when it occupies the stage, recognized as "dramatic" rather than "realistic," especially when the audience's reality is perceived as a theatricalized reality? The distinction is difficult to pinpoint, especially when the distinction itself is intentionally blurred, as in the case of Nero, who performed onstage wearing masks, including those of his own likeness.[18] Suetonius, furthermore, reports that the audience had difficulty in distinguishing theatre from reality, even while seated in the theatre watching Nero perform onstage, since it was not sure even then when Nero was "acting."[19] It can be no surprise, therefore, that later historians viewed Nero's reign as "theatrical," deliberately suggesting that there was no difference between Nero's behavior and interpretation of that behavior, on and off the stage.[20]

The incorporation of theatricality onto the stage leads to the creation of Seneca's metatragedy, in which the characters acknowledge their own theatrical reality as they incorporate the audience's own theatricalized reality into their own. Boyle's "actor-audience" arrives on the Senecan stage via theatricalization of tragedy and contemporary rhetoric. Following the murder of her children, for example, Seneca's Medea remarks that her actions cannot be considered a crime since they were not witnessed by Jason (*Med.* 986–994). In other words, Medea needs Jason to supply the text and the context for her actions. The spectators in the audience are irrelevant in a drama where characters have become their own audience. Where exactly does one draw the line between theatre and reality?

Just as tragic texts and the dramatic traditions of certain plays were achieving a remarkable level of intertextuality, the curtain rose on the writing of new tragic plays. This was due in part to the enormous success of pantomimic productions, but one must also take into account waning Imperial patronage and the role that rhetoric and theatricality played in exhausting the genre, and perhaps even in alienating the audience. Even if dramatists wanted to write tragedy after Seneca, could dramatic reality successfully compete with the theatricality of offstage reality to attract an audience? The implications of this question will be considered through a study of the evolution of tragedy to metatragedy and the cultural importance of theatricality on and off the stage.

CREATING TRAGEDY

LIVIUS ANDRONICUS

mirum videtur quod sit factum iam diu?

(LIVIUS *AJAX MASTIGOPHORUS* FRAG. 1)

Does it seem wonderful because it was done a long time ago?

So a character in Livius' tragedy asks of the value of an early deed in r
lation to the present. Should something be admired solely because of
age, or rather because it possesses some other quality besides antiqui
to deserve commemoration in the present? Perhaps the character re
ized that the question actually requires an understanding of the prese
against which the value of an earlier event can be measured. Livi
plays, already ancient by the late Republic, are important for more th
their antiquity. As the first Roman dramatic works, they influenced t
form of drama that was to follow, but their relative neglect, even in C
ero's day, has obscured their contribution to the Roman theatre.

If we look forward from the perspective of Livius, rather than ba
from the perspective of Senecan tragedy, we find that Livius' plays are
once examples of theatre and metatheatre that greatly influenced t
plays of Naevius and Ennius, and later those of Pacuvius and Accius,
which the audience's reality (and later theatricalized reality) comes to
ter the perception of dramatic reality onstage. The reciprocity of the
realities on and off the stage during the late Republic and early Emp
contributed to the metatheatricality of Seneca's plays, but his pla
emerge as products of the tradition rather than as aberrations. It is u

likely that members of Seneca's audience, experiencing just a small part of it, would have recognized a linear pattern to this development, but our vantage point gives us an opportunity to analyze the entire tradition of tragic productions at Rome.

The history of Roman tragedy and Latin literature begins in 240 B.C.E., when Livius Andronicus presented the first tragedy (together with a comedy?) at Rome.[1] Unfortunately, the title of this play cannot be recovered from the known plays of Livius. We do know that this tragedy was an adaptation of a Greek play and was presented at the games celebrating the end of the first Punic War.

The future dramatist had arrived in Rome as a prisoner taken in the capture of Tarentum in 272 B.C.E., when he was only a boy in the service of Livius Salinator. A native Greek speaker, Livius must have acquired Latin at Rome, where he was a schoolteacher. Depending on the order of composition, experience with Greek adaptation may have come from his translation of the *Odyssey* for a classroom text, which he rendered in the native Saturnian verse.

By adapting a Greek tragedy, Livius was transferring an established Greek dramatic tradition to Rome, creating the Roman theatre.[2] The occasion implies a ready audience, but not one that would have had any experience viewing a tragedy written in Latin. Unfortunately, we do not know whether Livius presented a tragedy before this date. If Livius was approached with the commission due to his reputation as a poet for his *Odyssia*, this was his first attempt at writing a play. If Livius had presented a play or plays prior to this date, then he had had the more difficult burden of attracting an initial audience for a novel, if not highly experimental, form of entertainment.[3] In either scenario, we cannot answer the question of why a tragedy was included in the victory celebrations on this date and for this occasion.

What were the first steps toward developing a tragic theatre in Rome? From the beginning, one finds a tension between Greek plays written centuries earlier for a Greek audience and Greek plays adapted for a Roman audience. Livius altered his Greek originals to make elements within the plays intelligible to his Roman audience through changes in dramatic format and content, thereby creating a distinctly Roman tragic theatre. Livius' innovations were not immediate, but rather evolved from actual stage experience. Since Livius presented the first play ever produced at Rome, whether for this or an earlier occasion, he must have organized or assisted in organizing everything from scratch: seating, stage construction and props, costumes, and perhaps the training of Greek actors in Latin. Livius also introduced far-reaching changes to the format of tragedies, most importantly the assigning of *cantica*, or recitative arias, to an actor, rather than to the chorus, which meant that the chorus did not provide the musical interludes between acts, as on the Greek stage. This change both reduced the chorus' role significantly and resulted in the unrealistic expression of emotion by actors who sing in complicated meters rather than speak in a natural way in trimeters or senarius verse throughout the play.

