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CHAPTER 1

Aristophanes' Frogs *and the critical tradition*

TRAGIC HISTORY

As the second half of the *Frogs* opens,[1] one of Pluto's slaves explains to Xanthias the system of rewards given in the Underworld to the pre-eminent practitioner of each of the 'important and clever' *technai*. Aeschylus holds the position for tragedy, but that is now under threat:

Οἰ. ὅτε δὴ κατῆλθ᾽ Εὐριπίδης, ἐπεδείκνυτο
τοῖς λωποδύταις καὶ τοῖσι βαλλαντιοτόμοις
καὶ τοῖσι πατραλοίαισι καὶ τοιχωρύχοις,
ὅπερ ἔστ᾽ ἐν Ἅιδου πλῆθος. οἱ δ᾽ ἀκροώμενοι
τῶν ἀντιλογιῶν καὶ λυγισμῶν καὶ στροφῶν
ὑπερεμάνησαν κἀνόμισαν σοφώτατον·
κἄπειτ᾽ ἐπαρθεὶς ἀντελάβετο τοῦ θρόνου,
ἵν᾽ Αἰσχύλος καθῆστο.
Ξα. κοὐκ ἐβάλλετο;
Οἰ. μὰ Δί᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ὁ δῆμος ἀνεβόα κρίσιν ποεῖν
ὁπότερος εἴη τὴν τέχνην σοφώτερος.
Ξα. ὁ τῶν πανούργων;
Οἰ. νὴ Δί᾽, οὐράνιον γ᾽ ὅσον.
Ξα. μετ᾽ Αἰσχύλου δ᾽ οὐκ ἦσαν ἕτεροι σύμμαχοι;
Οἰ. ὀλίγον τὸ χρηστόν ἐστιν, ὥσπερ ἐνθάδε.

(Aristophanes, *Frogs* 771–83)

SLAVE. When Euripides came down, he put on shows for the pickpockets and muggers and cut-throats and burglars – there's a lot of them in Hades. When they heard his antilogies and twistings and turnings, they went crazy and

[1] The sense of a major structural break is given by the strong closural sense of vv. 668–71, in which Dionysus and Xanthias are admitted to Pluto's palace (the geographical, if not emotional, object of their journey), the intervening parabasis, and the prologue-like conversation between the two slaves which follows; see Dover 1993: 6. With vv. 759–60, 'something, something very big is stirring, big indeed, among the dead and there is huge strife', designed to stir the audience's curiosity, compare Lysistrata's complaints about the women not arriving 'for no insignificant matter' (v. 14), but one which is 'big and fat' (vv. 23–4) at the start of her play.

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thought him the best; he then fancied himself and laid claim to the chair [of honour] where Aeschylus sat.

XAN. Didn't people throw things at him?

SLAVE. Not at all, but the *dēmos* shouted that there should be a contest (*krisis*) to see who was the better in the art.

XAN. You mean the criminals?

SLAVE. Yes, they shouted to the heavens!

XAN. Didn't Aeschylus have supporters too?

SLAVE. People of worth are scarce, just like here.

The precise nature of Euripides' *epideixeis* ('displays') is unfortunately not spelled out for us. In some ways the closest parallel to the slave's account is the Platonic Socrates' description (apparently) of a *proagōn* at which Agathon appeared before the citizens with his actors 'to give an *epideixis* of [his own] *logoi*' (*Symposium* 194b3–4). What actually happened at a *proagōn*, in which poets and plays to compete at the festival proper were somehow presented to the audience, remains very obscure, but one of our very few other sources speaks of 'an *epideixis* of the dramas which would compete in the theatre'.[2] Socrates may be speaking loosely (as well as teasingly), and it might be thought improbable that poets would 'perform' extracts from coming plays rather than merely announce subjects or titles, but some kind of dramatic 'taster' as a way of whetting the audience's appetite is at least hardly unthinkable, and Euripides' Underworld performances are indeed his way of introducing himself to the audience.

Whether or not a theatrical *proagōn* is also evoked here, it is well recognised that Euripides' arrival in the Underworld and his subsequent behaviour are likened to the *epideixis* of a 'sophist' visiting Athens.[3] We are perhaps to imagine that Euripides' posthumous performances consisted in solo recitals of extracts from his plays, less perhaps a praelection before the (really) dead for the Chair of Tragedy than a series of 'greatest hits' concerts, of a kind that was to become very common in the festival culture of the Hellenistic world. Leonard Woodbury has indeed suggested that we are to understand that Euripides brought with him to the Underworld a new form of performance ('formal recitations'), which had been 'inaugurated in Greece, under sophistic influence, in the second half of the century, after the death of Aeschylus';[4] if so, then this will be an example of what we will come to recognise as an important feature of the contest

[2] Scholium on Aeschines, *Against Ctesiphon* 67 (p. 119 Dilts), see Pickard-Cambridge 1968: 67–8.

