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Anna A. Lamari

**NARRATIVE, INTERTEXT,
AND SPACE IN EURIPIDES'
›PHOENISSAE‹**



TRENDS IN CLASSICS

Anna A. Lamari
Narrative, Intertext, and Space in Euripides' *Phoenissae*

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by

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*For my daughter Alexia,
born while this book was being written*

Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Acknowledgements | xi |
| Chapter 1: Theorizing tragic narration | 1 |
| The ancients on narrative | 3 |
| Towards a narratology of drama | 5 |
| The <i>Phoenissae</i> | 16 |
| Chapter 2: Retelling the past, shaping the future: | |
| Onstage narrative and offstage allusions (1–689) | 21 |
| 2.1. The labyrinthine path of myth (Prologue, 1–201) | 23 |
| 2.1.1. Jocasta and the past (1–87) | 23 |
| 2.1.2. The Teichoscopia (88–201) | 33 |
| 2.2. Surveying the history of Thebes (Parodos, 202–260) | 40 |
| 2.2.1. Between exoticism and intimacy: the Chorus and the past | 41 |
| 2.2.2. Singing time and place | 43 |
| 2.3. The clash of the Labdacids (First episode, 261–637) | 48 |
| 2.3.1. Polynices and the Chorus (261–290) | 48 |
| 2.3.2. Credible impossibilities: Polynices and Jocasta (291–354) | 52 |
| 2.3.3. The shadow of Oedipus (355–442) | 54 |
| 2.3.4. The arrival of Eteocles and the agon (443–587) | 59 |
| 2.3.4.1. The temporary judge: Jocasta’s first rhesis (452–468) | 60 |
| 2.3.4.2. Ἀπλοῦς ὁ μῦθος τῆς ἀληθείας: Polynices’ rhesis (469–496) | 61 |
| 2.3.4.3. The elusive similarity of names: Eteocles’ rhesis (499–525) | 63 |
| 2.3.4.4. The reply of Jocasta (528–585) | 66 |
| 2.3.4.5. A heated coda: Eteocles against Polynices (588–637) | 69 |
| 2.4. Redetermining the city’s guilty past (First stasimon, 638–689) | 71 |
| Chapter 3: Violating expectations: Offstage narrative and the play’s open end (690–1766) | 75 |
| 3.1. Sub specie <i>Septem</i> : Creon and the ‘second Eteocles’ (Second episode, 690 – 783) | 76 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| 3.2. A choral chronotope (Second stasimon, 784–833) | 80 |
| 3.3. Manipulating time: Tiresias, Menoeceus, and the turning point of the play (Third episode, 834–1018) | 86 |
| 3.4. Deceptive appearances: from the illusory triumphs of Oedipus and Cadmus in the past to Menoeceus' victorious death in the present (Third stasimon, 1019–1066) | 91 |
| 3.5. The city and the family: Theban victory and the forthcoming duel (Fourth episode, 1067–1283) | 93 |
| 3.5.1. Messenger speech part one: the attack of the Seven (1067–1199) | 95 |
| 3.5.2. Messenger speech part two: preparation for the fatal duel (1200–1283) | 98 |
| 3.6. From doomed duel to dual grief (Fourth stasimon, 1284–1307) | 100 |
| 3.7. Two, one, many: duel, suicide, and conflict (Fifth episode, 1308–1479) | 102 |
| 3.7.1. Preliminaries: Creon and the Chorus (1308–1334) | 102 |
| 3.7.2. The fatal news: mutual fratricide and maternal suicide (1335–1479) | 104 |
| 3.8. Lamenting the dead: Antigone and the entrance of Oedipus (Aria of Antigone and duet of Antigone and Oedipus, 1480–1581) | 110 |
| 3.9. Loose ends: the burial of Polynices and Antigone's marriage to Haemon (Exodos, 1582–1766) | 113 |
| Chapter 4: Intertextuality | 119 |
| 4.1. Myth before Euripides | 122 |
| 4.2. Intertextual references to earlier texts | 129 |
| 4.2.1. References to recognizable texts | 129 |
| 4.2.1.1. Teichoscopia and description of the warriors in the <i>Iliad</i> , the <i>Seven</i> , and the <i>Phoenissae</i> | 129 |
| 4.2.1.2. The motifs of 'conflict' and 'retribution' in the <i>Seven</i> and the <i>Phoenissae</i> | 134 |
| 4.2.2. References to non-recognizable 'texts': Euripides and the mythical 'megatext' | 135 |
| 4.3. Cross-textual narrative techniques | 137 |
| 4.3.1. Future reflexive | 137 |
| 4.3.2. Intertextual deception | 147 |
| 4.3.2.1. The incomplete narrative of Polynices' burial | 147 |
| 4.3.2.2. The list of warriors in the <i>Seven</i> and the <i>Phoenissae</i> | 152 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Chapter 5: Space | 159 |
| 5.1. The Theban topography of time (Prologue, 1–201) | 162 |
| 5.2. Out there: the distant gaze of the Chorus (Parodos, 202–260) | 167 |
| 5.3. Fragmented space: Thebes as a site of memory (First episode, 261–637) | 169 |
| 5.4. A mythical landscape: geography and the double foundation of Thebes (First stasimon, 638–689) | 175 |
| 5.5. Reasserting duality: inside and outside (Second episode, 690–783) | 177 |
| 5.6. Moving backwards: spatial distancing and temporal remoteness (Second stasimon, 784–833) | 178 |
| 5.7. Stepping in and stepping out: Tiresias, Menoeceus and the interplay between offstage and onstage space (Third episode, 834–1018) | 180 |
| 5.8. Places of pain (Third stasimon, 1019–1066) | 182 |
| 5.9. Sealing space: external danger, internal pollution (Fourth episode, 1067–1283) | 183 |
| 5.10. Locating beginnings: the δᾶ and the δίδυμοι θῆρες (Fourth stasimon, 1284–1307) | 187 |
| 5.11. Placing death: fatherland, palace, and the hope of burial (Fifth episode, 1308–1479) | 188 |
| 5.12. Coming together on stage: sons, mother, and father (Exodos, 1480–1766) | 189 |
| Conclusions: Myth for all: the play's flexi-narrative | 195 |
| Appendix I: The trilogy | 201 |
| Appendix II: The text | 205 |
| Abbreviations | 208 |
| Bibliography | 211 |
| General Index | 233 |
| Index Locorum | 237 |

