handling of timing and manner. Entries which through the withholding of certain aspects of preparation still have notable elements of surprise are a favourite device of Sophocles;[1] for Aeschylus see *Ag* 1577b*. But these techniques of surprise are exceptional. Usually the Greek tragedian makes full use of the tightening effect of forward-looking preparation. And generally expectation, as Coleridge noted in his *Lectures on Shakespeare*, is more powerful an emotional force than surprise.

The degree and extent to which a stage action is led towards by means of the infinitely variable techniques of preparation can supply an important and observable pointer to the artistic purposes and priorities of the dramatist. Our observation of dramatic preparation indicates what the playwright wanted his audience to expect and how he wished it to look at the event.

§2. *Visual Meaning*

The fifth-century Attic tragedian composed to be performed at the dramatic festivals; for him his play was not the written libretto but the work in performance. Likewise for his audience a tragedy was the production which they saw and heard in the theatre, and not, as it is for us, a paper copy of the text. The plays must be interpreted accordingly. These basic assertions are probably acceptable to most scholars and readers of Greek tragedy today. Their validity, though not their critical consequences, have become widely accepted over the last decades. Yet these dogmas are not in the last resort provable. We are not really in a position to contradict with finality someone who flatly asserts the opposite—that the poet primarily wrote to be read. All the same, common sense and our meagre evidence both point in the other direction.

To consider the matter first from the angle of the playwright, he did not in the fifth century 'write' a tragedy (*γράφειν*), rather he 'created' or 'produced' it (*ποιεῖν* has a wide range of sense), and he 'taught' or 'directed' it (*διδάσκειν*). *ἐδίδαξε* was evidently

[1] e.g. S. *Ant* 384, 823, *Trach* 531, *El* 660, 871, 1326, 1397, 1464 (far from an exhaustive list). Webster *Preparation*, who wishes to prove the inane claim that 'the arrival of a Sophoclean character is expected, Euripidean characters arrive unexpectedly' (123) completely misses this technique in Sophocles.

the word used in the official records of the festival, which were collected by Aristotle under the title *Διδασκαλίαι* (see Pfeiffer 81). Thus the word *τραγωιδογράφος* supplies a late notion (Polybius and later) while the words *τραγωιδοποιός* and *τραγωιδοδιδάσκαλος* are used of Agathon without distinction at Arph. *Thesm* 30 and 88. Indeed *ποιεῖν* and *διδάσκειν* used of tragedy effectively mean the same thing, to 'produce' or 'put on', as can be seen from Arph. *Frogs* 1021 *δρᾶμα ποιήσας Ἄρεως μεστόν* followed five lines later by *εἶτα διδάξας Πέρσας*. We have no evidence of a fifth-century tragedian who did not want his plays performed: to have his work performed was the only way to realize it.[1] We have no evidence that the performance was regarded as in any way a superficial or coarse or unsatisfactory realization of the play—the performance *was* the play.

The dramatists were practical men of the theatre, they did not merely supply the script. In the early days they were actors themselves (Arle. *Rhet* 1403b22). All, so far as we know, composed the music of their lyrics, devised the accompanying choreography, and supervised the production in general. This would include the over-all direction of delivery, gesture, grouping, movement, etc., and also probably of such technical matters as props, costumes, masks, and stage machinery. No doubt he had help and advice from others, but we have no reason to think that any of these tasks was put entirely in another's hands. And this is, indeed, why he was said to *διδάσκειν* his play—he literally

[1] A diversion has been raised in this context by the misinterpretation of the stylistic term *ἀναγνωστικός* at Arle. *Rhet* 1413b12, where it has wrongly been taken to mean 'intended solely for reading' instead of 'suited to reading'. It was rightly explained long ago by Sandys and Crusius; there is a good discussion with bibliography in Zwierlein 128ff. Yet the mistake continues to be made (e.g. P-C *DFA*² 82, Lucas on Arle. *Poet* 1450b18, Baldry *The Greek Tragic Theatre* (London 1971) 131) and to be corrected (e.g. Pfeiffer 29).

At Athen. 270a Metagenes' *Θουριοπέρσαι* and Nicophron's *Σειρῆνες* are both called *δράματα ἀδίδακτα*, which presumably means that they were never performed. But this is suspicious, since it seems too much of a coincidence that two comedies which Athenaeus quotes consecutively on the same topic should both have been exceptional in this way—and how would Athenaeus know this anyway? Dover's claim (Ar. *Clouds ed.* xcviii, 270, *Ar Com* 104, cf. Wilamowitz *Hellenistische Dichtung* (Berlin 1924) I 98 n. 4) that the revision of Arph. *Clouds* was for readers only is far from compelling. We do not know how the present text of *Clouds* survived, but there is no particular reason to suppose that Aristophanes put it into circulation. The fact, if it is one, that the revision is incomplete argues for the contrary. Calder has recently speculated (*CPh* 67 (1972) 291–3) that E. *Phaethon* was never performed, but without any good reason (of his seven points nos. 2–5 are irrelevant).

taught his performers what to do.[1] That the dramatists composed their own music is universally assumed; it supplies, for instance, the point of Arph. *Frogs* 1249ff., *Birds* 749, etc.[2] Aeschylus and Phrynichus were particularly famous for their choreography.[3]

