Natural ferocity dominates part of human society. Based on its spontaneous-instinctive needs and desires, it triggers off individual praxes and behaviors. Ideological definitions are collectively consecrated, forming ethic and mental orders. According to this, mimesis causes knowledge and catharsis regulates conscious behavior.

The social function of theatre art in the classic Hellenic era differs radically from that of modern post-dramatic poetics in the sense that, whereas ancient dramas and games educated the members of polis to act publicly, as citizens, post-poetics culture encourages the reasonable beings to live individually, reviving their pre-conscious ferocity.

Social embodying concerns the fundamental priority, the highest intellectual prerequisite, and the main function for the establishment or maintenance and further development of every collective entity. Aiming to present or impose itself as a logically (or ideologically) and aesthetically structured whole (Sorokin 314), every social system guides a multitude of interactions, setting rules and forming clusters of complementary expectations that correspond to roles and punishments (Parsons and Shills 195). The individuals are socialized by learning how to adapt themselves to group standards and, controlling their spontaneity, to acquire social behavior (Newcomb 51). Education contributes to the systematic socialization of every new generation (Durkheim, Education and Sociology 71). Socializing is based on judged models (Ogburn and Nimkoff § 12). Independently of the inborn tendencies, as it prepares individuals for a particular way of living (Weber 426-27), education aims to introduce or modify and continually check an activity (Bower and Hilgard 3). For these reasons it is included in the social techniques, which harmonize social behavior with dominant plans (Mannheim 6). Furthermore, it helps the civilizing progress, refining the nat-
ural origins. It cumulatively covers the older, simpler, and more unrefined phases of life, creating fine arts, deeper knowledge, and more complicated institutional laws (Tylor, *Anthropology* 20). Thus, human beings’ depended connectedness, both the conscious and the unconscious, is propelled as minor and adult persons become signifiers of contemporary culture at any given time (Herskovits 39).

Cultural evolution and socialization focus on the internalization of culture which rules the society where every baby is born and is progressively embodied (Parsons and Bales 17). Anthropology defines *culture* as a composite entirety that includes knowledge and beliefs, laws and customs, symbols and sacred ceremonies, art and morality, as well as all abilities and habits of social members (Tylor, *Primitive Culture* 1). Culture represents the way of living, as the social environment determines it, bringing together all idealizations and substitutes which influence all personal reactions (Klineberg 255). As a social technique, it inhibits the drives, allowing only their distorted satisfaction (Roheim 216). Primitively or physiologically, drives befit a fixed order of purposive behavior which motivates the human organism to satisfy a need (Woodworth 1918). Secondarily or educationally, culture intervenes using either external violence or internal intellectual attempts, evaluating the natural drives and regulating their manifestation or imposing their repulsion (Breuer and Freud 1937). Art acts as a relieving factor against forbidden drives, offering supplementary satisfactions and reconciling personal resignations with cultural demands (Freud, *The Future of an Illusion* § II).

In order to study the revisions-adaptations of ancient drama in the age of postmodern poetics, firstly, we ought to clarify the function of scenic art during the classical period of Athens and in the context of dramatic games. Thus, we will comparatively investigate the sociopolitical and cultural differences that characterize these two environments, determining the precipitating causes of drama, the aim of performances, as well as the audience’s needs and reception. Aristotle’s beliefs, selected from all his works, will mainly guide our effort. Special attention will be paid to *Poetics* (330 BC), which constitutes the first systematic endeavor to de-codify the tragic phenomenon. According to the Stagirite philosopher (*Physics* 200b), move and change determine the order of *physis*, which focuses on the condition in which the original phase of an animal is completed (*Politics* 1252b). Change results as the essential consequence of moves. It is based on antitheses and causes wear, which opposes the completed origin at any given time (*Metaphysics* 1018a). For the sake of this process, excrements are produced as remainders of the pre-change situation. These excrements also contain oppositions (*Parva Naturalia* 465b). During the archaic period of ancient Greece, excrements concerned the primitive, natural, or pre-civilized origins. Thus, they were connected directly with uncultivated drives. Similarly to them and independently of cultural progress, *pathos*, either as cause or effect (*pathema*), composes those moves and changes of the psyche which influence human beings in different ways and al-
low them to develop particularities in personal judgment (The Art of Rhetoric 1378a). As is the case with natural borders, excrements also remain inside the psyche, undergoing catharsis through sacred ceremonies and dramatic performances (Poetics 1449b; Politics 1342a).

