Aat Euripides' Orestes 395ff, Orestes is portrayed as subject to fits of madness since his murdered mother was buried five days previously. He and Electra are to have their fate decided by the people of Argos, and Electra anxiously awaits the arrival of their uncle Menelaus, who is their only hope of safety. When he appears he recoils in horror at the sight of Orestes and describes him as τινα νερτέρων, so wasted is he by the madness. It is thus quite natural for him to ask Orestes, in the first line of the passage quoted above, what the νόσος is which is destroying him, but the answer he gets puzzles him. Orestes refers to something called σύνεσις, or, in other words, ὃτι σύνοιδα δείν' εἰργασμένος. Menelaus fails to get his meaning, and we ourselves may well ask what Orestes, or Euripides, did mean.

The line has attracted a good deal of attention, and is frequently cited as an example of the existence in Classical Greek of a term or formula which may be rendered by the word ‘conscience’. Zucker, for instance, comes to the conclusion from a study of this and other passages that, “Wir finden in der Zeit der Sophistik die Vorstellung vom bösen Gewissen und seiner Beunruhigung und vom guten Gewissen und der von ihm ausgehenden Befriedigung in der Form des häufigen Ausdrucks: sich bewusst sein böser Taten—sich keiner bösen Taten bewusst sein, mit Bezugnahme auf Einzelfälle und auf den inneren Gesamtzustand. Mit anderen Worten: wir finden in dieser Vorstufenform die Vorstellung vom rückschauenden
Gewissen." Similarly Gernet remarks on a particular passage of Antiphon, "Il n'y a d'ailleurs pas encore dans ce passage de terme abstrait pour désigner la 'conscience': Euripide paraît le premier à employer ainsi le mot συνειασ (Or. 396) à une occasion qui fait justement penser à notre texte." The same line is also one of the passages cited in LSJ as examples of the use of the word συνειασ in the sense of 'conscience'.

That συνειασ and related nouns and verbal formulae can properly be rendered by the word 'conscience' may be correct, but it is a recognised problem in translation that it is very difficult to find exactly equivalent expressions in any two languages, not least when the two concerned are an ancient and a modern one, and when the terms involved are as complex as that of 'conscience'. In English we talk, for instance, of a 'guilty conscience', of 'conscience-money', of 'freedom of conscience' and so on, when it is evident that different aspects of the word 'conscience' are meant. When considering this word as a possible rendering for συνειασ and related expressions, we must therefore ask first what meanings the word carries for us, and then which, if any, of these meanings correspond to the usage of the Greek expressions.

A discussion of all the implications of the word 'conscience' would be beyond the scope of this article, but one basic distinction which can be recognised in our use of this word is that between what Zucker calls the 'backward-looking conscience' and the 'conscience' which prompts a course of action, and which might therefore be called 'forward-looking'. Thus we talk of having a clear or guilty conscience with reference to our past actions, and of following the dictates of our conscience when faced with alternative courses of action. But as well as this basic distinction, a further valid distinction can, I think, be made in the case of each of the two kinds of conscience so far described. When we talk of having a clear or guilty conscience with reference to past actions, we can mean simply that we are aware or are not aware of having, whether by commission or omission, rendered ourselves liable to penalties if we are apprehended. These penalties can be the legal penalties incurred by transgressing the laws of the state, or the censure, wrath or vengeance of those whom we have offended. 'Conscience' in this sense could thus be defined as an 'awareness of culpability', much as it is used in Shakespeare's "conscience does

1 F. Zucker, Syneidesis-Conscientia (Jenaer akademische Reden 6, 1928).
make cowards of us all.” This awareness is usually associated, as here, with feelings of fear, and can be accompanied by a feeling of remorse which is prompted by fear of sanctions and allied with a sense of one’s own stupidity in having done the deed. But we can also use phrases like ‘having a guilty conscience’ and ‘being conscience-stricken’ to denote a feeling of ‘moral guilt’. By this I mean the awareness that one has knowingly violated standards of behaviour to which one subscribes, an awareness which is usually associated with feeling ashamed of oneself. This connotation of such phrases as ‘being conscience-stricken’ is clearly quite different from ‘awareness of culpability’, a distinction we often draw when talking of past actions. Indeed the recognition of an act as ‘morally wrong’, that is, as contravening one’s own code of behaviour as distinct from incurring some external penalty, is a necessary prerequisite of a sense of moral guilt.

