

MAE J. SMETHURST

# The Artistry of Aeschylus and Zeami

*A Comparative Study of Greek Tragedy  
and No*



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A Comparative Study of  
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PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS

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## List of Abbreviations

<i>AJP</i>	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
<i>BICS</i>	<i>Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies</i>
<i>Camb. Phil. Proc.</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society</i>
<i>Class. et Med.</i>	<i>Classica et Mediaevalia</i>
<i>CP</i>	<i>Classical Philology</i>
<i>CQ</i>	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
<i>CW</i>	<i>Classical World</i>
<i>FEQ</i>	<i>Far Eastern Quarterly</i>
<i>GR</i>	<i>Greece and Rome</i>
<i>GRBS</i>	<i>Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies</i>
<i>HJAS</i>	<i>Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies</i>
<i>HSCP</i>	<i>Harvard Studies in Classical Philology</i>
<i>HThR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>Heike</i>	<i>Heike monogatari</i>
<i>JATJ</i>	<i>Journal of the Association of Teachers of Japanese</i>
<i>JHS</i>	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
<i>JJS</i>	<i>Journal of Japanese Studies</i>
<i>Koyama</i>	Koyama Hiroshi, Satō Kikuo, and Satō Ken'ichirō, eds., <i>Yōkyokushū</i> , vol. 1, <i>Nihon koten bungaku zenshū</i> , vol. 33 (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1973)
<i>MH</i>	<i>Museum Helveticum</i>
<i>MN</i>	<i>Monumenta Nipponica</i>
<i>NGS</i>	Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkōkai, <i>The Noh Drama</i> , 3 vols. (Tokyo and Vermont, 1955–1960)
<i>OCT</i>	<i>Oxford Classical Text</i>
<i>P-C</i>	<i>Pickard-Cambridge</i>
<i>Rh. Mus.</i>	<i>Rheinische Museum</i>

# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Rimer	J. Thomas Rimer and Yamazaki Masakazu, <i>On the Art of the Nō Drama: The Major Treatises of Zeami</i> (Princeton, 1984)
TAPA	<i>Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association</i>
WS	<i>Wiener Studien</i>
YKS	Yokomichi Mario and Omote Akira, eds., <i>Yōkyokushū</i> , vol. 1, <i>Nihon koten bungaku taikei</i> , vol. 40 (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1972)
ZZ	Omote Akira and Katō Shūichi, eds., <i>Zeami: Zenchiku</i> , <i>Nihon shisō taikei</i> , vol. 24 (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1974)

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In the year 1961, Kubo Masaaki, Professor of Classics at Tokyo University, kindly invited me to join the *Girishabigeki kenkyūkai* (Greek Tragedy Research Seminar) for its discussions of Sophocles' *Philoctetes*, held in conjunction with preparations for a translation of the play into Japanese and a production at Tokyo's outdoor theater located in Hibiya Park. This experience, coupled with an introduction to performances of *nō* in Japan, kindled my interest in a comparison of Greek tragedy and Japanese *nō*, an interest that was then nurtured by Gerald F. Else of the University of Michigan, who actively encouraged me in my pursuit of the present project.

I regret deeply that Gerald Else died before he had the opportunity to see a draft of the manuscript in anything close to its present form, for my gratitude to him as a mentor is great: he first taught me how to read ancient Greek, he introduced me to the works of Aeschylus and to Aristotle's *Poetics*, and he took concrete measures to support my comparative study by providing financial backing for a Workshop on the Comparison of *Nō* and Greek Tragedy under the auspices of the Center for the Coordination of Studies Ancient and Modern at the University of Michigan.

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## The Artistry of Aeschylus and Zeami



## Introduction



Anyone choosing at random and reading the texts of a Japanese *nō* play and an ancient Greek tragedy cannot help being struck by the differences between them: the former will most likely be a play short in length, lyric in tone, and lacking in dramatic conflict; the latter will probably be long and involve dramatic action and confrontation between characters. And yet, one continues to see references of a comparative nature to *nō* and Greek tragedy by scholars both of Japanese and of Greek theater and of the theater in general.<sup>1</sup> The reason is that most of these scholars have observed, and correctly, that some features of the productions of the two theaters are similar. Firsthand evidence dating from the Muromachi period in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when *nō* reached its artistic peak, as well as vestiges of early performances in present-day practice, taken with the existing evidence on the subject of Greek theatrical productions in the classical period of the fifth century B.C., when tragedy reached its artistic peak, assure us that, in spite of some obvious differences, performances of *nō* share a number of similarities with those of Greek tragedy. There is no question, for example, that early productions of both *nō* and Greek tragedy involved outdoor theaters, small all-male casts of actors, choruses, instrumentalists, masks, dancing, and other strikingly similar features. And yet, a lack of evidence about the circumstances of Greek performances, such as the nature of the audiences, theater structures, musical accompaniment, choreography, costumes, and props, makes a detailed comparison with performances of *nō* difficult. This lack

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Arthur Waley, *The Nō Plays of Japan* (London, 1921); Peter Arnott, *Greek Scenic Conventions in the Fifth Century B.C.* (Oxford, 1962) and *The Theatres of Japan* (London, 1969).



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of evidence on the Greek side may explain in part why no book devoted solely to a comparison of *nō* and Greek tragedy has ever been published.<sup>2</sup>

The many differences apparent in translated versions of the texts and the difficulty of reading the Greek and Japanese languages in their early poetic forms help to explain why no one has so far attempted a detailed comparison of important similarities and differences between the poetic texts of *nō* and Greek tragedy either. And yet, the texts do exist and provide ample material on which a comparison may be based—a comparison that can be of value in increasing our appreciation not only of *nō* and of Greek tragedy, but also of other poetic dramas. For whatever the real differences between *nō* and Greek tragedy may be, a close scrutiny of the texts of one dramatic form in the light of the other does provide the scholar with a gauge against which to measure the unique features of each. Moreover, as I shall attempt to show in this study, there are also similarities between the structures and the styles in the works of two playwrights, Zeami and Aeschylus, which when analyzed carefully in the light of each other can provide a fresh perspective on both.<sup>3</sup>

There are at least two approaches that can be taken in a study based primarily on the texts of plays, as is necessarily the case for the Greek side. One is to compare those *nō* which involve “plot,” that is, action unfolding contemporaneously with the dramatic time, with the majority of Greek tragedies; the other is to compare those tragedies which lack such action with the majority of *nō*. The former approach involves a larger number of texts on the Greek side; however, the latter is clearly the more informative

<sup>2</sup> To my knowledge the only works of length devoted to this subject are two dissertations: “A Comparative Study of Some Aspects of Greek Theatre and Nō Theatre: Aesthetic Values Arising from the Quest for the Meaning of Life,” by Ono Shinichi (Diss., University of Texas, 1975), and “The Mask in Ancient Greek Tragedy: A Reexamination Based on the Principles and Practices of the Noh Theater of Japan,” by Martha Bancroft Johnson (Diss., University of Wisconsin, 1984). (I follow the normal practice in this work of giving the surname first and the given name second for Japanese names, unless they appear in the other order in the author’s published work itself.) Martha Johnson writes on the subject of the types, the use, and the function of masks in Greek tragedy and *nō*. In “Apples and Oranges: The Construction of Character in Greek Tragedy and Noh Drama,” *Par Rapport: A Journal of the Humanities* 5–6 (1982–1983): 3–12, Thomas B. Hare points out the differences in portrayal of character between Sophocles’ *Oedipus the King* and Zeami’s *Izutsu*. The illustrations that she includes should be of interest to those who want to compare the differences and similarities between the masks of Greek tragedy and *nō*. Jason Roussos summarizes the similarities between the performances of *nō* and Greek tragedy in a short article, “Ancient Greek Tragedy and Noh,” *Diotima* 13 (1985): 121–128.

