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

hissed by the audience or targeted by actors from the stage.[3] Persons become personas.

Despite Ennius' use of rhetoric to effect metatheatrical allusions to the audience's reality, the extent to which his audience applied their perception of theatricality to modes of expression or to the interpretation of events offstage is uncertain. However, examples of the audience's perception and promotion of theatricality offstage are numerous for the period following the original presentation dates of Pacuvius' and Accius' plays. Cicero, for example, presents himself as an actor on the world stage:

> *sic obtinui quaesturam . . . ut omnium oculos in me unum conlectos esse arbitrarer, ut me quaesturamque meam quasi in aliquo terrarum orbis theatro existimarem.*[4]
>
> So I held the office of quaestor . . . in such a way that I thought the eyes of all were concentrated upon me alone, and that I considered myself and the office as if they were in some theatre of the world.

Even before Cicero's role in the Catilinian conspiracy, he was eager to draw attention to the dramatic nature of his actions by presenting himself as an actor upon the world political stage, as though he were "starring" in his own *praetexta*.[5] The theatricality of Cicero's pose is reinforced by many examples in the late Republic of the confusion between theatre and reality. Plutarch records that in Parthia (not Rome), Crassus' head was incorporated into a production of Euripides' *Bacchae* following the Battle of Carrhae, near the actual battle site. When the actor playing Agave entered the stage carrying Crassus' head at that point in the play when Pentheus' head is displayed, the actual slayer of Crassus, who was in the audience, stood up and took credit for the deed, rather than let the actor speaking Agave's lines do so, thus confusing theatre and reality to produce metatheatre on many levels: the audience's (offstage) reality was incorporated into the dramatic production with audience intrusion into an already nonillusory drama. Plutarch likens this banter between audience and actor to an *exodium,* or after-play, which in the time of Cicero usually consisted of a mime presentation following the production of a tragedy (*Crass.* 3.3). But unlike an exodium, in which actors and audience expect an exchange, here we have the creation of a new performance text during an actual performance—the audience watches the assassin interact with the author portraying Agave; the actor(s) onstage watch the assassin and other members of the audi-

ence interact and alter the dramatic text. Later, in the spirit of a mime *exodium,* Augustus, on his deathbed, asked if he had performed well in the mime of life (Suet. *Aug.* 99), thus suggesting that his life could be equated with a drama and transforming those standing by his bed into a theatre audience.

Cicero extends the metaphor of the forum as theatre by presenting a trial as a stage performance: *introitus fuit fabulae Clodianae* (*Att.* 1.18.2), thereby giving ordinary actions and events an extraordinary or theatrical emphasis. Moreover, as also cited in the introduction, Cicero quotes from tragedies in his speeches and self-identifies with actors portraying mythological roles.[6] For example, he associates himself with Medea when he quotes from Ennius' *Medea, quo nunc me vortam*? in a speech on the potential conviction of his client Murena, and again later in a letter to Atticus concerning his strained relationship with Antony in 49 B.C.E.[7]

Allusions to the theatre arising from the forum could also come from the audience, as in the case of the orator Hortensius, whose effeminacy earned him comparisons with a mime actress.[8] The gestures of those offstage began to resemble the gestures of actors onstage, since the term "theatrical" now applied to both actors on the stage and spectators/actors in the audience.[9] Reception by the theatre audience gave political/public figures "cues" on how to shape their public personas or images, or to guide the public's perception of their actions, though not without risk, since identification and applause could result in *infamia* and *turpitudo* in what Parker describes as the "semiotics of failure."[10]

The perpetuation of offstage theatricality affects the audience's perception of dramatic reality (the theatre's illusion of offstage reality), leading to the paradoxical question, "Is this realistic?" when what is being asked is whether the action on the stage accurately reflects the theatricality of reality off the stage (or the audience's perception of it). Boyle has characterized Seneca's plays as (metatheatrical) tragedies that "point to themselves as verbal and performative constructs of the theatrical imagination," calling them "language theatricalised," but traces of this metatheatricality are already apparent in the plays of Pacuvius and Accius.[11] These dramatists present a dramatic reality that has at once connections to and differences with the theatre (world of actors) and the *cavea* (world of the audience) as it points to its own theatricality. This chapter examines how the audience's increasing awareness of theatricality offstage is due in part to the reciprocal theatricality between rhetoric and drama onstage in the plays of Pacuvius and Accius. What emerges is tragedy theatricalized.

