inside, the home, but it also has the effect of keeping the means of autonomy out of female hands. (Here, as elsewhere in this article, I speak not of actual social practice but of the ideology surrounding that practice.) These ideological strategies reflect a persistent concern about women as circulating objects. The initial circulation of women makes marriage possible, but the association of women with circulation cannot easily be turned off once it has served its purpose. This is the ambiguity on which marriage is founded, and which casts women as potential Klytemnestras or Helens every one.¹⁶⁶

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¹ Not every gift given by a woman in Greek myth is destructive, nor is every gift given by a man benign. I will have more to say about women's role in benign exchanges, but the gift-giving practices of men are for the most part beyond the scope of this article.

² I leave aside the topic of gifts in political relationships, which is discussed with rather different results by Herman 1987 and Mitchell 1997.

³ See von Reden 1997: 3-4 and throughout; Kurke 1999: 10-11, 14-15 and throughout; but also Morris 1986a, esp. 8-9. For the term, see Parry and Bloch 1989: 23-28. On ranked spheres, see Mauss 1990: 8-10; Weiner 1976, 1992; Godelier 1999: esp. 31-34.

⁴ Errington and Gewertz 1987: 27.

⁵ Especially Weiner 1992, but the tendency goes back to Mauss.

⁶ Mauss 1990: 10. The concept of inalienability cannot be taken too literally. Many inalienable objects are exchanged for purposes of usufruct rather than possession, with the understanding that they will eventually be returned to the lineage from which they came. This is true even of persons: the debt incurred by marriage of a woman into another lineage is considered repaid when her daughter marries back into the maternal lineage.

⁷ Most explicit in Xenophon's *Oeconomicus*. See Vernant 1983 on gendered conceptions of space in ancient Greece. The inside/outside distinction is hardly limited to Greece: see Bourdieu 1970, Cohen 1991. On "sexual and spatial polarities" see Jenkins 1985: 109.

⁸ On the anxieties of exchange, see Parry 1989: 64-93.

⁹ The theme of the "traffic in women" so memorably addressed by Rubin 1975 and later elaborated by Sedgwick 1985, among others, is explored further in the larger project of which the present article is a part.

¹⁰ *Od.* 6.490-93: ἀλλ' εἰς οἶκον ἰοῦσα τὰ σ' αὐτῆς ἔργα κόμιζε, / ἰστόν τ' ἠλακάτην τε, καὶ ἀμφυπόλοισι κέλευε / ἔργον ἐποίχεσθαι· πόλεμος δ' ἄνδρεςσι μελήσει / πᾶσι, μάλιστα δ' ἐμοί, τοὶ Ἰλίῳ ἐγγεγάασιν. On this episode, see Arthur 1981. For a later example, see Paus. 10.30.1: "the daughters of Pandareos received arts fitting for women, from Athena" (ἔργα δὲ γυναιξὶν ἀρμόζοντα ὑπὸ Ἀθηνᾶς διδασχθῆναι).

¹¹ For the distinction between optimism and pessimism in feminist approaches to classics, see Richlin 1993: 272-303. Just 1989: 106ff. uses the same distinction in his discussion of the seclusion issue.

¹² The *Iliad* alone provides numerous examples, beside the obvious one of Helen. Agamemnon attempts to appease Achilles by offering him seven captive women (9.127, 130) and the choice of one of his own daughters in marriage (9.144-47). Briseis (1.275-76) and Chryseis (1.118-20) are awarded to Achilles and Agamemnon as prizes (*gêras*). Among the prizes that Achilles offers at the funeral games of Patroklos are tripods, horses, cauldrons, and women (23.261).

¹³ For the long debate on “Homeric Society” see Snodgrass 1974, Finley 1978, Morris 1986b, Qviller 1981, Geddes 1984, and for a recent overview, Raaflaub 1997.

¹⁴ de Ste. Croix 1970, Schaps 1979, Just 1989. For female landowners in the Hellenistic period, see Pomeroy 1997 and Schaps 1979.

¹⁵ *Pol.* 1269b12-1270a6. See Hodkinson 1989; Patterson 1998: 76-78; Pomeroy 1997: 42-43.

¹⁶ Hunter 1989a, 1989b, and 1994; Foxhall 1989 and 1996; Cox 1998: 69-70, 104, 211. Friedl 1967: 105-107 offers a parallel from twentieth-century Greek villages, where women’s power derives from the dowry they bring to the marriage.

¹⁷ Arthur [Katz] 1984.

¹⁸ On the orators as indices of popular views, see Ober 1989: 44. Also Davidson 1997: xxi: “although the orators are unreliable witnesses of what went on in Athens, they are excellent witnesses of what was thought convincing.”

¹⁹ *Theogony* 507-616, *Works and Days* 42-105.

