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### Thomas Stanley's *Aeschylus*: Renaissance Practical Criticism of Greek Tragedy

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Thomas Stanley, Caroline poet, translator, and popularizer of ancient learning, deserves a more complete exposition and evaluation of his practical criticism of Aeschylus than he has yet received. Since his folio text, translation, and commentary (London 1663) drew the praise of Isaac Casaubon's son, Meric, shortly after publication; since Ezra Pound, much later, praised the strength and skill of the translation; and since Eduard Fraenkel has given a judicious account both of Stanley's sources and of the increasingly perceptive manuscript notations Stanley added after publication,<sup>1</sup> this insistence may appear presumptuous. Before defending such a claim, a writer should cite Fraenkel's praise for Stanley's continued effort in annotating Aeschylus to "make the work worthy of its subject. What he here sets down as necessary elements of a commentary on a dramatic poet

<sup>1</sup> Meric Casaubon, "cuius praestantissimam editionem Londini curatam Viro clarissimo D. Thomae Stanleio debebit aliquando posteritas," printed by Samuel Butler, ed., *Aeschyli Tragoediae quae Supersunt* (Cambridge 1809), III, p. 148. Ezra Pound's praise of Stanley's Latin in comparison with Browning's English translation of Aeschylus appears in "Early Translators of Homer," *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, ed. T. S. Eliot (Norfolk, Connecticut 1954), pp. 269-75. Eduard Fraenkel, in his edition of the *Agamemnon* (Oxford 1950), discusses Stanley's scholarship (I, pp. 38-44) and gives a judicious account of Stanley's unacknowledged indebtedness to the work of John Pearson, Anglican divine, Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, and former classmate of Milton (I, pp. 78-85).

goes far beyond the ideas of his own time: it anticipates conceptions of the nineteenth century."<sup>2</sup>

Why, then, should we return to examine Thomas Stanley's thoughtful exposition of Aeschylus for his seventeenth-century audience? One motive is certainly the desire to develop and expand Fraenkel's point beyond the major examples he cites. But other reasons are more cogent. Since Stanley presented the first Aeschylean text, translation, and commentary for a non-specialized audience, the ideas he communicated are important for students of later Restoration and eighteenth-century poets and translators. In fact, the circulation of Stanley's work increased with Jan Cornelis de Pauw's re-edition, which included the 1663 commentary (The Hague 1745), and, even later, with Samuel Butler's *Aeschylus* (Cambridge 1809), which contained many of Stanley's manuscript addenda as well as original notes.

Even more important than the influence Stanley's ideas may have exerted, however, is the amplitude of the literary, historical, and philosophical exposition accompanying the edition. Quite simply, Stanley is the first editor of Aeschylus to undertake criticism on this scale. The great continental editors who preceded him wrestled with the problem presented by the mutilated text of a puzzling author; their introductions and notes do include critical evaluations but usually confine themselves to general observations about Aeschylus' unique and obscure style. Petrus Victorius (Pier Vettori), whose 1557 edition first included the complete *Oresteia*, makes one of the most specific stylistic comments preceding Stanley, noting Aeschylus' coining of new words and introduction of archaic and foreign terms.<sup>3</sup> Francesco Robortello's preface to his edition of the Aeschylean *scholia* (Venice 1552, pp. 1-8) provides the first practical criticism of one drama, the *Prometheus Bound*, in Aristotelian terms. Stanley not only supplies a broader context but implicitly suggests Robortello's limitations. In a different area Willem Canter's *Aeschylus* (Antwerp 1580) contains a supplement for the reader which, making no distinction between tragedy and history, arranges Aeschylus' characters and plots in a chronology beginning with Prometheus, who "flourished at the time

<sup>2</sup> Fraenkel, I, p. 41.

<sup>3</sup> Petrus Victorius' preface to his *Aeschylus* (Stephanus: Geneva 1557), "quū infinitis locis obscurae admodum sint, inveniunturque in ipsis multa nomina valde a consuetudine remota. Ille enim, ut undique amplū grandēque id poema efficeret, & plura quam alii eiusdem loci verba novavit & vetusta etiam peregrināque liberius usurpavit," sig. a iv<sup>r</sup>. I am omitting the lengthy Greek and Latin titles of the early editors when a brief citation identifies the work.

of Joshua and Cecrops," and concluding with the Persians.<sup>4</sup> Stanley's historical comments are more precise than Canter's although he has not totally freed himself from the traditional allegoresis of pagan authors which Don Cameron Allen traces in *Mysteriously Meant: The Rediscovery of Pagan Symbolism and Allegorical Interpretation in the Renaissance* (Baltimore 1970).

Not only are Stanley's interests broader than those of preceding editors; in addition, many of his emphases are new for an editor of Aeschylus, reflecting an effort to bring one of the most puzzling pagan authors into a literary and philosophic tradition Stanley can accept and defend to his audience. His notes are eclectic, drawing parallels with classical and patristic authors, citing earlier humanists, and even referring the reader to the contemporary history of volcanic eruptions. Three areas of emphasis, however, extend his analysis of Aeschylus beyond the comments of preceding editors to set the ancient tragedian in a context accessible to his readers. The first is a moral and mystical reading of Aeschylus, suggested first in Stanley's dedicatory epistle to Sir Henry Newton Puckering (the same man who possessed the MS of Milton's early poems):

Pollet etiam tacita quadam, Pythagoricae affini, sapientia.<sup>5</sup>

He [Aeschylus] is strong in a certain secret wisdom, associated with Pythagorean wisdom.

Previous editors had called Aeschylus a Pythagorean because Cicero had done so, but Stanley's commentary repeatedly demonstrates correspondences, ranging from individual word-choices to a shared conception of the structure of the universe. In the process of demonstrating Aeschylus' Pythagorean qualities, Stanley also draws as many Biblical parallels as possible but, unlike Canter, he retains a clear historical perspective.

A second area of emphasis is more strictly "literary": it includes

<sup>4</sup> Willem Canter identifies the passage as Chapter 4 of his *Novarum Lectionum, Libro V* (printed in his edition of Aeschylus [C. Plantinus: Antwerp 1508], pp. 9-13). His chronology includes the tragedies of Sophocles and Euripides but begins and concludes with the Aeschylean plays cited.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Stanley, dedicatory epistle of his *Aeschylus* (J. Flescher: London 1663; repr. Samuel Butler 1809), VIII, xiii. Subsequent citations of Stanley are from this edition. Butler uses brackets to indicate passages from Stanley's marginalia added after the 1663 edition. Butler's quotations have been compared with Stanley's 1663 edition and his MS material in the Cambridge University Library. Except for very brief passages, I have translated Stanley's Latin and Greek to provide continuity in a discussion requiring citation of a text which is not immediately accessible to many readers.

the visualization of Aeschylean plays as dramas to be staged, a contribution well noted by Fraenkel (I, 44). Stanley supplements this visualization with a discussion of Horatian and Aristotelian precepts as they were understood in his time, often broadening the received definitions to justify his reading of a particular Aeschylean play. Further, Stanley provides the most thorough analysis of Aeschylean style by an early editor. A final dimension of Stanley's interest is political: his devoted Royalism is apparent when he discusses the *Suppliants*, although his conceptualization of national and international law is one we might expect to find in a seventeenth-century interpreter of a great pagan author.

