

Klytemnestra's Bairns: Adapting Aeschylus into Scots

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Any translation or adaptation into Scots is, perforce, a political act which asserts the validity of a language that may be described as the late Isaac Bashevis Singer described the Yiddish in which he wrote: 'I would not say that Yiddish is dead. Neither would I say that it is alive'.¹ This essay in part examines the implications of that statement in relation to *Klytemnestra's Bairns*, my adaptation of the trilogy by Aeschylus known as *The Oresteia*. The first act of *Klytemnestra's Bairns* was performed during the 1991 Edinburgh Festival Fringe, and the first full production of the entire play was staged in and around the old Observatory building on Calton Hill during the 1993 Fringe. The full text was published by Diehard Press, Edinburgh, in 1993.²

Little is known of Aeschylus, yet his plays offer the only instance where the magistrates of Athens were empowered to provide a chorus for anyone wishing to perform them.³ The confident faith of Athens in Aeschylus' plays has never been seriously questioned, and subsequent adaptations and other borrowings attest to the enduring relevance of Aeschylus' vision and his story of the fate of the House of Atreus at the end of the Trojan War. But why adapt into Scots a set of plays that have already been presented on the modern stage in several versions? When I first came to read *The Oresteia* I was struck by their psychological as well as their poetical truthfulness. Here was a text that depicted people very much in their essential selves, with very real emotional responses. It was also a story central to the subsequent development of European culture and impossible therefore to ignore. The religious ceremonies around which Aeschylus crafted his trilogy and related them to the development of Athens as a centre of law and government celebrated Athens as an exemplar to the rest of Greece: from goddess-centred fertility rites Aeschylus developed a drama that encoded a triumph of (man-made) law over tribal custom. If one believes at all both in the validity of translating or adapting into Scots and in the capabilities of Scots as a medium, adapting *The Oresteia* seemed a challenge waiting for someone to do their best by it.

In *The Oresteia*, Agamemnon, joint king of Argos, is drawn by ties of blood into the quest by his brother and fellow king, Menelaus, for the latter's wife, Helen, who has eloped with Paris, son of Priam, the ruler of Troy. The fleet drawn up to sail for Troy lies becalmed at Aulis, and the prophet Calchas tells the kings that the sacrifice demanded is Iphigenia, Agamemnon's daughter. In spite of protests by Iphigenia's mother, Klytemnestra, Agamemnon publicly sacrifices the girl, then the ships sail for Troy. Klytemnestra nurses her anger and resentment of Agamemnon's betrayal of familial and human ties, and she takes as her lover Aegisthus, half-brother of Agamemnon and Menelaus, whose own brothers were slaughtered by Agamemnon's father. On his return at the end of the war, Agamemnon, and Cassandra, the daughter of Priam and a captive he has brought from Troy, are both murdered by Klytemnestra. This ends *Agamemnon*, the first part of the trilogy.

The second play, known as *The Choephoroi* or *Libation Bearers*, opens with the characters of the title, along with Agamemnon's surviving daughter, Elektra, bringing offerings to Agamemnon's tomb. They are spied upon by Orestes - the son of Klytemnestra and Agamemnon, who was sent into exile at the beginning of the war - and Pylades, his tutor and travelling companion. The pair reveal themselves to an initially disbelieving Elektra

and Chorus, who then relate the woes of Argos under the rule of Aegisthus. Realising that the stories he had heard of his father's murder are true, Orestes vows to be revenged upon Klytemnestra and Aegisthus. He concocts a ruse with Pylades to pretend that they are travellers who have been asked to inform Orestes' kindred of his death. When Klytemnestra interviews the pair and hears of her son's death she is completely overcome. Aegisthus, however, welcomes the removal of the last possible threat to his continued rule in Argos. Orestes deceives his way into the palace of Aegisthus and Klytemnestra and kills them both, only to discover that however justified he may believe himself to be, he cannot escape the wrath of the Furies - the spirits who haunt those who murder their own blood kin. This second play of the trilogy ends with Orestes leaving Elektra in the care of Pylades as he flees the Furies, who are dedicated to pursuing him to death.