Livius initially acted in his own plays—a circumstance reminiscent of the career of Aeschylus. The strain on Livius' vocal cords, however, was later alleviated by the introduction of an offstage singer who would sing the *cantica* for him, allowing Livius to concentrate on acting and dialogue parts. The evidence is not clear but, at least initially, this seems to refer only to the leading role played by Livius.[4] The effect of having the lead actor(s) gesticulating onstage while someone else sang offstage was to make an already unrealistic depiction of human interaction onstage even further removed from the audience's experience outside of the theatre.

The custom of having other characters join principal actors in duets and trios, common in later tragedy and comedy, may have originated with Livius as well. These *cantica* must have been enormously successful, since their use was immediately exploited by Naevius and soon after by the comic dramatists Plautus and Caecilius Statius.[5] The diminished role of the chorus furthermore altered the architectural needs of Roman tragedy, since actors rather than the chorus now provided the lyric components of drama.[6]

Too little remains of the fragments of Livius' tragedies to reveal the rigidity of style, which Cicero compared to a sculpture of Daedalus, claiming that Livius' plays were not worth a second reading.[7] Cicero was usually full of praise for the older poets, especially Ennius, so his condemnation of Livius' poetry is startling.[8] Cicero's comment nonetheless contains a clue to the reception of Livius' tragic works in the late Republic: "they are not worth a second read" implies that they were no longer to be seen onstage. Perhaps the dominance of tragic plays by later dramatists also cut short the popularity on the stage of Livius' tragic plays, but not before he had acquired a reputation as a tragedian.[9]

As with the plays of the other early dramatists, few fragments of Livius' plays survive, often only a single line.[10] The greatest number of surviving fragments come from the *Aegisthus*. Eight fragments from this play exist, yet it is unclear whether Livius used Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*

or Sophocles' *Aegisthus* as a model. The dramatic action centers on the return of Agamemnon, with Cassandra, to Mycenae after the fall of Troy, and his murder and Aegisthus' subsequent usurpation of power.

Fragments 1 and 2 describe the sack of Troy and the voyage back to Greece. The speakers of these lines are unknown. The alliteration of *p*'s in fragment 1 and *c*'s and *s*'s in fragment 2 point to the influence of *carmen*-style verse techniques.[11]

(1)
nam ut Pergama
accensa et praeda per participes aequiter
partita est.

For after Pergama
had been burned, and the booty was divided equally
among the participants.[12]

(2)
tum autem lascivum Nerei simum pecus
ludens ad cantum classem lustratur.

Then the frisky flat-nosed flock of Nereus
frolicking to our song encircled the fleet.

Fragment 3 portrays a character, perhaps Aegisthus, as a stock tyrant onstage,[13] overstepping the bounds of nature and civilization, through a gluttonous appetite for pleasure or power:

(3)
iamne oculos specie laetavisti optabili?

Have you, by now, delighted your eyes with a desirable sight?

Fragments 4 and 5 describe the return of Agamemnon and Cassandra to Mycenae:

(4)
nemo haece vostrorum ruminetur mulieri!

Let no one of you rehash this to the woman!

(5)
sollemnitusque †adeo ditali laudem lubens.

Solemnly and freely (he offered) praise to god.

Details of the murder of Agamemnon are described in fragments 6 and 7, perhaps by Cassandra:

(6)
. . . in sedes conlocat se regias:
Clytemestra[14] *iuxtim; tertias natae occupant.*

He seats himself upon royal thrones:
Clytemnestra is next to him; their daughters occupy the thirds.

(7)
ipsus se in terram saucius fligit cadens.

Falling, he dashed his wounded self onto the ground.

In fragment 8, in his command to servants(?) to remove Elect (*hanc*), Aegisthus behaves like a tyrant, but his self-identification wi his *maiestas* points to a Roman, rather than a Greek, concept:

(8)
quin quod parere (mihi) vos maiestas mea
procat, toleratis temploque hanc deducitis?[15]

Rather, that which my majesty orders you
to obey, tolerate it and lead this woman from the temple?

With the death of Agamemnon, Aegisthus and Clytemnestra emer triumphant at the end of the play and, as in Aeschylus' version, seem succeed unpunished. Did Livius choose this play because the mytholo ical characters were known to his audience, or was it because the them of power, betrayal, and usurpation evoked universal responses? Sin Livius was establishing the theatre at Rome, his choices in plays play a large role in shaping his audience's perceptions of and expectations f tragedy.