There are thus at least two senses in which the word ‘conscience’ can be used with reference to past actions, and a similar complexity is, I think, inherent in this word when used with reference to a future course of action. When a person hesitates to do something he can say, for example, “It would be on my conscience,” and he can mean by this that what he did would be an offence rendering him liable to penalties and therefore to the concomitant fear of being found out and punished. This use of the word ‘conscience’, which I may call ‘scrupulous fear’, would thus correspond to the ‘awareness of culpability’ with respect to past actions. But very frequently, of course, the word ‘conscience’, particularly when found absolutely, is used to denote a personal conviction of the rightness or wrongness of a course of action. Thus when talking of ‘freedom of conscience’ or of a ‘conscience clause’ in legislation, we mean the right of an individual to act in accordance with his personal conviction of what is right and what wrong. This meaning clearly differs fundamentally from ‘scrupulous fear’, since it has reference to a personal code of behaviour as distinct from a recognition that certain things are deemed right or wrong by others so that one will be rewarded or punished accordingly. This meaning, defined by the OED as ‘a moral sense of right and wrong’, thus corresponds to the use of the word ‘conscience’ to denote ‘moral guilt’. Indeed the two uses are very closely related, since it is when one has acted against one’s convictions that one feels moral guilt.

We can thus distinguish in our use of the word ‘conscience’ at least these four elements, namely ‘awareness of culpability’, ‘moral guilt’,
'scrupulous fear' and 'a moral sense of right and wrong'. With these in mind let us now turn to the Greek word σύνεσις and related expressions. In the lines quoted from Orestes the abstract noun is explained or glossed by the expression σύνοιδα δείν έλεγασμένος, and this phrase is itself almost certainly, as Zucker suggests, a shortened version of the commoner συνείδειν τι έκατω. The latter expression seems to have been used first by Sappho, but the fragmentary nature of the example precludes any attempt to discover how it was used. In Herodotus both σύνοιδα and συγγνώσκο (‐ομαι) are found. σύνοιδα is used to denote knowledge shared with others, τὰς δὲ μαντήας τὰς γνωμένας τούτους φυλάσσει, συνείδειν δὲ καὶ τοῦς Πυθίους, or, as a development of this meaning, to denote common knowledge of some fact about some other person, which can be to his credit or discredit: έκ δὲ τῶν ἄλλων συμμάχων ἐξελέγητο κατ' ὀλγοὺς, τοῖς εἴδεα τε ὑπήρχε διαλέγων καὶ εἰ τέους τι χρηστὸν συνήδεε πεποιμένον (Hdt. 8.113.3). συγγνώσκο (‐ομαι) on the other hand appears to indicate a sharing of opinion with someone, an admission or acceptance of the fact that he is right. When, for example, the Sicyonians and the people of Aegina have taken part in an attack on Argive territory, Argos as the victim immediately seeks redress and demands a fine from both peoples, with the result that, Σικυώνιοι μὲν νῦν συγγνώντες ἀδικήσας ὤμολογήσαν ἐκατόν τάλαντα ἐκτέλασαν ἀξίμιοι εἶναι, Ἀιγινηταὶ δὲ οὔτε συγγνώσκοκατο ἤσαν τὰ αἰθαδέατερα (Hdt. 6.92.2). Clearly the Sicyonians are ‘pleading guilty’. They are admitting, or acknowledging, the correctness of the Argive charge, and are paying the proposed fine in order to appease Argos and escape worse penalties. The people of Aegina, on the other hand, are ‘pleading not guilty’. They are denying the truth of the charge, presumably in the hope of getting off scot-free. συγγνώσκο (‐ομαι) thus denotes a sharing of the other person’s point of view, a meaning which lies also behind the cognate noun συγνώμη. For this word means not so much ‘forgiveness’, in the sense of taking pity on someone who has perhaps no excuse to offer for his action, but rather a recognition of that person’s reasons for his action. One shares his view of the action and so admits that he does not deserve the anger or reprisals with which one is threatening

4 Hdt. 6.57.4, cf. Solon 12.15f (I. M. Linforth, Solon the Athenian [Berkeley 1919]), Aesch. Cho. 215ff, Soph. El. 92ff, etc. This basic meaning continues to be the one most frequently found, and is often used to denote ‘complicity’, as for example in Eur. Hec. 870f, σύνσθι μὲν γὰρ, ἢν τι βουλεύσας κακῶν | τῷ τόνδ’ ἀποκτείνατι, συνδράσῃς δὲ μῆ.
him. Thus when Croesus keeps Atys away from hunting and fighting, Atys is highly annoyed because of the poor figure he is cutting (Hdt. 1.37.2-3). When Croesus explains the reason, namely that a dream had warned him that his son would die as the result of a wound, Atys acknowledges the validity of the reason, saying, συγνώσκω μέν ὁ πάτερ τοι, ἵδοντι γε ὃμιν τουαύτην, περὶ ἐμὲ φυλακήν ἔχειν (Hdt. 1.39.1).

