This is a pre-proof copy of the following book-chapter:

* Fotheringham, L.S. (2018), ‘Don Taylor, the ‘old-fashioned populist’? *The Theban Plays* (1986) and *Iphigenia at Aulis* (1990): Production Choices and Audience Responses’, in F.E. Hobden & A. Wrigley, eds., *Ancient Greece on British Television*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press (*Screening Antiquity* series).

On Saturday 21 July 1990, at 8.45pm, BBC2 screened Euripides’ *Iphigenia at Aulis* as the last in the fifth season of the anthology drama programme *Theatre Night*. Immediately after the ‘TWO’ logo faded, a pillar of yellow flame flickered up the centre of the black screen, a gong sounded and the words ‘The War Plays of Euripides’ appeared in white font over the flame. That plural is the only thing remaining in the televisual record to indicate that director-translator Don Taylor had wanted *Iphigenia* to stand as the first in a series of three televised Euripidean plays (with *The Women of Troy* and *Helen*), standing as a parallel to his earlier production of three Sophoclean plays: *Oedipus the King*, *Oedipus at Colonus* and *Antigone*. These three had been broadcast as a stand-alone series under the title *The Theban Plays* over three nights of a single week in 1986.[[1]](#endnote-1) But the parallel ‘trilogy’ was never to be completed. Far from being a beginning, *Iphigenia* would turn out to be the last *Theatre Night* (there was no sixth season), the last time Taylor worked for television, and the last British television broadcast of a production of Greek tragedy for almost twenty-five years.[[2]](#endnote-2)

Despite this irony, Taylor’s *Iphigenia* made him the most prolific director of Greek tragedy on British television (with a total of four plays), and the only one to tackle the genre more than once;[[3]](#endnote-3) his wish to direct a second trilogy on television reflects his firm belief that the medium was ‘merely the latest extension of a dramatic tradition that reached more or less unbroken back to Aeschylus’.[[4]](#endnote-4) His significance for Classicists interested in the twentieth-century reception and dissemination of Greek tragedy is assured. His significance in the broader history of British television drama has been identified as lying in his eloquent protest against mainstream developments in the field: he represents a range of people and approaches ultimately left behind by those developments.[[5]](#endnote-5) Although most of his television *oeuvre* in fact consisted of material written for the medium, his productions of Greek tragedy can be seen as the exemplary of his determination to make what he considered quality drama available to a mass audience, whatever its origins. A study of these productions is therefore a suitable a point of entry into the study of this relatively neglected but important director.

I will begin with a brief survey of Taylor’s career and opinions before attempting to convey an introductory impression of his television productions of tragedy; these sections will cover key features of his methodology and contextualise these features in terms of television history. I will then consider evidence for how the productions were received in the form of newspaper reviews and the BBC’s ‘Television Audience Reaction Report’ for *The Theban Plays*. All four plays (henceforward referred to as *King*, *Colonus*, *Antigone* and *Iphigenia*) are treated together, although there is more information available about responses to *The Theban Plays*. The fact that there is a strong stylistic continuity across the four productions, and that the small number of critical responses to *Iphigenia* show no marked difference from those to the earlier productions, makes it reasonable not to separate the analysis of this play from the other three.

What will emerge from the study of these documents is a wide variety of opinions on these productions as a whole, on individual aspects of them, and on the very act of putting ancient Greek tragedy on the modern mass medium of television. This variety highlights the impossibility of arriving either at a straightforward conclusion about these productions as artistic successes or failures; and this emphasis on variety seems an appropriate note on which to close a chapter on a man who argued passionately for more variety both in the way television drama was made and in the types of drama put on television.

A1 Don Taylor

The existing brief accounts of Taylor’s life and works tend to be influenced by his memoir *Days of Vision. Working with David Mercer: Television Drama then and now*, published by Methuen in the same year as the first volume of Mercer’s collected plays.[[6]](#endnote-6) Mercer was the best known of the new writers whose television work dramatising the lives of the working class, and of those educated out of the working class, Taylor directed in the first few years at the BBC (1960-65); the memoir focuses on these early days, though they are explicitly viewed from a later perspective. Born in a working-class London family in 1936, Taylor was in the first generation to benefit from the 1944 Butler Education Act. He developed an enthusiasm for drama and poetry at grammar school, and came to view the upper classes’ monopoly on education and culture as perhaps the greatest injustice they had committed against the working class.[[7]](#endnote-7) As a theatre-enthusiast starting work at the BBC in 1960, he saw in the wide reach of broadcasting the opportunity to make available to the working class not only ‘classic drama’ (a term encompassing not just ancient Mediterranean ‘Classics’ but the entire western theatrical canon), but also new works of – in his opinion – equally high quality, presenting a left-wing perspective on contemporary issues without descending into mere propaganda.[[8]](#endnote-8) Unlike some others we shall encounter below, he saw no incompatibility between the modern medium and the ancient material, nor between television’s mass audience and the western literary canon.

A *Radio Times* article promoting *The Theban Plays* in 1986 describes Taylor as ‘not so much an élitist as an old-fashioned populist with a mission to liberate great literature, great drama, great opera from the preserve of the ruling or moneyed cliques’;[[9]](#endnote-9) the phrasing suggests concern that Taylor’s enthusiasm for Greek tragedy may be misunderstood as ‘élitist’, typical of a ‘public-school housemaster’ (which the article carefully explains that Taylor is not). Taylor’s approach can be described as ‘populist’, but as a type of populism it has become ‘old-fashioned’. The tone of Taylor’s own quoted statement, ‘I have resisted the temptation to put Oedipus on a motor bike or exaggerate lurid aspects’, hints at his contempt, expressed more explicitly elsewhere, for a different brand of populism: that which sets out to attract the largest possible audience. *Days of Vision* narrates the events which in Taylor’s view led to the triumph of that kind of populism on British television, zeroing in on the arrival of Sydney Newman as Head of the BBC Drama Department in 1963. Newman’s re-organisation of the Department and fostering of new approaches to drama has often been described as launching a ‘Golden Age’; to Taylor, he was an uneducated upstart.[[10]](#endnote-10)

Taylor’s attacks on Newman can make uncomfortable reading; Caughie has called them ‘naked snobbery’ and ‘very unpleasant’.[[11]](#endnote-11) *Days of Vision* was written after twenty-five years of fighting a losing battle for something he sincerely believed in, starting with his failure to be given any work by the BBC Drama Department between 1965 and 1972. He blamed the introduction of commercial television (and capitulation to the commercial principle on the part of those running the BBC) for the destruction of his cherished ideals, and excoriated anyone, like Newman, who acknowledged attracting the audience as a goal. He also believed he had been ‘blacklisted’ by Newman (although Newman left the BBC in 1970);[[12]](#endnote-12) it seems more likely he was not a particularly congenial collaborator for many of those who worked happily under the new regime. He found refuge in the Documentary Features Department; much of his activity there has been described as ‘smuggling’ drama about historical literary figures on to the screen;[[13]](#endnote-13) his own plays also began being produced in the theatre at this time. The majority of his output as a director for the Drama department in the 1970s was also self-penned.

