

İSTANBUL BİLGİ UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE PROGRAMS  
PHILOSOPHY AND SOCIAL THOUGHT MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAM

THE REPRESENTATION OF TRUTH ON HUMAN BODY  
IN ANCIENT GREEK TRAGEDY

Eylem ABALIOĞLU

115679001

Doç.Dr. Ferda KESKİN

İSTANBUL

2020

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*Being part of a thesis writing process is like throwing stones into the blackhole. Creating a text with an unknown number of people at the end of an intense effort is truly a bottomless heart work. Only people who have passed through this process can understand the value of a tiny needle found in the excavation site only after months of dust, without finding any precious ruins. However, after my world vision and perspective, I would like to state that I am not alone at any stage of this excavation as a person who believes that all kinds of production is only possible with collective creation. If I would manage to deliver the text you read today, this was only possible thanks to the people who have contributed my work with their precious support.*

*First of all, I owe endless thanks to my advisor Ferda Keskin, who supported me whenever I need during this long and challenging journey, who was always ready to help me to open my way starting from my admission to my master's thesis stage, and who has kept the rights of his students above every institution. Besides, I would like to thank my lecturer Kaan Atalay, who introduced me to the magical world of Ancient Greece and expanded my horizons with his interpretation. I would not have imagined to take this path as someone who worked in the field of performing arts, if both of them would not be my side. Thanks to dear Ayrin Ersöz, who made me feel like I was on the right track with a multidisciplinary point of view, let new ideas flew in my mind with our long dialogues, also Demet Kurtoğlu Taşdelen, who gave me hope that philosophy and performance can unite with her comments, and Ms. Zeynep Talay Turner who supported me with her feedbacks in my thesis jury. In addition, I would like to thank Aziz Murat Aslan who supported me in the translation of my thesis and I benefited from his academic views.*

*Thank you to my dear teacher Burcu Yasemin Şeyben, who was deprived of all the students she will raise due to her indestructible stance and continues her profession abroad. I am grateful to her for his irreplaceable contribution to me as a person, both professionally and personally.*

*Finally, I would like to thank my husband and my family, who have provided me with unconditional support for the entire 4 years. Although I worked heavily at night, I am asking forgiveness from my children for the hours I stole from them.*

*Eylem*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| <b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....</b>   | <b>iii</b> |
| <b>TABLE OF CONTENTS.....</b>  | <b>iv</b>  |
| <b>ABSTRACT.....</b>   | <b>v</b>   |
| <b>ÖZET.....</b>   | <b>vi</b>  |
| <b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>   | <b>1</b>   |
| <b>1. REACHING THE TRUTH THROUGH THE ARTWORK<br/>AND REALITY OF FICTION.....</b> | <b>8</b>   |
| <b>2. RELIGION, LAW, JUSTICE IN ANCIENT GREECE.....</b>                          | <b>14</b>  |
| <b>2.1. Mythological Tradition / Democratic Tradition.....</b>                   | <b>15</b>  |
| <b>3. THE ORIGIN OF TRAGEDY.....</b>   | <b>22</b>  |
| <b>3.1. Dionysus and Tragedy.....</b>  | <b>29</b>  |
| <b>4. CONCEPTION OF TRUTH WITHIN THE ANCIENT GREEK<br/>PHILOSOPHY.....</b>       | <b>40</b>  |
| <b>5. THE BODY IN TRAGEDY.....</b>   | <b>46</b>  |
| <b>6. THE REPRESENTATION OF TRUTH ON<br/>BODY IN TRAGEDIES.....</b>              | <b>50</b>  |
| <b>6.1. Union of Wisdom and Divine Madness – “The Bacchae”.....</b>              | <b>51</b>  |
| <b>6.2. Oedipus the King – Regarding Seeing and Being Seen.....</b>              | <b>59</b>  |
| <b>6.3. Antigone on the Axial Interface of Life and Death.....</b>               | <b>67</b>  |
| <b>CONCLUSION.....</b>   | <b>76</b>  |
| <b>BIBLIOGRAPHY.....</b>   | <b>83</b>  |

## ABSTRACT

How is it possible that, despite the fact that The Greek Tragedy was merely generated in around hundred years, is still embraced even today by contemporary dramaturgists, directors, poets, authors and is rewritten and reproduced again and again? How shall we explain the fact that it expresses all the dilemmas of our daily lives via reaching today in a timeless manner far from centuries long distance and still smiles towards us? If the works of art are connected to a historical context as all the other social products do, if their births, structures and meanings are within this context and shall only be understood over this context, while the necessary conditions for their production is vanished, while the social life styles have evolved and went into an extreme change at all levels, how shall we explain these Works of arts are still surviving and they are able to still tell us something? Tragedy in social life that consider totally different ethical and legal rules and polytheistic way of living than we have today was questioning the position of human in an indefinite, divine, natural and social world that is fragmentized with discrepancies where no rules have decisively been established, one god is in conflict with another god, one law is in conflict with another law and justice is translocated and transformed even when the action is still in progress, From this aspect, it would not be too wrong to claim that tragedy is a timeless textual structure since it treats the uncertainties, dilemmas and interrogations that do exist in human nature in a more realistic way than today. In this thesis, I tried to research over the limit and limitlessness concepts that are to be counted on the center of Ancient Greek thought, while investigated how the search for truth in tragedies are represented in linguistic and physical body layers. I went deeper in the context of the limits of physical body and psuche (ψυχή) and the limitlessness of the creative capacity of human and the representation of body related ways of expression depending on the paradox of these two in tragedies. I also emphasized the human desires that are subjects to tragedies such as violence, death, salvation from the body and the desire of becoming a god on layers of texts, form and staging.

*Keywords: Ancient Greek, Tragedy, Body, Truth, Aletheia, Limit / Limitlessness, Performance, Oedipus, Antigone, Bacchae*

## ÖZET

Yunan Tragedyası, ancak bir yüzyıl içinde yaratılmış olmakla birlikte, nasıl oluyor da hala günümüzde çağdaş oyun yazarları, yönetmenler, şairler, yazarlar tarafından sahipleniliyor ve tekrar tekrar yeniden üretiliyor? Onun böylesine zamansız ve yüzyıllar öncesinden adeta gündelik hayatımızın bütün açmazlarını dile getirerek bize gülümsemesini nasıl açıklayabiliriz? Sanat ürünleri, diğer tüm toplumsal ürünler gibi belirli bir tarihsel bağlama bağlı ise, doğuşları, yapıları ve anlamları sadece bu bağlam içinde ve bu bağlam üzerinden anlaşılabilirse, üretimleri için gerekli olan koşullar ortadan kalkmışken, toplumsal yaşam biçimleri her düzeyde değişime uğramışken, bu sanat eserlerinin hâlâ canlı kalabilmesini, hâlâ bize bir şeyler anlatabilmesini nasıl açıklarız? Tragedya, yazıldığı dönemin çok tanrılı ve bizden tamamen farklı etik ve hukuksal kurallara sahip bir toplum yaşantısında, hiç bir kuralın kesinkes yerleşmiş görünmediği, bir Tanrı'nın başka bir Tanrı ile, bir hukukun başka bir hukukla çatıştığı, eylemin sürdüğü sırada bile adaletin yer değiştirdiği, dönüştüğü, çelişkilerle parçalanmış, belirsiz, Tanrısal, doğal, toplumsal bir dünyadaki insanın yerini sorgular. Bu açıdan bakıldığında tragedyanın, insan doğasında var olan belirsizlik, açmaz ve sorgulamaları günümüzden çok daha gerçekçi bir perspektifle işleyebildiği için zamansız bir metin olduğunu söylemek çok da yanlış olmaz. Bu tezde tragedyalarda hakikat arayışının dilsel ve bedensel düzlemde nasıl temsil edildiğini incelerken, Antik Yunan düşüncesinin temelinde yer alan meselelerden biri olan sınır ve sınırsızlık kavramları üzerinden bir araştırma yapmaya çalıştım. Bedenin sınırlılığı ile psuchenin (ψυχή) ve insanın yaratma kapasitesinin sınırsızlığı ve bu ikisinin çelişkisine dayanan bedensel ifade biçimlerinin tragedyalardaki temsilini incelerken; aynı zamanda, şiddet, ölüm, bedenden kurtulma ve Tanrılaşma arzusu gibi tragedyalarda konu edilen insan arzularının hem biçimsel olarak hem de sahneleme düzleminde nasıl incelendiğine değindim.