It is not so simple to illustrate the role of the playwright as production supervisor or director.[4] But, besides the very use of διδάσκειν etc., it is surely assumed throughout Old Comedy that the play in performance and not just the words is the responsibility of the *poietes*. One only has to go through the contest in *Frogs* (where the chief emphasis is on diction) to see that Aeschylus and Euripides are holding each other responsible for the general presentation of their plays. Aeschylus is liable, for instance, for the staging of his silences (911ff.), his chariot-borne entries (961ff.), the presentation of the dirges in *Pers* (1026). Costumes are part of their province (1061ff.; cf. *Acharn*, *Thesm*). Staging and presentation are quite often parodied in Aristophanes, and are regarded as part of the author's work, and not as the responsibility of actor, σκευοποιός, μηχανοποιός, or someone else. Consider, for example, the parodies of *Telephus* in *Acharn* or of *Andromeda* in *Thesm*. The features of presentation which come in for parody include gestures, postures, costumes, props, stage machines, and so on.[5]

[1] Cf. Johannes Rhenanus writing in 1613: '. . . even the most eminent actors have to allow themselves to be instructed by the Dramatists'. For this and other evidence that the 'Elizabethan' playwright taught his plays see J. Isaacs in *Shakespeare and the Theatre* (Shakespeare Assoc. London 1927) 88ff. esp. 97f.

[2] See in general Kranz *Stas* 137–46. It is quite possible that the musical notation of the famous papyrus fragment of E. *Or* (*c.* 200 B.C., see Turner *Greek Manuscripts* etc. (Oxford 1971) 70) goes back to Euripides himself; cf. Longman *CQ* N.S. 12 (1962) 61ff. esp. 65 n. 1. Compare also Dion. Hal. *de comp. verb.* 63, who discusses Euripides' scoring of *Or* 140–2.

[3] See Chamaeleon fr. 41 Wehrli (*ap.* Athen. 21c), Arph. fr. 677, 678 K. Philocleon's performance at the end of Arph. *Wasps* may be a tribute to Phrynichus' choreography (cf. 1479, 1490, 1524); see also the beautiful couplet attributed to him σχήματα δ' ὄρχησις τόσα μοι πόρεν, ὅσ' ἐνὶ πόντωι / κύματα ποιεῖται χείματι νὺξ ὁλοή (Plut. *Quaest. Symp.* 732f). See further Kranz *Stas* 146–8.

[4] I cannot resist quoting the anecdote in Plutarch (*de rect. rat. aud.* 46b) Εὐριπίδης . . . ὡς ὑπολέγοντος αὐτοῦ τοῖς χορευταῖς ὠιδήν τινα πεποιημένην ἐφ' ἁρμονίας εἷς ἐγέλασεν, 'εἰ μή τις ἦς ἀναίσθητος' εἶπε κτλ.

[5] Aristotle in *Poetics* authorized the mistaken notion that the theatrical aspect of the play was unworthy of the artist and should be left to the mechanicals (see Appendix F), but he mentions in passing (1455a26) that Carcinus ἐξέπεσεν because he did not take sufficient care over a detail of staging. Snell (on *TrGF* 70 F 1c) says 'nescio quo pacto ὁ διδάσκαλος haec non notaverit': if he means to imply that the διδάσκαλος was someone other than Carcinus himself, then he has missed the point.

It is possible that the lack of marginal stage directions is further evidence. Stage directions (παρεπιγραφαί) are very few and far between in our texts; and what few there are may well not go back to the dramatist.[1] There would be no need of written instructions, of course, when the playwright himself looked after rehearsals. I conclude, then, that the dramatist himself supervised the visual and aural presentation of his work in all aspects. This function, as well as the furnishing of the script, was an essential part of being a τραγωιδοδιδάσκαλος.

Consider the same issue from the side of the audience. There can be little doubt that tragedy was sometimes read in the fifth century as well as being seen in performance. Vase paintings and the increasing use of imagery of books and writing are alone clear evidence of the rise of the book during the course of the century.[2] The very fact that so much of fifth-century tragedy survived to reach Alexandria may be evidence that the text was circulated; though it is no less likely that the family of the dramatist (often also in the trade) ensured the preservation of at least one copy.[3] At the same time (despite the influential speculation of Wilamowitz to the contrary (*Einleitung* 121ff.)) there is no good reason to think that the reading of tragedy was at all widespread before the end of the century, let alone that tragedians composed with any consideration of a public of readers. It is perhaps worth noting that the very first surviving reference to

[1] Cf. Andrieu 183ff., 348f. This is a rather complex subject which I hope to discuss fully elsewhere. Of some fourteen examples of παρεπιγραφαί in tragedy which I have found alleged in one place or another, there are only four which may well go back to the dramatist himself (A. *Eum* 117–29, *Diktyoulkoi* fr. 474 l. 803, E. *Cycl* 487, and *trag. adesp. POxy* 2746). All the others are either certainly or probably the work of later editors, either in ancient or modern times. For myself, I doubt whether any parepigraphai at all, even those giving noises off, go back to the fifth century.

[2] See in general Turner *Athenian Books in the Fifth and Fourth Centuries* (London 1952) esp. 16ff., Pfeiffer chapter 2 esp. 25–32.