In the initial verses of the book of the same name, Aristotle lists the kinds of poetics (1447a). He contends that all of them are based on mimesis, which forms the efficient cause of art. Tragedy, in particular, concerns a mimesis of complete (1450b), significant, and perfect praxes (1449b). Thus, mimetic activities are connected with social acts, which are composed of culturally evaluated prototypes of mimesis. According to them, every spectator becomes familiar with the dominant culture, experiencing the scenic masks’ pathos. More analytically, as results of didaskalia-stage directions and also as assimilations of didaskalia-teaching (Papadopoulos, Writing Fables 38), the dramatic performances served the audience’s collectiveness, bridging different personal opinions and forming consciously accepted knowledge. Plato (Parmenides 132d-e) believes that participation in the same ideas-models forces all persons who are virtually similar to be actually similar. Modern scientific thought verifies that this communion causes identification (Allport 293), creating an emotional tie between members (Freud, Group Psychology § VII). According to this line of thought, the personal identities correspond with the social roles (Sarbin 225). Identification is based on the pleasure which every member feels, understanding her/himself as acting like another body or character (Nietzsche § VIII). Poetic identification, in particular, produces uniform illusions for all spectators, as they imagine scenic masks to represent their own person (Mannoni 1969). Under the effect of communion or identification, and by means of the de-codification of the same pedagogical messages, the receivers of scenic mimeses sympathize both with each other and with the imitators. Thus, personal experiences are enriched and social behaviors become convergent (Lipset et al. 1163).

As the efficient cause of dramatic art, mimesis is based on praxis (Aristotle, Poetics 1449b). It does not represent human beings, but, rather, life (1450a) and acts (1448a). Mimeses are connected with social moves-prototypes and depend on psychological moves-pathos. Furthermore, they produce changes (1451a), which signify the end of binding (origin) and the beginning of the denouement of dramatic myths (1455b). The tragic heroines/heroes are distinguished neither for virtue or justice nor for falling from happiness into misfortune because of wickedness or slyness, but for a mistake which they committed when they were glorified and happy (1453a). In order to imitate praxes (1452a), tragedy consists of myths, which comprise the most significant of its six parts (1447a). Myths concern the aim of tragedy, forming the synthesis of events or the plot (1450a). As the order and the psyche of tragedy (1450b), on the one hand, dramatic myths ought to respect tradition—at least to be in harmony with the essential signs of mythological narrations. On the other hand, either following or directing cultural evolution, poets must create new
myths (1453b). However, Plato (Republic 597a-598d) questions the value of the credibility of mimesis, because unlike the original essence of reality, it represents a visible phenomenon as a real one (378a). He also questions the pedagogical value of mythology and asks mothers to narrate only the socio-politically accepted myths (377d). Additionally, he intends to expel from his ideal republic the mythologist poets, including Homer and Hesiod, blaming them as common imitators of virtue’s idols (376e).

Both as activities and results, mimeses concern two equivalent natural orders. Mimetic praxes constitute an inborn tendency, and all social members feel pleasure when they receive mimetic stimuli and thereby seek learning (Aristotle, Poetics 1448b). Similarly to the nutritious order of the psyche as a drive or pathos, mimesis saves beings, preparing them for action (Aristotle, On the Soul 416b). It offers humans the initial knowledge that brings to light a personal potential for cultivating knowledge and self-knowledge. Thus, the initial knowledge is symbolized with Oedipus’ answer to the Sphinx (Papadopoulos, Social Members’ Dissuasion 129-30), forming the basis of consciousness, which is structured by socially confirmed knowledge (Freud, Totem and Taboo § IV). The initial knowledge coincides with the completion of the original phase, which is determined by the natural order, signifying the completion of the self and the first beginning of the ego. The successively upcoming learning mirrors conscious information, which depends on the cultural order. Following this, beings act and learn as individual units by interacting and imitating inside the social environment, accepting culture, assimilating the role of the generalized other and developing their conscious ego both about the self and the relationship of the self with others (Mead 155).