There is no doubt that Taylor was in favour of the democratisation of culture (bringing works perceived to be ‘the best’ to a mass audience) as opposed to cultural democracy (encouraging everyone to create their own art in their own way) – a debate which, despite Crace’s characterisation of Taylor’s position as ‘old-fashioned’, was still going on in the 1980s and indeed beyond.[[14]](#endnote-14) Taylor wrote negatively about popular entertainment more generally, and would not allow the term ‘popular culture’.[[15]](#endnote-15) His personal experience led him to reject suggestions that ‘élite culture’ had nothing to say to working-class people.[[16]](#endnote-16) He generalised too broadly from his personal experience: he believed for a long time that exposure to the ‘quality’ material that had enthused him would create enthusiasm and demand for that material in a wide section of the population; by the time of *Days of Vision*, he had learned otherwise, and expressed his disillusionment with great bitterness.[[17]](#endnote-17) He failed to recognise the extent to which his value judgements were shaped first by individual as opposed to universal preferences, and then by an extensive education of a particular sort.

His conviction that exposure would create demand recalls the BBC’s first Director General, John (later Lord) Reith. Reith was paternalistic – as evidenced by his notorious comment that ‘few know what they want, and very few what they need’ – but not élitist in that he did want to share what he saw as culture with the audience for the mass media of radio and television.[[18]](#endnote-18) Taylor expressed admiration for Reith, and nostalgia for the days when a single television channel unified the nation’s viewing experience;[[19]](#endnote-19) in the *Radio Times*, he is quoted describing television as ‘the whole nation’s medium’, as if the old monopoly, which would have compelled viewers to watch either Greek tragedy or nothing, was still in force. Instead his productions were broadcast on one of four channels, achieving viewing figures of no more than 0.6 million, while 12.1 million watched detective series *Taggart* on ITV.[[20]](#endnote-20) While Taylor acknowledges that telling people what to do (or watch) on the grounds that it is good for them as ‘a political principle … has ominous overtones’, he also admits that ‘as a cultural credo it lurks behind the whole history of the BBC, and indeed to a certain degree behind my own work.’[[21]](#endnote-21)

In 1977 he began to turn some of his attention to producing ‘classic drama’ for television with Granville Barker’s *Waste*; in 1981-90 he directed nine such works by twentieth-century playwrights Mikhail Bulgakov, Arthur Miller and Edward Bond as well as by Sophocles, Shakespeare and Sheridan; non-theatrical material at this time was limited to two new self-penned plays and three episodes of the drama series *Maybury*. Shortly after the broadcast of *Iphigenia*, as he was to write later:

I heard from a member of the production team that Alan Yentob [Controller of BBC2] had announced there would be another Greek tragedy on BBC2 only over his dead body.

His body is still in the way.[[22]](#endnote-22)

Taylor stopped trying to get work in television, but continued to work in theatre and radio until his death in 2003. He did not attempt to explicate Yentob’s reasons for taking this position. In contrast, Simon Curtis, who was brought in by Yentob from the Royal Court to helm the new anthology series *Performance*, spoke warmly in a 1998 interview of Yentob’s support for studio productions of theatre plays other than Greek tragedy.[[23]](#endnote-23) He could have taken a stronger position against such material. Early television drama had been dependent on the theatre for material and personnel, as well as wishing to claim some of the older medium’s cachet; an understandable desire to establish an identity of its own for the new medium as well as the gradual expansion of the pool of practitioners led to more material being created directly for television and to celebration of this fact. Theatre and theatricality became representative of the past, of what television was trying to escape: ‘the theatrical, the stagy, has been a term of abuse – formally, culturally and politically – at least … since the late 1950s in television’.[[24]](#endnote-24) The number of productions of theatrical material dropped, decade on decade, from an admittedly very high start. It must be acknowledged, however, that the number of productions of Greek tragedy was never very high – although higher than some other categories such as medieval plays.[[25]](#endnote-25)

A2 Taylor’s tragedies

The four plays are presented in new versions written by Taylor himself, working from literal translations provided by Geoffrey Lewis of the University of Edinburgh, who had been a fellow-student of Taylor’s at Pembroke College, Oxford, and acted as Classical Adviser on the productions. The compositions are verse: unrhymed lines of regular length for the dialogue, and rhyming, irregular lines for the choral song. They stay very close to the originals in terms of structure and content, although the English dialogue sometimes elaborates on the plainer language of the Greek. The plays are largely uncut, despite the enormous length of *Colonus* and scholarly doubt over the authenticity of several portions of *Iphigenia*. The Choruses deliver their lines spoken rather than sung, accompanied by specially composed orchestral music. There is no space to discuss Taylor’s interpretations of the plays here; but they do not stand out as unusual. The translations were published by Methuen, and Taylor’s introductions make an interesting case for the value of performance as a hermeneutic tool.[[26]](#endnote-26)

From the point of view of television technique, the productions are not only studio-bound but record the actors’ continuous performance over the (between 115 and 140 minutes) running time of the plays, captured as if live by switching from one to another of the studio’s cameras as required. This was the technique Taylor had learned as a trainee director on his arrival at the BBC in 1960, when all drama was broadcast live and there were no other methods available;[[27]](#endnote-27) it enchanted him with its ability to enhance the best aspects of theatre through the camera’s ability to alter the viewer’s perspective on the action: ‘in a TV play the cameras had to be inside the story, not merely watching it’.[[28]](#endnote-28) He remained devoted to the technique, which was by this time so infrequently used for drama that he laments the risk that the skills required to employ it were disappearing.[[29]](#endnote-29)