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Chapter 1

Theorizing tragic narration

The stage began to tell a story.
The narrator was no longer missing,
along with the fourth wall*

More than forty years have passed since G. Genette studied the multifarious, partly autobiographical narration of Proust¹ and came up with a systematic narrative theory.² By effectively putting together the previous theories of Russian Formalism,³ French Structuralism⁴ and Anglo-American New Criticism,⁵ while not rejecting the theoretical basis of semiotics, Genette created a methodology, which interprets literature by decoding the generating power and inner mechanisms of narrative. His theoretical analysis established narratology as both a separate branch in literary theory and a secure method for studying the text.⁶ Through diegetic criteria like focalization, the time of the story as opposed to the time of the narration, the order of the presentation of the events and the narrative rhythm, the theory of Genette presented students of literature with a full-scale guide to the labyrinthine path of narrative.

The theory of Genette was soon succeeded by other narratological approaches – mainly favorable to his theoretical model– that were not

* Bertolt Brecht, 'Theatre for Pleasure or Theatre for Instruction?', in J. Willet (ed.), *Brecht on Theatre*, London 1964, 71.

1 Proust (1913–1927).

2 Genette (1966); (1969); (1972); (1980). Apart from the discussions on Proust, these studies also include interpretations of the works of Stendhal, Flaubert, Robb-Grillet and Barthes.

3 On Russian Formalism, see Striedter (1989); Steiner (1995).

4 On Structuralism, see Culler (1975); (1983); Doležel (1995).

5 On New Criticism, see Jancovich (1993). Goheen (1951) and Lebeck (1971) have actually attempted to apply the theory of New Criticism to ancient Greek drama.

6 For an overview of narrative theory, see Martin (1986); Onega & García Landa (1996); Bal (1997); Prince (2003); Herman & Vervaeck (2005); Jahn (2005); Herman (2007).

restricted to the narrative of Proust, but applied to modern literature in general.⁷ One of the most characteristic examples of adopting a much broader narratological perspective is the contribution of Bal, who treats as narrative and, consequently, as subject of narratology ‘anything that can tell a story’.⁸ Under this scope, narratological rules can be applied not just to literature, but also to painting,⁹ even to music.¹⁰ During the 1990s narrative theory enjoyed an interdisciplinary¹¹ boom as it expanded to unexpected fields such as politics, law, and even medicine.¹² Narratology is now going through its ‘post-classical’ phase, being widely considered a ‘discipline’, combining theories and methods and thus projecting a ‘dual nature as both a theoretical and an application-oriented academic approach to narrative’.¹³ Meeting the current needs for more pragmatically oriented theories, contemporary narratology is mostly being developed in terms of *contextualist* (relating narratives to particular cultural, ideological, or other contexts), *cognitive* (relating narratives to

7 See Prince (1973); (1982); Rimmon-Kennan (1976); (1983); Chatman (1978); Booth (1983); Chatman (1990); Cohn (1983).

8 ‘A *narrative text* is a text in which an agent relates (‘tells’) a story in a particular medium, such as language, imagery, sound, buildings, or a combination thereof [Bal (1997) 5]. Other definitions of narrative presuppose the existence of a narrator, or of one event only, or of a sequence of at least two events [Forster (1979), de Jong (2004b)]. For a fuller discussion, see below, pp. 6 ff.

