

**REVIEWS**

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Gregory, Justina (ed.) (2005) *A companion to Greek tragedy*. Oxford: Blackwell. XVIII, 552 p. ISBN-10 1-4051-0770-7, ISBN-13 978-1-4051-0770-9.

This large volume of 552 pages observes Greek tragedy from various angles beginning with the historical conditions of its development and ending with its reception in modern times. The aim is to cover most of the relevant aspects of the topic which can lead to the understanding of this genre. In a sense it is a survey of the current stage of scholarship and our contemporary views on Greek tragedy. One has to admit that this is an enormous task.

The importance of Greek tragedy in general to the development of European culture is commonly accepted. Discussion begins with the impact and character of different aspects. This discourse is widespread, extending from the theoretical aspects of language and literature to the philosophical problems and the questions of stage practice.

Next to performance studies, reception studies are the major field in which new ideas about Greek tragedy recently have developed and where numerous contributions continue to appear. Therefore it is interesting to observe what new approaches are taken in a book that aims to present the widest possible picture of the subject. Greek tragedy is so abundantly represented in monographs and critical observations that it always seems intriguing to find a fresh angle of looking at this genre and at the plays that represent it. Let us now look at what aspects of tragedy are represented in this book and how they elucidate the questions either for educated general reader or for a classical scholar.

The volume combines 31 contributions by eminent scholars who are known by their earlier works on various problems of Greek tragedy. First of all I was interested in whether there is a general approach to the main questions under discussion. The essays are divided into four sections. Each section deals with different aspects of Greek tragedy, and all tend to cover almost all angles related to the topic.

Part 1 'Contexts' begins with the historical conditions from which the genre of tragedy arose. The essays by Paula Debnar and Scott Scullion discuss the historical and religious backgrounds. In tragedies, historical context and contemporary concerns often play important roles. We get a closer look at them in the first essay by P. Debnar where Aeschylus' *Persians* (naturally!) and *Oresteia*, Sophocles' *Ajax* and *Philoctetes*, and Euripides' *Children of Heracles*, *Suppliants* and *Orestes* are analysed. The choice of these tragedies is quite logical, although one can ask why not add (or at least mention) Euripides' *Phoenissae*, *Iphigenia in Aulis* or *Trojan women*, which all carry notable historical allusions (i.e. war and peace, moral aspects of military conflicts).

As for the discussion about the origin of tragedy and especially its religious origin, it has, of course, far-reaching dimensions. S. Scullion observes the ancient sources, first of all Aristotle, and examines the question from civic and linguistic aspects (etymology, Athenian and non-

Athenian origin, relations to dithyramb and satyr play). At the end of the paper the author also discusses religious sources. This leads to the conclusion that there was nothing Dionysiac about tragedy. But the question about the contingent link between Dionysus and tragedy remains open although the author refers to it. Thus, what this accidental relation means remains, unfortunately, obscure. When talking of Dionysus and the problems of religion one would expect to find a mention of *Bacchae* that is focused on the religious conflict. To reach the problems of *Bacchae*, the reader has to wait for the papers by B. Seidensticker, L. Battezzato, M. Halleran and others (it becomes evident that *Bacchae* is among the most cited tragedies in this volume). S. Scullion tends to support the view that epic was the main influence on the development of tragedy, and names it a sound Aristotelian view. Against the background of the above-mentioned discussion, the title of the essay seems somewhat confusing while in fact the role of the religious aspects is denied. One would expect instead of "Tragedy and religion" a title referring to the non-religious character of tragedy. Also, it is hard to understand why the author talks so vehemently about the non-religious origin of tragedy and at the same time does not mention ritual at all. From one side it is clear that people did not come to the theatre to get a religious experience. But the elements of ritual were there in any case, and that does not allow one to ignore religious aspects. This point in the essay causes some confusion. Ritual elements are mentioned later in the volume in the treatments concerning the structure, meaning and the elements of tragedy.

The connections between tragedy and comedy raise intriguing questions, and the specialist in this field, Bernd Seidensticker, has offered an excellent overview of the genres of dithyramb, comedy and satyr play. The notion that Euripides tests the boundaries of tragedy by comical elements in his works (p. 53) is a good starting point to understand the tension between tragedy and comedy and also the controversial character of Euripides' plays.