*Anahtar Kelimeler: Antik Yunan, Tragedya, Beden, Hakikat, Aletheia, Sınır / Sınırsızlık, Performans, Oidipus, Antigone, Bakkhalar*

## INTRODUCTION

It is quite a challenging endeavour trying to objectify and comprehend a culture and way of life that is totally different from ours that we experienced using the concepts and language from our daily life. We shall hardly think of the concepts that are torn apart from their context centuries ago, again within the scope of the actual semantic equivalent meanings they are hold onto today. One of the most significant problems of our age shall be stated that our preconceived premises to stand like the deepest key foundation stone in our construction. These unconscious premises are so strong that, when we start to go into more depth slightly in any action of thought that is realized in any subject, we suddenly crash into these basic assumptions. As a consequence, either we become knocked out of thinking at some point, or we shall make a choice of changing these premises. But this time, the fact that we try to do several things at the same time, results in getting lost in our subject of research. If we go further layers forward and deepen the interrogation, same wall stands once again in front of us and accordingly this time we bring into question the actual form of usage of the concept and again we shall not reach the thinking structure of that era completely. The way and form of thinking of the era shall be some kind of a key that unlock the doors and we shall not keep this key apart from us even for a moment. We shall use this key one by one for each concept from the beginning on. In addition to this, when we start to deepen our investigations and researches about a subject, it is also possible that we get lost ourselves within the codes of the phraseologies and ways of expressions of the culture or somewhere inside the challenge of comprehending the corridors of that culture after departing unconsciously from our main focus of interest as a result of the sticking to this so-called key unrestrainedly. In order not to fall into this entrapment, I tried to represent the terms and concepts within this thesis in a way not adhering to the modern life language and structures. I showed an ultimate attention not getting away from the characteristics of the evaluated and reviewed era. And most peculiarly I tried representing them in such a form that establishes a close relationship with the context. For instance while using the terms religion, ethics, freedom, justice and truth, I tried to deliver them not with their actual preconceived

meanings, but with the forms of usage in the era they belonged to. For this reason, it is also possible that the contexts of these concepts and terms shall be given in some places relatively limited compared to today, but also in some places in a broader context. Or else they shall be referenced totally to some different meaning. On this occasion, I take the risk of being a bit disordered and non-systematic from this perspective.

Tragedy that took its shape as a written style by the end of the 6th century is revealed as an expression of a subjective example of the human experience depending on specific social and psychological conditions. The problem is that these texts shall solely be understood entirely as long as a context is taken into consideration. And what here context refers to shall be expressed as the oral and intellectual background, categories of thought, types of *noesis*, system of belief, values and representations, forms of susceptibility, the states of the action and the causal agent. If we consider the above formula, there is no meaning in speaking of the existence of a mental universe specific to the 5th century Greeks. In better words, since we will not be able to utter the existence of a unique mental universe apart from the practices realized by the human, the mental universe of the concept of religion in this century shall be found in rituals and myths.

Law on the other hand when established is defined as opposition to religious thought systems forms; and with the addition of cities to this, political institutions, thoughts and behaviours system develops. At this point, mystical and old forms of social activity and power are replaced by the city (*polis*) with applications and methods of thought depending on it and they generate antinomy against each another. And tragedy parallel to this shall not reflect the truth which is unfamiliar to it and shall establish its own immaterial world. The thought of tragedy, its world shall only be formed through the human to express him/her in form of an authentic literary genre.<sup>1</sup>

The Ancient Greek society structure involves so many various codes in it that are actually different from today. The research studies, hand in hand with our contemporary way of comprehension, require a sustainable comparison among the

---

<sup>1</sup> Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece, Jean Pierre Vernant – Pierre Vidal-Naquet (Translated by Janet Lloyd), Zone Books (Sixth Printing), NY 2006, pg.31

categories applied in ancient tragedies. The fact that all the terms such as religion, law, justice, gender, moral doctrines, god, individual, freewill shall be referenced to different content, distant from their known meanings used today, brings us to a necessity of finding answers to these questions primarily. For instance, how shall the sense of responsibility and commitment of the causal agent to his/her actions that we can call as the psychological functions of will is developed in tragedy? In an age where there is no concept of freewill, from which perspective can we evaluate the question, what is the origin of the unfortunate series of incidents that happen to tragic hero (also shall we call this unfortunate) and the actions of the causal agent? What are the viewpoints to existence and god (gods)? If we needfully will be talking about a god, maybe for them he was some sort of an artist-god in their imagination who desires to comprehend the similar gratification and self-ordainedness both in executing and in destructing, in good and in bad who is totally unexceptionable and out of the limits of morals who works out for his own salvation to relieve himself from the pains of his intrinsic traps of contradictions. How did the Greek people the best educated, most beautiful, envied and beseemed human for living ever until today, created the artwork of pessimism? How did the Greek people see melancholy and pain in their own way? Or the growing will of them to beauty, feasts, entertainment and new worship is born out of melancholy and pain? What was the meaning of madness in Dionysus way? Wouldn't that be possible that the madness is not to be needfully the indication of corruption and collapse, but on the contrary the sign for an extremely matured culture? Were there visions and hallucinations suddenly appearing to an entire community and to the members of a cultural group? In the words of Plato, what if the most fortunate thing on Hellas<sup>2</sup> was the madness?<sup>3</sup>

How is it possible that, despite the fact that The Greek Tragedy was merely generated in around hundred years, is still embraced even today by contemporary dramaturgists, directors, poets, authors and is rewritten and reproduced again and again? How shall we explain the fact that it expresses all the dilemmas of our daily

---

<sup>2</sup> Greece (Phaedrus 244a)

<sup>3</sup> *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, Friedrich Nietzsche, Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy, edited by Raymond Geuss and Ronald Speirs (Translated by Ronald Speirs), Cambridge University Press, UK 2007, pg.7



lives via reaching today in a timeless manner far from centuries long distance and still smiles towards us? If the works of art are connected to a historical context as all the other social products do, if their births, structures and meanings are within this context and shall only be understood over this context, while the necessary conditions for their production is vanished, while the social life styles have evolved and went into an extreme change at all levels, how shall we explain these Works of arts are still surviving and they are able to still tell us something?<sup>4</sup> We will handle the answer to this question in more details, within the subject basic issues regarding the human existence that tragedy deals with later. But it is necessary to mention that the origin of human actions and the ethical, legal and social consequences of these actions have always been the main issue of societies at all ages. After that the monotheistic religions have come out, the ethical and legal norms are solidified and following this an absolute true belief is attempted to be validated. Together with the belief of an external god that comes with the christianity; against a perfect and eternal god, a helpless finite human figure whose creativity and imagination has been taken away, ethical obligations to be obeyed, asceticism that has been uplifted as much as the joy of life is taken away and consequently a longing to another life have become the most principle keystones of our comprehension in centuries. Christianity according to Nietzsche was from the beginning on basically and fundamentally the repulsion and World weariness of life from life itself. It was only covering and hiding itself under the belief and longing to another or a better life. Abomination of the World, cursing the aesthesis, fear from the beauty, somatic and sensual and a fiction other World to blacken this World was the case. Since life essentially was something immoral, it had to be false and unfair in a continuous manner. The will of negation of life through ethics had to be a hidden extermination instinct, a principle of deterioration and humiliation. In stark contrast to the doctrine of christianity that curses, judges, negates and sends to the zone of lies of all sorts of art, via only with its ethical criteria, for instance with the truth of God, life in fact

---

<sup>4</sup> Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece, Jean Pierre Vernant – Pierre Vidal-Naquet (Translated by Janet Lloyd), Zone Books (Sixth Printing), NY 2006, pg.237

with its everything is based on appearance, art, illusion, optics and the obligation of perspective and illusion.<sup>5</sup>

Yet, it was not possible for the ancient Greek citizens who respect turbidity as a merit to validate such strict and irreversible definitions and rules. For this reason, tragedy in social life that consider totally different ethical and legal rules and polytheistic way of living than we have today was questioning the position of human in an indefinite, divine, natural and social world that is fragmented with discrepancies where no rules have decisively been established, one god is in conflict with another god, one law is in conflict with another law and justice is translocated and transformed even when the action is still in progress.<sup>6</sup> From this aspect, it would not be too wrong to claim that tragedy is a timeless textual structure since it treats the uncertainties, dilemmas and interrogations that do exist in human nature in a more realistic way than today.