²⁰ Vernant 1974: 179-86. Among those who have focussed on the theme of exchange in this episode and in Hesiod generally are Pucci 1977, Arthur [Katz] 1982, Saintillan 1996, Zeitlin 1996: 53-86.

²¹ The gods already practice marriage of a sort, but it is not for the most part the enduring institution known to mortals, e.g. Ἰαπετὸς...ἠγάγετο Κλυμένην, *Theog.* 507-508. Cf. Brown 1997: 47, “[F]or the gods marriage, as both Homeric and Hesiodic man understand it, can have little or no meaning.”

²² The first woman resembles in this way a number of the talismanic objects to be discussed below.

²³ See Vernant 1974: 190, Marquardt 1982: 286, Zeitlin 1996: 60. Vernant connects Pandora (also called Anesidora, “she who sends up gifts”) with Demeter rather than Ge, that is to say, with fertility hard won by agricultural labor rather than from the spontaneous generosity of the earth.

²⁴ For *pandôra* as an epithet of the earth, *LSJ* cites *Ar. Av.* 971, *Ph.* 1.32. The Homeric epigram 7 addresses “Lady Earth, all bounteous, giver of honey-sweet wealth” (*Potnia Gê, pandôros, doteira meliphronos olbou*). Physis and Demeter are *pandôteira* (*Orph. H.* 10.16, 40.3). For a summary of the connections between Pandora and Gê, see West at *WD* 81. Hurwit 1995: 176 with n.17 points to yet another etymology, promoted by Vernant: she whom the gods give as a gift.

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- 25 For the analogy of woman and earth, see duBois 1988; also Arthur [Katz] 1982.
- 26 See Sussman 1984: 79-93, who takes Hesiod's complaints about idle women more literally than I. See also Arthur [Katz] 1984, Petropoulos 1994, Brown 1997.
- 27 E.g. *Il.* 6.289, *Od.* 7.97; see West 1966 at *Theog.* 603.
- 28 Arthur [Katz] 1982: 75 takes the phrase to be an oblique "rendering of the pressure of sexual need." Similarly, lines 600-601 (*gunaikas...xunêonas ergôn/largaleôn*). Only once does Hesiod use the word *erga* for women's work at the loom (*WD* 779).
- 29 On fear of women's reproductive powers, see Zeitlin 1996: 59-60.
- 30 For sources, see West 1978 on this passage. Detienne 1963: 22 ties this precept to a time of agrarian crisis, caused by partible inheritance.
- 31 Detienne 1963: 23 takes this passage to mean that partibility is not an inevitable rule, even in Hesiod's world.
- 32 Zeitlin 1996: 58-60.
- 33 Marquardt 1982. See below for further discussion of the wife as "keeper" of the household goods.
- 34 As Patterson 1998: 63 notes, "Hesiod's 'misogyny' is a strong indication of the wife's significant economic role in a household in which she had a vested interest."
- 35 For the concept of "negative reciprocity," which includes theft, see Sahlins 1972, esp. 195-96. Ferrari's point (1988) 52, that Pandora "represents the indissoluble connection in our world of both good and bad exchange," speaks to the dilemma faced by the poet in his treatment of her.
- 36 Brown 1997: 26-27.
- 37 For structural similarities between the two, see Pucci 1977: 92.
- 38 See Constantinidou 1990: 47 n.1 for two other points of contact with Pandora: Helen is "regarded as a punishment for those who possess her"; and her return to Paris in *Iliad* 3 is figured as a marriage, and she as a bride.
- 39 While Pucci 1977: 92 maintains that each is said to have the "mind of a bitch," I find it significant that in the *Iliad*, the epithet *kunopis* (lit. "dog-faced," i.e. shameless) is uttered only by Helen herself, thus calling into question the accuracy of the charge.
- 40 See Brown 1997: 40 on the connections between Epimetheus and Paris.
- 41 Suzuki 1989: 16 credits the *Iliad* with endowing Helen with a subjectivity that all later accounts deny her.
- 42 The phrase occurs at *Iliad* 9.128, 279; 19.245, etc. The Odyssean equivalent, *aglaa erga iduiê*, is found at 13.289 and 16.158, referring to the sort of woman Athena is pretending to be, and at 15.418 of the servant who betrayed Eumaios to his kidnappers. The apparent doublet *kedna iduia* is in fact not used of anonymous women, but of Eurykleia (1.428, 19.345), and *alochos* = Penelope (20.57; 23.182, 232). The one exception to this occurs at line 24.278, in Odysseus' lying tale to Laertes, where it describes four women given as presents by Odysseus to the speaker. Apparently in his lying tales Odysseus even pretends to be the sort of man who confuses a wife or loyal retainer with anonymous chattel. Agamemnon in *Iliad* 1 makes a similar

conflation when he claims to value a captive woman as much as his own wife.

