

THE GREAT DIONYSIA AND CIVIC IDEOLOGY

THERE have been numerous attempts to understand the role and importance of the Great Dionysia in Athens, and it is a festival that has been made crucial to varied and important characterizations of Greek culture as well as the history of drama or literature.¹ Recent scholarship, however, has greatly extended our understanding of the formation of fifth-century Athenian ideology—in the sense of the structure of attitudes and norms of behaviour²—and this developing interest in what might be called a ‘civic discourse’ requires a reconsideration of the Great Dionysia as a city festival. For while there have been several fascinating readings of particular plays with regard to the *polis* and its ideology,³ there is still a considerable need to place the festival itself in terms of the ideology of the *polis*. Indeed, recent critics in a justifiable reaction away from writers such as Gilbert Murray have tended rather to emphasize on the one hand that the festival is a place of entertainment rather than religious ritual, and on the other hand that the plays should be approached primarily as *dramatic* performances. This results in the following type of description:

For the Athenians the Great Dionysia was an occasion to stop work, drink a lot of wine, eat some meat, and witness or participate in the various ceremonials, processions and priestly doings which are part of such holidays the world over. It was also the occasion for tragedy and comedy; but I do not see any way in which the Dionysiac occasion invades or affects the entertainment. . . . To put it another way, there is nothing intrinsically Dionysiac about Greek tragedy.⁴

I hope to show in this article how such a characterization of the Great Dionysia provides a fundamentally mistaken view of the festival and its historical context. While there are, for sure, certain similarities between the Great Dionysia and religious festivals the world over, I shall demonstrate that there are specific ceremonials, processions and priestly doings which form an essential and unique context for the production of Greek drama and which do indeed importantly affect the entertainment.

There are two further arguments which often have been linked to the sort of description of the festival that Taplin offers. The first is that dramatic criticism should concentrate on the plays as pieces for performance—‘in action’. I shall be attempting to demonstrate how the understanding of a play in performance requires an understanding of the complexities of a context for performance which involves more than the technical details of the instantiation of a script in the fifth-century theatre. The second argument that has been thought to follow from the nature of the Dionysia as described in the more generally read studies is that the requirements of performance before a mass audience preclude, or at any rate severely limit, the possibilities of complex, problematic or obscure expression in the tragic texts. I shall be arguing that scholars’

¹ Particularly since Nietzsche’s *The birth of tragedy* (on which see M. S. Silk and J. P. Stern, *Nietzsche on tragedy* [Cambridge 1981] especially 90–131). Many histories of Greek culture, or elements in Greek culture, have extended discussions of tragedy, e.g. E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the irrational* (Berkeley 1951) or B. Snell, *The discovery of the mind* trans. T. Rosenmeyer (Oxford 1953). I have found especially interesting J.-P. Vernant and P. Vidal-Naquet, *Myth and tragedy in ancient Greece* trans. J. Lloyd (Brighton 1981) especially chapters 1–3.

² I am thinking especially of the studies of Vernant, Vidal-Naquet, Detienne, Loraux and their followers. See e.g. J.-P. Vernant, *Myth and society in ancient Greece* trans. J. Lloyd (Brighton 1980), *Myth and thought among the Greeks* (London 1983); P. Vidal-Naquet, *Le chasseur noir: formes de pensée et formes de société dans le monde grec* (Paris 1981); M. Detienne, *Les maîtres de vérité dans la*

grèce archaïque (Paris 1967); M. Detienne and J.-P. Vernant, *Cunning intelligence in Greek culture and society* trans. J. Lloyd (Brighton 1978); N. Loraux, *L’invention d’Athènes* (Paris 1981) (hereafter *L’invention*); *Les enfants d’Athènes* (Paris 1981) (hereafter *Les enfants*). For the extensive influence of Vernant in particular, see *Arethusa* xvi 1 & 2 (1983).

³ See for example N. Loraux, *Les enfants*, particularly 157–253. F. Zeitlin, *Under the sign of the shield: semiotics and Aeschylus’ Seven against Thebes* (Rome 1981) particularly 15–51. H. Foley, *Ritual irony: poetry and sacrifice in Euripides* (Ithaca 1985). See also S. Goldhill, *Reading Greek tragedy* (Cambridge 1986), especially ch. 3.

⁴ O. Taplin, *Greek tragedy in action* (London 1978) 162.

appeals in their dramatic criticism to criteria of a *necessary* clarity, simplicity or directness distort not only the readings of particular passages or plays, but also the fundamentally questioning or agonistic nature of Greek tragedy. This article is not, of course, meant to resuscitate the theories of Gilbert Murray and his followers, but rather to aid the understanding of Greek tragedy as a social and political phenomenon.

What happened on the days immediately before the days on which plays were performed is the least well known to us and it is also the part of the festival that interests me least for my present purposes. I will, however, briefly summarize (with some added comments) Pickard-Cambridge's account as emended by Gould and Lewis⁵ in order to provide a sense of the background of the main days of the Dionysia. The first part of the festival may not even be regarded as part of the festival—the εἰσαγωγή ἀπὸ τῆς ἑσχάρας.⁶ This is a reenactment of the original advent of Dionysus from Eleutherai. The statue of Dionysus Eleuthereus was taken to a temple on the road to Eleutherai, sacrifice was offered there, and then the statue was escorted back to the temple. It is interesting to note that second-century inscriptions indicate that the leading part in this procession was taken by the ephebes.⁷ There is, however, no fifth- or fourth-century evidence for this—or indeed for the whole rite—and it is perhaps incautious, if attractive, to assume that the ephebes played the same major role in fifth-century ceremonial (as Pickard-Cambridge assumes).

The εἰσαγωγή ἀπὸ τῆς ἑσχάρας is followed by the πομπή,⁸ which was a great procession leading up to the sacrifice in the sacred precinct of Dionysus. In the second century, the sacrifice was conducted by the ephebes, as Richard Seaford has recently discussed.⁹ There is mention also of a κνηφόρος, a bearer of a basket of offerings, and Pickard-Cambridge suggests that colour and show were particularly important in making this a glorious occasion. The πομπή was perhaps followed by a κῶμος of which next to nothing is clearly known, even if, indeed, the κῶμος should be taken as separate from the πομπή¹⁰ and the singing of choruses, the dithyrambic competitions which also took place at the Great Dionysia.¹¹ For example, the famous inscription sometimes called 'Fasti' (IG ii² 2318) with its list of victors etc. appears to refer to the festival in general as κῶμοι τῷ Διονύσῳ.¹²

There is also a preparatory day for the festival on which a Proagon was held. After 444 it was held in the Odeion, but it is not known where or if it was held before that date.¹³ Numerous documents hint at what happened in the Proagon and an interesting account of the Proagon for the Lenaia is to be found in Plato's *Symposium* (194aff). It would appear that each poet mounted a temporary platform with his actors and chorus, and announced the subject of the plays he was about to present in the competition. It would also appear from Plato that this might be thought of as something of an ordeal, and a nice anecdote in the Life of Euripides relates that shortly after the death of Euripides Sophocles appeared for the Proagon in mourning and his performers were without their customary garlands. The people observing burst into tears. The question of the relative dates of these various ceremonials is extremely vexed and I have nothing to add to Gould's and Lewis' necessary corrections to Pickard-Cambridge (augmented by Pélékedis¹⁴ and Allen¹⁵ who sets out clearly the evidence particularly with regard to the comedies).

It is what happens in the theatre itself before the plays, however, that is my main concern,

⁵ A. Pickard-Cambridge *The dramatic festivals of Athens*² (Oxford 1968) 58 ff.

⁶ See Pickard-Cambridge (n. 5) 59–61, with bibliography (especially 61 n. 1).

⁷ IG ii² 1028, IG ii² 1008. The earliest reference to this is 127–6 BC (SEG xv 104).

⁸ See Pickard-Cambridge (n. 5) 61–3. A second-century inscription (IG ii² 1006) separates the εἰσαγωγή and the πομπή.

⁹ R. Seaford, *CQ* xxxi (1981) 252–75.

¹⁰ As G. Thomson *Aeschylus and Athens*² (London

1946) 165–74 assumes in his description of the festival.

¹¹ It is suggested plausibly (Pickard-Cambridge [n. 5] 74–9) that the Dithyrambic competition took place in the two days before the dramas.

¹² See Pickard-Cambridge (n. 5) 71–3, 101–4.

¹³ See (contra Müller) Pickard-Cambridge (n. 5) 68.

¹⁴ C. Pélékedis, *Histoire de l'éphébie attique* (Paris 1962), especially appendix 3, 301–6.

¹⁵ J. T. Allen, *On the program of the City Dionysia during the Peloponnesian War*, *U. Cal. Publ. in Class. Phil.* xii 3 (1938) 35–42.

and I want to look in particular at four specific moments of ceremony that are rarely discussed or even mentioned in the context of tragedy.¹⁶ The evidence for the first comes from Plutarch's life of Cimon (*Cim.* 8.7–9):

πρώτην γὰρ διδασκαλίαν τοῦ Σοφοκλέους ἔτι νέου καθέντος, Ἀψεφίων ὁ ἄρχων, φιλονεικίας οὔσης καὶ παρατάξεως τῶν θεατῶν, κριτὰς μὲν οὐκ ἐκλήρωσε τοῦ ἀγῶνος, ὡς δὲ Κίμων μετὰ τῶν συστρατῆγων προελθὼν εἰς τὸ θέατρον ἐποίησατο τῷ θεῷ τὰς νενομισμένας σπονδὰς, οὐκ ἀφῆκεν αὐτοὺς ἀπελθεῖν, ἀλλ' ὀρκώσας ἠνάγκασε καθίσει καὶ κρίναι δέκα ὄντας, ἀπὸ φυλῆς μιᾶς ἕκαστον. ὁ μὲν οὖν ἀγὼν καὶ διὰ τὸ τῶν κριτῶν ἀξίωμα τὴν φιλοτιμίαν ὑπερέβαλε.

When Sophocles, still a young man, entered the lists with his first plays, Apsephion the Archon, seeing that the spirit of rivalry ran high among the spectators, did not appoint judges of the contest as usual by lot, but when Cimon and his fellow-generals advanced into the theatre and made the customary libation to the god, he would not suffer them to depart, but forced them to take the oath and sit as judges, being ten in all, one from each tribe. So, then, the contest because of the unusual dignity of the judges, was more animated than ever before.