When συγνώσκω and συγνώσκομαι are used by Herodotus each once with the reflexive, they appear to differ from the non-reflexive uses in denoting specifically an admission or conclusion about oneself which is reached after talking the thing over with oneself, as it were. The Sicyonians, for instance, admitted to a charge with which they were taxed by someone else, whereas Periander παρηθίκεε καὶ συνεγνώσκετο ἐωντῷ οὔκετε, εἶνα δυνατός τὰ πρόγματα ἐπορᾶν τε καὶ δίετεν (Hdt. 3.53.1). He ‘admits to himself’, ‘realises’ or ‘is aware of’ his own inability to cope, without being necessarily taxed with it by someone else. In the same way the Spartans, having driven Hippias out of Athens, are recorded as saying, ἄδρες σύμμαχοι, συγνώσκομεν αὐτοῦν ἡμῖν οὐ ποιήσαι ὁρθῶς (Hdt. 5.91.2). This is not so much an acknowledgement of the truth of an accusation as an independent realisation of their error.5

σύνοιδα is not found with the reflexive in Herodotus, but when it is used elsewhere in Greek literature,6 it appears, like συγνώσκω (-ομαι) to differ from the non-reflexive uses in indicating that the action of the verb, the ‘knowing’, is shared not with others but with oneself. It thus comes to mean something like ‘to be aware of’ or ‘conscious of’ something about oneself. Thus in a fragment of Gorgias (82 B 11a.5 D.-K.) we find, in suitably rhetorical language, ὅτι μὲν οὖν οὐ σαφῶς <εἰδῶς> ὁ κατήγορος κατήγορεί μοῦ, σαφῶς οἶδα· σύνοιδα γὰρ ἐμαυτῷ

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5 One may note a parallel example in Lys. 9.11, συνέψωσαν δὲ καὶ αὐτοὶ οὕλαν ὡς ἣδικηκότες. This passage together with the two Herodotean passages are the only three examples of the use of συγγνώσκω (-ομαι) with the reflexive cited by LSf before Dion. Hal. In Soph. Ant. 926, also cited under the reflexive uses by LSf, the verb is unusually used with a nominative participle directly dependent on it. This may be equivalent to a reflexive use (cf. Eur. Or. 396 and n.10 below), but the sense of the expression seems from the context to be that of the non-reflexive verb ‘to admit’, rather than that of the reflexive verb ‘to be aware of’.

6 The use of this expression does not become in any way frequent before the end of the fifth century B.C. It does not seem to appear at all in some major authors such as Herodotus, Aeschylus, Thucydides, and possibly Sophocles (Stob. 3.24 attributes to him one fragment containing the expression [v.I. αὐτῷ], = fr.845 Nauck). It then appears with some frequency in the speeches attributed to Antiphon, particularly V and VI, in Plato’s dialogues and in Xenophon. Aristotle, Demosthenes and Isocrates seem to use it a couple of times each.
The mere occurrence of either συγγνώσκω (-ομαι) or σύνοιδα with the reflexive would thus hardly justify the use of the word 'conscience' in any of the meanings discussed above, since these expressions would seem to indicate mere awareness or consciousness of some fact about oneself. But though this may be true of these expressions in isolation, are they perhaps used in contexts where the sense of the whole passage may justify 'conscience' in any of its senses? When these expressions are found in connection with some good quality in oneself, as for instance in the line of Aristophanes quoted above, the concept as a whole clearly bears no relation to 'conscience'. If anything, the predominant note is one of pride, much as we talk of 'conscious pride' with reference to our virtues or achievements. It is only when these expressions are used in connection with some unpleasant fact that the context as a whole can, but need not necessarily, suggest the notion of 'conscience'. Thus when Periander συγγνώσκετο έωντῷ οὐκέτι εἶναι δυνατός τὰ πρήματα ἐπορᾶν, there is nothing to suggest that we are dealing in this passage with 'awareness of culpability', least of all with 'moral guilt'. But in the second example from Herodotus where the Spartans confess their mistake, they not only admit something to their discredit, but by their attempts to rectify the situation, ἐπείτε δὲ ἐκεῖνα ποιήσαντες ζημάρτομεν, νῦν πειρησόμεθα σφει ἁμα ὑμίν ἄκεόμενοι (Hdt. 5.91.3), reveal both a fear of the consequences of their own willed action and a sense of their own stupidity that could perhaps amount to that 'remorseful regret' which can accompany 'awareness of culpability'.