Tragic experience is revealed in situations where considerable contradictions among traditions happened and the struggle-dissension of values is still felt intensively to give still pain and when human and divine dimensions appear both indissociably and at the same time dissociated in such a way to become poles apart. Human action, when becomes a subject of a debate or an idea, but is unable to procure an independent status to become completely sufficient to itself, the meaning of tragic responsibility becomes visible. The zone that is typical to tragedy is located on the borderline where the human movements and actions are articulated to divine powers and accordingly these actions to get involved into such an order that escape human's notice and goes far beyond the human and the ones to undertake them, to take responsibility exhibit their true meanings that they actually do not know.<sup>7</sup>

Tragedy, as Jean-Pierre Vernant states, reveals as obviously and clearly limited and dated historical moment. Tragedy that is an original literature type

---

<sup>5</sup> *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, Friedrich Nietzsche, Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy, edited by Raymond Geuss and Ronald Speirs (Translated by Ronald Speirs), Cambridge University Press, UK 2007, pg.9

<sup>6</sup> *Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece*, Jean Pierre Vernant – Pierre Vidal-Naquet (Translated by Janet Lloyd), Zone Books (Sixth Printing), NY 2006, pg.32

<sup>7</sup> *Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece*, Jean Pierre Vernant – Pierre Vidal-Naquet (Translated by Janet Lloyd), Zone Books (Sixth Printing), NY 2006, pg.27

which possesses specific rules and determining characteristics shows us a phase in formation of intrinsic human and responsible subject via expressing the unknown sides of human experience that is unknown until that moment.

But it is not sufficient to limit tragedy with its merely formal characteristics and with the existential issues it possesses, it is also essential to investigate under which circumstances it is revealed.<sup>8</sup> That's why I will try to research over the limit and limitlessness concepts that are to be counted on the center of Ancient Greek thought, while investigating how the search for truth in tragedies are represented in linguistic and physical body layers. I will go deeper in the context of the limits of Physical body and *psyche* (ψυχή)<sup>9</sup> and the limitlessness of the creative capacity of human and the representation of body related ways of expression depending on the paradox of these two in tragedies. While doing this, I will emphasize at the same time the human desires that are subjects to tragedies such as violence, death, salvation from the body and the desire of becoming a god on layers of texts, form and staging.

Together with the fact that tragedy is a literature form that has its individual rules and specific determining characteristics, seeing that merely as an artistic form, would have been an extreme limited point of view that validates the criticism we have done at the beginning. Tragedy is not merely an artistic form; but is a social institution that city gives a place with tragedy competitions next to its political and legal organs. City which is a spectacle that is realized with Public Courts or Councils at the same urban space and follows the same institutional norms, that is open to all citizens, that is managed, played, judged by qualified representatives of various tribes, transforms itself into theatre; sees itself somehow as a subject of play and performs itself in front of the public. Tragedy, on that sense strikes its roots to social reality more than any other literary form.<sup>10</sup> Hereby, the social reality term will be dealt within this thesis as the main subject. Despite the fact that tragedies

---

<sup>8</sup> Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece, Jean Pierre Vernant – Pierre Vidal-Naquet (Translated by Janet Lloyd), Zone Books (Sixth Printing), NY 2006, pg.25

<sup>9</sup> ψυχή (*psyche*): The animating principle of a human or animal body, vital spirit, soul, life (the animating principle of life), substance

<sup>10</sup> Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece, Jean Pierre Vernant – Pierre Vidal-Naquet (Translated by Janet Lloyd), Zone Books (Sixth Printing), NY 2006, pg.33

are a literary form, a work of art, they are also so to speak obviously and universally written historical inscriptions that are represented in a way reflecting the widespread belief, law, gender, divine sanctions, but most significantly all sorts of emotions belonging to human in the time they were written, with their characteristic style of expression away from today's dominant aesthetic intellection but never losing its glory where the human to find parts from himself/herself even after centuries. Thus, according to Ridgeway, none of the fields of literature and art had been so effective like the form of theatre tragedy on the thoughts and feelings of developed or semi-developed nations.<sup>11</sup>

On this thesis I will focus and mention on the term of truth in tragedies over the reality / fiction relationship that has already been mentioned above. I will emphasize how the truth (*αλήθεια*)<sup>12</sup> is treated in a work of art and the fact that tragedy is not only a text, but since they are texts to be staged and accordingly the state that since it is a work of art with its structure to involve chorus, voice, scenery, music, choreography and many similar other layers how it is transformed into shuddery experience from the perspective of readers and audiences. But first of all, I would like to speak about what is meant with experience and truth and how can we reach the activity of knowing the truth with a created work of art.

---

<sup>11</sup> Ridgeway, W., *The Origin of Tragedy with Special Reference to The Greek Tragedians*, Cambridge University Press, London 1910, s.1

<sup>12</sup> "*alétheia*", "the truth" in Ancient Greece. In the following sections of the thesis, we will touch upon his etymological origins.

## 1. REACHING THE TRUTH THROUGH THE ARTWORK AND REALITY OF FICTION

After Aristotle poet's (tragedy authors') work is to tell the possible things, which means the probable things based on the principle of probability and necessity, not to tell the things that have already happened. The distinction between the historian and the poet is that one tells the things that have already happened in the past (let's call this historical truths in here) and the other one tells the things that probably happen in the future. Poem, is more philosophical, strong and dignified in this manner, because poem utters more the universal and history utters the particular. Universal means someone who has definite characteristics to do and tell things that have definite distinctive characteristics based on the principle of probability and necessity. While assigning particular names to people, the purpose of poet is same as well. Particular, on the other hand is what Alkibiades did or what happened to him.<sup>13</sup> That's why puts the storyline in front of the character, because tragedy is the imitation of actions and life, not the people's. According to him there shall be no tragedy without an action, but it is possible to have a tragedy without a character or a protagonist. Thus, the principle, fairly the spirit of tragedy is the story and the characters are ranked on the second line.<sup>14</sup>

While a work of art is being created, it becomes universal via taking its own wings and leaving its roots, creator and its context behind. And it achieves this via metaphors and abstraction. For example we can turn the pages of a history book and read the 1917 October Revolution and we can review concrete proofs such as newspaper clippings, documented photographs. We shall also read the destructive affects of Bolshevik Revolution and post-revolutionary affects and changes and make deeper analysis on it and we shall write articles accordingly. But none of these things that we have done would bring us to an integral depth while seeing a cubo-futurist work of art of Lyubov Popova namely "Traveling Woman", or Malevich's "Black Square" or while watching Meyerhold's constructivist stage and movement

---

<sup>13</sup> Poetics, Aristotle, (Translated, with Introduction and Notes by Joe Sachs), St.John's Collage, Annapolis, Focus Publishing, Newburyport, MA, 2006, 1451b

<sup>14</sup> Poetics, Aristotle, (Translated, with Introduction and Notes by Joe Sachs), St.John's Collage, Annapolis, Focus Publishing, Newburyport, MA, 2006, 1450a

design. These works of art that found themselves a special place with their original language style and innovativeness within their historical fiction are revealed as the reflection of the social structure and even as a reflection that magnifies it. After a century when someone encounters with this work of art, who had never read a history book before, it enables him/her to see the projection of the history in a frame or even helps him/her to feel and experience it. What actually meant here with the experience is the experience gained through affection of artistic reality. This happens at a different dimension from the rationally comprehended reality. What is meant with the reality here is not the reproduction of an object that exists in the nature, on the contrary is the “new form” that is gained via tearing it apart from its context, the from the object itself and from its creator.

