The subject of the Oresteia Trilogy is nothing less than the growth of civilization, represented by the gradual transition from a primitive law of vendetta (“blood for blood”) to the rational society of civilized human beings.
The Oresteia Trilogy

1. Agamemnon: On the way to Troy, King Agamemnon sacrificed his daughter Iphegeia to get an easy passage for the Greek troop.

➔ conflict between public and personal responsibility

Vendetta: Agamemnon sacrificed his daughter ➔ Clytemnestra (and Aegithus) murdered her husband

2. The Libation Bearers: show the effects of the operation of the law of vendetta on Agamemnon’s son, Orestes.

Vendetta: To revenge for his father, Orestes (with the encourage of his sister Electra) killed his mother Clytemnestra ➔ Orestes was hunted by the Furies (the goddesses of vengeance)

➔ conflict: the contradiction of the law of vendetta

3. The Eumenides (= the kindly ones = the Furies)

➔ resolution through reason and persuasion ➔ Athena as judge, Apollo for Orestes, the Furies against Orestes
The Oresteia Trilogy

Aeschylus affirms his belief that progress can be achieved by reason and order. This gradual transition from darkness to light is handled throughout the three plays with unfailing skills.

- Mask of Agamemnon
- The murder of Agamemnon by Aegisthus
Achilles considers killing the throned Agamemnon, who has just declared that he would take the former's sweetheart Briseis for himself. But while Achilles ponders, Athena comes from heaven and, invisible to the others, seizes him by his hair and stays his anger. To the left old Nestor watches the scene.
• Agamemnon and Achilles
The Family of Agamemnon

Aerope~Atreus

Agamemnon~Clytemnetra

Menelaos~Helen

Orestes

Iphigeneia, Eletra, Chrysothemis

Tisamenos

Agamemnon~Clytemnetra

Menelaos~Helen

Iphigeneia, Eletra, Chrysothemis

Tisamenos
• Iphegenia
Conflicts

Blood for Blood (Vendetta):
- Agamemnon sacrificed Iphigenia
- Clytemnestra and Aigisthus murdered Agamemnon
- Orestes killed Clytemnestra

- Aegisthus and Clytaemnestra, just about to slay Agamemnon
• Orestes
• Eletra
Resolution through reason and persuasion

Athena as judge

Furies against Orestes

Apollo for Orestes

- Erinyes (Furies)