The final play, usually known in English as *The Kindly Ones*, opens with Orestes seeking temporary refuge at the shrine of Apollo, where the Furies, who have been in pursuit for some years, almost catch up with him. Fleeing to Athens, Orestes throws himself at the mercy of the goddess Athena. Here the play takes a different turn, as Aeschylus uses the ensuing trial sequence as a demonstration of the power of Athenian justice. Athena selects twelve citizens to judge the complex case of Orestes and makes it clear that this is the beginning of human as opposed to divine justice.⁴ The Furies, angered by the setting aside of ancient custom and thwarted of their prey, are offered guardianship of Athens by Athena, although the power they may enjoy seems equivocal.

In approaching *The Oresteia* I found particularly useful the analysis of infant behaviour outlined by psychologist Melanie Klein. Indeed, Klein wrote an essay, 'Some Reflections on *The Oresteia*',⁵ where she applies that analysis to Orestes. Part of the basis of Kleinian therapy lies in seeing infant behaviour as cyclical in its relation to the mother or main parent. The child will love its mother unreservedly as long as it has the mother's undivided attention. Loss of this attention causes the child to resent and *in extremis* hate the mother, but, as the child achieves a stronger self-identity it is possible for the child to feel guilt for the negative feelings harboured about the mother and to seek ways to compensate for these feelings that may cause the mother to go away again. Anyone observing the behaviour of a young child who has become aware that its parent believes its behaviour to have been less than desirable will recognise the behaviour pattern here. The tale of a man who revenges the death of his father on his mother, feels a deep sense of guilt for what he has done, and seeks forgiveness, seems to me to echo Kleinian analysis. This contributed to my interest in *The Oresteia* and influenced my approach to adapting it for the stage with the focus on Klytemnestra's children.⁶

Since I do not have Classical Greek, in deciding to render *The Oresteia* into Scots I had to find suitable translations upon which I could base my adaptation. I was familiar with the versions by Robert Lowell and Philip Vellacot which, although produced several decades ago, seemed to chime well with each other yet provided some useful contrasts, too. I also consulted the translations by Tony Harrison, Robert Fagles and Gilbert Murray, but I found the sense of the Lowell and Vellacott translations to be closer to what I felt to be right for the kind of interpretation I wished to convey in my own adaptation. What I wanted was a text that would at least hint at the origins of *The Oresteia* without unduly or unrealistically altering the plot.

I also had to settle on a suitable Scots medium for my purposes. To date, Modern Scots seems unable to develop a vocabulary that will allow it to discuss intellectual concepts in a currently acceptable form. For me, the strength of Scots lies in its immediacy, its ability to

hit emotional targets with remarkable precision and concision, and, despite its limitations in carrying complex intellectual cargoes, its flexibility of response to altered circumstances. Scots is also an excellent medium for irony, sarcasm, and those forms of humour that rely on juxtaposition and a sense of the ridiculous in all human struggling.⁷

I came to Scots late, and as a literary language, through English teachers who introduced their pupils to William Dunbar and Lewis Grassie Gibbon. I realise from the less happy experience of others how privileged we were. But it was only when I came to read Sydney Goodsir Smith and more especially Robert Garioch that I began to appreciate the possibilities of Scots. In spite of an Edinburgh childhood, and a later recognition of the splendid vernacular Garioch employed, Edinburgh demotic wisnae ma Scots. An 'Edimbourgeois' education, complicated by sojourns in coastal Angus and rural Aberdeenshire, none of which were long enough to give me real facility with the spoken Scots of these areas, makes ownership for me of any one variant of Scots impossible. I have a partial knowledge of some varieties of Scots, and lack of a specific Scots. However, I regard this as a source of literary strength, particularly in the case of *The Oresteia*.

