

Anger in the *Oresteia*

BY

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Declaration

I, Manuela Irarrázabal Elliott, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Signed: _____

Abstract

The study of ancient emotions has attracted growing attention in classical scholarship in recent years. This thesis seeks to contribute to that growing body of research. It examines the representation of anger in the *Oresteia*. While dealing with a culture remote in time, its religion, social structure and language, I attempt to extract the experiential base behind the dramatisation of the emotion by using cognitive science as a basis for my analysis. I propose that the representation of anger in Aeschylus indicates a rich conceptualisation of the emotion with a sophisticated degree of psychological insight and realism.

Anger is a complex psychological phenomenon involving cognitive processing, bodily change, and social interaction. Tragedy, a medium that deals with intense emotion in a social context, in interactive form through both word and action, lends itself exceptionally well to the presentation, and conceptualisation, of anger as a multifaceted and complex experience and phenomenon. The methodology and scope of this thesis enables the enquiry into this conceptual richness. While I draw on previous research on ancient emotions, both in method and content, I also develop them further by highlighting the importance of shaping the enquiry in a way that allows theoretical breadth and analytical depth.

I start out from the cognitive hypothesis that emotions are a function of the mind to explore how the characters in the trilogy shape their anger in terms of evaluations of social interactions. I use other Greek sources as a comparative framework for this investigation. I then treat cognition in a broader sense as having the body with all its sensorimotor capacities as its context. The use of cognitive metaphors will enable an understanding that accounts for aspects of anger with an important presence in the text such as overdetermination and desire. The dramatisation of anger is also considered as a socially embedded phenomenon, developing within and continuously affected by a social environment. Finally, I will approach anger from the perspective of the Gods both as immanent forces and as anthropomorphic entities.

Impact Statement

This research advances our knowledge through interdisciplinary work on ancient emotions in the field of classics. The methodology proposed applies cognitive science as a model for the interpretation of ancient texts. It combines literary, psychological and social concerns that might provide fruitful crossover within the discipline of classics, in conferences and research groups, or outside academia between researchers and institutions. It offers the basis for dissemination in journals, as well as the potential to structure lecture courses around the issues it raises. This research can also be insightful for the general understanding of emotions and the implications of new advances in cognitive science for other disciplines.

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Note

All translations are mine, unless otherwise stated. Abbreviations follow those in the Liddell-Scott-Jones Greek-English Lexicon (LSJ). I latinise proper names. All Greek textual references and quotations are taken from the Loeb editions, unless otherwise stated. The Greek text of the *Oresteia* that I follow is the 2008 Loeb edition by Alan H. Sommerstein. However, in some problematic passages, I choose to follow different editions – this will be indicated.

Introduction

Interpreting Anger in Aeschylus

Did the ancients feel what we feel? While evolutionary studies suggest that we have been biologically ‘modern’ for the past three hundred thousand years, it is nonetheless a captivating question. When reading the literature of the Ancient Greeks, we are dealing with cultures remote in time, and with different forms of religion, social structure and language. One may then be forgiven for failing to relate to their expressions of commonly lived experiences, such as human emotions. This thesis attempts to tackle just that, to extract the experiential base behind the literary abstractions of antiquity. I take anger as the lens of investigation and Aeschylus’ *Oresteia* as its field. My interest lies in the dramatic representation of anger considered as an emotion, by which I mean a psychological experience involving the mind, the body, and the society within which it is experienced. While there are fundamental differences between examining a phenomenon such as an emotion described in an artistic creation and examining it as it happens in real life, I start out from the assumption that art can, and often does, condense down precisely those issues that might appear too complicated to us. An artistic creation such as tragedy plays an essential social role as a place for the occurrence as well as the channelling of meaningful and evocative discourses for a community. The analysis of an artistic representation has inherent limitations, as any model will have, but it also has unique advantages. Creative literature, including drama, can be thought of as too simplified or too subjective a model, but that would be to miss an important point. It needs to give the necessary information, with some degree of accuracy, in order to be culturally intelligible. I hope this research can contribute to a greater understanding of ancient Greek emotions.

While anger has received a great deal of attention in recent scholarship by classicists, this research is new, both in nature and scope. I am proposing that the representation of anger in Aeschylus indicates a rich

conceptualisation of the emotion with a significant degree of psychological insight and realism. It provides illuminating insights into how the Greeks experienced, conceptualised, discussed, and represented emotions. Research on ancient emotions has somehow overlooked Aeschylus' work as a significant source of knowledge about the distinctive aspects of ancient Greek emotions. I therefore envision this research as a contribution to an area of investigation that, despite the prolific work in recent years, has paid only limited attention to tragedy. The interdisciplinary approach to emotions utilised here has been largely taken from cognitive science. The approach of cognitive science is enriched, particularly in the last two chapters, by perspectives taken from social psychology and anthropology. These complementary views will help us to refine our understanding of what makes ancient Greek emotions like ours and what distinguishes them, and what their fundamental characteristics are.

Although the plays do not give us explicitly defined concepts, they do provide representations of anger created for an audience to understand them through a range of elements. These elements might not necessarily be methodically or systematically articulated as in other type of discourses such as philosophy but, as I hope to show, are highly consistent with those we meet in other genres. Furthermore, the conceptualisations of anger in Aeschylus are also coherent with other expressions of the culture, such as religion, social structure, and language.

This last argument is particularly important to this thesis. The New Historicism, now influential in literary criticism in Classics, rightly acknowledges the relation of mutual interdependence between a text and its historical context (Bennett & Royle, [1995] 2016, pp. 138-48; Schmitz, 2007, pp. 159-74; Fry, 2012, pp. 246-58), irrespective of any subsequent readings in later receptions. Hence, to interpret anger in the *Oresteia*, one has to locate the text in its historical setting. The text works, at least partly, as a reflective expression of the society in which emerges, and it is embedded in a diversity of discourses. This is all the more important considering that we are talking of a psychological phenomenon that is, to a large extent, socially

embedded. The discourses and expressions through which anger is conveyed therefore need to be considered in their context. I try to create a cultural framework to read social situations and experiential states that reflect anger in the tragedies. I will explore a multiplicity of cultural forms in which anger emerges and which condition the intelligibility of its literary representation. The way in which different types of discourse, such as poetry and oratory, interact and shape historical reality and language needs to be part of the analysis of Aeschylean anger. Similarly, other social institutions like religion, hierarchical categorisation of people, and gender will be considered as key in the formation of discourse on anger in antiquity.

There is nothing inherently new in discussing ancient anger. Modern research has already shed light on important aspects of Greek and Roman emotions and how they connect to their context. As I will discuss below, research in Classics and related disciplines such as anthropology and history have helped us to develop methodological approaches to read emotions in cultures remote in time. While I inevitably rely on these methodologies, I also seek to refine them. One distinguishing feature is the way I treat Aristotle. His surviving work contains some of the most meticulous and systematic analysis of Greek emotions. However, this research suggests that it might not be sufficient as a paradigm to understand ancient emotions. While other studies of ancient anger have largely (and understandably) based their interpretation on Aristotle's *Rhetoric* II, here it is suggested that in some important respects Aeschylus departs from the conceptualisation of the emotion present there. Hence, I will use Aristotle as a fundamental source and as an inevitable starting point, as the fullest and most lucid articulation of emotion in ancient Greece, but not necessarily as an infallible or comprehensive guide for the interpretation of all anger in the texts. Therefore, beyond representing the addition of an ancient source to the study of anger in antiquity, the analysis of Aeschylus' work deepens and expands our understanding of the emotion. As I hope to show, the exploration of Aeschylus provides us with new awareness of the nuances and complexity of ancient conceptualisations of anger.

I should alert the reader that this thesis is not an attempt to offer a comprehensive interpretation of Aeschylean anger. I have elected to analyse certain passages of the *Oresteia* selected for methodological reasons.¹ I will prioritise an approach that allows me to look at the multi-dimensionality of anger. This means that I will revisit the same passages (those with a very high salience in regard to the plot movement and with a concentration of dramatic elements) with a set of questions throughout this research. This will allow me to study the passages from different angles and evaluate them in different frameworks, bringing new aspects to light. The dialogue between Clytemnestra and the chorus of elders in the *Agamemnon*, for example, provides insightful results when analysed from the perspective of emotions as evaluative processes as well as ways to read how the body is present in their conceptualisation. As I hope will become clear, anger is a multifaceted emotion that can be experienced in a variety of ways, some of them as internal processes and some as externally induced phenomena. Hence, the multi-layered reading of the *Oresteia* that is proposed here aims to unveil the sophistication of Aeschylean psychology.

Equally, the limited number of characters that I will analyse offers an excellent way to explore their development, their broader relationship within the social environment represented in the play, and how they contribute to the dynamism of the plot. This is because the conceptual tools that I apply will enable greater breadth with regard to theory while at the same time allow for a deeper exploration of the characters. Research on the construction of different kinds of characters, with a focus on their emotional responses on a granular level, needs to be strengthened. This multidimensional approach helps me to establish ways of understanding Aeschylean psychology and its relation to the construction of character in his work.

There is relatively little interest in the construction of emotion in tragedy at the moment. This might be due to the very intensity of emotions

¹ The *Oresteia* is particularly rich, among Aeschylus' surviving works, in angry words and in conflicts within families in which anger can be ascribed. The rest of the Aeschylean corpus will be also considered but as a basis to cross-check the evidence of the *Oresteia*.

in tragedy: the subject matter might seem too obvious or simple to the reader to need exploration. There has been far more interest in the research on the emotional experience of the audience of ancient drama, especially from the perspective of the cognitive approaches adopted by classicists. However, I would argue that the emotions of the characters in the plays, and the extent to which they conform to psychological, social, and ethical norms have direct implications for the generation of a dramatic effect, and therefore for the cognitive experience of the audience. This is not a new idea. Aristotle places a great deal of importance in tragic emotions and how they matter for the audience of tragedy. The construction of character is fundamental to understand the dramaturgy of the plays and how the audience relates to them. This thesis has the potential to engage with further questions that are relevant to other research currently being carried out.

Finally, I hope that this research may help both in content and method to enable both further readings of Greek tragedy and understanding of ancient emotions. As a consequence, I hope that this thesis may also be of interest to those studying anger in other texts and in other cultures distant in time and space. I offer a model, based on the cognitive science and complemented by other disciplines, to extract information about emotions as experiential states that can be useful for researchers wanting to apply a model of emotions to a literary text. In terms of content, I hope that this research will provide illuminating insights for those with an interest in how human emotions have changed over time, and yet in many respects have stayed the same.

1.1 Definition of Anger

Imposing an overly simple model upon the diverse material related to anger in the trilogy is undesirable. However, it is appropriate at this stage to articulate a basic, abstract, and broad definition of anger that provides us with a conceptual 'tool kit' to establish the fundamental aspects of the emotion to be considered in this research. This definition serves the dual purpose of setting the parameters to identify anger in the text when there is

no lexical indicator, and of establishing the questions for selecting the appropriate elements from the vast conceptual material found in ancient and modern literature on emotions. Since no definition is independent from the theory that produces it, I will be treating theories as 'models that constitute operational representations of our understanding' (following Wilson (2010, p.3)). I therefore consider the following definition, based on cognitive science, as a way of organising information and evidence in a useful scheme to handle the difficulty and complexity of anger.

I define anger as an emotion, by which I mean an experience that entails cognitive, desiderative, behavioural, physiological, and social aspects, which are connected and depend upon each other. It is typically, but not necessarily, a conscious phenomenon that can be experienced in a variety of ways. While the behavioural aspect of anger differs from one case to another, it can be identified as bearing some kind of aggressive or destructive inclination. The cognitive aspect often refers to an intentional object,² and involves the evaluation that something is not as it should be. The intentional object of anger may be an action, a situation, or an idea, and it is normally associated with the people, things or ideas that the subject of the emotion values or is attached to. The intentional object of anger may or may not coincide with the cause of the emotion. Anger involves physiological changes such as hormonal alteration, raised blood pressure, and other physiological alterations. The desiderative aspect of anger is often, but not always, connected to retaliation or punishment. Anger can vary along a number of dimensions such as the character traits of the subject, type of object, relation and level of attachment to the object, intensity, duration, etc.³

This definition has been formulated largely following some of the main hypotheses used in cognitive science to describe emotions. Given that any definition presupposes a theory, and we do not have a theory of anger by Aeschylus, we will inevitably impose something on the interpretation of the

² I explain what I mean by 'intentional object' in section I.2.1 below.

³ I will return to this definition, and each aspect will receive detailed discussion.

emotion in his work.⁴ This does not mean that if we want to ask the relevant questions about anger in the text, we need to start out from zero.⁵ The use of cognitive science as a framework to interpret ancient emotions has been tried with relative success. Two main arguments have been advanced to support the use of cognitive science to interpret emotion in ancient Greek literature. The first argument points to the fact that there is mounting evidence, mainly from research carried out by anthropologists (discussed in 1.2.4 below), that there are important trans-cultural elements in emotions.⁶ This evidence establishes grounds that allow us to think that it is possible to interpret ancient emotions from our own understanding of them. This first argument does not give us any details about what exactly we should take as idiosyncratic in Greek anger. The second argument is that Aristotle's definitions of emotions in the *Rhetoric* equips them with a strong cognitive component, indicating a conceptual bridge between the way we understand emotions today and how they were perceived in antiquity (discussed in 1.3.2 below).

1.2 Methodology

Anger, as well as other emotions, is a phenomenon that is often amplified in Greek tragedy in terms of scale, expression and effects.

⁴ As de Man (1983, p. 9) has put it, 'the contemporary contribution to this age-old problem [that unmediated expression is a philosophical impossibility] comes by way of a rephrasing of the problem that develops when a consciousness gets involved in interpreting another consciousness, the basic pattern from which there can be no escape in the social sciences'. See also, de Man (1986).

⁵ I borrow the idea of Heidegger (*Being and Time* §31; §32) and Gadamer (2007, p. 162) idea that the task of the interpreter is to enter the hermeneutic circle in an appropriate way, not to avoid it. Their stress that the task of interpreting a text departs from the rigours of a scientific demonstration in the sense that there will always be certain circularity inherent to the principles of hermeneutics has key relevance for the discussion on emotions: we cannot attempt to have neither an inductive approach to anger (that would be going case by case following the words for anger in the text) nor a deductive one (imposing a definition from a theory).

⁶ For similar discussions, see Konstan (2006) and Cairns (2003).

Nonetheless, despite the significance of its role and its ubiquity, one should not assume that anger is always explicit or conveyed to the audience through the same means. While we need to assume that the dramatisation of anger needs to be somehow signposted to make it intelligible, we cannot take it for granted that this will happen by means of denotative lexical indicators. Similarly, in drama, we cannot necessarily expect to find an emotion named or articulated as in theory. Hence, we need to establish a method that enables us to pin down the presence of the emotion in the text in ways that can be thought of as easily recognisable for its original audience, while at the same time bearing elements that can be linked to our understanding of anger. Once we can uncover the presence of the emotion, we can enter into the details of its dramatic construction and the concepts related to it.

Therefore, the main methodological question is the criteria to be used to discern the relevant from the non-relevant elements in the construction of a dramatic character or situation that accounts for an ascription of anger. We are primarily dealing with evidence from a set of texts which formed part of a larger performative representation. However, despite much of the dimensionality of tragedy having been lost, we do have the written words.⁷ Therefore, it is necessary to start with lexical indicators. As will be discussed further below, Ancient Greek is a language rich in words for anger. Some nuances and distinctions have been traced in the scholarship on ancient emotions, shedding light on important aspects of the notions of anger at stake in the texts. While progress in this respect has proved fundamental to explorations of anger in ancient literature, it has also shown some of the limitations of a purely lexical approach to anger. One limitation is the uncertainty about the extent to which these words label the same concept, or indeed the same phenomenon (if there is such a thing), that the English lexical categories for anger do. This is partly why the study of ancient anger has been importantly led by concept studies such as the ones conducted by,

⁷ For example, Taplin's (1972, 1978) work has shown how the richness of the visual aspects of tragedy can be inferred from the text.

for example, Konstan (2003, 2006) and Harris (2002, 2003) that seek to complement lexical approaches.

The study of the dramatisation of anger bears the complexity of being neither a lexical study nor a conceptual one. On the one hand, there are aspects of anger other than denotative lexical ones in drama, such as metaphors, vituperative terminology, and sarcasm. On the other hand, approaching this research as a conceptual study, in which various related words are considered, brings up the problem of how we configure our object of study, and how independent this configuration is from the theory that describes it. As Cairns (2008, p. 51) points out, the main difficulty of approaching anger on the basis of a concept (or even a set of concepts) is the risk of being too prescriptive.⁸ While we need to work with concepts, and that implies an inevitable element of prescription, we can adopt palliative measures for that. At the most basic level, we need to be explicit about the definitions we are using, and how they relate to any given set of theories. Likewise, we need to be clear about the purpose that we are attributing to a definition and the theory that supports it. The suggestion here is that when we establish a working definition of anger, either taken from Aristotle or from a modern theory, we can use it to guide us both in setting the parameters to identify anger in the text, and in establishing the questions that will require critical analysis from both modern and ancient perspectives. This is why the definition of anger given above will be taken as a model that constitutes an operational representation of our understanding of the emotion against which the evidence in the text can be considered. I give it a guiding role without denying that it will be constantly tested against the evidence in the texts and the results from other research in Greek emotions.

While the dimensions present in the definition of anger presented above are key to the understanding and discussion of the emotion, I will

⁸ Averill (1983) presents very interesting results on the differences regarding the understanding of anger between 'people in the street' and theorists of emotions, and often the empirical evidence is more on the side of the former group.

restrict the determining elements that allow me to identify anger in the text to the following three categories:

- Denotative lexical indicators, which signal that the emotion is being reported by the subjects themselves or is being ascribed to them by other characters. While connotative lexical indicators are also important, I will use them as a means to strengthen cases in which the recognition of anger might present difficulties.
- Propositional content of statements containing affronts to honour, to justice, or stating that things are not as they should be. This parameter has been established considering the cognitive premise that anger entails an evaluation of reality. I draw on extensive previous research on both modern and ancient anger that links the emotion with the perception of being offended.
- The possession by, or presence of, a supernatural agent such as an *Erinýs* or an *Alástōr* that can be associated with anger. This parameter is tied to both the cultural background and the literary tradition in which Aeschylus sits.

These three determining elements will enable the identification of anger in the passages of the trilogy selected to explore the different dimensions of anger laid out in the definition proposed above. In this way, I will pin down anger with a minimum number of elements to recognise anger, and then treat these instances critically. In what follows, I will discuss these three categories of indicators for anger in the text.

1.2.1 Lexical Indicators for Anger

Given that this research is language-bound in nature, mapping the words that will indicate the presence of anger in the texts under analysis is a fundamental endeavour. The terminology used to denote anger has received considerable attention in recent research (Harris, 2002, 2003; Konstan, 2003, 2006; Cairns, 2003; Allen, 2003). Despite differences in approach and method, compelling arguments for relying on a linguistic basis for talking about ancient emotions have been advanced, providing us with a good

ground for starting out. The limitations of adopting a purely lexical approach have also been repeatedly emphasised.⁹ Konstan (2006, p. 4) has argued that the Greek words for emotions do not in fact coincide entirely with the way we understand the relevant emotions, and that the way the Greeks conceived particular emotions differs in important respects from the way we characteristically conceive them today, both 'in popular parlance and in scientific literature'. He adds that even though the Greek terms for emotions are normally rendered into English 'by standard equivalents', the context in which we find those Greek terms will problematise the way in which these equivalences are made. Yet this problem can only be tackled by testing those 'standard equivalents' in different ancient sources, and from different analytical frameworks. A different but related limitation is that the words labelling emotions can obscure certain aspects of the concept they refer to, particularly when we are trying to find their equivalents in a modern language. While this is a significant problem, those 'obscured' aspects of an ancient emotion can be brought to light by different mechanisms, such as looking at metaphors and connotations given by the context in which the words appear.

The words used for anger in Ancient Greek evolved over time. Some underwent a transformation in terms of the concept they denoted, while others underwent a change in terms of the connotations they carried with them, and still others disappeared and were replaced by or subsumed under other words. As a general trend, the vocabulary for anger underwent a process of narrowing. Some important words for anger, such as *chólos*, had fallen out of use by the time of Aeschylus, and their absence in the *Oresteia* should not surprise us. Some of the words he uses had almost disappeared by the fifth century. This might be partly due to the nature of the genre, as a way of elevating the language and reflecting the distant mythical past by using words with a Homeric resonance like *mēnis*.

⁹ For a good discussion on the value and limitation of a pure lexical approach, see Sanders (2013, pp. 2-7). Dover (1974, pp. 195-7) stresses that emotional terms can be used to designate behaviours which are typically associated with an emotion.

The purpose of my evaluation here is to present the state of research today, signalling the aspects that will receive special attention in this thesis. I will now briefly sketch out some of the main arguments and give an overview of the words used by Aeschylus to denote anger, ordering them by frequency in his works. This order will suggest slight changes to the prevalence of some terms in this categorisation, and to the doxography about them.¹⁰

Kótos,¹¹ a term that almost disappeared after Homer and Hesiod, is the most frequent word for anger in Aeschylus. Cairns (2003, p. 31) argues that there is no distinction between *kótos* and *mēnis* in terms of their stimuli: basically, an issue of *timē*. Harris (2003, p. 31) and Walsh (2005, p. 79) suggest that *kótos* and *kotéō* show desire for retaliation, connoting an extraordinary duration of the emotion. Walsh (2005, p. 82) argues that *kótos* ‘has as its source something outside the immediate context, especially in reference to foundational experiences’. These two ideas, that the source is distant in the past and outside the immediate context, is discussed and confirmed in Chapter 2 (pp. 127-8). Walsh (2005, p. 79) additionally suggests that *kótos* supposes a hierarchical structure, in which a superior is entitled to the emotion towards an inferior but not the other way around.

*Orgē*¹² seems to have replaced the Homeric *chólos*. In early literature, it meant something like ‘temperament’ or ‘disposition’ (Harris, 2002, p. 52; Allen, 2003, p. 78-9), and by the second half of the fifth century the term was usually used to mean anger (Harris 2002, p. 53). *Orgē* is the central term in Aristotle’s analysis of anger in the *Rhetoric*, yet in *EN* and *EE* he sometimes uses *thumós* as an interchangeable term. Harris (2003, pp. 57-8, p. 123), drawing on Aristotle’s definition in the *Rhetoric*, argues for an understanding of *orgé* as an emotion that necessarily leads to action. While this is a valuable

¹⁰ I am deferring the discussion on Aristotle, key for both the doxography and taxonomy of the terminology for anger, to section I.5.1 below.

¹¹ There are twenty-eight instances in Aeschylus (*Seven* 744; *Ag* 456, 635, 1211, 1261, 1464; *Ch* 1025, 33, 592, 952; *Eu* 220, 426, 800, 840, 873, 889, 900, 500; *Frag.* 468**, 244, 541, 266; *Supp* 67, 347, 385, 427, 478, 616).

¹² There are twenty-two instances in Aeschylus (*Prom* 80, 315, 378, 190, 678; *Seven* 678; *Supp* 187, 763; *Eu* 848, 937, 981; *Ag* 71; *Ch* 326; *Frag* 44, 472, 26, 132c, 468, 35, 36).

insight (and suggested by *Ag* 71 and *Ch* 236), I will take issue with the way in which anger and action are connected in Chapter 4 (pp. 196-7); for example, for uses of the word in which this premise is not so clear, see *Eu* 848, 937, 981.

*Mēnis*¹³ and its cognate verb, so important in Homer, was almost completely replaced by the fifth century by *orgē* and *thumós* (Harris, 2002, p. 52). Yet it has an important presence in the *Oresteia*, particularly in the parodos of the *Agamemnon* (discussed in Chapter 2, p. 115), where it has a central role in explaining and giving unity to the plot. The fact that in Homer the noun is reserved for the anger of gods and Achilles has raised questions about its peculiarities (Harris, 2002, p. 50). Konstan (2006, p. 48) suggests that the term in Homer belongs to a solemn and religious register. Cairns (2003, p. 31-2) questions that view: the difference between *mēnis* and *chólos* is of connotation rather than of register, and these two terms co-occur, sharing the same scenarios and expressions.¹⁴ According to Muellner (1996, p. 31), the word often (yet not only) designates an anger related to cosmic irrevocable consequences.

In Homer and Hesiod, the physical nature of *thumós*¹⁵ is imprecise (Pellica, 2011), the ‘seat of vital energy’ within a person, and has to do with emotional responses (Sullivan, 1995, p. 54-5). It has been shown (Pellica, 2011) that while the uses of the adjectives related to *thumós*, usually translated as ‘spiritedly’, respond largely to metrical needs, showing a high degree of dispensability. According to Cairns (2003, p. 21), *thumós* in Homer never means anger, but a ‘general psychic force’ that sometimes coincides with anger, as when ceasing *chólos* and restraining *thumós* count as the same endeavour.¹⁶ In post-archaic Greece, according to Harris (2002, p. 53),

¹³ There are seven instances in Aeschylus (*Supp* 162, 175; *Ag* 155, 701; *Eu* 234, 314; *Frag* 28).

¹⁴ Griffin (1986, 43) stresses that there is no major difference in the use of the word between narrative and speech in Homer.

¹⁵ There are six instances in Aeschylus (*Ag* 992; *Ch* 392, 422; *Seven* 52; *Per* 11; *Frag* 159).

¹⁶ For a different opinion on the difficulty of rendering one term into another see Konstan (2006, p. 50); Harris (2002, p. 51).

thumós had a double sense: anger and the agency of anger within the individual. Plato and Aristotle used the word mainly referring to a part or a faculty of the soul (Harris, 2002, p. 54; Koziak, 1999, p. 1069).¹⁷

*Ménos*¹⁸ is yet another term that almost disappears after Homer. As Cairns (2003, p. 22) notes, the conceptualisation of *ménos* may accompany anger and overlaps, but for him (2003, p.22) at least *ménos* appears to share some of the attributes often attributed to anger rather than a form of anger: '[t]hus *menos* may accompany anger, its conceptualization (sic) overlaps with that of anger, and the energy that *menos* represents may convey both something of the physiological experience of the occurrent emotion (perhaps particularly the stimulation of the autonomic nervous system) and its goal-directed, desiderative aspect (the determination to retaliate), but *menos* is not in itself a candidate for consideration as a form of anger'. In Homer, it often describes the strength with which a warrior goes up against an enemy.

Chólos is the standard term for anger in Homer and it is strongly linked to issues of honour (Harris 2003, p. 24; Konstan, 2006, p. 48). Aeschylus does not use the word.¹⁹ By the fifth century it had effectively disappeared in prose; this may be (but cannot be shown to be) connected with its absence from Aeschylus. Whatever the reason, for our present purpose it requires no further discussion.²⁰

Pikría usually means 'bitterness'. *Pikrós* is used by Aristotle (*EE* 1221b10) to designate someone who keeps *orgē* within for a long time. It

¹⁷ For a brief discussion on the role of *thumós* in the trilogy, see Chapter 4, p. 190, 196.

¹⁸ There are ten instances in Aeschylus (*Supp* 560; *Ag* 1067; *Ch* 1076; *Eu* 128, 832, 840, 873; *Prom* 720; *Frag* 29C, 47a).

¹⁹ It appears only in the *Prometheus*, whose authenticity has been questioned, see Griffith (1977).

²⁰ Konstan (2006, p. 52) thinks that sometimes the use of *chólos* 'suggests something like raw battle fury', thus indicating an overlap with *ménos*. Konstan (2006, pp. 56-65) suggests that *chólos* shows much similarity with Aristotle's *orgē*, as the experience of the emotion responds to criteria of status and of actual abilities to retaliate.

also appears in Demosthenes (21. 204), and it may well also there indicate rancour or bitterness kept within someone.

I have restricted the discussion to the denotative terminology for anger. However, the range of terminology that can be used to signal the presence of anger is large. Insults are another indicator of anger, even though in the *Oresteia*, unlike the angry interaction between Agamemnon and Achilles in *Iliad* I, vituperation does not play a major role. As will be discussed in Chapter 3 (p. 161), Clytemnestra suggests that Cassandra is indecent or vulgar. However, this case of vituperation, and the few others in the trilogy (for example Cassandra calling Clytemnestra a 'lioness' (*Ag* 1259), which bears negative connotations related to the inappropriate behaviour of a woman), tend to be covered either with irony or highly ambiguous, and therefore need to be looked at against precise situations in the plays. A similar case occurs with the presence of words such as *drimús* that often accompany anger, linking it to a network of images and metaphors that configure patterns in the conceptualisation of the emotion – in this case, the imagery of dripping poisoned liquids and flying darts. As will be argued in Chapter 2, these symbolic representations are grounded in the human cognitive apparatus and are indicative of the experience of anger. These words will be discussed case by case in their context in the trilogy. The language of threats may also be indicative of anger, and likewise, intense statements of blame at perceived wrong. This will also be fundamental in my analysis of anger. Threats need not always be explicit, as they can be subtly conveyed by different strategies that will be discussed using speech-act theories. In both cases, context is fundamental to identify the presence of anger.

1.2.2 Other Indicators

The two other indicators of anger used here are (1) the propositional content of appraisals containing offences to one's honour or sense of justice, and (2) the presence of an avenging deity such as the *Alástōr*. I will briefly

outline below the justifications for the use of these indicators. They will receive further discussion in the relevant chapters.

I start out from the assumption that anger has a cognitive component which can be formulated in terms of an evaluation or appraisal of reality. In drama, as well as often in real life, this appraisal is linguistically articulated. Since this is one of the most basic hypotheses of cognitive approaches to emotions, we can draw on a good amount of research, both on modern and ancient anger, that has established the most paradigmatic content of those appraisals. Based on this, I will be looking at the propositional content in the tragedies in which affronts to honour, injustices, and a sense of re-victimisation are expressed. I do not only rely on previous research to establish issues such as the propositional content of ancient anger: in Chapter 1 I show how they are present in the discourse of anger in a variety of ancient Greek sources. These discourses can adopt different shapes, but they nevertheless recur with a high level of frequency when anger is at stake.

The attribution of anger to a character that is possessed by the *Alástor* or an *Erinýs*, or that is said to be an *Erinýs*, is based on two arguments. One is that the representation of these deities plays a fundamental dramatic role in the trilogy. As I will argue in Chapter 2, the symbolism linked to these deities is consistent with other representations of anger in Greek literature. The symbolism attached to them is that of revenge, and unforgiveness. The other reason is that the plays appear in a cultural context in which there was an active belief in these divinities, and this belief, among other things, played a key role in the maintenance of social rules and boundaries. Thus, the ascription of anger to a character linked to these creatures finds secure grounding, not only from a dramatic perspective, but also from a broader cultural one.

1.3 Greek Tragedy and Psychological Realism

The question of how to read an emotion in ancient drama relates both to the poetics of the genre and to hermeneutical considerations of the

understanding of emotions in a certain corpus or text.²¹ In the previous section, I established a method for identifying, interpreting, and exploring an emotion. Here, I give brief account of the main difficulties that previous research has faced when assuming a certain level of psychological realism and of individuation in the development of characters in Greek tragedy – Aeschylus having been particularly problematic. This discussion has been heavily influenced by the problems posed by Aristotle’s *Poetics*, both for those who agree or disagree with his approach to tragedy. However, the question of psychological insight in tragedy has been an object of interest not only for classicists but also for psychoanalysts and researchers looking at the relationship between art and psychology in general.

1.3.1 Reasoning with Universals and Literary Interpretation

In *Poetics* IV, Aristotle establishes that the reason why people enjoy looking at representations, even those in which pain is involved, lies in the understanding obtained from them (1148b10-15).²² The passage is imprecise about what exactly it is that people understand in tragedy, and the scholarship on it is rich in controversies. However, it is widely understood in the context of the discussion with Plato about the degree to which drama can be credited with ‘truth’. Here, I restrict the scope of the discussion to the question about the level of psychological realism needed to make an audience understand a dramatic situation, and how that relates to human cognition.²³ Halliwell (1992, p. 252) has made a compelling argument based on *Topics* (164a10-11) that the comprehension involved in tragedy takes place by reference to ‘the general categories which structure, and emerge

²¹ For a dissenting view, see des Bouvrie (1990, p. 123).

²² Aristotle stresses the importance of two emotions in tragedy: pity and fear. For a good discussion in this narrow view on tragic emotions, see Konstan 1999.

²³ Halliwell (1992, pp. 242-3) thinks that the pleasure is mimetic, and not real. Rorty (1992, p. 16) argues that in order to produce this pleasant effect on us, the very structure of the actions attributed to tragic protagonists should somehow represent us. This relates to the idea that ‘we take delight in self-knowledge’ found in *Magna Moralia* (1213a10-26).

within, our understanding of the world'. To say that one makes inferences in poetry (1451b5-6) is explained by Aristotle as relating the action to 'the kind of thing that suits a certain kind of person to say or do' in accordance with necessity and probability (1451b7-8).²⁴ There is therefore need for a certain level of accuracy for the poetic 'model' to work in the mind of its audience, an idea that is found in different places in the Aristotelian corpus. For example, in *Posterior Analytics*, there is an argument that all intellectual learning comes about from already existing knowledge (71a1-2), which is a condition imposed by Aristotelian epistemology: we understand a particular representation because we recognise something universal in it (100a17).

Aristotle argues that it is possible to infer qualities such as anger and desire from physical qualities if we have previously established, as a premise, that the body and the soul change together when affections take place (*Prior Analytics* 70b6-10). His point here is not that the body and the soul change together. Rather, if we believe that (a universal), we are then able to infer a human characteristic that we cannot see (a particular) from another characteristic that we can see (another particular). According to Aristotle, we can infer psychological traits if we are given the appropriate elements. While this does not provide clear criteria to assess the level of realism with which tragedy is furnished, it suggests that providing the appropriate elements is enough. As Halliwell (1992, p. 247) notes, the understanding of the audience means 'an active and interpretative process of cognition – a perspicacious discovery of significances in the world, or in representations of the world'. The inference from particular elements of representation to a certain type of character that *Poetics* IV alludes to depends on how these elements relate to reality. Even if Aristotle's concern was only with 'character types', this does not mean that the representation of these types need not be informed by recognisable psychological realism.

²⁴ As de Ste. Croix (1992, p. 23) points out, according to Aristotle 'universal statements in mimetic literary forms are about what a particular kind of man will say or do according to probability or necessity'.

Even types need the adequate amount of psychology in order to work in the context in which they appear.²⁵

1.3.2 Consistency, Action, and Choice

A different source of doubt about the degree of psychological realism in tragedy arises from the Aristotelian notion of character in the *Poetics* (1449b24 - 1450a15).²⁶ The idea developed there, that character is conveyed through action and choice, has been hugely influential in the scholarship on Greek tragedy.²⁷ Since in tragedy human choice is often permeated with divine intervention, many scholars have seen a problem in the consistency of character-construction. This view is strengthened by the plurality of accounts and views that one character can give about one event – as Clytemnestra does about the murder of Agamemnon. Belfiore (2014, p. 91), for example, thinks that there is not a constant dramatic personality existing independently of the sequence of scenes, and that the attempts made by some scholars to find psychological realism are out of place given that the dramatic conventions of tragedy do not leave room for such representations. An issue of particular importance in this context is the role of the gods in

²⁵ For a discussion on the *Rhetoric's* requirements that both the speaker's character and the audience's emotions be manifested and affected, respectively, by elements of the oration itself, see Nehamas (2015, p. 294). He (2015, p. 302) argues that there is no need for a large degree of individuation in the creation of characters: 'Oedipus is not a person who has a character but is himself a character, a type, which we may recognize as a type to which we ourselves belong'.

²⁶ *Eudemian Ethics* states that 'it is only because it is not easy to see the nature of man's choice that we are forced to judge of his character by his acts' (1228a14-16). On Aristotle's idea that there is a certain mind-state behind the choice and that this is what determines action, see *Rh* 1372; *EN* 1139a22-3; *EN* 1144b30-2.

²⁷ Blundell (1992, p. 155) argues that dramatic *ēthos* and *dianoia* are accordingly derived from the nature of human action as such. However, in drama this cannot happen, and the choice of the agent must be somehow shown; arguably, tragedy can only tolerate limited degrees of obscurity for the audience to be able to infer the characters. Barfield (2011, p. 51) argues that 'tragedies require a character that is sufficiently good, appropriate, real, and consistent'. For a good review of this discussion, see Bednarowski (2015, p. 180).

tragedy (an issue on which Aristotle in *Poetics* is notoriously silent), and particularly in Aeschylus. Lesky (1966, p. 82) argues that the way in which Agamemnon's decision is portrayed shows inconsistency, as it is made out of free choice and under the yoke of necessity at the same time.²⁸ He takes this lack of consistency as a sign of Aeschylus' interest in developing the theme of the tragedy over the exploration of human psychology.²⁹ However, there are ways of reading the co-occurrence of divine intervention and human agency without implying inconsistency in the construction of characters. The overdetermination model applied to Greek literature by Dodds (1951) accounts for both aspects to explain behaviour without postulating any fundamental inconsistency. Furthermore, the incorporation of divine intervention to explain action in the plays does not necessarily mean that Aeschylus was unconcerned with the development of human psychology.

1.3.3 Individuation and Personality

The problem of consistency of choice is not only related to the problem posed by Aristotle's notion of character,³⁰ but also to the question of the extent to which we are allowed to expect individuation, freedom, and responsibility in the characters of the plays. Furthermore, since all these are moral concepts that have been traditionally regarded as key indicators of human psychology, and often connected to the notion of 'personality', the

²⁸ Similarly, Levinson (1926, p. 94); Peradotto (1969b). Williams (1993, pp. 50-74) argues that Greek tragedy highlights the problematic gap between intention and responsibility.

²⁹ This last idea has had implications for the understanding of emotions in tragedy, as Taber Murray (1916, p. 56), who reads tragic emotions as static ways of giving form to the characters and that there is little room for psychological realism, exemplifies. Rorty (1992, p. 9) argues that even though tragedy is about action rather than character, they need to be coordinated.

³⁰ A notion that is widely maintained in the relevant scholarship. For example, see Easterling (1973, p.4), Blundell (1992, p. 155); Vernant (1992, p. 37); Barfield (2011, p. 40).

level of realism and psychological insight in the plays has been doubted.³¹ However, as Easterling (1973) argues, the concern about developing the individual personality of the characters and the level of psychology with which they are imbued are two separate questions. The fact that a character can be presented as intellegible to the audience despite divine intervention, however, does not mean that that there is a strong interest in developing the personality of the character. Easterling (1973, p. 4) suggests that 'the words they utter matter because they articulate the dramatic situation, rather than because they convey the character's inner consciousness'. However, she does not regard the fact that choices are permeated with divine intervention as a necessary indication of a lack of psychological realism. Easterling's claim (1973, p. 6) is that even though Aeschylus may have not been attentive to 'the exploration of the personality for its own sake', he was, nevertheless, interested in his characters as paradigmatic of the human condition.

However, characters also need to be differentiated, unless all are to be understood and evaluated in the same monolithic way. There is no real necessity for Aeschylus to explore the individual traits of his characters more deeply, according to Easterling (1973, pp. 6-7), because he could rely on the expectations of an audience that 'is willing to accept a good deal and to supply a good deal' to make the characters cohere.³² Easterling (1973, p. 9)

³¹ For an example, see Jones (1962). For a good summary of this discussion, see Nussbaum (1985, pp. 235-6). Her own view is that the passages where there is conflict between human agency and divine intervention convey how moral conflict is brought to bear on humans. On moral ambiguity and individuality, see Porter (2005, p. 326). Vellacott (1984, pp. 147-57) suggests that while the trilogy presents a movement from moral ambiguity towards clarity, as has been suggested by Lebeck (1971), the characterization of Orestes leaves us with open questions about his own moral vision as he acts under the authority and protection of a god. Webster (1957, p. 152) sees the chorus considering Agamemnon's choice as free. Podlecki (1987, p. 22) states that the attribution of decisions to gods does not diminish human responsibility. Similarly, Wohl (2010, p. 35) considers that tragedy has a large degree of tolerance of ambiguity regarding intentionality, but that it nevertheless concerns itself with responsibility.

³² For an argument that tragedy is able to convey aspects of psychological realism by giving certain clues about the characters from which the members of audience, due to an inherent human inclination to read minds related to

rejects the conclusion that Agamemnon cannot be read as a real person, or that he is just a vehicle for the development of the plot, precisely because Aeschylus has provided his character with human intelligibility. Furthermore, she thinks that there is no need to expect total coherence of the self in presenting the choices and actions to make it intelligible as a human being, and that the recourse to supernatural phenomena is not an impediment for psychological explanation. This perspective will be developed further in Chapter 2 (pp. 101-2), where I discuss overdetermination in the context of ascribing causes to anger in the plays. The main argument will be that while the terminology to explain anger might be different from modern English, it suggests that the experience is the same. For the purpose of the present discussion, it is important to note that Easterling's argument presents a way forward to read and explore the psychology in the construction of characters in Aeschylus.

Additionally, there are ways of reading consistency in character without the need to establish personality in drama. This solution been dealt very well by Gill (1986; 1995; 1996). He proposes (1986, p. 252) a hermeneutical distinction between analysing character and personality.³³

the function of mirror neurons, are able to construct and understand psychological phenomena, see Budelmann & Easterling (2010, p. 291). Some refer to this phenomenon as 'attribution theory', a term that played an important role in social psychology explaining how individuals (perceivers) use information to arrive to causal explanations of reality (e.g., Jones and Davis 1965; Fiske and Taylor 1991, p. 23) – this view has also been called 'naïve science' as it postulates that individuals operate as naïve psychologists (Greifeneder, Bless, and Fiedler 2017). This is not to say that tragedy has a particular place among other genres to generate such reaction among the audience. The point here that tragedy (as well as other forms of representation) can produce that effect, given a particular characteristic attributed to the human mind.

³³ The main idea is shared by many other scholars. For example, Nussbaum (1985, p. 235). She does not speak in terms of a distinction between character and personality, but she distinguishes the two frameworks of analysis. Vernant (1992, p. 38-9) presents a similar viewpoint, arguing that tragedy develops on two different levels, and that it is precisely this tension that produces its special value, the 'inquiry into man as a responsible agent' as a counterpoint to the supernatural. In his view, the purpose of tragedy is precisely to present these two levels as inseparable.

This distinction allows two different layers of analysis of the text. The reading from the 'character-viewpoint' is primarily concerned with putting the individual in an evaluative scheme in which they are understood as the agent of the action. Under this paradigm one expects coherence in order to attribute the subject with a 'character' and the responsibility for his or her actions. The reading from the 'personality-viewpoint' is concerned with exploring the characters as they really are; that is to say, with distinctive psychological traits (1986, p. 253). Representations of impulses and forces that seem to be external to the conscious and deliberative self, like an *Erinýs*, may be read as subconscious desires and may therefore be an important aspect of the construction of the character, for example. Gill (1986, p. 256) regards these types of scenes as more focused on the mental conflict of the person than on whether there is consistency in the way deliberative processes take place. According to Gill's argument, we can read characters as consistent, without entering into the issue of whether they have personality or not, as these questions pertain to different layers of analysis. What has been regarded as 'inconsistency of choice' does not affect the potential interest in the psychological construction of a dramatic character.

1.3.4 Psychoanalysis

When it comes to ancient literature, a fundamental assumption in psychoanalysis is that the experience of ancient audiences when confronted with tragedy is historically unallocated.³⁴ This means that there is something in tragedy that appeals to humans, independent of the cultural context in which it is read, performed, or watched (Vernant, 1990, p. 87). This assumption is based on the idea that the meaning ascribed to this experience is projected onto the work, regardless of the context, as opposed to the idea

³⁴ On the central figure of Oedipus as an archetype of the human process of awareness and Freud's project to reawaken us to the mythological memories still alive in our unconscious processes, see Downing (1975, p. 12). For the argument that after Freud's revolutionary ideas on family and sex, it is not possible to study the classics in the same way as before, see Brown (1957, p. 243).

that the meaning given to that experience can only be grasped (if at all) through the understanding of the historical, social and mental context in which the text was produced and consumed.

The main account of the *Oresteia* in terms of psychoanalysis is found in work done by Melanie Klein in the sixties. Klein (1963, p. 291) sees in the portrayal of Clytemnestra evidence that Aeschylus was concerned the representation of the human mind and also of characters who present behavioural aspects that can be recognised as human. She constructs an archetype of the human psyche, in which aggression rather than libido is placed at the centre of analysis of the trilogy (Alford, 1990, p. 178). The Oresteia-complex, as coined by her, refers to the archetypal conflict of love for and hate against the mother that relates to a feeling of persecution experienced by the child.³⁵ In early mental life, the guiltier and more persecuted a child feels, the more aggressive he or she often becomes later in life (Klein, 1963, p. 289). Klein (1963, p. 275) understands the trilogy as a representation of the development of human nature at different levels. The *Erinýes*, as well as Athena, represent different aspects of the super-ego (Klein, 1963, p. 297; Alford, 1990, p. 175). In the same vein, Alford (1990, p. 178) suggests that the role of the *Erinýes* in *Eumenides*, where they are finally integrated into the social community, represents them as being brought out from the unconscious and integrated into the community of the mind, stressing that in this movement ‘they remain children of the night, to be repressed once again but not denied’.³⁶

³⁵ In Alford’s (1990, p. 178) view, ‘Orestes’ reaction to his liberation from the Furies reveals that he has indeed integrated love and hate (...) that is, the play ends not with the repression of hate but with its integration with love. This is the key theme’.

³⁶ In this context, the question of the representation of the character’s choices has been seen as a reflection upon the inner sources of conduct, and found to be imbued with realism (Alford, 1992). Bennett (1978, p. 93) notes that the recourse to deities is not necessarily a conscious move done by the poets to represent humans in literature; it is psychoanalysis’ explanation of how religious beliefs operate in Greek literature as a rationalisation of different human drives and psychic phenomena. Simon (1978, p. 92) thinks that it is precisely in the depiction of madness that the tragic poets show refined insight, as they manage to represent mental and emotional disturbance,

In my study, though as indicated above I share Klein's view that Aeschylus is dealing with recognizable behaviour patterns, I have given little space to psychoanalytical approaches. Psychoanalysis works within a fairly rigid theoretical framework that involves strong assumptions and I find many of those assumptions unhelpful for the purpose of this investigation.³⁷ In particular, as noted earlier, I espouse an explicitly historicizing reading of tragedy. I nevertheless consider the views of psychoanalysis about tragedy, consistency, and character potentially enlightening. Although I do not presuppose the hypothesis of the subconscious, I will work on the basis that there are important aspects of the text that can be fruitfully analysed without the need to attribute them to a conscious motivation by the writer. This idea will play an important role, for example, in the understanding of symbolic representations of anger. I draw some conclusions from the text on the basis that there are culturally-shared aspects, such as certain uses of language, that need not be conscious for the members of a community in order to produce an artistic effect. There are levels of discourses that are not necessarily consciously articulated but nonetheless are important for communication.³⁸

There are two respects in particular in which the psychoanalytical reading converges with my analysis of Aeschylus, even though the methodological base differs. With specific reference to emotions in Greek tragedy, Alford (1992, p. 1) considers that the way in which they seem to be represented, as unconfined and uncontrollable, is in agreement with analysts such as Lacan and Klein, and that moderns think they control their passions far more than they do. According to him, the Kleinian view of emotions, which presents them almost as if 'they live a virtual life of their own', seems to be

leaving space for both irrational forces and the necessary individual control to carry on with the play.

³⁷ Psychoanalysis attempts to apply its framework to things consciously and overtly included in the text by its author, as well as those that the writer is not aware of (de Berg, 2003, p. 39; Moran, 2011, p. 108; Castoriadis, 1984, p. 11). For a good account of the limitations of these methods, see Arthur (1977, p. 56).

³⁸ On the 'intentional fallacy', see Selden ([1985] 2005, pp. 20-1).

appropriate for Greek tragedy (Alfred, 1992, p. 12). This conceptualisation of emotions is in accordance with one of the ideas I develop in chapters 2 and 4, namely, that the portrayal of anger in the *Oresteia* indicates the experience of a tension between being the subject of an internal phenomenon and being the object of an external one. Furthermore, the psychoanalytic understanding of emotions as determined by strong drives and desires³⁹ is also in line with one of the dimensions of anger that I pursue in this thesis. Chapter 3 discusses how the representation of desire, often overlooked in cognitive accounts of emotions, is present in anger.

As a note of caution, this research does not explore the potentially rich idea that certain behavioural aspects of anger in the Trilogy that might have been unconscious for Aeschylus can be traced. The analysis of this possibility is beyond the scope and methodological assumptions of this research.

1.4 Approach

This thesis approaches anger largely from a cognitive perspective. As with any hermeneutical consideration, the present discussion of cognition will focus on how to apply adequate parameters for reading emotions in an ancient text, and hence how we understand our own parameters to read emotions today. This discussion seeks to enable an analysis of the text that, beyond purely aesthetics and formalistic concerns, extracts elements of the experiential base underlying the representation of anger. As I have discussed, some cognitive approaches have proven fruitful in the study of emotions in antiquity. One important reason for this is their suitability for a cross-cultural analysis of emotions. It is particularly helpful for investigating

³⁹ See, for example, Alford (1992, p. 18): 'For drive theorists, psychic conflict stems from the intensity of the drives, from the way drives often seem about to overpower the ego, the agency charged with their control. Indeed, Freud often wrote of the puny ego, squeezed between the demands of the drives on the one hand and the demands of society, as embedded in the superego, on the other. The press of the drives upon the psyche, the urgent demand that they make for fulfilment, makes emotional life turbulent and conflict-ridden'.

the way Greek texts reflect a conceptualisation of emotions as evaluations of reality. It allows a contrast with recent empirical research. The range of approaches available is wide, as cognitive science is a young discipline. I am being selective: I want the core issues.

1.4.1 Cognition as Evaluation

Throughout this thesis I will consider different accounts within cognitive science. Nevertheless, I will emphasise the core (though not uncontroversial) idea that cognition is mental representation. According to this model, the mind works with these representations of the world.⁴⁰ The implication of this hypothesis for the conceptualisation of anger is that it can be described in terms of a mental representation ('evaluation' or 'appraisal' is most often the vocabulary used) of the world. The content of that mental representation is normally a social situation in which an offence takes place. The details of the propositional content, in the context of anger in ancient Greek literature, will be discussed in Chapter 1. I will now dive into the context of this cognitive approach to see which aspects might be relevant to the discussion of anger in Aeschylus.

The question of what emotions are, and how they fit into theories of human mind, human action, and social interaction is a breeding ground for discussion. Some theorists have regarded emotions as pure internal or neuropsychological processes that may or may not be conscious, and may or may not be exteriorised (Izard, 1969, p. 265), while others explain them in

⁴⁰ As a note of caution, I am not following here Computational Theory of Mind. The analogy between the mind and a computer (i.e., that the mind carries out operations over symbols that represent reality) has been taken in different ways by different authors, some more literally some more metaphorically. None of the authors that I am citing here follow that model – yet some of them (e.g., Solomon in his early work) have a disembodied conception of the mind. Furthermore, while the authors that I use for my account of the cognitivist model do not hold the enactive model that is in line with embodied cognition (the one I use in from Chapter 2 on), they do hold the idea that the mind only operates over a pre-given world, and therefore do not contradict the enactivist programme. I use the term 'cognitive science' consistently through out the thesis in the way in which Varela does (1991), including a variety of disciplines, philosophy among them.

terms of the perception of a bodily reaction (e.g., James 1884) or in terms of behaviours associated with certain stimuli, adaptive dispositions, or social facts (Kassinove, 1995, p. 8; de Sousa, 2013, p. 20). Furthermore, adding another layer of complexity, the discussion about ontology has been somehow informed by the discussion about the normative role that emotions play in social life (Pitcher, 1965, p. 329).⁴¹ If emotions are understood as mere sensations, they cannot be objects of evaluation of correctness/incorrectness or appropriateness/inappropriateness; and emotions, in a greater or lesser degree, show a history of evaluating judgments (Pitcher, 1965, pp. 329-31; Nussbaum, 2001, p. 2; Srinivasan, 2018, p. 7).

Over recent decades, the discussion of emotions has been led by cognitive science. The word 'cognition' is loosely used to indicate either an operation of the mind or its result. While in early modernity, emotions were widely understood as feelings or drives, being in a somehow troubled relationship with reason (Baier, 1980, pp. 404-16), according to cognitive science they involve information processing, perceptions, and enactment of reality. These theories have challenged James' (1884, p. 190) argument that emotions are just our awareness of bodily changes provoked by certain stimuli. One major critique of this theory is its inability to distinguish between one emotion and another, since our bodily perception can be the same for two different emotions. Empirical research has shown that the interpretation given to a perceived sensation relies heavily on the context and on how the subject constructs the situation (de Sousa, 2013, p. 7).⁴²

⁴¹ As Stearns (1987, p. 89) points out, the changes regarding emotional standards influence self-perception and the cognitive apparatus that is part of outright emotional experience. As he goes on to argue, 'if people shift from a sense that anger is neutral or even enjoyable – a transition historians can demonstrate – to a sense that anger is bad, their experience of anger will alter accordingly even amid some biological constants. But exactly where the boundary lines exist, how fully changes in experience parallel changes in standards, remains to be worked out'.

⁴² Even though James' approach was largely dismissed for its inadequacy in explaining how emotions can be distinguished on mere physiological grounds, some new research has shown emotion-specific blood pressure

Cognitive theories, in their various forms, suggest that emotions involve cognitions or changes in our interpretation of the world, that is, that the subject's evaluation of his or her circumstances is essential to emotion.⁴³ Although these stimuli are often found in appraisals of reality, which can be formulated in terms of propositional judgments,⁴⁴ they do not necessarily appear in the form of a language-based judgement or an elaborated thought, and they do not necessarily include anger-words. Solomon (2002, p. 142) understands that 'a good deal of cognition is radically pre-linguistic'. However, thoughts are usually involved in emotions, and often used as a means to describe emotions (Solomon, 2002, p. 135), as when we say that I am angry because I think that you do not respect me. Recurrent thoughts of a certain type may not be associated with the activity of thinking about the emotion at play – I may be thinking of vengeance without necessarily thinking that I am angry. In this respect, Solomon (2002, p. 138) has pointed out that the presence of certain type of thoughts can be taken as a sign of the presence of a certain emotion. For example, the recurrent thought of being the victim of an injustice, or the fantasy of inflicting harm on another, might be indicators of anger. The recurrence of a type of thought is therefore an interesting way of looking at the nuances of anger in the text.

The cognitivist approach to emotions, in philosophy at least, has often had an agenda with respect to the discussion about the rationality of emotions. Solomon, for example, denies that emotions are independent of

responses to imagined situations. There are experiments showing how contracting certain musculature can induce a certain mood and showing that blood pressure may cause changes in emotion-linked neurotransmitters (Kassinove, 1995, pp. 14-6).

⁴³ Solomon (1977, pp. 46-7) defines his notion of 'judgment' as 'a rule for interpreting experience' and differentiates emotional judgments from other types by 'their importance to us, by the fact that our self-esteem is at stake in them'.

⁴⁴ This is not to say that these appraisals need to be formulated in terms of a propositional content (see previous footnote). Rather, the point here is that given that this is possible, and actually happens, it can be used as one (not the only one as I will suggest in the next chapter) tool for reading an emotion in a text (which is a medium that naturally lends itself to propositional knowledge).

reason. They are urgent responses, even when they may last for years. In his view (1973, p. 34), it is the situation in which one becomes emotional that is disruptive, an obstacle, a threat, and not the emotional response. Solomon (1973, pp. 35-6) stresses that the reason why we often regard emotions as counterproductive, embarrassing, or as obstacles in our lives has to do with the fact that they emerge from disruptive situations and serve a purpose in those situations. The problem is that often the purpose is short-sighted, making them appear as non-purposive and irrational in a broader view. This view of emotions will be discussed in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, where I argue that from a phenomenological perspective, Aeschylean anger is conceived as a disruptive and probably alienating drive.

1.4.2 Intentionality

The main distinguishing feature provided by the cognitivist account of emotion outlined above is that they are intentionally⁴⁵ directed – anger is about something; a headache is not. This has to do with the idea that cognition is a mental representation of something – like a symbol. The what my anger is about is its intentional object. The ‘intentional’ epithet distinguishes between the object of a mental attitude from the object of an action. An action normally brings about a change in its object whereas a psychological action brings about a change in the subject. Only the object of a mental attitude can be a belief (the object of my anger can be what I believe to be an insult, but the object of burning cannot be what I believe to be inflammable if it is not actually inflammable). The acknowledgment of an object provides a better theoretical account of an emotion (Kenny, [1963] 2003; Pitcher, 1965, pp. 329-31; Greenspan, 1980, p. 230; Nussbaum, 2001; de Sousa, 2013; Srinivasan, 2018, p. 7). On the one hand, the attribution of

⁴⁵ The term is used in its technical sense as it appears in Scholasticism (*intentio* is the object of the intellect, thus having a special ontological status), as for example, in Aquinas’ *De Veritate* 21, 3 *ad* 5. It is from this usage, and not the everyday one, related to having a purpose in mind when doing something, that the term was appropriated in the nineteenth century by Brentano for psychology. The term is not to be confused with the (contentious) notion of intention in literary criticism.

an object to emotions allows for differentiation between emotions and mere sensations – anger and headaches are different types of phenomena. On the other hand, defining the formal object of an emotion, as Aristotle in the *Rhetoric* does, allows for the distinguishing of one emotion from another. The idea that the object of an action determines the action itself can be traced back to Scholasticism, for example, in Aquinas' idea that *obiectum specificat actum* (*ST I a 77, 3*): it is one thing to ride a horse, and a different one to ride a bicycle, even when the cause (need for movement) and the aim (get to a certain place quickly) of both actions may be the same.⁴⁶ The same principle has been applied in cognitive science: the reference to intentional objects has been considered as a condition of intelligibility for emotions, since when ascribing an emotion to a behaviour one needs to refer to its intentional object (de Sousa, 2013).