<sup>3</sup> Within his books on the subject of *nō*, Nogami Toyochirō, a Japanese scholar of literature, compared Greek tragedy and *nō* very effectively; however, his conviction that *nō* is unique led him to emphasize the differences, at the expense of the similarities, between the two. In particular, see his article, “Nō to girishageki” (Nō and Greek Drama), in *Shisō* (Tokyo, 1938), in which he refutes H. B. Chamberlain, who listed similarities between the two dramatic forms in his work *Things Japanese*, 5th ed. (London and Yokohama, 1905).

about the distinctive features of *nō* that were developed by Zeami. More importantly for the present study, the latter approach is also a better means by which to illuminate Greek tragedy from a new perspective and to direct the reader's attention to features of works written by Aeschylus, especially his *Persians*, that may not have been sufficiently appreciated heretofore. In addition, this approach allows us to concentrate attention on plays that Zeami, one of the most important playwrights, actors, critics, and teachers of *nō*, treats as the best of the genre, and to profit from the evidence of his fifteenth-century treatises on the art of *nō*.

The second approach, which is that adopted in the present study of Aeschylus's and Zeami's works, can be helpful to the classicist, who has very little external evidence about dramatic texts or performances in Greek antiquity. Beyond the exaggerated remarks of comic playwrights and the criticisms of Plato, little written evidence dating from the fifth century B.C. on the subject of Greek tragedy exists. We know that Sophocles wrote a treatise on the chorus, but it has not survived. Thus we must draw conclusions from the texts of the tragedies themselves and from what later critics and writers said when different fashions were in vogue than existed in the fifth century B.C. Aristotle, who is the author of our only existing theoretical work on the subject of Greek tragedy from the ancient period, wrote in the fourth century B.C., and he was not a playwright, actor, or teacher of actors, as Zeami was. In the *Poetics*, he does not focus on the subject of Aeschylus, questions of performance, or ways to engage the audience's attention in the theater. Although he addresses such matters as plot, character, diction, thought, and length of plays, he says nothing about the timing of the dramatic action, demotes the visual effects of the costumes and the masks to the lowest level of the playwright's art, assumes that his readers know about music composition, and often treats structure and style as if these pertained to a work intended for a reading rather than for a performance in the theater. In sum, Aristotle is less interested in questions of performance than he is in a theoretical discussion of the nature of poetry, especially dramatic poetry (although Aristotle shows that he is not unaware of the effect of performances on audiences in the theater; see the end of his *Politics*). Therefore, we must draw conclusions about Aeschylean performance, as we do about Sophoclean or Euripidean performance, from both the limited evidence of the extant texts and the external sources that do exist, that is, the vase paintings dating from the fifth century B.C. and later, and the remarks of such writers as Aristophanes and Plato, and of those who, like Athenaeus, Plutarch, and Pollux, wrote hundreds of years after Greek tragedy flourished.

The external evidence for *nō*, on the other hand, is by comparison quite extensive. Not only do we have vestiges of early *nō* preserved in perfor-

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manances today, but we also have Zeami's treatises, which are both theoretical and practical. (It is because Zeami wrote treatises that his *nō* serve as a better basis for this comparison than those written by his father Kan'ami, although he was equally important as a playwright and actor.) In these treatises, the playwright, actor, and teacher discusses or comments not only on length, structure, character, composition, and the aesthetics of *nō*, but also on dance, gestures, posture, music, prosody, special verbal effects, acting, the delivery of lines (even of single words and syllables), actor training, use of poetic sources, masks and costumes, use of the theater structure and props, attaining the desired effect of a performance on an audience, and so forth. When the plays he mentions are extant, such as the *nō Sane-mori*, on which much of this comparison concentrates, we can find examples to illustrate precisely what he means. In other words, Zeami's treatises remove some of the guesswork from the study of *nō*.<sup>4</sup>

Unfortunately, no one can claim that a comparison with *nō* will remove all the guesswork from a study of Greek tragedy. However, at the very least, a comparison of *nō* and Greek tragedy can provide for those familiar with only one of these theaters a meaningful introduction to the other, and an examination of the similarities and the differences between early Greek tragedy and Japanese *nō* can yield a sharper delineation of each form than is possible when each is taken in isolation from the other. In addition, because Zeami's treatises on the subject of performance are extant, because the secrets of the profession have been handed down since Zeami's day from one generation of actors to another, and because *nō* is still alive in theaters throughout Japan, in those areas in which the performances of tragedy and *nō* are similar it is possible to use the example of *nō* in an attempt to illustrate how the poetry of Aeschylean drama must have been brought alive by performers, musicians, and visual props. And most importantly, in spite of the obvious differences between the contents of the texts of *nō* and Greek tragedy, Zeami's treatises and plays can usefully contribute to an analysis of the structure and the style of Aeschylus's plays by providing material, such as does not exist from ancient Greece, to illustrate how the structure of a play written in poetic language is reflected in performance and how verbal techniques and literary allusions can be used in the theater. These are the areas that will be investigated in detail in this, a classicist's preliminary, comparison of *nō* and Greek tragedy.

<sup>4</sup> For a discussion of the treatises in the English language, see, for example, Richard N. McKinnon, "Zeami on the *Nō*: A Study of Fifteenth-Century Japanese Dramatic Criticism" (Diss., Harvard University, 1951); Yamazaki Masakazu, "The Aesthetics of Transformation: Zeami's Dramatic Theories," trans. Susan Matisoff, in *JJS* 7 (1981): 218-257; and Thomas B. Hare, *Zeami's Style: The Noh Plays of Zeami Motokiyo* (Stanford, 1986).

THE ORIGINS, the physical ambience of the productions, and the cultural, intellectual, and aesthetic milieu of *nō* and tragedy are not the subjects of this comparative study, which is focused instead on the structure and the style of dramatic texts and on the relationship of these to performance. However, a brief summary of the important similarities and differences in these areas is in order as background for anyone unfamiliar with either of the two theaters. On the subject of the origins or very early history of both *nō* and Greek tragedy,<sup>5</sup> the observations of Takebe Rinsyo at the conclusion to his article “Die griechische Tragödie und das japanische Noh-Drama” should suffice to illustrate one form a comparison can take.<sup>6</sup> *Nō*, Takebe says, developed from *dengaku*, field and harvest dances and songs, and from *sarugaku*, literally meaning “monkey songs and dances,” connected with Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples. Both of these were early improvisational forms of entertainment—playful and roughly hewn at first—of which traces survive in *kyōgen*, the comic-relief pieces still performed during a day’s program of three or more *nō*. *Nō* itself developed into a serious, noncomic, refined form of theater. Takebe argues that the history of *nō* might be comparable to that of tragedy in that, according to Aristotle, tragedy also sprang from improvisational beginnings, the *dithyrambos* and *satyrikon*, connected with the worship of the god Dionysus, and in that elements of these survived in the comic satyr plays performed after a day’s program of three tragedies. Tragedy, like *nō*, only later developed into a formal and serious theater.