Tragedy and polis is the topic of Neil Croally's contribution in which he directs the attention of the reader to the educative function of tragedy. When we read the following essays we realise that this is one of the leading ideas in the volume that emerges into the foreground in several analyses. Tragedy's connection to teaching and learning was an important subject in classical Athens, and that becomes evident from the seriously negative attitude to tragedy in Plato. The conclusion made by N. Croally, that Attic tragedy was primarily a discourse of the polis, seems exaggerated, and the second statement of the author, that the substance of tragedy was to educate people, is at least an oversimplification of the function of the genre. The idea of teaching can be taken into account in the case concerning Aeschylus, who proposed learning through suffering (*pathei mathos*), but in tragedies it is hard to find what characters had learned, e.g. in the case of stubborn Oedipus, proud Antigone, furious Medea or the suffering women of Troy. One cannot but recall the old saying that only a fool learns through suffering. To stress learning means to ignore most of the protagonists of tragedies. The other aspect concerns the audience: Did they learn something from tragedies? Did Athenian people have to go to the theatre in order to learn that you must not kill your father or children? Suffering was a moral choice of many main characters and that created compassion toward them – this was just the idea on which tragedy was based. Although the

political aspect is present in tragedies (but even more so is it evident in rhetoric and philosophy), we must not overemphasise its importance in the context of the tragic – or there will be no tragedy left. As we see from the following essays, this kind of focus on learning and civic context is connected to relatively little interest in characters. This conceptual basis of the whole volume must be kept in view. Both strong and weak sides of the book are based on this kind of approach.

Reducing tensions between tragedy and philosophy is the aim of William Allan's essay. Practical philosophy, especially ethics, was continuously the matter of discourse and problematic controversy in tragedies. The ancient quarrel between poetry and philosophy was proverbial and already Plato referred to it in his *Republic* (10.607b5). Allan pays his main attention to the analysis of how the thematic sections that were of interest to philosophers were reflected in tragedies: nature and cosmos, role of the gods, knowledge and reality, human nature and society. Tragedy's concern with intellectual issues is thought to be as important as civic and political affairs. Greek ethics must be studied not only in the works of philosophers but also in epic, tragedy and philosophy – that this conclusion deserves serious attention has to be generally accepted. A moral universe in tragedies challenges the sympathies and judgments of the audience: tragedy addresses similar issues of knowledge, politics, religion and ethics as philosophy did, in spite of different methods they use. One can recall a thought-provoking book by Thomas Gould, *The ancient quarrel between poetry and philosophy* (Princeton 1990), unfortunately not mentioned here (and not found in the bibliography). Important themes in this book concerning *pathos* are of great importance in relation to understanding the essence of the question.

Further, Christopher Pelling analyses the elements of rhetoric and performance in tragedies by paying special attention to Euripides' *Electra* and *Hippolytus*. He points out that psychology matters more to the character who is listening than to the person who speaks. A comparison with Sophocles' *Ajax* and Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* brings forth the variety of uses and explains how rhetoric functions in tragedies.

Jocelyn Penny Small concludes the first section with an article about pictorial representations of tragedy. Scenes on vases are introduced and the attempt to interpret the elements against the texts is made. The discussion leads to the conclusion that the relation of the vase paintings to the particular text is rather the exception than the rule: Artists were depicting stories, not illustrating texts.

In the first section of the volume we understand quite clearly that there are some general directions where the ideas about tragedy are moving. Social aspects, intellectual and educational qualities receive major attention, and these aspects remain in the centre of analysis in the following contributions.

The elements of tragedy that are observed in the second section are related mainly to the structure of plays. To some extent they are related to the five of the six elements named by Aristotle as the constituent parts of tragedy: myth, language (*lexis*), discourse (*dianoia*), music (*melopoiia*) and spectacle (*opsis*, see *Poetics* 6.1450a9–10). One must note here that *ēthos* (mentioned by Aristotle in the second place after *mythos*) is not included in the topics under

discussion in this volume. This is related to the general approach and the concept of the book.

