

2023-02-17

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**Hands to Oars:  
Aeschylus' Cosmo-*Phthoric* Spin on Empedocles' Whirlpool**

MICHAEL DEGENER

## Introduction

In “The Caesura of the *Symbolon* in Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon*”<sup>1</sup> I first gestured to the relationship of Helen, of the *opsis* of Helen, of her *phasma*, to the logic, or rather *sigetic*,<sup>2</sup> of the *symbolon* in Calchas’ false prophecy and the sacrifice of Iphigeneia. Although Helen’s departure precedes the sacrifice in the sequence of events and the effect of the *pothos*, the longing, that Menelaus experiences for her in her absence had already begun to hold sway, it is the gorgonic<sup>3</sup> impact of the sacrifice of Iphigeneia registered in the static *graphe* of the cast arrows of the Empedoclean extramission of her gaze written indelibly upon the *phrenes*<sup>4</sup> of the sacrificers that would determine that the Trojan debacle would be launched in a hypnotic martial trance. Such is presaged in the Lookout’s reference to the risk of his eyelids being συμβαλεῖν ὕπνω<sup>5</sup> (15), “cast

<sup>1</sup>Degener 2001 which developed content first introduced in Degener 1996. I would like to thank the folks at the Exedra Mediterranean Center where this paper was first presented in a much shorter form in the ‘22 Fonte Aretusa conference. In particular, I would like to thank Heather Reid for all her constructive comments.

<sup>2</sup> I refer here to Walter Benjamin’s theory of the sigetic sublimity of tragedy, that is, to the sublimity of the silence (σιγή) of the tragic hero struck dumb in the demonic hold of the pagan gods as developed in the preface to *The Origin of the German Trauerspiel* 2019; 1928. The sigetic is staged by Aeschylus in Iphigeneia literally being silenced by the bit in her mouth. The sacrifice stages, at once, what was not seen, οὐτ’ εἶδον—both by the sacrificers in third plural at Aulis and by the chorus in first singular who were not there—and what will not be spoken, οὐτ’ ἐννέπω (248). I will return to this pivotal ambiguity in the penultimate section to develop its implications for the relationship of dramatic mimesis and mental images.

<sup>3</sup> The gorgonic resonances of the sacrifice are explicitly echoed in the *Choephoroi* in the chorus’ exhortation to Orestes to steal himself like Perseus to face Clytemnestra in the moment of the matricide (831-36), and in the reference to the Erinyes as coming upon him in the manner of Gorgons (1048). MacLachlan 1993: 138-39 n. 13, regarding the retributive logic of the *ata* that Orestes will exact against Clytemnestra, adopts Kirchoff’s emendation of Γοργοῦς for *Ch.* 835. Whatever the reading, the gorgonic context is clear, albeit down the chain of retributive violence. At the opening of the *Eumenides* the Pythia at fist compares the Erinyes to Gorgons, and then retracts the comparison substituting for it the image of some creatures she reports to have seen in some painting, γεγραμμένας (48). Moreau treats the evil eye in Aeschylus’ oeuvre generally, and extends the gorgonic context of Orestes’ matricide to Clytemnestra’s hold over Agamemnon at the threshold of the palace 1976: 56-57. My thanks again to Alain for his generous assistance in bringing forth my study in 1996! We may also note that Prometheus says of Typhon that, ἐξ ὀμμάτων δ’ ἤστραπτε γοργωπὸν σέλας (*A. Prom.* 356).

<sup>4</sup> For the notion of writing in, or on, the *phrenes* see Electra at *Choephoroi* 450, ἐν φρεσὶν γράφου, and the Chorus’ rejoinder, <γράφου>, δι’ ὧτων δὲ συντέτραινε μῦθον ἡσύχῳ φρεσῶν βάσει (451-52) and the Furies of Hades at *Eumenides* 275, δελτογράφω... φρενί. For the location and physicality of the *phren* see Padel 1992: 20ff., and 76 specifically regarding writing on the *phren*.

<sup>5</sup> This correlation of συμβαλεῖν and ὕπνω constitute an example of Lebeck’s “prolepsis” in which, “in its early occurrences the image is elliptical and enigmatic” (1971: 1-2, and citing Fraenkel 1950: v. 1, 37). The *ate* of this trance of *hypnos* pertains through the full course of the *Agamemnon* and is recalled in the chorus’ opening verses in the *Choephoroi*. They are shrouded in the darkness of the violent events, merging, I contend, both the sacrifice and Clytemnestra’s compensatory murder of Agamemnon. While the verses are rife with problems, we may call out certain points. The overarching cast of *hypnos*—used here not literally as “sleep,” but rather to refer metaphorically to the domain of the unconscious, as I will argue for this and other instances in the *Agamemnon*—defines the past events: “For Shri! the hair-raising dream-mantic, ὄνειρόμαντις (33), of the houses, breathing the rancor forth from *hypnos*, ἐξ ὕπνου (33), cries out the midnight, ἀωρόνυκτον (34), shout of fear from deep within.” I read the unspecified reference in the second half of this verse to “those beneath the earth,” τοὺς γᾶς νέρθεν (40), as to both Iphigeneia and Agamemnon as they both “bear their grudge against those who killed them,” μέμφοσθαι...

together in sleep.”<sup>6</sup> Whereas the indelible *graphie* of the sacrifice is cast in the register of what is all-too-apparent,<sup>7</sup> *πρέπουσά θ’ ὡς ἐν γραφαῖς* (242), “appearing as if in *graphais*,” first to be seen in the register of *idein*, and then not, οὐτ’ εἶδον (248), “They/I did not see,”<sup>8</sup> this study presents the verso of this outward-striking, blinding obverse of the *graphie* in the collapse of the gaze into the psychic register of *dokein*, of the *doxai* of dreams and trance, as the imagined image of Helen, her *opsis*, hypostasized, drives the Argive armada to war.<sup>9</sup> Iphigeneia, under the tutelage of Artemis, constitutes the obverse of what is plainly visible; the verso of Helen embodies the

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τοῖς κτανούσι (41); the murders of *both* are to be taken together as paired according to the logic of the *symbolon* as developed in Degener 2001. The chorus reminds us, again in elliptical terms, of the “perdurance of the *ate* of the culpable one,” ἅτα διαφέρει τὸν αἴτιον (~68-70), and that one is no doubt Agamemnon for whom “there is no cure for having violated [θιγόντι] the abode of virgins [γυμφικῶν ἐδωλίων]” (71). These then constitute the sole references to Iphigeneia, and the sole reference to the specific case of *ate* of the sacrifice, as she will ever hence go unmentioned in Orestes’ and Electra’s argument for avenging Agamemnon. I will continue the discussion of other instances of *ata*, specifically the count of these instances, below at pg. 10 n. 35.

<sup>6</sup> The question as to whether ὕπνου at Ag. 426 must read solely as referring to literal sleep or, as I contend, also martial trance is the key to a complex of interconnections that bring us deeper into Aeschylus’ poetic response to Empedocles’ optics. I conclude that Aeschylus’ use of *hypnos* in this way is to be attributed to his own creative metaphoric sense and my argument is developed in the circumstantial, yet substantial, evidence presented below. Padel frames the possibility of such a correspondence: “passion and madness share the darkness of death, fainting, sleep” (1992: 79).

<sup>7</sup> See Scodel on the visibility, the excessive exposure, of the virgin as *agalma*: “the act of the sacrifice involves excessive display of the virginal body” (1996: 115 and *passim*).

<sup>8</sup> Although the sacrifice and the past moment of the striking, blinding gaze is only being narrated and thus only ‘depicted’ in the imagination of the viewers, we can assume that the image evoked would be imagined as conditioned by the frontal representations in pictorial media of the period, including preeminently among them those of the Gorgon, and having thus the effect of the “apostrophe” or “interpellation” of the spectators of such images as Frontisi-Ducroux 1996: 85ff., defines them. That Iphigeneia’s (frontal) gaze would overwhelm that of the male sacrificers would represent an exceptional reversal of what Frontisi-Ducroux explains *ibid.* 88 regarding the norm of women’s subjugation, particularly as concerns the rape of the *parthenos*, in such images. See Wohl 1998: 75-76 for an alternative and not incompatible, more erotically charged, conception of the spectators’ viewing experience and *ibid.* 79 for insightful questions regarding the terms of the Chorus’ testimony. As is evident from my earlier works, however, I do not concur with their reading of the *graphais*.

<sup>9</sup> My 2001 study had gone to press before Fletcher’s 1999a appeared. The work I present here, combined with my earlier studies, covers the first two thirds of the material that they address, that is, the (gendered) dynamics of the gaze vis-à-vis Iphigeneia and Helen. I do not treat Cassandra here, but I agree with most of Fletcher’s findings, especially their subtle and exacting treatment of Cassandra’s role in masochistic terms and the import of her role for the vicarious disposition of the experience of the spectators (although I depart in important regards from their treatment of Aeschylus’ use of the *graphie* as is already in certain measure evident). Indeed, I find something of an even more openly programmatic masochistic disposition in what I argue is a ‘Cassandrized’ Medea in “*Medea* 1079: [My] *Thumos* is Greater” forthcoming in *Phoenix*. I do concur with Fletcher as far as they go regarding the role of the patriarchal male gaze in the case of Iphigeneia (creatively couched in comparison with Mulvey’s Freudian/Lacanian study of the male gaze in classic Hollywood cinema) and the extramission of Iphigeneia’s gaze; however, the further step to be taken in recognizing the blinding impact of Iphigeneia’s gaze actually turns the tables on the patriarchal gaze and order of the Atridae and Argive host along with a more profoundly ungrounding impact upon the spectator. Nonetheless, this significant difference actually supports even more profoundly Fletcher’s orientation to reading Helen and Cassandra in terms of the gender dynamics of the gaze (venturing into critical responses to Mulvey including Irigaray). Below I will consider how Fletcher’s reading of Helen moves in the same basic direction as mine and how the position I am advancing here of an obverse/verso relationship between them hinges on my novel hypothesis of Aeschylus’ critical development of Empedocles’ optics.

erotic allure of Aphrodite in the play of phantasmic *doxai*.<sup>10</sup> So, this study forms a dialectical counterpart with my earlier work in its focus on Helen in the second set of corresponding odes of the first stasimon at 403-19 and 420-36. Moreover, in it I unfurl what I will argue is Aeschylus' tragic 'spin' on Empedocles' cosmogonic whirlpool of Love and Strife in his cosmo-'*phthoric*,' cosmos-destroying, whirlpool that swirls around the vortex driven by the absence of the erotic longing of *pothos*. In the strophe, Menelaus and company are drawn into the vortex of Aphrodesian *pothos*, "longing, absence;" in the antistrophe, the Argives are churned out in the moil of war under the brunt of Aphrodite's consort, Ares, gold-changer of bodies only to be returned as urns of ashes.

The first allusion to Empedocles' whirlpool comes as the chorus describe the Atridae as they embark following the sacrifice as mad vultures whirling overhead, στροφο-διν-οὔνται (51), from the verbal compound of *strophos*, "turning," and *dine*, "whirlpool." The twin-throned kings, who will be read as the eagles of the portent in Aulis by Calchas, are now presented in advance by the chorus with, instead, the jaundiced trope of vultures swooning overhead—indeed it is precisely on this word for turning, τρόπον (49), that expectations of noble predatory eagles turn awry.<sup>11</sup> The opening words of the chorus' are among the most cryptic and complex in the trilogy. Lebeck and especially Ferrari have made significant progress in their focus on the allusions to Iphigeneia; however, I go further in arguing for the chorus' definite, though *veiled*, references to the sacrifice.<sup>12</sup> Before turning to στροφοδινοῦνται and the oars of wings as key to

<sup>10</sup> Padel stresses the essential importance of the dialectic across all of tragedy: "Tragedy's most potent contrast is between seen and 'the unapparent,' between visible and imagined space" (1990: 343 and *passim*). Intensifying, however, Padel's exploration of spaces, including imagined interior spaces, I will demonstrate how space, viz. spatiality, itself is undone from 'within' the *doxic* register through Helen's *opsis* as the expression of *The Oresteia*'s most tragically sublime dimension.

<sup>11</sup> See Lebeck 1971: 8-9 who argues as well for the connection between the simile here and the portent at Aulis. They limit the logic of the comparison to the shared wings of the different birds with no further comment on the contrast of vultures vs. eagles. I cannot concur with their assertion, however, that, "one is not actually concerned with the psychology of the chorus, but with that of the choral ode, hence with the creative thought of its author," in that they thus do not take full account of the chorus' critique of Calchas that follows as they introduce his prophecy as I demonstrate in 2001: 65-66.

<sup>12</sup> Although Ferrari's reading of the simile of vultures 1997: 29 is mostly compatible with mine, as far as it goes, I do not concur with their sense of the degree of incoherence in the simile. The main problem stems, I suspect, from the fact that Calchas' duplicitous prophecy and the degree of the chorus' awareness of the duplicity of this inverse-Cassandra-false-prophet that all believed was as yet unrecognized. What would, in the absence of this knowledge, be read merely as relatively haphazard allusions to the sacrifice to which the chorus would be mistakenly understood to be oblivious, are in fact their quite direct conscious references, albeit veiled in the metaphors. The chorus parsed most, if not all, of what was cryptically conveyed in Calchas' prophecy—they'd had ten years to work on it—and are conscious of the risk that the avenging Erinys, Clytemnestra, may pose upon Agamemnon's arrival. That such is the case, is apparent even just prior to the turning of the τρόπον of the vultures. For how are we to read στρατιῶτιν ἀρωγῶν (47) if not as an ironic, and jaundiced, allusion to the Agamemnon's decision to sacrifice—his signature decision—as an aid to the army as is affirmed more explicitly with the repetition of the term, at 225, γυναικοποιῶν πολέμων ἀρωγῶν, "aid to the woman-avenging war." This 'aid' is thus precisely the opposite for Iphigeneia; it is to his virgin daughter *Iphigeneia* that Agamemnon *should have* offered succor as opposed to the polyandrous women-avenging host. Lebeck thus also does not go far enough in stating that the verses merely, "suggest the theft of Iphigeneia" (1971: 8-9), and that, "the chorus vacillate between voicing their anxiety and refusing to acknowledge the basis for its existence" (*ibid.* 175 n.10), and when they describe the "knowledge they possess" as "*unbewusst*" (1971: 32); also, similarly, Knox 1952: 18.

the main line of my argument, a treatment of the other elements of the simile, in particular the problem of τῶνδε μετοίκων (55), although somewhat tangential, must not be left unaddressed.

## These ‘Metics’

First, let it be said that the generally held view on the superficial reading of 40-59 deliberately dissembled by the chorus as seeming to refer solely, or even just predominantly, to the abduction of Helen should, by now, be decisively retired. This presumption should have been superseded long ago as there is so much that quite plainly disqualifies it. The two most obvious problems come with the notion of reading Helen as the young in the nest and the flawed notion that the recompense for her abduction would be demanded by an, that is, one Ἐρινύς (in the singular). That no such Erinys would see to the retribution for Helen’s abduction is established by the crux of the μὲν/δὲ that I argue spans from μὲν 40-59 to δὲ 60-67 that has gone unidentified by, among others, Fraenkel and Denniston-Page (*DP*). On the vaguer, more superficial level, on which the chorus blur the complexity of the hidden references to the sacrifice through 40-67, resolving with the obvious references to Helen, the δὲ element can be read as the shift from the events ten years past, δέκατον μὲν ἔτος (40), to the present of the dramatic action, ἔστι δ’ ὄπη νῦν (67).<sup>13</sup> Yet once we consider the references to Iphigeneia and Argos (and Aulis) as defining the μὲν, we may find an embedded opposition with the δὲ element that commences rather at 60, οὕτω δ’, in stating clearly what Zeus Xenios wrought on Troy. The logic of the contrasting elements hinges on the repetition of πέμπει at 59;61. The connection of *xenia* with the verb πέμπει at 61 governing the δὲ is set up in contrast to the more cryptic problem of the identity of the μετοίκων that is linked with the paired instance of πέμπει at 59 concluding the μὲν. Whereas it is clear what is visited upon Troy by Zeus Xenios and why,<sup>14</sup> what bends back upon Argos, and more specifically Agamemnon, as the ὑστερόποινον Ἐρινύον, is veiled in the cryptically construed words of the μὲν content.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, I contend that the recurrence of πέμπει provides a key point of leverage on the problematic reference to “these *metics*,” τῶνδε μετοίκων (57), in contrasting the term more specifically with the unequivocal reference to *xenia*; just as we have in Paris a corruption of *xenia*, so also shall we find a charged conception of *metoikia* in association with the Atridæ, *these metics*. I will argue here that Aeschylus construes the five instances of

<sup>13</sup> As per *DP* 1957: 71; Fraenkel 1950: v. II 27 looks rather to ἡμεῖς δ’ at 72.

<sup>14</sup> On the corruption of *xenia* and the link between the Erinyes’ relationship to *xenia* through its link to crimes against kin see Roth 1993: 1 and *passim*.

<sup>15</sup> Thus lines 40-59 open with the apparent reference of the Atridæ’s suit against Paris, 40-47, which then turns back ironically to their violation against their *own* house, 48-59; at 61-62, Zeus Xenios is then invoked explicitly by name as exacting retribution against Alexandros. This same pattern of setting up an explicit reference to Troy, which then folds back into an implicit and covert reference to the Atridæ’s own transgression, recurs in the first pair of strophic odes of the first stasimon, 367-384; 385-402 discussed below on pgs. 15ff.

μέτοικος/μετοικία<sup>16</sup> as an unfolding motif that starts here at *Ag.* 57 with the term in an ironic, etymological and deprecatory sense and evolves by the conclusion of the *Eumenides* to the literal legal sense of the term as applied to the Erinyes-*Semnai* μέτοικοι at *Eu.* 1011 and the closing reference<sup>17</sup> to the explicitly defined and performed legal institution of μετοικία named as such in the abstract at the close of the trilogy at *Eu.* 1018.<sup>18</sup>

The “vultures” are set whirling in an ecstatic swoon of *ate*,<sup>19</sup> the ἄτα that Calchas foreboded at 131,<sup>20</sup> upon having sacrificed Iphigeneia, thus having raided the nest of their own young, παίδων ὕπατοι λεχέων (50). The Chorus’ simile of vultures aligns with the murder of Iphigeneia in the reference to their violent attack on the raising of young birds, δεμνιστήρη πόνον ὀρταλίχων ὀλέσαντες (53-54), reading ὀλέσαντες, as does Ferrari, as “destroying.” Here we should recognize that this is not an attack on multiple young, but rather on the nest of the young,

<sup>16</sup> Five, unless we are to embrace, as I will, a sixth and final instance in Sommerstein’s proposed emendation of 1044 σπονδαὶ δ’ εἰς<ἰν ἀεὶ σε μετ>οικεῖν.

<sup>17</sup> Or penultimate reference, as indicated in note 16 just above.

<sup>18</sup> See Dougherty 2017 for bibliography on the different approaches to the question of how Aeschylus is using the terms that parse into opposed camps between the two positions that I am arguing are both in play from each end of the motif of the five (or six) instances to the other. Dougherty defers the question: “rather than trying to make difficult decisions about when *metoikos* is being used metaphorically (e.g., vultures) and when it designates the actual political category (e.g., Furies), I want to explore the word’s semantic range outside of its connection to the political institution” (2017: 578 n. 2). With respect to the historical questions of the codification of the legal status of *metoikia*, for which we are indebted to the main work of Whitehead 1977, I find my reading of the motif here in *The Oresteia* rhymes well with Bakewell’s 1997 argument for the dating ca. 463 in close association with *The Suppliants*. I hypothesize that Aeschylus’ ironic, etymological use of *metoikos* as applied to Agamemnon and Orestes can be thought of as hearkening back to the relatively casual and imprecise use of the terms prior to a recent codification wherein the politically framed meaning of *metoikia* applied to the *Erinyes* would have first been defined. Thus, the arc of the motif tracks from an imagination of the deeper mythical past of *The Agamemnon* aligned with a literary handling of the historically earlier casual usage of recent memory of *metoikos* moving to the more modern notion of the anachronistic advent of the Areopagus aligned with the historically novel legal usage. We see this imaginary development suggested in the explicit contrast between the *Erinyes* as the older vs. Athena the younger instituting the new regime, e.g., ἐπεὶ καθιππάζη με πρεσβῦτιν νέος, *Eu.* 731, and ἰὼ θεοὶ νεώτεροι, παλαιοῦς νόμους καθιππάσασθε, *Eu.* 778-79.

<sup>19</sup> In addition to the blinding impact of the sacrifice as resulting in the entranced blinding implied in the “clouding over,” κνεφάση, of the *ata* (131) referenced in Calchas’ foreboding, we may also sense here the metaphorical storm, in line with Ferrari’s study of the underlying imagery of *ate* 1997: 12ff., on which the entranced vultures will whirl up overhead. See also Padel 1992: 87-88. Ferrari refers to the connection of these two dimensions of *ate*, albeit in reference to the *Antigone*: “*ate* is the hurricane that produces a surge, an upheaval mingling sea and sky, resulting in the inability to see—*ate*’s characteristic ‘blackness’ and blindness—and in destruction” (1997: 14). So also Zeitlin: “these images... express turbulence of spirit and violence of emotion” (1965: 499), although this instance, nor the metaphorical winds on which the vultures are whirling, is not included in their list. Padel states: “the fifth century, especially tragedy, seems to replace *ate* with madness itself” (1992: 163).

<sup>20</sup> I argued for reinstating ἄτα in 1996: 478 n. 51. Ferrari also reads for ἄτα at 131 with both short and long initial alpha 1997: 15 and makes very similar arguments, covering much of the same bibliography and adding some as well. In addition to their argument for reading for both meanings of the separate words, I indicated then that the initial short alpha for long could be seen as the chorus anticipating ironically and critically the ruse of Calchas’ prophecy that played on the substitution of a short final alpha for long at \*σπευδ-ό-μενα (151) providing for the ζύμβολα (144) as subject in lieu of Artemis. Moreover, Ferrari’s placing of this instance of ἄτα in their fully developed treatment of the term across the full scope of *The Oresteia* is also well-aligned with my treatment. It strikes me as particularly telling that the *Choephoroi* ends on ἄτης (1076), as the chorus frets lest some resolution of the third storm of the matricide not be found.

παίδων,<sup>21</sup> in general as where the young are raised, that is, the women’s domain within the *doma*, the *oikos*.<sup>22</sup> It is not that all of the specific, multiple young birds, ὀρταλίχων, are being attacked, but rather that, in the snatching of one from among them, the nurturing of the young, δεμνιστήρη, as such, stated as the abstract concept, has been violated.

Ferrari makes important progress in certain regards on the problem of τῶνδε μετοίκων, reading the phrase as implying an “invisible chorus” (1997: 33) of metic women in Argos to account for the female associations of οἰωνόθροον γόον ὄξυβόαν (56-57), “the shrill-screaming-bird-cry-wailing” over what must be understood to be Iphigeneia’s corpse far below the whirling vultures. They conjecture that τῶνδε μετοίκων (57) name this chorus of alien metic women mourning in the guise of Erinyes such as we do certainly see expressly in the chorus of the Erinyes in the *Eumenides* and such as they argue we should conceive of implicitly of the chorus of alien women in the *Choephoroi*. The case of the chorus of Erinyes is unequivocal, as they are transformed into the *Semnai* in being established expressly as *metics* (*Eu.* 1010-11, 1018-31, and, *cum* Sommerstein, probably the closing verse, 1044-47). Yet although Ferrari only goes so far as stating, “whoever they are, it is fair to say that the *Choephoroi* *function* [my emphasis] like Furies” (*ibid.*), in reading these Furies figures as *metics*, Ferrari depends upon reading the problematic lines *Ch.* 970-71 as the chorus referring to themselves as “wailing *metics* in the palace, ἠρεόμενοι μέτοικοι δόμων” (*ibid.* 32). I see this argument as increasingly problematic, however, as we work back from the literal Furies *qua metic Semnai* of the *Eumenides*, to the arguably functional Furies of the *Choephoroi*, to the putative “invisible” chorus of *metics* in the *Agamemnon*.