PACUVIUS

Pacuvius, the nephew of Ennius, was born at Brundisium in 220 B.C.E. and died in 130 B.C.E. Little is known about his career except that he was a dramatist of modest output in the circle of Laelius, and that he was also a painter.[12] The *Vita* of Pacuvius states that in addition to painting he sold plays, but this must be a reference to a dramatist's customary practice of selling plays to aediles.[13] Pacuvius earned a reputation in antiquity as a *tragoediarum scriptor* not because he excelled in writing tragedy over other dramatic and literary genres, but because he was the only early tragedian who limited himself strictly to the writing of tragedies.[14]

In his critique of the plays of Pacuvius and Accius, Quintilian focuses on the use of language, however deficient by his contemporary standards, to express serious thought and to present dignified characters:

> *tragoediae scriptores veterum Accius atque Pacuvius clarissimi gravitate sententiarum, verborum pondere, auctoritate personarum. ceterum nitor et summa in excolendis operibus manus magis videri potest temporibus quam ipsis defuisse. virium tamen Accio plus tribuitur; Pacuvium videri doctiorem qui esse docti adfectant volunt.*
>
> (QUINT. *INST.* 10.1.97)
>
> The tragedians Accius and Pacuvius are the most noteworthy of the old writers for the seriousness of their reflections, the weight of their words, and the dignity of their characters. But the lack of elegance and polish in the revision of their works is a shortcoming more of their times rather than of themselves. Nevertheless, of the two, Accius is more rigorous; Pacuvius is considered more learned by those who aspire to learnedness.

Quintilian's interests lie in oratorical rhetoric, so his silence on the effect of their language on the dramatic action of their plays should not surprise us. The chance survival of fragments seems to point to an emphasis of rhetoric over plot, since the large number of riddles, philosophical discourses, and graphic descriptions overshadows, perhaps unfairly, whatever events of the plot we can reconstruct from the fragments. While caution is needed to avoid oversimplification of a complex issue, the dramatic contexts of surviving rhetorical passages point to a heightened awareness of the role of language for character delineation and metatheatrical allusion, perhaps at the expense of an economical dramatic narrative.[15]

If stage actions do begin to resemble token gestures, then we are faced with the following dilemma: does theatricality intrude on the theatre's illusion of offstage reality, or does theatricality on the stage reflect the growing awareness and perpetuation of theatricality off the stage? A character in Pacuvius' *Dulorestes* recognizes the power of rhetoric and seems to be threatened by words more than by actual violence:

> *. . . primum hoc abs te oro, minus inexorabilem*
> *faxis; ni turpassis vanitudine aetatem tuam.*
>
> *oro, nive plectas fandi mi prolixitudinem.*[16]
>
> . . . First, I beg you to make me less unyielding;
> do not spoil your age with falsity.
>
> I beg you, do not weave a complexity of speech for me.

The power of words to persuade and deceive is recognized by the speaker, who tries to remove the danger of rhetoric by confronting his or her interlocutor in a sort of preemptive strike. These appeals point to the vulnerability of the speaker and to the cleverness or deceptiveness of the unknown interlocutor, who takes on the role of an orator. This suggests that at least at one point in the play, the dramatic action centered on a rhetorical exchange or philosophic speech, yet at what cost to the audience's understanding of the play's main narrative?[17] If a character onstage was vulnerable to persuasion, so, too, was the audience. Bilinski, for example, argues that Pacuvius' sympathy for the plebs in the *Dulorestes* and the *Chryses* contributed to the Sicilian slave revolt.[18]

The audience's reaction to the presentation or questioning of Greek philosophical ideas within the larger context of the play's dramatic action is also a question.[19] The fragments of Pacuvius' *Armorum iudicium*, for example, point to an extended treatment of the debate between Ajax and Odysseus, but this debate is a central feature of the myth and may even reflect the prominence of the debate scene in Aeschylus' play (*Hoplon krisis*). Since Pacuvius' play does not survive, however, certainty is impossible.[20] Similarly, in the *Teucer*, the central focus of the play seems to be Teucer's defense to his father Telemon of his actions in the death of his brother Ajax.[21]

