

SEEING SOUNDS: SYNAESTHESIA
IN THE PARODOS OF *SEVEN AGAINST THEBES*



As the Chorus of Theban girls¹ perform during the parodos their excited dancing movements on the acropolis — roused by an acute feeling of fear² — they perceive, both aurally and visually, the enemy army advancing towards the city. Among their potent impressions, especially noticeable is the *visual* construal of the noise made by the clash of shields and spears:

ἀκούετ' ἢ οὐκ ἀκούετ' ἀσπίδων κτύπον; 100
πέπλων καὶ στεφάνων πότ' εἰ μὴ νῦν †ἀμ-
φι λιτὰν† ἕξομεν;³
κτύπον δέδορκα· πάταγος οὐχ ἐνὸς δορός·

The focus of our inquiry is κτύπον δέδορκα, a clearly unexpected formulation,⁴ embodying an instance of synaesthetic metaphor: κτύπος, apper-

1. They identify themselves as παρθένοι in l. 110; see Stehle (2005) 102; Gruber (2009) 157-160.
2. See Schnyder (1995) 66-72; Giordano-Zecharya (2006). It is very probable that the women are entering the orchestra in a scattered manner (σποράδην): see Mesk (1934); Taplin (1977) 141-142; Lupas & Petre (1981) 42; Schnyder (1995) 68-69; Gruber (2009) 166-167; *contra* Wilamowitz (1914) 69-71; Hutchinson (1985) 56-57. Their unruly movement is mirrored in the dochmiac metre prevalent in the song, which is astrophic at least as far as l. 108; what is, in fact, attested is a progression from a disorderly behaviour, conditioned by panic, to a much more orderly stance, something reflected in the metric pattern of the whole parodos; see Stehle (2005) 104-109.
3. ἀμφι λιταν<ἀ βαλεῖν χροῖαν> ἕξομεν; West.
4. Note that Murray adopts Askew's δέδοικα in his OCT, regarding δέδορκα as "vix credible". Meanwhile, a diverse array of interpretations is supplied by the ancient

taining to the perceptual mode of hearing, is syntactically connected with the verb *δέδορκα*, belonging to another mode, namely sight. While we are certainly not dealing with an isolated instance within Greek and Latin literature, similar expressions are far from frequent, sometimes even being shadowed by enigma and controversy.⁵ Synaesthetic metaphor also claims its own distinct place as a figure of speech in Western literature, having risen to considerable prominence within the work of several renowned 19th-century poets;⁶ interestingly, it has also proved a controversial literary device, creating, at times, an unsettling effect on critics.⁷ Literary instances of synaesthetic metaphor belong to a wider category of intersensal correspondences manifested on a linguistic-cognitive level;⁸ correspondences which are, of course, to be distinguished from occurrences of ‘strong’ synaesthesia. In the latter case, we are dealing with a real perceptual phenomenon,

scholiasts (Smith pp. 64-65); cf. Kenney’s (2003) ironic remark: “it is amusing to see how the scholiasts tied themselves in knots in their efforts to explain the famous crux at *Septem* 103”.

5. Notably contested are Soph. *Trach.* 693-694 and the Homeric *ὄψ λειριόεσσα* (see further, nn. 15, 25). In general, synaesthetic metaphors are yet to be granted the attention they deserve — with some exceptions, such as a book-length study focusing on Latin literature (Catrein 2003); on Greek literature, Stanford (1936, 47-62) remains a key point of reference (and id. 1942, 106-110 on Aeschylus); useful articles are, chiefly, Waern (1952); Segal (1977); Holt (1988). Many examples and discussion can be found in Wille (2001a) esp. 78-80, 317-322; (2001b) esp. 776-796, 976-988, 1037-1043. On synaesthesia in Aristotle, see Schmitt (2002).
6. Synaesthesia is present in poets such as Shelley, Byron, Baudelaire and Rimbaud; see Ullmann (1945); O’Malley (1957) 399-408; id. (1964); Paetzold (2003) 845-850. Generally on synaesthetic metaphor, see Marks (1978) 211-256; Day (1996); Marks (1996); Gross (2002); Cacciari (2008).
7. The use of synaesthesia by the symbolist poets, in particular, would be condemned in certain quarters as sign of decline; hence, an essay title such as Engstrom’s — “In defence of synaesthesia in literature” (1946) — should not surprise us. A noted critic has been the renowned classicist Lobeck (1846, 328-352; 333-334 on *κτόπον δέδορκα*), whose negative assessment is due to a strict application of rhetorical criteria regarding ‘solecism’, as in Ar. *Rhet.* 3.5.1407b18-21 (yet contrast *εὐόφθαλμον ἀκοῦσαι* in *Pol.* 2.8.1268b24). As a distinguished exponent one could mention Herder, who exalts synaesthesia in *The Origins of Language* as a primeval phenomenon originating in the purported primal common sensory organ, the *sensorium commune*; see O’Malley (1957); Paetzold (2003) 840-845.
8. I.e. cross-sensory correspondences expressed through language, but also in the form of perceptual similarity and perceptual interactions during information processing (as manifested in experiments). The terms usually applied are ‘weak’ synaesthesia or ‘cross-modal similarity’ (as in Marks, 1996, 41-44).

rooted in the human brain, a bodily condition in which a person undergoes a perceptual experience in one sensory modality when a second modality is stimulated — an exemplary case being ‘sound-colour synaesthesia’.⁹

To return to *κτύπον δέδορκα*, the challenge laying before us consists in ascertaining *why* does the Chorus resort to this synaesthetic expression; we need to position this uncommon merging of the senses within the whole context of the parodos and to attempt to trace its connection to the wider problematic of speech as a conveyor of reality, namely the question of the faithfulness of perception and verbal representation — an issue prominent throughout *Seven against Thebes*.¹⁰ This metaphor further calls to be assessed with regard to the question of *female* speech, a central theme of the play, crucial not least for the characterization of Eteokles, who engages in verbal altercation with the women both after the parodos and in the wake of his decision to face his brother, Polyneikes, at the seventh gate (line 653 ff.).

1. The Synaesthetic Pattern

Aiming at a fuller appraisal of *κτύπον δέδορκα*, it is worth making a brief reference to the framework of ‘directionality’ discernible in synaesthetic metaphors: the fact, namely, that the mapping of properties from one sensory modality to another is not wholly arbitrary, but instead follows specific patterns. This ‘directionality’ of synaesthetic correspondences is expressed as a gradation, a ‘hierarchy’ of the senses determining the order in which they give or receive meaning from other modalities: sensory words, usually adjectives, are thus transferred from the physiologically least differentiating modalities to the most differentiating and evolutionary advanced.¹¹ Charac-

9. That is, when one perceives music not merely in terms of aural melody, but also as a dynamic display of colours, shapes or contours. Note that an adequate definition of synaesthesia has only recently been attained due to advances made in brain imaging techniques and the knowledge adduced by cognitive neuroscience. Interestingly, such phenomena are six times more frequent among women than men (Cacciari 2008, 434). For a succinct general overview, see Ramachandran & Hubbard (2001); standard volumes are Marks (1978); Baron-Cohen & Harrison (1997); Adler (2002); Cytowic (2002); Robertson & Sagiv (2005); van Campen (2007).

10. See Longo (1978) 87-92; Zeitlin (1982) *passim*.

11. The seminal study is Ullmann (1945); for further research, see Williams (1976); Day (1996); Shen & Cohen (1998); also discussion by Gross (2002) 69-72. In fact, an important and stimulating scientific discussion is underway, aspiring to provide ade-

teristically, induced images tend to be visual, whereas inducing stimuli tend to be auditory, tactile or gustatory; at the same time, hearing is the sense the most frequently expanded and elaborated upon, both by synaesthetic metaphors and actual synaesthesia.¹² An important *caveat* is required here, however: notwithstanding the import of the physiological basis of intersensory correspondences, the ‘meaning’ of synaesthetic metaphors is not ‘simply there’, innate and fixed, but is conditioned by linguistic and cultural processes and evolves like that of other metaphors.¹³ What is more, literary, especially poetic, instances of synaesthetic metaphor can be more innovative, less expected than intersensory transferences effected in everyday speech.¹⁴

In the case of *κτύπον δέδορκα* we are dealing, of course, with a move between the two highest sensory modalities, whereby hearing is construed as seeing. Yet, apart from this rather concrete schema, we may posit a more abstract, generalizing pattern, whereby *δέδορκα* does not merely denote vision, but ‘perception’ in a more general sense. However, we shall postpone, for now, the discussion of this second conceptual schema in order to consider the synaesthetic expression *κτύπον δέδορκα* in its more concrete ramifications. Seeking its experiential basis, one may point to the synaesthetic attribution of visual qualities (such as colour) to sound,¹⁵ as in the case of ‘a bright sound’.¹⁶ In fact, the correspondence between high-pitched sound

quate answers as regards the nature of these constraints. A promising theory, propounded by V. S. Ramachandran and E. M. Hubbard (2001, esp. 8-14), seeks to explain them by suggesting that concepts are represented in brain maps in the same way that percepts (like colours or faces) are — something which leads them to suppose that intersensory metaphors can be regarded as involving cross-activation of conceptual maps in a manner analogous to the cross-activation of perceptual maps in ‘strong’ synaesthesia.