⁴³ Pomeroy 1994: 59 accords Xenophon the honor of being “the first Greek author to give full recognition to the use-value of women’s work, and to understand that domestic labor has economic value even if it lacks exchange value.” In my view, the Homeric epics do show an (admittedly unsystematic) awareness of those forms of female labor that have a tangible result, primarily the making of textiles and the preparation of food. To this short list one might add—thinking of Eurykleia—the raising of children.

⁴⁴ Among the Phaiakians: *Od.* 7.103-107. Examples of weaving goddesses are the Charites: *Il.* 5.339, Athena: *Il.* 5.734-35, Kalypso: *Od.* 10.222-23, Kirke: *Od.* 5.61-62.

⁴⁵ For example, Eurykleia is bought by Laertes for twenty oxen, *Od.* 1.43, and Eurymedousa given to Alkinoos from the spoils of her city, *Od.* 7.8-11.

⁴⁶ Finley 1981: 88-90. Finkelberg 1991 argues that there was in fact no clear pattern of father-to-son inheritance of kingship, and that the pattern hinted at in the *Odyssey* is not unknown in Greek myth, although inheritance combined with marriage to the king’s daughter, rather than his wife, is for obvious reasons by far the more common pattern. Westbrook (forthcoming) argues that kingship in Ithaka was part of Penelope’s dowry.

⁴⁷ Arete gives Odysseus a cloak and tunic (8.441-42); Helen is both giver and recipient. While in Egypt, Alkandre the wife of Polybus gives her a golden distaff and a silver basket used for wool-working (4.126, 131-32); Polydamna wife of Thon gives her healing drugs (4.227-28). Later she gives Telemachos a *peplos* (15.125-29), on which see below. On women’s gifts of cloth to Odysseus, see Block 1985 and Pedrick 1988. Kardulias 2001, which provides an excellent treatment of gendered clothing and transvestism in the *Odyssey*, came to my attention after the completion of this article.

⁴⁸ See below for Eriphyle. Astyoche was persuaded by a gift from Priam to send her son to help defend Troy.

⁴⁹ E.g. *Od.* 15.241: ἔνθα δ’ ἔγημε γυναῖκα; *Od.* 2.113: γαμέεσθαι / τῷ ὄτεώ τε πατήρ κέλεται. Anacreon says of an effeminate man: κείνος οὐκ ἔγαμεν ἀλλ’ ἐγῆματο (424 Lobel-Page).

⁵⁰ Goody and Tambiah 1973, Tambiah 1989.

⁵¹ As for example the phrase ἀνέρι μητέρα δῶσω, *Od.* 2.223, used by Telemachos of Penelope. See also *Od.* 4.7, *Il.* 6.192. I have chosen Homeric examples, but the usage continues throughout the archaic and classical periods. On Greek marriage, see Vernant 1973, Redfield 1982.

⁵² The notion of the wife as guardian of the household wealth is also found in the Sumerian *Courtship of Inanna and Dumuzi*. The goddess Inanna says to her consort, “I will watch over your house of life, the storehouse.... I, the queen, will watch over your house.” Wolkstein and Kramer 1983: 39. For Rome, with an overview of Greek parallels, see Pearce 1974.

⁵³ Zeitlin 1996: 29-31 emphasizes the quality of fixity in this passage and elsewhere.

⁵⁴ Semonides 7.85-87; discussed by Sussman 1984: 80-81 (compared to Xen. *Oec.* 7.13). As she notes, this text contains a similar ambivalence about women to that found in the *Theogony*.

Xenophon also uses the image of the bee. Just 1989: 240, Detienne 1977.

⁵⁵ For the text, see Diggle 1998: 123. The translation is by Vellacott 1975: 97. Discussed by Cohen 1990: 137.

⁵⁶ Xen. *Oec.* 7.13 etc. For the continuity of metaphor between his precepts and the myth of Pandora, see Sissa 1990: 135-36, 156. See also Pomeroy 1994. On the *Oeconomicus*, see also Murnaghan 1988, Scaife 1995.

⁵⁷ Lysias 1.6-8, translation taken from Lamb 1930.

⁵⁸ Recent writers have stressed the bilateral elements of succession in Athens, and tension between these and patrilineality. See Patterson 1998: 98. Just 1989: 87-89, 93 gives greater emphasis to patrilineality but is still good on bilateral devolution.

⁵⁹ Goody 1976: 15; Peristiany 1965. See also Cohen 1991: 113 n.45, Cox 1998: 73.

⁶⁰ On the self-serving nature of the argument, see Cohen 1991: 178 n.20, Sealey 1990: 28.

⁶¹ See note 16 above.