I return rather to reading τῶνδε μετοίκων (57) as referring to the Atridæ-vultures,<sup>23</sup> but not in Fraenkel’s sense of the vultures as metaphorical *metics* in the aethereal realm of the gods. The notion of such a trivial, isolated, and thus contrived use of this charged term is dubious on its face, let alone given the term’s key role as applied to the ultimate resolution of the chain of conflict in the according of formal *metoikia* to the Erinyes/*Semnai*. Surely this first reference to the term must be playing a more significant and integrated role. I contend that we should understand that by virtue of not just the specific atrocity of the sacrifice, but the more generalized attack on the δεμνιστήρη, that is, the *oikos*, the Atridæ-kings have been *reduced*, ironically, to mere ‘*metics*’, or something only like, or characterized by certain aspects of, literal *metics*. With ‘*metics*’ in half-quotes I indicate that Aeschylus is not using the term in its fully formal legal sense—as will be the case with the *metic-Semnai*—but rather in an ironic, deprecatory, etymological sense<sup>24</sup> as indicating a problematic change, *meta-*,<sup>25</sup> in *Agamemnon*’s

<sup>21</sup> Ferrari 1997: 34 rightly notes that this term refers only to human young and thus points to Iphigeneia.

<sup>22</sup> In a fashion similar to the reference to, “the abode of virgins,” νυμφικῶν ἐδωλίων at *Ch.* 71. See above pg. 2 n. 5.

<sup>23</sup> Although Aeschylus is using the term in a charged, metaphorical, and original sense, I do not fully agree with Ferrari’s argument that, as Dougherty, concurring, puts it, “the vultures/*metoikoi* metaphor depends upon the kind of lexical and metaphorical ambiguity that multiplies rather than limits meaning” (Dougherty 1997: 582, citing Ferrari 1997: 32-35).

<sup>24</sup> As does Dougherty 2017 in a somewhat similar way, for example, looking back to Whitehead (1977).

<sup>25</sup> I, however, argue for this sense of *meta-* as opposed to Dougherty’s “movement.”

relationship to his erstwhile *-oikos*. Once Agamemnon decides on the sacrifice, he cuts off his claim to the *oikos*,<sup>26</sup> only to return to the *oikos*<sup>27</sup> usurped by Clytemnestra, the ὑστερόποινον Ἐρινύων (58-59), with only the impossible prospect, at best, of being accorded what would be tantamount to ‘*metic*’ status under the reign of the usurpers Clytemnestra and Aegisthus. The demotion to ‘*metic*’ status lies in what is denied the literal *metic*, namely, ownership of property, of an *oikos*.<sup>28</sup>

Agamemnon cannot reclaim his place among his *philoï* in the *oikos*; his relationship to the *oikos* has been forever, and irremediably, altered. Indeed, we see a clear indication of Agamemnon’s ‘*metic*’ status once back, that is, once finally back in the *oikos* as a *corpse*, in the

<sup>26</sup> Thus, I depart from the first of the valences of Dougherty’s interpretation, namely that, “the *metoikos* both *belongs to and moves from* the house;” no, Agamemnon no longer belongs to the house, nor does the house any longer belong to him. The following questions that they pose, however, are valid: “Are they family members (*philoï*) or strangers (*xenoi*)? What is their relationship to the house (*oikos*)? Do they live within?” (2017: 582).

<sup>27</sup> See Bacon’s treatment 2001 of the theme of homecoming and the attendant sacrificial feast. See Zeitlin 1965 for the final feast in celebration of the *Semnai* that closes the *Eumenides* as the final rectification of the original corrupted, inedible, sacrifice of Iphigeneia (and Atreus’ before that).

<sup>28</sup> See Bakewell, “one of the primary conditions of μετοικία at Athens was that metics were normally barred from ἔγκτησις, ownership of a house or land” (1997: 214), and their discussion of the significance of μετοικία in the *Suppliants*. Particularly germane here is the specific, oblique reference at *Su.* 961 to “*oikos*” in the verbal term οἰκεῖν referring precisely to residing in public lodging *as opposed to* a privately owned *oikos*. Five years later, on the far end of the motif in *The Oresteia*, in *The Eumenides*, Aeschylus expands upon this use of οἰκεῖν as deferring the question of ownership of an *oikos* for the Erinyes. The Furies ask whether Orestes will live, οἰκήσει (*Eu.* 654), verbal οἰκεῖν, in the house of his father. The answer comes at 751 when Apollo declares that “the cast of a single ballot restores the οἶκον,” leading Orestes to thank Athena for saving his house, δόμους, and reestablishing him in his *oikos*, κατώκισάς, while also seeing to it that people will say that a man of Argos is established, οἰκεῖ, in his father’s property, (*Eu.* 755-59). The situation is different for the *metoikoi* Erinyes/*Semnai*. Athena’s negotiation begins with the offer of a relatively nebulous “seat beneath the earth,” ἔδρας τε καὶ κευθμῶνας ἐνδίκου χθονός (*Eu.* 805), which does not assuage them. Athena beseeches them to be “one who shares a house” with her, ζυνοικῆτωρ ἔμοι (833), *not* that this is according them the right of ἔγκτησις, and they see the downside as they complain that they will be allowed merely “to *lodge* under the earth,” κατὰ τε γᾶς οἰκεῖν (838)—like οἰκεῖν at *Su.* 961—as opposed to possessing an *oikos* on the earth; Athena’s next offer of an invitation to “share the land,” χώρας μετασχεῖν τῆσδε (869), evokes the same response from them, 871=838 (837-846=869-880; second strophic pair of the epirrhematic section 778-92=808-22). The next step advances at 890, however, to what *would* seem to read, with Dobree’s emendation (published in Davies 1885) of τῆσδε γαμόρω, as indeed an offer of ἔγκτησις: ἔξεστι γάρ σοι τῆσδε γαμόρω χθονός. This emendation is thus inconsistent with Aeschylus’ handling of the *metic* status of the Danaids and, as I’m arguing here, all the rest of this colloquy between Athena and the Erinyes as concerns what would be their otherwise limited *metic* dispensation. The mss, τῆδέ γ’ ἀμοίρω Tr: τῆδέ γ’ ἀμοίρου MGFETr<sup>3</sup>, despite being unreliable as they stand, reflect what appears to be the correct notion, namely, that the Erinyes will precisely *not* be granted the right of the γα-μόρος, that is, a μοῖρα of land. So, I argue that the sense of 890-91 would be something to this effect: “Although it is not possible for you to have a portion of land, you will nonetheless be justly accorded all due honors.” Earlier in the verse, Athena had invited them to stay, μένοις (887); stay, that is, as opposed to leaving, or, if they chose to leave, at least not to unjustly visit rancor upon the Athenians. The notion that they would be merely “staying” does not seem to me to set up an offer immediately following for them to own and *settle* on land. Moreover, it seems consistent with the limited status of *metic* that the Erinyes would then next want to know what honors actually would attach to the “seat,” ἔδραν, *under* the earth, κατὰ γᾶς, next to the house of Erechtheus, that is, *not* land *on* the surface of the earth, χθονός. Instead, they will be ushered away far below the surface of the earth, κάτω χθονός (1023), into the Ogygian depths. In the end, the Erinyes were not offered nor accepted the right of ἔγκτησις. They will not own an *oikos*; rather, they “will accept,” δέξομαι, the offer to “*lodge* with,” ζυνοικίαν Athena, and such will determine how they reside as *metics*, reading ...μετ>οικεῖν (1044), with Sommerstein.

duplicitous words of presumptive ‘*metic*’ Orestes returned and posing as a mere *xenos* falsely reporting his own death to Clytemnestra. He explains that he was tasked to make this report in order that Orestes’ *philoï* could decide what should become of his corpse. The next lines, 683-84, are more complex than has as yet been appreciated. They have been taken solely in the sense, and this is the sense he intends for Clytemnestra, of Orestes asking whether his corpse would be repatriated, or rather left to be buried abroad, that is, whether he would “be returned (home),” εἴτ’ οὖν κομίζεῖν<sup>29</sup> (683), or buried abroad as “a *metic*, forever a complete *xenos*-stranger,”<sup>30</sup> εἴτ’ οὖν μέτουκον, εἰς τὸ πᾶν ἀεὶ ξένον (684). Read in this way, the lines are understood from the public perspective, that is, the perspective from outside the *oikos*, and the term μέτουκον would be taken in the literal, legalistic sense demanded by the foreign polity. Should the corpse be conveyed across the political boundary of Argos or left within a foreign land?

Yet Orestes’ express reference to the *philoï* who are of course of the *oikos*, suggests that we should also read this from the perspective of living Orestes referring to his own, or private, status as one who was once among, and arguably should rightfully be reinstated into, the *philoï*, his erstwhile fellow *philoï*, “if the judgment of *his philoï* (in reality his, *Orestes’ actual self’s philoï*) to induct him back into the *oikos* should prevail,” εἴτ’ οὖν κομίζεῖν δόξα νικήσει φίλων, even if this will require the expulsion of she who, as is the case with all brides, originally entered the *oikos* as ξένοσ.<sup>31</sup> In this reading Orestes, posing as a mere *xenos*, is conceiving of his own status as being promoted to ‘*metic*,’ now not in the formal legalistic sense, but rather in the ironic, etymologized sense of being brought back into the *oikos* in Argos, just as he in fact now himself is in the process of effecting, albeit problematically. For his reinstatement as king, which he later defines in terms of Athena “returning [him] to [his] *oikos*,” σύ τοι κατώκισάς με (*Eu.* 756),<sup>32</sup> is pending. From this private perspective, Orestes is already poised at the threshold of the *oikos*, the *domos*; indeed, unfortunately for Clytemnestra, he has *already* crossed over this threshold as a ‘*metic*’ both now in, and originally *from*, the *domos*.<sup>33</sup> The boundary shifts from

<sup>29</sup> We would think here in terms of *LSJ* II. 5, bring to a place, bring in... and, more specifically, 7. bring back from exile. But that Aeschylus elides an explicit, and thus singular, indication of into what ‘Orestes’ would be conveyed is key in allowing for the ambiguity for which I am arguing.

<sup>30</sup> Taking *xenos* in the sense of “stranger” as does Garvie 1986: 232.

<sup>31</sup> The social status of the bride as originally *xenos* is underpinned, or rather, more profoundly undermined, on the ontological level of generation by Apollo’s argument for the mother as ξένω ξένη (*Eu.* 660).

<sup>32</sup> Dougherty’s point that, “the shift in prefix from *meta* to *kata*... designate[s] the change in Orestes’ relationship to his house” (2017: 595 n. 36) can be clarified by seeing this as marking the resolution of his vitiated ‘*metic*’ status.

<sup>33</sup> Here we may now appreciate on an even more trenchant level all that Dougherty argues à la Kristeva, especially their invocation of Freud’s meditation on the *unheimlich* entailing the “creative interplay of the familiar and strange” (2017: 579 n.4). While thinking Freud in terms of the ambiguity for which I’m reading here would warrant a more developed expatiation, we may see how the interplay of poles of the strange and familiar playing between Orestes as *xenos* and/or (problematic) *philos* is mediated through the literal boundary of the *oikos* in his charged ‘*metic*’ status. It should not come as a great surprise, however, that a more rigorous critique would see Freud’s conceptions, rooted in notions of subjective psychology, turned literally inside out: what is *concealed* is what is *not* of the home, but is figured rather as Orestes, who was originally in the home, now as foreign *xenos*. And this notion attends the opening issues of Electra’s recognition of Orestes. It seems that this dimension can be read in the duality of the notion of *xenia* as foreign and friend, separate and close. As I progress below to the abyssal dissolution of this same

the public boundary between polities to the public/private boundary of the *oikos* within Argos. The paramount significance of the threshold of the *oikos*, the *domos*, as defining all that is at stake in *The Choephoroi*, opening as it does with the invocation of the god of the crossing of boundaries, Ἑρμῆ χθόνιε (*Ch.* 1), is evidenced in the names “Pylades” and “Strophius” that Garvie notes are derived from epithets of Hermes<sup>34</sup> 1970: 87-88 and in the punning of πύλας | Πυλάδῃ (*Ch.* 562-63; enjambed) noted by Dougherty 2017: 589. This same threshold, πυλᾶν at *Ag.* 408 will configure the central pivot of my argument to follow, and all that is being developed through this meditation on the *metic* motif serves to point to the ramifications rippling through the trilogy of what I present below.

Cast out by Clytemnestra, Orestes’ status in Argos as at best ‘*metic*’ goes back to Agamemnon’s. Yet whereas Agamemnon failed in his bid to return to and reclaim the *oikos*, Orestes will ultimately succeed. Although the third instance of μέτοκος in the final stanza of the third stasimon is plagued with a nest of problems, I see in these words a recapitulation of the key dynamics at the threshold from 683-84. Orestes is just about to return to the stage now from within the *oikos*, the *domos*, having killed Clytemnestra. The extended time of the Orestes’ absence and Clytemnestra’s hold on the *domos* is now complete as the chorus hold out hopes that with a bit of luck, τύχαι (969), the multiple instances of *ata* will finally now be “purified and driven off,” καθαρμοῖσιν ἀτᾶν<sup>35</sup> ἐλατηρίους (968). We see now coming to fulfillment Orestes’

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threshold at *Ag.* 408, we will find that the prospects that the home, or *Heimat* (with interesting connotations of not only “home” but also “homeland”) could be constituted so as to contain any sort of *heimlich* content, that is, some sort of secret substantive ontological content, will prove without ground, even though the impulse to figure mimetically and conceive of this ungrounding of the *Heimat* signals inklings of the coming *hypokeimenon*. This problem as having first undermined Agamemnon’s *nostos*, and here, in being played out in *The Choephoroi*, as undermining Orestes’ hopes of reclaiming the *oikos* is, as I argued above, only artificially and insubstantially ‘resolved’ in the adventitious *metoikia* of the *Semnai*. Padel suggests this evolution in broad strokes, “while Western tragedy interiorized its tragic sites, Western thought looked increasingly within the mind, to explain the source of feeling and action—which Greeks of the fifth century at least half-attributed to the outside world” (in Winkler and Zeitlin 1990: 359).

<sup>34</sup> All that Padel so vividly develops in their discussion of the threshold of the skene, in Winkler and Zeitlin 1990: 346-47, and regarding Hermes at 355-56, applies not only here but even more centrally in what plays out across the same threshold both physically with Agamemnon’s return, and, on the deepest level, in the spectator’s imagination with Helen and her *opsis* in *The Agamemnon*.

<sup>35</sup> Here the proleptic (in Lebeck’s sense) instance of *ate* that defined Calchas’ characterization of what was to be feared of the sacrifice, his hypothetically forecast *ate*, τις ἄτα (*Ag.* 131), that came to pass and whipped up the martial trance, is unfurling in its full apotheosis in this allusion to multiple instances of *ate*. The plural here prefigures the final tallying of the cascading chain of instances of *ate* on which the *Choephoroi* closes in its final word of the play, ἄτης (1076). Would it not be a bit odd, though, should the chorus’ specific tallying of instances of *ate*, which gestures towards hopes for a final resolution, not, as has been thought to be the case, figure that instance—the properly inaugural instance of *ate* for which I argue—in the sacrifice of Iphigeneia? Again, the text is problematic, with what seems, as Garvie addresses 1986: 350-51, to be intruding glossing referring to Thyestes by name. So, again, I suggest that the emendation of παιδοβόροι for M’s παιδόμοροι may warrant another look. If, as I argued above at pg. 2 n. 5 the chorus had been alluding to Iphigeneia in their parodos, we might wonder whether M is reflecting some less than overt reference to the “ill fortune of the young,” generically obfuscated somewhat in the plural, or “the child,” in the more explicit singular. Then the storm imagery in 1065-67 would be recalling that of the inaugural *ate* of the sacrifice, with perhaps resonances of both the reference to child-bearing in Iphi-*gen*-eia’s name (on which, see Clement 1934: 396), semantically, and the shrill lament over her corpse, γόον (*Ag.* 57), phonetically, to be heard in the challenging hapax γονίας (1067), especially if we might imagine the swirling up on

prayer: “Zeus, Zeus, send up from below the late-avenging *ata*,” Ζεῦ Ζεῦ, κάτωθεν ἀμπέμπων ὑστερόποινον ἄταν (382-83), in terms at once recalling and seeking revenge for the “late-avenging Erinyes,” ὑστερόποινον<sup>36</sup> πέμπει παραβᾶσιν Ἐρινύν (Ag. 58-59). For now the hope is (in a roughly conjectured reading of the problematic text) that there will “fall out,” πεσοῦνται πάλιν (971) a “good face, and propitious turn of events for the *metoikoi* of/from the *domos*,” τύχαι δ’ εὐπροσωποκοῖται τὸ πᾶν | ἰδεῖν ἀκούσαι πρευμενεῖς | μετοίκους δόμων πεσοῦνται πάλιν (969-71). While we are left guessing in some measure as to the exact meaning of whatever the words were here, I want to stress what I see as the reference to Orestes and Electra, *pace* Ferrari, as those who are, who have been since Agamemnon was reduced to ‘metic,’ the remaining living ‘metics’ of and from the *domos*.

Before he can be reinstated as king, Orestes, who has been reduced temporarily to a mere *xenos* for having been exiled by Clytemnestra, must return to reclaim *first* the status of mere ‘metic’ in the etymological as opposed to strict legal sense, such as Agamemnon had been reduced to, *ironically*, as corpse whose proper rites beneath the earth have gone unfulfilled. For the mere act of killing Clytemnestra and Aegisthus would, so long as Orestes still bore the pollution of the matricide, accord to him at best *merely* the *ironically* vitiated status of a ‘metic’ in the sense indicating his problematic relationship to the *oikos*. To return to Argos as king, he will have to “go out from this land” *again* as “an *apo-xenos*,”<sup>37</sup> ἀλήτης τῆσδε γῆς ἀπόξενος (Ch. 1042), to seek not only ritual purification but also his acquittal in the Areopagus along with the satisfactory terms of a *genuine metoikia* for the Erinyes in the now *literal* Areopagus-defined and sanctioned legalistic sense—albeit only metaphorically and provisionally *applicable*, though yes, paradigmatically also, to these figures given their liminal nature. That Aeschylus’ agnostic proffering of the final ‘resolution’ of the Areopagus and the *metoikia* of the *Semnai* is consciously contrived is evidenced in Athena’s references to persuasion, Peitho (885, 970), in the course of her placating negotiations with the Erinyes. Although “μετοικία” is now finally being used in the literal, legalistic sense, it is applied artificially, *sophistically*, to the euphemistically dubbed ‘*Semnai*’ whose ontological underpinnings are as dubious as the Erinyes’ were enigmatic.

For Orestes to properly cross the threshold of the *domos* and reclaim it as his own, the change of the relationship to the *oikos*, this *met-oikia* in this etymological sense, had to be overcome through the establishment of the formal legal status of the *metoikia* of the nonetheless liminal *Semnai*. The resolution of the conferral of *metoikia* to the *Semnai* was in essence the

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the winds, and if we might hear what “breathed forth from sleep,” ἐξ ὕπνου κότον πνέων (33-34), “blowing” here again, πνεύσας γονίας (1067). It would make sense for the chorus to return now at the other end of the play to look back to Iphigenia. While prior to Orestes’ act the incentive was to suppress the memory of Iphigeneia, here with the hopes for a conclusion to the chain of *ate*, it may be alluded to again in the final reckoning of the tally of the three familial murders: first, the original *ate* that whipped up the storm of the sacrifice; second, the queen’s murder of the polemarch; third, the matricide that the chorus hopes, and prays, may finally quench the “force of *ate*,” μένος ἄτης (1076).

<sup>36</sup> These two are the sole instances of ὑστερόποινον in the trilogy.

<sup>37</sup> *Pace* Dougherty’s description of him as, “an exile once more, a *metoikos*” (2017: 587), Orestes is leaving precisely to be delivered from his mere ‘metic’ status. He is not a *metic* again, but again a *xenos*, an *apo-xenos*.

answer to the problems attendant upon the return to, and reclaiming of, what was lost by Agamemnon with the change of his status vis-à-vis the *oikos*. Returning then to the vultures, we see that the issue with reading τῶνδε μετοίκων (Ag. 57) depends upon the change in Agamemnon’s relationship to his *oikos*. This is why the atrocity of the sacrifice is not reflected in the similes as the attack on a singular victim as would refer exclusively to Iphigeneia, but rather as on the occupants of the nest, i.e., *oikos*,<sup>38</sup> the human young, παίδων (50), and the nurturance of the chicks, ὀρταλίχων (54), collectively.

The more complex challenge comes in parsing οἰωνόθροον | γόον ὄξυβόαν τῶνδε μετοίκων. I am not persuaded of Ferrari’s notion of an “invisible chorus” of *metic* women who function as Furies, reading this interpretation of τῶνδε μετοίκων back from an argument for *metoikoi* at Ch. 971 being the chorus of the slave women’s reference to themselves. As I am arguing, Aeschylus’ meditation on the issue of *metoikia* commences with Agamemnon in the etymological mode and then *shifts* to the formal legalistic mode *only* finally with the ‘resolution’ in the Areopagus of the *Erinyes*’ plaint. Thus, the metamorphosing meaning of *metoikia* only comes to be associated with female characters (excepting Electra’s marginal role) as the *Erinyes* become the *Semnai*. Yet Ferrari’s point regarding the female resonances of the οἰωνόθροον γόον ὄξυβόαν is clearly correct in that we should be imaging the wailing lamentation of the women of the *oikos* over Iphigeneia’s corpse. I argue, therefore, that we should read τῶνδε μετοίκων not first as a possessive genitive, but rather a genitive of source.<sup>39</sup> The “shrill wailing laments of birds,” referring to those of the women of the *oikos*, are attributable to the Atridæ, whose relationship to the *oikos*, which until just now was still theirs too, has changed. *These* who are now changed in their relationship to the *oikos*, τῶνδε μετοίκων, *these* who are now, *eo ipso*, ‘*metoikoi*’—I proffer this as the answer to the problem of the emphasis imparted by the deictic pronoun—are the cause of the lament. It is attributed to them. *These* who caused the lament will also own the consequences thereof as, “some Apollo, or Pan, or Zeus... sends the late-avenging *Erinyes* [Clytemnestra]<sup>40</sup> against the transgressors,” ἢ τις Ἀπόλλων | ἢ Πάν ἢ Ζεὺς... ὕστερόποιον | πέμπει παραβάσιν Ἐρινύων (55-59).

While this use of the genitive may seem somewhat forced, I suggest this is because Aeschylus also wants to retain some measure of the more obvious possessive sense. *These* ‘*metoikoi*’ in the ironically charged etymological sense, precisely in their violation of the *oikos*, would still feel most grievously the wailing lament, even along with cries of their own, perhaps even emasculated cries, intermixed discordantly with those of the women. This image of the Atridæ “vultures” whirling, στροφοδινοῦνται, rowing on oars of wings, πετέρυγων ἐρετμοῖσιν

<sup>38</sup> Wohl frames Agamemnon’s conflict as, “at least in part one between duty to the *oikos* (household) and military duty, a conflict between his two most important roles as an aristocratic male—as head of his *oikos* (‘Heavy my fate if I slaughter my child, *agalma* of my house’ 207–8) and as king and general (‘How am I to become a deserter, failing my alliance?’ 212–13)” (1998: 70).