The second section begins with the observations about myth and tragedy by Michael J. Anderson. The subject is extremely broad and complicated. The author focuses on the common denominator connecting these two, and examines the correspondingly fundamental social institutions, beliefs and values. Tragedy dramatises these aspects of society in the moment of crisis and violent conflict (p. 124). The institution of family is under threat in many tragedies (*Oedipus the King*, *Medea*, *Electra*, *Hecuba*, *Hippolytus* etc.) and so are the relations between individual and group, mortals and gods. These very general aspects are put in tragedies in the particular cultural context of 5th century BC Greece, thus altering the plot and characters dealing with the similar mythical patterns. A closer examination of the tragic innovations as compared to myths remains, in this essay, at a descriptive level without indicating the function of these changes. The author also refers to the general idea of didactic purposes in tragedies.

The following three papers deal with the structural aspects of tragedy: beginnings and endings (Deborah H. Roberts), lyric (Luigi Battezzato) and episodes (Michael R. Halleran). These combine the elements that Aristotle put under the concepts of language and discourse. The growing interest in narratology beginning with the 1980s also has influenced the analysis of tragedies. Beginnings and endings are among the subjects that characterise literary work, and they bring forth differences between the tragedians and also influence various readings of their works. Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides are compared in this respect, and in many cases no simple or single reading is possible. D. Roberts also refers to the works and authors that have made major contributions to research concerning these questions.

Lyric gives a special flavour to tragedies. The paper by L. Battezzato looks at the unwritten rules that govern lyrical parts in tragedies. In tragedies, song is expected at specific points and only from some characters and the chorus. In this, ritual origin plays a considerable role. It is not easy to give a short survey of this long-discussed and controversial subject. The author observes all the important aspects of the problem and briefly characterises various lyrical passages. He makes important references to the history of the problem and earlier discussions. Theories about the role of the chorus help give an idea about how choruses functioned in tragedies. In this, stress is laid on the concept of the chorus' "otherness", i.e. a reflective attitude toward tragic events.

The next paper deals with another part of the dynamic of Greek drama – *epeisodion*. Here, Michael Halleran analyses constituent parts of episodes. Various types of scenes are divided into three groups based on the representation of events: three-actor scenes, messenger scenes and *agōn*. This approach provides a framework for exploration of the episode's dramatic possibilities. From a more general viewpoint the analysis provides a closer observation of one tragedy (*Medea*). As a whole, one cannot imagine a better way to introduce the principles of the problem.

Music of tragedy has been mostly lost, and therefore the topic about melodic structures, rhythms and performance styles is especially complicated. P. Wilson explains the place of

music in tragedy, instruments used in it and the development of the style and structure of music in the 5th century BC. The analysis indicates that in order to understand the role and character of music on the tragic stage, a complex approach is required, one that combines strictly musical technicalities with cultural, historical and ethical aspects.

The production of tragedies has become the centre of attention, especially since the 1970s. Since that time classical scholars and theatre practitioners have found more effective ways of cooperation. This brought along a rapid rise of productions of Greek tragedies on stage. Numerous works about performance space (*skēnē*) and its parts, and the role of various stage equipment, have broadened our knowledge of Greek theatre as a complex phenomenon. Interrelation between speech, song and silence on the stage, the way the audience perceived the plays, ways of creating illusion – all this comprises the whole world of theatre. The paper about theatrical production by J. Davidson discusses the most important aspects of the problem in the present, keeping in mind the main problems that appear in this field.

The third part of the volume tries to give exhaustive information about the works of three major tragedians: Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides (in ca. 15 pages for each). There is a possibility that one can always refer to other books that deal with the relevant questions, but it is not the way chosen in this volume. The hardest thing is choosing between important and crucial basic information without falling into trivialities while at the same time covering most of the important aspects. By focusing on three tragedians, the problem is solved in a different manner: the informative scope and the level of generalisation concerning the three tragedians vary.