12. A conspicuous example being the use of tactile adjectives in order to assess the timbre of musical instruments — effectively the only descriptive means available; see Day (1996) 12. On synaesthetic Greek musical vocabulary, see Rocconi (2003) 53-80. Cf. Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 15 (p. 60, 1-5 U-R).
13. See Day (1996) 16-17. Significantly, patterns of directionality manifest variations from language to language; see Gross (2002) 62-64.
14. Gross (2002) 78-82.
15. Cf. the intriguing *ῥη λειριόεσσα* (‘lily-like’ voice) of the cicadas (Hom. *Il.* 3.151-152), whereby the whiteness of the lily equals clarity; see Kirk (1985) 283-284; Sardiello (1996). For a different explanation, interpreting *λειριόεις* as ‘dewy’, hence suggesting a ‘sweet voice’ (since dew and honey have properties imparting eloquence or musical skill), see Egan (1985).
16. Cf. Soph. *Phil.* 201: *προνόμνη κτύπος* (cf. 188-189, 216-217); with comments by Segal (1977) 92-93.

and glaring light is experimentally demonstrated, actually embodying a prototypical case of cross-modal similarity:¹⁷ in Greek literature it is most conspicuously represented through the construal of the sound of the trumpet as a blazing light.¹⁸ We may assert that such a correspondence, though not expressly present in *κτύπον δέδορκα*, is nevertheless evoked in the mind of spectators, who would be familiar with the particularly vivid Homeric descriptions of the gleam of armour, as characteristically in *Iliad* 2.457-458: ἀπό χαλκοῦ θεσπεσίοιο / αἴγλη παμφανόωσα δι' αἰθέρος οὐρανὸν ἔκε — descriptions which can be found in tandem with references to the noise made by the advancing army.¹⁹ Notably, the roar and cries of battle may also be described as 'burning': τότε δ' ἄμφι μάχῃ ἐνοπή τε δεδήει.²⁰ A remarkable instance attesting to the continuation of this Homeric tradition is Alcaeus' fr. 140 V: μαρμαίρει δὲ μέγας δόμος / χάλκῳ, παῖσα δ' Ἄρη κεκόσμηται στέγα / λάμπρυσιν κνίαισι (1-3).²¹ Within this tradition, lines 100-103 of *Seven against Thebes* retain their uniqueness due to the synaesthetic merging of the aural and the visual. One may, in fact, contrast the Aeschylean passage to the *sequence* of hearing and vision in lines 110-113 of Euripides' *Phoenissae*, which may actually be read as an 'analysis' of the synaesthetic perception of the women in *Seven*: to Antigone's exclamation κατάχαλκον ἅπαν / πεδίον ἀστράπτει the Servant replies: οὐ γάρ τι φαύλος ἦλθε Πολυ-εΐκης χθόνα / πολλοῖς μὲν ἵπποις, μυρίοις δ' ὄπλοις βρέμων.

17. Marks (1996) 43.

18. Characteristically in Aesch. *Pers.* 395: σάλπιγξ δ' ἀντὶ πάντ' ἐκεῖν' ἐπέφλεγεν (with Garvie 2009, 193); cf. Eur. *Pho.* 1377-1378 (with Mastronarde 1991, 534-535). A hymn may also be paralleled to glaring light, as in Pind. *I.* 4.43: ἄφραι πρὸς ὄν ἕμων; cf. Soph. *OT* 186-187, 473-475 (with Segal 1977, 88-91); Eur. *El.* 694-695. Optical metaphors are also used in musical terminology; see Rocconi (2003) 69-77.

19. As in *Il.* 2.459-466, continuing the optical imagery (455-458) partly quoted above; see Kirk (1985) 162-165; a similar combination is evident in *Il.* 19.359-364. Note especially the expression *τεύχεσι λαμπόμενος/-οι* (e.g. 17.214, 18.510), on which see Graz (1965, 234-240), who remarks that the verb *λάμπω* is applied to warriors — especially eminent ones like Achilles or Hektor — as they *are about* to attack (239). See, more generally, Krischer (1971) 36-38.

20. *Il.* 12.35; further instances in Wille (2001a) 78-80. For a modern parallel, cf. Swinburne's "bright sound of battle along the Grecian waves" (*Birthday Ode for the Anniversary Festival of Victor Hugo*).

21. See analysis by Marzullo (2009, 3-7, 91-95, 148-149), notably taking recourse to synaesthetic metaphor in order to convey the power of *μαρμαίρει*: "è l'equivalente ritmico-verbale di una strepitosa fanfara, dei concitati, incalzanti clangori che la sostanziano" (5).

It should be noted that the synaesthetic effect in *κτύπον δέδορκα* is reinforced through the choice of verb, which is certainly not the typical, ‘unmarked’ term for ‘seeing’: namely, while *δράω* is the preferred verb when what is at stake is *whether* one sees something,²² *δέρομαι* stands, already in Homer, for a piercing and threatening stare.²³ Notably, in *Seven against Thebes* it is employed by the Messenger to describe the frightening gaze of the Seven leaders as they are sacrificing a bull to Ares, Enyo and Fear; they are said to be staring, like lions, at Ares — *λέοντων ὧς Ἄρη δεδορκότων* (53): a metonymic pattern highlighting the menacing character of their gaze. Yet, given that *δέρομαι* does not merely denote a darting and intense glance, but may also entail the emission of streaming light from the eyes,²⁴ we may assert, as regards *κτύπον δέδορκα*, that the metaphoric intensity of the women’s fearful gaze is mirrored in the power of visualization inherent in their speech.²⁵ In a sense, the women are not merely ‘perceiving’ the threatening sound of arms, but also ‘relaying’ their fear to their addressees — an issue to which we shall return. Further, *δέρομαι* as a medio-passive verb is also most apt in order to convey the inner agitation of the viewing subject:²⁶ an inner upheaval, in the case of the Chorus of *Seven*, which is divulged not solely through speech, but also, importantly, via unruly bodily motion, whose foremost marker is the dochmiac metre.

Yet, what is further notable about *κτύπον δέδορκα* is that it embodies a synaesthetic element not merely in its semantic aspect, but also in its *acoustic* dimension. In order to better appreciate that, we should revisit the whole of lines 100-103:

ἀκούετ' ἢ οὐκ ἀκούετ' ἀσπίδων κτύπον;

100

22. As in *Pers.* 1017-1019 or *Cho.* 1061.

23. One may recall Gorgo *δεινὸν δερκομένη* (*Il.* 11.37), as well as the association between *δέρομαι* and *δράκων* in *Il.* 22.93-95; see Chantraine (1968-1980) s.v. *δέρομαι*. Due to its particular signification — as Schmidt (1876, 259) aptly notes — *δέρομαι*, though not liable to acquire a more general meaning, may nevertheless be applied to a *different* sensory modality.

24. Cf. Hom. *Od.* 19.446: *πῦρ δ' ὀφθαλμοῖσι δεδορκώς*. See Mugler (1960) 60-68; id. (1964) 83-85; Graz (1965) 240.

25. To quote from the ancient scholia, *μετήγαγε τὰς αἰσθήσεις ἐπὶ τὸ ἐναργέστερον* (Smith p. 64); with Wille (2001a) 320. A similar interpretation is offered by Hutchinson (1985) 63. Compare the frightened Deianeira’s exclamation in Soph. *Trach.* 693-694: *δέρομαι φάτιν ἄφραστον*; on which, see Segal (1977) 91-92; Holt (1988).

26. As in Hom. *Il.* 13.85-87; see Prier (1989) 29-31.

πέπλων καὶ στεφάνων πότ' εἰ μὴ νῦν ἄμ-
 φι λιτάνῃ ἔξομεν;
 κτύπον δέδορκα· πάταγος οὐχ ἑνὸς δορός·

We may trace, first of all, a chiasmic pattern stretching from ἀκούετε to δέδορκα: whereas in line 100 the percept (κτύπος) follows the verb of perception, in line 103 κτύπον is emphatically placed at the beginning of the line. We also encounter a second chiasmic structure determining the *object* of perception: while the iterated verb ἀκούετ' ἢ οὐκ ἀκούετ' is answered by the single δέδορκα, to ἀσπίδων κτύπον corresponds first κτύπον and then πάταγος οὐχ ἑνὸς δορός, forming a climactic pattern: firstly, because the 'single' κτύπος is projected anew as πάταγος, a term denoting a mix of sounds, explicitly here οὐχ ἑνός;²⁷ secondly, because from a defensive piece of equipment (shield) we move on to the offensive weapon par excellence, the spear.²⁸ We may sense an acoustic patterning as well: ἀκούετ' ἢ οὐκ ἀκούετ' is a 'protracted' utterance, characterized by a proliferation of vowels, intended to convey the anxiousness of the women:²⁹ to this question a brusque and agitated answer is given, marked by the unexpected δέδορκα. In order to appreciate the special impact of lines 100 and 103, we should keep in mind that they form iambic, 'spoken' interjections, which "lift themselves clearly from the context",³⁰ interrupting the (anxious) exhortations of the Chorus (or members of it) to rush to the altars (97-99, 101-102) — thus sparking further anxiety and fear.³¹ Moreover, the sequence κτύπον

27. Cf. l. 239: πάταγον ἀνάμιγα; also Eur. *Heracl.* 832. See Schmidt (1879) 320, 332, 335-338. On κτύπος, see below, n. 36.

28. The foremost organ of enslavement in ll. 322-323.

29. Especially through the long syllables; cf. Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Comp.* 20 [p. 91, 12-19 U-R]) on *Od.* 11.593-596; cf. Stanford (1967) 106-108. To this effect also contributes the 'hiatus' created by ἢ οὐκ; cf. Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 40 (p. 215, 8-10 U-R). We shall refer several times to Dionysius' analyses, since he offers an ancient viewpoint, however removed he certainly is from Aeschylus' time. Cf. Ar. *Rhet.* 3.2.1405b6-7: κάλλος δὲ ὀνόματος (...) ἐν τοῖς ψόφοις ἢ τῶ σσημανωμένῳ (also 16-18).

