Classical Quarterly **50.1** 30–44 (2000) *Printed in Great Britain*

THE SOCIAL FUNCTION OF ATTIC TRAGEDY: A RESPONSE TO JASPER GRIFFIN

Jasper Griffin's polemic, in this journal,[1] against what he calls the 'collectivist school' of interpretation of Athenian tragedy is welcome, as it encourages clarification of fundamental differences. I do not have the space here to tackle him wherever I think he is wrong, still less construct an argument to the effect that Athenian tragedy was a 'collective' phenomenon. Rather I want to do two things. Firstly, the casual reader may have formed the impression that whereas the 'collectivists' operate with vague and unsubstantiated notions, Griffin's view has the advantage of being firmly grounded in the ancient texts. This impression I intend to dispel. In doing so I will confine myself to some of G.'s general remarks and to his attack on my own views, as a sample of the quality of his argument. Secondly, I also adduce new material in the hope of advancing the debate on this important issue.

But first a brief, negative preliminary is unavoidable. The 'collectivist' views attacked by G. are so varied that it is sometimes difficult to see what his target is.[2] And this problem is worsened by G.'s constant tendency to caricature the views of those he is criticizing, who do not in fact (for instance) describe Athenian tragedy as 'indoctrination' (46, 50), or the strengthening of social cohesion as a 'simple purpose' or a 'simple and conscious aim' (42). Such terms are frequently introduced by G. himself so as to simplify his target.[3]

There is a distinction, somewhat blurred by G., between two senses in which tragedy might be called 'collective'. One is the discounting of individual genius, in which, as G. puts it (again with some caricature), 'it is society itself, and especially its institutions, which gets the credit for the creation of artistic masterpieces'. The other concerns the collective *effect* of tragedy on the community. I will take each of these in turn.

G. does not discuss (and so I will not do so either) the subtle interrelation, in Greek poetry, between the collective and traditional on the one hand and individual creativity on the other. I will confine myself rather to the Greek evidence that G. advances in order to privilege the latter.

> The conception of the Muse inspiring the poet expresses, one may think, something all too like the idea of 'creative spontaneity'; while the Greeks constantly discussed poetry in terms of the individual personalities of the poets. Aristophanes, for instance, in *Frogs* and also *Thesmophoriazousai*, builds his whole play on the idea that poets like Aeschylus and Euripides and Agathon had a strongly marked and idiosyncratic literary personality, which resembled his actual personality, and which differed strikingly from that of anyone else who wrote plays. (40)

[1] J. Griffin, *CQ* 48 (1998), 39–61.

[2] This extends even to the supposed political basis of the 'collectivists'. First (40) we have the cliché that *Marxism* lingers on only among a few benighted intellectuals, but later (61) are warned about thinking that an ancient work chimes with our *liberal* ideas about the state.

[3] We may even see the caricature in the process of unfolding. G. quotes from my *Reciprocity and Ritual: Homer and Tragedy in the Developing City-State* (Oxford, 1994), 153–4 the following: 'If that is so, then among the qualities that ensured the predominance of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* over other possible versions of themselves and over the epic cycle was their exceptional embodiment of the aspirations of the early polis', and on the very same page (49) paraphrases it as follows: 'we recall that for Seaford the ascendancy of the Homeric poems was because of their "exceptional embodiment of the aspirations of the early polis"'. The disappearance of the words 'among the qualities . . .' creates an absurdly simplistic notion that is easy to dismiss.

Neither Homer nor Phemios nor Demodocus utters the words: 'My songs embody heroic values, and are full of traditional elements both of content and form, into which I introduce my own variations and combinations.' No. They say things like 'Sing, Muse of the wrath . . .', or 'I am self taught, and the god put all kinds of paths into my mind.' However, we know that the Muse does not exist. What, then, does the Muse represent? For G. she is evidence for something like the idea of 'creative spontaneity'.[4] Let us suppose that he is right. Would that really have any bearing at all on the problem of where we should put the Homeric poems on the spectrum between collective tradition and individual genius? And if so, why has nobody brought it to bear?

But *does* the Muse represent the idea of creative spontaneity? The bard does not, after all, say 'the songs originate within me'. He attributes them to an *external* agent (the Muse, the god). G. is apparently unaware of Jesper Svenbro's subtle and complex argument that the epic Muse is a religious representation of the social pressure by which the bard is to some extent controlled.[5] My point is not to claim that Svenbro is necessarily right, but rather to question the unjustified assumption ('one may think . . .') which permits G. to be unaware of its opposite.

As for Aristophanes, well of course the Greeks were aware of differences in the character of their poets. But here again even the material selected by G. may in fact work the other way. Are the literary personalities in Aristophanes really that 'idiosyncratic'? Or are not Aeschylus and Euripides in *Frogs* stereotypical and polarized—caricatures of the old and the new respectively?[6] Further, this polarization is *political*, intimately related to the fact that a large section (1008–98) of the contest between the two tragedians centres around the agreed need for tragedy to benefit the community.[7] Perhaps Aristophanes is a poor witness for tragedy. But G. uses him, without mentioning that in this the only fifth-century extended discussion of tragedy, the effect of tragedy is certainly envisaged as collective.

The Aristophanean presupposition that the tragedian should improve people in general and save the polis has brought us to our second sense of 'collective'. For G. the audience of tragedy was 'collective' only in the trivial sense in which all audiences (e.g. at an opera or football match) are 'collective': containing as it did different kinds of people (Socrates, Agathon, peasants, and so on), it was no more *uniform* than a modern audience. Now in fact a case could be made (based on the relatively small-scale, relatively undeveloped division of labour, and relatively homogeneous culture of fifth-century Athens) for regarding the original audience of tragedy as more uniform than many modern audiences. But more importantly, what undoubtedly differentiates the audience of tragedy from the modern audience of an opera or a football match is the unusual *combination* of the following four factors. Firstly, it contains a high proportion of the people who also join *en masse* to make crucial decisions in assembly and lawcourts.[8] Secondly, it dramatizes and expounds fundamental issues of morality,

[4] This is welcome evidence that G. is prepared (contrary to the impression he sometimes gives: see below) to go beyond the Greeks' own terms in interpreting their literature.

[5] J. Svenbro, *La Parole et le Marbre* (Lund, 1976), esp. 31–5.

[6] On this scene K. J. Dover writes of 'Aristophanes' readiness to caricature both sides in a debate' (*Aristophanes Frogs* [Oxford, 1993], 17) and that 'comparison with *Clouds* indicates that Aristophanes has assimilated the contrast between Aeschylus and Euripides to the generalized contrast between old and new' (22).