Takebe suggests that because *nō* was called *sarugaku nō*, “the performance of monkey music,” long after the theater had dispensed with its original humorous and coarse elements, there could be an analogue here to the Greek name *tragōidia*. Since the name, which literally means “goat song,” persisted after tragedy became fully developed, that name, like *sarugaku nō*, may point to origins in comic and informal entertainment named after crude and laughable animals. Whether Takebe is correct or not in this particular conjecture, with which many scholars would disagree,<sup>7</sup> he does draw attention to aspects of *nō* and tragedy that are relevant to the present comparison of both theaters. First, he observes that both *nō*

<sup>5</sup> A study of the origins and early histories of Greek tragedy and *nō* and their connections with performed and written poetry, with dance, songs, and skits performed in religious and nonreligious precincts, and with entertainment and ritual performances at religious festivals might well prove valuable to a study of Greek tragedy, since the evidence is more nearly complete on the Japanese than on the Greek side. But even there, as on the Greek side, the evidence is often obscure and confusing.

<sup>6</sup> *Wiener humanistische Blätter* 3, 2nd ser., no. 5 (1960): 25–31. The article contains an epilogue by Albin Lesky, a classical scholar of Greek tragedy.

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, the arguments of Gerald F. Else in *The Origin and Early Form of Greek Tragedy* (Cambridge, Mass., 1965).

## INTRODUCTION

and tragedy developed out of improvisational forms of entertainment into artistic forms of theater. That they are artistic forms, rather than improvised, refined, rather than crude, is both true and important; we are not dealing with primitive theater. Secondly, he observes that both were connected with religious performances and festivals. Indeed, the religious content of both Greek tragedies and *nō* and the ambience of the religious festivals at which the plays (in the case of *nō*, some plays) were performed throughout their histories distinguish Greek tragedy and *nō* from much theater of the world.

One can treat the similarities between the theater structures and the performances, which Takebe also discusses in his article, for all Greek tragedy and all *nō* once they had developed into artistic forms of theater. At the same time, a close look at these similarities helps to explain why the present study is limited to tragedy of the early, rather than late, fifth century B.C., and to *nō* of the fourteenth and early fifteenth century A.D., rather than to that of later centuries and of the present day. (Since the evidence is difficult to assess, fragmentary, and in many cases unreliable on the Greek side, this summary is limited to only that information which can be presented with any degree of certainty.)

The most important theater arena, the one used for performances of Greek tragedy during the festival in honor of the god Dionysus, was located on the side of the Acropolis in Athens. In Aeschylus's day, the structures of this theater were not permanent, as they were in the fourth century B.C. For most of the period during which Aeschylus was writing and performing, the slope of the Acropolis hill, either the ground itself or temporary wooden stands, served as the auditorium for the audience, and the flat area in front of it, later called the *orkhēstra*, served as an acting and dancing area for both actors and chorus. At one end of this *orkhēstra* stood a temporary wooden structure that may have served as a stage (called a *skēnē*), or merely as a place in which the actors changed their costumes.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> On the Greek theater in Athens and its history, see A. Pickard-Cambridge, *The Theatre of Dionysus at Athens* (Oxford, 1946) and of the stage in Aeschylus's day, see N.G.L. Hammond, "The Conditions of Dramatic Production to the Death of Aeschylus," *GRBS* 13 (1972): 387–450, and Oliver Taplin, *The Stagecraft of Aeschylus* (Oxford, 1977), 452–459. On the evidence for rectangular-shaped acting areas, the differences between the theaters of the fifth century B.C. and those of the fourth century B.C., the size of the Greek theaters, and so forth, see the more recent work of E. Pöhlmann, "Die Proedrie des Dionysostheaters im 5. Jahrhundert und das Bühnenspiel der Klassik," *MH* 38, fasc. 3 (1981): 129–146. For information about the Festival of Dionysus, consult A. Pickard-Cambridge, *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens*, 2nd ed., rev. by John Gould and D. M. Lewis (Oxford, 1968), 57–125. Albin Lesky's article, "Noh-Bühne und griechische Theatre," *Maia*, n.s. 15 (1963): 38–44, which summarizes some of the similarities between *nō* and Greek tragedy, suggests that evidence for the use of resonators in the Greek theaters might be elucidated by the example of *nō* and the presence of

Outdoor *nō* theaters at religious sanctuaries, such as at Kōfukuji in Nara where performances are held today as they were in the past, were similar to this Greek theater in a number of respects. Evidence suggests that the audiences sat on temporary wooden benches or on the ground itself, around three sides of a flat area where the actors performed and the chorus sang, at one end of which there sometimes stood a temporary structure that was used as a stage, or sometimes a part of a temple or shrine building that was used as a viewing place for dignitaries. These theatrical arenas were smaller than their Greek counterparts. However, the arenas used for *kanjin nō*, "subscription *nō*," were at least as large, if not larger. Temporary wooden stands, boxes open to the sky, were built around an arena, which measured between ninety to one hundred and thirty-three feet or more in diameter—that is, more than three hundred feet in perimeter (sixty-three *ken* at five feet per *ken*)—and in which a temporary platform was constructed for the performances of the actors, chorus, and instrumentalists.<sup>9</sup> (In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the one *hashigakari*, a bridge by which the actors entered the stage from center back, or the two, on either side of the stage back, were comparable to the *parodoi*, "passageways," used in the Greek theater.)

In the fifth century B.C., the Greek theaters evolved from temporary structures, which included an *orkhēstra* where actors, chorus, and instrumentalists alike performed, to more solidly built structures, which included *orkhēstras* and stages that could separate the chorus from the actors. The structures were made of wood during the earlier period; later these structures were made of stone. (Remains of a later stone theater still exist today at Epidaurus.) By the middle of the Tokugawa era in the eight-

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thirteen pottery resonators used under the polished floors of *nō* stages today. His suggestion serves as an incentive for us to look further for other parallels.

<sup>9</sup> There is evidence that Sophocles had to stop acting in his own plays because his voice was too weak for the large theater; there is evidence that because the voice of Kiami, a *dengaku* performer, was not strong enough to fill a normal-sized arena for *kanjin nō*, the size of the stands was decreased especially for his performance to 54 sections or to an acting arena with a perimeter of 270 feet as opposed to the normal 300 plus feet. There is one notice for a performance of the year 1349 for which the *nō* theater featured at least 83 sections of boxes, or a perimeter of 415 feet. See P. G. O'Neill, *Early Nō Drama: Its Background, Character and Development 1300-1450* (London, 1958), 79.

*Nō* are still being performed at both the Buddhist temple Kōfukuji and at the nearby Shinto Kasuga shrine on the occasion of the Kasuga Wakamiya Onmatsuri, a religious festival. On the subject of this festival, of the subscription *nō*, and of the theater structure, see O'Neill, *Early Nō*, who thinks (78) that the stage itself, which was used in *kanjin nō*, was roofed. The ancient Greek *proskēnion* ("stage") seems not to have been covered with a roof during any period of its history. On the subject of *kanjin nō*, see also Jacob Raz, *Audience and Actors: A Study of Their Interaction in the Japanese Traditional Theatre* (Leiden, 1983), 76-85.