Aeschylean tragedy, introduced by Suzanne Saïd, is observed from the traditional aspects: life, stagecraft and innovations, relations to myth and history, themes such as individual and group, men and gods. There are generalisations that seem oversimplified, e.g. Aeschylus' tragedies do not sever individuals from the community or from the gods, do not separate the future from the remote past, etc. (p. 226). This kind of statement is correct to some extent but it would be better to speak about the relative importance of these aspects in comparison to other tragedians. Heroic grandeur is stressed when speaking of the art of Aeschylus: the stage effects, the symbolical and metaphorical value of his plays, characteristic verbal usage (there are quite a number of examples). The general impression of the paper still remains unbalanced between general observation and concrete examples. The moral aspect of the plays is omitted (e.g. the famous *pathei mathos* – the phrase that is explicitly found in Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 177–78), and there remains an unanswered question about the aim of the use of the highly figurative language with its mystical flavour. The reason why, despite the stylistic and metrical arguments, *Prometheus Bound* is attributed unquestionably to Aeschylus, also seems to rely on thin ground.

Going to the next tragedian, the diversity in ideas and characters of Sophoclean tragedies makes it difficult to give a brief and comprehensive view of his works. This is presented well by Ruth Scodel in her article on Sophocles. This tragedian, more than the others, has suffered from the attitudes and expectations of critics themselves, which has caused huge differences of opinion. Especially tricky is Sophocles' attitude toward gods, which has created debates

between the pietist and hero-worshipping wings of scholars. But the essay properly examines the ideas that go through the tragedies, such as women's loyalties and Athenian patriotism (p. 235). Scodel's analysis focuses on several aspects: the stylistic traits in tragedies, their relation to myths, characterisation, dramatic technique and ethical questions. As for characters, the contrasts between them are stressed while simultaneous clarity and ambiguity make them sometimes enigmatic. At the same time, the consistency of their convictions gives them a grandeur that one cannot forget. Contrasts of perspective, e.g. what is seen and what is hidden, what is truth and what is not, creates a tension that captivates spectators but also leads to moral complexity. Thus, most of the multifaceted questions in Sophocles are discussed here along with an insightful assessment. The analysis leads to the comprehensive picture of the dramatic art of Sophocles.

Euripides, even more so than Sophocles, remains a contested author. Justina Gregory discusses the disagreements that concern his relationship to Aeschylus and Sophocles and also to the genre of tragedy as a whole. She gives a diachronic survey of the reception of Euripides' plays beginning with the 5th and 4th centuries BC until the 20th century. Views about his works are altering even now, and this makes the analysis of his plays a complicated task. Gregory takes her position and admits it openly, naming it a revisionist view (p. 252), while leaving an open space to other interpretations. Euripidean drama combines innovation with tradition, addresses political and ethical issues and moves often along the borderline of the tragic, bringing into it elements of comic and everyday experience. Gregory analyses language, style and metre, structural principles of Euripides' tragedies and characterisation. The statement that the playwright's goal was to create effective theatre and his preference was for illustrative exposition over psychological realism is justified. Euripides aims to present the two modes, emotional and rational, with which human beings confront their mortality. He is interested not so much in individuals, but in stylised characters who reveal common traits concerning age classes (pp. 261–62). There are qualities which transcend age and gender, such as passionate love and deliberative mind, that are found in a number of characters (p. 264). Euripides and the other tragedians are in constant dialogue with the literary tradition, especially with epic, and with the other tragedians. This refers to the intertextuality of the genre and justifies the assumption that Euripides respected the tragic tradition, despite his variations on theatrical conventions. The complicated task to characterise Euripides' plays over less than 20 pages is done well, and readers get an overview of both the debated questions and the essential qualities of his works.

The works of three great tragedians that have survived are only a tiny part of all the works they had written. But they did not stand alone in their time and in the following centuries. Martin Cropp, who gives a survey about the lost tragedies, explains this in his article. In the following essay, Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood puts tragedy in a wider cultural context. Anthropology creates an awareness of the culturally determined nature of perception and judgment. According to the author, the anthropological approach helps build a bridge between the world of tragedy and that of the audience (p. 302). It is helpful in some cases, although I would like to add that it is just one of the ways to detect the meaning of the performance, and there is no need to make the anthropological approach the main and