30. Dale (1968) 86.

31. *Pace* Hutchinson (1985, 56), lines 100 and 103 must have been uttered by single members of the Chorus — not necessarily by the same person (the Coryphaeus), as suggested by Wilamowitz (1914) 70-71; Dale (1968) 86; Lupas & Petre (1981) 43; indeed, there is no reason to rule out a real dialogic sequence: so Kraus (1957) 60. In fact, the proliferation of asyndeta renders probable the distribution of ll. 78-108, partly at least, to individual speakers — given also the high probability of a σποράδην entrance: see esp. Schnyder (1995) 68-69; Gruber (2009) 166-167; taking the lead

δέδορκα· πάταγος has an analogy much more favourable to consonants (actually two of them double: *κτ* and *ρκ*), while also involving three consequent short *a* that convey a sense of brusqueness, but also imminence.³² The very use of *πάταγος*, with its onomatopoetic quality, intensifies *κτύπος*;³³ further, the iterated *δ* in *δέδορκα* possesses a ‘harsh’ quality,³⁴ which is reinforced within line 103 since *-δορ-* resounds in *δορός*;³⁵ in fact, *δέδορκα* can be regarded as possessing a distinctly more pointed, ‘aggressive’ tone, juxtaposed with the interrogative *ἀκούετ’ ἢ οὐκ ἀκούετ’*. Indeed, the long back vowel *ου* (*/oɪ/*) may be regarded as ‘blunt’ or ‘hushed’, particularly in its combination with the voiceless stops *κ* and *τ*, which are reiterated in *κτύπον* in the same line.³⁶ To reinforce this assertion we may invoke modern experimental research on the ‘physiognomic’ quality of sounds, which ascribes to the English [u] sound — phonetically resembling the Greek *ου* — characteristics such as those mentioned.³⁷ To sum up, the

from Hermann (1852); Bücheler (1877); Verrall (1887) 148. Instead, Robert (1922, 64-65) opts to divide up ll. 78-108 between two half-Choruses.

32. Note that short vowels are considered by Dionysius as non-euphonic (*Comp.* 14 [p. 51, 11-12 U-R]).
33. On the onomatopoetic origin of *πάταγος*, see Chantraine (1968-1980) s.v.; Della Bona (2008-2009) 73-74; cf. Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 16 (p. 62, 14-15 U-R).
34. One may refer to *δὲ δέεται* in Men. *Ep.* 716: see Post (1937) 342. This effect is intensified by *-ρκ-* (as well as the *κτ-* of *κτύπος*); cf. Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 16 (pp. 64-65 U-R) on Homer (esp. *Od.* 6.137): *ὅταν δ’ οἰκτρὰν ἢ φοβερὰν ἢ ἀγέρωχον ὄψιν εἰσάγη ... τῶν φοροειδῶν ἢ ἀφῶνων τὰ δυσεμφωρότατα λήφεται καὶ καταπνικῶσει τοῦτοις τὰς συλλαβάς*.
35. A kind of ‘alliterative linking’; on this notion, see Silk (1974) 178-182 (with Aeschylean examples). On the ‘rough’ character of *ρ*, cf. Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 14 (p. 54, 13 U-R): *τραχύνει δὲ τὸ ρ*. For instances of *ρ*-alliteration, cf. *Seven* 78-80, 181-185 (with Porzig 1926, 83, 85).
36. *Κτύπος* itself usually denotes a strong, yet low-pitched, sound: “jeden starken und dabei *nicht hellen* Ton fester Körper”, to quote Schmidt’s (synaesthetic) explanation (1879, 318-321: 319; italics mine). Cf. *Ag.* 1533; *Cho.* 427, 653.
37. We are referring to experiments at which participants were asked to connect the invented (nonsensical) words *maluma and *takete (or similar coinages) with qualities (to be selected from bipolar scales, such as peaceful-aggressive, quiet-noisy, bright-dark, big-small etc.) or even with shapes, whereby the sound [u] is associated with lobular, as opposed to pointed forms. See Marks (1996) 46-48; Ramachandran & Hubbard (2001) 18-23; Cacciari (2008) 437-439. According to Ramachandran and Hubbard, “there may be natural constraints on the ways in which sounds are mapped on to objects”, something, which — in their view — could even provide a first vital clue for understanding the origins of proto-language (19). Note that the ‘darkness’ of [u], as opposed to the brightness of [a], has been an experimental given already from the beginnings of the 20th century: see Jakobson & Waugh (1979) 192-194.

whole effect procured, especially in line 103, is one of shock and fear, a prevailing emotion of the Chorus through the parodos and beyond.³⁸

The above analysis, relying on the phonaesthetic quality of linguistic sound patterns, can be supported by the well-attested skilful employment of alliteration or puns by Aeschylus.³⁹ Notably, in Aristophanes' *Frogs*, not only aural, but also visual traits are assigned to Aeschylus' words, characteristically through the expressions *ἱππολόφων λόγων κοροθαίολα νείκη* or *ρήματα μορμωρωπά*.⁴⁰ Indices of a study of the 'physiognomic' aspect of language may actually be traced — before Plato — in a thinker not much temporally removed from Aeschylus, namely Democritus, who was concerned with the affective character of speech on a level more primary than the semantic, thus analyzing language into its basic constituent elements. Such must have been the topic of his lost works *Περὶ εὐφώνων καὶ δυσφώνων γραμμάτων* (*On Pleasant- and Ill-Sounding Letters*), as well as *Περὶ καλλοσύνης ἐπέων* (*On the Beauty of Words*).⁴¹

2. The Women's Perception of Reality in the Parodos

Having established the expression *κτύπον δέδορκα* as an instance of potent visualization, we shall now consider its position within the whole context of

38. Notably reinforced through *φ*-alliteration, particularly in lines 132-138; see Garvie (2002) 11.

39. For concentrated treatments of alliteration in Aeschylus, see Porzig (1926) 73-94; Stanford (1942) 80-85; Pogliani (1994); Garvie (2002); on puns, esp. Couch (1931) on *Persae*; a notable case is *Ag.* 263, 265, on which see Goldhill (1984) 35. Generally on alliteration in Greek poetry, see Defradas (1958); Stanford (1967) 99-121; Silk (1974) 173-193; regarding tragedy, see now Rutherford (2012) 113-118. On alliteration, as well as the associated phenomena of onomatopoeia and 'sound symbolism', ideal starting points remain Wimsatt (1975); Jakobson & Waugh (1979) esp. 177-231; see now Hinton et al. (1994); Bergen (2004). Also Bredin (1996), who forcefully argues for the existence in man of "a deep-seated need to coordinate words with things", to the effect that "even the smallest pretext, such as a slight resemblance, an association, a peripheral property, is enough to spark off in our linguistic experience an awareness of phonetic mimesis, no matter how slight." (566); on this point, cf. Stanford (1967) 115-116.

40. *Μορμωρωπά* (925) means 'bogey-faced': see Dover (1993) 308. On Aeschylus' 'grandiloquent' style, see now Podlecki (2006); on Aristophanes' parody of his style in *Frogs*, see Walsh (1984) 80-106.

41. See discussion by Ford (2002) 165-167; Porter (2010) 209-235.

the parodos. More specifically, with regard to the specific *mode* of perceiving reality adopted by the Chorus, a mode which — notably right at the beginning of the song (81-82) — suggests itself as effectively antagonistic to the Messenger’s autoptic perception:

*αἰθερία κόνις με πείθει φανεῖσ'
ἄνανδος σαφῆς ἔτυμος ἄγγελος·*

Πείθει is a powerful verb, indicating firm belief leading to cognitive confidence:⁴² what is, indeed, highlighted here is the sufficient character of the optical stimuli (*φανεῖσα*) in terms of informative content, since it divulges a message which — though not conveyed by means of speech (*ἄνανδος*) — is climactically described as clear and, moreover, true (*σαφῆς, ἔτυμος*).⁴³ Thus, the optical impression does not merely usurp the role of speech, but is, actually, projected as a “clear messenger” in the place of the human Messenger, the *κατάσκοπος* (Spy), who has introduced himself as conveyor of ‘clear’ dispatches: *ἦκω σαφῆ τὰκεῖθεν ἐκ στρατοῦ φέρων* (40), *σαφηνεῖα λόγον* (67). In effect, the oxymoron *ἄνανδος ἔτυμος ἄγγελος*, a contradiction in terms, positioned at the very beginning of the parodos, embodies a programmatic destabilization of the authority of speech, of its capacity to convey the truth — a theme that shall rise into prominence in the *Redepaare*.⁴⁴ Within that scene, the Messenger, who has introduced himself as a bearer of ‘clear’ information (*σαφῆ*), will frequently adopt a pointedly personal tone, a mode of expression often abstract or metaphoric. His descriptions are scarcely unmediated by emotion, even feelings of fear — this being particularly the case when he announces Hippomedon.⁴⁵

To return to the parodos, the privileging of the optical stimuli (*φανεῖσα* 81), by the Chorus, introduces the important role of sight in the women’s mode of perception. In fact, vision is prominent until line 108 and remains

42. One is reminded of *πέποιθα* in line 521; see further, n. 103.

43. See Lupas & Petre (1981) 45-46. On *ἔτυμος* here, denoting solid evidence, see Levet (2008) 48-49.

44. See Cameron (1970) 100-109; Zeitlin (1982) *passim*.

45. Note especially the expression *ὄνκ ἄλλως ἐρῶ* (490), betraying his inability to control speech. During the whole scene he effectively verges on acting as a spokesperson for the Argives and, for this reason, he will not avoid being even (subtly) reprimanded by Eteokles: note particularly the reprieve inherent in *κόμπαζ' ἐπ' ἄλλω* (480): see Benardete (1968) 8.

so until line 149, from which point onwards aural impressions prevail. While there is no need to posit any rigid contours, this schema, suggested by J. Mesk,⁴⁶ is valuable to the extent that it is based on a solid datum of theatrical realism: the fact, namely, that as the enemy army closes in on the walls of Thebes, the women are gradually becoming unable to visually perceive it.⁴⁷ On a further elaboration, we may assert that what is attested until roughly line 149, is not merely the foregrounding of visual stimuli, but a recurring climactic pattern, whereby a shift is effected from aural to visual impressions. This is first evident in lines 85-88:⁴⁸

[βοᾶ] ποτᾶται, βρέμει δ' ἀμαχέτον δίκαν 85
 ἕδατος ὀροτύπου.
 ἰὼ ἰὼ θεοὶ θεαί τ' ὀρόμενον
 κακὸν ἀλέύσατε.