In the universal-anthropological level, the ego’s autonomy caused the fragmentation of primitive unity (Nietzsche § I). Before the initial knowledge or conscious was established, as Prometheus Bound testifies (Aeschylus lines 443-449), human beings behaved similarly to infants, without intellect and knowledge. They existed like figures of dreams. As is the case with the thoughts of all infants who do not participate yet in social integration, primitive human beings’ thoughts were determined by unconscious psychological processes. The personal unconscious operates through the symbolic creation of illusions, calming desires before they become distorted by their collision with reality. Thus, it permits them to continue producing either the incoherence of dreams or neurotic behaviors (Freud, The Unconscious § II). The collective unconscious acts in parallel to the personal unconscious. It is completed by archetypes, which signify the passage from the primitive experiences within nature to the secondary experiences within society (Jung, “Approaching the Unconscious” 67-69). The collective unconscious is brought to light through symbols which are traced in religious ceremonies, artistic creations, and during psychical collapses (Jung, Contributions 162). These could be compared with ecstasy, when individuals distance themselves from the normality of the psyche (Aristotle, Physiognomics 808b), existing beyond their own selves.
Post-poetics Culture, or, Pre-conscious Ferocity / 91 /

(Nicomachean Ethics 1145b). Then, similarly to some fellow-sufferers heroines/heroes, such as Agave or Pentheus in Bacchae, they are affected by the sacred disease (Problems 953a).

Traditionally in the context of dramatic art and its scenic performances, the ego’s autonomy is symbolized with Thespis stepping out of the chorus, which led to the introduction of the first actor and the invention of dramatic dialog (Macdonald-Cornford 232). Plato believes that dialog concerns the process of “asking and answering” (Cratylus 390d). Through this, dialectically, the speakers focus on the essence of an issue (Republic 534b), disseminating the truth (Meno 75d). Aristotle indicates that, during their initial phase, tragedy and comedy were based on the improvisations of exarches in dithyramb and phallic songs respectively (Poetics 1449a). Improvisation constitutes an act or speech occurring off-hand, without preparation (Plato, Cratylus 413d). Exarches in pre-tragic and pre-comic mimeses operated spontaneously and, first of all, similarly to Euripides’ Iphigenia among the Taurians (line 743): they determined temporal beginning. Secondly, they guided collective activities (Plato, Laws 891d), regulating the rhythm of songs (Hesiod, The Shield of Heracles: Aspis 205) and movements (Homer, Odyssey D lines 17-19). Thirdly, they formed culturally cohesive ideas, crystallizing collective beliefs about the standard values such as right, necessary, and useful (Plato, Meno 98e-99a). In celebrations (Aristophanes, Wasps lines 875-884), they constructed the collective identity and submitted it to all participants, encouraging uniformity in mimetic activities and results, pathos-causes and effects, intellect and meanings, feelings and sentiments, praxes and behaviors. Poetically, because of communion and identification, the exarches contributed to the conservation or the change of collective culture. They played spontaneously in the present conditions (Homer, Odyssey Ο line 169), making useful their personal abilities and, above all, satisfying their egocentric needs, according to which they de-codified the present conditions. Through mimeses they connected social with pre-scenic reality, as they responded to current issues (Iliad Μ line 228) or interpreted archetypical impressions of dreams (Odyssey Τ, line 535). Thus, being exceptional persons, they represented an equally exceptional mask-role (Aristotle, The Art of Rhetoric 1413b).