absolute one. The meanings in performance were also created by the artistic and aesthetical phenomena. To this one has to add ethical dimension, which is the issue of the next paper by Douglas Cairns. Tragedy creates extreme conflicts of obligations and therefore engages the audience's ethical judgment. The correspondence between the values of the characters and those of the audience is the matter of debate. Here we can also see the polemic with the author of the previous paper on anthropological aspects of tragedy. Values are in a close connection with characterisation and motivation of *dramatis personae*. The motivation of the activity on the stage presents itself in a multifarious manner based on the heroic epic and civic context of tragedy. Traditional virtues such as justice, courage and wisdom are re-presented here. They are examined in the essay in relation to seeking honour and feeling shame. In a single play, values are contested in concrete situations, and it is not easy to detect only one moral priority. A good example is provided in Sophocles' *Ajax*, which is closely analysed in this case. Next to the traditional controversy between *sōphrosynē* and *hybris*, the important concept of *philia* is revealed, which I would prefer to be stressed even more explicitly.

Concerning the role of the gods in tragedy, Donald Mastronarde demonstrates by several examples how inscrutable they are in the course of tragic action. That is really the main aspect in relation to this complicated problem. The divine and the gods are present and cannot be ignored, but their influence can be either beneficent or malevolent. It is not possible to give an unequivocal ethical judgment to their role. Therefore one has to approve the view that tragedy is an exploratory and interrogatory genre and displays a wide range of attitudes about justice, order, etc. In Euripides' case this crisis of interpretation is especially clearly felt. One has to observe each tragedy separately, as it is done in this paper, to avoid big generalisations.

Mark Griffith observes tragedy in relation to the social aspects of authority proceeding from four fields: socio-political, domestic, religious and cultural (literary, mythical) fields. The title points to authority figures. They do not coincide, however, with the main characters. Thus, this essay stands in the place where the talk of the hero and his/her suffering would be. The author is interested not in a suffering hero but in social schemes. The tragic conflict arises from abuse of authority and from resistance to it. The paper examines the socio-religious background of tragic crisis and brings forth some generalisations from the sociological aspect. It also tends to point in the direction of class conflict, which I consider quite a dubious enterprise. The notion that spectators are brought to share the position of inferior characters (p. 348) seems to be an oversimplification, as well. The conflict with political and social authority leads to tragic results, and this is a general characteristic of tragedy. But that does not mean that the authority figure takes the central place in the tragic confrontation – this aspect is neglected by the author of the essay. It leads to misunderstanding of the main focus of tragedy, i.e. suffering that is related to the main hero. The problem of authority and resistance to it comes out clearly in Sophocles' *Philoctetes*. There the authority figure is the negatively depicted Odysseus, and all sympathy goes with the suffering hero Philoctetes. The conflict arises from the moral ground (betrayal, deception), and without this aspect there will be no tragedy. It is indicative that Griffith does not mention *Philoctetes* in his article.

The question about women's role in Greek tragedy has been actively discussed since the 1980s, and the relative impact of it is increasing. Judith Mossmann looks at the problem from a fresh angle and investigates the language of female characters. While in some cases male and female voices are definable (e.g. *Ajax*), in other cases it is less easy to detect them. Even in the same tragedy female voices could be differentiated (e.g. *Trojan women*). The analysis leads to the conclusion that modifying female characters' language usage makes it easier to see them as moral agents – a valuable statement with which I readily agree.

The third section ends with the discussion of the marginal figures by Mary Ebbott. The relation of foreigners and slaves to the central figures supports the main aim in tragedy to engage certain emotions. There is no strict opposition between marginal and central characters in this respect, and outsiders can contribute a great deal to the dynamic of theatrical experience.

The variety of the subjects discussed in this section opens various sides of the idea and production of tragedies. First of all, the observations are focused on the social aspect and on the impact that the plays make on the audience. Sometimes this point is stressed too strongly and independently from the inner qualities (e.g. aesthetical, ethical) of the plays.

The fourth and last part of the volume concerns reception of tragedy. Here, it is logical to begin with questions of texts and transmission. That is done clearly and briefly by David Kovacs. He gives an overview of textual scholarship without too much professional jargon, and the examples from Euripides' *Electra* and *Bacchae* demonstrate the critical points quite explicitly.

