

# Cassandra's Madness in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*

Cecilia J. Perczyk

“Oh, for God's sakes. You're such a Cassandra.”  
*Mighty Aphrodite* (1995) by Woody Allen

THIS PAPER looks at madness in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* (at 1035–1330) as embodied in the figure of Cassandra, a character who suffers a hallucinatory breakdown in front of the spectators. The representation on stage of an episode of *μανία* can be seen as a procedure characteristic of Aeschylus' output: both Io in *Prometheus Vinctus* and Orestes in *Choephoroi* experience hallucinatory crises on stage, as does our propheticess in *Agamemnon*.<sup>1</sup> In the tragedies of Sophocles and Euripides, by contrast, hallucinatory experiences usually take place offstage and are related by a messenger or eyewitness, with the exception of the case of Orestes in Euripides' *Orestes*.

In Ancient Greece, the ability to prophesy seems to have been viewed positively as one of the blessings of madness (Pl. *Phdr.* 244A).<sup>2</sup> In Aeschylus' tragedy, however, Cassandra's prophetic capacity takes on a negative valence insofar as her representation is associated with pain and death,<sup>3</sup> which are both central

<sup>1</sup> As it is with Cassandra, Io's madness is also linked to suffering.

<sup>2</sup> See E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley 1973 [1951]) 64–82. For a general and up-to-date study on prophetic *μανία* in Greece see Y. Ustinova, *Divine Mania: Alteration of Consciousness in Ancient Greece* (London 2018) 55–102.

<sup>3</sup> For some years now, pain has been studied as a social and cultural construct that is seen as an emotional experience associated with the conceptual

elements in the configuring of diseases in Hippocratic medicine in the fifth century B.C.E.<sup>4</sup> The fact that her gift of prophecy is the result of a punishment is instrumental in shaping Cassandra's character. While Aeschylus does not use Dionysian vocabulary to express Cassandra's trance—a language associated in tragedy with madness and the feminine, especially in Euripides' work—the prophetess expresses the suffering caused by the visions, the objects of which include her own and Agamemnon's

sphere of illness. On the conception of pain in the *Corpus Hippocraticum* see S. Byl, "Le traitement de la douleur dans le *Corpus hippocratique*," in J. A. López Férez (ed.), *Actes du VII<sup>e</sup> Colloque international hippocratique* (Madrid 1992) 203–213; P. Horden, "Pain in Hippocratic Medicine," in J. Hinnels et al. (eds.), *Religion, Health and Suffering* (London 1999) 295–315; B. Marzullo, "Il dolore in Ippocrate," *QUCC* 63 (1999) 123–128; L. Villard, "Vocabulaire et représentation de la douleur dans la *Collection hippocratique*," in F. Prost et al. (eds.), *Penser et représenter le corps dans l'Antiquité* (Rennes 2006) 61–78; and, focusing on tragedy, D. LaCourse Munteanu, *Tragic Pathos: Pity and Fear in Greek Philosophy and Tragedy* (Cambridge 2011).

<sup>4</sup> B. Holmes, *The Symptom and the Subject: The Emergence of the Physical Body in Ancient Greece* (Princeton 2010), shows that the configuration of the body as an epistemic object in the fifth century depends on the development of Hippocratic medicine and the simultaneous emergence of the symptom in tragedy. She also points out that, during this period, the suffering provoked by external forces and the upheaval caused by inner turbulence and subjection to illness were explicitly feminized. In line with the idea of the medicalization of Cassandra's madness proposed here, G. Cerra, "La ambigüedad en el tratamiento de la alucinación de Casandra y Orestes en la *Orestía* de Esquilo," in L. Gambon (ed.), *A quien Dionisos quiere destruir... La tragedia y la invención de la locura* (Bahía Blanca 2016) 177–197, at 190–194, stresses that, for the scene of Orestes' hallucination in *Choephoroi* (288–290, 329–331), terms are used from the same word families as for Cassandra's hallucinatory crisis in *Agamemnon*, not to mention stylistic features in common and the similarity of reactions and emotions linked to the hallucination. For E. Barra, however, "Un dio ti fa cantare' (Ag. 1175/76): La Cassandra di Eschilo fra Ippocrate e la Pizia," *Mythos* 5 (1993) 5–43, at 7, the prophetess's mental disturbance takes two forms: the religious, as expressed by the Chorus, and the secular, as expressed by Clytemnestra and also the Trojans, who, though not characters in the play, did not believe her prophecies (1273–1274). For Ustinova, *Divine Mania* 72, Cassandra fluctuates between madness and divine inspiration.

demise. She also has to endure the fact that the Chorus does not understand her. Cassandra's madness, then, is presented as a disease, a representation that implies a decoupling from the religious sphere.<sup>5</sup>

It is important to remember that Hippocratic medicine and tragedies belong to the same historical period.<sup>6</sup> While the dating and authorship of Hippocratic treatises is a subject of debate, the earliest part is unanimously held to date back the fifth century. Studies differ on chronological grounds concerning the *Corpus Hippocraticum's* influence on Aeschylus' production. Aeschylus wrote his works in the first half of the fifth century, and there is no strong evidence for medical writings prior to 440.<sup>7</sup> In his

<sup>5</sup> Cf. S. Schein, "The Cassandra Scene in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*," *G&R* 29 (1982) 11–16, for whom Cassandra's madness scene in *Agamemnon* differs from other tragic madness scenes; cf. also M. del P. Hualde Pascual, "Evolución de un personaje mítico: Casandra, de los textos clásicos a la novela histórica contemporánea," *Epos* 18 (2002) 105–124, at 111, who interprets the scene as exemplifying the theme of learning from suffering.

<sup>6</sup> Studies on the relationship between Hippocratic medicine and tragedies are dissimilar in their contributions, and it is possible to establish different theoretical lines. At first, the criticism focused on the difference between poetic lexicon and technical jargon (N. E. Collinge, "Medical Terms and Clinical Attitudes in the Tragedians," *BICS* 9 [1962] 43–55; M. G. Ciani, "Lessico e funzione della follia nella tragedia greca," *BFG* 1 [1974] 70–110; focus on Hippocratic medicine and comedy, S. Byl, "Le vocabulaire hippocratique dans les comédies d'Aristophane et particulièrement dans les deux dernières," *RPhil* 64 [1990] 151–162). Nowadays, instead, there is a tendency to consider that Hippocratic physicians and tragic poets shared ideas about the role of suffering, illness, and the nature of healing (Holmes, *The Symptom and the Subject*). G. Lanata, "Linguaggio scientifico e linguaggio poetico. Note al lessico del 'De morbo sacro'," *QUCC* 5 (1968) 22–36, at 30–31, had already stated the reciprocal influences of Hippocratic medicine and tragedy.