<sup>39</sup> I am grateful to Pauline Leven for their thoughts on this problem.

<sup>40</sup> As the instrument of the *symbolon*. We see the nature of the retributive logic of the *symbolon*, now shifted down the chain of retributive violence, spelled out expressly in Orestes’ plans for the retribution of the matricide at *Choephoroi* 461: Ἄρης Ἄρει ξυμβαλεῖ, Δίκη Δίκα.



exception. As per convention, the words of any given pair of lines are distinct, while the number and metrical length of syllables is identical, as is true of every other syllable in these paired odes.

The formal correspondences and the meta-resonances of sense between the strophic verses is produced across the formal boundary, indicated by the dashed line. Generally, the form is defined by the direct response of the choral odes, yet in this case Aeschylus has added another formal wrinkle. For within the speech of the chorus (**A** and **A'**), recollecting Helen's departure for Troy ten years prior, is embedded a quotation (**B** and **B'**) of the revelatory words of the prophets<sup>41</sup> of the house.<sup>42</sup> After the embedded quote, the chorus concludes their speech (**A'**), as they recount, now again in their own words, the disastrous consequences of Helen's departure and the resulting destruction of the war. By this formal contrivance, Aeschylus accomplishes a remarkably subtle and significant effect. For he construes the prophetic passage in a way such that it is simultaneously *a part of* the responsive structure of the paired odes and *apart from* it. For no two lines within the quoted words of the prophets respond to one another. The choral introduction spans for the first seven lines; the prophetic quote begins on the eighth

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<sup>41</sup> On the meaning of δόμων προφήται see Thomson who suggests they are likely the “κρηταί who... interpreted Clytemnestra’s dream” thus concluding that the phrase may mean: ‘the interpreters attached to the palace’” (1936: 105). See also Athanassaki 1993: 151 and bibliography in notes 6, 7 who arrives at “interpreters” for the sense. It is not precisely a question here of interpreters of “divine will... [nor] plan,” for I will argue below that their *manteia* reveals the baleful dynamics of the hypostatized image, *opsis*, of Helen. I agree with Athanassaki in challenging the notion that prophetic *manteia* is limited to foresight (ibid. 152-53) as the προφήται are clearly speaking of the ramifications of Helen’s departure after the fact. Cassandra’s visions are precisely apposite as she displays her *manteia* of current events in action: “of all the royal prophets Cassandra is perhaps the most famous and in the *Agamemnon* is, ironically, a δόμων προφήτις” (ibid. 152). When the prophets spoke is only imprecisely specified as following Helen’s departure at some point in the past as evident in the imperfect ἔστανον (408); it would not make sense to imagine that the words of the prophets would have been spoken immediately following Helen’s departure as we would need imagine some time for Menelaus’ *pothos* for Helen to engage its progressive effects as expressed in the progressive δόξει (415). Athanassaki’s point regarding the futurity of δόξει is apt; however, as will be evident in my reading of the spinning ambiguities of these words around the vortical play of πόθος (414), the progressive aspect of the future here needs to be weighed along with the temporal. Whatever indeterminacy there may be regarding when we must imagine the lament occurring, Doyle’s suggestion of broader indeterminacy as to “which Royal house and which marriage bed is being described” (2009: 20) is dispelled by the dominant force of *pothos* in play here as it depends unequivocally on Helen’s *absence* from Argos (on *pothos* as defined by absence, Plato *Crat.* 420a-b).

<sup>42</sup> Despite Devereux’s 1976:65 position on the integrity of 410-426, I do not concur with their view on what lines are quoted. Although I am sympathetic to many of Fletcher’s sensitive readings of the narrative dynamics of the chorus’ narration 1999b: 37ff., I do not concur with their contention that the quotation of the prophets does not necessarily end at 426, nor Athanassaki’s 1993: 150 suggestion that it extends to 455, for formal reasons that will be fully evident presently. I do not agree that we should read the prophetic passage, or parts of it, as literally double-voiced with the chorus; however, I see value in thinking of some resonance of double voicing as the sensibilities of the chorus’ understanding of the words of the prophets are crucial to fully appreciating the subtleties of how the chorus embed the quotation in their surrounding discourse, matching in their own words and meter each of the prophets’ words. So, in this measure, the prophets’ words are not merely ventriloquized by the chorus. See Fletcher for relevant bibliography on the question of the span of the quotation. Moreover, my reasons for departing from their position that *manteia* does not pertain with the prophets of the house will also be evident presently. The question of their *manteia* is no more a question of foreseeing future events than is the case with Cassandra, or the case of the prophetic song of fear, δεῖμα... μαντιπολεῖ... ἀοιδά (third stasimon; 976, 78) the chorus experiences in the present moment of witnessing Agamemnon’s return entrance into the palace and exit from the stage, a moment that will be of pivotal significance in considering Menelaus’ mental state below pg, 42. At the very least the special status of the prophets is necessary to present the occurrences within the house not accessible to the chorus in the public sphere.

line (marked **8**), continuing through the end of the strophe, and then through seventh line of the antistrophe; the choral conclusion resumes on the eighth line (marked **8**) of the antistrophe. Thus, **A** responds only to **B'**; while **B** responds only to **A'**; while no line of **B** responds to any line of **B'**. The result is that while the lines that present the chorus' own words are *restricted* to matching the form of their responding counterpart in the prophetic speech, there is no such formal restriction on, or within, any of the content of the quoted words of the prophets.<sup>43</sup>

The quote is, so to speak, free-floating above the structure of the responsive form. Aeschylus employs a remarkably subtle means of simultaneously maintaining the independence of the prophets' words (which were not originally uttered in the form of a choral ode) while framing their words into the responsive form of the odes. Although the implications of this critical form have yet to be fully appreciated, Aeschylus himself signals it in the immediately preceding strophe, lines 385-402, with the rare adjectival term '*epi-strophos*' at line 397.

## The Epistrophon

While the "rare word," ἐπίστροφον, has always been taken as meaning something like "the man who engages in these things"<sup>44</sup> as referring to Paris along with the entirety of the ode,<sup>45</sup> my study of the false persuasion of Calchas' interpretation of the augury, the ὄρνις at 113, led in the direction of indicating, as I do now, that the word, in conjunction with the reiteration of ὄρνις at 394, refers rather to Agamemnon.<sup>46</sup> Agamemnon is the one who was set whirling overhead, ἐπίστροφον, as a result of the duplicitous persuasion of Calchas' false *manteia* of the *symbola* of the eagles devouring the pregnant hare—Calchas the inverse Cassandra; false prophet that all believed. We saw this first in the reference at line 51 to the Atridæ as "whirling overhead," στροφοδινοῦνται. I contend that in both of these cases, the first element, *stropho-*, not only refers to the manic, entranced, action of the martial campaign led by Agamemnon, but also gestures, on the meta formal level, to the poetic "epi-strophic" form of the odes that follow at 403ff. as that of literally "a turning above."

Backing up to the two preceding strophic odes, the first pair of odes of the first stasimon 367-384 and 385-402, we see, at the opening of the first strophe what are plainly evident

<sup>43</sup> This poetic construction should be compared to what I explicated in 2001: 104-120 regarding the way in which the chorus' introduction to Calchas' duplicitous prophecy ironically mimics the "trusted" *stratomantis*' epic dactylic speech in advance to quoting the dactylic content of the prophecy.

<sup>44</sup> Fraenkel quoting Paley 1950: 209.

<sup>45</sup> As *DP* erroneously argue: "we must suppose that the Trojans and Paris are the theme throughout 367-402" (1957: 102).

<sup>46</sup> That the term refers here to '*metic*' Agamemnon is consistent with Clytemnestra's quite idiosyncratic reference to him as he is about to cross the threshold as "'ranging about' (?), 'haunting' (?), ἐπιστροφωμένον (973), the house," the term appearing only twice prior in archaic Greek. I will return below pg. 52 with a different interpretation of the meaning of the word here.

references to Zeus Xenios' blow against Paris and Troy;<sup>47</sup> Zeus carried out what he ordained.<sup>48</sup> This much, at least, is clear. This is an essentially dismissive caveat, for I contend that the chorus are primarily concerned in what follows with the impious actions of the Atridæ in what are at best thinly veiled references again to the sacrifice of Iphigeneia. For expediency here I refer to Ferrari's reading of the ode. I do concur with their reading, beyond the opening statement referring to Troy (367-69), as referring back to Iphigeneia,<sup>49</sup> although I think they see it as more cryptic than it is, presumably imagining it as allusive as opposed to what I would argue is the chorus' direct and fully conscious critique of Calchas and Agamemnon, albeit cautiously veiled for both apotropaic as well as political concerns. Moreover, I contend that once the chorus turn away from Troy and Paris at 369 they do not return to Paris again until 399, and only obliquely so, such that these two references, in framing the more obvious meaning of the opening and closing of the paired odes, bracket the more veiled content pertaining to the Atridæ, Agamemnon, Calchas, and the sacrifice. Thus, the reference to Peitho as the fore-planning child of *Ate* is not a return to Paris,<sup>50</sup> but rather continues the veiled critique of Calchas'

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<sup>47</sup> As was prefigured at 61-62 in the μὲν/δὲ addressed above at pgs. 5 ff.

<sup>48</sup> The phrase is not without issues. Goldhill responds to Fraenkel's "he achieved it as he decreed" arriving at "he did as he made happen" (2004: 43-44).

<sup>49</sup> Although Conacher states that, "the overt reference of ἀθίκτων χάρις is, of course, to Helen," and then goes on to refer to the various associations of χάρις with Helen (which associations I will address below), they also indicate that the phrase, "looks back also to... Iphigeneia, whose virgin grace was so poignantly described at vv 239-47, and to Agamemnon, to whom she was, above all others, ἀθίκτος" (1987: 19). While MacLachlan does state that, "Agamemnon will die as a result of crushing the beauty of his innocent daughter" (1993: 130), they see ἀθίκτων χάρις as referring, as per the conventional understanding, to Helen. My reading for this as directly referencing Iphigeneia sets up all of the retributive *ironic* instances of χάρις—all summed up in the chorus' phrase "*uncharis charis*," ἄχαριν χάριν (1545)—first in reference to Helen and then Clytemnestra that MacLachlan traces out at 1993: 124ff.. Their concise statement of the relationship of *charis* to vengeance sums up the arc of the narrative: "vengeance was the religious antithesis of *charis*, but one had no meaning without the other" (ibid. 145).

<sup>50</sup> *Pace* Ferrari who, in introducing their exacting and compelling treatment of the first of the two odes in their superb study of *ainigmata*, states that at the opening of the strophe, "the chorus had expressed the view that the destruction of Troy was the will of Zeus" and, regarding the antistrophe, "it resumes the train of thought at 385, with the mention of Peitho in reference to Paris and the abduction of Helen" (1997: 36). Of course, Ferrari's view on this point reflects the conventional assumptions. I concur with Lebeck's sense of more of a presence of Agamemnon throughout the odes, although they suggest this only relatively vaguely, arguing that the opening two strophes are, "filled with implication involving Agamemnon," and that the chorus' words, "reflect the dilemma at Aulis... [and] also raise the questions of Agamemnon's crime" and then, somewhat more precisely, "in between [the beginning of the stasimon and the explicit return to Paris at 399] there flow one from another a series of reflections having little to do with Troy and Paris, everything to do with the destiny of Agamemnon" (1971: 37-38), and then again of 374-75: "these words may be aimed at Paris; however, the wind metaphor... recalls the winds at Aulis and the change of spirit that came on Agamemnon" (ibid. 38-39). Although I do appreciate why Ferrari is perhaps more attracted to the punning they see on ἄρος and ἀρή 1997: 37, I would suggest that we should rather follow Ferrari's study of the relationship of *ata* and tempests to at least consider the possibility of *ata* here at 375 again in association with the metaphors of breathing and wind, as Lebeck is highlighting, and in a way recalling that instance discussed above at 131, despite the greater orthographic challenge. If *ata* had been the text here it would be immediately prefiguring the next occurrence in the antistrophe (albeit not in response) at 386. It may, moreover, be worth recalling my discussion above pg. 10 n. 35 of *ate* in the *Choephoroi*, and, in particular, the way that the essential force of *ate*, the μένος ἄτης (*Ch.* 1076) is best thought of consisting of the storms, the wind—in particular the suggestive γονίας—described at the opening of that final verse. Meanwhile, I do also more broadly concur with Ferrari's assertion that the content of the strophe *only appears* to refer to, "Paris and Helen but [is] so riddled with

duplicity and Agamemnon’s complicity.<sup>51</sup> As I pointed out,<sup>52</sup> κακοῦ δὲ χαλκοῦ τρόπον names Calchas,<sup>53</sup> albeit anagrammatically, turning his name, Κάλ-χας, around in the chorus’ expressly identified “trope,” τρόπον, on his rhetorical guile, in χαλ-κοῦ—and the chorus’ self-reflexive reference to their own rhetoric here, as with their first self-conscious use of the term at 49, τρόπον αἰγυπιῶν, is key for what follows regarding what I contend is their equally self-conscious and unique rhetorical use of the rare term ἐπίστροφον on a meta-narrational level.

Looking now at the antistrophe, 385-402, in more detail:

βιάται δ’ ἅ τάλαινα πειθῶ,  
 προβούλου παῖς ἄφερτος ἄτας.  
 ἄκος δὲ πᾶν μάταιον. οὐκ ἐκρύφθη,  
 πρέπει δέ, φῶς αἰνολαμπές, σίνος:  
 κακοῦ δὲ χαλκοῦ τρόπον  
 τρίβῳ τε καὶ προσβολαῖς  
 μελαμπαγῆς πέλει  
δικαιωθεῖς, ἐπεὶ  
διώκει παῖς ποτανὸν ὄρνιν,  
 πόλει πρόστριμμα θεῖς ἄφερτον  
 λιτᾶν δ’ ἀκούει μὲν οὔτις θεῶν:  
 τὸν δ’ ἐπίστροφον τῶν  
φῶτ’ ἄδικον καθαιρεῖ.  
 οἶος καὶ Πάρις ἐλθὼν... (385-399)

The first half has always been more or less correctly translated even if its significance has yet to be discerned,

But wretched *Peitho* (Persuasion) holds sway  
unbearable child of *Ate* (delusion)  
 And a solution is entirely in vain; for not hidden,  
 but all apparent, a strange-gleaming light, is the bane.  
 In the trope of evil bronze  
 With rubbing and blows

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ambiguities that it remains obscure” (ibid. 36), obscure only, that is, until we appreciate what both Ferrari and I are arguing, with albeit slightly different emphases and implications, namely, that the remainder of the strophe is referring to the sacrifice. It is unclear whether Catenaccio’s general characterization that the chorus, “remain conscious of the king’s disastrous choice at Aulis, just narrated in the *parodos*—their words vibrate between hope and premonitory fear” (2011: 206), refers to the paired odes or, more likely, solely the strophe.

<sup>51</sup> Knox apparently sees something of this, but only goes so far as stating: “The lines of the second stasimon which in general condemns Paris and Troy (369-80) are equally applicable to Agamemnon, so much so that the chorus, as if realizing where its words are leading, pulls up short and emphatically repeats the name of Paris, οἶος καὶ Πάρις” (1952: 18).

<sup>52</sup> Degener 2001: 87, and I reiterate my thanks here to Marcel Detienne for his affirmation of this point those many years ago!

<sup>53</sup> Pace Lebeck who sees it prefiguring Agamemnon’s murder 1971: 41, and Fraenkel the falseness of Paris 1950: v. II 230ff..

It (/he)<sup>54</sup> shows black-fixed,  
Having been tested...

The next lines must, however, be interpreted in an entirely new light. The trick to interpreting the syntax correctly lies in certain poetic clues. In general, this involves the prominent ring formations evident in the several poetic repetitions underlined above. Are these solely of aesthetic value? No. The key to understanding the ring structuring hinges on the anagrammatic trope on Kal-khas' name, the reversal of the syllables signaling the tropic dynamics of the ode overall. Thus, at the center of the ode, we find the anagrammatic lynchpin in the phonetic inversion of δι-και-ω-θείς and δι-ώ-κει- παῖς<sup>55</sup> (followed just a few words later by the participle θείς which to my ear supports *DP*'s text). Around this lynchpin are arrayed the three other key terms: παῖς (386; 394), ἄφερτος (386; 395)<sup>56</sup> and the pun on φῶς (389), “light” and φῶτ’ (398), “man.”

But just as the poetics confirm that φῶτ’, as the man Agamemnon, is referring back as a pun on the stigma, φῶς, of the *graphie* written upon him,<sup>57</sup> so also is it the case that the second occurrence of παῖς at 394 refers back to the first at 386. The παῖς is not a figural reference to a child who chases after a bird in vain, not, that is, Paris chasing Helen in folly. No, rather it is a repetition of παῖς, the fore-planning child of *Ate*, that is Peitho, that Peitho that was Calchas’ that is revealed as false-bronze when tested and that triggers the *ate* of Agamemnon’s decision to sacrifice his and Clytemnestra’s daughter. But by what syntax is it possible to read the second occurrence of παῖς as feminine to align with the first? For wouldn’t the second παῖς need to be masculine in agreement with the participle θείς precluding the feminine apparently required in reading παῖς again as Peitho? And what would then be the sense of διώκει? In answer to the first question, I propose that we read ἐπεὶ διώκει παῖς ποτανὸν ὄρνιν (393-94) as parenthetical and independent of the agreements of the surrounding clauses; in answer to the second, διώκει is to be taken not in the sense of “pursuing,” but rather in the sense of “putting to flight,” or “driving,”<sup>58</sup> and “putting into motion,” as in the wind driving ships.<sup>59</sup>

From this point on, I see a more unbridled—touchy word in the context—play of ambiguities. For the παῖς could be seen as Peitho driving the ὄρνιν as naming augur Calchas metonymically (as established at 113, θούριος ὄρνις), or, by extension, the kings of winged

<sup>54</sup> We may read here for “it” referring to the σίνοϋς or “he” referring to Calchas.

<sup>55</sup> Lebeck hears something of this effect although the scare quotes on “logical” does more to defer the problem than actually solve it: “often the decrease of ‘logical’ connection between ideas is accompanied by increase in verbal repetition” (1971: 39).

<sup>56</sup> I find Fraenkel’s 1950 v. II p. 200 sense that the term is most likely Aeschylus’ neologism as almost certain for reasons to follow. See also again Lebeck 1971: 39-40.

<sup>57</sup> For further implications of this reading see Degener 2001: 86-87. Lebeck also sees Agamemnon’s decision under the sway of the (unattributed) force of *Peitho* here *ibid.* 40.

<sup>58</sup> *LSJ* II. Lebeck comes quite close to this, although without quite—at least explicitly—turning the corner in invoking this reading of the verb: “the pursuit of the ποτανὸς ὄρνις, associated with affliction brought upon a city, evokes the omen of the parodos which sent the Atreidae to Troy, called ὄρνις in 112 and 157” (*ibid.* 43).

<sup>59</sup> That is, *LSJ* II and, even more specifically, III.

ships, the οἰωνῶν βασιλεὺς βασιλεῦσι νεῶν, “king of birds to kings of ships,” or rather just that one of the two who decided to sacrifice his daughter. But perhaps we could also see the παῖς in question as she upon whom the consequences of the prophecy and Agamemnon’s decision fall, namely Iphigeneia, and she who thus, by dint of her blinding gaze will drive the bird of the winged ships headlong in the blind *ate*<sup>60</sup> of martial trance... That ὄρνις is singular might argue against these readings; however, should we not allow some room for ambiguous play here given that this is a simile? Should we be surprised if the poetic imagery begins to blur or confound somewhat at this point? If we think of how something like the bottom is falling out from beneath the false bronze—again a metaphor for Calchas and his prophecy—that shows μελαμπαγῆς, “black-fixed” as the after-image of the all-too-evident, πρέπει<sup>61</sup> bane, σίνοϛ, a strange-gleaming light, φῶς αἰνολαμπές (389), of the *graphie*. The bottom falling out from below to expose the black nihilism beneath the gleaming façade of false bronze.<sup>62</sup> And we see the anagrammatic tropology turning the broader structure of the ode inside out such that the bird—however exactly we read it—is unleashing unbearable attrition, πρόστριμμ’ ἄφερτον, with πρόστριμμ’ (395) echoing τρίβῳ (392),<sup>63</sup> and προσβολαῖς (392) hearkening back to the role of the instance of *ballein* in the arrows from Iphigeneia’s eyes, ἀπ’ ὄμματος βέλει (241) tied to the broader retributive logic of the *symbolon*. Should we be surprised that referends of the simile of the child and singular bird set to flight, whirling, would be ambiguously blurred or, rather, multiply refracted?

Briefly, before returning to the ἐπίστροφον and in preparation for turning to the second strophic pair at 403ff., I must point out the significance of Aeschylus’ neologism ἄ-φερ-τοϛ that in the first instance at 386<sup>64</sup> is referring to the violation of the woman’s sphere of bearing, -φερ-

<sup>60</sup> Ferrari’s treats the relationship between *ate* and winds and storms 1997: 12ff.. As noted above, I, too, argued in 2001 for the reading of ἄτα (with short alpha) at 131 and do concur with their contention that Aeschylus conjoins the two separate words with variably short or long initial alpha in thus the most compacted form of the correlation between the similar meaning of these words: “the ἄτα (with short alpha) of line 131 is properly the ‘derangement’ that leads Agamemnon to sacrifice Iphigenia. It sounds like ἄτα (with long alpha), the ill wind that will darken the sky with storm clouds” (ibid. 15). Moreover, Ferrari supports the notion that the winged ships are set whirling on the storm winds whirling overhead consequent upon the sacrifice:

...the expedition against Troy is depicted as a tempest driven by *ate* from beginning to end. First, the unholy solution to the crisis at Aulis is brought about by *ate*, then the Achaeans who accomplish the plunder of the city are ‘gales of *ate*.’ No less than the killing of Iphigenia, the sack of Troy is the work of *ate* unleashed (818-20). (ibid. 17).

<sup>61</sup> Harkening back to πρέπουσά θ’ ὡς ἐν γραφαῖς (242).

<sup>62</sup> In 2001 I suggested an allusion to the magical use of writing, γραφαῖς, on lead of curse tablets showing through beneath the false bronze, regarding which see Peradotto 1969: 7 n. 19, Guthrie 1971: 273, and Gager 1992. For the role of γραφαῖς written on true bronze as serving as legal guarantees, see Gauthier: “Dans plusieurs textes officiels, *gravés sur bronze* [emphasis added], le terme [*symbola*] apparaît avec la signification de garant ou témoin. Ces textes ne sont pas postérieurs au milieu du V<sup>e</sup> siècle” (1972: 33). See also Steiner 2001: 9 for a consideration of these tablets in wider terms of iconic substitutes for the dead. See also pg. 47 n. 142 below regarding the graphic significance of grave inscriptions.

<sup>63</sup> See Lebeck 1971: 43-44 on how these lines forecast the reference to the retribution of the Erinyes at 462-66.

<sup>64</sup> Of the nine sole instances in Aeschylus all in *The Oresteia*.

from φέρω, in the sacrifice of the Artemisian Iphi-*gen*-eia,<sup>65</sup> and, in the second at 395, the wanton destruction ultimately to be visited on the city of Argos. This term that suggests the undoing of bearing, φέρω, prefigures the recurrence of the root -φερ- in the term for Helen's anti-dowry, her ἀντί-φερ-voς<sup>66</sup> at 406, clearly linked to the woman's sphere of childbearing.<sup>67</sup> I will return to this aspect below.