9 See Bal (1997) 66–75.

10 See Tarasti (1994), who applies narratology to the works of Beethoven, Chopin, Liszt, Sibelius and Debussy. Analogous is the example of the Dutch electronic journal *Amsterdam International Electronic Journal for Cultural Narratology (AJCN)*, which hosts narratological theories applied to any form of art. See <http://cf.hum.uva.nl/narratology/index.html>. For narratology applied to various media, see also Ryan (2009).

11 Interdisciplinary relations are created ‘when several disciplines reflectively deploy methods from other disciplines, either because the object requires it, or because the approach is more productive when not confined to disciplinary traditions’ [Bal (2008) 250].

12 Kreiswirth [(2008) 379–380] discusses relevant data, which are truly remarkable: ‘in the Worldwide Political Science Abstracts database, there were 16 articles published between 1970 and 1982 with ‘narrative’ in the title, 35 between 1983 and 1992, and 118 between 1993 and 2004. ... In the standard legal studies database, LegalTrac, the numbers jumped from 6 articles in the first decade, to 81 in the second, and then to 140; and, in the Medical Research database, PubMed, there were 28 articles published with ‘narrative’ in the title between 1973 and 1983, 133 between 1984–1993, and 429 between 1994–2003. Both inside and outside the humanities, researchers have become bullish on narrative in the last ten years’.

13 Meister (2009) 329.

their intellectual reception by humans), or *transgeneric* approaches (examining narration in various media).¹⁴

The ancients on narrative

Although narratology is a modern trend within literary theory, its origins go back to ancient Greek literary criticism. Homeric epic attracted the interest of early critics such as Plato and Aristotle, partly because of its use of different narrative modes.¹⁵ In Plato's *Republic*, the general term 'narration' (διήγησις) is divided into (a) 'simple' (ἁπλῆ), (b) 'effected through impersonation' (διὰ μιμήσεως γιγνομένη), and (c) 'effected through both' (δι' ἀμφοτέρων).¹⁶ According to Plato, this tripartite structure is reflected, in the three most popular poetic genres: dithyramb,¹⁷ drama and epic respectively. With regard to epic, narration through impersonation is found in the speeches (ῥήσεις), while simple narration is located in the parts between the speeches (τὰ μετὰ τῶν ῥήσεων). The coexistence of those two different types of narrative leads, according to the philosopher, to the narrative superiority that has to be attributed to the genre of epic.¹⁸

Aristotle builds on the narratological findings of Plato. In his *Poetics*, he makes a qualitative advance by distinguishing between the poet as a real, historical, extra-textual entity and the narrator as the poet's textual representative.¹⁹ According to the Aristotelian model, epic poetry consists of a short non-mimetic proem (where the poet reveals his poetic identity) and a long mimetic part, which includes speeches (where the poet speaks as character) and narrator-text (where the poet speaks as narrator).²⁰ For Aristotle, the several types of mimesis are categorized under

14 For further discussion and bibliography, see Meister (2009) 340-341.

15 For the following discussion I am heavily indebted to de Jong (1987a) 2-14 and Nünlist (2009) 94-106.

16 Pl. *R.* 392c-394b.

17 The dithyramb Plato 'knows' and is referring to must be the 'new' dithyramb, a melic genre flourishing at the end of the fifth and the beginning of the fourth century BC [Fantuzzi & Hunter (2002) 19].

18 de Jong (1987a) 2-5.

19 Arist. *Po.* 1448a19-28; 1460a5-11.

20 See de Jong (1987a) 5-8. The Homeric narrative 'advantage', deriving from the use of direct speech, is, according to Aristotle, lacking from other poems (*Po.* 1460a5-11). As pointed out by Halliwell [(1986) 126] and Finkelberg [(1998) 155-156], Aristotle is specifically referring to the rest of epic poetry, which seems not to have included as much direct speech in its narrative arma-

three criteria: the ‘means’ (ἐν οἷς τε), the ‘objects’ (καὶ ἅ) and the ‘manner’ (καὶ ὥς).²¹ Accordingly, mimesis is effectuated either in the manner of narrative or in the manner of dramatic representation.²² In contrast to Plato, Aristotle refers to mimesis in a looser sense, since it allows it to cover any form of artistic representation, including Plato’s three narrative divisions.²³ In this sense, ‘every art is mimesis’ and authors always ‘imitate’ to a greater or smaller extent events or words materialized or spoken by characters.²⁴ The Aristotelian theory of mimesis resembles modern literary theories in that he has noticed that ‘audiences respond to *representations*’ in ways that are different from how they would respond in encountering the originals.²⁵ From this vantage point, the spectators of classical tragedy perceive with pleasure disastrous events, which would be tormenting for an observer in real life.²⁶

A third phase in the evolution of ancient narrative theory is found in Plutarch’s *De audiendis poetis*. In chapters 19a6–20c25, Plutarch analyzes evaluative characterizations in the narrator-text of the *Iliad*. He realizes that the poet uses the descriptions of the characters’ emotional reactions in the narrator-text to express his personal feelings. In this light, both the narrower Platonic distinction and its Aristotelian improvement are surpassed by more thorough narratological analysis coming from Plutarch, who identifies the presence of the narrator beyond the restricted limits of the epic proems.²⁷

The ancient scholars make an equally important contribution to ancient Greek narratological research. Ancient scholia focus on fields like (a) time and the distinction between the time of the story and the time of the narrative, or (b) terminology for ‘narrator-text’ or ‘speech’. While in the first case, critics are aware of but not straightforward about such a distinction,²⁸ in the second case they use the terms διηγηματικόν and μιμητικόν to refer to the two categories respectively, as well as the expression μεταβαίνειν ἀπὸ τοῦ διηγηματικοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ μιμητικόν in

ture. A relevant comparison between the *Iliad* and the *Thebaid* is given by Griffin (1977) 49–50. On the differences between speech in Homer and speech in the other epics, see *id.* (1986).