The exarches or poets’ rights and obligations towards ritualistic groups and, later, towards audiences were tantamount to the archons’ rights and obligations towards sociopolitical groups. This correlation also worked in the opposite direction, with regard to the participants’ rights and obligations towards sociopolitical and ritualistic leaders. During the archaic period, since they were the poets’ ancestors, the exarches took the position of the archons in the organization of ritualistic groups. Similarly, being the sociopolitical archons’ ancestor, every master and man and father governed each family (Aristotle, Politics 1252b-1253b). Property and economic art constituted the fundamental instruments for a family’s creation and function. However, its order ought to take care of people and their virtue first (Poetics 1259b), determining the
supreme good as the aim of praxes (Nicomachean Ethics 1094a-1094b). Plato contends that pedagogy and religious services comprise the structural elements of both polis and family (Republic 618c). Being at the same time an archon and an exarch, each master and man and father performed pedagogical and ritualistic duties. By means of his authority, he officiated at sacrifices (Aristotle, Politics 1285b), kept watch on wedding ceremonies and, in general, supervised the observance of rituals (Plato, Laws 774e-775b). Thus, by approving or rejecting and modernizing myths through mimeses and ceremonies, he confirmed the collectively-accepted knowledge, consecrated groups’ identity, and codified information into a collective conscious (Durkheim, The Division of Labor 46).

In order to serve everyday needs more effectively, families gradually joined each other in a permanent way. Villages were thus born. The community which was created by the unification of many villages formed a perfect polis. This has to be based on virtue and support prosperity (Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics 1102a), aiming at self-sufficiency as much as possible (Politics 1252b). By cooperating, the archons and exarches or poets determined the (exclusively male) citizens’ culture and contributed to prosperity, which constitutes the supreme good that interests every member, but mainly concerns the whole. Inside the polis, the dominance of virtue is consecrated and confirmed. Outside it, human beings behave spontaneously, according to their natural abilities. Without cultural progress they assimilate with wild animals. First, the person who is separated from the whole loses self-sufficiency. Second, the person who co-exists with others but simultaneously feels self-sufficient must not be called a “citizen” (1253a). Naturally, however, as selfish existences, human beings enjoy everything that focuses on the ego (The Art of Rhetoric 1371b). Socio-politically, sufficiency surpasses individuality and extends to the collective bodies (Nicomachean Ethics 1097b). Therefore, culturally institutionalized ideas put forward the “common interest” (Aristotle, Politics 1282b).

The complete self-revelation of tragic order signified the evolution of the exarches’ improvisations into dithyramb (Aristotle, Poetics 1449a). After this point, mimetic praxes do not happen offhand, but rather presuppose cultural or ideological preparation and lead to the systematic development of tragedy inside the polis. Thus, the evaluation of praxes-mimetic prototypes, the approval of dramatic myths, the ratification of collectively-offered knowledge, and the control on personally-upcoming pleasure depend on the polis. During the pre-democratic period, the archons performed political praxes and the exarches regulated ritualistic mimeses. Both of them were based on their personal pathos and beliefs. Spontaneously, they constructed and imposed the prototypes of virtue, thus guiding dominant culture, and consciously commanded prohibitions regarding any behavior which they thought might oppose their regime (Freud, Civilization § III). So, they reduced the other members’ natural spontaneity. When democracy came into force, all citizens
participated in the governing of the *polis*. Then, the Archon nominated the sponsors of the (three) tragic choruses (Aristotle, *Athenian Constitution* LVI). Therefore, the perfect *polis* chose the poets and the subjects, the instruments, and the way of organizing the dramatic games. It, also, evaluated significant and complete praxes-mimetic prototypes, poetically forming and teaching the dominant culture.