<sup>7</sup> See J. Dumortier, *Le vocabulaire médical d'Eschyle et les écrits hippocratiques* (Paris 1935), on the presence of medical language in Aeschylus' works; G. Maloney, "Contributions hippocratiques à l'étude de l'*Orestie* d'Eschyle," in F. Lasserre et al. (eds.), *Formes de pensée dans la collection hippocratique* (Geneva 1983) 71–76, on the recurrence of medical arguments and reflections in the

tragic output, however, as in Sophocles' and Euripides', while divinities stand at the point of origin of the disease, there are similarities in the symptoms and a high number of technical medical terms that are found in Hippocratic treatises. Reference will, therefore, be made in this paper to Hippocratic treatises, in particular to *De morbo sacro*. While this is estimated to have been penned by Hippocrates between 425 and 420, later than the composition of the *Oresteia*—presumed to have been composed around 458—interest in it lies in the fact that, in Antiquity, it became the model for what today we call mental disorders. It can, therefore, be assumed that the ideas were in previous circulation, or the similarities and coincidences might even be seen as evidence of the reciprocal influences between medical and tragic discourses.

*Prophecy and pain*

We suppose that Cassandra enters the stage with Agamemnon in the second stasimon because of the Chorus's greeting to the king (782). For a long run of lines, Cassandra does not speak or seem to move (782–1071), a circumstance without parallel in Attic drama. The character's motionlessness and silence are so disturbing that the elders of the chorus compare her to a freshly trapped animal: τρόπος δὲ θηρὸς ὡς νεαιρέτου, "she has the manner of a wild beast just trapped" (1063). Clytemnestra continues the Chorus's image: χαλινὸν δ' οὐκ ἐπίσταται φέρειν / πρὶν αἱματηρὸν ἐξαφρίζεσθαι μένος, "and she doesn't yet know how to bear the bridle, not till she's foamed out her rage in blood" (1066–1067).<sup>8</sup>

For some critics, lines 1063 and 1066–1067 express the char-

*Oresteia*; and A. Guardasole, *Tragedia e medicina nell'Atene del V Secolo B.C.* (Naples 2000) 40–58, who devotes a section to this in his general study on medicine and tragedy in the fifth century.

<sup>8</sup> Text and translation: A. H. Sommerstein, *Aeschylus. Oresteia: Agamemnon. Libation-Bearers. Eumenides* (Cambridge 2009).

acter's incipient state of prophetic madness.<sup>9</sup> However, Medda links the comparison to an attempt by the Chorus to explain her motionlessness as a reaction of fear.<sup>10</sup> That said, Clytemnestra in 1064 employs a form of *μαίνομαι* to refer to Cassandra, after hearing the Chorus: ἡ μάνεται γὰρ καὶ κακῶν κλύει φρενῶν, "she's mad, that's all, obeying the promptings of an unsound mind."

The word family of *μαίνομαι* acquires a pathological connotation in the classical period, being used in tragedy and Hippocratic treatises to denote disorders of the mind and behavior caused by diseases that disturb mental capacities.<sup>11</sup> Added to the presence of *μαίνομαι* is the fact that Clytemnestra refers to Cassandra's *φρήν* (1064), an organ linked to the sphere of what we would nowadays call the mental, mentioned five more times in the fourth episode (1052, 1084, 1143, 1302, 1308). The following are important for this paper in relating to Cassandra's ability to prophesy or as indicating some kind of shift away from normality: μένει τὸ θεῖον δουλίᾳ περὶ ἐν φρενί, "divine inspiration can remain even in the mind of a slave" (1084); ἀκόρετος βοῶς, φεῦ, φιλοίκτοις φρεσίν, "wailing insatiably, alas, with a heart fond of grieving" (1143); τί τοῦτ' ἔφευξας; εἴ τι μὴ φρενῶν στύγος, "Why are you going 'ugh' like that? Unless it's some mental horror" (1308). The Chorus, too, employs an adjective from the *φρήν* word family, *φρενομανής*, explicitly linking Cassandra's state of mind to the intervention of a divinity: φρενομανής τις εἶ, θεοφόρητος, "You are out of your mind, divinely possessed" (1140).<sup>12</sup> Aeschylus, therefore, wishes to show from the beginning of the

<sup>9</sup> S. Mazzoldi, *Cassandra, la vergine e l'indovina: identità di un personaggio da Omero all'ellenismo* (Pisa 2001) 185; Sommerstein, *Aeschylus* 125; Cerra, in *A quien Dionisos quiere destruir* 183–184; and others.

<sup>10</sup> E. Medda, *Eschilo, Agamennone III* (Rome 2017) 146–147.

<sup>11</sup> See H. Perdicoyianni Paléologou, "The Vocabulary of Madness from Homer to Hippocrates. Part 1: The Verbal Group of *μαίνομαι*," *History of Psychiatry* 20 (2009) 311–339, at 312 and 314.

<sup>12</sup> On the use of psychological terminology in Aeschylus and, in particular, the use of *φρήν* see S. Darcus Sullivan, *Aeschylus' Use of Psychological Terminology: Traditional and New* (Montreal 1997) 13–63.

episode that, even before she speaks, Cassandra is in a state of alienation, which does not start with her spasmodic movements on stage, but which we may assume was on permanent display in the features of the character's mask.

After the queen's departure from the stage for the palace (1068), the audience sees Cassandra initiate a novel form of expression.<sup>13</sup> When she begins to speak, Cassandra expresses herself in lyric form and also performs rapid dance movements (1072–1177), while, in the second part, she recites until leaving the stage (1178–1330).<sup>14</sup> Aeschylus thus places the princess between the Chorus and the tragedy's other characters. It is also significant that the prophecy is repeated in both parts.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> The part of the scene where Cassandra speaks is divided into two large sections. The first is the *amoibaion* (1072–1177), when the Chorus responds to the prophetess first in iambic tetrameters and then (1121 ff.) in dochmiacs, a meter that translates the anguish prompted in her by the revelations, and second Cassandra's recited intervention, from 1178, to which the Chorus responds (1198 ff.) in iambic tetrameters interspersed with passages of stichomythia (D. J. Conacher, *Aeschylus' Oresteia. A Literary Commentary* [Toronto 1989] 41–44). The second part, the recited intervention, is divided into three speeches followed by four lines of comments or questions from the Coryphaeus and a passage of stichomythia between him and Cassandra, two prayers by the prophetess—one addressed to the citizens, the other to the gods—followed by a conventional statement (1327–1330) on the fate of men. The first speech (1178–1197), which deals with Thyestes' guilt, is strong and clear, and intended to convince the Chorus of the credibility of her words. The second speech (1214–1241), delivered under the influence of visions inspired by Apollo, is about Atreus' guilt, revelations about the coming fulfillment of the curse, and Clytemnestra. It is close to the previous lyrical utterances and expresses Cassandra's lack of concern about whether or not the Chorus believes her. The third speech is about Clytemnestra's visions, Cassandra's death, Apollo, and Orestes (1256–1294). Unlike the first two speeches, the third ends by ignoring the Chorus.