⁶² The evidence for this law is Isaeus 10.10 and Aristophanes *Ekkles.* 1024-25 with scholia. While the text of Isaeus appears corrupt, the textual problems alone are not enough to challenge the standard interpretation. See Wyse 1979 ad loc. For counterexamples, see Foxhall 1989 and 1996, Hunter 1994: 22, Hunter 1989b.

⁶³ Friedl 1975: 8-9.

⁶⁴ See Lombardi 1994 on the low prestige assigned to weaving, with citations from Plato and Aristotle. Oddly enough, there is no textile counterpart to the marvelous objects created by Hephaistos. Goddesses weave, but by a process of mystification, we hear very little about the fruits of their labor.

⁶⁵ Elizabeth Barber 1992: 113 cites Aristotle and Plutarch to the effect that while the *peplos* dedicated to Athena at the Panathenaia was made by young women (the *ergastinai*), the *peplos* for the ship was made by professional male weavers (*Ath.Pol.* 49.3, 60.1; Plut. *Dem.* 10.5, 12.3). Perhaps it was made of canvas, like a sail, and was therefore in the realm of male manufacture. Glotz 1967: 225 gives names of male slaves engaged in the textile industry. See also Keuls 1985: 246-47.

⁶⁶ The robes from which Hecabe chooses her offering to Athena in *Iliad* 6.289 are the work of women of Sidon (*erga gunaikôn Sidoniôn*). In *Odyssey* 7.96-97, the furniture in the palace of Alkinoos is adorned with beautiful robes woven by women (*erga gunaikôn*), and Arete recognizes her own handiwork in the clothing that Odysseus wears (7.324-25). Helen weaves: *Il.* 3.125-28, 15.105 and spins: *Od.* 4.131-56, etc. Penelope is famous for her weaving (as well as her unweaving). See Block 1985, Pomeroy 1994: 61-65. Barber 1991, 1994, Morrell 1997.

⁶⁷ Sutton 1981: 310 makes a similar point about wreathes: "Wreaths were made by women generally, which explains in good part the predominance of female wreath donors in our scenes." In a number of cultures, the plaiting or weaving of natural materials is, like weaving cloth, considered a female activity. See Hurcombe 2000, esp. 90.

⁶⁸ Block 1985, Pedrick 1988.

⁶⁹ Drawing on examples from tragedy, McClure 1997: 128 notes that "cloth helps women gain

control over men, either by detaining, destroying, or seducing them; its presence in these texts represents the subversive potential of an ordinary, feminine activity to overturn the normal social order.” Interestingly, Ovid in the *Metamorphoses* elaborates on two episodes, those of Prokne and of Arachne, in which the webs women weave are used to expose sexual crimes of men and gods.

⁷⁰ On *agalmata*, see the discussion of Gernet below.

⁷¹ Such exchanges, however, are not necessarily completely benign. The exchange of armor between Glaucus and Diomedes has been read both positively and negatively. See Craig 1967, Walcot 1969, Calder 1984, Donlan 1989, Alden 1996.

⁷² Textiles are part of the ransom Priam pays to Achilles for Hektor (*Il.* 24.229-31, discussed by Morrell 1997: 145), and gifts of clothing (again together with gold) are given to Odysseus by the Phaiakians, on orders of their king (*Od.* 8.392-93).

⁷³ Jenkins 1985: 121.

⁷⁴ The speaker of Lysias *On the Death of Eratosthenes* describes the manufacturing activities he oversees, but he does not himself engage in the work. The most obvious exception is Odysseus, who is frequently shown as a craftsman, Glotz 1967: 14-15. See also Zeitlin 1996: esp. 21.

⁷⁵ Gernet 1981: 115.

⁷⁶ Keuls 1985: 229 speaks of a separate work ethic, but without qualification by class.

⁷⁷ Humphreys 1995: 108.

⁷⁸ The intersection of class and gender, while important for a full analysis of the economic system portrayed in epic, is beyond the scope of the present essay. See Karydas 1998, van Wees 1992: 70ff. For an excellent treatment of class in the *Odyssey*, which touches on many of the issues explored here, see Thalmann 1998.

⁷⁹ This theme is touched on in many of the essays in Donald and Hurcombe 2000, especially those by Senior, Hurcombe, and Damm. See also Weiner and Schneider 1989: 20-25, who also detail divisions of labor within textile production. These writers, particularly Weiner and Schneider, do point to exceptions, but the preponderance of the evidence supports the dichotomy for which I argue here.

⁸⁰ It will not come as a surprise that he attributed this achievement to the desire to conceal “genital deficiency.” Here are his remarks on the subject in their entirety: “It seems that women have made few contributions to the discoveries and inventions in the history of civilization; there is, however, one technique which they may have invented—that of plaiting and weaving. If that is so, we should be tempted to guess the unconscious motive for the achievement. Nature herself would seem to have given the model which this achievement imitates by causing the growth at maturity of the pubic hair that conceals the genitals. The step that remained to be taken lay in making the threads adhere to one another, while on the body they stick into the skin and are only matted together. If you reject this idea as fantastic and regard my belief in the influence of lack of a penis on the configuration of femininity as an *idée fixe*, I am of course defenseless” (1965: 132).