Malevich was considering himself as a unique realist, but his realism was sort of a fantastic realism and to reach him, it was necessary for the one to dissociate him/her from the visible sides of life. In Russian avant-garde artists works, the progress was like vanishing of an object to be realized in aesthetic manner incrementally on the way to total abstraction, object to be comprehended in “superrational” way and finally to be disappeared completely.

When the object totally vanishes from the eyes, a universal language is inherited to us. Here comes the timeless permanence of tragedy: From its power to convey human issues in all its reality and in a holistic way. While doing this, of course, it benefits from the characters, but the character is an intermediate medium, to express the actions. Action is similarity and the common denominator of all humanity. For example, when we read the story of any female character, we shall collect detailed information about that woman and her life. This information is specifically belongs to the experience of that character within its own lifetime range and belongs to that era. But as soon as we read the story of Antigone, we do not solely read Antigone; her rebellion and revolt yet are now the story of entire women, even of all humanity fighting against injustice. It is abstracted from the conditioning of the external environment and the period in which it lived and all the characteristics of human beings such as mind, virtue, law, justice and courage find voice in the body of Antigone and these characteristics are merely transformed into an arbiter character. A transition from the particular to the universal is experienced.

Through the story of a single character, in fact the story of all humanity is told. As another example, Oedipus is neither an expiatory victim nor is he ostracized. He is character in tragedy, placed by the poet at the crossroads of a decision, confronted with a choice that is ever present and ever renewed.<sup>15</sup> He is not even a person, instead an imaginative representation. It is the common story of all human who is obliged to make decisions every moment and every day, who becomes helpless and stuck within the dilemmas of life, who shall not estimate the consequences of his/her actions and who surrenders or resists his/her choices at the turning points. This story is an imitation of life, even itself. Tragedy may be, as Aristotle defined *mimesis praxeos* or the “action itself” or “the imitation of the imitation” as Plato defined the work of art. Even Simonides defined poetry as an art of illusion whose function was to deceive by conjuring up "images," elusive beings that were at once themselves and something other than themselves, he anticipated one of the two major developments that would define the history of the whole problem of speech.<sup>16</sup> We do not assert the contrary. But what we defend here is that, the imitation is a plastically created phenomenon consciously against the truth. On a situation that it never acts as if it is real and this is to be known by all parties obviously, shall carry to the knowing and experiencing activity in philosophical manner by different means via being abstracted from reality and by forming its own authentic terminology. I tried prove it on the “The Origin of the Tragedy” section.

In the philosophical human, under the circumstances of the reality we live in, there is the intuition of that a second and totally different truth lies behind and that this second one is more visible. Such as the stance of a philosopher in the face of reality of existence is, the stance of a person with an artistic sensitivity, against the reality of dreams is same as well; such a human looks good and with full of love; because her/she interpretes life out of the images and prepares himself/herself to life in these incidents. It is not only nice and cute images that he/she experiences in full understanding; serious, blurry, sad, suspicious images, abrupt timidities, ironies of coincidence, briefly the entire “divine comedy” of life flashes before

---

<sup>15</sup> Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece, Jean Pierre Vernant – Pierre Vidal-Naquet (Translated by Janet Lloyd), Zone Books (Sixth Printing), NY 2006, pg.11

<sup>16</sup> The Masters of Truth in Archaic Greece, Marcel Detienne (Translated by Jone Lloyd, foreword by Pierre Vidal-Naquet), Zone Books, NY 1996, pg.116

his/her eyes, not solely like a shadow play (because he/she also experiences and lives these scenes and suffers), the truth will give the apparent proof that our inner eye that is the commonsense of all of us experienced the dream with a deep joy and with a joyful necessity. This argument is given in Wagner's "Meistersinger Opera" as follows:

*"My friend, it is the poet's task  
To mark his dreams, their meaning ask.  
Trust me, the truest phantom man doth know  
Hath meaning only dreams may show:  
The arts of verse and poetry  
Tell nought but dreaming's prophecy."*<sup>17</sup>

In this renewed relationship with the work of art, the artist positions himself/herself as a causal agent and creator between reality and its image.<sup>18</sup> The beautiful appearance of the dream world where any human is a real artist in it, is the creator of entire plastic arts and poetry art. We enjoy perceiving the forms directly. All forms do tell us something. There is nothing unnecessary or ordinary as Nietzsche mentioned. Touching or contacting things around directly or roughly, diving into thoughts via abstracting oneself from the ordinary way of human point of view is the most positive thing for a work of art. Because of the comfortable habit of seeing, the visual nerve gets so lazy that human chooses the relationship between the colors and forms and its attraction as if only looking behind a veil.

Nietzsche calls this form relationship regarding the tragedies as "music". The music deals here with, not what is musical with the regular meaning, but it is used for expressing a form within the artistic concept. As much as the vitality that are useful for regenerating the main lines and contours of a figure for a unique and in good composition painting, and the successful mixture of shadow and light, for poetry it shall be the music. As Gluck states in his work of art "Alceste", music

---

<sup>17</sup> *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, Friedrich Nietzsche, Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy, edited by Raymond Geuss and Ronald Speirs (Translated by Ronald Speirs), Cambridge University Press, UK 2007, pg.15

<sup>18</sup> *The Masters of Truth in Archaic Greece*, Marcel Detienne (Translated by Jone Lloyd, foreword by Pierre Vidal-Naquet), Zone Books, NY 1996, pg.109



shall support poetry, and strengthens the feelings, expressions and interest that the situations awaken without interrupting the incident or without damaging that with unnecessary contributions and additions. Music is used in tragedies as a tool to reach the main purpose: Its purpose is to transform the pain of god and hero to a strong feeling of compassion among the audiences. Words have the same purpose actually but that is rather difficult for it and it can achieve this duty only indirectly. Words effect initially the world of thoughts than it reaches the feelings; if the distance is long, mostly it can not reach this goal. On the contrary music as the universal language that is understood everywhere calls out directly to the heart. The main success of Greek Tragedy actually is based on most probably to this element, the music that is long lost and gone for us.

Tragedy depicted on stage characters and events that, in the actual manifestation of the drama, took on every appearance of real existence. Yet, even as the audience beheld them with their own eyes, they knew that the tragic heroes were not really there nor could be since, attached as they were to a completely bygone age, they by definition belonged to a world that no longer existed, an inaccessible elsewhere. Thus, the “presence” embodied by the actor in the theater was always the sign, or mask, of an ‘absence’, in the day-to-day reality of the public. Caught up by the action and moved by what he beheld, the spectator was still aware that these figures were not what they seemed but illusory simulations – in short, that this was *mimêsis*. Tragedy thus opened up a new space in Greek culture, the space of the imaginary, experienced and understood as such, that is to say as a human production stemming from pure artifice. A fiction, an illusion, the imaginary: Yet, according to Aristotle, this shadow play that the illusionist art of the poet brings to life on the stage is more important and true for the philosopher than are the accounts of authentic history engaged in recalling how events really occurred in the past.<sup>19</sup>

On the basis of work of art, we mentioned several elements and components that make tragedies so authentic and universal. Before getting to a point what tragedy is, how and for what reason it is revealed within the historical moment and

---

<sup>19</sup> Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece, Jean Pierre Vernant – Pierre Vidal-Naquet (Translated by Janet Lloyd), Zone Books (Sixth Printing), NY 2006, pg.187

what its formative characteristics are, I would like to mention what is the Greek thought structure that is a foundation to the formation of tragedy and what it means for them the concepts religion, law, justice and truth.

