



The *Oresteia*

The genealogy of a matricide in the tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides

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Abstract: Ever since Tantalus, each of his descendants in the House of Atreus has committed the unforgivable. Agamemnon, who committed infanticide, was killed in a conjugal trap. Orestes was reluctant to avenge the death of his father, but was urged to act by his sister Electra and the Oracle of Delphi. The dramas of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides retell the origins and consequences of this matricide. Their portrayals of the suffering of Orestes, his persecution by the Erinyes, and the trial that took place on the Areopagus invite the audience to reflect on the importance of the mother in the context of family violence.

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