

*The Ghost of Clytemnestra***Introduction: Clytemnestra's Reappearance and Ethical Appeals**

At the end of the *Choephoroi*, Orestes kills his mother, Clytemnestra, and displays her corpse to humans, gods, and the theatrical audience as proof of his just vengeance (*Cho.* 973–1006). In an eerie reversal at the start of the *Eumenides*, Clytemnestra reappears on stage, bearing the wounds of her murder, to demand vengeance against Orestes. Like the living queen, the Ghost of Clytemnestra marshals rhetoric to effect action in the world, rousing the sleeping Erinyes as her proxies by reciting a multitude of wrongs concerning her dishonor and suffering (*Eum.* 94–139). The Ghost thus extends Clytemnestra's character and claims beyond the presumed closure of her life.

Yet so much interferes with audience members, readers, and scholars heeding her arguments.¹ First is her identity, for the figure on stage is the afterlife remnant of the deceptive queen who turned on her husband, children, and state. Apollo himself had sanctioned taking vengeance on her. Audiences may be inclined to dismiss her claims as unworthy of consideration, for they belong to an irredeemably villainous character who has been condemned by an oracle and whose murder furnishes the plot of the *Choephoroi*.² By contrast, within the *Eumenides* her claims *are* treated seriously: The Erinyes take up Clytemnestra's demand for vengeance in their pursuit of Orestes. They subsume her position into their more general ethical imperative by insisting that retribution for kin-murder is a pillar of justice and that letting Orestes go unpunished

¹ The most influential analyses of Clytemnestra nearly ignore the Ghost and her particular issues, e.g. Winnington-Ingram (1948); Betensky (1978); Rabinowitz (1981); Vellacott (1984a); Goldhill (1984a); Neuburg (1991); McClure (1999); Foley (2001); and Vogel-Ehrensperger (2012). See now Schlatter (2018), 97–124, for a running commentary on chthonic issues in the scene; and Martin (2020), esp. 90–8.

² Clytemnestra loses the *agôn* with Orestes physically, and this, momentarily, seems proof of the triumph of his arguments (*Cho.* 894–930). See Foley (2001), 230–2.

threatens the order of mankind. As the *Eumenides* progresses, though, Clytemnestra's stage presence and arguments fade. Whereas Orestes remains on stage with his divine champion Apollo, the Ghost of Clytemnestra disappears. The Erinyes' universal arguments during Orestes' trial no longer resonate with Clytemnestra's personality or claims.³ When the Erinyes succumb to Athena's new justice, accept a place of honor in Athens, and release Orestes, they ignore the consequences for the very one who invoked them. No voice speaks for Clytemnestra.

Returning critical attention to the Ghost of Clytemnestra will demonstrate that dismissing her based on these two (contradictory) reasons misses the compelling ethical challenges she poses. The ominous, inventive Clytemnestra returns from the dead precisely to defy the quashing of individual claims based on a notion of the larger social order, even one that is divinely supported. Her Ghost's continuing demand for vengeance, moreover, extends the salience of ethical questions past the endpoint of life. She invokes her individual honor after death and hints at an underworld society, both notions that the political finale of the trilogy fails to address. This chapter picks up on previous human interactions with the underworld and examines how they extend to the claims of the dead themselves. Especially pertinent are the manifold provocations against normative values specific to the status and claims of the Ghost of Clytemnestra.⁴

A recurrent structure is necessary to dissect her fraught and thematically interconnected rhetoric. What is the Ghost's relation on the one hand to the living Clytemnestra and on the other to the afterlife from which she emerges?⁵ The first section comprises a close reading of the Ghost passage in order to uncover a set of linguistic and ideational problems in her speech. This provides a framework for further analysis in the following sections of the Ghost's self-reference and bodily representations, the rhetoric of her arguments, and her description of her disgraced afterlife. The last section focuses on the stakes of her claims within the scene, which the conclusion uses to elucidate the extraordinary challenges this early and unique ghostly figure poses to ethical thought.

³ Bacon (2001), 48–57; Winnington-Ingram (1948); and Vogel-Ehrensperger (2012), 309–27.

⁴ On normative ethical theory, normative values, and the general challenges that tragic characters pose to both, see the Introduction.

⁵ Vogel-Ehrensperger (2012), 308, puts this forth as a general, unanswered question: “Kann sie in diesem letzten Auftritt noch als menschliches Selbst beurteilt werden oder ist ihre Individualität als Lebende nun als tote Schattenfigur aufgehoben?”

The Rhetoric and Themes of the Ghost's Claims

The Ghost of Clytemnestra affects the living world through her language alone; she invokes demonic agents rather than herself attacking or haunting Orestes. The rhetorical claims she uses to activate the Erinyes must first be unpacked sequentially, since she reinforces them through repetition and shifts the meanings of her terms over the course of the speech (*Eum.* 94–103):

Κλυταιμήστρας Εἶδωλον

εὔδοιτ' ἄν, ὥη· καὶ καθευδουσῶν τί δεῖ;
 ἐγὼ δ' ὑφ' ὑμῶν ὧδ' ἀπητιμασμένη
 ἄλλοισιν ἐν νεκροῖσιν, ὧν μὲν ἔκτανον
 ὄνειδος ἐν φθιτοῖσιν οὐκ ἐκλείπεται,
 αἰσχρῶς δ' ἄλωμαι. προυννέπω δ' ὑμῖν ὅτι
 ἔχω μεγίστην αἰτίαν κείνων ὑπο.
 παθοῦσα δ' οὔτω δεινὰ πρὸς τῶν φιλότατων,
 οὐδεὶς ὑπέρ μου δαιμόνων μηνιέται,
 κατασφαγείσης πρὸς χερῶν μητροκτόνων.
 ὄρα δὲ πληγὰς τάσδε καρδίᾳ σέθεν

The *Eidōlon* of Clytemnestra

You would be asleep! Hey! And what use are you sleeping?
 I, thanks to you, having been dishonored thus
 among the other dead – the reproach of those I killed
 never ceases among the perished
 and shamefully I wander. And I proclaim to you that
 I am blamed the most by them.
 Having thus suffered appalling things at the hands
 of my nearest kin,
 not one of the divinities is wrathful on my behalf,
 although I have been slaughtered by matricidal hands.
 See these wounds in your heart!

Even from the first two words of the transmitted Greek text, an important issue ought to provoke scrutiny of Clytemnestra's status: It is uncertain how to name the figure on stage. Although scholars frequently refer to this character as “the Ghost of Clytemnestra,” the text does not. Of the available terms in Greek for soul, phantom, or dream, the primary medieval manuscript labels the character Κλυταιμήστρας Εἶδωλον, “the *image* (*eidōlon*) of Clytemnestra.”⁶ The term *eidōlon* is common in Homer, in

⁶ For the manuscript tradition, see the OCT, v–xii; and West (1990), 319–54. The manuscript stage directions refer to the Ghost of Darius in the *Persians* as an εἶδωλον as well, which may indicate a later

conjunction with other terms for the dead.⁷ It occurs, however, only three times in the text of Aeschylus, only once in the *Oresteia* (*Ag.* 839), and not at all in this scene.⁸ What then, is the proper term for this reappearance of Clytemnestra, instead of “image”? The ancient label (εἶδωλον, *eidōlon*) suggests the effectiveness of the dramatic delay before Clytemnestra announces that she is appearing in a dream (ὄναρ, *onar*) at verse 116. This is more than twenty verses after she begins speaking. Up until that point, the audience is necessarily unclear about her state: Is she a ghost able to act in the world? Is she a powerless image whose words will go unheeded? The cryptic beginning to the scene should not be ignored. Uncertainty at the start as to the status and power of the Ghost is a component of the scene’s aesthetic and the background for her polysemous rhetoric.

From her opening words and appearance among the snoring Erinyes, it is evident that the Ghost of Clytemnestra’s primary dramatic function is to wake them.⁹ The scene revolves around this function: She chastises them for sleeping (*Eum.* 94), continues her reproaches as they snore (118–39), and disappears forever when they awaken (140). The revenant Clytemnestra is, however, much more than a phantasmagoric alarm clock for the Erinyes. She activates them as her surrogates to chase and prosecute Orestes, since she appears to be powerless in the living world. Yet it is crucial to distinguish her from them, due to the claim sometimes made that she is an Erinys herself, or their master.¹⁰ This would overemphasize her supernatural status and assimilate her arguments to theirs.¹¹ Although she lets slip these “hounds of vengeance” (*Eum.* 129–32, cf. *Cho.* 924 and 1054), she does not control them, as is seen by their eventual renunciation of her cause. She is still the remnant of a human being.

convention. Since, however, εἶδωλον is not how the characters refer to these figures, it provides a textual starting point for examining the terminology actually used. Cf. Martin (2020), 128–9.

⁷ Vernant (1991), 186–8; see the Introduction.

⁸ Agamemnon uses *eidōlon* metaphorically (εἶδωλον σκιᾶς). The other Aeschylean uses are not decisive: one is attested in a fragmentary satyr play (TrGF 78a. 6). The other is at *Pr.* 568, where Io refers to either an image or a phantom of the dead Argos haunting her as a gadfly, although Sommerstein (2008c), following M. Schmidt, excises the phrase that includes εἶδωλον.

⁹ Whereas the precise staging of the character is unknown, the situation is clear. On Clytemnestra’s appearance and the debate over her staging, including whether she was staged at all, see Sommerstein (1989), ad 94–139, 103.

¹⁰ Clytemnestra’s Ghost is occasionally described *tout court* as an Erinys, as in Rabinowitz (1981), 170, or as their leader, as in Vogel-Ehrensperger (2012), 308; and Anderson (1932), 313–19.

¹¹ Clytemnestra in the *Ag.* stops just short of calling herself an Erinys, although she invokes Justice, Ruin, and the Erinys (Ερινύς, *Ag.* 1433) who was her helper, and later claims to herself be the “ancient, bitter avenging spirit” (ἀλάστωρ, *Ag.* 1501) of the house, a claim the Chorus dispute (*Ag.* 1505–8); see Foley (2001), 211–34; *contra* Neuburg (1991).