## 2. RELIGION, LAW, JUSTICE IN ANCIENT GREECE

Greek thought gets its origins from a tradition that covers the other founder elements strictly diffused into Hellenistic Culture; these elements, to Greece that consists of cities, from language, movement forms, to life, way of feeling, style of thinking to system of values and to common living rules gives the authentic view. This religious and social tradition is neither single formed, nor exactly fixed; it has no dogmatic characteristic.

Louis Gernet while analyzing tragedy shows us that his main tool is the social thought pertained to cities and the thought of law that is specially attempted to be formed at those times with an extreme effort. So-called courts have been so lately established that, tragedy poets are reflecting with these legal terms' uncertainties, fluctuations, unsettledness the contradictions with ethical thoughts and also revealing the uncertainties of terms, semantic shifts, inconsistencies and contrasts.<sup>20</sup>

Ancient Greek had no absolute thought of law based on principles that are organized as a whole in a consistent way. According to them there are either gradual or overlapped laws. Some of these are intersected and some of them are intertwined. At one pole the law confirms the real authority, and in some aspects is based on a necessity that is not any other object than its extension. On the other pole it enters into a religious zone; it mentions the sacred powers, the order of the world and the justice of Zeus. They represent the heroic legends that their finals are connected to kingdom dynasties, values regarding the cities, social practices, spirituality forms and human behaviours and phenomenon that the cities are to reject and to put into prison, to struggle to avoid, but at the same time obliged to depend on it and stay loyal to it. So, the tragic turning point that is revealed as a result of this agon is the moment that occurs when a gap develops at the heart of the social experience. It is wide enough for the oppositions between legal and political thought on the one hand and the mythical and heroic traditions on the other to stand quite clearly. Yet is

---

<sup>20</sup> Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece, Jean Pierre Vernant – Pierre Vidal-Naquet (Translated by Janet Lloyd), Zone Books (Sixth Printing), NY 2006, pg.25

narrow enough for the conflict in values still to be a painful one and for the clash to continue to take a place.<sup>21</sup> In this form of law the troubles regarding the human responsibility shows analogies. Human causal agent as well depending on this becomes an issue of ethical discussion. From this point of view divine justice, which is often visits the crimes of fathers upon their sons, may frequently appear as opaque and arbitrary as violence done by a tyrant.<sup>22</sup> For example; *nomos*<sup>23</sup> word in Antigone is used for absolutely opposite values to each other by various main characters. In a same way the *kratos* term in “Suppliants”, fluctuates among two opposite admissions without settling in one of them. Same word indicates both the legitimate authority and the dominance that is applied righteously and subjected to its power from legal point of view on the trustee. This uncertainty brings us to such a situation that we question the true nature of *kratos*; what is the authority, the authority of the man over the woman, of husband over wife, of the the head of the State over all his fellow citizens, of the city over the foreigner and the metic, of the gods over mortals? The oppositions stand out clearly above all in the context of man’s experience of the divine. In tragedy we find not just one category of the religious but various forms of religious life that appear to be opposed or mutually exclusive.<sup>24</sup> In order to understand this primarily we have to investigate and questions where this tradition comes from and what the origin of it is. That’s why in this chapter I will mention some details regarding the mythological tradition and democratic tradition within the historical context of Greeks.

## 2.1. Mythological Tradition / Democratic Tradition

At the beginning solely the mythological tradition dominates. This tradition strikes its roots so radically that, we have difficulties in understanding the Greek Gods without mythology. The spirituality of Greeks is only made up of myths, that

---

<sup>21</sup> Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece, Jean Pierre Vernant – Pierre Vidal-Naquet (Translated by Janet Lloyd), Zone Books (Sixth Printing), NY 2006, pg.27

<sup>22</sup> Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece, Jean Pierre Vernant – Pierre Vidal-Naquet (Translated by Janet Lloyd), Zone Books (Sixth Printing), NY 2006, pg.39

<sup>23</sup> *nomos*: Law

<sup>24</sup> Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece, Jean Pierre Vernant – Pierre Vidal-Naquet (Translated by Janet Lloyd), Zone Books (Sixth Printing), NY 2006, pg.39-40

means fictive poetic stories and cult staff. While interpreting the customs and sensitivities of Greek tradition, it is important not to “christianize” this religion. It is essential to attempt understanding the Greeks, from the reference of today’s believer who searches for assurance for his/her individual salvation in this world and beyond within the church that is the sole institution entitled to make these mass and rituals that makes him/her faithful. Today there is no space for Greek polytheism. Because this religion shall not exhibit anything to satisfy the human expectation. In this religion since there is no singularity, divinity in polytheism, different from what we believe does not mean strong enough to afford everything, knowing everything, infinity and absoluteness. These gods are multiple and are on earth; they constitute a part of the earth, they were born from the earth. Genesis process (*genése*) out of this cosmos, is realized from the initial triggering powers such as chaos (*kaos*) and earth (*gaia*). From these powers on within similar logic gods have become ruling both the celestial residencies in an invisible way during their visit and the earthly residencies where human do exist and live at some part. Thus as there is spirituality on earth, in gods there is earthliness. That’s why physical universe regarding the cult existential form, human life shall not be gravitated to an entire extraterrestrial being that shall not be evaluated by any common criteria that possess a natural character within the social existence. On the contrary as the cult shall be gravitated to planets such as moon, dawn, sunlight, night, to any source, to a river, a tree, the summit of a mountain; it is also possible that it is gravitated to any feeling, an obsession (*Aidôs, Eros*) or ethical or social conception (*Dike, Eunomia*). The Greek Human shall not separate natural and supernatural from each other. During the feasts that establish their contact with gods they experience the same divineness feeling with some aspects of the earth as well. From the beginning on belief is originated from supernatural zone. Greek polytheism is not based on any revelation; in its reality there is nothing with divine origin and imposed as a necessity by the divine. Binding and dedication are based on the practice of what the society follows as a custom, to the ancestor’s human ceremonies, to *nomoi* (laws). Just as the language, life style, table manners, costumes, attitude, behavioural forms in public and private spaces and cult too shall not need a reasoning apart from its own existence.

Just as there is no contradiction and an obvious disengagement between the natural and supernatural, divine and earthly, in a same way there is no distinction between the religious and related to society, family and citizenship. The Greek Religion shall not constitute an isolated life circle closed in its boundaries that overlaps with family, profession and political lives or spare times and rest times but that is not intertwined to this life. There exists a religion that establishes a collective order and gives an appropriate place to its different components and incorporates it into this order.

Even though the Greek Gods belong to the same world with the human and somehow, they are originated from the same roots, they have such a race that shall not know none of the defectivenesses such as weakness, tiredness, misery, sickness, death that seals to mortal creatures with the stamp of negation. They materialize and embody not the absolute or infinite one, but the integrity of values that is the price of existence on this earth; which means the beauty, power, perpetual youthfulness, and the permanent sparkling of life. The gods are unfamiliar to death which defines the prerequisite of human existence. The gods are, *athantoi* that means they are immortal; on the other hand, the human is *brotoi* that means they are mortal destined to death as well as diseases and aging.