It is thus only the connection of the expressions συγγνώσκειν (-εσθαί) τι έωντῷ and συνειδέων τι έωντῷ with some discreditable fact and with those feelings which were seen to be associated with the various meanings of 'conscience' which could justify any reference to 'conscience', and it is only these feelings which can determine which of the meanings of 'conscience' could be useful in any particular passage. Thus at Aristophanes, Vesp. 999ff,

πῶς οὖν εμαυτῷ τοῦτ’ ἐγὼ συνείσομαι,

φεύγοντ’ ἀπολύσας ἄνδρα; τί ποτε πείσομαι;
the verbal expression appears rather unusually in the future tense; but it is clear from the context that we are not dealing with the 'future-looking conscience', but with concern for a past action in which the future tense expresses an inability even to admit the deed to oneself because of the terrible consequences it will incur (τι ποτε πείσομαι). It is also interesting that the act is described as being 'out of character', which might suggest that we are dealing with 'moral guilt'; but such a phrase can refer to the fact that a person is normally law-abiding and does not do what will get him into trouble. Indeed that this statement occurs in a deprecatory prayer to the gods would indicate that Philocleon is offering as grounds for acquittal (ξύγγυνωτε) the fact that he is 'of previously good behaviour'. It is thus unlikely that 'moral guilt' is here implied, particularly as he also claims that his act was not deliberate. The basic reaction to the deed is one of fearful foreboding of the consequences, which would seem to indicate, if anything, the 'awareness of culpability' which was defined earlier.

It is the association of particular reactions to one's actions with the expression συνεδέναι τι έαυτῷ which alone justifies any reference to the word 'conscience', and of the types of reaction noted when we distinguished the meanings of 'conscience', it would seem that, as in the Aristophanes passage, fearful foreboding alone is conveyed by this expression. Thus it is because Alcibiades fears the censure of Socrates that he says, ἕγω δὲ τοῦτον μόνον αἰσχύνομαι. σύνοιδα γὰρ ἐμαυτῷ ἀντιλέγειν μὲν οὐ δυσαμένον ὡς οὐ δεῖ ποιεῖν ἀ οὖτος κελεῦει, ἐπειδὴν δὲ ἀπέλθω, ἡττημένω τῆς τιμῆς ὑπὸ τῶν πολλῶν . . . καὶ όταν ίδω, αἰσχύνομαι τὰ ὁμολογημένα. καὶ πολλάκις μὲν ἥδεως ὅν ἵδοιμ αὐτὸν μὴ ὅντα ἐν ἀνθρώποις (Pl. Symp. 216ff). Again we are hardly dealing here with an expression of moral guilt since, though he has accepted or agreed that he ought to do what Socrates suggests, his reaction to doing the opposite is to fear the consequences of not doing it, namely Socrates' censure. He is ashamed, certainly, but the shame he feels is not 'of himself' but 'before Socrates'. It is a shame which is evoked by the external stimulus of seeing Socrates, so that his reaction is to wish him dead.7

7 A situation similar to that in which Alcibiades finds himself is described in Xen. An. 1.3.10 (cf. Mem. 2.9.6), ὅστε καὶ μεταπεμπομένου αὐτοῦ οὖκ ἐθέλω ἐλθεῖν, τὸ μὲν μέγιστον
This combination of the expression συνειδέναι τι έαυτῷ with anxious foreboding, amounting to what could be termed ‘awareness of culpability’, is, as one might expect, most commonly found in the context of the law courts and of the relations between men and gods. Plato provides us with a good example of the latter when Cephalus describes the reaction of men to the approach of death (Rep. 330E4ff) ὑποψίας δ’ οὖν καὶ δείματος μεστὸς γίγνεται καὶ ἀναλογίζεται ἤδη καὶ σκοτεί εἰ τινὰ τι ἡδίκησεν. ὃ μὲν οὖν εὐρίσκων έαυτόν ἐν τῷ βίῳ πολλά ἀδικήματα καὶ ἐκ τῶν ὑπνῶν, ὃςπερ οἱ παιδείς, θαμά ἐγειρόμενος δειμαίνει καὶ ζῇ μετὰ κακῆς ἐλπίδος. τῶ δὲ μηδὲν έαυτῷ ἀδικὸν συνειδότι ἥδεια ἔλπις αἰὲ πάρεστι καὶ ἀγαθὴ γηροτρόφος. A distinction is drawn here between the man who has skeletons in his cupboard and the one who has none, and it is interesting that the counterpart to our expression is a verb of ‘finding out’ or ‘discovering’ (εὑρίσκων). What is described is an examination of one’s past life to find out if any of one’s actions have violated the (divine) law (ἀδικήματα) and therefore render one liable to penalties. There is no question here of that shame of oneself which results from a violation of one’s personal code of behaviour, but rather of the uneasiness of mind or peace of mind which results from the presence or absence of an awareness of culpability.