Pacuvius did not strive for complete audience identification with his characters in that he used the archaicizing language of his dramatic precursors and coined some odd expressions to elevate his poetry from contemporary expression. In the *Medus*, for example, Medea says, *possum*

ego istam capite cladem averruncassere ("I can avert that harm from your person"), in language derived from archaic prayer formulas;[22] and from the *Teucer,* the well-known description of a herd of dolphins: *Nerei repandirostrum incurvicervicum pecus* ("the flat-snouted humpnecked herd of Nereus").[23] Lucilius satirizes Pacuvius for using convoluted expressions in his prologues: *verum tristis contorto aliquo ex Pacuviano exordio* ("Truly a downer from some convoluted prologue of Pacuvius").[24] Lucilius gives the impression that all of Pacuvius' prologues were convoluted, but there is no way to know whether such a criticism applies to other parts of the play. Pacuvius' use of wordplay, however, served a dramaturgical purpose, as it does in Accius' plays, since it contributed to psychological realism in his character-drawing. Cicero, for example, was stirred by the emotional range allowed to the actor expressing Telemon's rage in the *Teucer.*[25] Also, in his celebrated *Iliona,* the speech by the Umbra that begins

> *mater, te appello, tu, quae curam somno suspensam levas*
> *neque te mei miseret, surge et sepeli natum ⟨tuum⟩ . . .*
>
> Mother, I call you, you who lighten your care with deep sleep
> do not pity me, rise and bury your son . . .

elicited audience sympathy and was famous in antiquity.[26] This passage also attracted notoriety since the actor Fufius actually fell asleep in his performance of the play.[27]

The effect of this language was to make the text more complex and engaging to the audience, however removed it was from everyday experience. Nowhere is this more apparent in the extant fragments than in a *canticum* on Fortune from an unknown play, possibly the *Dulorestes:*

> *Fortunam insanam esse et caecam et brutam perhibent philosophi,*
> *saxoque instare in globoso praedicant volubilei.*
> *id quo saxum impulerit fors, eo cadere Fortunam autumant.*
> *insanam autem esse aiunt, quia atrox incerta instabilisque sit:*
> *caecam ob eam rem esse iterant, quia nil cernat quo sese adplicet:*
> *brutam, quia dignum atque indignum nequeat internoscere.*
> *sunt autem alii philosophi, qui contra Fortuna negant*
> *ullam miseriam esse, temeritatem esse omnia autumant.*
> *id magis veri simile esse usus re apse experiundo edocet:*
> *velut Orestes modo fuit rex, factust mendicus modo.*[28]

> Philosophers claim that Fortune is unsound, blind, and dumb,
> and they say that she stands on a rolling ball of stone.
> Where chance hurls that stone, there, they claim, Fortune lands.
> Unsound, they say, is Fortune since she is fierce, uncertain, and unstable:
> Blind, they repeat, since she does not know where she steers herself:
> Dumb, because she cannot discern between what is worthy and unworthy.
> There are other philosophers, however, who counter that there is no misery in Fortune,
> but that rashness is present in all things.
> That this is more similar to the truth, practice teaches by experience:
> just as once Orestes was a king, but then was a beggar.

Within the analysis of the opposing philosophical views, ideas are arranged with paratactic precision, with an emphasis on argumentation. The three main qualities of Fortune, *insanam, caecam,* and *brutam,* are analyzed in order, and the appearance of these words at the beginning of three consecutive sentences points to strict parataxis in the style of archaic *carmen.* The emphasis, however, does not seem to be on Fortune, but rather on the various philosophical arguments.[29] The *canticum* format suggests that the passage was sung or recited at a key moment in the play, but the emphasis on the definition of Fortune seems to undercut its effectiveness in describing the fate of Orestes. The simile begins, however, just where this fragment ends, so perhaps the remainder of the speech focused more on Orestes than is apparent.

An examination of the extant fragments of the *Antiopa* reveals a play where Pacuvius uses rhetoric/sophistic debate to delineate character. The Greek model for the *Antiopa* was Euripides' play of the same name. The myth of Antiopa revolves around her rape by Zeus, after which she fled from her father Nycteus, king of Boeotia, to Sicyon, where she married Epopeus. Upon Nycteus' death, his brother Lycus and his wife Dirce punished Antiopa by killing Epopeus and imprisoning her. At some point in her journey, Antiopa gave birth to twins, Amphion and Zethus, whom she exposed but who were discovered and raised by shepherds. It was while fleeing prison that Antiopa was accidentally reunited with her sons, who helped her punish Lycus and Dirce for their crimes. In Pacuvius' play, Amphion and Zethus are adult herdsmen who bide their time in sophistic debate until the chance arrival of their hitherto unknown mother, Antiopa. Amphion and Zethus betray an education at odds with their circumstance, recalling the overeducated shepherds of

bucolic poetry. Upon discovering their mother's identity, the twins punish Dirce, who has attempted to recapture her.[30]

The surviving fragments are somewhat difficult to place within Euripides' play.[31] The most problematic fragments are the lines in which Antiopa reveals her identity to the twins, since it is unclear whether they should be placed before or after Dirce's arrival onstage.