<sup>14</sup> S. Mazzoldi, "Cassandra's Prophecy between Ecstasy and Rational Meditation," *Kernos* 15 (2002) 124–154, at 146, reads the scene as being characterized by an alternation between ecstasy and rationality.

<sup>15</sup> A precedent for the relationship between prophesying and unreason is presented in *Odyssey* 20.345–399, the episode of Theoclymenus, who has a

Cassandra breaks her silence with a shriek of horror (ὄτοτοτοῖ πόποι δᾶ, 1072), continued in the form of exclamations that interrupt the dialogue with the Chorus throughout the scene (ὄτοτοτοτοῖ πόποι δᾶ, 1076; ἰὸ πόποι, 1100; ἔῃ παπαῖ παπαῖ, 1114; ᾶ ἰδοῦ ἰδοῦ, 1125; ἰοῦ ἰοῦ, 1214; παπαῖ, 1256; φῦ, 1307).<sup>16</sup> There is, then, a marked difference from the manner of expression of the other female character in the play, Clytemnestra, whose speech is pre-eminently argumentative.<sup>17</sup> In the third episode, the audience saw the queen deploy a series of ruses to persuade her husband to tread the purple cloth. Her speeches, on the one hand, make use of deceptive persuasion and ritual discourse, discursive forms linked to the female in Ancient Greece; on the other hand, the character is depicted as the bearer of words of

vision about the murder of the suitors in Odysseus' palace (G. Guidorizzi, *Ai confini dell'anima, I greci e la follia* [Milan 2010] 108; S. Saïd, "From Homeric *ate* to Tragic Madness," in W. V. Harris [ed.], *Mental Disorders in the Classical World* [Leiden 2013] 363–393, at 382–383). Like Cassandra, Theoclymenus is a prophet of Apollo. One of the suitors interprets the account of the hallucination as a sign of insanity (20.360). Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* 76–77, argues that Theoclymenus' vision in the *Odyssey* belongs in the same psychological category as Cassandra's in *Agamemnon*, which he labels "symbolic."

<sup>16</sup> S. Crippa, "Glossolalia. Il linguaggio di Cassandra," *Studi Italiani di Linguistica Teorica e Applicata* 13 (1990) 487–508, and M. Bettini, *Voci: Antropologia sonora del mondo antico* (Rome 2018) 159–165, interpret Cassandra's exclamations as a corpus of religious glossolalia that bears linguistic analysis. For her part, Cerra, *A quien Dionisos quiere destruir* 186, stresses that the repetition of interjections and vocatives is part of the stylistic devices employed by Cassandra to persuade the Chorus of the veracity of her visions (a fact highlighted in 1213), along with the repetition of vision-linked verbs and deictic pronouns (1217–1218).

<sup>17</sup> On the counterpoint between Cassandra and Clytemnestra in *Agamemnon* see V. Wohl, *Intimate Commerce: Exchange, Gender, and Subjectivity in Greek Tragedy* (Austin 1998) 100–117; L. McClure, *Spoken Like a Woman: Speech and Gender in Athenian Drama* (Princeton 1999) 70–111, at 72–100; A. Doyle, "Cassandra – Feminine Corrective in Aeschylus's *Agamemnon*," *AClass* 50 (2008) 57–75, at 65–73.

political value.<sup>18</sup> Clytemnestra is depicted as androgynous insofar as feminine and masculine attributes overlap in her characterization. Ironically, Cassandra embodies the ideal of the Greek woman: she is seen to remain silent and motionless for a long sequence of lines, just as an Athenian woman would be expected to conduct herself, and also deploys traditionally female discourses, such as prayer and lament (I focus on this below).<sup>19</sup> She is the only character over whom Clytemnestra cannot impose herself because her silence, which constitutes an act of power and rebellion against her captors, renders the queen's weapon, rhetoric, useless.<sup>20</sup>

The Chorus identifies Cassandra as a mourner on two occasions (1074–1075 and 1173–1176):

τί τὰδτ' ἀνωτότυξας ἀμφὶ Λοξίου;  
οὐ γὰρ τοιοῦτος ὥστε θρηνητοῦ τυχεῖν.

Why are you wailing like that about Loxias? He is not the sort to come in contact with one who laments.

ἐπόμενα προτέροισι τάδ' ἐφημίσω.  
καὶ τίς σε κακοφρονῶν τίθη-  
σι δαίμων ὑπερβαρῆς ἐμπίτων  
μελίζειν πάθη γοερά θανατηφόρα·

What you have uttered now follows on from what went before, and some divinity that wishes you ill is assailing you very heavily and causing you to sing of woeful, deadly sufferings.

The first word we hear from the Trojan princess's mouth, after her shrieks of horror, is the name of the god Apollo (1073). She

<sup>18</sup> C. J. Perczyk and L. Seijas, "Los ardidés de Clitemnestra en el tercer episodio de *Agamenón* de Esquilo", *Telón de fondo* 32 (2020) 80–95, at 82–89.

<sup>19</sup> S. Goldhill, *Language, Sexuality, Narrative, The Oresteia* (Cambridge 1984) 57–58.

<sup>20</sup> See N. Álvarez Espinoza, "El silencio femenino en el mito griego de Casandra," *Revista de Lenguas Modernas* 19 (2013) 49–73, and "Casandra: las funciones y signos del silencio en el *Agamenón* de Esquilo y las *Troyanas* de Eurípides," *Káñina* 39 (2015) 23–37, which applies the perspective of the "rhetoric of silence" to the study of the character of Cassandra in Classical Greek literature.

refers to him as having entrusted her with the gift of prophecy (μάντις μ' Ἀπόλλων τῶδ' ἐπέστησεν τέλει, 1202), while, at the same time, naming him as her destroyer: Ἀπολλων Ἀπολλων· / ἀγυιᾶτ', ἀπόλλων ἐμός, “Apollo, Apollo! God of the Streets, and my destroyer!” (1080–1081 and 1085–1086).<sup>21</sup> The play on words between the noun Ἀπόλλων and the participle ἀπόλλων is worth noting. The relationship between Cassandra and Apollo seems to have been Aeschylus’ own innovation.<sup>22</sup>

Cassandra’s characterization as a prophetess without persuasiveness is a relatively late poetic creation that seems to originate in non-Homeric epic. In Apollodorus’ *Bibliotheca*, whose source would be the *Iliupersis*, it is told that Cassandra and Laocoön had tried unsuccessfully to warn the Trojans of the danger of the wooden horse (3.15.5); and the *Cypria* reports her mantic gifts.<sup>23</sup>

In the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the earliest poems to record the character, Cassandra is no prophetess but is characterized by her beauty, an attribute that sets her apart from Priam’s other daughters (*Il.* 3.365). Nor is she a consecrated virgin but is

<sup>21</sup> As has been seen, the Chorus also notes that Cassandra is disturbed by the presence of the divinity (1084, 1140, 1174–1175).