Furthermore, the attribution of an intentional object to emotion, which may differ from the cause of the emotion,⁴⁷ leaves room for a more flexible understanding of emotions as actions,⁴⁸ since the reference to the object permits us to leave the causal explanation in which the subject loses agency.⁴⁹ The distinction between the object and the cause of anger will play a fundamental role in my analysis of the trilogy, particularly as a way to integrate the over-determination model proposed by Dodds into my reading of anger (particularly, Chapter 2 p. 105-6).

⁴⁶ This idea is already sketched by Aristotle in *De Anima* II: Aristotle recognises mental objects (II.5) and how actions are defined by their objects (II.6-12).

⁴⁷ For a discussion on this see Greenspan (1980, p. 230); Elster (1996, p. 1387); also, Kenny ([1963]2003, p. 49).

⁴⁸ Psychoanalysis postulates that when the subject of anger is able to see the cause of his or her emotion, and how it differs from its particular objects, the tendency towards that emotion is dissolved. From a different starting point, cognitive therapies also work on the assumption that understanding the difference between the cause and the object is an effective way of dissipating a conflictive emotion.

⁴⁹ Solomon (1973, p. 33) contrasts the idea of emotions as actions with the traditional idea of emotion as occurrences. This view of anger is that it can be explained not only in terms of what it is about, or what its cause is, but also, and fundamentally, in terms of its purpose.

Cognitivism has faced various criticisms. Pitcher (1965, p. 335) considers cognition as 'some apprehension', which is the ground for the evaluation that leads to the emotion. Garro (2007, p. 51), in turn, differentiates between 'cognition' and 'propositional knowledge' or 'beliefs,' stressing that it is one thing to apprehend something, and another to categorise or organise what we apprehend, especially in domains like kinship, friendship, etc. Garro (2007, p. 56) has also pointed out that 'our understanding of new information is influenced by what we already know; interpretations are actively constructed as meaningful in relation to prior knowledge and experience.'⁵⁰ Colombetti and Thompson (2012) argue that the understanding of cognitive appraisals as disembodied is implausible. As Colombetti (2010, p.15) puts it, 'bodily arousal is not merely a response to the subject's evaluation of the situation in which she is embedded. It is rather the whole situated organism that subsumes the subject's capacity to make sense of her world'.

1.4.3 Embodied Cognition and Phenomenology

Following Varela *et al* (1991, p. 9), I treat cognition in a broader sense as referring to mental functioning, processing information about the world which in turn depends on the structures on the subject involved, having the body with all its sensorimotor capacities as its context. Cognition is, thus, understood not merely as a representation of the world. When we regard emotions as cognitive mechanisms, we think of them as involving mental processing of information that is embedded in a certain biological, psychological and cultural context.

The embodied cognition approach adds things that were left out of the cognitivist approach: the role of the body and imagination in the creation of

⁵⁰ Even though some physiological theories of emotions have pushed against purely cognitive-evaluative theories, neurological research has shown that neurochemicals have an effect on mood, and more importantly, that emotions influence our cognition, or even that emotions are made conscious independently from cognition, or driven by other emotions (Lindholm, 2007, p. 35). On intentionality as an interpretation of emotions in Plato and Aristotle, see Price (2009).

meaningful concepts (Lakoff, 1988, p. 119). Our conceptualisations arise from two main sources: the structured nature of bodily and social experience, and our innate capacity to imaginatively project from certain well-structured aspects of bodily and social experience to abstract conceptual structures. These two aspects will be introduced in this research through the model of conceptual metaphors developed by Johnson and Lakoff (1980) that will be discussed in the next section.

The key advantage of this approach is that it allows space for phenomenology. The experiential base of the conceptualisation(s) of anger in the trilogy is a fundamental aspect of this research.

1.4.4 Conceptual Metaphors

The methods I will be using have been discussed by Cairns (2008). While he has discussed ancient emotions extensively, here I am particularly interested in his application of embodied cognitive theories, which has expanded the understanding of emotions in Ancient Greece developed in line with cognitive science by Konstan. Cairns (2008, p. 58) proposes, in the same direction that many anthropologists have taken, a methodology that includes not only Greek emotion-words, but also 'language as expression of emotion, as well as the ways in which the physical aspects of emotion come to be reflected in language, whether descriptively or metaphorically (e.g. the use of physical symptoms and body language as metonyms for the whole emotional experience, and the pervasive role of metaphor in structuring emotional concepts)'. As Cairns (2003, p. 18) has argued, the Aristotelian concept is 'fleshed out by a range of metaphors and metonymies which present anger as an ontological entity, a force exerted on the self, a hot fluid in a container, an opponent against which one can struggle, a fire, a dangerous and aggressive animal, and suchlike'.⁵¹ This approach will be

⁵¹ Nussbaum (2001, p. 10) proposes what she calls 'an inductive-Socratic method' – meaning by this the acknowledgment of an extended ability to recognize instances of a given concept in a given group. She proposes to rely on people's general ability to classify phenomena under one emotion when they are competent speakers of a language.

fundamental to discussion of anger in the *Oresteia*, particularly when addressing somatic aspects, such as erotic terminology (Chapter 3), and daimonic possession in the representation of anger (Chapter 2).

1.4.5 Psychological Anthropology

The work done by anthropologists has been influential for the study of emotions in general,⁵² and of ancient Greek ones in particular. This can be seen in the establishment of theoretical frameworks to discuss emotions by classicists such as Konstan (2005; 2006, pp. 8-19) and Cairns (2003, pp. 12-13). One of the important contributions of anthropology to the problem of dealing with emotions in cultures that are distant from ours is the debate between considering them as universal or culturally-specific. An important argument for the validity of applying a cognitive approach to emotions to the Ancient Greeks comes from the assumption that we share some fundamental cognitive mechanisms with them.

Even though there has been acknowledgment of the work done by empirical scientists on emotions in search of some universal elements (Sober and Wilson, 1999, p. 22), the major trend in anthropology has been that of understanding emotions as cultural constructs (Lindholm, 2007, p. 37; Briggs, 2010, p. 63). However, it is not necessary to appeal to a strong notion of 'universality' when considering certain widely shared ways of talking about emotions. In addition, an evolutionary perspective on emotions does not necessarily imply any kind of determinism or attempt to make human behaviour uniform. Empirical research on emotions, such as Ekman (2004),⁵³ has tried to establish certain 'natural' or 'innate' parameters on which universal expression and recognition of emotions depend.⁵⁴

⁵² See, for example, Rorty (1980).

⁵³ Ekman is not an anthropologist, but I include his view under this section because since his research dealt with the idea of cross-cultural features of emotions, it has been enormously influential in anthropology.

⁵⁴ It is worth noting that the evidence to support the argument that there is a set of basic emotions is normally based on external display of features: there are certain facial expressions that are common across cultures, and also on the fact that these expressions are read in their communities' specific

Despite the fact that there has been an inclination to adopt culturally constructivist approaches in anthropology,⁵⁵ there is no need to adopt an entirely constructive one. We can acknowledge a uniform, fundamental base from which culturally distinct expressions of emotions arise, and attempt to probe both these layers (Lindholm, 2007, p. 43). Moreover, since certain behaviours can conceal the actual motivations of the individual, the conformity with what is expected in a given community may hide the psychological tendencies that the anthropologist is expecting to find (Levine, 2010, p. 57). Human behaviour and emotional expression depend upon cultural conventions and normative rules particular to a community. This only implies that reading emotions in a different culture demands some previous knowledge about its particular conventions for expression, but it does not deny that there are shared elements.

Psychological anthropology is a sub-disciplinary field in which, rather than a quest to find a universal definition of emotion (or the answer to the question of what emotions really are), the interest lies in the differences between cultural models for understanding emotions, and how these models can affect the way in which they are received or read in different contexts (Lindholm, 2007). This is an important perspective for making sense of the discourses on anger in antiquity and the role they play in the texts under analysis here. Birth (2007, p. 23), for example, has recognised metaphors as powerful tools for doing this since they may enable certain uses that other discourses or theorisations may veil. Similarly, Lindholm (2007, p. 36) acknowledges the relevance of Lakoff's theory, as he points out that anger is 'invariably characterised in terms of an increase in body heat, internal pressure, and agitation that builds within the container of the body until there is an explosion'.

emotions. Griffiths (1997, pp. 77-9), for example, argues that Ekman's six basic affects program, and only they, form natural kinds: the others, he claims, are for the moment beyond the reach of useful scientific investigation (de Sousa, 2013, pp. 20-1).

⁵⁵ See, for example, Briggs (2010, p. 63).

1.4.5.1 Reading Scenarios

Rorty (1980) and de Sousa (1987), among others, think that the way to escape the dichotomy between universal and culturally-specific understanding of emotions is to read them according to paradigm scenarios/schemas. This has the advantage of providing a defined object of study, a described emotional episode, instead of a complex one, such as emotion.⁵⁶ Taking into account the formal intentional objects of different types of emotions and a set of responses deemed ‘normal’, which are shaped by cultural and biological factors, we can interpret different situations through distinct frameworks, or paradigm scenarios (de Sousa, 2013, p. 19).⁵⁷ Lakoff & Kövecses (1987, p. 210) adapted this idea to explain how the variety of metaphors used in relation to anger converge in a prototypical cognitive model of anger.⁵⁸ The use of prototypical scenarios has been successfully appropriated as a model by classicists like Cairns (2003) and Sanders (2014) to interpret emotions in Greek literature. While I agree that emotions are often shaped, understood, and lived in the context of a certain narrative, in this research I will choose other models to approach anger.⁵⁹ On the one hand, the use of scenarios to pin down the presence of an emotion overlaps considerably with the reading of the propositional content of anger, which precisely favours the discussion about the perceptual dimension between

⁵⁶ According to Lindholm (2007, p. 31), the traditional way of thinking about emotions in anthropology has been pervaded by anxieties about the discipline being recognized as a science, and since emotions are considered as ‘fluid, mixed, not easily defined, and consequently impossible to analyze (sic)’ they have not really been a suitable object of study. This has led to some anthropologists to a shift from talking about *emotions* to talking about *emotional schemas/scenarios*.

⁵⁷ One limitation of this approach, as recognised by de Sousa (2013, p. 20) despite being one of its major proponents is that it can be over-prescriptive and not very useful from a normative perspective: emotions are by definition appropriate to their corresponding scenarios. However, while the emotion is, by definition, appropriate for its corresponding schema, it is not necessarily so for the situation, allowing it to be evaluated for its rationality or aptness.

⁵⁸ See also, Lakoff (1987, p. 397).

⁵⁹ The use of Lakoff’s and Kövecses’ theory is not affected by this since they mainly use these scenarios to demonstrate how the network of metaphors for an abstract concept like an emotion is systematically linked.

character and social context. This choice has to do with simplicity, as the use of the core elements taken from cognitive science suits my present purposes without the need to introduce the scenario model. On the other hand, even if the scenario model is explicitly deemed as a prototype, their proponents openly acknowledge that there are cases in which the emotions do not fit into them. Furthermore, the use of scenarios does not always work well when the trying to understand anger in terms of the purpose it can have in a given situation (White, 2010), since it cannot be easily shaped through a prototype scheme.

1.4.5.2 Wierzbicka's Critique⁶⁰

A critique of the cognitivist (that is to say, the understanding of cognition as propositional knowledge) perspective of emotions has come from anthropology and linguistics. Wierzbicka (1986, 2003) draws attention to the fact that many cross-cultural studies of emotions are written in English, which may affect the way they are understood. She does not, however, deny the existence of trans-cultural elements or that emotions can be translated from one language to another.⁶¹ While Harris (2002, p. 35; 42) is quick to find her argument fallacious, he makes a similar claim: modern (English speaking) psychologists fail to see anger as a long-term emotion. This is precisely Wierzbicka's (2003, p. 584) point: that 'anger' in English conveys certain expectations for English-speakers, one of which is seeing that emotion as a short-term reaction.⁶²

⁶⁰ Although Wierzbicka is a linguist, her publications span over a variety of disciplines. Many of her publications appeared in journals of anthropology, and her work has been deeply influential in this discipline, as in linguistics, philosophy, and psychology.

⁶¹ Her solution, a 'natural semantic meta-language' which includes only the base elements of human experience found cross-culturally, thereby avoiding the imposition of our own world-view (Wierzbicka, 1986, p. 588), is, however, too cumbersome, at least for the purpose of the analysis of ancient emotions.

⁶² A very similar example can be drawn from Wierzbicka's response to Nussbaum: the very way in which grief is thought of by her 'to weep uncontrollably' implies the sense it has for English speaking people because the term *grief* is somehow related to the expectation that one may want to

This discussion is significant for the understanding of emotions as propositional statements describing social situations. Within this context, Wierzbicka's point is a sensitive one: once emotions are identified with beliefs, which are conveyed by a particular language conditioned by a particular culture, the very language in which one speaks of emotions in another culture mediates the comprehension that one is trying to acquire. Her critique is symptomatic of a problem in the conceptualisation of emotions that restricts them to appraisals. This, however, will be addressed by allowing different dimensions of the emotion, such as symbolic representations and divine intervention, to emerge. By doing this, we do not need to rely entirely on the descriptors of the emotions. As Cairns (2008, p. 58) has suggested, there are palliative measures for the language-bias problem, such as looking at metaphors and to keep continuously contrasting our assumptions about anger with what the texts give us.

1.4.6 Social Psychology

Social psychology will be one important perspective I will be taking into account to complement cognitive science. Since this discipline looks at how humans are affected by the presence of others, it recognises emotions as depending on systems of interactions rather than on individuals. This way of approaching human emotions will be key in addressing some of the concerns raised by Greek tragedy. These systems of interactions can consist of spouses, family, friends, or any other type of social bond. The shift from the focus on the individual to the social system enables the exploration of various aspects of the representation of anger. For example, the idea that anger can be stimulated and manipulated suggests expectations about our ability to influence others' mind-states. This is both indicative of a sense of agency over others' emotions and of ideas about human behaviour: the characters in the trilogy operate with a certain conception of how others' minds work. Furthermore, some aspects of the representation of anger can

control weeping when losing someone – *normal/healthy* grieving is subject to cultural norms.

be better understood as a function of the environment and of systems of interactions. Issues such as gender roles and social hierarchies have been key aspects in recent discussions about anger in Ancient Greek literature, and yet, as I hope to show, they need to be re-considered.

When one deems emotions to be responding to interactions with others, and above all to the purposes of those interactions, it becomes difficult to attribute a fixed, internal, and unitary cause to anger (Kassinove, 1995, p. 8; de Sousa, 2013, p. 20). This perspective has also been maintained in diverse disciplines. Carol Travis (1982, p. 49), for example, describes anger as serving a culture's rules: anger often is the reaction to someone who breaks those rules, and is determined by the belief that one can influence the object of our anger and restore the damage caused by the breaking of those rules. Solomon (2002, pp. 135-6) proposes that anger should be understood fundamentally in relation to its purpose for human interactions, since it is a social phenomenon.⁶³ Anger does not normally involve only one person, and usually develops in a complex situation in which many different factors are articulated. To take this perspective into account means considering anger as an interactive progression, a transaction, or a channel of communication between individuals. In this sense, anger assumes a particular meaning for Greek tragedy in terms of the social rules between participants.

Emotions and the way in which they convey information have been also the object of study. Anthropologists such as White (2010, p. 71) regard emotions as 'moral idioms', bestowing upon them the power of talking indirectly. Moreover, he claims that this rhetorical quality is especially important in small societies, where interaction is mainly face-to-face, and in which overt public statements about the behaviour of others may well be proscribed. Talking about emotions can often be a way to express what cannot be said openly. This communicative potential is based on shared

⁶³ Konstan (2006, pp. 65-6) stresses that Theophrastus conceives *orgé* as stimulated by injustice; and that Seneca, when arguing against Theophrastus attributes to him the belief that anger is caused by evils. Chrysippus links *orgé* to *adikía*, and the same link appears in Aristotle (*EN* 5.8).

frameworks which speakers can refer to for fully expressing themselves and being understood by the listener. Moreover, by using emotions as idioms, a speaker can make indirect moral claims as emotions are liable to multiple moral readings. Thus, talking about one's anger may be a covert way to talk about other people's bad behaviour, without saying it, while keeping different readings of the statement(s) conveniently open.

The social dimension of anger is recognised by modern studies of the emotion in ancient Greece. Cairns (2003, p. 17) argues that the 'ancient definitions of anger, in so far as they locate that concept very firmly in reciprocal or hierarchical structures of honour (that is to say, in structures which depend upon publicly observable forms of social interaction), have much in common with the evolutionary approach'.⁶⁴ According to this, anger can be regarded as having a regulatory function within Greek society that is reflected, for example, in its use in oratory. On a similar note, Konstan (2006, p. 31) argues that 'Aristotle's cognitive approach to the *pathē*' is connected to the tendency of the classical period to see emotions as reactions to the social (competitive) environment rather than to 'an inner state to be disclosed', as it was in the Hellenistic period. Moreover, Konstan (2006, p. 39) suggests that the way in which Aristotle regards emotions, extending this to the classical period in general, is that they are the consequence of social interactions and social movements.

1.5 Comparison and Context

Although this thesis is on the *Oresteia*, it uses complementary sources both from Aeschylus and other Greek writers. One fundamental working

⁶⁴ Some evolutionary theories consider the function of emotions more broadly by asking not only why we should have particular emotions on specific occasions, but rather why we should have specific emotion-types at all. This question is often given an evolutionary answer: emotions (or at least many of them) are adaptations whose purpose is to solve basic ecological problems that animals (or humans) face (Plutchik 1980; Frank 1988; de Sousa, 2013, p.13).

assumption throughout this research will be that we need to create a contextual framework to extract information about emotions in literature.

1.5.1 Aristotle

Given the importance of Aristotle's discussion of anger, as a unique surviving attempt to systematise the understanding of anger within a classical Greek setting, he will inevitably figure prominently in my discussion. His work on emotions, particularly in the *Rhetoric*, is fundamental for this research. He defines and describes anger in detail, and places it within a theory of emotions. In the process of doing this, because of his conviction that emotion has a cognitive aspect, he provides an excellent basis for testing the value of approaching ancient anger from the perspective of modern cognitive theories. Furthermore, his treatment of anger in *De Anima* (403a ff) suggests the importance of looking at emotions as changes both in the judgments we make and in the body. Anger can be considered in terms of a judgment that an insult had taken place and as a boiling of the blood. Furthermore, in accordance with Aristotle's epistemology, to understand emotions one has to consider both the matter and the form of them. The former being their function and the latter, the physical change. Aristotle thus establishes a bridge between ancient and modern constructions of anger, and one that looks at the body and the mind in a holistic way. In the *Rhetoric* and *Nicomachean Ethics* is particularly useful since it takes as its starting point the characterisation of the object of the emotion in terms of an evaluation of an interaction with others. In *Rhetoric* (1378a31-3), Aristotle defines emotions in terms of their intentional object expressed in a propositional content – anger's object is defined as the evaluation of being the victim of a belittlement (*oligôria*) by someone from whom such treatment is not justified.⁶⁵ The treatment of anger by Aristotle continues by giving a formal

⁶⁵ According to the *Rhetoric*, anger is a response to the perception of being undeservedly denigrated by an inferior; in the *Politics* (5.2.2) and the *Nicomachean Ethics* (5.8.8; 7.6.4) anger is also considered as a response to an injustice, a sense of inequality or an abuse of power being committed. The treatment of emotions in his *Ethics* assumes that the subject has the

specification of three ways in which belittlement can be present as the apprehension of reality by the subject: contempt (*kataphronēsis*), spite (*epēreasmos*), and arrogance (*húbris*).⁶⁶ Aristotle therefore suggests that anger is, at least in part, a function of the individual's mind, that it is directed towards the (social) world, and that it takes a belittlement as the representation of what is happening in that world. The vocabulary employed by Aristotle is detached and prosaic, but even if we should not expect to find his terminology in Aeschylus, it points to a certain semantic nexus that allows us to look for verse equivalents (for example, *atimía*) and statements that convey the sense of belittlement. Aristotle's definition indicates that in his view anger has a judgmental component, when he establishes that it involves a perceived (*phainomenēn*) belittlement (if there is belittlement, and the subject fails to perceive it, there will be no anger; and the belief that one is being slighted is enough to give rise to the emotion, whether the slight took place or not).⁶⁷

In addition to this, David Konstan has tested a reading of Aristotle's⁶⁸ definition of anger that focuses on the role of judgment and evaluation in emotions in a series of ancient texts from different periods, arriving the conclusion that ancient anger needs to be understood in the context of a

ability (potentially at least) to decide his or her behaviour when experiencing an emotion, and this is the reason why emotional education is so important for Aristotle. On the education of emotions, see Nussbaum (2013, pp. 78-101). For an example of how music helps to educate anger see *Pol* 8.5.5. For a discussion on *húbris*, as a type of *oligôria*, see Cairns (1996, p. 2).

⁶⁶ A full discussion of these three types of belittlement is in Konstan (2003, pp. 108-9; 2006, p. 4).

⁶⁷ According to Konstan (2006, pp. 56-65) anger in tragedy shows much similarity with Aristotle's *orgé*: the experience of the emotion responds to criteria of status and of actual abilities to retaliate, and is activated by a sense of personal affront, more precisely a slight (suggesting an issue of status), and not by intentional harm. Konstan also points out that one of there must be a notion of injustice, or of suffering something undeserved, involved in anger (2003, p. 109). See also Harris 1997.

⁶⁸ For a critique of the Aristotelian theory of emotions, see Alford (1993, p. 270), who argues that Aristotle understood tragic passions badly by making his account of them more individualistic than they appear in tragedy, and suggests that emotions were understood in terms of the connection between individuals.

highly competitive society. Considerations of status and social credit are according to this reading fundamental to the articulation of the emotion.

1.5.2 Homer and Other Sources

I will create a cultural context to read anger by examining the works of Homer, Hesiod, some Lyric poets, such as Bacchylides and Pindar, and Athenian oratory, in particular Demosthenes, Isaeus, and Lysias. On the one hand, the views of Aristotle on anger have precedents in Greek literature from different periods and places. On the other hand, all these texts tell us something about the emotion, and can help to configure the salient aspects in the literary representation of anger. Among these sources, Homer will be critically important for this research. His unique importance has to do both with the generic affinity with tragedy, and the iconic status of his texts as the implied model and intertext. Homer therefore provides a cultural setting, as well as offering detailed situations in which anger is present, which serve as a good background for comparison. I will complement these sources with Athenian oratory, not only because Aristotle stresses the role of emotion in this context, but also because characters are presenting themselves and their experiences as intelligible for the audience. Oratory therefore provides an important comparative framework for the understanding of anger.

1.6 Structure and Outline

The thesis is divided into five chapters. Each chapter explores a different dimension of anger, as identified above. The first three chapters are strongly guided by premises taken from cognitive sciences. The last two, while still heavily dependent on cognitive science, introduce perspectives that are more in line with social psychology and anthropology. While each chapter can be read independently, and is explicit about its theoretical background and methodology, they form a unity. Nevertheless, some passages will be revisited and scrutinised from different perspectives throughout the thesis. When this happens, the new analysis of a passage will presuppose some aspects of the previous one.

Chapter 1 starts out from one of the most basic hypotheses in cognitive approaches to emotions, that they are importantly (but not exclusively) a function of the mind and involve processing information about the world. Perceptions and evaluations of reality, normally involving social situations, are key to comprehending anger. In literature, this is made possible because these perceptions can be linguistically articulated. The chapter will analyse the propositional content of the discourses involving anger in the *Oresteia*. Drawing on the results from previous research on ancient anger, I will be paying special attention to statements containing affronts to honour and justice, and missed social norms in the trilogy. I will also use other Greek sources, which contain explicit awareness of the propositional knowledge related to anger, as a comparative framework for my present investigations. I will suggest that the perception of being revictimised is an important feature in the propositional content of anger.

The chapter will also draw on a distinction proposed in recent scholarship between two models, the ‘independent’ and the ‘interdependent’, for understanding the conceptualisation of the self. I will suggest that this distinction is key to understanding the notion of honour in the trilogy. I will argue that anger in the *Oresteia* is based on a construal of a social situation with unreciprocated social norms, often expressed as problems of honour-diminishment. This connection between anger and social norms suggests a society that is not only heavily concerned about hierarchies and status, but also collaboration, reciprocity, and human bonds.

Chapter 2 explores the hermeneutical distinction between the cause and the intentional object of emotions and argues that it can be fruitfully applied to understanding over-determination in the explanations of anger given in the trilogy. As has been discussed above, the presence of supernatural agents of emotion in Greek literature can imply a psychological disconnect between ancient and modern minds. However, if we expand the understanding of ‘cognition’ to include the body as a site of experience, that breach can be mitigated. I will argue that anger is a physio-biological phenomenon, and this can be clearly seen in the metaphors we use to

describe it. I draw on the assumption that metaphors are found to be inherent to our conceptual system, an assumption taken from research conducted in the disciplinary framework of cognitive semantics. Similarly, the experience can find expression in supernatural attributions of anger amongst the Greeks, which can be analogous to our own, present-day metaphors. This is the line of thought with which I dive into the accounts of anger of the various actors in the *Oresteia*.

Chapter 3 argues that desiderative aspects of anger need to be brought into consideration to gain a better understanding of Aeschylus' portrayal of the emotion. This is important because it accounts for the special motivational power of anger. Desire in this context is not only an expectation about reality, but also a drive for punishment or revenge. Desire can also tell us about the position the individual occupies in the socio-cultural landscape, as that adds another layer of subtext to their yearning.

The chapter will also assess the somatic aspects of anger. Two of the strongest desires can be said to be those for sex and food. The *Oresteia* is ripe with erotic and food-laden imagery in its representation of anger. These desires arise in, are contained within, and enacted upon, the body. This allows us to peel yet another layer of the metaphorical imagery putting up a screen in front of the Ancient Greek mind.

Chapter 4 will go beyond the consideration of emotions as subject to appraisals of social situations to think of them as social mechanisms. An individual exists within, is affected by, and, in turn, affects society. This includes both the structure of society and its inhabitants, individually or collectively. Thus, emotion is also subject to and an agent of such forces. Anger manifests itself within an individual greatly informed by his or her relation to society. Moreover, it is also used by individuals to maintain the structure of that society, thus serving a social function. The chapter will see how anger has been utilised by agents in the *Oresteia* for relating to society and its parts.

Chapter 5 explores anger from the perspective of the belief in intervening gods. This chapter complements Chapter 2 by adding

considerations of the gods that offer the opportunity to explore the emotion in abstract terms. Things such as the anger of the dead, social justice, the cycles of revenge appear as key concerns in the *Oresteia* in relation to anger, and they are often formulated through divinities. The anger of the dead, that is represented in rather similar terms to the anger of the living (that is to say, involving cognition and volition), presupposes that it can impact the world of the living. This chapter thus attempts to synthesise the idea that anger can be understood in terms of social interactions and concerns developed in Chapter 4 with Greek religion.

Chapter 1

Anger and Propositional Content

This chapter explores the propositional content of anger as characterised by Aeschylus in the *Oresteia*. This approach is based on the cognitive hypothesis that emotions are mainly a function of the mind, and that they correspond to certain appraisals of reality. Even though the precise type of thoughts associated with an emotion are highly idiosyncratic, there are some recognisable patterns across cultures. Reports from empirical studies on anger suggest that considering oneself the direct or indirect victim of some sort of abuse, injustice, or any sort of denigration appears to be a recurrent feature (Tavris, 1989, pp. 313-8; Nussbaum, 2016). These perceptions can be shaped in different ways, and not necessarily as an ordered deliberative process (Solomon, 2012, p. 138). Persistent thoughts of being the victim of abuse can emerge, for example, as inarticulate memories, images and desires. However, a perceived loss of pride, loss of self-esteem, or an obstruction of personal wishes is repeatedly among the thoughts associated with anger (Averill, 1983, p. 1149). The perception of not being taken into consideration or not having a place in society is also a recurrent one (Nussbaum, 2014, p. 11). In addition to this, the sense of suffering undeservedly appears as one of the key features of anger, and it often takes the form of a 'why me?' type of thought. The perception of being the victim of repeated wrongs, or of being re-victimised is usually connected with the reluctance to forgive and/or forget that is commonly associated with anger. A tendency to think that one is not only the victim of personal injustice but of social and universal injustice is also among the propositional contents of anger. Hence, statements about the unfairness of life are not unusual among those who have been the victims of wrongdoing. The perception of being the victim can, in some cases, be such that it can blind the subjects as to what they themselves have done to others, putting their own sufferings above those of the rest, or above the future consequences of acting in anger. Even

approaching anger from the perspective that it is a function of the mind of the subject presupposes a physical and social environment.

As discussed in the introduction, the word ‘cognition’ is loosely used to indicate either an operation of the mind or its result. The term can be understood as ‘some apprehension’ (Pitcher, 1965, p. 335; Garro, 2007, p. 51); ‘thought’ (Neu, 1980; 1987); ‘judgment’ (Solomon, 1973; 1977; 2002); ‘propositional knowledge’ or ‘belief’ (Nussbaum, 2001, p. 23). In line with other recent views (Varela, Thompson & Rosch, 1991, pp. 40-2; Cave, 2016, p. 14), I treat cognition in a broader sense as referring to mental functioning and dealing with information about the world as constructed by the individual, having the body with all its sensorimotor capacities as its context. Cognition is, thus, understood as depending upon the experience of the individual (Varela, Thompson & Rosch, 1991, p. 9). When we regard emotions as cognitive mechanisms, we think of them as involving mental processing of information that is embedded in a certain biological, psychological and cultural context, that is enacted by the subject. In this first chapter, however, I shall operate within a more restrictive notion of cognition, seeing it as a mental operation of symbols or mental representation of the world – this is what cognitivists normally refer to as ‘judgments’ or ‘evaluations’.⁶⁹ I will use this understanding of cognition here, even though it will be broadened in the following chapters, for two main reasons. Firstly, it is simple, and provides clear-cut criteria to delineate anger. It allows us to distinguish it from other emotions through the judgment involved: my anger relates to the belief that she offends me, my jealousy relates to the belief that she loves someone else. Although this approach does not give the entire picture of the emotion,

⁶⁹ As Varela *et al* (1991, p. 8, p. 149) have described it, this cognitivist hypothesis establishes that the mind is generally understood as working with representations or appraisals of a pre-given world (many cognitivists assume that these representations are largely influenced by the subject). Varela *et al* do not restrict cognition to this (1991, p. 148). They think that one of the things that the mind does is to operate over appraisals. However, these appraisals are never done by a pre-given mind in a pre-given world, thus breaking the realistic assumption of the cognitivist approach. The understanding of cognition as an appraisal is therefore not contradictory with their own view that the mind also ‘creates’ and ‘enacts’ that world.

it gives one that is easily comparable with the textual evidence from the past. Secondly, an important part of the literature on ancient emotions which serves as a basis for my research is built upon this notion of cognition. I will further expand that understanding by incorporating the view that emotions as cognitive mechanisms can be considered not only as functions of the subject's mind, but also as functions of the social environment, the body, and the gods. However, since rules for interpreting reality are always embedded in a social context, judgments or representations of the world are intimately connected to the systems of belief in which the subject partakes. In consequence, the analysis of judgments related to anger carried out in this chapter necessarily considers the socio-cultural context in which they appear. The focus of analysis, however, remains on the subject of the emotion and how anger depends on mental representations of reality – idiosyncratic as they are.

The evaluative element of emotions, when syntactically formulable, normally has a propositional content (preceded by a that-clause) liable to a true/false evaluation. Although we do not say that somebody's anger is true or false, if someone says that she has been the victim of an offence, we can say whether the propositional content (preceded by something like 'I think/believe that') 'I have been wronged' is true or false. If, as Nussbaum (2001) and Neu (1980) contend, emotions are tantamount to the propositional content of a judgment (my anger is equivalent to my 'I have been wronged'), emotions themselves are somehow liable to a true/false value, hence the attraction that this type of analysis has exacted on philosophy and theory of mind. Yet, it is not necessary to hold this account of the relationship between emotion and judgment to make use of the hermeneutical advantages that this understanding of cognition presents for the analysis of emotions in Greek tragedy. The verbalisation of an emotion, together with the judgmental component attached to it, is an important factor in rendering the emotion understandable and justifiable to the eyes of others. Since we are dealing with a particularly verbalised type of drama, the understanding of anger in terms of the subject's mental representation is a

good tool to read its portrayal in the *Oresteia*. Although my interest here resides not so much in the possibility of assessing anger with regards to its truth-value, it is largely because emotions are conceptualised in terms of the propositional content of an appraisal of the world that they can be rationalised and discussed. Hence, the analysis of propositional content of anger is an excellent way to approach the literary representation of the emotion. The cognitive conception of anger presented here will also shed light on pragmatic issues relating to the poetics of the genre, such as how character construction is informed by considerations of anger stemming from Greek literary sources.

When addressing the propositional content of anger in the *Oresteia*, the main benchmark to determine the relevant judgments to be analysed will be taken from other Greek literary sources where an explicit mention of propositional knowledge connected with anger is found. As will become clear from the discussion, the propositional knowledge found in the Greek sources frequently coincides with the modern accounts above. However, it is not my intention here to use those modern accounts in a normative way. Rather, I am using the modern accounts to instantiate the cognitivist theory being used. The coincidence between modern and ancient accounts of anger, as for example the emphasis on personal diminishment and the weight given to social interactions, suggests a good starting point for the reading of anger in the *Oresteia*.

Words like *húbris*, *timē*, and *dikē* appear repeatedly in association with anger, standing out as possible, though not necessary, hallmarks of the idiosyncratic representations of the world that were associated with the emotion. Aristotle's treatment of anger in the *Rhetoric* and *Nicomachean Ethics* is particularly useful since it takes as its starting point the characterisation of the object of the emotion in terms of a judgment about an interaction with others. He illustrates anger, in these two books, primarily as a mental state. In *Rhetoric* (1378a31-3), Aristotle provides us with one example of the potential propositional content of anger – being the victim of a belittlement (*oligōria*) by someone from whom such treatment is not

justified. The treatment of anger by Aristotle continues by giving a formal specification of three ways in which belittlement can be present as the apprehension of reality by the subject: contempt (*kataphronēsis*), spite (*epēreasmos*), and arrogance (*húbris*).⁷⁰ Aristotle therefore suggests that anger is, at least in part, a function of the individual's mind, that it is directed towards the (social) world, and that it takes a belittlement as the representation of what is happening in that world. The propositional content of that judgment, according to the *Rhetoric*, can be interpreted as something like 'I am the victim of undeserved belittlement'. The attribution of propositional content related to being the victim of an insult to the judgment of anger is not only present in Aristotle, but also in many other Greek sources.⁷¹ The emphasis on the insult as the core aspect in anger's propositional content places the concepts of honour, status, and shame at the centre of the question of this chapter.⁷²

These three concepts are strongly connected with the notion of the self and how it is understood by different cultures. Social psychology has largely argued that there are different models of the self, and more recently neurobiologists have shown that those differences can be traced at the neural level. It is important to bear in mind that the self is not a physical entity; the awareness of a certain unshared experience at the root of the construal of selfhood is still a puzzle for neurologists (Varela *et al*, 1991, pp. 59-81; Markus & Kitayama, 1991, p. 225). One model of the self is the independent one that mainly prevails in Anglo-European cultures; the other is the interdependent that mainly prevails in Asian, African, and Latin American cultures (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Heine, 2001; Zhu, Zhang, Fan & Han, 2007). According to the first model, the self is conceived as 'an entity containing significant dispositional attributes, and as detached from context'

⁷⁰ A full discussion of these three types of belittlement is in Konstan (2003, pp. 108-9; 2006, p. 4).

⁷¹ For a good review of these instances, see Konstan (2006, pp. 41-76).

⁷² The connection between honour and anger has also been addressed considering modern societies. See for example, Koziak (1999, p. 1069), Nussbaum (2014, 2016), and Sloterdijk (2012).

(Markus & Kitayama, 1991, p. 225). According to the interdependent model, the self is conceived as depending on the context and as being 'part of an encompassing social relationship and recognizing that one's behaviour is determined, contingent on, and, to a large extent organised by what the actor perceives to be the thoughts, feelings, and actions of others in the relationship' (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, p. 227). The independent model, often described as the 'modern' model, is not an adequate account of selfhood in Greek literature (Dodds, 1951; Williams, 1993; Gill, 1996; Sorabji, 2006). The interdependent model provides not only insight for understanding emotions in ancient Greece, but also grounds the previous observations on the ancient notions of self and honour in modern research within psychology and neurology.

One of the relevant features present in the interdependent model of the self is the importance attributed to keeping social harmony, and to the amount of public worth that subjects perceive as coupled with their roles in a group (Heine, 2001). The emphasis on the worth attributed to one's roles is at the core of the discussion of how to understand the notion of *timē* in the trilogy as related to the interdependent representation of the self just described. The second feature to be highlighted is that there is evidence that subjects who fall under the interdependent model have the same neurological reactions when thinking about their mothers and when thinking about themselves, suggesting an overlap between self-representation and the representation of an intimate person in terms of neural processes, whereas subjects who fall under the independent model present a clear difference at brain level between thinking about themselves and thinking about their mothers (Zhu *et al*, 2007, p. 1312). This does not mean that these subjects do not have the experience of an inner sense or of unshared states (thoughts, emotions, motivations); it only means that the emphasis is placed largely on the environment and on the importance of fitting with others to keep harmonious interdependence. Hence, the interdependent self is a good model to understand not only the importance attributed to honour in Greek society, but also that notions like inherited honour and family honour are

embedded in a construal of selfhood that has influence on cognition, emotion, and motivation.

The understanding of honour in Greek culture as a family matter has received attention. For example, Jones (1962, pp. 97-8) has pointed out that often in Aristotle, as well as in other Greek sources, the concern of the subjects is not so much their personal honour, but the *oikós*' honour, stressing the importance of the invocation of family ties and sense of community as an intensifier of emotions. In this regard, Jones has made the point that in the *Oresteia* we can see a 'solidarity in hating', for example, between the siblings and the slave women. This emotional 'solidarity' is also contemplated in Aristotle's definition of anger (*Rh* 1378a), where an offence to a close one is included in the propositional content of anger. Similarly, in the *Politics*, Aristotle uses Heraclitus' quote that 'it is difficult to fight against anger; for a man will buy revenge with his soul' when warning that special precautions should be taken towards those who think that their relatives are being insulted 'for when men are led away by passion to assault others they are regardless of themselves' (1315a25).⁷³ The distinction between personal honour and family honour has very little to no significant implications in Aristotle's accounts of anger.

The relevance of this understanding of honour for anger is that certain assumptions about the emotion need to be revisited. Konstan (2006, p. 55), applying a very similar methodological principle to the one being used in this chapter (that is to say, an analysis of the propositional content of the emotion), has argued that anger in Greek literature is mainly conceived as a function of status and that this reveals a strongly hierarchical society – 'anger is just the desire to restore the state of affairs prior to the insult by depreciating the offender in turn'. However, this perspective needs to be revised since it presents some problems. Konstan is right to acknowledge that anger is related to status; he is also right that anger reflects the society in which it takes place and that Greek society, throughout different periods of

⁷³ Similarly, *Pol* 1311a34.

time, was ruled by hierarchies.⁷⁴ Even though Dodds' (1951) and Adkins' (1960, pp. 60-75) arguments that Greek society, at least in the archaic and early classical periods, was essentially regulated by competitive values⁷⁵ have been seriously challenged (Long, 1970, p. 122; Williams, 1993, p. 81; Cairns, 1993, pp. 14-26),⁷⁶ the way in which Greek anger is often understood is often aligned with the 'agonistic society' paradigm. This is to a large extent on account of the strong link between anger and *timē*. Despite the differences, both Dodds and Adkins claim that considerations of hierarchies, status, and the gaze of others operate as the main regulator of action in Greek literature (in opposition to an inner sense of goodness), and that individuals are so strongly concerned with their own success that they strive for it at the expense of other people. However, Greek anger is the reflection of other important features of Greek culture, and the conceptual breadth of 'honour' is key in this respect.

⁷⁴ Some might argue that one can be concerned for one's status as the equal of one's peers, not only as a superior or inferior. However, the concern exists because there is also anxiety about this equilibrium being broken, that is to say, that some of the equals will become a superior. The concern about equality exists because hierarchies exist.

⁷⁵ Dodds attributes to the archaic and early classical periods a lack of inwardness that he associates with the so-called 'shame cultures' of which ancient Greece, in his opinion, partakes. Adkins (1972) uses a slightly different classification: competitive societies vs. collaborative societies, Greek society pertaining to the first category. Finkelberg (1998, p. 22) points out that Aristotle (*EN* 1095b23-4) makes a distinction that *arête* differs from *timē* in that one depends on the subject while the other one depends on those who grant it. Although I agree this is a fundamental distinction, my point here is that the boundaries of how I value myself and how my peers value me are not always easily distinguishable.

⁷⁶ The criticism (Long, 1970, p. 122; Williams, 1993, p. 81) of Adkins' (1960) argument is that it is untenable on general grounds and that it does not receive enough support from Homeric evidence. One of the main problems posed by holding a strong opposition between 'competitive' and 'cooperative' cultures is that even in an extremely competitive culture, some cooperation is needed for it to remain a culture. Cooperation is reflected, Long and Williams suggest, in a number of values that need to have as their basis a sense of justice and fairness. With regards to Dodds' distinction, Cairns (1993) has raised important questions which undermine a strict distinction between 'shame culture' and 'guilt culture', and also between the very emotions of shame and guilt.

In what follows, I argue that the propositional content of anger in the *Oresteia* shows a notion of honour that is in line with the interdependent model of the self, that transcends the personal realm and is importantly embedded in both competitive values and collaborative ones. The fact that Aristotle replaces the idea of ‘perceived belittlement’ with ‘perceived injustice’ as the object of anger in his definition of the emotion in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (οὐ γὰρ ἄρχει ὁ θυμῷ ποιῶν, ἀλλ’ ὁ ὀργίσας. ἔτι δὲ οὐδὲ περὶ τοῦ γενέσθαι ἢ μὴ ἀμφισβητεῖται, ἀλλὰ περὶ τοῦ δικαίου: ἐπὶ φαινομένη γὰρ ἀδικία ἢ ὀργή ἐστὶν 1135b25) suggests not only that anger could be viewed in terms of a violation of justice as well as a violation of honour, but also that these two concepts are connected.⁷⁷ As will be discussed in more depth, ancient Greek literature provides an array of instances in which the subjects of anger make explicit claims about a loss of *timē* while describing situations in which social norms, rules of *philia*, and issues of justice are involved. This suggests that the concept of honour – with all its connotations about personal status, competition, hierarchies – cannot be detached from notions of justice, cooperation, and social bonds, which are integral parts of the experience of a living human.⁷⁸

This chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section has the purpose of establishing (a) that anger in the *Oresteia* is importantly implicated in a social situation as construed by the subject, (b) that this construal involves a threat to the subject’s honour, and (c) that the notion of honour at stake supposes an interdependent model of the self. The second section, drawing on the notion of honour previously discussed, addresses

⁷⁷ See also *EN* 1149b20, where Aristotle discusses the proposition that anger should be proportional to the injustice suffered by the victim.

⁷⁸ Honour can be justly or unjustly granted. This might lead to conclude that justice and honour are not really separated categories. However, this view cannot account for all perspectives of justice – and of honour for that matter. Book 5 of the *Nicomachean Ethics* draws attention to a number of situations in which the relationship between anger and justice is related to the action done deliberately – a condition for a breach of justice, but not necessarily to a breach of respect for others’ honours. My argument throughout this section is that justice and honour are strongly linked, but that their conceptualisations differ in many respects.

how the notion of justice is also present in the propositional content of anger, and how the two notions, honour and justice, appear strongly intertwined in the portrayal of anger in the *Oresteia*. The main discussion, in each of the two sections, will be preceded by a short theoretical contextualisation and by a number of instantiations, taken from different ancient Greek sources, to show the extent of applicability and effectiveness of the theoretical approach being used.

1.1 Honour and Status

1.1.1 Literary Context

The connection between anger and a representation of reality entailing an offence to honour and status is attested by different sources in Greek literature. The above definition by Aristotle has precedents in Greek literature from different periods and places. Hesiod also provides several instances in which anger is conceived as a mental state of the subject (god or human) when an issue of honour is at stake. Zeus, inviting the gods to attack the Titans, gives as an incentive the guarantee that nobody will lose his honour and privileges, as he would increase the honours and privileges, as it is right (τιμῆς καὶ γεράων ἐπιβησέμεν, ἧ θέμις ἐστίν *Th* 396) of those who were deprived of them by Cronus. Zeus is, thus, counting on desire to fight being linked to a perceived loss of honour. Zeus himself is said to have become enraged in his chest when anger came upon his heart (χώσατο δὲ φρένας ἀμφί, χόλος δὲ μιν ἴκετο θυμόν *Th* 554; μέγ' ὄχθησας *Th* 558) when he realises that he has been given just the bones of the ox – which is regarded as a disrespect for his status. Zeus is also deeply stung at the bottom of his heart when he realises that he has been cheated (ἐκ τούτου δὴ ἔπειτα δόλου μεμνημένος αἰεὶ / οὐκ ἐδίδου Μελίησι πυρὸς μένος ἀκαμάτιο *Th* 562-3) when he sees fire among men, as it is a clear sign that a hierarchical transgression has taken place. Uranus is portrayed as angry at heart (ὠδύσσατο θυμῶ *Th* 617) with his sons, the giants Obriareus, Cottus and Gyges, and punishes them by making them inhabit Tartarus. The anger is explained in terms of Uranus' apprehension of their mighty manhood

(ἤνορέην ὑπέροπλον *Th* 619 = *Th* 516), form and size, which is, again, the sign of a threat to his status. Similarly, in *Works and Days*, Zeus is represented as punishing the golden race of humans, and his anger is explained by his belief that these humans would not give honour to the blessed gods who live on Olympus (Ζεὺς Κρονίδης ἔκρυψε χολούμενος, οὐνεκα τιμὰς *WD* 138).

The same type of judgments about honour and status are present in Homer's portrayals of anger.⁷⁹ When Achilles recounts the argument that led to his withdrawal from battle, he claims that it was due to Agamemnon's great arrogant spirit (μεγαλήτορι θυμῶ) that he took his booty, and in doing so dishonoured (ἠτίμησας) a great man (*//*9.109-111). Thus, Achilles is not only understanding his own anger, but also justifying it, in terms of a perceived loss of honour. Poseidon gets indignant (ὀχθήσας) when he perceives that his authority is not being respected because Zeus dares to menace him (*//* 15.183-217). When Athene decides not to stop the suitors from being arrogant with the precise intention of making Odysseus angrier (*Od* 20.284), she shows that she understands how to provoke anger in a human by inducing a certain mental state. This case of theory of mind links anger to the perception of arrogance.

The same understanding of anger as a mental state whose content relates to an affront to one's honour is persistent over time and across political-cultural divides. It still appears in fourth-century Athenian oratory, thus giving us an idea of how deeply rooted it is in the Greek conceptualisation of emotions. In *Against Midias*, Demosthenes is clear in making the distinction between the blow received and the dishonour that the

⁷⁹ The scholarship on the relationship between anger and honour in Homer is vast. My only purpose here is to set a context for the discussion on Aeschylus. The focus here is not so much on trying to establish the particularities of the relationship between honour and anger in Homer, or any other source for that matter, but on establishing that issues of honour are present in the propositional content of anger. On anger and *timē* in Homer, see Most (2003), van Wees (1992, p. 110), and (Chaniotis 2012, p. 16). For anger and frustration of one's goals, see Adkins (1969, p. 17). For *timē* as a moral concept in Homer, see Gagarin (1987, p. 290).

blow meant for the victim. It is the dishonour, a mental representation of a social interaction, not the blow itself that causes the anger (οὐ γὰρ ἡ πληγὴ παρέστηκε τὴν ὀργήν, ἀλλ' ἡ ἀτιμία 21.72). Likewise, when Demosthenes claims that Phaenippus should be the object of anger because with his behaviour he showed contempt not only for him but for the laws of the city (ἀλλὰ καταφρονήσας ἀμφοτέρων, καὶ ἡμῶν καὶ τοῦ νόμου, δευτέρῳ μὲν ἔδωκεν 42.2), he places the emphasis of his argument not only in an interpretation of reality by the subject of the emotion, but also in an interpretation involving honour and status. In *Against Stephanus I*, one of Demosthenes' strategies to present his opponent as someone who should be punished consists in outlining his offence as deserving people's anger. And what he does to shape the offence in terms of 'something that deserves anger' is precisely to provide possible propositional content for the emotion, which in this case is wanton arrogance, greed, and false testimony (τούτους δ' ἀξιούς ὄντας ὀργῆς, οἳ τῷ τὰ ψευδῆ μαρτυρεῖν αἴτιοι τούτων ἐγένοντο 45.7; ἄξιον ὀργίλως ἔχειν (...) αἰσχροκερδία καὶ πλεονεξία καὶ ὕβρει 45.67) – all of them forms of contempt for the other members of society. Presenting the facts in a way that they can be characterised as offences to the city is a recurrent strategy of his, consisting in generating the judgment that an issue of honour and status is at stake (as for example in *Against Androtion*: τὰς ὕβρεις ἠνέσχεσθε τὰς τούτου, ἃς κατὰ τὴν ἀγορὰν ὕβριζεν ὁμοῦ μετοίκους (...) ἄξιον λαβόντας δίκην τήμερον 22.68).⁸⁰

Yet another example of anger being given propositional content related to honour is seen in Isaeus' *On the Estate of Menecles*. Here the speaker explains that although he is contentious about estates and inheritance issues, what deeply vexes him is that he could be thought as someone worthless and good-for-nothing (2.43):

⁸⁰ For a thorough discussion on how appeals to anger based on narratives presenting the facts as offences to the city or the laws were used in different Athenian courts, see Rubinstein (2004, pp. 190-5).

καὶ οὐ μόνον ταῦτ' ἐστὶ τὰ ποιοῦντά με ἀγωνίζεσθαι τὸν ἀγῶνα τοῦτον, ἀλλ' εἰ οὕτω φαῦλος ἄνθρωπος δοκῶ εἶναι καὶ μηδενὸς ἄξιος, ὥστε ὑπὸ μὲν εὐφρονοῦντος μηδ' ὑφ' ἑνὸς ἂν ποιηθῆναι τῶν φίλων, ὑπὸ δὲ παραφρονοῦντος, ταῦτ' ἐστὶ τὰ λυποῦντά με

The speaker could be about to lose his property but, in his narrative, what angers him is what he takes to be a case of social diminishment.⁸¹

The pervasiveness of the idea that anger is the function of an appraisal of reality that involves a diminution of honour across different genres and political views in Greek literature signals a deeply embedded belief. This representation presupposes a social environment, and the presence of others. As many of the examples, particularly the last one, show, concerns about honour and status are closely related to public image and how others regard one. This means that even though anger is envisaged as a mental representation of the subject, that representation is importantly embedded in a social environment. The next sub-section will briefly discuss the importance of this awareness for the understanding and analysis of the propositional content of anger in the *Oresteia*; the conception of anger as a function of society, a stronger approach, will be discussed in the fourth chapter.

1.1.2 Anger and Shame

In *Rhetoric* 1379a, Aristotle points out that a slight produces greater anger if it takes place before rivals of the victim, or if it is exacted either by those whom the victim admires, or by those by whom the victim would like to

⁸¹ For other instances in fourth-century oratory, see Lysias: (ὡς ἐγὼ ὕστερον ἤκουον: αὕτη δὲ ὀργιζομένη καὶ ἀδικεῖσθαι νομίζουσα, ὅτι οὐκέτι ὁμοίως ἐφοίτα παρ' αὐτήν 1.15); (ὀργιζόμενος δὲ τοῖς αἰτίοις 2.27); (προπηλακιζόμενος δὲ ἡγανάκτου 9.5). Lysias also puts anger in terms of reputation: what can be more vexatious than to slander a late father – especially when the slander involves his own children (ἄρ' ἄξιον ὀργισθῆναι τῷ τοιαύτ' εἰρηκότι καὶ βοηθῆσαι (...) τί γὰρ ἂν τούτου ἀνιαιρότερον γένοιτο αὐτῷ 10.28 = ἄξιον δὲ ὀργισθῆναι ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ 11.10). The speaker in this last example is deeply concerned about the public image and the fame of his father after his death, and this thought is used to explain his anger.

be admired. While discussing how the intensity of anger can be influenced by the context, Aristotle shows particular awareness of how the subject's representation of his own position with regards to others is a key element to understand the emotion. His remark on the components of rivalry, admiration, and respect towards others is relevant to the study of the propositional content of anger since it places anger in relation to other emotions such as shame and introduces an explanatory element for the level of intensity of the emotion.⁸² This relationship between the two emotions is important to assess how the portrayal of anger in the *Oresteia* might be reflecting a conceptualisation of the emotion as largely dependent on the subject's concern about how others perceive them.

In Homer, we find expressions like 'be men and put a sense of shame in your hearts' (ὦ φίλοι ἄνδρες ἔστε καὶ αἰδῶ θέσθ' ἐνὶ θυμῷ // 15.661) repeatedly being used to provoke the desire to rage and fight for the social values at stake. This shows how anger and shame are clearly understood as determined by what the subject perceives to be the way in which others are evaluating his or her actions. Words such as 'be ashamed (νεμεσσήθητε καὶ αὐτοί) of your abuse and fear the wrath of gods (θεῶν δ' ὑποδείσατε μῆνιν) exalting your bad deeds' (ἀγασσάμενοι κακὰ ἔργα *Od* 2.62-7; // 15.103; // 16.544) show how anger and shame share some propositional content, for example an abuse that has been committed. It is not surprising that anger and shame are liable to sharing some propositional content since both of them are heavily constructed upon notions of honour and status and, most importantly, they share an inhibitory role in interpersonal relationships. These two emotions signpost the disapproval and condemnation of an action.⁸³

⁸² Cairns (1993; 2007, p. 249) has discussed at length how honour and shame intertwine in ancient Greek literature.

⁸³ As a clear example, in *Against Conon*, Demosthenes makes the speaker say to the jury that his indignation if they pardon the defendant would be no less than that he already feels at the wrongs that he has suffered (54.15). His explanation is that it would be a new sort of indignation since it would show that the children of the defendant feel no fear or shame (54.23) while committing in his presence severe crimes.

We have similar examples in oratory. In Lysias, those Greeks who, with a high sense of honour, preferred to die for their freedom are said to be ‘ashamed of their circumstances and angered at their enemies’ (οὐχ ἦττον ταῖς συμφοραῖς αἰσχυρόμενοι ἢ τοῖς ἐχθροῖς ὀργιζόμενοι 2.62). Those idealised objects of praise feel shame and anger at being enslaved (the propositional content), and the differentiation of the emotions depends on a further elaboration of that judgment – they are ashamed about seeing themselves as dispossessed of their honour, and angry about their enemies’ behaviour.⁸⁴ In this example, a judgment that public image is under threat strengthens the anger of the victim of an injury, and this is in line with the *Rhetoric’s* definition of anger.

The way in which shame appears to be a measure of the humiliation and the diminution of honour present in anger suggests a relation of proportionality between anger and expectations on how the subjects are supposed to interact within their social environment. These expectations not only take the form of a need to fit into certain canons, but also of a need to receive reassurance from the social environment. The connection between anger and shame also suggests the importance ascribed to fitting into the social rules that is typically associated with the interpersonal model of selfhood earlier described. This serves as an indicator of the complexity of the mental content of anger as represented in Greek literature that will be developed over the next chapters. The next section sets out to explore how honour and shame appear as part of the propositional content of anger in the *Oresteia* and the extent to which anger can be considered as embedded in them. Given that context of the action in the trilogy is within a family, and that the notion of honour is embedded in an interdependent construal of the self, the next section will also examine Aristotle’s idea that the belittlement present in the propositional content of anger can refer to a *philos* of the subject of anger.

⁸⁴ In *Against Simon*, the speaker remarks that although the facts (an assault against a slave boy) are outrageous, what really angers him is the imposition of going through the shame of talking about those facts and the public exposition that this involves (3.3).