Fragment 1 informs the audience of the twins' identity:

(1)
Iovis ex Antiopa Nyctei nati ⟨duo⟩.[32]

(RIBBECK, 1)

[Two] sons of Jupiter by Antiopa, daughter of Nycteus.

A playful insult from one twin to the other seems to be the context of fragment 2:

(2)
loca horrida initas.[33]

(RIBBECK, 3)

It is you who enter uncouth places.

As with the Euripidean model, the play contained an extended philosophical debate between the twins about music in which Zethus included a long digression on wisdom and the usefulness of virtue.[34] If a debate on music were not relevant to the dramatic action, a digression on wisdom and virtue would seem even more unnecessary. We do not know whether the rest of the play's dramatic action was overshadowed by philosophical debate/character delineation.

In fragment 3, Amphion poses a riddle to the chorus of city-dwellers (*Astici*), who were perhaps present in this scene as judges to the debate between Amphion and Zethus:

(3)
{*Amphio*} *quadrupes tardigrada agrestis humilis aspera,*
brevi capite, cervice anguina, aspectu truci,
eviscerata inanima cum animali sono.
{*Astici*} *ita saeptuosa dictione abs te datur*
quod coniectura sapiens aegre contuit:

non intellegimus, nisi si aperte dixeris.
{*Amphio*} *testudo.*[35]

(RIBBECK, 4)

{Amphio} It is four-footed, slow-moving, rustic, lowly, coarse,
with a small head, snake-like neck, harsh to look at,
gutted, soulless yet with living sound.
{Astici} So thickly hidden with words is this riddle given
that someone wise would barely find it by guessing
unless you speak openly.
{Amphio} A tortoise-lyre.

This seven-line pun illustrates the emphasis of rhetoric in character delineation, but whether this appeared in a series of puns, with brother pitted against brother, is unknown.

Fragments 4–6 come from Antiopa's speech, or series of speeches, in which she relates the punishment she has endured from Lycus and Dirce. One cannot assume, however, that these lines immediately preceded the revelation of her identity at this point in the play.

(4)
. . . *perdita inluvie atque insomnia.* . . .

(RIBBECK, 5)

. . . ruined by filth and sleeplessness. . . .

(5)
frendere noctes, misera quas perpessa sum.

(RIBBECK, 6)

Gnawing nights that I, wretched, endured.

(6)
. . . *fruges frendo solidas saxi robore.*

(RIBBECK, 7)

. . . I ground the thick grain with a hard rock.

The context and placement of fragment 7 is unclear, but the emphasis on the physical effects of the sun is different from the usual appeal, in

tragedy, to the sun as witness to some crime. The passage seems more appropriate for a scientific or philosophical treatise, such as Accius' *Praxidicus*, which contained astrological information and agricultural advice.

(7)
. . . *sol si perpetuo siet,*
flammeo vapore torrens terrae fetum exusserit:
nocti ni interveniat, fructus per pruinam obriguerint.

(RIBBECK, 8)

. . . the sun, if it were unrelenting,
burning with flaming gases, would scorch the fruit of the earth:
unless it interrupted the night, fruit would freeze through frost.

Fragment 8 seems to be a speech by Antiopa, but the addressee is unknown:

(8)
minitabilitlerque increpare dictis saevis incipit.

(RIBBECK, 9)

S(he) began to scream threateningly with beastly words.

In fragment 9, Zethus(?) orders Antiopa and others (*vos*) away from the animal pens:

(9)
nonne hinc vos propere ⟨e⟩ stabulis amolimini?

(RIBBECK, 10)

Why don't you quickly remove yourself from the stables?

Fragment 10 seems to come from a speech by the shepherd who discovered the twins as infants on Mount Cithaeron. The shepherd's inability to solve the mystery contrasts sharply with the intelligence of the educated twins:

(10)
sed cum animo attendi ad quaerendum, quid siet?

(RIBBECK, 11)

But I focused with my mind on the problem (of) what it is.

Dirce arrives onstage with a second chorus of Maenads in pursuit of Antiopa in fragment 11:

(11)
. . . *cervicum*
floros dispendite crines.[36]

(RIBBECK, 12)

. . . upon your neck
let your flower-like curls fall.

Antiope addresses her sons in fragment 12, but whether her identity had been revealed until this point is unclear:

(12)
salvete, gemini, mea propages sanguinis!

(RIBBECK, 13)

I greet you, twins, offspring of my blood!