[3] It is possible that a copy of the text was deposited in some official collection, but we have no evidence of it. Not everything did survive; see in general Fraser *Ptolemaic Alexandria* (Oxford 1972) ii 486f. According to the *Life* of Euripides some dozen of his plays did not survive, and we have the tell-tale οὐ σώιζεται for the satyr play of 431 (Hypoth. *Med*) and maybe of 409, if the corrupt hypoth. *Phoen* is rightly restored by Snell *TrGF* DID C 16a. It is salutary to recall that Shakespeare, the most popular playwright of his day, did not ensure the survival of his plays. Had it not been for the collection of the First Folio by Heminge and Condell, fifteen of his plays, including *Tempest*, *Macbeth*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*, would presumably have been lost.

reading tragedy does not occur until the end of the century, at Arph. *Frogs* 52f.; and there Dionysus is characterized as a passionate devotee of tragedy.[1] No doubt tragedies were read by associates of the dramatist, by those who had for some reason failed to see the play, by tragedians, comedians, and rhetoricians who wished to use and draw on an earlier tragedy, by tragedy fanatics like Dionysus, and, probably above all, by those who wished to learn by heart parts of tragedies for private singing and recitation (see e.g. Arph. *Clouds* 1364ff., *Frogs* 151; cf. Plato *Phaedr* 228). But nowhere before Aristotle is there, so far as I know, any suggestion that the appreciation of tragedy by reading might be fuller or more developed: the text was only a convenient abstract of the real work.

Aristophanes always refers to tragedy in terms of its effect on a theatre audience, and never in terms of a significant reading public.[2] For his purposes a tragedy was a production in the theatre. Thus, for example, it is after attending a tragedy of Euripides that husbands suspect their wives (*Thesm* 389ff.), *εὐθὺς εἰσιόντες ἀπὸ τῶν ἱκρίων . . .* (395); and this happens not wherever a text is circulated but *ὅπουπερ ἔμβραχυ / εἰσὶν θεαταὶ καὶ τραγωιδοὶ καὶ χοροί* (390f., cf. *Frogs* 971 ff., especially l. 981). It is worth noting also how the critical discussion of tragedy in Aristophanes tends to be in terms of practical technique. This is particularly clear in the discussion in *Frogs* 905–91, where throughout it is the audience (*θεαταί* 909, 919; cf. *θεώμενοι* 926) which is the object of the technique. And it is likely that fifth-century critical theory of tragedy, like the theory of rhetoric, was put in terms of *τέχνη*, the *τέχνη* of affecting the audience (*ψυχαγωγία*, *ἀπάτη*, etc.), whether by the speech in the law-court or the tragedy in the theatre.[3]

[1] See Rau 118ff. For the phrase *ἀναγιγνώσκοντί μοι τὴν Ἀνδρομέδαν πρὸς ἐμαυτὸν* cf. Plato Com. fr. 173 K (a cookery book is the victim). Incidentally Eupolis fr. 304 K *οὗ τὰ βυβλία ὠνια* does not imply texts of *tragedy* on sale. (And might *βυβλία* mean only 'stationery'?)

[2] *Frogs* 1114 *βιβλίον τ' ἔχων ἕκαστος μανθάνει τὰ δεξιά* has, of course, been the subject of much controversy; cf. Rossi *BICS* 18 (1971) 78. Walcot has recently suggested (*G and R* 18 (1971) 45f.) that *βιβλίον* means a quotation-book, in which the spectator would copy striking lines so that he could then learn them by heart (*μανθάνει*). At least this, unlike many interpretations, accounts for the wording, though it conjures up an incredible picture.

[3] Pohlenz *Kl Schr* II 436ff. remains a valuable collection of evidence, although many of his conclusions are unacceptable (see Pfeiffer 47 n. 1); also cf. Rosenmeyer 235ff.

It is usually claimed in this connection that Aristophanes' parodies show that a greater or smaller part of his audience must have read tragedies closely and persistently.[1] But we must ask whether this is not a matter of scholars assuming that Aristophanes' audience must have considered his comedies in the same way as they do. Of course we like to know the wording and context of the original of every parody and to compare it word by word with Aristophanes' version: but how often is this necessary for the appreciation of the parody? In the case of the one extended parody where we have the original—the parody of E. *Hel* at *Thesm* 850ff.—a close knowledge of the text of *Hel* is clearly unnecessary: all Aristophanes requires of his audience is that they should have been present at the first production of *Hel* a year or two before. In many instances of paratragedy it is recognition of the fact of the paratragedy and not of the tragic original which is required; in many others the source is a scandalous tag or an opening line or a famous speech which many could recite by heart. And in the more extended parodies it seems to be acquaintance with a performance rather than with the text which is required of the audience. It has been rightly observed that 'again and again it is visual effects which Aristophanes recalls, knowing that for an audience a play is a thing done in their presence' (Harriott op. cit. 5). This suggests that successful plays were not performed just once at Athens for the first and only time, but that they were reperformed at later festivals. There is some evidence that Aeschylus' plays were reperformed at the City Dionysia (Arph. *Acharn* 9ff., *Frogs* 866f., Philostr. *Vit Ap* 6. 11); but if other playwrights were reperformed it must have been at the rural festivals. Here, unfortunately, our evidence is minimal; but one wonders how much truth lies behind Plato's caricature of the *φιλοθεάμονες* at *Rep* 475d, who *περιθέουσι τοῖς Διονυσίοις, οὔτε τῶν κατὰ πόλεις οὔτε τῶν κατὰ κώμας ἀπολειπόμενοι*.[2] Perhaps most theatre-goers went to more than one dramatic festival each year, and so saw the most famous plays more than once.