[3] See, e.g., Woodbury 1986: 242–3 and the notes of Del Corno 1985 and Sommerstein 1996 on v. 771. A rather different angle on the passage is taken by Rosen 2006: 34–6.

[4] Woodbury 1986: 242. Woodbury has an interesting discussion of the possible rôle for 'books' or 'written scripts' in such *epideixeis*, but it must be admitted that this is not strictly necessary.

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in *Frogs*, namely the way in which not just a snapshot in time of a stark literary contrast is dramatised, but also a process, no less in fact than the developmental history of tragedy over time. Be that as it may, if the slave's account naturally makes us think of the reports of the Sicilian Gorgias' effect on the Athenians when they first heard his 'antitheses and *isokōla* and *parisa* and *homoioteleuta* and suchlike' (Diod. Sic. 12.53.4 = Gorgias A4 D-K), it is rather Plato who provides us with the best comparative evidence for the effect of the dead Euripides upon his audience. In the *Protagoras*, for example, the great sophist's demonstration of an inconsistency in Simonides' poem is greeted by 'uproarious praise from the large audience' (πολλοῖς θόρυβον . . . καὶ ἔπαινον τῶν ἀκουόντων, 339d10). We may also think of the Platonic Hippias' *epideixeis*, whether before large audiences (ὄχλος πολύς, *Hipp. Min.* 364b7) in Athens, or the assembled Hellenes at Olympia (363c7–d4). Hippias sees these appearances as 'contests' on a par with (indeed surpassing) those of the athletes (364a3–9), and this may remind us that Euripides' agonistic spirit, his desire (and that of the 'rabble' which followed him, *Frogs* 779–81) for a public contest, is itself part of the portrayal of 'modern man'. A challenge to the universally acknowledged supremacy of Aeschylus might be thought a (comically) outrageous challenge to the shared cultural assumptions of the community of the dead,[5] no less than the newly educated Pheidippides' offer to demonstrate his right to strike his mother as well as his father (*Clouds* 1440–6); part of the provocation of these challenges lies precisely in the pleasures of contest and paradox, and paradox was (as we know) a central tool in the art of *epideixis*.

It is, however, the *Euthydemus* of Plato which the Aristophanic scene most calls to mind. Like Euripides (*Frogs* 774), the confrontation of Socrates with the pair of 'displaying' sophists attracts 'a great crowd' (πολὺς ὄχλος placed significantly at the opening of the dialogue, 271a2, cf. 304d9). The brothers are in Athens to 'display' their *sophia*, and they do not disappoint their claque of fans who react with amused uproar at their apparent success (276b6–7, 276d1); the brothers' *sophia* is what drives their fans crazy (276d2): 'everyone present praised the performance and the two men to the skies (ὑπερεπῄνεσε) – they almost died with laughing and clapping and enjoying themselves' (303b, cf. 274a). We can hardly fail here to recall the enthusiastic reaction (ὑπερεμάνησαν) of the Underworld underworld to Euripides' 'antilogies and twistings and turnings' – 'they thought him *sophōtatos*' (*Frogs* 776). The brothers are verbal 'wrestlers' no less than the

[5] See Olson on *Acharnians* 236 for the 'pelting' which Euripides might well have expected (v. 778).

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Aristophanic Euripides (271d–272a, 277d1–2, 278b7, cf. *Frogs* 775); unlike Gorgias, Euripides and the brothers grip the audience, not – or not primarily – with their verbal style, but rather with their arguments. Moreover, those who admire Euripides' forensic 'dodges' reveal thereby their moral badness, or – in the case of the Underworld – it has already been revealed by a 'criminal record'. The idea persisted in the critical and educational traditions, as the following stern warning from Plutarch's 'How the young man should study poetry' makes clear:[6]

> It is particularly necessary to [award moral praise and censure] in the case of tragedies, which contain plausible and cunning arguments for disreputable and wicked actions . . . Euripides represented Phaedra as accusing Theseus because it was through his mistakes that she fell in love with Hippolytus, and, similarly, in the *Trojan Women* he gives Helen the freedom to say against Hecuba that it is she who should be punished, not Helen herself, because Hecuba had given birth to the man who seduced Helen. The young man must be trained not to think any such argument witty and cunning and he must not smile at such verbal inventiveness (εὑρησιλογίαι), but he must loathe the arguments of wantonness even more than its deeds. (Plutarch, 'How the young man should study poetry' 27f–28a)