In fragment 13, Antiopa describes the filthy state in which she was kept as Dirce's captive, but since she is actually depicted as filthy, the description can only echo the obvious evidence of her current state:

(13)
. . . *inluvie corporis*
et coma prolixa impexa conglomerata atque horrida.

(RIBBECK, 15)

. . . with filthy body
and tangled hair uncombed, lumpy and shaggy.

The final fragment appears to be a Latinized spelling of Zethus' name but reveals little more:

(14)
Setum. . . .

(RIBBECK, 16)

The play most likely ended with the punishment of Dirce, but it is unknown whether in Pacuvius' version, the death of Dirce was anticipated or reported in a messenger speech. For the title character, Antiopa, the play's ending can be interpreted as a restoration comedy, in that she is reunited with her sons, and a revenge drama, in that she is instrumental in the punishment of Dirce.

Self-expression, identification, and sophistic problem-solving seem to form the plot of the drama itself. Rhetoric removes the dramatic reality of the play from the audience's world to a metatheatrical (re)-creation of it. The play's emphasis on identity, in particular the twins' self-expression and self-identification through rhetoric and Antiopa's revelation of her identity to her sons, anticipate Seneca's "theatricalized word." We also find this in Pacuvius' *Teucer,* where Teucer's revelation of his identity to his father leads to his exile. Rhetoric, in these plays, becomes a dramatic tool by which to create character and advance the plot.

Ancient responses to Pacuvius' plays and dramatic technique were mixed. Lucilius found the awkward and obscure elements of Pacuvius ridiculous, mocking the famous Nereus passage from the *Teucer, Nerei repandirostrum incurvicervicum pecus* ("the flat-snouted humpnecked herd of Nereus") with the comment, *lascivire pecus Nerei rostrique repandum* ("to frolic [with] the flat-snouted herd of Nereus").[37] The plays of Pacuvius, however, enjoyed a vogue in the late Republic, with restagings of the *Antiopa* and the *Teucer,* perhaps due to the perpetuation of offstage theatricality that Pacuvius' plays helped to create. According to Cicero, Pacuvius was the best of the Republican tragedians.[38] Cicero in fact claimed that he preferred Pacuvius' *Odysseus* to Sophocles' in the *Niptra.*[39] Horace and Quintilian admired the Hellenism of Pacuvius' plays and called him *doctus.*[40] Persius, however, writing during the Empire, called the *Antiopa* "warty," making a pun on the filthy appearance of Antiopa in the play.[41]

ACCIUS

Lucius Accius (170–c. 86 B.C.E.) was born at Pisaurum, the son of a freedman. Although his fame in antiquity was achieved as a writer of tragedies, the literary breadth of Accius resembles that of Ennius. Accius wrote, among numerous other works, the *Didascalia,* in which he traced the history of Latin literature from the first plays of Livius Andronicus to his own. Appreciation for Accius' style was not universal. Lucilius,

Accius' contemporary, mocked his style as he had Pacuvius'.[42] Accius' style as a tragedian was called *altus* by Horace (Ep. 2.1.56) and *animosus* by Ovid (*Am.* 1.15.19), yet later criticism of his rhetoric focused more on his language and the rhetorical devices of his speeches than on their effectiveness in portraying character and advancing the plot. The lampooning of Accius' plays by Novius and Pomponius in their farces may point to the audience's preference for comic farce.[43] Accius was no longer in vogue by the time of Tacitus, since in the *Dialogus de oratoribus,* the plays of both Accius and Pacuvius are referred to as "moldy."[44] Perhaps this fall from popularity was due to an end to the perception and fostering of a theatricalized reality encouraged by Nero both on and off the stage, which Accius' plays had come to represent.

The extant evidence identifies Ennius most often as a precursor to Accius.[45] For example, Accius followed both Ennius and Livius in composing an *Achilles* and an *Andromeda,* but Ennius alone in composing an *Alcmeo,* an *Athamas,* a *Hecuba,* a *Medea,* and a *Telephus.* Plays that first appeared only in Livius' work include the *Aegisthus* and the *Tereus.* The only play that Accius has in common with Pacuvius is the *Armorum iudicium.* Accius also continued the tradition, shared with Pacuvius, of writing *praetextae,* the *Brutus* and the *Aeneadae sive Decius,* which are examined in chapter 3.