So, as I now struggle to resist allowing the tropes of this complex ode to spin out of control, I return to consider ἐπίστροφον (397). That the term is referring to one man, Agamemnon that is, and not Paris, confirms the preoccupation through these two odes on the circumstances attending the sacrifice, as is again also confirmed in the way that the phrase in the preceding line, λιτῶν δ' ἀκούει μὲν οὔτις θεῶν, "and no one of the gods hears the prayers," recalls how Iphigeneia's pleas, λιτὰς (228) were for naught, παρ' οὐδέν (229). However, whereas Iphigeneia's entreaties were to her father Agamemnon, here I read the term as being used ironically to suggest that any prayer that *Agamemnon*<sup>68</sup> would make to whatever god, οὔτις θεῶν, would fall on deaf ears. With this in mind, the syntax of, φῶτ' ἄδικον καθαίρει (398) is a bit difficult, but if we accept Fraenkel's indication that "θεῶν τις can easily be supplied out of οὔτις θεῶν as subject" (1950: 209), then we have "some god brings down the unjust man." Some god then brings down the unjust man, the unholy one, εὐσεβής (372), who, in the blind *ate* of his impious act, was set on the wing whirling above, τὸν δ' ἐπίστροφον τῶν (397). This term ἐπίστροφον, now read as "the one whirling overhead" in a vertiginous martial swoon, hearkens back to the simile of vultures who set the ships rowing on oars of wings, περὺγων ἐρετμοῖσιν ἐρεσσόμενοι, whirling overhead, στροφο-δινούνται (52-52).<sup>69</sup>

<sup>65</sup> Wohl argues that "when women are commodities, their use value is their reproductive capacity... if Iphigeneia's value in marriage exchange would be reproductive potential, her value in this sacrifice is her sexual purity, the purity that makes her a perfect sacrificial victim" (1998: 71). This determines her valuation as a δόμων ἄγαλμα which would be thus in direct contrast with, while having been determined by, the corruption of Helen's exchange value as ἄγαλμα. Beyond, however, Iphigeneia's value in the sacrifice, which Wohl defines as an exchange between the sacrificers and the gods (following Mauss), we must also think of how this exchange is recast in the retribution that Clytemnestra will exact upon Agamemnon according to the contractual logic of the *symbolon*. The original definition of the exchange in the sacrifice that is occluded (Wohl, *ibid.* 71) is redirected to the exchange of Agamemnon's life for Iphigeneia's in the compensatory 'sacrifice,' the θυσίαν ἐτέραν (151), the second sacrifice of the contractual pair of the *symbolon*.

<sup>66</sup> The term is, at least, quite rare if not, as I suspect, an outright *hapax*; Fraenkel qualifies it as "the only instance in literature" (1950: v. II 407). Derived from φερνή, "dowry," it smacks also of resonances with ἀντιφέρω, "set against," "fight against," "oppose." See pg. 38 below where I develop the full sense and impact of the term.

<sup>67</sup> That the corrupted exchange of Helen between Argos and Troy sets up the corruption of the woman's exchange value in terms of childbearing is suggested by Wohl in describing, "the sacrifice of Iphigeneia as a sort of failed marriage exchange" and in their discussion 1998: 71-74 of the ritual dimensions of Iphigeneia's status as the *hebe* on the verge of marriageable age. For the grander course of the corruption and ultimate restitution in the *Eumenides* under Athena's tutelage as ultimate *parthenos* see Wohl *ibid.* 80-82 to which I would add that we see in the institution of Athena's virginal utopia the final restitution of the debt of Iphigeneia's sacrifice in the sacrifice and procession for the *Semnai* originally dictated by the retributive Artemisian logic of the *symbolon*. See pg. 8 n. 27.

<sup>68</sup> And so, although Lebeck arrives at this point in seeing the lines as pointing forward to Agamemnon's fate upon his return to Argos, our readings of this element come into alignment as they argue that it is to Agamemnon's "prayers... [that] 'not one of the gods pays heed...' (397)" (1971: 42).

<sup>69</sup> These two words are clearly linked, along with the one other *-strophos* compound, ἐπιστροφωμένου, again of Agamemnon, at 972. See pg. 52 below.

I go further, however, to contend that the somewhat difficult syntax of φῶτ' ἄδικον καθαιρεῖ in this reading is construed so as to allow for another ambiguous implication, namely that the “bringing down,” καθαιρεῖ from καθαιρέω, of the unjust man would indicate a prospect of catharsis of the impious sacrifice, taking καθαιρεῖ as at once from καθαίρω, “to cleanse” “to purge,” read in the transitive sense of *LSJ* II of Agamemnon as the defilement to be purged. And as we read this, we gain an even keener sense of the depths of the chorus’ cynicism regarding the untoward events that attended the launching of the expedition from Aulis. The question of what will provide for catharsis—in both the literal ritualistic and Aristotelian dramaturgical senses—is of course of central importance for *The Oresteia* overall<sup>70</sup> and, indeed, we find this term, καθαιρεῖ, again in overt coordination with the notion of ritual catharsis in the approach to the ultimate dénouement in *The Eumenides* of the chain of retributive violence inaugurated in the murder of Iphigeneia<sup>71</sup> (of course against the more perverse backdrop still of Atreus’ defilement of Thyestes and his sons). So, Orestes claims to have learned “many rituals of purification,” πολλοὺς καθαρμούς (*Eu.* 277),<sup>72</sup> and to have been “purified by the blood sacrifice of swine at the altar of Phoebus Apollo,” πρὸς ἐστία θεοῦ Φοίβου καθαρμοῖς ἠλάθη χοιροκτόνοις (*Eu.* 282-83), and, claims that “time purges [καθαίρω] all things,” or, in taking the term here as ambiguous in the same way as that for which I am arguing at *Ag.* 398, “time overtakes [καθαιρέω] all things,” χρόνος καθαιρεῖ πάντα (*Eu.* 286). Let us simply recall for the moment that Orestes’ ritual catharsis did not suffice and the supplemental exculpation in the Areopagus was ultimately required.

I see Aeschylus’ intention to allow for this ambiguity on καθαιρεῖ at *Ag.* 398 as explaining the difficulties in the syntax and the necessity for what has something of the ring of a

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<sup>70</sup> See Brown 1982: 30-32 and Parker 1983: 386-88 on the question of the how and when of the ritual catharsis of Orestes.

<sup>71</sup> At Degener 2001: 72-73 I argued that Clytemnestra’s murder of Agamemnon was the other sacrifice, the θυσίαν ἐτέραν (151), demanded by his sacrifice of Iphigeneia. Zeitlin 1965: 472ff. plays out Clytemnestra’s framing of her murder in sacrificial terms arguing that Clytemnestra conceives of her murder as an expiatory blood for blood sacrifice, “Clytemnestra has in mind another *sphagion*, the victim whose blood is offered as expiation of blood guilt,” and also looks forward to Orestes’ reference to the rite with its specific reference to ritual catharsis, αἷματος καθαρσίου (*Eu.* 448). Zeitlin goes on to explain:

Purification is achieved when the blood of a sacrificial victim is poured over the man polluted with blood guilt and then is washed off with clear water. The meaning of this ritual has been explained. The ghost of the murdered man demands blood to slake its thirst for vengeance. “The sacrificial victim is a surrogate for the polluted suppliant, the blood is put upon him so that he may be identified with the victim, the ghost is deceived and placated” (citing Harrison 1955: 61). This ritual is an advance over the primitive and savage notion that purgation from the stain of blood is obtained only by the offering of the blood of the murderer. It is evident, however, that it is this original type of blood offering that Clytemnestra has made. She has slaughtered Agamemnon and given his blood quite specifically to the Erinyes, the ghost of vengeance of her child, the Erinyes to whom she swore vengeance. (*ibid.* 479)

She concludes this discussion describing Agamemnon as, “the perfect victim, and the adult who is to expiate the deaths of children with his own death” (*ibid.* 480).

<sup>72</sup> Against the proposed emendations for this line and 286 below, the complex of these terms, culminating in this speech with καθαιρεῖ, is in line with and thus, in effect, parses *Ag.* 398.

kind of gnomic present tense throughout the ode.<sup>73</sup> Moreover, in line with the gnomic tonality of the ode overall, I read τὸν δ' ἐπίστροφον τῶν not only as referring to the specific man, Agamemnon, who instigated the course of events, but also as rising to a high sublime perspective on the debacle writ large, the view on all of these events τῶν, that whirl overhead, τὸν δ' ἐπίστροφον. And it is in thinking this term in this all-encompassing sublime sense that we may see it setting up how the chorus will construe the words of the prophets of the house in what we should not doubt Aeschylus would be fully self-consciously conceiving of as what he is thus aptly dubbing neologically the “epistrophic” form of the two odes that follow.

## The Epistrophic Form, *suite*

This epistrophic form mimetically expresses what the prophets reveal of what originally set all of these events in motion, what on an even deeper level led to the sacrifice, namely the ascendant force of the *opsis*, Helen's image, at 425. Let there be no mistake: Aeschylus explicates his own rhetorical means as he expressly intertwines the content of what is being said with the epistrophic form through which he presents it, through which he presents his chorus' rhetorical tropes as rising above Calchas.' Menelaus' obsession with the ὄψις gathers by dint of his longing, his *pothos*, for Helen in the *doxic* Aphrodisian register; in the Artemisian register, it is Calchas' duplicitous interpretation of the ὄρνις that registers the full brunt of the objective order of the *symbolon* in the full objective light of what is at once openly seen, *idein*, and then not seen, οὔτ' εἶδον (247).

Returning to the odes, there is still one more point to be noted of their overarching structure, namely the impact of this unique epi-strophic mode of presentation of the prophetic speech on the decisive element of the convention of the strophic form itself, namely the *boundary* that separates the strophe from its antistrophe. For the boundary only exists in the 'external' register of the chorus' presentation of the prophetic speech, where **B'** responds to **A**, and **A'** to **B**. On this purely *formal* level the strophe is *strictly* distinguished from the antistrophe. But such is not the case when the verses are viewed organically from within the prophetic speech. For 'within' the prophetic speech *there is no boundary division marking the transition from B > to > B'*; the transition is as seamless as from any line to the next once the prophetic quote is excised from the surrounding text into which it is embedded. The formal boundary necessary for strophic correspondence is thus *effaced* from within, hence the dashed line. I refer to this construction as the *ingression of the threshold*.

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<sup>73</sup> Lebeck's discussion of Aeschylus' masterful and deliberate use of ambiguity, and, in some sense, their discussion of the *gnome* 1971: 3-4—and we must only hope by this day that this understanding has come to be generally accepted—is on point here.

## The Ingression of the Threshold

What then is presented in this epistrophic form? A rough sketch of the odes will be helpful here. The choral introduction, **A**, describes the immediate results of Helen's departure for Troy; the preparations for war around the city; and finally backs up to the moment when Helen physically stepped across the threshold of the palace.<sup>74</sup> At this point the chorus takes us across the threshold of what can be seen in the public sphere into what they themselves cannot directly see of what has occurred in the *doxic* register within the palace through the words of the prophets of the house (**B** > **B'**). In **B** we learn of the impact of Helen's departure on Menelaus, of his longing, *pothos*, for she who is over the sea, and how the "grace of the stone statues (of Helen) has become a bane for the man, as all passion, all Aphrodite, passes away into the blankness of the stone eyes." In **B'** we enter the inner psychic world of Menelaus, his vain groping after dream-apparent images, and finally the action of the image of Helen to be examined in detail in a moment. Finally, the choral conclusion, **A'**, describes the physical effects of the war as, in the place of men sent forth, urns of ashes are returned into the houses of the waiting wives of each.<sup>75</sup>

In the 'external' register of the chorus' introduction, Helen's *physical* departure through the gates of the palace is described as follows:

βέβακεν ῥίμφα διὰ  
πυλᾶν ἄτλητα τλᾶσα... (407-08)

She stepped out lightly through  
The threshold, daring what ought not to have been dared...

The next couple of lines introduce the prophets of the house and their quoted speech. But it is in the lines of the antistrophe that respond to this moment of Helen's physical departure that the dynamics of the ingression of the threshold pertain. Again, I lay out the specific lines side by side:

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<sup>74</sup> Padel's discussion 1990: 354ff. of the "tragic door" provides a rich construction of the importance of this key figure both as physically visible on stage but also in the spectator's imagination, both dimensions being in play here at once.

<sup>75</sup> See Steiner 1995: 178.

**Strophe**

Ag. 406-408

**A : Choral Introduction (lines leading to beginning of quote of prophets)**

βέβακεν ρίμφα διὰ 5  
 πυλᾶν ἄτλητα τλᾶσα: πολλὰ δ' ἔστενον  
 τόδ' ἐννέποντες δόμων προφήται: :A

**Antistrophe**

Ag. 424-426

**> B' Prophetic Speech (last lines of quoted words of prophets)**

παραλλάξασα διὰ 5  
 χερῶν βέβακεν ὄψις οὐ μεθύστερον  
 πτεροῖς ὀπαδοῦσ' ὕπνου κελεύθους.' :B'

Whereas the meaning of the chorus' lines of the strophe is clear, those of the prophetic antistrophe are far more enigmatic. They have always been interpreted solely in one sense, describing the action of the image, or *opsis*, of Helen in Menelaus' mind:

Slipping through

His hands the *opsis* goes off, not a moment later,

Passing down the winged pathways of sleep... (424-27)

This is clearly a correct interpretation of the lines, where we see the *opsis* of Helen slipping through the metaphorical hands of Menelaus' mental grasp only to slip away on the metaphorical winged pathways of inward psychic oblivion. I contend, however, that this is not the sole meaning of these lines. Indeed, an ambiguity here calls for an alternative interpretation.

Beginning with the role of ὕπνος, along with other key terms, the instance at 426<sup>76</sup> is prefigured dramatically in the first occurrences of the word in the speech of the Lookout that opens the play in a retrospective allusion to the martial trance of *ate* initiated in the corrupted sacrifice in the moment when we may indeed say that some “*ata* from the gods,” τῖς ἄτα<sup>77</sup> θεόθεν, did “cast its darkness, forged at the outset, upon the great bit of Troy” κνεφάση<sup>78</sup>

<sup>76</sup> In 2002 parts I & II, Mace treats the motif of sleep and nighttime activity across the trilogy. The interpretation of ὕπνου at 426 for which I am arguing constitutes the deepest depths of the *hypnos*, or unconscious trance, and *ate* from which the full course of the trilogy must emerge. Mace's treatment of waking from sleep as associated with retribution, here in the crucial role of the Lookout's wakefulness for Clytemnestra's plan for retribution, is germane as what will be awakened to counter the *hypnos* of the *ate* of martial trance of the Trojan debacle inaugurated in the sacrifice. Indeed, the instance of *hypnos* at 426 is the key to establishing the condition that the logic of awakening for which Mace argues depends. It is surprising, therefore, that Mace does not discuss this instance. Moreover, Catenaccio's point that the traditionally sweet conceptions of dream in epic in being inverted as sleep, “has become for the Watchman a disease for which he must seek a ‘cure,’” (2011: 204) calls out something of the malaise of *hypnos* established with Menelaus that is approaching its full tragic, dramatic, apotheosis with the return of Agamemnon.

<sup>77</sup> For this reading of the line see pg. 6 ns. 19 & 20 above.

<sup>78</sup> While Mace does call out what they refer to as “Kalkhas' prayer that some divinely-driven curse (τῖς ἄγα θεόθεν) not darken (μή... κνεφάση) the army,” they read this solely in the vaguer, though no less ominous, sense of the

προτυπὲν στόμιον μέγα Τροίας (131-32). It is the blinding trance of ἄτα that results, in the moment of the sacrifice, from the deepest darkness driven by the *hypnos*<sup>79</sup> of Menelaus' blind obsession with Helen at 426, and that overhangs the entirety of the campaign up until the retributive 'sacrifice' of Agamemnon:

θεοὺς μὲν αἰτῶ τῶνδ' ἀπαλλαγὴν πόνων... (1)

καὶ νῦν φυλάσσω λαμπάδος τό σύμβολον,  
 αὐγὴν πυρὸς φέρουσαν ἐκ Τροίας φάτιν  
 ἀλώσιμόν τε βάζειν: ὧδε γὰρ κρατεῖ  
 γυναικὸς ἀνδρόβουλον ἐλπίζον κέαρ.  
 εὗτ' ἂν δὲ νυκτίπλαγκτον ἔνδροσόν τ' ἔχω  
 εὐνήν ὄνειροις οὐκ ἐπισκοπομένην  
 ἐμήν: φόβος γὰρ ἀνθ' ὑπνου παραστατεῖ,  
 τὸ μὴ βεβαίως βλέφαρα συμβαλεῖν ὑπνω: (8-15)

I ask of the gods deliverance [ἀπαλλαγὴν] from these troubles...

And now I am on the lookout for the *symbolon* [σύμβολον] of the signal fire  
 Ray of fire bearing [φέρουσαν] out from Troy the report  
 The report of its capture. Thus does the man-planning woman  
 Hold sway with expectant heart  
 And as I make my restless bed wet with dew  
 Not visited by dreams  
 For fear stands by [παρα] against sleep [ὑπνου]  
 Lest my eyelids be cast together [συμβαλεῖν] in sleep [ὑπνω]

Most of the key terms required to discern the alternative significance of lines 424-27 are here tightly clustered in the opening speech. First, the term *ἀπαλλαγὴν*,<sup>80</sup> occurring first at line 1 and repeated for emphasis at 20, derived from ἀλλάσσω, meaning “change,” “transform,” or “exchange,” prefigures not only *παραλλάξασα* at 424 but will also serve to read out key aspects of Aeschylus' critical dialogue with the cosmogonic dynamics of Empedocles' whirlpool. The verb *φέρουσαν*, which will be picked up in the undone -φέρ- terms in the second and third odes

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threat that the curse would, “visit [upon the army], thematically speaking, ...retribution” (2002 part I: 48 n. 59). Mace's attention to the storm that came by night to wreak havoc on the returning Greek fleet *ibid.* 50 can be thought in terms of the general overhang of the darkness.

<sup>79</sup> That Aeschylus does not think of *hypnos* solely in the literal sense of somatic sleep can be taken from Clytemnestra's indication that her “conscious mentation will not be vanquished by *hypnos*,” φροντις οὐχ ὑπνω νικωμένη (912), in the final moments as she approaches the realization of her waking plan for the retribution against the ‘sleeping’ Agamemnon. She is certainly not imagining that she might literally fall asleep. To this we may compare the threat of literal sleep to Clytemnestra's wakeful signal-fire attendant, οὐδ' ἄφρασμόνως ὑπνω νικώμενος (290).

<sup>80</sup> See Goldhill 1984: 8, 10-11 regarding the term and its possible relation to the mysteries and role in speech citing Thomson 1935: 21ff. who discusses the term in connection with the other allusions to the mysteries in the lookout's speech along with instances of the term across the trilogy.

of the first stasimon discussed above, here refers to the means by which the report is born by the signal fire constituted of the sundered registers of speech and image, the *symbolon*, of the signal,<sup>81</sup> hearkening to the sigetic sundering of speech and image in the blinding moment of the sacrifice as Iphigeneia cast the arrows from her eyes according to the extramission of Empedocles' optics. The prospect, or rather risk, of dreams, ὄνειροις (13), here prefigure the *doxai*, δόξαι,<sup>82</sup> that are thereby, πάρ-εισι, “dream-apparent,” ὄνειρόφαντοι, that open the antistrophe at 420, bearing, φέρουσαι—the root -φέρ- again, undone—but vain grace, χάριν. The question here, as pertains to the prospects of my reading of *hypnos* as “martial trance” at 426, is whether these “dream-apparent semblances,” ὄνειρόφαντοι δόξαι, are literally images seen in Menelaus' sleeping dreams or whether these δόξαι refer rather to his waking, although obsessive and distraught, imaginations of Helen. I will return to argue for the latter in the penultimate section below.

So, then to ὕπνος. There is a certain emphasis on the term, occurring in the Lookout's speech above twice at 14 and 15 (and then a third time again at 17). The key to appreciating how these instances support the notion of martial trance at 426 is in recognizing how it is tied in with the logic, the sigetic, of the *symbolon*. The deployment of the meaning of the term *symbolon*, the dynamic derivation of it from its roots of *sym-* and *ballein*, that dynamic that led to the untoward blinding and the succumbing to the blinding delusion of *ate* in the sacrifice, is on display here in the threat of the eyelids literally being cast, *ballein*, together, *sym-*.<sup>83</sup>

## Empedocles' Optics

This connection between ὕπνος and συμβαλεῖν brings us back to Empedocles' optical theory. I introduced this link first in 1996 in demonstrating the role of the outward-striking, blinding gaze in Aeschylus' adaptation of Empedocles' active optical theory as expressly articulated in fragment B84:

ὥς δ' ὅτε τις πρόοδον νοέων ὀπλίσσατο λύχνον  
χειμερίην διὰ νύκτα, πυρὸς σέλας αἰθομένοιο  
ἄψας παντοίων ἀνέμων λαμπτήρας ἀμοργούς

<sup>81</sup> Jean Bollack's commentary on the line begins to pursue this line of thought,

Mais on ne tient pas compte ainsi de l'unité que forme le vers 9 avec ses deux éléments qui associent la parole à l'éclat du feu: le « signe » du flambeau est analysé, la matière distincte du message qu'elle porte. En un troisième temps, le message est à son tour divisé et la parole (βάξιν) en tant que médium du message, distincte de la nouvelle de la prise (ἀλώσιμόν), comme son contenu. La *dissociation* [emphasis added] isole, dans le signe, le dynamisme propre de l'élément de la fonction qu'il parvient à remplir. (1981: 16)

For a more developed treatment of the *symbolon* along these lines, see Lallot 1974.

<sup>82</sup> Catenaccio 1997: 206 speaks of *doxai* as limited to Menelaus' experience.

<sup>83</sup> Mace 2002 part 1: 38 discusses the role of the Lookout posted in the service of Clytemnestra who is preparing the retributive murder of Agamemnon, what I argue to be the second 'sacrifice' of the pairing of the *symbola*.

οἱ τ' ἀνέμων μὲν πνεῦμα διασκιδῶσιν ἀέντων  
 φῶς δ' ἔξω ὅσον ταναώτερον ἦεν  
 λάμπεσκεν κατὰ βηλὸν ἀτειρέσιν ἀκτίνεσιν  
 ὧς δὲ τότε ἔν μὴνιγξιν ἐεργμένον ὠγύγιον πῦρ  
 λεπτήσιν [τ'] ὀθόνησι λοχεύσατο κύκλοπα κούρην  
 αἱ δ' ὕδατος μὲν βένθος ἀπέστεγον ἀμφινάοντος  
 πῦρ δ' ἔξω δῖεσκον ὅσον ταναώτερον ἦεν

Kirk-Raven-Schofield translate:

As when someone planning a journey through the wintry night prepares a light, a flame of blazing fire, kindling for whatever the weather a linen lantern, which scatters the breath of the winds when they blow, but the finer light leaps through outside and shines across the threshold with unyielding beams: so at that time did she [*sc.* Aphrodite] give birth to the round eye, primeval fire confined within membranes and delicate garments, and these held back the deep water that flowed around, but they let through the finer fire to the outside. (*KRS* 1983: 308)

While there is a great deal of debate as to how exactly to interpret all of the details of Empedocles' poetic imagery, going back to Aristotle and Theophrastus, indeed back further to Plato as reflected expressly in the *Meno*, but also most likely in the *Timaeus*, for the purposes of the dynamics of the gaze as pertains to Iphigeneia, the fragment suffices to locate the doctrine of the extramission of the ray of fire that issues out from the eye. And we do see here perhaps some hints of aspects we hear in moments of Aeschylus' text, as "the finer light, φῶς... ταναώτερον,<sup>84</sup> proceeds out, ἔξω, shining across the threshold, λάμπεσκεν κατὰ βηλὸν." Fletcher is correct so far as they go in positing extramission,<sup>85</sup> although they do not develop any particular focus on Empedocles.<sup>86</sup> It must be said, however, that there is no consensus as to whether, or how far, or how, the fire or ray issues from the eye. In 1906 Beare summed up the three possible explanations that were then the subject of debate, and continue to be, in the extensive literature:

<sup>84</sup> The meaning of ταναώτερον is worth reconsidering here. Against *KRS*'s "finer," I would argue that the term is indicating the great(er) extension of the ray of fire out from within the eye confirming the extramission of the gaze. Bollack's translation, "si loin qu'il peut aller" (1992: 2.134), respects this literal sense of the term although they find that, "les rayons s'arrêtent à la surface de l'oeil" (1992: 3.2.365). I am suggesting that we might take ταναώ-τερον as stretching out *further*, that is, as forming a proper outward effluence to the effluences of the objects perceived.