The distinction which the Aristophanic slave makes between the audience which enjoys Aeschylus and that which enjoys Euripides heralds in fact what was to become a crucial element in subsequent representations of theatrical history and culture. Thus, for example, in the eighth book of the *Politics*, Aristotle – picking up Plato's narrative in *Laws* 3 (see below) – notes that 'a gentleman' (ἐλεύθερος) should not train in musical skill to a professional level where he could take part in competitions because such artists aim 'not at their own *aretē*, but at the pleasure of the audience, and it is a pleasure which is vulgar' (1341b10–12). For Aristotle, there are two kinds of spectator, 'the educated gentleman, and the vulgar spectator, drawn from the class of manual workers, low labourers (θῆτες) and suchlike' (1342a19–20); here very clearly is the Aristophanic distinction, though expressed in Aristotle's social code, rather than the code of comedy.

For Plato the brother-sophists of the *Euthydemus* are aiming at the wrong target – at hollow success and notoriety rather than truth; in modern idiom we might say that, for Plato, this is 'prostituting philosophy', not unlike perhaps some of the criticism which one sometimes hears of academics who make (allegedly) large sums of money by 'popularising' their knowledge on radio and television. As with this latter case, of course, there is always another, and more flattering, way that such activities can be viewed;

[6] See Chapter 6 below.

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everything depends on who is telling the story, and neither Aristophanes nor Plato was a neutral observer of the cultural scene, and neither is likely to have played fair. Be that as it may, the contest in the *Frogs* will show Euripides' art also to be hollow at its core, an art which perverts 'true tragedy', as Plato's brothers pervert 'true philosophy' (see 307a–c).

That a great deal is in fact at stake here is shown by another Platonic narrative which tells a somewhat similar story. In a famous passage in the third book of the *Laws*, Plato considers the parallel development of government and musical performances at Athens (698a–701d). 'Once upon a time' music and poetry were divided into clearly distinguished types or 'genres' which were listened to in respectful silence; with the passage of time, however, came poets and performers, 'leaders of unmusical *paranomia*' (3.700d2), who 'though poetical by nature were ignorant of what was just and lawful (νόμιμον) with regard to the Muse' (3.700d4–5). These men mixed up and confused the different musical categories 'as though music had absolutely no standard of correctness (ὀρθότης), but was judged most correctly by the pleasure of the hearer, whether he be a good man or a bad one' (700e2–4). This led to *paranomia* in the audience and the rise of a noisy and undisciplined *theatrokratia* in place of the *aristokratia* which had been in control before;[7] what was worse, things did not stop there, but the newly found power of the masses with regard to music led them to throw off their fears in regard to other matters also, and the result was a 'freedom which is excessive and reckless' (701b2, cf. 699e3) and finally a breakdown of all social authority and respect for religion (701b–c). There are elements here which bring the *Frogs* to mind – 'the uneducated shouting of the mob' (700c2) reigns in the Underworld as on earth (cf. *Frogs* 779–81) – but what is most important is the narrative of an abandonment of what is 'correct' in favour of rule by popular pleasure rather than educated judgement, and the link which Plato makes between musical and theatrical licence and the breakdown of social order and hierarchy. Plato describes a kind of chain reaction. Indiscipline and the pursuit of pleasure first infect the poets: 'in bacchic ecstasy (βακχεύοντες) and possessed (κατεχόμενοι) more than was appropriate by pleasure' (700d5–6) gives a pointed spin to ideas of poetic inspiration[8] in order to suggest that, like the Theban women of Euripides' *Bacchae*, the poets have thrown off all conventional restraint and respect for hierarchy and 'the order of things'. After this, it is the mass of the people who catch a taste for this licence, first in their musical lives and then as

[7] On the historicity of Plato's account see Wallace 1997.
[8] Of particular relevance is, of course, Plato, *Ion* 533e–534b (note 534a4 βακχεύουσι καὶ κατεχόμενοι κτλ.).

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citizens. What is left, at least in the comic vision, is the 'few good men' (*Frogs* 783) who support the claims and tragedy of Aeschylus.