Accius looked to new models and translated freely, often "contaminating" the plots of many tragedies, as suggested by such titles as *Agamemnonidae, Epigoni,* and *Phinidae.* Like his precursors, Accius continued to write plays with war themes—for example, there are eight plays based on the Theban Wars and fourteen plays based on the Trojan War—but he also looked to material that was seemingly unused previously, such as episodes from the *Iliad* (*Epinausimache* and *Nyctegressia*) and the *Argonautica* (*Medea sive Argonautae*).[46] From a political viewpoint, Accius' plays may have been sympathetic to the aristocracy, which, if true, would reverse Pacuvius' perceived sympathy with the plebs.[47] But it is also possible that the audience perceived a sympathy or bias inherent in plays revolving around tyrants.

In Accius' tragedies, we find the same use of rhetoric for character delineation as in Pacuvius' *Antiopa.* Perhaps it is an accident of survival, but it seems that almost all of the passages dealing with deception and persuasion emphasize the harmful effects of rhetoric.[48] Accius seems to draw attention to the art of persuasion as much as to its ill effects. In the *Astyanax,* for example, a character voices a sinister view of the profit motives of soothsayers, which evokes a similar sentiment voiced in Sophocles' *Oedipus:*

nil credo auguribus, qui auris verbis divitant
alienas, suas ut auro locupletent domos.[49]

Not at all do I trust augurs, who enrich the ears of
others, so that they can enrich their own homes with gold.

We find deception through rhetoric again in the *Agamemnonidae,* in which a character complains about the use of lies for personal gain. Accius' pun on the words *composita* and *componas* on a shared meaning of balance, the one literal and the other figurative, and the apposition of *dicta* and *factis* point to irony since the speaker also knows how to speak for effect:

sic
multi, animus quorum atroci vinctus malitia est,
composita dicta e pectore evolvunt suo,
quae cum componas dicta factis discrepant.[50]

Thus
many, whose hearts are conquered by acute spite,
roll out balanced tales from their own heart,
which do not balance when you weigh words against deeds.

Finally, in the *Deiphobus,* a character complains of a torrent of words (from Odysseus?) designed to deceive. The apposition of *praesentem* and *praesens* again betrays an ironic use of rhetoric on the part of the aggrieved party:

vel hic qui me aperte effrenata inpudentia
praesentem praesens dictis mertare institit.[51]

Or he who, in a burst of open shamefulness
to my face, planned to drown me, facing him, with words.

Accius' seeming dialectic with rhetoric seems to reflect his audience's experience outside of the theatre, in particular the growing audience awareness and exploitation of a theatricalized reality off the stage that I examine in chapters 3 and 4. This reciprocal relationship between the theatre and the audience's perception of reality outside of the theatre, whether due to the plays of Accius, or in part to Varius' *Thyestes* or Ovid's *Medea,* may have anticipated and shaped how Neronian Rome interacted with the theatre. Metatheatre was already replacing theatre,

thereby placing the plays of Seneca within the development of tragedy rather than outside it.

The similarities between Accian and Senecan drama are striking—like Senecan drama, the extant fragments of Accius' plays feature many passages containing the use of spectacle to effect pathos. Since we cannot witness a production of Accius' plays, we must focus on descriptive rather than physical spectacle, what Beacham calls "verbal violence" and "descriptive gore," such as scenes revolving around murder, cannibalization, and mutilation.[52] A correspondence has been detected between Livius' *Aegisthus* and the *Agamemnon* of Seneca, but Seneca's play may owe even more to the *Clytemnestra* of Accius, therefore suggesting that Seneca may have been drawn to metatheatrical elements in Accius' plays and included them in his own.[53] Seneca may have also been drawn to Accius through the intermediate filter of Varius Rufus and Ovid, leading one to ask whether Accius' development of tragic rhetorical style lent itself best to Ovid in his *Medea.*[54] Although Quintilian praised the play as an example of Ovid's success when his native talent was restrained, we can only infer from Ovid's other works the extent to which rhetoric defined his (and his characters'?) approach to dramaturgy.[55] Through spectacle, Accius exploits the "theatricalized word" to present tragedy that is at once theatricalized and metatheatrical.

It is an irony of the Roman theatre that not a single play survives whole from the most famous Republican tragedian. Equally unfortunate is the disappearance of his treatise, *Pragmatica,* which contained Accius' views on dramaturgical issues and, perhaps, character delineation. Despite these losses, the extant fragments of the *Medea sive Argonautae* illustrate Accius' use of rhetoric in character delineation and the presentation of a theatricalized reality onstage that we find in Pacuvius' plays.