B1 *Mise-en-scène*

Each of the four productions opens with a dialogue-free scene, underscored by orchestral music, which establishes the setting and some aspect of the characters. They represent the gathering of the Theban crowd before the palace (*King*), Oedipus and Antigone wending their weary way on to the set (*Colonus*), sinisterly-helmeted guards raising enormous banners depicting Creon’s face within a palatial chamber (*Antigone*), and Agamemnon writing his letter while elsewhere soldiers patrol the Greek camp (*Iphigenia*). It is quickly apparent that the sets are not attempting to look like the real world; the effect may be least marked in the interior space of *Antigone*, most marked in *Colonus* with its necessarily stylised representation of a wild place, including a grove represented by green-lit net and fairly neat rows of jagged rocks like corridors lined with broken columns (see Figure 6.1). The space before the palace in *King* includes an enormous gateway in a wall that simply ends, and so requires no gate; the palace-façade (not immediately revealed) has sloping mirrored surfaces (Figure 6.2).

**[Insert Figures 6.1 and 6.2 here]**

When the lights come up to reveal the Greek camp in *Iphigenia* clearly, the sets of tidily arranged stone steps and the curving wooden palisades create the overall impression of an acting space where small numbers can enter, interact and depart, rather than a mustering place for a vast army. The impression may be enhanced by the fact that the steps form areas reminiscent of the audience’s seating area in an ancient theatre, here frequently occupied by the internal audience constituted by the Chorus. In addition, the central space of the studio is paved in blocks that create a circular pattern and so perhaps recall the (usually) circular *orchestra* of the ancient theatre, where the Chorus danced; the paving of the courtyard in front of the palace of *King* creates a similar although less marked effect, a visual allusion to the ancient theatre rather than an attempt to replicate it. Arrangements of steps and other, shallower variations in the height of the ground are prominent features of all four sets, enabling Taylor to provide some visual interest in these text-dominated plays by having the actors move up and down them: numerous characters take the high ground, as it were, before speaking to the rest of the cast.[[30]](#endnote-30)

**[Insert Figure 6.3 here]**

In *King* and *Iphigenia*, the wordless opening scene confirms that the productions are not set in a specific, real historical timeframe, through the combination of costumes and props from different periods. In *King*, the citizens of Thebes slowly gathering to plead for aid wear costumes from a wide range of centuries; the *Radio Times* article mentions ‘sources as varied as Bruegel and the Blitz’. In *Iphigenia*, the cameras shift between Agamemnon, writing a letter with a dip-pen and sealing it with wax by candlelight, and the soldiers patrolling the Greek camp, whose uniforms could plausibly belong to 1990 (see Figure 6.3). The effect is not as marked in *Colonus* or in *Antigone*, but these productions, designed to be viewed subsequent to *King*, do not have such a strong need to establish the ahistorical setting.

**[Insert Figures 6.4 and 6.5 here]**

The costume design overall creates a vague impression of the past. Formalwear and militarywear both tend to be conservative and therefore difficult to date; the aristocratic characters – the bulk of the speaking characters – are dressed formally, and many of the men’s costumes have military overtones. The constantly present Choruses all come across as roughly nineteenth-century: the Theban senators in their cloaks with a froth of white lace below upright collars and bow-ties (*King*), or tail-coats and identical gray cravats (*Antigone*: Figure 6.4); the well-to-do farmers of Colonus in their tweeds, gaiters and array of different hats. The outfits of the female Chorus of *Iphigenia* evoke *Little House on the Prairie* more than Queen Victoria; no realist production would put twelve women in identically-tailored dresses, each in a different solid colour with no patterning (see Figure 6.5). Some of the humbler speaking characters, such as the Messenger who describes Oedipus’ self-blinding in *King* and the Soldier who announces Polynices’ burial in *Antigone*, and some silent attendants for the aristocratic characters, are dressed in solid blocks of colour which seem symbolic of uniforms without representing a specific livery or evoking a specific time-period.

**[Insert Figures 6.6 and 6.7 here]**

Every now and then, characters wearing costumes suggestive of different eras (including the contemporary soldiers in *Iphigenia*) reinforce the impression that the action is not taking place in a specific historical period. Characters with religious affiliations who are presented positively, such as the prophet Teiresias and the unnamed Theban Priest, are dressed in more medieval-looking outfits: long robes with a homespun appearance, conveying perhaps an unwordliness. In contrast, the silent priestesses who prepare Iphigenia for the dreadful sacrifice are otherworldly and sinister: front-hair pulled into a beehive, back-hair into a bun; faces dead-white except for red lips and a stripe of black across the eyes (Figure 6.6). The sinister helmets of the silent Theban soldiers in *Colonus* may evoke Darth Vader or other *Star Wars* military outfits (Figure 6.7).

Although there are specific reasons to avoid a real-world setting in a fixed historical time-period for the mythological world and highly stylised form of ancient Greek drama, such an approach was in any case congenial to Taylor, who was explicitly opposed to realism as an artistic mode, and who blamed the market-driven triumph of ‘location film-making, naturalistic dialogue and journalistic style’ in drama for the disappearance from the screen of his own different aesthetic.[[31]](#endnote-31) Given the wide range of approaches and techniques which can be described as or opposed to ‘realism’ and ‘naturalism’ – the terms can even be used as opposites, although Taylor is far from the only writer to use them in reference to practices that are closely aligned if not actually identical – it is necessary to identify what Taylor’s opposition involved.[[32]](#endnote-32) It was rooted in his preference for explicit literary artistry, for poetry and metaphor; he argued that these can express and explore the complexity of the world more effectively than a visually or verbally convincing representation of its surface detail. Positive words in his vocabulary include ‘artistic’, ‘aesthetic’ and ‘stylised’ – even, on one occasion, ‘artificial’ (in relation to language); the terms ‘illusion of reality’, ‘reportage’ and ‘pictorial record’, used in relation to drama, are negative.