Plutarch describes how in 468 the archon by a bold stroke set aside the regular procedure in the theatre by appointing the generals as judges. Pickard-Cambridge notes that the probable point in the proceedings was just before the performances of the tragedies when the judges were about to be chosen.¹⁷ What the passage indicates is that the libations before the tragedies were poured by the ten generals. The nature of the offerings is unclear—νενομισμένας, 'customary', is the only description we have—but it is interesting that for the beginning of the tragic festival's days of drama it is the ten most powerful military and political leaders, the *strategoï*, who were actively involved before the whole city. A fourth-century inscription (*IG* ii² 1496) confirms that the generals were involved religiously in the dramatic festivals, but also suggests that the number of occasions in the calendar on which all the generals acted together in such a way were very few—no more than four occasions are attested for any one year—and usually it is for some occasion more obviously linked to their civic functions. The inscription mentions, for example, offerings to δημοκρατία, to εἰρήνη, and to ἀγαθὴ τύχη.¹⁸ On the major state occasion of the Great Dionysia it is, then, the most influential and important representatives of the state who are involved in the opening religious ceremony.

The second element of ceremonial can be seen directly in a scholion to Aristophanes' *Acharnians* (*ad* 504):

εἰς τὰ Διονύσια ἐτέτακτο Ἀθήναζε κομίζειν τὰς πόλεις τοὺς φόρους, ὡς Εὐπολὶς φησιν ἐν Πόλεσιν.

In the Great Dionysia, the tribute of the cities of the Athenian empire was brought into the theatre. This ceremonial is outlined in more detail by Isocrates (*de Pace* 82):

Οὕτω γὰρ ἀκριβῶς εὕρισκον ἐξ ὧν ἄνθρωποι μάλιστα ἂν μισηθεῖεν, ὥστ' ἐψηφίσαντο τὸ περιγιγνόμενον τῶν φόρων ἀργύριον, διελόντες κατὰ τάλαντον, εἰς τὴν ὀρχήστραν τοῖς Διονυσίοις εἰσφέρειν ἐπειδὴν πληρὴς ἦ τὸ θέατρον· καὶ τοῦτ' ἐποιοῦν, καὶ παρεισηῆγον τοὺς παῖδας τῶν ἐν τῷ πολέμῳ τετελευτηκότων, ἀμφοτέροις ἐπιδεικνύοντες τοῖς μὲν συμμάχοις τὰς τιμὰς τῆς οὐσίας

¹⁶ There is no mention of these ceremonies in Taplin (n. 4), Vernant and Vidal-Naquet (n. 1), nor, for example, in P. Arnott *An Introduction to the Greek theatre* (London 1959), A. Lesky, *Greek Tragedy* trans. H. A. Frankfort, (London 1965), and, most recently, M. J. Walton, *The Greek sense of theatre* (London 1984). They are mentioned briefly without any analysis by H. L. Baldry, *The Greek tragic theatre* (London 1981) 27, and Loraux, *L'invention* 26–31 discusses the orphans briefly in terms of the *ephebeia* but not in terms of the theatre. P. Cartledge, in *Greek religion and society* ed. P. E. Easterling and J. V. Muir (Cambridge 1985), briefly mentions the possible political significance of three of the ceremonials, but does not consider the plays, or the

overall effects of the festival.

¹⁷ Pickard-Cambridge (n. 5) 95–6.

¹⁸ The fragmentary state of the inscription makes certainty here finally impossible. There is for example a surprising reference in one year (333 BC) to a sacrifice by the generals at the temple of Ammon. It is not known when or why Ammon became part of state religion in Athens, but Foucart, noting this inscription and the name Ammonias given to a sacred galley as mentioned in Aristotle *Ath. Pol.* 61, suggests that 333 was the year of the inauguration of the temple of Ammon in Athens, and hence the sacrifice by the generals: P. Foucart, *REG* vi (1893) 6–7, and see *SIG*¹ 580.

αὐτῶν ὑπὸ μισθωτῶν εἰσφερομένης, τοῖς δ' ἄλλοις Ἑλλησι τὸ πλῆθος τῶν ὄρφανῶν καὶ τὰς συμφορὰς τὰς διὰ τὴν πλεονεξίαν ταύτην γιγνομένης. καὶ ταῦτα δρῶντες αὐτοὶ τε τὴν πόλιν εὐδαιμόνιζον . . .

'For so exactly did they gauge the actions by which human beings incur the worst odium that they passed a decree to divide the funds derived from the tributes of the allies into talents and to bring it on to the stage, when the theatre was full, at the festival of Dionysus; and not only was this done but at the same time they led in upon the stage the sons of those who had lost their lives in the war, seeking thus to display to our allies, on the one hand, the value of their own property which was brought in by hirelings, and to the rest of the Hellenes, on the other, the multitude of the fatherless and the misfortunes which result from this policy of aggression. And in so doing they counted the city happy.'

Here, following Raubitschek's generally accepted analysis,¹⁹ it is evident from the opening sentence that the tribute was divided into talents and displayed in the orchestra.²⁰ Isocrates' rhetorical use of this event is interesting, however. As Pearson comments, 'Isocrates deplores the *aselgeia* of their ancestors in having the tribute publicly presented at the Dionysia'.²¹ Such a ceremony, Isocrates claims, was a precise way to become hated by other people. This presumably was not the actual aim of such an event. Rogers comments in his edition of the *Acharnians* 'the tribute brought by the allies was spread out talent by talent over the theatrical orchestra in the sight of the assembled Hellenes',²² that is, the display was not just a piece of pomp and splendour, nor as Isocrates rhetorically supposes, to show how the Athenians valued the property of the allies. Rather, it was a demonstration before the city and its many international visitors of the power of the *polis* of Athens, its role as force in the Greek world. It was a public display of the success in military and political terms of the city. It used the state festival to glorify the state.

That this ceremony involved such a projection of self-image, such a projection of power, may be hinted at in Aristophanes' *Acharnians* 496 ff:

Δι. μή μοι φθονήσῃτ' ἄνδρες οἱ θεώμενοι,
εἰ πτωχὸς ὢν ἔπειτ' ἐν Ἀθηναίοις λέγειν
μέλλω περὶ τῆς πόλεως, τρυγῶδιαν ποιῶν.
τὸ γὰρ δίκαιον οἶδε καὶ τρυγῶδιά.
ἐγὼ δὲ λέξω δεινὰ μὲν δίκαια δέ.
οὐ γὰρ με νῦν γε διαβαλεῖ Κλέων ὅτι
ξένων παρόντων τὴν πόλιν κακῶς λέγω.
αὐτοὶ γὰρ ἔσμεν οὐπὶ Ληναίῳ τ' ἄγων,
κοῦπω ξένοι πάρεισιν· οὔτε γὰρ φόροι
ἤκουσιν οὔτ' ἐκ τῶν πόλεων οἱ ξύμμαχοι·
ἄλλ' ἔσμεν αὐτοὶ νῦν γε περιεπτισμένοι·
τοὺς γὰρ μετοίκους ἄχυρα τῶν ἀστῶν λέγω

Dikaiopolis is preparing to speak to the city as city, to διδάσκειν τὴν πόλιν. He goes on 'For now at any rate Cleon won't slander me, that I foul-mouth the city when there are *xenoi* present. For we're just ourselves and it is the Lenaian contest, and there are no strangers here yet. For the tribute hasn't arrived, and the allies are away from the city'. Unlike the Great Dionysia, the Lenaia is a more private affair. Unlike the Great Dionysia, there's no tribute, no allies, no problem about speaking home truths to the city.

A further passage from the *Acharnians* makes this example seem less straightforward. The chorus—also speaking to the city as city—remark in the parabasis (641 ff):

¹⁹ A. Raubitschek, *TAPA* lxxii (1941) 356–62.

²⁰ Raubitschek (n. 19) 358–9 (referring to B. D. Merritt, *Documents on Athenian tribute* [Cambridge 1937] 50, n. 3) goes so far as to suggest that each talent was carried in a terracotta vessel of the sort known to have been used to store and transport money, or perhaps

in leather bags, similar to those seen in an extant fragment of a relief that surmounted a decree concerning the collection of Athenian tribute.

²¹ L. Pearson, *CP* xxxvi (1941) 228.

²² B. B. Rogers, *The Acharnians of Aristophanes* (London 1910) 76.

ταῦτα ποιήσας πολλῶν ἀγαθῶν αἴτιος ὑμῖν γεγένηται,
καὶ τοὺς δήμους ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν δείξας ὡς δημοκρατοῦνται.
τοιγάρτοι νῦν ἐκ τῶν πόλεων τὸν φόρον ὑμῖν ἀπάγοντες
ἤξουσιν ἰδεῖν ἐπιθυμοῦντες τὸν ποιητὴν τὸν ἄριστον,
ὅστις παρεκινδύνευσ' εἰπεῖν ἐν Ἀθηναίοις τὰ δίκαια.
οὕτω δ' αὐτοῦ περὶ τῆς τόλμης ἤδη πόρρω κλέος ἦκει,
ὅτε καὶ βασιλεὺς Λακεδαιμονίων τὴν πρεσβείαν βασανίζων
ἠρώτησεν πρῶτα μὲν αὐτοὺς πότεροι ταῖς ναυσὶ κρατοῦσιν,
εἶτα δὲ τοῦτον τὸν ποιητὴν ποτέρους εἴποι κακὰ πολλὰ·
τούτους γὰρ ἔφη τοὺς ἀνθρώπους πολὺ βελτίους γεγενῆσθαι
καὶ τῷ πολέμῳ πολὺ νικήσειν τοῦτον ξύμβουλον ἔχοντας.

Again the subject of the speech is the opportunity and license to speak out freely in the democracy. The allies bringing the tribute are said to come because they want to see the best poet—the one who's prepared to speak out τὰ δίκαια among the Athenians. The Persian King, indeed, in order to test the Spartan embassy would want to know who had the best navy and who had the best . . . poet for speaking κακὰ πολλὰ against the city. 'That's what gives strength for fighting'. It is always difficult to evaluate the balance of joke and serious comment even in the parabasis of an Aristophanic play, but it is interesting that once more Aristophanes seems to be defending the right to free and scurrilous speech, and once more the context for his defence is the occasion of the Great Dionysia when all the *xenoi* are there. Many passages from Aristophanes and elsewhere could be used to show the commonplace that poets are the educators of the citizens—les maîtres de verité, as Detienne puts it—but these two passages suggest a more specific awareness of the connection of the Great Dionysia, the ceremony of bringing in tribute in the presence of the *xenoi*, with the city on display, the city aware of its role and image as international power.