The surviving fragments of the *Medea sive Argonautae* bear a remarkable resemblance to the story found in Apollonius Rhodius (*Argonautica* 4.303ff.), in which Medea murders her brother Apsyrtus, who was leading an expedition of Colchians against the Argonauts. The play covers events (too many?) following the Argonauts' theft of the Golden Fleece. After Jason and Medea, with the Argonauts, flee Colchis, they land briefly at the mouth of the Ister River to discuss a plan of attack against Medea's brother Apsyrtus, who is pursuing them with a fleet of Colchians. They resolve that Medea, under false pretenses, should request a meeting with her brother in order to murder him. Some conjecture a play by Sophocles as the possible model, but that play's fragments, which reveal that Apsyrtus was portrated as a boy, suggest instead the version of the myth in which Medea kidnaps her brother and

throws pieces of his cut-up corpse to delay the Colchian fleet.[56] One cannot rule out that the *Medea sive Argonautae* was an original composition by Accius in which he dramatized a story found in Greek epic, since, as noted above, he appears to have based two of his plays upon episodes in Homer's *Iliad*.

The play opens with the arrival of the Argo, which terrifies a barbarian shepherd(s) who has never seen a ship before. Although this is the first extant fragment, it may not come from the actual first lines of the play. As with the philosophical debates in Pacuvius' *Antiopa,* the shepherd's speech does not seem to advance the plot in the most economical way, but rather seems to point to its own metatheatricality. As the only ship the shepherd has ever seen, the passage reflects his inability to describe the Argo in known terms. Thus the bizarre expressions reflect his confused state. The shepherd's speech also contains distinct Roman elements such as heavy alliteration, assonance, and a reference to the Italic woodland god Silvanus, all of which are blended with a Hellenistic fondness for obscurity.

(1)
{*Pastor*} *tanta moles labitur*
fremibunda ex alto ingenti sonitu et spiritu.
prae se undas volvit, vortices vi suscitat:
ruit prolapsa, pelagus respargit reflat.
Ita dum interruptum credas nimbum volvier,
dum quod sublime ventis expulsum rapi
saxum aut procellis, vel globosos turbines
existere ictos undis concursantibus:
nisi quas terrestris pontus strages conciet,
aut forte Triton fuscina evertens specus
supter radices penitus undante in freto
molem ex profundo saxeam ad caelum erigit.[57]

(RIBBECK, 1)

{Shepherd} Such a great heap glides
roaring from the sea with a horrifying sound and hiss;
it churns the waves before it, and stirs eddies with force;
it rushes headlong, and sprays and blows upon the sea.
So that now you would think that a thundercloud, ripped, had rolled,
now that a seized rock was hurled high to the winds
or rainstorms, or round-balled waterspouts

against the coming waves;
unless the sea stirs some land-based disaster,
or by chance Triton overturning a cave with his trident
under the roots deep in the swelling waves
raises a rocky heap from the seabed to the sky.

(2/3)
sicut lascivi atque alacres rostris perfremunt
delphini, item alto mulcta Silvani melo
consimilem ad auris cantum et auditum refert.

(RIBBECK, 2/3)

Just as [excited] and eager dolphins let out a snort from their beaks,
similar to the woodland tune of Silvanus,
it carries a song and sound to my ears.

Before the shepherd can process the sight of the ship and compare it to phenomena known to him, such as the effect of a thundercloud or a hurled globe, he reacts to the sight and sound of the mysterious object. The comparison of the Argo to a monster is effective if the ship's bow had been painted with eyes.

(4)
ego me extollo in abietem, alte ex tuto prospectum aucupo.

(RIBBECK, 4)

I raise myself onto a fir tree, and take in the sight from a safe height.

Fragment 5 may designate the meeting place of Medea and Apsyrtus:

(5)
apud vetustam turrem. . . .

(RIBBECK, 5)

At the ancient turret. . . .

(6)
vagant, pavore pecuda in tumulis deserunt.
⟨a!⟩ qui vos pascet postea?

(RIBBECK, 6)

. . . They wander, and desert the flock on the hillside out of fear.
Alas! Who will pasture you from now on?

In fragments 7 and 8, Jason seems to explain the ship and the various stages of civilization to the shepherd(s). It is not clear how, if at all, such a discussion would advance the plot:

(7)
prima ex immani victum ad mansuetum applicans.

(RIBBECK, 7)

First, tamed from their savageness, they pursue cultivating pursuits.

(8)
. . . ut tristis turbinum
toleraret hiemes, mare cum horreret fluctibus.

(RIBBECK, 8)

. . . in order to endure the dismal storms
of hurricanes, when the sea shivered with waves.

Fragment 9 seems to come from a speech by Medea describing her plan to lure Apsyrtus by false pretenses and echoes the use of sophistry for deception:

(9)
nisi ut astu ingenium lingua laudem et dictis lactem lenibus.