The famous definition (Aristotle, *Poetics* 1449b) argues that, by the pathos-cause of pity and fear, tragedy brings a *catharsis* on the results of the same kinds of *pathos*. Contrary to the democratic right of equality of speech (Plato, *Protagoras* 319b-d), both poetic and political tragedies flourish (*Laws* 817B). In these cases, pity and fear reign, animating respectively pitiful and fearful consequences and burdening citizens with *excrements*. This term means either the useless surplus or the overabundance. *Nicomachean Ethics* (Aristotle 1141b) terms what wise men know plenty and admirable. *Problems* (Aristotle 953a) connects melancholy with eminent men in philosophy and politics, poetics and arts. *Metaphysics* (Aristotle 983a) characterizes superfluous persons who surpass the consecrated meter of knowledge as unhappy. *Politics* (Aristotle 1337a) blames the confused legislative acts, because citizens cannot understand whether they offer virtuous qualifications or useless ornaments. *Parva Naturalia* (Aristotle 448a) certifies that the simultaneous feeling both of a superfluous and a complete event is impossible. Excrements refer to persons who perform hyperbolic pathos-cause, producing equally hyperbolic or tragic, personal and collective pathos-effect. Thus, they concern both lawful political or dramatic archons’ *praxis* and arbitrary citizens’ *hubris*. The archons’ *praxes* elucidate the tendency to conserve dominant order. The opposing behaviors impose officially uncontrolled changes. Pity and fear constitute two kinds of *pathos* (Aristotle, *The Art of Rhetoric* 1378a). They belong neither to virtue nor to badness, because all human beings suffer from *pathos* without personal desire, while virtues presuppose an intention (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1105b-1106a). *Pathos* and *praxes* are distinguished in accordance with the graduation “hyperbole – middle position – deficiency” (1106b). Within the limits of natural spontaneity and tragic *hubris*, personal *praxes* and *pathos* are regarded as a proof of autarchic superiority. These *praxes* and *pathos* are performed hyperbolically, causing equally ferocious or antisocial pathos-effects. The middle position presupposes and entails the *catharsis* of hyperbolic or tragic *pathos*. Virtue resides in the middle and is determined by the *polis*. So, being one of the social techniques and cultural elements, the middle position of pathos-causes and effects is chosen for securing social cohesion and reinforcing cultural evolution.

As *The Art of Rhetoric* points out (Aristotle 1385b-1386b), pity concerns an affliction which is based on an immediately upcoming damage that can destroy or afflict either a well-known person or a citizen equal in value, especially when they do not deserve such a fortune. Consciously stabilizing collective identity, pity presupposes identification. Anxious men are sensitive
to it for fear that a close relative of theirs might suffer from a pitiful result of pathos and feel unhappy. On the contrary, those who believe that they are very happy behave impertinently. On the other hand (1382a-1384a), fear constitutes an affliction or agitation. It arises at the prospect of the appearance of a fearful and destructive event. To illustrate this point, hostility and wrath as kinds of pathos cause fearful stimuli. They are performed by powerful persons, who have the ability and the desire to damage. Mainly, fear is experienced by those who depend on others’ authority and those who compete with superior antagonists. Instinctively pursuing the survival of the ego or sovereignty over others, fear harms common interest. Those who think that they are very happy and feel self-sufficient, because of their extreme wealth or their numerous friends and their vigor or political power, behave impertinently, disdainfully, and audaciously. The hyperbolically uncontrolled, spontaneous, or arbitrary praxis is tantamount to hubris. According to Sophocles (Oedipus Tyrant line 873), hubris raises tyrants. Catharsis entails the removal of excrements outside of the middle area. The possible failure of it means inability to achieve social integration or cultural progress and indiscipline against collective identity. In these cases, within both polis and the conscious, egocentric or hubristic behaviors are performed, relating to natural ferocity, which was dominant pre-consciously outside humans’ community.