The humanity of the Ghost of Clytemnestra underlies several of her claims for vengeance. The first is her assertion of the Erinyes' transgression against her honor (*Eum.* 95–6): “I, thanks to you, having been dishonored (ἀπτητιμασμένη, *apētīmasmenē*) thus among the other dead.” The Ghost of Clytemnestra appropriates ideas of honor and dishonor from the living world and applies them to a general conglomeration of the dead (ἄλλοισιν ἐν νεκροῖσιν, “among the other dead,” 96; and ἐν φθιτοῖσιν, “among the perished,” 97). Within this group, she specifies that those she killed (ὧν . . . ἔκτανον, 96) maintain persistent and damaging accusations against her. She reinforces the notion of continuing social relationships by referring to blame (ὄνειδος, *oneidos*, 97; cf. ὄνειδεσιν, *oneidesin*, 135) and shame (αἰσχρῶς, *aiskhrōs*, 98). Nevertheless, she does not take responsibility for the causes of her dishonor but uses it to chastise the Erinyes. She continues to build up foundations for her – still unstated – claims with the allegation that none of the divinities care about a mother slain by her own child (102). Clytemnestra thus embeds her afterlife dishonor, shame, and blame within the framework of social and kinship bonds.

The connection with her previously living body enables the Ghost to focus attention on her wounds (πληγὰς τάσδε, 103) as marks of the crime against her. When rolled on stage in the previous play, her corpse might have been clothed in this same bloody costume (*Cho.* 973–1006).¹² In that case, the wounds would have represented the results of offstage violence. Their appearance on the incorporeal Ghost of Clytemnestra, however, now compels questions about their physical status: In what way, precisely, are these “wounds”? The phrase “see these wounds in your heart” (ὄρα δὲ πληγὰς τάσδε καρδίᾳ σέθεν, 103), moreover, exposes the problems that physical vision presents when applied to supernatural viewers and a spectral object. Does the Ghost intend for the Erinyes to see the wounds in their sleep, when they still seem unaware of her, or when awake? The Ghost's language and her liminal status involve issues of corporeality and spectatorship, which complicate the claim for vengeance that she derives from her wounds.

Whereas appealing to divinities to requite sacrifice is standard in Greek ritual, the Ghost of Clytemnestra incites the Erinyes to chase Orestes by a shaming procedure (*Eum.* 106–16):¹³

ἧ πολλὰ μὲν δὴ τῶν ἐμῶν ἐλείξατε,
 χοάς τ' αἰόινους, νηφάλια μιλίγματα,
 καὶ νυκτίσεμνα δεῖπν' ἐπ' ἔσχάρα πυρὸς

¹² On the staging of the corpses of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus, see Garvie (1986), lii–liii.

¹³ I exclude the deeply suspect verses, 104–5; cf. West (1990), ad loc. and Sommerstein (1989), ad loc.

ἔθουσιν, ὥραν οὐδενὸς κοινήν θεῶν·
καὶ πάντα ταῦτα λάξ ὀρω πατούμενα,
ὁ δ' ἐξαλύξας οἴχεται νεβροῦ δίκην,
καὶ ταῦτα κούφως ἐκ μέσων ἄρκυστάτων
ᾠρουσεν, ὑμῖν ἐγκατιλλώψας μέγα.
ἀκούσαθ' ὡς ἔλεξα τῆς ἐμῆς περὶ
ψυχῆς φρονήσατ', ὧ κατὰ χθονὸς θεαί·
ὄναρ γὰρ ὑμᾶς νῦν Κλυταιμῆστρα καλῶ.

Surely you have lapped up many things of mine indeed:
wineless drink offerings, sacred appeasements,
and night-holy meals over a hearth of fire
I sacrificed, at an hour shared by none of the gods.
And all these things I see trampled underfoot.
He has gone, escaped just as a fawn,
and what's more, lightly from the midst of nets,
he darted, greatly mocking you with squinting eyes.
Hear me, as I have spoken for my very
soul! Mind it, O underworld goddesses:
For in a dream, I, Clytemnestra, now call you!

The Ghost uses deliberately unsolemn vocabulary (ἐλείξατε, “you have lapped up,” 106; and λάξ . . . πατούμενα, “trampled underfoot,” 110) mixed with sacred language (νυκτίσεμνα “night-holy,” 108; ἔθουσιν, “I sacrificed,” 109). This verbally reproduces the Erinyes’ double nature, as both demons enforcing gruesome punishments (*Eum.* 70–2, 186–97, 385–8) and holy, ancient divinities (393–6). The sacrifices, chthonic in nature, ought to refer to those meant to ensure Clytemnestra’s vengeance against Agamemnon.¹⁴ Yet the Ghost of Clytemnestra now seems to regard her previous sacrifices as having created a general obligation for the Erinyes to support her, which she turns against her son. Their failure to fulfill their duty reemphasizes her earlier criticism of the shortfall in divine concern (101). This disrespect is evident in the Ghost’s accusation that the underworld goddesses themselves are trampling on sacred ritual (110). The metaphor reverses the previous instances of trampling in the trilogy, in which humans debased items belonging to the gods.¹⁵ Honor and dishonor are at stake as well in

¹⁴ The goddesses are underworld divinities (κατὰ χθονὸς θεαί, 115) and thus the sacrifices are at night, “at an hour shared by none of the gods” (108–9). On chthonic sacrifices and the Erinyes, see Scullion (1994), esp. 82. Compare Clytemnestra’s sacrificial language at *Ag.* 1384–98. Cf. Rynearson (2013), 10–11; and Zeitlin (1965), 474–83.

¹⁵ Agamemnon trod on the sacred fabrics (*Ag.* 904–74), and Cassandra stripped herself and trampled on the sacred robes that marked her as Apollo’s prophet (*Ag.* 1264–70); cf. Sider (1978), 15–17.

Orestes “mocking” the Erinyes (ὕμῖν ἐγκατιλλώψας μέγα, 113) and thus disrespecting Clytemnestra too.

The previous references to vision become a marked motif of the Ghost's speech in this passage. The uncommon verb for mocking (ἐγκατιλλώψας) combines squinting (ἰλλός) and seeing (ὄπ-) roots.¹⁶ It reinforces the unusual but only subtly marked sensory shift of seeing in one's heart (ὄρα . . . καρδίᾳ, *hora* . . . *kardia*, 103) and connects with the Ghost metaphorically seeing (ὄρω, *horō*, 110) her sacrifices trampled underfoot. This motif intensifies in the climactic verse 116, as the Ghost of Clytemnestra signals via the word ὄναρ that she herself knows she is in a dream of the Erinyes.¹⁷ “Dream” finally answers the question of how to label this iteration of Clytemnestra's stage character. It also opens the door to comparisons – within the *Oresteia* and other texts – between dreams, images, and ghosts.

Speaking for herself is vitally important for the Ghost of Clytemnestra, since her only advocates are temporarily incapacitated. It also differentiates her from other undead mentioned in the *Oresteia*. Characteristically, Clytemnestra's words become potent speech-acts. In the three verses that begin to disturb the Erinyes, she calls on them to listen (ἀκούσαθ', 114) and pay heed (φρονήσατ', 115), and emphasizes her own speaking (ἔλεξα, 114) and calling (καλῶ, 116). That she has spoken on behalf of her own *psukhē* (τῆς ἐμῆς περὶ ψυχῆς, 114–15) marks the stakes of her ethical claims, yet is also a deeply ambiguous reference: Is the *psukhē* her life, her image on stage, her disembodied soul in Hades, or a combination of these? Each possibility has different implications for the grounding of her claims and the consequences of completed vengeance for her continued existence.

Although presumably the audience could easily intuit the identity of the figure on stage through costume and her speech before verse 116, the Ghost of Clytemnestra's dramatic announcement of her own name (Κλυταιμῆστρα) builds on the status she held in life as a queen and the power she has exerted as the central manipulator in the first play and the object of vengeance in the second. Her high status, in turn, grounds the dishonor she claims to suffer in the afterlife (95). Clytemnestra's name couples with and reinforces her invocation of the Erinyes (ὕμας . . .

¹⁶ Sommerstein (1989), ad loc.; cf. Chantraine, s.v. and Beekes, s.v. on the ocular associations of ἰλλός in addition to the ὄπ- root (under ὄπωπα).

¹⁷ This is the adverbial use of ὄναρ, “in a dream,” (cf. *Eum.* 131) as Smyth (1926); the LSJ, s.v. 2.11; and Sommerstein (1989) translate. There are those who translate ὄναρ appositively, “as a dream” (cf. *Ag.* 82), e.g. Podlecki (1989). Cf. Goldhill (1984a), 215.

καλῶ, 116), in the final position in this speech, just before they begin to whine. But her self-naming moment foregrounds an ethical problem as well, that of continuity between her living character, the inanimate corpse on stage in the previous play, and her reanimated, speaking figure. The issue raised by the “I” who makes claims and its relation to the living or dead world is one that requires precise parsing.

As the previously silent Erinyes start moaning on stage – demonstrating already the efficacy of the Ghost’s language – she continues to urge them on (*Eum.* 117–28):

Χο. (μυγμός)

Κλ. μύζοιτ’ ἄν’ ἀνὴρ δ’ οἴχεται φεύγων πρόσω·
†φιλοῖς γὰρ εἰσιν οὐκ ἔμοῖς† προσίκτορες.¹⁸

Χο. (μυγμός)

Κλ. ἄγαν ὑπνώσσεις, κοῦ κατοικτίζεις πάθος·
φονεύς δ’ Ὀρέστης τῆσδε μητρός οἴχεται.

Χο. (ὠγμός)

Κλ. ὦζεις, ὑπνώσσεις· οὐκ ἀναστήση τάχος;
τί σοι πέπρωται πρᾶγμα πλὴν τεύχειν κακά;

Χο. (ὠγμός)

Κλ. ὕπνος πόνος τε κύριοι συνωμόται
δεινῆς δρακαίνης ἐξεκῆραναν μένος.

Chor. (*whine*)

Clyt. You would be snoring! But the man has gone, fleeing far;
[For suppliants are not dear to me.]

Chor. (*whine*)

Clyt. You are too drowsy, and you do not show compassion for suffering;
But Orestes, the murderer of this mother, has gone.

Chor. (*moan*)

Clyt. You moan, you drowse – will you not quickly get up?
What affairs have been assigned to you except to produce bad things?

Chor. (*moan*)

Clyt. Sleep and toil, powerful conspirators,
have drained the terrible serpent of wrath.