1.1.3 Honour and Anger in the Oresteia

1.1.3.1 Sense of Belittlement

In the *Agamemnon*, the first interaction between Clytemnestra and the chorus (Ag 264-614) is marked by her sense of belittlement. As Helen Foley (2001, p. 207) has appropriately stressed, Clytemnestra perceives a gender-driven prejudice about her cognitive abilities on the part of the elders, and she reacts to that situation with bitterness. Her knowledge that Troy has finally been captured by the Argives is disregarded by the leader of the chorus when he implies that she may not have better reasons for making sacrifices than mere hope (εὐαγγέλοισιν ἐλπίσιν θυηπολεῖς Ag 262). He also states that she is easily persuaded with little evidence (τί γὰρ τὸ πιστόν; ἔστι τῶνδ' ἐσοί τέκμαρ; Ag 272) and that her opinion is the product of an illusory dream (πότερα δ' ὄνειρων φάσματ' εὐπιθῆ σέβεις Ag 274).⁸⁵ Clytemnestra rightly interprets these insinuations as referring to her gender, and protests against the elders stating that they consider her mind as if it was that of a girl (παιδὸς νέας ὡς κάρτ' ἐμωμήσω φρένας Ag 277). This scornful attitude towards women's intelligence has been acknowledged as a feature in the tragedy (Gagarin, 1976, p. 93; Foley, 2001, p. 212). Aeschylus makes it clear that the intelligence of women is regarded as inferior to that of men when we hear the chorus say that Clytemnestra speaks with the intelligence of a man (γύναι, κατ' ἄνδρα σώφρον' εὐφρόνως λέγεις Ag 351). As Rosenmeyer (1982, p. 116) has pointed out, when Clytemnestra describes the route from Troy to Argos, she is in full knowledge and control of the situation. This is a coherent portrayal of the 'man-hearted woman' announced by the watchman at the beginning of the play, and of the 'intelligent-as-a-man woman' referred to by the chorus. The prejudice is therefore open, and Clytemnestra's reply to the *Coryphaeus* can be read as a reaction to perceived disdain. Commentators are, then, right in stressing her resentment about this prejudice (Fraenkel ad 275; Winnington-Ingram,

⁸⁵ For visionary abilities as a part of female stereotypes in tragedy, see Zeitlin (1990, p. 111). For the plasticity and elusiveness of the female roles in tragedy, see Easterling (1987).

1948, p. 131).⁸⁶ Winnington-Ingram (1948, p. 135) makes an interesting point when arguing that the quarrel between Clytemnestra and the chorus of elders configures her as a competitor for power. Furthermore, he adds, in doing this, she is represented not so much as subverting a role, but restoring it. Clytemnestra's non-conformity with the chorus' dismissal of her opinion might well correspond to an attempt to restore her position as a woman by protesting rather than to subvert it.

Remarks on gender stereotypes are also recurrent in the subsequent lines (γυναικείῳ νόμῳ *Ag* 595; οὐκ αἰσχρὸς ὡς γυναικὶ γενναίᾳ λακεῖν *Ag* 614) imbuing the interaction between Clytemnestra and the chorus with concerns about gender. Clytemnestra conveys her sense of being despised for her abilities as a woman, either with a hint of bitterness, as when she claims that the chorus are treating her as if she were a stupid woman (πειρᾶσθέ μου γυναικὸς ὡς ἀφράσμονος *Ag* 1401), or with a hint of irony as when she speaks of the 'words of a woman', implying that they are not considered as worthy of instruction (ὦδ' ἔχει λόγος γυναικός, εἴ τις ἀξιοῖ μαθεῖν *Ag* 1661).⁸⁷ Bitterness and irony are two ways in which verbal aggression can be realised.⁸⁸ The fact that she is pointing back to the gender stereotype that she resented more than a thousand lines before shows a construction of her anger around a judgment expressing something like 'I think that I am being scorned as my opinion does not count because I am a woman'.⁸⁹ This indicates a consideration of the emotion as dependant, at

⁸⁶ See O'Daly (1985, p. 2) on considerations based on the metre regarding the contest between Clytemnestra and the elders, and its emotional weight.

⁸⁷ Clytemnestra's use of irony is what Aristotle (*Rh* 1408b) describes as a sort of self-deprecating dissimulation. This model follows the Socratic strategy in which the ironist presents themselves in a pose of innocence or incapacity while knowing what they are doing. For a discussion of this in relation to psychoanalysis and how Odysseus uses irony, see Antze (2003, p. 106).

⁸⁸ For an example of the use of irony in a context of anger and retaliation, see the words of Odysseus to *leiodes* in *Od* 22.320-1.

⁸⁹ Heiden (1993, pp. 154-5) has made an interesting point when suggesting that 'the deceptiveness of the intriguer is usually intended to restore his or her loss of dignity, not to effect a true change of roles'. He notes that even the *Erinyes* end up being humbled; Clytemnestra never does.

least in part, on a construal of a social situation as perceived by the subject, a mental state that has to do with being the victim of belittlement and with the way in which one is publicly perceived – in this case as a woman and therefore someone with lesser ability of discernment than other members of society. Clytemnestra's characterisation is therefore very much in line with expectations about anger derived from other Greek literary sources.

The construction of Orestes' anger differs from Clytemnestra's in interesting respects, such as intensity and conviction about violence and punishment – whilst Clytemnestra is portrayed as strongly driven by her desire to punish Agamemnon, Orestes needs reassurance (*Ch* 899). Yet, the analysis of the propositional content of Orestes' anger reveals similar features between the two of them. It may seem paradoxical that Orestes is never explicitly said to be angry; however, as explained in the introduction, anger can be attributed to characters by means that are not only lexical.⁹⁰ In Orestes' case, the act of killing his mother is broadly understood as a part of the sequence of events prompted by the spirit of anger that dwells the house. According to the chorus of slave women, the decipherers of Clytemnestra's dream have spoken of the wrath of those in the underworld against the killers (ἐξ ὕπνου κότον / πνέων *Ch* 34; ὄνειράτων / θεόθεν ἔλακον ὑπέγγυοι / μέμφεσθαι τοὺς γὰρ / νέρθεν περιθύμως / τοῖς κτανοῦσί τ' ἐγκοτεῖν *Ch* 38-41). The dream, in which Clytemnestra breastfeeds a serpent born from her, is later, in the tragedy, explicitly interpreted as Orestes murdering his mother (ἐκδρακοντωθεῖς δ' ἐγὼ / κτείνω νιν, ὡς τοῦνειρον ἐννέπει τόδε *Ch* 549-50). Orestes is thus represented as one manifestation of the anger of the underworld. In this context, his anger is a function of forces (spirits, gods) that are external to himself. The next chapter will address causality with respect to emotions; for the purpose of the current analysis, it is enough to establish that anger, in term of external powers, can be soundly attributed to Orestes. Furthermore, this understanding of anger is key for the

⁹⁰ For a dissenting view on Orestes' emotional state, see Anderson (1932, p. 305).

development of the events in the trilogy, as much as Clytemnestra's anger is.

However, Orestes' anger is also importantly portrayed as a function of his mind and not only as a function of an external deity. That is, his anger is configured as depending on an assessment of reality and not only on spiritual forces. His own judgments about his situation, as Clytemnestra's, involve the perception that he has been the victim of dishonour. In the *Choephoroi*, once the siblings have been reunited, an invocation to the powers of the underworld takes place. The ritual was first initiated by Clytemnestra who sent the slave women and Electra with peace offerings (ἱαλτὸς ἐκ δόμων ἔβαν / χοὰς προπομπὸς ὀξύχειρι σὺν κτύπῳ *Ch* 22-3; πέμπει τ' ἔπειτα τάσδε κηδεῖους χοὰς, / ἄκος τομαῖον ἐλπίσασα πημάτων *Ch* 538-9; Electra is grieving her father ὦν εἶχε συμπενθεῖν ἐμοὶ / ἄγαλμα τύμβου τοῦδε καὶ τιμὴν πατρός *Ch* 199-200), but shifts its purpose towards what the siblings have in mind as their ultimate goal: an appeal for help in the vindictive mission against the rulers of the house (τρόπον τὸν αὐτὸν ἀνταποκτεῖναι λέγων / ἀποχρημάτοισι ζημίαις ταυρούμενον *Ch* 273-4). The portrayal of anger in this passage is rich in complexity and therefore deserves analysis from different angles. From the perspective of the propositional content of Orestes' anger, his claims revolve around the sense of being dishonoured. The death that Agamemnon could have suffered at Troy, a honourable one, would have meant for Electra and him such a position in society that they would have attracted the look of others in the street (τέκνων τ' ἐν κελεύθοις / ἐπιστρεπτὸν αἰῶ / κτίσας πολύχωστον ἂν εἶχες *Ch* 349-51). By contrast, his shameful death (ἀτίμως, ὥσπερ οὖν ἀπώλετο / πατήρ *Ch* 96-7; αἰσχρῶς τε βουλευτοῖσιν *Ch* 494) at the hands of his wife results in a loss of honour for the siblings. On top of this, Orestes has lost his property and his right to rule over Argos (πρὸς πιέζει χρημάτων ἀχηνία *Ch* 301), which means an effective drop in his social status. Having been excluded from his home is explicitly denounced by Orestes as a loss of honour (δωμάτων / ἄτιμα *Ch* 408-9). Orestes' anger is, thus, importantly constructed as a function of his mind and, more particularly, as an

assessment of reality involving a judgment about being a victim of scorn and disdain.

The sense of being scorned is shared by Electra, whose anger follows a similar pattern from the point of view of its propositional content. Electra's anger is more foregrounded than Orestes' as she is explicit in stating that she rightly hates (ἡ δὲ πανδίκως ἐχθαίρεται *Ch* 241) her mother, and is eager to see her father avenged. It is clear that she perceives herself as a victim of dishonour when she describes herself as a vagrant (ἀλώμεθα *Ch* 132) sold by her mother for the price of a lover, and as being treated as a slave (ἀντίδουλος *Ch* 135). She complains that after her father died, she was kept in dishonour (ἐγὼ δ' ἀπεστάτουν / ἄτιμος, οὐδὲν ἀξία *Ch* 444-5). Furthermore, Electra, as Clytemnestra and Orestes, is highly concerned about how others perceive her, and part of her outrage is that she had to cry for her father without being seen (χέουσα πολύδακρυον γόον κεκρυμμένα *Ch* 449). Electra's sense that she has been dishonoured and that her status in society has been diminished is clearly linked to her anger and desire to punish her mother.

By considering the way in which these three characters, Clytemnestra, Orestes, and Electra, construct their own situations, and the way in which these judgements are linked either to desires of retaliation or to justifications of anger and hatred, I have extracted a model for the understanding of a crucial dimension of anger in the *Oresteia*.⁹¹ These constructs can sometimes appear implicitly; however, we can see recurrent patterns of motivation and justification at work. These patterns are in accordance with the evidence from elsewhere in the Greek literary tradition and although Aeschylus is a century ahead of Aristotle, we can see that his conceptualisation of anger anticipates and justifies Aristotle's. Furthermore, these patterns of anger are repeated generation after generation like other patterns in the trilogy. This suggests that while the medium was strongly stylised, the understanding of anger is realistic. The connection between anger and a representation of reality entailing an offence to honour and

⁹¹ As we shall see in the next chapters, this is not the only model at play.

status is clearly a model present in Aeschylus. Having established this connection, it remains to be asked how this model is applied in the trilogy, and what exactly is the notion of honour involved in these experiences of anger.

1.1.3.2 Sense of Reiteration

The way in which this parameter, the perception that one's honour is under threat, is used in the representation of anger in the *Oresteia* sheds light on the model of anger at stake. The analysis of the propositional content of anger shows that the sense of belittlement and the anxieties about social status are accompanied by a sense of a reiteration. This sense may appear as a perceived impediment to regaining the honour lost or as a perpetuation of that loss. The idea that the subject of anger perceives him or herself as the victim of repeated wrongs is familiar in modern accounts of anger and it is usually associated with the resistance of the subject to let the offence 'just go' (Tavris, 1989, pp. 315-8). Re-victimisation has been linked to the inability to forgive or forget the wrongs suffered, and this experience is reflected in the characterisation in the *Oresteia*: it is not only that an offence to honour has occurred, but also that that offence is somehow iterative. This sense does not need to be accompanied by an actual reiteration, although it often is. As we will see, sometimes the characters receive repeated injuries, and sometimes they keep lingering upon past injuries over and over again. The latter could be considered as a case of brooding anger. In both situations, the subject is under the impression of being the victim of constant offences.

In the passage of the *Agamemnon* discussed above (*Ag* 264-614), the *Coryphaeus*' insinuation about Clytemnestra's inferior intelligence and knowledge clearly reverberates in her mind, and it suggests a conceptualization of anger in which the subject considers herself to be victimised and re-victimised. Clytemnestra's resentment is patent since she does not forget the *Coryphaeus*' words. Almost a hundred lines after them, she picks up precisely on the fact that she is a woman (τοιαῦτά τοι γυναικὸς ἐξ ἐμοῦ κλύεις *Ag* 348) when she has shown a clear explanation

of the source and evidence for the information that she had provided, thus showing a flaw in the stereotype that women's intelligence and knowledge are unfounded. She continues to linger upon those discriminatory remarks when she reminds the chorus how reluctant they had been to believe her because of her 'womanly uplifted heart' when they finally accepted that the war is over (*Ag* 590-2):

καί τίς μ' ἐνίππων εἶπε, 'φρυκτωρῶν δία
πεισθεῖσα Τροίαν νῦν πεπορθῆσθαι δοκεῖς;
ἦ κάρτα πρὸς γυναικὸς αἶρεσθαι κέαρ'

It is not only that Clytemnestra is not prepared to forget the injuries that she has suffered, but also that she is repeatedly bringing them back to the present, signalling that they are constantly alive in her mind. Clytemnestra's inability to let offences go is such that even after she has been murdered, her ghost perseveres in stressing her sufferings until she transfers that sense of being scorned to the *Erinyes*, creatures that embody intransigence to forgiveness. How this resistance is considered to be an aspect of anger in the trilogy and how it is embedded by the *Erinyes* will be discussed in more detail in the final chapter on gods and anger. My interest here is concentrated on showing that by looking at the propositional content of anger, the sense of reiteration appears as an important way in which a judgment about honour is linked to the emotion. When the *Erinyes* express their anger, they remark on their loss of honour, and they go over and over the same issue again (ἄτιμος *Eu* 780 = *Eu* 810; ἀτιμοπενθής *Eu* 792 = *Eu* 822; ἀτίετος *Eu* 839 = *Eu* 872). The strength of the *Erinyes*' anger is dramatically conveyed not only through a repetition of the wrongs received, but by repeating exactly the same words. Anger is again represented as linked to a sense that the mental representation at stake (loss of honour in this case) is not easy to let go or remove.

Orestes' and Electra's emotions are also importantly implicated and embedded in a social situation as constructed by themselves in which they are the victims of multiple injuries. This construal of the situation, though, differs from Clytemnestra's in that it is not so much a succession of injuries,

as about the different consequences of the murder of Agamemnon and how they affect the siblings. Orestes makes it clear that the murder of his father involves a number of issues, such as the inability to continue with his life in his own house and within his own community. The implications of the crime committed by his mother go beyond an act which is in itself shameful: it is violent towards the children as well, a point that Orestes and Electra make repeatedly. They are orphaned and bereaved children (τούς δ' ἀπωρφανισμένους / νῆστις πιέζει λιμός *Ch* 249-50; ἰδεῖν πάρεστί σοι, πατροστερῆ γόνον *Ch* 253; πατὴρ πένθος μέγα *Ch* 300; πολυδάκρυτα πένθη *Ch* 333; θρήνος *Ch* 335), and this is an important element in their anger. However, the siblings' anger does not only depend on their construal of the situation in terms of the painful and shameful act of Agamemnon's murder.

When the siblings and the slave-women invoke the powers of the underworld, they list the wrongs suffered as a way to justify the need for retaliation against Clytemnestra and Aegisthus. This invocation is done under high emotional tension. Orestes implores that his mother be slain on account of his father (τοκεῦσι δ' ὄμως τελεῖται *Ch* 385) and the slave-women speak of the wind of anger driving their hearts (θυμὸς ἔγκοτον στύγος *Ch* 393), suggesting that anger has an important presence in the ritual; they act as an intra-textual audience stating the presence of the emotion. The invocation of the *Erinyes* (βοᾶ γὰρ λοιγὸς Ἐρινύων *Ch* 402; ἴδετε πολυκρατεῖς Ἄραι φθινομένων *Ch* 406) is yet another sign of anger. Electra demands punishment (κάρανα δαίξας *Ch* 396) for what they have suffered and speaks of the anger against their mother (ἐκ ματρός ἐστι θυμὸς *Ch* 421) – after having expressed her hatred against her (ἐχθαίρω *Ch* 241). The enumeration of the wrongs suffered is, thus, part of their strategy to awaken the powers of the underworld and also to express their emotions. Both Orestes and Electra describe their situation as orphaned children as involving several wrongs that suppose an idea of re-victimisation. According to Electra, they are suppliants and similar to fugitives (ἰκέτας δέδεκται φυγάδας θ' ὁμοίως *Ch* 336); φυγάς implying a loss of honour,

and a situation that is difficult to reverse. Along the same lines, Orestes explains that he has been dispossessed of his goods (πρὸς πιέζει χρημάτων ἀχηνία *Ch* 301) and that he is under the power of a pair of women (δυοῖν γυναικοῖν ὧδ' ὑπηκόους πέλειν *Ch* 304). The siblings are therefore complaining that their honour is repeatedly affected by different injuries.

The *Oresteia*, like many other Greek literary sources, suggests that anger is importantly implicated and embedded in the construal of a situation by the subject of the emotion in which they are affected by an affront to their honour. The trilogy also illustrates that there is a sense of reiteration in the construal of the situation, in which the loss of honour is either repeated or it leaves the subject in a state of social vulnerability that is very difficult to redress. This sense of reiteration, which finds a parallel in modern research in the sense of re-victimisation associated to anger, coupled with the loss of honour, points to an understanding of anger as heavily contingent on anxieties about one's role in society.

1.1.3.3 Family Ties

So far, we have established a connection between anger and honour in the trilogy. The interdependent model of selfhood discussed above is key to unpacking the notion of honour at stake and discussing how it transcends the personal realm. For example, Clytemnestra's overt expressions of unease about her *timē*, often permeated with a sense of gender discrimination, concern not only her own honour, but also Iphigenia's. Furthermore, the distinction between the two is not very relevant for her. As discussed above, anxieties about honour in Greek society transcend the personal realm to include the family and those perceived as close ones. This understanding of honour, probably rooted in an interdependent construal of the self, is reflected in Clytemnestra's claims about the treatment received by Iphigenia, and the way in which it affects her.

After the murder of Agamemnon, the chorus are open in their condemnation of Clytemnestra's deeds, their horror at the way she speaks, and their certainty that she will be punished. In return, Clytemnestra reacts

by accusing them of holding a double standard and of offending Iphigenia's honour by not having reacted when Agamemnon treated her as a sacrificial animal (ὄς οὐ προτιμῶν, ὡσπερὶ βοτοῦ μόρον, / μήλων φλεόντων εὐπόκοις νομεύμασιν *Ag* 1415-16). Clytemnestra's speech here is without a doubt complex and rhetorically rich. Clytemnestra's main complaint has been seen in different aspects of her speech. For Lloyd-Jones *ad loc*, Raeburn & Thomas *ad loc*, and Sommerstein *ad loc*, Clytemnestra's main point is that Agamemnon dishonoured Iphigenia. For Fraenkel *ad loc* and Denniston-Page *ad loc*, Clytemnestra is mainly concerned with attacking the chorus for not having appreciated the full gravity of the wrong done, and therefore, of diminishing Iphigenia's importance. I agree with the latter, since even when it is clear that Clytemnestra is injured by Agamemnon's deed, the scene is constructed as a dialogue with the chore. She is mainly reacting to the chorus attitude, even when this means that she is also accusing Agamemnon of misbehaviour to prove that what she did was right. She denounces the inadequate appreciation of Iphigenia's worth implied by the reaction of the chorus. They reacted as if an animal sacrifice had occurred, when it was an act of infanticide (ἔθυσεν αὐτοῦ παῖδα *Ag* 1417).⁹² Clytemnestra's equivocal statement about the flock leaves it open that Iphigenia was dishonoured both by her father and by the city's reaction to his crime. The sense of humiliation is highlighted as she adds that all this happened as 'a song to (a spell against) Thracians' (ἐπωδὸν Θρηκίων ἀημάτων *Ag* 1418), with 'Thracian' probably carrying a pejorative tone in this passage (Fraenkel *ad loc*) – and also, conveniently for her, she effectively denies complexity to the situation, overlooking that Artemis had imposed the sacrifice as a condition to be able to wage the war.⁹³ Clytemnestra's

⁹² There is a good antecedent for this in the *Odyssey* (2.229-49) where Mentor declares that he is not so much angry at the insolence of men, but that it is at those who see that insolence without reacting that he feels indignant (νῦν δ' ἄλλω δήμῳ νεμεσίζομαι 2.239).

⁹³ One aspect that could be considered as an intensifier of her anger is the sense that the death of her daughter could have been prevented. For a correlation between grieving reactions (some of them involving anger) and the preventability of the loss, see Bugen (1977, pp. 199-200).

accusation is not a cold argument against double standards; it is a justification of her own actions. What was done to Iphigenia has deep consequences for her motivation.

Clytemnestra stresses that she is talking of the affront to the 'dearest fruit of her pangs' (φιλιτάτην ἐμοὶ / ὠδῖν *Ag* 1417-18), highlighting the strength of the tie between the two. Heath (1999, p. 20) has rightly pointed out that the way in which Clytemnestra uses language to refer to her children is carefully chosen. Whilst she uses *teknon* for all her children, she reserves *pais* for Iphigenia. The superlative *philtatos* is also carefully applied by her. In the trilogy, *philtatos* not only carries the obvious strong sense of emotional attachment,⁹⁴ but often also conveys a tone aimed to create an emotional response. The only time Clytemnestra uses *philtatos* referring to Electra and Orestes is when she wants to communicate the seriousness of the wrong that she herself has suffered in having been murdered by them (παθοῦσα δ' οὔτω δεινὰ πρὸς τῶν φιλιτάτων *Eu* 100). Similarly, Orestes applies the term to Clytemnestra when exalting her hostility towards him and his sister (τοὺς φιλιτάτους γὰρ οἶδα νῶν ὄντας πικρούς *Ch* 234), and to Agamemnon as a means to justify the murder of his mother (ἀντικτόνοις ποιναῖσι φιλιτάτου πατρός *Eu* 464). Just like Orestes, Electra applies the term to her brother and herself to highlight how the wrong that her mother has committed affects her (εἶναι τόδ' ἀγλαίσμᾳ μοι τοῦ φιλιτάτου *Ch* 193). There is a clear use of the term as a means of justifying a crime on the grounds of having suffered from the previous abuse of an important social code regarding family ties. This use is attested by Apollo when he speaks of the transgression of the tie of marriage (ἔθεν βροτοῖσι γίγνεται τὰ φίλιτα

⁹⁴ All the other instances of the term in the trilogy convey the strength of a bond and often grief or sorrow for a loss. Clytemnestra refers to the pain felt by the Trojans at the end of the war (*Ag* 329); when she realises that Aegisthus is dead (*Ch* 893); and to address Aegisthus directly (*Ag* 1654). The herald uses it to express the relief felt at being buried with his dearest ones (*Ag* 507). Electra uses it when she finds Orestes' lock (*Ch* 193), and later on to address him directly (*Ch* 496). The chorus of slave women express their compassion for Orestes when he is harassed by the *Erinyes* after killing his mother (*Ch* 1051), when they had previously referred to him as a *pais* (*Ch* 372).

Eu 216) to justify Clytemnestra's punishment, and by the *Erinyes* when they say that Clytemnestra is the one who nourished Orestes and who has his blood (ἀπεύχη μητρὸς αἷμα φίλτατον; *Eu* 608), to justify his prosecution.

Clytemnestra reads the behaviour of the chorus as not giving due honour to Iphigenia. When telling them that it was her own *philtatos* who had been dishonoured by Agamemnon, Clytemnestra is making a statement about the significance of the crime and about the way in which it signifies an affront to herself. Both claims could potentially help her to justify the murder committed by her. The tie with her daughter has consequences for her emotions, duties, and behaviour, and she expects the elders to understand this. Furthermore, a failure to react appropriately towards a very close one constitutes major misconduct, and the fear about its implications plays an important motivational role in the trilogy. Clytemnestra therefore confronts the elders with an issue that they are aware of, namely that Agamemnon committed a serious crime against *philía*,⁹⁵ and that this will have disastrous consequences for him (τί τῶνδ' ἄνευ κακῶν *Ag* 211; ἐπεὶ δ' ἀνάγκας ἔδου λέπαδνον *Ag* 218). What she is bringing up, though, is that the crime that Agamemnon committed has direct repercussions on herself, and this, as well as the crime itself, has been overlooked by the city.

Clytemnestra is not expected to avenge her daughter, in contrast to Orestes, whose duty is to avenge his father and to free his sister.⁹⁶ Orestes gives one partial explanation for this difference: a woman should not go against a man as it is he who goes to war (μὴ 'λεγχε τὸν πονοῦντ' ἔσω καθημένη *Ch* 919; τρέφει δέ γ' ἀνδρὸς μόχθος ἡμένας ἔσω *Ch* 921). Yet, the *Agamemnon's* portrayal of the consequences of Iphigenia's murder on Clytemnestra is more complex than this division of social duties according to gender. Clytemnestra is an avenging mother (*Ag* 155) who tries to claim endorsement for that role. Although there is no mention in the trilogy of Iphigenia's *Erinyes*, Cassandra is apparently able to see *Erinyes* wandering

⁹⁵ For a good account of the role of violations of *philía* in Greek tragedy, see Belfiore 2000.

⁹⁶ On the duty of redress falling on the male relatives of the deceased, see Cairns (2015, p. 648).

around the house, and these can be attributed both to Iphigenia and to Thyestes' children (δύσπεμπος ἔξω, συγγόνων Ἐρινύων *Ag* 1190). This vision is connected to the crime that Clytemnestra is committing inside the house, and therefore to her desire to punish her husband. Although the *Agamemnon* acknowledges both that Clytemnestra is moved to retaliate because of the honour of a member of the family and that Iphigenia has an *Erinýs*, neither of these two facts finds social recognition because of her gender. However, it is clear that Clytemnestra is portrayed as reacting to Iphigenia's dishonour as an '*Erinýs*', and therefore her anger reflects the importance of the *oikós*' honour described by Jones (1962) and is also in line with Aristotle's definition of anger.

Orestes' understanding of honour follows the same pattern of interdependence. In the passage of the *Choephoroi* discussed above, Orestes accompanies the invocation of the *Erinýes* with a claim that the Atreids have been displaced from their home and dishonoured (ἴδεσθ' Ἀτρειδᾶν τὰ λοιπ' ἀμηχάνως / ἔχοντα καὶ δωμάτων / ἄτιμα *Ch* 407-8), showing concern about the honour of the family. Likewise, the un-kingly death of Agamemnon is repeatedly brought up by him (οὐ τυραννικοῖς θανῶν *Ch* 479; πέδαις δ' ἀχαλκεύτοις ἐθηρεύθης, πάτερ *Ch* 494). The consequences of the shameful death of the father at hands of a woman is considered a problem for Orestes' and Electra's public image, as is made explicit by Orestes in the passage cited above (*Ch* 345-51). The honour of Agamemnon is not detachable from the family's and, thus, Orestes' honour, and this is why his shameful death is a burden for the siblings whereas as death in battle and a heaped tomb would have been easier for the house (δώμασιν εὐφόρητον *Ch* 353). The funeral is a further concern for the siblings. When Orestes learns that Agamemnon was buried in private, without lamentation, and mutilated, he reacts with huge outrage, considering this an affront to Agamemnon's honour (τὸ πᾶν ἀτίμως ἔλεξας, οἴμοι /

πατρός δ' ἀτίμωσιν ἄρα τείσει *Ch* 434-5).⁹⁷ This dishonour to his father is also a dishonour to himself as is clear from what he has been saying in the previous lines.

In order to grasp the full significance of the reaction to the burial arrangements it is important to stress the link between honour, status and funeral monumentalisation in classical Athens. Throughout the classical period, failure to provide adequate burial is a source of social disapproval (Morris, 1992, p. 125). Death is no bar to competition. Graves and burials were an important sign of social status, playing an essential part in the recognition of the role played by the individual and by the family within Greek society. The arrangement of burials reflected the structures that divided the community (Morris, 1992, p. 131; Loraux, 1986, p. 23). While a 'lavish burial was the sign of the *agathós*, bringing with it admiration and pride' (Morris, 1992, p. 44), the lack of burial was considered as a denial of status (Morris, 1989, p. 47). The strong connotation of honour and *kleos* implied in burial is also present in Sophocles' *Antigone*, where the denial of Polyneices' burial is a means of offending and diminishing him (Morris, 1989, p. 49), and in *Ajax*, where the military commanders seek to withhold burial from Ajax in punishment for his attempt on the lives of the Greek leaders. Both of these, despite differences, bear some resemblance to Athenian civic practice. As a city, Athens used burial and its refusal as a means of rewarding loyalty (through state funerals for the war dead) and punishing disloyalty (anyone executed for treason could not be buried in Attic soil). The glory of war is a very important sign of status in a community, and there is, therefore, an expectation about the burial of an important warrior. The context provides keys to understand the strength of the frustration experienced by the siblings at being restricted from giving their father an appropriate burial.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ See Garvie *ad loc* on the poetic use of *âra* in this passage and the special moving force it attributes, as a logical connective, to the words that Electra previously uttered.

⁹⁸ Concerns about their inheritance, already present in *Orestes*, can also be linked to Agamemnon's burial as in the fourth century the heir could help a case for their right to inherit by arguing that the rites of burial had been performed by them (Morris, 1989, p. 54; Griffith-Williams, 2013, pp. 73-4;

It is precisely because Agamemnon's burial affects the family as a whole that Orestes feels the need to redress it with punishment. Like Clytemnestra, Orestes assumes that the dishonour of a member of his close group imposes a duty on him and the failure to fulfil it is a source of social disapproval and shame. This restoration of honour goes both ways. Orestes advances the argument that Agamemnon, or his spirit, will recover his lost honour if he helps the siblings in restoring their own honour by taking back the power over the house and exacting punishment (εἰ δὲ μή, παρ' εὐδείπνοις ἔση / ἄτιμος ἐμπύροισι κνισωτοῖς χθονός *Ch* 484-5; εἵπερ κρατηθεῖς γ' ἀντινικῆσαι θέλεις *Ch* 499). In Orestes' mind, the deceased father has a duty towards his children, and restoring their honour will also contribute to enhancing his own honour. Similarly, Electra takes it for granted that Agamemnon's spirit will react with anger to the fact that she is enslaved, Orestes is in exile, and that the family's money is being spent (κάγῳ μὲν ἀντίδουλος: ἐκ δὲ χρημάτων / φεύγων Ὀρέστης ἐστίν, οἱ δ' ὑπερκόπως / ἐν τοῖσι σοῖς πόνοισι χλίουσιν μέγα *Ch* 135-7). The honour of Agamemnon is not separable from the honour of his children, and this notion of honour is key in the understanding of anger in the *Oresteia* as means to maintain social cohesion.

The construction of Orestes' anger in the *Choephoroi* is strongly collective, collaborative, and inseparable from the idea that the subject belongs, and sees himself as belonging, to a community. The sense of being the victim of reiterative wrongs, and the need to articulate those feelings takes an interesting form during the ritual, as it is something shared between the two siblings. Like Orestes, Electra stresses the shame of Agamemnon's death (αἰσχροῦς τε βουλευτοῖσιν ἐν καλύμμασιν *Ch* 494) and the dishonour she suffered because of the way in which he was buried (ἄτιμος, οὐδὲν ἀξία *Ch* 445). The siblings are involved in an effort to raise Agamemnon's spirit and get his help, and the repetition of their grievances can, thus, be explained as a part of their strategy. However, it is also clear

126). On the importance given to receiving burial from the close family members, see Kurtz & Boardman (1971, p. 143).

that they do not linger upon the sense of having been dishonoured only for the purpose of seeking sympathy from others. Both siblings are presented from the very moment in which they appear in the trilogy as deeply concerned about their honour and how to redress the situation. The sense of a need to exact punishment connected to the thought of having been dishonoured is a constituent part in the construction of the moods and the characters of both siblings. They have a shared purpose, and they need to strengthen it not only to secure the bond between them but also to achieve their goal. In this sense, the way in which anger arousal and anxieties about honour are intertwined in the text serves the double purpose of the presenting the plot and the characters in a realistic way.

Honour considered as a collective phenomenon in which an affront to one group member is taken as an affront to all, appears as a central issue when looking at the content of the judgements made by the main characters in the *Oresteia* in relation to their anger. This suggests a strong concern about their own space in society as well as about their public image. The way in which they reiterate their loss of honour is a sign of the strength of that concern and the difficulty of overcoming an injury relating to a domain of human experience that entails anxieties about one's role in a certain group, and often about hierarchies and status. However, the notion of honour at stake in the text also suggests that other important issues are involved, such as how subjects perceive themselves as attached to their families and to other members of society. In the next section, I will explore how the notion of honour cannot be detached from notions of justice, cooperation, and social bonds since all these aspects are integral parts in the experience of a living human pertaining to a group.

1.2 Honour, Injustice and Missed Social Norms

1.2.1 Competition Versus Cooperation

The previous section has discussed the importance of the notion of honour in the context of the analysis of the way in which the subjects of anger construct the situations upon which anger depends. As we have seen, the

notion of honour at stake involves concerns about personal status, public image, and strong bonds with other members of the community. It is also closely tied to another aspect of anger, which is the response to perceived injustice. The complexity and pervasiveness of the concept of honour in Greek literature should warn us not to rigidly over-schematise the relation between honour and anger. Since the notion of *timē* is so central in Greek texts, and it works as an important lens to interpret reality, often the very concept of justice is conceived as a function of *timē*, and therefore, the analysis of the propositional content of anger will often involve both concepts, justice and honour.⁹⁹

As mentioned above, justice and honour can be seen as pertaining to two different categories of analysis – they are, after all two different concepts and my own view is that this is enough reason to treat them separately, even if the question of whether they represent two different aspects or experiences of anger is not at the centre of this discussion. This is not to say that these two concepts should be taken as opposing each other as Dodds (1951) suggested. *Dikē* has traditionally been associated with notions of reciprocity, respect for the other, and cooperation within the set of rules of a society.¹⁰⁰ *Timē* has been often related to notions of personal honour, hierarchies, and competition. Dodds (1951, p. 32) regards the relation between anger and *timē* as one of the hallmarks of a ‘shame culture’ in which individuals are ruled by their desire to stand above others. However, as Long (1970, p. 123) points out, *timē*, with its hierarchical connotations of personal status, is at the centre of both cooperative and competitive values. Here I argue that in the propositional content of anger, *timē* serves as an organizing concept that is present in judgments about justice, fairness, and respect for

⁹⁹ Anger based on a perceived affront to honour and anger based on a perceived affront to justice are not necessarily two different types of experiences. In many cases, an injustice can be read as a diminution of honour, and a honour diminishment, as an injustice. This is not an attempt to suggest that considerations of honour are universally hierarchical or, for that matter, that all considerations of justice are cooperative.

¹⁰⁰ On the repercussions of violating reciprocity, see Donlan, W. (1998, p. 51).

social norms.¹⁰¹ I am not attempting to suggest that judgments about honour are devoid of rivalry and anxieties about status but rather that very often it is not possible to disentangle judgments about fairness and justice from those anxieties when looking at Aeschylean anger. Cooperation and competition are two categories that are part of the same experience of anger.

The connection between anger and injustice or failed cooperation is not only made by Aristotle, but also by Plato. The fact that Aristotle ascribes to anger a propositional content connected to notions of honour and hierarchies in the *Rhetoric*, and to justice in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, a book where the focus on how the notions of *eudaimonía* and *philía* relate to each other is a fundamental concern, suggests that the type of evaluation present in anger is regarded as highly contextual. In the *Phaedo*, one of Plato's characters claims that misanthropy is the result of excessive trust in others. The argument is that hatred arises from the repeated experience of trusting someone and then finding out that the person was base and false (89d). Therefore, a disappointment with regards to a human bond is placed at the base of hatred.¹⁰² This argument is further developed by Plutarch (*De Ira* 463b) who, quoting Plato, argues that those whose hatred of vice (*misoponēria*) makes them have recurrent fits of anger (*orgē*) should learn to get rid of their excessive trust of their fellows. The way to avoid anger is to lower expectations about fairness and trust.

This understanding of anger is still present, and perhaps with even more preponderance, in modern research on anger. Empirical research suggests that the propositional content of the emotion is often related to a sense of some expectations not being fulfilled, and social roles not being followed 'as they should'. This sense often translates into the perception of being the victim of unfairness or injustice (Callard, 2017; Tavis, 1989, p. 49; Elster, 1996, pp. 1390-1; Nussbaum, 2016). It is precisely because of this

¹⁰¹ On different types of appraisals of respect, see Darwall 1977. See also Cairns 2011.

¹⁰² Aristotle (in the *Rhetoric* at least) departs from Plato's view on the connection between anger and hatred. I will take issue with this distinction in Chapter 4, p. 196.

characteristic of anger that the emotion has been understood as serving the social purpose of a ‘tracker’ of missed, neglected, or abused, social norms (Sirivasan, 2018) and of an evaluation that cooperation has been broken (Gintis *et al*, 2003, pp. 159-62). It is important to bear in mind that the fact that anger is considered as relating to the perception of abuse of social norms is not considered by modern researchers as opposed to the acknowledged link between anger and concerns about self-respect and self-worth. In presenting honour and justice in a relation of interdependence, Aeschylus is part of a tradition. It is therefore important to consider the example of anger in Greek literature where concerns about personal gain and status are not distinguishable from concerns about social cooperation.¹⁰³ The below examples are not intended to be a systematic analysis of anger throughout Greek literature; they simply show that in different periods and genres honour and justice appear strongly linked in the representation of the emotion.

1.2.2 Honour and Justice in Context

In Homer, funerary games are represented as a highly competitive environment. Menelaus reacts with anger towards Antilochus when he cheats to win against him in a race (Μενέλαος ἀνίστατο θυμὸν ἀχεύων Ἄντιλόχῳ ἄμοτον κεχολωμένος // 23.566-7). The propositional content of the emotion can be primarily interpreted as an honour-related issue. Games are an important opportunity for the participants in the different contests to show their skills and abilities, and to reassert their social position in relation to their comrades. Antilochus’ cheating to win therefore results in a diminishment of honour for Menelaus. Yet Menelaus is not exclusively concerned about himself being the victim of an injury: his anger is also importantly about following the rules and teaching the young to do the same.

¹⁰³ Others would suggest that there are little grounds for distinguishing in practice between anger at issues of cooperation and issues of competition, even if these categories are different in principle. However, there are cases in which one value is placed over the other – at some point my anger might be that I am not being recognised as a superior to others (in beauty, in strength, in intelligence, etc.) even when I hold beliefs in equality and cooperation.

Therefore, his concern is not only his personal diminishment in the funeral games, but also the fact that these games should be performed according to their rules. In the *Odyssey*, the suitors respond with indignation at Antinous' abuse of the old stranger (ὡς ἔφαθ', οἱ δ' ἄρα πάντες ὑπερφιάλως νεμέσησαν *Od* 17.481). This anger is largely about fairness and following social rules. The honour of the group is threatened when a member goes against the rules, and this affects the honour of the members.

In *Works and Days*, Hesiod provides a list of the possible objects of Zeus' anger. This list comprises a number of offences that can be understood both as against honour and against social harmony and cooperation such as wronging a suppliant or a guest, sleeping with one's brother's wife, offending orphans, and abusing the elderly. Zeus will be angry and punish any of these wrongs (τῷ δ' ἦ τοι Ζεὺς αὐτὸς ἀγαίεται, ἐς δὲ τελευτὴν / ἔργων ἀντ' ἀδίκων χαλεπὴν ἐπέθηκεν ἀμοιβήν *WD* 333-4).

Pindar offers similar cases in which although anger is related to judgments about honour. The same judgements involve offences to justice or a sense of unfairness. In *Pythian 3*, Apollo is angry (χόλος 3.12) because Koronis, while pregnant with his child, had sex with a stranger from Arcadia and, on top of that, tried to deceive him. The propositional content of anger is clear: sex with a stranger and unfair deceit (ξεινίαν κοίταν ἄθεμίν τε δόλον 3.32), and both acts constitute an affront to the god's honour. It is on account of this affront that Apollo sends his raging (θύω 3.33) twin sister to Lacereia. Yet the situation is also one of transgression of social norms, as is suggested by ἄθεμις, and by the involvement of Artemis, the safeguard of appropriate conduct towards pregnancy and childbirth, in the story.¹⁰⁴ In *Nemean 5*, Hippolyta deceives her husband, making him believe that Peleus, his friend and host, has tried to seduce her. The situation clearly endangers the honour of the household. Peleus is in a difficult situation, not only with

¹⁰⁴ Similarly, in *Olympian 6*, Aegyptus goes to the oracle with heavy anger in his heart (ἐν θυμῷ πύσσεις χόλον 6.37) because his daughter Euadne is concealing her pregnancy from him. Her deceit and the fact that she did not wait for the wedding to have sex suppose a loss of *timē* for the family and an affront to the father.

regard to his friend but also to his own father Zeus, the guardian of hospitality (ξεινίου πατρὸς χόλον / δείσις 5.33). The narrative of the conflict makes it explicit that Peleus fears external sanctions and staining his public image. He is said to be angry at Hippolyta's sexual invitations (τοῦ δὲ ὀργὰν κνίζον αἰπεινοὶ λόγοι 5.32), as they involve an affront to his honour – he is an excellent man who is ashamed by such a proposal. However, Hippolyta's behaviour amounts to an affront to Peleus' honour precisely because it goes against certain internalised ideas about social conduct that make him a man of excellence. The frontier between what is an issue of fighting for status and what is an issue of fairness and rules of cooperation is blurred.¹⁰⁵ The propositional content of anger reflects the permeability between the two categories of motivation.

Oratory probably provides the most straightforward instances of anger being related to a sense of injustice or missed social norms. Demosthenes, in *Against Leochares*, declares that those who use unfair legal procedures deserve people's anger (ὡς δὲ καὶ τῶν ἀγώνων ἀδικώτατοι καὶ πλείστης ὀργῆς ἄξιοι τοῖς ἀγωνιζομένοις αἱ διαμαρτυρίαι εἰσὶν 44.57). In *Against Callicles*, he has the speaker say that there is nothing more vexatious than having a neighbour who is base and wants to take advantage of others (οὐκ ἦν ἄρ', ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, χαλεπώτερον οὐδὲν ἢ γείτονος πονηροῦ καὶ πλεονέκτου τυχεῖν 55.1). The speaker adds that there is a good reason to be angry (ἀγανακτέω 55.29) since Callicles was abusive in the way he conducted the use of water and public roads in his lands. Anger is clearly considered to be implicated in the perception that someone is taking advantage of others and disrupting the harmony of the community.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ Some may argue, as Aristotle does, that anger is invariably accompanied by a sense of being unjustifiably wronged. The examples analysed in the previous section can also be seen as cases in which the problem of honour denounced by the subject of anger is the transgression of a social norm, but the emphasis is placed in the fact that a diminishment of honour has taken place. The emphasis is thus placed in different aspects of the problem that generates anger.

¹⁰⁶ In *Lysias 4*, the speaker denounces being the victim of a false allegation of premeditation. This contention can have an important impact on the assessment of the crime at stake. As the trial is being conducted in the public

The above examples show that the propositional content of anger, as it appears in literature from different periods, is related to notions that fell into the broad category of what we could call cooperative values. I will now show that this is also the case in the *Oresteia*. As the above examples suggest, the sense of norms being broken is largely expressed in terms of *timē*-violations, and thus, the two categories of analysis, cooperative and competitive, are often jointly involved in the experience of anger. The violation of a norm can be experienced as a personal offence and disrespect particularly when there are strong expectations of social cooperation within the members of a group.

1.2.3 Honour and Injustice in the *Oresteia*

The first stasimon of the *Agamemnon* revolves around justice and the consequences of transgressing it.¹⁰⁷ A concatenation of passages shows how the contravention of norms is indelibly connected to anger (personal, social, and divine), and ultimately to punishment. In the first strophe and antistrophe, the chorus remark that the gods do concern themselves with those humans who transgress the norms of the sacrosanct (οὐκ ἔφα τις / θεοῦς βροτῶν ἀξιοῦσθαι μέλειν / ὅσοις ἀθίκτων χάρις / πατοῖθ' *Ag* 369-72). They suggest that the destruction of Troy and its people is the result of an act of injustice and disrespect committed not only by Paris, but also by his

space of the Athenian courtroom, his honour is also at stake. The speaker, however, chooses a narrative for his anger in terms of justice and lack of reciprocity (4.19). Similarly, in *Lysias* 9, when defending himself from the accusation of public debt, Polienos argues that that debt was justly condoned by the treasurers, and that his prosecutors are mainly driven by enmity. He adds that while the injury caused by his prosecutors amounted to measured vexation (ἀγανακτέω 9.20), the injury that would be caused by the (allegedly) unfair outcome of the trial would lead to great pain. The difference, as he puts it, resides in the fact that the first injury is motivated by hatred, and therefore, understandable, while the second injury would be only explainable by reference to an evil intention of his fellow citizens (διὰ κακίαν δὲ τῆς πόλεως 9.20). Hence, according to Polienos, his anger-pain is related to judgments about the unsoundness of justice, unfairness, and breaking of social bonds.

¹⁰⁷ Gagarin (1976, pp. 66-72) argues for a strong sense of retributive punishment conveyed by *dikē* in the *Oresteia*.

ancestors who in their excess of pride and wealth overlooked the importance of justice (οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν ἔπαλις / πλοῦτου πρὸς κόρον ἀνδρὶ / λακτίσαντι μέγαν Δίκας / βωμὸν εἰς ἀφάνειαν *Ag* 381-4). In this respect, Jones (1962, p. 88) has stressed the centrality of the issue of material prosperity in the choral songs of the tragedy. In his view, *húbris* in the tragedy is largely put in relation with excess of wealth. Jones is right about the importance of the excess of wealth to understand the conflict in the tragedy, but it is important to remember that this excess of greed also led to the destruction of a city with its people and its temples, which constitutes an important offence against the gods, the consequences of which are to be feared.

The second and third strophes continue revolving around the same topic, now placing the emphasis on the narration of how Helen's act was injurious (ἀτίμους *Ag* 412) both for her husband and his people, and for the people of Troy. Here the notion that a transgression of norms leads to a bitter end for the transgressors and their community, and that the transgression is related to anger, is made explicit. The transgressor of justice brings harm to his community (πόλει πρόστριμμ' ἄφερτον ἐνθείς *Ag* 395) for the gods do not forgive (λιτᾶν δ' ἀκούει μὲν οὔτις θεῶν *Ag* 396) – this is what happened to Paris and, as the elders will begin to suggest, this is what will happen to Agamemnon.¹⁰⁸ Paris took Helen, bringing destruction to Ilium; Agamemnon took pride and money, bringing death and turmoil to Argos (ὁ χρυσαμοιβὸς δ' Ἄρης σωμάτων *Ag* 438). Furthermore, the representation of Helen plays a role in furnishing the chorus' discourse with a social content. They are aware that the problem is not only divine anger and how it determines individuals in future generations, but also the collective anger of the people in the present. It is the people's anger that, they fear, might have an impact on the development of the events upon Agamemnon's arrival. The chorus speak of the perceived imbalance among the people between their loss of lives and the gains of the Atreids who brought them to war (φθονερόν

¹⁰⁸ The anger related to Paris is different in important respects to the anger against the Atreidai at the losses in war. My point here is just that in both cases there is an important transgression of norms of cooperation.

δ' ὑπ' ἄλγος ἔρ- / πει προδίκους Ἀτρείδαις *Ag* 450-1). They fear the anger of the people (βαρεῖα δ' ἀστῶν φάτις ξὺν κότῳ: / δημοκράντου δ' ἀράς τίνει χρέος *Ag* 458-9) as the possible source for Agamemnon's punishment.

The stasimon, thus, contextualises the action in the middle of a conflict between, on the one hand, excessive pride, unfairness, and several abuses of social conventions, and on the other hand, anger, punishment, and retribution. Hence, there is a clear link between anger and a perceived injustice, and the way in which this is described involves considerations of honour. The relationship between excessive pride, injustice, and anger is also expressed by Clytemnestra when she receives her husband. In the carpet scene, she invites Agamemnon to enter the house walking on the cloth she made for him. While knowing this is an act of excessive pride for a man, she does this by talking of the *dikē* of his homecoming. The irony in her words consists in the double sense of *dikē* in the context: the vengeance upon Troy, which resulted in total destruction, and the chorus' previous claim that the gods take note of those who kill many (*Ag* 911-13):

εὐθύς γενέσθω πορφυρόστρωτος πόρος
ἐς δῶμ' ἄελπτον ὡς ἄν ἡγήται δίκη.
τὰ δ' ἄλλα φροντὶς οὐχ ὕπνω νικωμένα
θήσει δικαίως σὺν θεοῖς εἰμαρμένα

Agamemnon cannot possibly take the chorus' words as a reference to Clytemnestra's since he was not present in that scene, and she plays with that. In either of the two interpretations of *dikē*, as Agamemnon being back home after the going through the pains of war for Paris' violation of *xenia* or as Agamemnon receiving his punishment after committing excesses during war, the notion is linked to an abuse of social rules and not just to an affront to honour.

Later on, Clytemnestra makes explicit the role of justice in the motivation for her anger when she asserts that the murder of Agamemnon was more than just (τῶδ' ἄν δικαίως ἦν, ὑπερδίκως μὲν οὖν *Ag* 1396).¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ Perhaps a reference to the οὐχ ὀσίη (*Od* 22.412). If Odysseus' words had become proverbial, as Lloyd-Jones (1979, p. 104) suggests,

The tone in this passage is sarcastic as Clytemnestra has just given a sardonic reply to the group of elders (πρέσβος Ἀργείων τόδε *Ag* 1393), and is now mocking the ritual for a dead body. Since she is arguing her case in a quasi-legal context (at least at the level of metaphor), there is inevitably an element of rhetorical manipulation, since anyone arguing a case in a public context must seek social approval for their conduct or condition. Nevertheless, both her sarcasm and her rhetoric respond to a long-standing judgment about justice. She thinks that such are the crimes that Agamemnon has committed that he has received what he deserved: the outcome of her anger. The language of justice is also present when she claims that Agamemnon damaged the house and is now being paid back by the house (τοσῶνδε κρατήρ' ἐν δόμοις κακῶν ὄδε / πλήσας ἀραίων αὐτὸς ἐκπίνει μολῶν *Ag* 1397-8). Clytemnestra continues to call herself the architect of justice (οὗτός ἐστιν Ἀγαμέμνων, ἐμὸς / πόσις, νεκρὸς δέ, τῆσδε δεξιᾶς χερὸς / ἔργον, δικαίας τέκτονος. τάδ' ὦδ' ἔχει *Ag* 1404-6)¹¹⁰ making it clear that she persists in her view of the situation in terms of fairness while, as discussed in the previous section, this is seen by her as a matter of honour.

The same concomitance of concerns about honour and concerns about justice is present in Clytemnestra's argument with the elders. As I previously discussed, her anger at them is largely concerned with a loss of honour and being the victim of belittlement. However, she also perceives that an injustice has taken place. After having referred to them as if they were in the position of judges (δικάζεις (...) ἐμοὶ),¹¹¹ she complains that they are not being fair (ἐπήκοος δ' ἐμῶν / ἔργων δικαστῆς τραχὺς εἶ. *Ag* 1420-

Clytemnestra's statement must have sounded especially distasteful for the Greek audience.

¹¹⁰ For the use of *téchnē* in tragedy as a suggestion that there is a woman plotting, see Zeitlin (1985, p. 75).

¹¹¹ Fletcher (2014, p. 67) points out that Clytemnestra refers to the elders as if they were a *dikastes*, thus appointing them as judges and recognizing their authority over her. It is also important to acknowledge the prevalence of legal terminology in the trilogy.

1).¹¹² As with honour, the unfairness on the part of the elders that she is adducing does not only concern her and what she has done, but also concerns Iphigenia, which again reflects the interdependent conception of the relationship between self and group. Clytemnestra thinks that the elders hold a double standard regarding murder and that she is doing justice to her daughter (τὴν τέλειον τῆς ἐμῆς παιδὸς Δίκην *Ag* 1432).¹¹³ Clytemnestra, thus, includes two complaints regarding justice in her speech, one being missed retribution (Iphigenia deserved to be avenged), and the other one a double standard in judging a crime. These two claims appear in the text along with her perception that there is an offence to her honour and to Iphigenia's, charging the propositional content of her anger with honour and justice at the same time.

In the *Eumenides*, the ghost of Clytemnestra also employs the language of justice (πατούμενα (...) δίκην *Eu* 110-11).¹¹⁴ Still expecting to get her due, she reproaches the *Erinyes* for neglecting her,¹¹⁵ and dismisses the libations she has poured for them in the past.¹¹⁶ Her first complaint before the *Erinyes* is that she is being kept in dishonour among the other dead (ἐγὼ δ' ὑφ' ὑμῶν ᾧδ' ἀπητιμασμένη ἄλλοισιν ἐν νεκροῖσιν, *Eu* 95-6), which is a source of dishonour and shame for her. She is also in shame on account of the blame for those she killed (ᾧν μὲν ἔκτανον / ὄνειδος ἐν φθιτοῖσιν οὐκ ἐκλείπεται, / αἰσχρῶς δ' ἀλώμαι *Eu* 96-8), repeating that she is being harshly blamed (ἔχω μεγίστην αἰτίαν κείνων ὑπο *Eu* 99).¹¹⁷ Clytemnestra is, thus, complaining about two things: that the *Erinyes* are not behaving with her as they normally do with others (that is, avenging), and the shame of

¹¹² See Fletcher (2014, p. 67).

¹¹³ See Denniston-Page *ad loc.*

¹¹⁴ For an argument about the use of πατέω to convey an injustice in the trilogy, see Sommerstein *ad loc.*

¹¹⁵ As has been noted by Sommerstein *ad loc.*, her complaint bears resemblance to Patroclus' *Il* 23.69-74.

¹¹⁶ Lebeck (1971, p. 78) suggests that this passage points to the idea that the *Erinyes* themselves, and the institution they represent, are being dismissed or trampled to the ground.

¹¹⁷ The syntax of the whole passage seems to be purposely awkward in order to convey her emotional state effectively (Sommerstein *ad loc.*).

being blamed for what she did. Clytemnestra continues to say that despite having sorely suffered at the hands of her close kin, there has been no angry reaction on the part of the gods (*Eu* 100-2):¹¹⁸

παθοῦσα δ' οὔτω δεινὰ πρὸς τῶν φιλάτων,
οὔδεις ὑπέρ μου δαιμόνων μηνίεται,
κατασφαγείσης πρὸς χερῶν μητροκτόνων

Honour and shame intertwine in Clytemnestra's verbal expressions. She claims that despite having been the victim of a crime that falls under the *Erinýes'* domain (δωμάτων γὰρ εἰλόμαν / ἀνατροπᾶς, ὅταν Ἔρης / τιθασὸς ὦν φίλον ἔλη *Eu* 354-6; βροτοκτονούντας ἐκ δόμων ἐλαύνομεν *Eu* 421), no deity is angry about it (οὔδεις ὑπέρ μου δαιμόνων μηνίεται *Eu* 101). There is a sense of a lack of reciprocity from the *Erinýes*. Clytemnestra still expects a reaction as she presents the facts in a self-flattering light: she overlooks that she also murdered kin.¹¹⁹ Even though rewards from gods for libations or any other offerings are not guaranteed, it remains the case that the relationship between divine and mortal is one of reciprocity and it is in this respect that she can complain about its absence. She is, thus, denouncing negligence on the part of the *Erinýes* in their 'institutionalised capacity,' and a degree of abuse in the situation on the part of Orestes.¹²⁰ Both things constitute a case of dishonour and injustice.

1.3 Conclusions

The three examples I have analysed indicate that the representation of anger in the *Oresteia* is largely based on the construal of a social situation in which unreciprocated social norms take place. The most basic implication of this conclusion is that there is a cognitive understanding of anger, at least to a certain extent, at the base of Aeschylus' representation of anger. Anger

¹¹⁸ While she emphasises the proximity of those who killed her, she does not acknowledge that of whom she killed (φίλτατος versus φθιτός; κατασφαγείσης πρὸς χερῶν μητροκτόνων *Eu* 102).

¹¹⁹ Clytemnestra may be going back to *Ag* 1499-1501 where she claims that she is not only Agamemnon's wife, but also the Spirit of Vengeance (Denniston-Page *ad loc*).

¹²⁰ For a similar reading of this passage, see Bacon (2001, p. 50).

in the *Oresteia* can be fruitfully analysed by looking at the propositional content of the mental states of the characters, which indicates a conceptualisation of the emotion that is in line with Aristotle's understanding of the emotion.