[7] See esp. 1008–10, 1419, 1561–2 'save the polis'.

[8] The theatre as reconstructed by Lykourgos is thought to hold between 14,000 and 17,000. Plato's 30,000 (*Symp.* 175e) for the earlier theatre may be an exaggeration. Even allowing for the

politics, and religion. Thirdly, as with all live audiences, though what is seen and heard may affect people differently, the experience is nevertheless also *shared* by those present at the event. Fourthly, it is for various reasons an intensely emotional and an intensely pleasurable experience.

That it was indeed pleasurable is something that G. imagines we need to be reminded of. He cites certain well-known passages of Gorgias, Plato, and Aristotle in order to impress upon us that there was a certain kind of pleasure to be had in tragedy, and then, oddly, assumes that this ancient evidence counts against the 'collectivists'. For he declares that this pleasure is

> an experience of the individual soul: made more possible, no doubt, by being in a crowd of people similarly attentive and moved,[9] but not one in which there is any point in calling collective. (55)

Well, if a group of people feel pleasure in the same thing, then *of course* each individual in the group feels pleasure in it. But this may (even if, or especially if, that pleasure is 'complex, emotional, particular') have certain consequences, some of which may be in the broad sense political. Indeed, how could tragedy have any social or political consequences *unless* its audience (composed of individuals) took pleasure in it? This does not mean that the 'collective' is a single recipient of pleasure, with a single pair of eyes and a single pair of ears. G.'s assumption that pleasure must, in this debate, be aligned with the 'individual' against the 'collective' is a curious one.[10] Moreover, what G. does not point out about the passages of Gorgias, Plato, and Aristotle is that they assume a uniform reaction by the audience, with in fact a significant failure to mention variety of individual response, or the particularity (whatever that means) of individual response supposed by G.[11]

The notion that the effect of tragedy on its audience is 'collective' is associated by G. with what he calls the 'assertion that the polis had a simple and conscious aim [*sic*] in putting on the plays: that of strengthening social cohesion' (42). But tragedy may have strengthened social cohesion, for example with the sense of solidarity arising from collective lamentation,[12] without that being a 'simple and conscious aim' of the polis. 'The ancients, of course', continues G., 'have omitted to tell us so. In fact, Plato seems to think tragedy had something like the opposite effect' (42). But what does Plato actually say? G. explains as follows:

presence of foreigners, metics, women, and slaves, it seems very likely that the audience contained many thousands of politically active male citizens. In the fourth century the number of adult male citizens is estimated at 20,000 or 30,000. For the early fifth century Hdt. (5.97.2) suggests (perhaps as a conventional number) 30,000. A high estimate for the year 432/1 is 60,000: M. Hansen, *Three Studies in Athenian Demography. Historisk-filosofiske Meddelelser* 56 (Copenhagen, 1988).

[9] G. may have felt forced to make this concession by Pl. *Ion* 535–6, in which the rhapsode sees his vast audience weeping, amazed, and held (as it were) by a magnetic power that originates from the god and passes to them through poet and rhapsode.

[10] Has this to do with the isolation of enjoying Greek poetry in the late twentieth century? G. seems to feel that the particularity of (his?) pleasure in poetry needs to be defended against the collective, the historical, and even the explicable.

[11] Gorgias says, in G.'s own translation, 'those who listen to poetry experience the shudders of fear, etc.' (*Hel.* 9). Plato says of Homer and the tragedians that 'their audiences "take delight in their displays of pathos . . ."' (*Rep.* 605cd); here 'their audiences' is G.'s paraphrase (though Plato actually says 'the best of us . . .'—which in the context means *even* the best of us). Of Aristotle, G. refers to passages from the *Poetics* that refer to tragedy as producing pity and alarm and pleasure (with no mention of the audience).

[12] For this anthropologically based argument see n. 62 below.

Republic 3. 394dff. argues that the citizens should each have a single ἐπιτήδευμα and not be influenced by the sinister versatility of tragedy into adjusting to several: οὐκ ἔστιν διπλοῦς ἀνὴρ παρ' ἡμῖν οὐδὲ πολλαπλοῦς, ἐπειδὴ ἕκαστος ἓν πράττει (397e1–2), and that is why we must not permit tragedy in our ideal city. Presumably that means that tragedy is a menace to homogeneity. (42, n. 10)

Examination of the whole passage reveals that, contrary to the impression given by G., it is (as are the specific words he quotes) from a discussion of the education of the *guardians,* and is about the undesirable effects of *imitating* on the *imitators* (i.e. the actors and playwrights). About menace to the homogeneity of the *audience* it has nothing to say. To be sure, Plato does elsewhere in the *Republic,* in a passage not mentioned by G., say that tragedy is bad for the audience, as appealing to the lower, unreasoning element of the soul, 'which is like making the worst people powerful and handing the polis over to them' (605b). If this is thought to be a 'menace to homogeneity', then it is a menace to the internal homogeneity of each individual spectator, not to the homogeneity of the audience taken as a whole. Indeed diversity within each individual may actually *increase* the homogeneity and cohesion of a group.

But let us suppose that Plato's ghost would, if we pressed him on the subject, agree that tragedy weakened (his idea of) social cohesion. Plato was profoundly hostile to democracy. Indeed, his insistence that everybody confine himself to a single activity is precisely an attack on the principle on which the cohesion of Athenian participatory democracy was based. His comparison of the effect of tragedy to 'handing the polis over to the worst people' suggests a connection between tragedy and democracy. Plato bans tragedy from his ideal state because, in stark contrast to G., he believes that tragedy produces not just 'individual' pleasure but important *political* consequences. If tragedy did make for the cohesion of the democratic polis, Plato can hardly be expected to praise it for doing so. The same goes for Aristotle,[13] and to some extent even for Aristophanes. G. fails to mention the possibility of anti-democratic bias in the ancient writers he produces as witnesses.

But even were there no political bias, we would still fail to be impressed by the fact that 'the ancients, of course, have omitted to tell us so'. The notion of tragedy creating social cohesion is a relatively sophisticated one. Its absence from ancient literary criticism does not require us to dismiss it. To confine ourselves, in attempting to understand Greek literature, to what the Greeks themselves said about it would be as myopic as to stay within what the Greeks themselves said about their economy, their religion, their kinship relations, and so on.