In the sphere of the law courts one particular passage in Antiphon (5.93) merits discussion in detail: εἶ δ’ ἵστε ὅτι οὐκ ἂν ποτ’ ἤλθον εἰς τὴν πόλιν, εἰ τι ξυνήθη ἐμαυτῷ τοιοῦτον· νῦν δὲ πιστεύων τῷ δικαίῳ, οὐ πλέον οὐδὲν ἐστὶ δεξιόν ἀνδρὶ συναγωγουξεσθαι, μηδὲν αὐτῷ συνειδοτὶ ἄνωτόν εἰργασμένον μηδ’ εἰς τοὺς θεοὺς ἁσβηκότι· ἐν γὰρ τῷ τοιοῦτω ἤδη καὶ τὸ σῶμα ἀπειρηκὸς ἢ ψυχὴ συνεξέσωσεν, ἐθέλουσα ταλαιπωρεῖν διὰ τὸ μὴ ξυνειδέναι ἐαυτῇ· τῷ δὲ ξυνειδότι τούτῳ αὐτῷ πρῶτον πολέμον ἐστιν· ἐτὶ γὰρ καὶ τοῦ σώματος ἑσύνοντος ἢ ψυχὴ προσαπολείπει, ἡγουμένη τὴν τιμωρίαν οἱ ἥκεν ταύτῃ τῶν ἁσβημάτων· ἐγὼ δ’ ἐμαυτῷ τοιοῦτον οὐδὲν ξυνειδῶς ἢκω εἰς ὑμᾶς. It is of this passage that Gernet says, as mentioned above, “Ces conceptions et considérations psychologiques ne sont pas de date très ancienne; il n’y a d’ailleurs pas encore dans ce passage de terme abstrait pour désigner la ‘conscience’: Euripide paraît Ie premier a employer ainsi le mot σύνεσις (Or. 396) à une occasion qui fait justement penser à notre texte.”

8 Though these two passages do not, perhaps, have much more in common than the use
conscience covers, of course, an even wider range of meanings than English ‘conscience’, since it denotes both consciousness and conscience, so that what particular aspect or aspects of la conscience Gernet considers present in this passage is not clear. Certainly it would be unwise, I think, to talk of ‘conscience’ in English without specifying the particular aspect involved. In the passage the defendant says that he would not have returned to the city ‘me sentant coupable’ as Gernet himself translates. An unwillingness to face someone or go somewhere indicates fear of the consequences of one’s actions, and this same reaction has already been noticed in other passages where the general context might suggest ‘awareness of culpability’. There is certainly in this passage, as Gernet points out, evidence of that deeper psychological observation which is very much in evidence at the time, but it is the observation of the effect on a defendant of the presence or absence of awareness of culpability. What causes the guilty man’s mental unease is not any feeling of ‘moral guilt’, but his fear of τὴν τιμωρίαν . . . τῶν ἀσεβημάτων. As Demosthenes points out in a similar observation (19.208), τάληθες ἱσχυρῶν, καὶ τούναντιόν ἀσθενές τὸ συνειδέναι πεπρακόσιν αὐτοῖς τὰ πράγματα. τὸτο παραρεῖται τὴν θρασύτητα τὴν τούτων, τούτ’ ἀποστρέφει τὴν γλώτταν . . . σιωπᾶν ποιεῖ. Consciousness of culpability creates a lack of confidence to face a jury, and it is this aspect of the word ‘conscience’, rather than that of ‘moral guilt’, which lies behind these passages.9

It would seem from the passages discussed that the phrase συνειδέναι τι ἐαυτῷ means no more than ‘awareness’ or ‘consciousness’ of some fact about oneself, but that the association with it of a feeling of fearful foreboding might justify reference to the expressions ‘guilty conscience’ or ‘clear conscience’ in the sense of the presence or absence of an awareness of culpability. What, then, of the line in Euripides’ Orestes? It would seem that σύνεσις is here used as a noun equivalent of συνειδέναι τι,10 a phrase which, as we have seen, means

9 Cf. ὁ συνειδών αὐτῷ τι κἂν θρασύτατος | ὡ σύνεσις αὐτῶν δελούσαν εἰναι ποιεῖ (Men. fab.inc. fr.632 Edmonds) and τὸ μὴ συνειδέαν γὰρ αὐτὸ τῷ βίῳ | ἀδίκημα μηδὲν ἥδων ἴδει (Antiph. fab.inc. 269 Edmonds), also Isoc. 1.16, 3.59.