The Ghost attempts to invoke the Erinyes’ pity (κοῦ κατοικτίζεις πάθος, 121), a somewhat ironic move thanks to her nearly simultaneous appeal to their evil function (125). The pathos (πάθος, 121) she describes doubles her previous reference to suffering (παθοῦσα, 100), although it remains unspecified if this pain stems from the original betrayal by Agamemnon,

¹⁸ “Desperatus,” OCT.

being killed by Orestes, being hounded by the dead in the afterlife, or all three.¹⁹ She specifically emphasizes that Orestes murdered her as his mother (φονεύς . . . τῆσδε μητρός, *phoneus* . . . *tēside mētros*, 122), cycling back to her mention of “matricidal hands” (χερῶν μητροκτόνων, *kherōn mētroktonōn*, 102). The rhetorical recurrence to previous themes and language links the Ghost both to the living Clytemnestra’s incantatory rhetorical technique and to the Erinyes’ repetitively binding dance and obsessive harping on their dishonor.²⁰ The deictic in the phrase “this mother” (τῆσδε μητρός, *tēside mētros*, 122) also moves the frame of reference to her nondream self, since it refers to the biological mother that she was when living. Like the deictic in “these wounds” (πληγὰς τὰσδε, *plēgas tasde*, 103), it represents a facet of the vacillation of frames of reference between the presence of the one who was wronged and the absence inherent in her appearing in a dream and not having a biological body. Moreover, it continues the ethical problem surrounding Clytemnestra’s motherhood from the *Choephoroi*. What do the types of distance from the living world that Clytemnestra’s death, appearance in a dream, and continuing abdication of her ethical accountability as a mother do to her own language of presence and obligation?

Although she is decidedly human, many references within this speech yoke Clytemnestra thematically to the Erinyes. In the *Choephoroi*, Clytemnestra was bitten by a snake in her dream, standing for her son who returned from ostensible death (Chapter 5).²¹ In the *Eumenides*, Clytemnestra herself is the dream (116) and describes her avengers as a snake (δεινῆς δρακίνας, 128), tethering their chthonic state to her own.²² She urges them to perform their assigned duty (πέπρωται πράγμα . . . τεύχειν κακά, 125). The verbs do the work here, indicating that the Erinyes have a specific, unchangeable function. This raises the question of how Clytemnestra’s claims relate to the transformation of the Erinyes’ avenging, outsider position in the old law to a cherished, insider one under the new law. If they can move from murderous, polluted, and dishonored to honored, why is Clytemnestra never given the opportunity?

¹⁹ This emphasis on suffering loops back to the living queen’s speech to Agamemnon, in which her tendentious story of torment in his absence was one of her rhetorical ploys (*Ag.* 855–913). Cf. Foley (2001), 209.

²⁰ On Clytemnestra’s *telos* prayer or binding song in *Ag.* 958–74, see McClure (1996). For the Erinyes’ repetitions, see Rosenmeyer (1982), 284–310, 343.

²¹ On the dream experience and its precedents, see Brown (2018), ad *Cho.* 523–39.

²² Lebeck (1971), 14; and Rabinowitz (1981), 168–72.

As the Erinyes begin to awaken, the Ghost's final lines focus attention on their dreaming, and thus on her own status (*Eum.* 129–39):

Χο. (μυγμὸς διπλοῦς ὄξύς)
 λαβὲ λαβὲ λαβὲ λαβὲ· φράζου.
 Κλ. ὄναρ διώκεις θῆρα, κλαγγαίνεις δ' ἄπερ
 κύων μέριμναν οὔποτ' ἐκλείπων φόνου.
 τί δρᾷς; ἀνίστω· μή σε νικάτω πόνος,
 μηδ' ἀγνοήσης πῆμα μαλθαχθεῖσ' ὕπνω.
 ἄλγησον ἦπαρ ἐνδίκοις ὀνειδέσιν·
 τοῖς σώφροσιν γὰρ ἀντίκεντρα γίγνεται.
 σύ δ' αἵματηρὸν πνεῦμι' ἐπουρίσασα τῶ,
 ἀτμῶ κατισχναίνουσα, νηδύος πυρί,
 ἔπου, μάραινε δευτέροις διώγμασιν.

Chor. (sharp double whine)
 Get him! Get him! Get him! Get him! Look there!
 Clyt. You are pursuing a beast in a dream, and you bellow like
 a dog never abandoning concern for gore.
 What are you doing? Get up! Do not let toil conquer you,
 nor, soothed by sleep, ignore pains.
 feel a stab of pain in your liver from just reproaches;
 to the wise they are like goads.
 But you, send after him bloody breath,
 waste him away with fumes, with fire from your insides,
 follow him! Waste him away with a second pursuit!

This interplay between what the theatrical audience sees in the dramatic frame and the “dream” is already present with the Erinyes' first articulate words. These indicate that they believe they are actually pursuing Orestes, even mimicking the chase (λαβὲ λαβὲ λαβὲ λαβὲ, 130), while they are still lying asleep on stage. One can almost hear the disgust in Clytemnestra's line, “what are you doing? Get up!” (τί δρᾷς; ἀνίστω, 133). The Erinyes' φράζου (“look there!” 130) is a deictic indicator that picks up on and complicates the present–absent dynamic and visual themes of the Ghost's language, since they are pointing out an unseen Orestes as if he were visible to them. When the Ghost complains that they are pursuing a wild beast within one dream (ὄναρ διώκεις θῆρα, *onar diōkeis thēra*, 131) from which she, another dream (ὄναρ, *onar*, 116), is trying to wake them, she indicates to the audience that two dreams are occurring on different levels. Moreover, she is exhibiting a remarkable degree of self-awareness concerning her status within this doubly problematic dream-state.

When they do awaken, the Erinyes refer to Clytemnestra as the “reproach from dreams” (ὄνειδος ἐξ ὄνειράτων, *oneidos ex oneiratōn*, 155), which sums up the Ghost’s effective goading in one condensed expression. The strong assonance of the phrase draws attention to Clytemnestra’s own use of these terms (ὄναρ, *onar*, 116 and 131; ὄνειδος, *oneidos*, 97). Their use of the plural, “dreams” (155), has multiple possible referents. It could simply stand for the singular, could refer to dreams each Erinyes was seeing, or could refer to the double dream of Orestes escaping and Clytemnestra chastising. As we will see, the layered and uncertain references to dreams and their link to reality is in line with other passages in the *Oresteia*. It is less possible to untangle them, I will argue, than to recognize that they double the Ghost’s problematic physical state and draw attention to her tenuous pleading.

The dynamics of Clytemnestra’s body play out inversely to the Erinyes’ embodiment. They were only abstract references in the *Agamemnon* and invisible in the *Choephoroi*, but their embodiment is a central theme in the *Eumenides*.²³ Its effects manifest themselves in this Ghost passage, where they are both visible for the first time and momentarily prevented from fulfilling their function. Sleep is not only a physical impediment, but, the Ghost warns, its mollifying quality could also undermine their obligations: “nor, soothed by sleep, ignore pains” (134). These pains are either hers (again appealing to her sufferings in life or the underworld) or their own, since she hurts the Erinyes by means of goading accusations (135–6). Their possible softening and pain derive from the fact that the Erinyes are now staged; their avatars give physical referents to otherwise metaphorical language. This is especially true in the mixture of nonphysical ideas with body parts in the command to “feel a stab of pain in your liver from just reproaches (*oneidesin*)” (ἀλγησον ἥπαρ ἐνδίκους ὄνειδεσιν, 135), and is possibly behind the references to “fumes” and “fire from your insides” (138–9), as well as to “seeing in the heart” (103). Their physical presence, speech, and insistence on their rights are the foundation for the appeasement through persuasion and honors that Athena initiates. The Erinyes themselves at one point also declare a surprisingly middle-path attitude in

²³ On a theatrical level, her very reappearance fits the general pattern in the *Oresteia* of the increasing embodiment of superhuman elements. Early in the trilogy, characters invoke supernatural forces as abstractions; then, characters declare that they perceive these forces manifesting their efficacy through visions and signs; last, the forces themselves appear hypostatized on stage and speak. Cf. Lattimore (1953), 13–15; Kitto (1961), 23; Lebeck (1971), 1–3; and Sommerstein (2010a), 171–81. On this arc for the Erinyes, Apollo, and Athena, see Brown (1983), 29–30; and Bacon (2001), esp. 48 and 52.

an often-quoted passage (*Eum.* 526–30) and at the end add positive blessings to their functions. These aspects of their later character might then connect to the bizarre non sequitur in this passage, when the Ghost avers that reproaches are goads for the “wise” or “moderate” (σώφροσιν, *sōphrosin*, 136). Either adjective seems entirely out of place as a possible description of the Erinyes in this scene. The irony is all the more apparent as the Ghost of Clytemnestra is in the midst of urging them to shrivel her son up with bloody breath (137). The incongruity in Clytemnestra’s speech serves as a brief hint of things to come but also differentiates the Erinyes from her, the one whom the trilogy never appeases.

The Ghost demands blood-for-blood vengeance, in line with the living Clytemnestra’s justification after her murder of Agamemnon. To interpret the substance and dynamics of her pleas, it is crucial to conceptualize them in ethical terms.²⁴ Despite the paranormal circumstances, the Ghost builds her case on human foundations: shame, personal honor, motherhood, and divine wrath for familial crime, all of which are imbricated with the ethical concerns of the trilogy.²⁵ An audience attentive to the perspectives of characters in the play ought – when these touch on social norms and ethical matters – to consider her claims. Living Clytemnestra raises ethical questions beyond acceptable social confines.²⁶ Her confrontations with society are the key to her living character’s tragic, ethical importance. It will become evident that the Ghost of Clytemnestra intensifies those challenges to normative constructs, in part by breaking with so many aspects of life itself.

The Dream of Clytemnestra: Presence, Self-Reference, and Image

The bases for the Ghost’s claims are greatly affected by her status as a dream and as an afterlife figure. She manipulates references to her body and current state in ways distinct from earlier ghostly figures in extant literature. There is, in fact, precedent for the demands of the dead, even for ghosts of formerly living characters returning to ask for actions to affect their underworld existence. By contrasting Clytemnestra to her two

²⁴ See Foley (2001), 202–3 n. 3, on the living Clytemnestra’s ethical claims for vengeance; cf. Vellacott (1984b), 63–75.

²⁵ Zeitlin (1965), 482–3, examines how at first Clytemnestra is justified in avenging her lost child and then loses that justification, in part through the predatory behavior against her own children.

²⁶ Foley (2001), 207–34, emphasizes the living Clytemnestra’s dangerous questioning and subverting of male dominance – sexual, political, linguistic, and violent.

Homeric forerunners, one gains a better understanding of Aeschylus' innovative poetics and ethical challenges.