21 *Po.* 1448a24–25.

22 *Po.* 1448a19–1448b3. See also Genette (1979) 16–18.

23 Nünlist (2009) 97.

24 Fantuzzi (1988) 49.

25 Ford (2002) 95.

26 *Po.* 1448b10–17 *pace* Gorg. fr. 11.56 D–K; Pl. *R.* 605c10–605d5. See also Iakov (2004) 33–34.

27 See de Jong (1987a) 8–10.

28 Nünlist (2009) 74–78.

order to indicate (c) the transition from the one narrative mode to the other.²⁹ Further importance is also given to (d) focalization, designated by the expression *λύσις ἐκ τοῦ προσώπου*³⁰ or (e) the distinction between first, second, and third person narrative.³¹

Towards a narratology of drama

Narratology originally sprang from the analysis of literature, while the so-called ‘narrative (or narrativist) turn’, i.e. the study of the narrative phenomenon regardless of the field of its occurrence, is mainly a recent trend.³² Narratologists’ initial interest was restricted to contemporary literature; the first step towards the systematic application of modern narratological principles to ancient Greek literature occurred towards the end of the 1980s by de Jong, who applied the theoretical knowledge of Genette and Bal to the *Iliad*.³³ Her work shed light on the epic narrative system, proving that modern theoretical tools can be equally effective when used for the elucidation of ancient literary works. Her seminal study inspired similar scholarly attempts, like that of Richardson,³⁴ who focused his attention on the role of the Homeric narrator; a second book by de Jong applied the narratological model of Genette and Bal to the *Odyssey*.³⁵

Epic poetry worked as the initial vehicle for the expansion of the application of modern critical theory to ancient Greek literature.³⁶ Such a unanimous scholarly choice reflects epic’s ‘convenient’ narrative structure; like many modern literary genres, epic poetry projects an explicit, external main narrator, who overtly weaves the narrative threads of the plot. The explicit presence of a governing narrative ‘mind’ which makes the right narrative choices, generates the appropriate narrative mechanisms and securely leads the narration to a pursued narrative end is readily found in genres where such a driving force is unquestionable. Conversely, when there is no explicit narratorial identity, scholarly

29 Nünlist (2009) 102–106. See also de Jong (1987a) 10–14.

30 See Nünlist (2009) 116–132.

31 See Nünlist (2009) 110–112.

32 Kreiswirth (1995).

33 de Jong (1987a).

34 Richardson (1990).

35 de Jong (2001).

36 Academic interest in epic narrative never ceased: see additionally the works of Pucci (1987); Hölscher (1990); Reichel (1994), (1998); de Jong (1997), (2004a), (2007); Rengakos (2006).

objections to narratological approaches, have ranged from academic quibbling to baffled puzzlement. In this light, the exclusion of a central narrator has often served as the strongest argument against the use of narratology as an interpretive tool in drama. On the other hand, the fact that the absence of a main narrator is only due to generic conventions makes objections to narrativity less strong, as it allows for a form of narrativity manifested in non-novelistic or epic terms.

I will investigate not whether narratology can work on drama, but whether drama can be seen as an integral narrative and can therefore be examined the way other narratives are. The only way to tackle this question is to consider drama's *narrativity*. A term coined by Greimas, who yet used it in order to refer to the way narrative was operating in his semiotic model,³⁷ narrativity, according to Prince, designates:

‘the quality of being narrative, the set of properties characterising narratives and distinguishing them from non-narratives. It also designates the set of optional features that make narratives more prototypically narrative-like, more immediately identified, processed, and interpreted as narratives’.³⁸

The angle from which narrativity is perceived is the factor that determines the elements of which it is comprised. Accordingly, narrativity is designated either through matter or through degree, and it is applied either as a fixed concept, or in comparison of a particular to other narratives.³⁹

Discussions of narrativity go back to Aristotle, in his famous definition of tragedy.⁴⁰ For Aristotle, narrativity depends not just on the qualities of the imitated action, but also on its size. Much later, Labov studied oral narratives and distinguished between ‘complete’ (i.e. having a beginning, middle and end) and ‘more fully developed’ types of narratives.⁴¹ The latter are self-evaluated, since they contain ‘the means used by the narrator to indicate the point of the narrative, its *raison d’être*: why it was told, and what the narrator is getting at’.⁴²

Traditionally, narrative presupposes a sequence of at least two events, as in Forster’s example, ‘the king died and then the queen

37 Greimas (1970) 157–160; (1987) 63–65.

38 Prince (2008) 387.

39 Abbott (2009) 309, “‘narrativity’ is still commonly used in two senses: in a fixed sense as the “*narrativeness*” of *narrative* and in a scalar sense as the “*narrativeness*” of *a narrative*, the one applied generally to the concept of narrative, the other applied comparatively to particular narratives’.