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eenth century, the conventional nō theaters had evolved into intimate indoor auditoria with raised and roofed wooden stages measuring approximately twenty feet square. (These stages are used for performances throughout Japan today.) In nō theaters, there seems at first to have been no backdrop; later the painting of a pine tree was and still is used in all performances. On the Greek side, for a performance of Aeschylus's *Persians* (472 B.C.), no scene painting or backdrop was needed; however, by the time the *Oresteia* (458 B.C.) was staged, some representation of a building that could serve as a palace and temple must have been used.<sup>10</sup> In other words, in antiquity until the time that Greek tragedy was no longer a viable form of entertainment, the theater structures in Greece changed from temporary to permanent structures, and from one acting arena for both actors and chorus to a separation of some of their functions between the skēnē and the orkhēstra; in Japan, public nō theaters of Zeami's day were not permanent structures, but the later indoor theaters, which have remained essentially the same from the eighteenth century on to the present day, were. Throughout the history of nō the actors and chorus have performed together on the same surface. Thus, since Greek tragedy was always performed outdoors, but only *early* nō was with any frequency, and since nō has always featured one acting arena for the chorus, actors, and instrumentalists, but only the *early* classical Greek theater did, the Greek theater of the fifth century B.C., especially the early theater of Aeschylus's day in which a stage with a backdrop was not needed, is most nearly comparable to that of Muromachi period nō.<sup>11</sup> In fact, because they accommodated a variety of props and mechanical devices,<sup>12</sup> later Greek

<sup>10</sup> Comparable to the painting of the pine in nō is the presence of a religious marker, an altar, in ancient Greek theaters. The pine tree represents the Yōgō pine at the Kasuga Shrine in Nara in front of which the god of the shrine was first said to dance. Even today, once a year during the festival there, a nō actor regularly stands at the pine so that "the god may descend into the actor and make him his reflection." See Donald Keene, *Nō: The Classical Theatre of Japan* (Palo Alto, 1973), 13; this book, as well as the original hardback edition published in 1966 with many illustrations, is a good general introduction in the English language to the subject of nō. See also the appropriate pages of E. Miner, Hiroko Odagiri, and Robert E. Morrell, *The Princeton Companion to Classical Japanese Literature* (Princeton, 1985), esp. 307–316. In Japanese, almost all facets of nō are discussed in *Nōgaku zensho*, ed. Nogami Toyochirō, 7 vols. The new edition (Tokyo, 1984) was edited by Nishino Haruo and Matsumoto Yasushi.

For diagrams of the changes that took place in the physical nō theater, see Earle Ernst, *The Kabuki Theatre* (New York, 1956), 33. It is likely that even lines 140–141 of the *Persians*, which refer to a place for taking counsel, do not point to the need for scene painting or a backdrop. See below, Chapter Two, note 40.

<sup>11</sup> Pöhlmann, "Die Proedrie," has suggested that there was greater flexibility with respect to the playwrights' use of the acting area in the fifth century B.C. than there was in the next century.

<sup>12</sup> Certainly by the fourth century B.C., productions of tragedy included a number of mechanical devices, such as the *mēkhanē* used for the *deus ex machina*. One of the ex-

theaters dating from the end of the fifth and from the fourth centuries B.C. are more nearly comparable to the present-day kabuki theater.

In both early tragedy and fourteenth- and fifteenth-century *nō*, the uncluttered acting arena in which few props were needed allowed the performers in their costumes and their masks to be visually prominent and serve as the focus of the plays. The costumes were elaborate, perhaps stylized, and reflected the function and the class of the character that an actor depicted.<sup>13</sup> To judge from the lists in Pollux's *Onomasticon* of the second century A.D., and from the collection of the Kanze school of *nō*, masks fell into similar categories in both countries.<sup>14</sup> Perhaps because there are only so many types of characters that can appear in myth and legend and history, the material on which the writers of tragedy and *nō* drew, the masks in both theaters were similarly typed by sex, age, and class. Coloration of the skin and the style of the hair indicated certain distinctions between the types, such as the degree of suffering of the character. To the extent that masks were used and the masks of the two theaters fell into similar categories—character types, famous people out of legend, divinities, and monsters or supernatural beings—Greek tragedy and *nō* were alike.

Unfortunately, none of the masks survives from the Greek classical period, but on the basis of inferences drawn from the texts of the plays and

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ceptions to the absence of such devices in *nō* today is the use of a large bell dropped to the stage by means of a pulley in the play *Dōjōji* written by Nobumitsu in the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century. See Keene, *Nō*, 76–78. On the use of realistic props in *nō*, see Raz, *Audience and Actors*, 115. In kabuki many such devices are featured. On the subject of the paucity of stage resources required for the performance of Aeschylus's plays, see Taplin, *Stagecraft*, 434–451. The *Life of Aeschylus* (14) states that the playwright outdid his predecessors and adorned the skēnē and amazed the spectators in a number of ways, including the use of painting, devices, altars, tombs, musical instruments. To my mind, this and similar late evidence can be interpreted in two ways. It may reflect the practices of a period later than Aeschylus during which the prop managers and set designers translated scenes from Aeschylus's texts into spectacular productions. Or, this evidence may suggest that Aeschylus amazed the audiences because his use of painting, costumes, props, musical instruments, etc., was more in evidence and more effective than that of his predecessors. However, I do not think that we should interpret it to mean that in Aeschylus's day productions of his plays were filled with spectacle or that many props and elaborate sets were required for them.

<sup>13</sup> For tragedy, see Pickard-Cambridge, hereafter P-C, *Dramatic Festivals*, 197–209; for *nō*, see Keene, *Nō*, 65–66. The actors and chorus members of *nō* usually carry fans; those of Greek tragedy do not.

<sup>14</sup> See Pollux 4. 133–142. On the problems involved in using Pollux as a source for costumes and masks in Greek tragedy, specifically, in determining which period of tragedy he means, see P-C, *Dramatic Festivals*, 177–179. The collection of the Kanze school is a major collection of masks, but not the only one. See Katayama Kuroemon, ed., *Kanzeke denrai nōmenshū* (translated at the end of the book as “Noh Masks Treasured in the Kanze Family”) (Tokyo, 1954), whose book was chosen for citation because it includes at the end a short description in English of each mask illustrated.



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from Greek vase paintings dating from the fifth century B.C., it seems likely that the masks of tragedy from the early rather than the late periods are more like those of *nō*.<sup>15</sup> In the fourteenth century, there is evidence to show that *nō* masks could be expressive and realistic compared to those of later centuries. All these later masks, and many of the earlier masks as well, including those Zeami used, were more elegantly carved and more subtle in their depiction of differences in facial expression than the earliest versions. The same degree of subtlety of expression is not apparent for those masks represented on Greek vase paintings and in later sculpted models. In fact, along with the changes that took place in the development of the theaters, the Greeks, like the Romans, moved toward greater distortion of facial expression on the masks and larger masks than we find in the *nō* theater.<sup>16</sup>

The kinetic elements—the dances, movements, and gestures—made it possible for the actors who wore masks to display emotions.<sup>17</sup> We know little about dance and movements, important features of performances of tragedy at least in early fifth-century B.C. Greece, for the Greek texts do not contain choreographic directions, as the *nō* texts do.<sup>18</sup> However, to

<sup>15</sup> According to P-C, *Dramatic Festivals*, 191, the early masks seem to cover the face alone, but later masks include full heads of hair. (The Japanese *nō* mask covers the face alone; the wig is a separate piece.)