<sup>85</sup> 1999a; they provide useful bibliography.

<sup>86</sup> And, in fact, it may well be that Aeschylus was not looking solely to Empedocles, for there are suggestions, although hazier, of the theory of extramission going back to Empedocles' master Pythagoras and other pre-Socratics that I see, however, as of less specific relevance. On the Pythagoreans and vision see Jablonski 1930: 309.

...it is not easy to ascertain *how far* the rays of fire passed outwards: whether (a) merely through the water to the outer surface of the eye, or (b) all the way to the object, however distant. The third possibility, that the inner fire formed a junction with the emanations from the object at some point intermediate between this and the eye, cannot, on any positive authority, be ascribed to Empedocles, but would seem to constitute the distinguishing feature of Plato's visual theory. (1906: 15)

I hope here to demonstrate that considering Aeschylus and Empedocles in dialogue will not only advance our understanding of the *The Oresteia*, but I believe will also provide some indirect insight into aspects of the pre-Socratic's doctrine that have heretofore remained just outside the margins of our direct evidence. In particular, we may consider whether the dynamics of the gaze in association with Helen, which I will refer to as the collapse of the gaze, may suggest that what seemed just beyond reach to Beare as regards the third of the possible explanations probably did in fact pertain, namely, that Empedocles probably did, already prior to Plato, conceive of a "junction," or better, a "grasping" of the effluences that flow out from the eye as they meet with those issuing from the object—or the effluences from the eyes of another person—being perceived.<sup>87</sup>

Such is unequivocally recorded by Plato, mainly in the *Timaeus*,<sup>88</sup> but also in moments of the *Theaetetus*, *Meno*, and *Phaedo*. The most complete description of the extramission of the gaze and grasping of the effluences from viewer and object viewed comes at *Timaeus* 45b1-d3. Plato explains how the eyes were fashioned such that a fine fire would flow, ῥεῖν, through the eyes, διὰ τῶν ὀμμάτων (b7). The description of the subtle fire, and the description of how, "the center part" of the eye "kept out everything of a coarser nature and allowed to pass only this pure element"<sup>89</sup> recalls Empedocles' simile of the lantern. Then we have the description of the effluences connecting in one line of vision as a kind of 'body' unto itself:

...when the light of day surrounds the stream of vision, then like falls upon like, and they coalesce [συμπαγῆς γινόμενον] and one body [σῶμα (c4)] is formed by natural affinity in the line of vision, wherever the light that falls from within meets with an external object. And the whole stream of vision, being similarly affected in virtue of similarity, diffuses the motions of what it touches or what touches it [ὅτου τε ἂν αὐτό ποτε ἐφάπτητα καὶ ὁ ἂν ἄλλο ἐκείνου (d1)] over the whole body [that is, the 'body,' σῶμα, of the joined effluences], until they reach the soul, causing the perception that we call sight. (45c2-d3)

I would propose that we translate ἐφάπτητα (d1) rather as "grasps," as in the grasping of hands and that we thus see not only the effluence of the eye grasping the object, but the effluence of the

<sup>87</sup> See Ierodiakonou 2005: 26 n. 41 and O'Brien 1970: 157-59 for useful surveys of sources, positions, and annotations.

<sup>88</sup> See Hershbell 1974 on possible influences of Empedocles on *The Timaeus* and specifically as pertains to optics 157-61. Zeller attributes the notion to Empedocles: "beim Sehen der sehende Körper aus dem Auge heraustreten, um sich mit den Auflüssen des Gegenstandes zu berühren" (1869: 648).

<sup>89</sup> This, and the following translations, Jowett in Cooper, Cairns & Hamilton 1961: 1173.

object grasping the eye's effluence in turn.<sup>90</sup> Moreover, I would argue that we can read *συμπαγῆς γένόμενον* as essentially a gloss on Empedocles' *harmottein*, ἀρμόττειν, as explaining the way that like effluences do not just fit into their specific passages, *poroi*,<sup>91</sup> but also "fit together," from the root meaning of ἀρμόζω, Att. ἀρμόττω, in this grasping. In the *Meno* we have a more literally Empedoclean identification of this fitting together as the action of the *harmottein*, ἀρμόττειν of the effluences, ἀπορροάς, that flow through these *poroi*, πόρους:

SOCRATES. You... believe in Empedocles' theory of effluences [ἀπορροάς]? MENO. Wholeheartedly. SO. And passages [πόρους] to which and through which the effluences make their way? MEN. Yes. SO. Some of the effluences fit into [and, I would argue, "are fitting together in," ἀρμόττειν] some of the passages, whereas others are too coarse or too fine. MEN. That is right. SO. Now you recognize the term "sight" [ὄψιν]? MEN. Yes. SO. From these notions, then, "grasp [σύνες] what I would tell," as Pindar said... (76c7-e3)

Although σύνες, from συνίημι, "bring or set together," does not quite exactly mean grasp in the literal sense of the grasping of hands, ἄπτω, I would contend that Socrates' oblique suggestion that the putting together of two things as the basic function of *aesthesis* serves as the root metaphor for apprehension is not inadvertent following his reference to Empedocles' fitting together of ἀρμόττειν.

So, several elements in Plato refer unequivocally to Empedocles, e.g., the effluences, the *poroi*, and, the notion of fitting together, *harmottein*, that I am suggesting most likely supports either an express notion, or unstated implication of a grasping together of the effluences. At *Sense and Sensibilia* 437b11ff. Aristotle speaks of Empedocles and *The Timaeus* in one breath,

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<sup>90</sup> *LSJ* II. "lay hold of" with the example of Hom. *Od.* 5.348: ἐπὶν χεῖρεςσιν ἐφάψεται ἠπειροῖο. "Grasping" is the root meaning of the unprefix form of the verb, whence "haptic" in English. The notion of this grasping, again the feature that determines Beare's third possibility, is also in evidence at *Theaetetus* 156d3-e7 where, in an explanation of the experience of the whiteness in objects viewed when objects to be seen that are "adjusted to" the eye and the eye come into proximity, Socrates identifies the *space* between, μεταξύ (d6), the perceiver and the object perceived where the experience arises as vision. See Jablonski for a useful orientation to the fundamental problem of vision as being originally understood in how we can perceive objects at a distance in comparison with our experience of objects susceptible to our immediate sense of touch: "Die Schwierigkeit bestand beim Gesichtssinn gegenüber dem Tastsinn hauptsächlich darin, verstehen zu lehren, wie man das Entfernte, vom eigenen Körper Getrennte, wahrnehmen könne" (1930: 308).

<sup>91</sup> *Pace* Sedley, for example, who reads ἀρμόττειν solely as describing how like effluences "fit into [my emphasis]" the *poroi* in order to form the image on the surface of the eye and argues that Theophrastus has not "followed Aristotle's mistake conflating [Empedocles' doctrine of vision] with Plato's visual ray theory in the *Timaeus*" (2018: 26-27). Sedley provides a useful catalog of sources. While Long, in discussing the relationship of this passage to Empedocles, suggests that there is no "particular evidence for thinking Plato's theory to be original" (1996: 263), they nonetheless incline away from the theory of extramission concluding, "it is unnecessary to ask whether these two sources of light actually meet, and if so where" (ibid. 264). By way of contrast, Jablonski aligns with Beare's third possibility: "„Wissend, daß Abflüsse von allem, was da entstanden ist, stattfinden“, [citing Diels, I, S. 254] verbindet EMPEDOKLES mit der Annahme, daß im Akte des Sehens ein mildes Feuer dem Auge entströme, die ergänzende Lehre, daß von den Gegenständen Strömungen ausgehen, die das Auge erreichen und das Sehen ermöglichen" (1930: 310).

reporting in simple, prosaic terms, that light, φῶς, passes out of the eye using Empedocles' simile of the lantern, λαμπτήρ, as if applying it by apposition as well to *The Timaeus*, and then goes on to quote the text of B84. Just before the quote, he says that Empedocles seems, ἔοικε (437b24), to contend that light issues from the eye; just after, he says: “one time [μὲν] he speaks thus [of extramission as introduced before the quote], at another [δὲ] by effluences [ἀπορροίαις] from the things seen” (437b24). While O'Brien (1970: 142ff.) argues for taking the μὲν\δὲ as adversative, as if Aristotle is indicating that the elements of extramission and the *poroi* are not correlated in Empedocles' thought, and Beare reads Aristotle as “imputing inconsistency to [Empedocles'] theory” (1906: 17), I see here an indication that both positions should be taken together as would be consistent with Beare's third possibility that effluences flow from the eyes and from the objects perceived, μὲν and δὲ.

Theophrastus, in *On the Senses*, does not specifically link Plato and Empedocles. He gives us the basic elements of the *poroi* and the *harmottein*, ἐναρμόττειν (*Sens.* 7.1), with only a minimal reference to the structure of the eye, “through which the fire by reason of its subtlety, passes like the light in lanterns,” (Stratton 1917: 71) δι' ὧν διέναι λεπτὸν ὄν καθάπερ τὸ ἐν τοῖς λαμπτήρσι φῶς (*Sens.* 7.7).<sup>92</sup> I suggest that there is some question as to whether *harmottein* refers solely to the matching of specific objects of sense with the corresponding *poros* of the sense, as is clearly indicated by Theophrastus, or whether the notion of effluences fitting together in a kind of grasping goes along with this sense of matching. First, we must note that in addressing the grasping together of the effluences in Plato's theory of *The Timaeus* Theophrastus uses *harmottein* along with the added prefix *sun-*: “assuming then that there is this effluence and that <effluence and organ><sup>93</sup> must [δέον]<sup>94</sup> unite [συν-αρμόττειν], he holds that the <visual stream> issues forth for some distance and coalesces with the effluence, and thus it is we see” (ibid.). Theophrastus' specific phrasing here is telling. The notion that the very fact of the effluences *necessarily* [δέον] presupposes that they must be “fit together *with* one another” [συν-αρμόττειν] suggests that the basic underlying sense of *harmottein* is “fitting together” as is then expressly, and with some emphasis, affirmed with the prefix *sun-*. Yet here Theophrastus is concerned not with the fact that the effluences fit together, or, as I would put it, come together in a grasping, as he is taking that as a necessary [δέον] given; rather, he is addressing *where* the fitting together occurs, namely “at some distance” [μέχρι] from the perceiver and the object. I contend then that as Theophrastus moves on to speak of the next in the group of thinkers who share in common the notion that perception arises by likeness, Empedocles, he is already working with the preestablished understanding that *harmottein* involves this necessary fitting-together. So, turning to Empedocles, the question turns to focus on the specifics of the dynamics of the like effluences, namely that, yes, of course, they fit together as they must, but also, now,

<sup>92</sup> O'Brien 1970 interprets Theophrastus' discussion of the outward flowing fire from the lantern simile and that of the effluences and their activity with the pores as separate, the former as pertaining solely to the physiognomy of the eye, the latter solely as accounting for the act of vision. Cf. Cherniss 1935: 318 n. 106.

<sup>93</sup> Stratton uses these symbols to indicate words that are not literally present in Theophrastus' text. Although it seems only appropriate to retain their orthography as it appears, it is, unfortunately, all the more cumbersome with my added interjections indicated with standard brackets.

<sup>94</sup> Such bracketed elements, such as this very important indication of the necessity that the effluences *must* be fitted together, *sun-harmottein*, are my additions to Stratton's text.

they must fit together *in*, that is, *into*, *en-harmottein*, their specific corresponding *poroi*. They must at once fit together with each other in the grasping, but also—in what is specific to Empedocles’ theory—they, together, must fit together with, that is, fit *into*, *en-harmottein*, the specific *poroi*.

So, at *Sens.* 7, in speaking of the different senses, Theophrastus explains *harmottein* as indicating that *aesthesis* occurs as the object appropriate to one of the senses matches, ἐναρμόττειν, the *poros* for that sense. Of special importance for my argument regarding Aeschylus, however, is rather what Theophrastus says of the mismatching that would result from some *poroi* being too wide, some too narrow, for various objects: “some <of these objects> [those that are mismatched- added] hold their course through without contact [οὐχ ἀπτόμενα; or, as I propose, “without grasping together”], while others are quite unable to enter” (Stratton 1971:71). Then, at *Sens.* 15, he indicates contrafactually that if an object of sense that “is like” would “not *fit*” [μὴ ἐναρμόττοι] “<the passages> [*poroi*], but merely *touches* [Stratton’s emphasis] <there> [ἄπτοιτο],<sup>95</sup> perception might reasonably arise from any source whatever” (ibid. 79). Perhaps, this instance of *haptēin* would not amount to a proper grasping, such grasping as is necessary not only for perception but also apprehension, for want of the *harmottein*. Indeed, perception depends upon both *haptēin* and likeness to effect *harmottein*: “for [Empedocles] attributes our recognition of things to two factors—namely, to likeness and to contact [ἀφῆ- ἀφή,<sup>96</sup> “grasping”]; and so he uses the expression “to fit” [ἀρμόττειν, “fit” or, rather, “fit together” or “join”]” (ibid.), δυοῖν γὰρ τούτων ἀποδίδωσι τὴν γνῶσιν τῷ τε ὁμοίῳ καὶ τῇ ἀφῆ· διὸ καὶ τὸ ἀρμόττειν εἶρηκεν (*Sens.* 15.2-3). I contend that Theophrastus is here expressly establishing that ἀρμόττειν—and it is telling that Theophrastus drops the ἐν- prefix at 15.3—indicates a grasping together of like elements matched to, and susceptible to fitting together *in*, the -ἐν of ἐν-αρμόττειν, the specific *poros*. For if ἐν-αρμόττειν were referring solely to the objects fitting into their specific *poroi*, why would there be any reference to the role of grasping, ἀρμόττειν un-prefixed, in addition to, and separate from, likeness which already aligns the object with the specific *poros*?

We are lucky to have Theophrastus’ account as we don’t quite find this explanation in what remains of Empedocles’ own words. This may be an accident of history, but I suspect that it is more likely that the reason we don’t find him fully spelling out the workings of extramission may be that he would have taken certain aspects for granted and wouldn’t have felt the need to explain what is likely to have been common experience.<sup>97</sup> As exotic as the theory of

<sup>95</sup> It is worth noting that Theophrastus’ counterfactual hypothesis keeps the element of the grasping, ἄπτοιτο, presumably as if an unimaginable omission, and problematizes the less obvious factor, namely the likeness.

<sup>96</sup> ἀφή (from ἄπτω) *LSJ* “touch,” A.II.4 “grip,” let me say “grasp,” and 5. “contact”; c.f. ἄπτω A.2. “join,” II. “grasp,” III. metaph. 4. “grasp with the senses, perceive.”

<sup>97</sup> Indeed, the common experience of the inherent relationship between the optic and haptic is in evidence in the pictorial art of the day as Frontisi-Ducroux notes:

Vase paintings, on objects that are handled, conjoin sight and touch, which can only reinforce the sensual effect of erotic scenes. But it must not be forgotten that for the Greeks, vision—whatever its object—is thought to be a long-distance touch. One might conclude that... opposition [of the] haptic and optic is not applicable to the art of the Greeks, who do not really dissociate these two categories. (1996: 97 n. 33)

O’Brien states, “Empedocles and his audience could well have taken it for granted that fire did in fact leave the eye, even if they did not think that its leaving the eye had any particular part to play in the act of vision” (1970: 145).

extramission seems to us in the Newtonian era,<sup>98</sup> and while there is not room here to consider what we can see from other texts, especially poetic works, of the late archaic and early classical period, there is one further point of evidence—whether some fortuitous remnant of Empedocles’ own language, or some formulation in explanatory commentary—in the doxography of a ray-image, ἀκτινείδωλον,<sup>99</sup> a neologism,<sup>100</sup> that seems to aptly describe how an image is communicated along a ray comprising the fitted effluences, grasped together, that is, akin to what Plato referred to as the “one body.”

We do nonetheless have in Empedocles’ own words a handful of references to hands. In B133, we find a tantalizing correlation of eyes and hands: “it is impossible to bring [the divine] near to us within reach of our eyes or to grasp him with the hands [χερσὶ]—although this is the main road of persuasion entering the minds of men” (*KRS* 312). Yet despite the close suggestion of the correlation of hands and eyes here, we find elsewhere that he uses the term for the hand “especially used for grasping” (*LSJ*), παλάμη, in express association with the *poroi*, though not solely for the sense of sight. In B2 we find narrow παλάμαι, translated by *KRS* as “powers,” spread through the body and then in B3:

Come now, observe with all your powers [πάση παλάμη] how each thing is clear, neither holding sight [ὄψιν] in greater trust compared with hearing, nor noisy hearing above the passages of the tongue, nor withhold trust from any of the other limbs [organs, parts of the body], by whatever way there is a channel [πόρος] to understanding [νοῆσαι], but grasp [νόει] each thing in the way in which it is clear. (*KRS* 285)

The power of grasping, the παλάμη, is here accorded to all of the senses, but also is understood to serve to conduct what is grasped through each channel, πόρος, of sense to give rise to understanding or comprehension noetically, νοῆσαι. Thus Theophrastus at *Sens.* 10ff. concludes that, “thought [φρόνησιν] is either identical with sense perception or very similar to it” (Stratton 1917: 75) and thus to find, as recorded in fragment B107 (which Theophrastus preserves), the fitting together, *harmottein*, of cognition in terms of grasping: “for from these have all things been fittingly conjoined [ἀρμοσθέντα], and by their means do [they] think [φρονέουσι] and have delight and suffer grief” (ibid. 75). The fundamental notion of grasping as the essence of our notions of perception and apprehension is of course there in the Latin roots of those terms.

So, looking back to B3, while all of the senses are being conceived of—well, metaphorically<sup>101</sup>—as hands that grasp, we see that this is most immediately experienced to be

<sup>98</sup> It may be noted just the same that Goethe’s theory of color and vision is more directly filiated with the Pythagorean-Empedoclean-Platonic tradition.

<sup>99</sup> Plut. *Epit.* iv. 13 (Diels, *Dox.*, p.403): Ἐμπεδοκλῆς τοῖς εἰδώλοις τὰς ἀκτῖνας ἀνέμιξε, προσαγορεύσας τὸ γινόμενον ἀκτινείδωλον συνθέτως; but also, *Anthologium* 1.52.13.3: Ἐστιαῖος ὁ Περὶνθιος τοῖς εἰδώλοις τὰς ἀκτῖνας ἀνέμιξε, προσαγορεύσας τὸ γινόμενον ἀκτινείδωλον. Beare opines of this passage that it “is intrinsically suspicious,” going on to conjecture that Empedocles did not hold, “the theory of a confluence of the Reverse Adaptations from the eye with the emanations from objects” (1906: 17-18).

<sup>100</sup> Guthrie attributes to *Histiaeus* the “invention of [the] technical portmanteau-term” (1962 V: 491).

<sup>101</sup> Padel 1992: 41-42 discusses B3 specifically placing the role of the *poroi* in broader physiological contexts beyond perception. See also their discussion ibid. 33-40 of what distinguishes our sense of metaphorical language and thought, specifically: “I assume that the poets’ imagery for inner experience indicates implicit beliefs abroad in

the case with sight. It is the metaphor of the grasping of the hand, *παλάμη*, that is *organically* experienced as the essence of both perception and apprehension, and essential to *noesis*, and thus we see that Empedocles, when he would feel the need to explain the powers of the other less dominant senses in terms of the *poroi* and *harmottein*, will extend the notion of the metaphorical grasping of the dominant sense of sight as commonly experienced.<sup>102</sup> The “hand” of vision, *παλάμη*, the power of vision, grasps the effluences of the image-ray and effects the *harmottein* in the *poros* of sight. We fifth century Greeks are all aware that we are possessed of the power of the grasping of sight; but we are also possessed of the less obvious “hands” of the other senses as well that accomplish the same in their *poroi* and with their objects.

With all of the foregoing in mind, we may turn back again to Plato, not to the more obvious content of *The Timaeus* this time, but rather *The Phaedo*, to find another account of Empedocles’ theory of *aesthesis* as the grasping of hands, along with the same emphasis on the grasping of hands in vision. Having found the theories of causation of the pre-Socratic physical philosophers deficient, and having feared that in relying upon the testimony of the senses his soul might be subject, in a metaphor, to the sort of blinding that may result from an eclipse—a certain kind of cancellation of the gaze, if not quite the collapse we will find in Aeschylus—he concluded that: “I feared that I might blind my *psyche* entirely if, looking to things with my eyes, I should grasp them taking them in hand [ἐπιχειρῶν ἄπτεσθαι] with each of the senses” (*Phd.* 99e1-4). And we can be quite assured that Plato does have Empedocles in mind here given his reference to his whirlpool just a bit earlier, as further evidence that the notion of grasping must indeed have been there in Empedocles: “That is why one person [no doubt Empedocles] surrounds the earth with a vortex [δίνη; Empedocles’ whirlpool of Love and Strife], and so keeps it in place by means of the heavens... and [imagines to] someday find a more mighty and immortal... Atlas...” (99b6-11).

But now we must go where indeed there is no Atlas to be found, back into not just Empedocles’ miraculously self-sustaining cosmogonic whirlpool of Love and Strife, whirling sublimely overhead, but rather down into and through the bottom of the whirl in Aeschylus’ cosmo-*phthoric* spin on Empedocles as all comes crashing down into the abyss of tragic sublimity. And, as the engine of this collapse, we will find the eyes that Aphrodite wrought, there in the palms of her hands, Κύπριδος ἐν παλάμησιν (B95),<sup>103</sup> or rather their *absence*.

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the culture about what is in people, how it gets there, and how it interacts with the world outside... it is not surprising that early theorizing about the world, and human relations with it, works with the same pattern of imagery as the poets, at a time when imagery is not a vehicle of explanation but embodies it” (ibid. 43-44).

<sup>102</sup> See Jablonski 1930: 313.

<sup>103</sup> Cf. Steiner’s reference to this fragment in association with Helen 1995: 179 n. 26.

## The Collapse of the Gaze, and Ingression of the Boundary, suite

In the interpretation presented above of Menelaus' vain attempt to *grasp* the image of Helen at 424-26, the movement of the *opsis* may be provisionally identified as inwardly directed. This interpretation is only provisional, however, for it is also possible to consider the movement of the *opsis* as if it were *passing out* from the inner register of Menelaus' psychic, noetic, experience into the physical world as if in accordance with the sort of movement attributed to Empedocles' visual extramission. From this perspective the lines exhibit a remarkably different meaning:

Being transposed, παραλλάξασα, through, διὰ,  
The hands the *opsis* goes 'out,' not a moment later, οὐ μεθύστερον  
In pursuit, on the winged ships, κελύθοις, in martial trance, ὕπνου...