Taylor’s goal in avoiding realism can be compared to the Brechtian *Verfremdungseffekt*: ‘The aim [of television] must [be] … to shatter the audience’s film-based visual expectations, to startle them into moments of perception by presenting them with pictures that *do not* look like the real world’.[[33]](#endnote-33) As this quotation suggests, Taylor equated realism and cinema, and thus he was able to exploit the rhetoric of the search for the ‘purely televisual’ in defence of his preferred alternative: the studio-bound play. Films are shot in ‘real’ locations; the artificial (or as Taylor put it, ‘created’) environment of the studio allows realism to be resisted: ‘A film is always real, unless you make an enormous effort that it should not be so. A studio television play never is, unless you make an enormous effort that it should be so’.[[34]](#endnote-34) Here, and elsewhere, Taylor seems to fall prey to the assumption that the camera presents an unmediated version of what it is pointed at.[[35]](#endnote-35) Perhaps he aimed at exploiting his reader’s tendency to fall prey to it. Unfortunately for him, the association of the camera with television has led audiences to a preference for this kind of realism in that medium as well as in cinema, and to the dismissal of studio-bound drama as ‘artificial’, ‘theatrical’ (used in a negative sense) and ‘old-fashioned’.[[36]](#endnote-36) When technological developments, especially in the portability of cameras and the editability of videotape, gradually made the enhanced ‘realism’ of location-shooting more possible and more affordable for television, many directors were happy to escape the studio and give the audience what they wanted. The original attraction of television was precisely its ability to bring moving images of one part of the ‘real’ world (including the studio) to another (the living-room), and in ‘real’ time.[[37]](#endnote-37) The lack of mediation in ‘realist’ film and television may be an illusion, but it is an illusion that the audience appears to have bought into with enthusiasm.

B2 Actors and cameras

The first principal actors appearing on the screen include Cyril Cusack as the Priest in *King*, Anthony Quayle as the elderly Oedipus and Juliet Stevenson as Antigone in *Colonus*, and Roy Marsden as Agamemnon in *Iphigenia*. Notable figures appearing later include John Gielgud as Teiresias (*King* and *Antigone*), Claire Bloom as Jocasta (*King*), and Fiona Shaw as Clytemnestra (*Iphigenia*). The list features some of the brightest luminaries of the British stage, many of whom would also have been known to the television-audience; the Choruses too are full of faces which would have been familiar to viewers, even if they might not be able to name every one. The sheer size of the casts is an indicator of the expense and effort that went into the productions: in each play there are eight speaking parts, twelve Chorus-members, and a number of non-speaking extras – most strikingly in *King* (twenty-nine ‘Theban Citizens’ and ‘Theban Children’ listed in the credits) and *Iphigenia* (thirty-eight ‘Greek Soldiers’, some of whom act briefly as a subsidiary Chorus, and twelve ‘Priests and Priestesses’).

**[Insert Figure 6.8 here]**

It is in scenes involving a large number of actors and/or extras, including the choral odes, that the elaborate interaction of performers and camera-operators required by Taylor’s use of the multicamera, continuous-performance technique is most impressive. This can create a wide variety of effects. The movements of the Choruses are often stylised, as they move around the set in order to group themselves in their different configurations; although it is no less artfully put together – and much more complex from the point of view of the number of performers and shots – a less stylised impression is created by the opening silent scene of *Oedipus the King*, involving around thirty extras trickling gradually on to the set, over around three minutes.

**[Insert Figure 6.9 here]**

In the case of the choral odes, the movements of both performers and cameras add visual interest to a feature of ancient drama which is alien to modern audiences in serious drama, although it is used in the popular form of the ‘musical’. Both visual and aural interest are also added by shifting between different modes of delivering the lines, sometimes divided among the twelve actors speaking individually, sometimes delivered by the whole group in unison, or in sub-groups of two, three, four or six; the cameras cut or pan to maintain focus on the current speaker(s). These performances have been described as ‘choreographed’;[[38]](#endnote-38) the cameras play as vital a role in the ‘dance’ as the actors, and the director acts as the ‘caller’ by instructing the vision-mixer to prioritise the feed from this camera or that. The younger, female Chorus and the occasional joyful odes in *Iphigenia* sometimes give the impression of an actual dance (especially at 1.08.32-09.46); the older, male Choruses of *The Theban Plays* perform movements expressive of solemnity. At the end of the fourth ode of *King* after the terrible revelation, raising their cloaks one by one to cover their eyes (01.28.04-17); in *Antigone*, when Antigone ascends the staircase to her death, a line consisting of ten members of the Chorus, shot from above, moves with precision from the vertical through the diagonal to the horizontal across the floor of the darkened set (01.13.39-53; see Figure 6.9).

Long speeches delivered by single actors tend to involve less frequent shifting between cameras, although they are broken up with reaction-shots from the other actors. There is, perhaps, surprisingly little use of the Chorus for such shots except in *Antigone*, which includes several scenes where one character is alone with the Chorus. But even keeping the focus on the speaker need not result in a static or simple presentation; to take one example from early in *King*, it takes some effort on the part of the camera-operators to maintain the close-up on Michael Pennington in Oedipus’ response to the Priest (00.08.59-00.10.01), as he runs down and up the palace-steps and moves among the crowd. There are seven separate shots here, from long shots to close-ups, probably involving three cameras; three of the shots involve moving the camera to track Pennington while ensuring that he is not blocked by the extras. The extras, who respond to Oedipus’s words, are nevertheless captured in the frame, reducing the need for cutaway reaction-shots.

Taylor’s long takes focusing on the speaking actor may be particularly long in the tragedy productions due to the length of the speeches. Even so, both his dedication to capturing continuous performance and some of the ways he went about doing so reflect his prioritisation of the actor’s performance and of the script as the key elements in television drama: ‘There are times when the best possible thing a director can do is to point a camera at an actor and watch him act good words’.[[39]](#endnote-39) It would be unfair, however, to suggest that Taylor was uninterested in visuals, although he did love words. It is clear from a number of anecdotes that in order to achieve specific visual effects he was interested in pushing at the limits of the technology, in terms of number of shots used or the swiftness with which the cameras had to be moved across the floor, or exploiting the latest dollies and cranes to get the camera as high as possible. [[40]](#endnote-40) He continues to be fond of crane-shots in his tragedy-productions, again exploiting the variations in ground-level built into the sets. In the same article that recommends watching the actor ‘act good words’, he has interesting suggestions for ‘the use of unrelated film and the divorcing of the picture from the sound’. But his strongest visual interest is in ‘obsessive close-up’. He associates this technique, sometimes combined with whispered dialogue to convey ‘a kind of passionate, interior monologue’, with the intimacy of television as a medium.[[41]](#endnote-41)