## I

When Stanley presents Aeschylus as a "Pythagorean" philosopher, the interpretation is often more nearly Neoplatonic.<sup>6</sup> He is quite interesting when he considers the structure of the universe in these terms. For instance, lines 5-6 of the *Agamemnon* ("Those bright potentates conspicuous in the sky who bring winter and summer to man")<sup>7</sup> prompt his consideration of universal order. This has the flavor of the Pythagorean school in whose teaching Aeschylus was immersed according to Cicero:

Ille enim primus coelum nuncupavit κόσμον a decore stellarum. . . . οὐρανὸν κόσμον προσηγόρευσε, διὰ τὸ τέλειον εἶναι καὶ πᾶσι κεκοσμηθῆναι, τοῖς τε ζώοις, καὶ τοῖς καλοῖς. Quam pulchritudinem participat a primo et intellectuali pulchro. (III, p. 140)

For he [Pythagoras] was the first to call the heavens a *kosmos* after the adornment of the stars . . . because it is perfect and adorned with all things which are alive and beautiful. He says that this beauty has a share in the *first and intellectual beauty*. (Italics mine.)

The conception of living, harmonious inhabitants of space and of

<sup>6</sup> See Allen's similar assessment of the Cambridge Platonists, p. 34. Stanley's silent collaborator, John Pearson, contributed to the scholarship on the Neoplatonist Hierocles (Fraenkel, I, p. 83). Stanley demonstrated his interest in Neoplatonism and Pythagoras before he began the *Aeschylus*. Galbraith Miller Crump, in his edition of *The Poems and Translations of Thomas Stanley* (Oxford 1962), includes Stanley's translation of Pico's "Platonick Discourse Upon Love," published in 1651 (pp. 197-229), as well as Stanley's early poem with commentary, "Pythagoras his moral Rules," pp. 68-74. See Crump's discussion of Stanley's sources, which include Hierocles' commentary on "The Golden Verses" attributed to Pythagoras, pp. 389-90. Stanley's poem itself is consistent with his "Pythagorean" discussion of Aeschylus.

<sup>7</sup> Fraenkel's translation of this line, I, p. 91. All references to plays and line numbers are to *Aeschylus Septem quae Supersunt Tragoedias*, ed. Denys Page (Oxford 1972). Subsequent translations of Aeschylean lines are my own.

a more perfect "idea" beyond them may be read in a Neoplatonic context familiar from various sources to Spenser, Sidney, and Milton. Stanley's own translation of Pico's "Platonick Discourse upon Love" subordinates the "idea," "minde," or "world-soul" to God.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, in his early poem, "Pythagoras his Moral Rules," he observes "How nature is by general likenesse chained" (line 54) and, in his notes, adds the gloss: "By him who gave us Life, God" (p. 73). In the Aeschylean commentary Stanley is moving far from his dramatic context (the words of the Watchman in the *Oresteia*) to present Aeschylus as a philosopher approaching truth in terms which had attracted Renaissance men for several centuries. Equally interesting is his digression in the *Eumenides* to consider the mystic origin of the *kosmos*. Again, he expands upon one line, "[Marriage] is mightier than an oath, and is guarded by Justice" (*Eum.* 218):

Atque hinc etiam confirmari possit Aeschylum Pythagoreis jure annumerandum; etenim apud illos jurisjurandi religio summa; quo fit ut aureorum carminum auctor primo praecepto de Diis colendis hoc adjungat, — καὶ σέβον ὄρκον — ad quem locum vide sis Hieroclem, qui humanum jusjurandum quasi rivulum ac imaginem esse contendit magni illius jurisjurandi quo naturae totius universitas obstricta est eique obtemperare cogitur. (VI, p. 127)

From this source we can confirm that Aeschylus should rightly be numbered among the Pythagoreans, for they had the highest regard for an oath. For this reason the author of "The Golden Verses" adds this to the first commandment about worshipping the Gods: "And reverence your oath." On this passage, see Hierocles, who contends that a human oath is, as it were, a small *derivative* and a *copy of that great Oath by which the whole order of Nature is bound* and is forced to conform with it. (*Italics mine*)

Not only has he moved from his context to present a human oath as an imperfect "copy"; the idea that a mysterious oath binds created order (although Stanley does not make the idea explicit) is not inconsistent with belief in a divine Creator whose Logos is his "effectual might."

Stanley's Pythagorean reading may commend Aeschylus to a thoughtful Christian reader. He is careful to suggest moral and philosophic congruencies and to explain differences when they occur. He observes that the Pythagoreans subjected God to Fate, an opinion which the Stoics approved (*Prom.* 518, *St.* 517). After the comment, a commendable perception of the characters' lack of omnipotence,

<sup>8</sup> *The Poems and Translations . . .*, ed. G. M. Crump, pp. 199-200. All citations of Stanley's work other than his *Aeschylus* are from this text.

he does mediate between the ancient philosophers and his reader: "Deum, i.e. Divinam providentiam, vel fortunam." He is interested in the primacy the Pythagoreans assign to fire among the elements (Prometheus' invocation, St. 88), the medicinal power of music (Ag. 17), the importance of memory, and the "purer" predictions of the Pythagoreans without the aid of blood and sacrifice (Se. 25, St. 27).<sup>9</sup> Elsewhere he approves Pythagorean moral values: marital fidelity in the *Suppliants* and observance of the "mean" in wealth (Ag. 471, St. 479). Even the Aeschylean "kennings" ("winged hounds" for "eagles" in Ag. 135, St. 139) are attributed to Pythagoras' search for teaching and for learning truth. He "used to say certain things in a mystical fashion, symbolically, of which Aristotle has given a fuller record":

Nec minus cothurnum Tragicum quam Scholam Pythagorae sapit haec loquendi forma: de quo Porphyrius in Vitâ, ἔλεγε δέ τινα καὶ μυστικῶ τρόπῳ συμβολικῶς, ἃ δὴ ἐπιπλέον Ἀριστοτέλης ἀνέγραψεν. (III, p. 169)

By documenting Aeschylus' "Pythagorean" attributes, with the further citation of Neoplatonists such as Hierocles, Stanley associates the first great tragedian with the two ancient writers most highly respected by Renaissance Christians for their faith. Allen, for example, has demonstrated the acceptance of Plato and Pythagoras both by patristic writers and certain Cambridge Platonists (pp. 21 and 35). Aeschylus emerges as the representative of a philosophy with prophetic insight, the illustrator of an orderly and beautiful universe, the advocate of high moral values, and a participant in mystic approaches to truth, such as musical charms to heal and unusual word usages to provide insight.