[1] The chief exception is a brief but well argued article by R. Harriott in *BICS* 9 (1962) 1ff. The study of paratragedy in Aristophanes has been greatly facilitated by the valuable collection made by Rau.

[2] On the rural festivals see P-C *DFA*² 42ff., 99f.; cf. also Calder in *Educ. Theatre Journ* 10 (1958) 237–9 (a sensible three pages called 'The Single-Performance Fallacy').

There is, then, enough evidence to indicate that the reading of tragedy in the fifth century was a subsidiary activity, and that it did not enter significantly into the playwright's intentions, nor into his public's expectations. If these conclusions are accepted, even with reservations, then there are far-reaching consequences for the interpreter of Greek tragedy. For instance, the play should be treated as sequential; that is to say that, since the work was performed from start to finish in a certain time, it must be taken in order, and we should be wary of treating the play as 'spatial', that is as an indivisible whole in which all parts bear on all others (a notion applied by G. Wilson Knight to Shakespeare). We should hesitate to explain anything earlier in the play in terms of something which is only divulged later, though we may *re*interpret the earlier feature. We should, in general, avoid picking at random from here and there in the play, and should treat it as an ordered succession. Further, we should be reluctant to read between the lines. The phrase gives itself away, since an audience does not read and so cannot read between the lines, any more than it can turn the pages back. A performed work should wear its meaning in view; it cannot afford to be inexplicitly cryptic, or to hide its burden in inconspicuous corners. The playwright's first requirement is his audience's concentrated attention. This he must capture and keep, and he must be very careful how he disperses or diverts or distracts this concentration. So the critic should not 'extract from the text subtleties so tortuous that they could never reach the consciousness of an audience through a medium as fast moving and unhaltable as music'.[1]

But these are negative cautions, and one should take care in pressing them.[2] Especially one should be careful not to dogmatize too confidently about what an author could or could not put into his work, for there are many levels of creative consciousness besides clearly formulated deliberation; and similarly with what an audience could or could not register during a work in performance, for there are many degrees of apprehension besides the full and conscious recognition which it is the critic's task to formulate. My concern here is, in any case, not so much with what can *not* be expected of a play in performance but with what *is* to be expected: visual meaning.[1]

[1] Richard David on Shakespeare in *PBA* 47 (1961) 158.

[2] There is a lesson here from Homeric studies. The discovery that Homer is the culmination of an oral tradition led to dogmatic assumptions about the kind of detailed artistry it is legitimate to expect from him. Some have insisted that certain kinds of large-scale 'literary' artistry, e.g. complex structures of theme or imagery, corresponding scenes, are out of the question for an oral poet—even though they are clearly there in the poems. The case against this patronizing and arbitrary circumscription of Homer's genius is well put in A. Parry's introduction to *The Making of Homeric Verse* (Oxford 1971) esp. l–lxii and by A. Amory Parry in *CQ* N.S. 21 (1971) 1ff. esp. 6.

The critic of a work which is only fully realized in performance should always keep his mind's eye on the work in action. As he reads he must envisage how these lines would be bodied forth in the theatre. He must ask how the performance adds to and interprets the lines, and how the words put meaning into the action. For both are part and parcel of the work as a whole. Anyone who has read A. *Ag* must sense that Agamemnon's walking over the red cloth has some special meaning, or that in S. *OC* the action of the blind Oedipus leading those who can see is imbued with significance, or that Pentheus' Bacchant's clothing in E. *Ba* is more than an adventitious detail. These are very obvious examples of visual drama which call for interpretation; but if one looks a little closer one can see that each tragedy in performance is full of significant theatrical points which need to be recognized and appreciated. For example, there is the dramatic use of gestures, of stage groupings, of the direction of movements, of props, of tableaux. Such practical aspects of staging can in their context be given great significance. Anyone who has seen a Greek tragedy (or any other play) and thought about it knows that visual elements like these are part of the essential fabric of the work.

So when the playwright draws attention to a stage action, we should take up the invitation and consider what the significance of that action is meant to be. And if the dramatist is a great dramatist, or just a good one, then we should not be content with the answer that the action 'adds spectacle' or 'enhances verisimilitude'; we should look for something which the action conveys which could not be put in any other way. In such a brief and concentrated dramatic form as Greek tragedy the great artist is not going to squander time and attention on superfluous or superficial stage business. As Steidle (15) has put it, 'in the

[1] This phrase is the title of the excellent first chapter of N. Coghill's *Shakespeare's Professional Skills* (Cambridge 1964).

whole of ancient drama the stage actions are never there for mere effect, but rather have a meaningful function for the understanding of the work'.

There was in Greek tragedy much more stage action than is generally acknowledged. None the less it would be most misleading if the impression were given that there were notable scenic effects going on all the time or even most of the time. There are long stretches of the tragedies where there is little movement besides (presumably) the conventional gestures which accompany speech; and the stage picture, once established, would cease to be visually notable until it changed again. (Throughout the lyric portions the possible significance of the choreography is almost completely lost to us.)[1] Significant stage effects, those reflected in the words, tend to come together in groups, and are often separated by quite long static scenes. There is no denying that the tragic theatre of the fifth century was more static than most other schools of drama. But that is no reason for neglecting the visual element which is there: on the contrary, its sparing use tends to give it heightened prominence when it is brought into play.