Poetics notes catharsis only once (Aristotle 1449b), without further explanations about its contribution to the aim of tragedy. Catharsis is achieved at the end of scenic mimeses. Then, as Plato believes (Gorgias 499e), all praxes are rendered significant and perfect. In an analogous manner, Aristotle (Metaphysics 1021b) characterizes as perfect whatever has achieved its aim. Therefore, although it serves catharsis of pitiful or fearful pathos-effect, pity or fear as pathos-cause is not subjected to catharsis. Furthermore, Aristotle in Nicomachean Ethics (1104b) compares catharsis and punishments, which constitute a kind of cure. In addition, Metaphysics (Aristotle 1013a) connects catharsis with health. Politics (Aristotle 1341b) points out that music helps sacred ceremonies, because it contributes both to education and catharsis of psyches (1340a). Persons who have an inclination towards pity and fear experience similar relief. Thus, in order to satisfy spectators, artists who compose theater music ought to synthesize cathartic harmonies and melodies (1342a). Being equal to psychological discharging, catharsis has a therapeutic influence. As the aim both of sacred ceremonies and dramatic myths or performances, it presupposes participation, identification, and illusions. At the level of scenic mimesis, in one of the last tragedies of the classical period, Euripides’ Bacchae (405 BC), which was performed one year after the poet’s death and, also, one year before the overthrow of Athenian democracy, one can trace the function and the contents of catharsis. In the prologue of this drama, the god of theater art presents himself as a priest of Dionysus (line 4), bringing to light his supreme desire: as Deus’ son (line 1), he has to reestablish his glory, imposing the bacchic praxes (line 40) of his sacred ceremony:
the dances, and the dithyramb (lines 21-24). Poetically, he aims to determine Thebes’ culture. As an exarch, during the scenic mimeses, he will confront Pentheus, the archon of the polis’ unholy rationalism and stupid authoritativeness. By the denouement of the dramatic myth, the god explains the root of the Thebans’ tragic order: “If you had wisdom when you did not want to have, now you would be happy, having achieved an alliance with Deus’ son” (lines 1341-1343). Both as a means of catharsis and punishment, Bacchus decided to submit all tragic heroines/heroes to ecstasy and expel them (line 1350), either out of the polis or out of the scenic life, treating them as expiatory victims by the name of the god of gods and men: “Since ancient times Deus, my father, has ordered so” (line 1349). Going back to the past of classical dramaturgy and the beginning of Athens’ democracy, in Aeschylus’ Agamemnon (458 BC), we meet the dominant culture, which Zeus consecrated by “leading mortals to the way of wisdom,” as he confirmed the law “the person who suffers learns” (line 176-178). Learning, however, depends on socio-politically and culturally confirmed knowledge, fixes collective identity, condemns self-sufficiency, and satisfies common interest. Plato (Laws 659c-d) characterizes old men as educational models, because of their experience and virtue. In the presence of younger generations’ members, they personify the permitted feelings against stimuli which may cause either an affliction or a pleasure. Causing social integration in a similar way, through their scenic teaching the old men of Agamemnon’s chorus indicate that Zeus strikes the individuals “who profane the holiness of sacred ceremonies.” On the one hand, the culture of the old citizens of Argus affirms that “there is no castle able to guard such a man, who throws down Dices’ great altar with a kick, in order to be full of wealth.” On the other hand, these citizens pray that disaster not strike social members “who employ wise thought, remaining content with little” (lines 367-385).

Regardless of definitions of time or place and cultural level, in the context of praxes-prototypes as being, tragedy constitutes a fundamental element of reality (Papadopoulos 2011). Its consequences act within the collective unconscious and through the explanation of myths, symbols, and dreams, as the confirmed knowledge is impressed into the human conscious, both the personal and the collective unconscious. Tragedy connects movements and changes, every efficient cause and every achieved result. By pity and fear, it is reflected in every rational existence and social coexistence, accumulating excrements in nature and the psyche. Catharsis means deliverance from tragedy and concerns a basic cultural request. For these reasons, myths and art, ideas and virtue, symbols and sacred ceremonies have been either comprehended or fabricated. During the classical period, as was mentioned above, poetically aiming at the cathartic middle position as social techniques, pedagogy and scenic teaching focused on the control of spontaneity and the reduction of egoism. In spite of the easily understood sociopolitical and ideological reclassifications, poetic culture was dominant in the ancient world, in the Byzantine
era, and during the age of Renaissance. In the first case, it secured the superiority of the polis. In the second, it praised God’s majesty through hymns. In the third case, it glorified the power of nations. The differentiations began in the seventeenth century, when poets poor in inventiveness were facilitated by imitations, unwisely rehashing the past intellect (Steiner 40). The definitive turnabout occurred during the eighteenth century, following the ideas of the European Enlightenment, when it is thought that moral and political duties can secure a lawful kind of state governance. On the other hand, catharsis has a periodic influence as a vain emotion (Rousseau 287-88). Introducing the romanticism and defending the natural right, Social Contract argues that performances of rational creations are opposed to natural equality. Thus, the Letters and the Arts do not keep pace with virtue (Russell 435, 450-54).