Stanley's Christianization of Aeschylus merges with his Pythagorean reading in his annotation of the *Prometheus Bound*. Although we might have predicted such an interpretation, we do not in fact receive it from other editors of the period:

Nonnulli e sanctis Patribus Promethei vincula fabulosa cum passione Domini nostri conferunt, hisce forsitan aut similibus rationibus perducti: Christus est ὁ Λόγος, Σοφία Πατρὸς, quem et a Pythagora Σοφίαν dictum volunt aliqui: eo non abludit Promethei nomen; ambo φιλόνηρωποι. Causam δέσεως Prometheae ab aliis novam et longe diversam statuit Aeschylus, sed huic analogiae valde congruentem. (I, 155)

<sup>9</sup> The consideration of fire as the highest and noblest element is, of course, a familiar part of the "chain of being." Stanley translates Pico on the subject in "A Platonick Discourse . . .," p. 202. Memory is the mother of the Muses, whom Pico allegorized as guardians of the spheres (p. 203). Music, concord, and harmony make up "Beauty in the largest sence" (p. 207).

Some of the holy Fathers compare the legendary chains with the passion of our Lord, perhaps being influenced by these or similar reasons: Christ is the Logos, the Wisdom of the Father, whom some people claim was called *Sophia* by Pythagoras also; the name of Prometheus is not inconsistent with this idea: both are *philanthropoi*. Aeschylus gives a reason for the binding of Prometheus which is original and quite different from other writers but quite relevant to this analogy.

He cites *The Souda* (Suidas) for a definition of *λεωργός* (knave, miscreant) as "one who dies for the people" and calls special attention to the "apparatus by which Prometheus is crucified." Stanley leaves the relationship of Prometheus and Christ a limited analogy, however, and does not pursue it throughout the play. Hermes' final advice to Prometheus, "and never say that it was Zeus who cast you into suffering unforeseen" (1073-75; St. 1072), provides an occasion for the justification of the ways of God to men with support from ancient and contemporary writers. Stanley relates his line to a similar *sententia* discussed by James Duport, professor of Greek at Cambridge, 1639-54, observing that Duport "says that this is a celebrated proverb and praised everywhere by the ancients, containing a defense of God and his providence regarding evil: whoever makes God the author of it acts impiously and unjustly" ("Celebris, inquit, gnome, et a veteribus passim laudata, continens apologiam pro Deo ejusque providentia, circa malum: cuius auctorem impie et inique Deum faciunt, quicumque faciunt" [I, 261]).<sup>10</sup> The implication is that Zeus is not responsible for Prometheus' suffering. Since Stanley has already observed that even Zeus lacks omnipotence, however, the interpretation can be more general. He and Duport are asserting that even the pagans considered men the authors of evil. Although Stanley has admired Prometheus earlier, the final comment is more reserved; Prometheus' concern for mankind may have been Christ-like, but he is the author of his own torture. Further, he *has* foreseen the consequence of his actions.

Stanley's parallels of pagan and Judaeo-Christian faith and ritual reveal a similar ambivalence. Sometimes he wants to show the similarity of ancient belief to the Biblical tradition. At other points, however, he corrects earlier commentators with an awareness of history: the pagan authors preceded Christ, and parallels should be

<sup>10</sup> Stanley is reading the Aeschylean line as a proverb which resembles Duport's citation and discussion of the *Odyssey* (I. 7; 32 ff.). Milton makes the same point with the same reference at the end of his chapter on Predestination in *De Doctrina Christiana*. See *John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose*, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York 1957), p. 931.

regarded cautiously in this context. When he suggests Hebrew-Greek similarities, he is usually drawing Old Testament parallels; the greeting of Jacob to Joseph resembles, for example, the Herald's first words to the Chorus in the *Agamemnon* (Ag. 539, St. 548). He sees similarities between the Greeks and Hebrews when they attribute victory to God (or the Gods), in his comment on line 4 of the *Seven against Thebes* ("For should success be ours, we owe it to Heaven"):

Putabant Gentes victoriam a Diis suis esse, ad eosque referebant. . . .  
[Plane ut Moses apud Josephum, III. 2. *θύσας δὲ ΧΑΡΙΣΤΗΡΙΑ βωμῶν ἰδρύεται ὑκαῖον ὀνομάσας τὸν θεόν.* Ita Graeci Troja direpta τὰ τῆς νίκης χαριστήρια θύουσι, multa scilicet Diis sacrificia peragunt.] (IV, 158)

The pagans thought that victory came from their Gods and used to attribute it to them. [Josephus notes that] . . . Moses, having sacrificed thank-offerings, established a victory altar, calling upon the name of God. So the Greeks, when Troy was plundered, sacrificed thank-offerings for victory.

His choice of parallels is further justified by the "historical" idea continuing into the Renaissance that the Greeks derived some of their metaphors from the early Hebrews.<sup>11</sup> The nets and snares of the *Agamemnon*, for example, he attributes to Hebraic influence, citing Ezekiel 12:13: "My net also will I spread upon him, and he shall be taken in my snare."

In addition, Stanley emphasizes evidence for the immortality of the soul or for belief in God in "pagan" philosophy of any period. He explains Electra's complaint that Agamemnon was not properly buried by referring to the historical context appropriate to the play, but expands the discussion of this scene to consider the existence of the soul and its judgment. Aeschylus' lines further support the idea that "the funeral pyre consumes only the body, not the soul of the deceased person, which he proves to be immortal . . ." ("Rogus funebris absumit corpus tantum, non animam defuncti [quam immortalem esse, nec una cum corpore interire, ex eo probat]" V, 128). Then, citing Plutarch's "On Those Who are Punished Late by the Deity," he concerns himself with that philosopher's belief in reward and punishment after this life:

[ὥστε εἰ μὴθὲν ἔστι τῇ ψυχῇ μετὰ τὴν τελευτὴν, ἀλλὰ καὶ χάριτος πέρας

<sup>11</sup> Ernst Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. W. R. Trask (New York 1953), traces the idea that the Hebrews were the true teachers of the Greek poets and philosophers to the writings of the Alexandrian Jews, p. 211. Allen demonstrates the survival of this idea into the seventeenth century. See especially pp. 30-37.