How did the various elements of the first Roman audience of litera productions react to such an explosive beginning? If Livius was pr senting a tragedy for the first time in 240 B.C.E., seeing a "Greek" pl in Latin was a novel experience to many in his audience. Even to mi tary personnel and government officials who had seen Greek plays pe formed in southern Italy, the production of a tragedy in Latin at Ror would have been a novelty, especially with Livius' operatic innovatio It is a matter of debate whether it was the opportunity to see a Gre play performed in Latin rather than in Greek that attracted Hiero II

Syracuse, who visited Rome in 237 B.C.E. in order to view the spectacles/plays.[16]

Livius, through his bold literary innovations, introduced a poetic vocabulary, expressed Greek concepts in a Roman way, lessened the role of the chorus, and established the *canticum* format—necessary first steps toward the development of a distinct Roman tragic theatre. Livius' success is further measured by the almost immediate appearance of a rival, Naevius, who followed Livius' lead in dramatic form and content. From a semiotic perspective, Livius' innovative approach to adapting Greek tragedy, in particular his use of *cantica* by a professional singer or actors rather than the chorus, ensured that, from the beginning of the Roman theatre, dramatic reality was not a reflection of offstage reality (who, after all, sings their joys and fears?), but rather a construct of recognizable human experiences expressed in an unrealistic way. This suspension of offstage reality demonstrates that the audience needed to be selective in its response to dramatic reality: this action is realistic; however, that one is not, but rather is theatrical. Livius, therefore, lay the groundwork for both theatre and metatheatre at Rome.

NAEVIUS

The second tragedian at Rome, Gnaeus Naevius (c. 270–c. 199 B.C.E.), faced a dilemma: should he reject Livius' innovations and present a tragedy on the Greek model, or adopt the format introduced by his precursor? Naevius chose the latter course, maintaining the diminished role of the chorus and the use of *cantica* sung by characters, thereby continuing the "unrealistic" dialogue format. He also contributed some innovations of his own. Naevius staged his first tragedy in Rome in 235 B.C.E., only five years after Livius presented his first play.[17] As the author of both tragedies and comedies, he must have learned his dramatic technique as a member of Livius' audience at least sometime between 240 and 236/5 B.C.E.

The lack of secure dates makes it impossible to identify which plays of Livius were staged before Naevius began his dramatic career in 235 B.C.E. There is no reason to assume Livius produced all of his plays before 235 B.C.E. For the sake of convenience it is easier to imagine a linear progression and to assume that some of Livius' plays were produced before Naevius', although for plays written after 235 B.C.E. the converse is equally possible. The original dates of production for Naevius' plays are unknown, and one can date the restaging of his plays on only one

occasion—the *Equos Troianus*, which was presented at the dedication of Pompey's theatre in 55 B.C.E. Others may have enjoyed a vogue in the late Republic, but the sources are silent.

The titles of Naevius' plays reveal a fondness for mythological material associated with the Trojan War cycle: *Andromache*(?),[18] *Equos Troianus, Hector proficiscens, Hesione,* and *Iphigenia.*[19] His only other known tragedies, the *Danae* and *Lycurgus,* appear to be examples of *contaminatio,* the fusing of plots from different originals.[20] From a dramaturgical point of view, this raises an important question concerning the audience's knowledge and reception of the technique: does *contaminatio* require the audience to recognize this fusion, or can it just enjoy the result without knowing anything about the process? If the recognition of the technique is required, then Naevius inserts yet another interpretative for the audience to consider as it follows the dramatic action on the stage.

The writer of both tragedies and comedies in his youth, Naevius turned to epic in his old age and composed in saturnians—the meter used by Livius in his own epic, the *Bellum Punicum,* which described the mythological origins and contemporary history of the Punic Wars.[21] Yet in his *Vita,* Naevius is remembered as a *comicus* rather than a tragedian.[22] His skill as a comic writer is also noted by Volcacius Sedigitus, who places him third in his list of top comic writers at Rome. Many of the characters common in the plays of Plautus first appeared in Naevius' plays.[23] Part of his fame as a comic writer may rest on his famous lampoons, such as the one suggesting that the Metelli owed their political power to chance rather than intelligence: *fato Metelli Romae fiunt consules.* This supposed feud with the Metelli earned him their rejoinder—*malum dabunt Metelli Naevio poetae*—and eventually led to imprisonment and exile in 201 B.C.E., but the evidence surrounding this episode is inconclusive.[24] According to Cicero, Naevius' Old Comedy–style attack against figures of state served as a warning to later poets at Rome.[25]

Naevius' contributions to the creation of a Roman theatre were many. In addition to the practice of *contaminatio,* Naevius introduced a new dramatic genre with specific Roman content called the *fabula praetexta.* Themes of his historical drama deal with remote legendary or quasi-historical subjects, such as his *Romulus sive Lupus,*[26] or with the military success of his patron, such as his *Clastidium,* which described M. Claudius Marcellus' victory over the Insubrian Gauls in 222 B.C.E. The *Clastidium* brought a contemporary figure and theme and, more important for the further development of metatheatricality, introduced offstage realism to the tragic stage.[27] Moreover, those members of the au-

dience who personally knew the person being depicted onstage could weigh whether that depiction was accurate and whether the events portrayed or related were historically correct.

As with the case of Livius, few fragments survive from Naevius' tragedies. Of those that do survive, the fragments from the *Danae* reveal aspects of the metatheatricality of Naevius' tragedies difficult to recover elsewhere. The play contains Roman elements: *cantica, carmen*-style verse techniques, and specific Roman concepts drawn from the audience's world, such as that of a *pater familias*. The Greek model or models for the *Danae* are unknown, but possibilities include Sophocles' *Acrisius, Danae*(?), and *Men of Larissa,* and Euripides' *Danae.* If the plot of Naevius' play was culled from more than one of these plays, as the fragments suggest, then we have *contaminatio* in a tragedy, in which case one cannot rule out the possible influence of Livius' *Danae.*

The basic outline of the myth is as follows: Acrisius, fearing an oracle that a grandchild would kill him, imprisons his daughter Danae, who is then loved by Jupiter in the form of a shower of gold. Danae and her resultant son, Perseus, are locked in a chest and put out to sea by Acrisius, and they drift until they finally reach Seriphus.