10 It is noticeable that Euripides does not use the dative of the reflexive pronoun with συνειδέαν. In all but two passages the verb means ‘knowledge shared with others’, but both here and in Med. 495 (σύνοιαθά γ’ ἐίς ἐμ’ ὦν κεφρό δόκων ἦν) the nominative participle seems
no more than to be conscious of something. To the noun also this meaning, and this only, can be attributed. It is certainly an unusual use of the noun, but that it denotes 'consciousness', rather than 'conscience' in any of its senses, is, I think, clear from the meaning of the phrase which it summarises.\footnote{The normal meaning of σώνεις (from σώνεμνυ, σωνέναι) is, of course, 'understanding' or 'intelligence'. Euripides' use of it as equivalent in meaning to σωνειδέναι τι ἔστιν (does he perhaps derive it from that word?) is, I think, without precedent, and only two other examples are cited by LSJ. In the fragment of Menander (quoted above n.9) it is used as an equivalent of συνασπόφρον ἀνθρώπος τι, which is clearly related to σωνειδέναι τι ἔστιν. The Polybius passage (οὐδεὶς γὰρ οὔτως οὐτή μάρτυς ἐστὶν φοβερός οὔτε κατάγχορος δεῖνός ὡς ἡ σώνεις ἢ ἐγκατατοκύδα ταῖς ἐκάστῳν ψυχαῖς 18.43.13) is considered to be in all probability a gloss and lacks a context which would give it a precise meaning, but the description of σώνεις as μάρτυς φοβερὸς might suggest 'awareness of culpability'.}

But does the context perhaps justify some reference to 'conscience'? Compare this passage with Aristophanes, \textit{Thesm.} 476f, where the same or a very similar expression occurs:

\[\text{ἐγὼ γὰρ οὐτὴ πρῶτον, ἢνα μὴ ἀλλην λέγω,} \]
\[\text{εὐνοιοί εἵμαυτή πολλὰ δεῖν ...} \]

Zucker is of the opinion that the actual use of this expression differs in the two passages, in that here it means only 'ich weiss von mir'. This difference of usage can, I think, hardly be proved, and he himself gives no evidence beyond saying that the phrase can refer to 'moralische Tatbestände'. Differences there certainly are in the two passages, but they lie not in the expression itself, which in \textit{both} cases means 'ich weiss von mir', but in the reaction to what has been done. It is very obvious that Mnesilochus has no qualms whatsoever about what 'she' has done. Orestes, on the other hand, is in obvious distress, and describes his condition as λύτη. But can one even so talk justifiably, in Orestes' case, of a guilty conscience in any sense? The adjective he uses to describe his deed is δεινὸς, a word which appears to bear no moral connotations at all, being used of things which are extraordinary or monstrous. What he is conscious of is the full horror of the deed, a feeling which need have nothing to do with awareness of culpability or with moral guilt. That awareness of culpability may form part of his distress cannot be denied, but it seems to me that what is being described here, with again that subtler observation of...
psychological matters, is an irrational, amoral sense of horror which can end in madness. One play cannot be used to explain another, but it is interesting to note that in the Electra Orestes relives the scene of the murder, which was an experience clearly sufficient to prey on his mind and destroy it.

There is thus no evidence to support the rendering of the word σόνεια by the word ‘conscience’ in any of its senses. It is used with the meaning ‘consciousness’ and is therefore synonymous with συνείδησις, the meaning of which is likewise ‘consciousness’ as is shown by its use in Democritus: ἐνοι δινήσεις φύσεως διάλυσιν οὐκ εἰδότες ἀνθρωποι, συνείδησις δὲ τῆς ἐν τῷ βίῳ κακοπραγμοσύνης, τοῦ τῆς βιοτῆς χρόνον ἐν παραχώσει καὶ φόβοις ταλαιπωρέουσα. The passage is akin to the one in the Republic discussed above, and describes the same awareness of culpability and the consequent fear of sanctions. So too the use of the word σάννοια in Eur. Andr. 804ff would seem to denote some kind of meditation on or awareness of one’s past actions:

δέσποινα γὰρ κατ’ οἶκον, Ἐρμόνην λέγω, πατρός τ’ ἐρημωθεῖσα συννοίᾳ θ’ ἅμα, οἶνον δεδρακεν ἔργον Ανδρομάχην κτανείν καὶ παῖδα βουλεύσασα, καθαυνείν θέλει, πόσιν τρέμουσα, μὴ ἀντὶ τῶν δεδραμένων ἐκ τοῦ ἀτιμώς δωμάτων ἀποσταλῇ, ἢ καθάνῃ κτείνουσα τοὺς οὖ χρῆ κτανεῖν.