ἀπάσης καὶ τιμωρίας ὁ θάνατος, μᾶλλον ἂν τις εἶποι τοῖς ταχὺ καλαζομένοις τῶν πονηρῶν καὶ ἀποθνήσκουσι, μαλακῶς καὶ ῥαθύμως χρῆσθαι τὸ δαιμόνιον.](*ibid.*)

If there is nothing to the soul after death, if death is the end of all requital and punishment, one would rather say that the deity deals gently with those of the wicked who are quickly punished and who die.

To strengthen this point, Stanley links Aeschylus, the Psalmist, and the Stoics to consider briefly the value of belief in God. The Aeschylean line "But that men lacked reverence" (*Ag.* 372, *St.* 381) follows the Chorus' consideration of mortals who trample "inviolable sanctities." Stanley immediately cites Psalm 14:1, "The foolish man says in his heart there is no God," and comments favorably, "Stoici ubique per sapientem virum probum intelligunt."

As fully as possible, he is giving his reader the opportunity to consider Aeschylus and other virtuous pagans not only as men familiar with Hebraic customs but as believers in the tenets revealed by natural light before the Incarnation.<sup>12</sup> It is interesting to a modern reader that Stanley is not disturbed by some of the attributes of God which horrified William Empson.<sup>13</sup> Stanley comments straightforwardly:

[Deus malorum ridet insaniam et poenam, Psal. ii. 4. Qui habitat in coelis irridebit eos; ἐκγελάσεται αὐτοῦς, et Dominus subsannabit eos]. (VI, 151)

God laughs at the madness and the punishment of the wicked. Cf. Ps. 2:4, 'He who lives in the heavens will laugh at them and the Lord will deride them'. (*Eum.* 560, *St.* 563)

Stanley often transcends the idea of a stern and punitive deity, however, to suggest that he considers the divine mind a mystery which men can never fully comprehend: he parallels lines 1057-58 (*St.* 1065) of the *Suppliants*, "Why should I attempt to look at the divine mind / A sight without depth" with the Psalmist's "Thy judgments are a great abyss" (Ps. 36:6). The ancients (especially the

<sup>12</sup> Although many scholars can be cited on this point, I prefer Thomas More's discussion of these two central beliefs in *Utopia*. On natural revelation of a Creator, "They [the Utopians] think that like other designers He has exposed the workings of the world to the sight of man (whom alone He created with ability to understand it). . . ." On the afterlife, Utopus "issued severe and careful restrictions against anyone's so falling away from the dignity of human nature as to believe that the soul dies with the body or that the world revolves by chance without divine providence." Trans. by Peter K. Marshall (New York 1965), pp. 85 and 111.

<sup>13</sup> Particularly the "jeering" of the Father and Son, pages 96-97 of *Milton's God*, rev. ed. (London 1965).

"Pythagoreans" and Stoics) do resemble Stanley and his readers, but he emphasizes the beliefs Aeschylus and Renaissance Christians share: humans are responsible for evil fortune, here and hereafter; God laughs at the plight of those who oppose him; and His mind remains unfathomable.

With the possible exception of the Hebraic influence on ancient Greece, Stanley maintains his historical perspective. When he makes a verbal parallel with the Annunciation, the emphasis is simply upon "divine protection," not the Virgin Birth (VI, 180). He draws a careful distinction between pagan lustral rites and Christian baptism (on *Ag.* 1037, *St.* 1046), for example, concerning the "holy water" (*χερμύβων*) which Clytemnestra invites Cassandra to share:

[Quaquam quod innuit Justinus Martyr, Apolog. 2. Ethnicos sc. ritum hunc aqua se aspergendi in ingressu templorum a Christianorum baptismo, daemonum instinctu didicisse, minus verisimile videatur, cum longe antiquior fuerit baptismo iste Gentilium ritus. . . . qui Christum natum saeculis aliquot antecessit]. (III, 247)

Although Justin Martyr, Apolog. 2, suggests that the pagans learned this custom of sprinkling themselves with water at the entrance of their temples from Christian baptism by the inspiration of devils, this seems unlikely since that ritual of the Gentiles was much more ancient. . . . [He goes on to point out that Justin's authority, Theophrastus,] preceded the birth of Christ by several centuries.

Stanley has chosen a long-disputed issue and resolved it with the awareness of historical distance which Allen suggests ". . . in due course fathered a shadowy form of cultural anthropology" (p. 241). The interest in placing unfamiliar customs within some historical context is, perhaps, predictable in sixteenth or seventeenth-century editions, but Stanley is far more meticulous in his historicity than Canter had been.

## II

Stanley's interest in historical accuracy leads to his second major consideration, ancient tragedy as drama intended for performance, in his addressing the question of marriage between cousins in the *Suppliants*. He examines Danaus' argument to his daughters historically by citing Augustine (*Civ. Dei* XV. 16) and Livy, to conclude that "in fact marriages between cousins were not considered illegitimate" (*Su.* 225, *St.* 233). Having accounted for the historical question, he then explains Danaus' strong objections in terms of dramatic motivation: "This is spoken appropriately in the character of Danaus who knew well that these marriages would be fatal for him" ("[Apte

quidem sub persona Danai, quod fatales sibi fore has nuptias bene noverat, hoc dictum est]" II, 116). In the same play Stanley thinks that a dramatic motive is required to explain Pelasgus' ignorance of Io's history when that king questions the Danaides (*Su.* 295 ff., St. 302): "It is astonishing that he makes the Argive king ignorant of the history of Io. But the truth is that he is pretending to be ignorant in order to discover whether the Danaides know the details thoroughly" ("Mire facit Regem Argivum ignarum historiae Ius. Sed fingit potius se ignarum, ut sciat utrum Danaides rem ipsam probe noverint" II, 124). This interest in the motivation of characters within the context of the action recurs as he considers the appropriate excuse for Orestes' absence at the end of the *Agamemnon* (877; St. 886) or for the Chorus' knowledge of the details of Agamemnon's death (*Choeph.* 523, St. 521). This meticulous attention to the character who speaks to another and to his reasons for doing so leads Stanley to the excellent insight praised by Fraenkel, that the Chorus, not a messenger, perceives the entrance of Clytemnestra and salutes her (*Ag.* 266):

Non lac lacti magis simile atque huic locus ille est in Persis, ubi senes Persici, ex quibus constituitur Chorus, de expeditione Xerxis valde solliciti, ut Graeci nostri de Agamemnone, longa adhibita oratione, tandem ingredientem reginam, mutato genere carminis, salutant: quod videntur non animadvertisse qui nuntium hic ingressum, et Trojae expugnationem quam ab accensa face didicerat exponentem, commenti sunt. Quo nihil a poetae mente magis absonum. (III, 182)<sup>14</sup>

Milk is no more like milk than this passage to the one in the *Persae* where the Persian old men who make up the Chorus, very troubled about the expedition of Xerxes, give a long speech and finally salute the queen as she enters, changing the style of the verse. This does not seem to have been noticed by those who have wrongly contrived that a messenger enters here describing the sacking of Troy. . . . Nothing could be more discordant with the poet's intention. . . .