The plays feature a captive foreign princess (Cassandra), an exile (Orestes) and a stranger (Orestes' companion Pylades). Here, it seemed, was an ideal opportunity to assert the positive values of some of the varieties of language I had heard, read and used over several years and to give them a context which, despite originating in a text with which few might be familiar, would yet be sufficiently accessible to be appreciated and understood by Scots speakers, non-Scots speakers, and non-Scots alike. I would try to produce a text that was comprehensible for audiences and actors, but which would avoid the kind of 'dictionary-raiding Scots' that sometimes seems more concerned with lexicographic pyrotechnics than with expressing thought, feeling or emotion. Hence, I set out to write in a form of Scots that I hoped would be comprehensible to as many people as possible, whether familiar with Scots or not, and which would at the same time be consistent with its own compositional framework and allow for other language variants within the text.⁸ It's mebbe no the kin o Scots aa scribes an makars wid agree wi, but it seemed tae me the richt wey tae gang about it. For a text as dramatically and psychologically rich as *The Oresteia* I wanted to avoid archaisms, or words or phrases which I judged might be incomprehensible to a modern audience, unless these could be contextualised in such a way that I could reasonably hope an audience would understand them, if not immediately, then at least upon repetition within the text. How far I succeeded I can only leave the audience or reader of *Klytemnestra's Bairns* to judge.

It may be helpful at this point to offer two examples of speeches, examining each of them in turn before looking at other aspects of the adaptation. The first of these is Klytemnestra describing the fires that have signalled the fall of Troy:

Troas' brennin touers an waas
Wis signal tae licht anither pyre.
At licht anither. An anither still.
Frae roch tae ridge,
Frae ridge tae hill.
Til the licht stretched awa,
Ower an across the Firth tae here.
Sae noo the bairns o Argos
Maun ken the darg o bauld Agamemnon
Troas his peyed. Redded noo are Menelaus' wrangs.⁹

As I have said, one of my concerns was to produce a text that aimed to be generally comprehensible. Hence, despite the richness of Scots, as evidenced by dictionaries and literary products, *Klytemnestra's Bairns* has a comparatively limited vocabulary. Certain words are repeated throughout the text both to aid comprehension and to play on their different nuances and meanings where possible. For example, a word in this speech, *redded*, is frequently used in *Klytemnestra's Bairns* to signify order and a 'tidying up' in both the literal and figurative senses. In addition to familiarising audiences and actors to the vocabulary by such repeated use, this allowed me to maximise the value of certain words chosen by placing them in as many different contexts as possible - contexts which are sometimes unusual but not inappropriate. In the above speech, for example, *darg* is used in a related sense to its meaning of 'work' or 'duty', but the context gives it a certain unusual resonance. The word *brennin* ('burning') was also intended to resonate at different points in the text, partly as a reminder to the audience of the compulsion toward and results of that vengeance which drives the action of *The Oresteia* forward, but partly also to reinforce the audience's understanding of the word by repetition. This may appear to diminish any value in using Scots - and even to deny it as a language - yet I would argue that part of the strength of Scots lies in its 'restricted growth'. A language shorn of prevarication and euphemism of civilisation seemed to me exactly right for a society, such as that in *The Oresteia*, stumbling uncomprehendingly toward them. A further consideration is that, while 'literary Scots' has a remarkable linguistic richness, this is most easily enjoyed where it is possible to re-read or listen again to achieve full comprehension. Theatre is a different medium from poetry and prose and it demands that unfamiliar words or phrases do not impede an audience's understanding of the action. [10](#)

I hope that anyone reading through the above short speech will gain some idea of the effect at which I aimed: the creation of dignity by simplicity. The essential power of any 'simple' language, I believe, lies in its capacity to empower itself and its users; in this case by the sharpness and clarity of description which can be employed in a language whose imagery substantially derives from a non-urban and non-literate society. However, any composition intended as 'literary' is also a construction of its author; that is, it is a language variant invented to perform a specific task. To pretend that *Klytemnestra's Bairns* is actually representative of contemporary Scots speech would be as specious as to pretend that it was entirely the product of a particular literary tradition in Scots. It owes much to both these sources, and thereby to many people, whether writers or speakers of Scots, or both.