The ghost of Patroclus (*Il.* 23.62–107) is Clytemnestra's most obvious precursor in surviving literature. Both appear in the dream of their addressee (Achilles and the Erinyes respectively), begin their rebukes of the sleepers with the same verb (εὔδω), and describe their suffering in the afterlife to motivate the addressee's actions in the living world.²⁷ Patroclus is called a *psukhē* ("soul"), yet he does not refer to himself as either a *psukhē* or a dream.²⁸ When, in a poignant moment, Patroclus asks Achilles to give him his hand (23.75), Achilles' inability to embrace the image instantly exposes the discontinuity between the living Patroclus and his impalpable, shrieking, fleeing *psukhē* (23.99–101). This ending to the Patroclus scene emphasizes the disparity between the *psukhē* and the living person in terms of how both characters conceptualize its corporeality. The *psukhē* acts and speaks as if he is still physically cohesive. Achilles, at first, takes the *psukhē* for his embraceable companion, yet the action dramatically reveals the *psukhē*'s immaterial nature.²⁹ This undead dream scene thus draws attention to the problematics of self-reference and incorporeality after death.

In Homer, when ghosts demand action on their own behalf, they are concerned with ritual burial, not vengeance.³⁰ Even though Achilles becomes obsessed with avenging his friend's death, the ghost of Patroclus does not even mention his killers but focuses his companion on the immediate fulfillment of the burial that will enable him to proceed through the gates of Hades (23.71).³¹ This is the case as well with the ghost of

²⁷ Patroclus begins his exhortation to Achilles with the indicative εὔδεις, "you are asleep!" (*Il.* 23.69). Clytemnestra's beginning, εὔδοιτ' ἄν, "you would be asleep!" (*Eum.* 94) may be read as a sarcastic optative (Smyth §1826).

²⁸ The *Iliad*'s narrator names the visitation in Achilles' sleep the "*psukhē* of Patroclus" (ψυχὴ Πάτροκλῆος, 23.65), as does Achilles once he has awakened (Πάτροκλῆος . . . ψυχὴ, 23.105–6). On the other hand, within the dream Achilles addresses the figure as his actual companion (23.94–8), not a *psukhē*, nor a dream. The Patroclus figure does not use any of the terms *psukhē*, *eidōlon*, or *onar* for himself, only for others in the underworld (ψυχὰι, εἶδωλα, 23.72).

²⁹ Vernant (1991), 189; and Gazis (2018), 73–4. Odysseus' mother, when questioned by her son as to whether she is "some image" (τί . . . εἶδωλον, *ti* . . . *eidōlon*, *Od.* 11.213) sent to deceive him, responds that after death "the *psukhē*, like a dream (θυειρος, *oneiros*), having flown out, flutters about" (*Od.* 11.219–22).

³⁰ Vengeance is entirely suppressed in all instances of the Homeric afterlife, not only in the Patroclus scene. The shade of Agamemnon, for example, narrates to Odysseus Clytemnestra's treachery and his attempt to kill her as he was dying but mentions nothing about vengeance now that he is dead (*Od.* 11.405–56), only asking about the whereabouts of his son (457–61). Contrast this with the very start of the *Odyssey*, in which Zeus already reveals the requital brought by Orestes on Aegisthus (1.40–3). Cf. D'Arms and Hulley (1946); and Marks (2008), 17–35.

³¹ That is, the *Iliad*'s scene mainly spurs the fulfillment of a human ritual obligation. Richardson (1990), ad 23.69–92, puts this in the context of Homeric double motivation.

Elpenor (*Od.* 11.71–6), who is simultaneously concerned to set up a reminder of his existence for the living.³² The ghost of Elpenor explicitly states that his shade would become a supernatural affliction on Odysseus in the living world were he to be left unburied (11.73). Despite such threats, however, not one of the Homeric dead ever manifests power over the living, nor do the living show much fear of their threatened vengeance.³³ With this background, it is now possible to return, in greater detail, to the Ghost of Clytemnestra's rhetoric, her claims, and their complications.

Like the ghosts of Patroclus and Elpenor, the Ghost of Clytemnestra articulates her demands rhetorically to the agents who she hopes will fulfill them. By contrast, however, she supports her claims by emphasizing her *presence*, most obviously by linguistically drawing attention to her visible self ("this mother," τῆσδε μητρός, *tēsde mētros*, *Eum.* 122) and her wounds ("these wounds," πληγὰς τὰσδε, *plēgas tasde*, 103). The intervention of the Ghost of Clytemnestra in the *Eumenides* as a speaking, present, undead figure allows her to break the silence of her corpse on stage in the *Choephoroi*. Yet her speeches proceed to diverge widely from those of the ghosts of Patroclus and Elpenor, drawing attention to the anomalies of ghostly speech concerning the visible first person, the represented spectral body, and continuity after death.

The first set of such differences concerns self-reference. The Ghost of Clytemnestra uses first-person singulars for her underworld self (e.g. ἐγώ, ἀπητιμασμένα, 95; ἀλῶμαι, 98; ἔχω, 99), her previous living self ("I killed," ἔκτανον, 96), and her current stage-figure ("I declare," προουνέπω, 98). In this, she resembles the ghosts of Patroclus and Elpenor, each of whose references to himself appears to present a unified self as current speaker, formerly living individual, corpse, and afterlife *psukhē*.³⁴ Neither Homeric ghost, however, mentions his name or current status (whether as a dream or a *psukhē*). The figure in the *Eumenides* both refers to herself as Clytemnestra and draws attention to the fact that she appears in a dream (ὄναρ γὰρ ὑμᾶς νῦν Κλυταιμῆστρα καλῶ, *Eum.* 116). In this multilayered self-reference, she invokes the Erinyes with a first-person verb (ὑμᾶς . . . καλῶ) and simultaneously uses her naming as a self-invocation

³² He is also a *psukhē* (ψυχὴ Ἐλπήνορος, *Od.* 11.51), and his ambush of Odysseus before the other dead represents his not having entered the house of Hades proper. See Tzagarakis (2000), 33.

³³ Hence the dishonoring of enemy corpses and seeming unconcern for the cremation of common soldiers, on which see Garland (1984).

³⁴ E.g. Patroclus' imperative (*Il.* 23.71): θάπτε με ὅττι τάχιστα, πύλας Ἄϊδαο περῆσω, "Bury me as quickly as possible so that I may pass through the gates of Hades!" In this command, the ghost of Patroclus refers to his corpse as himself ("bury me") and to his underworld existence ("so that I may pass through") equally as himself.

(Κλυταιμῆστρα). Clytemnestra's conjuring of her own presence is only made more eerily potent through her simultaneous understanding of her absence, of herself as a dream.

The Ghost of Clytemnestra convolutes the issue of her presence further when she refers to interrupting the second dream the Erinyes are experiencing: "You are pursuing a beast in a dream" (ὄναρ διώκεις θῆρα, *onar diōkeis thēra*, *Eum.* 131). The Ghost, visible to the audience, is commenting on a dream that is invisible to them. Her metaphorical use of words for vision within the dream (especially ὄρα . . . καρδίᾳ, 103; ὄρῳ, 110; ἐγκατιλλώψας, 113) only further problematizes her effective invisibility. For she is not only both present and absent, as is any ghost, but she is also *unseen by any internal audience*. Unlike the *psukhē* of Patroclus or the Children of Thyestes, she never appears to any human beings – not to Orestes nor to the Pythia, who both see the Erinyes. She is not even visible to the Erinyes themselves, who only see Orestes in their sleep and never address Clytemnestra when they awaken, implying she is already gone. Her *mise en abyme* displacement of presence and visibility puts Clytemnestra at multiple removes from the living, human world.

The Ghost's liminal status as an incorporeal double of a dead, dissembling murderer distills the *Oresteia's* recurrent problematizing of image as false presence. The trilogy often connects such suspicion with the issue of language as false image. The *Agamemnon*, especially, is glutted with critiques of the veracity of both. The Chorus and Clytemnestra in dialogue equate the "phantoms of dreams" (ὄνειρων φάσματ', *oneirōn phasmat'*, *Ag.* 274) with divine deception (δολώσαντος θεοῦ, 273), with "the (vain) belief . . . of a slumbering mind" (δόξαν . . . βριζούσης φρενός, 275), and with "unwinged rumors" (ἄπτερος φάτις, 276). They also connect "dream-appearances" (ὄνειρόφαντοι, *oneirophantoi*, 420) with "(vain) beliefs" (δόξαι, 421) and oppose dreams to the truth (εἴτ' οὖν ἀληθεῖς εἴτ' ὄνειράτων δίκην, 491, cf. 980–1). *Agamemnon*, as well, describes deception within the "mirror" of social relations as "an image (*eidōlon*) of a shadow" (κάτοπτρον, εἶδωλον σκιᾶς, 839). Human characters in the *Agamemnon* thus enmesh the language of image with epistemological problems. This is especially evident in the Chorus's anxiety over the living Clytemnestra's verbal fabrication, linked with her "dream" of *Agamemnon's* death (889–94).³⁵ The whole complex of

³⁵ On living Clytemnestra's problematic speech, see Goldhill (1984a), esp. 68, 74–5, 77; and on these themes in her Ghost scene, 213–15. Foley (2001), 207, shows that rumors and dreams are spoken of as "women's thinking" in the trilogy; cf. McClure (1999), 74–9. On Clytemnestra's fabrications connected with dreams, see Catenaccio (2011), 205–8.

dreams and images as connected with fiction, wish fulfillment, and death thus permeates Clytemnestra's living language.

Dreams linked with the repeated murders of the house of Atreus invade waking life. Although the categories of dream and image are labeled unreal, the dreams themselves seem increasingly potent over the first two plays. The Children of Thyestes model a dream-vision that appeals for vengeance (*Ag.* 1217–38). Yet in appearing to Cassandra alone they represent more an omen of a future murder than an incitement to act. In the *Choephoroi*, by contrast, the plot revolves around Clytemnestra's dream. Fear of its force causes her to order the libations for Agamemnon; for the mourners, it signals Agamemnon's power and approval of the upcoming vengeance; and Clytemnestra herself acknowledges it as prophetic in her dying moments (*Cho.* 928–9).³⁶ The interpretation of the dream's symbolic language adds a dynamic of riddle and solution to Clytemnestra's murder. It also implies a deferred communication between the chthonic dream-sender, Agamemnon, and the dream-interpreter and fulfiller, Orestes (523–50).³⁷ By the end of the *Choephoroi*, the Erinyes have taken on the role of chthonic nightmare, unseen by the Chorus yet already acting on Orestes' mind (1020–62).³⁸ Thus, the previous dreams and visions connected with Clytemnestra are dramatically circuitous, but they create a potent expectation that when one appears, its portent will be consummated.