No less than Plato's account of music in the third book of the *Laws*, the *Frogs* tells a story of the history of tragedy. In this history a principal characteristic of Aeschylus' drama, at least as presented by Euripides, is the prominence of the chorus (914–20) and hence – by modern standards – the smaller rôle of individual characters. In the *Poetics* Aristotle claims that 'Aeschylus increased the number of actors from one to two, reduced the choral element (τὰ τοῦ χοροῦ) and gave speech the principal rôle' (1449a15–18); this – particularly the last element[9] which would greatly surprise the Aristophanic Euripides – might seem to run counter to the satirical picture in *Frogs*, but in fact the two different perspectives, one comic and one historical, are telling the same story. Aristotle clearly sees in the history of tragedy a gradual move from lyric song to speech, and this too is the picture which the *Frogs* offers. The *Frogs* lets us see that as early as the late fifth century the relative prominence of the chorus was already a notable feature of discussion of the history of tragedy, and it was particularly in his treatment of the chorus that Aeschylus could be seen to be 'archaic'. For the Aristophanic Euripides the chorus is not really part of the play and the audience do not really listen to it: rather, in Aeschylean tragedy, while the chorus is singing the audience are wondering when the real 'talking' is going to start (919–20), whereas in the case of Euripides himself the δρᾶμα, the 'real action', begins with the first verse and never lets up (945–50, contrast 920, 923 of Aeschylus). Aristotle's later protest, itself problematic given the philosopher's view of what was important in tragedy,[10] that 'the chorus should be treated as one of the actors, should be a part of the whole and contribute to the action, as in Sophocles but not in Euripides' (*Poetics* 1456a25–7) may thus be seen to be a contribution to a debate already under way in *Frogs*. The Aristophanic Euripides might well in fact have applauded the modern practice of asking students to read the iambic parts of plays only; this is normally excused on the grounds of the linguistic difficulty of the choral parts, but the idea that the choral parts are not really part of 'the action' perhaps still lurks over educational practice. Be that as it may, this idea was, as we know, to have a profound influence on Hellenistic performance practice and, indeed, critical theory. At the other end of this development Dio Chrysostom describes his own

[9] For the influence of such accounts see, e.g., Philostratus, *Vita Apollonii* 6.11.10 (= Aeschylus T106 Radt).
[10] See, e.g., Halliwell 1987: 152–4.

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fondness for listening to all forms of performance, but especially drama; this leads him to a description of drama as performed in his own day:

> Every part of comedy is preserved, but of tragedy only apparently the strong parts (τὰ ἰσχυρά); by this I mean the iambics, and parts of these they deliver in the theatres. The softer parts (τὰ μαλακώτερα), namely the lyrics (τὰ περὶ τὰ μέλη), have fallen into oblivion. As perhaps in the case of the old, the firm parts of the body, namely the bones and the muscles, resist the passing of time, whereas the rest diminish; thus it is that the bodies of the very old are wasted and shrunken . . . (Dio Chrysostom 19.5)

Here we should remember not just Euripides' dietary treatment of the tragic art (*Frogs* 939–44), but specifically his notorious 'sinews of tragedy' (τὰ νεῦρα τῆς τραγωιδίας) at *Frogs* 862;[11] although the idea of a literary text as a 'body' is familiar enough, Dio seems to have picked up and elaborated this particular Aristophanic idea from a play with which he was very familiar.[12] Tragedy is now very old; it moved from growth to decay long ago, but – like old men – it preserves the sound wisdom of ancient times and is thus more than worthy of a hearing.

In his narrative of tragic history, the Aristophanic Euripides has replaced an old 'heroic' silence, the silence of an Achilles or a Niobe,[13] with a new 'democratic' (952) freedom of speech for characters who belong to categories with which the audience were very familiar (and which, curiously or not, recall the cast of a New Comedy) – 'the wife, the slave, the master, the young girl, the old woman' (949–50).[14] The old hierarchy on stage has broken down, and – as in Plato – it is to be followed by a related breakdown in society; in both narratives that breakdown takes the form of extreme democracy, or – as Plato would see it – ochlocracy.[15] When Aeschylus complains that, because Euripides has taught the Athenians to chatter, 'the ordinary sailors speak back to their commanders (τοῖς ἄρχουσι)' (1071–2), it is very hard not to recall a crucial stage in Plato's account of the consequences of musical licence: 'unwillingness to be subservient to those in authority (τοῖς ἄρχουσι)' (*Laws* 3.701b5–6). In the narratives of both Plato's Athenian stranger and Aristophanes' Aeschylus, standards

[11] To Dover's note ad loc. add, *inter alios*, Kassel 1994: 48. I am not aware that Dio 19.5 has been connected with *Frogs* 862 previously; the use of στερεός and μαλακός as stylistic terms is obviously relevant here, and note the stylistic use of *eneruare* in Latin (e.g. Petronius, *Satyrica* 2.2). For the ideas, if not the language, cf. 'Longinus' *On the Sublime* 11.2. Why τὰ μέλη could be μαλακά is vividly illustrated by Aeschylus' parody of Euripides at *Frogs* 1301–64 and the parody of Agathon at *Thesmophoriazousai* 99–167.