Intimacy and ‘liveness’ have been seen as integral to the television-viewing experience by many creators and analysts, but have been repeatedly redefined over time as increasing screen-size and picture-quality have reduced the need to huddle close to the set with the curtains drawn (a powerful factor in the early descriptions of intimacy, and one which Taylor clings to), drama has increasingly pre-recorded programmes rather than being broadcast live.[[42]](#endnote-42) For example, the casting of well-known actors might be seen as creating an impression not only of quality but of intimacy: the viewers recognise ‘old friends’. Taylor’s preferred form of intimacy, and his rhetoric on the topic, recalls the earliest days of television. In 1937, for example, producer George More O’Ferrall stated that, with regard to television drama, ‘We should regard fine acting as our chief asset and use the cameras to show it to its best advantage and, where possible, to heighten its effect. The value of the close-up is immeasurable. … There is a peculiar intimacy that belongs to television alone’.[[43]](#endnote-43)

A3 Responses to the productions

These four productions received comment in the nation’s broadsheets at least twenty times, in a mixture of previews, evaluative comments in listings and post-broadcasting reviews:[[44]](#endnote-44) seventeen times for *The Theban Plays* in 1986, by eleven writers working for six publications (four newspaper groups);[[45]](#endnote-45) three times for *Iphigenia at Aulis* in 1990, by three writers working in three publications (two newspaper groups).[[46]](#endnote-46) *The Theban Plays* also received two substantial reviews in *The Listener*, the BBC’s own magazine: one before broadcast and one after.[[47]](#endnote-47) The table below shows my evaluation of these comments as positive overall (though potentially including acknowledgement of negative features), negative overall, mixed or neutral. This variety confirms the significance of individual preferences even in professional evaluations of drama; there is no consensus among the critics on the viability either of the attempt to bring Greek tragedy to television in general, or of these productions in particular. There is also disagreement on individual aspects of the productions and even on individual moments. A varied response likewise appears in the BBC’s internal ‘Television Audience Reaction Report’ for *The Theban Plays*, although the majority opinions reported are positive. This together with the positive reactions from critics indicates that however old-fashioned Taylor’s approach to television drama had become by the mid- to late 1980s, that approach had not yet lost the entire audience, who were still prepared to tolerate or even enjoy a variety of types of drama.

**[Table 1 here]**

The audience report provides viewing figures and summarises the results of a questionnaire which included questions that could be answered yes/no or on a ‘strongly agree … strongly disagree’ scale, for which a quantitative analysis can be provided, and space for the respondents to write more discursively about their reactions; a reader’s impression of overall tendencies in these comments, occasionally illustrated by quotation of a representative or particularly striking remark, is also offered. Whereas the critics choose what to comment on, the audience reactions recorded here are to some extent shaped by the questions asked by the BBC and the quotations preserved have been part of a process of institutional selection. In addition to such questions as whether respondents had video-taped the plays, and what they thought of the decision to broadcast all three in one week (on which opinion was more sharply divided than on the other questions), the questionnaire asked:

* whether the audience found the plays easy to follow, entertaining, attention-holding, too long, or still ‘relevant today’;
* whether the Chorus ‘helped [the audience] to understand the meaning of the plays’;
* opinions of the acting, the costumes and the sets;
* whether the plays should have been shown in a single week.

While some questions are generic, those about length, contemporary relevance and the Chorus may give an insight into anxieties felt about the productions at the BBC.

Viewing figures for *King* and one of the programmes broadcast at the same time have already been mentioned; these confirm that the audience was small and probably consisted of those already interested in or curious about Greek tragedy. This must be borne in mind when noting that a majority of those surveyed not only welcomed the opportunity to see the plays, but said that they were easy to follow, entertaining (slightly fewer), and held the attention; a relatively small number found them too long. The responses to the questions about relevance and the Chorus were slightly less good. The sets and costumes were generally evaluated positively (with sets having perhaps a slight advantage), achieving similar scores to the questions about comprehensibility and entertainment value. The most positive response of all, statistically speaking, was to the acting. The summary of the open responses notes particular appreciation for Juliet Stevenson as Antigone.

The summary provides a little more detail and some reactions to other features of the productions, especially the translation. Opinion on this was divided:

It was described as having ‘brought the plays to life’ and the use of modern colloquialisms helped to bring out the relevance of the plays to today. … There were also a few complaints about the modernity of the translation.

Similarly, while some found the ‘style of presentation … ‘fresh and original’’, and thought that the *mise-en-scène* ‘add[ed] to the plays’ messages’, others found the staging ‘confusing’, the ‘sets and costumes ‘hideous and irrelevant’ or ‘weird’’, objecting in particular to the mixture of periods or to ‘modern dress’ *per se*. It is also noted that ‘some commented on the ‘clever use’ of different levels of the acting areas, which they found very effective’ – suggesting that the sets, and the way Taylor directed the action to exploit them, were appreciated. Although some were ultimately unconvinced that the plays remain relevant today, others were enthusiastic about their ‘timelessness’ and their status as ‘masterpieces’.

In the press, the most frequently commented-on aspects of the productions overall were the costumes (mentioned by nine people), the acting or casting (ten), and the translation (eleven); there are also a few comments on the music, the sets and various aspects of the camerawork. There is very little comment on two of Taylor’s major concerns, the democratisation of culture and continuous performance. Only Rusbridger picks up on the claim in the *Radio Times* article that Taylor aims to bring tragedy to the working class; he makes no serious evaluation of the attempt, but his later comment that the plays ‘will doubtless have been videoed by a thousand and one grateful classics masters the length of the land’ may imply that he thinks the actual audience is precisely the constituency from which Crace was attempting to dissociate Taylor. Two people mention continuous performance. Stringer believes the technique has been successful; Cropper, on the other hand, writes that ‘it was hard to see how the transmission gained thereby.’ The process does not seem to have put people off, but it does not seem to have engaged many of them either.