<sup>16</sup> See the discussion of the young woman mask painted on a fragment of a vase that probably dates from Aeschylus's time in Lucy Talcott, "Kourimos Parthenos," *Hesperia* 8 (1939): 267–273. This mask is not naturalistic, nor does it exhibit a distorted facial expression. It is compared to a young woman's mask (*magojirō*) in *nō* by Johnson, "The Mask in Ancient Greek Tragedy," 272. Johnson includes illustrations of these masks in figs. 1 and 44 respectively.

<sup>17</sup> Since those *nō* actors who did not and do not wear masks maintain expressionless faces throughout a performance, the effect is very much as if they had donned masks. Only those *nō* actors who are playing the roles of a woman, old person, demon, monster, or deity wear masks. By contrast, all members of the cast in tragedy wore masks.

<sup>18</sup> See P-C, *Dramatic Festivals*, 246–254, and U. v. Wilamowitz-Möllendorff, *Aeschylus tragoediae* (Berlin, 1958), 12–13. On pp. 250–251, P-C quotes evidence on the subject of the importance of dance to the tragedians Phrynichus, Aeschylus, and Sophocles and gives the evidence for Aeschylus's invention of many dance figures. Even though we cannot reconstruct the choreography, we know that dance was an important aspect of early, if not later, Greek tragedy. See Lillian B. Lawler, *The Dance of the Ancient Greek Theatre* (Iowa City, 1964). Famee Lorene Shisler, "The Technique of the Portrayal of Joy in Greek Tragedy," *TAPA* 73 (1942), discusses on pages 286–288 some gestures and movements that seem to be required in the light of the texts of Greek tragedies. On the subject of imitation in the arts, Aristotle (*Poetics*, 1447a27) says that dancers imitate character, feeling, and action by means of rhythms that are embodied in gestures.

Zeami speaks to the importance of dance and gestures in his treatises. For example, at the beginning of his *Nōsakushō* (On the Composition of *Nō*), he says that dance and song, which includes poetry, are the two arts of greatest importance to consider in one's choice of a subject for *nō*. For a detailed discussion in the English language of dance in *nō*, see Monica Bethe and Karen Brazell, *Dance in the Nō Theatre*, Cornell University East Asia Papers, no. 29 (Ithaca, N.Y., 1982).

judge from Greek vase paintings, late evidence, and the texts themselves, the gestures and the dances were more flamboyant in the Greek theater than in the Japanese *nō* theater.<sup>19</sup> Yet this difference, like the others, is less pronounced if we compare the *nō* of the early period rather than that of the present day with Greek tragedy. During the earliest period, and again when we enter the second half of the fifteenth century and the sixteenth century, many of the *nō* performances were melodramatic. But government sanctions in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries produced a permanent change, and the dances, not to mention the speeches and songs, became very solemn and slow in tempo. The effect of this change can be seen in the slow-moving and dignified performances today in which the words of the songs and the speeches are sometimes so muffled that they are unintelligible.<sup>20</sup> In Greece, on the other hand, vase paintings strongly suggest that there was flamboyant acting during every period of tragedy. This vital element, dances and movements by the actors on stage, even more vital in *nō* than in tragedy, is comparable only if we limit ourselves to the early period of *nō*.

Thus the particular aspects of the theaters and the performances mentioned above recommend a comparison, not of late tragedy or *nō*, but of the theater of the early part of the fifth century B.C., especially that of Aeschylus, with that of late fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century *nō*. In sum, there are significant parallels between the performances of *nō* and tragedy that set them apart from other theaters. In both, three or more serious plays, often with a religious message, and the comic *kyōgen* or satyr plays were performed on religious and/or public occasions for all classes of people,<sup>21</sup> in outdoor theaters that contained few props or architectural structures compared with much of later Greek tragedy and other types of Japanese and Western drama. From the three sides of these outdoor auditoria, the audience's attention was directed toward the small, all-male casts, with primary roles limited to two or three actors, one of whom

<sup>19</sup> See the evidence of T.B.L. Webster, *Greek Theatre Production*, 2nd ed. (London, 1970), and A. D. Trendall and T.B.L. Webster, *Illustrations of Greek Drama* (London, 1971).

<sup>20</sup> See Keene, *Nō*, 39–41. When *nō* became the official entertainment of the courts, the public turned its attention to the more melodramatic kabuki and bunraku performances.

<sup>21</sup> On the presence of "commoners" at the performances of *nō* during the Muromachi period, see Raz, *Audience and Actors*, and Watsuji Tetsurō, "Yōkyoku ni arawareta rinri shisō" (Japanese Ethical Thought in the Noh Plays of the Muromachi Period), trans. David A. Dilworth, *MN* 24 (1969): 467–498.

One difference between *nō* and Greek tragedy is that Zeami, like other playwrights of *nō*, also put on productions of plays for the shōgun in his palace. These were performed for a more elite audience and in smaller theaters both than his productions of *kanjin nō* or those *nō* put on at religious festivals, and than productions of Greek tragedy.

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was the playwright himself. These actors were supplemented in some cases by mute extras, but always in both theaters by choruses and musical instrumentalists, a flutist and two or three drummers in *nō*, and a player of a double-reed instrument (*aulos*) and perhaps a lyre player in Greek tragedy.<sup>22</sup> In both forms the dances, movements, and gestures enhanced the appearance of those members of the cast who were dressed in masks and costumes, and also complemented the words of the texts. Finally, in both, the texts, which were poetic, were delivered in a variety of ways: sung to the accompaniment of instruments, recitative, narration, and speech.<sup>23</sup>

The similarities summarized above, which as a whole apply to the theaters of Aeschylus and Zeami and which in many cases apply to *nō* and Greek tragedy throughout their histories, in themselves provide a basis for a comparison. At the very least, the similarities allow us to posit one conclusion about *nō* and Greek tragedy that sets them apart from many theaters. They prevent members of an audience from mistaking a performance not only for everyday reality, as is true of other theaters, but also for the degree of realism even, for example, of a Shakespearean or kabuki play.<sup>24</sup> Various elements, such as the masks, the small number of male actors, and the presence "on stage" of the chorus and the instrumentalists throughout a performance, create a special aesthetic relationship between the plays and the audiences. The use of masks or expressionless faces not only disguises the fact that males are playing female roles, but also submerges the personalities of the actors. The words, because they are for the most part poetic, the stage, because it is devoid of sets and many props, and the movements, because they are arranged by a choreographer (the playwright himself), do not reproduce their counterparts in the real world. The scarcity, but importance, of the visual features helps the playwright in turn to place the focus on that which in his mind is essential for the audience to appreciate in any given play.

The special aesthetic relationship between actors and audience in both *nō* and Greek tragedy is achieved in part because the casts of both are limited to a small number of actors. The masks make it possible for an actor in *nō* or in tragedy to assume two roles and even more than two roles

<sup>22</sup> See P-C, *Dramatic Festivals*, 165-167.

<sup>23</sup> On delivery in Greek tragedy, see P-C, *Dramatic Festivals*, 156-167. On the subject of vocal music and chant, see the work of the *nō* performer (drum player) Kunio Komparu, *The Noh Theater: Principles and Perspectives*, trans. Jane Corddry (text) and Stephen Comee (the *nō* plays) (Tokyo and New York, 1983), a translation of *Noh e no izanai* (Invitation to the Noh). On the musical dimensions of Aeschylean tragedy, see William C. Scott, *Musical Design in Aeschylean Theater* (Hanover, N.H. and London, 1984).