The Ghost of Clytemnestra is a nexus of the issues related to dream-images and their fulfillment. The Ghost's ethical argument becomes warped due to – but also despite – her spectral continuity of form. For the Ghost's resemblance is less to Clytemnestra's living body than to her corpse. The Ghost supports her claims by pointing to her wounds as irrefutable evidence for her petition through a verb of seeing and a deictic: “See these wounds” (ὄρα δὲ πληγὰς τάσδε, *hora de plēgas tasde*, *Eum.* 103). She thus draws on the oft-repeated ethical claim in the *Oresteia* (before the new law of Athena) that bloodshed necessarily entails further bloodshed. This emphasizes the physicality of the wounds and the liquid drawn from them, a recurrent, fluctuating theme in the trilogy.³⁹ Yet unlike wounds on a living being, those on the Ghost of Clytemnestra

³⁶ See Mace (2004), 39–50; and Catenaccio (2011), 211–21.

³⁷ See Chapter 4 for the interpretation of Clytemnestra's dream and Chapter 5 for Orestes as fulfiller.

³⁸ For the psychological effectiveness of the Erinyes on Orestes, see Brown (1983), 15–22. The Chorus insist that they are imaginings (δόξαι, *Cho.* 1051), but he denies precisely this (οὐκ εἰσι δόξαι, 1053); cf. Catenaccio (2011), 222–3.

³⁹ On the logic of blood for blood in the *Oresteia* and its connections to other liquids such as dew, milk, libations, and the Erinyes' venom, see Lebeck (1971), 80–91; and Sommerstein (2010a), 171–8.

operate as signs without substance, just as subject to her manipulation as language and image.

The Cassandra scene in the *Agamemnon* allows a clarifying comparison for the links between images, dreams, and wounds. Cassandra points out the dead Children of Thyestes (invisible to the Chorus and, presumably, to the audience) with the same verb in the imperative and deictic as the Ghost of Clytemnestra uses for her wounds: “see these children!” (ὄρατε τοῦσδε τοὺς . . . νέους, *horate tousde tous . . . neous*, *Ag.* 1217–18). Cassandra describes them holding their flesh and innards in their hands (1220–1). These she interprets to be the signs of their murders that demand requital against Agamemnon (1223–38). Yet Cassandra’s language stresses that these are only visions of the children, not their reanimated corpses. She sees them “bearing the forms of dreams” (ὄνειρων προσφερεῖς μορφώμασιν, *oneirōn prosphereis morphōmasin*, 1218), although she is not asleep.⁴⁰ Cassandra’s reference to the dead children as images without substance nevertheless leads to her interpretation of their wounds as a call for vengeance, providing a template for the *Eumenides* scene.

The Ghost of Clytemnestra, by contrast, is both the interpreter of her own wounds and staged to be visible to the audience. These seemingly minor differences are immensely significant. The wounds from Clytemnestra’s violent murder leave stains that her Ghost now uses to exceed their intended purpose, the vengeance with which audiences might have sympathized. Near the end of the *Choephoroi*, Orestes displays his mother’s corpse to humans, the gods, and the audience with verbs of seeing (e.g. ἴδεσθε, *Cho.* 973; ἴδεσθε δ’ αὖτε, 980; and δεῖξαθ’, 984) and describes the killing of his mother as justice (ἐνδίκως φόνον τὸν μητρός, 988–9; and κτανεῖν τέ φημι μητέρ’ οὐκ ἄνευ δίκης, 1027).⁴¹ Perhaps the corpse was then clothed in a bloody costume now worn by Clytemnestra’s Ghost.⁴² In transporting these brutal marks back from the afterlife, though, the Ghost strips them of the signification Orestes assigned. In her telling, the gory writing on her body recounts none of Orestes’ dilemma and plotting, nor any divine justification from Apollo’s oracles. Instead, the Ghost treats the wounds as a palimpsest on which she overwrites Orestes’ meaning with her own. The reversal is consummate: Whereas the murderer points to the wounds on the corpse, claiming that they are marks of justly completed vengeance, the dream of the murdered now points to the very same marks

⁴⁰ Mace (2002), 53; and Catenaccio (2011), 209–10.

⁴¹ On this display of justice, see Rousseau (1963), esp. 126–7; and Goldhill (1984a), 101, 198–9.

⁴² Again, the staging is unknown, but see Sommerstein (1989), ad 94–139.

on herself and counterclaims that it is just to seek vengeance against their maker.

The complicating factor in this struggle over meaning is that the marks themselves are not actual wounds. In fact, it is precisely the deictic in the phrase “these wounds” (πληγὰς τὰσδε, *plēgas tasde*, *Eum.* 103) that conjoins several levels of representational fiction.⁴³ Although presumably visible to the audience, the wounds cannot be biological injuries for two reasons. First, as is evident from her placement in a dream, the Ghost of Clytemnestra lacks material substance in the dramatic world.⁴⁴ That is, the marks visible on her image alert an audience to the lack of biological wounds even *within* the play; any representation of wounds, even a spray of ruby blood out of a gaping neck, would still fail to designate a human body’s wounds, since they are worn by an apparition. This ghostly figure is not meant to be identical with the corpse but is a dream of the incorporeal dead queen. Clytemnestra’s visible wounds are thus superfluous.⁴⁵ Since the wounds to which the Ghost of Clytemnestra points with her demonstrative lack substance, the ethical appeal from them is deeply compromised.

One might well suspect this first point: Are not the wounds visible on Clytemnestra’s Ghost merely a natural extension of the wounds that her body suffered at the moment of death? Support for this critique comes not only from the appearance of the Children of Thyestes but also from the precedent of *Odyssey* 11, in which Odysseus tells of encountering wounded and bloody soldiers among the dead (*Od.* 11.40–1). The *Iliad*’s ghost of Patroclus, however, provides a powerful counterexample. His appearance illustrates that there is no requisite connection between wounds on a corpse and wounds on the dream of the dead. The *Iliad* explicitly states that Patroclus’ *psukhē* appears like the living Patroclus in body and clothing (*Il.* 23.66–7). In other words, he appears as he was in any other moment of life – any moment but his naked, spear-pierced, battlefield death. Even in Odysseus’ underworld story, the images of the dead often do not bear the marks of their death. Especially telling is the case of Agamemnon, who cannot be imagined to be covered in stab wounds from his murder by

⁴³ On deictics as bridging reality and fantasy, see Felson (2004), 253.

⁴⁴ See Holmes (2010), esp. 41–83, 228–74, for understandings of the biological body in Greek thought and the possibilities of nonphysical action (divine or demonic) that affects it. Cf. Williams (1993), 21–30.

⁴⁵ They are also not dramatically necessary, as Cawthorn (2008), 22, points out: “Wounds function as the marks, the evidence or inscriptions, of violence, regardless of whether these wounds are textual, reported, or enacted.”

Clytemnestra, for, as mentioned in Chapter 1, Odysseus asks him whether he was killed in battle or drowned (*Od.* 11.397–403). Since the Ghost of Clytemnestra forges an imperative for vengeance in part from the reference to her visible wounds, it is essential to emphasize that their appearance on her image is neither literarily nor culturally necessary.⁴⁶

The second point concerning the Ghost's wounds is that her appearance – in a double set of dreams and on stage – complicates her argument from the physical even further. Clytemnestra's mention of wounds directs the attention of the sleeping Erinyes and the audience to a costume.⁴⁷ The imperative “see” (ὄρα) initiates a type of vision detached from human sense perception. It also operates at a double remove from literal sight for the internal audience, the Erinyes. They either see Clytemnestra's Ghost in a dream, or do not see her at all, since they appear to be paying attention exclusively to their chase of Orestes in another dream. Moreover, the command “see!” works differently for the theatrical audience, who presumably see the Ghost as a costumed representation of a dream. This is therefore more than a simple reference to stage machinery. The audience must treat either a portrayal of wounds on her costume or even nothing at all as the invisible dream of wounds on the image of an animate corpse.⁴⁸ The effect is that of a hall of mirrors and transparencies, which draws attention to the very nature of this character's visibility.⁴⁹ Like Homeric ghosts that cannot be embraced and the visions that flit through the arms in the *Agamemnon* (*Ag.* 423–6), the body marked as an image or a dream is acknowledged within the literary work to be deceptive to its viewer. In this case, the viewer is the audience. The compromised wounds thus indicate a sophisticated piece of metatheater: The Ghost's reference to her costume implicates spectatorship and locates the production of dramatic meaning in nonliteral seeing.⁵⁰ Additionally, even the audience must see them in the

⁴⁶ Note, too, that grave goods did not picture the animate dead (even the war dead) as injured, but as they were in life or as winged souls, cf. Vermeule (1979), 1–23.

⁴⁷ On deictics in tragedy pointing out stage material, like props (or in this case, a costume), see Mueller (2016), 7; and on Clytemnestra's net–trap–robe theme, 42–69. On Aeschylus' use of terrifying costumes for the Erinyes from later evidence, see the *Vita Aeschyli* 9 (=TrGF 3 T A1.30–2) with discussion in Calder (1988); and Frontisi-Ducroux (2007), 165–74.

⁴⁸ It is significant in this context that the Erinyes themselves were previously invisible abstractions who are now staged characters. They draw the audience's attention to the nature of the dramatized image. See Bacon (2001), 57; and Zeitlin (1965), 488–98.

⁴⁹ Johnston (1999), 24–5, relates the problem of image in Greek social and religious attitudes about ghosts to the nature of tragedy as a genre: “The ghost – the *eidolon*, the *skia*, the *phasma*, that thing that is here in front of our eyes and yet not really here – emblemizes quite nicely the slippage between reality and illusion that tragedy loved.”

⁵⁰ This example of Aeschylean metatheater is subtle but operates like the more explicit examples in later playwrights that have drawn far more attention from scholars. It corresponds to the focus of

“mind’s eye” or, as the Ghost puts it, “heart.”⁵¹ That is, regardless of their visual presence on a costume, for their ethical effect they must be *felt*.

The Ghost of Clytemnestra’s staging and language advertise that the character before the audience is only the façade of a human being, a mere dream of demons. The layers of precarious visibility and ambiguous presence comprise the multiple removes between the ethical appeals of the Ghost and those of living characters. These fissures in her language of self-reference thus undermine one basis of her imperative for vengeance. Crucially, the Ghost herself seems almost aware of it. Her very vocabulary of dreams and visibility simultaneously destabilizes presence, center, and reality. It is a set of obfuscations that extends the rhetorical mastery of the living Clytemnestra. This is part of the Ghost’s double move to support her ethical claims through linguistic manipulation: She makes dubious assertions but blurs their structure to avoid refutation.

