

## 1 Andrew Sofer on 'dark matter' (2013: 3–4, only bold passages read aloud)

In physics dark matter refers to nonluminous mass that cannot be directly detected by observation... [B]ecause it does not emit light, x-rays, or any other radiation, dark matter can only be inferred by its gravitational effects on the motion of ordinary matter...

Translated into theatrical terms, dark matter refers to the invisible dimension of theater that escapes visual detection, even though its effects are felt everywhere in performance. If theater necessarily traffics in corporeal stuff (bodies, fluids, gases, objects), it also incorporates the incorporeal: offstage spaces and actions, absent characters, the narrated past, hallucination, blindness, obscenity, godhead, and so on. No less than physical actors and objects, such invisible presences matter very much indeed, even if spectators, characters, and performers cannot put their hands on them.

Faced with the unseen, theater scholars tend to discuss offstage persons, spaces, and objects in terms of the indexical sign first posited by Charles Peirce... an offstage siren indexes a police car, for instance, just as smoke indexes fire or a knock on the door a visitor. **But to observe that fictive stage space, action, and/or character are pointed to by narrative (or audible) indices—the messenger's story of Oedipus' blinding, the breaking string in *The Cherry Orchard*, the gunshot in *Hedda Gabler*—does not yet account for their pull within the fictive world or their power over an audience (my emphasis), the gravitational effects that are my [sc. Sofer's] subject here...** A fresh method and vocabulary can help account for theater's capacity to alter our perceptual field through means besides the visual—to alter other's consciousness at will. This ability is no mere epiphenomenon, an indexical pendant to the iconic stage. Dark matter is woven into the fabric of theatrical representation.

## 2. Prologue: Orestes returns to his native soil

### 2a. Invocations at the tomb (A. *Cho.* 1–5 = Ar. *Ran.* 1126–8, 1172–3; Page's OCT and my own translations are used throughout)

Ἐρμῆ χθόνιε, πατρῶϊ' ἐποπτεύων κράτη,  
σωτήρ γενοῦ μοι σύμμαχος τ' αἰτουμένωι·  
ἦκω γὰρ ἐς γῆν τήνδε καὶ κατέρχομαι  
τύμβου δ' ἐπ' ὄχθωι τῶνδε κηρύσσω πατρὶ  
κλύειν, ἀκοῦσαι

5

Chthonian Hermes, overseer of fatherly powers,  
be my savior and ally, I beseech you,  
for I have come to this land and return.  
And upon this mound of a tomb, I call upon my father  
to listen, to hear.

### 2b. Dedicatory offerings of hair (A. *Cho.* 6–7 = cit. Σ ad P. *Pyth.* 4.145)

...πλόκαμον Ἰνάχωι θρεπτήριον,  
τὸν δεύτερον δὲ τόνδε πευθητήριον

...a lock of hair, as a thank-offering for nourishment, to Inachus,  
and this second, in sign of mourning...

### 2c. Orestes underscores his current presence to the corpse (A. *Choe.* 8–9 = cit. Σ ad E. *Alc.* 768)

οὐ γὰρ παρών ὦμιωξα σόν, πάτερ, μόρον  
οὐδ' ἐξέτεινα χεῖρ' ἐπ' ἐκφορᾷ νεκροῦ

For, not being present, I lamented your fate, father, nor did I  
hold out my hand [sc. in grief] at your corpse's funeral march

## 3. THE ARRIVAL OF THE CHORUS AND THE RITUAL LAMENT OF THE PARODOS

### 3a. Orestes sees the chorus approach in black robes (A. *Cho.* 10–12)

τί χρῆμα λεύσσω; τίς ποθ' ἦδ' ὀμήγουρις  
στείχει γυναικῶν φάρεσιν μελαγχίμοις  
πρέπουσα...

What's this I see? Whatever is this gathering of women that  
approaches, conspicuous in their black robes...

### 3b. Electra stands out as exceptional in her lament (A. *Cho.* 14–8)

...χοᾶς φερούσαις, νερτέροις μελίγματα:  
οὐδὲν ποτ' ἄλλο· καὶ γὰρ Ἥλέκτραν δοκῶ  
στείχειν ἀδελφὴν τὴν ἐμὴν πένθει λυγροῦ  
πρέπουσαν.

