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The Space of Fiction and the Space of Representation in Greek Tragedy

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Summary:

Introduction.....	3
1. Tragedy: Text and Performance	
1.1. <i>Mimesis</i> and <i>opsis</i>	13
1.2 The tragic text	22
1.3. A note on Aeschylean Tragedies.....	32
2. The Space of Tragic Representations	
2.1. Great Dionysia and the theatre of Dionysos in Athens.....	39
2.2. The tragic stage	43
2.3. The problematic of space.....	56
3. The Space of Fiction in Two Tragedies of Aeschylus.....	67
3.1. <i>Persians</i>	69
3.2. <i>The Seven against Thebes</i>	109
3.3. Strategies and poetical means.....	138
3.3.1. «Deixis am Phantasma».....	148
3.3.2. Poetical means.....	157
Conclusions.....	158
Bibliography.	163
Maps and plans.....	181

Summary:

This research forms part of the vast frame of theatre history, dealing with an aspect of the theatrical spectacle from the times of its beginnings, namely, the problem of the space in the Greek tragedy in the first quarter of the fifth century BC.

Space is an intrinsic dimension of the dramatic discourse, that Aeschylus not only intuited, but also explored from a pragmatic perspective, with the stage and poetic means he disposed of.

Our approach envisages the relationship between the space indicated by the dramatic text and the space of its representation on the stage of the Great Dionysia, the Athenian dramatic festival established in the sixth century BC and synonymous, all along the fifth century BC, with the period of growth and peak of the tragic genre.

This undertaking is not singular, but has its points of reference in the researches that started to evolve after the World War II, and that enjoy continuity, at some dramatic academics and practitioners's instance that bestow philological acrobacy on performance studies research.

The novelty, if not topicality of this undertaking consists in its approach, an implicit «reading practice» that could seem a plain recurring to the text, since comprises the analysis of the means that serve the author in constructing the dramatic space. It is not only a line by line analysis of the first two complete Aeschylus' extant tragic texts whose date is established with certainty, the remotest, *Persians* (472 B.C.), respectively *The Seven Against Thebes* (467 B.C.), produced until Sophocles' entering the Great Dionysia competitions, so till the encounter between Aeschylus and Sophocles, which, as any significant encounter, was to lead to mutual emulation, but a reconstructive exercise. Not of what could have had taken on scene, impossible restitution, but of a mode of articulation of the Aeschylean text with regard to the dramatic space, by the means the dramatist – by turns poet, director and actor - had at hand at that moment.

If dramatic criticism is interested in the effect of the text performed on stage, in semiological aspects or in the „world created by the performed text”, our endeavour envisages the analysis of the strategies and poetical means of the construction of the fictional spaces and of the way these were communicated to the spectators, pragmatic and stilistic modalities immanent to and indissociable from the theatrical script, with special regard to the staging processes in those times.

Key words: Greek tragedy, scenic space, dramatic discourse, set design, dramatic script, Aeschylus, Deixis am phantasma, figures of speech

Synthesis of the main parts:

The first chapter, „Text and Performance”, deals, on one hand, with the relationship between mimesis (m...mhsij) and opsis (Ôyij) on the basis of its treating by Plato in *The Republic* and by Aristoteles in *The Poetics*, taking into account that at the beginning of the fifth century B.C. poetry, tragic poetry also, became an instrument of mediation in the complex relationship between the subject „that sees” (thewmenos) (qeèmenoŷ) and its object, „what is seen” (theatron) (q~atron). On the other hand, discusses the manuscriptical avatar of the tragic texts generally, through the agency of the socio-

historic and technologic conditions to which they were subject to, with a note concerning Aeschylus tragic manuscripts.

The second chapter, „The Space of the Tragic Representations” envisages the larger phenomenon of Great Dionysia, the case of the Theatre of Dionysos in Athens, with special concern to the tragic performance space and to the spatial problematic as it results as a consequence of the respective conception of Ionian physiologists, transposed by Thales and his disciples in theory and practice.

The third chapter, “The Space of fiction in two Aeschylean tragedies” is structured both as a double case study, *The Persians* and *The Seven Against Thebes*, which undertakes the line by line analysis of the two texts with the purpose of identificating the occurrences dealing with fictional spaces, the departure point of the scenic representation, and as analysis of the strategies and poetical means used by Aeschylus for constructing these fictional spaces, where pragmatic strategies like «Deixis am Phantasma» and respective poetical means, of Homeric pattern, are emphasized as well with the purpose of clarifying syntagm as “space in Aeschylus”, so used and brought into discussion by dramatic criticism, as of proposing my own acception of such syntagm: as long as I’m concerned the space in Aeschylus that allows us to be approached is the one the tragic text offer to us, the only document in view of any restitutions with regard to this integrating part of the dramatic discourse. Only this one is uncoverable, analyzible for want of documents concerning the staging practices of our author, as director’s notebook or programatic writings. Eliminating a methodological confusion between dramatic text and dramatic discourse was one of the consequences of this undertaking. What we know is that dramatic discourse, verbal and scenic, used the tragic text as a starting point especially conceived with regard to entering the Great Dionysia competitions, but we cannot infer no other type of conclusions in default of the mentioned documents.