

which, whether by Aeschylus, by Phrynichus, or if it was so by Thespis, the literary tragedy was grafted. Whence came the name which was for some time bestowed upon the whole? What was *drama*? For whoever may first have used the word *drama* in its present sense, neither Aeschylus nor Thespis invented, or is supposed to have invented, the thing. Drama, as the name implies, is not properly a form of written literature at all, but something far older and more natural. It is *action*, the presentation of a picture, fact, or story by movement and pantomime. It exists or has existed everywhere for ages without any literature at all, and has often attained a high development without even any regular verbal composition. When indeed literature takes possession of it, the literary element by its deeper interest and greater permanence will surely conquer the rest, and in Athens during the fifth century this process, like all others, went on with amazing rapidity, so that we soon arrive at a species of 'drama', such as the *Medea* of Euripides or the *Oedipus at Colonus* of Sophocles, which is not essentially an 'action' or performance at all, but a thing to be heard or read. The name in fact had already become, as it now notoriously is, a misnomer. But it was of course not a misnomer when it was given, and it is highly significant that the art which Aeschylus took up and turned into tragedy called itself 'performance' or 'action.' If we compare what was written, in ages when the book-drama was familiar, about the early dramatists of Athens, with what was said of them at the time when they were still remembered, we shall note a marked difference. We speak, and Suidas might have spoken, of Phrynichus as composing a tragedy on the taking of Miletus. But Herodotus does not say so. He says that he 'made a performance' or 'action' of it¹. Aristophanes mentions Phrynichus often and tells us that even in his own day the songs of Phrynichus were still the favourites of the older generation. But nowhere, I believe, does Aristophanes or any one near that time, speak of the δράματα of Phrynichus as a kind of literature, which existed or could exist in a manuscript, like the *Andromeda* of Euripides, which Dionysus read on board ship before the battle of Arginusae². He speaks of them as things which had been. 'Phrynichus,' says Agathon to Mnesilochus in the *Thesmophoriazusae*, 'whose work you have yourself heard, was fine in person and fine in dress, and that is why his *actions* were fine too³.' Phrynichus, as he appears in the allusions of Aristophanes is properly an artist in *pantomime*, inventor of gestures, figures, and movements, and

¹ G. 21.² *Frogs* 53.³ *Thesm.* 167.