Eleven fragments of Naevius' *Danae* survive, but they are difficult to place within the dramatic action of the play. The action seems to center on events after the rape of Danae, when Acrisius punishes her with imprisonment and exile for the birth of Perseus. Fragment 1 may describe either Jupiter or Acrisius:

(1)
omnes formidant homines eius valentiam.

All men fear his power.[28]

In fragment 2, the speaker (Danae's father?) defends or mocks Danae's current/former condition and invites another character (and the audience) to look at Danae:

(2)
contempla placide formam et faciem virginis.[29]

Examine quietly the shape and beauty of a virgin.

(3)
excidit orationis omnis confidentia.

All confidence of speech was lost.

Does Acrisius accuse Danae of promiscuity in fragment 4?

(4)
eam nunc esse inventam probris compotem scis.

Now you know that she was caught a friend to filth.

In fragment 5, Danae seems to recount how Jupiter seduced her in wha
appears to be a euphemism for sex. The emphasis on Danae's hand re
calls a Roman wedding ceremony, for which the hands of the betrothe
were joined to signify their union:

(5)
auri rubeo fonte lavere ⟨me⟩ memini manum.

I remember that I washed my hand in a redness of gold.

Does fragment 6 contain Danae's complaint on the unfair treatment c
women, or Acrisius' fears of gossip concerning Danae's pregnancy?

(6)
desubito famam tollunt, si quam solam videre in via.

Straightaway do men start a scandal, if they see a woman alone in the street.

In fragment 7, Acrisius justifies his punishment of Danae:

(7)
quin, ut quisque est meritus, praesens pretium pro factis ferat.

Indeed, just as each man deserves, let him have the reward for his deeds.

Danae protests her innocence in fragment 8:

(8)
indigne exigor patria innocens.

Innocent, am I unworthily driven from my homeland.

Is fragment 9 a reference to Semele?

(9)
. . . quae quondam fulmine icit Iuppiter.

(She whom) Jupiter once struck with a thunderbolt.

Fragments 10 and 11 describe Danae's appeals to Jupiter for help and his apparent response:

> (10)
> *manubias suppetiat pro me.*
>
> Let him send forth attending slaves on my behalf.
>
> (11)
> *suo sonitu claro fulgorivit Iuppiter.*
>
> Jupiter flashed with his own loud thunder.

It is only when the poetry and dramatic works of Naevius and Livius are held up in comparison with the more sophisticated poetry of Ennius and the later Republican poets that they appear deficient in poetic syntax and language.[31] Cicero compares Naevius' poetry with that of his successor Ennius rather than with that of his precursor Livius, thus suggesting that Naevius' style anticipated Ennius' innovations more than it reflected Livius.[32] Yet Naevius' success should be based on his adoption of Livius' innovations to the genre and on his furthering of metatheatrical elements. With Ennius, rhetoric is further exploited as tragedy becomes even more open to offstage culture, culminating in the heavily rhetoricized plays of Pacuvius and Accius. Only after the establishment of a theatre can the concept of theatricality be recognized by the audience and applied to the interpretation of offstage events.

ENNIUS

Ennius experienced an early and formative contact with Greek culture owing to his birthplace at Rudiae in southern Italy. According to Suetonius, the proximity of his birthplace to Greek culture made him *semigraecus*.[33] Ennius himself boasted that he had three souls as a result of his broad cultural exposure: *Ennius tria corda habere sese dicebat quod loqui Graece et Osce et Latine sciret*.[34] Like Naevius, he served in the military.[35] Afterward, Ennius was brought to Rome from Sardinia by M. Porcius Cato in 204 B.C.E.[36] He lived on the Aventine close to the Temple of Minerva and, like Livius, taught for his livelihood. After Cato, Ennius received the patronage of M. Fulvius Nobilior, and he cultivated the friendship of many important men of state, like the elder Scipio Africanus.[37]

Ennius' literary output was prodigious. In addition to writing tragedy and comedy, Ennius further developed Naevius' innovations in historical epic with his *Annales*. He also wrote a poem about Scipio Africanus, four books of satires, and various treatises. Ennius wrote many successful tragedies concurrently with his *Annales*, the last of which, the *Thyestes*, dates to 169 B.C.E.[38]

Ennius' tragedies bring a recognizable Roman world onto the stage, which contributed to the growing reciprocity between onstage and offstage reality begun by Naevius. Like Naevius, Ennius wrote *praetextae* and incorporated specific Roman elements into his tragedies. Fuller development of metatheatrical allusions by Ennius leads to the growing recognition of theatricality off the stage. If Romans could see themselves on the stage, it was inevitable that they would recognize theatrical allusions off the stage. To this end, Ennius paved the way for Pacuvius and Accius to exploit rhetoric further and anticipate the blurring of on- and offstage reality during the late Republic and early Empire.