We have moved from the issue of social cohesion to that of specifically *democratic* cohesion. If there is something democratic about the content of the plays, then (G. asks)

why do we not find anything about the really live issue in Athenian internal politics: the conflict between democracy and aristocracy/oligarchy? Instead we find discussions only between democracy and monarchy—a form of government not seriously on the agenda for fifth-century Athens. When the old men of the chorus in *Wasps* denounce the hero for *tyrannis,* he replies, 'How everything is tyranny and conspiracy with you! I hadn't heard even the name in the last

[13] Aristotle regards the *performance* of tragedy as relatively unimportant (*Poetics*, ch. 6). For a historical explanation of the absence of the polis from Aristotle's account of tragedy, see Edith Hall in M. S. Silk, *Tragedy and the Tragic* (Oxford, 1996), 295–309. S. G. Salkever, on the other hand, argues that 'Aristotle's discussion presupposes the thought that tragedy is not only a political institution, but more particularly a democratic one' (in J. P. Euben [ed.], *Greek Tragedy and Political Theory* [Berkeley, 1986], 274–303).

fifty years' (489, 491). In reality it was the oligarchs who argued a serious case, who presented a threat to the democracy, and who conspired against it. (51–2)

Now what matters for the argument about tragedy is not the unanswerable question of what was actually on the agenda, but rather what people in general *believed* might be on the agenda. And on this question the *Wasps* passage (spoken by Bdelykleon, 'Nauseated by Kleon') is evidence that people in general *were* anxious about tyranny (even if Bdelykleon and Aristophanes were not). Indeed Bdelykleon goes on to state that the word tyrant is bandied about the marketplace, as cheap as salt fish. There are numerous other passages of Aristophanes that suggest (or mock) this fear of tyranny.[14] And Thucydides writes (on the events of 415 B.C.) that the Athenians, knowing of the harshness of the tyranny of Peisistratus and his sons, 'were always in fear and took everything suspiciously' (6.53; cf. 6.57), and 'believed that everything had been done as part of an oligarchical and tyrannical conspiracy' (6.60). The tendency to associate tyranny with oligarchy is not confined to this passage.[15]

But perhaps this talk of tyranny did not pre-date the Peloponnesian war? After all, what Bdelykleon says is that he had not heard the word for fifty years. However, although we do not have detailed narrative history for much of those fifty years, we do know that throughout the fifth century the Athenians in general were conscious that their democracy had been created out of the overthrow of an oppressive tyranny. The tyrannicides were the first, and throughout the fifth century the only (Dem. 20.70), citizens to receive the public honour of having their images placed in the agora—in a prominent position (perhaps in the Orchestra, i.e. the original theatre).[16] The group, removed by Xerxes' troops but promptly replaced by another, had considerable influence on fifth-century painting and sculpture. The tyrannicides also received hero-cult at their tomb in the Kerameikos (*Ath. Pol.* 58.1), were praised in famous drinking songs (dating probably from the late sixth century or early fifth) for having made Athens *isonomos* (with equal political rights for all), and were protected by law against slander. Their direct descendants were given special privileges, one of which certainly goes back to the Periclean period at least.[17] On the acropolis was erected a stele commemorating the injustice of the tyrants and listing members of their family (Thuc. 6.55). Before every assemby meeting a curse was pronounced against whoever intended 'to become tyrant or to join in restoring the tyrant'.[18] Sommerstein notes (on Ar. *Thesm.* 331–51) that this curse 'had apparently changed little since the 480s, since the reference to "restoring the *tyrannos*" would have been meaningful only while the ex-tyrant Hippias was still alive'. The decree of Demophantos of 410 B.C., prescribing the death penalty for attempts at tyranny, is generally believed to have reaffirmed and expanded an archaic law.[19] In the law imposed by Athens on Erythrai before the mid-fifth century the death penalty is prescribed for anyone betraying the

[14] See J. Henderson in K. Morgan (ed.), *Popular Tyranny* (Texas University Press, forthcoming).

[15] Note e. g. the 'tyrannical' behaviour of 'the thirty': Xen. *Hell.* 2.3.16, 4.2.1.

[16] On this point, and in general, see M. W. Taylor, *The Tyrant Slayers. The Heroic Image in Fifth Century B.C. Athenian Art and Politics* (Salem, NH, 1991).

[17] Eating at public expense in the Prytaneum: see e.g. W. E. Thompson in *AJP* 92 (1971), 226–37; Rhodes on [Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 24.3.

[18] Something similar was probably also part of the oath taken by members of the Boule, by the mid-fifth century if not the late sixth, according to M. Ostwald in *TAPA* 86 (1955), 103–28.

[19] Perhaps the one cited at *Ath. Pol.* 16.10: see Rhodes ad loc.; B. Lavelle in *Class. et Med.* 39 (1988), 35–7.

city to the tyrants.[20] Ostracism, which was used from 487 B.C. (if not before), was believed to have been instituted as a measure against tyranny,[21] and indeed was early used against relatives of the ex-tyrant Hippias. And most interestingly of all for our argument, at the City Dionysia (by far the most important context for the performance of tragedy) there was read out annually, probably throughout most of the fifth century,[22] a decree proclaiming a reward for killing any of the tyrants.

This brief summary[23] suffices to show that the conflict between democracy and oligarchy/aristocracy was not in fact the only 'live issue' in Athenian politics during the time of our extant tragedies. At this point G. might want to observe that what he claimed was 'not seriously on the agenda' was not in fact *tyranny* but the quite distinct institution of *monarchy*. But the observation would be unwise. In describing its royal personages, tragedy uses the word βασιλεύς (and its cognates) frequently, but the word τύραννος (and its cognates) more frequently.[24] Even more significantly, the tragic 'kings' or 'tyrants' frequently resemble in various respects the typical tyrant as described by Herodotus and Plato.[25]

This raises an important point. In G.'s caricature of the 'collectivist' approach, with its notion that with tragedy 'the city had as its unambiguous [*sic*] purpose to foster civic consciousness' (42), tragedy should consist simply of dramatizations of such contemporary issues as democracy against oligarchy, the problems of empire, and so on. But it does not, and this, he believes, counts against the collectivist school.[26] Now, it is a fact known even to the 'collectivists' that the tragedians took their themes from traditional *myths*, which are older than the Athenian democracy and older (at least in their core) than the polis that took shape in the eighth, seventh, and sixth centuries. Tragedy is *among other things* a highly complex synthesis of these traditional myths (and their values) with, inevitably, new elements (and values) emanating from the society in which they were created. This perspective is characteristic of an approach to tragedy associated with (among others) Gernet and Vernant, of which G. makes no mention. His view is rather as follows.