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... bearing libations, propitiatory offerings for those below[.]  
It cannot be otherwise: for I think I see Electra approaching,  
my own sister, conspicuous in her baleful grief.

### 3c. The Beginning of the Choral lament (A. *Cho.* 22–31, first antistrophe, continued on next page)

...ἰαλτὸς ἐκ δόμων ἔβαν  
χοᾶς προπομποῦσ' ὀξύχειρι σὺν κόπῳι.

Sent forth from the palace I have come carrying before me  
in procession libations with a sharp-handed strike.

πρέπει παρήϊς φοίνισσ' ἀμυγ- μοῖς ὄνυχος ἄλοκι νεοτόμωι, δι' αἰῶνος δ' ἰυγ- μοῖσι βόσκεται κέαρ, <u>λινοφθόροι δ' ὑφασμάτων</u> <u>λακίδες ἔφλαδον ὑπ' ἄλγεσιν,</u> πρόστερνοι στολμοὶ πέπλων ἀγελάστοις ξυμφοραῖς πεπληγμένων.	25     30	My cheek is marked, incarnadine, from the scratches of my nail, a furrow newly-cut, but throughout my life my heart grazes on griefs, and the <u>linen-consuming tears of my woven garments</u> are repeatedly ripped on account of my pains, the garments on my breast struck with mirthless misfortunes.
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#### 4. EXODOS: ORESTES PRESENTS THE ENSNARING CLOTH

##### 4a. Orestes displays the bodies of his father's murderers, along with the web that ensnared Agamemnon (A. Cho. 972-3; 980-986)

ἴδεσθε χώρας τὴν διπλὴν τυραννίδα πατροκτόνους τε δωμάτων πορθήτορας...		Behold the twin tyrants of the land, the killers of my father and destroyers of my house...
ἴδεσθε δ' αὐτε, τῶνδ' ἐπήκοοι κακῶν, τὸ μηχανήμα, δεσμὸν ἀθλίωι πατρί, πέδας τε χειροῖν καὶ ποδοῖν ξυνωρίδος. ἐκτεínaτ' αὐτὸ καὶ κύκλωι παρασταδὸν στέγαστρον ἀνδρὸς δειξαθ', ὡς ἴδῃ πατήρ, <u>οὐχ οὐμός, ἀλλ' ὁ πάντ' ἐποπτεύων τάδε</u> Ἥλιος...	980     985	Behold, again, <u>you who overhear these evils</u> , the device, the trap for my wretched father, the shackles that coupled his hands and feet. Spread it out and, standing about it in a circle, display the man's covering, so that father may see— <u>no, not my father, but the one who oversees all these things</u> , <u>Helios...</u>

##### 4b. Orestes addresses his father while calling the cloth as witness to Clytemnestra's culpability (A. Cho. 1010-1015)


Ὀρ. ἔδρασεν ἢ οὐκ ἔδρασε; μαρτυρεῖ δέ μοι φᾶρος τόδ' ὡς ἔβαψεν Αἰγίσθου ξίφος· φόνου δὲ κηκίς ξὺν χρόνωι ξυμβάλλεται πολλὰς βαφὰς φθειρούσα τοῦ ποικίλματος. νῦν αὐτὸν αἰνῶ, νῦν ἀποιμῶζω παρών, πατροκτόνον γ' ὑφασμα προσφωνῶν τόδε:	1015	Did she do the deed, or did she not? I call upon as my witness this cloth, which was dyed by Aegisthus' sword. <u>A stain of blood</u> , together with time, wears away the many colors and of this pattered garment. <u>Now I praise him, now I am present to lament him</u> , <u>as I address this father-killing web.</u>
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Agamemnon's Corpse as Dark Matter in Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers*

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Wyles, Rosie. 2010. "Towards Theorising the Place of Costume in Performance Reception." In *Theorising Performance*, ed. Edith Hall and Stephe Harrop, 171–80. London: Duckworth.