40 Arist. *Po.* 1449b24–28.

41 Labov (1972) 362–363.

42 Labov (1972) 366.

died'.⁴³ Genette defines narrative as a change from an earlier to a later state of affairs (which involve a single event),⁴⁴ while de Jong opts for the presence of a narrator as a prerequisite for narrative, thus excluding drama from the sphere of narrativity.⁴⁵ According to Stanzel, narrativity is tied to 'mediacy': the story is mediated indirectly, through a narrator ('teller mode'), or directly, through a reflector, namely a character ('reflector mode').⁴⁶ For others, the concept of mediacy from story to narrative needs to be reconsidered, since it is not necessarily narrator-oriented. According to Jahn, plays are mediated by a narrative agency, which either takes the form of a narrator inserted in the performance, or remains a vague governing authority in charge of narrative selections.⁴⁷ As Fludernik puts it, 'narrating as a personal act of telling or writing can no longer claim primacy or priority. Both acting and telling are facets of a real-world model most forcefully present in natural narrative but nevertheless disposable on a theoretical level'.⁴⁸ In her model of 'natural' narratology, experiencing is an equally legitimate mode of mediating, as is telling, reading, or viewing. Consequently, '[n]arrativity can emerge from the experiential portrayal of dynamic event sequences which are already configured emotively and evaluatively, but it can also consist in the experiential depiction of human consciousness *tout court*'.⁴⁹ From this perspective, narrativity is a feature ascribed to the narrative by the narratees, namely by its receivers.⁵⁰

In structural terms, given that factors such as the temporality of narrative have been also treated as decisive, narrativity has been defined as 'the play of suspense/curiosity/surprise between represented and communicative time (in whatever combination, whatever medium, whatever manifest or latent form)'.⁵¹ Such a tripartite scheme unquestionably reshapes previous findings regarding narrativity, as it leaves room for turning the focus from one aspect of the narrative to another according

43 Forster (1979) 87, also taken over by de Jong (2004b) 6.

44 Genette (1983) 18, endorsed by Prince (1999) 43.

45 de Jong (2004b) 6-8.

46 Stanzel (1971) 6.

47 Jahn (2001) 674.

48 Fludernik (1996) 27.

49 Fludernik (1996) 30.

50 According to Fludernik's model, '[n]arrativity ... is not a quality adhering to a text, but rather an attribute imposed on the text by the reader who interprets the text *as narrative*, thus *narrativizing* the text' [Fludernik (2003) 24].

51 Sternberg (1992) 529.

to generic or authorial factors. Culler also focuses on temporality, defining narrative as the temporal sequences of human actions or states.⁵²

As pointed out at the beginning of this discussion, narrativity could also be defined according to degree. Prince's theory⁵³ drew a line between non-narrative texts and texts with a low degree of narrativity. According to his model, narrativity is constructed on the basis of several criteria, such as the 'specificity of the (sequences of) events presented', the extent to which 'occurrence [of events] is given as a fact ... rather than a possibility or probability'⁵⁴ or the extent to which the events of the narrative 'constitute (pertain to) a whole, a complete structure with a beginning, a middle and an end'.⁵⁵ Of equal importance is the existence of a 'continuant subject',⁵⁶ allowing the narratees to perceive events in a sequence, or the 'point' of the narrative, i.e. the 'desire' of the narrative on the part of the narratee.⁵⁷ Finally, according to Prince, narrativity is marked by the existence of 'disnarrated elements', i.e. of parts of the story that did not happen, albeit they could have.⁵⁸ Coste has proposed different degrees of narrativity and set forth a narrativity-scale; according to his schema, narrativity is positively influenced by factors such as causality, specificity or avoidance of superfluous repetitions.⁵⁹

Scholars have studied different modes of narrativity, as well as different degrees. In this light, the 'simple narrativity' of fairy tales can be distinguished from the 'complex narrativity' of Balzac or Dumas, since in the former, the plot evolves linearly, following the unraveling of a single narrative thread, while in the latter the main plot lines are fused with secondary subplots. Equally, 'figural narrativity' found in lyric, historical or philosophical texts has to be distinguished from 'instrumental narrativity' found in sermons or debates, since in the former, the story is constructed after universal claims, while in the latter general strategies concerning the macrotextual level are mirrored in narrative structures appearing in the microtextual level.⁶⁰

As seen from above, narrativity is a multifarious concept, the definition of which depends on the angle of its reception. Having surveyed the basic theoretical approaches to narrativity, we can examine the ex-