I will return below to draw out the Empedoclean resonances of key terms here, specifically forms of the verb *allasso* "to change or undergo transmutation," but also the word κέλευθος, meaning "pathway." For the moment, it must be pointed out that the sense of κέλευθος in the alternative reading I am proposing as "ships" is drawn from the sense of the term that is established at line 127 where Calchas refers to the Greek expedition metonymically as the "path," κέλευθος, on which they set out.<sup>104</sup> That the term is being used here at 425 to refer to the expedition is, moreover, confirmed in the specific martial sense of comrades in arms of ὀπαδοῦς'. Below we will also see κέλευθος connected with another form of *allasso* in Empedocles' description of the whirlpool.

The *opsis*, now to be seen in its true guise as the hypostatized *phasma*, or phantom, of Helen<sup>105</sup> that is the spectral engine of the Trojan debacle, *goes out*,<sup>106</sup> transposed, παραλλάξασα, through a spectral 'parallax', wherein the previously *metaphorical* 'hands' of Menelaus' mental groping prove *at once*, not a moment later, οὐ μεθύστερον, to be the physical, i.e. *literal*, hands of the warriors put to the oars of the winged ships; those same ships referred to in that original

<sup>104</sup> The term occurs three times in *The Agamemnon*, the third of which, as referring to the tapestry-strewn pathway Clytemnestra contrives for Agamemnon's return across this same threshold, I address below at pg. 51.

<sup>105</sup> Although Vernant does not expressly include the *opsis* in the list of terms that he groups together under what he refers to as the psychological category of the double, and he turns to Achilles' experience of *pothe* for Patroclus' *psyche*, his description applies well to Menelaus' *pothos* for Helen as it results in the hypostatization of her *opsis*:

A double is completely different from an image. It is not a "natural" object, nor is it simply a product of the mind. It is not an imitation of a real object, an illusion of the mind, or a creation of thought. For the person who sees it, the double is an external reality, but one whose peculiar character, in its very appearance, sets it in opposition to familiar objects and to the ordinary surroundings of life. It exists simultaneously on two contrasting planes: just when it shows itself to be present, it also reveals itself as not of this world and as belonging to some other, inaccessible sphere. (2006: 325)

<sup>106</sup> See Jablonski's discussion of the Pythagorean conception of the movement of the *opsis*: "ging aus den Augen ein Etwas, ἢ ὄψις, hervor, die Dinge berührend und ihre Formen und Farben erfassend" (1930: 309).

metaphor at 52 noted above, “rowing on oars of wings.” It is in order to prepare this sense of the *πτεροῖς κελύθοις*, that Aeschylus explicitly established the metaphorical relationship between wings and oars in that earlier instance.

But whereas the outward movement of the effluence from the eyes in Empedocles’ optics provides for the *grasping* of the object of perception, the mode of perception here is that of *doxai* or illusions, the spectral vision of Helen’s phasma, and instead of the outward striking gaze of the Artemisian sacrifice of Iphigeneia, here it is a question of the *collapse of the gaze* into the inward nihility of Menelaus’ erotic longing,<sup>107</sup> his *pothos*, for Helen, “as all Aphrodite wanes passing away in the blankness of the stone eyes of the statues...” This sense of the collapse and exposure to nihility is expressed in the phrase ἐν ἀχηνίαις, the term defined by Chaintraine as expressing “manque, privation.” Later, at 740-41, when Helen arrives as a prize in Troy, we must assume that the arrow of her eyes, ὀμμάτων βέλος,<sup>108</sup> goes out as did the arrow from Iphigeneia’s eyes, ἀπ’ ὀμματος βέλει (241); however, in this case, as her gaze is cast from her in her living presence, she was experienced as a grace,<sup>109</sup> “a delight,” an ἄγαλμα,<sup>110</sup> casting “a soft

<sup>107</sup> Steiner also points to the absence of the love communicated through the gaze: “in the absence of the departed Helen’s gaze, all love is gone” (1995: 179 n. 26). While I do not concur with Steiner’s response to the debate over the attribution of the eyes suggesting deliberate ambiguity *here* (responding to such as Fraenkel’s reading for the eyes belonging to Menelaus), I *do* argue for a remarkable play of ambiguities just above this point at lines at 414-15 as will be addressed in the last section below. It is worth noting here the way in which Jablonski interprets Empedocles’ optics of like perceiving like in the *poroi* in the terms of the interplay of the Love and Strife of the cosmology:

Nach der Lehre des Empedokles... werden die Elemente in ewigem Wechsel vereinigt durch die Kraft der Liebe und getrennt durch den Haß. Wenn wir erfahren, daß im Sehen Gleiches zu Gleichem strebt, daß die „Poren“ dem entsprechenden Elemente innigst angezogen seien, wenn wir weiter hören, daß die göttliche Aphrodite es war, welche die unermüdlichen Augen bildete, so ahnen wir, was sich für EMPEDOKLES im Sehvorgange abspielte: ein Zueinanderstreben des Getrennten, ein Wiedereinswerden des Geschiedenen, eine Vermählung des *Innen mit dem Außen* [emphasis added] durch die Weltkraft der Liebe. (1930: 312)

<sup>108</sup> See Pearson 1909: 256 for a reference to this instance of the gaze as erotic missile along with other relevant references to Aeschylus including the missiles cast from Iphigeneia’s eyes and other authors including Empedocles B86.

<sup>109</sup> That is, although not explicitly stated here, we should imagine that she would have been possessed of the delightful grace that she would have once presented to Menelaus but that had come to be “hated by him,” ἔχθεται χάρις ἀνδρὶ (417), as presented by her statues in her absence. MacLachlan makes only brief mention of this charged instance of χάρις, referring to the “cold statues” as “lacking a response return-gaze” (1993: 66-67). Rabinowitz contrasts the impact of Helen’s absence to what is implied of Helen as an ἄγαλμα, presumably possessed of and conferring *charis* to Paris and Troy: “she... is imagined as coming to Troy in the form of a wealthy statue (*agalma*) shooting a soft glance from her eyes” (2013: 200). They go on to compare the missiles of Helen’s eyes to those of Iphigeneia *ibid.* 207, although apparently without an awareness of the blinding impact of Iphigeneia’s gaze. Wohl explains that the value of, “*agalmata* lies... in their *kharis*” (1998: 61, 76 n. 95). Doyle 2009: 17ff. casts Helen’s status as an *agalma* and possessed of *charis* against the model of Hesiod’s Pandora and her role in Troy as “highlighting the parody of a marriage ceremony” (*ibid.* 18). Steiner’s focus on “the life force that is *charis*” (2001: 24) as associated with the liveliness of mimetic productions, and citation of Saintillan’s defining of *charis* as “l’ensemble des valeurs que doit réunir en elle la vie pour pouvoir être dite la plus vivante” (1996: 320), is of particular relevance to the impact of the *charis* of the *kolossoi* of Helen on Menelaus. Of Pandora, Steiner also states that the “painful longing (*pothon argaleon*, *Op.* 66)” the “finely crafted object generates” (2001: 186) by dint of “concentrated form” of erotic appeal is produced by “a process of artistic ornamentation, embellishment, and ‘making like’... [in order] to acquire the status of an *agalma* or thing that gives delight” (*ibid.* 188).

<sup>110</sup> Steiner’s comparison 1995: 179 n. 24 between *agalma* as mobile, ‘walking’ statues and the fixed *κολοσσῶν* (416) aligns with the contrast between the present and absent Helen respectively.

arrow from her eyes,” μαλθακὸν ὀμμάτων βέλος.<sup>111</sup> Such would, thus, be how Menelaus would also have experienced her gaze while still in her presence. In her absence, Aeschylus’ *opsis* is acting according to an *anti*-Empedoclean optics, where the image slips through the vainly grasping hands of Menelaus’ mind collapsing inwardly, and thus instead of being grasped by these metaphorical hands, the *opsis* itself puts the physical hands of warriors to the oars of ships as these physical men are driven forth outwardly to the dactylic beat of the drum in martial trance to the oblivion of war.

Thus, in effect, on the tragic level of this pivotal moment, the *opsis* is passing neither *in* nor *out*, but instead whirling overhead epistrophically,<sup>112</sup> a malevolent hypostasis of she who is now physically across the sea, having stepped lightly<sup>113</sup> across the threshold. The hypostatized *opsis*<sup>114</sup> effaces not only the statues in the blankness of the stone eyes that are thus no longer animated by the living presence of Helen in the city, and thus no longer support the active gaze,<sup>115</sup> the grasp of the gaze of he who now longingly gazes upon them, but effaces as well the *very boundary* of the putatively inner and outer.<sup>116</sup> The *opsis* is the engine of both ontological and rhetorical collapse, as the hypostatized image goes out, seeking, as it were, to be rejoined with the corporeal form of Helen. The *opsis* works the collapse of the threshold, effecting the ingression of the boundary, in precisely that single word in the two strophes that matches exactly, that preposition that is itself *the very marker of the boundary*, διὰ, “through.” For whereas Helen was plainly visible passing *through*, διὰ, the physical boundary of the palace, the *doxic* activity of her spectral *opsis* is far more enigmatic as it effaces the boundary that upholds

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<sup>111</sup>Steiner suggests the comparison with the absent Helen at 1995: 180. In 2001, they addressed the connection between Helen and her gaze in the first and second stasimons, referring to the “soft but deadly dart, the heart piercing flower of love that the queen emits from her eyes” (2001: 144), and mentioned Iphigeneia, translating Ag. 240-42 as “striking as in a picture,” and indicating that “we might contrast the *impotence* [emphasis added] of Iphigeneia’s earlier visual (but voiceless) appeals for pity” (ibid. n. 33).

<sup>112</sup> Although Lebeck does not quite read 394 as do I as Agamemnon *putting* the “bird” to flight, epistrophically, they do hear how the figure of the bird there is picked up in Menelaus’ yearning for Helen: “the thought expressed in the half proverbial, half metaphorical phrase διώκει παῖς ποτανὸν ὄρνιν (393-95) is also developed in the second pair of strophes with reference to Helen and Menelaus... it is the same yearning for τὰ πετόμενα which drives Menelaus to pursue her” (1971: 45), τὰ πετόμενα resonating as well in the wings of the dreams.

<sup>113</sup> That Helen is described as stepping through the threshold lightly, ῥίμφοι, like to the dynamics of the *opsis*, is contrasted by the immobility of the stone *kolossai*. See Vernant 2006: 330 and Steiner who refers to Helen’s departure as exhibiting “uncanny powers of movement” (2001: 137), and for their discussion ibid. 140 of the role of *kolossoi* in fixing the images of revenants, with relevant bibliography, that, as images of the dead, cast by association here on the *opsis* of the living, though absent Helen its uniquely haunting charge.

<sup>114</sup> Vernant expresses the otherness of Helen in the register of the beyond: “radiant with charm, haunting and *ungraspable* [my emphasis], Helen is like a person from the beyond, doubled in this life and on this earth, in herself and her phantom, her *eidolon*” (1991: 102). I will address below the inappropriateness of thinking of the *eidolon* of Helen, as opposed to her *opsis*.

<sup>115</sup> See Steiner 2001: 144.

<sup>116</sup> Thus, we have a tragic undoing of the sort of relationship between inside and outside that Jablonski describes in association with the Pythagorean conception of vision: “Wichtig ist an der pythagoreischen Lehre die Auffassung, daß der Sehakt auf der Tätigkeit des feurigen Elementes beruhe. Dieser Gedanke geht von der Tatsache aus, daß mit dem Auge das Licht, die Ausgeburt des Feuers, wahrgenommen wird, und er gründet sich auf die Überzeugung, daß zwischen Aufnehmendem und Aufzunehmendem, zwischen Organ und Gegenstand, zwischen Subjekt und Objekt, letztlich zwischen *Innen und Außen* [emphasis added] eine Verwandtschaft des Wesens bestehe” (1930: 309).

the distinction upon which the metaphorical hands ‘within’ Menelaus’ mind could be distinguished from the literal, physical hands put to oars. The simple preposition that marks the threshold, *διὰ*, constitutes a *formal node*,<sup>117</sup> canceling the meta-phorical transference of strophic form *from within*, through the ingression of the threshold:

#### Strophe (406-407)

βέβακεν ρίμφα *διὰ*  
 πυλᾶν ἄτλητα τλᾶσα...

she went lightly **through**  
 the physical threshold...

#### Antistrophe (424-425)

παραλλάξασα *διὰ*  
 χερῶν βέβακεν ὄψις οὐ μεθύστερον

transposed **through**  
 the hands the image went, not a moment  
 later

And let us not forget the presence of the visible door of the *skene* upon which the spectator’s imagination of this effect is superimposed—hinging physical reality and mimetic imagination—in the dramatic present moment. The collapse of the gaze effects the collapse, moreover, of *any cognitive delay* that would be suggested in thinking, provisionally, of what must be parsed as the dual interpretations of the lines. For the image that was working within Menelaus’ mind at once, in one and the same moment, οὐ μεθ-ύστερον, “not a moment later” goes ~~in/out~~. Rhetorically this collapse can only be fully appreciated in the challenge posed by thinking the sublimity of *both* interpretations of the action of the *opsis at once*, with no cognitive delay, of *fully* appreciating what is at stake in Aeschylus’ insistence that those “metaphorical” hands of Menelaus’ mind are absolutely *indissociable* from those literal hands on oars; to think without such as the slight delay, the μικρὸν ὑπερίζει, that Aristotle at *Rhetoric* 1410b26 assigns to the transference of meta-phor, as the meta- of metaphor, is cancelled in Aeschylus’ μεθ-ἴn οὐ μεθ-ύστερον. We must think instead *against, anti-*,<sup>118</sup> the correspondence of the strophes; think the collapse of the *space* of transference secured in the *meta* of *meta-phor*. Aeschylus named this collapse, long before our earliest attestations of the word “metaphor,” in the word, a *hapax legomenon*,<sup>119</sup> he coined for Helen’s “anti-dowry” of destruction, her ἀντί-φερνον [406]. This word may thus be aptly understood as naming the peculiar mode of rhetorical collapse in play with the ingression of the threshold, the eponymous mode of “*antiphora*.” And so in this ‘dowry’ that should secure the prospects of generation to be conferred through marriage, we

<sup>117</sup> Steiner sees the inwardly oriented resonances of these responding lines: “Lines 424-25 occupy the same metrical unit as lines 407-8, and echo several of the earlier terms: παραλλάξασα διὰ χερῶν βέβακεν ὄψις. In place of the living Helen who flits overseas, her visionary double now glides through Menelaus’ extended hands” (1995: 178).

<sup>118</sup> Goldhill’s focus on the general “force of ἀντι-, ‘over’, ‘opposite’, ‘against’” and its importance across the trilogy is relevant here: “this sense of opposition, the essence of reciprocity, is developed at the very core of the narrative action, where events, people, images are constantly being forced into a position of opposition... ἀντι also implies, however, a mutual exclusivity as well as opposition” (1984: 13), and then of ἀντίφερνον specifically *ibid.* 45.

<sup>119</sup> See pg. 20 n. 66.

have rather the unbridled—I choose the word deliberately—undoing of bearing, -φερ-, itself and unleashing rather of destruction, φθοράν: the ἀντίφερνον φθοράν.

### *Oneirophantoī Doxai: Waking Dreams ‘There’-by*

Now to the question posed above as to whether the “dream-apparent semblances,” ὄνειρόφαντοι δόξαι (420-21), are images seen in literal sleeping dreams or whether these δόξαι refer rather to Menelaus’ waking, although obsessive and distraught, imaginations of Helen. It is not surprising that the word has always been taken in the literal sense of the compound term to refer to visions that Menelaus is experiencing in literal sleeping dreams, particularly since these dream-apparent semblances are disappearing down the pathways of what has always been understood simply to be literal sleep, ὕπνου κελεύθοις (426), in the last words of the prophetic passage. Yet if we think of ὕπνος not simply as sleep, but rather as referring in a more general sense to the loss of consciousness, as I am arguing of the term as referring at once to Menelaus’ inward experience and the martial trance of the sailors at oars, we may consider an alternative notion, namely that as with *hypnos* as being only metaphorically ‘sleep’, these visions are also only metaphorically ‘dream’ images in referring rather to waking ‘dream’-apparent semblances of Menelaus’ imagined memories of past moments with Helen.

While there is nothing particularly exotic or enigmatic about the basic sense of the compound ὄνειρό-φαντοι, and it is not that there are not other analogous ὄνειρό- compounds, we should ask why exactly Aeschylus would be construing what is a quite rare compound, if not a *hapax*,<sup>120</sup> especially given that we might ask how “dream-appearing *doxai*,” if understood literally, would be anything different from simply *dreams*, ὄνειράτα, *tout court*. Taking *DP*’s text at 423, μάταν γάρ, εὔτ’ ἂν ἐσθλά τις δοκοῦνθ’ ὄρᾳ, “for it is vain when one sees mere seeming splendors,”<sup>121</sup> would there be any reason to distill out how it is vain to see *doxai* in the generalized terms of τις to explain what everyone commonly knows of dream experience? It was common knowledge that there is the risk of folly with dreams, such as we see in the chorus’ suggestion that Clytemnestra might be subject to the delusion of the mere *phasmata* of dreams, ὄνειρων φάσματ’ (274). Would this statement not make more sense as an explanation of the vanity of the less commonly experienced or understood, or at least more noteworthy, circumstance of such a one as Menelaus as he is obsessed with the merely illusory images of Helen in her absence? Of course it is vain to see literal dream images (unless the dream be prophetic); that is taken as given. What is more noteworthy and poignant is to be subject to vain

<sup>120</sup> A search of the *TLG* through the 5<sup>th</sup> century shows only this instance.

<sup>121</sup> I am at something of a loss for just how to artfully render ἐσθλά, but I am thinking in terms of Chaintraine’s indication regarding the use of the term for riches and treasure.

waking dreamlike visions and then to fall into a stupor as the memory images evanesce into unconsciousness slipping through the vainly groping hands of the imagination. To better appreciate this, we need to work back up into the verses that lead to this statement.

Although there is no formal responsion between **B** (410-18) and **B'** (420-26), that is, between the first and second halves of the prophetic speech, the chorus' formally imposed structuring of the break between strophe and antistrophe nonetheless does mark a transition in orientation from what could be regarded outwardly, that is, Menelaus' longing and diminished condition concluding with the dumb matter of the stone *kolossoi*,<sup>122</sup> to what requires crossing inwardly into the psychic, *doxic*, register of Menelaus' *imagination*—and we cannot simply pass over the question of the disposition of imagination as regards Menelaus and Aeschylus' audience of fifth century Greeks, as if we can simply assume our own common conception of it. Moreover, across the chorus' outward division of the stanzas we find internal reflections in recurrences of key elements. For we see pairings of key terms including; φάσμα (415) & (ὄνειρό-)φαντοι (420); χάρις (417) & χάριν (422); and, δόξει (415) & δόξαι (421) & δοκοῦνθ' (*DP* 425), along with the specific opposition between δόξει (415) and ἰδεῖν (413) that has been at issue across the full scope of this study. Finally, the precise pairing of πάρεστι (412) & πάρεισι (421), two instances of πάρειμι, πάρ-ειμι, structure a key pivot, or 'parallaxed' shift in sense, that is parsed in παραλλάξασα (424), that is, παρ-αλλάσσω.<sup>123</sup> What *is* cedes to what *is* *subject to* transmutation.

Working backwards from the ὄνειρόφαντοι δόξαι, they follow immediately upon what is expressed of what has waned away in the blankness of the eyes of the *kolossoi*. According to the Empedoclean optics I argue are in play here, Menelaus' gaze is no longer being met with the gaze that would have flowed forth from Helen when she was still present. Thus, the images that the statues provoke in Menelaus are but vain semblances of Helen,<sup>124</sup> mere δόξαι. Helen is not there; she is not present *there-by*, πάρ-εστι, to be taken in hand. Rather, it is only the mere δόξαι of her that are any longer 'there'-by, πάρ-εισι (421), for what was once the sensate image, ὄψις, that he would have seen as issuing from the present object of his vision, Helen in her physical presence, is transformed, παρ-αλλάξασα, into the mere image itself, ὄψις, now detached from the physical object susceptible to waking visual perception and transformed into such as the mere images of illusory 'dream'-like experience, ὄνειρόφαντοι δόξαι, of the metaphorically darkening

<sup>122</sup> On the inert, lifeless and blind stone of the *kolossoi*, "which is visible but opaque and blind," see Vernant 2006: 329. The blindness to which Vernant refers takes on greater significance in light of the implications of Empedocles' optics at issue here. So, also Steiner: "The departure of Aphrodite from the *kolossoi* that momentarily beguile Menelaus signals the vacancy that lies within these seemingly living statues" (2001: 192).

<sup>123</sup> Although I depart from Devereux's conventional reading of the ὄνειρόφαντοι δόξαι as literal dreams, they do refer to "the constant re-evocation of what went before and anticipation of what is to come, [that] gives [these verses] a polyphonic quality" and to "doubles of various kinds." In addition to the lexical pairings, they add that "the narrative begins and ends with simulacra: with the eloped Helene's imprint on the bed and with the memory of her vanishing in dream" (1976: 65, 67, 70). Despite Vernant's keen sense for *oneiroi* as belonging to his list of doubles, he also reads them as literal dreams "that appear in sleep" (2006: 326).

<sup>124</sup> Regarding the question as to the specificity of the likeness to Helen of the *kolossoi*, see Stieber 1994: 105-107 who argues that we should imagine the statues as portraits of the Late Archaic Attic *kore* type.

world of ‘sleep’-unconsciousness within.<sup>125</sup> And deep, profoundly deep, is the sleep whence *The Oresteia* would wake us. So then the χάρις (417) of the *kolossoi* that are indubitably there-by physically with Menelaus and were heretofore vivified by Helen’s presence in Argos is now hated by him, just as is the χάριν (422) vane of the δόξαι (421), these ‘dream’-apparent *doxai*, ‘there’-by triggered by his *waking* experience of these *kolossoi*.

Menelaus is losing his grasp upon the world about him. We see this in the first words of the prophets’ speech, as we hear that it is possible to see him there, present physically, πάρεστι... ἰδεῖν (412, 13), albeit in the increasingly vitiated way expressed in whatever was the daggered content of 412-13 (with what seems most likely again an expression of the sigetic, † σιγὰς † at 412, in him being somehow struck dumb<sup>126</sup> and transfixed by his imaginative preoccupation with Helen).<sup>127</sup> Yes, Menelaus is still there-by, πάρ-εστι,<sup>128</sup> plain to see in the plain light of day, ἰδεῖν (413), yet *just* barely still there, as, in one of what are the multiply refracted implications of 414-15 which I will treat presently, he is nonetheless being reduced to a mere semblance of his former self, such that he will only seem, δόξει (415), to rule the house any longer. The gradual attrition of his grip on reality that wears away in the progressive aspect of δόξει, along with the indefinite tenor of the future tense as articulating the state of the unknown of the ‘*hypnos*’ to which he is succumbing, is such as will result finally in the transformation, παρ-αλλάσσω, of what were once memories grounded in renewed quotidian perceptions of Helen now waning away as δόξαι in(to) the empty eyes of the mere shells of her past presence in the *kolossoi*; memories now slipping away as what are but mere *dreamlike* semblances, ὄνειρόφαντοι δόξαι, now appearing in what was their place ‘there’-by, πάρ-εστι, until they no longer appear at all slipping away through the hands into the ‘*hypnos*’-trance within.