<sup>22</sup> J. Davreux, *La légende de la prophétesse Cassandre d’après les textes et les monuments* (Paris 1942) 31, followed by Doyle, *AClass* 50 (2008) 57; P. Debnar, “The Sexual Status of Aeschylus’ Cassandra,” *CP* 105 (2010) 129–145, at 132; cf. K. Latte, “The Coming of the Pythia,” *HThR* 33 (1940) 9–18, at 16–17, and H. W. Parke, *Greek Oracles* (London 1967) 30, for whom the relationship was known to the public. Hualde Pascual, *Epos* 18 (2002) 110, explains the inclusion of Apollo in the story of Cassandra by the importance of the god’s role in the trilogy. The innovation obeys the urge to include an impiety, in this case deceiving Apollo, which justifies the prophetess’s final punishment.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. J. M. Bremmer, “Prophets, Seers, and Politics in Greece, Israel, and Early Modern Europe,” *Numen* 40 (1993) 150–183, at 152, and Hualde Pascual, *Epos* 18 (2002) 108. On Cassandra’s use of oracular language in *Agamemnon* see S. Crippa, “Un genere oracolare? Ipotesi per un’analisi del linguaggio delle visioni,” in E. Banfi (ed.), *Atti del Secondo Incontro internazionale di Linguistica greca* (Trento 1997) 121–142.

betrothed to Othryoneus, who dies in battle (3.365, 13.368–369).<sup>24</sup> Cassandra's cries on seeing Hector's corpse are conspicuous: she announces his death to the Trojans (24.697 ff.). She dies at the hand of Clytemnestra, according to the specter of Agamemnon in *Od.* 11.385–453.<sup>25</sup> Aeschylus, then, retains two aspects of the Homeric character in his depiction: uttering cries and dying at Clytemnestra's hand.

It is important to remember that only Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* and Euripides' *Troades* feature Cassandra among their tragic characters, apart from sporadic references in *Hecuba* (827), *Electra* (1032), *Iphigenia in Aulide* (757 ff.), and *Andromache* (296 ff.). If we compare *Agamemnon* and *Troades*, we can see the evolution of the character of Cassandra and the different use that the poets make of the myth according to their ideological approaches, motivated by their historical circumstances. Aeschylus' Cassandra is a prophetess who is staged as suffering, a far cry from the figure in Euripides' tragedy, brimming with hatred for the invading enemy. Euripides employs βακχεύω—"celebrate the mysteries of Bacchus, speak or act like one frenzy-stricken, inspire with frenzy"—several times in reference to Cassandra (*Tro.* 170, 341, 367, 408, 500), transforming the character into an exultant maenad. Even if there are references to Apollo as Cassandra's

<sup>24</sup> G. Mosconi, "Alle origini della profetessa inascoltata. Un'ipotesi sulla Cassandra di Omero," *λεύσσειν. Rivista di Studi Umanistici* 3 (2010) 11–20, discusses the figure of Cassandra in Homer.

<sup>25</sup> Hualde Pascual, *Epos* 18 (2002) 107. Agamemnon tells that it was Clytemnestra who hatched the conspiracy to assassinate him, accompanied by Aegisthus, and took it upon herself to kill Cassandra. In Book 24 (95–97 and 199–202) he gives the queen an active role in the murder. Cassandra's presence in the account of the King of Argos's ghost in Books 11 and 24 could be explained as being a later interpolation, a claim currently under dispute, since the other three characters in the *Odyssey* who give their version of Agamemnon's death do not mention her: Zeus recalls that Aegisthus had killed Agamemnon and then wed Clytemnestra (*Od.* 1.35–36); Nestor tells that Agamemnon dies at the hands of Aegisthus (3.193–198, 232–235, 254–275, 303–312); and Menelaus relates that Proteus revealed to him that Aegisthus plotted the crime at a banquet (4.518–527).

god in the play (42, 253, 329, 356, 408, 428, 450), she is never defined as a prophetess. While the other women lament, she enters the scene singing a hymenaeus in celebration of her union with Agamemnon and prophesizes that he will be the ruin of Atreus' lineage. In contrast to her representation in *Agamemnon*, a play conspicuous for her silence, in *Troades* Cassandra expresses herself like a *rhetor*, using *δείξω* when she argues that the Trojans are more fortunate than the Achaeans (365–370).<sup>26</sup>

The Argive elders compare Cassandra to a nightingale when referring to her lamentations (1140–1145):

ἀμ-  
 φὶ δ' αὐτᾶς θροεῖς  
 νόμον ἄνομον, οἷά τις ξουθὰ  
 ἀκόρετος βοᾶς, φεῦ, φιλοίκοις φρεσὶν  
 ἴτυν ἴτυν στένουσ' ἀμφιθαλῆ κακοῖς  
 ἀηδῶν μόνον.

you cry forth about yourself a song that is no song, like a vibrant-throated bird wailing insatiably, alas, with a heart fond of grieving, the nightingale lamenting “Itys! Itys!” for a death in which both parents did evil.

The allusion is to the myth of Procne lamenting her son Itys' death. A few lines earlier, the prophetess had mentioned the children of Thyestes (1095–1097), to which the Argive elders return later (1241–1245). The simile is possible because the children suffer a comparable fate, being devoured by their father. The truth is that, like Cassandra's, the legend of Procne and Philomela is a story of sexual aggression and emotional and

<sup>26</sup> See T. Papadopoulou, “Cassandra's Radiant Vigour and the Ironic Optimism of Euripides' *Troades*,” *Mnemosyne* 53 (2000) 513–527. On the use in tragedy of the word family of *βακχεύω* during the Classical period, see H. Perdicoyianni-Paléologou, “The Vocabulary of Madness from Homer to Hippocrates. Part 2: The Verbal Group of *βακχεύω* and the Noun *λύσσα*,” *History of Psychiatry* 20 (2009) 457–467, at 457–461. There are indeed no terms in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* from the *λύσσα* word family, which, along with those of *βακχεύω* and *μαίνομαι*, make up the vocabulary of madness (see Perdicoyianni-Paléologou, *History of Psychiatry* 20 [2009] 311–339).