⁸¹ Weiner and Schneider 1989: 22, Errington and Gewertz 1987: 11, Hurcombe 2000: 91ff. For some examples of variations in the division of labor and exceptions to the rules, see Senior 2000,

Damm 2000: 116, Friedl 1975.

82 This dichotomy may also have been reflected in the social realities of women's religious practices in ancient Greece. Ridgway 1987: 403 notes that although garments may have been among the most common of female offerings to the gods, their perishable nature makes them hard to document. Literary evidence for organized public giving of garments to goddesses begins with *Iliad* 6.303. For an unusually rich body of inscriptions documenting women's individual dedications, see Linders 1972. Dedication lists and other inscriptions do provide some evidence of durable objects donated by women.

83 Putting this in other terms, Morrell 1997: 145 describes this passage as linking the "extra-domestic and intra-domestic spheres of production."

84 Gernet 1981: 111-46. See von Reden 1995: 82 for a cursory treatment of dangerous gifts in Gernet, and now von Reden 1999 for a more extended discussion of Gernet's article, which does not however address the question of dangerous gifts.

85 "The word *agalma*, in its earliest usage, implies the notion of 'value.' It can be used of all kinds of things, even, on occasion, of human beings thought of as 'precious.' It usually expresses some idea of opulence, and above all of aristocratic wealth (horses are *agalmata*)" Gernet 1981: 114-15.

86 Gernet 1981: 253 n.40.

87 The connection between adultery and theft is discussed by Cohen 1991: 111-13. His paraphrase of Dr. Johnson, to the effect that "the thief merely makes off with the sheep, but the adulterer gets the sheep and the farm as well," is surprisingly apt here (113 n.45).

88 See Finley 1981 [1954]: 88-90. This motif also occurs, placed in a non-Greek setting, in the tale of Gyges and Kandaules' wife (Hdt. 1.11). See Tourraix 1976, on women's role in the transmission of power in Herodotos.

89 Cited by Gernet 1981: 123.

90 Here as in many other mythic contexts, a woman's allegiance to her brother trumps allegiance to a husband. The privileging of natal family over the husband and the special relationship between sisters and brothers are taken up in the larger project of which this article is a part.

91 Discussed also by Brown 1997: 42.

92 Apollodoros 3.15.1. The rest of the story confirms her status as a material girl. Upon being caught by her husband, she fled to Minos. When he made advances, she complied, braving a spell that made sex with him dangerous, in exchange for a swift dog and a dart that always flew straight. J. Tzetzes *Chiliades* i, 542ff. is the only other ancient author who mentions the intrigue of Prokris and Pteleus and the bribe of a golden crown.

93 Buxton 1994: 127-28 points to the selectivity that emphasizes the "*dangerousness* of golden necklaces and mirrors," when in fact "real women" owned these objects with impunity. Sutton 1981: 289, on the other hand, cites a number of texts to show the "unsavory reputation" of gifts of jewelry.

94 Schaps 1979: 10, 9-12 for examples; also Hunter 1994: 24-25.

95 Cf. Plut. *Quaest. R.* 7, 265 f 9-11: [why are gifts between spouses forbidden?] "Or is it that

women are most likely to be seduced and welcome strangers because of gifts they receive from them; and thus it is seen to be dignified for them to love their own husbands even though their husbands give them no gifts?" Although Plutarch is ostensibly describing Roman customs, he derives his first suggested answer from Solon, and may also be thinking of Greek customs in this part of his answer as well.

⁹⁶ Katz 1991: 77-113, Zeitlin 1996: 46.

⁹⁷ See in particular two oinochoai by the Schuwalow Painter in Ferrara (Mus. Naz. 2509 and 3914, 4th quarter of the 5th century, *ARV*₁ 1206, 4 and 12 = *LIMC* Eriphyle I.8 and 9) and an earlier kalpis most likely depicting the same scene by the Phiale Painter (Toronto, Royal Ontario Museum 919.5.27 [362], 3rd quarter of the 5th century, *ARV*₁ 1020, 94; *LIMC* Eriphyle I.16). The connection between these vases and genre scenes of erotic gift-giving is discussed in detail by Sutton 1981: 369-79.

⁹⁸ Several are reproduced in Reeder 1995: 181-83. See e.g. cat. 36, a Nolan amphora by the Berlin Painter (San Antonio Museum of Art inv. no. 86.134.59; *Para.* 345, 184ter), circa 490-480, in which the man holds a flower in one hand and a small bag in the other. Another Nolan amphora by the Providence Painter (Harvard University, Sackler Museum, inv. no. 1972.45; *ARV*² 638, 43; Reeder cat. no.37), circa 485-475, shows the woman holding and examining a gift of a wreath or garland.