This ceremonial moreover can have been introduced only at a relatively late date—after the transfer of the treasury from Delos—and it shows how with the development of Athenian democracy the power of the *polis* as such becomes increasingly emphasized in public ritual and display. (The ceremonials I am discussing are not merely organizational relics from an earlier era.) The public funeral of the war dead and the establishment of the casualty list *stelai* which I will discuss below, also appear to have been introduced no earlier than the 470s.²³ In both cases, the development of civic ideology is seen in the development of ritual.

The third moment of ceremonial I want to discuss is also clearly linked to the authority of the *polis*. Before the tragedies the names of those men who had greatly benefited Athens in some way were read out in front of the whole city, and the honours that had been bestowed on them in the form of a crown or garland were specified. It was a great honour to be singled out in this way before the city, but a passage from Demosthenes, where such crown giving is being discussed, suggests a different kind of reasoning behind such a ceremony (*De Cor.* 120):

ἀλλὰ πρὸς θεῶν οὕτω σκαιὸς εἶ καὶ ἀναίσθητος, Αἰσχίνη, ὥστ' οὐ δύνασαι λογίσασθαι ὅτι τῷ μὲν στεφανουμένῳ τὸν αὐτὸν ἔχει ζῆλον ὁ στέφανος ὅπου ἂν ἀναρρηθῆ, τοῦ δὲ τῶν στεφανούντων εἴνεκα συμφέροντος ἐν τῷ θεάτρῳ γίνεταί τὸ κήρυγμα; οἱ γὰρ ἀκούσαντες ἅπαντες εἰς τὸ ποιεῖν εὖ τὴν πόλιν προτρέπονται, καὶ τοὺς ἀποδιδόντας τὴν χάριν μᾶλλον ἐπαινοῦσι τοῦ στεφανουμένου· διόπερ τὸν νόμον τοῦτον ἢ πόλις γέγραφεν.

But, really now, are you so unintelligent and blind, Aeschines, that you are incapable of reflecting that a crown is equally gratifying to the person crowned wheresoever it is proclaimed, but that the proclamation is made in the Theatre merely for the sake of those by whom it is conferred? For the

²³ On the date of the ἐπιτάφιοι λόγοι and public grave *stelai*, see C. W. Clairmont, *Patrios nomos: public burial in Athens during the fifth and fourth centuries BC* (London 1983) 16–45; Loraux, *L'invention* 28 ff. F. Jacoby, *JHS* lxxiv (1944) 37–66 has been tellingly

questioned by D. W. Bradeen, *CQ* xix (1969) 145–59. In general, see also R. Stupperich, *Staatsbegräbnis und Privatesgrabmal im klassischen Athen* (Diss. Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität zu Münster 1977).

whole vast audience is stimulated to do service to the city, and applauds the exhibition of gratitude rather than the recipient; and that is the reason why the state has enacted this statute.

The whole audience is stimulated by such a ceremony to do service to the *polis*. The ceremony is 'pour encourager les autres'. Indeed, Demosthenes suggests further that the audience is actually applauding the exhibition of thanks rather than the person being crowned: καὶ τοὺς ἀποδιδόντας τὴν χάριν μᾶλλον ἐπαινοῦσι τοῦ στεφανωμένου. Demosthenes' rhetoric appeals here to a fundamental and well-known tenet of democratic ideology, namely, that a man acts and should act to benefit the city; so the individual himself and his success are not what are important but it is the city recognizing and thanking a contribution to the city that is enacted in such a ceremony. For Demosthenes, this ceremony of announcing the names of civic benefactors is fundamentally connected to a projection and promotion of civic duties and civic self-image.

If Demosthenes' rhetoric appeals to the fervour of democratic ideology, a long argument in Aeschines (*Against Ktesiphon* 41–56) hints at ways in which this ceremony was sometimes less straightforward and that vying for this honour, as for others, was something that the Athenians competed in vigorously. Aeschines argues at length both on the technicalities of the laws of giving a crown in the theatre, and also on the possible justification of the specific case of Demosthenes receiving a crown, but none the less, like Demosthenes, he takes it for granted that the announcement of the crown before the people in the theatre is closely connected with the authority and status of the *demos*, and moreover, that the presentation was 'before all the Hellenes', ἐναντίον ἀπάντων τῶν Ἑλλήνων (43.8; cf. 49.3). Even with allowance for the rhetorical overkill in Aeschines' speech (against Demosthenes as much as against Ktesiphon, of course) and the specific technicalities of his argument, it is clear that this ceremony was perceived as an important public occasion. The proclamation of the names of those who had benefited the city is another way of asserting the ties, connections and duties between individuals and the city. Above all it stresses the moral and social imperative of doing good for the city as a key way of defining behaviour in the democratic *polis*.

The fourth ceremonial aspect of the tragic festival is also closely linked to the civic ideology of the Athenian democratic *polis*. Again, the orators provide an important insight into the occasion. The first piece of evidence is again Isocrates *de Pace* 82, the passage quoted earlier. Isocrates says that the children of those who died in war were brought on stage. This, he says, was to show the other Greeks how many orphans and what disasters resulted from a policy of aggression. The *de Pace* is, as its title suggests, something of an anti-imperialist, anti-war tract, and there can be few better examples of a misrepresentative use of a past historical event to further a rhetorical argument. For as we will see, the ideology of this event may imply a quite different attitude from that of Isocrates.²⁴ I wrote 'past historical event' because as is clear from a fascinating passage of Aeschines, this ceremony was already no longer performed by the time of the speech *Against Ktesiphon* (330 BC):

τίς γὰρ οὐκ ἂν ἀλγήσειεν ἄνθρωπος Ἑλλήν καὶ παιδευθεὶς ἐλευθερίως, ἀναμνησθεὶς ἐν τῷ θεάτρῳ ἐκεῖνό γε, εἰ μὴδὲν ἕτερον, ὅτι αὐτὴ ποτε τῇ ἡμέρᾳ μελλόντων ὥσπερ νυνὶ τῶν τραγωδῶν γίγνεσθαι, ὅτ' εὐνομεῖτο μᾶλλον ἢ πόλις καὶ βελτίοσι προστάταις ἐχρήτο, προελθὼν ὁ κῆρυξ καὶ παραστησάμενος τοὺς ὀρφανοὺς ὧν οἱ πατέρες ἦσαν ἐν τῷ πολέμῳ τετελευτηκότες, νεανίσκους πανοπλίᾳ κεκοσμημένους, ἐκήρυττε τὸ κάλλιστον κήρυγμα καὶ προτρεπτικώτατον πρὸς ἀρετὴν, ὅτι τούσδε τοὺς νεανίσκους, ὧν οἱ πατέρες ἐτελεύτησαν ἐν τῷ πολέμῳ ἄνδρες ἀγαθοὶ γενόμενοι, μέχρι μὲν ἡβῆς ὁ δῆμος ἔτρεφε, νυνὶ δὲ καθοπλίσας τῆδε τῇ πανοπλίᾳ, ἀφήσιν ἀγαθῇ τύχῃ τρέπεσθαι ἐπὶ τὰ ἑαυτῶν, καὶ καλεῖ εἰς προεδρίαν. τότε μὲν ταῦτ' ἐκήρυττεν, ἀλλ' οὐ νῦν.

For what Greek nurtured in freedom would not mourn as he sat in the theatre and recalled this, if

²⁴ See for discussion and bibliography, e.g. P. Harding *CSCA* vi (1973) 137–49. Isocrates' treatment of the ceremonial is particularly important in emphasizing that while one may talk of the expected norms of an ideology, (even in the complex, developing world of

the fifth-century *polis*), the construction of the meaning of the ceremonials depends also on the viewer. The relations of individuals in and to an ideology cannot be considered as necessarily determined or univocal.

nothing more, that once on this day, when as now the tragedies were about to be performed, in a time when the city had better customs and followed better leaders, the herald would come forward and place before you the orphans whose fathers had died in battle, young men clad in the panoply of war; and he would utter that proclamation so honourable and such an incentive to valour: 'These young men, whose fathers showed themselves brave men and died in war, have been supported by the state until they have come of age; and now clad thus in full armour by their fellow citizens, they are sent out with the prayers of the city, to go each his way; and they are invited to seats of honour in the theatre.' Such was the proclamation then, but not today.

This passage of Aeschines—as rhetorical as Isocrates, for sure—gives us, however, a much clearer view of what happened and of its relation to the expected norms of a civic discourse. The young men whose fathers were recognized as heroes of the city because they had died in battle,^{24b} were brought up and educated at the expense of and by the city. Now that they have reached the end of maintained childhood, they are paraded in full military uniform, again provided by the *demos*; and they are sent forth to whatever good fortune they may find, and are honoured with special places in the theatre. The herald proclaimed what the city had done for the boys and what as men they would do for the city.

Each of the four ceremonials which opened the days of the tragedies in the Great Dionysia, then, is closely linked to a sense of the authority and dignity of the *polis*. But before I turn to consider the relations between these ceremonials and the tragedies, I want to focus briefly on the parade of orphans, a ritual which seems to have flourished with democracy and disappeared at the time when the certain evidence for the institution of the *ephebeia* itself starts to appear. For it is certainly possible to specify in considerably more detail the way in which this ceremonial relates to civic ideology; and such analysis will be important for our understanding of the festival and its plays.

I begin with the well-known statement of Vernant, recently quoted by Lloyd-Jones in his discussion of Artemis and the transition from girlhood to womanhood: 'Marriage is to a girl what war is to a boy'.²⁵ Marriage and childbirth provide the *telos* of a woman's life when she is clearly and completely separated from the male sphere and she adopts the role by which she is essentially defined.²⁶ In the word *γυνή* it is difficult to separate the senses of woman and wife. For the man, the *telos* is to stand in the hoplite rank as a fully accepted citizen.²⁷ It is a moment by which his role in society is essentially defined. It is the parallels in achievement between childbirth and fighting that give a peculiar force to Medea's famous remark that she would rather stand in the battle-line three times than give birth once.²⁸

The parallels between war and marriage as states defining male and female roles in society have been discussed at length by Vernant, Vidal-Naquet, Loraux and others.²⁹ I want in particular to look here at the notion of war and fighting as the role into which a man is initiated. Now cross-cultural parallels for initiations connected with fighting and manhood are numerous.³⁰ The notions of first blood, first kill and taking up a role with a specifically male

^{24b} On ἄνδρες ἀγαθοὶ γενόμενοι, see Loraux *L'invention* s.v. 'agathoi', especially 99–101.