physical torture, with a silenced female voice.<sup>27</sup> Cassandra is said to be like a nightingale singing a bitter lament, a “song that is not a song,” in reference to the “lyreless lament” of the Erinyes heard by the elders in the third stasimon (τὸν δ' ἄνευ λύρας ὄμως ὑμνοῦδει / θρηῖνον Ἐρινύος, 990–991).<sup>28</sup> Medda notes that musical metaphors are the main resource used to express the nature of Cassandra's disturbance (see 1153, ὀρθίοις ἐν νόμοις, “in notes loud and shrill,” and the image of the swan song in Clytemnestra's mouth at 1444–1446, ἡ δέ τοι κύκνου δίκη / τὸν ὕστατον μέλψασα θανάσιμον γόον / κείται, φιλήτωρ τοῦδ', “while she, after singing, swan-like, her final dirge of death”).<sup>29</sup>

Cassandra rejects the comparison because she points out that, unlike Procne, who had been blessed by the gods with metamorphosis into a nightingale, she will be slaughtered like a sacrificial animal (1146–1149):

ἰὼ ἰὼ λιγείας μόρον ἀηδόνοιο·  
περέβαλον γάρ οἱ πτεροφόρον δέμας  
θεοὶ γλυκύν τ' αἰῶνα κλαυμάτων ἄτερ·  
ἐμοὶ δὲ μίμνει σχισμὸς ἀμφήκει δορί.

Io, io, the life of the clear-voiced nightingale! The gods have clothed her with a feathered form and given her a pleasant life with no cause to grieve, while what awaits me is to be cloven by a two-edged weapon.

P.-A. Brault emphasizes that Cassandra's end is exemplary because she voluntarily walks to her death like a sacrificial animal (πῶς θεηλάτου / βοὸς δίκην πρὸς βωμὸν εὐτόλμως πατεῖς; “how comes it that you are walking boldly towards it like an ox driven

<sup>27</sup> E. Pillinger, *Cassandra and the Poetics of Prophecy in Greek and Latin Literature* (Cambridge 2019) 28–73, at 52.

<sup>28</sup> The Erinyes' threnody, anticipated by the Chorus, establishes the musical theme taken up by Cassandra in 1186–1193, which is analyzed in the following section.

<sup>29</sup> Medda, *Eschilo, Agamennone* III 189. On the musical dimension in *Agamemnon* see A. Bierl, “*Melizein Pathe* or the Tonal Dimension in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*,” in N. Slater, (ed.), *Voice and Voices in Antiquity* (Leiden 2017) 166–207.

by god to the altar?” 1297–1298).<sup>30</sup> Cassandra’s relation to the world of birds runs throughout the play.<sup>31</sup> Clytemnestra first compares her to a swallow (ἀλλ’ εἴπερ ἐστὶ μὴ χελιδόνος δίκην / ἀγνώτα φωνὴν βάρβαρον κεκτημένη, “well, unless she has some unintelligible barbarian language, as the swallows do,” 1050–1051). The analogy lies in the facts that the swallow is a migratory bird and the prophetess is of barbarian origin.<sup>32</sup> As we have seen, after the murders the queen likens Cassandra to a swan, which sings its saddest song before dying (1444–1446). We should remember that, in the myth of Procne, her sister Philomela is turned into a swallow, while the swan is the bird of the god Apollo (Pl. *Phd.* 84E–85B). On the other hand, the Hippocratic treatise *Epidemiae* VI suggests that birds are bilious animals, a judgment that might explain the relationship established in tragedy between birds and the figure of Cassandra, who suffers episodes of madness characterized by their spectacular nature and, according to *De morbo sacro* 18,<sup>33</sup> affecting bilious people, as will be seen in the section below.

For Greek culture, funeral rites lay outside the sphere of Apollo, a god traditionally linked to joyous festive song.<sup>34</sup> Indeed, as mentioned, on seeing Cassandra, the Argive elders warn against invoking Apollo with funeral lamentations (1074–

<sup>30</sup> P.-A. Brault, “Playing the Cassandra: Prophecies of the Feminine in the *Polis* and Beyond,” in D. E. McCoskey et al. (eds.), *Bound by the City: Greek Tragedy, Sexual Difference, and the Formation of the Polis* (Albany 2009) 197–220, at 217.

<sup>31</sup> The nightingale and the swallow are the favorite birds to express funeral lament in Greek literature, particularly in tragedy (L. Jiménez Justicia, “La caracterización animal de los personajes femeninos en la *Orestíada*,” *Florentia Iliberritana* 22 [2011] 71–86, at 84).

<sup>32</sup> Pillinger, *Cassandra and the Poetics of Prophecy* 36, warns that, to the Greeks, the swallow—like the original meaning of the term βάρβαρος—represents that which makes noise but without meaning.

<sup>33</sup> Text and transl. W. H. S. Jones, *Hippocrates, Works* II (London 1923).

<sup>34</sup> This is a recurring theme in Greek poetry; Medda, *Eschilo, Agamennone* III 155, sets out a list of sources.

1075), a matter they insist on after hearing Cassandra's cries: ἦδ' αὖτε δυσφημοῦσα τὸν θεὸν καλεῖ, / οὐδὲν προσήκοντ' ἐν γόοις παραστατεῖν, "here she is again, making an ill-omened invocation of a god for whom it is in no way appropriate to be present amid cries of grief" (1078–1079). Cassandra herself refers to her words as a funeral lament before hearing Agamemnon's screams when he is murdered by his wife: ἄπαξ ἔτ' εἰπεῖν ῥῆσιν ἢ θρήνων θέλω / ἐμὸν τὸν αὐτῆς, "I wish to make one more speech—or should I say direct my own dirge for myself" (1322–1323). Cassandra also presents suffering as a constituent part of the act of prophecy: τί τόδε νέον ἄχος; "What is this fresh agony?" (1101); τὸ γὰρ ἐμὸν θροῶ πάθος / ἐπεγχύδαν, "I cry out my own sufferings, pouring them on top of these" (1136–1137). Pain even becomes the object of her predictions, as she claims to have predicted the Trojans' in the war: ἦδη πολίταις πάντ' ἐθέσπιζον πάθη, "I was already prophesying to my fellow-citizens about all they were to suffer" (1210). So, while Apollo stands at the origin of madness, there is a distancing from the god's traditional representation that has to be linked to the understanding of madness as a disease.

Cassandra not only describes the onset of prophecy in terms of painful aggression but also refers to Apollo as a "wrestler" when it comes to passing on the ability to prophesy: ἀλλ' ἦν παλαιστής κάρτ' ἐμοὶ πνέων χάριν, "but he was a wrestler, really breathing delight upon me" (1206).<sup>35</sup> In Hippocratic medicine, the agonal metaphor is usually employed when speaking of the relationship of patient and disease: the body becomes a natural space of combat, as reflected in Aeschylus' play.