The “Mother of Hades”: Inventing and Warping the Afterlife

The Ghost’s uncorroborated story of her own afterlife (*Eum.* 95–8) ought to arouse just as much suspicion as her phantom wounds. Her narration is reminiscent of the rhetorical techniques that the living queen used to manipulate Agamemnon. After the murder, Clytemnestra straightforwardly admitted to having used deceptive language (*Ag.* 1372–3). Yet duplicity was not her only tool; for the sake of vindicating her action to the Chorus of the *Agamemnon*, she also invented an underworld tale. In her response to the Elders’ question concerning who will grieve for the dead king, Clytemnestra described an ironic scene in which Iphigeneia – the daughter Agamemnon had bound, gagged, and slaughtered – embraces and kisses him in the house of Hades (1555–9, cf. 1525–9).⁵² The living Clytemnestra’s verbal invention of this postmortem episode clarifies the Ghost’s later depiction of the underworld in two ways. First, she justified

the second wave of metatheatrical studies of Greek tragedy sketched out in Dunn (2010), 5–6, the subtle use of stage properties as empty signs that can be filled with meaning but also draw attention to the dramatic illusion. Cf. Zeitlin (1990), 63–96, and (2010), 266–7; Ringer (1998); Dobrov (2001); and Mueller (2016), 1–8; with important challenges from Rosenmeyer (2002); and Thumiger (2009).

⁵¹ On the use of metafictional or metatheatrical self-awareness as a device to connect with the theatrical audience on levels other than narrative immersion, see Ringer (1998), 7–19; Dobrov (2001), 4–18; and Dunn (2010), 5–17.

⁵² Garner (1990), 36, catches the ironic reversal in this fantasy embrace and draws attention to the Homeric allusion in the phrase Clytemnestra uses (περι χεῖρα βαλοῦσα, *Ag.* 1559): This is almost precisely how Odysseus describes his fruitless attempt to embrace his mother’s shade (περι χεῖρε βαλόντε, *Od.* 11.211, cf. 11.392–4; *Il.* 23.75, 99–101).

Agamemnon's slaying by appealing to their daughter's continuity after death. That is, Iphigeneia's nondisappearance implied an ethical basis for vengeance on her behalf.⁵³ Secondly, depicting Agamemnon facing the daughter he killed in the afterlife strengthened Clytemnestra's argument that her act was only a segment of a greater cycle of punishment that included superhuman elements, such as the curse of the house and underworld suffering.⁵⁴

The image that the living Clytemnestra created of Iphigeneia (whom she names in *Ag.* 1527 and 1555) waiting to embrace her murderous father ties into the assertion by the Ghost that those she killed (presumably Agamemnon and Cassandra, although she suppresses their names) relentlessly hound her in the afterlife (*Eum.* 95–8). Now it is Clytemnestra's Ghost who fears an embrace by the victims of murder, effectively reversing the imagined familial reunion scene between Agamemnon and Iphigeneia. Clytemnestra (living and dead) conjoins human relations in the afterlife to murderous action in both these depictions: in the *Agamemnon* as part of justifying her killing after the fact, in the *Eumenides* to activate the Erinyes for vengeance.

Linking the ideas of Clytemnestra's involvement with the afterlife and rhetorical invention is Cassandra's moniker for the queen, "mother of Hades" (Ἄιδου μητέρα, *Hadou mēter*, *Ag.* 1235).⁵⁵ Clytemnestra's Ghost is strongly linked to Hades, presumably appearing from that realm (cf. the Ghost of Darius, *Pers.* 685–92). But since Clytemnestra is the only source for her own afterlife, it is crucial to recognize that her depiction of it in the *Eumenides* only correlates with her own in the *Agamemnon*, not with any other mentions of the afterlife in the trilogy. Conspicuously absent is any acknowledgment of a divine system of moral punishment. Clytemnestra's Ghost does not describe hounding in life by divine spirits of vengeance and subsequent retribution in the afterlife, which is the worldview articulated by the Elders of the *Agamemnon* (*Ag.* 461–8, cf. *Cho.* 59–65). Nor does her tale

⁵³ Wohl (1998), 107, and n. 25.

⁵⁴ See Neuburg (1991); and Foley (2001), 211–34, on the living Clytemnestra's stated motivations: human, from her own reasons, on the one hand, and divine, as part of the curse of the house, on the other.

⁵⁵ This pregnant label, more fully "the raging/sacrificing (θύουσαν is ambiguous) mother of Hades," has diverse meanings. Perhaps all simultaneously in play are the murders Clytemnestra commits; her connection to the dead Iphigeneia; her murder by Orestes; more speculatively, a reference to a mythic divinity, "the mother of Hades" (which Rohde connects with Hekate); and/or a proleptic reference to her returning as a ghost. Cf. Rohde (1925), 591–2; Denniston and Page (1957), ad loc.; Zeitlin (1966), 646–52; Rabinowitz (1981), 156–67; and Judet de La Combe (2001), ad loc.

corroborate the Erinyes' description of the afterlife in the *Eumenides*, in which the chthonic goddesses themselves drag mortals down to punishment by Hades (*Eum.* 267–75). This Great Assessor of humankind (μέγας . . . εὐθύνος βροτῶν, *megas* . . . *euthunos brotōn*, 273) is said to punish every mortal who transgresses (τις . . . ἤλιπεν βροτῶν, 269).⁵⁶ Hades as judge of ethical action, though, does not figure into Clytemnestra's afterlife. The Erinyes even claim to Orestes that Clytemnestra is "free by virtue of being murdered" (ἡ δ' ἔλευθέρα φόνω, *Eum.* 603), effectively eliminating from consideration the issue of her continuing punishment.⁵⁷ Thus the play gives ethical room for Clytemnestra to make her arguments. Even as the Ghost seeks help from universal forces of requital, she evades linking her afterlife to divine punishment.

Instead of ethical punishment by Hades, the Ghost of Clytemnestra recounts a far more personal ordeal in the underworld. When she attempts to move the Erinyes to pity her suffering (κοῦ κατοικτίξεις πάθος, 121; cf. παθοῦσα, 100), Clytemnestra portrays herself as the victim, not only of Orestes, but also of other dead below. The idea of the pressure of the other dead is akin to one in the speech of the ghost of Patroclus. In his narrative, the dead are an umbrageous multitude that crowd him away from the house of Hades: "but I wander *purposelessly*" (ἀλλ' αὐτῶς ἀλάλημαι, *all' autōs alalēmai*, *Il.* 23.74). When the Ghost of Clytemnestra laments "and I wander *shamefully*" (αἰσχρῶς δ' ἀλώμαι, *aiskhrōs d' alōmai*, *Eum.* 98) she employs the same verb (ἀλάωμαι, *alaomai*) and even echoes the alliteration – an intriguing reminiscence of the Homeric scene. Significantly, she replaces the notion of simple exclusion with active shame. She thus extends concern with one particular aspect of society to the world below; her Ghost links αἰσχρῶς (*aiskhrōs*, "shamefully," 98) and αἰτία (*aitia*, "responsibility, guilt, blame," 99) with ὄνειδος (*oneidos*, "shame, reproach," 97), which is used more often in this scene than in the rest of the trilogy combined.⁵⁸ Together, these words strongly imply a community with social norms.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ This description specifically includes the crime of a child against a parent (*Eum.* 270–1), which fits the Erinyes' addressee, Orestes, but, intriguingly, excludes Clytemnestra and Agamemnon. See Chapters 4, 5, and 7.

⁵⁷ Contrast the Erinyes' later claim about afterlife punishment that dead transgressors are "not very free" under the earth (θανῶν δ' οὐκ ἄγαν ἐλεύθερος, 339–40).

⁵⁸ Compare the three uses of ὄνειδος in this section of less than sixty lines with only two in the rest of the *Oresteia* (*Ag.* 1560 and *Cho.* 495).

⁵⁹ Williams (1993), 75–102, proposes a much-debated theory of Greek notions of heroic honor and shame (in tragedy especially) as internalized forces – instead of simply social pressure – but ones that can always potentially come from an agent outside of the self. On the notion of responsibility in the vocabulary of *aitia* in Greek thought more generally, see 50–8; and cf. Cairns (1993), esp. 178–214, on Aeschylus.

Both in life and in the afterlife, however, Clytemnestra defies communal mores, twisting the normative meanings of shame and responsibility.⁶⁰ The terms *aiskhrōs*, *aitia*, and *oneidos* might seem to indicate that Clytemnestra is facing humiliating punishment below.⁶¹ The Ghost, however, actively revises the meaning of *oneidos* in her next lines. She minimizes its connection with “shame,” redirecting its force toward its other meaning, “reproach.” With this reproach, she incites the Erinyes to kill on her behalf: “Feel pain in your liver from just reproaches (*endikois oneidesin*)” (ἄλγησον ἦπαρ ἐνδίκους ὀνειδέσιν, *Eum.* 135).⁶² This is the Ghost’s only mention of any form of the term *dikē*, “justice.” She uses it solely to intensify her admonitions against the Erinyes, rather than to claim that the act of vengeance she calls for is just.⁶³ As part of her avoidance of ethical responsibility, the Ghost redirects the negative pressure of her vocabulary away from herself and toward an imperative for murder.

Instead of justice or societal good, the Ghost’s rhetoric focuses value purely on herself. Her appeal to the Erinyes is partly grounded in the argument that the lack of vengeance causes her dishonor (ἀπτημισμένη, *apētimasmenē*, 95).⁶⁴ The Ghost attempts to protect her “honor” in a manner that neglects the other crucial aspects of τιμή (*timē*), both “office” and “duty.” She intends no reciprocal contribution to society, as is necessary when honor operates in the living world. Clytemnestra’s Ghost rather links her honor and dishonor to the Erinyes.⁶⁵ She reminds the dark deities of her nighttime offerings (106–9) for which they now owe her this pursuit. Ironically, she herself invokes duty by urging the Erinyes to perform their “assigned functions” (πέπρωται πράγμα, 125), which they continually associate with their own “honor” and “dishonor.”⁶⁶ In disconnecting honor from duty, the Ghost thus differentiates herself from the Erinyes,

⁶⁰ Cairns (1993), 204–6; and Foley (2001), 201–34. Goldhill (1984a), 89–91, links the rhetoric of Clytemnestra’s appropriated κράτος, “power/political power,” and lack of αἰσχύνη, “shame,” with that of her transgressive language and sexuality.

⁶¹ Vogel-Ehrensperger (2012), 304, 336–7, among others, treats this shame and dishonor as Clytemnestra’s punishment and the mark of her final defeat, without reference to how the Ghost manipulates these very terms to continue her claims through the Erinyes.

⁶² See Nooter (2017), 266–7, on the transformation of Clytemnestra’s words into physical pain for the Erinyes.