²⁵ J.-P. Vernant *Myth and society in ancient Greece* (Brighton 1980) 23, quoted by H. Lloyd-Jones, *JHS* ciii (1983) 99.

²⁶ See Vernant (n. 25) 19–70. See also e.g. F. Zeitlin, *Arethusa* xv (1982) 129–57. For interesting collections of essays on this and related topics, see H. Foley, (ed) *Reflections of women in antiquity* (London, Paris, New York 1982); *Arethusa* vi (1973) and xi (1978); A. Cameron and A. Kuhrt (edd) *Images of women in antiquity* (London and Melbourne 1983). A good general introduction is J. P. Gould, *JHS* c (1980) 38–59. I have discussed this material with regard to tragedy in Goldhill (n. 3) ch. 5.

²⁷ See Vernant (n. 25) 19–70; see also J.-P. Vernant

(ed.), *Problèmes de la guerre en Grèce ancienne* (Paris 1968), and the sensible comments of J. K. Davies, *Democracy and classical Greece* (Hassocks 1978) 31 ff.

²⁸ *Medea* 250–1. See the excellent study of N. Loraux, 'Le lit, la guerre', *L'homme* xxi 1 (1981) 37–67.

²⁹ See e.g. the works cited in n. 25, n. 26, n. 27.

³⁰ A vast bibliography could be given. A. Van Gennep, *Les rites de passage* (Paris 1908) remains standard. For a standard case study (and further bibliography on cross cultural parallels), see V. W. Turner, *The forest of symbols* (Ithaca, N.Y. 1967) and *The ritual process* (Rochester 1969). For the classical material, see H. Jeanmaire, *Couroi et Couretes* (Lille 1939); A. Brelich, *Paides e Parthenoi* (Rome 1969); C. Calame, *Les choeurs de jeunes filles en Grèce archaïque* (Rome 1977).

group of hunters or fighters occur again and again. But the culture of fifth-century Athens offers a particularly interesting view of a changing attitude to warfare. The Homeric warrior is a man who fights primarily as an individual, for his κλέος. When he meets or challenges another warrior, the exchanging of names and boasts, the named catalogues of victims in an *aristeia*, point to the connection of individual military prowess and the perpetuation of an individual's κλέος. The hero is supreme. The narrative of the *Iliad* revolves around the claims of κλέος and τιμή, Achilles' need for τιμή, the external, visible signs of κλέος and κῦδος, that makes him withdraw from the battle. It is an essential dynamic of the *Iliad*'s tragic force that Achilles, the best of the Achaeans, is also the one who takes the logic of a heroic ethos to an extreme in that he is prepared knowingly to go to his death, to choose an early death, in part at least in order to perpetuate an everlasting κλέος. The notion of single combat, a hierarchy of warriors, the search for the perpetuation of a *name* are essential structurings of the heroic ethos of the Homeric poems.

The Homeric poems remained throughout the fifth century in a position of considerable authority. Despite the attacks of Xenophanes, say, or from a different viewpoint Stesichorus, Plato's judgement of Homer as the best and most divine of the poets remained the commonest aesthetic and moral evaluation.³¹ Indeed, Plato's hostility to the poets is to a large degree due to the status of authority held by poets as teachers or controllers of knowledge—the role which Plato wishes to appropriate for philosophy alone. But one of the most striking points of tension between the poetry of Homer and its use in the fifth century is in the sphere of military values. Of course, certain standards are retained: appeals to bravery, strength, courage, ἀρετή as military values are as common in fifth- and fourth-century generals' mouths as they are in Homeric leaders' speeches. But the invention and dominance of the hoplite phalanx introduce a new series of values also. For the nature of the phalanx requires not individual expression of prowess but the values of group co-operation. The phalanx is only as strong as its weakest member—a phalanx broken is easily routed and destroyed. Unlike the Homeric view of the Trojan war where so much of the fate of both sides depends on the behaviour of its strongest individuals, Achilles and Hector, in warfare dominated by the hoplite phalanx, it is as a group that the phalanx fights and wins and loses. It would be a banal view of cultural change—indeed, it would be simply false—to suggest that there are no signs of co-operative or group ethics in Homer. Similarly, it is quite incorrect to suppose that desire for individual honour disappears in the fifth and fourth century.³² But it is also the case that the qualities required of a fighting man are channelled in a different direction in fifth-century Athens and are given a different emphasis. What is more, these different requirements of military involvement are closely linked to the idea of the democratic *polis* as well as its history. For in the fifth century the army is truly a citizen army. To be a citizen one must play one's role in the hoplite rank and to take one's place in the hoplite rank one must be a citizen. When Vernant says that war is an essential determinant of a man's role in society, in part he is referring to the way in which citizenship and military values are inherently intertwined in fifth-century Athens. Moreover, as Finley writes, there were very few years and almost no years in succession without some military engagements for Athens in particular.³³ When war was debated by the citizens in the assembly, it was debated by the men who would follow the decision into battle. The involvement of Athenians in war and military values is not only deeply embedded in the myths and stories told as exempla, but in the actual running of the city.

One of the most interesting recent works on this connection of Athenian military values and the democratic *polis* is Loraux's *L'invention d'Athènes* (Paris 1981). In this exhaustive study of funeral orations, she has superbly illuminated both a major state event and the way the Greeks conceptualized the city and a person's involvement in it. I want briefly to use some of Loraux's findings to outline some further aspects of Athenian ideas of military service, because the funeral

³¹ Plato *Ion* 530b9–10. See Detienne (n. 2), and Goldhill (n. 3) especially ch. 6.

³² See the comments of K. Dover, *Popular morality in*

the time of Plato and Aristotle (Oxford 1974) 229–34.

³³ M. I. Finley, *Politics in the ancient world* (Cambridge 1983) 60.

speech as an institution offers a fascinating comparison with the tragic festival.³⁴ The Funeral Speech for those who had died in war was delivered yearly by a man appointed by the state and, of course, for the first year of the Peloponnesian war the speaker was Pericles. The speech was delivered specifically for those who had died fighting for the city. The ceremony involved a procession, and then the speech at the burial site. What is particularly interesting is the content of the speech itself, and the restrictions apparently surrounding the event. Individual rites and offerings were allowed on the two days before the speech, but on the day of burial, everyone, citizens and foreigners, men and women together followed a line of wagons in which the bones of the dead were arranged tribe by tribe. At the cemetery the speaker addresses the crowd, but he does not deliver what one might at first expect from a funeral speech. For the subject of the speech is not exactly the glories and valour of the men who died, but rather the glories of the city itself. Indeed, the names of those who have fallen are not even mentioned. The speech glorifies the city and, as I earlier quoted Demosthenes saying, it is a way of applauding the act of giving thanks rather than applauding the individuals. The most famous example of a funeral speech is Pericles' in Thucydides, and this speech has certainly been used again and again to explain, prove or determine Athenian attitudes to their city. For Pericles' speech concentrates on the glories of the city of Athens—in the first year of the war which will destroy the city's power. Thucydides' placing of that particular speech in that particular place in the narrative of Athens' rise and fall is certainly a composition of rhetorical artfulness by the historian, but it also helps us formulate a sense of the important change of attitude with regard to fighting. For now men are said to fight not for individual κλέος nor for the perpetuation of their names through the retelling of acts of individual prowess. Now fighting is for the city. One may fight to free a land, to protect homes, women, children, as in Homer, but success is measured in terms of the city's fortunes, and each individual's success is subsumed to the τύχη of the city. So in the Funeral Speech it is the city that is discussed and a citizen's role in democracy. Pericles' soldiers are a class, a group, not individuated. Military values are separated from individuals and individualism. No names are given in a funeral speech—the reverse of Homeric name-filled battle narratives, where there are no anonymous heroes.

Closely linked with the development of the ἐπιτάφιοι λόγοι and the public burial of the war dead, however, is the establishment of the Athenian casualty list *stelai*, which certainly must qualify the sense of the anonymity of the democratic war dead.³⁵ Although it is at present impossible to discover the precise chronological connection between the institution of the public funeral address and the erection of the casualty lists (except that the address is probably a later innovation),³⁶ scholars are generally agreed that as with the funeral oration 'erecting of casualty lists . . . is contemporary with the rise of Athenian democracy'.³⁷ These lists certainly record the names of those who die for the city but here too in a fascinating way we can see the influence of civic ideology. For the individual names are given in lists according to the Cleisthenic tribal divisions, without patronymic, without demotic, without, in other words, the normal markers of a Greek male's position in society.³⁸ Loraux writes: 'La liste officielle proclame l'égalité de

³⁴ I am aware that in the available space I will not be able to do justice to the subtlety of Loraux's argument or the wealth of her material. Since Loraux, a further long study in English has been published—Clairmont (n. 23)—which sets out the evidence usefully but lacks Loraux's grasp of the issues. For a good correction of Clairmont on Herms, see R. Osborne, *PCPS* xxxi (1985) 47–73.

³⁵ For descriptions of these *stelai*, see in particular Bradeen (n. 23); Clairmont (n. 23) 46–59; also D. W. Bradeen, *Hesperia* xxxiii (1964) 16–62; and *Hesperia* xxxvi (1967) 321–8; and *Hesperia* xxxvii (1968) 237–40. Loraux *L'invention* 31 ff has an interesting discussion.

³⁶ See Thuc. ii 35. For bibliography on the question,

see Clairmont (n. 23) 250 n. 17. For the important role of the Marathon victors and their memorial see Clairmont (n. 23) 10 f, and particularly Loraux *L'invention* s.v. 'Marathon' especially 157–73. For contrasting views on the reference to Marathon in Thuc. ii 35, see H. Konishi, *AJPh* ci (1980) 35 ff, especially n. 19; and M. Ostwald, *Nomos and the beginnings of Athenian democracy* (Oxford 1969) 175.

³⁷ Clairmont (n. 23) 20.