<sup>24</sup> See John Gould, "Dramatic Character and 'Human Intelligibility' in Greek Tragedy," *Camb. Phil. Proc.*, n.s. 24, no. 204 (1978): 43-67, on the subject of actions and characters in tragedy. See his note 56 on *nō*.

in tragedy. To be sure, there can be more than three actors with speaking roles in *nō*, as there cannot be in tragedy, but the effect is similar—one actor, presumably the main actor and the playwright, is the center of attention. In *nō*, predictably, there is the *shite*, the main actor, and the *waki*, the adjacent actor who prepares for and draws out the story from the *shite*. Each of these actors can be attended by *tsure*. The attendant of the *shite* is called simply *tsure*, of the *waki* *wakizure*. The former may, but need not, play important roles; the latter are often attendant priests or courtiers who, whatever their number, do not have a dramatic character of their own but assume a function literally as attendants of the *waki* priest or courtier. (The *waki* and *wakizure* do not wear masks.) Thus the total number of significant actors in *nō* is three: *shite*, *tsure*, and *waki* (although often there are only a *shite* and a *waki*).

In tragedy, the main actor (sometimes called the *tragōidos*), and the one or two other actors (called *hypokritai*), later called the protagonist, deuteragonist, and tritagonist respectively,<sup>25</sup> all can play more than one role, but in many tragedies, in which the main character appears in the beginning, middle, and end, the same actor presumably plays this role throughout. Of the three actors in tragedy, one often plays the role of a nameless character, such as a messenger. In *nō*, the *kyōgen*, often playing the part of an ordinary and nameless inhabitant of the place in which the play is set, is an additional actor. Some tragedies and *nō* feature, in addition to the actors mentioned above, children and mutes and walk-ons, but for the most part, the limitation of two or three significant actors in both theaters helps to create a setting in which the audience's attention is attracted to, rather than distracted from, the words, movements, and visual appurtenances, the props, and the costumes of the few actors. In Aeschylus's *Persians*, for example, there are only two actors; in Zeami's *Sanemori*, there are two actors plus the *kyōgen*.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> P-C, *Dramatic Festivals*, 129–135, presents the evidence for the use of these names in Greek tragedy. It may be the case that in early Greek tragedy a distinction by name was not drawn between the main actor and the one or two others, as Gerald F. Else had suggested there was in "The Case of the Third Actor," *TAPA* 76 (1945): 1–10, and "HYPOKRITĒS," *WS* 72 (1959): 75–107. However, Else's suggestion is one for which the example of *nō* provides a parallel.

<sup>26</sup> Nogami, in "Nō to girishageki," discusses the differences in the deployment of roles in *nō* and tragedy, saying that there may be many more actors on stage in *nō* than in Greek tragedy. However, such is true only when there are a number of *wakizure* or *tsure* or attendants of the *kyōgen*, that is, actors who play relatively insignificant parts and are often not individual characters in their own right. Nogami also states that the *shite* is the only important character, the one on whom the play is focused. On this point, see his article, "Nō no shuyaku ichinin shugi" (The Principle of the One-actor Leading Role in Nō), in *Nō: kenkyū to hakken* (Nō: Research and Discovery) (Tokyo, 1930 [originally published in 1909?]), parts of which have been translated into English by Chieko Irie Mulhern under the title "The Monodramatic Principle of the Noh Theatre," *JATJ* 16,

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The constant presence on stage of a chorus of eight to ten men in *nō* and twelve to fifteen men in tragedy is another distinctive, if not unique, feature of these theaters that enhances the special aesthetic relationship between the actors and the audience. In opera, for example, there may be a chorus; however, it does not remain on stage throughout the performance, and the ensemble is externally directed by a conductor, often standing on a podium above the instrumentalists, who are not in full view of the audience. In *nō* and tragedy, on the other hand, the chorus, as well as the instrumentalists, remains on stage, and both groups perform without the assistance of a conductor.

The choruses, like the masks and the number of actors, differ in important particulars between *nō* and Greek tragedy. In *nō*, the chorus is neither masked nor dressed in costumes that depict a character, because the chorus is not a character in its own right. In fact, it only rarely expresses an opinion of its own, never stands up from its seated position, and does not become involved in the movements during the course of a performance. The chorus assumes the part of characters in a different manner: it speaks for the playwright, as in the tragedies, and serves as a mouthpiece for the characters. The *nō* chorus assumes more than one identity during a play by becoming the voice of the main actor (*shite*) or of the second actor (*waki*). (There is a tendency in many *nō* for the chorus to sing on behalf of the *shite* so that he can dance when the audience's attention is directed toward him.) The result is an interaction between the chorus and the actor, between the group and the individual for whom it speaks, such that often the distinctions between them disappear. In Greek tragedy, the chorus has a fixed identity. Not only do the members of the choruses wear masks and costumes that distinguish the group as a group of old men or of maidens, for example, but they also function as a group of characters in their own right. The chorus speaks in its own voice, participates actively in dialogues, sings, moves around, and even dances. It may advise, give information, express emotion in the first person, on occasion display differences of opinion within the group, and take part in the action.

The presence of a chorus is a feature that *nō* and tragedy share in common; the function of the chorus is different. And yet, if the chorus is to be considered in a comparison between *nō* and tragedy, that comparison is best made between the works of Aeschylus and Zeami rather than between those of Sophocles or Euripides and Zeami. In many of the works of the

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no. 1 (April 1981): 72–86. At the end of this article (pp. 80–83 in the translated version), there is a summary of some differences—the number of actors, the function of the choruses, and the use and types of masks—that Nogami found between *nō* and Greek tragedy.

latter two tragedians, the choruses act as objective observers or commentators upon the action of the play; by contrast, the choruses of Aeschylus's tragedies can become so involved in the action that in two of his tragedies, the *Suppliants* and the *Eumenides*, the chorus functions as a major character. These choruses engage in a degree of physical action, which most probably included a vigorous dance in the original productions of the *Eumenides*, that is antithetical to the lack of motion on the part of the seated choruses of *nō*. However, the choruses in Aeschylus's works can serve, if not as the mouthpiece for other actors, at least as a main character in some plays, as an important but secondary actor (like the *waki*) in others, and in all plays as a spokesman for the author (like the choruses of *nō*). In addition, the function of the Aeschylean chorus as an actor provides a third or fourth actor to his tragedies as *tsure* provide extra actors in *nō*. It is therefore possible to draw a comparison between the Aeschylean chorus and that of *nō*. Nogami, who takes into account the differences in the choruses of Aeschylus's, Sophocles', and Euripides' plays as well as the relative importance of the chorus in Aeschylus's works as opposed to his successors, makes a particularly important point when he argues that the idea of a one-man show is intrinsic to *nō*, whereas the contraposition of actor and chorus at first, and later of actor and actor, creates a tension in tragedy that one does not find in *nō*. The lack of confrontation between actors and between actor and chorus in the *Persians* is one of the primary reasons why the analysis of structure in Chapter Two focuses on this Aeschylean work.<sup>27</sup>