Yet if Aeschylus is not referring here to literal dreams, why does he construe the term ὄνειρόφαντοι to refer to waking, if obsessively transfixed and increasingly delusional, mental

<sup>125</sup> Devereux actually sees the absence of any direct reference to Menelaus’ sleeping as an issue to be addressed and even goes on to contrast the elaborated presentation of the sleeping behavior of the Erinyes: “*Menelaos’ sleeping behaviour* [Devereux’s emphasis] is not even alluded to.” I am not, however, persuaded of their suggested solution: “The simplest, and artistically most satisfying, hypothesis is that the poet advisedly left it to his audience to imagine what the dream-haunted Menelaos’ sleep was like” (ibid. 71), nor of the extremes to which Devereux’s psychoanalytic methodology tends in speculations on nocturnal emissions (ibid. n. 30) and many other particulars. Whatever the potential merits might be as a Freudian analysis of such dreams generally (and there is much room for skepticism here as regards antique psychology), Devereux’s intensive psychoanalytic treatment of what they interpret as dream content serves by unintended implication to alert us to the simple fact that there is actually *nothing* in this passage to suggest the illogical character of proper dream experience. I would argue that however untethered Menelaus’ entranced, obsessed state may be to the direct sense of experience of the *kolossoi* and the reality about him, there is, tellingly, nothing to suggest the outright hallucinatory character of actual dreaming.

<sup>126</sup> Fraenkel: “he is completely under the spell of silent stupefaction” (1950: 216).

<sup>127</sup> Devereux: “Menelaos’ self-isolation is also a *conditio sine qua non* of the deflection of his attention from tangible reality to Helene’s phantom, which, obviously, exists [depending on the meaning of “exists”- added] only in [and it depends on how we conceive “in”- added] his own mind... and, in the last resort, of a total loss of interest in—of a decathecting of—external reality” (1976: 69).

<sup>128</sup> I find it difficult to resist the notion that πάρ-εστι may be alluding to Menelaus’ existential status in addition to construing the impersonal πάρεστι ἰδεῖν, especially given that the infinitive is postponed by the daggered content, and that the construction is followed by what may be construed as a reference to his transmuting status in φάσμα δόξει (415) immediately following.

images? The question is in essence what other term he might have chosen for what we refer to as imagination, or *whether* there was, as yet, *any* such term. Or, as Vernant poses the question: “to what extent did the ancient Greeks recognize an order of reality corresponding to what we call image, imagination, and the world of the imaginary?” (1991: 164). The term that would seem to be the most likely candidate, φαντασία, is not attested prior to Plato<sup>129</sup> and only comes to more closely approximate our sense of the term “imagination” as a faculty of the psyche with Aristotle. Is it that Aeschylus coins ὄνειρόφαντοι for want of a better term for what would, as yet, have only been at best, if that, a vaguely conceived notion?<sup>130</sup>

The closest contemporary terms, φάσμα and φάσματα, are in play, the first of which near to hand in the φάσμα at 415. I mentioned the second of two instances of φάσματα in the trilogy, indeed in Aeschylus, at 274 above as referring to the possibility of false dream images, literal sleeping dreams, appearing to Clytemnestra. The first occurrence of φάσματα, however, is more complex. It comes in στρατόμαντις Calchas’ prophetic interpretation at 145 where he interprets the significance of the φάσματα of the portent. That Aeschylus employs this term, apparently quite rare in the day,<sup>131</sup> is quite significant in that, unlike the purely illusory φάσματα of dreams at 274, this instance is referring to Calchas’ *prophetic* vision arising from, and matched to the actual phenomena of the portent of eagles that appeared, φανέντες (116)—indeed, whose appearance in the register of ἰδεῖν is emphasized as “all-conspicuous,” παμπρέπτοις (117)—to all. So, as in my reading of Menelaus’ experience of the *kolossoi* giving rise to the ὄνειρόφαντοι δόξαι conveyed by the prophets of the palace, we have an actual visual perception triggering the experience of prophetic mental images—Calchas’ ‘vision’ of the sacrifice, as I argued in 1996/2001. And, as I indicated at the opening of the study, it is precisely this mode of emphasized visual perception, πρέπουσα, that also characterizes the appearance of Iphigeneia “as if in *graphais*” in the moment of the sacrifice: πρέπουσά θ’ ὡς ἐν γραφαῖς (243).

There is, however, a crucial difference between the two prophetic modalities. In both, the mental images are spurred by external phenomena susceptible to the sense perception of vision. The mental images augured by the portent that Calchas then articulates as his prophecy are understood as sent from the beyond of the divine realm of the gods and are then superimposed *from without*, in public, upon what is seen; in Menelaus’ case, the mental images that arise from his sense perception of the *kolossoi* give rise to the mental images that only the prophets from *within* the private sphere of the house can explain as *arising and passing away in-wardly*. These images are not superimposed upon the experience of sense, but rather *detach* from the experience of sense, and—and this is crucial in recognizing the novelty of Aeschylus’ conceptions and Empedocles’ relevance—there are now understood to be actual pathways within the mind, the *keleuthoi*, along with metaphorical hands grasping *in-wardly* therein. Calchas’ visions come

<sup>129</sup> See Bundy 1927, Watson 1988, Cocking 2005, and especially Vernant’s focus on φαντασία in Plato’s *Sophist* 1991: 164-185 as also Steiner’s 2001: 63ff.

<sup>130</sup> Indeed, even still as late as at *Republic* 476c5-8, we find evidence for the lack of a specific term: “Isn’t dreaming, whether in sleep or in waking [ἐάντε ἐν ὕπνῳ τις ἐάντ’ ἐγρηγορώς, emphasis added], just this: to take what is similar to something not to be a likeness but to be the thing itself which it resembles?”

<sup>131</sup> The only other clear attestation comes at Pindar’s *Olympian* 8.43.

from the beyond, fluttering down from on high on the winged words of the *augury*, the ὄρνις (113), and are communicated in the epic, dactylic mode of *stratomantic* recitation (126-138) giving rise to mental images as experienced *outside* oneself collectively such as are the images of epic performance generated and experienced in public Muse-inspired recitations, while at once *mimicked*, mocked even, on stage in the chorus' jaded strophic introduction (122-25; 156-59) and conclusion, τοῖς δ' ὁμόφωνον (158); what is disclosed of Menelaus' private, personal experience is expressed in the lyric prophetic mode of the prophets of the private sphere within the house, the ὄψις<sup>132</sup> fluttering away *in-wardly* on the winged pathways, πτεροῖς... κελεύθοις (426), and then framed out in the mimetic form of the chorus' dramatic performance *epistrophically*.

In the moment of the sacrifice, Iphigeneia “is all-apparent as if in a painting,” πρέπουσά θ' ὡς ἐν γραφαῖς (243), and then the host is blinded, “what happened next they did not see,” τὰ δ' ἔνθεν οὐτ' εἶδον (248). This ‘painting’, this graphic-image, appears as the mental image directly taken from the visual perception, the last image in the stream of perceptions, *arrested* and *recorded* upon the *phrenes* of the sacrificers. As the flow of perceived visual experience is arrested in the blinding of martial trance, this last ‘*graphie*’ is isolated *qua* mental image. In being arrested, transfixed, for a moment, it is exposed as an untethered mental image before it is nonetheless lost to them in the blinding loss of their fully waking disposition in trance. They see Iphigeneia straining at the bit; they see the *graphie*; then, they see nothing. In the moment that the image is isolated for them *qua* mental image the disposition required to sustain this experience of it *subjectively* is lost. Thus, we may provisionally answer Vernant's question in the negative as regards this diegetic mythic content, for they could not take possession of this image. We could say that they could not *grasp* it, that the ‘*graphie*’ of Iphigeneia proved just as elusive of their grasp as were the ὀνειρόφαντοι δόξαι of Helen as they “slipped through the metaphorical hands,” παραλλάξασα διὰ χερῶν (424-25), of Menelaus' mental experience, passing away *subjectively*, *inwardly* on the “winged pathways to unconsciousness,” πτεροῖς... ὕπνου κελεύθοις (426).

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<sup>132</sup> With all due respect, indeed veneration, I must point out that Vernant's misconception of the *oneirophantoi* as dream images that appear in sleep in a comparably mysterious manner as Calchas' prophetic vision of the ὄρνις from the divine beyond is determined by his failure to distinguish between Aeschylus' novel conception of the inward movement of the ὄψις and an atavistic bias (as is common of the age-old misconceptions of Aeschylus generally) to read for the archaic modality of the *eidolon*. This bias is evident in his misattributing of the dynamics of the *opsis* as if of “*eidola d'Hélène*” (1990: 42). The term *eidolon* occurs only once in the play in Agamemnon's quite vacuous speech when he refers in exceedingly nebulous terms to an “image of a shade,” εἶδωλον σκιᾶς (886). What could be emptier? Indeed, I would venture to say that the playwright is standing Agamemnon up as but the vacuous shell of the archaic warrior—as, incidentally, I have argued Homer had already too—‘propping up’ an empty icon utterly devoid of any of the interiority that he is inaugurating in all that he has unfolded through the dynamic of Helen's *opsis*. Indeed, I suggest that we should think rather of *Agamemnon*, the living man(/actor), as reduced to a mere *eidolon*—a mere bygone iconic relic—as he is experienced by the chorus (and the auditor-spectators vicariously), once he has passed into the palace at the opening of the second stasimon as I will discuss below.

We must not overlook, however, that Aeschylus seizes upon the simile of the mimetic *graphie*<sup>133</sup> to figure for his audience in 458, and for history, what I presume to contend is not merely a *representation* of the first moments of the seizing of the conscious experience of mental images but what looks to effect, in fact, the very instantiation of such in human experience,<sup>134</sup> the very invocation of self-possessed inward psychological experience, or at least *inwardly* oriented *intimations* of such. Aeschylus employs the dramatic spectacle, tragedy, as a mimetic instrument to reconfigure the disposition of his spectators' experience in the performance. For we must successfully reconstitute in *our* imagination all that is entailed not solely in the diegetic register of the drama, but as well what it configures for the experience of the auditor-spectator, that is, how Aeschylus situates them. We must imagine the dramatic presentation of the sacrifice of Iphigeneia as constituting a metamorphosis of sacrificial ritual, a discharging of the hypnotic thrall of the symbolic order. As the Athenian audience hears the chorus' account of the portent of eagles, of the 'trusted', duplicitous στρατόμαντις Calchas' prophetic interpretation of the eagle portent, of the stilling of the winds and Agamemnon's bitter decision, as the diegesis leads them forward in their as yet unreflective experience of *the train of their own mental images*, they are drawn themselves into the thrall of sacrifice, progressively prone to losing their awareness of the fact that what they are experiencing is solely a function of the mental images to which they are as yet unconscious and that are produced by the mimesis of Aeschylus' dramatic artistry. Indeed, the audience-spectators are all led to the moment of the sacrifice as if they too were there at Aulis, members of the assembled host. They are unreflectively identifying with the host, with "them" in the third person plural, such that when the chorus describes Iphigeneia as if in *graphais*, they see that mental image, and they see it as fixed as is the static image in paintings, *graphais*; as fixed as is an indelibly recorded memory in *graphais*,<sup>135</sup> writing.<sup>136</sup> But then, when

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<sup>133</sup> In Plato's *Sophist*, the Eleatic Stranger asks whether painting is not such an art as produces "as it were a man-made dream for the waking," οἷον ὄναρ ἀνθρώπινον ἐγρηγορόσιν ἀπειργασμένην (*Soph.* 266c).

<sup>134</sup> I am not asserting that this historical development happened for all the members of Athenian society in this one instance, but rather that the gathering circumstances of the day allowed for Aeschylus to bring the advent of this novel conformation of experience to this fully realized formal and reflective expression thus to fix it herein and record it in the historical record.

<sup>135</sup> It seems Aeschylus chooses the plural to accommodate the two senses of the term.

<sup>136</sup> Even more thoroughly apposite to Aeschylus' figuration of the *graphais*, indeed so much so in including the element of the *graphais* in the sense of writing such as subtended Aeschylus' figure of the painting in the reference to his own written text in *graphais*, as I argued at 2001: 87-89, is Plato's discussion of the formation of mental images in the *Philebus*:

SOCRATES: It seems to me that at such times our soul at such times is like a book.

PROTARCHUS: How so?

SOCRATES: It appears to me that the conjunction of memory with sensations, together with the feelings consequent upon memory and sensation, may be said as it were to write words in our souls. And when this experience writes what is true, the result is that true opinion and true assertions spring up in us, while what is false we get the opposite sort of opinions and assertions.

PROTARCHUS: That certainly seems to me right, and I approve of the way you put it.

SOCRATES: Then please give your approval to the presence of a second artist in our souls at such a time.

PROTARCHUS: Who is that?

the chorus says that “they did not see” what happened in the actual moment of the sacrifice, so also do the auditor-spectators for just a moment experience, imagine vicariously, the blinding of the host: τὰ δ’ ἔνθεν οὐτ’ εἶδον (248). By dint of the mimetic dramatic thrall, they experience themselves unreflectively as enthralled participants in the sacrifice, and then as blinded by it. But then, just a moment later, *hearing* οὐτ’ ἐννέπω, “I do not say,” and realizing now again that they are seeing of course only the chorus presently on stage, they now retroactively assign the first person singular as superimposed on their prior imagined experience, “what happened next I did not see (then), and I do not say (now),” τὰ δ’ ἔνθεν οὐτ’ εἶδον οὐτ’ ἐννέπω (248). Having just experienced themselves, unreflectively, that is, *imagined* themselves, as enthralled participants, they are now thrown back in reflection on the apotropaic taboo of the chorus’ denial of having seen the sacrifice. This mimetic *mechane* thus provides the individual auditor-spectator the opportunity to throw back in self-reflection in the vicarious first person experience of οὐτ’ εἶδον, to reflect upon his predisposition to succumb to the mass psychology of the thrall, while also retaining *in his imagination* the vivid *image*, the fixed, untethered, *graphe*. “No, [I]<sup>137</sup> did not experience the sacrifice, [I] did not see it; [I] *only* imagined it as [I]<sup>138</sup> am sitting here in the theater,” sitting here as an individual in the *theatron*, the place of seeing and mimetically constructed self-reflection, with the prospect now of being constituted as a viable individual citizen of a democracy, prepared to relate vicariously, come the *Eumenides*, with the jurors in the Areopagus.

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SOCRATES: A painter [ζωγράφον], who comes after the writer and paints in the soul pictures of these assertions we make. [εἰκόνας ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ τούτων γράφει]. (*Phil.* 38e-39b)

Indeed, we may go so far as to wonder whether Plato may even have had Aeschylus somehow in mind here, while noting, however, that it seems Plato reverses the sequence of the ‘painting’ and ‘writing’ of Aeschylus’ mimesis of the sacrifice: in *The Agamemnon*, the experience of the ‘*graphais*’ as ‘painting’ *precedes* the formation of a reflective conception, the ‘*graphais*’ as ‘writing’, of what has been experienced. Plato’s historically consequent reversal marks how fundamental is Aeschylus’ reconfiguration of experience in this moment and how significant the role it plays in the historical progression of the constitution of the subject. And so, although Plato relegates all that pertains in *phantasia* to the register of mimetic semblance as opposed to being, and turns his attention away from the subject of the experience of the *mimetic* phenomena including mental images, we nonetheless see how what Aeschylus figures of the fixing of the *graphe* has worked its way more fundamentally into Plato’s conception of the formation of sense perception *and* mental images. It would be folly, moreover, to cling to an atavistic fetishization of oral performance in doubting that Aeschylus fully intended for *The Oresteia* to be read.

<sup>137</sup> I bracket the pronoun to indicate that a superimposition of our modern subjective experience of self must not be allowed to obscure the peculiarly charged disposition of the fifth-century auditor-spectator. Moreover, I do also intend the bracketed pronoun to capture in a placeholding capacity the filiation of whatever may be made available to our experience of the disposition of that [I] and what becomes of the “I” consequentially in history. For another instance of the [I] comparably bracketed, see my treatment of the as yet undetected first instance of the pronoun that heads the modernist masterwork *Blood Meridian* as its first word in my forthcoming *Blood Confessional: Cormac McCarthy’s Bildungsroman of the Misbegotten Child*.

<sup>138</sup> I will drop the cumbersome contrivance going forward, but similar instances of the pronouns “I” and “my” to follow should be understood as also thus bracketed.

And prepared, as the auditor-spectator, as the drama progresses to the first stasimon, I fall back deeper into the *doxic* register of the images in-wardly directed in Menelaus' proto-*imagination* while poised to experience myself forming in *my mind* these images as waking dreamlike illusions, to more fully appreciate such as the stupor Menelaus had slipped into as the *images* were slipping away, παραλλάξασα, through the grasp of his metaphorical hands; meanwhile, at once, Helen's *opsis* arises untethered to unleash the untoward events of the Trojan debacle. Having been ungrounded by what I experienced of the impact of Aeschylus' mimesis of the sacrifice, I am now tasked with negotiating Menelaus' psychic dissolution under the sway of the untethered φάσμα, of the whirling ambiguities and images, imaginations of Menelaus pining away in the palace, of the preparation of the warriors and arms, of the whirling launch of the winged armada, the hands to oars, the dactylic beat of the drum, the grind of war, the urns of ashes...

And, come the third stasimon, prepared now to see a mimetic representation of *myself* vicariously in the perplexity, in the swoon, of the chorus who have, along with me, just seen 'metic' victor Agamemnon *apparently* home safely pass into the palace, as performed by actor/'Agamemnon' visibly on stage now. The character standing on stage in the person of the actor constitutes the mimetic core peculiar to the dramatic form. The empty core of *eidolon*-icon-Agamemnon. The third stasimon, 975ff., opens with the chorus perplexed at the "fixed fear fluttering before their prophetic heart"—their heart that literally sees wonders, τέρας—ἐμπέδως δεῖμα προστατήριον καρδίας τερασκόπου ποτᾶται, as they are subject to the "prophesying of the unbid, unpaid song," μαντιπολεῖ δ' ἀκέλευστος<sup>139</sup> ἄμισθος αἰοιδά. At this point the chorus returns to dreams, "dreams difficult to interpret," δυσκρίτων ὄνειράτων (981), as a figure—albeit tentatively negated—for what they are experiencing, yet having difficulty believing, in the present moment. They are in essence saying that what they are actually seeing, with their prophetic, τερασκόπος, *imagination*, cannot be dismissed as merely inscrutable dreams, that a "persuasive confidence seated on the inward throne of their mind," θάρσος εὐπειθὲς ἴζει φρενὸς φίλον θρόνον (982-83), cannot "spit out [their fear] in the manner of mere inscrutable dreams," οὐδ' ἀποπτύσαι δίκαν δυσκρίτων ὄνειράτων (980-81). That the notion that what they are experiencing *inwardly*, *in*, or at least before, their heart, as based on what they are actually seeing, that is, experiencing fully conscious, while fully waking, might be compared to dreams, or might be mistaken for mere dream-like waking imagination, affirms, indeed parses, the contention that the ὄνειρόφαντοι δόξαι in Menelaus' case were referring to dream-like waking experience.<sup>140</sup> Moreover, unlike the chorus' waking experience of Agamemnon before me on

<sup>139</sup> With no doubt something of a folk etymological ring of the κελεύθους that 'parallaxed' the psychic and physical registers at 426, and just rang out again in Clytemnestra's reference to the path of tapestries 65 lines prior at 909. For the etymology of κέλευθος, Chaintraine says, "On pense à κελύω," before going on to review the inconclusive arguments for the connection.

<sup>140</sup> That Menelaus' ὄνειρόφαντοι δόξαι spurred by the *kolossoi* serve to prepare the spectator for the chorus' description of their experience of Agamemnon/actor in terms of such a waking dream aligns with Steiner's comment on the relationship between drama and sculpture: "For the dramatists of the fifth-century Athens, the statue that seemingly replicates, and even substitutes for, a living reality can supply a model for the several responses that figures onstage similarly generate" (2001: 44).

stage, Menelaus' experience is triggered not by Helen in person, but rather the simulacra present to his experience in her absence. In other words, although the fear they are experiencing is only available to the prophetic vision of their heart, it cannot be dismissed as being such as were the mere untethered images of the *ὄνειρόφαντοι δόξαι* appearing to Menelaus' proto-imagination.<sup>141</sup> No, for in the antistrophe the chorus states definitively, enacting at once my experience as auditor-spectator: “I have been persuaded by my own eyes of the *nostos*,” *πεύθομαι δ' ἀπ' ὀμμάτων νόστον* (987-88); “I am myself [αὐτό-] the witness,” *αὐτόμαρτυς ὄν* (988).

I am persuaded, I am the witness, state the plural chorus invoking again the individual experience of the spectator-auditor in the theater. [I] too as spectator-auditor, witness Agamemnon on stage—or rather the mimetic performance of character Agamemnon by the masked actor; [I] too am *susceptible* to seeing Agamemnon present there—or at least of having been *persuaded* of such by the mimetic performance of his character on stage. As spectator-auditor now in the *illo tempore* of the mythic past in the diegetic register, [I] experience vicariously the chorus, speaking in the first person, describing how they feel prone to mistake for but a waking-dream what they actually saw as if merely *seeming* to be an illusion of Agamemnon, haunted by his having actually been present thereby only thence to disappear from the chorus' and my view; as spectator-auditor now in the present moment in the theater, I experience the confluence of what, in the mimetic register, I am at once enabled to reflect upon, myself, individually, of my dawning awareness of the *actual* illusion produced by the artistry of the dramatic presentation.

However, the situation is more complex still. For the problem of the plural chorus speaking in the first-person singular must be accounted for. What is the effect for the spectator-auditor, auditor-spectator, hearing, seeing, the chorus' performance of their haunted, yet only seemingly illusory experience? Would not the plural chorus speaking in unison of their own putatively individual self-same experience—putatively both for their speaking in the plural and for them as actors merely enacting their 'experience' on stage—as (a) present, putatively self-same witness(es), *αὐτόμαρτυς ὄν*, be the perfect mimetic representation of the audito-spectators as putatively individual—[I]<sup>142</sup>—there together collectively in the *theatron*? The intimacy of this

<sup>141</sup> The corruption of 984-85 is frustrating, especially as it looks to my eye as if some more or less implicit reference to the logic of the *symbolon* is in play in *ξυνεμβολαίς*, or some form of *ἐμβολή*, along with the suggestion that the debt Agamemnon took out in the sacrifice is now “coming due,” *χρόνος... παρήβησεν* (984-86).

<sup>142</sup> We find a physically fixed form of this experience as an individual [I] comparably multiplied, and thus suspended, in the experience of the graphic epitaphs on archaic *semata* gravestones that invite the mourner reading the epitaph to read themselves into the first-person form of *oiktiro*, *οικτιρῶ*, “[I] feel pity for,” as discussed by Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 174-79. We may imagine the implications of the suspension, or bracketing, of the [I] that at once invokes one's invested sense of themselves in the depth of their grief for the absent dead, but also an experience of being anonymized as but one of the multiplicity of those whose experience was similarly invoked as [I], none of whom are any longer present there, indeed many of whom may be as dead and gone as the absent one for whom the *sema* has been erected. That Aeschylus may well have this lived experience in mind seems to be reflected in the occurrence of the same term for pity in the reference to the blinding “piteous missile,” *βέλει φιλοίκτη* (241-42), that effected, first, the annihilation of the sacrificers, “them/[I],” *οὔτ' εἶδον* (248), then, to be immediately superseded by the formation of the suspended experience of the [I] as spectator in the *theatron*. The effect of this moment in Aeschylus' performed text is all the more apposite to the epithets when considered in the

proto-soliloquy (-poliloquy) draws the auditor-spectator(s) at once inwardly into the haunted diegetic seemingly illusory identification, and out to the awakened actual mimetico-illusory identification with the plural chorus. In contrast to what the chorus/spectator(s) see outwardly, Agamemnon<sup>143</sup>/actor<sup>144</sup> physically onstage,<sup>145</sup> the chorus convey in their song what is experienced *inwardly*. The unpaid strain, ἄμισθος ἀοιδά, is unbidden, ἀκέλευστος; the seeming waking dreamlike experience cannot be rooted out from their/our/[my] heart; the *threnon* of the Erinyes wells up self-taught from within their/our/[my] own self, their/our/[my] *thumos*, θρηῖνον Ἐρινύος αὐτοδίδακτος ἔσωθεν θυμός. But, in as much as the means have been construed whereby I, auditor-spectator, experience this vicariously, I at once identify as what I hear in the first-person singulars as invoking my own individual experience while I also recognize that, just as is the case with the plural chorus on stage, [I] am among my fellow citizens in the *theatron* at once also each themselves engaged with, and participating collectively in, the waking dreamlike illusion of this mimetico-dionysiac thrall: drama.