The image of the shout which flies, in tandem with that of roaring water vehemently hitting a mountain, form a powerful image, which intensifies the projected (or real as well?) auditory impressions.⁴⁹ What is further observable in the above verses is a shift from a predominantly aural image (*βρέμει* ... *ὀροτύπου*) to a (metaphorically) optical one: *ὀρόμενον κακὸν* — the verb *ὀρνυμαι* denoting motion or 'rise' on the horizontal axis.⁵⁰ Meanwhile, the

46. Mesk (1934); based on Robert (1922).

47. It actually corresponds to the metric structure of the parodos, which is astrophic until l. 108, while from l. 109 to l. 149 we encounter a flawed parallelism between strophe and antistrophe, which it would be preferable not to attempt to heal through emendation (*pace* West; see id. 1990, 102-108), but rather accept it, since it “emphasizes the chorus’ hard-won progression from astrophic to strophic stanzas” (Stehle 2005, 106). Indeed, from l. 150 onwards, strophic respension is much more regular, something which reflects the orderly fashion of the women’s prayer, their increasing *εὐφημία*; see Stehle (op. cit.) for the whole analysis. The view that ll. 109-149 form an *astrophic* section, supported by Wilamowitz (1914) 69-70, is notably maintained by Hutchinson (1985) 63-65.

48. I omit ll. 83-84 due to their insuperable textual problems — my argument is not affected, though.

49. We cannot be sure about the stage-effects possibly used.

50. In Homer, for instance, it is used of the night (*Od.* 5.294); fire (*Il.* 17.737-738); or the waves (*Il.* 23.214). Note that the aorist endows *ὀρόμενον* with a dynamic quality: “lit. *which has started* on its course” (so Verrall, 1887, 9); cf. Graz (1965, 256-259) on the Homeric *ὀρώρει*.

shift from the aural to the visual becomes more pointed in the ensuing lines 89-92:⁵¹

βοᾶ < > ὑπὲρ τειγέων·
 ὁ λεύκασπις ὄρνυται λαὸς εὖ-
 πρεπῆς ἐπὶ πόλιν διώκων < >.

The main problem posed by these lines consists in the interpretation of the image of the army “rising above the ramparts”: either the warriors themselves are meant (in an imaginary way) or their voice;⁵² in both readings, *λεύκασπις* and *ὄρνυται* possess a visual character supplying a more immediate impression than *βοᾶ*.

In lines 100-103 the clang of armour embodies a more distinct, thus more proximate, sound compared with *βοᾶ* and *βρέμει* earlier,⁵³ while the merger of the aural and visual senses marks a moment of utmost tension.⁵⁴ The women’s penchant for optical imagery is further discernible in lines 114-115:

κῦμα περὶ πτόλιν δοχμολόφων ἀνδρῶν
 καχλάζει πνοαῖς Ἄρεος ὀρόμενον.

What we again encounter is a move from aural imagery (*καχλάζει*) to a visual percept (*ὀρόμενον*), more concrete than *ὀρόμενον κακόν* in lines 87-88 earlier. Furthermore, what Aeschylus effectively does in lines 87-88 and 115 is to intensify the traditional use of *ὄρνυμαι* referring to the ‘rise’ of

51. Granted that we read *βοᾶ* in line 89 — as West does, from whose edition we quote those lines (numbered as 89-91). Maas suggested *δᾶ*, accepted by Page (OCT); yet the fact that this exclamation is only attested in *Persae* (six times: 116, 122, 570, 573, 578, 581) lends to it a distinctly ‘oriental’ character, not immediately applicable to *Seven*. Another transmitted reading is *βοά*; so Kraus (1957) 59 and n. 3; Hutchinson (1985) 61.

52. The corruption of the text does not encourage a definitive verdict; see Hutchinson (*ibid.*). In general, it is hard to trace a firm distinction between ‘real’ and ‘imaginary’ percepts in the parodos: mainly because of the ascendancy of the evocative power of words over concerns of factuality.

53. Robert (1922) 162.

54. See Longo (1978) 88-89; also Lupas & Petre (1981) 52: “Les images visuelles et auditives qui alternaient dans la première partie du prélude convergent maintenant et se confondent dans une saisissante synesthésie”.

sound — established in Homer⁵⁵ — by adding the visual element of looming waves (*ῥδατος* 86; *κῶμα* 114) and, thus, enhancing the synaesthetic quality of the whole imagery. The visualizing tendency culminates, in a sense, in lines 122-126, where the aural impression announcing the charge of chariots, *κινύρονται φόβον χαλινοί* (123), is succeeded by the imminence of the physical presence of the seven leaders: *ἑπτὰ δ' ἀγήρορες πρέποντες στρατοῦ (...)* *προσίστανται* (124-126). If we are to draw a general conclusion, the women do not merely ‘describe’ what they experience, but they forcefully ‘convey’ it to the spectators — or to the implied, internal, audience of citizens — especially through visual imagery aiming at the creation of potent *φαντασίαι*, to apply a later rhetorical term.⁵⁶

3. Eteokles' Response

As the *parodos* is brought to a close, Eteokles abruptly enters in order to harshly reprimand the women in a fierce tirade (181-202), whereby he accuses them of spreading fear to the citizens and defenders of the city. Confronted with the women's non-abating persistence in externalizing their terror, Eteokles subsequently reproves them with an expression meriting particular attention (245-246):

*Χο. καὶ μὴν ἀκούω γ' ἱππικῶν φρουραγμάτων.
Ἔτ. μὴ νῦν ἀκούουσ' ἐμφανῶς ἄκου' ἄγαν.*

The object of Eteokles' rebuke is the Chorus' ‘mode’ of hearing, which is ‘conspicuous’ (*ἐμφανῶς*). It is worth noting that hearing — which forms

55. E.g. *ῥρουμαγδός* (*Il.* 2.810) / *ἀλαλητός* (*Il.* 4.436) *ῥρώρει; ῥροντο* *δοῦπος* (*Il.* 16.635): actually, within images of an onrushing army or of battle. What is evident in this use of *ῥρονμαι* is the idea of sound ‘spreading’ in all three dimensions and, thus, ‘filling’ space: see Wille (2001a) 52-58 (with further Iliadic instances).

56. Cf. Mesk (1934) 456: “[der Chor] schildert, was er sieht und hört, schildert es so packend und anschaulich, daß wir seine immer größer werdende Angst bis zu seiner im Gebet ausströmenden fast hoffnungslosen Verzweiflung miterleben”; similarly Kranz (1933) 148-153: 150; Gruber (2009) 165-166. It is worth referring here to the description of ecstatic cult practice in Aeschylus' *Edonoi* (fr. 57.10-11 Radt), where a strong, emotive experience is divulged through the fusion of aural and visual imagery: *τυπάνου δ' εἰκόν, ὡσθ' ὑπογαίου / βροντῆς, φέρεται βαρυνταρβής*; see Deichgräber (1938-1939) 247-249; Di Benedetto (2006) 95-97, 292

the trigger of the synaesthetic metaphor: ἀκούετ' ἢ οὐκ ἀκούετ' — is prominent within the Chorus' exchange with Eteokles, up to 246: κλύουσα (239), καὶ μὴν ἀκούω γ' (245). Yet, what the women 'hear' is objectionable to the king not merely because it is 'clearly' heard,⁵⁷ but primarily because it is 'manifestly' expressed. What Eteokles essentially does, is to accurately summarize the women's mode of perception and its verbalization: namely, their recurrent shift from powerful aural stimuli to 'visualizing' expression. What is effectively insinuated is their ἐμφανῆς λόγος:⁵⁸ their verbal expression is equated with φαίνειν, while ἄγαν points at a transgression of the mean — an excess that ought to be suppressed. Indeed, Eteokles' enjoinder calls to be viewed in the light of his opening declaration, namely the priority he emphatically placed on the opportune employment of speech (1):

Κάδμον πολῖται, χορὴ λέγειν τὰ καίρια

His duty as ruler is effectively proclaimed in a programmatic way as a task and challenge firstly of *rhetorical* character. Thus, Eteokles' reprimand of the women may be regarded as targeting not so much the 'factuality' of their verbal expression, but more pointedly its inopportune character in view of the exigencies of the situation. Of course, Eteokles' ability to speak καίρια shall eventually be tested in a wholly unanticipated way from line 653 onwards, namely from the moment he learns that the attacker at the seventh gate is his very own brother. Yet, for the time being, it is the women who are unable to control their language (and behaviour): significantly, Eteokles' reproach is closely followed by their open avowal of the ineluctable impact of fear on their speech: ἀψυχία γὰρ γλώσσαν ἀρπάζει φόβος (259).⁵⁹

57. As in the frequent expressions σαφῶς / σαφῆ αἰσθάνομαι / κλύω etc.; examples in Wille (2001a) 297.

58. Expression borrowed from *Eum.* 420; cf. *Supp.* 829; *Soph.* *OT* 848; further instances in Wille (2001a) 318-319. An eloquent parallel is Pindar's conception of poetic speech as being capable of φαίνειν the glory of the victorious athlete; e.g. *O.* 4.10 (on the epinician celebration): χρονώτατον φάος ἐδουσθενέων ἀρετῶν; contrast ἄφαντον βρέμει in *P.* 11.30. On this Pindaric trope, see Gundert (1935) 11-29; Bremer (1976) 245-255, 276-284; Wille (2001a) 187-191.