[12] See below pp. 39–48 on Dio 52.

[13] See above pp. 6–7 on Aeschylean silences.

[14] For Euripides and New Comedy see below p. 46.

[15] For the relevance of Plato's account in *Republic* 8 of the 'democratic man' see below p. 89.

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of 'correctness' in both μουσική and political life have collapsed. If we ask 'who is to decide where "correctness" lies?', then the answer in both cases is at best shadowy. In the *Laws* the starting position is an 'ancestral constitution' characterised by an *aidōs* which ensured willing subservience to laws and magistrates (698a–b); its superiority to the 'excessive freedom' which followed is shown by the subsequent grim history of Athens. So also in *Frogs*: although it is clear that Euripides' status is such that, while he was alive, tragedy still flourished at Athens, it is also clear that, in the view at least of Aeschylus, he is both a cause and a symptom of moral and political decline. The strongest argument against Euripidean tragedy, or rather *for* Aeschylean tragedy, is simply the current parlous state of Athens. However we interpret Dionysus' decision to take Aeschylus rather than Euripides back,[16] a simple choice between 'the good old days of a powerful Athens' and the 'perilous position of 405 BC' was really no choice at all: no process of κρίσις is actually involved. *Why* the 'ancestral constitution', the separation of musical forms into allegedly discrete types, and the way Aeschylus created tragedy were 'correct' (ὀρθόν, cf. *Laws* 3.700e2, 4) is not really a matter for debate, and in any case debate itself is, as both *Clouds* and *Frogs* clearly show, a weapon of the opposition. The appeal to correctness is very powerful in ancient criticism,[17] in part because of the polyvalence of ὀρθόν and in part because the appeal can be to an authority which is hard to define and therefore hard to attack. It should be self-evident to any 'right-thinking' person that neither Euripides' logical 'twistings and turnings' (*Frogs* 775) nor the metrically meretricious 'windings' of his spiders (*Frogs* 1314–15) are 'straight'.

PRACTICAL CRITICISM

Euripides' distaste for the prominence of the chorus in Aeschylean tragedy is part of a preference for drama which engages the audience by presenting a world familiar to them outside the world of the theatre; however familiar choral performances were to the Athenians, they were marked off as phenomena of festivals and theatre – people simply do not behave or sing like this in 'unmarked' situations. In the comic vision, Aeschylean drama was a strange, even outlandish (*Frogs* 1029), spectacle, whereas Euripidean drama demanded an intellectual response from an audience actively engaged in

[16] See below pp. 36–8.
[17] See below pp. 21–2 on Aristotle's *Poetics*. I leave out of account for the moment the question of 'correctness' of language (*Frogs* 1180–97; Dover 1993: 29–30; below pp. 22–4).

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a process of interrogation (*Frogs* 957–8), and one made possible because what they were witnessing were things of a kind with which they were familiar (959–61).[18] Euripides' drama is 'democratic' not just because everyone speaks, but because the audience too take an active part. A number of issues arise here. We may start with the nature of the claim itself.

Εὐρ. λεπτῶν τε κανόνων εἰσβολὰς ἐπῶν τε γωνιασμούς,
νοεῖν, ὁρᾶν, ξυνιέναι, στρέφειν, +ἐρᾶν, τεχνάζειν,
καχ' ὑποτοπεῖσθαι, περινοεῖν ἅπαντα –
Αἰσ. φημὶ κἀγώ.
Εὐρ. οἰκεῖα πράγματ' εἰσάγων, οἷς χρώμεθ', οἷς ξύνεσμεν,
ἐξ ὧν γ' ἂν ἐξηλεγχόμην· ξυνειδότες γὰρ οὗτοι
ἤλεγχον ἄν μου τὴν τέχνην·

(Aristophanes, *Frogs* 956–61)

EUR. [I taught the Athenians] opportunities for subtle measurings and precisely judged verbal angles, I taught them to reflect, observe, understand, twist . . .[19] devise, suspect the worst, carefully consider everything –
AESCH. I agree!
EUR. I brought on everyday things, the kind we're used to, the kind that are familiar and from which I could have been found out; for the audience here knew what was going on and could examine my art.