> It is thus very important to see that in the age of the tragic poets and their audiences the old moral questions were still alive and interesting. The burial of Hector is already a very important issue in the *Iliad*, and supplicants beg for succour and for mercy, not always in vain, in the *Odyssey*. There was no need for a new political set-up to force them on the attention as startling innovations. (59)

Not much reflection is required, however, to realize that the tragic treatment even of

[20] R. Meiggs and D. Lewis, *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions to the End of the Fifth Century B.C.* (Oxford, 1969), no. 40, lines 32–4.

[21] [Aristot.] *Ath.Pol.* 22. 3.

[22] Aristophanes (*Birds* 1074–5) parodies the anachronism of this practice with the words 'anyone who kills any of the *dead* tyrants'. The decree would have been appropriate early in the century.

[23] In which I am heavily indebted to K. Rauflaub 'Stick and glue: the function of tyranny in fifth-century Athenian democracy', in Morgan (n. 14).

[24] This cannot be attributed merely to the greater metrical convenience of τύραννος.

[25] I set these respects out in 'Tragic tyranny' in Morgan (n. 14).

[26] That he really does believe this is confirmed by his seriously telling us that even Euripides' *Suppliant Women*, which he admits may have some sort of political motive, also 'contains things of a very different tendency'. Well, *of course* it does—even though the category of 'almost pure pathos' that he applies to the suttee of Evadne and the grief of her father does not exactly shed a flood of light on the passage (except perhaps for the clinically insensitive), and may mislead those unaware of the complex way in which the scene relates to Greek ideas of the wedding (which are quite different from our own).

the very themes chosen by G. (refusal of burial, supplication) differs profoundly from the Homeric—and precisely by virtue of the involvement, in tragedy, of the polis.[27] As for the various horrors of tragedy (incest, kin-killing, human sacrifice, and so on) that are barely present in Homer, G. claims that these too are 'neither new in the democratic polis nor specific to it', but rather 'relate to primitive and universal taboos and anxieties' (59). In this there may be some truth.[28] But the crucial question, unasked by G., is *why* these themes are central to tragedy whereas in Homer they occur hardly at all.[29]

Traditional myth did not provide much scope for dramatizing 'the conflict between democracy and aristocracy/oligarchy'. It was rather centred around the crimes and disasters of powerful *individuals*, unencumbered by the institutions of the state. But these traditional themes *were* assimilable (up to a point) to a recent historical experience, the experience of tyranny. And so one factor making for the tragic concentration on monarchy-cum-tyranny (rather than oligarchy versus democracy) was the striking adaptability of *this* element of the tradition to fifth-century democratic attitudes, the subtle synthesis I have mentioned between myth and the new realities of the polis.[30]

Along with this factor there enters another. It has been argued[31] that the preoccupation of fifth-century Athenians with tyranny is to be explained not only by the antithesis between tyranny and the democracy that was created out of its overthrow, but also because dislike of tyranny was a political view on which everybody (whether of democratic or aristocratic/oligarchic inclination) could agree.[32] And indeed if tyranny was really not seriously on the agenda, then the theory that dislike of tyranny

[27] The evidence is too plentiful even to summarize here. How G. can claim that the 'great tragic theme' of leaving the dead unburied was 'not political but religious in character' (61) is beyond me (it is of course both), especially as he also writes that tragedy 'loves scenes in which tyrannical power forbids the burial of the dead and is defied' (56).

[28] Though oddly the only evidence that he gives for it is from Herodotus, who was closely associated with democratic Athens.

[29] G. does not consider my answer, but he does list striking events, some of them of the kind represented in tragedy, in Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon. 'What I am concerned with', he writes (57), 'is the general character of the political world in the fifth century, full of such episodes, and (at least equally important) populated by people who saw history in terms of such patterns and such dramatic confrontations.' But the political world contains more than just 'episodes'. For example, G. notes, appositely, that at Corcyra 'father slew' son (Thuc. 3.81), but does not observe that such (non-Homeric) horrors occurred, according to Thucydides, in *conflict for control of the polis*. Similarly, G. claims that the Athenians saw their history as determined by great personalities such as Pericles (58). But actually Pericles himself stresses (to the Athenians) the importance of various factors, notably *money*—as do others in Thuc. (2.13; cf. e.g. 1.80.3–4, 1.83.2, 1.121.2, 1.141.3, 6.34.2). Cf. e.g. A. *Ag.* 1638–9 (unthinkable in Homer). Understanding tragedy requires us to understand the polis, for which events described by Thucydides, Herodotus, and Xenophon are very limited evidence. Nor should we disdain to inform ourselves of the general understanding of pre-modern societies that has made some advance in the last two hundred years or so.

[30] Against the link between democracy and tragedy G. advances the possibility that tragedy was first performed under tyranny (47) and the fact that it was imitated by the Romans in their 'eminently undemocratic city' (60). But this argument works only if we assume that the political complexion of tragedy was always the same. In fact the politics of the only extant Roman tragedy (Seneca) are (precisely as those attacked by G. would predict) quite different from Athenian tragedy.

[31] See esp. Rauflaub (n. 23).

[32] Rauflaub cites Alcibiades' justification to the Spartans of his aristocratic family's record of democratic leadership: 'My family has always been opposed to tyranny. The people (δῆμος) is the name given to any force that opposes δυναστεία (despotic power)' (Thuc. 6.89).

served to unite the Athenians does at least provide some much-needed explanation of their preoccupation with it, in tragedy and elsewhere.

The phenomenon of a single undesirable individual serving to unite the community is a widespread one, and is in Greek society implicit in, for instance, the ritual of the scapegoat (*φαρμακός*). The scapegoat is ambivalent in the sense that it is detested by the whole community but also (by its expulsion or death) saves the community. The importance of this ritual for understanding the *Oedipus Tyrannus* has been shown in detail by others.[33] In my book *Reciprocity and Ritual* I extended this argument, and compared the similar pattern of ambivalence of the hero that is to be found both in tragedy and in certain aetiological myths of hero cult. The myths dramatized by the tragedians were traditional and (yes) collective, created and transmitted, in numerous constantly changing versions, by large numbers of people. In this process they were influenced, in overall shape and in detail, not (or not merely) by a (supposed) absolute freedom of individual fantasy but by social processes such as ritual. So much, one would have thought, is uncontroversial. Another, more controversial question is of the proportions in which the especially detailed versions of myths preserved in tragedy have been shaped on the one hand by such social processes,[34] and on the other hand by the free and individual imagination of each tragedian. In arguing for the importance of hero-cult for understanding Sophocles' *Ajax*, I drew attention to an accumulation of specific features of the drama that seem to prefigure the Attic cult of Ajax (if they do not, their combination is an odd coincidence). The very same conclusion was reached simultaneously, independently, and with more detail, by Albert Henrichs.[35] My argument used the accumulation of elements within a single tragedy, but also the accumulation of tragedies for which the same kind of argument can be constructed (notably Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus* and Euripides' *Heracleidae*). Certain features of these plays are rather odd if we imagine them as emerging merely from the imagination of the poet, but perfectly explicable as elements of the type of (aetiological) myth that may correspond to details of hero-cult and encourage its performance. For this view it is a bonus that many of the plays (including *Oedipus at Colonus* and *Heracleidae*) explicitly refer forward to cult that will be given to those who have suffered and passed away, rather as the ending of the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* refers forward, briefly but explicitly, to the ritual which is certainly prefigured in the narrative.