A point-by-point correspondence does not present itself in a comparison of the choruses of *nō* and tragedy any more than it does in other areas of the comparison. We should not expect it to do so. Yet again and again there emerges in Aeschylus's works some quality that makes them, more than the works of Sophocles and Euripides, seem like Japanese *nō*—a fact that reflects the times in which Aeschylus wrote and the difference between the first and second halves of the fifth century B.C. The differences among the tragedians is in part due to the influence of formal rhetoric and sophisticated modes of thought that began to be taught and practiced extensively in Athens during the latter half of that century; their influence is clearly

<sup>27</sup> See Nogami, "Nō no shuyaku ichinin shugi," 29–36 (pp. 80–83 in Mulhern's translation), on this difference between *nō* and Greek tragedy. Nogami's "Gasshōka no higikyokuteki seishitsu: Nō to girishageki to no hikaku" (The Tragic Quality of Choral Songs: A Comparison of Nō and Greek Drama), in *Nō no saisei* (The Rebirth of Nō) (Tokyo, 1935), is devoted to the subject of the chorus. The article begins with a caveat against seeing a similarity between the choruses of *nō* and of tragedy. But his observation (139) that the chorus is the onlooker in tragedy and that similarly the *waki* is not part of the action in *nō* is one of many that are helpful in a formulation of the differences and the similarities between the roles of the choruses and actors in *nō* and Greek tragedy.

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visible in the plays of Sophocles and Euripides, but less so in those of Aeschylus. The reasoned exposition of Sophocles' plays and the dissection of arguments common in Euripides' plays hardly appear at all in the works of Aeschylus. A syllogistic and expository style does not characterize *nō* either. The Japanese did have a "philosophy and a rhetoric" in the fifteenth century, but the *nō* theater, not to mention the literature, exhibited neither the kind of rhetoric that could be used in courtrooms and assemblies nor the kind of philosophy that led to the development of Western logic, science, and mathematics. "Abstract" thinking in Japan lay instead in the realms of religion, study of historical change, and aesthetics.

It can be argued that Sophocles and Euripides appeal intellectually to their audiences in a way that Aeschylus and Zeami do not. The audiences of later Greek tragedy could feel flattered when invited to exercise their wits and to realize that they knew better than some character what another meant to say to him. In Euripides' *Medea*, for example, the audience knows, as Jason does not, that Medea is lying when she begs his forgiveness, and it may take delight in her sophisticated methods of persuasion. Or when Oedipus, in Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*, says that he is as fully committed to finding Laius's killer as if Laius were his father, the audience knows that he is in fact both the son and the killer of Laius. It enjoys its superior knowledge and speculates on the possibilities that this knowledge offers to the development in the plot of a well-known story.

In the *Agamemnon* and the *Libation Bearers*, Clytemnestra and Orestes also practice deceit, but this is not the case with characters in Aeschylus's *Persians*, where the emotional mood and the atmosphere of the words, music, movements, and costumes engage the audience's attention instead. In his model plays, Zeami does not depend for success on the impact of a logical argument as much as on the emotional or poetic or aesthetic impact of the characters' words, music, movements, and appearance. His characters are not sarcastic, do not intend to deceive. They are unlike Medea, who pretends to be weak when she lies in her speech to Jason, or Oedipus, whose words depend on a fallacy created by the author for their effectiveness. As a result, the styles of Aeschylus in his *Persians* and of Zeami allow the audiences to concentrate on the words themselves and thus to grasp the literal, the emotional, the religious, the moral, and the aesthetic significances directly. The richness, depth of tone, and significance of the statements and songs of the characters and chorus often derive from allusions to ritual forms or to poetry and song that provide an added religious, spiritual, and aesthetic dimension. In other words, the playwrights appeal to the audiences' familiarity with and knowledge of poetry, song, and the techniques of poetic language. This type of appeal to knowledge is very

different from the irony found in the plays of Sophocles, and even more in the plays of Euripides.

Among the aesthetic ideals that do apply to *nō* and that had developed by the fifteenth century is *yūgen*. The term is almost impossible to define inasmuch as its meaning changed, even within Zeami's lifetime;<sup>28</sup> but as a working definition I offer "half-revealed or suggested grace, tinged with wistful sadness."<sup>29</sup> Part of what is involved in this aesthetic in *nō* is the veiling in mystery of that which is to be perceived or grasped by the audiences so that it cannot be appreciated by reason alone, but engages other faculties as well, that is, the senses, the heart, and the spirit. Zeami's plays all show marks of the subtle more than the obvious, of suggestion more than explicit statement, and of restraint more than prolixity of expression. Zeami recommended above all that the actors display *yūgen* (grace and elegance) in their acting. With his poetry as well, especially in the woman *nō*, which are the most lyric plays, Zeami succeeds both in creating an atmosphere of grace tinged with wistful sadness and in representing what is regarded in Buddhist thought, which so strongly influenced him, as the fragile world in which we live.

Suggestion and subtlety of expression are not unknown qualities of style in ancient Greek writings. Suggestion rather than explicit statement characterizes the style of Aeschylus's older contemporary, Heraclitus, who seemed to allude to his own method in a famous fragment: "The lord whose mantic office is in Delphi does not speak out or conceal, but gives signs."<sup>30</sup> Beauty tinged with wistful sadness is eminently descriptive of the lyric poetry of Sappho, a poetess of the seventh and sixth centuries B.C. Aeschylus's style, in many respects comparable to that of Heraclitus, often hints and suggests rather than states explicitly. It is often highly lyric, if not in Sappho's mode. But even in the *Persians*, the aggregate definition of *yūgen* does not apply. Wistful sadness does not tinge Aeschylus's work; the emotions he expresses in his plays are fear and grief. Nor does he represent to his audience a fragile and elusive world; rather, his world of gods and human beings is solidly planted on earth. A longing for someone or a regret about some experience during his or her lifetime is often the character's "tragedy" in *nō*, especially when he is a ghost or spirit. The successful resolution of this tragedy is release from the world and from the punishment of remaining attached to it. In Aeschylean works, fear and

<sup>28</sup> See Andrew A. Tsubaki, "Zeami and the Transition of the Concept of *Yūgen*: A Note on Japanese Aesthetics," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 30, no. 1 (Fall 1971): 55-67.

<sup>29</sup> This definition is suggested in *The Noh Drama*, NGS, vol. 1 (Tokyo and Vermont, 1955), x.

<sup>30</sup> Diels-Kranz no. 93.



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grief, two tragic emotions that can also, though less frequently, be found in *nō*, spring not so much from a character's experience or relationship with another person as from some violent act in which the main character, a living person, is involved and for which he or she suffers the consequences from divine and human retribution on earth.

*Nō* is a world of comparatively ephemeral beings; Greek tragedy, a world of substantial beings. And yet, when Herington says that Aeschylus "stands on the other side of a gulf both from us and from the extant works of Sophocles and Euripides," he points to an important and substantive reason for a comparison of Aeschylus's plays with those of Zeami: there is a "spiritual force" that pervades the works of both.<sup>31</sup> That is, gods and spirits interact with human beings and the two worlds interpenetrate both on the stage and in the word without the rationalism found in the works of Sophocles and Euripides. (This rationalism is found even in those plays of Sophocles and Euripides, such as the *Oedipus at Colonus* and the *Bacchae*, in which the worlds of men and gods are interrelated.) In addition, it is important for the reader to bear in mind that Zeami was not as esoteric in practice as an application of the concept of *yūgen* to his works might suggest. Zeami himself wrote treatises not only on the subject of aesthetics, but even more on matters, such as acting, that reveal him to have been a practical man of the theater. We know that he wrote his plays with the theater in mind, that he acted in them, that he directed them, and that he trained other actors. Although there is no evidence to suggest that Aeschylus wrote treatises on the dramatic art, we do know that he also acted in the plays he wrote, directed them, and trained the choruses for dances, and that, like Zeami, he was successful in the theater.<sup>32</sup> For these reasons and, as I said, because both playwrights produced ethically, spiritually, and emotionally stirring performances rather than those which appealed primarily to the intellect, I am convinced that a comparison of their plays is valuable.