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register of the written *graphe* of the text. See my treatment of Aeschylus' self-conscious "grammaticity" (2001: 87-89) in this moment and my citation of Moreau for a key precedent for such in the *Seven*. For a different reading of the "optics" of these epithets, see Steiner 2001: 156.

<sup>143</sup> Again, recalling my discussion of Vernant's reference to "*eidola* d'Hélène" at pg. 42 n. 132 above, I suggest that we might imagine Agamemnon as appearing by this point as but an archaic *eidolon*-icon relic, such as the utterly eviscerated εἰδῶλον σκιᾶς, "image of a shadow," Aeschylus had him reference at 839.

<sup>144</sup> And, as we experience *eidolon*-Agamemnon, so too are we sensitized to the *eidolon* produced in our imagination by the iconic mask the actor wears with an attention akin to what it seems Aeschylus had developed in his *Theoroi Ishtmiastai* of the comic satyrs' experience of what they refer to as the *eidolon* of the iconic mask which I would suggest they *ironically* describe—are they too speaking as a plural chorus in first person singular?—as full of their own form, εἰδῶλον... ἐμῇ μορφῇ πλέον (P. Oxy. 2162, fr. 78a 6-21 Radt: 6). What exactly *would* a satyr be filled with? Some Dionysiac plenum? How much could a mask be filled with? Would we have expected, prior to 458, to find therein such as Alcibiades sought within the Silenus icon of Socrates-Marsyas?

<sup>145</sup> At the risk of further distraction in this complex moment, I highly recommend a careful reading of Steiner's fascinating treatment of the *Theoroi* fragment at 2001: 44ff.:

But the satyrs may also be commenting on their audience's behavior in more immediate fashion, and their own efforts to determine the relations between the *techne* and semblance of *phusis* inhabiting the image resemble those in which the theatergoers are simultaneously engaged. The best way to make sense of portable, satyric-faced images endowed with a high degree of likeness to their bearers is to understand them as identical to the theatrical masks that the chorus members wear... worn by the chorus member, the open-mouthed mask serves not only as indicator of his identity as satyr—and recall how once an actor put on his mask, he effectively became one with the individual portrayed—but also as transmitter of his words, furnishing a "talking head" whose words and lifelike appearance combine to persuade the audience of the reality of what he sees. But detached from its bearer, and consequently stripped of voice, the mask's realism and verisimilitude are insufficient to make the satyr present: instead, the image stands exposed as no more than a secondary account, and chorus and audience alike can recognize the illusionism. (ibid. 47-48)

I see something akin to this exposure to the actual mimetic illusion in the spectator-auditor's split identification with the plural chorus in the third stasimon. What we glimpse of the *Theoroi* literalizes the dionysiac thrall of satyrs while discharging it in their vain buffoonery and the satirical lampooning of the mimetic illusion. In that we witness the satyrs faced with their own artful likenesses in the *Daedalic* masks, mimetic works of 'portraiture', we are given to ponder that what lies behind the mask the 'satyr'/actors wear is just as vacant as the vacancy upon which they gaze, humorously, agape and at which their mothers would shudder! For the masks the satyrs are carrying are but the second-degree likeness of the likeness of the masks that conceal the irony of the absence of any putative dionysiac plenum when satyrs are *merely* represented in the public *polis*-theater, the realm of *techne*, as opposed to prancing about ithyphallic in mythic *phusis*.

Returning now to Vernant’s question regarding the fifth century experience of the image, we may turn to their treatment of the *kolossos* as falling under the rubric of “the psychological category of the double:”

A double is completely different from an image. It is not a “natural” object, nor is it simply a product of the mind. It is not an imitation of a real object, an illusion of the mind, or a creation of thought. For the person who sees it, the double is an external reality, but one whose peculiar character, in its very appearance, sets it in opposition to familiar objects and to the ordinary surroundings of life. It exists simultaneously on two contrasting planes: just when it shows itself to be present, it also reveals itself as not of this world and as belonging to some other, inaccessible sphere. (2006: 325)

Vernant offers a list of terms associated with the double, drawn first from the visitation of Patroclus’ *psyche* to Achilles at *Iliad* 23.59-107,<sup>146</sup> and then from Menelaus’s experience in the first stasimon that, in addition to *psyche* and *eidolon* from the epic, includes the relevant terms here—*pothos*, *charis*, *phasma*, and, yes, “the dream figures (*oneirophantoi*) that appear in sleep” (ibid. 326), or rather, *pace* Vernant, while awake. Missing from their list, however, is the *key* term, namely *opsis*, ὄψις (425). The omission is odd; perhaps Vernant was spooked a bit by its direct translation as “image” conceiving of it in the terms of our commonplace experience of visual images.

Yet, now to complete my treatment of the problem of the image and proto-imagination, I return precisely to reconsider the image, the *opsis*, in the sequence of events as opposed to their dramatic ordering. I reorder the sequence above starting now from the chronologically first moment in the first stasimon and turn my focus on the detached, double phenomenon of Helen’s *opsis*. We might compare Aeschylus’ use of *opsis* to the Homeric term for the waking experience of the visual double, the *eidolon*. What distinguishes the *opsis* of Helen from, say, the *eidolon* of Aeneas in *The Iliad*, depends upon what has been introduced in Empedocles’ optical theory, namely the theoretical conception of the *movement* of the visual phenomenon into and out from the eyes. We should imagine the *opsis* being *shorn* from Helen as she crosses through the physical threshold. The play of this *opsis* is thus newly conceived of as passing into, and then out from, a now more defined notion of proto-interiority figured in Menelaus’ psychic experience. No doubt this novel experience is essential to the fundamental transformation of the very notion of *psyche* from its Homeric conception as a mere phantom of the deceased to the seat of inward, individual psychic experience.<sup>147</sup>

<sup>146</sup> For my treatment of this moment specifically and the problem of *psyche* in general, see my forthcoming essay on *psyche*, *eidolon*, and *thumos* in Homer and Hesiod and my more in-depth treatment in my full length work in progress *Iliad ad Nihilum: Psyche, Conscience, Wonder*.

<sup>147</sup> Jablonski’s characterization of the Pythagorean *opsis* noted above at pgs, 34 n. 106 and 36 n. 116 may be presumed thus as essential to the Pythagoreans’ role in the redefinition of *psyche*. By 412, in Gorgias’ *Encomium to Helen*, we can hear this made explicit: διὰ δὲ τῆς ὄψεως ἡ ψυχὴ κὰν τοῖς τρόποις τυποῦται, “through the *opsis* the *psyche* is stamped within its inflections [τρόποις]” (15); οὕτως εἰκόνας τῶν ὀρωμένων πραγμάτων ἡ ὄψις ἐνέγραψεν ἐν τῷ φρονήματι, “thereby the *opsis* engraves, or writes [ἐνέγραψεν], in the mind images of things seen” (17).

The recovery of this understanding of Aeschylus' *opsis* is impossible without the admission of the doubly charged sense of *hypnos* signifying the lapse of waking consciousness at line 426. Without this expanded, metaphorical reading of *hypnos* we could neither discern the full construct of all that Aeschylus discloses of the specific dynamics of the image required for the advent of imagination, nor Aeschylus' grander vision of the process by which we all emerged from the grand thrall of the archaic order of the *symbolon*, the '*hypnos*' of myth, as the object of *The Oresteia* writ large. So too should we imagine the *graphe*, as that disposition of the detached *opsis* susceptible to being fixed and recorded, as shorn from Iphigeneia and excised from the stream of ongoing visual experience on the diegetic level of the sacrifice, and fixed in the imaginary experience of the auditor-spectators in its dramatic performance.

The play of the *opsis* 'in' Menelaus's psychic—and really we might only say as yet here something more like *psychish*—experience thus introduces the prospects of the sort of interiority required for the reflection that distinguishes what Aeschylus *constructs* for his auditor-spectators in their vicarious imaginary experience of the sacrifice from what is lost to the mythical sacrificers in Aulis for whom the interiority that would be required in order that the *graphe* could register *as* experience is lost in the *hypnos* of *ate*, the swirling martial trance of the armada setting out in winged ships. No, the sacrificers in Aulis were no more able to sustain the interiority necessary to take hold of the *graphe* than had been Menelaus able to seize the *opsis* in the metaphorical hands of his mental grasp. For, again, the movement of the *opsis* inward and outward *effaces* the very boundary of within and without through the node of  $\delta\acute{\iota}\alpha$  (407; 424). There is as yet no conception of an *hypokeimenon* underpinning the *psyche*. The world in which this physical boundary, again that boundary—or rather its dramatic simulacrum—in plain view to the auditor-spectators all the while on stage, that would serve as the tenor of the metaphor of the distinction of psychic interiority from the objective world without is dissolved in Aeschylus' *cosmophthoric* undoing of the ontology of Empedocles' sublime whirlpool.

Thus, we may reorder the three configurations of the image and imagination on a spectrum. First, on the diegetically abyssal end of the spectrum, is the *opsis* shorn from Helen and effacing the boundary of interiority/exteriority; Second, mediating the two ends of the spectrum, the *graphe* of the sacrifice is *recorded* diegetically *on* the *phrenes* of the sacrificers, as the *stigma* of the *symbolon* is written *upon* them in their oblivion of *ate*, while, on the level of the dramatic experience of the auditor-spectators, the shaking loose from the dionysiac thrall occasions the prospect of psychic interiority into which they, [I], may find ourselves falling back in reflection; Third, on the dramaturgically abyssal end of the *Gesamtwerk*, the auditor-spectator, [I], find myself, along with all of those around me in the *theatron*, as we all find ourselves represented in the perplexity to which the chorus is at risk of succumbing as they see a man, Agamemnon, reduced to what they cannot confidently imagine as anything *essentially* more than a waking dream before them. [I], along with those around me, we experience ourselves vicariously in the chorus as representing in what they strive to assure themselves is but a false experience of what seems but an illusion of a waking dream, what [I] must see as but an actual

illusion of actor ‘Agamemnon’ passing, however, through that same physico-mimetically staged boundary already effaced on the other end of the spectrum.

So, finally, the third stasimon, first antistrophe: the pitch of this experience—wherein encharged participation in the dionysiac collective alternates with, cycles with, prospects for individual experience of mimetically discharged imagination—at once draws the spectator most powerfully into, and separates him out from, all the registers of tragic mimesis, as “at once, what stirs within me [σπλάγγνα] is in no way mere delusion [οὔτοι ματάζει], while, at once, what is within me is in no longer deluded, as my heart cycles, κυκώμενον κέαρ, in the τελεσφόροις δίναις—we are all, at once, drawn into the all-destroying whirl, and [I]<sup>148</sup> am, at once, shaken loose in the all-consummating spin of the *Gesamtwerk*—bearing upon my self-possessed [πρὸς ἐνδίκους], my righted [ἐνδίκους], mind [φρεσὶν] (995-97). Δίκη<sup>149</sup> *ad* δίνην. Such is Aeschylus’ presentation of the first throes that attend the advent of the imagination.

## The Cosmo-Phthoric Whirlpool

Turning now into the whirlpool, the δίναις, and one last time to the first stasimon, we find that Aeschylus’ tragic usage of παραλλάξασα as linked with the preposition διὰ resonates with such in Empedocles in a couple places. First, in fragment B17, regarding the cycle of cosmic change:

Double is the birth of mortal things and double their failing [ἀπόλειψις; I prefer “waning away” or “death”]; for the one is brought to birth and destroyed by the coming together [σύνοδος; the notion of the ὁδός, “road,” rhymes with what we see below of the “pathways,” κελεύθοι] of things, the other is nurtured and flies apart as they grow apart again. And these things never cease their continual [διαμπερὲς] interchange [ἀλλάσσοντα], now through Love all coming together into one, now again each carried apart through Strife. So insofar as they learned to grow one from many, and again as the one grows apart grow the many, thus far do they come into being and have no stable life;

<sup>148</sup> The suspension of the dionysiac thrall in the disclosure of the illusion of its mimetic representation unfolds a heretofore unrecognized movement toward, and ungrounded underpinning of, Kierkegaard’s teleological suspension of the ethical. What could only as yet step onto the stage of history in the bracketed, suspended advent of the [I], discloses but the vortical abyss, the absence of the *ground* from which Kierkegaard’s movement of faith springs up. Subtending then the singularity of Abraham, Knight of Faith, is the bracketed [I] shaken loose from the dæmonic tyranny of the symbolic order in the suspension of the unmediated commandment of the pagan gods as divine sanction of the sacrifice and the ethical universal. The telos is at once drawn fully into itself and dissolved in the τελεσφόροις δίναις.

<sup>149</sup> The suspended disposition of the bracketed [I] should, moreover, be understood as problematically subtending the ‘founding’ effected in the decision in the Areopagus and the dubiousness of the citizen-jurors’ role therein.

but insofar as they never cease their interchange [δια-λλάσσοντα] continually, through and through [δια-μπερὲς], thus far they exist always changeless in the cycle. (*KRS* 287)

The interweaving of Love and Strife, Aphrodite and Ares, at once work the generation and destruction of all things in an unceasing, δια-μπερὲς, interchange of forms, ἀλλάσσοντα, arising and perishing. As individual beings, they have no stable life; yet seen from a sublime metaphysical vantage and in as much as they never cease their interchange, ἀλλάσσοντα, through and through, δια-λλάσσοντα, continually, δια-μπερὲς, thus far they exist changeless in the cycle. And we find these terms again, now adding in κέλευθος, in B35 (partial) in explicit connection with the whirlpool or vortex:

When Strife reached the lowest depth of the whirl [δίνης] and when Love comes to be in the middle of the vortex [στροφάλλιγι; from στροφήος (στρέφω)] there it is that all these things come together to be one only, not suddenly, but combining from different directions at will. And as they mingled countless tribes of mortal things poured forth; but many remained unmixed, alternating [ἐναλλάξ] with those that were being mixed—all those that Strife still held back from above, for it had not all retired blamelessly to the furthest limits of the circle, but in some of the limbs it remained while from others it had withdrawn. As much as it was always running ahead in escape, so much was it always pursued by a gentle immortal impulse of blameless Love. Then straightway those things grew mortal that before had learned to be immortal, and those that were unmixed before became mixed as they exchanged their paths [διαλλάξαντα κελύθους]. And as they mingled countless tribes of mortal things poured forth, fitted with forms [ιδέησιν] of all kinds, a wonder to behold. (*KRS* 296)

Empedocles' pathways, κελύθους,<sup>150</sup> name the byways of the generations of forms, ιδέησιν, that is, *visible* forms in the register of *idein*. As a result of the continual exchanges and transformations, ἐναλλάξ, διαλλάξαντα, unfolding in the cosmogonic whirlpool, discrete, visible forms roil up, breaking across the threshold of phenomenal appearance, a sublime wonder to behold.

In Aeschylus, “this pathway,” ἄδε κέλευθος (127), describing in Calchas' opening words metonymically the expedition that went off to vanquish Troy, that pathway-expedition that rowed on wings of oars, the comrades in arms rowing in martial trance, περοῖς ὀπαδοῦσ' ὕπνου κελύθοις (426), would return back finally to the pathway strewn with tapestries, κελύθου στρωννύναι πετάσμασιν (909), by she whose mind did not succumb to trance, φροντὶς οὐχ ὕπνω νικωμένη (912), to usher ‘*metic*’ Agamemnon back into the *domos*, ἀνδρὸς τελείου δῶμ' ἐπιστροφωμένου (972), “the man [*viz.* τὸν δ' ἐπίστροφον (397)] come to his end whirling over

<sup>150</sup> The term occurs in Empedocles elsewhere only at B115, in the *Katharmoi*, in association with another form of *allasso*, in describing the hard pathways of life exchanged from one incarnation to another, ἀργαλέας βιότου μεταλλάσσοντα κελύθους.

the house [ἐπιστροφωμένου],” the ground worn away as the literal rug is pulled out metaphorically—rather, *antiphorically*—from beneath him.

So now, reading out Aeschylus’ epistrophic poetics, the tragic sublimity of his vision draws us back down beneath the threshold of visible forms, back down the winged pathways, πτεροῖς κελεύθοις, “down the oar-blade track to non-appearance,” κατ’ ἴχνος ἄφαντον (695), into the *doxic* register of Helen’s *phasma*:

πόθῳ δ’ ὑπερποντίας  
 φάσμα δόξει δόμων ἀνάσσειν.  
 εὐμόρφων δὲ κολοσσῶν  
 ἔχθεται χάρις ἀνδρί:  
 ὀμμάτων δ’ ἐν ἀχηνίαις  
 ἔρρει πᾶσ’ Ἀφροδίτα. (415-19)

As the gaze collapses; as Menelaus now comes to hate the grace, χάρις, of his past exchange of erotic glances with Helen, those glances that once held up in his imagination as his gaze fell upon the beautiful stone statues of her, animated by, and amplifying her living presence in Argos; the beguiling χάρις of the statues, εὐμόρφων κολοσσῶν, all the more beguiling now in her absence; as all Aphrodite wanes in the blankness of the stone eyes, ὀμμάτων δ’ ἐν ἀχηνίαις, reduced to nothing but the blankly, plainly, visible shell of dumb matter; thus does the *phasma* appear, φάσμα δόξει.

Because of his longing for she who is over the sea, Menelaus, dumbstruck in sublime silence, σιγᾶς (412), will seem reduced to a mere phantom, φάσμα δόξει, ruling the house; thus reduced to a mere phantom of his former self, φάσμα, Menelaus will seem, will progressively *only* seem, δόξει, to rule; only seem to rule as, in fact, by dint of the collapse of the glances he exchanged with Helen, and that were supported in his living memory of she who is now over the sea, fade away as if mere ‘dream’ images, ὄνειρόφαντοι δόξαι (420-21), down the winged pathways, πτεροῖς κελεύθοις (426), of the oblivious nihility within; progressively, a *phasma* of she who is over, ὑπερ-, the sea, the baleful hypostasized *opsis* of she who is gone over the sea; or, progressively, as the world itself is worn away with the τρίβῳ τε καὶ προσβολαῖς (391), now awful-gleaming, αἰνολαμπές (389), fixed black, μελαμπαγής (392), beneath, whirling, ἐπίστροφος, above, ὑπερ-, the sea, driving the wings of ships below, a *phasma will appear, appear*, in the awful-gleaming *doxic* register, to rule. The *opsis*, the *phasma*, will appear, will *arrive*, will manifest, to rule;<sup>151</sup> as the boundary that upholds the world had collapsed in the ‘parallax’ of the quintessentially tragic moment of non-eternal timelessness, οὐ μεθύτερον, that non-eternal timelessness in which all that would arise in *genesis* falls back into bearing undone, -φερ-, into the dowry of destruction, ἀντίφερνον φθορὰν, of Aeschylus’ cosmo-*phthoric* whirlpool of Ares and Aphrodite; that δίνη that draws Agamemnon and his host, as well as the

<sup>151</sup> And we also mustn’t forget that *phasma* too, the ὑπερόποιον παραβᾶσιν Ἐρινόν (59), of wife and mother waiting all the while. Others have heard an allusion to Clytemnestra here as well: Steiner 1995: 178 n. 16.

chorus and by extension the auditor-spectators vicariously, into its destroying vortex, τελεσφόρ-  
αις δίναις (996); collapsing into that whirl around the vortex of the constitutively *atopos pothos*,  
πόθω δ' (415), undoing place, undoing *domos*, while also emptying the wives' *domoi* of warriors  
exchanged for urns of ashes by gold-changer-of-bodies-Ares, χρυσαμοιβὸς δ' Ἄρης σωμάτων  
(438). For the locative force of these houses *into which* these urns are returned, δόμω 'ν, in the  
antistrophe, is cast back not a moment later, οὐ μεθύστερον, rhetorically onto, and thus  
ontologically into, that *atopos*, nowhere place in that non-now-nor-ever-time-οὐ-μεθύστερον-  
moment, in a collapsing retrograde respension of δόμω 'ν back 'into' πόθω δ'.

#### Antistrophe (431)

δόμω 'ν ἐκάστου  
Into the house of each...

#### Strophe (414)

Πόθω δ' ὑπερποντίας  
'into' the Longing for she who is over the sea

Thus, to Empedocles' question—as he propounded the harmonious, Ἀρμονίης, fully-  
fitted Eleatic ontology of his sphere, Σφαῖρος (B27), everywhere equal unto itself (B29) under  
the unifying force of Love—asking *whence*, πόθεν, could arise nothing, τοῦ παντὸς δ' οὐδὲν  
κενεόν· πόθεν οὖν τί κ' ἐπέλθοι; (B14), as “from All there is no void; for whence could it  
arise?,”<sup>152</sup> Aeschylus responds, but not in the terms of *whence*, πόθεν, nothing might arise, but  
rather by locating the *atopos* ‘place’ *whither* all passes out, withering away in the hypostasized  
vortex of the nihility of erotic longing: Πόθω.<sup>153</sup>

<sup>152</sup>With respect to the question of Eleatic, Parmenidean influence on Empedocles' rejection of origination from, and  
destruction to nothing, Cleve references the pseudo-Aristotelian *De Melisso Xenophane Gorgia*:

But similarly also Empedocles (sc., just as Anaxagoras) says that “the moved with each other” (*i.e.*, the  
universe moved in itself) are always in motion uninterruptedly all the time throughout, and that yet there is  
nothing empty [<κενὸν>].... For what hinders that things move toward each other and at the same time  
immediately transpose themselves by anything regrouping itself into something else, this, in turn, into  
something different, and this back again into the first all the time?

Also, more importantly for Aeschylus' response to Empedocles, Cleve cites Plutarch's rejection of, “that old  
misinterpretation” that Empedocles “does not do away with origination, but with origination from not-being, nor  
with destruction [φθορὰν], but with complete destruction, that is: such destruction as would annihilate (things) into  
the not-being” (1969: 330-331), that complete destruction of φθορὰν.

<sup>153</sup>It was this discovery of what I see as the epicenter of the *Agamemnon* that led me back to investigate  
*pothos/pothe* in Homer. This investigation uncovered, much to my surprise, something of a skeleton key to what I  
have come to see as a late, mid-sixth century, Homer's wholesale ironic and veiled critique of the aristocratic ethos  
of the epic tradition he inherited. A hint of this can be gleaned from my 2022 essay on Euphorbus. A book length  
work-in-progress version of this project entitled *Iliad ad Nihilum: Psyche, Conscience, Wonder* will soon be  
available on Boston University Open Access. In that work, which is launched from Achilles' curse of *pothe* against  
Agamemnon and the Achaeans at 1.240, I read out Homer's wordplay on ποθή and πότε that unwinds in a number  
of instances across the epic on the syllabic, that is, sub-formular level *pace* Lord-school theory of oral composition.  
I see it as not in the least inconceivable that Aeschylus had Homer's use of ποθή in mind in composing a response of  
Πόθω to Empedocles' interrogative πόθεν.

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