⁹⁹ On the women's status, see Rodenwaldt 1932, Crome 1966, Keuls 1985: 258-60, Sutton 1981, Bérard, 1989: 89-90, Davidson 1997: 86-89. Meyer 1988 maintains that the purses function as attributes of solid Athenian citizens, rather than as payment. Some images, however, show the woman reaching out eagerly, as if receiving payment. See Sutton 1981: 283. Keuls 1985: 262 describes the purse as "an economic phallus."

¹⁰⁰ Lissarrague 1995: 91-101, esp. 93. Keuls 1985: 233 also notes that the frequently appearing walking stick suggests that the male intruder "is merely visiting from the world of men."

¹⁰¹ Sutton 1981: 376 discusses a vase by the Chicago painter with the Eriphyle episode depicted on one side and a genre scene of courtship with gift-giving on the other.

¹⁰² Other accounts: Plutarch *Solon* 4.1-4, Diodorus Siculus 9.3.3. For an overview of the tradition of the tripod, and some recent controversies, see Bollansée 1999: 65-75.

¹⁰³ In this version, after Helen threw it away, it was brought up along with a catch of fish and became the cause of a war between the Coans and the Milesians. The quarrel was resolved when an oracle instructed that it be given to the wisest man. All agreed upon Thales (Diogenes Laertius 1.32).

¹⁰⁴ Plato applied the word *perimachêtos* to Helen herself, or rather to an image (*eidolon*) of her (*Republic* 586c, quoting from Stesichoros).

¹⁰⁵ In Boston in the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts (catalogue no. 13.186, *ARV*² 458, 1; also Ghali-Kahil 1955: cat. nos. 11 and 53, plates 4 and 48; *LIMC* Helene 166 = 243).

¹⁰⁶ Ghali-Kahil has only one other vase that pairs Helen on one side with Paris and on the other with Menelaos. This vase, a siphon in the Kerameikos Museum, gives no hint of the abduction, but shows a static Paris standing before a calmly seated Helen (Kerameikos Museum; Ghali-Kahil cat. nos. 22 and 47, plate 68.1-3; *LIMC* Helene 84 = 238).

107 See Kunisch 1997: 155-56.

108 See Kunisch 1997: 130: “Die Vergleichbarkeit des Geschehens spiegelt sich in der Vergleichbarkeit des formalen Aufbaus beider Bilder.” [“The similarity of the events is reflected in the formal similarity of the composition of the two images.”]

109 Cf. Kunisch 1997: 95 on the scarcity of empty ground (“leeren Hintergrund”) on this vase. He comments also on the negation of boundaries: “Das Bild des Bostoner Skyphos stellt den für Makron einzigartigen und auch untypischen Versuch dar, die hintere, gegenständlich nicht konkretisierbare Grenze des Bildes weitgehend zu entmaterialisieren, ihre Existenz geradezu zu leugnen.” [“The image on the Boston Skyphos reveals an attempt—singular and also atypical of Makron—to dematerialize thoroughly the boundaries of the image (which can not be concretized with reference to any objects), even to deny their existence.”]

110 Gernet 1981: 135 comments on its function as a fusion of two kinds of wealth, wealth in flocks and herds and wealth in precious metals. This is similar to the distinction made by Morrell 1997. For the two kinds of wealth see Benveniste 1969: 37-45, esp. 44: “Dans la société homérique, la richesse est une réalité multiple, considérée dans ses diverses valeurs qu’on distingue en *keimêlia* et *próbata*.” See p. 43 for the Homeric formula *keimêlia kai probasis*. On *keimêlia* see also Morris 1986a: 9-10.

111 Errington and Gewertz 1987: 61-62 discuss the myth of a golden girl among the Chambri, whose existence, concealed by the men from their wives, allows them to avoid altogether both exchange and relations with wives and affines. Here the idea of woman as male wealth is taken to extremes.

112 Gift-giving among women is rarely mentioned. Exceptions are the silver basket and golden distaff given to Helen by Alkandre in Egypt (*Od.* 4.125-26, 130-32). Egypt is also the source of another remarkable gift, the drug *nêpenthês*, given Helen by Polydamna (*Od.* 4.220-30). That these gift exchanges occurred in Egypt perhaps accounts for their anomalousness. Schaps 1979: 70 comments that “Gifts by women to other women are not recorded anywhere—not surprisingly, in view of the overwhelmingly male sources of our information.”

113 The earliest source for this version of the story is Euripides, but whether he drew on older versions or simply improvised using familiar mythic elements is impossible to determine. On women and poisons, see Just 1989: 266, Faraone 1994, 1999.