³⁸ See N. Loraux, 'Mourir devant Troie, tomber pour Athènes: de la gloire du héros à l'idée de la cité' in *La mort, les morts dans les anciennes sociétés* eds. G. Gnoli and J.-P. Vernant (Cambridge and Paris 1982) 28.

tous les citoyens Athéniens . . . les citoyens disparus n'ont-ils pas d'autre statut que celui d'Athéniens.'³⁹ There are, it must be added, certain titles which appear very occasionally in these lists, but even these are only military, civic roles such as *strategos*, *trierarchos*, *taxiarchos* etc.⁴⁰ The casualty lists show how the democratic egalitarian ethos attempts to 'intégrer les valeurs aristocratiques de la gloire',⁴¹ in that each man is offered a degree of immortal κλέος, but at the same time the values of democratic collectivity and the primacy of the city are stressed in a new form of memorial. As Thucydides says, 'We do not need the praises of a Homer' (2.41); the city provides its own honours. The institution of the public funeral speech, the collective memorial of those who died for the city, mark most clearly the shifts in military ideology from Homer to the fifth-century democratic *polis*.

The importance of the duties, obligations and affiliations between individuals and the state is one of the strongest tenets of the developing democratic ideology, despite—or perhaps because of—the fact of the continuing strength of affiliation to the *oikos*. For despite the evident changes in ideology in fifth-century democracy, one of the most marked continuities of ethical norms is the belief in the need for the continuity of the *oikos* through both economic stability and the generational continuity of children.⁴² But even in the sphere of the family, an area of great traditionality and conservatism, the city makes inroads. Important tensions between the requirements of civic duties and the requirements of the *oikos* have been outlined by, for example, Humphreys and Finley—both of whom see tensions between the norms of public and private life.⁴³ Fighting, *leitourgia*, jury duty, and the other appurtenances of direct democracy can all be seen as a possible challenge to the economic and generational continuity of the *oikos*. But I want here to focus rather on the way in which the city increasingly appropriates the vocabulary of the family. For the city 'nourishes'; the citizens are the 'children' of the laws; the city becomes a 'father', a 'mother'. The term 'father-land' is extended in its connotations. To attack one's city is like patricide, to reject the laws is to reject that which gave one life and upbringing.⁴⁴ The emotionally and morally charged terminology of the family is appropriated in civic ideology to express the citizen's relations to the city and its laws, and this appropriation may be viewed as a product of the tensions between public and private felt in the (sometimes) competing claims of the democratic city and the more traditional *oikos*.

This attitude to civic involvement influences, then, the attitude to childhood and in particular the attitude to the moment of transition from childhood to adulthood. The most important moment of this transition is almost certainly the *dokimasia* in which the child was recognized by the deme as a citizen and fit to be enrolled (ἐγγράφεσθαι) as a citizen. Common phrases like δοκιμάζεσθαι εἰς ἄνδρας, or ἄνδρα γιγνεσθαι, or ἄνδρα εἶναι δοκιμασθῆναι, or ἐξελεθεῖν ἐκ παίδων, or ἀπαλλάττεσθαι ἐκ παίδων emphasize that this is not just a question of citizenship but also of being an ἀνὴρ—or rather the notion of being a πολίτης or δημότης implies becoming an ἀνὴρ and stopping being a παῖς. To stop being a παῖς and start being an ἀνὴρ in fifth-century Athens means a radical change in role and responsibility, in that the immediate requirements and obligations of a citizen in a direct democracy devolve on a person when he changes ἐκ παίδων and becomes an ἀνὴρ. It is the status of ephebe that provides the notional and ritual separation between the two classes.

³⁹ Loraux *L'invention* 22–3

⁴⁰ Conveniently listed in Bradeen (n. 23) 147, with references. There are also *xenoi* mentioned on some lists. For the evidence, see Bradeen (n. 23) 149–51; for discussion see Loraux *L'invention* 33–5, who concludes (35): 'pour les *astoi* comme pour les étrangers les règles d'inscription ont probablement varié au cours de l'histoire athénienne: oscillant entre l'exclusivisme et l'ouverture, entre une conception large et une conception étroite du statut d'Athénien.'

⁴¹ Loraux (n. 38) 28.

⁴² See e.g. W. K. Lacey, *The family in classical Greece* (London 1968); G. Glotz, *La solidarité de la famille dans le droit criminel en Grèce* (Paris 1904).

⁴³ S. Humphreys, *The family, women, and death* (London 1983), especially 1–32; M. I. Finley, *Economy and society in ancient Greece* (London 1981) 77–94; see also Dover (n. 32) 301–6.

⁴⁴ A good example of this shift in vocabulary is to be found in Plato's *Crito*, especially 50c3 ff.

In the light of this necessarily somewhat impressionistic view of the sense of a self in fifth-century democratic Athens, it is interesting to look back to that ceremonial which is part of the opening of the tragic festival, the parade of young men in full military uniform, and to investigate how it relates to the norms of the civic discourse that I have been discussing. It is quite clearly a moment in which the full weight of civic ideology is felt. Here are the children of men who have died fighting for the city, now preparing to take *their* place in the hoplite-citizen body as men. The city has educated them, the city has taken the place of parents or family, the city has provided the armour in which they stand. Before the whole city in the theatre, the young men are paraded and the ties and obligations of city and individuals are proclaimed. Not only do the boys at the point of becoming men reaffirm their ties to the city but also these ties are constructed markedly in a military sense. The young men appear in full military dress, and the reason for their state education and upbringing is that their fathers died in war for the city. Moreover, in pointing out that the city has brought them up and paid for and directed their education, the involvement of the city in a traditional area of private concern is strongly marked. (Education is often thought of as a community matter, for sure, but not in terms of the effacement of the family's interests here enacted.) The fact that the festival of the Great Dionysia, a major civic occasion, is chosen for the moment of this expression of the city's relation to its young men endows it with considerable force. Childhood, the moment of leaving childhood and becoming a man, what it means to be a man, are all influenced by democratic *polis* ideology. The city's claim on the citizen as man affects the status of the child.

What I hope to have shown so far is this: the four moments of ceremonial preceding the dramatic festival are all deeply involved with the city's sense of itself. The libations of the ten generals, the display of tribute, the announcement of the city's benefactors, the parade of state-educated boys, now men, in full military uniform, all stress the power of the *polis*, the duties of an individual to the *polis*. The festival of the Great Dionysia is in the full sense of the expression a civic occasion, a city festival. And it is an occasion to say something about the city, not only in the plays themselves. The Great Dionysia is a public occasion endowed with a special force of belief. This is fundamentally and essentially a festival of the democratic *polis*.

After such preplay ceremonials, the performances of tragedy and comedy that follow could scarcely seem—at first sight—a more surprising institution (at least if one judges from modern examples of state occasions with a particularly strong nationalistic or patriotic ideology). For both tragedy and comedy in their transgressive force, in their particular depictions and uses of myth and language, time after time implicate the dominant ideology put forward in the preplay ceremonials in a far from straightforward manner; indeed, the tragic texts seem to question, examine and often subvert the language of the city's order.

Before I turn to justify these generalizations with more detailed examples, I want to make clear certain things I am not claiming and certain ways in which I do not think that tragedy questions the city. First, I do not think that the *polis* is seriously questioned as the necessary basis of civilization. To be *ἄπολις* is regarded as a state beyond civilization, and Aristotle's expressions that the city is logically prior to individuals and family, or that man as an animal is essentially *polis* based, are enshrined in tragedy as well as in the prose writing of the fifth and fourth centuries.⁴⁵ Second, I do not think Athens is seriously challenged as the home of that civilization of the *polis*. Not only is Athens the subject of several well-known passages of eulogistic writing—and the patriotism of plays such as the *Persae* has rarely been questioned by critics—but also recent research, particularly by Vidal-Naquet and Zeitlin, has begun to outline a sense of the differences in the conceptualization of the cities of Argos and Thebes and Athens in the tragic texts—a system of differences in which Athens seems positively constituted in

⁴⁵ See the remarks of Finley (n. 33) 122 ff, e.g. 125 'Not all Athenians held the same views and not all Greeks were Athenians, but the evidence is decisive that nearly all of them would have accepted as premises, one might say as axioms, that the good life was possible only in a *polis*.'

opposition particularly to the negative aspects of the tragic city of Thebes.⁴⁶ It is important that the tragic narratives are most often set in cities other than Athens in times other than the present. Third, I am not seeking to make any contribution on the always vexed question of reading specific allusions to contemporary political debates in the tragic drama. When I write of questioning a dominant political ideology, I do not mean to imply a topic such as whether the *Oresteia* was written to comment on the zeugite admission to the archonship.⁴⁷ Fourth, I do not want it thought that I am claiming to explicate the way all audience members responded at all times to the tragedies and comedies of the Great Dionysia. We cannot expect to know how an Athenian audience would react to any tragedy, and, more importantly, it is an intolerably naive idea to suppose that an audience of a drama has only a uniform, homogeneous collective identity or response, or that such a supposed collective response (however determined) should be the sole proper object of criticism. I am not suggesting that every member of an audience left the theatre deeply perplexed and reflecting on the nature of civic ideology—but the picture of an audience uniformly and solely interested in ‘pleasure’, ‘entertainment’, is equally banal. What I hope to describe here is a tension between the festival of drama as a civic institution and a reading of the texts of that institution. How different Athenians reconciled or conceived that tension is simply not known.

With these provisos, I want now to investigate the sense of this tension between the texts of tragedy and the ideology of the city—which I shall approach first through a general example and second through two more specific cases.