The understanding of the original idea of tragedy has varied through centuries. Beginning with antiquity itself, some of the widely spread views are stated by Stephen Halliwell. He discusses the sophists, Aristophanes, Plato and, of course, Aristotle, whose briefly mentioned *hamartia* nevertheless had a highly controversial afterlife. The postclassical viewpoints toward tragedy were ambivalent: tragedy remained prestigious in the literate culture but was condemned in the moral sense (stoic approach). Greek tragedy had a profound influence on Roman theatre and literature, where certain tragic patterns and motifs were employed (the essay by Vassiliki Panoussi). The Roman period but also later epochs found tragic material appropriate in order to express the problems of their own times (see the papers by Salvatore Di Maria and Herman Altena). The ancient responses to tragedy were built around the relationship of drama and life and later had a great influence on cultural thought in Western Europe.

It is indicative that Nietzsche is the only person named in relation to reception in the titles of the articles, and his life and works are specifically discussed. Albert Henrichs is an appropriate scholar to write about the unorthodox vision of Nietzsche on tragedy. In the second half of the 20th century, classical scholarship has paid much attention to his "lost son" and found that many of Nietzsche's ideas apply to our time. The central concept of suffering and a tragic world view developed by Nietzsche, put in the context of Nietzsche's study and scholarship, and his connections to the cultural development of his age are explained in this paper. The famous struggle with U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff gets the



attention it deserves and is treated as a paradigmatic clash between conflicting principles: in general terms a quarrel between scholarship and art. The problem exists today and is the closest connection to the reception of tragedy. Nietzsche's idea of the pre-Hellenic Greek spirit has caused a paradigmatic shift in understanding classics but also literature in general. One can only welcome this paper among the other approaches to tragedy.

Ismene Lada-Richards analyses the performative aspect of tragedy. How artistic problems of Greek drama manifest themselves in later European drama is a matter of major importance. It is through performance that tragedy comes alive. The way a metatheatrical material is combined with the affective side and the emotional involvement of tragedy is a serious question of reception strategy. Performative truth has had many faces in the course of the development of the Western theatre, and I. Lada-Richards pays keen attention to this. Good knowledge of the tragedies' smallest nuances and the use of examples taken from various Attic tragedies help illustrate her arguments. Theory and practice of stage acting are sensitively connected in this essay.

Thus, the book on Greek tragedy tries to find answers to the question of what makes Greek tragedy important and made producers turn to it throughout the centuries. Herman Altena's paper presents a set of complex conditions that contributes to the continued existence of tragedy. One of the most widely spread explanations is that Greek tragedy deals with universal themes and issues central to human life, which do not lose their significance. The tragic condition inspires people to undertake actions, make choices and assume responsibility; individual human beings are responsible for the world they create. This all leads to everlasting ethical problems that arise in the critical situation. Tragic view offers an alternative to the fable of total individual freedom and the suggestion that we can fully master our lives (p. 479). These aspects from the ethical field contain perhaps the most important key words about the tragic feeling and the survival of tragedy. The mythical framework allowed the Greek tragedians to explore the human condition at its most extreme, creating, at the same time, critical distance. The same distancing quality is valid in the modern theatre's reception of the ancient drama. Also, Greek tragedy can accommodate a broad range of performance experiments and help audiences experience true theatre. Directors of tragedy must make a choice between different styles in staging the plays, ranging from realist to modernist and postmodernist, and from reconstructionist to experimental (p. 488). The success of the performance does not depend only on the style chosen but mostly on the artistic qualities and knowing their own cultural context and expectations of the audience.

The last contribution to the volume by Paul Woodruff is about the translation problems of Greek tragedy. There is a valuable notion that the translations saved these works of art from oblivion. The paper is focused on the main question that a translator has to solve, i.e. choosing one of different possible versions as the equivalent to the original. The conclusion is that perfect justice in translation is beyond our reach. Each language has its means of poetic expression, and a translator has to build a bridge between two languages and cultures.