59. See de Romilly (1971) 36.

4. Visualization and Theatricality

Eteokles' ἐμφανῶς ἀκούειν effectively captures the women's implicit equation of perception with vision, an equation essentially underlying their visualizing tendency throughout the parodos. The persistence and importance, within Greek thought, of the conceptual schema 'to perceive is to see'⁶⁰ is most conspicuously represented by Aristotelian theory, according to which a central capacity of metaphor is to "bring" something "before the eyes" (πρὸ ὀμμάτων ποιεῖν).⁶¹ We are, in fact, dealing with an autonomous element of speech, whose effect is 'actualization' (ἐνέργεια):⁶² it impels audiences to visualize images, enabling them to participate in the persuasive process through their sensory reaction to words.⁶³ We need to keep in mind that, according to Aristotle, poetry involves both poets and audiences in a complex mix of perceptual and rational cognition.⁶⁴ To connect with the parodos of *Seven against Thebes* — when the women declare to 'see' the clamour of enemy weapons, they effectively intend to present it before *our* eyes, having rendered it as concrete and immediate as possible.

Yet, this is not all: the process of seeing what one hears is effectively at the heart of the *theatrical* phenomenon — and we know that Aristotle commends a provocation of φρίττειν and ἔλεεῖν that does not (necessarily) stem from the deployment of ὄψις (*Poetics* 14.1453b3-8):

60. A 'conceptual metaphor' — to adopt a term of modern cognitive theory: namely, a schema whereby a conceptual domain (target) is understood in terms of another (source domain) via a process termed 'mapping'. The seminal work is Lakoff & Johnson (1980); from then onwards, research has thrived; for a recent introduction, see Kövecses (2010).

61. See esp. *Rhet.* 3.10.1410b31-35. We may actually draw a parallel with the term 'projection', used by Indurkha (1992) as an alternative to 'mapping' (both being visual metaphors). Cf. Nietzsche: "Die Metapher ist für den ächten Dichter nicht eine rhetorische Figur, sondern ein stellvertretendes Bild, das ihm wirklich, an Stelle eines Begriffes, vorschwebt" (*Geburt der Tragödie* 8).

62. Λέγω δὴ πρὸ ὀμμάτων ταῦτα ποιεῖν ὅσα ἐνεργοῦντα σημαίνει. *Rhet.* 3.11.1411b24-25 (also 1-6); cf. 2.8.1386a34-35; *Po.* 17.1455a22-26. See Newman (2002) esp. 9-14; Munteanu (2012) 84-89, 98-103.

63. See Newman (2002); also Kirby (1997), with differing emphasis. Of course, πρὸ ὀμμάτων ποιεῖν, like the Aristotelian term φαντασία (see O'Gorman 2005), betokens the central importance of 'visualization' through the history of literary theory, poetics and rhetoric in antiquity: what would emerge as the key rhetorical figure of ἐνάργεια or ὑποτόπωσις; cf. [Long.] *De Subl.* 15.1-2, 26.2. See Zanker (1981); Manieri (1998).

64. See Heath (2009) 8, 22-23.

δεῖ γὰρ καὶ ἄνευ τοῦ ὁρᾶν οὕτω συνεστάναι τὸν μῦθον ὥστε τὸν ἀκούοντα τὰ πράγματα γινόμενα καὶ φρίττειν καὶ ἐλεεῖν ἐκ τῶν συμβαινόντων· (...) τὸ δὲ διὰ τῆς ὄψεως τοῦτο παρασκευάζειν ἀτεχνότερον καὶ χορηγίας δεόμενόν ἐστιν.

We may assert — especially in the light of the above passage — that, though ὄψις is not disparaged, a rather intellectual form of mimesis appears to be more congenial to Aristotle.⁶⁵ Tragedy, as he characteristically remarks, τὸ ἐναργὲς ἔχει καὶ ἐν τῇ ἀναγνώσει: what is thus foregrounded is the inherent ‘visuality’ of the dramatic text, the evocative power of words.⁶⁶ His treatment of ὄψις is of special relevance to Aeschylus’ *Seven against Thebes*, since it privileges a kind of tragic play in which the visual moment is not allowed to usurp the function of the word as an essential element of poetry; indeed, though Aeschylus was a dramatist capable of boldly employing ὄψις, a ‘Regisseur’ according to Karl Reinhardt,⁶⁷ in this play *ἔκπληξις* seems almost entirely created through speech (*λέξις*), coupled, of course, with movement and gestures on the part of the actors and the Chorus.⁶⁸ The question may actually be raised whether the poet’s choice of ‘substitut-

65. A key point of contention is *Po.* 6.1450b16-20, where ὄψις is considered as *ψυχαγωγικὸν μὲν, ἀτεχνότατον δὲ καὶ ἥμισυ οἰκεῖον τῆς ποιητικῆς*. According to the most common interpretation, ὄψις is regarded as not belonging to the central ‘task’ of the poet, not as lacking in importance: see (with varying nuances) Halliwell (1986) 66-69, 337-343; Di Marco (1989); Bonanno (1999); Frazier (1999); Bonanno (2000); Billault (2001); Bassi (2005) 254-260; Schmitt (2008) 511-512, 518-521, 729-732; Munteanu (2012) 80-90. For a different reading, whereby Aristotle is considered as reacting against theatrical practices of his own time, which privileged the visual element, and defending an older style of dramaturgy, see Marzullo (1980); in a distinctly critical vein, Porter (2010, 102-120) regards the Aristotelian approach as idiosyncratic.

66. 26.1462a17-18; cf. 11-13: *ἔτι ἢ τραγωδία καὶ ἄνευ κινήσεως ποιεῖ τὸ αὐτῆς, ὥσπερ ἡ ἐποποιία· διὰ γὰρ τοῦ ἀναγνώσκειν φανερὰ ὁποῖα τίς ἐστιν*. The prime importance of the word is equally reflected in Aristotle’s admonition to the poet *τοὺς μύθους συνιστάναι καὶ τῇ λέξει συναπεργάζεσθαι ὅτι μάλιστα πρὸ δμμάτων τιθέμενον* (17.1455a22-32: 22-23) — see esp. Bonanno (1999) 273-274; Frazier (1999) 138-139; Munteanu (2012) 88-89. To quote Loraux (1989, 172), “il s’agit de trouver la *lexis* appropriée, celle qui aura absorbé le voir, de telle sorte que toujours le dire soit en excédent sur ce qu’il montre.”

67. See Reinhardt (1949): *Aischylos als Regisseur und Theologe*.

68. See Rosenmeyer (1962) 50-51; Aeschylus’ proclivity for spectacular effects has been overstated though, as Taplin (1977, 39-49) argues — aptly remarking that Aristophanes’ satire focuses primarily on his ‘high-sounding’ language (cf. above, n. 40). The information contained in the *Life of Aeschylus* (test. A 1 esp. 7, 14 Radt) also requires a nuanced interpretation: see Gruber (2009) 72-74.

ing' the power of the word for direct visual impression is thematized, in an almost metatheatrical way, in the parodos. The dialogic sequence *ἀκούετε ... δέδορκα*, by acting out the process of 'vivid' perception, appears to be effectively simulating the experience of the *spectators* during the parodos: namely, the fact that, despite lacking any visual contact with what is happening off-stage, they are expected to visualize it after hearing it being described. Therefore, the Chorus becomes, in a sense, a 'model' for the spectators, effectively shaping the emotional reaction of the public. The Chorus' effect on the audience actually possesses a model *within* the play, namely the influence exerted by the women on the citizens of Thebes, a 'second-grade', off-stage audience: an effect consisting in the dissemination of terror, the disheartening of the citizens — forcefully imputed by Eteokles to the Chorus.⁶⁹ Hence, if the women are capable of inspiring panic to the citizens of Thebes, they should equally be able to provoke feelings of *φόβος* among the citizens of Athens sitting in front of them at the theatre.

One may, in fact, sense in *Seven against Thebes* the emergence of a problematic surrounding the emotional impact of drama, an issue that we find first developed by a thinker who also happened to admire this play, namely Gorgias of Leontinoi.⁷⁰ Gorgias considers the impact of poetic speech as paradigmatic of the role of *λόγος* in general (in prose or poetic form), which is capable of instilling strong emotions in the audience: *τοὺς ἀκούοντας εἰσῆλθε καὶ φρίκη περίφοβος καὶ ἔλεος πολύδακρυς καὶ πόθος φιλοπενθήης* (*Encomium of Helen* 9) — a climactic formulation underlining the creation of an empathetic response in the hearers.⁷¹ The impact of persuasion is so powerful — in an essentially physical manner — that it effectively 'moulds' the soul: *τὴν ψυχὴν ἐτυπώσατο ὅπως ἐβούλετο*;⁷² moreover, it is capable of making incredible or invisible things (*ἄπιστα* and *ἄδηλα*) to be 'seen' with the eyes of the mind: *φαίνεσθαι τοῖς τῆς δόξης ὄμμασιν* (op. cit. 13). The faculty of vision is equally liable to become perturbed and to affect, in its turn, the soul of the beholder; characteristically, the example adduced is

69. See esp. ll. 184, 191-194, 236-238, 242-244, 270.

70. See fr. 24 D-K.

71. See Garzya (1997) 20-22. Note that *λόγος*, for Gorgias, is an eminently material phenomenon, essentially another *πράγμα*, able to exercise influence through the sensations it gives rise to — see Porter (1993) 285-288; id. (2010) 292-307; esp. 294-295.