In the last twenty-five years much excellent work has been done on the nature of the Sophoclean hero. Knox’s well-known description of this Sophoclean type has been taken up by Winnington-Ingram, who has carefully attempted to see how a figure like Ajax extends and perverts a Homeric model.⁴⁸ Now it is not difficult to see that the Sophoclean hero, with fierce demands for his or her individualism, his or her commitment to his or her own needs and demands in the face of society or social pressure, is scarcely a figure who would sit easily in democratic ideology, and it is indeed relevant that figures like Ajax and Antigone are set in conflict with figures who use standard arguments with a contemporary ideological slant. Antigone is faced by a man who attempts—at least, at one level—to enforce the notion of the city having supreme claim on an individual’s allegiance. Ajax, or rather the dead body of Ajax, is faced by trite arguments of Menelaus and Agamemnon who require σωφροειν as a political virtue in the form of obedience to the rulers of the state. It is also significant that both Creon and the Atreids descend to lower forms of argument and appeal under the pressure of their opposition’s disobedience. The point is this: at one level, it might be neat and convenient to think of the Sophoclean depiction of heroes like Antigone or Ajax as moral tales that demonstrate the dangers of individualism. After all, both Ajax and Antigone die in less than glorious ways, and the actions of both lead to social upheaval and the disastrous violence of tragedy. This would imply that the tragedies offer a sort of reversal, common in the ‘sacred time’⁴⁹ of festivals: as, for example, men about to become warriors may be dressed as women; and ephebes are often described as reversing the values of the hoplite rank they are to join.⁵⁰ But it is clearly not as simple as that. The problem of evaluating Ajax, particularly in comparison with the men who

⁴⁶ P. Vidal-Naquet, ‘Oedipe entre deux cités’, in *Mythe et tragédie deux* (Paris 1986); F. Zeitlin ‘Thebes: theater of self and society in Athenian drama’ in J. P. Euben (ed.), *Greek tragedy and political theory* (Berkeley 1986 102), who suggests that ‘We look at Thebes as a *topos* in both senses of the word: as a designated place, a geographical locale, and figuratively, as a recurrent concept or formula, or what we call a “commonplace” . . . This . . . can also illuminate the ideological uses of the theater in Athens as it portrays a city on stage which is meant to be dramatically “other” than itself’.

⁴⁷ See S. Goldhill, *Language, sexuality, narrative: the*

Oresteia (Cambridge 1984) ch. 3.

⁴⁸ B. M. W. Knox, *The heroic temper* (Berkeley 1964) passim; R. I. Winnington-Ingram, *Sophocles: an interpretation* (Cambridge 1980) 11 ff, and especially, 304 ff. And on Ajax specifically, see now P. E. Easterling, ‘The tragic Homer’, *BICS* xxxi (1984) 1–8.

⁴⁹ A common notion in anthropology developed from van Gennep (n. 30). See e.g. E. R. Leach, ‘On time and false noses’ in *Rethinking anthropology* (London 1966).

⁵⁰ See e.g. Vidal-Naquet (n. 2); Jeanmaire (n. 30); Brelich (n. 30); Calame (n. 30).

follow him, and the difficulty of evaluating Antigone and her actions have resulted in some of the most polarized and aggressively debated judgements in the criticism of tragedy. Sophocles himself was actively involved in the cult worship of the heroes—a religious phenomenon of growing importance in the fifth century. The question of the evaluation of Ajax both in his qualities as a warrior and in his behaviour as a man is problematic in Sophocles' play because the negative exemplum of Ajax is touched with a certain glory. It is an essential dynamic of Sophocles' tragedy that Ajax should seem both an outstanding hero and also unacceptable in society. The hero does not simply *reverse* the norms of what it means to fit into society but *problematizes* such integration.

But this problematizing of the evaluation of Ajax is particularly interesting in terms of the tragic festival itself. For after the preplay ceremonials of civic display which express the role of man as warrior in civic terms, and the city's claims of allegiance and obligation on the individual, a tragedy like *Ajax* depicts a man who transgresses those qualities and those obligations, and achieves his greatness, his superhuman status, precisely by such transgression. Ajax acts in a manner which goes against all the tenets of contemporary democratic civic ideology, but this going-too-far leads him to a sort of awesomeness. Few today think of Sophocles as 'turning away in disgust from a degenerate world to enjoy the congenial company of heroes';⁵¹ in their tensions and paradoxes, his plays are marked by their genesis in the fifth-century Athenian *polis*. In particular, it is the way that Sophocles' plays echo against the developing civic ideology, so forcibly represented in the preplay ceremonials, which makes his dramas considerably more radical and questioning than the image of 'pious Sophocles' sometimes allows. Indeed, the Sophoclean hero is the paradoxical figure so well described by Knox and Winnington-Ingram particularly because of the interplay of such a figure with the dominant ideology of the city. It is the way in which the hero can find only an uneasy place in the city's order that makes problematic both the hero's status and the security of the civic discourse.

This difficult status of the Sophoclean hero can be seen more precisely through an analysis of a key passage of Sophocles' *Ajax* where the hero speaks for the final time to Eurysaces, his son (545–82). In this speech which echoes the famous Homeric scene of Hector, Andromache and their son at the Scaean gates, Ajax turns to his child and expresses the values he expects his son to follow, and how he should use his father as a model. He asserts that if his son is truly of his father's blood he will not fear the sight of the slaughtered sheep: *ταρβήσει γὰρ οὐ, νεοσφαγῆ που τόνδε προσλεύσσω φόνον, εἴπερ δικαίως ἔστ' ἐμὸς τὰ πατρόθεν* (545–7). It is necessary that Eurysaces learns to form his nature in the wild, savage, ways of his father: *ἀλλ' αὐτικ' ὦμοις αὐτὸν ἐν νόμοις πατρός δεῖ πωλοδαμνεῖν κάξομοιοῦσθαι φύσιν* (548–9). Indeed, the child should use his father as a model in everything but his fortune: *ὦ παι, γένοιο πατρός εὐτυχέστερος, τὰ δ' ἄλλ' ὁμοῖος* (550–1). When his time comes, the child will have to show his birth and breeding (556 ff). Ajax further claims that he will ask Teucer to be the boy's guardian (561–4) and asks the chorus too to look out for him (565–6) and make sure Teucer gets the message to have the boy sent to Telamon and Eriboia, his grandparents (507–9). As for weapons, Ajax leaves his son his shield, but announces that he will himself be buried with the rest of his armour (574–6). For sure, this scene raises the problem of Ajax as rôle model, the question of how to evaluate the hero. What sort of example does he provide for his son? The question is set up in this scene in terms of passing on from father to son of material and spiritual inheritance, and, in particular, in terms of military values. For sure, the echoes of the Homeric scene of Hector and Andromache do not merely mark the difference between Hector and Ajax, but also stress the values and attitudes of the world of epic in which tragedy is rooted but from which it is being permanently sundered.⁵² But these important elements in the construction of this scene must also be viewed in terms of the discourse of fifth-century Athens in which the play finds its

⁵¹ Winnington-Ingram (n. 48) 307.

⁵² See Goldhill (n. 3) ch. 6 for discussion and bibliography.

genesis. And the difference between Ajax's attitudes and the fifth-century democracy could hardly be better expressed than the juxtaposition of Ajax's admonitions to his child, Ajax's sense of military and social behaviour, Ajax's heroic extremism, and that preplay ceremonial of the orphans, state-educated and armed, professing their allegiance to the *polis* and taking their proper place in the hoplite rank. The inheritance Ajax hopes to leave and leaves stands in a significant tension with the fifth-century city's representation of his action and attitudes.

Such a juxtaposition is not, of course, a dramatic juxtaposition in the normal sense of a grammar of theatrical practice: it is a juxtaposition of values that would be in play without any ceremonial preceding the drama. But the specific events in the theatre which mark so strongly the festival as a *polis* occasion bring into sharp and vivid highlight the contemporary world and values against which Ajax's depiction and indeed the whole tragedy resounds. The scene of Ajax with his child, juxtaposed to the preplay ceremony of the orphans in military uniform, significantly alters the way we look both at Sophocles' tragedy and at the notion of a child, at offering advice and a rôle model to a child. The context for understanding this scene goes beyond its instantiation in a performance in the theatre, beyond its interrelations with Homer. This scene cannot be fully appreciated or understood without realizing the complex interplay of its writing with the ideology of the fifth-century *polis* of Athens.

A similar analysis could be applied to several Sophoclean heroes,⁵³ but I wish to consider briefly here another example which further demonstrates the range and complexity of relations between the tragic texts and the civic ideology of the preplay ceremonials. In *Philoctetes*, the question of the integration of the hero into society is certainly raised, indeed it is essential to the play—in which Sophocles has made Lemnos deserted,⁵⁴ Philoctetes bereft of all human contact, and Odysseus' plan a temptation for Philoctetes precisely to return to the civilised world. Critics have concentrated extensively on Philoctetes as a hero, on the tension between culture and wilderness in the play, and on the complex plotting which revolves around luring Philoctetes and his bow to Troy.⁵⁵ But for my present purposes, it is on the figure of Neoptolemos that I wish to focus. For Neoptolemos is the orphaned son of a great military hero who had died nobly in war.⁵⁶ He is also at the point of committing himself to the Trojan expedition—a young man about to take his place in the male military group. Moreover, from the beginning of the play Neoptolemos' attitudes and behaviour are being put to the test (50–1):

Ἀχιλλέως παῖ, δεῖ σ' ἐφ' οἷς ἐλήλυθας
γενναῖον εἶναι, μὴ μόνον τῷ σώματι . . .

In the dialogue which follows Odysseus' instructions, Neoptolemos questions whether he can adopt a policy of deceit and be 'noble'.⁵⁷ He would prefer, he claims, to fail acting in a right way than to succeed by wrong doing (βούλομαι δ', ἀναξ, καλῶς/δρῶν ἐξαμαρτανεῖν μᾶλλον ἢ νικᾶν κακῶς (95). Surely, he asks (105), it is disgraceful (αἰσχρόν) to lie? Even when the young man accepts Odysseus' instructions, it is with a recognition that he is about to compromise his values (120):

ἴτω ποιήσω, πᾶσαν αἰσχύνην ἀφείς.

When Philoctetes realizes that Neoptolemos has deceived him—at the same time as Neoptolemos hesitatingly confesses his part in the deception (895 ff)—both Philoctetes and

⁵³ I have discussed in particular *O.T.* and *Antigone* in such terms in Goldhill (n. 3) chh. 4, 6, 8.

⁵⁴ The scholia suggest it is only part of the island that is deserted—presumably to reconcile Sophocles' description with Homeric and indeed contemporary Lemnos. Both Aeschylus and Euripides in their plays on Philoctetes seem to have used choruses of Lemnians.

⁵⁵ For a good critical survey, see P. E. Easterling *ICS* iii (1978) 27–39. Since that article, two important

studies have appeared, Winnington-Ingram (n. 48) and C. P. Segal, *Tragedy and civilization: an interpretation of Sophocles* (Cambridge, Mass. 1981).

⁵⁶ Emphasized often—e.g. 336 ἀλλ' εὐγενῆς μὲν ὁ κτάνων τε χῶ θανῶν. See P. W. Rose, *HSCP* lxxx (1976) 50–105, especially 97 n. 97.

⁵⁷ On the changing senses of γενναῖος in this play, see H. C. Avery, *Hermes* xciii (1965) 289.