Here the careful attention to similarities in style and characterization in a parallel passage clarify the dramatic interaction of Clytemnestra with the Chorus so that her character — particularly her power, initiative, and cleverness — is strengthened for future readers by the contrast.

In this scene and elsewhere Stanley introduces another of his literary interests: he visualizes the Chorus' behavior. Consistently, he asks his reader to approach Aeschylean drama not only as an art form for reading but as a spectacle actually staged; in fact, he is the

<sup>14</sup> See Fraenkel's discussion of this passage, I, pp. 44-45.

first editor to ask this of his readers. He gives frequent "stage directions," for example, his note on the *Suppliants*, line 710 (St. 718): "Danaus had seen, from the place to which he has been led, the fleet of the Aegyptii pressing toward them" ("[Viderat Danaus a loco in quem deductus fuerat, instare classem Aegyptiorum,] II, 150), or on the *Eumenides*, line 34: "We must understand that the Prophetess, having entered the temple, suddenly returned raving, terrified, and trembling" ("Intellegendum est vatem ingressam templum subito rediisse insanam, pavefactam, et tremementem," VI, 110). He also wants his reader to visualize the prophetic garb of Cassandra, a matter important to the interpretation of a scene he admires not only for its *pathos* but for its *technikon*. The reader is to hear her cries as appropriate for a person inspired by a deity and to observe the laurels and staff she will discard before she, too, becomes a victim. Stanley has even searched Strabo's geographical work to give his readers a description of the Furies: they wore black cloaks, tunics to the feet, and walked with staffs. Furthermore, other commentators notwithstanding, he insists that there were fifty of them "but the people, terrified by this number, thenceforth reduced the number to fifteen by law" ("sed consternatus hoc numero populus lege redegit exinde tragicum chorum ad quindecim," VI, 101). The accuracy of his authority, Pollux, may be questioned, but Stanley wants his reader to share the horror of seeing this Chorus. Stanley's concern with visualization of the drama does not appear in other textual editors; it is worth noting that William R. Parker admired the same quality in the work of Stanley's great contemporary, John Milton.<sup>15</sup>

In his application of dramatic theory, Stanley repeats some of the Aristotelian and Horatian ideas of his time; often, however, his careful reading of Aeschylus demands the clarification of a concept or outright disagreement with an earlier theorist. His definition of tragedy at the beginning of the commentary on the *Eumenides* is worth citing because of its scope as well as its contradiction of such influential men as Joseph Scaliger and Daniel Heinsius:<sup>16</sup>

Non est tragoediae necessarium ut semper habeat horrendos rerum exitus, et mortes et caedes et venena; Alcestis Euripidis in exitu omnia habet laeta; ostendit enim Alcestin Admeti uxorem a morte auxilio

<sup>15</sup> William Riley Parker, *Milton's Debt to Greek Tragedy in Samson Agonistes* (Baltimore 1937), p. 143.

<sup>16</sup> Scaliger's definition of tragedy as "Imitatio per actiones illustris fortunae, exitu infelici, oratione graui metrica" is cited and evaluated by Bernard Weinberg, *A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance* (Chicago 1961), II, 746. For a discussion of Heinsius' idea that "the happy ending is undesirable," see Paul R. Sellin, *Daniel Heinsius and Stuart England* (Oxford 1968), pp. 139-40.

Herculis liberatam. Quae vero tragoediam χαρακτηρίζουσι duo sunt. Primo, Personae, quas esse oportet aut Deos, aut heroes, aut reges, aut viros clarissimos, non vero e plebecula aut notae inferioris. . . . Secundo, Res quae repraesentatur, quam non oportet esse e communi vita depromptam, sed grandem et severam. Haec si succedant fabulae, quiscunque exitus sit, tragoedia est. Idem et de Supplicibus dicendum. (VI, 99)

It is not essential that tragedy always have dreadful conclusions, deaths, murders, and poisonings. The *Alcestis* of Euripides has an ending which is entirely happy, for it shows Alcestis, the wife of Admetus, freed from death by the help of Hercules. In fact, there are two things which characterize a tragedy: First, the characters, who should be Gods, heroes, kings, or distinguished men, but certainly not from the common people or of a lower rank. . . . Second, the events represented, which should not be drawn from common life but should be lofty and serious. If these things are in a play, whatever the conclusion is, it is a tragedy. The same must be said of the *Supplices*.

Stanley's first criterion appears in medieval interpretations<sup>17</sup> but his applications certainly do not. A modern reader is surprised that he considers the *Suppliants* a completed tragedy rather than part of a trilogy in which bloodshed is yet to occur. However, Stanley seldom speculates about Aeschylean trilogies. He approaches the question when he calls the *Oresteia* a tetralogy whose central figure is Orestes (*Choeph.* 660, St. 666), but he examines each play separately and does not trace the progression throughout the sequence of plays.<sup>18</sup> His application of the definition is thus to the *Eumenides*, rather than to the *Oresteia* as a whole. In the same decade Milton's preface to *Samson Agonistes* commends David Paraeus' discussion of Revelation as a "high and stately tragedy." Stanley's criteria, applied to either work, permit not only a "happy ending" but a renewed cosmic order to be termed "tragic."<sup>19</sup> The ready admission of these works to the genre suggests that the tragic frontiers were wider for these men than for other theorists and, perhaps, for us.

Stanley also clarifies the concept of *anagnorisis* when he defends

<sup>17</sup> Joel E. Spingarn, *Literary Criticism in the Renaissance* (1908; repr. New York 1963), listed the idea as "medieval," p. 42. D. W. Lucas, ed., *Aristotle, Poetics* (Oxford 1968), agrees with Stanley's criterion to the degree that "heroes and 'persons of quality' " are proper tragic subjects, commenting on *σπουδαίους ἢ φαύλους*, 48a 2, p. 63. Subsequent references to the *Poetics* are to Lucas' edition and commentary.