114 Sahlins 1972: 195-96.

115 Patterson 1998: 4.

116 Two important treatments of the theme of exchange in this play are Goldhill 1984 and Wohl 1998. Seaford 1994: 369-75 touches on it as well.

117 The *locus classicus* is Fraenkel, 1950 ad loc. (v. 2: 304-305), although after almost two pages, he does allow the possibility that the phrase operates metaphorically, hinting of the murder to come, an interpretation rejected by Rosenmeyer 1982: 238. See Lebeck 1971: 41-42, on an earlier reference to bronze at lines 390-93, and Fraenkel’s “detailed metallurgical analysis” of that passage (v. 2: 202-205).

118 Fraenkel takes this as the main point.

119 See Lebeck 1971: 81-86, McClure 1997: 128, Morrell 1997: 160-62.

120 Macleod 1975 = Macleod 1983: 41-43 sketches the theme of clothing throughout the trilogy. See also Rosenmeyer 1982: 137, apparently contradicting his own statement at 238.

121 In the *Agamemnon*, it is clear that she has done the deed herself (lines 1380, 1384-86) and although Aigisthos at 1608-1609 tries to claim it, the chorus (1643-46) sees through this, accusing him of leaving the murder to a woman. The implication of Orestes' words is that Klytemnestra struck using her lover's sword.

122 Also 1028: *phoinikobaptois esthêmasi* for the Erinyes. See Lebeck 1971: 63-68 for a detailed working out of the textile-net imagery.

123 My remarks on this scene owe much to Jenkins 1985: 16-20. See also Crane 1993, much of whose argument is anticipated by Flintoff 1987. For a different approach, see Morrell 1997.

124 For a more psychologizing approach to Agamemnon's capitulation see Dover 1987: 151-60. See also Lebeck 1971: 74-79 and Taplin 1977: 310-16, both of whom reject a largely psychological interpretation. Sailor and Stroup 1999: 154, 174-78 propose a political reading according to which Agamemnon's willingness to participate in the destruction of household wealth reveals anti-democratic and tyrannical leanings. Wohl 1998: 105 similarly sees Klytemnestra as violating both democratic *and* aristocratic principles in proposing the destruction of the cloth.

125 Morrell 1997 stresses the aspect of competition.

126 Taplin 1977: 299-300, 306-308.

127 Klytemnestra's relation to this form of female wealth is somewhat ambiguous. Unlike Helen and Penelope, and indeed most female figures in Homeric epic, she is never associated with weaving. This may be related to the fact that she is never represented directly in epic, but only appears in the reported speech of others. Nonetheless, she embodies a third paradigm for female behavior in marriage, a thoroughly negative one which significantly influences the actions of Odysseus in response to Agamemnon's posthumous warnings.

128 Gernet 1981, Flintoff 1987: 123: "something with a religious dimension." Morrell 1997: 157 is more explicit: "the garments are better suited as dedicatory offerings to the gods."

129 Morrell 1997: 149. See also Wohl 1998: 86-87, von Reden 1995: 163-64.

130 See Jenkins 1985: 125-26 on the significance of the dye. Crane 1993: 129 argues that Agamemnon's hesitation about walking on the cloth represents a failure to embody *megaloprepeia* and a misunderstanding of the "ethics of generosity." Also, von Reden 1995: 163-64; Wohl 1998: 87, 105: "Clytemnestra herself speaks the play's most explicit disenchantments: it is she who transforms the tapestry into mere money in her 'sea of purple' speech."

131 Brown 1997: 44 on her combining of these two aspects of the wife's role. See Pearce 1974, esp. 31.

132 See Flintoff 1987 on Klytemnestra's "cavalier attitude towards the resources of her household" (127), although I believe that he exaggerates the expense involved. Goldhill 1984: 75 discusses this passage in the context of Penelope's decision to stay and guard her husband's possessions (*Odyssey* 19.525-29).