Although the problems of translation seem a logical topic for the final contribution, the end of the whole volume seems somehow too abrupt. I would have expected some general

remarks on the ideas discussed in relation to tragedy, which this large book offers. The brief preface is too scanty to shed light on the leading ideas of the volume, which represent quite different approaches. If variety was the goal in itself then there are aspects that are lacking, e.g. the problems connected with characters and many ethical issues. Looking at the key words that are in the index, one can point out some of the tendencies of the book. *Ēthos* as a key word is missing, which is strange because it is one of the six main aspects of tragedy named by Aristotle (see *Poetics* 6.1450a9–10). There is also no trace of hero in the index (but we can find heroic age and heroic nudity), although the issue is examined in some essays. The suffering hero does not get the attention that he/she deserves. In my opinion, it raises serious problems in understanding what tragedy really is when we observe it without focusing on the main characters as sufferers.

Fortunately, the other five main components of tragedy found in Aristotle are thoroughly examined in the essays, but comparatively little attention is paid to emotions. The main discussion of the emotional effect of tragedy takes place in the section on reception. It is also characteristic that major discussion of emotions is related to tragedy's teaching goals.

To conclude, it is evident that the essays in the volume mostly examine the function of tragedy in Greek society and its later impact on cultural developments in Europe. It is not reasonable to suppose that all the angles can be covered in the framework of one volume. Every editor is free to choose a specific approach, but it would be helpful if this goal was also explained to the reader in either the preface or the conclusion. The international scope of the volume also leads to a variety of approaches that are not always in agreement with one another – there can be nothing against it and it makes the reading of the book all the more interesting.

The collected essays offer a general view about the aspects of Greek tragedy that are mostly connected with the social side of this genre. Here one can find a central approach concerning the function and meaning of tragedy.

Sometimes it seems that a desire to give an all-embracing picture of Greek tragedy has been too great. It is an almost impossible task to cover all the important aspects concerning the three tragedians: their life, works, *technē* and later impact. In this sense Euripides is best represented concerning different aspects of his heritage. But there is no talk about the reception of the works of Aeschylus and Sophocles in later times, although it would be interesting to learn about the comparative aspect of the reception of the three tragedians.

One would expect a bit more correspondence between different articles in the treatment of factual matters. Thus, the anonymous *Rhesus* cannot be referred to as a Euripidean tragedy (Anderson, p. 130) while later there is a correct reference to it (Cropp, p. 288 and a mention of the problem of authorship by Kovacs, p. 387). On the whole, it would be better that such a universal volume include papers that are more balanced in related issues. This aspect raises questions and leads to the feeling that the authors were not always impartial in their approach to the main problems. Some aspects of vital importance to tragedy seem to have been neglected (mainly concerning the questions of characters and *ēthos*). At the same time some ideas are represented quite strongly (e.g. tragedy's teaching capacity) – in certain cases

it can lead to the misunderstanding of the spirit of the tragic. There are some smaller omissions and the index does not cover all occurrences (e.g. Seaford p. 55 is lacking in the index). As always, there is room for improvement. As for the structure of the essays, most of the articles end without concluding remarks – which is a pity – while every one of them makes a comprehensible whole.

Greek is transliterated and translated, so readers do not have to have previous knowledge of Greek. This makes the book approachable to a wider circle of interested readers. But the readers cannot be illiterate in problems of Greek literature; otherwise they cannot follow the sometimes-sophisticated arguments, especially when there is a polemic with the earlier interpretations (e.g. Small with Taplin). The volume shows us how a serious analysis can be done without using too much professional jargon. The lively tone of the essays goes sometimes even into speculations *à la* what people in theatre were thinking and talking about.

Greek tragedy in its cultural context remains a topic worthy of further discourse. In spite of some problems and questionable statements, this volume is a useful supplement to the existing literature and helps to give an overview of the huge amount of problems connected to Greek tragedy which otherwise must be gathered from various scattered sources. The reader can get a comprehensive picture of the state of affairs in scholarship on tragedy at the present stage. The aspects of the tragic have a vivid impact even today when either reading or watching tragedy *en scène*. Although we cannot feel the same in our theatre as the ancient Athenians did, we can still get in touch with tragic feelings. In order to understand the complex character of the tragic, this book will be of great help. In general, this is a good guide to Greek tragedy. It makes agreeable reading during which one can learn a lot from the various aspects of this genre.