With this argument G. engages not at all. Rather, his criticism is as follows:

> In not one of these three plays [*Ajax*, *Philoctetes*, *Oedipus at Colonus*], in fact, is 'permanent and collective cult' ever actually mentioned. And the number of plays that do end with the establishment of a cult of any relevance to Athenian citizens is not as great as is sometimes implied.[36]
>
> Can we really be happy to interpret the plays primarily in the light of something that is mentioned elliptically or not at all? (53)

[33] J. P. Guépin, *The Tragic Paradox* (Amsterdam, 1968), 89–90; J.-P. Vernant in J.-P.Vernant and P. Vidal-Naquet, *Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece* (Sussex, 1981), 87–119.

[34] It is perhaps curiously necessary to point out that this does not imply the absence of human consciousness.

[35] 'The tomb of Aias and the prospect of hero cult in Sophokles', *CA* 12 (1993), 165–80. The argument is in some respects anticipated by P. Burian 'Supplication and hero cult in Sophocles' *Ajax*', *GRBS* 13 (1972), 151–6.

[36] Here G. misleads. Of Aeschylus the only final plays of trilogies we have are *Sept.* and *Eum.*: at the end of *Sept.* hero-cult is indicated (1002–3; cf. Pausan. 9.18.3), and in *Eum.* cult for Orestes is predicted and cult for the Furies is founded. See also Soph. *O.C.*; E. *Alc.* (445–52), *Med.* (1381–3), *Hcld.* (1031–6), *Hipp.* (1423–30), *Suppl.* (1196–1212), *H.F.* (1328–33), *I.T.* (1456–67),

First, the *Oedipus at Colonus*. G. refers to p. 135 of my book for the statement that 'the cult and its benefits are both permanent and collective'. On the very same page I refer to the many passages by which it is emphasized that the cult and its benefits will be permanent (1519, 1555, 1765) and 'collective' (*ξύνα*[37] 1751; for 'the polis' 1519, 1496; add 287–8, 459–60, 1533).[38] All this is simply ignored by G. It is true, as he observes, that the cult will be known only to the king and his successors. Of all his criticisms of my views, this is the only valid one: in calling this cult 'collective' I had not explicitly specified that I meant its benefits not its performance.

As for the *Ajax* and *Philoctetes*, it is true that the founding of cult is not explicitly mentioned in these plays.[39] Nor indeed is it mentioned at the end of the same author's *Women of Trachis*, where Heracles orders the burning of his own body on Mt. Oeta, even though this is almost certainly a pre-existing aetiological myth of the hero-cult of Heracles on Mt. Oeta.[40] So here is a simple example of a dramatic detail (perhaps not the only one in the play) issuing from a hero-cult that is *not mentioned in the drama*. There was in Attica itself an important hero-cult of Ajax,[41] which would surely be far better known to Sophocles' audience than the cult of Heracles far to the north on Mt. Oeta. The Attic hero-cult of Ajax has, unsurprisingly, influenced the myth as dramatized by Sophocles, and very likely affected the perception of the drama by the Attic audience. The answer to G.'s question 'can we really be happy to interpret the plays primarily in the light of something that is mentioned elliptically or not at all?' (53) is (leaving aside the 'primarily', which he has introduced to make the view easier to dismiss) a resounding yes. And indeed there are numerous other practices of the Athenian polis that, even though mentioned in tragedy either not at all or far less frequently than hero-cult is, cannot be ignored by serious interpreters of tragedy:

Hel. (1666–9), *Pho.* (1703–7). G. claims that no cult is predicted at the end of Eur. *Alc.*, *El.*, *Andr.*, and *Hec.* But in *El.* he has failed to notice 1270–2; in *Alc.* the cult of Alcestis is predicted not at the end of the (prosatyric) play but before her return from the dead; and both *Andr.* and *Hec.* end with the establishments of *tombs*, at which in the former case we know there was an important hero-cult (see below). In *Ba.* the cult of Dionysos must have been established by the god in the lost part of his final speech. The ending of *I.A.* is spurious, and of *Tro.* exceptional as involving the destruction of the whole (exceptionally, non-Greek) community, which cannot therefore perform cult. Of Euripides' extant tragedies that leaves only *Ion* and *Or.*, each of which ends with the aetiology not of hero-cult but of the *naming* (of the *Ionians*, of the the town *Oresteion*) after the hero. About his lost plays we can say little, except for the founding of hero-cult in the *Erechtheus*.

[37] In *Sophocles: Second Thoughts* (Göttingen, 1997), 137, H. Lloyd-Jones and N. Wilson attempt to defend (against my argument, n. 3, p. 135) the conjecture *νὺξ* (Martin) by citing A. *Cho.* 65 *τοὺς ἄκρατος* (Schütz; *ἄκραντος* M) *ἔχει νύξ* (in a context of *punishment*), which however (on either reading) has the opposite sense to that given by Martin's conjecture to the *OC* passage.

[38] Perhaps G. thinks that the presence of Oedipus' body (without cult) will be enough. But it is through cult that benefit from the heroic dead (e.g. Theseus in the Theseion) is maintained: W. Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Oxford, 1985), 203–8. And indeed cult for Oedipus is clearly indicated at 1526–34 (cf. 624, 1642, 1644 *τὰ δρώμενα* with Kamerbeek ad loc.), though its content must remain secret. The point of secrecy (cf. e.g. Eur. *Hcld.* 1041–2) was presumably to deny to enemies the chance to obtain the goodwill of the hero through offerings at his tomb, as is made explicit at E. *Erechtheus* 65.87–9: E. Kearns, *The Heroes of Attica. BICS Suppl.* 57 (London, 1989), 51–2. Hero-cult for Oedipus at Colonus is mentioned at Pausan. 1.30.4.