<sup>18</sup> Consideration of the trilogy problem is rare before the nineteenth century. A landmark is Friedrich G. Welcker's *Die Aeschyleische Trilogie* (Darmstadt 1824).

<sup>19</sup> For a distinction between Aeschylus' plays and other Greek "tragedy," see C. J. Herington, "Aeschylus: the Last Phase," *Arion* iv, 3 (Autumn, 1965), especially pp. 399-402.

the frequently parodied recognition of Orestes and Electra in the *Choephoroi*. He quotes Aristotle: "The fourth type of *anagnorisis* [arises] from comparison or inference (*ek syllogismou*), as in the *Choephoroi* because someone similar has arrived and someone similar is no one but Orestes" (*Poet.* 1455a. 4-5, although Stanley places it in Chapter 11). To develop his own discussion of the concept, Stanley corrects the scholiast on Aristophanes' *Clouds* to state that Aristophanes is indeed making fun of Aeschylus,

nec merito id quidem. Non enim Electra ex similitudine crinium statim colligit Orestem esse qui τὸν βόστρυχον dedicavit, sed satis apte rationis calculos ponit; neminem scilicet illic crines depositurum nisi qui Agamemnonem cognatione prope contingeret: non id facturam Clytemnestram, nec a se factum esse, ideo ab Oreste Electrae simili. (V, 119)

. . . although this criticism is not deserved. For Electra does not immediately gather from the similarity of the hair that it was Orestes who dedicated the lock, but she makes her deductions appropriately enough; she says that no one was likely to lay hair there unless he were close to Agamemnon in kinship; Clytemnestra would not do this and she had not done it herself; therefore it was Orestes, who was like Electra, who had done it.

In the process he has placed Electra's reasoning into the form of a logical syllogism more precise than Aristotle's words suggest. He then insists that this attention to reasoning is essential for properly interpreting Aristotle: "and this is what Aristotle means when he says that this *anagnorisis* occurred through *syllogismos*, not from comparison, but from logical argument," an interpretation D. W. Lucas has accepted in his commentary on the *Poetics*, p. 63. In addition, Stanley disapproves the introduction of comic matters into tragedy when he mentions Euripides' parody of Aeschylus' scene in *Electra*, attacking him for twisting the earlier tragedian's ὑφασμα (woven goods, such as the piece of handwork Orestes shows Electra) into "cloaks and robes. . . . This type of quibbling is more suitable to the witty style of Aristophanes than to the seriousness of tragedy" ("per πέλους et φάρεα explicans. Quod cavillationis genus Aristophanicae potius lepiditati quam tragoediae gravitati convenit," V, 122). Commenting thus upon a particular scene Stanley has clarified the "fourth type of *anagnorisis*" for critical theorists at the same time that he criticizes Aeschylus' parodists, particularly Euripides who has violated tragic decorum.

Stanley's careful reading of the text elicits the consideration of *ēthos* as he defends the decorum of Cilissa's rambling in her grief

about the care she gave Orestes in infancy (*Choeph.* 749, St. 747). He praises Aeschylus by comparing his treatment of a simple character of lower birth with Vergil's similar treatment in his fifth *Eclogue* of "that simplicity which best characterizes a shepherd and country people. . . . Full of the same type of simplicity in this *locus*. Although the words may not seem sufficiently consistent with each other, nevertheless the passage must not be considered defective since it suits a doting old woman all the more for that reason":

simplicitatem illam quae pastorem et rusticos χαρακτηρίζει optime exprimit. . . . Ejusmodi simplicitatis plenus est hic locus, qui, licet verba non satis inter se congruere videantur, mutilus tamen non censendus, cum eo magis deliram anum deceat. (V, 153)

Stanley's emphasis upon the suitability of speech for "a doting old woman" suggests that he sees the *ēthos* of a character as the expression of a generalized type. He supports the idea further with Aristotle's distinction (*Rhet.* 2. 12) between the relative volatility of young men and the mature hesitation of older men, applying the contrast perceptively to Vergil's portrayal of Turnus and Latinus in the *Aeneid* (XII. 11 ff.). In his actual definition of *ēthos* Stanley is willing to consider the uniqueness of the individual within certain limitations, "for *ēthē* vary in accordance with age, sex, fortune, country, emotions and also the nature which is particular and individual to each person":

variantur enim ἦθη pro ratione aetatis, sexus, fortunae, patriae, affectuum, et etiam naturae unicuique propriae et individuae. (V, 152)

His specific examples from Aeschylus usually emphasize the general type the character fits. His illustrations from the *Agamemnon* are interesting from this point of view; they are also interesting because he makes no suggestion that Agamemnon fell as the result of hubris or any character flaw:

sic alia est persona, aliud ἦθος senis, aliud juvenis; aliud viri generosi et candidi, qualis erat Agamemnon; aliud mulieris adulatricis et vafrae, qualis Clytemnestra. (V, 152)

so there is one *persona* and one *ēthos* for an old man, another for a young man; one for a noble and open-hearted man, such as Agamemnon was; another for a fawning and cunning woman, such as Clytemnestra. . . .

Similarly, he accounts for the Chorus' hesitation in the murder scene, appropriately considering the Chorus as "characters." They are old men and senators; as a result they waver and do not act rapidly. In his discussion of the *Seven against Thebes*, however, Stanley is reluctant

to generalize his statements about a character to the point that he makes the "type" inconsistent with the individual variation the play itself reveals. The character who receives the most specific treatment is Amphiaraus, whose shield is pure and without a device "as he himself was," and whose words, characterized as "wise and reverent," are reserved for appropriate disclosures, including prophecy, "as if . . . Amphiaraus would not have used that dissuasion to his fellow soldiers unless he had foreseen that they would be conquered":

[Ad orationem prudentissimam et piissimam Amphiarai, quam recensuerat nuntius, referenda haec sunt: quasi diceret Eteocles, Amphiaraus ad commilitones suos dehortatione illa non usus fuerat, nisi eos victos fore praevidisset]. (IV, 224)

Amphiaraus may still be generalized, but he is no longer simply the exemplar of "the prudent man" a previous editor had made him.<sup>20</sup>