Hermione’s reaction to what she attempted to do is to fear her husband’s wrath and wish herself dead rather than meet him. The context is thus very similar to others discussed above in which awareness of culpability is associated with the fear of sanctions and the consequent desire to avoid them. To render the word by either ‘conscience’ or ‘remorse’ (LSJ s.v.) could thus be misleading, since

12 Democrit. 68 B 297 D.-K. It is συνείδησις which is the strict noun equivalent of the expression συνείδαντι τι έκσαι, and which, rather than σόνεια, after the classical period becomes the word normally used to denote ‘awareness of culpability’. The phrases ὀρθή συνείδησις and ἄγαθή συνείδησις are attributed at Stob. 3.24.11-12 to Bias and Periander respectively, and in the NT συνείδησις is used frequently to denote ‘clear’ or ‘guilty conscience’. In some passages in St Paul’s Epistles it also seems to be used to mean something like ‘scrupulous fear’, with particular reference to the wrath of God (cf. ἐνθύμων discussed below). The participial substantive τὸ συνείδος is similarly found after the classical period with the meaning ‘awareness of culpability’ as in Paus. 7.10.10, ὑπὸ συνείδοστος ἐπαρρησίαζετο ἄγαθον; and Stobaeus’ own chapter (3.24) is entitled Περὶ τοῦ συνείδοστος.

there is nothing to suggest we are dealing with moral guilt, and any justification for a reference to remorse or to awareness of culpability is to be found in the context rather than in the use of the word itself.

One other word to which has been attributed the rendering 'conscience'¹⁴ and which therefore merits mention is ἐνθύμον. The word is interesting because it is the only one of those discussed which is used with reference to both past and future actions. Thus of Xerxes it is said (Hdt. 8.54) that he may have had sacrifice offered at Athens because ἐνθύμον οἱ ἔγενε ἐμπρήσαντα τὸ ἱρὸν, whereas Thucydides records (at 7.50.4) that after the eclipse of the moon at Syracuse the Athenians requested the generals not to proceed ἐνθύμον ποιούμενοι. Is this, then, a word which could justify the rendering 'conscience' with reference to both past and future actions? As Hatch points out in his detailed discussion, it denotes primarily a feeling of anxiety, a weight on the heart or mind caused by fear (e.g. Od. 13.421). It then becomes incorporated into religious terminology when it refers specifically to fear of divine wrath. The word is thus used in contexts of fearful foreboding, which at best suggests 'awareness of culpability' in Xerxes' case and 'scrupulous fear' in the Athenians' case. But even so it must be borne in mind that the Greek word refers specifically to fear of divine wrath.

It would thus appear that none of the words and expressions discussed can justifiably be rendered by 'conscience' in any of its senses. They denote an awareness or consciousness or anxious reflection about one's actions. Only certain contexts in which they occur can be said to justify a reference to 'conscience'; and even then, it will be noted, only those meanings of 'conscience' which are connected with the consequence of one's actions, namely 'awareness of culpability' and 'scrupulous fear', are involved. None of the contexts justifies any reference to 'moral guilt' or 'a moral sense of right and wrong', that is to say, those meanings that have to do with a personally accepted code of behaviour.¹⁵

¹⁴ W. H. P. Hatch, "The Use of ἀλειφόμοιος (and Related Words)," HSCP 19 (1908) 172; also LSJ s.v.

¹⁵ Zucker is of the opinion that the various elements which he considers make up the concept 'conscience' were already present at the time of the Sophists and might have become unified but for Socrates. One of these elements is the concept of 'shame before oneself', a feeling which, it will be remembered, was seen to be a possible concomitant of 'moral guilt'. He refers particularly to a fragment of Democritus quoted by Stobaeus,
Although from our point of view we may be tempted to say that these words and phrases mean only 'consciousness', their use in Greek in fact represents an interesting shift of emphasis in the manner in which judgement was passed on past actions. In Homer (Il. 9.115f) Agamemnon replies to Nestor's criticisms of the way in which he took Briseis,

\[\text{δώ γέρον, οὗ τι ψεύδος ἔμας ἔτασ κατέλεξας.}\]
\[\text{άσαμην, οὐδ’ αὐτὸς ἀναίνομαι . . .}\]