52 Culler (1975) 143.

53 Prince (1982); (1999); (2008).

54 Prince (1982) 149.

55 Prince (1982) 151. See also *id.* (1999) 45.

56 Prince (1982) 151.

57 Prince (1982) 159.

58 Prince (1988).

59 Coste (1989) 62.

60 Ryan (1992) [after Prince (1999) 47; (2008) 387-388].

tent to which it can be applied to drama. Starting with the degree of its development, we have seen that narrativity is calculated by its completeness and self-evaluation, or *raison d'être*.⁶¹ The concept of dramatic completeness was also a poetic prerequisite according to Aristotle's definition and it is one of tragedy's main narrative qualities; as for a play's *raison d'être*, it is inferred by the spectators, who by the end of the play are in position of problematizing fate and justice under the effects of pity, fear and catharsis. If narrativity is defined on the basis of the sequence of two events⁶² or at least the change from an earlier to a later state of affairs,⁶³ then in the case of Greek drama that is obtained by means of complex dramatic plots. Finally, in structural terms, classical tragedy raises suspense, curiosity and surprise,⁶⁴ as it also represents the temporal sequences of human actions or states of emotion.⁶⁵

With respect to the degree of narrativity found in drama, it can be argued that the events presented are narrated as facts (not possibilities), which constitute a whole with a continuous subject (again meeting the Aristotelian criteria). As for the requirement regarding the feeling of desire for the narrative on the part of the narratees, it could be found in the quintessential feelings of pity and fear that display the spectators' agony and mental participation in the events represented. Tragedy even hosts the alleged 'disnarrated elements', which are effectuated by means of the so-called 'negative anachronies'.⁶⁶ Likewise, classical drama insists not only on causality, but equally opts for specificity and the avoidance of superfluous repetitions.⁶⁷ Drama pertains to the category of 'complex' narration, since a play's main plot is fused with secondary subplots,

61 See above, Labov (1972).

62 See above, Forster (1979).

63 See above, Genette (1983); Prince (1999).

64 See above, Sternberg (1992).

65 See above, Culler (1975).

66 See above, Prince (1982); 'Negative anachronies' refer to the sphere of possible actions that characters *could* perform, but did or will not. Such a narration of possible scenarios that finally did not come into being is usually communicated to the spectators through the means of negative flashbacks or flashforwards. See for example *Ph.* 344–349 and the narration of Jocasta regarding the nuptial customs in celebration of Polynices' wedding that were never performed (see below, pp. 52–53 and n. 237) or Electra's plan to kill Aegisthus in Sophocles' *El.* 951–957. Negative anachronies also resemble the so-called 'fabricated narratives' of postmodern dramas [Richardson (2001) 684–685].

67 See above, Coste (1989). Repetitions in tragedy occur in order to yield specific dramatic or narrative results. In addition, events that are referred to more than once are usually narrated by different focalizers and at different length.

while it also shares the qualities of ‘figural’ narratives, since its plot tackles universal questions about human fate and divine justice.⁶⁸ Consequently, Greek tragedy fulfills all the prerequisites of narrativity set out by several scholars, with the single exception of the requirement of a narrator as the medium of transmission of the communicational message. The absence of the narrator makes some scholars exclude drama from narratological research, and the analysis of such claims will be our focus in this last part of our discussion.

The first systematic attempts to analyze dramatic narration were undertaken on the basis of the theoretical model of the structuralist A. J. Greimas.⁶⁹ According to the semiotic square of Greimas, narrative reality can be classified into groups of concepts that become relevant through opposition. His semiotic analysis involves two axes, the ‘paradigmatic’, which provides a horizontal organization of units, and the ‘syntagmatic’, which organizes units vertically. Following a distinction of Propp, Greimas studied the text by means of minimal units, called ‘actants’, that correspond to roles performed by characters, and ‘functions’, that correspond to types of incidents that tend to reappear.⁷⁰ The narratological model of Greimas works as a basis on which Philippides,⁷¹ Aélion,⁷² and Mpezantakos⁷³ analyze a series of ancient Greek tragedies. Their findings reveal a dense net of relations between the structural elements of the plot, which sheds light on the text’s meanings.

Regardless of the narratological character of the aforementioned approaches, a great ‘divide’ concerning the application of narratology to ancient Greek drama opened up in 1991, when de Jong published a study on the Euripidean messenger speeches.⁷⁴ By applying the theory of Genette and Bal to only the speeches of tragic Messengers, she drew a line between the ‘embedded-narrative’ parts (messenger speeches) and the dramatic, ‘non-narrative text’.⁷⁵ Similarly, in her recent introduction to narratological theory, de Jong emphasized that due to the absence of a main narrator, drama cannot be considered a narrative. Consequently, in dramatic non-narrative texts, the internal (intra-dramatic) narrators shall –according to de Jong– be considered secondary narrators, even if

68 See above, Ryan (1992).

69 Greimas (1966); (1973).

70 Katilius-Boydston (1990).

71 Philippides (1984).

72 Aélion (1987).

73 Mpezantakos (2004).

74 de Jong (1991).