In this second speech, Klytemnestra is telling the bemused Chorus of the arrival of Agamemnon:

Kin ye no hear? Are ye aa deaf?
Yon's the soond o oars cuttin watter!
The daith-rattle o Troas is the maitter
oan the lips o thae whae are returnin.
There's been clash o hoo best tae divide its gowd an siller,
its airtfu hingins an its stane-wark,
at maiked the pow'r o Troas tae aa the world -
aa whae passed aneath its portals - ambassadeur,
traiveller or sodger. Troas is doon,
an lik a wrastler at's spent,
winnae, nor cannae rise again. [11](#)

It may seem that a number of the words here are less than familiar to contemporary Scots: words such as *gowd*, *siller*, *daith* and *clash*.¹² Yes and no; for my impression is that words like these are still occasionally employed, and can certainly all be found in use in our folk tradition, which impinges on the consciousness of far more Scots than the literary tradition generally does. *Airtfu hingins* (tapestries) and *stane-wark* (sculpture) are inventions of mine designed to indicate the imagined luxury of the Trojan capital. Such inventions may seem to run counter to my aim of accessibility, but by creating them in an area where there is poverty in Scots vocabulary I hoped to suggest a similar poverty in that of the Argoseans, whose society was unused to displays of material wealth and therefore lacked a vocabulary to describe such wealth adequately. Scots, as with all languages and language variants, is a prisoner of its speakers' pasts, which in this case means a less than extensive vocabulary where the plastic and applied arts are concerned. I may produce a chorus of denial and disapproval for this observation, but the reality of it is one reason why so much of this essay has so far been written in English.

Hivin scrieded sae muckle aboot yasin Scots at maist fowk wid ken or fin weys tae unnerstaun, there's aye words at come at ye roon a corner an fin their way in onyhoo - *lounder* bein een o em. The Herald o Agamemnon, explaining to the Chorus the storm which has wrecked the Argosean fleet, invokes the justice of the Gods, who 'socht tae lounder us lik bairns/fir aa the shame we hid tae Troas brocht'.¹³ *Lounder* is a wurd at maist fowk micht wonder at, tho it soounded sae richt at it wis yased in spite o bein maistly unkennt. Sound and context, I believed would convey the meaning in such instances. The English alternative, 'punish', would, I felt, have had less onomatopoeic impact and would have less successfully conveyed the sense of being treated like children by the Gods.

Scots is also a tongue which can express the humorous most effectively. Apollo opens the *Agamemnon* by speaking directly to the audience. He finds that he has to remind them:

Apollo am I namit. A Goad. At is famit
Fir mony a bauld an craft-lik deed.¹⁴

Try speaking the lines aloud, observing the punctuation, and listen to the result. Whether god speaking to audience or character speaking to god, the reductive humour arises from the familiarity of address and the implied intimacy between characters - or between actors and audience. In contrast, the exchanges between Klytemnestra and Agamemnon sometimes feature humour, but of a different, more barbed variety. Here Klytemnestra attempts to persuade Agamemnon to walk on the red carpet she has laid, thus encouraging him to commit the sin of hubris and invite punishment by the Gods:

Klytemnestra. Priam wid hae daen it.

Agamemnon. Priam wis a Troan, an he's deid...

Klytemnestra. Gif ye are truly a King - King o ma hairt,
ye'll gie in. Dae this, at is sae sma a thing.
Gie obedience tae yer truest subject.
Juist fir yince.

Agamemnon. I ken ower weel whae is ruler an whae subject
i the laun o the mairriage-bed. But oan sic a day as this,
whaur ligs the pint i sic fripperies an fancies?

Klytemnestra. Ye hae said it yersel. 'T is nocht but a fancy o mines.
Sae waulk upo [sic] it. ¹⁵

The terse immediacy of the opening and closing exchanges conveys, I hope, the domestic world of Agamemnon and Klytemnestra and the 'reality' of their relationship as husband and wife. They are intended as real people having a real domestic argument, yet one which is about far more than the lines immediately suggest.

Notwithstanding the conversational basis of a passage such as this, for much of the principal action it seemed more appropriate to use a more formal Scots of a (restrained) 'literary' variety. An example of this is when Agamemnon addresses the Chorus on his return from Troy:

Wi ae vice aa the Goads
spake tae me, saying frae this weird ye sal
ne'er be free, til Troas is doon, its sodgers deid,
its waas nocht sauf ash. An noo its [sic] dune.
Fir sic glory, lat aa the Goads be thankit.
Ye weemen o this toun, tae ye I turn.
Frae the youngest hizzie tae the auldest wife.
Aa o ye hae loast. Faithers. Luers. Gudemen. Brithers.
Tae this lang daurk strife.
Fir the haurd luiks ye gie me,
I dinnae blame ye.
Sic is nocht sauf the weird o thaim
whae hae bocht their fame
wi the lives of ither, mebbe better, men.
But noo is yer King cum hame.
An ye sal see hoo a King kin darg,
fir his fowk an kin. ¹⁶