More than one kind of οἰκεῖον πρᾶγμα, 'everyday thing', is involved here. Euripides' examples (vv. 971–9) of the λογισμός ('reasoning') and σκέψις ('examination') which he has introduced to tragedy with the result that the Athenians now 'manage their homes' (οἰκίας οἰκεῖν) better, Dionysus' 'bomolochic' response which focuses upon the most banal of domestic incidents (980–91), and Aeschylus' subsequent destruction of Euripides' prologues by means of 'a little oil flask' all suggest that 'household objects' or 'household events' is one way in which Euripides' phrase may be understood; we may recall the report that Hesiod too was mocked by some critics for 'banality' (σμικρολογία) because petty household objects turned up in his poetry (Plutarch fr. 62 Sandbach). Lysias was for later writers the model of plain purity and the use of 'everyday' words in oratory (Dion. Hal. *Lysias* 2.1, 3.1, etc.), and when Demetrius, *On Style* illustrates the subject matter appropriate to the plain and simple style of oratory (the ἰσχνόν) from Euphiletus' description of his οἰκίδιον in Lysias 1 (chap. 190), we are given a very striking illustration of where Euripides' οἰκεῖα πράγματα could lead within a critical concern with style. The distinction between 'high'

[18] See, e.g., Walsh 1984: 88–9; Walsh's whole discussion of the *Frogs* is a particularly valuable contribution.
[19] The transmitted text is here very unlikely to be correct.

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and 'low' subject matter and verbal style which the Aristophanic Euripides ushers in was to be one of the dominant critical discourses of antiquity.

Thus, for example, in order to prove the power of arrangement (*synthesis*), rather than selection, of words, Dionysius of Halicarnassus cites the opening of *Odyssey* 16, in which Telemachus returns to Eumaeus' hut and is greeted by the swineherd as, unrecognised by both of them, the young man's father looks on:

> Where is the power (πειθώ) of these verses and why are they as they are? Is it the choice of words, or their arrangement? I know that no one will say 'the selection', for the language (*lexis*) of the verses is woven from the most ordinary and humble vocabulary, such as a farmer or a seaman or an artisan or anyone at all who takes no trouble over speaking well would use without thinking. If you break up the metre, these same verses will appear banal (φαῦλα) and without quality; they contain no excellent (εὐγενεῖς) metaphors or examples of *hypallagē* or *katachrēsis* or any other type of figurative language, nor are there many glosses or exotic or newly coined words. (Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *On the Arrangement of Words* 3.9–11)

For Dionysius, this Homeric scene was drawn straight from life (βιωτικόν), as elsewhere he seems to have noted Euripides' preference for 'the wholly true and that which was close to real life' (*On Imitation*, 2.2.11 Aujac).[20] We see here that the *Frogs* has bequeathed to the critical tradition not just a way of talking about poetic style, but also a critical language which uses sociopolitical distinctions to describe levels of style; from the comic perspective, at least, Euripides' radically 'democratic' tragedy (*Frogs* 952) will have 'lowered' and flattened the level of the language also.[21]

It is also clear that the οἰκεῖα πράγματα of verses 959–61 cover a very wide field. πράγματα is used of the events of the dramatic plot (what people πράττειν), in both *Frogs* itself (v. 1122) and subsequently,[22] and part of Euripides' claim is that the situations (and characters) of his dramas were analysable, that is subject to *elenchos*, by the same rules as govern our everyday lives; such πράγματα are οἰκεῖα in the sense of 'fitting', 'appropriate'.[23] This critical process of 'thinking, examining, reasoning' probably finds no better real illustration than Electra's (misguided) demolition of the old man's suggestion that Orestes has paid his respects at his father's tomb (Euripides, *Electra* 524–46); Electra's rejection is precisely based on an appeal to ordinary experience (men have larger feet than women, their hair

[20] On this work see Chapter 4 below.
[21] Commentators on Horace, *Satires* 1.4.53–62 (the style of satire and the style of Ennius contrasted) should pay more attention to this passage of Dionysius; see also Oberhelm and Armstrong 1995.
[22] See, e.g., Aristotle, *Poetics* 1454a14, 34; Plutarch, *Moralia* 347f, citing Menander T 70 K-A.
[23] See above p. 4 on Horace's *idonea uitae* (*Ars Poetica* 334).

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