- 133 Flintoff 1987: 125 also notes the similarity. See Lebeck 1971: 63-68 for treatment of metaphors of trapping throughout the trilogy.
- 134 On the perversion of death ritual in this scene, see Seaford 1984 throughout and 1994: 62.
- 135 The word appears in the feminine only here and in Euripides' *Medea* 409, where Medea calls women *kakôn de pantôn tektones sophôtatai*, "the cleverest devisers of all evils."
- 136 See Wohl 1998, Ormand 1999 on the theme of exchange in this play.
- 137 Segal 1995: 91. Elsewhere (1986: 58) he couches the same point in semiotic terms.
- 138 My discussion here owes much to Wohl 1998, esp. 26-28 and 34.
- 139 For this scene's deliberate echoes of the *Agamemnon*, see Segal 1995: 40.
- 140 See Koch-Harnock 1989: 108-85 for the theme of the shared cloak in Greek art and literature. She notes that the rivalrous situation of the *Trachiniai* could very well be represented by the figure of two women holding up a cloak with a man between them (163-62 with illustrations), although she presents no evidence beyond the Sophokles passage.
- 141 See Segal 1995: 82-83, Wohl 1998: 23-29.
- 142 Wohl 1998: 23-24, from whom I borrow the phrase "so well provided" as a translation for this difficult phrase. The chorus that follows, 499-530, presents the episode from Deianeira's own history in which she herself was treated like a prize. See Wohl 52-54.
- 143 The poison, the blood of the female Hydra, represents yet another deadly female gift. Wohl 1998: 28.
- 144 Segal 1995: 65 notes that Sophokles' language at lines 1051-52 and 1057 recalls that of Aischylos about Klytemnestra. He also notes the similarities between the arrival of Iole and that of Cassandra in the *Agamemnon* (7).
- 145 The robe, which alternates between being called a *chiton* (580, 769) and a *peplos* (602, 674, 758: *thanasimon peplon*, 774), is here once again a *chiton* but also a *peplôma* (612-13). At 662, it is a *pharos* (if we accept Haupt's reading), and at 764, a *stolê*. Interestingly, Flintoff 1987: 120 notes that in the *Agamemnon*, Klytemnestra and Agamemnon even disagree about the nature of the cloth—whether it is clothing, and how it is decorated. On this ambiguity, see Loraux 1995: 125-31, esp. 130. Seaford 1994: 390-91 discusses the gift of the cloak in the context of perversions of "ritual attire."
- 146 See Segal 1995: 45 on the "explosive sexuality" within the house. See Faraone 1994 and 1999 for a rather different reading than my own of the nature of "Deianeira's mistake."
- 147 Cf. Loraux 1995: 42, Wohl 1998: 9 with n.21.
- 148 ὅστις ὥστε παρθένος / βέβρυχα κλαίων, 1071-72; νῦν δ' ἐκ τοιούτου θῆλυς ἠύρημαι τάλας, 1075. Cf. Loraux 1995: 121, Winnington-Ingram 1980: 85, Wohl 1998: 9.
- 149 Loraux 1987.
- 150 *Soph. Ant.* 1222: βρόχῳ μιτώδει σινδόνης καθημένην; *Aisch. Suppl.* 462: the μηχανὴ συζωμάτων, "contrivance of sashes" as the Danaids' threatened means of suicide. See Loraux 1987: 10 with n.10.
- 151 Wohl 1998: 36 and later (49): "In her mode of suicide—penetration by the Homeric

sword—she showed herself both a failed man and a failed woman, constrained until the end by gender.” As should be clear, my reading is somewhat different.

152 Segal 1995: 85 sees “loosing the peplos” as an evocation of the consummation of the wedding night, while Wohl 1998: 49 emphasizes sexual violation: Deianeira’s body is “eroticized at the moment of death” and “penetrated by the Homeric sword.”

153 As when the female attendants of Hekabe use them to blind the children of Polydorus in Euripides’ *Hekabe* 1170.

154 Hdt. 5.87.2-3. The change to Ionian dress and the elimination of brooches in women’s attire can be related to the pattern of the gendered division of wealth discussed in this article.

155 Oidipous’ attack on his eyes using Jocasta’s brooches (*chrusêlatous / peronas*) Soph. *O.T.* 1268-69, can be seen as analogous to Deianeira’s turning of her husband’s sword upon herself.

156 Wohl 1998: 11-13 discusses the trade-off of mother for father offered to Hyllos.

157 Vernant 1983. Alkestis, when preparing to die, prays to Hestia at the hearth and all the altars in the house, Eur. *Alkestis* 161-74. As this example shows, women’s relationship to this goddess is not tied exclusively to the role of daughter.

158 See Ormand 1999: 10, 13, 19-21 on women as outsiders in both the *oikos* and the *polis*.

159 *Agamemnon*: Goldhill 1984: 17; *Trachiniai*: Wohl 1998: 17-22 etc., Ormand 1999: 41-45.

160 Just 1989: 84, 93.

161 On the differences in age, see Just 1989: 151-52, Cox 1998: 70, 121-22.

162 For a contrasting view, see Cohen 1990: 147-65. On the Homeric ideal of homophrosunê, see Winkler 1990: 160-61, Wohl 1993, Zeitlin 1996: 23f.

163 See Cox 1998: 115, 118, 186 on Alcibiades’ forcible reclamation of his wife.

164 Demosthenes, 27-29, *Against Aphobus* 1-3. See Hunter 1989a, 1989b, Cox 1998: 103-104.

165 Rubin 1975, Sedgwick 1985. See note 9 above.

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