The social situation on which anger is construed is often expressed as problems of honour-diminishment, justice, and re-victimisation. This conclusion is in line with what has been often suggested in previous research: the notion of honour is at the core of the understanding of Ancient Greek anger. This has normally been taken as a sign of the hierarchic and competitive nature of Greek society. However, as I hope I have shown, the strength of connection between anger and social norms suggests a society that is not only heavily concerned about hierarchies and status, but also about collaboration, and keeping human bonds. The analysis of the propositional content of anger suggests that the situations represented involve many nuances with regard to the concept of honour, some of them in very close relation to concerns about justice and fairness. But to be concerned about honour is to be concerned when rights to honour (one's own or others) are infringed. It is not only about the self-assertive pursuit of esteem.

Chapter 2

Objects and Causes of Anger

The previous chapter begins with the hypothesis that emotions are a function of the mind, discussing the way in which the agents in the *Oresteia* ground their anger in an interpretation of the situation and the behaviour of others. However, this principle proves to be inadequate when giving account of some important aspects of anger in the trilogy, such as divine intervention in human experiential states, the influence of a curse over a family's behaviour, or the perception of being possessed by an external agent. Here, I will primarily be arguing that by broadening our understanding of what cognitive science say about emotions, it is possible to account for aspects of Aeschylean anger that, at first, might seem irredeemably unrelatable to us, in particular the notion of being possessed by an *Erinýs*. The line of argument that I will develop follows Easterling's (1973, pp. 5-6) insightful observation that (with emphasis from the original):

[...] of course a divine explanation of human behaviour came as naturally to Aeschylus as to Homer or Herodotus. But what we must remember is that such an explanation is a diagnosis of something actually observed in human behaviour, and not a piece of mumbo-jumbo independent of observed phenomena.

In this context, Easterling is not talking of emotions; yet she makes a point that is crucial for interpreting anger or anything else in Greek literature: whatever the beliefs and conventions involved in a dramatic representation may be, we are in front of a portrayal of humans and human experiences.¹²¹

¹²¹ Similarly, Gill (1983, p. 266) is aware that it may be objected that Aeschylus' explanation is not psychological but supernatural and therefore external to the human realm. However, he, as Easterling did, finds here the possibility of reading a way of representing the fact that people often seem to go 'outside' their minds, while still acting as the persons they are. Gill (1983, p. 265) regards the 'the abnormal situations, the pervasive role of 'forces' and gods, the ambivalent or elusive ethical framework' as possibly having a function in terms not only of presenting 'the self as it is' but also of diverting the possibility of making the moral judgment that one would normally make in the face of certain acts, and to put us in contact with a

The fact that we recognise the role of literary convention in shaping the representation of a human experience, and that we know from modern research that we are dealing with a culture which accepted as a matter of belief the idea of external agents intervening in human behaviour, does not mean that we should be 'content to believe that there are aspects of behaviour in Greek plays that we should expect to be quite inexplicable by our own human criteria' (Easterling, 1973, p. 6). As she points out, their beliefs must have had a correlation to their own experience of a psychological event and of observed behaviour. Even in a highly stylised medium such as Greek tragedy, a certain level of realism is needed to make the scenes relatable to its audience. Furthermore, any 'realistic' representation of anger needs to be mediated by shared beliefs and conventions to be rendered intelligible.

This last premise is not only applicable to ancient literature. In fact, the way in which we give account of our emotions depends both on our shared cultural understanding of them and on our experience, two factors that are strongly interrelated (Lakoff, 1987, pp. 405-6).¹²² The conceptualisation of anger as an objective entity that takes hold of us is present not only in ancient notions but also, and pervasively, in modern ones. Modern Western theories of emotion may not frame anger in terms of a personified agent; however, as has been observed in cognitive linguistics, the way in which we speak in our everyday life of the cause of anger and of how anger causes events indicates that our language has incorporated an experience of anger as an independent entity (Lakoff, 1987, p. 400; Johnson & Lakoff, 1980, pp. 69-76). The belief that emotions can possess us, or our rational capabilities, making us perceive, say, and do things in a way that differs from what we perceive to be normal is also implicated in the way we speak of behaviour being caused by anger. Similarly, Novaco (2007, p. 14) highlights that reports of anger most typically are expressed in terms of

psychological sense of what is incomprehensible. For a discussion on Greek religion and cognition, see Atran (2002).

¹²² Novaco (2007, p. 4) describes the psychological symbolism of anger as 'energising, empowering, signalling, justifying, rectifying, and relieving'.

something that ‘happens’ to the subject. He (2007, pp. 17-18) also notes that anger is often experienced as an ‘automatic’ response that is troublesome and that ‘takes control’ of the personality. Anger reactions can be experienced as being uncontrollable and inevitable. The notion of being ‘possessed’ by an emotion is therefore, in a more or less conscious way, familiar today.¹²³

Following the same principle, that ancient conceptualisations of human experience can be relatable to us, Holmes (2008, pp. 232-5; 2010, p. 15, p. 124) has recently linked the belief in daemonic possessions and the experience of an ill body as an unconscious mechanism: ‘the reason symptoms feel daemonic even when they erupt from within us is that we are largely unaware of what goes on inside the cavity, allowing trouble to develop without our knowledge’.¹²⁴ Holmes brings a very relevant element to the discussion on the ascription of divine causation to human behaviour: unconscious mechanisms, such as those involved in an ill body or, for that matter, in a strong emotion, are experienced as somehow detached or independent from us. When we try to give account of what we perceive to be an ‘automatic’ bodily and mental reaction, we might easily have recourse to an objective explanation such as divine intervention or a personification of anger. This type of explanation, which focuses less on considerations that have the subject’s perceptions at their centre (as the ones analysed in the previous chapter) than on explanations based on the object as a separate entity from the subject of the emotion, deserves attention not only because it has an important presence in the trilogy, and it carries information about the way in which anger was perceived, lived, and described, but also because this type of explanation is something experienced today.

¹²³ This is not only applicable to anger. The very conceptualisation of emotions as *passions*, in which the individual is the object of them, indicates the same phenomenological experience. For a comprehensive analysis of the history of emotions and how they have been conceptualised in different ways, see Boddice (2018). For good examples of how *erôs* was perceived as an invasive source of irrationality, see Sanders, Thumiger, Carey & Lowe (Eds.) (2013).

¹²⁴ On organic causes of anger, see Aristotle’s *DA* 403a15–25.

To make this suggestion clearer, we shall consider another integral idea from cognitive science – intentionality, to the discussion of ancient anger. This helps to account for a divine explanation of human behaviour in a way that can be ‘explicable by our own human criteria’, as Easterling suggests above. In the context of cognitive science, intentionality captures the idea that the human mind is directed towards the world or that our mental states are about something as shaped by us. For example, my anger is about you arriving late. The experience of having an emotion, according to the principle of intentionality, has a conscious element – my anger is how it is for me to be in a certain state and it relates to the way in which I configure the world (for example, my understanding that you are late). One consequence of this hypothesis, as recent literature on emotions shows (Kenny, [1963] 2003; Donnellan, 1970; Ellis, 1970; Törestad, 1990; Wellman, Harris, Banerjee & Sinclair, 1995), is the distinction between intentional objects (the what my anger is about) and causes of our mental states. The relevance of this distinction for the purpose of reading an ancient emotion is in helping to underpin the difference between our objective accounts of the emotion (those that depend either on the emotion considered as a separate entity from the subject or on the emotion as being caused by something) and the more subjective ones (those that depend on the subject’s appraisals).¹²⁵

While the object of an emotion is more or less conscious (we normally know at some level what our anger is about), the cause of it can be less straightforward for the subject.¹²⁶ From a psycho-biological point of view, the

¹²⁵ For a good argument on the relationship between intentionality and consciousness, that to account for an intentional object requires consciousness of it, see Gallagher & Zahavi ([2008] 2012, pp. 123-5, pp. 136-8).

¹²⁶ This distinction between the conscious elements of an emotion and those that remain ‘hidden’ for the subject is also present in psychoanalysis. Antze (2003, p. 116) points out that the psychological patterns that emerge in Greek tragedy are ‘typically shaped by forces beyond human control – fate, prophecy, or the will of the gods’. As he (2003, p. 116) stresses, ‘Freud’s own quest for the origins of neurosis led in a similar direction. While his case histories dwell at length on the minutiae of patient’s lives, their real point always lies elsewhere, in what they reveal about a set of larger controlling

cause of anger can be an unconscious event, such as a traumatic experience in childhood, lack of sleep, the level of testosterone and serotonin in the blood (Reuter, 2010, p. 30), or a certain type of dementia or brain damage (Potegal & Stemmler, 2010, p. 39). Similarly, if we think of fear, a noise in the night can be the cause of my fear because I interpreted it as an intruder in the room (I am scared that there is an intruder, not that there is a noise in the room). Hence, the cause of the emotion, even if it is not necessarily conscious for the subject, can be objectively evaluated, whereas the intentional object remains a subjective consideration.¹²⁷ Even if we may know what we are angry at (someone arriving late) we might not be clear about why we are angry at that, or why we are so angry at that.¹²⁸ We can, thus, be left with the feeling that the object of our anger is not explanation enough and that we need to look for additional reasons, such as being under stress or having a trauma – stress and trauma being, of course, our modern way of explaining the experiential state of a person.¹²⁹

The intentional object of anger, what my anger is about, is often given by the propositional content of the emotion. As discussed in the previous chapter, in the *Oresteia*, it refers mainly to issues of honour and justice, involving notions of social hierarchies, social reciprocity, and family ties. The discussion on the propositional content of anger was, therefore, conducted by looking at the subjective aspects of the emotion, since it is considered as

influences – the Oedipus complex, the psychosexual stages, the life and death instincts, the primal crime, primal scenes, primal repression’.

¹²⁷ Between the ages of two and three, infants are able to distinguish the more objective explanations for emotions from the more subjective ones (Törestad, 1990; Wellman *et al*, 1995, pp. 139-40).

¹²⁸ Anger has been understood by modern theories in relation to fear (de Sousa, 2013, p. 7; Tavris, 1982, pp. 89-91); in relation to depression and panic disorders (Kassinove, 1995, p. 37); and in relation to grief (Freud, 1917; Klein, 1940; Burgen, 1977; Somary *et al*, 1991). Anger is considered as a stage in a normal grieving process, and grief can be a fuel for anger that can last a long time, even an entire life (Somary *et al*, 1991, p. 192).

¹²⁹ Coleman (2011, p. 7), based on modern psychological research, has combined an object perspective (what is the object of the emotion) with a relation perspective (what is the role of anger in a relationship) to read anger in French literature.

a function of the subject's appraisals. The distinction being drawn in this chapter sets a framework for a reassessment of the emotion, which complements the approach in the preceding chapter by incorporating the description of aspects of the emotion that, although experienced by the subject, are not attributed to the mind – for example, an external agent such as the *Alástōr*. Dodds (1951, p. 7, pp. 30-3) famously borrowed the term 'overdetermination',¹³⁰ often used by psychoanalysts, to describe the way in which we attribute two or more distinct, sufficient causes to an event – as, for example, when human action is not only explained in terms of human motivation and agency but also through divine intervention.¹³¹ This topic has been extensively discussed, and it is clear that we are talking of a culture in which the attribution of more than one (to us) sufficient cause to explain human action is not considered at odds.¹³² It is not my purpose to discuss

¹³⁰ The concept of overdetermination is in a way applicable to the distinction between the cause and the object of the emotion in that the two perspectives coexist without being always integrated into a single discussion. Phenomenology and brain sciences often struggle to account for each other. For an interesting discussion on this 'competition' between disciplines, see Varela *et al* (1993, pp. 3-14).

¹³¹ An example of how conflicting views can (and need to) be held by individuals who try to explain the world through different lenses or sets of beliefs is reflected in the pains taken by Scholastic philosophers to make sense of ascertaining divine *prescientia* and human freedom at the same time – for example, Boethius' *Consolatio Philosophiae V*; Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae* I.14 and *Summa Contra Gentiles* I.66-7. Hammond (1965) applies one of the arguments from Scholasticism, the notion of human freedom as a 'coincidence' between human and divine will, to the *Oresteia* in a very interesting way. A notion of causality as a coincidence of different un-related causes is already expressed by Aristotle, although in secular terms, in *Physics II*.

¹³² A large portion of the discussion on over-determination in the *Oresteia* has been led by the question of the level of agency and responsibility given to the characters of the play. Wohl (2010, p. 49), for example, suggests that Clytemnestra 'acting in concert with forces beyond her individual will and agency – not only the '*daímon* heavy with wrath' but ultimately Zeus himself (1481-88) – she nonetheless comes to bear the full responsibility for Agamemnon's over-determined death and must pay the price for her act'. The question about anger and responsibility, or about the ethical implications of anger, is beyond the scope of my research on anger, whose focus is on the conceptualisation and experience of the emotion.

over-determination beyond the scope of what is said in the trilogy concerning the sources and explanations for anger. The perspective that I will be proposing does not attempt to challenge the literature on the topic. Rather, since anger in the trilogy is explained in multiple distinct ways, involving the human mind and involving divine agency, it is necessary to adopt a model that can help us to make this understanding of human experience recognisable 'by our human criteria', to put it in Easterling's words.¹³³

Although not articulated in the same way, the distinction between the cause and the intentional object of Clytemnestra's anger is already implicit in Winnington-Ingram's (1948, p. 132) account of the *Oresteia* when he argues that the reason behind her anger is Agamemnon's status as a man. In his view, we should understand her behaviour in terms of the broader literary theme of sexual antithesis that he deems to be central to Aeschylus' works. Furthermore, he also sees Clytemnestra's reaction to Iphigenia's murder and Agamemnon's sexual behaviour is ultimately explained by her desire to compete with Agamemnon for power and redress her inferior status. While Winnington-Ingram is not denying that Clytemnestra evaluates Agamemnon's deeds as a source of belittlement, and that she is angry at them, he thinks, nonetheless, that the cause of her reaction should not be seen in these assessments. He attributes the cause of her emotion to another psychological characteristic of hers that is objectified as a desire to overthrow male supremacy. The claim that Clytemnestra's anger is better explained in reference to a differentiation between her subjective appraisal of reality (such as Agamemnon having dishonoured her by killing Iphigenia, or the elders having diminished her opinion) and a more literarily encompassing source of explanation is important when trying to understand the psychology of the play, as Winnington-Ingram (1948, p. 133) argues.

¹³³ Simon (1978, p. 108), from a psychoanalytic perspective, takes the fact that the *Erinyes* are visible and not a hallucination in the *Eumenides* as a sign that the main concern of Aeschylus is not the internal conflict. The conflict is put in the cosmos and in society. Orestes' relief does not come from any kind of inner harmony, but from the juridical settlement of a cycle of violence.

Although he is most certainly right in detecting a profound anxiety about power and status in the representation of Clytemnestra, and in connecting this anxiety to her anger, he reduces Clytemnestra's anger to these factors at the cost of overlooking others. There is a complex network of events, such as Thyestes' crime, Paris' abduction of Helen, Iphigenia's murder, the *Erinyes'* dwelling in the house, and a curse affecting the family, that must be taken into consideration, in addition to the general theme of gender status in the *Oresteia*, to understand the representation of Clytemnestra's anger. The implicit distinction between the intentional object and the cause of experiential states is important because it allows us to read different but complementary information about emotions. In other words, this distinction can help us to achieve an integrated approach to the representation of anger in Greek drama if we acknowledge that different types of explanation of the emotion are at play.

Subsequently, I will analyse three passages from the *Agamemnon* and one from the *Choephoroi* in which a causal explanation of anger, independent from the propositional content of the emotion and involving an objective entity, is offered. The framework will therefore be the importance of the distinction between the intentional object and the cause of an emotion. As an important tool for the analysis of these passages, I will be using some developments from cognitive linguistics and theories of embodied cognition on the connections between language and bodily experience evidenced by metaphors.¹³⁴ The main claim that I will be taking from these theories is that our language is embedded in our bodily experiences and beliefs. The way in which an emotion is articulated (through language), even when it may involve

¹³⁴ Simon (1978, p. 95) stresses that in tragedy terms such as *thumós*, *psuche*, *kardia*, *phren* are more metaphorical than they were in Homer. In Homer, they may refer to the body and to breath, while also denoting psychological functions. He thinks that 'such terms as *thumós* and *psuche* in tragedy are way stations, as it were, toward more technical philosophical usages. They come to resemble our own use of somatic terms for feelings ('he has no guts') and seem less literal in their relation to the body than in Homer. In a sense, they are more abstract, which is another way of saying that their use reflects a greater degree of mind-body differentiation than is expressed in Homer'.

great creativity and individual imagination, carries information about the way in which the members of a speaking community experience a certain psychological event (Johnson & Lakoff, 1980, pp. 3-6). The words and the expressions we choose to relate to anger, which is often done in an abstract way, are largely mediated by the way in which we have been taught about them and, therefore, the way we have experienced them. The metaphors we use to express and talk of emotions are so embedded in culture that they provide a rich hermeneutical tool for literature. Using these theories to read causal accounts of anger, including beliefs such as daemonic possession, provide a way of extracting information from the text with particular focus on how language is used to express abstract concepts. As discussed above, causal accounts of emotions are attempts to find objective explanations (this is, explanations that do not have the subject's experience at the centre) and thus require a great deal of abstraction as well as incorporation of relevant beliefs. Embodied cognitive theories establish a link between abstract language, belief, and human experience, thus allowing the integration of Easterling's observations about understanding behaviour in Greek drama 'by human criteria' even when it might include beliefs that we regard as far removed from us, since we can still find elements of a shared experience behind those beliefs.

2.1 Anger and Metaphors

The understanding of metaphors as operations embedded in a speaking community has been one of the central ideas in cognitive linguistics. The exponents of this view place the emphasis on the way in which metaphors are found to be inherent to our conceptual system (Johnson & Lakoff, 1980, p. 3), and therefore are fundamental for communication between individuals.¹³⁵ A metaphor is generally defined by them (1980, p. 5)

¹³⁵ Performative theories of language had previously argued something similar with regard to metaphor. Searle (1979, p. 78) maintained that for a metaphor to work in a speaking community, the relationship between the sentence's literal meaning and the metaphorical meaning (the meaning that the speaker conveyed and that the receiver, if the metaphor is successful,

as a mechanism which enables 'understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another'. When it comes to emotions, Lakoff's and Kövecses' (1987, pp. 405-6) main thesis is that abstract and ontological conceptions are never independent from metaphors – we need, for example, to appeal to concepts such as 'force', 'intensity', 'limit', 'causal power', 'boiling', 'insanity', 'burden', 'struggle', etc. to talk of our anger.¹³⁶ In other words, we understand abstract ideas, such as anger, in terms of other, more concrete ones, such as boiling liquids. These symbolic models provide non-arbitrary patterns that are informed by shared experiences and folk knowledge of the subjects in a speaking community (Lakoff and Kövecses, 1987, pp. 377-9, p. 399). The way in which metaphors and symbolic representations are integrated into language is not necessarily conscious and it is often inherited with the language in which they are found. This thesis does not deny the possibility that metaphors can be, and often are, conscious acts of creativity. Rather, their study places the emphasis of the discussion on those symbolic representations that are inherited with the language showing that far from being arbitrary, they respond to patterns and can be associated with both the experiences and the beliefs of the members of a community. Furthermore, beliefs and symbolic representations are never

attributes to it) is 'systematic rather than *ad hoc*'. Metaphors not only depend on the meaning of the words and on the meaning that the speaker intends, but also, and fundamentally, on the audience. It is in this sense that performative theories of language see metaphors as acts of collaboration between the speaker and the audience. I am not discussing this theory in more detail only because their main focus is based on the study of metaphors considered as a characteristic of a language rather than as a characteristic of thinking, the latter being the focus of this research. However, performative theories do provide an interesting basis for the conditions of intelligibility of a metaphor. It is worth bearing in mind that performative theories tend to elaborate on metaphors considered as creative and purposeful literary or rhetorical devices (that can of course be present in everyday life), and although this purposeful use of metaphors is not denied by cognitive linguistics, the emphasis is rather placed on how we use metaphors to articulate our thinking in ways that are not necessarily conscious (Johnson, 1987, pp. 65-72).

¹³⁶ These metaphoric models can be seen with more clarity in the use in English of expressions like 'inflammatory remarks', 'she let out her anger', 'he exploded', 'she is consumed by anger' and 'you are driving me mad'.

completely disconnected from each other. The extent to which we can attribute a symbolic quality to an expression can also be problematic.¹³⁷ However, given that the purpose of analysing the objective explanations of anger in the trilogy is to extract information about the emotion that is not necessarily explicit there, I do not need to presume that the language is neither purely nor purposely symbolic. Furthermore, as I do not have empirical information about the metaphorical patterns used by everyday speakers of ancient Greek to refer to anger in the same way we can have it with English, I will only be looking at the patterns recognised among users of modern languages – mainly English. For example, vocabulary involving heat, struggles, explosions or beasts is present in common English expressions for anger and they act as an indication of some important features that are part of experience of the emotion (Lakoff and Kövecses, 1987, pp. 380-415). However, I will contrast these metaphors with the metaphorical patterns that we do have from extant Greek literature.

For our present purposes one metaphor of particular significance is the conceptualisation of anger as an eruption,¹³⁸ a symbolic representation that is probably grounded at a physiological level in the increase of blood pressure that is part of the experience of the emotion. This conceptualisation also captures the experience of saying things that otherwise one would not dare to say, a phenomenon linked to the release of adrenaline into the body leading to the perception of a surge of power that takes place with anger (Lakoff, 1987, p. 385). The ‘eruption’ metaphorical model involves words

¹³⁷ It is important to bear in mind that the theory never assumes that the members of the speaking community themselves are aware that the way in which they talk is permeated with metaphors and symbols. The premise is that their knowledge of any abstract entity is (inconspicuously) symbolic in nature since this is the way in which language allow us to communicate and think.

¹³⁸ The ‘eruption’ metaphor pertains to the broader symbolic model that has been termed as ‘hot liquid in a container’ and it huge range of applications in modern English, especially when it comes to talk of perceived internal states (Lakoff, 1987; Johnson & Lakoff, 1980). See also Novaco (2007, p. 18): ‘a principal psychological metaphor associated with anger is that is ‘eruptive’, exemplified by Mt Vesuvius imagery’.

relating to explosions and images of an ‘interior’ or ‘hidden’ part of oneself coming out violently after being contained for a period of time. Novaco (2007, p. 18) associates this metaphor with a threshold effect present in anger: a point in which something in a system changes in a qualitative way, and a new property emerges (for example, water boiling). As he puts it, ‘when “heat” (social friction) reaches a critical point, an explosion of anger emerges as a new property’.¹³⁹ The imagery of something being contained and then violently exposed is present in the portrayal of Clytemnestra’s anger. In fact, her first words after having killed her husband are that she is now, after years of lies, not ashamed of contradicting her (previous) words (πολλῶν πάροιθεν καιρίως εἰρημένων / τάναντί’ εἶπεῖν οὐκ ἐπαισχυνθήσομαι *Ag* 1372-3). The idea that her anger has resulted in an exposure of what was hidden inside her, her true opinion, is an important aspect in the representation of her behaviour. The ‘eruption’ symbolic representation is also present when she recalls Agamemnon’s murder a few lines after. She reiterates that the display of violence, materialised in an eruption of Agamemnon’s blood (κάκφουσιῶν ὄξειαν αἵματος σφαγὴν / βάλλει *Ag* 1389-90), is part of a long-standing quarrel that has been kept in her thoughts (ἐμοὶ δ’ ἀγὼν ὄδ’ οὐκ ἀφρόντιστος πάλαι / νείκης παλαιᾶς ἦλθε, σὺν χρόνῳ γε μὴν *Ag* 1377-8). Although Aeschylus is not using the ‘eruption’ to stand directly for anger, the image of it is at the centre of Clytemnestra’s own description of one of the most unsettling scenes of aggression in the trilogy. Furthermore, the ‘eruption’ is closely linked to a long-standing quarrel and to an aspect that she considers as ‘interior’ and had kept hidden. This representation of the denouement of an old anger follows some important elements of a conceptualisation of anger that is strongly embedded in the human body and that has a correlate in many conceptualisations of the emotion today.

¹³⁹ This conceptualisation of anger is also present in expressions like ‘the last straw’ or the ‘last drop’.

Drimús,¹⁴⁰ the adjective that Clytemnestra uses to describe the *Alástōr* (ὁ παλαιὸς δριμύς ἀλάστωρ *Ag* 1501), is characteristically applied to qualify nouns falling under the semantic categories of battle and anger (for example, δριμεῖτα μάχη // 15.696; μάλα γὰρ δριμύς χόλος αἶρεῖ // 18.322; δριμὺ μένος *Od* 24.319) conferring them with an aspect of being terrible that is taken from its literal meaning as ‘sharp’, ‘pungent’ or ‘bitter’ when applied to a dart or a drug. Aeschylus also uses it in the trilogy as an epithet of anger and hatred (δριμύς ἄηται κραδίας / θυμὸς ἔγκοτον στύγος *Ch* 392-3).¹⁴¹ The metaphorical relationship between anger (χόλος) and both drugs or dripping fluids (βεβρωκῶς κακὰ φάρμακ’, ἔδου δέ τέ μιν χόλος αἰνός // 22.94; φάρμακον (...) νηπενθές τ’ ἄχολόν τε *Od* 4.221;¹⁴² χόλω ἄρα σ’ ἔτρεφε μήτηρ // 16.203) and darts, or some sort of missile shots or thrown things (πῦρ ἔμπεσε νηυσὶν Ἀχαιῶν // 16.113; // 4.217; // 15.451; also, Odysseus’ final reaction to the suitors; χόλος ἔμπεσε θυμῷ // 9.436, 14.207, 14.306, 16.206)¹⁴³ is suggested by Homer and by Aeschylus’ *Suppliants* (ἀλγεινὰ θυμοῦ κάρτα κινητήρια *Supp* 448). The connection between anger and fluids suggested by the word *drimús* is also present in Aeschylus as when the *Erinyes* threaten with dripping poisoned drops in the soil (βαρύκοτος (...) ἰὸν ἰὸν ἀντιπενθῆ *Eu* 780-2; similar images: *Ag* 834; *Ch* 1058; *Eu* 54; *Eu* 730).¹⁴⁴ This strengthens the force of the idea that anger is present in Clytemnestra’s actions through the *Alástōr*, and puts it in relation

¹⁴⁰ See Clements (2013) on the use of *drimús* and the importance of the senses, like taste, in Aristophanes.

¹⁴¹ According to Konstan (2006, p. 51), the adjective *drimús*, when applied to *cholos*, suggests a violent fury that can be provoked either ‘by harm or scorn’, a use he finds attested by Hippocrates.

¹⁴² Anger as a disease: χόλον ἐξακέσαιο // 4.36; *Od* 3.145.

¹⁴³ The metaphorical use of ‘falling weapons’ and especially ‘falling fires’ for anger has been suggested by Walsh (2005, pp. 212-8). For the metaphor of words as flying arms, see Martin (1989, p. 35).

¹⁴⁴ Padel (1992, p. 84) points out that the image of the Etna overflowed by the boiling *cholos* of the Titan buried is connected to the idea that anger, desire and grief flow outward their object. Padel (1992, pp. 126-8) also suggests that Greek emotions were often perceived as diseases, or as invading or assaulting an enemy.

to metaphors of bitterness, hot, boiling liquids and eruptions that are usually linked to anger (Padel, 1992, pp. 22-3, p. 136).¹⁴⁵

The second important symbolic model for anger traced among modern English speakers applicable here is the one that Lakoff has called the 'opponent metaphor' (Lakoff, 1987, p. 392). This model groups linguistic expressions and images involving anger being a struggle, being an entity that one has to control because it is dangerous, or that can make you yield or surrender to its power. Under this model, we also find images representing anger as bestial and fierce, as insatiable and having demands to be appeased. The symbolic pattern often appears showing anger as an act of negotiation in which the subject's own value is at risk. As with the 'eruption' metaphor, the 'opponent' is grounded in the bodily and psychological experience of anger, as well as in the beliefs about the emotion. The main idea revealed by this model is that anger is experienced as an external entity with power over us, which can make us do things without being in full control and awareness of ourselves. The experience of being in a situation in which an external threat needs to be fought against, is partly grounded in neural mechanisms that are triggered in the subjects of anger as a way to respond to a perceived threat. These mechanisms are impulsive, unplanned and unconscious and may involve involuntary behaviour (Potegal & Stemmler, 2010, p. 46).¹⁴⁶ The anxiety produced by this involuntary behaviour is reflected in the belief that anger has to be fought against, and often appears through metaphors of wild animals: animalistic behaviour is angry behaviour, the dangerous animal is anger, the animal inhabits the person as anger inhabits the person. The attested presence of these symbolic representations in the way we speak of anger shows a way in which the ascription of

¹⁴⁵ Examples of 'dripping' *ménos*: *Il* 5.470; 23.468; 22.312; *Ag* 1164-6,743; *Wasps* 424.

¹⁴⁶ Similar mechanisms are involved in other emotions as well, and the experience of being 'out of control' or 'out of one's own mind' is present in a variety of ways. The opponent metaphor (which is not the only metaphor present in the vocabulary of anger) is related to the experience that one is under a threat and out of control – anger itself is perceived as a threat in this state.

daemonic presences in the representation of anger in the *Oresteia* can be relatable to us, as we can also perceive that our actions can be ‘automatic’ or ‘out of our control’. The idea that Clytemnestra and the rest of the members of the family are under the power of an external agency – an *Alástōr*, an *Erinýs*, or a curse over the house – reflects the belief that one can be possessed by anger, and this belief can be understood in connection to a recognisable phenomenon.¹⁴⁷

The extraction of symbolic elements from the representation of divine agency as explanation for human behaviour is not an attempt to deny that figures such as the *Erinýes* or the *Alástōr* constituted an important religious belief in Aeschylus’ society.¹⁴⁸ In addition to this, the *Erinýes* play an important role as characters, as tangible as Clytemnestra and Agamemnon, in the *Oresteia*. Their intervention in the *Eumenides* has a crucial literary role in the development of the action of the play. I shall discuss the *Erinýes* as characters in the play, and particularly their anger, in the final chapter. For the present analysis, it is sufficient to show that the beliefs about anger can be deeply embedded in the physiological experience of the emotion and that the way in which these beliefs are included in the trilogy deserve close attention.

2.2 Causal Explanations of Anger

2.2.1 The Parodos of the Agamemnon

In the parodos of the *Agamemnon*, the elders narrate how Calchas predicted that Agamemnon would have to face a child-avenging anger (μίμνει γὰρ φοβερὰ παλίνορτος / οἰκονόμος δολία μνάμων μῆνις τεκνόποινος Ag 154-5). Aeschylus is undoubtedly personifying anger in the

¹⁴⁷ Furthermore, we may find that these two ways of articulating, through a metaphor and through divine intervention, are often indistinguishable (Oudemans and Lardinois, 1987, p. 91).

¹⁴⁸ I will deal with the religious aspects of anger in the fifth chapter of this dissertation. My focus here resides in unravelling the different elements present in the causal explanations for anger to extract information about the emotion that is not present in the account of the emotion that we already have from the analysis of its propositional content.

play – *mēnis* is the subject of an active verb (μίμνει) and of humanlike descriptors. Yet, the chorus' words present various grammatical and literary difficulties and have given room to an array of interpretations. Fraenkel (*ad loc*) has pointed out a number of problems involved in making a direct identification between this *mēnis*, with all its attributes, and Clytemnestra. In the same line, Lloyd-Jones (1979 *ad loc*) stresses that the 'housekeeper' is Wrath, and that this is not a direct reference to Clytemnestra. Denniston-Page (*ad loc*), on the other hand, reads that Clytemnestra nurses her anger at home, and that the target of her anger is Agamemnon. Raeburn & Thomas (*ad loc*) propose that the 'resurgent' anger will return in the form of Clytemnestra, the housekeeper, suggesting that anger here is treated as an independent entity. Anderson (1929, p. 146) suggests that Clytemnestra's identification with the *daímōn* of the house is a metaphor. According to Whallon (1961, p. 83) and Peradotto (1969a, pp. 13-14), the housekeeper is Clytemnestra, but the wrath that avenges a child is to be understood as a clan destiny. Rosenmeyer (1982, p. 88) thinks that these words apply both to Clytemnestra and to the *Erinýs* prompted by Iphigenia's murder. Lebeck (1971, p. 34) suggests that this is a reference to a child-avenging *Erinýs* prompted not only by Iphigenia's murder but also of Thyestes' children. Furley (1986, p. 112) argues that this child-avenging *mēnis* points to the past (Thyestes) rather than to the future (Clytemnestra), and that it is a marker that Agamemnon's culpability is hereditary. Smyth (1924, p. 167) interprets Clytemnestra's emotional state as hatred against Agamemnon and a result of his infidelity, adding that the 'supreme passion' drives her to avenge her daughter without specifying what this passion is.¹⁴⁹

While the nature of the relationship between *oikonómos* and *mēnis* is a matter of controversy, it is clear that they are in apposition and that both substantives come with a number of attributes such as 'child-avenging'

¹⁴⁹ As Thomson (1966a, pp. 246-7) has noticed, the fact that Aeschylus, departing from Homer, makes Clytemnestra kill Agamemnon on her own gives priority to the conflict around Iphigenia over the feud between Aegisthus and Agamemnon.

(τεκνόποιος’) and ‘remembering’ (μνάμων).¹⁵⁰ This old anger that awaits Agamemnon also has a long memory (μνάμων), is recurrent (παλίνορτος) and, in some imprecise way, is akin to a fearful (φοβερά) housekeeper (οἰκονόμος). The fact that the personification of anger in the passage is done using the term *mēnis* is significant – the term is only used three other times in the trilogy (*Ag* 701; *Eu* 234, 314).¹⁵¹ As has been repeatedly noted, the term usually has a solemn register (Konstan, 2006, p. 48), mainly, but not exclusively applied to gods and high rank warriors in Homer (Harris, 2002, p. 50). Yet, Cairns (2003, pp. 31-9) has convincingly argued that the term probably carries a connotation of intensity, rather than of status. However, the term is seldom used in tragedy and most of the discussion is based on Homer, which imposes limitations to our understanding of its connotations (Cairns, 2003, p. 32). In the *Oresteia*, the term is twice used by the chorus of elders (*Ag* 155, 701), once by Apollo (*Eu* 234), and once by the chorus of *Erinyes* (*Eu* 314). It always bears the sense of an anger that will have severe consequences, and the nature of the offence that propels it varies from a violation of the bond of marriage, a violation of *xenía*, a violation of the duty of respect towards suppliants, and the murder of a kin. Although we cannot establish the connotations of *mēnis* with precision, considering this background, the personification of anger in the parodos is constructed on an anger that is strong and that has disastrous consequences. Yet, the fact that it is given humanlike features signals an attempt to transmit or emphasise characteristics of the emotion that probably do not come immediately with the term.

¹⁵⁰ The *Erinyes* often bear the epithet of *mnemones* ‘remembering’ (Allen, 2000, p. 81). For example, *Prom* 515.

¹⁵¹ The only other place in Aeschylus is *Supp* 162 (175 depending on the edition), predicated of Hera referring to her jealousy of Io. The context is of solemnity, the word is pronounced in despair by the initial chorus of suppliant women, and it refers to an anger of disastrous consequences. The offence that is the object of the emotion is a serious one, but does not carry a religious or extremely severe undertone.

There are varieties of anthropomorphic experiences across many cultures.¹⁵² Personification of animals, things, and concepts respond to different needs. It helps effective communication and common understanding as it provides intuitive and readily accessible knowledge in circumstances in which there are no non-anthropomorphic models of agency, such as those provided by science, for example (Epley, Waytz & Cacioppo, 2007, pp. 867-71; Johnson & Lakoff, 1980, p. 34). Furthermore, how anthropomorphism is conceived within a culture can vary from a sense of it as a metaphorical way of thinking to the belief in the personified entity as real. This variation occurs along a spectrum of attitudes towards personification rather than as a stationary point. Greek culture is a particularly good example of the many ways in which personification can be included as a belief. The anthropomorphising of *themis* leads to rituals and to the belief of a goddess with certain characteristics, motivations, and desires. The case of *mēnis* is different. It does not correspond to the actual belief in a deity, and even though the *Erinýes* embody anger in many different respects, it would be inaccurate to say that they are *mēnis* personified. Whichever the level of belief granted to the personification of *mēnis* in this passage, even if we assume a weak form of belief, ‘metaphors can still have a powerful impact on behaviour towards agents in ways that are consistent with these metaphors’ (Epley *et al*, 2007, p. 867).¹⁵³ The characteristics of

¹⁵² There is a vast amount of literature showing how people personify pets, gods, geometric shapes, plants, and computers; for a list of research on this topic, see Epley *et al* (2007, p. 864). They (2007, p. 868) stress that ‘a person’s own knowledge and phenomenological experience are so automatically accessible and richly organized that they continue to serve as an automatic base for induction’. One interesting suggestion is that a tendency among collectivist cultures to lean towards stronger ways of anthropomorphising (2007, p. 877). On the importance of anthropomorphism in Greek religion, see Grube (1970, p. 44). As a note of caution, this is not to suggest that belief opposes or contradicts metaphors.

¹⁵³ This is actually coherent with the general argument advanced by Johnson & Lakoff (1980) that I am following in this chapter. As has been noted, expressions like ‘inflation has attacked the foundation of our economy’ have an impact on how we understand, behave and react towards some events, as for example accepting certain measures imposed by the government (Epley *et al*, 2007, p. 867).

this *mēnis* are communicated through a mechanism that enables ‘understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another’ and therefore is metaphorical. This is a culture in which the personification of abstract concepts often leads to such materialisation.¹⁵⁴ The characteristics of the anger being personified in the *parodos* reflect an understanding of the emotion as a powerful external entity, with agency and huge influence over human affairs. These characteristics are most likely based on phenomenological experience of the emotion, as indicated by the metaphors used.

Although this anger is reified as an external entity, it is evidently neither conceived nor depicted as entirely independent from the subjects it affects. Calchas’ statement about the anger that awaits Agamemnon is highly ambiguous, as is appropriate for to the speech of the seer in general (Vernant & Vidal-Naquet, 1990, p. 116-7; Bowden, 2005, p. 51; Fontenrose, 1978, pp. 6-7, pp. 79-81; Parke & Wormell, 1956, pp. 33-4; Bonnechere, 2007, pp. 174-50), and of the seer in the warfare context in particular (Flower, 2008, pp. 154-6). However, there are clear indications that this *mēnis*, as a ‘housekeeper’, concerns Clytemnestra. She, the wife who tends the house in her husband’s absence, describes herself as the ‘faithful dog of the house’ (δωμάτων κύνα / ἐσθλήν ἐκείνῳ *Ag* 607) and Cassandra refers to her as a ‘hateful dog’ (μισητῆς κυνὸς *Ag* 1228) describing the way in which Clytemnestra seemed tame to her master but nonetheless had brought Aegisthus to the house and planned his murder. The connotations of the two analogies between Clytemnestra and a dog are different in each context. While Clytemnestra, with irony, insinuates the fidelity of the dog as a flattering attribute for herself, Cassandra alludes to Clytemnestra’s sexual behaviour, ‘dog’ carrying the connotation of a ‘bitch’. Yet both analogies play with the idea that dogs are, or should be, fierce housekeepers (Lebeck, 1971, p. 8). Furthermore, the dog imagery of the *Oresteia* has also been connected to

¹⁵⁴ Other attitudes towards personification in Greek culture, such as those that lead to rituals, will be further discussed in the last chapter, which is dedicated to religion.

the imagery of a treacherous person (Stanford, 1942, p. 2), which is particularly fitting for Clytemnestra in the *Agamemnon* (Zeitlin, 1985, p. 76). Clytemnestra's treacherousness is precisely what Cassandra highlights when saying that she is a fawning dog (Denniston-Page *ad loc*). Despite the elusiveness of Calchas' words, the anger waiting for Agamemnon points to Clytemnestra. The characteristics present in the personification of this *mēnis* can be made extensive to Clytemnestra while at the same time they communicate the nature of the anger that affects not only the members of the family, but also Artemis as the 'child-avenging' goddess. The personification of anger thus provides knowledge about the emotion while at the same time establishes a connection between the characters who are affected by it.

The precise nature of the identification between Clytemnestra and this anger is, however, disputable: she can be the embodiment of anger, the subject of anger or, if she is possessed by the emotion, the object of anger. The text and the context allow either option. In any case, it is clear that Calchas gives a causal explanation of Clytemnestra's behaviour, and that that explanation is largely independent from the appraisals of her mind. Yet, the *mēnis* in the parodos concerns not only Clytemnestra but also the rest of the characters of the trilogy. It has been repeatedly noted that the *Oresteia* presents patterns suggesting that desire for violence and revenge is transmitted from one generation to another – μνάμων μῆνις plays with the idea that anger has memory. Knox's (1952) famous analysis of the 'lion metaphor', that in the trilogy stands, among other things, for the cyclic rebirth of violence, serves as an example of the idea that those in the house are possessed by a force that affects their behaviour. Heath (1999, p. 31) extends the reach of the 'lion metaphor', arguing that the metaphorical use of animals across the trilogy represent the 'entanglement and ceaseless coils of the cursed house, of the old system of vengeful justice'. As he notes, the 'snake' imagery, as well as the 'bird' trope, is applied to the *Erinyes*, who are intransigent in their demands for blood. Heath suggests possible ways in which the 'lion metaphor' relating to the reproduction of violence that are

closer to the imagine of anger, such as the *Erinýes* and vendetta.¹⁵⁵ This connexion is further strengthened by Peradotto (1969a, p. 19) and Fowler (1991), who have also seen the imagery of the *Erinýes* in Clytemnestra, Aegisthus and Orestes. Peradotto and Fowler have suggested that, in a way, these three characters are ‘*Erinýes*’ in their demands for blood and their unforgetfulness. They have thus recognised that ‘being an *Erinýs*’ can be granted with a certain symbolic quality despite their concrete existence and expression in the trilogy, and despite the fact that the word is not used in this metaphorical way in the text. Similarly, Loraux (2002, p. 34) has suggested a parallel between Athena’s ‘wineless intoxication of wrath’ (ἄοίνοις ἐμμανεῖς θυμώμασιν *Eu* 860) that describes the *Erinýes*, and Clytemnestra speaking of the madness of the killings affecting the house (μανίας μελάθρων / ἀλληλοφόνους *Ag* 1575-6). This parallel indicates the clear presence of the idea that anger, as well as violence, is grounded in the house and has devastating implications for the dwellers in it.

A network of metaphors and analogies has therefore been identified throughout the trilogy that loads anger with characteristics that are highly abstract and symbolic. The metaphors comprising this network show similarities with the symbolic patterns of anger discussed above. The emotion is perceived as an entity that demands, will not be easily appeased, and is associated with loss of control that affects and takes possession not only of individuals but of an entire family. All these concepts associated with anger fall under the model of the ‘opponent metaphor’, and they provide a key to understand the anger generally affecting the characters in the trilogy.

The parodos plays yet another important function in the drama, showing how the narrative of a distant past informs the present – something similar happens when Cassandra impacts the way in which her audience

¹⁵⁵ The relation between anger and aggression is highly controversial: some theories tend to equate them, some others do not. However, when aggression or violence is perceived, it is also often presumed that underlying anger is present and, conversely, when anger is present, some type of aggression is often expected (Cavell & Malcolm, 2007, pp. xvii-xix). This does not mean that one can ascribe anger to any aggression, but the two are normally connected in people’s minds when reading others’ behaviour.

ought to understand Clytemnestra's anger by relating it to the old events of the house (Lloyd-Jones, 1962, p. 198; Lebeck, 1971, pp. 22-3; Goward, 1999, pp. 60-1) and this also has relevance for the understanding of Clytemnestra's anger. Calchas' speech loads the present with ills from the past, creating tensions and expectations around Agamemnon's homecoming by means of framing the incidents in a context that surpasses the most immediate issues, such as Clytemnestra having a lover, wanting to keep the power, and disliking Cassandra's presence, without nullifying them. Furthermore, Calchas' narrative captures the retributive logic of Artemis, the banquet of Thyestes, Paris' abduction of Helen, and Iphigenia's sacrifice by Agamemnon, unifying all these events around the *mēnis* that now is awaiting Agamemnon. Clytemnestra's anger is therefore rendered understandable not only by means of establishing dramatic links with the mythological background of the trilogy, but also by making it a presence or a force that is beyond Clytemnestra's own understanding and power. Anger is, in some sense, something that can affect the subject without this being a necessarily conscious process.

The chorus' words allude to a previous sacrifice (σπευδομένα θυσίαν ἑτέραν ἄνομόν τιν' *Ag* 150) that connects with this *mēnis* as well. ἑτέρα points to Agamemnon's murder referring to those of Iphigenia, Thyestes' children, and Troy's children (Fraenkel, *ad loc*; Lebeck, 1971, pp. 32-6). The anger waiting for Agamemnon is, therefore, significantly related to Artemis' grudge (ἐπίφθονος Ἄρτεμις *Ag* 135). The reason for Artemis' anger, why it is directed towards Agamemnon through Clytemnestra, and what exactly is the nature of Agamemnon's guilt is a much-debated topic.¹⁵⁶ Beyond the

¹⁵⁶ Whallon (1961, p. 87) interprets that Artemis is angry because she holds sacred to herself the young of every kind; Peradotto (1969, p. 249) thinks that Artemis is angry because of Iphigenia's murder, and that she requires the sacrifice of the murderer of the innocent, including the children of Troy; Lebeck (1971, p. 35) contends that the hare is a symbol for all the innocents dead related to the story; Lawrence (1976, p. 106) suggests that Artemis' anger serves Zeus in punishing Agamemnon for his future sin of pride; Lloyd-Jones (1983, pp. 101-2) also thinks that Artemis is angry about the dead at Troy; Furley (1986, p. 115) argues that Artemis is angry about Thyestes' crime; Helm (2004, p. 41) shares Lebeck's opinion.

question of what exactly Artemis is angry about, and why it resulted in the sacrifice of Iphigenia, something she will also want to punish, it provides a causal explanation for Clytemnestra's anger.¹⁵⁷

The prophetic words of Calchas, that anger is unappeasable, are not only fulfilled, but also reinforced throughout the trilogy. The adjectives applied to that *mēnis*, and the very personification of the emotion, not only play a literary role in connecting the trilogy to a mythological and archaic past, but also represent the emotion in a cognitively rich way. The trilogy is set in a past in which the kind of justice in operation is in many respects more primitive than the Homeric world, which has established procedures or trials to settle disputes (as in *Iliad* IX). The *Oresteia* is rich in judicial language, but frequently it does not have a real counterpart in the social institutions of the trilogy, and it remains either metaphorical or aspirational.¹⁵⁸ It is only in the last play that civic justice comes into being through a legal procedure. Consequently, before the legal procedure is established, the only way to achieve satisfaction or justice for an offence is through retaliation by oneself or one's kin. The vendetta requires unforgettingness to be effective.¹⁵⁹ In this

¹⁵⁷ In terms of narrative, Iphigenia is also used as a linking element for the different aspects of the story. Kitto ([1939]1990, p. 69) has pointed out that her sacrifice is the strongest connection between the story of Troy and the curse of the house of Atreus. Zeitlin (1965, p. 466) has drawn attention to the way in which the memory of Iphigenia's sacrifice pervades the *Agamemnon*, and how it acts as the main motive for Clytemnestra's justification for Agamemnon's murder ("Ἄτην Ἐρινύν θ' *Ag* 1433), suggesting that Aeschylus 'unifies the murders by revealing their relationship to the sacrifice of Iphigenia as effects of the same cause – the curse on the house – and he further unifies them as all partaking of the peculiar horror and lawlessness of her death' (1965, p. 96). In the same line, Gagarin (1976, p. 64) thinks that the killing of Agamemnon is the result of several factors, Iphigenia's death being the most important among them.

¹⁵⁸ *Electra* (*Ch* 120) understands the distinction between *dikastés* and *dikephóros*, thus showing awareness of a possible different way of dealing with crimes. However, her distinction does not have any echo in the world of the *Choephoroi*, the chorus' reply is 'the one who will kill in return' (ἀνταποκτείνω *Ch* 121), and her distinction thus remains closer to an aspirational state of affairs than to what is the actual reality of her environment. For this discussion, see, Gewirtz (1988) and Euben (1982).

¹⁵⁹ It might be argued that the vendetta and the need for retaliatory actions from family members can coexist, and actually did coexist, with a procedural

sense, the very nature of the world that these characters inhabit is presented as predisposed and apt for this important feature of anger. Calchas' description of anger shows an understanding of the emotion as recurrent (παλίνορτος), an idea that is firmly rooted in the belief in the *Erinýes* and the *Alástōr*, and that is coherent with both the experience that anger reproduces itself (from one generation to another) and that anger, once an offence has been committed, will not leave a community easily.¹⁶⁰ These two aspects of anger were also present in the analysis of the propositional content of the emotion carried out in the previous chapter. The idea that anger is heritable can be seen as a natural consequence of the understanding of *timē* as a family issue that binds its members in a way that might differ from the experience of anger in more individualistic cultures in which the notion of the self is less interdependent on others. Similarly, the idea that anger stays and never leaves, or is an unappeasable entity, is another way of expressing the experience that for the victim it is very difficult to let the offence go. These characteristics of anger appear in both the analysis of the intentional object of the emotion and in the analysis of the cause of the emotion. Clytemnestra's anger, as Aegisthus', Orestes' and Electra's, is not easily appeased. All the characters, until the trial, understand that the only way to appease it is

system of justice. Yet, my point is neither that after the establishment of procedural justice the vendetta actually disappeared nor that Aeschylus is suggesting that. Rather, the trilogy repeatedly represents characters who either contemplate a different system to deal with crime and do not have that option or do not consider that option at all. In both cases the world being represented does not provide an alternative solution for crime. Furthermore, the absence of a non-violent option in the world of the *Agamemnon* and *Cheophoroi* is stressed by the recurrent legal metaphors, which are invariably used of non-legal intervention.

¹⁶⁰ Gill (1986, p. 266) suggests that when Clytemnestra, echoing the chorus, presents herself as possessed by the spirit of anger (*Ag* 1475-80), it is in part a self-justificatory strategy in a dialogue of accusation and defence with the chorus, yet 'her words also highlight the fanaticism that can make a person identify herself with a spirit of vengeance, even while she recognizes that this spirit causes hideous deaths in successive generations (...) Aeschylus does not explain this phenomenon, psychologically; his representation seems designed to preserve what is private and inexplicable in such cases'.

through shedding blood. The expression ‘lust for blood’ (ἔρωσ αἱματολοιχὸς *Ag* 1478) reveals a conception of the emotion as a demanding force.

However, Calchas’ *mēnis* might also convey the understanding of the emotion not simply as an ‘opponent’, as the noun is placed in apposition with ‘housekeeper’ (οἰκονόμος). This image is particularly telling in the context of the parodos of the *Agamemnon*, where the sense of transgression of social and divine norms is crucial. *Oikonómos* could also be a play on words, ‘law/rule of the house’. The narrative of the parodos suggests that the decision to sacrifice Iphigenia involves a fundamental breach of family rules. Furthermore, the idea that the housekeeper is the perpetuator of bloodshed within the family makes anger particularly fearful (φοβερά), but it also carries connotations about securing social, and familial bonding. Again, this understanding of anger is coherent with those considerations of honour and social cohesion discussed in the previous chapter. The conflict between attributing ‘anger’ and ‘housekeeper’ to the same subject will be particularly present in *Orestes* and at the centre of the dispute between Apollo and the *Erinýes* in the last play. The personification of *mēnis* is extremely important for the understanding of anger in the play.

2.2.2 Cassandra’s Account

Cassandra’s brief intervention in the play has a key role in the dramatization of Agamemnon’s murder. She is not only the prophetess within the tragedy, but also the one who narrates the series of events that have beset the house, revealing the connections between them. Her prophetic words, riddled for the chorus, have a different effect on the external audience in knowledge of the myth. For the latter, Cassandra makes more explicit what was already implicit in Calchas’ ambiguous words expressed by the chorus in the parodos (Lebeck, 1971, p. 35). Cassandra frames her visions of Agamemnon’s murder trapped in the bath tub (ἐν πέπλοισι / μελαγκέρῳ λαβοῦσα μηχανήματι / τύπτει: πίτνει δ’ ἐν ἐνύδρῳ τεύχει *Ag* 1126-8) into the narrative of Atreus’ crime against Thyestes (κλαιόμενα τάδε βρέφη σφαγὰς, / ὀππὰς τε σάρκας πρὸς πατρὸς βεβρωμένας *Ag* 1096-7; εὐνάς

ἀδελφοῦ *Ag* 1193) and Paris' wedding (ὡς γάμοι γάμοι Πάριδος ὀλέθριοι φίλων *Ag* 156) in the past. She also connects the murder with her prophecies about her own death at Clytemnestra's hands (ἐγὼ δὲ θερμόνους τάχ' ἐν πέδῳ βαλῶ *Ag* 1172; *Ag* 1136-9) in the near future, and with Orestes' revenge (ἤξει γὰρ ἡμῶν ἄλλος αὖ τιμάορος, / μητροκτόνον φίτυμα, ποινάτωρ πατρός: / φυγὰς δ' ἀλήτης τῆσδε γῆς ἀπόξενος / κάτεισιν, ἄτας τάσδε θριγκώσων φίλοις: *Ag* 1280-3) in a more distant future. In her account, all these events appear as causally connected to Clytemnestra's behaviour towards her husband. This causal network thus operates as an explanation, at least for the external audience of the play, of what is going on inside the house.

Cassandra is not explicitly attempting to talk of anger in a generalised way as Calchas did. However, the main reason for narrating the events going on inside the house is Clytemnestra's extraordinary behaviour. Most importantly, there are some elements in her speech that clearly point to her understanding of Clytemnestra as being angry. Thus, when Cassandra explains Clytemnestra's actions, she is explaining her anger. One reason to attribute the presence of anger to the events is that, upon her arrival, she sees a group of singing *Erinyes* (συγγόνων Ἐρινύων *Ag* 1190) and, as she indicates, they bring *átē* to the house. Cassandra therefore envisions the house as a place inhabited by anger and deep conflict. Furthermore, when she speaks of Clytemnestra as 'insatiable strife' (στάσις δ' ἀκόρετος *Ag* 1117),¹⁶¹ the chorus of elders understand that she is talking of an *Erinys*, and she leaves that interpretation untouched. The idea of Clytemnestra as an *Erinys* is therefore suggested in the exchange between Cassandra and the elders. As mentioned above, she refers to Clytemnestra as a hateful dog that greets its owner licking his hand, bending its ears cheerfully (οἶα γλώσσα μισητῆς κυνὸς / λείξασα κάκτεινασα φαιδρὸν οὔς, δίκην *Ag* 1228-9), while being treacherous as *Atē* (Ἄτης λαθραίου *Ag* 1230), thus connecting

¹⁶¹ *Akóretos* is used twice before by the chorus (*Ag* 756; *Ag* 1002) to express the inevitability of the evils coming – insatiate wealth brings destruction; insatiate health, sickness.

Clytemnestra to the *átē* brought by the *Erinýes*.¹⁶² Clytemnestra is also described as a raging hellish mother (θύουσαν Ἰδίου μητέρ' *Ag* 1235) – with θύω connoting a stormy rage. Cassandra asserts that Clytemnestra is someone who breathes war/destruction/vengeance against her kin (Ἄρη φίλοις πνέουσιν *Ag* 1235-6), a woman who confuses war with home (ὥς δ' ἐπωλολύξατο / ἡ παντότολμος, ὥσπερ ἐν μάχης τροπῇ / δοκεῖ δὲ χαίρειν νοστήμῳ σωτηρίᾳ *Ag* 1236-8), and a sort of monstrous figure like an amphisbaena or Scylla (ἀμφίσβαιναν, ἢ Σκύλλαν τινὰ *Ag* 1233). All these expressions clearly configure Clytemnestra as an angry person in the eyes of Cassandra.

Like Calchas in the *parodos*, Cassandra speaks in a way which leaves it unclear whether Clytemnestra herself is a sort of monstrous embodiment of anger, if she is possessed by an angry entity like an *Erinýs*, or if she, as an angry woman, has become or resembles a horrific creature.¹⁶³ The way in which Cassandra uses language is permeated with images and symbols that most probably are not supposed to be strictly distinguishable from concrete description of contrastable reality – this is in part why the elders struggle to understand what she says. In any case, it is clear that there is a certain conceptualisation of an angry person as dehumanised and unnatural in her behaviour. The description of Clytemnestra as 'breathing war' will re-appear in the *Choephoroi* when the chorus say that Clytemnestra is breathing out anger through her dream (ἐξ ὕπνου κότον / πνέων *Ch* 33-4), referring to the windy anger of hurricanes (κάνεμοέντ' ἄν / αἰγίδων φράσαι κότον *Ch* 592-3), and to describe *Poiná* as breathing anger (ὀλέθριον πνέουσ' ἐν ἐχθροῖς κότον *Ch* 952). In the *Eumenides*, the metaphor appears describing the anger of the *Erinýes* (πνέω τοι μένος ἅπαντά τε κότον *Eu* 840). It has particular symbolic interest as it fits with the 'eruption'

¹⁶² See Cairns (2013, p. xxvii-xxviii) on *atē* and psychological winds.