The dominant mythological tradition before the revealing of philosophy in ancient Greece was defining the world totally under the sovereignty of gods. There was a belief that the human and gods do live within the same cosmos, where they have no reach and connection to gods. Since the gods' behaviours are unpredictable, they were in insolvent and desperate situation against the gods. Together with passing from the village life to city life, dramatic changes have happened in human collectivity. The individual who sustains his/her life through exchanging the needs with what they produced in the past, together with the passing to the city life became not proceeding sort of life model that is self-sufficient and with the improvement of commerce city bureaucracy is shaped. While the village life was founded on meeting the necessities, the individual got rid of this necessity in city; but since the type of collectivity has changed, this situation lead the individual to bear different sorts of responsibilities in city. And this enable the development of human creativity. And democracy and cities have developed as a result of these changes

and together with the cities a system of political institutions, thoughts and behaviours. All these components confronted the human insolvency and human collectivity capability against each other.<sup>25</sup> As forementioned at the introduction of the thesis, as a result of the replacement of social activity and powers' mystic and old forms by connected applications and thought styles and city (*polis*), these two conceptions had contradiction among each other. Before this human that is in insolvency against gods, with the collective power of city life, have experienced the leading power of human. And this provided two basic questions to be asked: "What is the resource of universe I have experienced?" and "What is the resource of human action?" First one prepared the philosophy to reveal on social layer and the second one paved the way for tragedies to reveal in artistic layer.

The presocratic philosophers give different answers to the question 'What is the resource of external world that is experienced?': When coming to Plato such as *logos*, water, number etc., the answer to this question appears as 'good' in front of us. According to this thought soul *ψυχή* (*psyche*) that exists within the nature of universe which means substance is an unlimited and kinetic being with its structure. The power of creativity is infinite and it can set itself into action and belongs to the divine. It involves all characteristics that we dedicate to what is divine today. "Good" that is the source of existence and knowledge in Plato, is also the final source that *psyche* shall reach, *psyche* carries "good" in itself, but because of its relationship with the body it has forgotten that from the moment that it was born. Because the body as per its structure is a limited being. The behavioral rules that Delphoi commanded mean this: "Know Thyself" and "Identify Thyself". Human needs to accept his/her boundaries. The contradiction of *psyche*'s limitlessness that is the resource of human existence and the limitedness of bodily and physical makes a basic dilemma for human: At one side the human who has the power of creativity, capability, limitlessness of *psyche* – that possesses all divine powers; and at the other side again the human who is subjected to the boundaries of the body, but shall comprehend the pieces and parts within these boundaries, but just because of this

---

<sup>25</sup> "The Courage to Create and Love Concept in Plato's Thought", Eylem Abalıođlu, Plato and Ignorance Research Paper, Lecturer Kaan Atalay, Philosophy and Social Thought, Istanbul Bilgi University, 2016, pg.2

limited comprehension who shall not reach the truth. Plato speaks us at this point the impossibility of reaching the knowledge. Because the human believes in the reality of world that he/she comprehended with senses that are subjected to the limits of the body (*doxa*). But according to Plato the truth is far beyond this “doxologic” activity. Because we realize our comprehension through our body which means with our senses in an inevitable way, this comprehension as well is subjected to the limitedness of the body. However, *psyche* or the being is in such a form that shall not accept the limits. According to Plato this contradiction between the limitlessness of *psyche* and body constitutes the foundation of our life. Realization of *psyche* of itself (good), becomes impossible with doxologic activity. Our comprehension misguides us, that’s why these activities made by the senses shall only be an “imagination”. This is totally arbitrary and accidental assortment process. On two layers above of this there exists *belief (pistis)* and *thought (dianoia)* that means geometric noesis. After Plato, despite the fact that geometric noesis is done with pure intelligence, it shall not reach us to the knowledge, because geometry functions with hypothesis; working via making appropriate illations of the topography it presents staying inside this system. For example,  $2+2=4$  is a geometric noesis activity, it is not something based on empirical experience. Because we shall not see the reflections of these within the universe that we experienced. Entire mathematical theories are founded and constructed on this. When going upstairs of the building it becomes possible to prove whether the operation is correct or wrong, but the basic hypothesis shall not be validated or negated, it shall only be accepted as correct. Since such kind of noesis is an activity made by mind, it is closer to the reality than an activity that is subjected to perception, but this shall not again brings us to the knowledge of truth since this principle hypothesis shall not be questioned. And the *noesis* (understanding) that stands at the uppermost layer of Plato’s ‘Divided Line’ shall be the sole method to carry us to the knowledge. According to him the realization of *psyche* itself shall only be possible via the noetic activity. Because according to this thought the meaning of to be, to know and to live means to realize thinking through pure intelligence, creation, demolition and reconstruction. And this shall only be concretized by human via with the effort of exceeding the limits and the activities executed. The fact that the



activity of creation is something divine, and the fact that psyche itself has unlimited power of creation and it exists in human, it replaces human in a sense, a divine being. That's why when considering this situation from Plato's way of thinking the distinction of God-Human is blurry. There is a way of thinking that everything has a single and unique origin (good) and this origin shall be reached only through philosophical actions. The only way to reach this origin is that the human to get rid of his/her bodies' and perceptions boundaries even via considering death. And this is only possible after Plato via 'Love' (*Eros*). The state to reach this good and knowledge within the last paragraph via Love is mentioned in the Symposium with the following expressions: "...he catches sight of such knowledge, and it is the knowledge of such beauty".<sup>26</sup> What is meant with this here is that the knowledge of beautiful and good is not in what is beautiful but within the pure beauty itself. Once the human reaches the knowledge of truth, origin, light he/she shall not settle with its projections. They avoid the boundaries of body and they become one with the origin. This state of being one is overlapped with *ecstasy*. Ecstasy is developed in Greek Theatre related to the feasts of Dionysus; it is the summit of creativity that provides the union of form and desire and order and vitality. Ecstasy here is defined as "rushing out of the usual bifurcation that sustains in many human activities between the subject and object. This situation appears in an extremely weird way regarding psychological point of view that is established on the duality of subject and object that is the feature of western thought for 400 years when looking from today.

As can be seen from the mentioned ones, entire life styles, ways of beliefs, approaches to god and human within the proper period of Greek society are the road maps that are directed to the revealing of a tragedy. It is impossible to interpret tragedies without these in a transparent manner. If we do not know the social beliefs that form the period of the being, tragedy than could be understood purely as forms of art and literature texts, this means to restrict its concept unfairly. If we reviewed religion and law concepts, on the axis of "duality" in the Ancient Greece societies' dominant and real-like conception model, yet we shall internalize a little bit more

---

<sup>26</sup> Plato Complete Works, John M. Cooper, Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., Indianapolis / Cambridge, 1997, Symposium, 210 e

how these affect tragedies and how and for what reason the tragic is revealed. Despite the fact that it seems a little bit long to make this preparation for entering the main subject, I think it is worth this effort regarding finding the key I was talking at the beginning. If we do not realize the demolishing and constructing tradition with the principle of looking into it with another perspective via destructing the premises we will be in such a contradictional action to this thesis' main discourse. For this reason, on the next chapter I will try to deal with the origin of tragedy and the incidents it took into account contextually from both formal and language format and in terms of its content.

### 3. THE ORIGIN OF TRAGEDY

We need to define the origin of tragedy as a labyrinth and in order to find the way out of this labyrinth, we need to benefit from all these mentioned art principles.