In other applications of critical theory Stanley reflects the opinions common to his period. He corrects the hypothesis to the *Agamemnon* by pointing out that Aeschylus does not show the murder itself but removes violent action from the stage, a familiar enough Horatian interpretation. He is also concerned with a certain verisimilitude in dramatic time, especially in the speed of Agamemnon's death and burial: "However, he makes a mistake, as was observed by G. Vossius . . . 'When Agamemnon, according to Aeschylus, is killed and buried with such speed the actor is scarcely given time to catch his breath' " ("Peccat tamen, ut observatum est eruditissimo Ger. Vossio, Instit. Poet. I. p. 22 'cum apud eum Agamemnon tanta celeritate et occiditur et tumulatur, ut actori vix respirandi tempus detur,'" III, 270). Stanley's desire to make dramatic time believable recurs when he adds that Aeschylus has been "deservedly" criticized for having Agamemnon return on the same day Troy was captured. On this point he expresses his preference for Seneca's handling of time "more carefully" in his *Agamemnon*. It is the only "unity" which troubles Stanley, but he would like to see less compression in Aeschylus' play. A concern for historical verisimilitude recurs throughout the notes on the *Persians* because Stanley continues to observe that Aeschylus' *Persians* follow Greek rites and customs: "a fault, but nothing is more common in the poets, Homer not excepted":

Hos ritus non ex more Persarum, sed Graecorum, describit. 'Ἀμόφρημα, sed quo nihil poetis, Homerum non excipio, frequentius. (VII, 206)

<sup>20</sup> Joannes Caselius, *Septem ad Thebas Duces Aeschyli Tragoedia* (Stephan Myliander: Rostock 1582), is the only preceding editor who discusses the characters of this play. Eteocles is the exemplar of the public man, the ruler (sig. A3<sup>v</sup>); Amphiaraus is the prudent "private" man who "miniméque videri, sed bonus esse velit," sig. A3.



In addition to his consideration of dramatic motivation and theory, Stanley provides a most thorough analysis of Aeschylean style by an earlier editor. In his dedicatory epistle he echoes earlier commentators to observe that Aeschylus is *grandiloquus*, but he adds that this style may sometimes be compressed or restrained (*castigate*) and be employed to convey weight and seriousness (*pondus*). His comments on specific passages develop each of these observations. He further affirms that the grand and lofty style is important for the tragedian's art; for support he cites "Longinus," an authority increasingly important in England but not mentioned by the earlier continental editors. Another justification of the elevated style, for Stanley, is the value of varying the choice of words in order to avoid tautology. His own careful reading, however, permits him to criticize the scholiast's remarks (on *Frogs* 814) about the "lofty" style in the first six lines of the *Prometheus Bound*: "Certainly in the first four verses there is nothing particularly sonorous, nothing loftier than the style of Euripides or indeed of Sophocles" ("certe in quatuor prioribus nihil admodum sonorum, nihil quod supra Euripidem, nedum supra Sophoclem, se attollat," I, 158, on line 1). Stanley's careful textual reading, in addition, does not confine him to stylistic comments about Aeschylean grandiloquence without the examination of passages of brief but effective statement. He calls attention to the *breviloquentia* which emphasizes each word when Clytemnestra stands over her husband's body and addresses the Chorus: "This is Agamemnon, my husband — a corpse, the work of this right hand . . ." (Ag. 1404-06, St. 1413). He also admires a section of the *Eumenides* (lines 45 ff.), suggesting that Aeschylus frequently follows rather long, harsh, or unfamiliar words (*duriuscula*) with those familiar to the common people.

We have already noted one of Stanley's observations of stylistic qualities distinctive to Aeschylus: the "kennings" which he ascribes to Pythagorean obscurity. He also joins Petrus Victorius<sup>21</sup> in admiring Aeschylus' repeated *paronomasia*, citing not only names of characters but even such instances as line 717 of the *Prometheus*, "[the river] *hybristes*, not wrongly named." Other rhetorical figures are noted and usually approved within the commentary: examples of *trlatio*, *epi-*

<sup>21</sup> Stanley is citing Victorius' *Variae Lectiones*, XXXVI. 24, "[Nam argumentum ab etymo non est leve aut contemnendum. . . . Sed etiam Aeschylus, non poeta solum, sed doctissimus vir ac merito philosophus existimatus, utitur eodem argumento in eadem persona notanda, vitioque cui affinis erat demonstrando, in fabula cui nomen est Ἐπτα ἐπι Θήβας. Atque id non semel: unde etiam perspicitur ipsum id non leve nec nugatorium existimasse; neque enim tam crebro eodem se contulisset,]" IV, 220-21.

*phonema*, and *sarcasmos*. "Tautological" figures are defended by referring to Aeschylus as an imitator of Homer. The only rhetorical device Stanley disapproves is the anachronism of referring to Scythia in line 2 of the *Prometheus Bound* since the name is derived from a yet unborn descendant of Hercules. Criticism of this error is common, even in the *scholia*;<sup>22</sup> in Stanley's case the meticulous attention he devotes to Greek history may account for his objection. One of the most interesting combinations of historical knowledge with legal rhetoric is Stanley's comment upon Orestes' defense before the Areopagus (*Eum.* 443, St. 446): "There is a great deal of the poet's skill (*ars*), and of his wisdom (*prudencia*), in this speech of Orestes; for in such a short speech he skillfully treats the arguments necessary in a capital case":

[*Multa est in hac Orestis ῥησει tum ars tum prudentia poetae: fabre enim in tanta breviloquentia necessaria in causa capitali argumenta persequitur.*] (VI, 144)

Throughout the commentary Stanley has confined his rhetorical discussion to the most familiar terms and emphasized particularly Aeschylean choices; here his comprehension of the effective use of Greek legal rhetoric within a drama anticipates a more sophisticated analysis, such as Bernard Knox has applied to the legal rhetoric of Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*.<sup>23</sup>

### III

Stanley's political glosses are valuable as the observations of an educated and fervent Royalist three years after the Restoration. (His *Psalterium Carolinum*, rendering the *Eikon Basilike* in verse, may have been known to Milton.<sup>24</sup>) In other notes he interprets Aeschylus according to national and international law, referring to his major European authority, Hugo Grotius (*De Jure Belli ac Pacis*), a man whom Milton also admired.

Before a consideration of these major emphases, it is valuable to examine one indignant exclamation which shows Stanley's understanding of the *Prometheus Bound*. He is moved by his reading of Zeus' seduction of Io to exclaim that power, now economic and political, still has its privileges in affecting young women's lives: "Rulers, sometimes by force, sometimes by gifts, sometimes by the

<sup>22</sup> Pedantic attention to *anachronismos* is regular in the scholiasts: e.g., the Medicean scholia on *Prom.* 411 and 846 or *Eum.* 566.

<sup>23</sup> Bernard M. W. Knox, *Oedipus at Thebes* (New Haven 1957; repr. 1966), pp. 79-98.