¹⁶³ The role of curses in myth is mainly aetiological: they provide an explanation for the affliction of a person, a family, or a city (West, 1999, p. 36). As West (1999, pp. 38-9) notes, the inherited curse was not a fixed element in the myth, but 'an accessory motif that could be fitted in at various points, according to the changing horizons of individual authors'.

metaphor described above, suggesting a pattern that is likely to be connected with the psychological experience of anger.

Cassandra finally says that she will be killed on account of anger (ὥς δὲ φάρμακον / τεύχουσα κάμοῦ μισθὸν ἐνθήσειν κότῳ / ἐπέύχεται, θήγουσα φωτὶ φάσγανον / ἐμῆς ἀγωγῆς ἀντιτείσσασθαι *Ag* 1260-3).¹⁶⁴ In presenting Clytemnestra to her audience as an agent of revenge, she has chosen a degree of ambiguity with regard to Clytemnestra's anger, which is coherent with the representation of Calchas as the other seer in the play. She refers to the emotion vaguely, and one intentional object that she attributes to it is her own presence in the house (ἀγωγή (...) φόνον *Ag* 1263).¹⁶⁵ Tragic concubines are generally presented as a threat to the peace of the family and the community (Foley, 2001, pp. 87-105). Clytemnestra's anger is therefore reflecting a social anxiety of being displaced, that responds to a contextual reality in which legislation on the status of concubines and their children had been changing. With regard to the terminology employed, Harris (2003, p. 31), Cairns (2003, p. 31), and Walsh (2005, p. 79) argue that *kótos* carries the sense of a long-term anger, and a sense of necessity for accomplishing vengeance. Walsh (2005, p. 82) also adds that the source of *kótos* is to be found outside the immediate context of interaction in which anger appears. This last remark is probably a corollary of the idea that this is a long-term anger, and that the punishment comes after some time. The anger that Cassandra is talking about points to Clytemnestra's clear determination to carry out her vengeance. If the use of *kótos* in this passage coheres with the idea of a long-term anger, and Cassandra is therefore suggesting that she will be killed on account of a long-term anger, the object of the emotion she is referring to is not (or at least not entirely) herself being brought as a concubine. If Cassandra is suggesting that she is being killed on account of an old anger, an anger at the murder of Iphigenia, she is

¹⁶⁴ I follow Denniston-Page's edition. Fraenkel is inclined for *potōi*, but does not deny *kótos* as possible. Lloyd-Jones chooses to translate *pótos* without commenting on this choice.

¹⁶⁵ Sexual jealousy has been plausibly ascribed to Clytemnestra's feelings against Cassandra (Anderson, 1929, p. 143; Sanders, 2013, p. 158).

describing an interesting feature of anger. The word *kótos* appears seventeen times in the *Oresteia* (out of twenty-four, considering the remaining Aeschylean tragedies). Instances range from the citizens' anger at their losses at war (*Ag* 456), to explain the storm that assailed the warriors (*Ag* 635), Apollo's anger at Cassandra (*Ag* 1211), the anger of the elders at the events in the house (*Ag* 1464), the underworld's anger affecting Clytemnestra's dream (*Ch* 33), to describe the wrath of a hurricane (*Ch* 592), to describe *Poina*'s anger in general (*Ch* 952), to describe Clytemnestra's anger against her son (*Ch* 1025); to describe the anger that should be felt at those who kill their spouses (*Eu* 220), to describe the possible motivation for killing (*Eu* 426), to describe the anger of the *Erinyes* at human misconduct (*Eu* 501),¹⁶⁶ to describe the *Erinyes*' grievance at Orestes' acquittal (*Eu* 800, 889), to describe the *Erinyes*'s state after the trial (*Eu* 840 = 873; 900). These passages suggest that *kótos* is often used for long-term anger, with the exception of *Poiná* or the anger experienced by the *Erinyes*, which is unforgetting by nature, even when the anger is explained by the immediate context, as it is the case with Orestes' acquittal.

The case for a reading of Cassandra's explanation of her own murder as the result of an anger whose object is not primarily herself (Cassandra with her presence undoubtedly exacerbates Clytemnestra's anger at her husband) is supported by Clytemnestra's own expression. After killing Cassandra, she tells the chorus of elders that this murder came as a 'side-dish' (παροψώνημα *Ag* 1447) for her pleasure. She is therefore aware that the main target of Clytemnestra's anger is Agamemnon. Clytemnestra's vengeance on Cassandra is presented as part of triangulation of the anger at her husband. Cassandra thus adds interesting complexity to the emotion in a way that no other character in the play does.

Cassandra's hostility towards Clytemnestra (θεοὶ γλυκύν τ' αἰῶνα κλαυμάτων ἄτερ *Ag* 1148) makes her account of the anger of Clytemnestra highly detached from her experience or what has led to that anger – the

¹⁶⁶ This is an interesting example as anger is put in explicit relation with madness (*Ag* 1575).

chorus of elders see (at least in part) the complexity of the situation of what Clytemnestra has suffered. Cassandra does not understand (or is not interested in) how Clytemnestra's appraisals of reality have a role in her anger. The account of anger that she gives is fundamentally based on her understanding of the causal network of events that has affected the house since the conflict between Thyestes and Atreus. In this explanation, in which the subject of the emotion plays little to no role, the house becomes almost a living entity with power over its dwellers. The first thing she expresses after arriving at Argos is her distress at being brought to the house of the Atreidae (ἀ ποῖ ποτ' ἤγαγές με; πρὸς ποίαν στέγην *Ag* 1087), a place where crimes against kin that have been committed and that is stained with blood (μισόθεον μὲν οὖν, πολλὰ συνίστορα / αὐτόφωνα κακὰ κατατόμα, / ἀνδρσοφαγεῖον καὶ πεδορραντήριον *Ag* 1090-1092). She is not so much stating her horror of the past crimes, but of being brought to such a place. She thus implies that the past crimes will have an effect on the future. When she starts seeing what Clytemnestra plans to do with her husband, she first expresses it in terms of a great evil being conceived in the house (μέγ' ἐν δόμοισι τοῖσδε μήδετα κακὸν *Ag* 1102) and the consequences for the family (ἄφερτον φίλοισιν *Ag* 1103). Her discourse presupposes the understanding that the house, as a material structure, and the household are intimately connected. What happens in the house has an impact on those who inhabit it. This idea is represented very concretely when Cassandra sees an out-of-tune singing chorus of *Erinyes* in the house (*Ag* 1186-90):

τὴν γὰρ στέγην τήνδ' οὔποτ' ἐκλείπει χορὸς
ξύμφθογγος οὐκ εὐφωτος: οὐ γὰρ εὐ λέγει.
καὶ μὴν πεπωκῶς γ', ὡς θρασύνεσθαι πλέον,
βρότειον αἶμα κῶμος ἐν δόμοις μένει,
δύσπεμπτος ἔξω, συγγόνων Ἐρινύων.

The manifestation of *Erinyes* in the house is the evidence not only of old crimes, but also of anger lingering. The connection between the past events and the house is so strong that the *Erinyes* remain (ἐν δόμοις μένει *Ag* 1189), and Cassandra highlights that that they are linked to the house by repeating that twice in four lines (στέγη; δόμος).

The presence of the house, as an important physical and a social structure also has a role in Clytemnestra's discourse. One of the ways in which she tries to justify her crime is by saying that she is exacting justice for the house (ἐν δόμοις κακῶν *Ag* 1395) and that it was Agamemnon the first to bring catastrophe to it (οὐδὲ γὰρ οὗτος δολίαν ἄτην / οἴκοισιν ἔθηκ'; *Ag* 1523-6). She suggests that Agamemnon having broken the family bonds and damaged the house, got what he deserved, as if it was a natural consequence of his own actions. This idea is present again some lines later when she wishes that the madness of mutual killings will be expelled from the house (μανίας μελάθρων / ἀλληλοφόνους ἀφελούση *Ag* 1575-6). Clytemnestra's expressions reflect the idea present in Cassandra's views that the house, with what has been committed in it, has a certain power over those who inhabit it.

Both in Cassandra's and Clytemnestra's words, the references to the house fluctuate between the concrete and the symbolic (the house can metonymically stand for the household). In either case, there is a notion of causality involved according to which once crimes have been committed, they will call for more crimes. This view is central to Cassandra's explanation of Clytemnestra's anger against Agamemnon. In this sense, Clytemnestra is very concretely acting as an *Erinýs* in the house. The understanding of anger in Cassandra's account is largely related to the imagery of monstrous figures, who police the house bringing discord (as an out-of-tune chorus), and that will not stop. This image corresponds to the personification of anger done by Calchas in the parodos.

2.2.3 The Elders' Account

In a more problematic passage, the attribution of a supernatural source of explanation for Clytemnestra's behaviour is also presented by the chorus of elders when they confront her after Agamemnon's murder.¹⁶⁷ After

¹⁶⁷ Gagarin (1976, p. 59) notes how there is reference to an overall pattern of action, in which the subject is subjected to the necessity of external forces and tensions between opposites (such as day and night, lightness and darkness), already in the beacon speech.

a long and quarrelsome exchange with Clytemnestra, and in their attempt to, somehow, render intelligible the crime they have just witnessed, the chorus appeal to the narrative of the old spirit assailing the house (*Ag* 1468-70). As Calchas and Cassandra did before, they understand Clytemnestra's extraordinary behaviour in relation to the crimes of the sons of Tantalus, and they link them to the house. The idea conveyed by the elders in this passage is coherent with the previous ones in that anger is old and is related to the house. Both ideas point to an understanding of anger that is not entirely dependent on the subject – it is, of course, an anger related to Clytemnestra, but the explanation they give for that refers to events that are older than her, and that affects the whole family. The elders are even more explicit about the power and agency of this spirit when, a few lines later, they suggest that it rules (they use κράτος and κρατύνω one line after the other) the house of the Tantalids through two women alike in spirit, referring to Helen and Clytemnestra (*Ag* 1468-71):

δαίμον, ὃς ἐμπίτνεις δώμασι καὶ διφυί-
οισι Τανταλίδαισιν,
κράτος τ' ἰσόψυχον ἐκ γυναικῶν
καρδιόδηκτον ἐμοὶ κρατύνεις

The connection between this spirit and anger is also made explicit by them when they say that it is a great spirit of wrath (ἧ μέγαν οἰκονόμον / δαίμονα καὶ βαρύμηνιν αἰνεῖς *Ag* 1481-2). The notion of insatiability that had been discussed in relation to anger is also present in their conception of the angry spirit (ἀτηρᾶς τύχας ἀκορέστου *Ag* 1484).

Clytemnestra conveniently picks up on that line of explanation, acknowledging that the spirit of the house (that later she specifies as the *Alástōr*), explains her desire for blood (νῦν δ' ὤρθωσας στόματος γνώμην, / τὸν τριπάχυντον / δαίμονα γέννης τῆσδε κικλήσκων / ἐκ τοῦ γὰρ ἔρωσ αἰματολοιχὸς *Ag* 1475-8; ὁ παλαιὸς δριμύς ἀλάστωρ / Ἀτρέως χαλεποῦ θοινατήρος *Ag* 1501-2).¹⁶⁸ She attributes to the *Alástōr* a causal connection with this desire, when she says that it is its source (ἐκ τοῦ). Even if

¹⁶⁸ Similarly, ἡ Μοῖρα τούτων, ὦ τέκνον, παραιτία (*Ch* 910).

Clytemnestra's sincerity in attributing the cause of her anger to the spirit of the house is questionable (especially after the threats received from the chorus) and the mention of the *Alástōr* by them might appear as a good way to expel any guilt from her, she tries that because it seems like a possible solution. Both she and the chorus find it possible to ascribe a cause for her anger to an extraordinary force that took command of her, and every time they speak of it they add an adjective that qualifies it as pertaining to or assailing the house.¹⁶⁹ If Clytemnestra is trying to be deceitful, she is doing it by means of a plausible narration of the events. In fact, the elders do not react to her first appropriation of the idea of a spirit (*Ag* 1477). They only react by saying that she should not attempt to take the blame off herself after she explicitly makes that attempt by questioning whether the crime was hers (αὐχεῖς εἶναι τόδε τοῦργον ἐμόν; *Ag* 1497), and the idea that she relates it to the *Alástōr* (*Ag* 1501). Even after they are clear that they do not accept her excuse that she was not responsible for the deed, they keep saying that an *Alástōr* might well have been involved (*Ag* 1505-8):

ὡς μὲν ἀναίτιος εἶ
τοῦδε φόνου τίς ὁ μαρτυρήσων;
πῶς πῶς; πατρόθεν δὲ συλλή-
ππων γένοιτ' ἂν ἀλάστωρ

Beyond the question of what exactly each character understands and believes, it is, for all of them, possible to explain Clytemnestra's actual anger in terms of past deeds. They all think of spirits taking hold of the agent of these crimes.¹⁷⁰ Clytemnestra, the elders, Cassandra, and Calchas share an understanding of anger as a phenomenon that is partly explained by means of an independent entity, and in all these cases the spirit brings about the idea of an anger that is old and insatiable.

¹⁶⁹ Foley (2001, pp. 204-205) argues that even though Clytemnestra was able to make a powerful defence of herself, she undermines it, 'especially her claim to be acting as a fully autonomous agent,' to the point of thinking that the fact that Clytemnestra is not represented as making her choice, but only justifying it, is indicative of the view that women were not subjects of fully autonomous choice.

¹⁷⁰ This discussion will be further developed in Chapter 5 (pp. 224-6).

2.2.4 *The anger of Orestes*

As discussed in the previous chapter, the anger of Orestes is broadly understood as another instance of the sequence of events prompted by the spirit of anger dwelling in the house. Cassandra (ἤξει γὰρ ἡμῶν ἄλλος αἶ τιμάορος, / μητροκτόνον φίτυμα, ποινάτωρ πατρός: / φυγὰς δ' ἀλήτης τῆσδε γῆς ἀπόξενος *Ag* 1280-3) foresees him coming home to avenge his father. In the *Choephoroi*, Clytemnestra's dream with the serpent is interpreted both as the wrath of those in the underworld against her (κριταί τε τῶνδ' ὄνειράτων / θεόθεν ἔλακον ὑπέγγυοι / μέμφεσθαι τοὺς γὰς / νέρθεν περιθύμως / τοῖς κτανούσι τ' ἐγκοτεῖν *Ch* 37-41) and as Orestes' killing his mother (θανεῖν βιαίως: ἐκδρακοντωθεὶς δ' ἐγὼ / κτείνω νιν, ὡς τοῦνειρον ἐννέπει τόδε *Ch* 549-50). Like Clytemnestra, Orestes is ambiguously referred to as the embodiment of an anger that assails the house or as someone who is affected or possessed by that anger. In either case, anger is treated as an object that is independent from the subject and their appraisals.¹⁷¹ Orestes' acts are explained by being considered as a part of a causal network of events in the house. These characteristics of Orestes' anger cohere with those of Clytemnestra. Yet, the case of Orestes' anger has an interesting peculiarity as it is somehow mediated by the anger of his own father. Orestes, Electra and the slave women ask the spirit of Agamemnon for help in their vengeful enterprise. It is their understanding that they need this help to ensure their success. They also believe that to make the spirit of Agamemnon actually help them, they need to present their case in a way that will magnify his anger. The anger of the spirit of Agamemnon is considered as an important allied force for them.

This anger is also understood as a force that emerges and takes shape in Orestes' anger – the spirit of Agamemnon will seek revenge through Orestes, who will kill his mother. As the chorus of slave women explain to

¹⁷¹ Catenaccio (2011, p. 211) makes an interesting link between the dream, the beast and the breast as a way of putting together 'human and bestial realms'. Goheen (1955, p. 134) sees an evolution in Clytemnestra in which she is rendered an 'unnatural mother', in which the imagery of blood and womb represents the mixture of fertility and death, fecundity and hatefulness.

Orestes, legitimate lamentation for a father brings about vengeance (πατέρων τε καὶ τεκόντων / γόος ἔνδικος ματεύει / τὸ πᾶν ἀμφιλαφῆς ταραχθεὶς *Ch* 329-31). The spirit of the dead will make his anger manifest (φρόνημα τοῦ θανόντος οὐ δαμάζει (...) φαίνει δ' ὕστερον ὀργάς *Ch* 324-6) and this will happen in the form of Orestes' vengeance. Electra and the chorus also perceive Orestes' behaviour as being part of the phenomena regulated by divine and natural laws. When Electra invokes Zeus', Earth's, and the gods of the underworld's sense of justice (Ζεὺς ἐπὶ χεῖρα βάλοι (...) δίκαν δ' ἐξ ἀδίκων ἀπαιτῶ *Ch* 395-9), she places Orestes' revenge as a matter that goes beyond his own concerns. While she is not directly talking of Orestes' emotions, the whole passage is charged with anger since that is their understanding of the driving force of revenge.

The imagery of anger is clearer in the following lines, when the slave women continue Electra's words by reminding her of the laws of blood retribution (ἀλλὰ νόμος μὲν φονίας σταγόνας / χυμένας ἐς πέδον ἄλλο προσαιτεῖν / αἶμα *Ch* 400-2) and of the *Erinýs* (βοᾷ γὰρ λοιγὸς Ἐρινύων / παρὰ τῶν πρότερον φθιμένων ἄτην / ἑτέραν ἐπάγουσαν ἐπ' ἄτη *Ch* 402-4) that will come to avenge the dead. As Peradotto (1969a, p. 19) and Fowler (1991) have suggested, the imagery around Orestes configures him as an *Erinýs*. He is the *Erinýs* of his father, as much as Clytemnestra is of her daughter. This is another instance in which anger is represented as in connection to a certain supernatural power. This connection can be very concrete as Orestes needs the support from the underworld, as well as the threat from it (ἄλλας τ' ἐφώνει προσβολὰς Ἐρινύων / ἐκ τῶν πατρώων αἱμάτων τελουμένας *Ch* 283-4), to manifest his feelings and kill his mother. The connection resides somewhere between the symbolic and the concrete: Orestes might be an '*Erinýs*', being as bloodthirsty and vengeful as an *Erinýs*, his anger might be as that of an *Erinýs*, he might have a role and duty similar to the ones of an *Erinýs*. All these aspects are related to his anger, charging its representation with symbolism that conveys the idea of anger as an external entity. Yet, these representations do not make the presence of the

Erinýes in the play any less real, whether pertaining to Orestes' mind, as in the *Choephoroi*, or as a character in the play, as in the *Eumenides*.

The fact that Orestes is also the object of a threat, both from the underworld and from Apollo, links his anger in an interesting way with the *Erinýes*. Orestes is strongly bonded to the house and to the reputation of his father, as discussed in the previous chapter. His behaviour, as that of Clytemnestra, is explained by the events in the house, and in this sense his agency is understood as strongly interconnected with his family. In addition to that, Orestes has an important social role to fulfil, and that role is to exact punishment or revenge. He has a duty that appears not only in his own words, but also in Electra's expectations about him (ἀλκῆ πεποιθῶς δῶμ' ἀνακτήσῃ πατρός *Ch* 237). This expectation is interestingly expressed by the chorus of slave women, in analogy to the treatment of a wound by medicine, that the pain suffered in the house can only be healed by someone inside through cruel and bloody *Éris* (*Ch* 471-5):

δῶμασιν ἔμμοτον
τῶνδ' ἄκος, οὐδ' ἀπ' ἄλλων
ἔκτοθεν, ἀλλ' ἀπ' αὐτῶν,
δι' ὧμᾶν ἔριν αἱματηράν.
θεῶν τῶν κατὰ γᾶς ὄδ' ὕμνος.

Orestes' anger, thus, has a strong component of the way in which the *Erinýes* themselves understand their role in society as a way of settling conflict through the laws of vendetta.

2.3 Conclusions

The theoretical distinction between the object and the cause of an emotion is a useful way of disentangling aspects of ancient anger such as divine possession and intervention. The analysis of anger with a focus on the cause of the emotion can be puzzling given the multiplicity of accounts. However, by introducing a broader understanding of cognition that allows to account for phenomenological aspects of the emotions, that multiplicity becomes a breeding ground for the analysis of symbolic representations of

anger. This shift in the way we approach the plays enables a view according to which some symbolic patterns emerge in the material that at first sight might have seemed inconsistent. These patterns suggest that certain experiential aspects of anger, such as the feeling that the emotion is an invasive entity, or that it can take hold of the subject posing a threat to their environment, are important in the conceptualisation of anger in Aeschylus.

This chapter has shown that a reading which focuses on the agent's perception of the perceived wrong does not fully encompass the nature of anger as presented in the trilogy. Agents and observers do not see anger just as a conscious response to perceived wrong but also as a force which can overcome the individual. This finds expression in the complex of ideas connected with the notion of divine agents of anger. The divine element is not, however, just a means of conceptualizing the impact of anger on the individual. It also takes its place within a system in which the anger of the individual agent coexists with and interacts with a number of other facts. It is in this respect that Aeschylean anger diverges most from most modern, and indeed Aristotelian constructions. Anger can persist across time and anger which finds no reparation or satisfaction can outlast the lifespan of the individual victim. The dead too are capable of anger and this anger can impact on the living. The notion of inherited guilt means that the anger of any individual (or indeed any individual act or emotion) can respond (in ways which are never clearly perceived but are nonetheless real) to events in preceding generations. Though this is remote from our way of perceiving the world, it has to be taken into consideration in any attempt to explore the totality of Aeschylean anger.

Chapter 5 will reconsider the role of deities from the broader perspective of the social role that the belief in them plays in Greek society and the implications for anger.

Chapter 3

Anger, Desire, and the Body

In *Rhetoric* II, Aristotle defines anger as a desire for revenge at a perceived belittlement (ὀργή ὄρεξις (...) τιμωρίας φαινομένης 1378a). As will be discussed, Aristotle explicitly places the desiderative aspect of the emotion at the centre of its definition. In the previous two chapters, I have considered anger from the perspective of the appraisals and the beliefs of the subjects of the emotion.¹⁷² I have also discussed how these two elements intertwine when looking at the emotion from a phenomenological perspective. The present chapter addresses the emotion from the perspective of desire¹⁷³ and considers the presence of the body in the representation of anger in the trilogy. Anger is not only a manifestation of a way of perceiving and understanding the world, it is also a manifestation of desires and motivations. Anger can be understood in terms of a desire for things to have been different, for exacting punishment, for changing a state of affairs that is perceived as wrong, unfair, or abusive (Tavris, 1989; Srinivasan, 2018; Cherry, n.d.; Callard 2017).¹⁷⁴ These desires are often, but not necessarily, related to aggression or a destructiveness of some

¹⁷² I have already discussed Aristotle's definition of anger in the Introduction. Here my focus is on the role that desire plays on it. Aristotle gives a rather holistic account of anger, integrating appraisals, desire, and the body, throughout his corpus, but stresses different aspects in different places. The role of pleasure and pain in the definition of anger, and of emotions in general, is a good example of the way in which he envisions emotions as embodied (e.g., *Rh* 1378a).

¹⁷³ *Conation* is the term used in modern scholarship on emotions. However, the term already has an intellectual connotation that I do not want to impose on the reading of ancient emotions, as I argue in this chapter. As Alford (1990, p. 184) points out, in Freudian terminology, we are talking of 'drives'; however, Lacan calls it desire.

¹⁷⁴ In this sense, anger is a point of convergence between retrospective and prospective desires. A desire is by definition unfulfilled, which explains the strength of the frustration involved in those retrospective desires connected to anger.

sort. Anger is not only the appraisal that something is wrong, it is a desire to make a change to that situation.¹⁷⁵

Although the desiderative aspect of anger is usually recognised in modern theories of emotions (Averill, 1974, p. 153; Solomon, 1977, p. 48; de Sousa, 1987; Srinivasan, 2018, pp. 7-8; Price, 2007), its role in defining emotions receives considerably less attention than the one granted to cognitive appraisals.¹⁷⁶ These theories have mainly focused on the way in

¹⁷⁵ See Litvak *et al* (2010, p. 291). The typical example given for anger without desire of retaliation is the character of Nelson Mandela (who is not only a unique personality, but also a very strategic one). It is not simple to determine when someone is primarily driven by a desire to retaliate or by a desire to change things. Odysseus needed to be careful in changing the situation in his house, but after he felt secure again, he followed his retaliatory desires and punished those who had been taking advantage of his family's precarious situation. Nevertheless, Odysseus established his priorities carefully.

¹⁷⁶ Often, theories of emotions tend towards a reduction of the conative element to the cognitive one. The propositional content of them can be formulated in the same way: 'I do not want you to lie to me' can be expressed in terms of 'I do not think it is good that you lie to me'; similarly 'I want to exact vengeance upon you' can be translated into 'I think it appropriate to take vengeance on you'. The main argument against appealing to desires for explaining emotions is that they make the theory more complex without a need for it (that is, proponents claim they can explain the same phenomenon by appealing only to appraisals) (Neu, 1987; Nussbaum, 2001). If an account in terms of evaluations and beliefs is enough to explain motivation, desires can be subsumed within that (Stocker, 1980, p. 329). Yet an early and very interesting critique of the reduction of desires to judgments on the grounds of the propositional content can already be found in Russell (1921). He based his evaluation on both psychoanalysis and behavioural theory. The main criticism has to do with the failure of cognitivist approaches to explain why desires move to action in a different way than judgments. While they do not deny that emotions have an important motivational factor, they do not link it to a desiderative aspect. Desire and motivation are two different things, and the point here is not that motivation has been neglected in theories of emotions – in fact it is almost invariably present in them (e.g., Damasio 2006 and Frijda 1986). The appeal to an underlying disposition towards judgments as a criterion does not explain the difference between desires and appraisals. In response to this criticism cognitivists have coined the term 'hot cognition' to refer to the kind of cognition that moves to action; Solomon (1973, p. 34) speaks of 'urgent judgments', but then the need for this new terminology just displaces the problem of how to account for desire. Furthermore, from a phenomenological perspective, the analogy between judgments and desires is highly problematic: we do not experience judgments and desires in the

which the subjects of anger perceive and evaluate the situation in which the emotion emerges, with a focus on the cultural assumptions involved in those perceptions and evaluations. For example, Solomon (1977, p. 48) acknowledges that ‘every emotion is also [as well as judgment] a system of desires and intentions’ and this is what he calls the ‘ideology’ of emotions. In his view, in anger it is essential that there is a desire. Yet, he subsumes desire under the judgmental aspect of the emotion all the same (1977, p. 48) and does not really address the thrust for fulfilment that desires involve.¹⁷⁷

This focus of interest on judgments is reflected in recent discussions of Aristotle’s theory of emotions, which in turn has informed the discussion of ancient emotions more broadly.¹⁷⁸ His definition of anger in the *Rhetoric* starts by identifying it with a conative aspect of the mind (ὀργή ὄρεξις) and continues with the judgmental one (διὰ φαινομένην ὀλιγωρίαν εἰς αὐτὸν ἢ τι τῶν αὐτοῦ, τοῦ ὀλιγωρεῖν μὴ προσήκοντος 2.2.1). Aristotle establishes the object of the emotion (some kind of *oligoría*) as a way to specify the type of desire that anger is. While Aristotle himself pays special attention to the judgmental aspect of anger in the *Rhetoric*, where he concerns himself mainly with the question of how emotions involve and generate changes in our judgments (ἔστι δὲ τὰ πάθη δι’ ὅσα μεταβάλλοντες διαφέρουσι πρὸς τὰς κρίσεις 2.1.8), he also establishes

same way, despite the propositional similarities they might have. Phenomenology is not a necessary concern for a cognitivist, but it is a central question in this research, as I have been indicating in previous chapters.

¹⁷⁷ Similarly, de Sousa (1987). For a discussion on the problems involved in equating emotions to cognitive appraisals of reality, see Price (2007, p. 5-7).

¹⁷⁸ Fortenbaugh (1975; 1979) argues that this definition of anger is based in the causal connection between ὀργή and φαινομένην ὀλιγωρίαν established by διά. According to him, Aristotle is applying the principle set up in the *Posterior Analytics* that definitions are given by the identification of effective causes, which amounts to the essence of the *definiendum*. Konstan (2003; 2006; 2013) and Nussbaum (2001; 2013) follow Fortenbaugh in his argument that Aristotle defines emotions in terms of the judgements involved. Cairns (2003, p. 26) acknowledges the presence of a desiderative aspect in ancient perspectives of anger, but he does not develop this idea in all its potential depth.

that the genus of anger is desire.¹⁷⁹ Although he does not show interest in developing the desiderative aspect of the emotion in the *Rhetoric*, at least not in the way he does with the judgmental aspect, he does so when discussing emotions in his ethical works and in *De Anima* (for example, 403a29-65).¹⁸⁰ The fact that Aristotle recognises the importance of desire in accounting for anger does not necessarily have implications for Aeschylus' conception of the emotion, but it opens up a line of investigation that has, surprisingly, been overlooked in recent accounts of ancient anger. This chapter proposes to shift the emphasis from appraisals and judgments to desires when looking at ancient anger.

The neglect of the desiderative aspect in modern readings of ancient representations of anger is partially explained by the vast attention received by the role of cognitive appraisals of reality in explaining emotions in modern cognitive discussions. Yet, desire plays an equally important role in outlining emotions and differentiating one from another (de Sousa, 2013, pp. 7-8), and

¹⁷⁹ As Price (2007, p. 14) has put it, 'Aristotle actually defines anger as a kind of desire (certainly one that presupposes a background of belief, factual and evaluative) (...) there is no emotion that he defines purely as a belief with a distinctive content (...) if one *must* be monistic (but to what purpose?), why not identify emotions with wishes – or else states of *feeling glad* about something – directed at past, present, or future?' Stocker (1980) argues that desires have a role in intellectual reasoning, but clearly distinguishes, based on his reading of Aristotle, between intellect and desire.

¹⁸⁰ Aristotle in *De Anima* 403a15-25 is not entirely consistent with his view on emotions as presented in *Rhetoric*, for he acknowledges the possibility of emotional arousal without judgmental stimulus: 'when the body is already in a state of tension resembling its condition when we are angry. Here is a still clearer case: in the absence of any external cause of terror we find ourselves experiencing the feelings of a man in terror' (J. A. Smith's translation). For a similar account of emotional arousal that avoids appraisals such as bodily feedback, unconscious priming, see Litvak *et al* (2010, p. 290). In a different vein, but also acknowledging the complexity of Aristotle's understanding of anger, Clark (1975, pp. 198-9) points out that when defining anger both as a desire and as a physiological change that affects the blood and the heart (*De An* 403a29). Aristotle conceives desire as an embodied phenomenon that is inseparable from the individual-in-society. Similarly, Stocker (1980) argues that desires have a role in intellectual reasoning, but clearly distinguishes, based on his reading of Aristotle, between intellect and desire. See also Sokolon (2006, p. 18-9).

for this reason, it has also been considered as a defining principle for emotions (Kenny, [1963]2003, p. 70). Fear, for example, is defined by the desire to avoid, shame by a desire to conceal, and anger by the desire to punish. It is often stressed (Solomon, 1973, p. 29; Konstan, 2003, p. 106; Lazarus, 1991, pp. 133-51) that a change in an appreciation of reality can dispel an emotion (if I understand that there was no ill-intention behind what I perceived as an offence, my anger may disappear). However, as Lazarus himself acknowledges, this ‘appeasement’ is often easier said than done.¹⁸¹ On the other hand, a change in the desire associated with an offence might imply an emotional change (I may understand that there was actually an intention of being offensive in the words I heard, and I may want to laugh or be compassionate; in this case we would probably say that my anger was dispelled). Different attitudes towards those desires result in different behaviours (you might react quickly, express openly, repress, or try to hide a desire) and often explain how emotions vary across cultures (Ekman, 2004, pp. 114-15). Furthermore, desire is a useful basis for predicting behaviour. The link between behaviour and desire has in some cases been strong enough to suggest that desire is defined by reference to a fairly stereotypical behaviour (Kenny, [1963]2003, pp. 70-1) – we know that someone has a desire for retaliation because he is shouting out recriminatory statements to others.¹⁸² Even though the nature of the connection between desire and

¹⁸¹ There can be also a mismatch between the justifying the conditions of the thought and the explicit thought: ‘I might after all, be angry that John was late to meet me, while explicitly believing that he was not wrong to do so; I might believe, for instance, that his reasons for meeting me in time were trumped by his obligation to help his unwell mother’ (Srinivasan, 2018, p. 7).

¹⁸² For an argument against Kenny, see Solomon (1973; Appendix in the 1980 version). His main critique refers to the inability to give account of the connection between the object of an emotion and the desire involved in it (1973, p. 273). However, Solomon’s point is not really relevant to the discussion on the importance of acknowledging that desires are part of emotions, but on how to make a theory of emotions including them consistent – Solomon (1973, p. 277) actually does grant desires an explanatory role. Greenspan (1980) and Connolly (2011) present different arguments for a more comprehensive account of emotions in which the dichotomy between cognition and affection is blurred.

behaviour is controversial, the special motivational force of emotions has received acknowledgment (Greenspan, 1980, p. 224),¹⁸³ for 'we can often perceive the difference between detached and emotional behaviour' (p. 240). Emotions not only inform choices, but also move to action (sometimes irrational, destructive, or exceptional ones), hence their role in tragedy as driving forces of conflict.

Looking at emotions from the perspective of desire is a way of understanding the connection between assessments of reality and behavioural attitudes in a particular individual, in a particular context (Kenny, [1963]2003, p. 70). Desires, as well as appraisals, are subject to the norms and constraints of society, and therefore are an enriching source of information about a culture. Desires depend importantly on personality traits, so they can also be a source of information about the characters in the play. Both Clytemnestra and Orestes perceive themselves as victims of several serious offences, and both are prepared to avenge an abuse by killing a family member, yet with respect to their desires they differ enormously. While Clytemnestra desires to kill Agamemnon and takes pleasure in doing so, Orestes is driven not only by the desire of seeing his mother being punished but also, and more importantly, by fear of not meeting Apollo's command. As will be discussed in the next chapter, Orestes needs the push and drive provided by his sister and the chorus of slave women and has to be reminded by his friend that there is a threat by a god involved in the killing of his mother. While Clytemnestra's desire to punish blinds her to the horror and the implications of her act, Orestes is never affected in such a way.¹⁸⁴ The difference in the way the desire to punish is constructed informs the way in which characters are constructed, as well as the social circumstances in which they find themselves in the play. Arguably, the accomplishment of an action necessarily has to do with the desire for it when there is no

¹⁸³ Yet Greenspan does not speak of conation, rather she uses 'motivating attitudes' or 'attitudes with a special motivational force' (1980, p. 239).

¹⁸⁴ Zeitlin (1965) argues that all the characters in the trilogy fall prey to the same self-deceptive belief about being justified in their crimes and they therefore overlook the consequences.

compulsion, but elements of duty and fulfilment of social expectations need to be considered with relation to the context in which the plays take place.

Gagarin has convincingly pointed out (1976, pp. 59-65) that a continuous expectancy of reciprocal retribution can be read across the *Oresteia*.¹⁸⁵ It can appear in the form of a spirit of revenge (ὁ παλαιὸς δριμύς ἀλάστωρ *Ag* 1501) or under the form of a maxim (ἄξια δράσας ἄξια πάσχων *Ag* 1527).¹⁸⁶ This general expectancy gives us a framework for understanding patterns of behaviour in social interactions. However, the way in which this particular pattern informs a desire to retaliate is not something that may be straightforwardly established. As previously discussed, retaliation cannot necessarily be taken as a sign of anger, nor anger as a necessary sign of a desire for retaliation.¹⁸⁷ Similarly, the fact that they retaliate needs to be considered with caution if one wants to see the behaviour as a sign of the fulfilment of a strong desire to retaliate. It therefore becomes necessary to establish an alternative means for ascribing desire that is not only based on the fact of their actual retaliation.

One important way of accounting for desire is through pleasure. Normally, the fulfilment of a desire produces pleasure; likewise, the object of desire is usually pleasurable. Furthermore, the notion that anger involves

¹⁸⁵ For example, *Ag* 1397-8; *Ag* 1527-8; *Ag* 349; *Ag* 1397-8, *Ag* 1658, *Ch* 888, *Ch* 930; *Ch* 556-7. For instantiations of this expectation in Hesiod and Solon, see Gagarin (1976, pp. 66-7).

¹⁸⁶ Kitto ([1939]1990, pp. 77-9) discusses how δίκηφόρος, 'retribution-bringing', is used three times in the trilogy: it describes the crowbar with which Zeus treated Troy; it is used by Aegisthus to describe what happened to Agamemnon; and it is used by Electra to ask about the kind of help she is to expect to change the order of things regarding Clytemnestra and Aegisthus. He points out ([1939]1990, p. 79) that the desire for retributive pain is normal in Greek popular morality, but Electra's distinction between δίκηφόρος and δικαστής advances the cultural shift proposed in *Eu* 120.

¹⁸⁷ According to Averill (1983, p. 1153), it is not possible to establish a correlation between anger and aggression, for sometimes there is violence without anger, and sometimes there is anger without violence. Still, this does not affect the presence of desire for retaliation. The problem found in evaluating anger from behaviour is the difficulty of establishing patterns – they range from silence and passivity to verbal abuse, physical aggression, and killing.

pleasure is present in Homer (καὶ χόλος, ὅς τ' ἐφέηκε πολύφρονά περ χαλεπήναι, / ὅς τε πολὺ γλυκίων μέλιτος καταλειβομένοιο // 18.108-9). Aristotle quotes this passage in *Rh* 1370b12 (and 1378b6), replacing χόλος by θυμός, and connects the element of pleasure (ἡδέα) with the thought of the accomplishment of the desire for punishment in which anger consists. Aristotle makes the point that no one desires to do (ἐφίημι) what is not attainable (ἀδύνατος). The reason he gives for this assertion is that while it is pleasant to think that one will obtain what one wants, thinking the same of something unattainable does not bring pleasure with it.¹⁸⁸ This explanatory cause of the way in which anger works is followed by a discussion of social hierarchies according to which a feeling of disdain, to provoke anger, must be produced by an inferior party, otherwise the injured one will either be scared or will not really be able to experience the pleasure of mentally advancing retaliation.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁸ Konstan suggests that the emotion at stake here would be hatred. However, Aristotle is not explicit about this, as he is when stating the difference between anger and hatred in terms of the object of desire. For a discussion on the issue of the pleasure felt by the subject of anger, see Latvik *et al* (2010, p. 302). They suggest that Aristotle might be pointing to the pleasure felt at the anticipation of vengeance on account of the optimism in attaining one's goals that has been related to anger by modern researchers. They report (2010, p. 303) that some brain-image studies reveal that a sub-cortical structure activated when anticipating the punishment of the transgressor is associated with the reward centres of the brain, making it pleasurable. The same report establishes that this sub-cortical structure remains activated even if administering the punishment comes at personal cost. Interestingly, these imaging studies have found that anger may not activate the same cortical activity if the individual who experiences the emotion does not conceive the possibility of approaching the object of his or her anger. In this case the brain-image does not show the same pattern of joy, and the situation only facilitates backward imaging and thought. Aristotle's point that being able to conceive of punishment as possible makes a difference to the emotion (although not to the point of denying it) might be sound.

¹⁸⁹ See Cope (1877, *ad loc*) and Konstan (2003). Against, Grimaldi (1988, *ad a33*). Grimaldi argues that the sense should not be restricted to disdain felt by an inferior, but simply to disdain felt by someone who should not 'by all that is right' feel it.

In the context of Aristotle's idea of anger, it is worth also noting *De Anima* 432b ff, where Aristotle states that appetite (ὄρεξις) is the only source of movement – in opposition to the idea that thought (νοῦς) is also a source of movement. Appetite can be contrary to calculation, and the object of desire is a product of imagination (πολλοὶ γὰρ παρὰ τὴν ἐπιστήμην ἀκολουθοῦσι ταῖς φαντασίαις 433a10), but it must be something attainable (τὸ πρακτὸν ἀγαθόν).¹⁹⁰ There will be no feeling of pleasure if it is evident that our desire will be frustrated to the point that not even by means of imagination can one configure this good as attainable. This discussion of pleasure in *De Anima* provides a clue to understanding the definition in the *Rhetoric*, and may help us to supplement the information provided by his view on how social hierarchies affect the emotion. In his account, anger is an emotion that is felt only towards individuals, not groups of people, and where the punishment needs to be conceived of as feasible. Aristotle makes the point that if realisation of punishment is not conceivable, there will be no pleasure involved, and the experience will not count as anger. The Aristotelian link between desire and pleasure is not only an attractive one, but also a useful tool to ascribe the presence of desire in a play. This link provides a framework to read important aspects of anger in the *Oresteia* that are absent in other accounts, such as how the body, considered as a lived experiential structure informs the conceptualisation of anger at play in its dramatisation.

The behavioural manifestation of a desire comes as bringing about something related to its fulfilment or as doing things that without the desire one would not do – similarly, a hallmark of pleasure is to prolong or repeat doing something which would otherwise be difficult to explain – as, for example, when Clytemnestra re-enacts Agamemnon's murder. Human desires need not be realisable (we can desire to fly like a bird), but need to be somehow conceptualised: we cannot desire to breathe like an amoeba if we do not know what that means, or if we do not have any experience of that

¹⁹⁰ In her discussion of Aristotle's *De Motu Animalium*, Nussbaum (1978, p. 261) points out that given that desire implies the absence of the object, it is the *phantasia* of it what is present. See note 175 above.

(a baby can of course desire its mother's breast without conceptualising it) (Kenny, [1963]2003, pp. 85-6). The way in which the fulfilment of a desire is achieved can be appropriate for its own purposes or not – one can question whether Achilles' way of fulfilling his desire to punish Agamemnon was the best one. Considerations about the costs and timings of the pursuit are relevant to one's own life and play a role in the way an emotion is carried out and perceived. It is debatable what happened to Achilles' perception of being diminished by Agamemnon, but we know that he wanted Agamemnon's behaviour to have been different, and that, at Patroclus' death, he considered it more important to fight the Trojans than to keep punishing Agamemnon.

The discussion of how the desiderative aspect of anger is present in the trilogy will, therefore, be informed by pleasure. Furthermore, when addressing the way these two elements form part of the conceptualisation of anger, the body will also enter as a category of analysis. The current chapter explores how the body, considered both as a lived, experiential structure and as the context for cognitive mechanisms is present in the literary representation of desire for retaliation. This connection between desire and the conceptualisation of an experience such as anger that involves the body will be importantly mediated by pleasure. The erotic imagery linked to anger in the play, in addition to the presence of other symbolic representations, will be used as a hermeneutic tool to underpin the presence of desire in the conceptualisation of the emotion.

The desire to kill or inflict harm upon someone, and more concretely the pleasure of seeing the person suffer or die, is a clear element in Clytemnestra's character. Aeschylus is not only confirming for us that desire in this context is credited, but also that this element contributes to the representation of her anger as a symbiosis of reason, moral assessments and irrational drives.¹⁹¹ These elements do not necessarily appear simultaneously in the representation of anger. They often unfold one after

¹⁹¹ The idea of blurring the passive-active distinction has been largely developed by Averill (1974) and Solomon (1973), who argue that emotions are closer to actions than to occurrences that happen to people.

the other, pointing to an understanding of anger as a progression rather than as a static state (an idea that will be further developed in the next chapter), representing a fundamental tension within the representation of the emotion. The desiderative aspect of Clytemnestra's anger appears with an explicit first-person report of her feelings (merged with those of the supernatural force in the associative way we saw in Calchas' speech) rendered as 'a desire for licking blood' (ἔρωσ ἀίματολοιχός *Ag* 1478), a metaphorical expression that incorporates a bodily experience of a need for satisfaction.¹⁹² The strength of her murderous desire is not only indicated by the unusual character of her vengeance (abnormal behaviour is connected to and explained by desire), but also by the meticulous planning. The very way in which she kills her husband, with an expensive and finely embroidered net in the bathtub,¹⁹³ does not primarily reflect a desire to ensure that the murder is accomplished successfully. Rather, it points to the manufacture of a particular setting that suits an ideal of the murder. The crafting of this setting indicates long-term planning that is not related to securing the conditions for the crime to succeed or to go unpunished. This suggests a steady and unremitting desire, rather than the instantaneous response common in many depictions and conception of anger. This persistence in turn suggests intensity. The nature of the murder reveals that the precise way in which she wants to see Agamemnon die has been held for a long time. She has imagined and pursued the crime, because it will be a source of pleasure for her. As I will go on to discuss, the exultation that follows the crime, together with the erotic vocabulary employed when referring to the corpses, supports this idea.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹² Expressions such as 'eager to slay' (for example, κατακτάμεναι μενεαίνων // 5.436) are not rare in Greek literature. For a discussion from a psychoanalytic perspective of a number of examples in Greek tragedy and epic, see Sagan (1979).

¹⁹³ The clothing materials displayed on the ground to receive Agamemnon are not only tremendously expensive (Flintoff, 1987, p. 126) but also of an elaboration that could have taken years to achieve (Flintoff, 1987, p. 121).

¹⁹⁴ Aristotle, in *Rh* 2.4.30, establishes the desire to cause pain as a parameter of differentiation between anger and hatred. According to him, the desire to kill or to cause evil counts for hatred. This demarcation seems too rigid for

The yearning for revenge is a fundamental and powerful aspect in Clytemnestra's characterisation, which she continues to pursue even after her death. However, there is a second indication that desires are present in the representation of her anger. As outlined above, anger is considered as a clear sign of wanting things to be different even when there is no strong retaliatory element present. This is of course not an element as prominent as the desire to punish in the *Oresteia*. However, it is a parameter that also deserves attention since it adds context to the literary representation of how characters act or control their impulses and desires in anger. Clytemnestra's anger at the elders because they do not consider her opinion as equal to the opinion of a man means not only that she is able to judge the situation as such, but, more importantly, that she wants her context in Argos to be different – or at least she does not want to play by its rules anymore. This desire is, thus, telling us something about Aeschylus' Clytemnestra and about Aeschylus' Argos. However, her anger at this situation moves her in a very different way compared to her anger at what Iphigenia suffered. While her desire to avenge her daughter leads her to ignore consequences (as the chorus are continuously reminding her), her anger at the elders has little driving force and is of a much more controlled nature – she knows that in order to stay in power she needs to avoid further violence. The analysis of desire in anger entails questions of moral character, cost-benefit calculation, impulse regulation and seeking the best opportunity to act. The characters are all, to a greater or lesser degree, able to weigh their immediate desires for retaliation against longer term desires, such as achieving power. Clytemnestra's desire to avenge Iphigenia might be very strong, but one may wonder whether she would have risked her position of power to fulfil it. The tension between desire and rationality mentioned earlier re-emerges as a central one when talking of the representation of anger in the trilogy.

the picture of Clytemnestra – it is always possible to say that hatred is also present in her.

3.1 Clytemnestra's Desire for Revenge

I have established in the previous chapters that Clytemnestra's character is configured as angry at the chorus in the passages that I will be analysing here.¹⁹⁵ I take that analysis as a starting point for the present discussion. My interest here is to explore how desire for punishment is represented. The present discussion aims to shed light on (1) whether desire is incorporated in the representation of anger and (2) how this happens. The latter issue relates to questions such as the degree of explicitness of desire, the metaphors used to convey it, the shape it takes, and how it might relate to other emotions.

As mentioned above, the desire to harm Agamemnon as a way of revenge appears in various forms in Clytemnestra's portrayal. The way in which desire appears as a relevant element in the characterisation of anger in the *Agamemnon* follows a dramatic structure that goes from subtle insinuations to explicit expressions. After having claimed that Troy had fallen to the Greeks, Clytemnestra makes a series of ambiguous remarks about the conditions for the army to get back safely (that is to say, not offending gods). She skilfully uses conditionals that could be read either as hopes about the events or as counter-factual statements about those same events. For example, she states that if the winning army behaves properly without offending any god, there should not be further dangers to be faced (*Ag* 338-40):¹⁹⁶

εἰ δ' εὖ σέβουσι τοὺς πολισσούχους θεοὺς
τοὺς τῆς ἀλούσης γῆς θεῶν θ' ἰδρύματα,
οὐ τὰν ἐλόντες αὐθις ἀνθαλοῖεν ἄν.

If she does not know that, on the contrary, the winning army has behaved hubristically, she must at least be aware that that is the most likely situation.

¹⁹⁵ See Chapter 1, pp. 73-8. Even though there is no strict causal relationship between anger and overt violence, a desire for aggression, harm, or destruction is usually involved in the emotion (Törestad, 1990).

¹⁹⁶ And probably from ὡς δ' εὐδαίμονες (*Ag* 336), as this may be an allusion to the commonplace notion that nobody can be said to be happy until dead (Rose, 1958, p. 29; Raeburn & Thomas, 2011, p. 107).

While we do not know what exactly Clytemnestra knows, as discussed in Chapter 1 (p. 70), she is portrayed as a well-informed queen who is not naïve about war. The same happens when she expresses the hope that the army will not be greedy and take goods in excess, so they will not enrage the gods and will have a safe return (ἔρωσ δὲ μή τις πρότερον ἐμπίπτη στρατῶ / πορθεῖν ἢ μὴ χρή, κέρδεσιν νικωμένους *Ag* 341-2). Here she is, again, playing with a hidden counter-factual; she either knows this is not the case or hopes that it is not – the latter being Lloyd-Jones' (1962, p. 193) and Peradotto's (1969a, p. 11) suggested interpretations. There is a further ambiguity, for even if she is being honest in expressing hopes that the army will be back safely, and Agamemnon with them, she has a 'welcome' prepared for him. After all, if Agamemnon dies on his way back, she will be deprived of the opportunity to kill him in the specific way in which she wants him to die. This is suggested by the last sequence of equivocal messages when she points out that if the army returned without performing any sacrilegious act, the pain of the dead would not be appeased (ἐγρηγορὸς τὸ πῆμα τῶν ὀλωλότων / γένοιτ' ἄν *Ag* 346-7).¹⁹⁷ Up to this point, she is expressing the same type of veiled message as the previous lines – she is giving conditions that most likely are not going to be met by the army and that she probably does not want to be met. She links these conditions to the appeasement of the dead, an ambiguous reference which could point either to Iphigenia or to the Argives and Trojans deceased in war – the latter being the interpretation that the chorus give (Denniston-Page *ad loc*). She is, thus, giving a veiled warning that the dead will not be appeased. This warning is strengthened by a further ambiguity as she adds 'if no unexpected obstacle emerges' (εἰ πρόσπαια μὴ τύχοι κακά *Ag* 347), which she knows to be what in fact is going to happen. Furthermore, since the anger of the gods and that of the dead require human agency as a rule, she is also hinting at her own role as the agent of that anger.

¹⁹⁷ In the same fashion, she will later say when persuading him to walk on the tapestry, 'may *dikē* bring him [Agamemnon] into his home' (*Ag* 911).

The sequence of ambiguities just described presents Clytemnestra as being almost friskily playful with the chorus as she waits for her husband's arrival. She speaks of the idea of him being punished with a level of detachment and enjoyment that places her, from the very beginning of the trilogy, as a treacherous woman waiting to kill her husband. Her treacherousness is, therefore, constructed upon an understanding of her ultimate desire to murder her husband, which is at the centre of the conceptualisation of her anger. While from the perspective of the chorus the ambiguity of her words increases a few lines later when she says that she prefers Agamemnon's homecoming to other blessings (πολλῶν γὰρ ἐσθλῶν τήνδ' ὄνησιν εἰλόμην *Ag* 350), from the perspective of the audience the ambiguity decreases, showing clearly that she is taking pleasure in thinking of the possibility of taking revenge.

Clytemnestra's covert warnings regarding punishment will be echoed by the herald who repeatedly speaks of retributive justice. He reports that Agamemnon destroyed Troy with the mattock of Zeus the Avenger (δικηφόρος *Ag* 525)¹⁹⁸ just before confirming Clytemnestra's hidden hopes that the Greek did actually not behave properly regarding the gods at Troy (βωμοὶ δ' ἄιστοι καὶ θεῶν ἰδρύματα *Ag* 527).¹⁹⁹ The herald, in a seemingly naïve way, alternates this report about how the Greeks devastated Troy, temples included, with remarks on the fact that gods do not forgive sacrilegious acts. He even exemplifies this by showing that, as a matter of retributive justice for a theft (ὀφλῶν γὰρ ἀρπαγῆς τε καὶ κλοπῆς δίκην *Ag* 534), Paris and his family had to pay double the price for the damage caused and the affront to Zeus (διπλᾶ δ' ἔτεισαν Πριαμίδαι θάμάρτια *Ag* 537). This example anticipates that Clytemnestra will strike Agamemnon in a parody of a libation to Zeus. The herald, in his enthusiasm for being back home after

¹⁹⁸ The connection between the herald's words and Clytemnestra's is suggested by Goldhill (1984, p. 50).

¹⁹⁹ Although the line has been doubted as spurious (Fraenkel *ad loc*; Rose, 1958, p. 41; Raeburn & Thomas (2011, p. 125), there are strong arguments in favour of keeping it as authentic (Lloyd-Jones *ad loc*; Denniston-Page *ad loc*; Raeburn & Thomas *ad loc*). As Peradotto (1969a, p. 11) has noted, the line matches Clytemnestra's words in *Ag* 399.

war, shows his ignorance of the actual atmosphere that reigns in Argos. In fact, as we know, in the palace an avenging wrath awaits (μίμνει γὰρ φοβερὰ παλίνορτος / οἰκονόμος δολία μνάμων μῆνις τεκνόποινος *Ag* 154-5), and in the city the angry talk of the people asks for retribution (βαρεῖα δ' ἀστῶν φάτις ξὺν κότῳ: / δημοκράντου δ' ἀράς τίνει χρέος *Ag* 456-7; πᾶσα γὰρ πόλις βοᾷ *Ag* 1106). While the herald gives the information in a way that conveys a reticence to talk about certain things, he still seems to believe that he can present the war in a somewhat positive fashion to the demos. His discourse proposes letting the harm suffered due to war go, on account of the honour of winning it (*Ag* 567-73):²⁰⁰

τί ταῦτα πενθεῖν δεῖ; παροίχεται πόνος:
παροίχεται δέ, τοῖσι μὲν τεθνηκόσιν
τὸ μήποτ' αὐθις μηδ' ἀναστῆναι μέλειν.
ἡμῖν δὲ τοῖς λοιποῖσιν Ἀργείων στρατοῦ

The herald's words might be an expression of his naïveté, but they might also form part of a more strategic discourse about the need for being prepared to forgive what has happened in the past and to look forward for the sake of the city.²⁰¹ These words contrast with the more general idea, prevailing in Clytemnestra's perspective, that there is a residue from the past that cannot simply be expelled, and whose consequences are still to come. The herald is, thus, inadvertently providing the supplementary information that makes Clytemnestra's ambiguities clearer to the audience of the play. Furthermore, she is open about her joy at the news brought by the herald, and says she will receive her honourable husband in the best possible way (ὅπως δ' ἄριστα τὸν ἐμὸν αἰδοῖον πόσιν / σπεύσω πάλιν μολόντα δέξασθαι *Ag* 600-1). She expresses herself with an irony that anticipates the erotic element with which her crime will be configured later in the speech, making the desiderative element of her anger clear. Her 'welcome' is explained by:

²⁰⁰ I follow Fraenkel's and Denniston-Page's editions in placing lines 570-2 after 573.

²⁰¹ For an extensive discussion on the role of prohibitions against recalling certain issues of the past in order to preserve the order of the *polis*, see Loraux (2002).

'what can be more pleasant for a woman than her husband's arrival?' (τί γὰρ / γυναικὶ τούτου φέγγος ἥδιον δρακεῖν, / ἀπὸ στρατείας ἀνδρὶ σῶσαντος θεοῦ / πύλας ἀνοίξει; *Ag* 601-4). The erotic suggestion becomes clearer as she tells the herald to pass on the message to her husband that his wife is waiting at home as faithful as ever (γυναῖκα πιστὴν *Ag* 606), not only a blatant lie, but also one that she seems to particularly enjoy, as she repeats it when Agamemnon is back by saying that Orestes represents the unbroken marital seal (κύριος πιστωμάτων *Ag* 878) – which is untrue on more than one level as she has had Aegisthus as a lover. The element of pleasure, which is strongly linked to desire, is at the centre of her portrayal as the crime is about to happen, suggesting an element of mental anticipation of it.

Similarly, there are several elements in Clytemnestra's later speech that indicate her enjoyment at recalling and describing to the chorus how she killed Agamemnon and Cassandra. When she appears to the eyes of the elders with the two corpses, she boasts success (οὔτω δ' ἔπραξα *Ag* 1380). She does not feel any necessity to hide herself after what she has done, and there is no element of shame or remorse. On the contrary, there is an element of exhibitionism in her behaviour. She is happy to be seen with the two corpses, and to speak out about how and why she killed without remorse. It is this attitude that especially unsettles the chorus, as the first thing that they express on seeing her with the two corpses is their repulsion at her language and insolence (θαυμάζομέν σου γλῶσσαν, ὡς θρασύστομος *Ag* 1399).