Metatheatrical allusions to the audience's reality abound in Ennius' tragedies, in a way that recalls the mixing of Greek and Roman customs common in Roman comedy. In his *Iphigenia*, for example, Ennius alters his Euripidean model (446–449) to people the stage with Romans when Agamemnon laments the impending sacrifice of his daughter:

> *plebes in hoc regi antistat loco: licet*
> *lacrumare plebi, regi honeste non licet.*[39]
>
> Common people are better than their king in this:
> the people may cry, but the king may not with dignity.

By drawing on the audience's knowledge of Roman class distinctions, Ennius imbues Agamemnon with Roman aristocratic personality traits.[40] Later in the same play the chorus, rather than Achilles, as in Euripides, stresses the politically charged Roman concepts of *otium* and *negotium*:[41]

> *otio qui nescit uti . . .*
> *plus negoti habet quam cum est negotium in negotio.*
> *nam cui quod agat institum est †in illis† negotium*
> *id agit, ⟨id⟩ studet, ibi mentem atque animum delectat suum:*
> *†otioso initio† animus nescit quid velit.*
> *hoc idem est: em neque domi nunc nos nec militiae sumus.*
> *imus huc, hinc illuc; cum illuc ventum est, ire illinc lubet.*
> *incerte errat animus, praeter propter vitam vivitur.*[42]

He who does not know how to use leisure . . .
has more of work than when there is work in work.
For to whom a task has been set, he does the work,
desires it, and delights his own mind and intellect:
in leisure, a mind does not know what it wants.
The same is true (of us); we are neither at home or in the battlefield;
we go here and there, and wherever there is a movement, we are
there too.
The mind wanders unsure, except in that life is lived.

Considering his style and expression more refined than those of Livius and Naevius, Ennius sought to distance himself and his poetry from their works:[43]

scripsere alii rem
vorsibus quos olim Faunei vatesque canebant
cum neque Musarum scopulos [. . .]
nec dicti studiosus quisquam erat ante hunc.
nos ausi reserare. . . .[44]

Others wrote history
in verses that once the Fauns and seers used to sing
when neither the mount of the Muses [. . .],
nor was there anyone learned in literature before him.
We dared to unlock. . . .

Despite protests to the contrary, Ennius' epic, like his tragedies, betrays an admiration for the form of tragedy developed by Livius and Naevius[45]—in particular, the reduced role of the chorus in favor of *cantica,* with full exploitation of *carmen*-style verse techniques. In the *Alexander,* for example, Cassandra's piteous speech describing her mantic state makes heavy use of alliteration and assonance. One also finds a *figura etymologica,* two words of the same root meaning in noun and verb form (*fatis fandis*), and a *versus quadratus,* an archaic verse meter, in the final line:

sed quid oculis rapere visa est derepente ardentibus?
ubi illa paulo ante sapiens †virginali† modestia?

mater, optumatum multo mulier melior mulierum,
missa sum superstitiosis hariolationibus;

†neque† me Apollo fatis fandis dementem invitam ciet.
virgines vereor aequalis, patris mei meum factum pudet,
optumi viri. mea mater, tui me miseret, mei piget.
optumam progeniem Priamo peperisti extra me. hoc dolet:
men obesse, illos prodesse, me obstare, illos obsequi.[46]

But what did she seem to see suddenly with burning eyes?
Where is she who was so recently wise with virgin modesty?

Mother, a better woman by far than the best women,
I was driven by superstitious prophecies;
Apollo stirs me [not] unwilling, in my mad state, by fate foretold.
I feel shame before virgins my age, my deeds cause my father, the best of
men, shame.
Mother, I pity you, despise myself.
Except for me, you have given birth to the best offspring for Priam. That
grieves me:
I injure, they protect; I oppose, they follow.

In the *Andromeda,* the description of the slain sea monster is full o
alliteration and assonance:

alia fluctus differt dissupat
visceratim membra, maria salsa spumant sanguine.[47]

A wave separates and spreads other
torn-apart limbs, the salty sea froths with blood.

This resembles the *carmen*-style technique apparent in the *Chresphon-tes,* where Merope laments the fate of her husband Cresphontes:

neque terram inicere, neque cruenta convestire corpora
mihi licuit, neque miserae lavere lacrimae salsum sanguinem.[48]

Neither was I allowed to sprinkle earth, nor to cover the bloody bodies,
nor to wash the blood with the salt of a pitiful tear.

In the *Phoenix,* one surprisingly finds an unknown speaker statin
impressively, if only for sheer linguistic manipulation,

†stultus est qui cupida† cupiens cupienter cupit.[49]

He is foolish who desires desirously, desiring with a desirous (heart).

A speech by Phoenix (to Amyntor?) from the same play contains examples of wordplay (*virum/virtute; adversum adversarios*) and puns (*innoxium, obnoxiosiae,* and *nocte*):

> *sed virum vera virtute vivere †animatum adiecit†*
> *fortiterque †innoxium vocare† adversum adversarios.*
> *ea libertas est qui pectus purum et firmum gestitat;*
> *†aliae† res obnoxiosiae nocte in obscura latent.*[50]
>
> But for a man to live with true courage
> and to call (himself) guiltless bravely before the foe.
> This is liberty when he conducts his life pure and firm;
> other harmful things lie in obscure night.

More examples of Ennius' dramatic technique and metatheatrical allusions are apparent in the *Medea exul* than in any other surviving play. Once again, a listing of the fragments and analysis of their dramatic features provides a more useful means of measuring the dramatic action and the role played by metatheatrical elements within the play. A listing of the play's fragments will also provide a basis for comparing Accius' *Medea sive Argonautae* in chapter 2.