It is important to make a series of clarifications about the representation of pain in the Hippocratic treatises in order to understand the value of their presence in shaping the character

<sup>35</sup> Critical opinion is divided over the translation of *παλαιστής*: one camp (with whom I agree) understands the term in the literal sense of "fighter," while another translates the term as "suitor," a metaphor (D. Kovacs, "The Way of a God with a Maid in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*," *CP* 82 [1987] 326–334, at 326–327).

of Cassandra in Aeschylus' tragedy. Suffering plays a crucial role in the semiology of diseases in the *Corpus Hippocraticum*: as well as being a useful sign for prognosis, its elimination leads to the restoration of health.<sup>36</sup> Three word families are used essentially to express pain in the Hippocratic treatises: the one linked to ὀδύνη, overwhelmingly present in the *Corpus Hippocraticum*, and those linked to πόνος and ἄλγος. There seems to be no substantial semantic difference between these word families; indeed, the terms might be said to be interchangeable. Nevertheless, ὀδύνη is the only term used exclusively to signify pain, while the other two nouns can have further meanings: πόνος “work” and ἄλγος “sorrow.”

In Aeschylus' tragedy, Cassandra expressly links πόνος to divination: ὑπ' αὐτὸν με δεινὸς ὀρθομαντείας πόνος / στροβεῖ ταρασσὼν φροϊμίους †ἔφημένους†, “the terrible agony of true prophecy is coming over me again, whirling me around and deranging me in the <fierce storm> of its onset” (1215–1216).<sup>37</sup> A few lines before this, the Chorus also draws attention to the painful nature of the hallucinatory crisis: πόθεν ἐπισσύτους θεοφόρους ἔχεις / ματαίους δύας / τὰ δ' ἐπίφοβα δυσφάτω κλαγγᾷ / μελοτυπεῖς ὁμοῦ τ' ὀρθίοις ἐν νόμοις; “whence do you get this possession coming violently upon you, this futile misery, and sound out these fearful things in song, at once in tones hard to interpret and in note loud and shrill?” (1150–1153); καί τις σε κακοφρονῶν τίθη/σι δαίμων ὑπερβαρῆς ἐπίτινων / μελίξειν πάθη γοερά θανατοφόρα, “and some divinity that wishes you ill is assailing you very heavily and causing you to sing of woeful, deadly sufferings” (1174–1176). The chorus of Argives describes Cassandra as wretched: εὐφημον, ὦ τάλαινα, κοίμησον στόμα, “speak only of good things, poor girl; put your tongue to sleep” (1247); ὦ πολλὰ μὲν τάλαινα, “woman unfortunate in so many ways” (1295). While no further

<sup>36</sup> Villard, in *Penser et représenter le corps* 61–62.

<sup>37</sup> Cassandra earlier uses πόνος, but to refer to the destruction of Troy: ἰὸ πόνοι πόνοι πόλεος ὀλομένης τὸ πᾶν, “io, the sufferings, the sufferings of my city, utterly destroyed!” (1167).

uses of terms from the word families associated with pain in the Hippocratic treatises occur to describe Cassandra's state, the episode of prophetic madness is clearly an experience portrayed as suffering.

It is important to remember that the representation of the Sybil in Heraclitus (12 B92 D.-K.) is close to Aeschylus' portrait of Cassandra: both are from Asia Minor, were pursued by Apollo but did not surrender, received their prophetic gift from Apollo but did not serve as his mouthpiece, and their mythical biographies were not linked to any sanctuary.<sup>38</sup> Most significantly, they looked frantic while uttering prophecies and were tortured by their visions. Also Cassandra and the Sibyl suffered when prophets, like other itinerant or independent seers not associated with temples, as did prophetic priests serving at sanctuaries.<sup>39</sup> Even if Aeschylus did not invent the relationship between prophecy and suffering, his representation acquired a new significance in the fifth century.

### *Symptoms*

Prophetic vision causes Cassandra physical disturbances. On two occasions, she expresses having such a strong feeling of heat that it makes her fall to the floor: ἐγὼ δὲ θερμὸν ροῦν τάχ' ἐν πέδῳ βαλῶ, "and I shall soon shed a flow of warm blood to the ground" (1172); παπαῖ / οἶον τὸ πῦρ ἐπέρχεται, "Papai! How the fire comes upon me!" (1256–1257). And again, as we have seen, she expresses a feeling of agitation in 1215–1216: ὑπ' αὐτὸν με δεινὸς ὀρθομαντείας πόνος / στροβεῖ ταρασσῶν φροίμοις †ἐφημένους†. This features ταρασσῶ, "trouble the mind, agitate, disturb," and

<sup>38</sup> Mazzoldi, *Cassandra, la vergine e l'indovina* 102–107, and Ustinova, *Divine Mania* 72–73. Cassandra is assimilated to the Sibyl in Lycophron, see C. Cusset, "Cassandre et/ou La Sibylle: les voix dans l'*Alexandra* de Lycophron," in M. Bouquet et al. (eds.), *La sibylle. Parole et représentation* (Paris 2004) 53–60.

<sup>39</sup> M. Nissinen, "Prophetic Madness: Prophecy and Ecstasy in the Ancient Near East and in Greece," in K. L. Noll et al. (eds.), *Raising Up a Faithful Exegete: Essays in Honor of Richard D. Nelson* (Winona Lake 2010) 3–29, at 17–27, who clarifies that in Ancient Greece those who prophesied were not expected to behave like others because prophesying was a divine gift.

στροβέω, “agitate inwardly.” The meaning of *ταράσσω* and its word family as causing a disturbance of the mind seems to be an innovation of Aeschylus’. The usage, also attested in the Hippocratic treatises, features in Orestes’ madness scene in *Choephoroi*.<sup>40</sup>

Cassandra’s hallucinations are retrospective, on the one hand, in their allusion to the banquet of Thyestes (1096–1097, 1217–1222) and the fall of Troy (1167–1171), and prospective, on the other, referring to Agamemnon’s imminent murder (1100–1104, 1107–1111, 1114–1118), his death (1080–1082, 1136–1139, 1160–1161, 1256–1263, 1275–1279, 1289–1294, 1311–1317),<sup>41</sup> and Orestes’ revenge (1280–1291, 1323–1326).<sup>42</sup> She also sees the Erinyes, whom she describes as vampiric beings (1186–1193):<sup>43</sup>

τὴν γὰρ στέγην τήνδ’ οὐποτ’ ἐκλείπει χορὸς  
 ξύμφογγος, οὐκ εὐφωτος· οὐ γὰρ εἶ λέγει.  
 καὶ μὴν πεπωκὼς γ’, ὡς θρασύνεσθαι πλέον,  
 βρότειον αἶμα κῶμος ἐν δόμοις μένει,  
 δύσπεμπτος ἔξω, συγγόνων Ἐρινύων  
 ὕμνοῦσι δ’ ὕμνον δώμασιν προσήμεναι

<sup>40</sup> Cerra, *A quien Dionisos quiere destruir* 187–190.