[39] Although (against G.) I agree with Harrison (*JHS* 109 [1989], 173–5) that in *Phil.* it is hinted at at 1418–22: see further Seaford (n. 3), 138.

[40] See e.g. P. E. Easterling, *Sophocles Trachiniae* (Cambridge, 1982), 9–10.

[41] U. Kron, *Die Zehn Attischen Phylenheroen. AM* Beiheft 5 (Berlin, 1976), 172–6; Kearns (n. 38), 82, 141; H. A. Shapiro, *Art and Cult under the Tyrants in Athens* (Mainz am Rhein, 1989), 154–7.

democracy, philosophy, written law, the mysteries, the development of rhetoric, the legal position of women, the Peloponnesian war, to name but a few.

Finally, there is G.'s third point, that not as many plays end with the foundation of cult as is sometimes implied. I have already indicated (n. 36) that he has miscalculated the frequency of this phenomenon. Here my concern is with the rider 'cult of any relevance to Athenian citizens'. Certainly, the Attic cult of Ajax was presumably of more relevance to Athenians than that of Heracles on Mt. Oeta. But of the thirteen explicit foundings of cult that I list in n. 36, no fewer than nine are Attic.[42] The others are from Thebes, Corinth, and Trozen[43]—places surely not unfamiliar to many Athenians. However, the general and perhaps unanswerable question of the 'relevance' of non-Athenian cult to the Athenians is beyond the scope of this paper. Let us take instead a specific example. Euripides' *Andromache* is one of the plays which G. lists as having 'no cult . . . at the end'. This is in a sense true. On the other hand, Thetis emphasizes the need to take the body of Neoptolemus to Delphi (where he was killed) and bury it 'next to the Pythian altar, a reproach to the Delphians, so that the tomb may declare his violent death at the hand of Orestes', and later in her speech repeats the injunction (1263–4). Now, where there is the tomb of a hero, there is likely to be some form of cult. In this case we are explicitly told by Pausanias (10.24.6) that next to the temple of Apollo at Delphi there was the tomb of Neoptolemus, to whom the Delphians made annual sacrifice. But Pausanias, it may be objected, wrote half a millenium after Euripides. Indeed, for the fifth century B.C. we have no Pausanias, and our knowledge of cult is haphazard. However, in this case it happens that we have a passage from Pindar's seventh *Nemean Ode* (461 B.C.) to make it certain that there was an important hero-cult (43–9 ἡρωίαις δὲ πομπαῖς θεμίσκοπον οἰκεῖν ἐόντα πολύθυτοις εὐώνυμον ἐς δίκαν κτλ.) for Neoptolemus at his tomb next to the temple (θεοῦ παρ' εὐτειχέα δόμον) long before Euripides wrote the *Andromache*. In several other cases of the foundation of hero-cult being stated or hinted at in tragedy—such as Eteokles and Polynices at Thebes, Oedipus at Colonus, Philoctetes on Chryse, Hippolytus at Trozen, or Eurystheus in Attica—we have otherwise only late evidence. The cult of Neoptolemus at Delphi was 'relevant' to the Boeotian Pindar. I suspect that it was relevant also to the Athenians, many of whom probably visited Delphi and may have seen the tomb as (precisely as Thetis suggests) a reproach to the Delphians and evidence for the crime of the Dorian Orestes. In any event, the tomb would have been given extra prominence by its cult.[44]

The other criticism made by G. concerns the benefit I envisage for the polis from the destruction or self-destruction of the heroes.

> At the end of the *Bacchae*, then, 'salvation [is] brought to the polis by the death of Pentheus' (p. 311). At the end of the *Antigone* and *Oedipus the King*, 'the whole polis is by implication [*sic*] saved by the self-destruction or removal of the family with which the drama culminates' (p. 349). So too at the end of the *Seven against Thebes*, when the two sons of Oedipus have slain

[42] Eur. *Alc.*, which refers to both Sparta and Athens, I count under the latter.

[43] At Trozen this was the cult of Hippolytus, who also, however, had an Athenian hero-cult alluded to at *Hipp.* 29–33. The cult foretold in *Hel.* is not specific to any particular place.

[44] C. Carey in his *A Commentary on Five Odes of Pindar* (Arno Press, 1981), comparing our passage of Pindar with the tradition that the Delphians were at this time *hostile* to Neoptolemus, is puzzled, because unaware that to give hero-cult (in appeasement) to the enemy you have slain is standard practice: see e.g. M. Visser 'Worshipping your enemy: aspects of the cult of heroes in ancient Greece', *HTR* 75 (1982), 203–28. The Athenians, to judge from Eur. *Andr.*, may have isolated this element of the cult as a *reproach* to the Delphians.

each other in single combat, 'the polis is saved not only because the besiegers are beaten off but also, it is clear [*sic*], because the royal family is no more' (p. 346).

'By implication'; 'it is clear': the phrases betray the uncomfortable truth that in these plays nothing of the sort is actually said. (53)

But the uncomfortable truth turns out, yet again, to be rather different. My remark about *Bacchae* is from a discussion of line 963, in which Dionysus says to Pentheus (as the latter goes to his death) 'alone you are suffering/toiling (ὑπερκάμνεις) on behalf of the polis'. With ὑπερκάμνεις Dionysus certainly alludes to the imminent *death* of Pentheus. But how is the lone death of the king 'on behalf of the polis'? As I explained in detail, not only is this just one of a series of respects in which King Pentheus resembles the *pharmakos*, whose ritual death or exile benefits the polis, but the same pattern occurs in various myths, and in particular in a number of tragedies.[45] One example, from Euripides' *Phoenician Women,* is the proposal to sacrifice prince Menoiceus as a 'remedy bringing salvation for the polis' (E. *Pho.* 893 πόλει . . . φάρμακον σωτηρίας). The death of Pentheus in fact benefits Thebes both as the killing of a *pharmakos* (scapegoat) and as allowing the founding of the cult of Dionysos.[46]

Next, the *Septem.* The messenger says (820–1):

> πόλις σέσωται, βασιλέων δ' ὁμοσπόροιν
> πέπωκεν αἷμα γαῖ' ὑπ' ἀλλήλων φόνῳ.
>
> The polis has been saved, and/but of the kings of the same seed
> the earth has drunk blood in mutual slaughter.[47]

He also[48] says (814ff.) that the god has destroyed indeed (δῆτα) the ill-fated clan, and that

> τοιαῦτα χαίρειν καὶ δακρύεσθαι πάρα,
> πόλιν μὲν εὖ πράσσουσαν, οἱ δ' ἐπιστάται,
> δισσὼ στρατηγὼ . . .
>
> Such things there are to lament and rejoice at,
> on the one hand the polis faring well, on the other the leaders,
> the two generals . . . [have divided their inheritance with iron].