He concedes the truth of Nestor's accusations, but describes his action as ἀτη and himself as under the influence of ἀτη (άσαμην). Indeed when apologising to Achilles he even claims,

\[\text{ἐγώ δ’ οὐκ αἰτιός εἰμι,}\]
\[\text{ἀλλὰ Ζεὺς καὶ Μοῖρα καὶ ἥεροφοτίς Ἐρμός,}\]
\[\text{οἳ τ’ μοι εἳ αἰγορῇ φρεσίν ἐμβαλὼν ἀγριον ἀτήν.}\]

He regards his action as the result of ἀτη, something external to himself, so that he himself is blameless. In exactly the same way, as Boehme suggests, the Homeric hero tends to attribute to his θυμὸς any thought which he no longer accepts as worthy of him. Thus Hector, having entertained the idea of appealing to Achilles' pity instead of fighting him, says (Il. 22.122),

\[\text{ἀλλὰ τ’ ἡ μοι ταῦτα φίλος διελέξατο θυμός;}\]

It may also be noted that in much the same way a mistake is often regarded as being the result of a person having acted μεγαλύτεροι θυμῶν εἶξας (Il. 9.109f) or φρεσὶ λευγαλέησι πιθήσας (9.119) where the θυμὸς or φρένες would seem to be regarded as something apart from the 'self', which is felt to be blameless. When, therefore, the Spartans say 'we

\[\text{μὴ δὲν τ’ μᾶλλον τοὺς ἄνθρωπος αἰδείσαι ἐνωπώ μὴδὲ τ’ μᾶλλον ἐξεργάζεσθαι κακών, ε’ μὲνει μηδεὶς εἰδὴσει ἢ οἱ πάντες ἀθρωπων ἀλλ’ ἐστὶνό μάλιστα αἰδείσαι καὶ τοῦτον νόμον τ’ ὕψη καθεστάναι, ὅστε μηδὲν ποιεῖν ἀνεπιτήδειον (68 B 264 D.-K.). This passage certainly describes a form of 'shame before oneself' or 'self-judgement', but that it also implies the existence of that personal acceptance of a code of behaviour which was seen to be the pre-requisite of both 'moral guilt' and 'a moral sense of right and wrong' is, I think, doubtful. What Democritus seems to urge is that one should not do, even privately or secretly, what others would censure if they knew of it (cf. B 244, B 84). The standard of behaviour is still 'what others think', what is 'proper' or 'fitting' (ἀνεπιτήδειον), rather than one's own 'moral consciousness'.}\n
17 J. Boehme, Die Seele und das Ich im homerischen Epos (Leipzig-Berlin 1929).
admit to ourselves' that we made a mistake, the recognition of error is no longer externalised (ἀοσάμην), but is an internal awareness (συγγινώσκομεν αὐτόις ἡμῖν).

It is, I think, this internal awareness expressed in the word σύνεσις, rather than the strange use of the word itself, which puzzles Menelaus in the Orestes. Orestes' affliction has been attributed earlier in the play both by others and by himself to the θεὸς εὐμενίδας (Or. 37-38), the αἰματωποῦ καὶ δρακοντώδεις κόρας.  

But in reply to Menelaus' question as to what is wrong with him, Orestes refers not primarily to these externalised agents of madness, but to σύνεσις, an inner consciousness. This concept Menelaus fails to grasp since, as his question to Orestes implies (τίς σ' ἀπόλλυσιν νόσος;), he understands Orestes' plight in terms of something external destroying him. That is why he is much happier when Orestes talks of λύπη ... ὃ διαφθείρουσα με, since this can be understood as a form of νόσος which, because it is caused from without, can be cured: δεινῇ γὰρ ἦ θεὸς, ἀλλ' ὃμως ἰάσιμος.  

We are now back to the passage from which we started. I hope it has emerged that the mere occurrence of the word σύνεσις, or the related expressions συγγινώσκειν (-εσθαῖ) τι ἐαυτῷ and συνειδέναι τι ἐαυτῷ, does not justify any reference to 'conscience' in any of its senses. On the other hand, these words and expressions are not to be dismissed as mere failed candidates for such a rendering. In their own right they indicate a growing awareness of the inner self, and an increasingly subtle psychological analysis.

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18 Or. 256; cf. Aesch. Choeph. 1054, αὐδὲ μητρὸς ἡγκοτοι κόνες.
19 Cf. Phaedra's nurse in Eur. Hipp., who, as Dodds suggests (op. cit. [supra n.16] 56), cannot grasp that the μέλαμα affecting Phaedra's mind (line 317.) is purely internal, but understands it in terms of a magical incantation by enemies (line 318.).
20 I wish to thank Professor G. L. Huxley of The Queen's University of Belfast for helpful criticism of earlier drafts of this article.