75 Such a distinction is also endorsed by Barrett (2002).

primary narration and narrator are nonexistent.⁷⁶ At the other end of the spectrum, scholars like Gould, Goward and Markantonatos believe that Greek drama does not consist of separate narrative parts placed in a non-narrative sequence, and see it as a coherent narrative whole.⁷⁷ Such a scholarly chasm derives from the theoretical problem concerning the absence of the narrator. Few scholars would deny that the search for a main narrator as the ‘undisputed’ prerequisite for the existence of narrativity has been heavily conditioned by the influence of the novel. Owing to the absence of an apparent main narrator, dramatic narration ‘tells the story’ via techniques that do not appear in any other literary genres. Moreover, the use of the narrator as the determining factor for narrativity is intricately linked to the way we perceive the communicative process, and greatly depends on the semiotic model of communication that one adopts.

A typical diagram of the communicative procedure includes the transmission of the message (narrative) from the *real author* to the *real reader*. In this tripartite sequence (1. author – 2. narrative – 3. reader), one could insert the stages 1^a and 3^a representing the *implied author*⁷⁸ and *implied reader*⁷⁹ respectively. The communicational model would then have the form: 1. real author – 1^a. implied author – 2. narrative – 3^a. implied reader – 3. reader, with 1^a alluding to the ‘persona’ of the writer⁸⁰ and 3^a to the ‘persona’ of the reader that the real writer might wish to construct. In an even more complex form, communicational procedure is supplemented with an additional stage, that of the *fictive narrator*, situated at 1^b. The fictive narrator is a creation of the real author, and in that case would appear responsible for the transmission of the message and the fulfillment of the narrative. In this complex form, the communicative model would be as follows: 1. real author – 1^a. implied author – 1^b. fictive narrator – 2. narrative – 3^a. implied reader – 3. reader. The implied author (1^a) does not have to coincide with the real

76 de Jong (2004b) 6–8.

77 Gould (2001a); Goward (1999) 9–20; Markantonatos (2002); (2008). See also Lowe (2000), who recognizes the narrative economy of ancient Greek drama, regardless of the absence of a main narrator.

78 On the *implied author*, see Schmid (2009).

79 The concept of the *implied reader* alludes in the case of drama to the concept of the *implied audience*. See Lada-Richards (2008).

80 ‘The implied author can be defined as the correlate of all the indexical signs in a text that refer to the author of that text’ [Schmid (2009) 167].

author (1), as the fictive narrator (1^b) does not necessarily coincide with the implied (1^a) or the real (1) author.⁸¹

Different approaches to dramatic narration depend on the divergent definitions of the identity of the fictive narrator (1^b). As shown by the communicative process, the presence or absence of a fictive narrator is a matter of authorial choice not of communicative necessity. This means that communication is effected in a more complex (with the additional insertion of an artificial narratorial persona) or simpler way (with no narratorial intervention, directly from the real author to the real reader). The supplementary addition of a fictive narrator derives, as its plain absence, from the will of the writer or the conventions of the genre he or she serves.

Supporters of the application of narratology to drama identify the fictive narrator with the real author,⁸² while those who criticize such a possibility do not. The latter believe that such an expansion of the subject of narratology is pointless and endangers the efficacy of its methods.⁸³ The above analysis of the communicative process however, ought to demonstrate that the lack of an implied narrative persona in no way annuls the existence of the diegetic level (i.e. the first level of narration),⁸⁴ in which an implied narrator is or is not inserted, according to the desire of the real author. Instead of a fictive narrator who narrates the diegetic events, dramatic narrative makes use of the merits of imitation and representation; putting aside the fictive narrator and projecting the real author, the story is commuted to the spectators via the unique fusion of 'pure narrative' and 'imitation'.⁸⁵ Besides, such an 'omission' of a narrative persona is not unusual. Dramatic narration parallels that of

81 I adapt the semiotic communicational model of Chatman (1978) 151. See also Rimmon-Kenan (1983) 86-89.

82 Goward (1999) 12; Markantonatos (2002) 5; Markantonatos (2008) 195-196.

83 de Jong (2004b) 7.

84 The first level of narration, also called 'diegetic', confirms the pre-existence of the 'extra-diegetic' or 'hyper-diegetic' narrative level, in which the real author is supposed to compose his narration. See Genette (1980) 228-229.