⁶³ The living Clytemnestra, by contrast, consistently emphasized the rightness of her acts, even claiming that the goddess Justice was on her side after killing Agamemnon (e.g. *Ag.* 1432). Cf. Foley (2001), 201–34.

⁶⁴ Her protest also echoes the dishonor that the Chorus of the *Choephoroi* attributes to Agamemnon and his children (ἀτίμους, *Cho.* 443, cf. 94, 408, 485). See Sommerstein (1989), 101–2 n. 95.

⁶⁵ ἐγὼ δ’ ὑφ’ ὑμῶν ὧδ’ ἀπτημισμένη, “I, dishonored thus by you” (*Eum.* 95), or “thanks to you” as e.g. Sommerstein (1989) translates.

⁶⁶ E.g. *Eum.* 394, 780, 792, 796, 807, 824, 838, 845, 853–4.

who several times articulate their function as valuable in the largest schema of the social order, and whose acceptance of honors in Athens leads them to abandon her cause.

These problematic elements together compromise the afterlife that Clytemnestra's Ghost narrates as a foundation for her ethical claims. With her appeal to another realm, the Ghost provides herself an "elsewhere" that is free from the socio-political mores of Argos (and Athens).⁶⁷ She can thus ignore the reciprocal relations involved in words like "shame" and "honor" and convolute their meanings for her own ends. She depicts her suffering below, but instead of the conclusion that others might draw from it – that this is divine or human punishment for her crimes – she twists it into motivation for further familial bloodshed. Evident in the Ghost's afterlife story are the connections to the living Clytemnestra's duplicity. These, alongside her arguments from individual dishonor and her tendentious interpretation of "reproach," all undercut her ethical appeals. Moreover, the *Eumenides* itself takes the transformation of reproach even further, since the Erinyes *only* refer to Clytemnestra as the "reproach from dreams" (ἄνειδος ἐξ ὄνειράτων, *oneidos ex oneiratōn*, 155).⁶⁸ "Reproach" thus comes to replace Clytemnestra's name, which is never spoken by any character again. The Ghost makes specific linguistic moves to transform social pressure into vengeance, using the same vocabulary with which the other characters write her out of the play.

Speaking for Her Very Soul

Clytemnestra loses. Once the *Eumenides* moves to Athens, Athena uses civic, collective language to overturn the kingship and kinship structures of Argos. The ending of the trilogy deliberately shifts the focus away from individual characters and thus from Clytemnestra's personal arguments. It would be irresponsible to the ethical claims of tragic characters, however, to simply accept their dramatic fate. Tragic characters routinely suffer ignominious endings, sometimes without redeeming reversals. For an ethically responsible reading, one must integrate the perspective of the character involved. It is thus imperative to heed how the Ghost of

⁶⁷ The Ghost's treatment of the afterlife as an "elsewhere" is analogous to what Zeitlin (1990) identifies in the classic analysis of the theatrical setting of Thebes (and Argos) as a "site of displacement" for Athens; cf. Seaford (2012), 102–4; and Kurke (2013).

⁶⁸ Cf. Vogel-Ehrensperger (2012), 308 n. 112.

Clytemnestra marks the stakes of her own ethical appeals. She does so with a striking use of the term *psukhē* (*Eum.* 114–15):

ἀκούσαθ' ὡς ἔλεξα τῆς ἐμῆς περὶ
 ψυχῆς

Hear me, as I have spoken for my very
 soul!

The phrase “for my very soul!” (τῆς ἐμῆς περὶ ψυχῆς, *tēs emēs peri psukhēs*) summarizes the Ghost’s pleading. Yet the term *psukhē* here involves a further problem of self-reference, besides those of dream and insubstantiality. Whereas in Homeric afterlife scenes *psukhē* denoted the ghosts and dead themselves, the Ghost of Clytemnestra never refers to herself as a *psukhē*. Instead, her language here objectifies her *psukhē*, preventing it from being identified with her speaking self. The phrase, doing something *peri psukhēs*, is only found a few times before Aeschylus, but in each instance means “defending one’s life from death.”⁶⁹ Needless to say, this gloss is utterly incongruous in the current context. The dead Clytemnestra no longer has any life to save. Aeschylus, through this poetic paradox, forces his audiences to seek a different interpretation.

The concerns of Homeric ghosts suggest that, although they never explicitly declare it, they could be thought of as speaking “on account of” or “for the benefit of” their *psukhē*, in the sense of improving their soul’s condition in the afterlife. This interpretation rests on the demands of the ghosts of Patroclus and the ghost of Elpenor for ritual burial, which would provide their *psychai* entry into the realm of Hades. As a basis for her claims, the Ghost of Clytemnestra does appeal to the cultural mores of obligation to the dead. Yet through her unparalleled use of *peri psukhēs*, she demands the spilling of kindred blood for “the benefit of her soul.”⁷⁰ Unlike the Homeric ghosts, then, the Ghost of Clytemnestra returns to provoke a cultural transgression. She thus undercuts the positive societal functions of ritual, instead twisting the claims of the dead against the

⁶⁹ The analysis here expands on Sommerstein (1989), ad loc.: “this plays on two senses of ψυχή. Normally, to speak or run or fight περὶ ψυχῆς meant to do so ‘for one’s life, with one’s life at stake’ (e.g. *Il.* 22.161; *Od.* 22.245; *Eur. Hel.* 946) . . . only since (Clytemnestra) is dead, she has not been speaking ‘for my life’ but ‘for <the welfare of> my spirit’ (also ψυχή).” On the normal use of the term *psukhē*, etymologically connected with breath, “only when there is a question of life and death,” see Burkert (1985), 195–6. Cf. Chantraine, s.v.; and Beekes, s.v.

⁷⁰ Her language never refers to funeral ritual or any of the possible salvation rituals in the Greek world, such as the Eleusinian Mysteries, on which see the Introduction.

living. In extant epic and tragic literature, she is the first ghost to directly demand her own vengeance.

Aeschylus' treatment of two other dead rulers serves to clarify the point about Clytemnestra's desired change of status in the afterlife. First, Clytemnestra's Ghost is in strong contrast with the earliest extant Aeschylean ghost scene. In the *Persians*, King Darius is actively raised by others in a ritual, speaks for himself, and emphasizes his honor in the underworld (*Pers.* 607–842). The Ghost of Darius is, in fact, called a *psukhē* (ψυχῆν, 630). He does interact with the living world by repeatedly demonstrating concern about the Persian state (e.g. 682) and his son (e.g. 739–51). He even imparts insight to the elders about the change of values at death. Darius sententiously advises them (and thus the theatrical audience) to “give pleasure to your soul (*psukhē*)” (ψυχῆν διδόντες ἡδονήν, 841) because wealth is of no use to the dead (τοῖς θανούσι, 842).⁷¹ Note that this benefit is for the living soul, contrasted with the dead spirit himself. Nevertheless, he does not ask anyone to act on his behalf nor indicate that he will act in the world. Moreover, unlike the ghosts of Patroclus, Elpenor, and Clytemnestra, the Ghost of Darius does not demand any action that might affect his underworld state – he does not need to. He himself declares his power in the underworld (*Pers.* 688–92), and the language and rituals in the scene attest to his honor above. This provides a stark antithesis to the afterlife dishonor and powerlessness of which the Ghost of Clytemnestra complains and to the benefit she seeks through vengeance.

On the opposite end of the spectrum from Darius, two previous scenes of the *Oresteia* – both related to the murdered Agamemnon – contain themes that parallel the Ghost of Clytemnestra's concerns. The first is the Elders expressing consternation over Agamemnon's potential funeral (*Ag.* 1543–6, Chapter 2). They demonstrate the robust link in the *Oresteia* between proper ritual and actual benefit to the *psukhē* by using the phrase “on behalf of his soul” (ψυχῆν . . . χάριν, *psukhē* . . . *kharin*, 1545). This is synonymous with the Ghost of Clytemnestra's later *peri psukhēs* but refers to the rites, rather than to vengeance on his behalf. The second relevant example responds to the abased burial that Clytemnestra actually gives Agamemnon (Chapters 4 and 5). The Chorus of Slave Women, Orestes, and Electra in the *kommos* scene (*Cho.* 306–513) restore to Agamemnon his lost ritual lamentation and

⁷¹ Sourvinou-Inwood (2003), 223–7, explores the gulf between what the audience would have seen as the foolhardy behavior of Darius while alive and the wisdom of his Ghost, which an audience could interpret as the result of his change of status after death and nearness to the divine. Cf. Muntz (2011), 257–71; and Parker (2009), 128–9.

even endeavor to raise him from the dead (315–22, 456, 459) or gain his power (244–5, 479–80, 490). The Slave Women, moreover, accentuate the divide between what ought to be Agamemnon's position as a king honored in the underworld (354–62) and his actual burial as a mutilated and dishonored (ἀτίμους, *atimous*, 443) corpse. They use this disparity to inflame his progeny to vengeance.⁷² The children, in turn, promise their father future household rituals for his help in killing Clytemnestra (*Cho.* 483–8). Every character in the scene appears to accept that kin-killing, and not merely the correct rituals for Agamemnon, can effect the change of status they desire for his afterlife. The benefit that the Ghost of Clytemnestra seeks by having Orestes killed therefore echoes the benefit to Agamemnon's afterlife that the mourners previously used to justify killing her.

The Ghost of Clytemnestra epitomizes the “old justice” of unending vengeance, even from beyond the grave. She disregards entirely the social aspect of ritual closure, evident in the Elders' concern for civic mourning in the *Agamemnon* and the more private concern for household mourning in the *Choephoroi*. Instead, the Ghost of Clytemnestra focuses on murderous acts, ignores civic or familial obligations, and never mentions a desire for ritual lamentation. The reasons she proffers for vengeance, in their focus on her pain and dishonor, also differ from the universal claims the Erinyes make in Orestes' trial, ostensibly on her behalf. Acting for her own *psukhē* means privileging herself as an individual.

Summations/Connections

At every turn, the Ghost of Clytemnestra undercuts the bases of normative ethics, tearing at the social fabric with her claims and actions. The dead queen stands out from previous undead figures in Homer and tragedy by explicitly seeking a change in her afterlife honor not through ritual but through vengeance. Unlike them, also, her living character has already been condemned ethically as a murderer, kin-killer, and liar. The living Clytemnestra deceived through language, took control of the house, and violently subverted the state. For this, she was killed by her own children. That is, in part her own actions and in part her murder by family severed the bonds required for ritual burial, with its positive memorialization, social reintegration, and a sense of closure. Yet despite these seemingly

⁷² Clytemnestra's Ghost goading the Erinyes might be the mirror image of the Chorus of Slave Women attempting to rouse Orestes to kill his mother, cf. Zeitlin (1965), 496; and Chapter 4.

irredeemable issues with her living character, her postmortem fate could have unrolled differently. She could have never appeared at all and become whitewashed over time, like Agamemnon, whose pattern her death follows. He – despite his murderous transgression against the household, being killed by his wife, and receiving a dishonored burial – does eventually gain familial lament and honors.⁷³ Clytemnestra could have returned from the underworld reformed, chastised by punishment, or only demanding proper ritual.⁷⁴ Instead, her Ghost rises implacable, raging about her dishonor, and calling for kindred blood. Her reappearance thus pushes the social problems inherent in the living Clytemnestra's actions and rhetoric to their logical limits.