Although at the heart of the play is the disastrous effect of the royal household on Thebes,[49] G. may nevertheless want to defend his criticism on the grounds that in the lines I have quoted no causal relation is made explicit between the death of the royal brothers and the salvation of Thebes. I will meet this point below. Now G. continues his criticism as follows:

It is not even true that at the end of *Oedipus the King* and *Seven against Thebes* the royal family 'is no more'. On the contrary, it is still on the throne; and the city has not yet reached clear water.[50] The chorus of the *Seven*, commenting on the death of the two princes, still says 'My anxiety is about the city, μέριμνα δ' ἀμφὶ πτόλιν—oracles keep their sharpness' (843f.). What

[45] Seaford (n. 3), 93, 130–1, 311–8.

[46] Ibid., ch. 8; id., *Euripides Bacchae* (Warminster, 1996), 44–52.

[47] Hutchinson in his commentary deletes these lines. But cf. Seaford (n. 3), 347, n. 57.

[48] The order in which these lines are spoken is a textual problem that does not concern us here.

[49] See e.g. 764–5 (quoted below), 923, and the plot as a whole.

[50] But the very same metaphor is in fact used by the messenger (795–6) to say that (after the battle) the city now *is* in clear water!

does lie ahead, of course, but ἔξω τοῦ δράματος, is yet another disastrous family business: the prohibition of burial of Polynices' corpse and the breach of that prohibition by Antigone. (53)

G. has here abandoned his principle, maintained apropos of hero-cult, that what is not mentioned in the play cannot be important for interpreting the play. I would welcome his conversion, were it not for the repeated insistence in the *Septem* that the house, and indeed the whole clan, is destroyed.[51] G. no doubt has Sophocles' *Antigone* in mind. But before Sophocles'play, which was written long after the *Septem,* there has survived no mention of Antigone's deed.[52] As far as Aeschylus' Theban trilogy is concerned, the action ends where it ends: the inherited family problem is, as at the end of the Oresteian trilogy, resolved.

G. cites 843–4. At 842–4 the chorus sing thus:

> βουλαὶ δ' ἄπιστοι Λαίου διήρκεσαν,
> μέριμνα δ' ἀμφὶ πτόλιν·
> θέσφατ' οὐκ ἀμβλύνεται.
>
> The faith-lacking decisions of Laios endured,
> and there is μέριμνα for (or throughout?) the polis:
> oracles do not lose their sharpness.

What these oracles are, G. does not tell us, but the chorus do. Just before the news of the death of the royal brothers they tell us in some detail of the old oracle of Apollo to the effect that Laios would save the polis by having no offspring (742–9), and of the consequences, for the royal family, of Laios disobeying it (750–7). And so when they then add 'I fear that with the kings the polis be subdued' (764–5), the fear is given special point by the oracle. But then the messenger arrives, and states that Apollo has now, with the death of the royal brothers, '*for the clan of Oedipus* (in emphatic position) fulfilled the ancient follies of Laios' (801–2 . . . Οἰδίπου γένει / κραίνων παλαιὰς Λαίου δυσβουλίας),[53] whereas the polis (he reveals in response to the chorus' immediate question) has been saved, adding that 'the god has indeed destroyed (ἀναλοῖ δῆτα) the ill-fated clan', and that the polis is faring well.[54] For the chorus then to say that 'the faith-lacking decisions of Laios endured . . . oracles do not lose their sharpness' makes perfect sense as commenting on the observations of the messenger. Although Laios' defiance of the oracle has in the past done damage to the polis, in the end it is for the *clan* that Apollo has 'fulfilled' the oracle. For Laios to obey the oracle by having no offspring would have meant salvation for the polis. And indeed with the self-destruction of the pernicious clan, which has produced the same result (no clan) as Laios would have done by obeying the oracle, the polis has indeed been saved. This coheres with the description of the punishment for Laios' transgression of the oracle as 'lasting to the third generation' (744–5). And so now, 'having overcome the two brothers, the *daimon* ceased his activity' (959–60).[55] Here is our causal connection between between destruction of clan and salvation of polis.

[51] 689–91, 720, 801, 813, 828 (retain ἀτέκνους· see n. 56 below), 877, 880–2, 954–5.

[52] Along with most critics, I accept the overwhelming evidence that *Sept.* 1005ff. are interpolated (see Hutchinson's commentary ad loc). My remark (n. 3, 347) that 'it is of course well known that the family and its sufferings were not yet at an end' implied too great a concession.

[53] As Hutchinson notes ad loc., there are verbal echoes here of the earlier description of the oracle.

[54] In the lines quoted above. I believe that 820–1 should be printed after 801–2, but this problem makes no real difference to my argument.

[55] On safety for the group by relinquishing a member as a basic pattern of Greek and other religions, see W. Burkert, *The Creation of the Sacred* (Harvard, 1996).

What, though, of the phrase quoted by G., *μέριμνα δ' ἀμφὶ πτόλιν*? On one view, adopted by G., this means that there is anxiety for the future of the polis. On another (preferred by Hutchinson in his commentary) it means grief or lamentation (as does the same word six lines later) throughout the city (cf. 900). Even if the former were correct, it could be the chorus persisting in general anxiety about the polis. Can the words be, as G. believes, a specific reference, the first hint in extant literature (and the only one in *Septem*) of the deed of Antigone? No, for the chorus accepts that the clan has been destroyed (828,[56] 880–2, 954–5), the polis saved (826), and the *daimon* satiated (959–60).[57]

On one point G. is correct. My expression 'by implication' does indeed 'betray' (in fact it *means*) that what is implied is not (explicity) said. It is self-evident that at the end of *Antigone* and *Oedipus Tyrannus* it is not stated that the polis has been saved. Hence my use of the phrase 'by implication'.