72. See Ford (2002, 172-182) for a reading of *Helen* which "suggests a Gorgias much closer to the scientists and more interested in theories of perception than in theories of art" (173). Closer to a view of Gorgias as aesthetic theoretician are Rosenmeyer (1955) and Segal (1962).

that of the gleaming of the bronze and iron armour of an enemy army (op. cit. 16): *ἐταράχθη [ἡ ὄψις] καὶ ἐτάραξε τὴν ψυχὴν*.⁷³ Significantly, both *λόγος* and sight are constitutive of the central element of theatrical practice which Gorgias terms *ἀπάτη*.⁷⁴

In *Seven against Thebes* the women of the Chorus are overwhelmed by fear through powerful visual (and aural) stimuli announcing the enemy attack, whereas the dangerousness of *λόγος* becomes evident within the framework of the rhetorical antagonism developing between Eteokles and the women: the rhetoric of the king aims at instilling courage in the warriors (another Gorgianic potentiality of *λόγος*⁷⁵), in contrast to the women, who provoke fear and panic. Notably, the spread of fear is expressly mentioned as an effect of the Chorus' behaviour *within* the play: *πολίταις (...) διετροθήσατ' ἄψυχον κάκην* (191-192).⁷⁶ One may, in fact, assert that what would emerge, in both Gorgias and Aristotle, as a central function of tragedy is being here problematized. It is important to add that the Chorus of women can be regarded as exemplifying a behaviour which is liable to spread terror not merely through speech, but also via unruly spatial movement — through their *χορεία*.⁷⁷ Their influence is indeed described by Eteokles in strong, somatic terms (237-238): *ἀλλ' ὡς πολίτας μὴ κακοσπλάγχχνους τιθῆς | εὐκηλος ἴσθι μηδ' ἄγαν ὑπερφοβοῦ*.⁷⁸ We may better ap-

73. It has actually been suggested that Gorgias refers here to an army as *described* in tragedy, possibly even having in mind the shield scene of *Seven*; this is hardly plausible, yet Gorgias significantly leaves unresolved the question whether fear felt as aesthetic response is *essentially* different from one stemming from real danger; see Munteanu (2012) 44-51, with further references. On the power of *ὄψις* in Gorgias, see also Ford (2002) 181-182; Constantinidou (2008) 26-107 (esp. 35-36), 153-154.

74. Fr. 23 D-K. *Ἀπάτη* should not be regarded as an instance of 'objective' realism or verisimilitude; what Gorgias, instead, seeks to foreground is poetry's affective impact; note the dative *πάθεισιν: ἡ τραγωδία ... παρασχοῦσα τοῖς μύθοις καὶ τοῖς πάθεισιν ἀπάτην*. See Garzya (1997) esp. 22-29; Halliwell (2011) 266-284, esp. 276.

75. *Hel.* 14.

76. On the relevance of the Gorgianic problematic to Aeschylean Choruses, see analysis by Gruber (2009) 74-90.

77. Note the tradition about Aeschylus' orchestric innovations (test. 103 Radt), as well as about the dancer Telestes, on whom we learn that *οὕτως ἦν τεχνίτης ὥστε ἐν τῷ ὀρχεῖσθαι τοὺς Ἐπτά ἐπὶ Θήβας φανερά ποιῆσαι τὰ πράγματα δι' ὀρχήσεως* (test. 81 Radt).

78. *Κακοσπλάγχχνος* is a *hapax*. On *σπλάγχχνα* as a seat of emotion, see Dumortier (1935) 14-16; Padel (1992) 12-18 (on tragedy in general); Sullivan (1997) 222 (on Aeschy-

preciate this warning in the light of contemporary research on the kinaesthetic effects of dance, more precisely on what is now being designated as ‘kinaesthetic empathy’.⁷⁹

5. Sensory Perception and Tragic Recognition of Truth

At this point of our analysis, as we are focusing on the emotional impact of the Chorus’ behaviour, we risk effectively adopting Eteokles’ strongly negative view on the role of the women. Yet, in order to arrive at a proper assessment of their utterances, it is necessary to study not only their impact (inside/outside the play), but also their cognitive validity. In a first instance, the women’s predilection for visual imagery, and their concomitant privileging of sight, may be aligned with a traditional estimation of the reliability of perception stemming from vision, an idea which may actually be regarded as being deeply embedded in Greek language: it suffices to take into account the already Homeric usage of the verb *οἶδα*, which, though functioning as a present tense, actually forms the perfect of *εἰδέω* (to see).⁸⁰ A pointed privileging of sight as a means of securing reliable knowledge is further encountered in both Xenophanes⁸¹ and Heraclitus, the latter forcefully expressing this idea through his dictum *ὀφθαλμοὶ τῶν ὄτων ἀκριβέστεροι μάρτυρες* (fr. 101a D-K).⁸²

lus). On the somatic aspect of fear in Aeschylus, see de Romilly (1971) 40-51; Schnyder (1995) 158-204 and *passim*.

79. Notwithstanding the preeminence of its visual component, dance is now regarded as an essentially kinaesthetic art whose apperception is grounded not merely in the eye but in the entire body; spectators are, in fact, considered as being able to internally ‘simulate’ movement sensations of speed, effort and changing body configuration. See Reason & Reynolds (2010); Hagendoorn (2011); Savrami (2013).

80. Or an earlier *εἶδω*: see Chantraine (1958) 420-421; id. (1968-1980) s.v. *οἶδα*. Note that the shift from ‘seing’ to ‘knowing’ is a pattern evident within the whole Indo-European family of languages: cf. esp. Sanskrit *véda* (knowledge), Latin *video* (I see), German *wissen* (to know), English *witness*, *wit*, etc.; see Chantraine (ibid.); Sweetser (1990) 32-34, 37-40. The expression *ἰδοῦ* can be regarded as a fossilized token of this connection; e.g. Soph. *Ai.* 870-871: *ἰδὸν ἰδοῦ, / δοῦπον αὖ κλύω τινά* — parallels in Wille (2001a) 319.

81. See fr. 34 D-K, with Fränkel (1962) 382-383; Heitsch (1966) esp. 223-224; Trépanier (2004) 147-148.

82. See Marcovich (2001) 22-24.

Yet, simultaneously, doubt is expressed in Presocratic thought concerning the validity of percepts gathered from the senses, in the way that the latter are employed by mortals. It is worth quoting from Empedocles' fr. 3 D-K, where a mode of perception is exalted which, though construed as vision, it clearly transcends it:

ἀλλ' ἄγ' ἄθρει πάση παλάμη πῆ δῆλον ἕκαστον,
 μήτε τιν' ὄφιν ἔχων πίστει πλέον ἢ κατ' ἀκοήν
 ἢ ἀκοήν ἐρίδουπον ὑπὲρ τρανώματα γλώσσης,
 μήτε τι τῶν ἄλλων, ὁπόση πόρος ἐστὶ νοῆσαι,
 γυίων πίστιν ἔρυνκε, νόει δ' ἧ δῆλον ἕκαστον. 10

Ἄθρει πάση παλάμη denotes a mode of perception characterized by intensiveness and focus,⁸³ its power being stressed through the synaesthetic assigning of tactile characteristics (πάση παλάμη) to sight.⁸⁴ We may speak of a 'cooperation' of the senses,⁸⁵ signalling an attempt to counter the human predicament deplored in fr. 2.1 D-K: *στενωποὶ μὲν γὰρ παλάμαι κατὰ γυῖα κέχυνται*.⁸⁶ The imperative νόει in line 13 seals the philosopher's admonishment by projecting νοῦς as a force capable of eliminating false impressions received by the senses.⁸⁷ The relevance of this Empedoclean enjoinment to the parodos of the *Seven* becomes manifest: shall the women's synaesthetic hearing be appraised as a 'higher' expression of sight, capable of furnishing valid knowledge, or — alternatively — as the product of the overwhelming of a single sense (hearing — ἀκοή ἐρίδουπος), rooted in a perturbed bodily condition, similar to that implied by the expression γυίων πίστιν ἔρυνκε?

83. See von Fritz (1946) 16. Cf. the Platonic ἄθρει περισκοπῶν (*Tht.* 155e); with Chryssakopoulou (2012) 112-114.

84. "The choice of the term seems to convey the idea that the senses somehow *grasp* their objects" (von Fritz *ibid.*). Coxon (2009, 304) translates "with every means of apprehension".

85. "une synesthésie parfaite" (Bollack 1969, 34).

86. See comments by Bollack (1969) 7-8, 34-35.

87. Cf. fr. 17.21 D-K: τὴν [Φιλότητα] σὺ νόφ δέρονκε, μὴδ' ὄμμασιν ἦσο τεθηπῶς (with influence from the Parmenidean τεθηπότες in fr. 6). What is implied here is a sort of 'mental' sight; see von Fritz (1946) 18-20; Wright (1981) 162; Trépanier (2004) 167-170. *Contra* Bollack (1969, 67-68), who reads in it an intense and focused *sensory* perception.

Before attempting any answer, it is worth adducing an important Parmenidean parallel: the forceful condemnation by the goddess of the indiscriminating use of sensory faculties (fr. 6, 4-9 D-K):

[ὁδοῦ] ἦν δὴ βροτοὶ εἰδότες οὐδὲν
 πλάζονται δίκρανοι· ἀμηχανίη γὰρ ἐν αὐτῶν
 στήθεσιν ἰθύνει πλαγκτὸν νόον· οἱ δὲ φορεῦνται
 κωφοὶ ὁμῶς τυφλοὶ τε, τεθηπότες, ἄκριτα φύλα,
 οἷς τὸ πέλειν τε καὶ οὐκ εἶναι τῶντὸν νερόμισται
 κοῦ τῶντὸν, πάντων δὲ παλίντροπός ἐστι κέλευθος.⁸⁸

5

Εἰδότες οὐδὲν is a powerful expression through which Parmenides introduces a broad category of mortals, who are considered as being unable to make proper use of their sensory faculties.⁸⁹ The result is effectively the same as if they were altogether lacking the senses of hearing or seeing (6);⁹⁰ what is remarkable is that this ‘cognitive failure’⁹¹ is not due to a feeble employment of the senses, but rather to an *indiscriminate* use of them (*ἄκριτα φύλα*), a marked ‘sensibility’, which results in their becoming ‘overwhelmed’ (*τεθηπότες*, ‘bedazzled’) by the percepts that they experience.⁹² Mortals wander (*πλάζονται*) and ‘get sidetracked’ (*φορεῦνται*) in a nonsensical way due to the *ἀμηχανίη* characterizing their mind: *πλαγκτὸς νόος*.⁹³ Moreover, *παλίντροπος κέλευθος* implies a back-and-forth movement, indicating a mode of cognition easily distracted by diverse percepts: a path that “actually does ‘backtrack’ by leading those who focus their attention on mutable entities in one direction at one moment and then in another direction at another.”⁹⁴ We are dealing with a failure both to discern correctly and, concomitantly, to opt for the proper course of action. To connect with

88. Text from Coxon (2009) 59.

89. For a succinct discussion, see Palmer (2009) 114-118.

90. Cf. Heraclitus fr. 34 D-K; also Pindar, *O.* 12.9, *N.* 7.23-24 (with Mansfeld [1964] 30-32).

91. So Palmer, (2009) 114.

92. See Coxon (2009) 303-304; Bredlow (2011) 233, 256-257; cf. Heraclitus, fr. 107 D-K.

93. See Fränkel (1962) 404; Mansfeld (1964) 21-30; Mourelatos (2008) 75-78; Palmer (2009) 116-118. Cf. the Homeric *παρέπλαξεν δὲ νόημα* (*Od.* 20.346).