Three specific quotations from reviews of *King* provide a useful introduction to the different attitudes to the project as a whole:

It is strangely unnerving when the emotional concentrate of ancient Greek tragedy comes flooding down the centuries and bursts through the confines of the box in the corner of the living room. Not the sort of thing you expect. … Directed by Don Taylor in his own new translation, it carried a conviction that was hard to resist. (Stringer)

What very nearly sank this version early on, though, was that the production design is a mess, and that Taylor chose to do it as theatre, as opera, not as television. (Hebert)

It is an interesting experiment but the impression at the end is that a great classic tragedy has been scaled down and diminished in the attempt to make it more accessible to present day audiences. (Knight)

Stringer’s response was extremely positive, but he opens his review with these words which reveal some concern about the compatibility of tragedy as material and television as a medium – concern which in this case has been overcome. The potential incompatibility is expressed in a contrast between ‘emotional concentrate’ and ‘the confines of the box…’, which suggests that Stringer may be thinking of the intimacy of the television medium as potentially inadequate to the content of tragedy. The review goes on to list a number of aspects which contribute to the production’s success, but continues to mention problems posed by the enterprise, such as the fact that the story is so well-known and the Chorus as a dramatic convention. Stringer seems rather more concerned than Taylor himself about the difficulty of the undertaking.

Hebert and Knight, in contrast, are both negative about the way the production has negotiated the question of compatibility, but for rather different reasons: Hebert, prioritising the medium, feels that not enough has been done to adapt the material to television; Knight, prioritising the idea of ‘a great classic tragedy’, concludes that the effort made to adapt the material for a modern audience is already excessive. Knight’s other comments may explain what he means. He focuses on the ‘infelicities in the dialogue’ resulting from the contemporary tone of the translation; he finds these incompatible with the ‘length of the speeches’, the ‘declamatory style of acting’, and the content (the horrors described). To identify these three elements as what Knight himself would associate with ‘a great classic tragedy’ may be to over-interpret what is of necessity a highly compressed comment appearing in the day’s television listings, but that contemporary language contributes to the ‘diminishing’ effect seems likely. It is implied that the audience lacks some education or experience which would enable it to cope with an undiminished version, presumably involving a linguistically less accessible translation, and although the point is expressed in terms not of intermediality but of the gap in time between tragedy and today (‘present day audience’), he may in fact have in mind the mass audience of television, whose level of education cannot be guaranteed. It is not impossible long speeches and declamatory acting seem to him untelevisual, although he does not say so.

What Hebert means by describing the production as ‘not television’ must likewise be deduced from his other comments. His description of the delivery of the Chorus, ‘every voice round and on the breath, not to say bellowing’ seems similar to Knight’s ‘declamatory’ and can easily be associated with the theatre; his opinion of the translation is lukewarm at best, but it is not his main concern. Unlike Knight, he identifies Taylor’s translation as verse, but does not seem to find this in itself untelevisual. Immediately after the theatre/opera comment, he mentions the mixed periods of the costumes and describes the set as ‘a mixture of symbol and pure marbled Melamine.’ The combination of the word ‘symbol’ and the reference to an artificial material indicates that what is here associated with theatre and opera rather than television is the non-realism of the production. Cropper’s adverse comment on the ‘Sword and Sorcery set’ of *Colonus* may also indicate a distaste for non-realism; Day-Lewis, Rusbridger, and Last express concern about ‘incongruities’, ‘contradictions’ or the like – in the costumes, in the language, or between the two – which suggest they would have approved more of a production set in a single coherent historical period.

Waymark’s comment that ‘there has been no attempt to adopt television’s forte of naturalism’ makes the most explicit connection between the medium and the mode. Numerous critics do not mention the medium at all, making it difficult to be certain how much they have considered whether the features they comment on favourably are ‘televisual’, those they view negatively ‘untelevisual’; they may simply be talking about their own taste within ‘television’. But at least nine raise the question of whether the material is compatible with the medium, however briefly; for Selway and Stringer, incompatibility has been overcome or shown not to exist; for Cropper, Hebert, Last, Rusbridger and Waymark, it is a problem; Banks-Smith, Brayfield are unclear on this point.[[48]](#endnote-48) For Cropper, Hebert and Waymark the compatibility of theatrical material with televisual presentation appears to be in question; the others focus on something other than theatre *per se* as the thing which may or may not be compatible with television, although all could be seen as focusing on a type of theatre or an aspect of theatre: for Brayfield, Last, Rusbridger and Stringer, the specific genre of Greek tragedy; for Selway, ‘great, grand drama’; for Banks-Smith, the ‘size’ of Fiona Shaw’s performance as Clytemnestra. These last two critics may be using the words ‘great, grand’ and ‘size’ in opposition to the the old idea of the ‘intimacy’ of television.

Three of the critics who do not raise the issue of televisuality do mention specific difficulties of producing modern productions of Greek drama (Dunkley, Purser, Senter); two more comment on problems relating to ‘classic tragedy’ or ‘the revered classics’ (Knight, Lennon). Together with Brayfield, Last, Rusbridger and Stringer, this makes a total of nine critics who focus on tragedy as a genre or on a combination of antiquity and canonicity rather than on the theatre-television polarity; Hebert and Waymark do both. This may suggest that the chronological and cultural gap between ourselves and the tragedians is more of a problem for the critics than the theatre-television polarity, which is only explicitly mentioned by three. But that would beg the question of what aspects of tragedy/‘the revered classics’ is conceived as causing a problem. Dunkley, Last, Lennon and Purser comment on specific cultural differences between us and the Greeks such as belief in the gods. Hebert, Purser, Rusbridger and Stringer all comment on the Chorus, an ancient theatrical convention; Rusbridger adds other problematic aspects of ancient theatricality: the reporting rather than presentation of action, lengthy speeches, the unchanging location. Senter’s focus combines the cultural with the theatrical.

**[Insert Figure 6.10 here]**

I close by returning to Hebert and the question of the televisual:

… in the most memorable image of the night, we saw [Oedipus] emerge from the palace with a white cloth over his head, like a ghost in charades, till slowly the two blood stains appear from the empty eyes. I’d have liked more of that kind of thinking, a more sustained attempt to adapt to television.[[49]](#endnote-49)

Oedipus appears at the top of the steps, the object of the fascinated gaze of the Chorus; a Messenger has just narrated his self-blinding. The cloth he holds over his head by a crooked right arm is the train he wore on his first appearance, which Hebert had derided earlier in his review. This spectacle is not a visual revelation of new information, and if Oedipus’ action were taken as naturalistic, his generation of this ‘memorable image’ for the Chorus (and by extension the audience) is more easily read as self-dramatisation than as the instinctive act of a man driven to despair. By first concealing his face, then allowing the bloody image of eyes to appear on the cloth before finally showing his own sightless eyes, Oedipus here presents what he has suffered vividly or even as ‘theatrically’ as possible (see Figure 6.10). The scene would work well in a theatre, even if television allows it to be enhanced by the use of close-up. Pennington’s pose is very similar to a nineteenth-century engraving of French actor Jean Mounet-Sully as Oedipus, in a Comédie Française production of the play, emerging from palace doors at the top of a flight of steps, draped in a bloodstained white cloth which he holds in front of him, although not over his head, by an extended right arm.