Tragedy is an invention and innovation for the period that it is created. Tragedies truth is not involved in more or less primitive and mystic dark history that sustains to show itself secretly on the theatre stage, it can be understood within innovations and authenticities on three layers in ancient Greek culture. Initially let's consider the social institutions layer. Of course with the effects of the tyrans that are the first representatives of society, by the group of citizens in Ancient Greece of a highest state representative that exists in the ancient Greece, that is subjected to *arkhōn*'s authority and up to the details of the organization, tragedy contests have been arranged subjecting to the rules of the council and democratic courts. From this point of view, it can be claimed that tragedy is the city itself that makes it a form theatre and put on stage in front of the entire citizens. The second innovation is in layer of literature forms; a poetic form has been developed to perform on stage and to be implied on stage, is written both for listening and to be watched, programmed for a performance and that is totally different from the previous ones. Finally on the human experience layer, together with the improvement of something that we shall call tragic consciousness, the human and its actions are not reflected as bounded like constant realities, defined and judged by a perspective authentic to tragedy, apart from that are reflected as unanswered questions and double barreled riddles that are waiting to be solved. And here the question that we formerly asked as "What is the origin of human action?" steps into our consideration. The distinction between the divine and human, this crack gives its basic problematic to tragedy. Different from the epopees the innovation that tragedy brought on the human layer, brings it to a different zone. Epopee and epic stories that it gives drama the subjects, characters and frames of story lines, present the old time heroes as a model and reverencing values and virtues belonging to heroes. Legendary heroes who are reverenced in epic stories and epopees are transformed into subjects of discussion on the theatre stage over the dialogue plays in tragedy, via bringing the

protagonists with the chorus and through the turning points of fortune (*peripeteia*) during the drama. The hero, when the discussion is the case in front of the audience, the Greek audience who live in Athens during the 5<sup>th</sup> century discovers that the main problematic is itself within the tragedy spectacle and by way of it.<sup>27</sup>

As Walter Nestle strikingly puts it, tragedy was born when myth began to be assessed from a citizen's point of view. The only origin of tragedy is tragedy itself.<sup>28</sup> When we turn back into the point of view that in Greek Theatre not the incident but pain is to be emphasized; since we do not know how pain or excitement within emotional life turned into tragic impressions or since we only know just a part of it, we have no criteria to examine the comments and interpretations of Attica audience about the work of a poet as Nietzsche mentioned. Our beliefs do always tell us that the real audience, whoever they are, shall protect the consciousness of he/she is not standing in front of an empirical reality, but is standing in front of a work of art: Besides this, the tragic chorus of Greeks had to see human with their flesh and bone in its stage persons.<sup>29</sup> In this situation, were they considering what happened on stage as real? No, because while time passing in theatre is solely an artificial time, the architecture is solely a symbolic architecture, while a temperate language has an ideal character, to bear this thing that is the core of entire poetry art only as a poetic freedom is not sufficient. The introduction of the chorus was the decisive step by which war was declared openly and honestly on all naturalism in art. For this chorus the Greeks built the hovering platform of a fictitious state of nature on to which they placed fictitious creatures of nature. Tragedy grew up on this foundation, and for this very reason, of course, was relieved from the very outset of any need to copy reality with painful exactness. Yet it is not a world which mere caprice and fantasy have conjured up between heaven and earth; rather it is a

---

<sup>27</sup> Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece, Jean Pierre Vernant – Pierre Vidal-Naquet (Translated by Janet Lloyd), Zone Books (Sixth Printing), NY 2006, pg.186

<sup>28</sup> Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece, Jean Pierre Vernant – Pierre Vidal-Naquet (Translated by Janet Lloyd), Zone Books (Sixth Printing), NY 2006, pg.305

<sup>29</sup> The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings, Friedrich Nietzsche, Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy, edited by Raymond Geuss and Ronald Speirs (Translated by Ronald Speirs), Cambridge University Press, UK 2007, pg.37

world which was just as real and credible to the believing Greek as Olympus and its inhabitants.<sup>30</sup>

The prevalent opinion tells us that the tragedy is born from a tragic chorus and at the beginning it was nothing but a long song that tells the situations of known mythological beings which is sung by a chorus. Lyric chorus, in ancient times expresses the poems that are read artificially repeatedly regarding a myth in contests that are devoted to gods by Greeks. The main and general success of ancient tragedy is even based on the chorus while it was very popular; chorus especially is a factor that shall not be neglected and to be taken seriously into account. It means while planning a theatrical performance the first thought is the necessity of designing the women and men that have close connection with the persons to take place in the play; and the next thing is searching for the incidents to reveal mass psychology in lyrical and musical terms. The poet looks to the performers on stage as if he/she is looking from the chorus and together with the chorus to the Athens audience as well. Chorus partitions that are engraved into the texture of tragedy shall be counted as the mother's bosom of the main play, almost the entire dialogue, than means of the entire stage world. Rupturing of the individual and becoming of one with the first existence is told. We believe that the stage principally as origin is designed as vision and the sole "truth" here is the chorus that generates the vision itself and speaks entirely of the symbols of dance, voice and lyrics.

Knowing this main duty of chorus in antique age tragedy is significant from the following points of views: First of all the relationship between the chorus and hero is different from the dialogue that we know among the equals. Secondly, the duality that chorus and hero created on the language layer pushes us to the necessity of imposing different meanings in terms of content to these two opposite elements. In tragedy technique there is polarisation between two elements: at one side the chorus that is a collective and anonymous being, that forms in its concerns, hopes and syllogisms the group of citizens and works for expressing the feelings of the audiences; on the other side the individualized identity that is performed by the professional actor/actress, that his/her action is the center of gravity of drama and

---

<sup>30</sup> *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, Friedrich Nietzsche, Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy, edited by Raymond Geuss and Ronald Speirs (Translated by Ronald Speirs), Cambridge University Press, UK 2007, pg.39

more or less unfamiliar to the ordinary situation of the ordinary citizen who represents the face of another age's hero. The representation of chorus and the tragic hero in such a dual way coincides with a duality in tragedy language; at one side the lyric style of the chorus, on the other side the dialogue focused style with its closer criteria to prose on the protagonists of the drama. The heroic identities that were made familiar to ordinary human with the language they used, do not realized only at stage in front of the eyes of the audiences, they become an object of discussion that were exposed to each other and the chorus members, which means that they are questioned before the public in a sense. Chorus, instead of uplifting the virtue of the hero, is worried about the hero and asks questions about him/her. Thus, hero within the contemporary frame of tragedy is no more an example; he/she is yet from his point of view and from the others points of views is a problem. He/she expresses a tragic consciousness and the feeling of discrepancy that divides human in itself as Nietzsche pointed out.

Another thing that we shall say about the duality of chorus and hero is the singularity and polarity relationship between each other. Chorus collective is either Creon or Antigone, if it is a hero, than it is individual. Chorus and heroes use costume and masks. But, chorus members and the hoplites of the city wear uniforms. In contrast, the costumes and masks of the actors are individualized. Against the hero that is possessed with an immoderation expresses the reality of truth, average truth and the truth of the city in its own way. The hero dies or transforms into definitive character such as Philoctetes or Creon, chorus sustains its being. Not the first saying but the last saying is always the head of the chorus like within the text of "Oedipus at Colonus": "This is where the story ends forever."<sup>31</sup>

When considering from this point the chorus seems to us as if it is an absolute and everlasting being and as if it has a voice in decisions. Apart from the known sayings such as the chorus in ancient Greek tragedies is the ideal audience or represents the public against the part of the stage that represents the power, if the conditions at the time that it was written were taken into consideration; we shall claim that the city and tragic chorus have totally different functions from one

---

<sup>31</sup> Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece, Jean Pierre Vernant – Pierre Vidal-Naquet (Translated by Janet Lloyd), Zone Books (Sixth Printing), NY 2006, pg.311

another. In Athens the city council proposes and parliament makes a conclusion, however in tragedies the chorus never makes a conclusion or the conclusion of chorus is ridiculed; as a general rule the one to take irreversible decisions that forms the core of tragedy is the hero or the power to trigger him/her.<sup>32</sup> To know this is important from this aspect: Despite the fact that it seems like there is a collective and individual contrast between the chorus and the hero; in fact despite the fact that there are many people, chorus from musical point of view brings before us not the majority, but the single being that is enormous with powerful lungs as Nietzsche pointed out. This shows us by the way the opposite relationship between them is fictionalized like the relationship between the equals from one aspect and they involve each other. We can see different examples of this in various texts; for example, let's consider the following part in Euripides' Medea:

LEADER OF THE CHORUS:

“Since thou hast imparted this design to me, I bid thee hold thy hand, both from a wish to serve thee and because I would uphold the laws men make.”

MEDEA:

“It cannot but be so; thy words I pardon since thou art not in the same sorry plight that I am.”