94. Palmer (2009) 117; see also Becker (1937) 141-143; Coxon (2009) 300-301. One may refer here to fr. 7.3-5 D-K, condemning again a non-focused or indiscriminate employment of the senses: *μηδέ σ' ἔθος πολύπειρον ὁδὸν κατὰ τήνδε βιάσθω, | νωμῶν ἄσκοπον ὄμμα καὶ ἠχῆσσαν ἀκονήν | καὶ γλῶσσαν, κοῖναι δὲ λόγῳ πολύδοξον ἔλεγχον.* See Leshner (1994) 24-34; Thanassas (2007) 78-79; Palmer (2009) 122-125.

Seven, one is reminded of the panic-stricken movement of the Theban women, especially from the middle of the orchestra to the statues and back, but also through the streets of the town:⁹⁵ a behaviour which mirrors their inner upheaval, as they themselves avow.⁹⁶ Interestingly, in his verbal rehearsal of their behaviour, Eteokles envisions himself — as metaphoric helmsman of the city — to be abandoning the helm and running aimlessly to the bow of the ship (208-209: *τί σῶν; ὁ ναύτης ἄρα μὴ ᾿ς προῶραν φηγῶν / πρόμνηθεν ἤδρε μηχανὴν σωτηρίας ...*); an illogical move, which would leave the ‘ship of the state’ without direction.⁹⁷

Thus, if considered against the backdrop of the philosophical views related above, the behaviour of the women might, indeed, be regarded as failing the standards of a *discerning* employment of the senses. We can hardly deny that the Chorus’ outlook on the situation, in its expression via speech and bodily movement, is to a certain extent exaggerated and obviously ill-adapted to the urgency of the situation. In this sense, their demeanour may indeed be regarded as emblematic of someone whose mode of sensory perception qualifies her as *τεθηπυῖα*, ‘bedazzled’. Yet, a different, eventually opposed, reading suggests itself from the very philosophical fragments cited above, calling for serious consideration: the privileging of sight as an overarching sensory faculty may alternatively be construed as alluding to or simulating a kind of ‘mental sight’, akin to the Empedoclean *ἄθρει πάσῃ παλάμῃ* (fr. 3.9 D-K). In this case we would be dealing with a notion “dis-

95. See l. 258: *παλυστομεῖς αἶθ' θιγγάνουσ' ἀγαλμάτων*; also ll. 191-192: *καὶ νῦν πολίταις τάσδε διαδρομούςς φηγῶς / θεῖσαι* — with Lupas & Petre (1981) 75. For a comparable case of someone ‘thrown off the track’ due to fear and inner perturbation, cf. *Cho.* 1021-1024 (Orestes attacked by the Erinyes), with de Romilly (1971) 38-39; Garvie (1986) 335-337. Generally on the image of erratic motion in Aeschylus, see Becker (1937) 156-177.

96. Cf. Dionysius’ of Halicarnassus description of the metaphoric ‘rapture’ induced by Demosthenes’ prose (*Dem.* 21 [p. 176, 16-17 U-R]): *ἐνθουσιῶ τε καὶ δεῦρο κάκεισε ἄγομαι, πάθος ἕτερον ἐξ ἑτέρου μεταλαμβάνων*.

97. *Pace* Hutchinson (1985, 80) and Novelli (2005, 124-127), I believe that the comparison, while targeting the women, has Eteokles as its inescapable point of reference, since he has introduced himself as ‘helmsman’ already in ll. 2-3 (cf. 62-63); so van Nes (1963) 80-81; Dumortier (1975) 37-38; Thalmann (1978) 33. It is also worth noting that the Parmenidean *φορεῖνται* reminds us of a ship tossed around by the waves (especially in connection with *ἰθύνει*); see Becker (1937) 141; Mourelatos (2008) 24.

tinctly Aeschylean”,⁹⁸ which traces its roots deep in tradition, being already present in Homer, characteristically at *Il.* 21.61: ὄφρα ἴδωμαι ἐνὶ φρεσὶν ἠδὲ δαείω.⁹⁹ In fact, such a reading of lines 100-103 of *Seven* is not novel, but actually harks back to the ancient scholiast who refers to Epicharmus’ dictum νοῦς ὄρῃ καὶ νοῦς ἀκούει· τᾶλλα κωφὰ καὶ τυφλά (*PCG* I 214):¹⁰⁰ far from disparaging the Chorus’ mode of expression, he thus reads it as an instance of ‘mental sight’.¹⁰¹ In support of such an interpretation we should count the fact that the women’s behaviour ought not to be regarded as stemming from a fear of purely irrational character. As D. Konstan points out, their fear also possesses a cognitive basis: they have overestimated the power of the enemy and, hence, they are pessimistic about the prospect of successful defence. This becomes clear in the scene of the *Redepaare*, in which, as they hear Eteokles developing his strategy and dismissing the enemy boasts, they gain confidence and are gradually led to believe in victory.¹⁰² This process of ‘convergence’ between Eteokles and the women essentially begins with their acquiescence to Eteokles’ call for ‘silence’ at line 263 (σιγῶ) and may be regarded as culminating in the Chorus’ confident reaction (521-525) to the central of the seven pairs of speeches, after Eteokles has shown that Hippomedon, with Typhon on his shield, will be vanquished by the Theban defender Hyperbios, whose emblem is Zeus.¹⁰³ Thus, if the reaction of the women at the parodos cannot be plainly dis-

98. So Burian (2007) 198 (on Eur. *Hel.* 122; see further, n. 100). Note esp. *Cho.* 854: οὔτοι φρέν’ ἂν κλέψειεν ἀμματωμένην — with Garvie (1986) 280; also *Eum.* 104. See Sansone (1975), 16-20; Sullivan (1997) 30, 32-33, 58.

99. See Wille (2001a) 61-62.

100. Ascribing it to Homer though: see Smith p. 64, 103a (also h, j). On this dictum, see Kerkhof (2001) 80-83, with further parallels; also comments in *PCG* I, p. 128. The Epicharmean fragment may, of course, be parodic; cf. its (almost certain) resonance in Euripides’ *Helen* (122), where the mind seems to be ‘confirming’ the evidence of the senses: αὐτὸς γὰρ ὄσσοις εἰδόμην, καὶ νοῦς ὄρᾳ; see Allan (2008) 162. Compare the Parmenidean enjoinder λεῦσσε δ’ ὄμωσ ἀπέοντα νόω παρεόντα βεβαίως (fr. 4.1 D-K): i.e. to ‘observe’ what is beyond the range of sense-experience with an ‘intuitive νόος’, a term used by von Fritz (1945) 239-242: 241; see also Leshner (2008) 474-476; Coxon (2009) 306.

101. Sansone (1975, 19-20) is led to a similar conclusion, having underlined the unique character of κτύπον δέδορκα within the extant Aeschylean corpus.

102. Konstan (2006) 144-149; esp. 148.

103. See Marinis (2012) 24-30. Note πέποιθα (521), which reveals a marked sense of confidence compared, for instance, with ἐπέχομαι earlier in the *Redepaare* (481); see Lupas & Petre (1981) 169.

missed as a token of irrationality, then we should earnestly consider the possibility that their synaesthetic perception, and their visualizing tendency more generally, does not merely betray an excessive ‘sensibility’, but may well be indicative of a capacity for insight.

Yet, in order to establish such a view, we need to consider the Chorus’ outlook on reality throughout the play and within the wider problematic of speech and truth, which affects all dramatic agents (Chorus, Eteokles, Messenger): indeed, what is at stake in *Seven* is not merely *what* one sees, but also, importantly, whether what is seen is faithfully divulged or accurately interpreted. In fact, almost none among the persons of the drama succeeds in *consistently* interpreting reality in an authoritative manner. *Almost*, since we encounter two exceptions, one of fleeting presence and one of central importance to the drama. The first is the unnamed seer of lines 24-29, who must be Teiresias. What is distinctive of him is that he practices an art expressly characterized as “free of falsehood” (*ἀψευδής*):

νῦν δ’ ὥς ὁ μάντις φησίν, οἰωνῶν βοτήρ,
ἐν ὧσι νομῶν καὶ φρεσὶν πυρὸς δίχα 25
χρησθηρίους ἄρνιθας ἀψευδεῖ τέχνη,

We may trace here an obvious difference from the women’s synaesthetic grasp of reality and their ‘visualizing’ tendency: the seer’s mode of perception does neither rely on visual stimuli¹⁰⁴ nor does it ‘reinterpret’ aural impressions as visual, but instead proceeds from aural stimuli directly to the mind.¹⁰⁵ The optical image is thus bypassed or rather *substituted* by a mental process (*φρεσίν*), to be subsequently externalized via authoritative speech: *φησίν*. Without the aid of vision the seer is able to provide exact information, announcing that the main attack of the enemies has been decided during the night (28-29). The implicit contrast with the Messenger, who can only add detail to the seer’s prediction, could hardly have been more pointed: he bases his “clear” dispatches (*σαφῆ*) predominantly on vision (*κατόπτῃς* 41). The women, now, may be regarded as, to a certain extent, partaking in the seer’s ‘mental’ mode of apprehending reality, since

104. See comments by Lupas & Petre (1981) 20-22.

105. A mantic ‘expansion’ of a common enough process; cf. *Cho.* 450: *τοιαῦτ’ ἀκούων* < > *ἐν φρεσὶν γράφον* — for similar expressions, see Wille (2001a) 299-300. Note as well that aural stimuli in the seer’s case share only an indirect, ‘semiotic’ connection with reality.

their mode of perception — through its visualizing tendency — is characterized by a degree of sharpness and insight and, as such, it functions as a warning about the horrors of the impending conflict, which — though the city will be spared — shall nevertheless culminate in the abomination of mutual fratricide.

