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'sic verba spernit mea' – The Usage of Rupture of Coherence in Senecan Drama

Different from the Greek dramatists, Seneca used rupture of coherence in dramatic speech as a means of characterisation. This observation gives a hint to Seneca's own dramatic technique in contrast to his Greek predecessors, on whom he is usually regarded as highly dependent. He seems deliberately to have used rupture of coherence which is a noticeable progress in terms of the psychological correctness of the drama. This presents an argument in favor of the opinion that Seneca wrote primarily for the stage.

In this paper, rupture of Coherence is understood as a break of the Maxim of Relation. The main factors, which make an utterance relevant, are firstly the fulfilment of a Directive Speech Act, secondly - if there is no directive speech act - coreference on at least the deep structure or the logical form.

Seneca uses rupture of coherence mainly as a means of characterisation, as becomes clear e.g. by analysing the dramatic speech of Cassandra in *Agamemnon* and Ulixes in *Troades*. The communicational behavior of Seneca's characters fits to their characteristic features apparent otherwise. It can be said accordingly, that Seneca does not use only one means to characterize the dramatis personae, but draws a coherent picture of a person's character, which becomes apparent on different channels. By that he highlights his characters comparatively 'real' in their behavior, especially in psychological terms. In that regard his persons resemble more closely real human beings than any characters drawn by the Greek Classics.

A further purpose for rupture of coherence lies in the structure of the plot: For example in *Oedipus* the alienation of the couple Oedipus and Iocasta is mirrored by their communicational behavior.

That leads to the notorious question of performability. It is hard to believe that subtle dramatic means like rupture of coherence could be really estimated by an audience if the tragedy is not on stage but only recited. Consequently, if we assume that Seneca used rupture of coherence deliberately, and there are points in favor of that notion, we must come to the conclusion that Seneca might have written primarily for the stage.