The *Medea exul* is based upon the *Medea* of Euripides, set in Corinth, in which Medea, hearing of Jason's marriage to Creon's daughter, plans her revenge by killing his bride, murdering her own children, and fleeing to Athens. It is very likely that Ennius wrote a second play about Medea, called *Medea,* based on Euripides' *Aigeus,* whose action is set in Athens after the events of Corinth. It is doubtful that Ennius would have combined all the events of Corinth and Athens into one play.[51] The fragments that survive provide valuable insights into Ennius' dramaturgy, especially on the matter of his play's relationship to Euripides' original.

The first fragment, in senarii, is a speech by Medea's nurse, who wishes that the ship *Argo* had never reached Colchis and initiated the terrible course of events that followed. We know from the opening lines of Euripides' play that this speech formed the opening lines of Ennius' play:[52]

> (1)
> *utinam ne in nemore Pelio securibus*
> *caesa accidisset abiegna ad terram trabes,*
> *neve inde navis inchoandi exordium*
> *cepisset, quae nunc nominatur nomine*

> *Argo, quia Argivi in ea delecti viri*
> *vecti petebant pellem inauratam arietis*
> *Colchis, imperio regis Peliae, per dolum.*
> *nam numquam era errans mea domo efferret pedem*
> *Medea animo aegro amore saevo saucia.*[53]
>
> Would that the fir timbers had not fallen to earth,
> cut from the Pelian grove with axes,
> and that no initial building of the ship had begun,
> which is now called the *Argo,*
> since conveyed on her, the select Argive men
> were seeking the golden fleece of the Colchian ram,
> through trickery, by order of King Pelias.
> For never would my mistress Medea, sick at heart and wounded by a savage love,
> erring, have set foot outside her house.

Ennius alters the opening lines of Euripides' play in several ways. He lists the events of the *Argo*'s voyage chronologically; he omits the detail that the Argive heroes rowed the ship themselves, thereby making their social station comprehensible to a Roman audience; and he changes the *Argo*'s timber from pine to fir, which was in contemporary use in Rome. Ennius adapted rather than adopted Euripides' text.[54] In Euripides' version, the emphasis is on the arrival at Iolcus, rather than the departure from Colchis. Roman elements in versification include heavy alliteration and assonance, and a *figura etymologica, nominatur nomine.*

Fragment 2 seems to correspond to the scene in Euripides' play in which Medea confronts Jason (lines 465–519), but curiously, Ennius uses the conversational senarius, rather than the musically accompanied verse that one might typically expect in such a highly emotional scene:

> (2)
> *quo nunc me vortam? quod iter incipiam ingredi?*
> *domum paternamne? anne ad Peliae filias?*
>
> (JOCELYN, 217–218)
>
> Where now shall I turn? What journey shall I begin to undertake?
> To the home of my father? Or to the daughters of Pelias?

In fragment 3, Medea addresses the matrons of Corinth, rather than the generic women found in Euripides. The first line is omitted in Joce-

lyn's text for metrical reasons, but I include it as a line that may be corrupt, but that, due to the *carmen*-style features, seems to preserve the context of the lost original, especially the elevated social and married status of Medea's addressees and their domicile on an *arx,* which corresponds to the Palatine Hill in Rome, rather than the city of Corinth:[55]

(3)
[*quae Corinthum arcem altam habetis matronae opulentae optimates,*]
multi suam rem bene gessere et publicam patria procul;
multi qui domi aetatem agerent propterea sunt improbati.

(JOCELYN, 219–220)

[You rich, optimate women who dwell on the hill of Corinth,]
many are the men who have conducted their own and the [re]public's
business well far from their homeland;
many are the men who spent their lives at home and accordingly earned
no esteem.

The highly alliterative *sententiae* following Medea's address express Roman ideas of foreign *provinciae,* typical of the jurisdictions given to contemporary magistrates, again showing adaptation rather than translation. They also reveal Medea's knowledge of public life, which betrays her status as an unconventional woman with masculine traits.

Fragment 4 comes from the dialogue between Creon and Medea, in which Medea tries to allay Creon's fear of her:

(4)
qui ipse sibi sapiens prodesse non quit nequiquam sapit.

(JOCELYN, 221)

The wise man who is not able to help himself is wise for nothing.

In fragment 5, the Nurse speaks about Medea's misery:

(5)
cupido cepit miseram nunc me proloqui
caelo atque terrae Medeai miserias.

(JOCELYN, 222–223)

Now a desire has seized poor me to speak
to the sky and earth about Medea's miseries.

Fragments 6–10 correspond to the scene in which Medea confro
Jason about his imminent marriage to Creon's daughter and his betra
of their own implicit marriage bond. Jason's accusation of sexual m
tives in fragment 6 are central to his position that he was tricked into
cepting Medea as a wife:

(6)
tu me amoris magis quam honoris servavisti gratia.

(JOCELYN, 224)

You saved me more for the sake of love than for honor.