It is now time to move on to the second faithful interpreter of reality: the seer Amphiaraios, the only just and pious person among the Seven.¹⁰⁶ His main distinctive feature is the absence of any emblem on his shield, a fact interpreted by the Messenger as an indication that “he does not want to *seem* the bravest, but to be” (*οὐ γὰρ δοκεῖν ἄριστος ἀλλ’ εἶναι θέλει*).¹⁰⁷ What is remarkable in his stance is not merely his piety and justness, for which Eteokles praises him, but also the fact that he raises himself above the contingency and precarious character of the interpretation of signs.¹⁰⁸ While the anonymous seer is in no need of visual stimuli in order to perceive the truth, Amphiaraios repudiates their deployment as a means of *proclaiming* the truth. More precisely, given that shield emblems are per definition intended to create strong visual impressions, Amphiaraios opts to avoid creating *any* such impressions, since they would only derail sober reasoning: he instead asks to be judged through his own mode of life and his performance on the battlefield. What is effectively exalted through this stance is a ‘mental’ mode of perception, unaffected by emotion, in many respects similar to that of the anonymous seer.

One may, in fact, contrast Amphiaraios’ sober and lucid outlook on reality with Eteokles’ stance after line 653, when he shall emerge as a quintessentially tragic person in his Parmenidean *ἀμυχανίη*.¹⁰⁹ The eventual collapse of his hermeneutic ability when confronted with the presence of Polyneikes at the seventh gate is a telling depiction of human limitations regarding the perception of truth. Eteokles does not any more exemplify a

106. See Zeitlin (1982) 114-135, 157-158.

107. L. 592. *Δοκεῖν* actually reminds us of the terms *δόκος* and *δόξα*, proliferating in early Greek philosophy; one may recall the Parmenidean condemnation of human opinion (fr. 1.30 D-K): *βροτῶν δόξας, ταῖς οὐκ ἐν πίστις ἀληθείς*. See Rösler (1970) 16-21 and Poli Palladini (2001) 451-54, who posit influence from Presocratic thought on Aeschylus; cf., inversely, Traglia (1952, 41-99) on Aeschylean linguistic elements in Empedocles. In our paper though, references to philosophical texts do not aim at tracing lines of influence, but only at adducing parallels capable of elucidating Aeschylean ideas within the context of contemporary thought.

108. See Zeitlin (1982) 114-116.

109. Cf. fr. 6.5 D-K, quoted above.

model of prudent and responsible leadership, but instead appears ‘possessed’ by a fateful urge to surrender to his destiny by confronting his own brother, an urge stemming from a clear “failure properly to register the enormity of fratricide”.¹¹⁰ From now on Eteokles is first and foremost the “son of Oedipus”, significantly introducing his emotionally charged monologue with an exclamation addressed to his *θεομανές γένος* (653-654).¹¹¹ The roles appear completely changed: it is now the Chorus who is manifestly projected as possessing insight and, consequently, beseeches the king, *Οιδίπου τέκος* (677),¹¹² to abstain from the horrendous deed of fratricide by resisting his ‘irrational’ urge, denounced in strong terms as *θυμοπληθής δορίμαργος ἄτα* (686-687) and *ὠμοδακῆς ἕμερος* (692).¹¹³

No wonder should it then be that, as the women are about to learn the dreadful news of fratricide later in the play, they shall collectively designate themselves as *μάντις* (808). They have actually foreseen, during the second stasimon, the death of the brothers through mutual fratricide: *ἐπεὶ δ’ ἂν αὐτοκτόνως / αὐτοδάκτοι θάνωσι* (734-735); moreover, they have accurately traced the brothers’ fate to Laius’ *παλαιγενῆς παρβασία* (742-743).¹¹⁴ The women may, thus, be regarded as possessing a deep feeling, a veritable ‘insight’, which warns them of the impending disaster, as is also the case with

110. So Lawrence (2007) 349.

111. See esp. ll. 689-691. What we may assert here is that the influence of the Curse and Eteokles’ inner traits co-exist in an entangled way: see Sewell-Rutter (2007) 25-34, 158-161; cf. Easterling’s (1993) analysis of how, in Aeschylus, supernatural influence cannot usurp inner motivation. In fact, the presence of the Erinyes in Eteokles’ mind is signalled early in the play through her inclusion in his prayer at ll. 69-77: see Stehle (2005) 110-120 and Lawrence (2007) esp. 339-341. This view is not universally accepted, yet what is certain is that we can detect an element of marked ‘emotionality’ in Eteokles’ behaviour throughout the play, particularly evident in his abrupt manner of speaking when he confronts the women of the Chorus; see Thalmann (1978) 93; Seidensticker (2009) 224-228.

112. Cf. *τέκνον* (686); on these addresses, see Gruber (2009) 192-193.

113. The whole exchange between the Chorus and Eteokles stretches between lines 677 and 719; see Gruber (2009) 188-196.

114. See Zeitlin (1982) 156-157; cf. ead. (1996) 357: “women’s exclusion from the central area of masculine public life seems to be matched by their special access to those powers beyond men’s control, to those outside forces that make sudden forays into human lives, unsettling all their normal assumptions.” The most noted Aeschylean instance of female mantic ability combined with inner perturbation (and frenetic motion) is, of course, Cassandra in *Agamemnon*.

other Aeschylean Choruses, notably those of *Persae*¹¹⁵ and *Agamemnon*: we especially recall the *καρδία τερασκόπος* of the Elders of *Agamemnon* (977), stimulated by fear and prescient — as here — of the grim fate of the king.¹¹⁶ Hence, the women's synaesthetic 'vision' may, finally, be regarded as a particularly eloquent sign of a 'sensibility' which is not really *ἄσσκοπος*, but eventually turns out to be capable of a very accurate discernment of reality.¹¹⁷

6. Final Thoughts

What we may, by now, assert is that the synaesthetic metaphor *κτύπον δέδορκα* may be regarded as holding special significance with respect to a number of issues. Firstly, it helps to enact the confrontation between the Chorus and Eteokles as regards verbal expression — a conflict about language, yet essentially reflecting a clash of outlooks, due to their divergent modes of perceiving reality. This confrontation ought to be situated within the wider framework of the question of representation and truth, an issue prominent throughout the play, culminating in the proliferation of symbolic and metaphoric expression in the *Redepaare*. Within this framework, the question emerges whether the women's perception is true to reality or somehow distortive of it. This question is intimately connected with a second one, pertaining to the essence of the theatrical experience, namely the problem of 'perceiving what is absent', which leads us to the issue of the relationship between *ᾄψις* and *λέξις* — to apply the Aristotelian terms — in *Seven against Thebes*. What we may deduce from the above discussion is that in a play where visualization is prominent, particularly at the description of the shields, synaesthetic metaphor effectively insinuates what the audience undergoes: it 'sees' what it hears about. In a sense then, the Cho-

115. In the parodos, esp. ll. 10-11: *κακόμαντις ἄγαν ὀρσολοπεῖται / θυμὸς ἔσωθεν* — with comments by Belloni (1994) 77-78.

116. See 975-979: *τίπτε μοι τόδ' ἐμπέδως / δεῖμα προστατήριον / καρδίας τερασκόπον ποτᾶται; / μαντιπολεῖ δ' ἀκέλευστος ἄμισθος ἀοιδά* (cf. 990-992). What is emphasized is the spontaneity of this 'song of fear', as well as its rooting deep in the 'heart': see de Romilly (1971) 61-80 (with further parallels); Sansone (1975) 45-53; Schnyder (1995) 54-61. On 'prophetic' *θυμὸς* in general, see Padel (1992) 68-75.

117. From this same 'sensibility' stems the strongly agitated tone conditioning the women's lament from line 822 onwards; note particularly their self-construal as *θυιάς* (maenad), on which, see Marinis (2012) 33-36.

rus is a ‘model’ for the audience; or, alternatively, the audience is supposed to ‘mirror’ the Chorus. Yet — to return to the issue of the perception of reality — if the women are reprimanded by Eteokles for their overly sensible perception, for ‘seeing’ what they are not supposed to ‘see’, namely a grave danger, towards the end of the play they will prove perspicacious and discerning indeed, since they are the first to realize Eteokles’ eventual demise: this shall prove the final vindication of the Chorus.*

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* This article has evolved from a paper presented at the 4th Panhellenic Drama Conference, held at the University of Patras (26-29 May 2011). I profited much from the discussion there and I am grateful to Theodoros Stephanopoulos and Stavros Tsitsiridis, hosts of the conference, for their valuable feedback on this paper. I want to extend my thanks to Giulia Maria Chesi, Kaiti Diamantakou, Michael Kardamitsis, Peggy Karpouzou and Panagiotis Vouzis, for offering helpful comments on earlier drafts of this article.

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