Many scholars use the rather unsuccessful and abstracted term postmodern to characterize the present phase of civilization (Patsalidis 1997). The prefix “post” means what comes next. Furthermore, the adjective “post-dramatic” signifies the poetics which deviates from previously accepted rules of classical dramas and performances. Indubitably, the dominant plans in the age of globalization differ fundamentally from those which were implemented in the past. However, the changes do not concern the revisions-adaptations of the being of tragic praxis-prototype; they focus, instead, on the becoming of both stage and social didaskalia, on the way of mimesis and politics of content or reception. Shakespeare’s Hamlet wonders: “To be or not to be?” (3. 1). This is the most essential, tragic, existentialist, and, therefore, perpetually universal question of the questions the conscious is used to asking. Another Shakespearean, Gloucester, characterized the conscious as timid, while he felt an absolutely hyperbolic fear or, inversely, an absolutely deficient pity (Richard III 5. 3.) The conscious existence is tragic solely because it exists consciously, even if it does not develop any consciousness about its essence as tragedy. It is tragic because it assimilates the dominant culture, whether voluntarily or not, thereby recognizing, but also binding, its own nature’s order, de-codifying the movement-pathos of the self and the change-pathos caused by the relation of the ego with others within the cultural order. It is tragic as it feels the upcoming death, which constitutes the leading cause of fear (Aristotle, The Art of Rhetoric 1382a). The primitive fear of death signals definitiveness, revealing the end of a unique world, which cannot reappear (Derrida 2003). Only human beings know the inevitable coming of death (Blanchot 1981), consciously provoking and suffering successive oppositions and wear, which, tragically, lead to death.

Thus, the central point of the investigation of this study is transferred from the post-dramatic poetics to the post-poetics culture, according to which, during the twenty-first century, human beings are educated and encouraged to act individually or privately to a greater extent, and, publicly, as participants-citizens of the globalized system, to a lesser extent. Subjectivity questions intellectual beliefs which were held until recently (McDonald 145-67). The
continuation of cultural evolution overthrows and deconstructions demolish the identity of the single and exclusive (western) cultural model. Postmodernism is not interested any more in the true representation of actually or mythically preexisting reality. Through a powerful transformation, the perpetually evolving myth is reduced to a personal matter of each creator, who does not express collective knowledge, but rather declares her/his own spontaneous or arbitrary opinion (Grammatas 69-71). In addition, the members of the audience who watch spectacles are now independent units rather than fellow-sufferers. Their communion and identification become feeble. Collective illusion is either absent or masqueraded into a kind of self-illusion (Freud, *The Future* § VI). Discontinuation and inconsistency develop between what actually exists and what is theatrically represented, proving the discord of the scenically proposed messages and the needs of every single spectator (Dort 155-56).