The close study of stage action as an approach to critical interpretation is still in its early days, and has really got under way only in the last few years.[2] The whole approach has grown

[1] G. R. Kernodle 'Symbolic Action in the Greek Choral Odes' in *CJ* 53 (1957–8) 1–7 argues briefly but forcibly that the chorus actually danced out the events which it was singing about—the sacrifice of Iphigenia, the punishment of Capaneus, the death of Phaedra or Pentheus. The theory has its attractions; but, apart from the lack of corroborative evidence, it runs into difficulties. The chorus would lose its corporate identity, the responsion of strophe and antistrophe would be lost, many allusions are too brief to be danced out, some would be grotesque, and, above all perhaps, the contrast of the songs with the action—their removal in time and space, diction, and particularity—would be destroyed.

[2] There is a similar movement in Shakespearean criticism. This goes back at root to Poel or further, but it was put on a sound basis in theory and in practice by Granville Barker (there is a good programmatic statement in *Companion to Shakespeare Studies* (Cambridge 1934) 83). Its development seems, however, to have been slow and unsteady. Two recent books which apply this approach are J. Russell Brown *Shakespeare's Plays in Performance* (London 1966) and J. L. Styan *Shakespeare's Stagecraft* (Cambridge 1967), both of which offer valuable observations, though they tend to fail to distinguish between the way that Shakespeare had the work performed and the way that they themselves would do it if they were to mount a production. The whole critical approach is still in its formative stages to judge from the contribution of D. Seltzer to the *New Companion to Shakespeare Studies* (Cambridge 1971) 35ff., and from Stanley Wells's critical survey in the same book, where he says (p. 261) 'criticism based on a strong sense of the play as something that is incomplete until it is performed seems likely to grow in importance, but it is a difficult area of discussion'.

out of a combination of the traditional study of dramatic technique combined with a greater awareness among scholars of the practical theatre and of the problems of producing the great plays of the past. (There is a brief doxographical survey on pp. 488–9.) It is not an easy field of study: one seldom deals in certainties, usually in possibilities, or, at best, probabilities. Thorough accumulation and careful discrimination of all relevant evidence is required, especially when trying to establish conventional or unconventional techniques. Complete consideration of the dramatic context of a stage action and close attention to the accompanying words are needed for an assessment of its function. But clearly there is work to be done.

But, if this approach is likely to be as productive as has been made out, why has it not been recognized and exploited earlier? I can suggest several reasons for this. One is that there are virtually no stage directions in our transmitted texts, and hence in the scholarly editions.[1] The handful that there are seem to have been preserved at random, and most of them concern noises off-stage (cf. p. 15 n. 1 above). The plain text with no explicit reminder that it is the libretto of a work to be performed has encouraged scholars to neglect the stage action. If full stage instructions from the author's own hand had been transmitted with the text then this aspect would certainly have received due attention. Another reason is that there is little on the dramatic significance of stage action in the remnants of ancient scholarship on the plays, the scholia. Scholars so regard the scholia that if some topic receives attention in them then, however

[1] There have been exceptions, above all Wilamowitz's *ed maj* of Aeschylus which has an *actio* section at the foot of each page. Van Leeuwen put Latin directions in his text of Aristophanes (often too freely). Koerte has made this the usual practice for editors of Menander (though Sandbach *OCT* has regrettably not followed the convention). Since the stage action is part of the play as a whole, it would be a good thing, in my view, if Wilamowitz's precedent were followed. ('No one can write an adequate commentary on a Greek play, or even edit it adequately, without producing it in his mind' Dover *Skene* 2.) But as long as it remains traditional for an edition to be as nearly as possible a corrected copy of the transmitted text with a catalogue of scribal errors, this practice is unlikely to be adopted. Translators do, of course, usually include stage instructions; but few have taken any trouble over them.

foolish or trivial, it is treated with respect. But in this case there is little encouragement.[1]

Consider next a feature of theatre history which has probably had a much deeper and more insidious influence. Each age reproduces old plays with its own visual and theatrical conventions and fashions. It is true that there is often some nominal allusion to the theatre of the original production (in costume or music, say), but generally directors and designers and actors feel free to handle the presentation of the play entirely in their own way. With time the lay-out of the stage and theatre changes, ideas about costumes, lighting, and scenery change, techniques of acting and delivery change. But it is not only in these external trappings that the presentation of the play is no longer as its creator meant it to be; the visual meaning of his drama, woven into it by means of gestures, movements, tableaux, etc., this too goes by the board or is obliterated. Yet the greatest damage is done by the interpolation of extraneous spectacle and visual effects. No doubt visual interpolation has always seemed easily acceptable because, although not explicitly supported by the text, it does not positively contradict or make nonsense of it. So this has been regarded as perfectly legitimate practice in almost every chapter of theatre history, and above all, perhaps, in the latest. Modern reinterpretations depend almost entirely on visual means, and these mainly take the form of extra action and spectacle which are not directly founded or reflected in the text. Of course the text itself may also be cut, added to, and rewritten (and this was no less true of the ancient world, see Page *passim*), but this is always comparatively inhibited, since the text is the one aspect of the play which is laid down in black and white. It is above all through visual presentation in all its aspects,