The purpose of the present comparative study, recommended by the similarities mentioned above, is in part to support the view that Aeschylus

<sup>31</sup> John Herington, *Poetry into Drama: Early Tragedy and the Greek Poetic Tradition* (Berkeley, 1985), 131, confirms some of my observations about early Greek tragedy. R. N. McKinnon's remark about *nō*, in "The *Nō* and Zeami," *FEQ* 11, no. 3 (May 1952): 357, is typical, "It is the coexistence and free communication between the phantom world and the present world in the *Mugen Nō* [*nō* in which a ghost or spirit appears in the second half] which makes the *Nō* an especially distinctive form of dramatic art."

<sup>32</sup> At least we know that Aeschylus won first prizes in dramatic contests. On the dramatic festivals, see P-C, *Dramatic Festivals*, 79–82 and 93–100. Dramatic contests as such were not held in Japan, but the guilds and actors competed with each other for the favor of the ruling class. On patronage, see O'Neill, *Early Nō*, 41 and Keene, *Nō*, 30–31. On the competitions, see Masaru Sekine, *Ze-ami and His Theories of Noh Drama* (Gerrards Cross, 1985), 115–117.

lus's works, although they represent a significant breakthrough in the history of drama in ancient Greece, still belong to the tradition of recited and performed poetry that preceded and was contemporaneous with his day. Specifically, this study will attempt to show that our earliest extant tragedy, the *Persians*, in many respects unique among Greek tragedies, as well as other parts of Aeschylus's work, are, like many *nō*, drama that can be defined as verbal and visual poetry rather than drama that is characterized by its plot and action.<sup>33</sup> But this study also has a wider purpose: to show how *nō* and tragedy, with the similarities and differences they share, are informative and suggestive about each other, and thus to point to features of dramatic style that, when understood, can benefit any student of the theater. Through a detailed examination of the texts of Aeschylus and of Zeami, and through reference to Zeami's treatises and present-day performances of *nō*, this study will try to demonstrate how dramatic structure, words, and allusions to other poetry can be understood in the theater, how words are related to visual and kinetic features in a performance, and how the meaning of a play is revealed through all of these. Because the examples presented here are drawn primarily from plays written by Aeschylus and Zeami, and especially from the *Persians* and *Sanemori*, the conclusions are limited to a significant few; however, it is my belief that an understanding of the methods applied to these examples can be illuminating to the scholar of any theater.

THIS WORK is arranged in such a manner that the analysis of structure in *nō*, Chapter One, is presented before the analysis of structure in tragedy, Chapter Two, and the conclusions drawn on the basis of the comparison are relegated for the most part to Chapter Two. My own translation of the entire *nō* *Sanemori* appears within the text of Chapter One, and a summary of the *Persians* as a whole, for which published translations are readily available, is included in Chapter Two.<sup>34</sup> In Chapter Three, after intro-

<sup>33</sup> In *Poetry into Drama*, Herington says, "By some means Aeschylus has already acquired a truly unique mastery in the blending of verbal and visual poetry—a mastery that I cannot parallel in any other poet-dramatist known to me, of any date" (145). *Nō* provides a parallel.

<sup>34</sup> For those who would like to become familiar with Aeschylus's tragedies before reading this comparative study, translations are readily available. Among them are the Penguin Classics translations of *The Oresteia* by Robert Fagles and of the other Aeschylean tragedies by Philip Vellacott, the University of Chicago Press series translations of *The Oresteia* by Richmond Lattimore and of the other Aeschylean tragedies by Seth G. Benardete, and Hugh Lloyd-Jones, translation and commentary, *Aeschylus: Agamemnon*, *Aeschylus: The Libation Bearers*, and *Aeschylus: The Eumenides* (Englewood Cliffs: 1970). For English translations of the *Persians*, I recommend both A. J. Podlecki, *Aeschylus: The Persians* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1970), and Janet Lembke and C. J. Herington, *Aeschylus: Persians* (New York and London, 1981); for a Japanese transla-

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ducing the reader to stylistic features in Japanese poetry through a close examination of a passage from the *nō Matsukaze*, then comparing it with a passage from the tragedy *Agamemnon*, I analyze the style of Zeami's *Sanemori* and compare it with passages from Aeschylus's *Oresteia*. In Chapter Four, I first discuss Aeschylus's poetic style in general, the affinities it bears with the style of Zeami, and how these apply to a theater performance; then, with a view to identifying not only some essential similarities, but also some differences between the styles of Aeschylus's tragedy and Zeami's *nō*, and in order to show how the comparative dimension can enhance our appreciation of style in Aeschylus's work, I examine the *Persians* in terms of specific themes, verbal techniques, and literary allusions.

Japanese and Greek terms that are defined in the two Glossaries appearing after Chapter Four are italicized on their first occurrence only. For the benefit of Japanologists and of classicists, the text of *Sanemori*, excluding the *ai-kyōgen* section, and the Japanese and Greek texts of the passages that I have analyzed closely in Chapters Three and Four are printed in Appendices Three and Four respectively.

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tion of the *Persians*, see Kubo Masaaki, "Perushanohitobito," in *Girishahigeki zenshū* (The Complete Greek Tragedies), ed. Kure Shigeichi, vol. 1 (Tokyo, 1979), 121–152.

## Structure in Nō



The successful playwright of nō constructs his work in such a way that he engages the audience's attention by means of a progression that controls the mood of the play from beginning to end and that focuses onto the main character the visual appeal of costume, mask, and props; the meaning of the nō; the story on which the author has drawn; and the modes of presentation—the music, the words, the stage action. Because the number of characters is limited; the visual effects—costumes, masks, and stage props—are used economically in most nō; the subject is chosen on the basis of its adaptability to a performance, and then, in the best nō, is integrated fully into that performance, the audience's attention is seldom distracted in various directions, as in some theaters, away from the main character and the mood that the author purposefully creates.

In his treatises, Zeami gives specific and general advice that is a key to understanding how he achieved the kind of focus one finds in many of his nō. And from these works, it is clear that, like any good playwright, actor, teacher, or writer about drama, Zeami does not think a nō will be successful if, though well written, it is poorly performed, and also that he considers the audience's reaction important—the reaction to visual effects, to acting, to music, to language, to literary and historical sources, to “structure,” and to subject, and not to any one of these alone. He writes about how one should choose subjects as the basis of nō; how one should organize a nō; how one should fill out a nō verbally, musically, and kinetically; how the actors should be trained; and how they should perform. At its best and in Zeami's hands, nō is a theater that engages the audience's attention fully, is entertaining, emotionally compelling, and at the same time, aesthetically and spiritually uplifting.

Zeami's views on the aesthetic and practical matters involved in the