Despite the chorus' expressions of shock and horror, Clytemnestra continues to relate how she accomplished the murder giving details that present her as a woman who has subjugated her husband in a denigrating manner. She narrates how she trapped Agamemnon in such a way that he could neither escape nor defend himself from his fate (ὡς μήτε φεύγειν μήτ' ἀμύνεσθαι μόρον *Ag* 1381), 'like a fish' (ὡσπερ ἰχθύων *Ag* 1382), in an enormous garment (ἄπειρον (...) πλοῦτον εἴματος κακόν *Ag* 1382-3), like a fishing net (ἀμφίβληστρον *Ag* 1382). The imagery of the net has been

connected with hunting, ritual and war (Lebeck, 1971, p. 63)²⁰² suggesting a parodic resemblance between Clytemnestra and a boastful hunter or warrior.²⁰³ This imagery adds an element of pride to the portrayal of her gratification at her success, that does not go unnoticed by the chorus who are quick to condemn it (κομπάζεις λόγον *Ag* 1400). The emphasis (three adjectives and a substantive in apposition) placed by Clytemnestra on the description of the artefact used for the murder suggest the importance of it, as well as her contentment at how it worked – it was all around him (περιστιχίζω *Ag* 1383).²⁰⁴ Although she begins her narration providing those elements that help the chorus and the audience of the play to understand what went on inside the house, she is quickly (by line 1387) giving information that is not needed for a simple statement of facts. Rather, the level of detail and the specific imagery serve the additional purpose of recalling and expressing her enjoyment at what she did. The description of Agamemnon as a ‘trapped fish’ shows her satisfaction in having him under her power. This is also clear from her remark that after making sure that Agamemnon had no way to escape from her, she stabbed him twice, he cried twice, his legs gave way, and she stabbed him again (*Ag* 1384-87):

παίω δέ νιν δίς: κὰν δυοῖν οἰμώγμασιν

²⁰² The image of the net has attracted a good deal of critical discussion due to its centrality in the play. Lebeck (1971, p. 63) points out that the image of the net and the hunt works by linking Agamemnon’s murder to the capture of Troy. For other accounts of the net metaphor in the trilogy, see Stanford (1942); Vernant & Vidal-Naquet (1990, pp. 141-59).

²⁰³ Stanford (1942, p. 26) notes that Aeschylus is drawing on Homer’s description of Menelaus’ delight at being granted a prize at Patroclus’ funeral games (*//* XXIII, 597-9). He also suggests (pp. 32-3) that Clytemnestra’s words at 1382 may have been taken from Ibycus (*fr.* 7, 3-4), perverting the original sense of the phrase.

²⁰⁴ Zeitlin (1965, p. 488) has argued that the emphasis on the net is an example of how Aeschylus goes from a metaphorical expression (of entanglement, in this case) to the concrete (the robe as a device for trapping and killing). Zeitlin’s point is interesting since the net also acts as a concretion of a metaphor for temporality and iteration in Clytemnestra’s anger. The net marks for how long these ‘perforations’ have been prepared and refers back to Clytemnestra’s previous words (*Ag* 867-8). For a dissenting opinion about the role of the net in the lines 866-8, see Rosenmeyer (1982, p. 120).

μεθήκεν αὐτοῦ κῶλα: καὶ πεπρωκότι
τρίτην ἐπενδίδωμι, τοῦ κατὰ χθονὸς
Διὸς νεκρῶν σωτήρος εὐκταίαν χάριν

It has been convincingly argued (Zeitlin, 1965, p. 464) that the third stab, which is a metaphor for a perverted ritual, follows a pattern throughout the trilogy.²⁰⁵ However, there are other elements involved.²⁰⁶ The third stab, that comes after Agamemnon has fallen, is unnecessary for the purpose of killing him. Its gratuitous nature indicates the strength of her desire to destroy and is the sign of the fulfilment of a long-lasting desire. Clytemnestra finally, in her own way, makes Agamemnon receive as many perforations as needed to be like the net, as she had earlier suggested with irony (*Ag* 867-8).

There is a somewhat adjacent but relevant feature that has been consistently noted by commentators. The way in which Clytemnestra's narration is constructed has some rhetorical elements that make room for a performance of the scene in which she can re-enact the murder. Two aspects have been signalled in this regard. There are changes in the metre whose best explanation is to alleviate the recitation of the passage (Fraenkel *ad* 1383, Denniston-Page *ad loc* agree) and help to convey a strong emotion (Stanford, 1942, p. 121). The second aspect is the alternation of tenses (while she is narrating something in the past, she sometimes uses the present tense: as with *περιστιχίζω* *Ag* 1383). The intercalation of tenses is a known rhetorical device that places emphasis being placed on a certain part of a narration (Denniston-Page *ad loc*).²⁰⁷ As Fraenkel (*ad* 1383; Denniston-Page agree) has insightfully suggested, 'Clytemnestra lives and acts the whole story again while she tells it'. The whole sequence of acts is

²⁰⁵ Here I follow Denniston-Page's edition.

²⁰⁶ Zeitlin (1965, p. 496) has noted the characters in the *Oresteia* perform their crimes with an attitude 'which is appropriate to the spirit of joy which attends a sacrifice to the gods'. However, this interpretation has certain limitations since not all characters show the same level of joy at what they have done. The case of Clytemnestra is also particular in that her joy includes elements that are not present in a sacrifice, as I will discuss in the next section.

²⁰⁷ Another example is *ὀρώμεν* (*Ag* 659), highlighting the most exciting part in the recount of the storm.

presented in a way in which an actor can perform them (Raeburn & Thomas, 2011, *ad loc*), and thus, re-enact the crime. Besides these rhetorical elements being a good example of Aeschylus' dramatic skills and involvement with the performative aspects of tragedy, they indicate a Clytemnestra who is engrossed in her story. Just after killing her husband she recounts the facts in a way that suggests a re-enactment of the emotional state in which she killed. After doing so, she adds 'I glory in the deed' (ἐγὼ δ' ἐπέύχομαι *Ag* 1394), making manifest what was already implicit in her speech.²⁰⁸

3.2 Anger and the Erotic Imaginary

As delineated in the previous chapter (pp. 109-15), embodied cognitive theory has helped pinpoint experiential aspects of anger through the analysis of symbolic representations in the language of the trilogy. Lakoff (1987, p. 395) has noted that the metaphorical use of appetite and voraciousness is linked to the 'opponent' metaphor used for anger, where the desire for 'food'²⁰⁹ metonymically stands for the demands of the subject of anger.²¹⁰ In Homer, Achilles' anger at Patroclus' death finds expression in a desire to eat the one who caused it (Hector) raw (*//* 22.345-7); a similar expression is found conveyed by Hecuba after the death of her son (*//* 24.200-16). In the *Oresteia*, the imagery of food is also connected to vengeance and murder: Clytemnestra refers to Agamemnon as a 'fish' (*Ag* 1382), and to Cassandra as a 'side-dish' (παροψώνημα *Ag* 1447); Orestes

²⁰⁸ For a quick discussion on the pleasure of reminiscence, see Davis (1982, p. 250).

²⁰⁹ More precisely, it is cannibalism.

²¹⁰ For a full discussion of the 'opponent' metaphor see Chapter 2, p. 114. The premise at stake is that cognition depends upon the experience of having a body with all its sensorimotor capacities. This is why our conceptual apparatus reflects our sensorial experience (as well as psychological and cultural experiences). The secretion of epinephrine that is part of anger produces a feeling of excitement. A famous early experiment on emotions showed how patients, when given a dose of dopamine, could not tell whether they were experiencing anger or excitement (Schachter, S., Singer, J., & Solomon, R. L., 1962).

‘sucks blood’ from her mother’s breasts (ὥστ’ ἐν γάλακτι θρόμβον αἵματος σπάσαι *Ch* 533). Lakoff’s analysis also details how expressions of desire in general, and sexual desire in particular, are metaphorically connected to both anger and food.²¹¹ In ancient Greek literature, desire is often said to be ‘a fire’.²¹² Taillardat (1962, pp. 159-61) argues that the metaphor ‘to be consumed/burnt up’ (ἐπιτύφομαι) by desire is commonly used, and that in *Lysistrata* (839 ff.) this ‘burning desire’ is related to cooking. Burning and inflaming are used as metaphors applied to anger (1962, p. 187); the verb ἐμπίμπρημι is often involved – for example Aristophanes’ *Frogs*’ ἐμπρησθεὶς (859), pointing to *orgē*.²¹³

The language used by Clytemnestra to describe the murder has a number of elements that have an erotic tenor. It has been noted (O’Daly,

²¹¹ Examples of common imagery of sexual desire and anger present in English: ‘battle of sex’, sex as war, ‘she’s devastating’, ‘dressed to kill’, ‘what a bombshell’, ‘conquest’, ‘surrender’, ‘to be mad about/at’. Examples of sexual desire and food: ‘meat’ (= sexually the desired object), ‘sexual appetite’, ‘honey’, ‘sugar’, ‘she’s a dish’. In Spanish, ‘I ate someone’ can stand for ‘I had sex with someone’; ‘tasty’ stands for ‘good-looking’ (the same applies to Portuguese). ‘Fire’ and ‘hot’ metaphorically stand for both anger and sex in English, as with ‘inflame’. Lloyd-Jones (1962, p. 193) reads that ‘in Clytemnestra’s mind the fire from Ida’ in the beacon speech is an allusion to ‘the avenging fire of Zeus’. Gantz (1977, p. 33) suggests that the imagery of fire in the trilogy is connected to Clytemnestra’s desire and revenge.

²¹² For double-meanings of food-vocabulary with erotic connotations, see Henderson (1975, pp. 47-8) and Pulleyn (1997, p. 566). Although these uses are attested in comedy, my point is that the conceptual connection between the two is at least plausible in Aeschylus’ time.

²¹³ For a discussion of Aristotle’s theory that anger, physiologically considered, is a boiling in the area of the heart, see Renehan (1963, p. 62). For uses of the ‘boil’ epithet for anger and desire see Padel (1992, p. 116). Allen (2000, p. 52) suggests that *orgē* refers not only to anger but also to sexual passions. Allen (2003, p. 82) argues for a connection between the cognate *orgāō* and sexual desire and with ripe fruit or land. She draws attention to the connection between *orgē* and fertility in Hippocrates. Harris (2003, p. 122) denies the etymological connection suggested by Allen, but acknowledges that ‘occasionally’ *orgē* and *erōs* are linked, due to the fact that both of them were considered as strong driving forces (or motivations) behind human action, as things to be resisted by women, and because *erōs* frequently leads to angry emotions. Thumiger (2013, pp. 35-6) argues that *erōs* is used as a metaphor for an undetermined destructive passion in tragedy.

1985, pp. 6-10) that her use of words is not only persuasive and treacherous, but that it also has a disturbing element of the perverted and blasphemous. The disquieting aspect of her language has to do with erotic undertones placed in contexts of murder. Clytemnestra herself is presented throughout the *Oresteia* as an overtly eroticised character, which is in turn helped by the knowledge of her sexual involvement with Aegisthus already insinuated in the beacon speech.²¹⁴ The chorus of slave-women speak of Clytemnestra's all-daring passion (παντόλμους ἔρωτας *Ch* 597) and of desire that should not be desired²¹⁵ that overpowers women (θηλυκρατῆς ἀπέρωτος ἔρωσ παρανικῆ *Ch* 600). This characterisation of Clytemnestra is strongly connected to her dominant character and her enjoyment of power (Zeitlin, 1965; Foley, 2001). The language of the *Oresteia* plays around that triad – sexual desire, revenge, will to power – particularly in reference to Clytemnestra. Although this triad is not necessarily connected to anger, it acquires particular preponderance in the scene that follows Agamemnon's death, which is a scene, as previously shown, charged with anger. In what follows, I argue that the representation of Clytemnestra's anger is importantly informed by erotic imagery, as when she talks of her desire to lick blood (ἔρωσ αἱματολοιχὸς *Ag* 1478).²¹⁶ This responds to a conceptualisation of the emotion that incorporates pleasure and desire, and that it is part of a non-arbitrary pattern coherent with the experience of the emotion.

As I argued with regard to Clytemnestra's expressions of desire for revenge, her hedonistic and erotic undertones begin as insinuations, but become more explicit expressions. The language she uses to state that she is not ashamed of recognising her past lies (οὐκ ἐπαισχυνθήσομαι *Ag*

²¹⁴ Harry (1930, pp. 53-6) noted a sensual tone already present in Clytemnestra's account of the tour of the light announcing Agamemnon's homecoming. He argues for keeping the χαρίζεσθαι (*Ag* 304) in the text, as in conveying this sense of sensuality it is coherent with the preceding πρὸς ἡδονὴν (*Ag* 287). The text, however, is highly corrupted.

²¹⁵ For text and interpretation, see Garvie *ad loc*, who argues that ἀπέρωτος ἔρωσ, here with a pejorative sense, is an oxymoron equivalent to others found in Greek tragedy.

²¹⁶ For a similar argument, see Thumiger (2013, p. 38).

1373), carries a certain sexual connotation, as it commonly refers to a transgression of the norms of behaviour and specifically sexual behaviour when applied to a woman (Goldhill, 1984, p. 89, 2004).²¹⁷ Furthermore, it echoes her previous exchange with the herald, when she asserts that her words are truthful and virtuous as they correspond to an honourable wife (τῆς ἀληθείας γέμων / οὐκ αἰσχρὸς ὡς γυναικὶ γενναίᾳ λακεῖν *Ag* 613-4),²¹⁸ which comes just after she has spoken of not knowing of the enjoyment of any other man during Agamemnon's absence (οὐδ' οἶδα τέρψιν οὐδ' ἐπίσογον φάτιν / ἄλλου πρὸς ἄνδρὸς *Ag* 610-11). The ironical touch of that 'truth' is, thus, made explicit by 'saying the opposite' (τάναντί' εἶπεῖν *Ag* 1373), or openly contradicting what she had previously said, in front of the elders. This last gesture of defiance and dismissal of the chorus advances the sense of empowerment that she will rejoice in while talking of Agamemnon's death.

The account of the events that follows conveys her satisfaction at having Agamemnon under her power by contrasting his passivity and inability to react with her own actions: he was trapped before she attacked him (*Ag* 1381); he sank down before she gave the third stab (*Ag* 1385);²¹⁹ he fell before she received a spurt of his blood (*Ag* 1388).²²⁰ The way in which she presents the facts indicates a feeling of triumph that is suggested by the

²¹⁷ For a discussion on Clytemnestra's as well as other characters' lies in the *Oresteia*, see Pontani (2007).

²¹⁸ These lines appear in the manuscript as pertaining to the chorus, but it has been widely agreed (Fraenkel *ad loc*, Lloyd-Jones *ad loc*, Denniston-Page *ad loc*) that they must pertain to Clytemnestra.

²¹⁹ As Fraenkel *ad loc* notes, *autoû* is not an expendable addition. It indicates that Agamemnon 'sank down there after the two blows without being able to move from the spot'.

²²⁰ The denigrating aspect of Agamemnon lying in the bathtub has been highlighted by O'Daly (1985, p. 4). We learn from Orestes (*Ch* 479) how humiliating this is. Clytemnestra's enjoyment of this death is still present in the *Choephoroi*. Her offering the strangers a bath and a bed in accordance with the house (*Ch* 670) carries an irony. Most notoriously, she insists on playing with double meaning in speaking of guests who ought to receive their due (*Ch* 710-4). Roth (1993, p. 9) notes that this may be an unconscious reference to what she has done, while at the same time a dramatic irony with respect to what she is going to receive.

image of ‘hunting’ brought in with the net. The vocabulary that she uses to portray this last scene (οὕτω τὸν αὐτοῦ θυμὸν ὀρμαίνει *Ag* 1388) takes similar idioms from the *Iliad*, carrying military imagery (Fraenkel *ad loc*).²²¹

As considered above, her narration of Agamemnon’s murder ends with a transfiguration of the third stab as if it were a votive offering to Zeus (Διὸς νεκρῶν σωτήρος εὐκταίαν χάριν *Ag* 1387), analogising the third libation to a fulfilment of revenge (Zeitlin, 1965). The pleasure of this fulfilment in relation to Zeus is complemented with a sexual tenor when illustrating how she received Agamemnon’s blood (Foley, 2001, p. 204; O’Daly, 1985, p. 10).²²² In her account, after expelling his soul, Agamemnon gave a sharp spurt of blood that she received like a dark shower (πεσῶν / κάκφυσιῶν ὀξεῖαν αἵματος σφαγὴν / βάλλει μ’ ἐρεμνῆ ψακάδι φοινίας ὀρόσου *Ag* 1388-90).²²³ Clytemnestra makes it explicit that the shower caused her pleasure and that the enjoyment of receiving a rain of Agamemnon’s blood is connected with images of life, fecundity, birth, nurture, growth, as well as with death and revenge.²²⁴ She renders the shower as such a pleasurable experience that she compares it to the joy of the crops receiving Zeus’ moisture and to giving birth (χαίρουσαν οὐδὲν

²²¹ Moles (1979, p. 184) agrees and stresses the metaphorical use of ‘battle’ for sex.

²²² Zeitlin (1965, p. 496) connects the exultation felt by Clytemnestra at the crime to the ‘spirit of joy which attends a sacrifice to the gods’ – a spirit of joy which is absent from Orestes’ doom. Zeitlin contrasts Clytemnestra’s self-deceit (which consists in not realising that the pleasure of vengeance will be short, and it will bring more pain, something that the chorus know well) with Orestes’ awareness that the price of vengeance is pollution. Moles (1979, p. 180) stresses that the unnaturalness of Clytemnestra is also shown by the contrast between the implicit association of joy with the image of a conjunction between Earth and Sky.

²²³ Moles (1979, pp. 184-5) has argued for an interpretation of the passage as an ejaculation of dark blood. Pulleyn (1997, p. 565) agrees. However, O’Daly (1985) has given compelling arguments to doubt this interpretation, or to ascribe to Clytemnestra the intention of giving her words that meaning. O’Daly does not deny the erotic tenor in Clytemnestra’s words altogether, but thinks they are sexualised in a different way.

²²⁴ For association between reaping a good harvest (θερίζω), blood (βροτοῦς) and destruction in Aeschylus, see *Supp* 636. Moles (1979, p. 182) considers some mythical fertilising properties of blood.

ἦσσαν ἢ διοσδότη / γάνει σπορητὸς κάλυκος ἐν λοχεύμασιν²²⁵ *Ag* 1391-2).²²⁶ With the strong sexual hints here it is not surprising that some scholars have sought a more graphic and physiologically literal interpretation of the image of her enjoyment.²²⁷ However, the relevant question here is not so much about the precise allusion to sex at stake, but about the relationship between this joy, with its erotic tonalities, and the satisfaction of her longheld anger.

Clytemnestra's reference to pleasure and murder also applies to Cassandra, who is said to be a side-dish to her luxurious bed (ἐμοὶ δ' ἐπήγαγεν / εὐνήσ παροψώνημα τῆς ἐμῆς χλιδῆς *Ag* 1446-7).²²⁸ This passage has also received attention for its ambiguity and for the problematic nature of vocabulary employed.²²⁹ Fraenkel (*ad loc*) has doubts about the authenticity of *eunēs* because Clytemnestra must be saying that Cassandra enhanced Clytemnestra's own pleasure, which he thinks makes little sense.²³⁰ O'Daly (1985, p. 14) agrees that the statement has 'inarticulate

²²⁵ For a discussion on the metaphorical allusion of λοχεύμασιν with κάλυκος, see Morgan (1992), interpreting the pleasure as connected to giving birth rather than to ejaculation.

²²⁶ This expression of pleasure (*Ag* 1391-2) alludes to *Iliad* 23.597 (Fraenkel *ad loc*; Denniston-Page *ad loc*), transfiguring an image of joy and life into one of fierce killing.

²²⁷ Moles (1979, p. 181) notes that sowing imagery (σπορητὸς) is also used to refer to sexual intercourse. His point that there is a certain irony in the passage with regards to the idealisation of the joy of the sexual encounter between spouses separated for a long time – the 'sexual' encounter is rather different between these spouses.

²²⁸ For uses of 'bed' connoting sex, see Sander (2013, p. 136). It is a standard metonymy in Greek tragedy.

²²⁹ One source of discussion is whether Agamemnon brought this luxury or Cassandra either of them can be the subject of ἐπήγαγεν. Fraenkel *ad loc* thinks it is Cassandra, Denniston-Page *ad loc* and Pulleyn (1997) remain indecisive, Lloyd-Jones *ad loc* translates Agamemnon as the subject, and Willi (2002, p. 157) agrees with the latter. Lloyd-Jones translates 'Agamemnon's bed' but does not provide a justification for this. Fraenkel's interpretation seems the one that makes more sense since Cassandra has been the subject in the previous lines and there is no indication of a change of subject.

²³⁰ Fraenkel gives, as a second argument for doubting the word, that 'it is difficult to imagine Clytemnestra speaking of the joys of her bed' as 'she remains the queen'. Yet this, as Lloyd-Jones *ad loc* points out, seems to be

meaning', however his suggestion seems even more convoluted.²³¹ The passage makes perfect sense, rendering it as Fraenkel suggests, but without taking *eunēs* out: Cassandra brought pleasure to Clytemnestra's bed – meaning she enjoyed Cassandra in the same way in which she enjoyed Agamemnon: denigrating and murdering her.²³² Revenge, in Clytemnestra's mind, is conceptually associated with erotic pleasure.

The denigrating way in which she refers to Cassandra as the captive prophetess and yet the one who suits both Agamemnon and the sailors (θεσφατηλόγος / πιστή ξύνευνος, ναυτίλων δὲ σελμάτων / ἰσοτριβής *Ag* 1441-3) is part of her enjoyment. Despite arguments over the precise connotation of *isotribēs* here,²³³ it is in many contexts a phallic word related

an insufficient reason to reject the term. Fraenkel's very conclusion, that her lust is not sexual but for revenge, is a good example of how in modern English we (unconsciously) employ a sexual metaphor for anger. Raeburn & Thomas (2011, *ad loc*) think that the sense of the passage is that Clytemnestra will be able to enjoy sex with Aegisthus better once she has killed Agamemnon (however it is not clear how this would apply to Cassandra).

²³¹ *Eunēs* taken objectively, translating 'delight *in me*' (that is to say, Cassandra brought a side-dish to our bed, an addition to my charms). Willi's (2002, p. 157) solution, that τῆς ἐμῆς χλιδῆς refers to Clytemnestra as the one who provides pleasure rather than the one who gets it (with hints of a *ménage à trois*) is not compelling.

²³² Pulleyn (1997, pp. 565-6) has suggested that Clytemnestra is actually saying that she obtained sexual pleasure – the sexual pleasure that Agamemnon expected to obtain from Cassandra – in killing her. Similarly, Debbar (2010, p. 137) proposes that Clytemnestra, 'whose blood-lust is equated with sexual appetite', metaphorically rapes Cassandra. While I agree about the metaphorical use of 'sex' to express the experience of revenge, my suggestion is that this is due to the way in which our conceptual system is grounded in our bodies. This is rather different from saying that Clytemnestra is expressing that she obtained sexual pleasure or that she 'metaphorically raped' Cassandra.

²³³ Young (1964, p. 2), Koniaris (1980) and Tyrrell (1980) have argued for the plausibility of the word having acquired some obscene connotation like 'rubbing Agamemnon's erection' in this scene. They both believe that *isotribēs* originally pertained to male harbour jargon, which would be coherent with Clytemnestra's knowledge of the route from Troy to Argos, and with her stereotyped manliness. This view is followed by Willi (2002, p. 155), who provides compelling evidence about the use of vocabulary associated with comedy in the trilogy. Contrary to this interpretation, Neitzel (1984) and O'Daly (1985, p. 13) argue that Clytemnestra is attempting to denigrate

to agricultural and nautical uses of sexual imagery.²³⁴ Clytemnestra is clearly referring to Cassandra in a denigrating way, comparing her with Agamemnon both with regards to their sexual behaviour and to their death. In both cases, the pleasure in punishing is related to having power over the one they want to punish.

The iteration of the vocabulary of lust in relation to punishment, denigration, and death continues, for example, in the comparison between Helen and Clytemnestra in their destructiveness and lustfulness.²³⁵ It is interesting to note that when Clytemnestra says that her lust for blood comes from the spirit that assails the family (ἐκ τοῦ γὰρ ἔρωσ ἀίματολοιχὸς / νεῖρα τρέφεται *Ag* 1478-9), evoking the image of an open wound that does not heal (πρὶν καταλῆξαι / τὸ παλαιὸν ἄχος, νέος ἰχώρ *Ag* 1479-80), she is not only connecting bloodshed with pleasure but also with pain. The fact that the chorus reply to her words, acknowledging that it is indeed a spirit of wrath (δαίμονα καὶ βαρύμηνιν αἰνεῖς *Ag* 1482), makes explicit that anger is connected to these pleasures and pains. The notion that anger and retribution about something that has not been resolved in the past are connected to a strong desire to retaliate will also be expressed in the form of the *Alástōr* and the *Erinýes*.

3.3 The Erinýes' Desire for Retaliation

The *Erinýes'* anger represents, in important respects, a continuation of Clytemnestra's, and is consistent with the idea that desire is a fundamental element. In the trilogy, their anger is characterised by a desire to exact indiscriminate revenge and to destroy to an unparalleled degree. They threaten Apollo with their being grievous company for the land when dishonoured (καὶ μὴν βαρεῖαν τήνδ' ὀμιλίαν χθονὸς / ξύμβουλός εἰμι

Cassandra, but that *isotribēs* does not carry the connotation proposed by Koniaris and Tyrrell.

²³⁴ See Borthwick (1981, p. 2). Contra, Fraenkel *ad loc*; Lloyd-Jones (1978).

²³⁵ For a general discussion of an understated presence of *erōs*, in connection to *átē* and *húbris* in Aeschylus, see Serra (2002). The image can be seen in Aeschylus' *Suppliants* under the shape of lascivious Ares (μάχλον Ἄρη 635).

μηδαμῶς ἀτιμάσαι *Eu* 711-2; similarly, *Eu* 719-20), implying that its people will pay for the dishonour that they might receive from the young gods. The threat is further strengthened after they know the result of the vote. They say they will release poison (ἰὸν *Eu* 782), causing retributive grief (ἀντιπενθῆ *Eu* 782), infertility (ἄφορον *Eu* 784; ἄτεκνος *Eu* 785), and a fatal-to-human stain (βροτοφθόρους κηλίδας *Eu* 787). The image of the effects of the *Erinýes'* anger is a counterpart to Clytemnestra's enjoyment of Agamemnon's death. While the evocation of fecundity is part of the avenger's pleasure in the satisfaction of desire, the evocation of infertility accompanies the effect of anger on others. In the words of Apollo, the *Erinýes* themselves embody infertility as they are old maidens and no god or human wants to have intercourse with them (ἕπνῳ πεσοῦσαι δ' αἰ κατάπυστοι κόραι, / γραῖαι παλαιαὶ παῖδες, αἷς οὐ μείγνυται / θεῶν τις οὐδ' ἄνθρωπος οὐδὲ θήρ ποτε *Eu* 68-70); the opposite of Clytemnestra. The theme of infertility is strengthened by the repetition of words related to soil or land (γῆ *Eu* 781; χθονὶ *Eu* 783; πλουτόχθων *Eu* 947) in relation to their vengeance and by their later promise of not affecting its fertility (*Eu* 938-48).

This portrayal of the *Erinýes* as creatures threatening to bring infertility is complementary to that of them as desiring vengeance (ὀργὰν ποινᾶς *Eu* 981) and relishing human blood (ὄσμῃ βροτείων αἱμάτων με προσγελᾶ *Eu* 253). Cassandra presents them not only as drinkers of blood (πεπωκῶς (...) βρότειον αἷμα *Ag* 1189), but as luxuriating in blood (κῶμος *Ag* 1189) and being filled with boldness by it (θρασύνεσθαι πλέον *Ag* 1188). The *Erinýes* refer to Orestes as food (βόσκημα δαιμόνων *Eu* 302), and as a feast (δαίνυμι *Eu* 305), implying that they find it pleasurable to hunt him (like Clytemnestra, they are also hounds), and eat him. The pleasure involved in punishing is visceral in kind, almost as if it were the alleviation of a need, as they 'sup greedily up' (ρόφέω *Eu* 264). The oxymoron they use, that his undrinkable or unpalatable blood nourishes them (ἀπὸ δὲ σοῦ / φερούμαν βοσκὰν πώματος δυσπότου *Eu* 266), reflects the notion of anger involving a desire for 'undrinkable' things that has been at play during the trilogy.

3.4 Conclusions

As we have seen, anger is not merely a matter of perception and evaluation. It also has an appetitive element; it is a drive. And the satisfaction of this appetitive element involves pleasure, whether this is expressed or experienced in anticipation or in consummation. Aristotle recognises the importance of the appetitive element as a motivator of action in *De Anima* and pleasure as the object of the desire in his account of anger in *Nicomachean Ethics*. This aspect of anger plays a prominent role in Aeschylus' representation of anger in the *Oresteia*. Sometimes the desire for punishment or revenge are made explicit in their connection to anger. However, Aeschylus' use of metaphor, narrative and dramatic irony proves a very effective way of mirroring the inner life of the individual and representing obliquely the operation (as distinct from the causation) of the emotion. It is in the latter case that the body becomes manifest, as a lived experiential structure, in the representation of emotions.

Chapter 4

Anger as a Social Phenomenon

The previous chapters have looked at the dramatic representation of anger in the *Oresteia*, treating the emotion mainly as a mental and primarily internal experience which is predominantly understood as a function of the subjects of the emotion, their perceptions of reality, their beliefs, and their desires. As noted in the introduction (p. 47), anger is also a social experience. It is not only a function of individuals but, importantly, also a function of the social environment in which it takes place.²³⁶ This chapter investigates the dramatisation of anger approached as a socially embedded phenomenon, not only in the sense that it responds to social norms and systems of belief, but also in the stronger sense that it is continuously affected by and generated in a social environment.²³⁷ The chapter will address two main questions: (1) the apparent dichotomy between considering anger as a social phenomenon and as an ‘inner’ phenomenon of individuals; (2) the representation of anger as an entity that possesses its subjects and, in some way, isolates them from society. Continuing with the methodology used in

²³⁶ For certain authors in psychoanalysis, the social context has also been granted as a fundamental aspect for the human psyche. As Alford (1990, p. 180) has acknowledged: ‘[Melanie] Klein makes relationships, rather than drives, primary. In so doing, Klein provides support to those who would challenge social theories based on the Freudian assumption – itself evidently an expression of the liberal individualism of the Enlightenment – that individuals are driven monads, using others merely as objects to meet their needs’.

²³⁷ I am therefore not only acknowledging Konstan’s (2003) idea that anger in Greek literature implies a social arena, but also taking it further in line with perspectives from social psychology – see for example Smith, Fischer, Vignoles & Bond (2013). Gill (1996, 8, 43-4, 68, 71-2) has extensively argued that Aristotle’s ethics presuppose an individual within a community; a point that Nussbaum (2013) has also made. The adoption of the *right disposition* by means of education is shaped by the community in which the individual partakes. This external regulation does not invalidate the claim that emotions were perceived as internal phenomena for it points to the level of foundation of the Aristotelian ethics in which the *telos* of human life is understood within a community.

the previous chapters, I will be paying special attention to the metaphors and symbolic representations present in literary depictions of anger. Two arguments will be at the centre of this discussion. One will contend that the representation of anger in the *Oresteia* gives account of both aspects of the emotion: the interactive one ruled by social codes and the interior one related to how the emotion is physically and mentally experienced. It is also suggested by the text that these two aspects are internalised as a holistic experience. The other argument will see the trilogy conveying a paradoxical aspect of anger. While the emotion serves a social purpose, it has an isolating effect on the individual.

Framing anger as a social phenomenon presumes that it can be experienced and conceptualised as involving multiple agents and developing in a complex situation involving various environmental factors. The idea that anger serves a social purpose that needs not be conscious has received attention from different disciplines, ranging from cognitive and evolutionary theories to empirical and anthropological findings (Sober & Wilson, 1999, p. 22; Lindholm, 2007, p. 37; Briggs, 2010, p. 63). Anger has been largely understood as a social tool for setting boundaries and denouncing what is considered abusive or wrong (Travis 1989).²³⁸ In addition, Solomon (1973, pp. 32-4) proposes the idea of emotions as actions, conceptualised as reactions to events, in contrast to the traditional idea of emotions as occurrences, conceptualised as caused by events. This view provides a framework in which anger is typically, if not necessarily, a reaction to something (the intentional object of the emotions as discussed in Chapter 2, pp. 104-5). This view therefore presupposes a sense of pertaining to a social environment whose rules of behaviour become subverted in some respect. Solomon (1973, p. 33; 2002, pp. 135-6) argues that anger should be

²³⁸ On the strategic role of emotions and how anger can be useful in conflict resolution from the perspective of Game Theory and Evolution, see Frank (1988).

understood fundamentally in relation to its purpose for human interactions since it presupposes a social environment with a set of rules.²³⁹

Anger, conceived as an interactive progression, plays the social role of a transaction, or a channel of communication between subjects. These considerations provide a tool to explore the representation of anger in Greek tragedy in greater depth. It also allows us to explore how this notion of anger might be compatible with an understanding of the emotion as a personal experience which is fundamentally dependent on the individual's mind and body. The relevance of exploring anger in the *Oresteia* through this lens lies in that we are talking of a genre that is largely concerned with intersubjective situations. Social psychology recognises emotions as depending on systems of interactions rather than on individuals, which is also a key concern in tragedy. There are various angles from which one can look at anger as a social phenomenon. The idea that anger can be stimulated and manipulated suggests expectations about our ability to influence others' mind-states. This is an indication not only of a sense of agency, but also of ideas about behaviour and emotional processes – the characters in the play operate with a certain conception of how others' minds work. This chapter focuses on anger understood as a function of the environment and of systems of interactions. Gender will be a key aspect in this discussion. It will also consider anger as subjected to notions of social hierarchies, posing a challenge to the view held in recent scholarship that anger is strongly associated with a certain social status.

²³⁹ Similarly, Travis (1982, p. 49) describes anger as serving the culture's rules. She conceives anger as the reaction to someone who breaks those rules, and as determined by the belief that the damage caused can be restored by some retaliatory act. For the idea of anger as a social phenomenon and serving an evolutionary purpose, see also Sober & Wilson (1999).

4.1 Two methodological remarks

4.1.1 Speech-acts

The view that language can be understood as a system that operates deductively, in which meaning is uniquely given by semantics and a set of rules (grammar), has received repeated criticism in pragmatic and socially-oriented approaches to language. For example, Austin's (1975) and Searle's (1979) speech-act theories consider language as having three different functions: locutionary (to mean something); illocutionary (to create what is meant, as resigning with a 'I resign'); and perlocutionary (to create something different but related to what is meant, as making people run with a 'Fire!').²⁴⁰ It is important to bear in mind that while semantics is concerned with the content of an act of speech, performativity is concerned with its illocutionary force, which is a function of the specific context in which a sentence is uttered. For 'you're standing on my foot' uttered in the London tube to be understood as 'get off my foot' and not as a mere report, the hearer must infer the intention of the speaker, and this is not only a matter of the semantic content of the statement, but of certain conventions and assumptions related to communication. In this case, 'performative' means that the statement is active and affects the environment in which it is uttered, even when it has the form of a proposition. For this generative and consequential dimension of language there needs to be a speaker who relies upon certain conventions that give advocacy to the act – for 'I do' to be the act of marriage, it has to be uttered in a certain occasion in front of the necessary people. According to this view, language acquires specific functions depending on the circumstances – utterance being a fundamental one – whereas the weight of semantic definitions lessens when establishing the meaning of a sentence. Speech-act theories presume interactions between speaker and his

²⁴⁰ I am explicitly restricting the understanding of performativity to Austin's and Searle's view. Later developments of the theory tend to regard all acts of speech as speech acts – I do not agree with (or find helpful) that view for my purpose here.

addressees and thus has a strong social implication, such as awareness and anticipation of receivers and reactions to utterance.

As Martin (1989, p. 146) has pointed out, Homeric poetry anticipates performative theories of languages ‘in treating speech as act, part of an economy in which talk about one’s action is as important as deeds themselves’. When referring to the type of words that a character utters as ‘winged’ or ‘provocative’, Homer is showing awareness of how speech can have a variety of functions that go beyond isolated semantic considerations. In Homeric epics, words openly convey the intention and the effect that they produce in their environment. We do not normally find the same meta-language of speech indicating the intention with which words are uttered in Aeschylus.²⁴¹ The genre does not have the same need of them, given the absence of a narrator and performance being achieved mainly by means of acting, singing and dancing. As I will discuss, in Aeschylus, nevertheless, we also find some acknowledgment of a performative aspect of language. It is essential to his plays that the words uttered by his characters act upon, and affect, both the internal audience and the external one. Acknowledging a performative function in language is especially relevant to Greek tragedy, which is a genre in which linguistic interaction is central: words are the primary, and sometimes sole, medium of interaction between characters and the main way in which they affect situational change.

Furthermore, the effect of words on both the internal and external audience is fundamental in Aeschylus. He belongs to a culture in which orality is central to many cultural institutions. As a consequence of this, they show an awareness of the relationship between the audience and the spoken word that is an important part of a tradition involving different genres, poetry among them. One way in which this performative power of words upon the audience is evidenced in the text is through irony.²⁴² Searle (1979, p. 77)

²⁴¹ An exception in the trilogy: ‘bearers of charming words’ (θελκτηρίους / μύθους ἔχοντες *Eu* 81-2), and very similar *Supp* 1004.

²⁴² On Aristotle’s account (*EN* 4.7), irony is a sort of self-deprecatative dissimulation. The words are deceptive to the interlocutors but not to those in the know, and can, thus, lead to opposite interpretations. From a

points out that many speech acts are instances of a break between the speaker-meaning²⁴³ and the literal meaning. This is the case with irony, where what the speaker means is not the same as what the sentence means literally but is, in various ways, dependent on that. According to Searle's analysis (1979, p. 113), irony works because the utterance is such that, taken literally, it is obviously inappropriate to the situation, leading to a reinterpretation of it – the most typical reinterpretation being the one that takes the speaker-meaning as opposite of the literal one.

What has been traditionally called 'tragic irony' works in a slightly different way. The writer makes the speaker mean something for the internal audience and another thing for the external audience. Hence the external audience needs to understand both meanings for the irony to be effective. Language in this situation, beyond carrying a certain meaning, will depend on the illocutionary force which the statement wields, and thus with the ability to act upon the audience. It is therefore clear that tragic irony has a performative dimension. Even though in tragedy the spectators are not directly addressed or acknowledged, as in comedy, they are nonetheless moved to cohere as an audience with some basic shared knowledge and expectations. This is possible, among other reasons, because the spectator is reminded of the simultaneity of the real and fictional experiences involved in theatre through this break between the speaker-meaning and the literal meaning. This awareness is activated, for example, by a reminder that they all know what is about to happen in the play. Thus, when Clytemnestra, receiving her husband, comments that if he had been stabbed as many times as it had been reported to her, he would now have as many holes as a net

psychoanalytical perspective, this type of irony allows the sufferers to express their feelings without having to face the repercussions of that expression (Antze, 2003, p. 114), for example giving signs of anger that can be interpreted in a different way. Zeitlin (1985, p. 75) argues that tragic irony is a typical characterization of women, and that irony is 'tragedy's characteristic trope' in which different levels of knowledge and ignorance operate at the same time.

²⁴³ That is to say, the meaning of the word intended by the speaker.

(τέτρηται δικτύου πλέον λέγειν *Ag* 868),²⁴⁴ her speech has one function with respect to the internal audience, and a different one with respect to the external audience.²⁴⁵ For the latter, her language is not only descriptive, but also gives continuity and congruence to the play, foreshadowing the plan for the murder. Furthermore, it is conveying a non-explicit intention – even in the case that the audience still have doubts about what is going to come next, it generates suspense and anticipation. In this sense, Clytemnestra’s words have an active role that goes beyond the illocutionary one.

Akin to the understanding of tragic irony, the performative theories of language mentioned above serve as a way to unmask the force of a statement when uttered by considering its context. Threats, for example, depend to a large extent on the illocutionary force of the speech: ‘You don’t want to go’, depending on the context and on the force with which it is uttered, might be a report, a suggestion or a threat. If ‘take it as a threat’ is added on, the speech act is evidenced as such by the illocutionary verb – a necessary feature of effective threats is that the listener understands that she is being threatened. For the speech act to be successful some felicity conditions are required, as for example the belief that the one who threatens has the means to affect the threatened one. Normally, a threat is expected to have a perlocutionary effect – to stop someone from doing something, for example. This approach will help us to read the dynamics of anger in the interaction between Clytemnestra and the chorus, where a number of veiled threats play an important role.

²⁴⁴ Stanford (1942, p. 120) sees this as ‘a touch of sadistic humour’. Rosenmeyer (1982, pp. 122-39) has drawn attention to Clytemnestra’s words as a simile that turns into metaphor, when playing with the ‘as’ ‘like’ ‘so’ and ‘and’ that syntactically work as a simile turning obscure what she says. For other examples of Clytemnestra’s ironies, see Roth (1993, p. 9).

²⁴⁵ Lebeck (1971, p. 63) points out that the image of the net and the hunt works by linking Agamemnon’s murder to the capture of Troy. Zeitlin (1965, p. 488) takes this passage as an example of how Aeschylus goes from a metaphorical expression (of entanglement in this case) to the concrete: the robe as a device for killing. For a dissenting opinion about the role of the net, see Rosenmeyer (1982, p. 120).

4.1.2 Anger as a 'Transaction'

As discussed in Chapter 2 (p. 104), the human cognitive apparatus is grounded in bodily experience. For this reason, the way in which emotions are conceptualized is permeated by metaphors and symbolic representations that articulate, consciously or not, our bodily experience. Within this framework, I have been following Lakoff's 'opponent' metaphor (1987, pp. 392-4) to designate a variety of symbolic representations used to conceptualise anger. This notion conveys notions such as anger taking hold of us, being difficult to appease, and imposing demands over others. This last idea can take the form of a transaction – an apology is in some cases the 'price to pay' as a way of calming the other's anger. This relates to a widely shared perception that one cannot or should not forgive without receiving an apology, which helps to keep social cohesion (Travis, 1989). As I will discuss, in Homer, we find explicit conceptualisations of the emotion as moments of transactions, in which certain demands and conditions are placed. The subjects are then faced with the dichotomy of controlling their anger or experiencing something like falling under its power. These Homeric representations, I will argue in the next section, bear symbolic understandings of anger as an 'opponent' in Lakoff's sense. Moreover, they provide a literary precedent for similar representations found in the *Oresteia*.

4.2 Anger and Society in Homer

This section argues that the representation of anger in Homer can be read both as an internally and an externally generated phenomenon. I also argue that in either case there is a perceived reduction in the subject's agency. I will start by contextualising the emotion in relation to certain Homeric values, and then discuss two different but similar apparent dichotomies related to anger. The first presents anger as conceived either as a social experience or as an inner experience. The second sees anger either as a function of an interaction or as a function of the subject.

Given the importance attributed to *timē* in Greek culture, as attested by Homer and many other sources, the sense of losing one's prize is a highly

disruptive situation for the subject.²⁴⁶ The ample semantic spectrum of the term, which encompasses a certain position in society (it is connected to notions of honour, status, prestige, privilege, dignity, worth, belonging, deference, and also price) indicates the enormous range of social institutions and practices associated with it (Cairns, 2015, p. 645). The connection between anger and anxieties about losing *timē*, repeatedly attested by Greek literature, already places the emotion in a social environment.²⁴⁷ The reference to honour when analysing anger brings together a number of features that have been discussed in other chapters of this thesis, such as the judgment that one's *timē* has suffered an offence and the desire to respond in a retributive way to that offence. In addition, when looking at anger in Homer, considering the emotion as a system of interactions, we see that it is richly permeated with symbolic features that enlarge their understanding as individual events.

When Achilles says that anger increases like smoke in the breast of men (καὶ χόλος, ὅς τ' ἐφέηκε πολύφρονά περ χαλεπήναι, / ὅς τε πολὺ γλυκίων μέλιτος καταλειβομένοιο / ἀνδρῶν ἐν στήθεσσι ἀέξεται ἡύτε καπνός // 18.108-10), he points to an understanding of anger as an interior state.²⁴⁸ A similar image of anger as an entity that spreads through the breast is found in Sappho: σκιδναμένας ἐν στήθεσιν ὄργας πεφύλαχθαι γλῶσσαν μαψυλάκαν (Fr. 126 Diehl = 158 Voigt). *Stēthos* denotes a physiological place connected to life; it is where warriors receive mortal stabs

²⁴⁶ Chapter 1 (p. 66) discussed the relationship between honour and anger in Greek culture. As Dodds (1951, p. 17) points out, the enjoyment of *timē* is one of man's highest goods in Homeric society. This is still present in Aristotle's discussion of what the most valuable thing for men is, in *NE*, where he argues against considering honour and wealth as the highest values as most people think (οἱ μὲν γὰρ τῶν ἐναργῶν τι καὶ φανερῶν, οἷον ἡδονὴν ἢ πλοῦτον ἢ τιμὴν, ἄλλοι δ' ἄλλο 1595a23-4). For a slightly different view on values in Homeric society, see Adkins (1970, p. 74).

²⁴⁷ *Timē* is not just something that can be lost but also something that can be acknowledged and awarded mutually, and failure in this respect is also a source for anger, as discussed in Chapter 1.

²⁴⁸ As it will be clear, this is not to say that he only regards anger as an interior state. Walsh (2005, pp. 127-39), following Holoka (1983), discusses the patterns in which Homeric *chólos* emerges, is magnified, and diminishes.

in battle (*//* 5.19; *//* 5.41; *//* 8.326), and is also referred to as the container for emotions (ἔχω is usually present in many different formulations,²⁴⁹ such as ἀλλά τε καὶ μετόπισθεν ἔχει κότον, ὄφρα τελέσση, / ἐν στήθεσσι ἐοῖσι: σὺ δὲ φράσαι εἴ με σώσεις *//* 1.83). Furthermore, it is the place where *nóos* and *thumós* are contained (*//* 4.309), where *ménos* is placed by a goddess (*//* 5.125), and where θυμός and πένθος converge (*//* 18.112; *//* 22.242). *Stēthos* is used in expressions like ‘being overflowed (οὐκ ἔχαδε) by *chólos*’, as when Hera speaks of her anger at Zeus (*//* 4.24), or that the ‘heart is stirred up in the chest (θυμὸν ἐνὶ στήθεσσι ὄρινε) of the Achaeans’ by the words of Agamemnon when he aims to stimulate their desire to be at home (*//* 2.142).²⁵⁰ The idea that anger is an entity at work within the body which makes the mind and the heart swell appears repeatedly in Homer, often in the form of a digestive metaphor (ἔδου χόλος, ὅς τε καὶ ἄλλων / οἰδάνει ἐν στήθεσσι νόον πύκα περ φρονεόντων *//* 9.553; μοι οἰδάνεται κραδίη χόλω *//* 9.646).²⁵¹

The use of metaphors taken from the body to speak about emotions has been noted by Padel (1992, pp. 12-48). She has discussed in detail the conceptualisation of emotions as ‘innards’ – for example, ἥπαρ, the liver, is a place where one can feel anger, lust and fear. One of the things that she highlights is that the metaphors used in relation to the liver are not ‘seat’ or ‘container’ as with other parts of the body, but that the liver is instead said to

²⁴⁹ For the ‘body as a container’ metaphor, see Lakoff (1987); for the use of this metaphor in Greek literature, see Cairns (2003, p. 251); Walsh (2005, p. 210).

²⁵⁰ See also *//* 9.638. Adkins (1970, pp. 16-7) has noted that although *thumós* has been linked to the Latin *fumus* and the Sanskrit *dhumas*, which means ‘smoke’, it does not necessarily imply that ‘smoke’ was strictly conveyed by *thumós*, and it is worth exploring the connection between the two. *Thumós* might record elements of human experience that are associated to ‘smoke’, relating to the hot, the swirling, and the surging aspects associated with the term. In Plato’s *Cratylus* 419e, where *thumós* is derived, correctly or not, from *thúsis* (raging) and connected with boiling of the soul, the ideas of ‘hot’ and ‘boil’ are also present. Similarly, Stefanelli (2010, p. 33).

²⁵¹ For an analysis of the Homeric ‘your mother nursed you with bile’ (*//* 16.203) and its relation to the education of emotions in antiquity, see Hanson (2003).

be 'slashed' or 'eaten' by emotions. Padel (1992, p. 82) also points out that diseased swelling organs are attributed to an excess of liquid, the idea behind being the need for something to be purged. As she argues, these medical principles for treatment underlie Homer's language of feeling. Padel's suggestion establishes a conceptual system surrounding anger that is grounded both in bodily experience and in the ancient knowledge of the body in Homer. Furthermore, in her example shows a conceptualisation of the emotion that personifies it (anger 'eats'), and describes an inner process in which the individual has little power or agency.

In Homer we see an example of coexistence between the idea that anger is a highly social experience, governed by social norms and often related to one's *timē*, and the idea that it is an interior, hidden, and personal process. This argument can be strengthened further. Anger in Homer appears as a function of the subjects (their characters, desires, beliefs, etc.) and as a function of the interaction between them. In Achilles' case, the conceptualisation of anger as an interior process, that is as involuntary as an autonomic bodily function like breathing, coexists with another perception of it as an interactive process ruled by social norms, in which the subjects involved can have agency and control over these processes. In the first instance, Achilles reports that his anger was provoked (ἐχόλωσεν // 18.111) by Agamemnon's failure to behave according to the social rule (what is expected of him as a king), giving this account of his emotion in terms of his beliefs. His anger escalates and develops gradually. It is ruled by a dynamic of reciprocity – a scorn for a scorn, a threat for a threat. This episode of anger is presented in such a way that it cannot be understood outside the scene in which it takes place. It is impossible (and senseless) to tell when the subjects are expressing personal beliefs about each other (supposing, for example, that they already have a history of disagreement), and when they are reacting to the demands which the interlocutor, and the group dynamic, are imposing upon them. Achilles begins insulting Agamemnon by calling him 'greedy'/'acquisitive' (φιλοκτέανος // 1.122) due to an offence (Agamemnon's disrespect for his subordinate's physical measure of honour: female booty).

As Agamemnon continues to fail to show the respect that Achilles expects, the latter escalates the tone of his offences: ‘shameless’ and ‘dog-eyed’ (ἀναιδέες // 1.149; κυνῶπα // 1.159). When Achilles perceives Agamemnon’s demand for a compensation as a personal threat (ἀπειλέω // 1.161), he responds with a threat to abandon the combat. When Agamemnon directly attacks Achilles by calling him ‘the most hateful’ (ἔχθιστος // 1.176), asserting that he does not need him to fight, and demanding Briseis as his compensation (// 1.184), Achilles utters an oath against Agamemnon for not having honoured the best of the Achaeans (// 1.244), and withdraws from battle. This sequence shows anger as a function of a social interaction, in the sense that the emotion can be better described as the resulting behaviour of a system (that is to say, it is more than the aggregate of its parts) than a function of the appraisals (about a social situation) by the individuals involved. To understand the rules that govern that interaction, it is not enough to understand the two characters involved. One needs to apprehend the interaction itself as a system whose behavior cannot be explained looking at its isolated elements.²⁵² In other words, anger, in this passage, not only depends on two individuals and two character-traits, but also responds to a dynamic within a social system. This dynamic is a function of an interaction which often occurs before the eyes of other members of society.

Furthermore, parallel to the intensification of the tone of both adversaries’ insults, their demands from one another also increase. This pattern is coherent with the symbolic representation of anger as an ‘opponent’, which is difficult to appease and imposes demands on others, as described by Lakoff. Achilles starts by demanding to be treated, along with the other warriors, according to the rules (// 1.123), and ends up demanding

²⁵² In Chapter 1, I delineated the way in which appraisals appear in the dramatisation of anger. Since anger normally happens in a social context, those appraisals are mainly about social situations; hence honour and justice were at the centre of the discussion. Here I discuss anger not only considered as a function of the appraisals about social situations by the individuals involved, but also as a process in which the behaviour of its parts depend on many different elements.

to be recognised as the best among all. Agamemnon starts by demanding some compensation and ends up demanding the opponent's prize, Briseis.

This escalation is also accompanied by a sense of losing control, since both Agamemnon and Achilles render the episode almost as though it was an involuntary event: smoke expanding in the lungs, *átē* sent by a goddess (// 19.86; // 9.554).²⁵³ In this sense, anger is represented as an 'opponent' that can take hold of us. What begins as a decision, takes shape as the urgent need for keeping one's position. Agamemnon is clear about the reason for taking Achilles' prize: to establish who is the best, and dissuade others from competing with him (αὐτὸς ἰὼν κλισίην δὲ τὸ σὸν γέρας ὄφρ' ἐὺ εἰδῆς / ὅσον φέρτερός εἰμι σέθεν, στυγέη δὲ καὶ ἄλλος / ἴσον ἐμοὶ φάσθαι καὶ ὁμοιωθῆμεναι ἄντην // 1.185-7). Yet he, afterwards, recognises that he went too far in offending Achilles. The escalation of anger, which is ruled by the situation, is experienced by the characters as a diminution in their own sense of agency, that is to say in the perceived self-control. This is an interesting correspondence as it suggests a sense in which the individual in a social situation perceives his or her anger as a somehow external, or at least externally produced, phenomenon.²⁵⁴ The conceptualisation of anger as an external entity²⁵⁵ appears in yet another form in the *Iliad* where Achilles' anger is treated as carrying demands to be appeased, and therefore following the pattern described above.²⁵⁶

Furthermore, the emotion appears as an act of negotiation in which the subject's own value is at risk. The portrayal of anger as subject to negotiation is suggested by the way in which the embassy was carried on (παύε', ἕα δὲ χόλον θυμαλγέα: σοὶ δ' Ἀγαμέμνων / ἄξια δῶρα δίδωσι

²⁵³ On understanding *átē* as a state of mind, a 'temporarily clouding' of consciousness, attributed to a daemonic agency, see Dodds (1951, p. 5); contra, see Cairns (2012).

²⁵⁴ See the second chapter for a discussion on this aspect of the portrayal of anger.

²⁵⁵ The portrayal of anger as produced externally does not make it an external entity. However, the expression 'put anger on someone's chest' objectifies the emotion and makes it external.

²⁵⁶ For a similar discussion, see Muellner (1996, pp. 94-132).

μεταλήξαντι χόλοιο // 9.260-1). In this scene, Achilles' anger at Agamemnon is treated as a delicate 'good' – the ambassadors are careful not to play down or trivialise Achilles' anger, and we see them assigning it a price as if it was a concrete object (ἔα δὲ χόλον θυμαλγέα: σοὶ δ' Ἀγαμέμνων / ἄξια δῶρα δίδωσι μεταλήξαντι χόλοιο. // 9.260-1; εἰ μὲν γὰρ μὴ δῶρα φέροι τὰ δ' ὄπισθ' ὀνομάζοι / Ἄτρεΐδης, ἀλλ' αἰὲν ἐπιζαφελῶς χαλεπαῖνοι, / οὐκ ἂν ἔγωγέ σε μῆνιν ἀπορρίψαντα // 9.515-7). As a part of their strategy to convince Achilles, the ambassadors give examples of occasions in which it is correct to give up one's own anger. These occasions can be classified into two groups: when you are offered enough goods, so anger serves as a process of retribution, and when your anger is making your *phíloi* suffer. This second criterion is not enough on its own, at least as Phoenix presents it, for he says that he would not cease his anger if a gift were not be given in return, even if the Achaeans were in great need (// 9.518).²⁵⁷ In either case anger is understood as having its own demands in return for the damage suffered by the subject. Anger appears as much as a function of the individual (this is why Achilles is presented with some expectations from his fellow men) as a function of an interaction in which certain rules ought to be followed (there is a certain measurement of what amounts to a reasonable demand to appease Achilles' anger),²⁵⁸ and in which an escalation in the tone and the demands is portrayed.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁷ Similarly, Eurymachus tries to establish a deal of forgiveness for Odysseus' anger: χαλκόν τε χρυσόν τ' ἀποδώσομεν, εἰς ὃ κε σὸν κῆρ / ἰανθῆ: πρὶν δ' οὐ τι νεμεσσητὸν κεχολῶσθαι *Od* 22.58-9.

²⁵⁸ Some may argue that to say that anger here is serving a social purpose is not different from saying that the propositional content of anger is often about honour. Although there needs to be an overlap since reading an emotion as a social phenomenon implies reading how the individuals involved perceive that situation, the focus here is in the relational aspect of the emotion, on the fact that the literary representation of the emotion gives details that a philosophical account such Aristotle's one does not, namely that there is a process of interactions involved.

²⁵⁹ For another example of an escalation in anger, see Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* 800-12. For a discussion on escalation in oratory and its link to the sense of honour being diminished, see McHardy (2008, p. 100).