[1] In the scholia there are, in fact, scattered remarks on the stage action, and even aesthetic comments on dramatic and scenic technique. These are presumably derived from Alexandrian commentaries which may well have given considerable weight to such matters; but too little has survived the process of selection to embolden modern scholiasts to follow suit. See e.g. scholia on A. *Eum* 1 (see p. 368 n. 3); S. *El* 190, *OC* 1547, *Aj* 308; E. *Hipp* 569, *Tro* 99, *Or* 223. The collection, discussion, and *index verborum* in A. Trendelenburg *Grammaticorum Graecorum de Arte Tragica Iudiciorum Reliquiae* (Bonn 1867) is still valuable, and there are some helpful observations in G. Malzan *De Scholiis Euripideis* etc. (Darmstadt 1908). Cf. also Rutherford III 101ff. esp. 114 (on pp. 118–25 R. attempts a complete list of scholia on Aristophanes which have to do with entrances, exits, scenery, dress, attitude, movements, and gestures). Weissmann *Anweisungen* is of little value on this topic.

inevitably including visual meaning, that actor-managers, producers, and directors have felt free to adapt, refurbish, reinterpret, and, all too often, travesty old plays.

Complete freedom in the theatrical production of old plays is nothing new and there have been few exceptions to it.[1] The ancient Greek theatre was no exception. Within a century of the death of Sophocles and Euripides there had been considerable changes to the stage, the skene, machinery, masks, buskins, etc.[2] Visual effects were confidently interpolated (see index on Page p. 221f., and §4 below), and there was not, so far as we know, any idea that the way that the fifth-century dramatists themselves produced their plays had any claims on the later theatre. No doubt the visual meaning of their plays, embodied in comparatively small details of gesture and movement, were disregarded along with the more obvious external features of staging. The tragic theatre of the fourth century was, it seems, dominated by the virtuoso actor; and he is unlikely to have restricted himself to the small (though significant) actions inherent in the original work. There do seem to have been some scholars who were interested in the dramatist's visual meaning (see p. 22 n. 1 above); but equally there were others who with no sense of the history of the theatre were happy to recount the contemporary staging as though it were the same as the original (see §4 below).

If we turn to consider the revival in the production of Greek tragedy led by Max Reinhardt early this century, then theatrically speaking the situation is little different.[3] The outward staging was quite unlike the original—proscenium arch, artificial lighting, no masks, naturalistic acting, and so on. Visually the production was dominated by huge visual effects in scenery and in crowd grouping, which were supposed to convey the grandeur of Greek tragedy. In this welter of spectacle the plain stage actions

[1] A few come to mind e.g. the traditional Japanese theatres, the Comédie-Française, the D'Oyly Carte Opera.

[2] For details see D–R 375ff., Frickenhaus 31ff., P-C *TDA* 134ff., Bieber *Hist*[2] 108ff. etc.

[3] For Greek tragedy on the modern stage in Germany see Schadewaldt *HuH*[2] ii 636ff. My random illustrations do not pretend to be a complete account of the production of Greek tragedy in recent times. The best modern productions of Greek tragedy are, in my view, those done by modern Greek companies, especially the National Theatre of Greece at Epidaurus. Many of these productions try to take serious consideration of the dramatist's scenic intentions, and yet avoid antiquarian lifelessness.

which convey the author's visual meaning, even if they were noticed and carried out, would be inconspicuous and of little weight. And now in the contemporary professional theatre of ritual, cruelty, and the absurd there is no place for the scenic techniques of the Greek tragedian.[1] Quite apart from incongruous doctrines of the function of the theatre and of the relationship between actor and audience, so much stage action and ritualistic hocus-pocus is interpolated, and this so dominates the production as a whole, that the visual meaning of the original play is neglected and lost.

This is not the place to go into the awkward and contentions —and extremely important—question whether it is right for the producers of old plays to regard themselves as under no obligation to the dramatist's visual meaning, or whether on the other hand they ought to hamper their own scenic imagination by paying attention to it. The problem seems to be to find a tenable position which rejects the two extremes of a lifeless and unachievable reconstruction of the first performance on the one hand, and on the other a complete and arrogant independence which treats the play as a mere starting-point for improvisations and the author as no more than a fine name. My point here is that directors and actors hardly ever have, as a matter of fact, taken account of the dramatist's theatrical intentions, once he is no longer around to insist on them. This must have had its effect on scholars and critics. Either they have been so bound up with the theatrical practices of their own day that they have failed to see how these have fought against and obliterated an essential aspect of the original work, or they have been so put off by the high-handed treatment of their beloved plays that they have turned their back on the theatrical aspect of the tragedies altogether, and have treated them as incorporeal poems or as mere corrupted texts.

Now to the notion which has had the most far-reaching effect: the idea that the performance in the theatre is not the province of the tragic poet or of the critic, and may even be unworthy of them. This is clearly implied in Aristotle's *Poetics* and through

[1] I have in mind in particular the 'seminal' figures like Peter Brook and Jerzy Grotowski, and the influence of the actor-lunatic Antonin Artaud and the sage Jan Kott. The first chapter of F. Furgusson *The Idea of a Theater* (Princeton 1949) has been influential here. Ironically the theory of a ritual theatre stems in part from Hellenists like Frazer, Cornford, Jane Harrison, and Murray.

Poet has had untold influence. The distinction is made near the beginning at 1449a8f. where Aristotle talks of judging the development of tragedy *αὐτό τε καθ' αὑτὸ . . . καὶ πρὸς τὰ θέατρα*. Whatever is meant exactly by *θέατρα*[1] Aristotle must here be driving a wedge between the essential work and its manifestation in the theatre; and this is irreconcilable with the view I am advocating. I postpone a full discussion of what Aristotle has to say on the theatrical aspects of drama to Appendix F.