This theatrical analysis of the moment Hebert considers an ‘attempt to adapt to television’ suggests room for disagreement about what ‘television’ is. The critics overall are not united on the importance of televisuality as key feature in judging the artistic success or failure of the productions, or on a definition of televisuality. The audience report focuses on specific production-decisions rather than on judging the productions ‘as television’. Looking at the evidence as a whole, it is clear that responses to this attempt to put Greek tragedy on television vary because individual opinions and preferences vary.

A4 Conclusion

This chapter has described some aspects of Don Taylor’s four television productions of Greek tragedy and set them in the context of a) Taylor’s own writings about his artistic and political goals and b) the existing evidence for responses to the productions by press critics and members of the viewing public. The result is a snapshot of attitudes towards the democratisation of culture, as applied to the material of Greek tragedy and the medium of television drama, at what turned out to be the last occasion for some time on which this material and medium were combined. The conditions of broadcasting in 1986 and 1990 – the fact that other, more popular programmes were available to be watched, and were being watched, at the same time as Taylor’s productions – mean that his desire to bring Greek tragedy to all must be seen either as unsuccessful or as untested: the opportunity to reach the audience he wished to did not exist. But although the entire nation did not watch, an audience of 0.5-0.6 million per play is still substantial – a production in a 1,000-seat theatre would have to run for well over a year to capture the same size of audience. We cannot know the motivations that led these people to watch the productions, but we do know a little about how some judged them. There were negative judgements, but the substantial number of positive responses show that however unusual, even old-fashioned, various aspects of Taylor’s approach might have been, there was still an audience – including an appreciative audience – for Greek tragedy and for studio drama in 1986 at least. More interesting than the evidence for both positive and negative judgements is the evidence that those who came down on the same side of this division were not necessarily in agreement about the reasons for their conclusion. The variety of opinions reflects the complexity of the issues at stake: social, aesthetic and political questions about the nature of broadcasting, drama, entertainment and culture, and the desirability of various forms of these. When we have the amount of evidence that is extant for *The Theban Plays*, for example– from reviews to the BBC’s survey of audience response – the variety of opinion amongst contemporary viewers is underscored. With his televised tragedies, the ‘old-fashioned populist’ Taylor certainly succeeded in engaging a mass audience.

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A Programmes discussed

*The Theban Plays*. 3-part series. Prod. Louis Marks. Dir. Don Taylor. BBC2.

Part 1: *Oedipus the King*. Tuesday 16 September 1986, 8.30-10.40pm.

Part 2: *Oedipus at Colonus*. Wednesday 17 September 1986, 8.50-11.00pm.

Part 3: *Antigone*. Friday 19 September 1986, 9.00-10.55pm.

The Sophoclean trilogy was preceded by an ‘unrehearsed discussion about acting Sophocles and his meaning to the modern world’ (*Radio Times*, 11 September 1986, p. 37): *Speaking to the City: Sophocles then and now.* Prod. Louis Marks. Dir. Don Taylor. Sunday 14 September 1986, 8.40-9.05pm.

List of Images

5. The chorus of the *Iphigenia at Aulis*.

6. Religious figures: Tiresias and Oedipus in *Oedipus the King*, Iphigenia and priestesses in *Iphigenia at Aulis*.

9. Chorus movement in *Antigone*: Antigone ascending the staircase, with Chorus below.

10. The blinding of Oedipus in *Oedipus the King*: Oedipus in the doorway; close-up on blood stains.

*Iphigenia at Aulis* by Euripides. *Theatre Night*. Prod. Louis Marks. Dir. Don Taylor. BBC2. Saturday 21 July 1990, 8.45-10.45pm.

**Table: Evaluative comments on Taylor’s tragedy productions in the press**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Newspaper group** | **Writer** | **Type of notice** | **Words** | **Response** |
| 1986 | *The Times* | Celia Brayfield | 1 review | 377 | mixed |
| Martin Cropper | 1 review | 108 | negative |
| Peter Waymark | 1 preview, 1 listing | 100, 212 | neutral? |
| *The Daily Telegraph;* *The Sunday Telegraph* | Robin Stringer | 2 reviews | 360, 115 | positive |
| Philip Purser | 1 review | 735 | positive |
| Peter Knight | 2 listings | 162, 105 | negative |
| Rosemary Say | 1 preview | 162 | positive |
| *The Guardian;* *The Observer* | Jennifer Selway | 1 preview | 100 | positive |
| Hugh Hebert | 1 review | 545 | negative |
| Alan Rusbridger | 1 review | 560 | negative |
| *The Financial Times* | Christopher Dunkley | 1 review, 3 listings | 347, 113, 100, 31 | positive |
| *The Listener* | Al Senter | 1 review | 714 | positive |
| Peter Lennon | 1 review | 825 | positive |
| 1990 | *The Daily Telegraph;The Sunday Telegraph* | Richard Last | 1 review | 629 | negative |
| Sean Day-Lewis | 1 preview | 203 | mixed |
| *The Guardian;* *The Observer* | Nancy Banks-Smith | 1 review | 203 | positive? |