In fragments 7–9, Medea informs the chorus of the significance of
conversation with Jason, which has just ended, and alludes to her int
tion of killing Jason, Creon, and the princess to exact vengeance. T
use of the word *blandiloquentia* in fragment 7 makes it clear that
ception played a role in securing Medea a place in Jason's expediti

(7)
nequaquam istuc istac ibit; magna inest certatio.
nam ut ego illi supplicarem tanta blandiloquentia
ni ob rem —

(JOCELYN, 225–227)

There is no way that the business will go there; great is the struggle.
For would I have begged him as a suppliant with such sweet expressions
unless because. . . .

(8)
qui volt quod volt ita dat ⟨*semper*⟩ *se res ut operam dabit.*

(JOCELYN, 228)

He who makes a wish, that wish always turns out according to the
attention he gives to it.

Fragment 9 contains Medea's intentions to exact her revenge, and the *versus quadratus* in the final line adds a ritualistic air to her threats and belie her status as a sorceress in possession of superhuman powers:

(9)
ille traversa mente mi hodie tradidit repagula
quibus ego iram omnem recludam atque illi perniciem dabo
mihi maerores, illi luctum, exitium illi, exilium mihi.

(JOCELYN, 229–231)

That man has given the means to me today
with which I shall unbolt all my anger and I will give harm to him,
sorrows to me, for him grief, disaster for him, exile for me.

Ennius preserves the shocking simplicity of Euripides' famous line:

(10)
nam ter sub armis malim vitam cernere
quam semel modo parere.

(JOCELYN, 232–233)

For I would prefer to wage my life three times under arms
than only once to give birth.

In fragment 11, the chorus, which now knows of Medea's intent to kill her children, prays to Jupiter after she has left the stage:

(11)
Iuppiter tuque adeo summe Sol qui res omnis inspicis
quique tuo lumine mare terram caelum contines
inspice hoc facinus prius quam fit. prohibessis scelus.

(JOCELYN, 234–236)

Jupiter, and you, rather, highest Sun who see all things
and who embrace the sea, the earth, and the sky with your light,
look upon this deed before it comes to pass. Prevent a crime.

The Paedagogus addresses the Nurse in fragment 12:

(12)
antiqua erilis fida custos corporis,
quid sic te extra aedis exanimatam eliminat?

(JOCELYN, 237–238)

Ancient faithful guardian of your mistress' person,
why have you come outside of your house, breathless?

Fragment 13 is out of dramatic context here and seems to come from Ennius' second play about Medea, which is set in Athens—unless, of course, this is an example of *contaminatio* and the play is set in both Corinth and Athens. The city of Athens is pointed out to Medea:

(13)
asta atque Athenas anticum opulentum oppidum
contempla et templum Cereris ad laevam aspice.

(JOCELYN, 239–240)

Look upon Athens, an ancient and wealthy city,
and look to your left upon the Temple of Ceres.

The mixture of Greek (Athens) and Roman (Ceres) elements in this fragment are reminiscent of the fictional world of Roman comedy, which is a composite of the two cultures.

The contexts and placement of fragments 14–16 are very difficult to determine. In fragment 14, Medea says goodbye to her children, who do not appear in Euripides' version; therefore Ennius heightens the pathos of the scene for a Roman audience, which comes through even in the image of Medea's hands intertwined with those of her sons, since we know those very hands will soon take their lives:

(14)
salvete optima corpora.
cette manus vestras measque accipite.

(JOCELYN, 241–242)

Farewell, best of souls.
Give your hands and accept mine.

Fragment 15 contains an address to Helios, Medea's grandfather:

(15)
sol qui candentem in caelo sublimat facem.

(JOCELYN, 243)

Sun, you who lift your shining face in the sky.

Medea's love for Jason is mentioned in fragment 16, and the internal repetition of words signifying a heart (*cordis . . . corde*) calls particular attention to her amorous desires, if not her sexual appetite:

(16)
utinam ne umquam †mede† cordis cupido corde pedem extulisses. . . .

(JOCELYN, 244)

[Medea,] would that you had never set out with desirous heart. . . .

The context of fragment 17 is unclear as well:

(17)
fructus verborum aures aucupant.

(JOCELYN, 245)

Ears yearn for the fruit of words.

These fragments make it clear that Ennius adapted his Greek original in many important ways to make the dramatic action and characters intelligible to a Roman audience, as in the alteration of Greek concepts and the elevation of social status of the Argive heroes and the Corinthian women in the *Medea*. Metatheatrical allusions make Ennius' play at once Greek and Roman. Greek characters are transformed into Romans in a drama, which, while ostensibly unrealistic and set in the timeless spaces of Greek mythology, nevertheless was as accessible as contemporary Rome.

THE AUDIENCE

Interpretation of tragedy requires interpreters in the audience. The "audience" of the earliest tragic productions was, of course, not a monolithic group, but one that was composed of various diverse groups. There has been much effort to identify the social groups in the audiences of the third

and second centuries B.C.E., and to determine the influence that each group exerted on scenic productions in particular and popular culture in general. The upper classes, for example, are commonly associated with tragedy; the lower classes, however, are associated with Plautine comedy and the native Italian Atellana and mime.[56] It is important to stress that tragedy and comedy shared not only meter, language, and mythical subject matter, but also an audience, as the concurrent development of the two genres after 240 B.C.E. shows. Both groups continued to attend all types of scenic entertainment throughout the Republic. Otherwise, what need would there have been for legislation governing the seating arrangements of the theatre according to public rank and class? Moreover, the aristocracy took an interest in performance spaces.[57]