Aristotle's *Poetics* is the most influential critical work on Tragedy ever written, and with good reason. But its influence has not been wholly for good. The over-emphasis on plausibility and consistency, for example, has wasted a lot of disciples' time on insignificant trifles, the teleological framework has led to an over-emphasis on the primitive in Aeschylus, and the failure to appreciate complex plots has hindered the understanding of Euripides (see Burnett chapter I). On the particular topic of visual meaning Aristotle's failure seems to lie in his times. During the fourth century it had become possible to regard the text of a Greek tragedy as the tragedy itself and not as the libretto of a performance.[2] This attitude is not to be found in Plato, and may to some extent be a reaction to Plato's emphasis on performance. Once tragedy is treated as a text then it is all too easy to lose sight of its visual meaning. That Aristotle did, and critics ever since have turned their backs in the same direction.

All these actions for which I am claiming dramatic significance take place, of course, on stage in view of the audience. I am not concerned here with actions off-stage, those that took place before the play began, or those that take place elsewhere. Indeed I should claim that the actions which take place off-stage and outside the play, although they are generally larger and more violent, are comparatively unimportant. A Greek tragedy concentrates on a certain short sequence of events set at a particular place and within a certain brief space of time; and every action

[1] There has been a tendency among recent commentators to try to exculpate Aristotle from his disparagement of the theatrical aspect of tragedy. Thus, on this place Lucas, for example, glosses *τὰ θέατρα* as (p. 79) 'accidental factors like the requirements of dramatic festivals—as it might be by dinner and licensing hours'. But that would be *πρὸς τοὺς ἀγῶνας*; and *θέατρα* must be to do with spectators and the play in visible performance. Unfortunately Aristotle does not elaborate the distinction here (*ἄλλος λόγος* 9).

[2] Cf. in general the clear and informed exposition of Mehmel *Virgil und Apollonius Rhodius* (Hamburg 1940) 20–3.

outside that time and place, however huge and horrendous, only matters in so far as it is brought to bear on the focus of the play on stage. It has only as much prominence as the attention it is given. The actions on the stage, on the other hand, although usually rather slight and lacking in violence, become the object of concentrated attention and bear the visible burden of the tragedy.

It might seem obvious that in a play the things that happen before the eyes of the audience will be of crucial importance in a way that actions which are only alluded to or reported cannot be. Yet in the discussion of Greek tragedy there is a widespread and pervasive notion that the mighty deeds off-stage are somehow what the play is 'about'. One cannot but suspect that this idea owes something to the usual practice of the handbooks which both in antiquity and in modern times have given synopses of the plot. The texts of most plays are prefaced by a summary of the plot in the *hypothesis*; and the contents of each Greek tragedy have been reduced to a paragraph of paraphrase in dozens of modern handbooks. Yet a mere summary of the plot can tell us nothing of critical value about a play, nothing of its special qualities and emphases—it cannot even distinguish a mediocrity from a masterpiece.[1] Whatever the reasons behind it, there is a widespread misconception that there is little or no action in a Greek tragedy, and that all the momentous and notable actions take place off-stage. We find, for example, in *GGL* I 2 p. 121 the assertion that 'What the public actually sees with its eyes in Greek tragedy is as a rule not *action* in the physical sense'. But if one reads on (p. 122) then one finds that what Schmid allows to qualify as 'Handlung' is simply and only physical *violence*.

[1] Perhaps the over-emphasis on plot summary, and hence on actions which take place off-stage, is in part due once more to Aristotle *Poet*. Aristotle did not mean anything so superficial as this by μῦθος nor by πρᾶξις, but a misleading impression might easily be gained. When, for instance, he says at 1453b3ff. that pity and fear may be aroused simply by hearing τὰ πράγματα γινόμενα . . . ἅπερ ἂν πάθοι τις ἀκούων τὸν τοῦ Οἰδίπου μῦθον, the reader might well take μῦθος here to mean a summary of the plot. Even such a sensitive critic as Jones (198) can say 'the *Antigone* is about the burying of Polyneikes: this is the single distinct action which, in the Aristotelian analysis, the tragedy imitates' (cf. *hypoth* I to *Ant* τὸ δὲ κεφάλαιόν ἐστι τάφος Πολυνείκους . . .). Yet the burial does not even take place on-stage. In fairness to Aristotle the variant reading in B should probably be accepted at *Poet* 1450a16, giving μίμησις . . . πράξεων καὶ βίου (rather than πράξεως); and elsewhere in *Poet* the singular πρᾶξις may mean 'action = acts' rather than 'one single particular action'.

And yet there are many kinds of human action other than those which draw blood.[1]

There is another widespread misconception which also tends to direct attention away from the small but immediate actions on stage towards the large but distant actions beyond. The dogma is that the inherited body of myth was firmly fixed by tradition and allowed the dramatist very little freedom in his use of 'action'. Quite apart from all the evidence for variation and innovation in the handling of myth in Greek tragedy, it is not even true that the immutably fixed elements in the story put any significant constraint on the dramatist's invention. It is mistaken to claim, as is often done, that the 'story dictates' the dramatic treatment, or that 'it is the poet's initial choice of the subject of his play or trilogy that determines the details of its treatment'.[2] The three 'Electra' plays, the *Philoctetes* plays (Dio Chrys. *Or* 52) and even more clearly the three 'Seven against Thebes' plays (A. *Seven*, S. *Ant*, E. *Phoen*) are the simple refutation of this assertion. It is entirely up to the dramatist which brief sequence of events he selects from the myth, which aspects he emphasizes, which characters he concentrates on, which he neglects. The identity and role of the chorus is in his hands, so is the sequence of events and their relative emphasis, so is the selection and articulation of themes. In sum, it is up to the playwright how he makes his play.