<sup>24</sup> Crump, p. liv.

magnificence of their royal apparel, easily dazzle the eyes of women, sway their minds, and overcome their chastity. *Sic et magnates!*"

[Reges qua vi, qua muneribus, qua etiam regalis cultus pompa, foeminarum oculos facile perstringunt, animos inflectunt, pudicitiam expugnant. *Sic et magnates!*] (I, 249)<sup>25</sup>

From a literary standpoint Stanley's comment diminishes an objection directed at this play by Francesco Robortello, whose contribution to Aeschylean criticism is noted above. Stanley's comment glosses line 901 ff. (St. 903), the Chorus' reaction to the story of Io, expressing the desire to marry within their own rank and avoid the attention of the "mightier gods" — a passage Robortello considered outside the central action. Stanley appears quite willing to see that the choral observation is natural after Io's story of torment and Prometheus' prediction of future trials before she will find peace. Politically, however, he goes beyond the account of the play (consistent to this point with "sometimes by force") to describe men who resemble Tudor or Stuart courtiers more nearly than they do Zeus.

In his quotations from Grotius, Stanley's royalist sympathies are suggested by his emphases and omissions. He chooses for exposition the Danaides' idea that Pelasgus is an absolute monarch, "You are the state; you are the people" (*Su.* 370, St. 375), by quoting the Dutch humanist's juridical statement at length. Grotius is taking up an historical question about the presence of absolute monarchs in antiquity, but portions of the statement do Pelasgus an injustice in this play. According to the quotation, both Biblical and Roman precedents make anointed kings responsible only to God: "Hence the anointed king is said to be above the people, above the inheritance of the Lord, above Israel." Grotius continues to assert the "truly kingly" authority in the Roman Empire: "Hence the dictum of M. Antoninus, the philosopher: 'No one but God alone can be a judge of a *princeps*.'"<sup>26</sup> Stanley further cites Grotius on the point that Aeschylus' Argos, unlike Athens, was an absolute monarchy. Grotius had not accounted for, and Stanley does not choose to gloss, the passages Milton chose from the same play to refute Salmasius in the *Defensio Prima*: Pelasgus' refusal to make an agreement on his sole authority (*Su.* 368-69) and his obligation to consult an assembly of citizens before he makes any decision concerning the suppliants (398-

<sup>25</sup> The comment follows discussion of an emendation by Robortello.

<sup>26</sup> Stanley's citation of Hugo Grotius, *De Jure Belli ac Pacis*, i.e. Sect. 8., "[Hinc rex unctus dicitur super populum, super haereditatem Domini, super Israellem. . . . Hinc illud dictum Marci Antonini Philosophi; Nemo nisi solus Deus iudex principis esse potest,]" II, 132.

401; 517-18).<sup>27</sup> Thus Stanley selects his evidence from the comments of the Danaïdes favorable to a strong monarchy and remains silent on the speeches revealing Pelasgus' clear limitation of his own authority.

Stanley, Grotius, and Milton are closer to agreement when Stanley considers Pelasgus' comment (*Su.* 390, *St.* 395) that the Danaïdes are subject to the law of their own country:

[Magnus vero Grotius . . . 'quod si id cuius accusantur supplices non sit vetitum jure naturae aut gentium, res dijudicanda erit ex jure civili populi unde veniunt, quod optime ostendit Aeschylus Supplicibus'.]  
(II, 134)

The great Grotius . . . interpreted the passage thus: 'But if the crime of which the defendants are accused is not forbidden by the law of nature or by international law, the case must be judged according to the civil law from which [the defendants] come, as Aeschylus shows very well in the *Supplices*'.

The concepts of the *jus naturae* and the *jus gentium* are familiar enough by the time Stanley is writing; he has already suggested that marriages between cousins would not violate basic moral absolutes. In a deceptively similar way Milton places the concepts into Samson's rebuke to Dalila:

. . . if aught against my life,  
Thy country sought of thee, it sought unjustly,  
Against the law of nature, law of nations.  
(*Samson Agonistes* 888-90)<sup>28</sup>

Samson's argument is more subtle, however, because his "civil" and "natural" law are Judaic; hence the Philistine government is not a moral or legal sovereignty to be obeyed. The *Suppliants* could raise a similar question in the argument of the Danaïdes (lines 395 ff.), but Stanley does not annotate their appeals to *dike* or to the gods in terms of the *jus naturae*.

Stanley, throughout his commentary, has considered both the predictability of the physical cosmos and the universality of the moral absolutes within "natural law." But he places the miraculous on a different level of consideration. For example, he makes a Biblical

<sup>27</sup> For Milton's discussion of this play, I am referring to his *Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio*, ed. Clinton W. Keyes, in *The Works of John Milton* (New York 1932), VII, 307-11. The lines cited from this play are those he quotes and translates from Greek to Latin in his argument.

<sup>28</sup> Milton's poetry is quoted from Hughes's edition, p. 572. For Milton's prose discussion of Samson's motivation, see the *Defensio Prima*, ed. cit., VII, 219.

parallel to the dialogue of Prometheus and Hermes (*Prom.* 1001, St. 1000), but draws his distinction carefully:

Hinc apud Evangelistas, ut Matth. VIII. 27. Ἄνεμοι καὶ ἡ θάλασσα ὑπακούουσιν αὐτῷ, non sine specie proverbii, de re quae praeter ordinem naturae. (I, 256)

So in the Evangelist (Matt. 8:27) "Winds and sea obey him," not without the appearance of a proverb on a topic beyond the law of nature.

Stanley, then, has considered the "law of nations" and the "law of nature" as permanent concepts applicable to Aeschylus and his characters as well as to the seventeenth century. However, he retains his original reverence for Pythagorean and Christian "mystery" by suggesting that divine revelation cannot be limited by these laws.

Accepting as fact the survival and reprinting of Stanley's criticism into the early nineteenth century, how are we to assess its value? Not only did he provide the first popular edition of Aeschylus; he supplied a necessary transition in interpreting "pagan" tragedy. His Pythagorean allegoresis is tempered with the awareness of historical distance: he also wants to know what Greek and Roman geography, customs, and beliefs actually were. He begins the close analysis of Aeschylus' unique style, and challenges the poetic theory available to him when his author's text so requires. In many respects Fraenkel's commendation of a famous later scholar may be applied to Thomas Stanley's seventeenth-century endeavor: "For him there was no such thing as a watertight compartment of textual criticism, another of metre, another of history of religion, another of ancient law, and so forth: . . . they had all to be subservient and to co-operate to one purpose only, the adequate interpretation of the text in hand."<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Fraenkel is discussing Wilamowitz, whose stature in the history of classical scholarship certainly surpasses Stanley's. I cite only the comment evaluating the German scholar's literary criticism (I, 60-61), which summarizes an attitude and purpose applicable to Stanley in the seventeenth-century context discussed in this paper.