Neoptolemos himself refer to his 'true nature' (φύσις 902; ἐν σαυτῷ γενοῦ 950; cf. 971) as militating against the deceit. None the less, at first Neoptolemos rejects the possibility of returning the bow with an appeal to his duty (925–6):

ἀλλ' οὐχ οἶόν τε τῶν γὰρ ἐν τέλει κλύειν
τό τ' ἔνδικόν με καὶ τὸ σύμφερον ποιεῖ.

What is right (ἔνδικον) and what is expedient (σύμφερον) constrain Neoptolemos to listen to those in command (which is both a general point about obedience and a specific indication of whose instructions he is still following here). Obedience towards οἱ ἐν τέλει is a standardly expressed requirement, of course, for the maintenance of the bonds of a democratic as well as a more hierarchical society. This value, however, along with the more pragmatic values espoused by Odysseus, is put at stake first by Neoptolemos' confession of pity (965–6) and anguished question οἴμοι τί δρώσω (968), and then by the act of returning the bow. As he had previously claimed to be willing to fail (ἐξαμαρτάνειν 94) nobly rather than to succeed basely, now he rejects his deception precisely as failure (ἐξήμαρτον 1224; τὴν ἀμαρτίαν/αἰσχρὰν ἀμαρτῶν 1248–9); as he had previously feared being disgraceful (αἰσχρός), and claimed to do τὸ ἔνδικον, now he claims his actions have been both disgraceful and without right (1234):

αἰσχρῶς γὰρ αὐτὰ κοῦ δίκη λαβῶν ἔχω.

At the moment of handing over the bow, however, Neoptolemos is forcibly reminded of what he had previously called his duty, as once again Odysseus enters at the decisive moment (1293–4):⁵⁸

ἐγὼ δ' ἀπαυδῶ γ', ὡς θεοὶ συνίστορες,
ὑπὲρ τ' Ἀτρειδῶν τοῦ τε σύμπαντος στρατοῦ.

It is precisely his obligations to the Atreids, to the army at Troy, and indeed even to divine oracles on his part in the fall of Troy which Neoptolemos is rejecting in favour of a different set of values. Indeed, the young man is essentially prepared to desert from the army⁵⁹ and return home with Philoctetes (despite some misgivings, 1403–4). His new found relation with the hero seems to outweigh what had before seemed to be his duty. Neoptolemos is turning his back on his part in the Trojan war as he prepares to leave the stage at 1407. 'Neoptolemos cannot . . . both maintain his standard of honour and win martial glory'.⁶⁰

The appearance of the *deus ex machina* (or perhaps rather the *heros ex machina*), who redirects Philoctetes and Neoptolemos back towards Troy, has given rise to one of the most controversial debates in Sophoclean criticism. Herakles certainly resolves the tension between Neoptolemos' decision and the standard version of the fall of Troy. It is certainly a *coup de théâtre*, a 'second ending', as it is often called, which must be read in the light of the 'first ending'. But what is implied by the re-establishment of the expected pattern of myth? Does it mean that Neoptolemos' adherence to a sense of honour and pity and his observation of the duties of his relation of *philia* with Philoctetes are to be rejected or transcended? If this is the gods reordering the passage of events, how does it relate to the human values implicated in the drama? Is Sophocles in a Euripidean manner cynically showing how his characters must sacrifice their true nature and best feelings to live out myths, or divine commands, that they inherit? Is this Sophocles questioning whether Philoctetes and Neoptolemos are right to have rejected the Trojan expedition? Perhaps one can conclude only that in the tension between the 'first' and 'second' ending one can specify the constituent factors in the critical problem without necessarily

⁵⁸ Compare 974 where Odysseus enters to echo Neoptolemos' question τί δρώμεν, ἄνδρες; with ὦ κάκιστ' ἄνδρῶν, τί δρῆς;

⁵⁹ The threat of desertion recalls his father at Troy, as

well as, say, Agamemnon's different plight in Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, where he asks πῶς λιπόναις γένωμαι/ξυμμαχίας ἀμαρτῶν; *Ag.* 212–3.

⁶⁰ Winnington-Ingram (n. 48) 298.

ever being sure of its resolution?⁶¹ As Winnington-Ingram concludes, 'It is unlikely that interpreters will ever agree about the precise tone of the play's close.'⁶²

But what of Neoptolemos in this? The play has raised questions about his education (in a general sense),⁶³ about how he should act in a specific difficult situation. But above all, it has set in tension, on the one hand, the possibility of his simply taking part in the Trojan expedition, simply obeying his leaders, simply adopting the course that will lead to military success, and, on the other hand, his conception of what is right, what is noble, what is the correct way to behave. It is the tension between these aspects that leads to the archetypal tragic question οἴμοι τί δράσω. Vidal-Naquet has described Neoptolemos' decision as a rejection of collective civic values in favour of the values of the household: 'He chooses the values of the family as opposed to the city.'⁶⁴ This decision, followed by its eventual reversal in favour of the expedition to Troy, is to be seen, argues Vidal-Naquet, as part of Neoptolemos' transition from the status of ephebe to the status of hoplite. While it is clear that the material Vidal-Naquet has collected on the conceptualization of the ephebe is extremely important and provides an interesting range of ideas against which to view this play in particular, it seems difficult to see Neoptolemos as conforming absolutely and completely to the pattern of initiation Vidal-Naquet has so well delineated. The values with which Neoptolemos is concerned are not merely the values of the family—one must also consider conflicting aspects of *heroic* duty with regard to fifth-century changing attitudes—and, as other critics have pointed out, the imagery of wildness and culture in the play does not conform simply to the clear pattern Vidal-Naquet requires.⁶⁵ Perhaps most importantly, the use of the anthropological model can be thought to lead to an underestimation of the *uncertainty* of the double ending of the play, particularly with regard to Neoptolemos. This uncertainty can be clearly seen in the light of the preplay ceremonials. The herald at the parade of orphans proclaims the city's education and support of the boys, and the boys' future support of the city as hoplites and citizens. The requirement of commitment to the collective ethos of a fifth-century democratic military ideology is firmly established. The individual's involvement in such an ethos is unquestioningly asserted in the ritual. Yet Neoptolemos' involvement in the *Philoctetes* dramatizes a conflict between moral and social values and a commitment to the collective need of the Trojan expedition. Neoptolemos is put in the position of refusing his military role in order to maintain his notions of what is right. Neoptolemos' *uncertainty* and awareness of a conflict in his system of beliefs contrast strikingly with the opening ritual's assuredness. In the ephebic oath, the young Athenian promised to stand by his colleague wherever in the line he was stationed;⁶⁶ Neoptolemos shows that it is not always clear what this might involve. One cannot see Neoptolemos, then, as offering either a straightforwardly positive exemplum in his nobility, or a straightforwardly negative exemplum in his willingness to desert the army and his role in the fall of Troy. Herakles' commands to Philoctetes at the close of the drama may be thought to reconcile the development of Sophocles' plot with the expectations of myth but do not resolve the tension that led to Neoptolemos' anguished question as to what he should do. Both the basis and the evaluation of Neoptolemos' decision remain problematic (even if the *deus ex machina* removes the need for Neoptolemos to follow through the implications of his choice). The text of *Philoctetes* seems to question, then, and set at risk the direct assertion of ideology that the preplay ceremonials seem to proclaim. As with *Ajax*, the

⁶¹ Each of these positions has been adopted. For a survey see Easterling (n. 55).

⁶² Winnington-Ingram (n. 48) 301. C. Gill, *G&R* xxvii (1980) 137–45 and K. Mathiessen, *Wurz. Jahr.* vii (1981) 11–26, both have interesting comments particularly on the sense of reintegration of Philoctetes as hero and man, but both underestimate the problematic nature of Neoptolemos' dilemma for the ending of the play.

⁶³ See Rose (n. 56) *passim*.

⁶⁴ Vernant and Vidal-Naquet (n. 1) 185–6. See also Vidal-Naquet (n. 2) 125–207.

⁶⁵ See Segal (n. 55) 292–361; Winnington-Ingram (n. 48) 301 and *BICS* xxvi (1979) 10–11; Easterling (n. 55) 36–9; and the highly polemical V. di Benedetto, *Belfagor* xxxiii (1978) 191–207.

⁶⁶ οὐδὲ λείψω τὸν παραστάτην ὅπου ἂν στοχῆσω. On the date of the ephebeia and the ephebic oath, see below 74–75.

relation between the ritual of the festival and the drama is complex. Rather than the negative exemplum, a reversal of the norm, we see the far more unsettling process of an investigation of a possible *conflict* in the system of belief that is instantiated in the preplay ceremonials. Neoptolemos does not merely represent or reflect a fifth-century Athenian notion of the ephebe, but raises questions about it.

I have focused here on two plays that can be directly related to the fourth of the ceremonials I discussed earlier. There are, of course, numerous other examples of varying complexity that could be investigated. For as much as the parade of orphans before the city is part of a system of belief, so numerous other scenes or themes or conflicts of the tragic texts can be properly appreciated only in terms of the pervasive power of this civic discourse (so much in evidence in the preplay ceremonials). Again and again, for example, as has been discussed by critics from Hegel onwards, tragedy dramatizes conflicting obligations of household and state—especially emphasized, for example, in the *Septem*, the *Antigone* or the *Oedipus Tyrannus*.⁶⁷ The hierarchical order of family and state is depicted in tragedy as a locus of tension and conflict—tension and conflict between members of the same family and between the duties of civic and familial roles. Again and again, as has been the subject of numerous important studies, tragedy investigates and undercuts the secure meanings of key words in the discourse of social order—σωφρονεῖν, σοφός, δίκη, κράτος etc.—and depicts tensions and ambiguities in their sense and usage.⁶⁸ Again and again, tragedy portrays the dissolution and collapse of social order, portrays man reaching beyond the bounds and norms of social behaviour, portrays a universe of conflict, aggression, impasse. In part, it must be in the relation between the proclamation of civic ties, duties and obligations in the civic festival of the Great Dionysia and the questioning, challenging plays produced in the festival that an understanding of the tragic moment⁶⁹ will lie.