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1. The opening gong-sound and the font of the initial title were repeated from *The Theban* *Plays*. For the planned second trilogy, see D. Taylor (1998b) and the back flap of the dust jacket of D. Taylor (1990a). [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. The next broadcasts of Greek tragedy on British television were both of theatrical productions of Sophoclean plays: *Steven Berkoff’s* *Oedipus* (Sky Arts, 2013) was the product of post-performance editing; Ivo van Hove’s *Antigone* (BBC Four, 2015) was broadcast live from the Barbican. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. The runner up is Bill Hays, with his 1979 version of Aeschylus’ *Oresteia* (see Keen, this volume; Wrigley 2011f and 2017b). [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. D. Taylor (1990a), 30. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. See MacMurraugh-Kavanagh and Lacey (1999); Bignell *et al.* (2000:,161, 187); Caughie (2000: 75-6, 86); Wake (2014). [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. D. Taylor (1990a). Other accounts: Anon. (2003); Hayward (2003); Purser and Billington (2003); Purser (2007); Wake (2014). [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. D. Taylor (1990a: 47-9). [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. D. Taylor (1990a: 86-90). [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Crace (1986: 82). [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. For the ‘Golden Age’, see Cooke (2015: 70); Caughie (2000: 57-8). For various negative comments on Newman, see D. Taylor (1990a: 105, 160-1, 169-70, 184-93, 199-204, 221-4, 238). [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Caughie (2000: 75-6). [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. D. Taylor (1990a: 221-4). The accusation had been reported in Appleyard (1982); see Newman (1982) for response. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. Purser and Billington (2003); cf. Purser (2007). [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. See Kershaw (1992: 183-95; cf. 134-6). [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. D. Taylor (1990a: 5, 19-21, 45-7, 95-6, 200-1). [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. D. Taylor (1990a: 63). [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. D. Taylor (1990a: 235-40). [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. The statement, from Reith’s *Broadcast over Britain* (1924: 34), is frequently quoted, e.g. in Crisell (2002: 35). For Reith and television, see Cooke (2015: 11-13); for Reith in the context of the interwar generation’s resistance to the commercialisation of culture, see LeMahieu (1988: 3-4, 138-9, 141-54); for Reith more generally see Caughie (2000: 25-9); Bailey (2007: 99-103). [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. D. Taylor (1990a: 238, 1-2; cf. 237, 243-5 on commercial television). [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. Viewing figures for the evening that *King* was broadcast are taken from BBC Broadcasting Research: Television Audience Reaction Report TV/86/104: *The Theban Plays* by Sophocles, 1 (BBC WAC). [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. D. Taylor (1990a: 37). [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. D. Taylor (1998b: 38). [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. Ridgman (1998b: 199). [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. Caughie (2000: 219). These developments are traced by Cooke (2015: 12-4, 17-8, 40-3, 56, 68). MacMurraugh-Kavanagh and Lacey (1999) explore and problematise the view that television moved naturally and inevitably from being more theatrical to being more filmic/cinematic. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. See N. Taylor (1998); Wyver (2011). On medieval mystery plays on British television, see Wrigley (2015c). [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. The volumes were originally entitled *Sophocles. The Theban Plays* (1986) and *Euripides. The War Plays* (1990). Taylor’s Euripides-translations were subsequently divided between *Euripides. Plays: II* (1991) and *Euripides: Plays III* (1997); his introduction, relating to the ‘trilogy’. The introduction and translator’s note to the Sophocles volume were retained in the currently available 1998 edition, *Sophocles: Plays I*, but repaginated following additional introduction by series editor J. Michael Walton. [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. He gives an admirably lucid account of the studio process at D. Taylor (1990a: 11-4). [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. D. Taylor (1990a: 22). [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. D. Taylor (1990a: 264, 267). [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
30. The visual echo of ancient theatre-seating in *Iphigenia* and the movement of the actors up and down steps in *King* and *Iphigenia* are noted by Wrigley (2012a) and (2012d). [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
31. D. Taylor (1998b: 39); cf. (1981: 33) and (1990a: 258-9). For other practitioners opposed to realism, not acknowledged by Taylor, see Cooke (2015: 113-20, 129-34); Caughie (2000: *passim*, esp. 152-78). [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
32. See Cuddon (2013: 462-3, 590-3, 664) for various uses of the terms; Cooke (2015: 27, 51, 81, 104, 108) for the terms used in opposition and (2015: 101, 109, 129) for the terms used in alignment; Caughie (2000: *passim*, esp. 69) for the flexibility and evolution of realism. [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
33. D. Taylor (1990a: 264); there are occasional brief references to Brecht elsewhere in the book, and in D. Taylor (1996), but no sustained exploration of his ideas. [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
34. D. Taylor (1990a: 258). [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
35. The most extended description of the camera as operating on its own occurs at D. Taylor (1981: 32). [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
36. MacMurraugh-Kavanagh and Lacey (1999: 66-7, 71-2) discuss the audience’s increasing dissatisfaction with studio drama from the mid-1960s. [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
37. See Caughie (2000: 99-101) for the ‘rush of the real’ and the aesthetic of immediacy. [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
38. Cooke (2015: 8). [↑](#endnote-ref-38)
39. D. Taylor (1964: 207). [↑](#endnote-ref-39)
40. D. Taylor (1964: 152) and (1990a: 25-8, 126-8). [↑](#endnote-ref-40)
41. D. Taylor (1964: 206). [↑](#endnote-ref-41)
42. For intimacy as a property of the medium and an aesthetic value in early discussions of television, see especially Jacobs (1998) and (, 2000). [↑](#endnote-ref-42)
43. O’Ferrall (1937). [↑](#endnote-ref-43)
44. The barer listings that confine themselves to statements that the plays were to be broadcast, summaries of the action and/or extracts from the press pack, have not been included in the count. [↑](#endnote-ref-44)
45. Reviews: Brayfield (1986), Cropper (1986), Dunkley (1986b), Hebert (1986), Purser (1986), Rusbridger (1986), Stringer (1986a) and (1986b). Previews and listings: Dunkley (1986a), (1986c) and (1986d), Knight (1986a) and (1986b), Say (1986), Waymark (1986a) and (1986b). [↑](#endnote-ref-45)
46. Reviews: Banks-Smith (1990), Last (1990). Previews and listings: Day-Lewis (1990). [↑](#endnote-ref-46)
47. Senter (1986); Lennon (1986). [↑](#endnote-ref-47)
48. Four more critics mention the medium (positive are Dunkley (1986b), Purser (1986), Say (1986); neutral is Day-Lewis (1990)); not all reviews of television programmes feel the need to point out that the programme is on television, so these may still be significant. [↑](#endnote-ref-48)
49. In contrast to Hebert (1986), Dunkley (1986b) describes this moment as Taylor’s ‘sole glaring error’. [↑](#endnote-ref-49)