Homer thus provides an early instance in which the representation of anger as a function of a social interaction is finely integrated into an understanding of the emotion as an event that is primarily experienced by its subject. Achilles' anger serves an important social purpose, that of denouncing the abuse of the king, even though this very fact will bring negative consequences for him and for his community.²⁶⁰ In what follows, I will be using aspects of this instance, partly as a model of analysis and partly as a stepping stone, for exploring further elements present in the Aeschylean model of anger.

4.3 Escalation

The dialogue between Clytemnestra and the chorus of elders that takes place just after the murder of Agamemnon and Cassandra²⁶¹ presents similar patterns to those seen in *Iliad* I. As with Homer, there is a complex interplay between the structure of the value system and the difficulties of its application in specific situations where status issues, in this case interrelated with gender, come into play. Clytemnestra's anger at the elders is a function of a social dynamic in which escalation, competition, and threats play a key role in shaping the emotion. The failure of the chorus to recognise the demands that Clytemnestra's anger imposes on them indicates two complicating factors. Although her anger has a clear social role as the

²⁶⁰ The discussion on the interaction of the concepts of honour and justice as found in the propositional content of anger (section 1.2 above) shows the relevance of social norms for the subjects of anger and in this sense signals the role of anger in a social situation. Any social situation is performed by subjects whose appraisals and emotions conform that very situation. Hence, those appraisals (as for example that a breach of established norms has taken place) can be considered as an indication of the role that the emotion might play. However, this is not necessarily the case: social situations do not depend uniquely upon the appraisals of their individuals.

²⁶¹ This passage is discussed at length in relation to the propositional content of anger in Chapter 1 (pp. 73-8), where I established that Clytemnestra is angry at the elders. This is based on her perception of being treated as inferior for being a woman, and for resenting the double standard when judging Iphigenia's and Agamemnon's death. Foley (2001, p. 212) extensively discusses the case for Clytemnestra as being treated as inferior for being a woman.

indicator of a serious transgression (Iphigenia's murder), it is not fulfilled when coming from a woman. The social context itself poses a restriction to the intelligibility of her anger based on gender. While the 'demands' of Clytemnestra's anger have been fulfilled, she sought vengeance for the crime suffered by Iphigenia, the emotion remains powerless with regards to gaining social acknowledgment about the wrong suffered. Considered from the perspective of the social purpose of the emotion, the representation of Clytemnestra's anger indicates a limited scope of influence.

When Clytemnestra confronts the chorus, she has already achieved the main 'demand' of her anger against Agamemnon. After the murder, the object of her anger experiences a shift. The main focus of her anger now is the utter lack of recognition of her as a victim that is linked Agamemnon's impunity, and to her status as a woman. Her anger in the interaction with the chorus is related to not having a space and a voice in society. Her attempts to negotiate with the chorus in what is to be considered as 'punishment' and what as 'wrongdoing' fail emphatically.

The depiction of anger through an escalation between two parts is key to understanding the passage. Clytemnestra tries to position herself as a defender of justice by casting Agamemnon as the offender (τῷδ' ἄν δικάως ἦν, ὑπερδίκως μὲν οὖν *Ag* 1396), suggesting that her act was a proportionate reaction to the offence (τοσῶνδε (...) κακῶν *Ag* 1397).²⁶² At the evident dismissal of her view by the chorus, who highlight her arrogance and boastfulness over her husband (θαυμάζομέν σου γλώσσαν, ὡς θρασύστομος, / ἥτις τοιόνδ' ἐπ' ἀνδρὶ κομπάζεις λόγον *Ag* 1399-1400), signalling the gender issue at stake, she insists by saying that her deed was

²⁶² This is an interesting case of what today is called 'moral hypocrisy', a phenomenon often associated with anger, consisting of a discrepancy between the acceptability of one's own moral transgressions and those committed by others as an unconscious mechanism to preserve one's own image (Valdesolo & de Steno, 2007). Statements such as 'life is not fair' are often invoked to mollify concerns about moral hypocrisy (Polman & Ruttan, 2012, p. 130). In a similar fashion Clytemnestra refers to Destiny (ἡ Μοῖρα τούτων, ὦ τέκνον, παραιτία *Ch* 910), when Orestes questions her moral conduct.

the result of her hand, ‘an artificer of justice’ (δικαίας τέκτονος. τάδ’ ὦδ’ ἔχει Ag 1406), failing again to influence their view. When the chorus imply that her intellectual capacities are diminished (τί κακόν (...) πασαμένα Ag 1407-9) and signal to her the public consequences of her deeds (δημοθρόους τ’ ἀράς (...) ἀπόπολις δ’ ἔση / μῖσος ὄβριμον ἀστοῖς Ag 1409-11), the escalation becomes patent. Clytemnestra persists in casting herself as the victim (φιλτάτην ἐμοῖ / ὠδῖν’ Ag 1417)²⁶³ and Agamemnon the wrongdoer who has been granted impunity. While doing this, she is also advancing a counter-accusation at them: ‘should you not have exiled him, punishing him for his impure deed?’ (οὐ τοῦτον ἐκ γῆς τῆσδε χρῆν σ’ ἀνδρηλατεῖν, / μιασμάτων ἄποιν’; Ag 1419-20), and slips in a threat (ἀπειλέω Ag 1422).

There is yet another escalation of anger in this interaction: after Clytemnestra’s threat, the chorus question her behaviour (μεγαλόμητις; περίφρονα Ag 1426)²⁶⁴ and keeps commenting on her intellectual abilities and her physical appearance (ἄντιπον²⁶⁵ ἔτι σὲ φρῆν ἐπιμαίνεται / λίπος/λίβος²⁶⁶ ἐπ’ ὀμμάτων²⁶⁷ αἵματος ἐμπρέπει.²⁶⁸ Ag 1427-8),²⁶⁹ and persist in stating that she will only get what she deserves (τύμμα τύμματι τεῖσαι Ag 1430). Interestingly they pick up on the irrational aspect of her

²⁶³ Compare with // 15.110-12.

²⁶⁴ The language of the chorus is not offensive *per se*, but being questioned about one’s behaviour was taken as an offence as it may lead to public discredit, for example when Aias questions Idomeneus’ behaviour (// 23.474 ff.), inflaming his anger (χολωσάμενος // 23.484).

²⁶⁵ Denniston-Page’s edition; otherwise ἀτίετον.

²⁶⁶ Verrall’s, Fraenkel’s, and Denniston-Page’s comments on this line agree on the necessity of making this change. It is difficult otherwise to make sense of the sentence.

²⁶⁷ The same expression is used for bloodshot eyes in Hippocrates, see Fraenkel *ad loc*.

²⁶⁸ Denniston-Page’s edition; in disagreement with Fraenkel’s and Verrall’s.

²⁶⁹ Opinions are divided with respect to whether the ὡσπερ οὖν (...) ἐπιμαίνεται (Ag 1427-8) should be taken backwards (Fraenkel *ad loc*: ‘your words and your thoughts are overbold in tune with your mind’s raving’; and similar Verrall *ad loc*) or forward (Denniston-Page *ad loc*: ‘just as your mind is mad by reason of this deed of blood, so your eyes are bloodshot’). In both cases the sense is that Clytemnestra’s mental state is affected by the bloodshed and that this is reflected in her eyes.

anger and ignore the cognitive-evaluative aspect, showing an emphasis on other considerations, such as physical appearance, when understanding emotions. This time, their reaction is not only to invoke public opinion and consensual law, but also the defining principle of the *lex talionis*. Clytemnestra mirrors this escalation and swears that she is prepared for a confrontation as she counts on Aegisthus to defeat them: ‘for me, no foreboding penetrates the hall of fear (...) for in him [Aegisthus] I have not a small shield of courage’ (οὐ μοι φόβου μέλαθρον ἐλπίς ἐμπατεῖ, (...) οὔτος γὰρ ἡμῖν ἀσπίς οὐ σμικρὰ θράσους *Ag* 1434-7). Clytemnestra’s anger at the dismissal of her view of the situation proves to be ineffective.

After Clytemnestra’s threat, the elders actually stop addressing her for almost fifty lines (*Ag* 1448 - 1496), expressing their despair at the situation.²⁷⁰ The disengagement from Clytemnestra’s denunciations indicates the chorus’ frustration at the situation, showing that the discussion has reached an impasse. Although they do not refute her, and are aware of the problem posed by Iphigenia’s murder (*Ag* 225), they do not respond to her claims about double standards regarding impunity. Her anger, as the marker of a transgression, fails in its purpose. They only start addressing her again after she claims that she was not the full agent of the murders, attributing the source of the crimes to an external power, the fierce avenging spirit of the house (ὁ παλαιὸς δριμύς ἀλάστωρ *Ag* 1501) that possessed her.²⁷¹ The chorus do not deny her point, but are clear that this does not release her from the responsibility for the murders (ὡς μὲν ἀναίτιος εἶ *Ag* 1505).²⁷² Foley

²⁷⁰ See Lloyd-Jones’ (*ad loc*) note on these passages; also, Raeburn & Thomas *ad loc*: the chorus sing three lyric strophes, each followed by an *epithymnium* (1455, 1488, 1537); ἰὼ marking the lamentation. Foley (2001, p. 215) is probably right in that the chorus stop blaming her because they realise the seriousness of the political situation.

²⁷¹ Dodds (1960, p. 30) considers this as a moment of insight rather than cold irony.

²⁷² Zeitlin argues that Clytemnestra is trying to make the point that the *lex talionis* is not applicable to her since what she did was an act of justice, not a crime (1965, p. 476) – yet as she argues (p. 482), the trilogy questions the very concept of justice at stake, which involves retribution and punishment. According to her own argument, even a justified vengeance for a wrong

(2001, pp. 204-205) argues that even though Clytemnestra was able to make a powerful defense of herself, she undermines it. In her view, Clytemnestra's reference to the *Alástōr* weakens her own 'claim to be acting as a fully autonomous agent'. This is, according to her, an indication of the view that women were not considered as subjects of fully autonomous choice, as even Clytemnestra is not able to see herself as a fully autonomous agent.

Foley's argument about women's agency is right to a certain extent. However, even if it is the case that Clytemnestra is not able to see herself as a fully autonomous agent, this is not fundamentally different from the way in which male behaviour is seen in the trilogy. The reference to the *Alástōr* is also related to the family as a whole and the angry spirit has affected male members in the past. As I have argued in Chapter 2 (p. 110), anger, as well as other emotions, is often perceived as a state in which the subjects somehow lose their power of agency. The interaction between Clytemnestra and the elders does effectuate a shift, and this shift is most likely related to a gender issue. Clytemnestra's anger at the chorus fail in its social purpose as an indicator of a serious transgression partly because of her gender. There are indications of this gender conflict at various points in the play. For example, the chorus dismiss her knowledge of the events from the beginning, and their first reaction to her misdeeds is that they cannot accept that a woman can act and speak this way about her husband. Gender is such an important factor at work in the conflict upon which anger is constructed in this scene that it makes Clytemnestra shift from her focus on Agamemnon's crime towards what she perceives as the chorus' offence against her.

When mentioning *Alástōr*, both Clytemnestra and the chorus stop blaming each other. they seem to reach a certain level of common understanding that such a situation of entanglement and violence can only be explained with reference to an external power that has taken hold of Clytemnestra and the house. When Clytemnestra assents to the idea that *Alástōr* is behind the murders, she might see it as a way to avoid holding all

previously committed will lead to the corruption of the avenger. See also Podlecki (1966, p. 70) and Spatz (1982, p. 102).

the blame for the murders. This suggestion however is quickly denied by the elders, who, despite having suggested the presence of a vindictive spirit in the first place, hold her fully responsible for her acts.

If the mention of the *Alástōr* has to do with Clytemnestra trying to escape punishment, it is also an indication of a culturally embedded idea that anger is an alienating and invasive experience, as discussed in Chapter 2 (p. 109). Just like in Homer, the allusion to the *Alástōr* marks the coexistence between the idea that anger is a highly social experience, and the idea that it is an interior, hidden, and personal process.

However, the incorporation of the *Alástōr* also marks a moment in their interaction in which, despite their disagreement, the chorus' anger acquires a different tone – at least until Aegisthus enters with new threats. Although they never make a personal threat of the kind 'we will punish you', they invoke the social institutions of Argos, and the cultural beliefs in the inevitability of retribution, when talking of the punishment that is to come. The chorus convey their outrage at her deed. Even when acknowledging the difficulty of the context in which she committed a crime, they never condone it.

Although Clytemnestra changes her emotional attitude, she maintains that what Agamemnon suffered was just (ἄξια δράσας ἄξια πάσχων *Ag* 1527), soon after signalling once again that he killed her own daughter (ἀλλ' ἐμὸν ἐκ τοῦδ' ἔρνος ἀερθέν / τὴν πολυκλαύτην Ἴφιγενεΐαν *Ag* 1525-6).²⁷³ Despite the change in emotion, her interpretation of the situation does not change significantly. The chorus express their worries about the future of the house, and the inevitability of what is to come: 'reproach is met with reproach' (ὄνειδος ἦκει τόδ' ἀντ' ὀνειδούς / δύσμαχα δ' ἔστι κρῖναι *Ag* 1560-1). Even though they stop trading blame, no real agreement is reached. The sequence of Clytemnestra's anger at the elders shows a progression in which the emotion grows and takes shape as a function of the interaction between the agents involved, reaching a point in which a threat is uttered.

²⁷³ Bernard Knox (1966) has argued extensively that a change of mind was perceived as sign of weakness, or as a sign of being the victim of an imposition in Greek tragedy before Euripides.

The same sequence also shows how anger is softened as a function of a social interaction. This happens in an interesting dynamic. On the one hand, the two parties reach a certain minimum common understanding in looking at the complexity of the context of the crime. On the other hand, the two parties understand their fundamental disagreement with regards to a possible justification of Clytemnestra's crime. This tension is accompanied by a pragmatic calculation of the risks of escalating and perpetuating anger, at least on part of Clytemnestra (*Ag* 1574-6). After both parties have advanced threats, there is a common movement towards stopping the cycle of murders.

I have been arguing for two interconnected things in relation to the representation of anger in the interaction between Clytemnestra and the elders. The first one is that a conceptualisation of anger as subjected to others' reactions, and as a means of communication in which the agents show awareness of their environment, and are responsive to it is clearly present. Anger appears as a function of the subjects (their characters, desires, beliefs, etc.) and as a function of the interaction between them. The second one is that there is also an understanding of anger as a phenomenon that not only depends on social interaction, but also serves a social purpose as, for example, to establish limits and restrictions in relationships and setting up roles (the punisher and the wrongdoer). However, the passage that I just discussed also shows that the purpose can fail. I attribute this failure not only to the nature of the crime that Clytemnestra committed, but also, and importantly, to her position as a woman in the society she lives in.

In the analysis just presented, threats have played an important role, and they deserve more attention. In the next section I will briefly discuss their power in influencing anger, considered from the perspective of performative theories of language.

4.3.1 Escalation and Threats

I suggested above Aeschylus' awareness of the performative aspect of language. This was based on the fact that words uttered by his characters

openly act upon and affect their context. When Aeschylus portrays one of his characters as getting angry at a perceived threat, he relies partly on Homer as a model for the portrayal of anger, and partly on other cultural sources and shared cultural heritage, thus drawing on the same set of cultural assumptions. The chorus' utterances that Clytemnestra will receive her punishment in due course (ἀτίετον ἔτι σὲ χρὴ στερομένην φίλων / τύμμα τύμματι τεῖσαι *Ag* 1429-30) are incendiary words to her, even though in appearance they are expressing an opinion on what is going to come. The way in which Clytemnestra reacts to an utterance, although it has the shape of a simple propositional statement reporting that punishment is to come, indicates that she is aware of the performative aspect of the language loaded with the intentions of the speaker.²⁷⁴ The elders have been warning that death and exile are the punishment with which the demos will react to what she has done (*Ag* 1407), but, as Clytemnestra makes clear in her response, they are not just voicing the demos' opinion as detached from themselves.

As discussed above, speech-act theories have drawn attention to the fact that a statement needs a context to be read with the necessary intention to make it work. When Clytemnestra replies to the elders that they are also hearing the righteous power of her oath (καὶ τήνδ' ἀκούεις ὀρκίων ἐμῶν θέμις *Ag* 1431), she insinuates that their enunciation of the *lex talionis* sounded like a statement of intention.²⁷⁵ Peradotto (1969a, p. 2) has convincingly argued for considering *cledomancy* as a cultural institution, at least in literature, that takes various forms of speech. The feeling that certain type of utterances had a performative power on future events had to do, in part, with the intention attributed to the speaker, and with the power attributed to the spoken word.²⁷⁶ The invocation of a universal law of retribution can, in

²⁷⁴ Furthermore, ἔτι at the beginning is plausibly the sign of a threat (Fraenkel *ad loc*).

²⁷⁵ The discussion (Fraenkel and Denniston-Page *ad loc*) about the imperative needed here might find some clarification by reference to performative theory for it permits to give account of a command made in the form of a proposition.

²⁷⁶ I am referring particularly to utterances; random noises could also be read as carrying a message. In terms of criticism, as Peradotto (1969a, p. 10) has

this context, convey a threat. Clytemnestra's reaction is consistent with this. Clytemnestra is not only reacting to a threatening statement with regards to the rightful application of the laws of the city, but also reacting to what she perceives as words that carry an even stronger performative power. Aeschylus thus provides a portrayal of anger as a process that depends on an elaborate network of statements and interpretations of these statements made by the individuals involved. The escalation of anger in the passage just discussed is not only an example of how an emotion is the result of a sequence of an intersubjective interaction, but also of how this sequence involves a number of subtle elements, some explicit, some requiring context and interpretation. Threats play an essential role in the construction of anger as an emotion that depends on an interaction. Threats in this passage reflect an understanding of the power they have as anger-arousers/exploiters in a social interaction. The link between anger-arouser and exploiter shows a theory of mind and the understanding that subjects are strongly influenced by others.

4.4 Provoking Anger: the Kommos in the Choephoroi

One potential implication of conceiving anger as a social phenomenon is that it can be purposefully manipulated by taking advantage of the environment. Just as people can provoke each other in a competitive way they can also stimulate and escalate anger through collaborative interaction. Anger-arousal is often portrayed as a result of deliberate stimulation in Homer. Zeus, for example, is described as speaking provocatively when using mocking words (κερτομίους ἐπέεσσι // 4.6) to arouse Hera's and Athena's anger (ἐρεθίζω // 4.5). The words used by Agamemnon to move warriors to fight (παριστάμενος ἐπέεσσι // 4.233) are said to instigate anger, literally 'bilious words', (χολωτοῖσιν ἐπέεσσι // 4.241). the same formula is used to describe how Athena speaks to Odysseus as a way to

suggested, this way of looking at literary cledomancy can be very close to what has been called tragic irony since it allows one to create a gap between what the internal audience and the external audience understand.

induce him to fight (*Od* 22.224-6). These cases have in common the high degree of public exposure of their agents to other members of society.

The use of provocative words to inflame others' anger plays a significant role in the *Oresteia*, particularly in the construction of Orestes' behaviour. The context of the provocation is the confluence of Electra and the chorus, who have been sent by Clytemnestra to the grave of her father to offer a libation, and Orestes' arrival. According to Electra, the slave-women are there to assist a ritual (ἐπεὶ πάρεστε τῆσδε προστροπῆς ἐμοὶ / πομποί *Ch* 85-6) whose aim is to placate the chthonic powers after Clytemnestra's dream about the serpent. Electra is presented in a state of constant insecurity about what to do. Despite the role that the chorus have been assigned, when Electra asks what to say, they advise her to call on some deity or human to come for the masters of the house. Even after this clear sign of their aggressive spirit, Electra shows confusion, responding with a question whether they refer to a judge (δικαστής *Ag* 120) or an avenger (δικηφόρος *Ag* 120). 'Simply ask for the one who will take life for life', the chorus say (ἄπλῶς τι φράζουσ', ὅστις ἀνταποκτενεῖ *Ag* 121). Once again, Electra appears as unconfident, asking whether it is right to ask such a thing of the gods. Instead of answering her question, the chorus reply with a rhetorical question 'how is it not [right] to requite an enemy with evils?' (πῶς δ' οὐ τὸν ἐχθρὸν ἀνταμείβεσθαι κακοῖς; *Ch* 123), thus evoking the widely accepted notion that it is good to harm one's enemies. This effectively moves Electra to action as she begins her speech calling the gods of the underworld. The chorus thus succeed in making Electra take retaliatory action by means of words that encourage and exacerbate her desire to punish. When doing so, they appeal to a widely accepted notion to make the crime in which she is about to take part seem acceptable.

The slave-women themselves hate Aegisthus, as they insinuate to Electra. They advise her to include in her invocation 'whoever hates Aegisthus' (χῶστις Αἴγισθον στυγεῖ *Ch* 111), and when Electra asks if this applies to them, they respond that she already knows the answer to that question (αὐτὴ σὺ ταῦτα μανθάνουσ' ἤδη φράσαι *Ch* 113), making it

almost explicit that the words apply to them. Later they say that they want to see their masters die in the pitchy ooze of a flame (ἐγώ ποτε / θανόντας ἐν κηκίδι πισσῆρει φλογός *Ch* 267-8). They are thus pursuing a personal desire for retaliation, as has been indicated by their desire to be included among those who abhor Aegisthus, while inciting first Electra and then both siblings to enact it, appealing to notions of retaliatory justice (ἀντὶ μὲν ἐχθρᾶς γλώσσης ἐχθρὰ / γλώσσα τελείσθω: τούφειλόμενον *Ch* 309-10). A few lines later, as the slave-women help Electra and Orestes to raise the ghost of Agamemnon, they continue to provoke the siblings. In the process of doing so, they make clear their personal investment in the cause – they are after all Agamemnon’s loyal servants. In this role, they reassure the siblings about expecting a reaction from the underworld: the anger (ὀργάς *Ch* 326) of the dead will be at some point manifest, and lamentation stirs up vengeance (γόος ἔνδικος ματεύει / τὸ πᾶν ἀμφιλαφῆς παραχθείς *Ch* 330-1).²⁷⁷ The chorus show another example of a highly performative use of language. By giving an anchor, the slave-women move the siblings to a group conjuration in which they sing their laments in turns and express their wish for things to have been different. The language that all of them use is clearly provocative, showing that the siblings follow the strategy of the chorus with their father’s ghost. In this case, it is collaborative interaction, rather than competitive defiance that intensifies the emotion.

Following the strategy of the chorus, the siblings’ attempt to secure the support of Agamemnon’s ghost and to mourn him properly on behalf of the family lingers upon notions of shame and loss of honour (λιπῶν ἄν εὐκλειαν ἐν δόμοισι / τέκνων τ’ ἐν κελεύθοις ἐπιστρεππὸν αἰῶ *Ch* 349-50; παισὶ δὲ μᾶλλον γεγένηται *Ch* 379; ἴδεσθ’ Ἀτρειδᾶν τὰ λοιπὰ ἀμηχάνως / ἔχοντα καὶ δωμάτων *Ch* 407-8).²⁷⁸ Once more, the chorus

²⁷⁷ As McHardy (2008, p. 27) has put it, it is often difficult to tell whether desire for revenge is driven by grief at the loss of a close one or by the perception of a slight or dishonour done to themselves.

²⁷⁸ On the vendetta and mourning, see Macleod (1982, p. 137), and Alexiou (1974, pp. 4-23). Foley highlights (1993, p. 115) how Aeschylus links Orestes’ revenge with the performance of funerary rituals, and with the

cleverly exploit the situation when Electra, in her lamentation, expresses her wish for the killers to have died instead of Agamemnon. They reassure her that their death is precisely what is to be wished. Yet, as the other strategy, they remind the siblings that those who could have helped are already dead (τῶν μὲν ἄρωγοὶ / κατὰ γῆς ἤδη *Ch* 376-7), putting more weight on the sense of duty that Orestes already has, as the responsibility of reversing their situation relies entirely on them. The text here is highly corrupt, but there is agreement (Garvie *ad loc*) that the sense is that it is now a concern for the children. This interpretation is supported by Orestes' reaction. He replies that these are 'piercing words' (διαμπερές *Ch* 380), and utters the promise that each of his parents will end up paying the same (τοκεῦσι δ' ὅμως τελεῖται *Ch* 385).

The response to Orestes' speech is that a wind of anger is blowing (πάροιθεν δὲ πρόρας / ὄριμὺς ἄηται κραδίας / θυμὸς ἔγκοτον στύγος *Ch* 390-2), indicating that the chorus perceive that anger is being effectively aroused. The reaction of the chorus to Orestes' expression is not an attempt to calm him down as one might expect, given their stereotyped role as the voice of moderation. On the contrary, they come up with (or at least speak out about) the idea of seeing the masters of the house dead – 'why would I hide what revolves in my mind?' (τί γὰρ κεύθω φρενὸς οἶον ἔμπαρ / ποτᾶται; πάροιθεν δὲ πρόρας *Ch* 389-90). It is after this that they all express openly their desire for this to happen: 'when will you Zeus cleave their heads?' (κάρανα δαίξας *Ch* 396), says Electra, who a moment before was asking whether it was correct or not to ask a god to punish her mother. The chorus assure the siblings that it is the law that crimes call for an *Erinýs* to punish them (βοᾷ γὰρ λοιγὸς Ἐρινὺν / παρὰ τῶν πρότερον φθιμένων ἄτην / ἑτέραν ἐπάγουσαν ἐπ' ἄτη *Ch* 402-5). This moves Orestes to invoke the vindictive gods of the underworld (πόποι δὴ νερτέρων τυραννίδες, / ἴδετε πολυκρατεῖς Ἄραι φθινομένων *Ch* 405-6) and to lament the state in which they have been left (Ἄτρειδᾶν τὰ λοιπ' ἀμηχάνως / ἔχοντα καὶ

memories of how the funeral was, suggesting that women play a supporting role in vengeance instead of a leading role.

δωμάτων / ἄτιμα *Ch* 407-9). Electra even goes further to express that her mother can fawn or be charming but the *thumós* aroused by her, like a savage wolf, cannot be soothed (λύκος γὰρ ὥστ' ὠμόφρων / ἄσαντος ἐκ ματρός ἐστι θυμός *Ch* 421-2). Her language has changed dramatically over the course of the interaction with the chorus. While at the beginning she is presented as almost incapable of expressing her feelings, in fear of being inappropriate, she is now voicing what she thinks of her mother.

Up to this point, the chorus have served two purposes. On the one hand, they support the invocation and give guidelines for the performance of the ritual. On the other, they raise the siblings' anger and move them to action by intensifying the emotion. As the previous chapter also suggested, this shows that a mere sense of duty, or even the threat of a god, is not enough for the completion of a task such as murdering a family member. The chorus of slave-women play a role in prompting the protagonists' desire to take retributive action that is often connected to being in the pitch of anger. This is achieved partially by making that desire shared and open, and by showing that it is supported by the gods of the underworld. The clearest moment of provocation is when the slave-women give Orestes a piece of information that is not only painful for him but also considered outrageous: 'know this, he [your father] was mutilated' (ἐμασχαλίσθη δέ γ', ὡς τόδ' εἰδῆς *Ch* 439). They show Orestes that the issue goes beyond the lack of an appropriate funeral for a king; Agamemnon's corpse had been mutilated before burial. That this is not a simple description of the fact is evident from its conclusion with a rhetorical question: 'Do you hear these shameful miseries done to your father? (κλύεις πατρώους δύας ἀτίμους; *Ch* 443). The chorus are instigating anger through knowledge and memory, showing that while the emotion is socially constructed, they possess an idea of anger as connected to cognitive appraisal and processing of information.

The double purpose of the chorus is also clear from the two-folded modes of their speech. The lamentation often follows a pattern according to which the slave-women sometimes address Agamemnon's ghost directly, as they use the second person imperative singular form, ἄκουσον (*Ch* 459), or

more generally, as the forces of the underworld using imperative plural, πέμπετ' (Ch 477). They are giving cues to the siblings about how to perform the lamentation. However, they sometimes also address the siblings and encourage them in this invocation of Agamemnon's and his *Erinýes*' anger. In such cases they use the third person form to refer to Agamemnon (ὄργῃ Ch 454), and the second person form refers to Orestes (εἰδῆς Ch 439). These shifts indicate that their speech is having two functions. When they address Orestes and report about Agamemnon, they are providing reasons for the siblings to take revenge rather than simply showing them how to perform a ritual of appeasement. When they address Agamemnon, they are taking part in the ritual.

At one level, the interaction is constructed in a way that the chorus and the siblings aim to raise the anger of Agamemnon and of other gods of the underworld (πρέπει δ' ἀκάμπτῳ μένει καθήκειν Ch 455). At another level, it is also the dramatisation of a complex interplay between explicit and implicit social functions and personal goals. There are a number of contributing factors that make up this interplay. The siblings re-create the pattern shown by the chorus, according to whom anger is meant to spring up from the knowledge or memory of a certain event that is perceived as the object of anger. This is made explicit by the repetition of μέμνησο: μέμνησο λουτρῶν οἷς ἐνοσφίσθης, πάτερ (Ch 491); μέμνησο δ' ἀμφίβληστρον ὡς ἐκαίνισαν (Ch 492).²⁷⁹ As shown above, the chorus' description of how Agamemnon was buried in a degrading way (ἄτιμος Ch 443), with his extremities mutilated, is intentionally directed towards the siblings. This description, in agreement with the Aristotelian emphasis on how both personal dishonour and the dishonour done to *philoí* stimulate anger, is inflammatory for Orestes (τὸ πᾶν ἀτίμως ἔλεξας, οἴμοι Ch 434). The remark on his father's burial immediately elicits retaliatory desires in him: 'she will pay the price of degrading my father' (πατρός δ' ἀτίμωσιν ἄρα τείσει

²⁷⁹ For the relation between memory and *phren*, see Sullivan (1995, p. 29). See also the idea of accountability for deeds in life in relation to Hades' *phrenes* (δελογράφῳ δὲ πάντ' ἐπωπῆ φρενί Eu 275). See also te Riele (1968, p. 343).

Ch 435). Electra follows the chorus in provoking Orestes: ‘I was dishonoured (...) engrave this in your mind’ (ἐγὼ δ’ ἀπεστάτουν ἄτιμος (...) ἐν φρεσὶν γράφου *Ch* 445-50). This time, it is the chorus who take Electra’s words and repeat them: ‘engrave it, and let our words go through your mind’ (γράφου δι’ ὧτων δὲ συντέτραινε μῦθον ἡσύχῳ φρενῶν βάσει *Ch* 451-2). The very same pattern, according to which the way to provoke anger is to provide the subjects with a possible object for their anger, is followed by the siblings when trying to raise Agamemnon’s ghost. For example, they warn Agamemnon that if they fail in their task of avenging him, he ‘will be dishonoured while others dine well’ (εἰ δὲ μή, παρ’ εὐδείπνοις ἔσῃ ἄτιμος *Ch* 484-5). There are two interesting aspects in the way in which the siblings and the slave-women create a unity in calling Agamemnon’s ghost to action.

Firstly, there is a strong connection between knowing or remembering something and anger-arousal signals an understanding of the emotion signaling a cognitive phenomenon. This is very much in line with the discussion of anger in the first chapter. The scene that I just analysed indicates a conceptualisation according to which the emotion can be stimulated by providing an object for it – the what the anger is about. However, the scene is also stressing the impact of the environment on the subjects, and this is the second aspect. The conception of anger at play is, therefore, in an important respect a social phenomenon. The subjects need the views of others, and their support to inflame anger in them or to let it grow inside themselves. All the characters have very good reasons to be angry right from the beginning. Nevertheless, the emotion is socially constructed and exploited by bringing cohesion to a group that is initially fragmented. Although Electra and Orestes love each other they struggle to recognise each other, and the slave-women are not really known to Orestes. This means that at the beginning of the play, they shared the same type of feelings towards Clytemnestra and Aegisthus, but they were not really a team that could express or act on their anger. The chorus create a faction in a conspiratorial way by creating a sense of a shared desire and purpose. This

sense is key in the construction of the siblings' anger and in the dramatization of the conception of a crime.

4.5 Anger and Social Hierarchy: Cilissa's Case

As pointed out earlier, considering anger as a socially embedded phenomenon implies that it responds to social norms and systems of belief. Bearing in mind the importance of hierarchies in Greek society, it is necessary to explore how they are present in the representation of anger. Konstan (2003; 2006), Harris (2002) and Allen (2000) agree that the conceptualisation of anger (*orgē*) in the Classical period is restricted to a type of emotion that leads to direct violence or punishment. This notion of anger is consistent with Aristotle's definition in *Rhetoric* II, and with his observation on the nature of pleasure and the anticipation of the desired object in *Rh* I discussed in the introduction. According to this view, anger is so strongly related to a position of power that the possibility of it being experienced by an inferior towards a superior is almost denied. Harris (2002, p. 57), for example, derives from Aristotle's definition a general assumption that 'while *orgē* is an emotion, it is only *orgē* if it leads to action or comes close to coming to action; the feeling by itself, restrained by, for example the prudential inadvisability of showing anger against someone 'far more powerful', scarcely counts'. This interpretation relies heavily on two ideas: that anger necessarily encompasses the end of punishing, and that an inferior or someone who has no power to exact punishment on their superior cannot experience anger. In the following discussion I want to examine a couple of passages in the trilogy where this understanding of anger is challenged.

In the sequence from the *Agamemnon* that I discussed above, after Clytemnestra threatens the chorus and they start their lamentation, they invoke Helen as the source of the sufferings of the house (ἰὼ ἰὼ παράνουσ Ἑλένα / μία τὰς πολλὰς, τὰς πάνυ πολλὰς / ψυχὰς ὀλέσασ' ὑπὸ Τροίᾳ *Ag* 1455-7). Even though the chorus do not say explicitly that they are angry at Helen, Clytemnestra reads this emotion in them from the fact that they blame Helen (μηδ' εἰς Ἑλένην κόπον ἐκτρέψης *Ag* 1464), and nothing is

said by either party to negate this evaluation. Clytemnestra assumes that blame and anger are connected.²⁸⁰ In Clytemnestra's assumption, anger is not necessarily connected to the belief that one is actually able to exact punishment; punishing Helen does not play any relevant role here. The chorus interestingly also provide us with an instance in which anger is not punitively oriented. While they have been showing signs of their anger by contesting and speaking their minds about what they think is correct, they are not seeking personal revenge. They express their warnings and threats about the social consequences of her acts, but their anger is not constructed around a strong desire to punish. This calls for a re-consideration of the idea that anger was necessarily subjected to the ability to enact punishment. It may be a more complicated phenomenon than Aristotle's neat formulation may suggest. The same may apply to the idea that, for us to identify an emotional response such as anger, a specific hierarchical relationship is necessary.

A passage in *Choephoroi* suggests strongly that the dynamics of power in relation to anger may not always be clear-cut. When Orestes, hiding his identity, is introduced to the palace in Argos, he tells Clytemnestra that Orestes is dead. Clytemnestra sends Cilissa, the nurse of Orestes to bring Aegisthus and to give him the news about Orestes. When Cilissa is on the threshold of the palace mourning Orestes, the chorus of slave-women ask her where she is going with that grief. Cilissa conveys what she has been asked to do, and takes the opportunity to speak about Clytemnestra's hypocrisy – how she pretended to be sad in front of others, while in private showed signs of happiness at Orestes' death. Cilissa expects Aegisthus to be happy with the news as this is a new cause of sorrow for her (ὦ τάλαιν' ἐγώ *Ch* 743). Among all the terrible woes she had to suffer in this house, she explains, Orestes' death is the worst (ἀλλ' οὔτι πω τοιόνδε πῆμ' ἀνεσχόμην *Ch* 747). on top of this, she has to be the one who gives the news that will

²⁸⁰ The ascription of blame to someone is considered the most typical instigation to anger in modern western societies according to empirical studies, see Averill (1983, p. 1150).

make the man who destroyed the house happy (λυμαντήριον / οἴκων *Ch* 765-6). She thus conveys the feeling that she is doing something that she really does not want to.

It is clear, then, that Cilissa does not regard herself as having the power to oppose Clytemnestra's orders – whatever she would like to happen, she is not in a position to bring it to realisation, and is not conceiving any revenge. Still, Aegisthus is an object of hatred and abhorrence (στυγέω *Ch* 770), an emotion that the chorus attribute to her, and which she does not reject. In the trilogy, *stúgos* is used to denote a sort of hatred close to disgust, the object of such hatred (στύγη θεῶν *Eu* 644, *Ch* 393; *Ch* 532) or bitterness (θυμῶ στύγος *Ag* 547).²⁸¹ Konstan (2003, pp. 110-1; 2006, pp. 43-7), based on Aristotle's taxonomy of emotions in *Rhetoric* II, argues that anger and hatred encompassed very distinct phenomena. Aristotle's most common term for hatred is *miseîn*, and Konstan's account of hatred mainly refers to this term, although he seems to recognize *stúgos* as sharing some of hatred's features in this discussion (2006, p. 187). In *Politics* V, Aristotle says that attacks on tyrants are the result of *orgē* as 'when men are angry, they mostly attack for the sake of revenge' (1311a33); and a few lines later, he restates this by establishing that two main reasons lead men to attack a tyrant, hatred and contempt. Thus, the boundary between these two emotions is not so clear as it seemed to be in the *Rhetoric*. Furthermore, in *Politics* 1311b23, he acknowledges that men who are angered (ὀργίζω) due to maltreatment and torture have committed murder, while others have tried to do it because of being treated insolently (1311b23). Again, the idea that *orgē* only arises from an insult or slight and not from mere harm is absent here. Aristotle has a special taste for taxonomies, but he does not always subscribe to them, since even his taxonomies depend on the purpose of the writing in which they appear – hence the blurred distinction between anger and hatred in the *Politics*. In English, we normally distinguish 'hatred' from 'anger' as denoting different emotions, and we know that Aristotle made the same distinction at the lexical and conceptual levels. Although we often

²⁸¹ Corrupted line; I follow Fraenkel's edition.

group *stúgos* with *miseîn* under a category different from the words in Greek that fall under ‘anger’, where exactly the difference resides in Aeschylus’s use of the terms is a more complex issue.²⁸² In *Choephoroi*, when the chorus in an emotionally charged passage (πάροιθεν δὲ πρόφραξ / ὄριμὺς ἄηται κραδίας / θυμὸς ἔγκοτον στύγος *Ch* 390-2) speak of a bitter (ὄριμὺς) wind of anger (θυμὸς), Aeschylus places *stúgos* in apposition to *thumós* and equates it with *kótos*. This is, therefore, an instance that exposes the limits of the strict differentiation between anger and hatred made by Aristotle in the *Rhetoric*, since his formulation does not apply straightforwardly to what the Aeschylean chorus say.²⁸³ This is not to say that Aeschylus did not distinguish between anger and hatred, but that his distinction might have been less sharp than the one adhered to by the dialectician.

In Cilissa’s case, based on what they interpret to be her emotion towards her masters, the chorus handles the situation by advising her to withhold the message and to pretend to be happy (γηθούση φρενί *Ch* 772), as a way to make Aegisthus come unarmed and without fear to meet the visitors. The chorus never explain what they have in mind, but Cilissa is clearly willing to help in manipulating the circumstances. This is clear as she does not manifest any objection to interfering with Clytemnestra’s message to her husband. The chorus ascribe *stúgos* to Cilissa, an emotion that is semantically and idiomatically close to *thumós* and to *kótos* in the play, even though, if we followed Aristotle, there is no apparent means of action due to her position in the hierarchy. Nevertheless, it is precisely based on the

²⁸² In Aeschylus’ *Seven*, *stúgos* is used as the object of *némesis*, with the sense of something hateful or against the social norm (τίς τάδε νέμεσις στυγεῖ; *Seven* 235), and to describe a hateful journey (δωμάτων στυγεράν ὁδόν *Seven* 335). In *Suppliants* it is used as the mark of a hateful and disgusting deed such as forced marriage between members of the family (*Supp* 528).

²⁸³ See also: τίς τάδε νέμεσις στυγεῖ; (*Seven* 235). In Euripides’ *Helen*, Teucer responds ἡμαρτον· ὀργῆ δ’ εἶξα μᾶλλον ἢ με χρῆν to Helen’s question: καὶ ταῖς ἐκείνης συμφοραῖς ἐμὲ στυγεῖς; (*He* 79). Similarly, Ζεὺς μιλίσσων στυγίους / Ματρὸς ὀργὰς ἐνέπει (*He* 1339). In Xenophon’s *Memorabilia*: μὴ λαμβάνων δὲ τὸν μὴ διδόντα μισεῖ, οὐ δοκεῖ σοι καὶ οὗτος χαλεπὸς φίλος εἶναι; (2.6.2).

assumption that she desires retribution that the chorus can count on her in conspiring against the masters of the house. Here, the possibility of revenge presupposes the emotion, and not the other way round. In other words, the chorus could think of Cillisa as enraged (or being close to it) with her master despite knowing that she had no power. It is difficult to argue conclusively in this regard, but we can see that there is some reason to doubt that Aristotle's definition of anger provides an adequate description of Aeschylean anger. The two cases studied here suggest that anger cannot be tied inexorably to a position of power or to the idea that one has the ability to exact punishment.

4.6 Proportionality as a 'Transaction'

Assigning a 'price' to pay in response to anger is related to managing notions of proportionality. Notions of proportionality appear as central and regulatory to keep relationships and to deal with problems within society. They provide a perspective in which the subject has to consider himself and his interests as dependent on a larger group. One very common way of looking at proportionality today is in terms of the relation between the offence and the punishment or, more precisely, in terms of the relation between the good received by means of punishment and the bad effects of it.²⁸⁴ Lakoff (1987, pp. 209-10) has pointed out that in models where anger is built from strong notions of retributive justice, the emotion is related to a duty to seek vengeance. As he notes, under this model two responsibilities imposed by life in society are in conflict: the responsibility to control anger for the sake of others, and the responsibility of retribution, often also for the sake of others. The tension between these two factors is present in models of anger-representation in which a notion of proportionality is assumed, according to which it is (ideally) possible to respond to both duties in a 'proportionate' way. In this sense, the notion of proportionality is not only a function of social norms but is also required by them.

²⁸⁴ See, for example, McMahan (2015).

The same tension between the good and the bad effects of punishment is present in the *Iliad*. For example, Athena commands Ares to stop his anger (χόλος) at his son because otherwise it will carry destruction for the rest of the Olympian gods (*Il* 15.132-8). Athena's argument is that the bad consequences of Ares' anger are more important than the good ones (which are not in question), exhibiting an implicit notion of proportionality at play. When trying to placate Achilles' anger, Odysseus also appeals to a notion of regard for others (φιλοφροσύνη γὰρ ἀμείνων *Il* 9.256) that should be valued more than personal anger.²⁸⁵ Patroclus criticizes Achilles on very similar grounds. He highlights the fact that the best Achaeans are enduring sufferings and adds 'but you are impossible' (ἀμήχανος ἔπλευ *Il* 16.29), implying that Achilles' behaviour is not meeting the social expectation attached to being an important warrior at war. Furthermore, when he continues to express his hope that he will never hold such an anger (μὴ ἐμέ γ' οὖν οὕτως γε λάβοι χόλος *Il* 16.30), he clearly suggests that Achilles' anger is going beyond what he considers to be appropriate. Patroclus' complaint echoes an important aspect of the portrayal of Achilles' anger: there is something out of (human) proportion with it. This is the sense conveyed by metaphors applied to him: as the son of a storming sea and a cliff, his mind is rough (ὅτι τοι νόος ἐστὶν ἀπηνής *Il* 16.35). The disproportion of this anger is assessed by Patroclus largely in terms of Achilles' asking too much and with this forgetting about others.

Clytemnestra presents a similar case in terms of her disproportionality. As noted above, she introduces a notion of proportionality as a part of her attempt to place herself as a defender of justice while identifying Agamemnon as the offender (τῷδ' ἄν δικαίως ἦν, ὑπερδίκως μὲν οὖν *Ag* 1396). She establishes a measure of proportion between offence and punishment (τοσῶνδε (...) κακῶν *Ag* 1397) that is largely transaction – and of course convenient to her own narrative of the situation. The relationship between the good and bad effects of Agamemnon's punishment

²⁸⁵ On the role of the relations of affection and the relations of blood in the construction of anger in Homer, see Muellner (1996).

shows that, from the perspective of Clytemnestra, there is an expression of quantification and a notion of proportion (τοσόσδε *Ag* 1397) that is related to her notion of justice (ὑπέρδικος *Ag* 1396). This notion picks up on the appropriateness (πρεπόντως *Ag* 1395) of the 'libation' that she is carrying out. According to her first formulation, Agamemnon has committed enough crimes against the house to 'fill the bowl' that she is now pouring out (*Ag* 1397).²⁸⁶ The sense of proportion is suggested by the image that she is pouring out what Agamemnon himself put in, the 'content of the bowl' being related to the damage done to the house (ἐν δόμοις κακῶν *Ag* 1397). This image is largely transactional – she is giving him back what he gave to the house.

The idea that Agamemnon damaged family ties with his actions was already suggested by Clytemnestra when making ironic reference to the (broken) pledge between spouses represented by their children (παῖδες *Ag* 878). Heath (1999, p. 20) notes that throughout the *Oresteia*, Clytemnestra reserves *pais* for her Iphigenia, and leaves *téknon* to refer to Orestes. Clytemnestra seems therefore to be making an exception. However, while she makes reference to the pledge between spouses when talking of Orestes, *pais* might well be covertly alluding to Iphigenia. The harm done by Agamemnon thus enters Clytemnestra's equation of the harm that the punishment will bring is compared to the benefits. As seen in the previous chapter (p. 156), her pleasure at the death of Agamemnon is great. In the lines following the killing of Agamemnon, there is no sign of any worry about what the murder can mean to Electra or Orestes. Furthermore, when the chorus warn her about the consequences of the punishment on her own future, she only shows concern about maintaining her power in Argos with Aegisthus. Clytemnestra thus operates with a certain notion of proportionality, but a corrupted one, in which she distances herself from her family and the broader community. Her notion of proportionality leaves

²⁸⁶ See Denniston-Page *ad loc*, who explains the sentence as 'what is so fitting about the libation is that it may be poured from a bowl which the dead man himself has filled'.

Electra and Orestes aside, and this is something that they later resent and punish.

The perspective of the chorus on this proportionality is rather different from Clytemnestra's. They find her rendering of the situation as well as her words about her husband receiving his dues over-bold (θρασύστομος *Ag* 1399) and ill-adjusted to reality and a reflection of her dubious mind-state (τί κακόν (...) πασαμένα *Ag* 1407-9; φρὴν ἐπιμαίνεται *Ag* 1427). They are quick to point out the problem of proportionality, as she conceives it, when they mark the bad consequences of her act of revenge as a consequence of what she did to the city (τόδ' ἐπέθου θύος, δημοθρόους τ' ἀράς; / ἀπέδικες ἀπέταμες: ἀπόπολις δ' ἔση / μῖσος ὄβριμον ἀστοῖς; *Ag* 1409-11; ἀτίετον ἔτι σὲ χρὴ στερομένην φίλων / τύμμα τύμματι τείσαι *Ag* 1429-30).²⁸⁷ They highlight that there is something that she is not able to see now (ἔτι *Ag* 1429) that she will nevertheless have to face in due course. Thus, they make it plain that her crime is not regarded as proportionate to what Agamemnon did. The very fact that they remind her that what she did is a crime that will be punished evidences that Clytemnestra's perception that Agamemnon received what he deserved is considered a loss of proportion. In this sense, the chorus here represent an attempt to bring her back to the norms of society by reminding her that she is part of a wider community with a shared notion of what it means to punish. As suggested above, this is related to her being a woman. Considering Clytemnestra's anger from the perspective of a notion of proportionality, anger appears to be an isolating factor – her anger makes her lose, or pervert, the basic notions of the social norms. Even when considering anger as a social phenomenon, we find that, in some respects, it is portrayed as an isolating experience.

4.7 Conclusions

Looking at the representation of anger in the *Oresteia* as a social phenomenon involves asking the question of how people's emotions are

²⁸⁷ Here I follow Denniston-Page's edition; Fraenkel also supports this instead of ἀτίετος.

influenced by the presence of others, and their social environment. From this perspective, Aeschylean anger can be considered as a dynamic experience in which the subjects react and become attuned to their environment. The characters show a sense of awareness of their environment, as they articulate and re-articulate their positions in their interaction with others. This indicates a high level of realism in the construction of these interactions. Furthermore, the *Oresteia*, as well as Homeric epics, presents a case in which a representation of anger that preponderantly relies on aspects of the particular social environment is compatible with, and inextricable from, a representation of it as an interior process involving the body. This somatic aspect in the imagery related to anger suggests a sense of personal agency being reduced when interacting with others that is in line with the imagery of anger discussed in Chapter 2.

The idea that anger can be stimulated by and manipulated in others indicates expectations about the ability to influence others' states of mind and therefore awareness of emotional processes. The knowledge of how the presence of others influences the subject's behaviour is also clear in the construction of the characters and is a sign of realism. Additionally, the social perspective of Aeschylean anger shows how interactions with others not only suppose a structural condition of implicit hierarchies, but also of implicit reciprocity and expectations. All these aspects give us cues about a rich psychological understanding of the intersection between the subjects and their social environment.

Chapter 5

Angry Deities

This chapter expands the discussion on the divine in the representation of anger developed in Chapter 2, where I approached it largely from a perspective of the cognitive symbolism they carry. Agents such as the *Erinýes*, the *Alástōr*, and other avenging spirits are involved in human anger. This chapter attempts to provide a further step by synthesising the perspective of divine intervention outlined in Chapter 2 with the ideas discussed in Chapter 4 about the fundamental importance of the social context for an integral understanding of anger. The association of anger with divine beings, and the persistence of that association until the end of the trilogy, indicates an understanding of the emotion as an inevitable and even necessary part of the natural order. The presence of daimonic creatures associated with anger and their implication in actions and events on the human plane shows that just as the social realm cannot be disentangled from the personal one, so too the human and divine realms cannot be separated from each other. They cohere as complementary parts of the natural order.

Chapter 2 explored the way the *Erinýes* represent aspects of the human experience, such as the powerful desire to punish. In this sense, their appearance in literature could be seen as personifications: we can say that an '*erinýs*' stands for some human experience, and that a certain human experience is like an '*erinýs*'. However, we can also say that an *Erinýs* exists to provide a certain control over those offences that are especially unsettling for society. Thus, the *Erinýes*, and similarly the *Alástōr* and other Greek divinities (Buxton, 1994, pp. 145-51), are complex creatures representing and giving account of various aspects of human internal or external reality at the same time.

The question of the extent to which we can say that the *Erinýes* stand for an inner experience such as guilt or anger, and therefore have a metaphorical or figurative role in the *Oresteia*, is key to understanding their relation to emotions. As Lebeck (1971) has convincingly shown, the

construction of the *Oresteia* is governed by a pattern in which images that appear on a verbal level in the first two plays, are fully dramatised in the last one. Although it is true that the *Erinýes* only appear as having a concrete visible existence to the audience in the last play,²⁸⁸ they cannot be considered only symbols for inward feelings or social functions in any of the plays. The *Erinýes* are part of a system of beliefs, and the audience of the play understood, and therefore experienced, certain phenomena by reference to them. The actual belief in avenging spirits has implications for the way in which they are incorporated into the narrative of the play. The *Erinýes* are part of a pattern of representation, but how this pattern interacts with their status as objects of belief needs more attention.²⁸⁹

The attitudes towards beliefs and how they are incorporated into human experience are highly dependent on the theory through which one looks at them in another culture. Although functionalism,²⁹⁰ with its focus on the role that different phenomena play within a social structure, and symbolism, with its focus on what the story unravels about the human psyche, provide accounts of religion and myth that are useful in many respects, the understanding of Greek divinities and their dramatic role in tragedy cannot be reduced either to the function they might have played in Greek society, or to a symbol associated with the intimate experience of the psyche or the collective unconscious. As Gould (1995, p. 5) pointed out, Greek religion is 'a mode of experience, a response to life as lived by ancient Greeks'. Religion is, in many respects, a system of communication shared by the members of a culture that enables them to interpret, respond to, and give account of their experiences. From a cognitive perspective, the world experienced through religion, is already impregnated with those beliefs;

²⁸⁸ Brown (1983) has persuasively argued against the interpretation held by some scholars that the *Erinýes* are visible to the audience in the *Choephoroi*.

²⁸⁹ For a discussion on gods as legislators and onlookers, see Boyer (2007, pp. 170-74).

²⁹⁰ Functionalism as a theory in cultural anthropology, not to be confused with a perspective in philosophy of mind.

experience normally serves as a confirmation of them.²⁹¹ The way in which the members of a religious culture explain their own behaviour, emotions, and thoughts is dominated by the beliefs linked to those experiences; this, in turn has an effect on those very experiences. One particularity of those beliefs pertaining to Greek religion is that the gods, and the cosmic order, are causally involved in the explanation not only of the external physical world but also of the interior working of the individual human mind, including experiences, such as anger and sexual desire. The cognitive mechanism involved here is theory of mind. This is relevant to our consideration of the significance of the inclusion of divinities in Aeschylus' representation of anger.

Given that Greek gods are not transcendent in the way in which the Old Testament God is, and are materially embedded in the natural world, playing a role in both natural and social processes (Bremmer, 2006, p. 5), the way in which they are incorporated in the understanding of social life and human behaviour makes it difficult to disentangle the religious from the other aspects of life. Moreover, as Vernant (1992, pp. 324-5) has pointed out, the relationship between the individual and the gods is always somehow mediated by society, and many aspects of religious life have an important social function playing a very practical role in the organisation of society. This relation between religious and social experiences goes both ways: religious life is mediated by social and civic norms, and social and civic life is mediated by religion. Plato (*Prot* 328b), not without a certain irony, portrays Protagoras, who famously doubted the existence of gods, as sending his students to the temple to state under oath how much money they thought his lectures were worth. The temple and the oath serve as such powerful and useful institutions (in this case to establish the price of a lecture), that in Plato's dialogue even Protagoras needs them for his business. This relationship between the social

²⁹¹ Perception is not necessarily constrained by the surrounding world, it also contributes to the enactment of that world (Varela *et al*, 1993; Chamero, 2009).

and the religious aspects of a culture has implications both for the categorisation of an experience, and the conceptualisation of an emotion.

Given this amalgamation of (our) categories, neither a purely functionalist reading nor a purely symbolic reading of Greek myth and religion can provide a picture complete enough for the purpose of understanding how the *Alástōr*, the *Erinýes*, or the curse of the house of Atreus, present in the representation of anger in the *Oresteia*, join together with the thoughts and desires of the experience of an emotion. As Paul Veyne (1988) suggests, different attitudes towards myth and modalities of belief can coexist: cultures and individuals have the ability to hold conflicting views about myth and religion. If we consider this close interconnexion between social structures and religious belief along with the fact that talking of anger through the gods may allow certain type of discourses that otherwise would not have room in the tragedies. For example, it is through the gods that certain abstract ideas about anger such as its social role, the necessity of a system beliefs that includes punishment and, perhaps more importantly, fear of punishment are addressed. The dangers of anger can only be fully comprehended within a system that accounts for cycles of revenge and where they lead families, and societies in general.

In what follows I will (1) briefly delineate the elusive divinities called *Erinýes* in the literature that precedes Aeschylus; (2) discuss the role of these divinities in the *Oresteia*; (3) outline the other deities associated with anger in the *Oresteia*; (4) discuss how the divine in the representation of anger plays a role in connecting anger to an important social function that is nonetheless problematic for the restoration of peace and the settlement of pass conflicts.

5.1 The Erinys

The epithet ἐρινυύς, probably meaning ‘angry’ (Harrison, 1908, p. 213; Treston, 1923) or ‘strife-producing’ (‘die Zwietracht-bewirkende’ Neumann 1986), was applied either to any god or spirit (Treston, 1923, p.

113), or to the *kēres* (Harrison, 1908, p. 213).²⁹² The adjective is not normally used to refer to a living human.²⁹³ The *Erinýes* have been associated with a cluster of emotions, involving anger, fear, guilt (Levinson, 1926, p. 92; Bacon, 2001, pp. 50-1), and revulsion (Parker, [1976]1983, p. 312).²⁹⁴

They appear in a wide range of literature assuming the form of female avenging spirits or goddesses, who exact terrible but just retribution (they are not wicked as the harpies or sirens) (Fowler, 1991, p. 86; Hard, 2004, p. 38; Sewell-Rutter, 2007, p. 85; Aguirre, 2010, p. 133). Heraclitus presents them as allies of Justice, and assuming the role of those who make sure that natural behaviour is in accordance with the rule of justice (“Ἥλιος οὐχ ὑπερβήσεται μέτρα· εἰ δὲ μή, Ἐρινύες μιν Δίκης ἐπίκουροι ἐξευρήσουσιν 22B94 DK).²⁹⁵ Even though their role is to preserve both civic and natural order, giving support to the establishment of authority by enforcing unwritten law, they are also associated with conflict and its perpetuation (Lloyd-Jones, 1971, p. 83). The retributive notion of justice

²⁹² Harrison also suggests that an *Erinýs* was primarily the angry ghost of a human who had been murdered. The hypothesis is incapable of proof; but the connection with the angry spirits of the dead is real enough.