This speech by Agamemnon also shows at work, in the two occurrences of *nocht sauf*, my previously-mentioned strategy of repetition and contextualisation of archaisms to assist audience comprehension. ¹⁷ This strategy can be at work sometimes within the same speech (as here) and/or sometimes within separate speeches by different characters at removed locations within the text. *Nocht sauf*, for example, also features in an earlier exchange that Klytemnestra has had with the Chorus where she considers the probable behaviour of troops sacking a city: ¹⁸

Chorus 1. There'll be sodgers yet i the streets,
struttin aboot, sauf 'neath Argos ain cockade.
Whit's a sackit toun tae a gallus sodger lad?

Klytemnestra. Nocht sauf an excuse tae thieve an rob,
gie mair grief tae lasses whae aaready hae mair nor eneuch,
dae aa mainner o thochtless, nameless hairms. ¹⁹

As before, I hoped that the repetition of possibly unfamiliar words or phrases such as *nocht sauf*, used in different contexts and moods, would help to make them understandable to an audience. Also, I intended the use of possibly unfamiliar words when contextualised alongside more familiar words to be a means of mediating between a

contemporary and a more literary Scots. I was aware that there was a possibility of misinterpretation, and a possible danger in over-repeating a relatively narrow range of 'literary' Scots words, but I was sufficiently confident of the dramatic power of such Scots medium that I felt I could reduce vocabulary to a point where nuance of interpretation rested almost wholly with the actors.

When I decided to use Scots for my adaptation it seemed appropriate to feature more than one variant. In the 'Afterword' to the published version I wrote that

the adaptation imagines a possible response to a request from a financially constrained Athens for an accessible, cost-effective reworking of the text making use of local varieties of language. ²⁰

What I meant to indicate through the script was that not only are there several variants of Scots throughout contemporary Scotland, but also that significant numbers of those living in Scotland do not use Scots at all. If comprehensibility and accessibility were major criteria in language choice, a further part of the agenda lay in asserting that all varieties of language in Scotland had value, and that each contributed to the strength of the other. If my own particular choice of a form of Central Lowlands Scots has been given centre stage, this was not meant in any way to diminish other forms of Scots, or English, in either the literary or everyday life of the people of Scotland.

I also felt it unlikely that the performers of the original *Oresteia*, the inhabitants of ancient Athens, were necessarily monoglots, given that they were inhabitants of a major city state which would draw part of its population from all over the area. Thus Orestes, the exile since childhood, speaks differently from his parents and the rest of Argos, as does his companion Pylades. Brought up from an early age away from the place of his birth, it seemed natural that Orestes would adopt at least some of the speech patterns and language variant of his new home. Hence Orestes speaks in a form of Scots in which some elements of North-East Scots are present, even though the pattern and sentence structure remain largely that of Argos, that is, the same as that of most of the other characters. A further example of linguistic contrast is Cassandra's speech. Having a Cassandra who is English to the tip of her prophecies may upset some cherished myths concerning the hegemonic relationship of Scotland and England, but that is precisely what her speech was meant to do.

Having chosen some of the linguistic ingredients - variants of Scots and Standard English - there came the decision of how to allocate them for reasons other than the kind of clear-cut ones determining the speech varieties given to Orestes and Cassandra. For example, there was the question of giving the Chorus a similar form of Scots to that of the Argosian court. In a society such as Bronze-Age Greece, 'polite' and 'impolite' speech seemed an inappropriate notion; and, in any event, to provide the equivalent in the text would be to risk causing an audience difficulty in having to cope with yet another language variant. In classical Greek drama the Chorus was male. ²¹ In *Klytemnestra's Bairns* the Chorus, who become the revenging Furies that pursue Orestes from the end of the second act, were written to be played by women. The three actors can be taken to represent 'Womankind' in youth, maternity and old age. Bringing the women of Argos literally centre stage was both a deliberate statement and a recognition of the realities of theatre economics. Here is a flavour of their speech:

Chorus 3. O, ye Goads, gif ye dae truly hear us,
I beg ye tae preserve us aa.
I'm fearfu at oor King his noo been slainit.