85 Analogously, Goward [(1999) 17-18] notes that "pure narrative" shows us what a text might be like when a poet does not conceal his own *persona* behind another character (as in drama) and when he chooses to suppress all attempts at vivid *showing* and restrict himself instead to limited *telling*; there is no doubt that the result is lacking in vivid and lifelike detail, and that it is more distant from 'felt experience'.

cinema, where the fictive narrator is also usually absent, and has to be identified with the director.⁸⁶

With respect to narrativity, recent studies have tried to show that drama should not be considered in different terms, especially since narrativity is not only diegetic but also mimetic. Drama's mimetic narrative qualities are evident from Aristotle's observations; in dramatic narrative, the story is communicated through the representation and not the telling of actions, while the degree of narrativity depends on the richness of the events represented. 'Diegetic narrativity, on the other hand, refers to verbal, as opposed to visual or performative, transmission of narrative content, to the representation of a speech act of telling a story by an agent called a narrator'.⁸⁷ Additionally, while mimetic narrativity focuses on the so-called 'illusion of action' or 'illusion of characters',⁸⁸ diegetic narrativity foregrounds the 'illusion of a teller',⁸⁹ i.e. of a narrator figure that highlights more the act than the content of narration and consequently gives more weight to the 'telling-' than the 'story-frame'.⁹⁰

Drama can also demonstrate diegetic elements.⁹¹ Dramatic narration does not confine itself to Aristotelian *mimesis*, but also displays diegetic elements, such as *metalepsis*,⁹² direct address of the audience by characters, parabasis, prologue, epilogue, soliloquies, metanarrative comments, stage directions, and of course messenger reports.⁹³ As Nünning and Sommer neatly put it,

86 The special character of narration in cinema (similar to narration in drama) has not been considered an obstacle to narratological approaches to cinematography. See Chatman (1990).

87 Nünning & Sommer (2008) 338.

88 Wolf (1993) 97.

89 Nünning & Sommer (2008) 339.

90 Fludernik (1996) 339–341.

91 A characteristic example of mimetic and diegetic fusion in drama is found in the so-called 'memory plays', i.e. those combining dramatic presentation and traditional story telling by involving a single speaker who narrates episodes of his or her life. For the memory plays, see Richardson (2001) 682–685.

92 *Metalepsis* is defined as 'the contamination of levels in a hierarchical structure as it occurs in narrative' [Pier (2008) 303]. For Genette, *metalepsis* specifically refers to the 'intrusion into the storyworld by the extradiegetic narrator or by the narratee (or into deeper embedded levels), or the reverse' [Pier (2008) 303]. See also Pier (2009). For a recent discussion of the narrative effect of *metalepsis* in ancient texts, see de Jong (2009), according to whom *metalepsis* in ancient literature enhances both the narrator's authority and the narrative's realism. For an example of *metalepsis* in the *Phoenissae*, see below ch. 2.1.1.

93 Nünning & Sommer (2008) 340–341.

'[i]n drama ... diegetic narrativity is not restricted to such narrators who tell, and generate,'⁹⁴ stories on an extradiegetic level of communication, but can occur, rather, on various levels of dramatic text: many prologues and choric narrations would be typical examples of extradiegetic narratives, while the stories told by characters ... represent intradiegetic narratives which can feature a high degree of what we have called diegetic narrativity'.⁹⁵

By fostering the distinction between diegetic and mimetic narrativity, a new horizon of narratological interpretation opens up, according to which dramatic art is not by definition deprived of any narratorial qualities, but just displays them differently. Drama's diegetic spectrum is expanded even more widely when seen under a transgeneric point of view and approached through narrative techniques used in genres whose narrativity is non negotiable. In film, where the absence of a main narrator does not contradict its narrativity, plot mediation is traced in image sequences or soundtracks. Similarly, in drama, the enactment of the plot on stage could equally be considered a type of narrative mediacy.⁹⁶ In other words, 'what is usually uttered by a single, governing voice becomes [in drama] enacted by several speaking characters'.⁹⁷ Following the findings of transmedial narratology, one cannot deny that narrative does not posit 'the occurrence of the speech act of telling a story by an agent called a narrator' as a necessary condition.⁹⁸ As in film, where visual and sound images dominate, acquire diegetic force and make the presence of a narrator optional, in drama the physical enactment of the

94 *Generative* narrators are found in heterodiegetic narratives, where they reside in a clearly distinct level from that of the characters. For the generative narrators, see Richardson (1988) 196 ff.; (2001) 685–686. According to Fludernik [(2008) 368], the technique of the generative narrators 'enhances the willingness of the audience to see the actors as real people, rather as puppets manipulated by the stage manager'.

95 Nünning & Sommer (2008) 339.

96 Fludernik (2008) 358.

97 Richardson (2001) 683. Even in postmodern drama, where the existence of a narrator is not unusual, the narrator figure might at any moment stop performing his 'diegetic' role and allow the enactment of his story to begin. The narrator's presence or absence are part of drama's conventions and cannot affect the genre's narrative qualities. As celebrated in a well known metatheatrical narratorial confession, 'the narrator is an undisguised convention of the play. He takes whatever license with dramatic convention is convenient to his purposes' [Tennessee Williams, *The Glass Menagerie*, New York 1980, scene I].

98 Ryan (2005) 2. According to Ryan's cognitive model, narrative is defined after: (i) the creation of a mental image of a world that (ii) must go through changes that cannot be fully anticipated and where (iii) physical events are related to specific mental states.