What is the nature of this 'implication'? Suffice it to say here that in both *Antigone* and *Oedipus Tyrannus* the actions of the *tyrannos* pollute the whole polis, and that in *Oedipus Tyrannus* the polluter is assimilated (I noted above) to the figure of the scapegoat, whose exile or death purifies the community. In both plays, as often in tragedy, the royal family *self*-destructs, leaving the community guiltless and free from vengeance. For the purpose of the resolution of conflict this is more important than it may at first seem to those of us who feel neither the anger of the dead nor the duty to avenge our kin. The community cannot afford to rejoice at the demise of the powerful. Certainly, it is obvious that the endings of these plays focus on the sufferings of Creon and of Oedipus and of their families, and not on the future of Thebes. Indeed, that is why I argued that what we see is in effect the self-destruction of the royal household, whereas G., thinking of the future, objects that (in *Septem* and *Oedipus Tyrannus*) the royal family 'is still on the throne'.[58] And yet are we to imagine Thebes, in *Antigone* and *Oedipus Tyrannus*, continuing in the grip of the disease caused by the tyrants who have now been removed? If the answer to this question is no, then the inevitable implication is that Thebes is cured. But does this implication matter to the interpretation of the plays? Certainly, its significance is limited: it is not the single key that unlocks tragedy. Rather, the contradiction between tyranny and the polis, of which the saving of the city through the self-destruction of the ruling family is one aspect, is an important but ignored component of the complex and multiple meanings of Athenian tragedy. In support and elucidation of this conclusion, two further points must be summarized here.

The first is that the disastrous doings of ruling families in tragedy are removed from the Athenian audience not only in time (in the age of myth) but also spatially (notably in Thebes). As we have seen, the Athenian democracy could associate tyranny with oligarchy, and tends to define and unite itself in antithesis to tyranny. It is, moreover, throughout much of the fifth century hostile to its oligarchic neighbour Thebes. Contrary to what G. imagines, I have never made the absurd claim that at the end of

[56] At 828 Hutchinson argues correctly that *ἀτέκνους* cannot mean 'unfortunate in their birth', but says that the notion of childlessness appears 'much too abruptly here'. But the chorus in this stanza are responding to what the messenger has just said, which includes the fact that the clan has 'indeed' been destroyed!

[57] The *aorist* *διήρκεσαν* (842) implies that the chorus are (not unnaturally) thinking of the death of the brothers (the present *ἀμβλύνεται* [844] then expresses a general principle).

[58] *Septem* I have dealt with above. In *O.T.* the destruction of Oedipus' household is powerful and complete enough to marginalize any sense of continuity in the succession of Creon, who as Jocasta's brother is from a different household.

the dramas Thebes acquires democratic institutions. Of course it does not. It is Thebes. And yet even in Thebes tyranny is represented by tragedy as in tension with the polis that it rules. As Euripides' Theseus, democratic king of Athens, tells the Theban herald, 'there is nothing more hostile to a polis than a *tyrannos*'.[59] In this way tragedy gives the Athenians three reassurances which together (despite potential inconsistency with each other) constitute the best of all worlds: the horrors of tyranny are projected onto the mythical past, the tension between tyranny and polis is resolved with the ancient self-destruction of the former, and the horrors of tyranny are safely projected onto Thebes. The representation of Thebes as in general a kind of anti-Athens[60] is also about Athens.

The second point concerns endings. We inevitably feel that the concluding focus (in many tragedies) on the intense suffering of once-powerful individuals makes everything else pale into insignificance. And this feeling may be heightened by our conception of tragedy as essentially or exclusively about unredeemable, inexplicable suffering. G. observes that it would be an obtuse audience that would leave a performance of Hamlet with the competence of Fortinbras as the next king of Denmark 'uppermost, or even importantly present, in its mind' (54).

And yet , as G. himself pertinently remarks, 'it must always be remembered that it was not for us that [Attic tragedy] was composed, and that it is consequently impossible to reduce it without remainder to our own familiar terms' (61). This should make us wonder whether our reaction to Hamlet can be so easily transposed *in toto* to fifth-century Athens. This is not to say that the chorus and the audience did not express grief at the death and suffering.[61] Indeed I have argued that one respect in which the effect of tragedy is 'collective' is the unifying effect of shared grief or lamentation on the group.[62] Now, this effect was also likely to have been a feature of hero-cult, even though the hero honoured by the community with cult is often also an offender against it.[63] And another ritual in which the community is likely to feel ambivalence about the suffering individual at its centre is the ritual of the *pharmakos* (scapegoat), who is both killed or exiled by the community and saves the community.[64] These rituals, in which focus on the death or exile of an ambivalent individual benefits the community, belong to the same world as does Athenian tragedy and may well have formed part of the perceptual filter of its audience.[65] Ambivalent too, in the historical memory of the Athenians, is the tyrant: towering individual, benefactor of the polis,[66]

[59] *Suppl.* 439; cf. e.g. *Pho.* 560 πότερα τυραννεῖν ἢ πόλιν σῴσαι θέλεις;

[60] See F. Zeitlin, 'Thebes: theater of self and society in Athenian drama', in J. Winkler and F. Zeitlin (eds), *Nothing to Do with Dionysos? Athenian Drama in its Social Context* (Princeton, 1990), 130–67.

[61] For the audience, see esp. Pl. *Rep.* 606a.

[62] This effect is 'collective' also in the sense that it is antithetical to the potentially anti-social effect of the same shared emotion when confined to the bereaved family. See my anthropologically grounded arguments (n. 3, 86–92, etc., ignored by G.) for the unifying effect of collective lamentation.

[63] Visser (n. 44); Seaford (n. 3), ch. 4.

[64] See n. 33 above, and J. Bremmer, 'Scapegoat rituals in ancient Greece', *HSCP* 87 (1983), 299–320. The ritual was performed in Athens.

[65] For ambivalence towards the tragic hero, see e. g., in Aesch. *Ag.*, the chorus' clearly implied disapproval of the king as bad for the community (62, 447–9, 456–62, 763–84) with their subsequent grief at his death (1489–96, 1538–50). On the ambivalence of the *Oresteia* towards its great individuals, see further M. Griffith, 'Bright dynasts: power and politics in the *Oresteia*', *Classical Antiquity* 14 (1995), 62–129.

[66] On the Athenian tyrants' benefits for the polis, see e. g. Hdt. 1.59.6, Thuc. 6.54.5.

criminal, expelled in the interest of the polis, universally detested. In tragedy the two ambivalences (religious and historical) merge. The suffering or death of what G. rightly calls the 'towering personalities' of tragedy has the huge attraction of providing simultaneously not only the solidarity of lamentation that is both pleasurable and collective but also symbolic resolution of the tension between *tyrannos* and polis.

University of Exeter RICHARD SEAFORD
r.a.s.seaford@exeter.ac.uk