Chorus 2. Whit kin we dae?

Chorus 3. Nocht, but ainly bide oor weird,
Bide an lat ithers hae their say.

Chorus 1. Na. Lat's intae the palace!
Defend, gif we kin, the Hoose o Atreus
frae anither blaw. Gif we dae nocht,
we sal hae nane but wirsels tae blame fir aucht. [22](#)

What I intended was to give the idea, through choice of language, of three distinct personalities who were recognisable human types. Also, language contrast, in the interplay made possible between the Chorus and some other players, provided opportunities both to test the effectiveness of the principal form of Scots chosen and to exploit the dramatic potentialities thereby released. This can be seen at work in scenes between Cassandra and the Chorus such as this:

Chorus 3. We arenae angerit wi ye, no lik wir Queen.
I truith, I pity ye. But Cassandra, at wis yince
o Troas, Princess, 't is as a slave ye maun dee!

Cassandra. Apollo!

Chorus 2. Whit's Apollo tae ye, at ye trauchle him sae, wi yer grief?

Cassandra. O Apollo, where is this you have brought me?
Whose house is this I see?

Chorus 1. The Hoose o Atreus. Shairly ye ken at?

Cassandra. No! This is the House of Death,
that stinks of its own flesh.
I see a child that struggles for its life,
That pushes from its throat the sacrificial knife.

Chorus 3. Ye daur tae gie us prophecy? [23](#)

Those who choose to write in Scots are faced with the question: whose Scots? Who may be said to 'own' the Scots which is written? Those with a firm grasp of a particular variant, as in the case of writers with a specific geographic and/or cultural background, do not, seemingly, have a problem. Such writers' tenure of their particular linguistic turf appears to give them an assurance that those of us without can only envy. *Klytemnestra's Bairns* is in part an attempt to narrow the gap and widen the debate between different linguistic experiences. Whatever varieties of Scots may be currently spoken, their relationship to literary Scots is on the one hand tenuous and on the other essential if writing in Scots is to address more than a few enthusiasts. A wholly literary Scots seems as inappropriate to the writer's task as an illiterate one. Apollo's opening speech demonstrates the implications of this for my own writing:

This Hoose o Atreus stauns noo weel cursit,
an't wis I, Apollo, at made it sae.
At aa whae mairk the oan-gauns aneath its roof
micht cam tae ken the meanin o justice, an o truith.

Atreus, whaes hoose this wis, hid a brither.
Yin Thyestes. They twa redded Argos thegither,
til, fir the seducin o Atreus' spouse, Thyestes wis
forcit frae this hoose, tae wander ower the yird.
But his name lived oan. His bairns tae. Back he
cam, seekin tae be reconcilit wi's brither, Atreus.
Whae cookit a denner. O Thyestes bairns. ²⁴

This speech, which sets out the curse on the House of Atreus and the 'backstory' of the play, is also the audience's introduction to the language of the adaptation. The style is deliberately conversational, yet much of the language is not contemporary; as a consequence, it is, in a sense, 'contradictory' language. The first consideration with a theatre text ought to be audiences and actors; that is, with creating a text which is speakable and, hopefully, understandable, without compromising integrity. *Klytemnestra's Bairns* undeniably owes much of its inception and language to the Scots literary tradition, but I sought to simplify and limit the vocabulary from that tradition with the overall intention of giving the audience enough familiarity in terms of context and usage to render the unfamiliar understandable. A contradiction? Certainly, but Scots with its 'literary' hat on tends to a self-conscious language not used in everyday speech, which means that in theatre one has to devise means to 'contradict' to assist accessibility of meaning.