The Ghost's exceptional challenge is only intensified by her precarious arguments. The emphasis on her status as a dream leads to questions about how far her body can be denatured before her arguments from physical wounds become insubstantial as well. Exactly where she seems to engage emotion most immediately – wounds seen in the heart, underworld shame as an unavenged mother – her language reveals the shifting nature of its referents. Each key phrase the Ghost utters disintegrates its presumed signified: Her wounds are not wounds, her disgrace is not punishment for her acts, and her afterlife depiction fits no one else's. Controlling the narrative and eluding all mores frees the Ghost of Clytemnestra to reinterpret her "shame" and "dishonor" in the afterlife, not as punishments for her transgressions, but as reproaches against the Erinyes themselves. Her story of the afterlife and continuing rhetorical mastery enable her to warp even these sufferings into markers of an ethical imbalance in duty that must be corrected in her favor.

The living queen, bereft of political and physical power, had to rely on language to weave an entrapping web and overturn the social order.⁷⁵ While repugnant for her actions, her dramatic and rhetorical virtuosity captivated audiences internal and external.⁷⁶ As a ghost, Clytemnestra is

⁷³ As we saw in Chapters 4 and 5. In fact, redemptions of Clytemnestra begin after the *Oresteia*, for already in Euripides' *Orestes* Helen sends libations to honor her sister's grave (94–125). On the changing receptions of Clytemnestra, see MacEwen (1990); Komar (2003); and Hall (2005).

⁷⁴ At the end of the *Agamemnon*, for example, Clytemnestra acts to mollify further conflicts, shifting the representation of her character, on which see Foley (2001), 228–9.

⁷⁵ The living Clytemnestra's linguistic potency shares many features with feminine forces marked as monstrous and disruptive in myths of masculine, divine order, which are consequently suppressed, as Rabinowitz (1981) demonstrates comprehensively. Cf. Zeitlin (1978).

⁷⁶ Betensky (1978) rightly connects the dramatic force of the living Clytemnestra with her inventive language both within the play and for the theatrical audience. She is thus similar to Odysseus, the sympathetic fabricator, on which see Pucci (1998), 131.

again innovative with her oratory, even depicting a similar underworld scenario to the one the living queen created for Agamemnon. Clytemnestra, when living, wrote her own play, carefully scripting the return of Agamemnon to include an act of impiety and to culminate in her long-planned vengeance. Analogously, her Ghost breaks the frame of the drama;⁷⁷ she metatheatrically directs the action on stage by rousing the Chorus.⁷⁸ She flickers with self-awareness, with an understanding that she is a dream and knowledge of another, invisible dream.⁷⁹ The living Clytemnestra masterfully manipulated Agamemnon through language and stagecraft; the Ghost of Clytemnestra extends this rhetorical cunning to the image of herself, to her depiction of life beyond death, and to her allusions to the theatrical illusion.

Throughout, Clytemnestra has no divine support, no prophet, oracle, or command from the gods as Agamemnon and Orestes have. Even her champions, the Erinyes, who at first take up her ethical claims, eventually abandon her. They shift to themselves the vocabulary of reproach and honor that the Ghost had attempted to redefine. They generalize Clytemnestra's claims, thus annulling her singularity. Despite their corrupt femininity, despite their connection with blood and punishment that made them abhorrent, they gain honor from Athena.⁸⁰ It becomes evident over the rest of the *Eumenides* – as the other characters mute Clytemnestra's name and undercut her role as mother and queen – that the new social system and justice of Athena is meant to suppress Clytemnestra.⁸¹ Within the context of the trilogy as a whole, Clytemnestra's claims are compromised and then forsaken.⁸²

⁷⁷ Ringer (1998), ix–x, 8–12, argues (concerning Sophocles' tragedies) that creative characters who act as directors, role play, and deceive are part of a suite of devices for calling attention to dramatic illusions and simultaneously creating connections for audiences with their own cultural background (with the contemporary *polis*, the theater, and the festival setting).

⁷⁸ R. Cioffi, in a 2015 Society for Classica Studies talk, "Night of the Waking Dead: The Ghost of Clytemnestra and Collective Vengeance in Aeschylus' *Eumenides*," suggestively likened Clytemnestra's Ghost to a chorus leader, even to a *choregos* directing the Erinyes, which hints at metatheatrical possibilities from a different angle. Cf. Nooter (2017), 160 n. 38, on Clytemnestra as director and author of the Erinyes.

⁷⁹ Although there are no explicit statements within the *Odyssey* equating Odysseus' story of the underworld with artful invention, one can trace the concatenation "ghost-image-dream-story-deception," Pucci (1987), 76–109, and (1998), 131–77.

⁸⁰ Brown (1983), 34, sees the whole *Eumenides* as changing the terms of the debate from the previous human cycle of retribution to a wholly divine issue, only resolved by the conversion of the Erinyes; cf. Sewell-Rutter (2007), 79–109.

⁸¹ Note that the same actor would have played Clytemnestra and Athena, adding a metatheatrical connection. See Brown (2018), 20–3, for the complex splitting of roles between and within the *Oresteia*.

⁸² Foley (2001), 201–34, demonstrates that, even though the living Clytemnestra justifies herself and demands to be treated comparably to male autonomous agents, judgment in the *Oresteia* always

It is precisely the abandonment by all humans and divinities that the Ghost complains of, and, through force of personality, returns from the dead to resist. In asking to right a wrong done to an individual, the Ghost reengages the living Clytemnestra's multidimensional character.⁸³ For the living queen was not, by any means, a flat villain but challenged a system that oppressed women and killed her daughter.⁸⁴ To recognize the full power of Clytemnestra's tragic personality is to see that she keeps fighting the lost fight, even after death.⁸⁵ The Ghost of Clytemnestra names herself and calls out, implicating internal and external audiences.⁸⁶ When she narrates her experience in the underworld with the first-person singular, the Ghost makes a personal entreaty. Despite the compromised nature of her words, she insists that her hearers "listen" in all seriousness, since she is "speaking for her very soul."

By the act of locution, dramatic characters demand ethical respect for their hypostasis. Some have declared it a fundamental of drama, the imperative to count the persona, *prosōpon*, mask, or character, as a person, not merely as a means to further plot, dramatic tension, or an idea.⁸⁷ In speaking, the Ghost awakens not only the sleeping Erinyes but also anyone who hears.⁸⁸ The Ghost's words thus implicate each individual

ends up being given along gendered lines; cf. Winnington-Ingram (1948); McClure (1999), 70–92; and Zeitlin (1965), 589–93.

⁸³ See Easterling (1973), 3–7, on stage presence and entanglement in relatable human dilemmas as criteria for emotionally credible characters in tragedy, with specific reference to the *Oresteia*.

⁸⁴ Zeitlin (1996), 87–111, discusses the *Oresteia*'s depiction of the problems that women pose in Greek cultural representations, especially tragedy, as always a radical Other in a male-dominated society, never an end in themselves, a dynamic that their deaths, especially, display; cf. Loraux (1987), 1–3.

⁸⁵ Vellacott (1984b), 62–75, among others, claims Clytemnestra is the real "tragic heroine" of the *Oresteia*; cf. Anderson (1929); and Winnington-Ingram (1948).

⁸⁶ The Ghost's speech thus resonates with Clytemnestra's transgressive public discourse in the *Agamemnon*, which has drawn much critical attention. Cf. Zeitlin (1965), 481–3; and McClure (1999), 70–80. On silence as the adornment of women, see Loraux (1987), 1–3, 21, 26–7; and McClure (1999), 5, 7–8, 20–8, 32–9, who builds on work of Zeitlin and Winkler to show that women who speak for themselves are immediately transgressive. Foley (2001), 207–9, discusses Clytemnestra's mixing of masculine and feminine roles through the usurpation of masculine speech.

⁸⁷ Nagy (2010) theorizes one way of connecting the theatrical actor to a notion of outreach to the dramatic audience (37, emphasis original): "Just as *subjectivity* can be analyzed in terms of the *person* in *grammar*, it can also be analyzed in terms of the *persona* in *theater* . . . in Greek, the noun *πρόσωπον* (*prosōpon*) likewise means 'theatrical mask' . . . a subjective agent, an 'I' who is looking for a dialogue with a 'you.'"

⁸⁸ Altieri (1998) focuses on the "lyrical I" that cries out of literary texts and calls for ethical engagement. Critiquing Nussbaum and others who use literature to either establish ethical generalizations or supplement them, he rightly claims that listening to characters in literature encourages thinking through complexities lacking in such universalizing theories. On direct address in the second person implicating the theatrical audience of the *Oresteia*, see Sommerstein (1989), ad 526–8.

audience member in the (over)heard command to listen, to “see,” to imagine in one’s heart. Clytemnestra – dead, dreamt – is calling out to us.

Although the *Oresteia* stands so early in the Western theatrical tradition, its Ghost scene continues to solicit reconsideration of this potent character. As a formerly living human who now lacks substance, yet has speaking presence, who must motivate through argument, image, and story-telling, the Ghost darkly illuminates tragedy’s ability to raise serious ethical issues.⁸⁹ Clytemnestra eloquently demands respect for herself, even after death, a respect the drama finally withdraws from her. Yet she represents a nexus of challenges to ethically normative theories and notions of virtuous actors. Through the Ghost, an audience confronts the possibility that human ethical claims may be valid even for a transgressor against the state, destroyer of family, and shameless deceiver, even as spoken by a character who is dead, who is harassed in the afterlife, and who pleads within a dream of demons. The Ghost of Clytemnestra’s key provocation is in the tension between the estrangement she causes and the pull of her ethical appeals: She is spectral, guilty, yet human.

⁸⁹ Clytemnestra, both living and dead, is thus ethically significant in complementary ways to later tragic female characters who have drawn much attention for breaking social barriers, such as Antigone, who has credibility as a moral actor, and Medea, who has enough magical power to escape punishment; cf. Foley (2001), 172–200, 243–71.