And so it is up to the playwright to invent the stage action and to use it; the few fixed elements make no difference to this. And it is, indeed, precisely in his dramatization that his art lies; not in the story, but in *how* he turns it into a drama. For the critic the quality of the play depends on the artistic arrangement and selection, including the stage action, and not on the mere story, which is shared by good and bad dramatist alike. The compulsion of the myth may be exaggerated as a joke (as it is in Antiphanes fr. 191 K), but it is not to be taken seriously. Aristotle with his admirable emphasis on ἡ τῶν πραγμάτων σύστασις would no doubt have agreed with this (though it is a pity he did not

[1] I should mention that the word 'Handlung' was used in a metaphysical sense by that school of *Geistesgeschichte* which saw all great works of art as chapters in the history of ideas. Aeschylus is seen as struggling with the emergent concepts of choice, individuality, and responsibility in Snell's *Aischylos und das Handeln im Drama* (*Philol* Supp. XX, 1 (1928)) 1ff.

[2] Garvie 143 (quoted with approval in *AC* 1969 p. 493).

say it more explicitly). In conclusion, the kind of action which is under the dramatist's control and in which his stagecraft consists is the stage action, the deeds which are done before the eyes of the audience.

§3. *Text and Stage Action*

Now we must face the problem of how to discover the stage action, and how to distinguish the significant from the trivial. How in the absence of explicit stage directions are we to know what is going on? The answer is, in principle, simple: the significant stage instructions are implicit in the words. The characters of Greek tragedy say what they are doing, or are described as they act; and so the words accompany and clarify the action. Wilamowitz put the matter succinctly: 'acerrime contendo, e verbis poetarum satis certe colligi actionem . . .'.[1] With this goes the converse, which was put thus by Fraenkel (A. *Ag ed* III 642–3): 'In ancient dramatic literature it is never allowable to invent stage-directions which are not related to some definite utterance in the dialogue.'

In practice, however, the inference of the stage action from the words is not so simple (as is frequently witnessed in this work). The relation between text and action is not always straightforward and is not uniform. None the less, what is required for the moment is a rule of thumb. It would be a good start if it could be broadly accepted that the words, if we know how to use them, give the significant action, and that there was no significant action other than that indicated by the words.

There arises straight away a pair of basic difficulties. (i) How can we tell that the plays did not include all sorts of stage business which are not indicated at all by the words? (ii) How can we tell that when characters say they are doing something they are in fact translating their words into stage action?

First, how much stage action did the dramatist sanction which is not accompanied or referred to at all in the words? It has already been observed that the most important element in

[1] Wilamowitz *ed maj* xxxiv; cf. his vigorous earlier formulation in E. *Her ed* ii 5 n. 1 and Haupt's passing dictum (*Opusc* II 460) 'nihil autem fere fit in Graecorum tragoediis comoediisque quin fieri simul indicetur oratione'. The principle has been recently reasserted more fully by Steidle 22f., Ortkemper 18f.

theatrical revivals and reinterpretations is precisely the interpolation of significant stage business which is not authorized by the text: perhaps, it may be claimed, in the original performance there was a lot more going on, not only decorative details but important stage actions which coloured and altered the entire play—and perhaps these are not reflected at all in the text. Why should they be? The text is, after all, only a 'libretto', not a complete casebook of the production. If any play does not make sense unless we have to suppose some stage action which is not indicated by the words, then this would be the thin end of the wedge. Zielinski[1] claimed that there are many such places, and formulated the principle: 'If a certain passage is logically incomprehensible or psychologically implausible without the assumption of a certain piece of accompanying stage business, then that stage business is to be assumed.' But are there any such places? Tycho v. Wilamowitz in an excellent passage (140–2) argues that the interpretation of a play must proceed from what is there, not from what is not there, and shows that Zielinski by a *petitio principii* wishes to interpolate stage action in order to support an interpretation which is not grounded in the play we have. Only if a play makes indisputable nonsense without an imagined stage action should we be willing to interpolate it.

But one might take a more arbitrary and less rigorous standpoint. Why should we suppose that the relation between words and action was so close? As it has been put, 'we cannot demonstrate that fifth century producers did not sometimes indulge their fancy. Greek Tragedy was not necessarily austere at all times.'[2] There is in the last resort no refutation of this contention, even though there is no external evidence of any such procedure. But it becomes a most unlikely notion when considered in practical terms. For this extra action would either have to take place in a dumb show or it would have to be going on while the words were being spoken. In the former case, why should the dumb actions not be accompanied by words? In the latter,

[1] Zielinski *Philol* 64 (1905) 6–14, with special reference to S. *Trach*. The quotation is from p. 8.

[2] H. L. Tracy *CJ* 53 (1958) 338ff.; the quotation is from p. 345. Cf. on p. 344 'There may well have been much more free invention on the producer's part than any surviving evidence suggests': but we have the 'producer's' invention—the play itself.

THE STAGECRAFT OF AESCHYLUS

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BY

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