Scots as a spoken language variant remains alive and continually altering because those who keep it alive and do the altering do so largely unconsciously. There is always a tension, a genuine contradiction, between those who preserve in their everyday speech elements of any language variant presently under threat - as Scots undoubtedly is in many ways - and those who write in the literary forms of those language variants. This is, to return to a quotation I gave at the start of this essay, an experience akin to what the Yiddish writer Isaac Bashevis Singer described as writing in a language which, to paraphrase, is neither dead nor alive. With *Klytemnestra's Bairns* I sought to produce a text which would inhabit this 'contradictory' area: that is, which would in some senses mediate between the literary and the everyday. My belief is that a Scots that remains the property of the 'literary Scots' literati, and denies the present reality of Scots speech, risks running out of people to whom it can communicate with any effect. In my combining of the literary and the vernacular in *Klytemnestra's Bairns* I was recognising and exploring the 'contradictions' (and 'contra-dictions') that flow from our Scots resource, whilst at the same time asserting that, for me, the medium I used was legitimate for the purpose of fashioning a theatrically effective adaptation of Aeschylus' great trilogy.

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Footnotes

¹ Interview, 'Kafka's castle', B.B.C. Omnibus (B.B.C. TV: 17 March 1974 - BBC recording reference LMA6491B). [[Return to Text](#)]

² Later page references are to this published text. [[Return to Text](#)]

³ As if Glasgow District Council were automatically to part-fund productions of, say, a James Bridie play. [[Return to Text](#)]

⁴ Although she finally uses her casting vote to free Orestes and send him home to Argos to enjoy his patrimony. [\[Return to Text\]](#)

⁵ Melanie Klein, 'Some Reflections on *The Oresteia*' in *Envy and Gratitude and Other Works, 1946-1963* (Edinburgh: Diehard Press, 1975), pp.275-299. [\[Return to Text\]](#)

⁶ As indicated by my choice of title. [\[Return to Text\]](#)

⁷ Despite the body count, *The Oresteia* is not a classical tragedy, so humour which did not diminish character or plot seemed to me justified. [\[Return to Text\]](#)

⁸ These being Standard English and a variety of North-East Scots. [\[Return to Text\]](#)

⁹ Bill Dunlop, *Klytemnestra's Bairns* (Edinburgh: Diehard Press, 1993), pp. 5-6. [\[Return to Text\]](#)

¹⁰ My use of 'Troas' for 'Troy' may appear to contradict the foregoing, which I find difficult to justify, except by observing that the alienating effect of such a distinctive variant on the more familiar 'Troy' may help to frame an audience's mind towards the universality of the play's themes. [\[Return to Text\]](#)

¹¹ Bill Dunlop, *Klytemnestra's Bairns* (Edinburgh: Diehard Press, 1993), p. 6. [\[Return to Text\]](#)

¹² The latter was chosen for its rightness in implying both discussion and physical argument. [\[Return to Text\]](#)

¹³ Bill Dunlop, *Klytemnestra's Bairns* (Edinburgh: Diehard Press, 1993), pp. 10-11. [\[Return to Text\]](#)

¹⁴ Bill Dunlop, *Klytemnestra's Bairns* (Edinburgh: Diehard Press, 1993), p. 1. [\[Return to Text\]](#)

¹⁵ Bill Dunlop, *Klytemnestra's Bairns* (Edinburgh: Diehard Press, 1993), p. 15. [\[Return to Text\]](#)

¹⁶ Bill Dunlop, *Klytemnestra's Bairns* (Edinburgh: Diehard Press, 1993), p. 13. [\[Return to Text\]](#)

¹⁷ An example I then gave, *darg*, features in the above speech, too. [\[Return to Text\]](#)

¹⁸ Note that the Chorus also uses *sauf*. [\[Return to Text\]](#)

¹⁹ Bill Dunlop, *Klytemnestra's Bairns* (Edinburgh: Diehard Press, 1993), p. 6. [\[Return to Text\]](#)

²⁰ Bill Dunlop, 'Afterword' in *Klytemnestra's Bairns* (Edinburgh: Diehard Press, 1993), n.p. [\[Return to Text\]](#)

²¹ In the *Agamemnon*, old men of Argos. [\[Return to Text\]](#)

²² Bill Dunlop, *Klytemnestra's Bairns* (Edinburgh: Diehard Press, 1993), p. 19. [[Return to Text](#)]

²³ Bill Dunlop, *Klytemnestra's Bairns* (Edinburgh: Diehard Press, 1993), p. 17. [[Return to Text](#)]

²⁴ Bill Dunlop, *Klytemnestra's Bairns* (Edinburgh: Diehard Press, 1993), p. 1. [[Return to Text](#)]