<sup>41</sup> In 1160–1161 the images of the rivers Cocytus and Acheron appear, where Cassandra says she will continue to prophesy. She also identifies the gates of the palace of Argos with those of Hades (1291).

<sup>42</sup> There is no specific term in the Classical Greek lexicon for hallucination, whether auditory, visual, or olfactory. On the content of hallucinations in tragedy see L. Gambon, “Alucinación y locura: la experiencia de la mirada marginal en la tragedia griega,” in *A quien Dionisos quiere destruir* 149–176. Gambon draws attention to the fact that Hippocratic treatises tend not to dwell on the content of hallucinatory states, which is a core theme of tragic madness insofar as it raises religious, political, and other questions.

<sup>43</sup> An image taken up in other passages of the *Oresteia*: *Cho.* 580, *Eum.* 184, 264–268, 302, 305. Analyzing *Ag.* 1186–1193 in a study of the representation of the Erinyes in the *Oresteia*, G. De Santis, “Las Erinias: configuración progresiva del personaje y definición simbólica en *Orestíada* de Esquilo,” *Ordia Prima* 4 (2005) 37–74, notes that the Erinyes form a chorus that does not befit a chorus from the polis and that this musical distortion constantly signals the state of events throughout the trilogy.

πρώταρχον ἄτην, ἐν μέρει δ' ἀπέπτυσαν  
εὐνάς ἀδελφοῦ τῷ πατοῦντι δυσμενεῖς.

There is a group of singers that never leaves the house. They sing in unison, but not pleasantly, for their words speak of evil. Moreover, this revel-band drinks human blood, thus emboldening itself, and then remains in the house, hard to send away—the band of the houses' kindred Furies. Besetting the chambers of the house, they sing a song of the ruinous folly that first began it all, and one after another they show their abhorrence of the brother's bed that worked harm to him who defiled it.

The first to see the Erinyes, then, is Cassandra; they later harass Orestes in *Choephoroi*, and the audience finally sees them in *Eumenides*. Pillinger explains that the paradox of Cassandra's νόμον ἄνομον (1142: see 255 above) is picked up again in the voices of the Erinyes; here, however, it applies not to the effect of an individual voice but to that of a Chorus, which deals more successfully with the meaning.<sup>44</sup> By “singing in unison,” the Erinyes avoid the fragmentation that characterizes Cassandra's message and show themselves to be in synchrony with the events they set in train. Accordingly, their dissonant message is not incoherent; quite the opposite, their horror is plain.

As well as being visual, Cassandra's hallucinations are also auditory and olfactory. She hears Clytemnestra's cry before Agamemnon's arrival (ὡς δ' ἐπωλολύξατο / ἢ παντότολμος, ὥσπερ ἐν μάχης τροπῇ, “what a cry of triumph she raised, as if an enemy had been routed in battle, this woman who will stop at nothing!” 1236–1237). She also claims to smell the murders as they take place inside the palace (φόνον δόμοι πνέουσιν αἱματοσταγῇ, “the house breathes blood-dripping murder!” 1309), a smell that the Chorus attributes to sacrificed animals (καὶ πῶς; τόδ' ὄζει θυμάτων ἐφεστίων, “what on earth do you mean? That's the smell of sacrifices at the hearth,” 1310).

In *De morbo sacro*, hallucinations and delirium appear as symptoms, not of the ἱερὴ νόσος but of another clinical set, specified in chapters 17–20, which are given no specific name but which

<sup>44</sup> Pillinger, *Cassandra and the Poetics of Prophecy* 62.

are linked to the ἐγκέφαλος, “brain,” an organ also related to the sacred disease.<sup>45</sup> The treatise explains that the appearance of disorders in sight and hearing—which I interpret as references to auditory or visual forms of hallucinations—and in speech—which are the outward sign of delirium—are a consequence of wetness of the brain (*Morb.sacr.* 17):

καὶ μαινόμεθα μὲν ὑπὸ ὑγρότητος· ὅταν γὰρ ὑγρότερος τῆς φύσιος ᾖ, ἀνάγκη κινεῖσθαι, κινευμένου δὲ μήτε τὴν ὄψιν ἀτρεμίζειν μήτε τὴν ἀκοήν, ἀλλ’ ἄλλοτε ἄλλα ὄραειν καὶ ἀκούειν, τὴν τε γλῶσσαν τοιαῦτα διαλέγεσθαι οἷα ἂν βλέπη τε καὶ ἀκούη ἐκάστοτε·

Madness comes from its moistness. When the brain is abnormally moist, of necessity it moves, and when it moves neither sight nor hearing are still, but we see or hear now one thing and now another, and the tongue speaks in accordance with the things seen and heard on any occasion.

Chapter 18 of the treatise differentiates two subtypes of these brain disorders on the basis of their etiology—heating of the brain, caused by the precipitation of either bile or phlegm to the organ—and specifies their symptoms.<sup>46</sup> Unlike those affected by

<sup>45</sup> C. J. Perczyk, *La locura en Heracles y Bacantes de Eurípides* (Buenos Aires 2018) 81–86. As the treatise’s title contains ἱερὴ νοῦσος, some critics make the mistake of considering chapters 17 to 20 as part of the description of the sacred disease: L. Conti Jimenez, “Perturbaciones mentales en los poemas homéricos y en las tragedias de Sófocles y Eurípides,” *Myrtia* 15 (2000) 35–50, at 47–48, considers epilepsy in this treatise to be a form of madness, attributing the symptoms described in chapter 18 to the sacred disease, while E. L. Mahieu, “Maladie sacrée, maladie unique: Hippocrate neuropsychiatre,” in J. Arveiller (ed.), *Psychiatries dans l’histoire* (Caen 2008) 99–112, at 99, argues that the sacred disease designates a single condition with two forms, namely, convulsive epilepsy and madness. For J. Jouanna, on the other hand, *Hippocrate II.3 La maladie sacrée* (Paris 2003) xviii–xxii, the development of these chapters makes it possible to situate the ἱερὴ νοῦσος as part of a broader pathological system.

<sup>46</sup> More information on brain disorders that are not the sacred disease is given at the start of the treatise: τοῦτο δὲ ὄρω μαινόμενους ἀνθρώπους καὶ παραφρονέοντας ἀπὸ οὐδεμιῆς προφάσιος ἐμφανέος, καὶ πολλὰ τε καὶ ἄκαιρα

phlegm, who remain quiet, those whose brains are heated by bile cry out and move continuously (18):

οἱ μὲν ὑπὸ φλέγματος μαινόμενοι ἥσυχοί τε εἶσι καὶ οὐ βοηταὶ  
οὐδὲ θορυβώδεες, οἱ δὲ ὑπὸ χολῆς κεκράκται τε καὶ κακοῦργοι  
καὶ οὐκ ἀτρεμαῖοι, ἀλλ' αἰεὶ τι ἄκαιρον δρῶντες.