(RIBBECK, 9)

Unless so that I may praise his nature with clever tongue and trick him with soft words.

Fragment 10 is difficult to assign:[58]

(10)
exul inter hostis, exspes expers desertus vagus.

(RIBBECK, 10)

Among enemies, homeless, hopeless, helpless, a deserted wanderer.

(11)
. . . perite in stabulo frenos immittens feris.

(RIBBECK, 11)

. . . expertly applying bridles to the beasts in the stable.

In fragment 12, Apsyrtus or another character may be addressing Medea, but it is possible that this fragment actually belongs to another play:[59]

(12)
tun dia Mede's, cuius aditum exspectans pervixi usque adhuc?

(RIBBECK, 12)

Then are you godlike Medea, whose arrival I have lived in hope for until now?

The dramatic context of fragments 13 and 14 is unclear, but it is possible that they come from a speech by Jason corresponding to *Argonautica* 395ff., where he calms Medea, saying that her fears of being abandoned by him are unfounded. The glibness of Jason's words is reflected in the legal metaphor *causandi:*

(13)
qui potis est refelli quisquam, ubi nullust causandi locus?

(RIBBECK, 13)

Who is able to be refuted when there is no chance for pleading one's cause?

Fragment 14 evokes a sophistic debate of proof through argumentation; even though the proof here is visual, it is described as spoken:

(14)
principio extispicium ex prodigiis congruens ars te arguit.

(RIBBECK, 14)

First of all, the art of examining entrails through portents argues against you.

After the murder of Apsyrtus and the flight of Jason and Medea, Aeetes laments the death of his son. Aeetes' presence in the play is surprising, since nowhere in Apollonius' version does Aeetes pursue the Argonauts.

(15)
lavere salsis vultum lacrumis. . . .

(RIBBECK, 15)

To wet my face with salty tears. . . .

(16)
pernici orbificor liberorum leto et tabificabili.

(RIBBECK, 16)

I am made childless by the swift and rotting death of my children.

In fragment 17, the chorus (of shepherds?) laments the unpredictability of life:

(17)
fors dominatur, neque vita ulli
propia in vita est.

(RIBBECK, 17)

Chance rules, nor in life can anyone
call life one's own.

As with Pacuvius' *Antiopa,* rhetoric removes the dramatic reality of the play from the audience's world to a metatheatrical (re)creation of it.

Theatre productions of tragedy did not end in the Republic only to be revived by Seneca.[60] Accius may have been the last great "professional" Republican writer of tragedies, but a string of authors writing for the stage "part-time" kept new productions of tragedy on the stage under the early Empire, side by side with reproductions of Republican plays.[61] These writers include C. Julius Strabo, Cassius Parmensis, C. Asinius Pollio, Varius Rufus, Ovid, Cornelius Balbus, Pomponius Secundus, and the author of the *Hercules oetaeus.*[62] Tragedy also enjoyed an authorship and audience/readership outside of the theatre as a form of private

poetry written by, among others, Cicero, who translated Aeschylus' *Prometheus Unbound;* Julius Caesar, who composed an *Oedipus;* Augustus, who penned an *Ajax;* and Quintus Cicero, brother of the orator, who wrote four plays in the space of sixteen days while on campaign. None of these compositions, however, was intended for stage production. Theatre productions nonetheless continued to be immensely popular under the Empire, even though tragedy was produced on a smaller scale than productions of pantomime and Atellane farces, as the widespread construction of theatres throughout the Roman world attests.[63]

Revivals of the "classics," especially the plays of Ennius, Pacuvius, and Accius, in the late Republic, and the corresponding influence of mime productions, altered the relationship between the earlier productions and contemporary theatre reproductions. With fewer original productions on the stage from Sulla onward, allusions arising from previously staged plays took on contemporary relevance, thereby producing a dichronic theatre experience for an audience already sophisticated in dramatic allusion. Chapter 3 explores the semiotic consequences of the "competing realities" of the stage and the audience in the staging of *praetextae.* The opening program of Pompey's theatre, which included visual referents to his triumph, demonstrated to public figures exploiting the stage how the restaging of previously produced plays and the inclusion of the audience's reality could become relevant. The blending of the audience's own reality with the dramatic reality of the play led to the double interpretation of stage action: play means this (as it relates to the play's plot) and this (as it alludes to cultural/offstage personalities and events). Therefore an ambiguity between intended message and audience perception emerges, as well as a reciprocity between metatheatre and reality, on and off the stage, that finds ultimate expression in the plays of Seneca.

ROMAN TRAGEDY

Theatre to Theatricality

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