Related to the question of the audience's composition is that of the level of its cultural sophistication. As Charles Gorton states, "The general history of drama from 240 B.C. has been summed up as 'the hellenizing of the Roman stage' (Jocelyn [1967], 12–23). The vital first forty or fifty years had been a time of healthy rankness with an audience blessedly ignorant of rules and schools."[58] However, the evidence of tragic and comic texts points to genres built upon fully developed Greek models, which in itself suggests that the audience's interpretive abilities were not expected to grow gradually with the emerging theatre, but rather were expected to be in place from the beginning, as witnessed by the inclusion of metatheatrical elements in the earliest plays. A confused or unsatisfied initial audience would have been difficult to attract to subsequent productions. Yet within the first forty or fifty years, Livius, Naevius, and Ennius attracted and retained an audience for a variety of dramatic works, which suggests that the audience was not ignorant of either thematic material or metatheatrical elements that were in keeping with its taste for rhetoric. Allegory, on the dramatic level, does not seem to have been above the sophistication of the audience, especially before the availability of written literary texts.[59] Indeed, the audience may have been first introduced to allegory through theatrical productions.

The audience of Plautus' comedies seems to have been acquainted with myths through previous exposure to the performance of Latin tragedy.[60] It is difficult to find specific verbal parallels between tragic and comic texts because of the paucity of fragments, yet some verbal echoes are detectable. Ennius' tragedies provide some clues to the interrelationship. Line 932 of the *Bacchides*, for example, is considered a parody of a line from Ennian tragedy. Plautus' *o Troia, o patria, o Pergamum, o Priame periisti senex* in its context points to a parody of tragedy, but its model can be made specific by comparing it to Ennius' *o pater, o patria,*

o Priami domus. Other examples have been collected by Ribbeck.[61] Comic parody, however, is not limited to tragedy only, and an example from the *Annales* has been offered in support of Plautus' exploitation of Latin poetry for comic material: *o Tite, tute, Tati, tibi tanta tyranne tulisti,* which seems to be parodied in the *Pseudolus* (191 B.C.E.): *io te te, turanne, te te ego, qui imperitas Pseudolo* (702).[62] The use of *turanne* and the alliteration of *te* and *t* sounds continues in the lines following 702, but this line itself does not seem sufficient to assign the Ennian line as its model.

Fraenkel, however, in his *Plautinisches im Plautus,* argues that the Chrysalus passage (925–978) in the *Bacchides* of Plautus is largely a free composition by Plautus himself and is based neither on a Greek model nor on a specific tragic precedent.[63] Yet this passage alludes to tragedy and provides an extended parody of a tragic scene, which is presented in a way that assumes the audience's knowledge of events surrounding Troy's destruction, including the roles played by heroes such as Agamemnon, Menelaus, and Ulysses. Furthermore, this tragic parody trivializes the mythical event by likening it to Chrysalus' attempts to raise money, and it further parodies the fall of Troy by presenting Chrysalus in the guise of a hero, in attendance at the battle itself. While buffoonery can always be appreciated by various members of the audience, this scene can best be understood by an audience versed in the specifics of events around Troy and the tragic circumstances of its fall. The tragedies dealing with the Trojan cycle would have provided this information.[64]

The fragments from the plays of Livius, Naevius, and Ennius illustrate that the stage was not the exclusive domain of actors, unconnected with the reality of the audience. Ennius' rhetorical skill contributed to the perception of offstage theatricality in that only once actors say and do things appropriate to the theatre can they be quoted and imitated offstage and recognized as theatrical. The involvement of the audience or the inclusion of the audience's reality on the tragic stage points to metatheatre developing concurrently with the theatre itself: the recreation of the audience's reality onstage leads to a perception of theatre, whereas the recreation of stage reality or the framing of offstage reality in relation to the theatre leads to a perception of theatricality offstage. In chapter 2, I consider the plays of Pacuvius and Accius, examining the effects of this reciprocal theatricality between the stage and the audience and role played by rhetoric to produce tragedies that call attention to their own theatricality.

THEATRICALIZING TRAGEDY

aiunt Accium interrogatum, cur causas non ageret, cum apud eum in tragoediis tanta vis esset optime respondendi, hanc reddidisse rationem, quod illic ea dicerentur quae ipse vellet, in foro dicturi adversarii essent quae minime vellet.

(QUINTILIAN *INST.* 5.13.43)

They claim that when Accius was asked why he did not plead cases, when in his tragedies there was such a talent of refuting excellently, he gave the reason that in his plays the characters said whatever he wished, but in the law courts his opponents would say things he would not wish.

Accius' clever response that whereas he could put speeches into the mouths of his characters, but not into those of his opponents in the law courts, points to similarities in style, beyond argumentation, between the rhetoric of the forum and that of the tragic stage recognized by those audience members posing the question.[1] The reciprocity between the theatre and the forum leads to the recognition of theatrical elements in oratory and of rhetorical elements in the theatre—the orator as actor and the actor as orator—and accordingly, the perception, and in this case the self-identification, of theatre spectators with a forum audience.[2] What emerges is an audience, whether in the theatre or in the forum, that is attuned to role-playing and able to identify with rhetorical personalities and constructs. As a result, public figures, whether or not they actively encourage a connection between themselves and the theatre, are identified as role-playing; for such figures, even attending a show becomes a political and theatrical act in that they could be applauded or

ROMAN TRAGEDY

Theatre to Theatricality

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