Those who are mad through phlegm are quiet, and neither shout nor make a disturbance; those maddened through bile are noisy, evil-doers and restless, always doing something inopportune.

Similarly, as we have seen, according to the elders Cassandra utters obscure sounds and high-pitched cries (1152–1153). We need to remember that, as she cries out, she is making rapid dancing movements (1072–1077). Hallucinations and delirium are fundamental to the depiction of Cassandra in Aeschylus' tragedy and constitute the symptoms of mental disorders other than the sacred disease of the Hippocratic treatise, where they are attributed to physiological causes.<sup>47</sup>

That said, it is important that the Hippocratic treatise has no specific term for mental disorders other than the sacred disease. Rather, verbal forms appear that are based on the word families *μαίνομαι* and *παραφρονέω*, “to be beside oneself, deranged” (*Morb.sacr.* 17), a compound of *φρονέω*, “to have understanding,” terms that, as we have seen, are used to describe Cassandra's

ποιέοντας, ἔν τε τῷ ὕπνῳ οἶδα πολλοὺς οἰμώζοντας καὶ βοῶντας, τοὺς δὲ πνιγομένους, τοὺς δὲ καὶ ἀναίσσοντας τε καὶ φεύγοντας ἔξω καὶ παραφρονέοντας μέχρι ἐπέγρωνται, ἔπειτα δὲ ὑγίαιας ἔοντας καὶ φρονέοντας ὡσπερ καὶ πρότερον, ἔοντας τ' αὐτέους ὠχροὺς τε καὶ ἀσθενέας, καὶ ταῦτα οὐχ ἄπαξ, ἀλλὰ πολλάκις, “Then again one can see men who are mad and delirious from no obvious cause, and committing many strange acts; while in their sleep, to my knowledge, many groan and shriek, others choke, others dart up and rush out of doors, being delirious until they wake, when they become as healthy and rational as they were before, though pale and weak; and this happens not once but many times” (*Morb.sacr.* 1).

<sup>47</sup> Barra, *Mythos* 5 (1993) 5–43, studies the common ground between Cassandra's symptoms in *Agamemnon* and case studies of patients in the *Corpus Hippocraticum*.

behavior.<sup>48</sup> J. Jouanna notes that this phrase contains an accumulation of the two forms characteristic of the vocabulary of insanity: the μανία word family, denoting insanity with positive connotations, and compounds of φρήν, forming a second group with the family of νοῦς.<sup>49</sup>

Mental disorders other than the sacred disease are a category in the Hippocratic treatise's process of pathologization. While that category has no specific name, to it is ascribed a certain cause, wetness of the brain: to it the term νόσημα is applied (*Morb. sacr.* 20); to it is specified a pattern of two subtypes (17 and 18), whose symptoms are associated with the psychological rather than the physical; and it is associated with suffering, which, as we have seen, is a defining condition for diseases in Hippocratic medicine. In this light, the reason for the presence of the verb μαινομαι and for the absence of the noun μανία to describe both Cassandra's behavior in *Agamemnon* and mental disorders other than the sacred disease in the Hippocratic treatise is one and the same: verbal forms express a set of recognized actions and behaviors; the use of nouns, on the other hand, shows that the concept has attained a degree of definition and abstraction.<sup>50</sup> Nor are terms in the word family νόσος used to describe Cassandra's behavior. This confirms that the pathologization of madness is not complete but still under way during

<sup>48</sup> τῷ δὲ αὐτῷ τούτῳ καὶ μαινόμεθα καὶ παραφρονέομεν, καὶ δαίματα καὶ φόβοι παρίστανται ἡμῖν, τὰ μὲν νύκτωρ, τὰ δὲ καὶ μεθ' ἡμέρη, καὶ ἀγρυπνία καὶ πλάνοι ἄκαιροι, καὶ φροντίδες οὐχ ἰκνεύμεναι, καὶ ἀγνωσία τῶν καθεστώτων καὶ ἀθησία, "It is the same thing which makes us mad or delirious, inspires us with dread and fear, whether by night or by day, brings sleeplessness, inopportune mistakes, aimless anxieties, absent-mindedness, and acts that are contrary to habit" (17).

<sup>49</sup> J. Jouanna, "The Typology and Aetiology of Madness in Ancient Greek Medical and Philosophical Writing," in W. V. Harris (ed.), *Mental Disorders in the Classical World* (Leiden 2013) 97–118, at 99.

<sup>50</sup> Verb forms of the word group of μανία are more frequent than nouns and adjectives in the *Corpus Hippocraticum* (C. Thumiger, "The Early Greek Medical Vocabulary of Insanity," in *Mental Disorders* 61–96, at 65).

the fifth century and is reflected by Aeschylus in his play.

This paper has shown that, in *Agamemnon*, Aeschylus builds up a close relationship between madness and the female world insofar as the character suffering the disease is a woman deploying discourses such as funeral lamentation, associated in Ancient Greece with the female gender, but alien to the realm of Apollo, the god who gave the prophetic gift to Cassandra. It should not be forgotten that the gift is the result of a punishment that also implies a negative valence in her behavior.

It has also drawn parallels between Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* and the treatise *De morbo sacro*, evidence of the reciprocal influences between the medical and tragic discourses. In this way, even if Aeschylus did not invent the relationship between prophecy and suffering, he brings elements to the portrayal of Cassandra's madness as a disease that will appear elsewhere,<sup>51</sup> as in the character of Orestes in *Choephoroi*, and in other authors' tragedies, such as Euripides' *Orestes*.<sup>52</sup>

October, 2023

Universidad Nacional de Hurlingham  
 Instituto de Educación  
 Av. Vergara 2222 (B1688GEZ)  
 Villa Tesei, Hurlingham, Buenos Aires  
 Argentina  
 cecilia.perczyk@unahur.edu.ar

<sup>51</sup> On stereotypes of frenzied behavior see T. Papadopoulou, *Heracles and Euripidean Tragedy* (Cambridge 2005); A. Provenza, "Madness and Bestialization in Euripides' *Heracles*," *CQ* 63 (2013) 68–93. Both study how Euripides problematizes the relationship between hero and demon that causes the madness in Euripides' *Heracles*.

<sup>52</sup> I wish to thank my advisor, Claudia Fernández, and my colleagues, Dana LaCourse Munteanu and Tomás Fernández, for their readings of my work and their helpful suggestions.