The unknown root of mythic symbolisms, the initial explanations of archaic myths, and the successive modernizations of dramatic myths obscure their collective dimension both within unconscious and conscious places of the psyche, on the basis of which society and civilization are founded. Furthermore, all of them surrender, becoming vehicles for collectively unconfirmed symbolisms and personal impressions. By weakening sacred ceremonies and dramatic myths, *mimeses* and participation, identifications and *catharses*, the post-poetics culture inflames tragic confusion and substitutes the metaphysical comfort with *deus ex machina* (Nietzsche § XVII), depriving all conscious beings of the possibility to accept their social integration inside a logically (or ideologically) and aesthetically structured whole. Traditionally, social realism was dominant. According to this, all collective bodies surpass their constituent persons. In some particular cases, such as the organization of the two technical masses, the Church, and the army (Freud, *Group Psychology* § V), the autonomous substance of members was clearly rejected (Mises 250). From another standpoint, postmodern models aim at social nominalism, submitting individuals to an antisocial and, therefore, either non-cathartic or non-purified becoming of society, propagandizing that knowledge and comprehension of all phenomena are personally achieved, mainly through experiences (Pribram 11). So, general ideas and conceptual terms constitute simple *nomina* (House 63). As the global, multicultural, and mass society is characterized by great mobility and social differentiation, the loss of traditional values transforms social groups into disordered crowds, the members of which are led astray by vain uniformities, suffer alienations, and assimilate the results of their unsuccessful social integration (Bell, *The End of Ideology* 22-24). A few years after the bipolar age of extremes (Hobsbawm 1994), the political logic and the economic practices encourage hyperbolically autarchic activities. The persons who possess authority and wealth behave like *animals or gods* (Aristotle, *Politics* 1253a). The intellectual desires and the behavioral models, similarly, further reduce the already restricted potential of underprivileged social categories. Thus, globalization drastically limits the middle position, which was historically based on
the rise of the bourgeoisies (Marx and Engels 11-12), overthrows the equality of middle class (Reissman 12), forms dispossessed citizens (Bell, “The Dispossessed” 25), and sacrifices the latter like an ancient pharmakos (Nilsson 99)—the ritualistic ancestor of the tragic heroines/heroes.

In conclusion, the post-poetics culture either scorns or falsifies the potential which dramatic art and performances have in order to accomplish their cathartic predestination through pity and fear, by expelling spontaneous ferocity both from the conscious and society. According to the classical meter (Aristotle, Poetics 1453b), poets who by means of spectacles excite monstrous, rather than fearful, illusions bear no relation to tragedy. On the other hand, making hyperbolic use of technological accomplishments, some postmodern creators (or post-creators) act as autonomous exarches, emphatically promoting insipid sensationalisms and consecrating elitist lifestyles and ephemeral fashions. Proposing deceptive ideals, they deflect the spectators’ need for identification with others. Simultaneously, they serve a realistic self-interest, performing their tyrannical particularity (Bierstedt 203). Furthermore, during the classical period, virtue reduced authoritative behaviors or egocentric desires and thus protected common interest (Schmidt 1891) through the adhesiveness among Atis (psychic confusion), hubris (arrogance toward gods or people), Nemesis (punishment because of Zeus), and tisis (giving in return). Today, in a contrary fashion, some autarchic members, either of the audience or society, full of Atis, commit hubris in the name of catharsis, achieving the demystification of tisis and falsely declaring that they represent Nemesis. The Art of Rhetoric (Aristotle 1382a-1386b) points out that persons who are instigated by the tragic kind of pathos-cause and produce tragic pathos-effects of equal value also violate common interest. As was argued above, this is true for the hubristic personalities who have been educated to believe that behaving impertinently, audaciously, and disdainfully, by disliking collective prosperity, ignoring cohesive pity, and playing on others’ fear, may secure their egocentric sufficiency. The same category includes the speculators and the timid, when they have authority over others, and, also, those who possess extreme wealth or numerous friends, vigor or political power. However, evidently tragically, the post-poetics culture rewards pointless competitions and hyperbolically selfish characters or thoughts, praxes or mimeses, favoring through them the dominance of antisocial and pre-conscious ferocity within society.

Professor
Aegean University
Greece

Works Cited


Post-poetics Culture, or, Pre-conscious Ferocity / 101 /


* This research has been co-financed by the European Union (European Social Fund – ESF) and Greek national funds through the Operational Program “Education and Lifelong Learning” of the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) – Research Funding Program: THALIS -UOA- «The Theatre as educational good and artistic expression in education and society»