Rather than simply reflecting the cultural values of a fifth-century audience, then, rather than offering simple didactic messages from the city's poets to the citizens, tragedy seems deliberately to problematize, to make difficult the assumption of the values of the civic discourse. And it is precisely this unsettling force of the tragic texts that make certain critics' assertions of the necessarily simple, clear and straightforward nature of texts for performance quite so insufficient. Indeed, it would seem more appropriate to claim that it is exactly the refusal to accept the simple, clear and straightforward that constitutes the extraordinary force of the tragic dramas of Athens.

This discussion of the nature of the questioning of civic language and ideals in the tragic theatre could certainly be extended and treated in greater detail; but I wish to conclude this article by looking briefly at the question of the *ephebeia*, which I have mentioned with regard to *Philoctetes*. I want here merely to make some general observations. The first is this: it is clear that a great many of our extant plays are explicitly concerned with young men at the key times of taking up a role as a man in society—all the Orestes plays, *Philoctetes*, *Bacchae*, *Hippolytus* immediately spring to mind. Vidal-Naquet, Zeitlin and Segal have each written studies in which the connections between those dramas and the institution of the *ephebeia* are drawn out—particularly the significance of the imagery of hunting and warfare, and also the elements of ritual reversal in the *ephebeia* that are paralleled in many initiation rituals around the world.⁷⁰ One of the most common criticisms brought against this work is the lack of evidence for the institution of the *ephebeia* in the fifth century, although it may be assumed that the oath of the

⁶⁷ A vast bibliography could be given; see e.g. on *Septem*, Zeitlin (n. 3); on *Antigone*, see Segal (n. 55) 152–206; V. Rosivach, *ICS* iv (1979) 16–36; J. Hogan, *Arethusa* v (1972) 93–100; on the *Oedipus Tyrannus*, see Segal (n. 55) 207–48.

⁶⁸ A vast bibliography could be given. In general, see Vernant and Vidal-Naquet (n. 1) chapters 1–3; on Aeschylus, see Goldhill (n. 47); Zeitlin (n. 3); on Sophocles, see Segal (n. 55) 52–9, and his index under

'Language'; on Euripides, see on e.g. *Hippolytus* for discussion and bibliography Goldhill (n. 3) ch. 5.

⁶⁹ 'Tragic moment' is Vernant's phrase; see Vernant and Vidal-Naquet (n. 1) chh. 1–3.

⁷⁰ Vidal-Naquet (n. 2) passim; F. Zeitlin, *Arethusa* xi (1978) 149–84; C. Segal, *Dionysiac poetics and Euripides' Bacchae* (Princeton 1982) 158–214. See also Goldhill (n. 47) 193–5.

ephebes goes back into the fifth century.⁷¹ It may be worth pointing out that the existence of the oath at an early stage, the treatment of the orphan ephebes in the theatre in the fifth century, and the key role played by ephebes in the tragic festival at a later date, may indicate a certain connection between tragedy and males at the age of manhood (in terms of adoption and definition of a social role), even if there is no formal institution of the *ephebeia* at the time of fifth-century tragedy—a fact in itself neither finally proven or disproven yet.⁷² I do not wish to revive Mathieu's thesis that the ceremony of the orphans at the Great Dionysia is actually the institutional origin of the *ephebeia*,⁷³ but I do stress the connection between tragedy as a didactic and a questioning medium and the affirmation of the duties and obligations of a citizen. As Mathieu comments, the ephebic oath is a civic oath, concerned fundamentally with expressing and upholding the tenets of δημοκρατία⁷⁴—and, as Reinmuth comments on the *ephebeia* at a later date: 'Every opportunity was taken to foster their [the ephebes'] civic consciousness.'⁷⁵ In other words, any suggested relations between the institution of tragedy and the institution of the *ephebeia* itself must be too delimited a tool to outline the complex relations between tragedy, its attitude to past and present values, and the transgressions enacted on stage, but it is important to keep in mind the connections between times of transition, particularly transition into adulthood, and the educative role of poetry, and the complex, often paradoxical examples offered by the staging of myth in the tragic festival.⁷⁶ The juxtaposition of the young men affirming their civic duties and affiliations in the theatre and the young Orestes, forced to lie, deceive and kill his mother, and yet to be vindicated, seems to me to be of some importance to the way we think of the Athenians conceptualizing the move from childhood to adulthood and the role of the moral exemplar of myth.

To conclude: I outlined first some moments of ceremonial from the days of the drama festival. These I showed were indicative of the festival's production in the democratic *polis*. In particular, these ceremonials were concerned with the relations of an individual to the city, his ties and obligations, and how these were expressed in terms of military involvement and the recognition of the man's duty as soldier in the city, which affects the view of youth as youth—his place in society. But the tragedies and comedies which follow—both tragedy and comedy may be described as 'genres of transgression'—constitute in some important senses a questioning of the terms of that civic discourse. Tragedy again and again is concerned with *competing* obligations of household and state. Tragedy again and again focuses on young men whose behaviour in society puts society at risk. Tragedy again and again takes key terms of the normative and evaluative vocabulary of the civic discourse, and depicts conflicts and ambiguities in their meanings and use.

How does this relate to Dionysus, the god in whose name the festival takes place? The Athenians had an expression 'Nothing to do with Dionysus'. Were they right to apply it to the City Dionysia? Dionysus is the divine figure of the ancient world most studied in the modern

⁷¹ See P. Siewart, *JHS* lxxxvii (1977) 102–11; H. Y. McCulloch and H. D. Cameron, *ICS* v (1980) 1–14.

⁷² See O. Reinmuth, *The Ephebic inscriptions of the fourth century BC* (Leiden 1971); Pélékedis (n. 14), especially 7–17.

⁷³ G. Mathieu, 'Remarques sur l'éphébie attique' in *Mélanges Desrousseux* (Paris 1937) 311–18. Mathieu had been anticipated by A. A. Bryant, *HSCP* xviii (1907) 87 and n. 4. It is important that this ceremonial constitutes for the orphans the *conclusion* of ephebic status, as they now take their place in the hoplite rank. Their assumption of full armour, therefore, is a significant gesture in marking this conclusion, since the ephebe is conceived of as lightly armed specifically in contrast with the panoply of the hoplite. In the theatre, they appear as ἄνδρες πολῖται for the first time (in full

armour).

⁷⁴ Mathieu (n. 73) 313. Wilamowitz, who admittedly did not have the inscriptional evidence now available, is nonetheless importantly mistaken particularly when he argues that the *ephebeia* could not be a fifth-century phenomenon because of its 'anti-democratic' nature (*Aristoteles und Athen* i [Berlin 1893] 191, 193–4). Wilamowitz is criticized by Pélékedis (n. 14) 8–14.

⁷⁵ O. Reinmuth, *The foreigners in the Athenian Ephebeia* (Nebraska 1929) 6.

⁷⁶ For an attempt to show how closely linked tragedy and ephebes may be, see now J. J. Winkler, 'The ephebes' song: *tragōida* and *polis*', *Representations* xi (1985) 26–62.

age.⁷⁷ Henrichs in his recent sober study of the god and his interpreters begins by outlining four main areas of influence for the god, namely, wine and vitality, ritual madness, the mask and theatre, a happy afterlife.⁷⁸ But he quickly begins to qualify and redefine these areas ('god of wine and vitality' [205] becomes 'god of wine and escape from every day reality' [209]), and he finally writes 'Virtually everybody who has an informed opinion on the subject seems to concede that a balanced and unified view of Dionysus and his place in history is not only difficult to achieve but is essentially incompatible with the complexity of the god and with his disparate manifestations . . . Dionysus defies definition' (209). Henrichs goes on to suggest, however, that perhaps the most profitable way for analysis is opened by Otto, who 'summed up Dionysus as a god of paradox' (234). This view finds an echo in Daraki's recent study. She writes: 'Toutes ces jonctions d'opposés repètent sur divers registres ce qui déjà s'annonçait dans l'identité contradictoire du dieu mortel'; and "'Dionysos" est une autre façon de penser'.⁷⁹ So, too, Segal writes that 'Dionysus operates as the principle that destroys differences',⁸⁰ and he has attempted at length to describe 'the multiple inversions and contradictions of Dionysus'⁸¹ in the *Bacchae* in particular. Along with the illusions and transgressions of the theatrical experience, along with the release of maenadic ecstasy or wine, Dionysus' sphere would seem to encompass precisely the sense of paradox and reversal I have been describing in the relations between the preplay ceremonials and the plays in the City Dionysia. It is the *interplay between norm and transgression* enacted in the tragic festival that makes it a Dionysiac occasion.

The special circumstances of the City Dionysia festival bring the special license of comedy, with its obscenity and lampoons, and the special license of tragedy, with its images of society collapsing. The two faces of Dionysus form the one festival. The tensions and ambiguities that tragedy and comedy differently set in motion, the tensions and ambiguities that arise from the transition from tragedy to comedy, all fall under the aegis of the one god, the divinity associated with illusion and change, paradox and ambiguity, release and transgression. Unlike the displays of civic rhetoric we have seen in such set pieces as Pericles' Funeral Speech or in Demosthenes' political rhetoric, the Great Dionysia, Dionysus' festival for the city, offers a full range of Dionysiac *transgression*, from the intellectually and emotionally powerful and dangerous tragedy, through ironic and subtle questioning, to the obscene, scatological, uproarious comedy. The drama festival, plays and ceremonials together, offers not just the power and profundity of a great dramatic literature but also the extraordinary process of the developing city putting its developing language and structure of thought at risk under the sway of the smiling and dangerous Dionysus.

Tragedy must be understood, then, in terms of the festival of which it is a constituent part and the silence of critics on the preplay ceremonials is indicative of a general unwillingness to consider both the extended context of the tragic texts and the particular difficulties involved in reading this literature of transgression and impasse. The tragic festival may at first sight seem to have little to do with our expectations of the Dionysiac religion under whose name it takes place. But in the interplay of norm and transgression enacted in the festival which both lauds the *polis* and depicts the stresses and tensions of a *polis* society in conflict, the great Dionysia seems to me an essentially Dionysiac event.⁸²

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⁷⁷ For an interesting survey and bibliography, see A. Henrichs, *HSCP* lxxxviii (1984) 205–40.

⁷⁸ Henrichs (n. 77). See also J. N. Bremmer, *ZPE* lv (1984) 267–86; A. Henrichs, *HSCP* lxxxii (1978) 14–65; and most recently M. Daraki, *Dionysos* (Paris 1985).

⁷⁹ Daraki (n. 78) 28; 232.

⁸⁰ Segal (n. 70) 234.

⁸¹ Segal (n. 70) 266.

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