²⁹³ According to *Der Neue Pauly* (1998 *ad loc*), the etymology of *Erinýs* is uncertain, but the *Erinýes* are generally identified with both courses and the deceased. For an argument against an early link between the *Erinýes* and the spirit of a dead person, see Padel (1992, pp. 172-9). Although she provides good reasons to doubt that the *Erinýes* are only angry *kēres*, this does not suggest that the link did not exist at all.

²⁹⁴ Visual descriptions of the *Erinýes* are very scarce before Aeschylus. Yet, the association of the *Erinýes* with snakes is not an invention of Aeschylus, and might be related to the representation of fertility, and by extension the power of Earth, who when angered becomes an *Erinýs* (Harrison *et al*, 1927, p. 432). In visual arts, they usually appear as formidable beings, stern in character, carrying torches and scourges, and generally wreathed with serpents, or having serpents on their hair, or carrying serpents (Hard, 2004, p. 39). They can appear with or without wings, dressed in black or not, and not always as hideous creatures (Sewell-Rutter, 2007, p. 85). All these visual representations come after Aeschylus, and it is generally assumed that they were somehow influenced by him. For a discussion on understanding both the positive and the negative aspects of anger in relation to the image of the Gorgons in Aeschylus, see Belfiore (1992, pp. 19-30).

²⁹⁵ Similarly, in Homer (*//* 19.418), they restrain the voice of a horse, who against its nature speaks and informs Achilles about his death.

attached to the *Erinýes* is one in which they restore the imbalance produced by the wrongdoing, while at the same time creating a new one (Fletcher, 2011, p. 36; Gagarin, 1976, pp. 66-7). Hence the anxiety they produce does not only concern the one who is to be punished but the whole community surrounding him or her.²⁹⁶

The characterisation of the *Erinýes* as avengers, and their relation to rituals of purification, places them in connection with the other spirits of retribution that I will discuss in the next section.²⁹⁷ Normally, they are involved with polluted hands as they prosecute those who have blood in their hands (Parker, [1976]1983, p. 107). The *Erinýes* are also connected with oaths and curses (Parker, [1976]1983, p. 190; West, 1999, p. 32; Fletcher, 2007, p. 102). In archaic poetry, the *Erinýes* appear as the guarantors of oaths, they punish perjury, and they are often prompted into action by an oath from the injured one.²⁹⁸ Their role is therefore strongly related to the purpose of loyalty oaths as a way of upholding social order, operating where there are few human means of control.²⁹⁹ In the *Iliad*, for example, Agamemnon invokes

²⁹⁶ By the time of Homer, the *Erinýes* had been personified as avengers of the moral law in general, acquired the characteristic of implacability (Treston, 1923, p. 113), and gained frightening epithets such as στυγερά (*Il* 9. 571), ήεροφοίτις (*Il* 9. 454), and δασπλήτις (*Od* 15. 234). In the trilogy, στύγη θεών *Eu* 644, *Ch* 393, *Ch* 532.

²⁹⁷ In some contexts, it is not clear whether a sharp differentiation between some of these spirits and the *Erinýes* can be established (Clinton, 1996, p. 166). What they all have in common that they can be regarded either as agents of pollution and vengeance or as embodiments of pollution and vengeance; they are angry, and they embody anger. They can appear as a singularity or as an indefinite plurality in the same text or even in the same passage, something that also happens often in Greek texts when divine power is described (Vernant, 1992, p. 329).

²⁹⁸ Thus, Alcaeus invokes the *Erinýes* as guarantors of an oath (Ἐ[ρίννυ]ς ὥς ποτ' ἀπώμνυμεν fr. 129.14) when he accuses Pittacus of breaking the oath they had made together. For a discussion on the role of oaths, curses, and raw-flesh eating present in this poem, see Bachvarova (2007, p. 184).

²⁹⁹ Gagarin (1975, p. 65) has noted that even though we can attribute pollution to all characters who commit crimes in the *Oresteia*, it is a more significant factor for Orestes as there are not more relatives to seek revenge for Clytemnestra.

them as guarantors of his oaths // 3.27-80; 19.258-60.³⁰⁰ With regard to curses, the *Erinýes* can be the agent that brings the curse to fulfilment, or identify themselves with curses.³⁰¹

The *Erinýes* can be summoned in aid of the victim, or automatically appear when an act against law is committed (West 1999, p. 32).³⁰² Their jurisdiction varies according to the literary context in which they appear. However, they are especially concerned with those threatening the traditional structure of the family, as for example when a younger member offends an older one, being thus associated with transgressions which are especially difficult to control by normal social mechanisms of punishment. Their birth mythically links them to the crime of a son against a father resulting in the castration of the father (*Th* 185).³⁰³ This feature will be important to understand their changes throughout the trilogy, and their role in the *Eumenides*, since they construct their discourse against Orestes on the basis of their 'old' jurisdiction as guarantors of the crimes against family members. As I will discuss further, one aspect of the *Erinýes*' development within the *Oresteia* is their relationship with different gods, and how this is important to

³⁰⁰ In *Against Demosthenes*, when Dinarchus makes the accusation that the oaths taken on the Areopagus have been broken, he invokes the *Semnai Theai* and the other gods by whom it is customary to swear (ἐπιωρκηκῶς μὲν τὰς σεμνάς θεὰς ἐν Ἀρείῳ πάγῳ καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους θεοὺς οὓς ἐκεῖ διόμνυσθαι νόμιμόν ἐστι 1.47).

³⁰¹ In *Works and Days*, the *Erinýes* personify the curse that will be activated when someone breaks an oath or swears falsely (*WD* 802-4). Hesiod does not go into detail regarding their activities, or specify the type of crimes they punish, but since they assist the birth of Horkos (*WD* 803-4), and Horkos is related to perjuries (*Th* 230-1), they are related to the enforcement of a curse. In the *Iliad*, Phoenix is cursed to the *Erinýes* for having taken Amyntor's concubine; Athaia cursed her son for having killed her brothers (*Il* 9.447-57; *Il* 9.571); Telemachos suggests that Penelope might curse him if he should send her away (*Od* 2.132; *Od* 11.277-80). For Aeschylus, see *Seven* 720-5.

³⁰² For a list of cults of the *Erinýes*, see Brown 1984, p. 260.

³⁰³ Caldwell (1989, p. 151) suggests an association between the *Erinýes* and anxieties about sexual desire leading to castration. On his view, the *Erinýes* are 'psychological symbols of guilt, especially that guilt that is attached to enacted or repressed hostile impulses against parents'. Their hideous connection to castration is signalled by Apollo (*Eu* 187).

understand the relationship between anger and the vendetta delineated in the plays.

5.1.1 *The Erinyes in the Oresteia*

From the beginning of the *Oresteia*, the *Erinýes* appear as the avengers of transgressions in the household. They are associated with the adultery of Merope and Thyestes (Fletcher, 2007, p. 111; 2011, p. 61), as suggested by Cassandra (*Ag* 1219; *Ag* 1242), who connects them with a curse over the house – an idea that the *Erinýes* themselves will later on confirm (*Eu* 417). The context of Thyestes' curse frames Clytemnestra's anger into a mythical past in which inherited guilt and the vendetta are the way to deal with crime.³⁰⁴ This is key to understand why the portrayal of *Erinýes* is integral to a progression in the trilogy that is linked to the experience and enactment of anger. The notion that anger can be fixed at the heart of a family, that it is as intransigent and unappeasable as an *Erinýs*, will end up with Athena embodying not only wisdom and understanding, but also authority and procedural legality. On the one hand, there is a need for divine anger and divine punishment to give account of the world, and more precisely of wrongdoing and harm among peers – a kind of theodicy.³⁰⁵ On the other hand, the drama treats these issues through a particular family and its members. While many aspects of Clytemnestra's anger are treated in relation to general ideas about justice and revenge, the trilogy engages with the particularity of her character.

Through the *Erinýes*, the trilogy addresses important issues concerning anger, and for this reason many of the features of the *Erinýes*'s anger are concerned with broader aspects of the connection between anger and retributive justice. Yet, their portrayal is also deeply human. For example, they are strongly concerned with the affront to their *timai* and with unjust treatments of an old divinity, which are important and recurrent features of human anger as discussed in the first chapter. The characterisation of the

³⁰⁴ See also Di Benedetto (1984).

³⁰⁵ On the problematic aspects of Zeus' theodicy in the *Oresteia*, see Cohen (1986).

Erinýes appeals to a conceptualisation of anger that is relatable to the audience, and therefore gives immediacy to an issue which treated in the abstract would be both less vivid and less forceful. The *Erinýes*, as portrayed in the *Eumenides*, are in many respects human-like in their experience of anger.

5.1.1.1 The Erinyes in the Agamemnon

In the *Agamemnon*, the *Erinýes* mainly appear in the chorus' speeches. Most of the time, they are presented in very abstract terms, and broadly concerned with justice – mainly *xenía* and *philia*. In the opening anapaests (*Ag* 59), the chorus claim that Zeus Xenios sent the Atreids as a punishment against Priam, as a god (Apollo, Zeus or Pan) sends an avenging (ὑπερόποιος) *Erinýs* against the transgressors when hearing the cry of a vulture whose nest has been violated. In this case, the *Erinýes* operate in direct connection with the system of justice as implied by the description of the Atreidae as both *Erinýes* and prosecutors (μέγας ἀντίδικος *Ag* 41), with a clear legal tone. The elders employ the *Erinýes* in a second analogy, this time referring to Helen: she, like an *Erinýs* sent by Zeus Xenios, comes as an evil settler to the house of Priam (πομπῆ Διὸς ξενίου / νυμφόκλαυτος Ἐρινύς *Ag* 748-9).

The chorus also relate the *Erinýes* broadly to justice when they expose their reasons for being fearful about Agamemnon's homecoming: the black *Erinýes*, with time (κελαιναὶ δ' Ἐρινύες χρόνῳ *Ag* 463), will punish those who are fortunate without justice (τυχηρὸν ὄντ' ἄνευ δίκας *Ag* 464) – implying that this was the case with Agamemnon at Troy. Their intervention there is closely linked the anger (κότος *Ag* 456) of the people, a connection reinforced by the description of the latter as resulting in a 'curse (ἄρά *Ag* 457) decreed by the *demos*'. Both things are grounds for anxiety and fear. The herald makes a similar connection when he refers to the storm that the Argive fleet suffered as a sign of divine anger (Ἀχαιοῖς οὐκ ἀμήνιτον θεῶν; *Ag* 649), just after suggesting the need for a song for the *Erinýes* (*Ag* 645). The *Erinýes* appear again in relation to the chorus' fears for Agamemnon after he enters the house on his return, as their heart sings a terrifying song of the

Erinýes (θρῆνον Ἐρινύος *Ag* 991) portending disasters.³⁰⁶ When they express their fear, they reuse the expression of ‘the song of the *Erinýes*’ which has been repeatedly associated with emotions (Padel, 1992, pp. 59-64), especially guilt (Levinson, 1926, pp. 91-2) and fear (Goheen, 1955, p. 131).³⁰⁷

Similarly, when Cassandra envisions Agamemnon’s murder, in her horror, she speaks of the cry (κατολολύζω *Ag* 1118) of ‘the insatiable strife’ (στάσις δ’ ἀκόρετος *Ag* 1117). The chorus present it as the cry of the *Erinýes* (ποιάν Ἐρινὺν τήνδε δώμασιν κέλη / ἐπορθιάζειν; *Ag* 1119-20). Here, the chorus relate these cries to the role of the *Erinýes* as creatures concerned with a crime against a family member (γένος *Ag* 1117). The narrative shifts in the type of crime they prosecute makes them a useful means to highlight and talk about characters, actions and the emotions around them in different contexts – like the web of images explored by scholars such as Lebeck (1971) this shifting application allows the text to draw together behaviour and reactions which are different in specifics but are at base the same. At the same time the emphatic association here creates a fundamental connexion with Clytemnestra and in the process prepares for the bond between them in the last play of the trilogy.

After Agamemnon has been killed, Cassandra goes back to the image of the group of kindred *Erinýes* attached to the roof of the house (*Ag* 1186-90):

τὴν γὰρ στέγην τήνδ’ οὔποτ’ ἐκλείπει χορὸς
ξύμφθογος οὐκ εὐφωτος: οὐ γὰρ εὖ λέγει.
καὶ μὴν πεπωκὼς γ’, ὡς θρασύνεσθαι πλέον,
βρότειον αἶμα κῶμος ἐν δόμοις μένει,
δύσπεμπτος ἔξω, συγγόνων Ἐρινύων.

³⁰⁶ The relation between the *Erinýes*, guilt and music also appears when the Herald (πρέπει λέγειν παιᾶνα τόνδ’ Ἐρινύων *Ag* 645) mentions that when someone is accountable for a glory that entails the death of many men, singing serves as a way to placate the *Erinýes*.

³⁰⁷ Thalmann (1985a) makes an interesting case for the use of *moirai* in relation to human internal organs. There is a transgression of this allotment when the heart controls the tongue.

Cassandra's account of the *Erinýes* revolves around certain features that are also the characteristics of Clytemnestra's anger, discussed in previous chapters, such as their concern with those connected by blood (*Ag* 1190), that they never leave the house (*Ag* 1186; *Ag* 1189; *Ag* 1190; *Ag* 1191) (discussed in Chapter 2, pp. 111-2), and that they luxuriate (κῶμος *Ag* 1189) in their retributive activity (discussed in Chapter 3, pp. 150-2).

The last two mentions of the *Erinýes* in the *Agamemnon* again stress their conceptual plasticity, and their dual presence as real creatures and a means of (what we would call) symbolic representation for specific kinds of human behaviour. In one of Clytemnestra's attempts at justifying the murder of Agamemnon, she claims, in an oath (ὄρκιος), that she killed her husband in the name of Justice for her daughter, and of the *Erinýes* and *Atē* (μὰ τὴν τέλειον τῆς ἐμῆς παιδὸς Δίκην, / Ἄτην Ἐρινύων θ' *Ag* 1432-3). The *Erinýes* here are presented in their traditional aspect of guarantors of oaths, concerned with family crimes, and in close relation with Justice and *Atē*. Clytemnestra also suggests that Agamemnon's murder was a sacrifice for them (αἶσι τόνδ' ἔσφαξ' ἐγὼ *Ag* 1433), implying that the three divinities, Justice, *Erinýes*, and *Atē* demand blood for blood. The last mention of the *Erinýes* in the *Agamemnon* is made by Aegisthus. When expressing his satisfaction at the death of Agamemnon, he refers to the robe that was used as the murderous weapon as pertaining to the *Erinýes* (ὑφαντοῖς ἐν πέπλοις Ἐρινύων *Ag* 1580) – *Erinýes* being a clear symbol for Clytemnestra and her destructive behaviour.

Thus, in the *Agamemnon* the *Erinýes* appear in a variety of ways and in various contexts, sometimes as an analogy for Clytemnestra. Most of the time, the text represents them as a real presence, and one which fulfils an important function in the development of the events of the play. The *Erinýes* as presented reflect the social role of anger: it is dangerous and a threat for society, while at the same time, it is a response to, and an indicator of, inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour. They also underscore the idea that divine anger discerns and responds to injustice in the world, and that punishment for the wrong committed will come.

5.1.1.2 The Erinyes in the Choephoroi

The *Choephoroi* adds some interesting elements to the progression of the depiction of the *Erinýes* in the trilogy. It coheres with the *Agamemnon* in that they are associated to a young god – Apollo, in this case. They also operate with strong intimidating power over those who fear them and are believed to bring calamities to those who offend. However, while their role in the first play is to a large degree aetiological, and their presence is either inferred from the complexity and horror of the crimes or from the visions of Cassandra, in the *Choephoroi* the *Erinýes* have an almost constant presence in Orestes' thoughts. At first, they are a potential and imminent threat for him, and later he sees them in his post-murder frenzy. The *Erinýes* here still play their role as infallible prosecutors, but they are also more concrete than in the *Agamemnon*, since we will see how Orestes will have to take them into consideration when making a vital decision.

When plotting against the kings, Orestes assures the slave-women that he is acting in accordance to Apollo's command, who has threatened him with a process of wasting and physical degeneration if he fails.³⁰⁸ This degeneration, associated to the wrath of the underworld gods is also associated to the *Erinýes* (ἄλλας τ' ἐφώνει προσβολάς Ἐρινύων *Ch* 283), who are activated by the blood of a father (ἐκ τῶν πατρῶων αἱμάτων τελουμένας *Ch* 284). This is explicated when Orestes says that he is also threatened with madness and rash midnight fears (καὶ λύσσα καὶ μάταιος ἐκ νυκτῶν φόβος *Ch* 287).³⁰⁹ Among Orestes' adjectives for the *Erinýes* there is one that reflects precisely the aspect that relates them to the vendetta, and to the other angry spirits of the play: they are 'anger-provoking'

³⁰⁸ Apollo revealed to him the underworld's anger are plagues (νόσος *Ch* 279), flesh-eating ulcers with savage jaws (*Ch* 280); lichen-like skin diseases (*Ch* 281; *Ch* 282). On pollution and skin diseases, see Parker ([1976]1983, p. 218).

³⁰⁹ The social and religious implications of this threat (*Ch* 291-4) will be discussed later in relation to the Selinuntine *Lex Sacra*: Orestes is scared about being denied the possibility of going through the purificatory measures that coincide with those needed to expel the Alesteros.

(μηνίματα *Ch* 278).³¹⁰ They represent the self-reproductive nature of anger, in whose cycle all the characters of the play are involved. It has been noted that a characteristic of anger in the *Oresteia* is that it generates more anger from one generation to another, reinforcing the idea it is insatiable or unappeasable.³¹¹

In fact, as the slave-women explain, the ‘law’ of operation for the *Erinýes* is actually a cycle of revenge, in which they are ‘automatically’ summoned by crimes – when blood touches the ground, it cries for more blood. This cycle is importantly about the dynamics of anger, and its destructiveness, as the chorus and Orestes suggest (βοᾶ γὰρ λοιγὸς Ἐρινύων *Ch* 402; Ἄραϊ φθινομένων *Ch* 406). Far from this being an impediment, Orestes recognises their social value when he summons the curses of the dead (that is to say, the *Erinýes*)³¹² claiming that he is helpless in his dishonoured state (ἴδεσθ’ Ἀτρειδῶν τὰ λοιπ’ ἀμηχάνως / ἔχοντα καὶ δωμάτων ἄτιμα *Ch* 407-8). A few lines later, Orestes, when envisioning the murder of Aegisthus, relates how the *Erinýes* who is scant of murder/sacrifice will have the third beverage of pure blood (φόνου δ’ Ἐρινύς οὐχ ὑπεσπανισμένη / ἄκρατον αἶμα πίεται τρίτην πόσιν *Ch* 577-8), referring

³¹⁰ The text here has been much contested, see Garvie *ad loc.* On *mēnīmata* as both the causes of gods’ anger and the manifestation of that anger as great sufferings for humans related to the diseased, see Burkert (1992, p. 66).

³¹¹ This notion is, for example, present in Knox’s (1952) analysis of the ‘lion’ metaphor that stands for the cyclic rebirth of violence from one generation of the house to the next. Heath (1999, p. 31) argues for a similar view in relation to the metaphorical use of animals across the trilogy: ‘like the lion imagery, the snakes represent the entanglement and ceaseless coils of the cursed house, of the old system of vengeful justice’. The snake imaginary, as the bird one, is applied to the *Erinýes* who are represented by their demands of blood. In a sense, then, all the characters of the trilogy are *Erinýes* in their implacable demands for blood (Fowler, 1991). On the physical characteristics of the *Erinýes*, see Higgins (1978). On the *Erinýes* as snakes, and how the imagery is applied to Clytemnestra, Aegisthus and Orestes, see Peradotto (1969a, p. 19).

³¹² For the association of the *Erinýes* and the curses of the house, see for example Ἄραϊ δ’ ἐν οἴκοις γῆς ὑπαὶ κεκλήμεθα (*Eu* 417). The connection was made earlier by Cassandra (*Ag* 1219; *Ag* 1242).

to the *Erinýs* of his father. The anger of Orestes,³¹³ is then understood in as part of a complex system of interactions (between people, gods, and emotions), in which he will be either 'with' or 'against' his father's *Erinýes* and Apollo. The idea of the cycle of retribution is continued by the slave-women as they announce that the much-renowned, calculative *Erinýs* (χρόνῳ κλυτὰ βυσσόφρων Ἐρινύς *Ch* 651), referring to Clytemnestra, will be finally met by Orestes.

The seeming interminability of this retributive cycle is made even clearer with the last mention of the *Erinýes*. This time, it is Clytemnestra who, in her attempt to dissuade Orestes from killing her, reminds him about the 'parent's curse' (γενεθλίουσ ἀράσ *Ch* 912), and warns he should 'avoid a mother's grudge-bearing hounds' (φύλαξαι μητρὸς ἐγκότους κύνας *Ch* 924). The latter is an expression that Orestes himself uses at the end of the play when he sees the *Erinýes* as a vivid presence (σαφῶσ γὰρ αἶδε μητρὸς ἔγκοτοι κύνες *Ch* 1054). The cycle of contagious and corrosive anger, linked to the imagery of pollution and disease, has been passed from one member of the family to another. Since Orestes is the last one in that chain, anger will necessarily overwhelm the family, otherwise the retributive cycle would be broken in detriment of the notion of justice as 'receiving what you deserve' that has been at play in the trilogy up to this point.

5.1.1.3 The Erinyes in the Eumenides

The *Erinýes* in the *Eumenides* become full characters in the action. They are no longer a distant threat or beings visible only to certain characters by reason of their physical or mental state,³¹⁴ but very physical creatures, whose anger is at the centre of the play. The *Erinýes*, and the anger they represent and experience, become 'tangible' in the last play. As I have argued, all the choruses in the trilogy display some degree of anger. The first chorus is able to manifest their outrage at what they see, and to utter a threat against the queen. The second chorus partake in a murderous plot, and fuel

³¹³ I discussed Orestes' anger in Chapter 2, p. 129.

³¹⁴ As for example, pollution for Orestes and the resultant derangement, or the vatic powers of Cassandra.

other characters' anger to fulfil their desire for punishment. The third chorus is not only explicitly angry, but they are the embodiment of anger. This pattern, in which the anger of the chorus increases, goes hand in hand with the accumulation of crimes and with the 'natural' cycle of the vendetta. Since Clytemnestra has no avenger in the human world, the anger that has been passed from generation to generation in the Atreids' house now appears represented and embodied by the *Erinýes*. Hence, the characterisation of the *Erinýes* in this play is key to explore the correlation between anger, the vendetta, and justice.

One important aspect of the portrayal of the *Erinýes* in the *Eumenides* is the persistence of Clytemnestra's anger even after her death. This idea is already present in the *Choephoroi*. For example, when Orestes fears the anger of his father's ghost, and when Clytemnestra threatens Orestes. In the *Eumenides*, the anger of the dead is not only a fear, but the reality that Orestes has to face. As has been discussed, the belief in the *Erinýes* plays an important social role in 'enforcing' the rules that threaten the structure of the main social institutions, being the family being among them. The fact that Clytemnestra's anger has been a constant phenomenon, while shifting from one object to another (now it is about her loss of honour at Orestes' hands, while Iphigenia's murder has disappeared from her discourse) points to realistic psychological characteristics of anger. However, this portrayal also responds to the dramatisation of a more abstract anger that has been characterised, among other things, as 'recurrent', 'remembering' and 'housekeeping'. When anger is transferred from the human to the divine plane, as with Clytemnestra, it allows some of the thematic aspects of the emotion to be represented visually in drama in a way which has all the conceptual advantages of personification but the credibility of recognisable divine beings.

The chorus' connection with anger, together with their association with the vendetta,³¹⁵ makes the *Erinýes* both an embodiment of Clytemnestra's

³¹⁵ For a discussion on how *dikē* puts the whole conflict in the same supernatural level in which Clytemnestra is represented, see Gellrich &

anger and at the same time the representatives of broader principles of social justice. Along with the process of concretisation of the *Erinyes* experience throughout the trilogy, the scope of the crimes they prosecute suffers a narrowing, at least at the beginning of the play. This leads to a close relationship with Clytemnestra – when Apollo asks them what their upright privilege is (τίς ἤδε τιμή; κόμπασον γέρας καλόν *Eu* 209), they answer that they prosecute those who commit violence against their mothers (τοὺς μητραλοίας ἐκ δόμων ἐλαύνομεν *Eu* 210), and reject any involvement with those crimes that do not concern those sharing the same blood (οὐκ ἄν γένοιθ' ὄμαιμος αὐθέντης φόνος *Eu* 212). This idea is also suggested by the degree of control which Clytemnestra appears to exercise over them. When Clytemnestra orders them to spread their breath (*Eu* 137-9), or their anger, metaphorically suggested by the 'fire of the bowels' (νηδύος πυρί *Eu* 138), her anger is theirs.³¹⁶ Elsewhere in the play their focus is wider. As was discussed earlier (Chapter 4, p. 198), anger is also conceived as a necessary social force, sometimes the only mechanism of enforcement, punishment, and more broadly of setting the boundaries of what is acceptable and what is not. The *Erinyes* are representatives of the principle of retributive justice as embodied in the vendetta, as well.³¹⁷

The *Eumenides* also early on hints at alternatives to conflict. The play begins with the Pythia's prayer to the gods of Delphi. The accompanying narrative here describes a sequence in which power and privilege are transferred without rancour or violence. While the first mention points to

Zerba (2014, p. 146). They (2014, p. 147) also suggest that the image of the eagles in the parodos applies not only to Agamemnon and Menelaus, but to all the agents of justice: Clytemnestra, Aegisthus, Orestes and Electra.

³¹⁶ For a discussion on this, see Scott (1966).

³¹⁷ Faraone (1985) has recognised similarities with Attic judicial curse tablets; similarly, McClure (1999, p. 109). Faraone (1985, p. 105) argues that when the *Erinyes* are represented as litigants in a legal case by Aeschylus, they sing a binding song aimed at affecting the outcome of the trial. According to Faraone, this is made explicit since the target of their song is *phrenes* (*Eu* 330-2=343-5). Faraone also stresses how this type of curse places the *Erinyes* in a highly competitive frame – they are not only prosecuting Orestes due to their role, but also for their own honour.

Themis (*Eu* 2), placing emphasis in an ‘old’ goddess related both to oracles and justice, the following that Apollo is the new master of the temple. The Pythia manages to present the connection between the old gods and the new ones, so troubled for much of the play, as if they could peacefully coexist – something that Athene will take pains to achieve with the *Erinýes*.³¹⁸

This however is yet to come. After having been roused by Clytemnestra,³¹⁹ the *Erinýes* are depicted as hounds after their prey, and are concerned about it being overlooked or forgotten (*Eu* 254-7):

ὄρα ὄρα μάλ' αὖ,
λεύσσετε πάντα, μὴ
λάθῃ φύγδα βὰς
ὁ ματροφόνος ἀτίτας

When they find Orestes in the temple of Athena, they are panting for breath after a long and hard journey that would have exhausted a human. The image is not only indicative of their persecutory power, but also of the strength of their drive (*Eu* 248-53):

πολλοῖς δὲ μόχθοις ἀνδροκμήσι φυσιᾶ
σπλαγχνον: χθονὸς γὰρ πᾶς πεποίμανται τόπος,
ὑπέρ τε πόντον ἀππέροις ποτήμασιν
ἦλθον διώκουσ', οὐδὲν ὑστέρα νεώς.
καὶ νῦν ὄδ' ἐνθάδ' ἐστί που καταπτακῶν.
ὄσμη βροτείων αἱμάτων με προσγελᾶ.

But even here there are hints of a wider role. This characteristic of them as ubiquitous witnesses (also in *Eu* 318) goes back to the idea that anger works as a ‘tracker’ of wrongdoing in society (see Chapter 1, p. 87).

Intransigence is a characteristic of this justice (εὐθυδίκαιος *Eu* 312) In the world of Athene later in the play even the most horrendous crimes, like matricide, can be subjected to legal evaluation and the resultant conflict potentially resolved. In the conception under which the *Erinýes* operate,

³¹⁸ On the tension between the old and new laws in the *Eumenides*, see Dover (1957, p. 234).

³¹⁹ For the metaphor of ‘waking’ as ‘counter-revenge’, see Mace (2002, p. 37).

wrongs are engraved – by *Erinýes*, by Hades (δελτογράφω δὲ πάντ' ἐπωπῆ φρενί *Eu* 275), and by humans, as the slave-women knew to be a characteristic of anger (ἐν φρεσὶν γράφου *Ch* 450; 451). Accordingly, the *Erinýes* assure Orestes that given his crime, he will not be allowed to face any court (*Eu* 260-1), because 'once mother's blood has fallen to the earth, it cannot be recalled' (αἷμα μητρῶν χαμαὶ / δυσαγκόμιστον *Eu* 261-2). There is no escape from the retributive consequences it brings: blood for blood (ἐρυθρὸν ἐκ μελέων πέλανον *Eu* 264). They thus represent a system in which punishment comes without hesitation or plea of justification. The centrality of anger to this understanding of justice is made clear by Aeschylus when the *Erinýes* use *mēnis* (οὔτις ἐφέρει μῆνις ἀφ' ἡμῶν, *Eu* 314) as a way to pin down the one who deserves punishment from the one who does not.

There is nothing new or unique about the association of inexorability and implacability with divine anger. For example, Solon singles it out, as what differentiates Zeus' way of punishing from that of humans, that the god does not react with quick anger (ὀξύχολος). Nevertheless, Zeus does not overlook/forget (λανθάνω) any wrongdoing, and sooner or later punishment will come to those who deserve it 13.24-8:

τοιαύτη Ζηνὸς πέλεται τίσις· οὐδ' ἐφ' ἐκάστῳ
ὥσπερ θνητὸς ἀνὴρ γίγνεται ὀξύχολος,
αἰεὶ δ' οὐ ἐλέληθε διαμπερές, ὅστις ἀλιτρὸν
θυμὸν ἔχει ...

The passage connects divine intervention with the solution of a social problem that, as Solon himself implies, is not in human's hands to solve. However, in the *Eumenides* implacability through the association of the *Erinýes* with the vendetta extends into the human world to characterise a kind of society and a mode of dispensing justice. Despite the changes imposed by Athena, this function will persist: one of the characteristics of the court is that it is both impartial and detached and has a sharp anger (κερδῶν ἄθικτον τοῦτο βουλευτήριον, / αἰδοῖον, ὀξύθυμον, εὐδόντων ὑπερ / ἐγρηγορὸς φρούρημα γῆς καθίσταμαι *Eu* 704-6). This is the description

of a type of anger that has a new aspect (it is not about personal gain),³²⁰ but it is sharp to punish.

One of Clytemnestra's claims in the *Agamemnon* is that Iphigenia's murder has been forgotten,³²¹ a murder that has been thematically linked in the *parodos* with Thyestes' children and those innocents at Troy. Similarly, Electra and Orestes call for the angry spirit of their father showing their expectation about revenge, even at the cost (at least clear for Orestes) that they will enter the cycle of retribution as well.

The acquittal and restoration of Orestes leaves Clytemnestra's desire for revenge unsatisfied. Lacking a relative able and willing to punish, she is reliant entirely on the *Erinyes*. Their failure to punish him is also hers. But the disappearance of Clytemnestra early in the play and the central role in the action played by the *Erinyes* themselves means that it is the impact of the verdict on them which occupies our attention. The acquittal of Orestes leaves the anger of the chorus doubly unsatisfied.³²² It leaves unpunished Orestes'

³²⁰ The claim that the court is depersonalised marks a difference from the system of the *Erinyes*, at least as they are in the *Eumenides* deeply assimilated with Clytemnestra and her injuries, while overlooking other issues. Clytemnestra's anger plays a role in punishing a deed that had been overlooked by another human. However, it is rooted in a first-person experience: she is not punishing parricide (the killing of a close relative) and adultery in general, she is avenging the offspring of her pangs, and punishing the abuser of a woman who is her husband, for whom she has been waiting for ten years. Clytemnestra, clever and persuasive as she is, presents her crime as an act of justice, but as an act of justice that relates to her daughter and to herself – she does not intend to present the situation as if she were making justice for the sake of her community. Even if at a larger scale she is part of the development of events stemming from Artemis' anger against Agamemnon, she is always concerned about her own sufferings.

³²¹ As Vellacott (1977, p. 113) points out, the elders forget their own words in the *parodos* when talking to Clytemnestra.

³²² Visser (1984, p. 193) has pointed out that Aeschylus portrays two aspects of the social function that the *Erinyes* play in Attic society: vengeance (*poinë*) and pollution (*miasma*). In this sense, she argues, Aeschylus is making explicit the two main purposes of murder trials in Athens. She proposes to look at the *Erinyes* as the embodiment of two convergent social systems. Vengeance is part of an honour system, and in this respect, 'satisfaction' at a personal level was an important aim of a murder trial (Visser, 1984, p. 195), compared to punishment that is generally more related to social sanction. *Miasma*, in turn, is part of a broader system of civic responsibility, and it can't

homicide and negates their earlier insistence that there is no release for him and those like him. It also exacerbates their personal sense of injury and equally importantly overturns the principle of punishment and deterrence which they represent and the larger social purpose it serves. They will no longer be there to respond to the cries of victims of wrong (κικλήσκω *Eu* 508; θροέω *Eu* 510) ὦ δίκαια, / ὦ θρόνοι τ' Ἐρινύων *Eu* 512). Their anger, which is integral to their social role as upholders of justice, will also be nullified (*Eu* 499-502):

οὐδὲ γὰρ βροτοσκόπων
 μαινάδων τῶνδ' ἐφέρ-
 ψει κότος τις ἐργμάτων
 πάντ' ἐφήσω μόρον.

The sense of personal injury means that the anger of the chorus of *Erinýes* is not assuaged by the acquittal of Orestes; on the contrary, it is enlarged by the result of the vote. The trial has set a general principle (trial by a dispassionate third party, with the result now in hands of the polis). Athena has created a mechanism for dispute resolution, but it has not satisfied the agents of revenge. Implacable anger has been a feature of the *Erinýes* from the start. Now it is turned against Athens. The extent of their anger and its unremitting persistence are vividly presented by a feature very unusual in Greek tragedy. They repeat verbatim their statement of injury (*Eu* 778-92 = *Eu* 808-22; *Eu* 837-46 = *Eu* 869-80).³²³ The effect is to indicate their immovability and the scale of the problem which their sense of affront presents for Athens, given the extent of their power to harm. Athena responds to this with patience and understanding;³²⁴ she treats them with respect throughout, unlike Apollo. She does make one veiled threat (about the keys to the thunderbolt) but otherwise she is calm and respectful

be entirely understood from an individual's point of view (Visser, 1984, p. 199).

³²³ For another such impasse marked by verbatim repetition, though the tone is different, see *Ag* 1488ff, 1513ff.

³²⁴ For a discussion on the desire for political stability in Athena's discourse, see Carey 1990, p. 241.

throughout. She relies on persuasion. The detail is important. It makes clear that she does not negotiate from weakness (this is not compliance from necessity). She has the power to harm and with it the power to escalate the dispute in a way which has proved disastrous throughout the trilogy. Instead she elects to argue. This is key to her success in assuaging their anger. The ability to listen is also a characteristic of the new court and the attitude the citizens should adopt (*Eu* 570-5), which contrasts with the view of the *Erinyes* that certain crimes can never receive a judicial hearing.³²⁵

The encounter is of profound significance both dramatically (as the first occasion in the trilogy when someone with a grievance exercises forbearance) and historically (in terms of the narrative of social evolution) as a demonstration of the capacity to substitute reason for violence. The fact that it takes place on the divine plane and especially the fact that it is the goddess of wisdom who persuades and the goddesses at work in the process of violent revenge who are persuaded, given this encounter an exemplary status. As was noted above, we might use the language of symbolism. But these are real beings. Rather the encounter is emblematic, paradigmatic, of alternatives to violence and of responses to discord which (for the first time in the trilogy) stabilise. a key element in Athene's success is that (unlike Agamemnon in the *Iliad*) she offers compensation which the recipient sees as adequate. They complain that they have been stripped of honour and as old gods consigned to the past. Athene offers them a *timē* to replace that which they have lost and a role in the present and future. And where they saw themselves as exiles (*Eu* 838 = *Eu* 871) like Orestes, she gives them a place at the heart of the city. Orestes is not the only exile who finds a role in society. As before, there is a strong element of human

³²⁵ The question of whether we are to consider Orestes as polluted or not when he approaches Athena is also controversial (Bowie, 1993, p. 26). Although he assures that he has been cleansed, not only the *Erinyes* claim that he is polluted, but also the Pythia regards him as such (ὄρω δ' ἐπ' ὀμφαλῷ μὲν ἄνδρα θεομυσῆ / ἔδραν ἔχοντα προστρόπαιον, αἵματι / στάζοντα χεῖρας καὶ νεοσπαδῆς ξίφος *Eu* 40-2); the latter is the perception of an impartial observer in the play. The ambiguity about Orestes' pollution is not irrelevant for the understanding of anger.

psychological realism (despite the divine status and monstrous appearance of the chorus), in that the agent needs to feel that the cause of the anger is addressed, if s/he is to be satisfied.

The new song the *Erinýes* sing is a joyful one, not one that calls for strife and anger (στάσις *Eu* 978; ὀργή *Eu* 981).³²⁶ This marks the place where anger ends.³²⁷ Athena is skilful in the treatment of anger – while she disagrees with the *Erinýes*, she treats them with respect and acknowledges the reasons they give for their anger. She uses concessions and tries to negotiate (with the thunderbolt as the last recourse). The sound of guilt and fear has been acknowledged in the song of the *Erinýes*, and, along with them, there is also a sound of anger.³²⁸

When Aeschylus represents the shift from one understanding of justice in which the vendetta, embodied by angry spirits, shifts to another, in which procedural law is represented by the Areopagus, the role attributed to anger changes.³²⁹ However, this does not necessarily reflect a change in the

³²⁶ The motive of the song, that has been important in all the plays, is one of frenzy, confusion and madness (τόδε μέλος, παρακοπά, / παραφορὰ φρενοδαλῆς *Eu* 330-1 = *Eu* 343-4). McClure (1999, p. 106) argues that the link between the *Erinýes* and Clytemnestra is suggested by this use of magical language – Clytemnestra through imprecations, and the *Erinýes* through their binding song (ῥυμνον (...) δέσμιον *Eu* 306) in which and both are heard as dissonant sound of their voices (ἔκνομος *Ag* 1473; 1187; 990; *Eu* 332-3; 345-6; they resemble barking dogs *Eu* 131-2).

³²⁷ This may, as many scholars have felt, have a bearing on the political climate at Athens at the time of the play. The question of the possible topicality of the play is highly contentious and is beyond the scope of this dissertation. See, for example, Murnaghan (2011, p. 252).

³²⁸ This transformation can be seen, for example in the way in which the metaphors for light are used. Lebeck (1971, pp. 131-3) suggests that the move from darkness to light is corresponded by a move from the symbolic to the concrete. Bremmer (1999, p. 17) stresses the image of light in relation to the idea of salvation. See Tarrant 1960 for a review of the uses of metaphors of light in Greek literature. Seaford (2012, p. 295) sees a pattern: the image in the *Agamemnon* points to a firelight that can destroy and deceive, while in the *Eumenides* this tension is resolved. Similarly, Peradotto (1964, p. 388).

³²⁹ Aeschylus' position on the power held by the Areopagus' court is highly controversial. The fact that the court had been at the centre of polemical reforms makes it clear that Aeschylus is engaging and appealing to the recent events; somehow. How exactly, it is hard to establish. For a discussion on this, see Bowie (1993). Gagarin (1973, p. 84) doesn't see the

conceptualisation of anger or in the value attributed to it. Athene's intervention does not change the *Erinýes*. Nor does she remove their capacity for anger in removing the immediate cause and effect. When the *Erinýes* have accepted their new honours and swear that they will not bring disaster to the Attica, Athena asserts that the courteous *Erinýs* has great power (μέγα γὰρ δύννται / πότνι' Ἐρινύς *Eu* 950), both above and below the earth. When Athena invites the citizens of Athens to hear the voice of the *Erinýes*, she remarks on the performative power they have, the 'accomplishment of their words' (ἐπικράϊνω *Eu* 949).

5.2 Other Angry Deities and the Vendetta

The *Oresteia* is rich in examples of the ambivalent use of words for designating either the angry spirit, the polluting criminal, or the asylum seeker.³³⁰ While the use of language designating these figures seems to be somehow relaxed, the *Alástōr* stands out from the rest in its vengeful power. As discussed above, the trilogy is set in a past in which the kind of justice in operation is retributive,³³¹ which has no established procedures or trials to

reconciliation between the *Erinýes* and the Areopagus as a shift between one type of society to a different one; he rather thinks that it represents how aspects of the old system should prevail even after the configuration of the court. Lloyd-Jones (1971, pp. 94-95) argues that it is not accurate to say that the trilogy represents a transition between the vendetta to the rule of law, as these concepts were not clearly separated as for us.

³³⁰ Words like *prostropaios*, *palamnaios*, *miastor*, and *alastor* can be used to designate the polluted killer, the victim's polluting blood, the victim's anger, and the victim's avenging spirit (Parker, [1976](1983), pp. 108-9). In the *Oresteia*, *prostrópaios* has a dual meaning as 'suppliant' and 'polluting' (Burkert, 1992, p. 72). It is applied to Orestes (*Ch* 287, *Eu* 41, *Eu* 234, *Eu* 237, *Eu* 445) – with the exception of Thyestes (*Ag* 1587), and Ixion (*Eu* 718), in the latter cases meaning 'suppliant'. It also appears under the form of *Potitrópaios* (*Eu* 176-7); for ποτί- (= προσ-) in tragedy, see Sommerstein *ad Eu* 79. *Palamnaíos* appears only once in the trilogy (*Eu* 448) as the one who needs to be cleansed. *Miástōr* is used twice: once marking the one who should punish Orestes (*Eu* 176-7), the other one referring to Clytemnestra and Aegisthus (*Ch* 944).

³³¹ It could be argued that this is also the case in modern times because punishment should only affect those who have previously committed an offence. However, there are two clarifications to be made. Firstly, 'punishment' by definition is a reaction to a previous wrong. Secondly, there

settle disputes. The *Oresteia* is rich in judicial language, but frequently it does not have a real counterpart in the social institutions of the trilogy, and it remains either metaphorical or aspirational. As Sommerstein (1989, p. 20) has pointed out, Electra wants a third party to come and avenge her father (*Ch* 120), but instead of this, it is her brother who has to bring ‘justice’ by killing their mother. This precariousness of all the victims in the play, Clytemnestra included, is balanced out by a plurality of avenging and fear-inducing figures. The richness of this vocabulary suggests that anger does not only survive through a curse, but also through guilt.³³² There is something that stays in the offender, until punishment comes. This indicates a notion of anger that involves both the offender and the angry victim or the vindictive spirit that avenges them.

In the *Oresteia*, the *Alástōr* appears in two passages, one in the *Agamemnon* and the other in the *Eumenides*.³³³ In the former, the word is used to denote an angry spirit (the old terrible *Alástōr* of Atreus: ὁ παλαιὸς δριμύς ἀλάστωρ / Ἀτρέως *Ag* 1501-2), and in the latter, a suppliant (kindly receive this *Alástōr*: δέχου δὲ πρευμενῶς ἀλάστορα *Eu* 236). These two passages have an important role in the denouement of the plot and therefore need further attention.

is a whole body of literature showing an age old and ongoing debate on how to understand and justify the practice of imposing penalties on others. Some justifications come from the idea of retribution, but this has been problematic, both in terms of moral justification and pragmatism. This is why other concepts such as deterrence, rehabilitation and restoration are important in the discussion. In any case, even if we find that many modern societies are retributive, this does not affect my argument.

³³² On inherited guilt in the *Oresteia*, see Gagné (2013, pp. 394-445).

³³³ *Alástōr* primarily denotes a spirit of destruction, a spirit of vengeance, or an evil spirit more broadly (Fraenkel on *Ag* 1501). It is for example identified with κακὸς δαίμων in the *Persae* (354). As the *Erinyes*, it can represent destruction and be destructive itself, but it does not receive any significant degree of personification or visual description in tragedy. Since this spirit can act through people, it has agency, or it stands for it. In Greek literature, it mainly appears in tragedy. It can be used as the attribute of a *daímōn*, for Zeus (Ἀλάστωρ ὁ Ζεὺς Pherecydes fr.114a), or for humans (a traitor *Dem* 18.296). In Homer, the word appears only in the *Iliad* and as a proper name for warriors (*Il* 4.295; 5.677; *Il* 8.333; *Il* 13.422), never as a spirit.

Clytemnestra's claim that the old *Alástōr* took vengeance on Agamemnon has received a good deal of attention. Two main interpretations have been given: she is either suddenly conscious of her deed or disowning her responsibility for the murder of Agamemnon. Fraenkel (*ad* 1502) interprets this as a sign of a cognitive and emotional shift in Clytemnestra, seeing her as attributing the act to the *Alástōr* as only he, using her as a vehicle, could have done something so terrible. Yet, there is no sign in Clytemnestra's words that she has gone through a transformation of any kind, either emotional or cognitive. As Denniston-Page (*ad loc*) point out, nothing indicates that she is now aware of the horror of her crime, or that she is looking for an explanation.

In their attempt to make sense of the murder scene, the chorus of elders place the blame on Helen, and assert that the house holds an unmovable strife (ἔρις ἐρίδματος *Ag* 1461), implying the presence of a spirit in it. At Clytemnestra's strong reaction against blaming Helen, they directly address the spirit in a more precise way: it is the spirit of the Tantalids, who fell upon the house exercising its power through women who are alike (δαίμον, ὃς ἐμπίτνεις δώμασι καὶ / διφυίοισι Τανταλίδαισιν, / κράτος τ' ἰσόψυχον ἐκ γυναικῶν *Ag* 1468-71). The chorus do not say what type of spirit this is, but the imagery with which it is connected is the one with which the *Erinýes* are presented in the trilogy: ravens (black), tuneless song (κόρακος ἐχθροῦ σταθεῖς ἐκνόμως / ὕμνον ὕμνεῖν ἐπεύχεται *Ag* 1473-4). Clytemnestra responds by recognising this spirit of the family (δαίμονα γέννης *Ag* 1477), and links it the perpetuation of the desire for new blood (ἐκ τοῦ γὰρ ἔρωσ ἀίματολοιχὸς (...) νέος ἰχώρ *Ag* 1478-80). When Clytemnestra claims that the murder belongs to the *Alástōr* of Atreus (ὁ παλαιὸς δριμὺς ἀλάστωρ / Ἀτρέως *Ag* 1501-2), The way in which she characterises the *Alástōr* (δριμύς; χαλεποῦ θοινατῆρος 1502; and Ἀτρεὺς in genitive) resembles an *Erinýs* as they are used with a possessive – the *Alástōr* is not normally attributed to someone in that way. Fraenkel (*ad loc*) might be right that despite the important overlaps between the *Erinýes* and the *Alástōr*, it seems too simplistic as a solution just to dismiss their

differences (and the same applies to the rest of the angry spirits), but it also seems to be the case that these differences are not always a concern for the expression of the experience involved. After forty lines in which different types of divine agency had been said to be involved in Agamemnon's murder, when Clytemnestra is precise about its type, she speaks of the *Alástōr* – the term that Orestes also uses to describe himself in the *Eumenides*.

The way in which Clytemnestra phrases her agreement with the chorus is that the *Alástōr* acted through the corpse's wife (φανταζόμενος δὲ γυναικὶ νεκροῦ *Ag* 1500). The *Alástōr* attributed to her does not amount to a new explanation:³³⁴ it is in line with what she has been saying from the beginning, namely that she is an avenger and that the deed is in accordance with justice (Denniston-Page *ad loc*; Wohl, 2010, p. 49). The new element, and in this she is following the chorus' view that Agamemnon suffered not only for the crime that he committed, but also for the one that Atreus did, is that she embodies the spirit of the vendetta.

With regard to the argument that she is disowning responsibility for the crime, which is sound given that it is in agreement with the chorus' interpretation 'that you are not responsible for the murder' (ὡς μὲν ἀνάιτιος εἶ *Ag* 1505),³³⁵ it does not really affect the belief or the role of the *Alástōr*. They only negate what they perceive as the purpose of Clytemnestra's words, not that an *Alástōr* could have been involved. The chorus have been talking of the spirit behind the crime, even Zeus has been implicated, for forty lines without implying any interest in resting responsibility on Clytemnestra,

³³⁴ John Jones (1962, pp. 91-2) argues something similar: after an array of opinions – condemn her, admit Agamemnon's fault, confessing themselves unable to judge, accusing Helen – they finally express their horror at the evil spirit that through successive generations has been assailing the house of Atreus. Similarly, see Gagné (2013, p. 398-9).

³³⁵ For a dissenting view, see Neuburg (1991, p. 63-8), who argues that there is no need to ascribe to Clytemnestra the intention of avoiding responsibility if one reads the chorus' claim as 'that you are not to be censured for the murder?' In her view, Clytemnestra could be saying that the deed is not to be understood as the crime of a wife but the act of justice of an *Alástōr*, taking the it in a symbolic way.

and this is coherent with the references to divine agency in the rest of the trilogy. Even if she is trying to disown responsibility, she uses the word to say that an angry spirit acted through her, and that it renders the deed as an act of vengeance for the murdered children (νεαρός *Ag* 1504), as she will go on to explain once again (*Ag* 1521-9).

In the previous chapter (p. 181), I pointed out that the mention of the *Alástōr* marked an end for the escalation of threats between Clytemnestra and the elders. The *Alástōr* thus plays an important dramatic role, allowing the characters to put an end to a dynamic of anger by articulating a projection from the human to the divine. This acts as a depersonalisation of anger that allows the characters to look at the conflict in broader terms. As the elders are quick to signal, the recourse to divinities linked to revenge does not dispense people from guilt. However, in the interaction between them, the attribution of the conflict to a divine creature helps in dealing with conflict. The only way in which the chorus could account for the level of violence they were witnessing was a divine figure that would embody the laws of revenge.

In the *Eumenides*, when Orestes refers to himself as an *Alástōr* (*Eu* 236), he means ‘a suppliant’. His use of the word is an instantiation of a category that can be applied to humans – the *Alástōr*-suppliant. Orestes adds that he is not a προστρόπαιος or someone with polluted hands (δέχου δὲ πρευμενῶς ἀλάστορα, / οὐ προστρόπαιον οὐδ’ ἀφοίβαντον χέρα *Eu* 236-7).³³⁶ Even though both figures denote fierce avengers, Orestes is distinguishing between them, probably because of their connotations. As

³³⁶ The scarcity of references to avenging creatures such as the *Erinýes* or the *Alástōr*, as well as to the notion of *miasma* in general, in forensic speeches has led some to conclude that by the fifth century the belief in pollution was confined to Tragedy (Parker, [1976](1983), p. 107). While there must be some truth to overall explanation for the social purpose these beliefs played, it is important, nonetheless, to keep in mind that religious beliefs play several roles in society. Aeschylus’ society is no exception, as has been suggested by the *Lex Sacra* from Selenius, by Aeschylus’ time there was a set of purificatory measures to rid oneself from angry spirits related to crimes of hospitality and patricide and they coincide with Orestes’ concerns about what he will suffer if he does not avenge his father, as described in the *Choephoroi* (291-4) (Clinton, 1996, p. 176). For a further discussion, see Sewell-Rutter (2007, p. 85).

Sommerstein (*ad loc*) has noted, Orestes' use of the word is ambiguous: although it is intended to mean 'suppliant', this is not the most common usage of the word, and the meaning that Clytemnestra gave it must still reverberate in the audience. Orestes does not deny that he, here an *Alástōr* begging to be received by Athena to undergo a trial, avenged his father by killing his mother thus somehow mirroring his mother – just as her, Orestes is an avenger who acted according to the law of the vendetta. What he is asking for is a reassessment of his status from a different set of rules – those imposed by Athena. Both Orestes and Clytemnestra regard the act of retribution as part of divine justice, yet Orestes wants his social status to become universally recognised as 'unpolluted'.

5.3 Conclusions

Throughout the trilogy, the characters share anger as a defining emotional experience and motivation and for the vendetta to work this emotion has to be experienced afresh across time.³³⁷ The present events in the family depend on the past not only in a direct causal way (one crime leads to the other; every action is the reaction to a previous wrong), but also because of guilt rooted in the past. This is an important part of the Aeschylean conceptualisation of anger.³³⁸

For the representation of anger as transcending the individual, lasting for generations, and staying within a family corrupting all relations the angry divinities just described are important both conceptually and dramatically. All these divinities enable the drama to represent anger as a particular problem within a family and at the same time as an abstract theme of social, and eventually human, relevance.

³³⁷ Similarly, Bacon (2001, p. 50).

³³⁸ Gould (1995, p. 27) notes that a major theme in the *Oresteia* is how the past affects the future: first it is how the past ten years have unavoidable repercussions; how the past two generations have an impact on the present.

Conclusion

In the preceding chapters I have outlined a multi-layered model to read anger in ancient texts. This model considers premises and empirical results from different disciplines, and theories. Historical, literary, religious, and political contextualisation of the text is also an integral part of this model. I hope I have shown that the representation of anger in Aeschylus is highly complex and sophisticated. For this reason, along with the distance in time, it needs to be evaluated from different perspectives and understandings of emotions.

One important aspect of anger in the *Oresteia* is that it presupposes a society which espouses both competitive and cooperative values. While the importance of cooperative values in Greek society has often been stressed, anger is has frequently been perceived by modern scholars as a sign of the competitive nature of society. It is this latter assumption that has been challenged by the reading of the propositional content of anger in the trilogy. Anger is also represented as a sign of deep concern about human bonds.

Anger in the *Oresteia* shows patterns that clearly cohere with the evidence from other Greek authors. As discussed, the notion of honour is central to the understanding of anger in the trilogy. However, Aeschylus can be used to supplement that evidence and expand our understanding of the phenomena by adding nuances both in the language and in the way the themes are developed.

The presence of desire, with both its motivational power and its link to irrationality and loss of control, is fundamental to understand anger in Aeschylus. This is particularly useful in expanding on Aristotle's views on desire and in the process demonstrating an aspect of anger often missing from cognitive readings of the emotions. The presence of desire in the dramatisation of anger is a hugely valuable from the perspective of phenomenology. The Aeschylean representation of anger indicates that the lived experience of the emotion had a strong hedonistic component.

Modern research on emotions can usefully illuminate Aeschylean (and potentially other) Greek tragedy. Anger in the *Oresteia* shows patterns that are clearly in line with modern research in emotions. This is clear not only from a cognitivist perspective based on appraisals, but also from a broader understanding of cognition that accounts for experiential basis of the conceptualisations of the emotion in the trilogy.

The last two points strengthen the position argued at the start of this thesis, namely, that there are firm grounds to think that anger in Aeschylus has realistic psychological components, and despite the amplification inevitable in a genre which deals with events on a grand scale and in a heroic context, reflects lived and perceived experience.

I hope my analysis has shown the importance of including the divine in any understanding of Aeschylean anger and the degree to which the dramatic use of this element converges with and diverges from our perceptions. The role of divine figures, where they personify or represent experience (as for example Aphrodite and Artemis in *Hippolytus*) is immediately intelligible even to us as an effective means of dealing with large concepts and themes in a visual medium. This cannot be the full explanation, because there is a residue which resists secular analysis and simple rationalisation. One aspect that stands out in the trilogy is the need to know the past in order to understand the present. This is a dimension lacking from modern – and indeed ancient – secular accounts of anger. However, this dimension of anger can be fully incorporated in the distinction between the cause and the object of emotions, so important in cognitive science.

If time allowed, this research could be expanded by addressing the full Aeschylean corpus, or by examining Sophoclean and Euripidean tragedy to determine how far they converge with, or diverge from, the Aeschylean representation that I have analysed here.

In terms of methodology, I would like to have included certain aspects of cognitive science such as ‘emergence’. This idea is already implied in my analysis, but it could be made explicit and more developed: anger is to be understood as the behaviour of a system involving the mind, the body,

society, and the gods. Anger is not just the addition of these elements; it is something that happens in the interaction of them. A focus on this concept could potentially allow further elements to be incorporated, thus enriching our understanding of the emotion. The granularity of anger, or in fact of any emotion, could be explored by focusing on the interaction of the elements in the system.

Finally, there are two aspects of the modern research on emotions and cognition that I would like to have explored. The first one is salience (this is a fairly new approach to emotions and really interesting). Further work in that direction would include, for example, questions of how an emotion is a way of picking certain elements from the vast spectrum of experience: anger is not so much the effect of an affront to *timē* or the perception that that affront should be redressed; it belongs to those 'mechanisms that control the crucial factor of salience among what would otherwise be an unmanageable plethora of objects of attention, interpretations, and strategies of inference and conduct' (de Sousa, 2018). This approach could potentially allow us to infer the patterns of salience in their experiences and therefore more detail about their minds, and ultimately their lives, from our knowledge of ancient emotions. The second one is the application of the enactive programme first developed by Varela *et al* (1991) in relation to embodied cognition. I just hinted on this when discussing the ways in which we can read divine intervention in anger. However, this is a methodological approach that could work very well to complement Dodds' overdetermination model.

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