As we can see here chorus and Medea are fictionalized like two different separate identities; chorus is a friend that warns Medea against the dangers, that protects and watches her over and gives her advice and she is also an observer. It has no exact and clear conclusions, it is also confused against what has happened. The relationship between them is neither hierarchical to tyrannizing each other, nor a relationship between the equals (if it was so there would be no chorus hero duality). That's why knowing the function and position of chorus, retains us from making a mistakable comment with a wrong reference or narrow context. If we fall

---

<sup>32</sup> Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece, Jean Pierre Vernant – Pierre Vidal-Naquet (Translated by Janet Lloyd), Zone Books (Sixth Printing), NY 2006, pg.312

into this mistake, without neglecting the divine dimension tragedy becomes earthliness and plays a role as a tool in absolutization of the ethical judgement that are fictionalized by proper periods' dominant discourse and in adoption. Yet we do not want this, that's why we have to clarify the significance of chorus and with what sort of function it takes place in these works of art.

As Nietzsche pointed out, to be able to comprehend how the tragic chorus of Greeks is older than the main "incident", more untainted, even more important, we shall see again the duality that is the core and origin of Greek tragedy via eluding from the tradition we are in, the one that is in way of Apollo and Dionysus as an expression of intertwined two artistic impulse. After this information we shall think of the Greek tragedy as a Dionysus chorus that is revealed within a way of Apollo symbolic world all over again. This chorus within its own vision looks at its master Dionysus and that's why it is a chorus that is idolized forever; it sees how he or god gets pain and is emerged, that's why it is not in action. It is with that duty serving totally before god, of course is the most high that means is the Dionysus way of expression of nature, that's why like that it speaks of divination and wisdom with admiration: As the one to take pain it is the wise to notifies the truth from the center of the world at the same time. It is the one and same person that speaks to musician, poet, dancer and spirits. The duty of Dithyrambic chorus is to exhilarate in a Dionysus way the spiritual state of the audiences, when the tragic hero is seen on the stage, in a way not to see the the human to carry a mask, but a visional figure that are born from their own spellbounding.

Dionysus who is the main hero and the focus of vision of stage, according to this information and what is told, in the oldest period of tragedy really does not exist, and is presumed only that it is present: which means that the tragedy at the beginning is only "chorus", not a "play". After that the god is attempted to be played visible to all eyes that surrounds the vision figure with divine illumination: thus in narrow terms the "play" begins. The actor/actress who wears a tragedy mask, represents the protagonist god: but the mask wearing god himself is hiding himself



behind a vision of a human and this leads to equivocal situation.<sup>33</sup> The audience unconsciously transfers the entire image that chills in a magical way at god's soul to this mask wearing figure and transforms its reality into merely a fantastic dream. Chorus is the symbol of entire mass that fall in enthusiasm in a Dionysus way in Greek tragedy. From this point of view, it is a living wall against the onslaught of reality, it lays the truth entirely, truly and rationally compared to the culture human who sees itself the only reality.<sup>34</sup> That's why it must always be remembered that the audience of Attic tragedy identified itself with the chorus on the *orchestra*, so that there was fundamentally no opposition between public and chorus.<sup>35</sup>

I will mention on the next chapter the Dionysus and tragedy relationship to be able to explain what we refer to with this Dinoyosos way of enthusiasm state. The reason why I do this is to show that there is another period of understanding the truth that speaks in Greek musical plays. If they did not have a god like Dionysus that is represented by crazy and ecstatical bodies, we could have evaluate right now tragedy among the romantic period poetry category; but despite this there would have been a gap in our minds: Now that we accept these pieces as works of art and we believe that they are written with an aesthetic concern; why than the used language, despite the fact that it is this much childish and exhibitivive, carries such codes to penetrate the deepest parts of human? It leads to an explosion of feelings in readers and awakens an intensive instinct to take action. We know that the tragedies are texts written to be put on stage. Aristotle meant the same thing while saying that tragedy is not the imitation of the action, but the performative imitation of the action. Behind the dialogue of Greek drama, we are always concious of a concrete visual actuality and behind that of a specific emotional actuality. Behind the drama of words is the drama of action, the timbre of voice and voice, the uplifted hand or tense muscle and the particular emotion. The spoken play, the words which

---

<sup>33</sup> Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece, Jean Pierre Vernant – Pierre Vidal-Naquet (Translated by Janet Lloyd), Zone Books (Sixth Printing), NY 2006, pg.202

<sup>34</sup> The Birth of Tragedy *and Other Writings*, Friedrich Nietzsche, Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy, edited by Raymond Geuss and Ronald Speirs (Translated by Ronal Speirs), Cambridge University Press, UK 2007, pg.41

<sup>35</sup> The Birth of Tragedy *and Other Writings*, Friedrich Nietzsche, Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy, edited by Raymond Geuss and Ronald Speirs (Translated by Ronal Speirs), Cambridge University Press, UK 2007, pg.42

we read, are symbols, a shorthand and often, as in the best of Shakespeare, a very abbreviated shorthand indeed, for the actual and felt play, which is always the real thing. This is merely a particular case of the amazing unity of Greek, the unity of concrete and abstract in philosophy, the unity of thought and feeling, action and speculation in life.<sup>36</sup>

And the most important sources of thought that provides this togetherness is as forementioned the Apollo and Dionysus duality. If we neglect one of these sides –that is for us the most important one; possessed with the illusion of the appearance, it becomes very possible that we may lose the meaning that is actually desired to be expressed mainly. That's why we need to know Dionysus much closer who let our heroes to make all these craziness.

### 3.1. Dionysus and Tragedy

It is very obvious that in ancient Greek Theatre a religious dimension exists, but as forementioned in the previous sections, religion does not mean how we understand it and does not have the position that we understand. It is not really separated from either the social or the political spheres. Every notable collective manifestation within the framework of either city or family, whether the public or in the private sphere, incorporated aspects of a religious festival.<sup>37</sup> At this religious dimension the Greeks extracted two gods to themselves as a double source of origin: Apollo and Dionysus. The fact that the continuous evolution of art is bound up with the duality of the *Apolline* and the *Dionysiac* in much the same way as reproduction depends on there being two sexes which co-exist in a state of perpetual conflict interrupted only occasionally by periods of reconciliation. There is a great contrast between the art of Apollo that is based on visuality, beauty and scale and Dionysus'

---

<sup>36</sup> Greek Tragedy in Action, Oliver Taplin, Routledge, New York 1978, sf. 1 (T.S. Eliot's Introduction Quote)

<sup>37</sup> Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece, Jean Pierre Vernant – Pierre Vidal-Naquet (Translated by Janet Lloyd), Zone Books (Sixth Printing), NY 2006, pg.186

nonvisual art of music.<sup>38</sup> The work of art that is called the Attican tragedy consists of confrontation of these two gods. Apollo is the god of all image-making energies, also the god of prophecy. According to the etymological root of his name, he is 'the luminous one' (*der Scheinende*), the god of light; as such, he also governs the lovely semblance produced by the inner world of fantasy.<sup>39</sup> Ethical god Apollo acknowledges only one law; it is the individual which means the protection of the boundaries of the individual, in Hellenic terms the moderation. Apollo expects from the ones similar to him to be temperate and to protect this he wants them to know him. Thus, the expectation of 'Know thyself' and 'Not too much!', uplifting himself/herself and passing the limits are the real enemy demons of universe that are not following Apollo.<sup>40</sup>

Dionysus on the other hand reaches the ancient Greek culture from outside, is a crossbreed god that is accepted among the Olympus gods afterwards. Before getting into the Greek culture it is crossbred by all sorts of rituals and beliefs that are connected to phenomenon such as agricultural plentifulness, seasonal transformations and fertility, aggression and death in human life. Dionysus is an unfamiliar object in the ancient Greek culture. The historian underlines this via throwing its origins out to the boundaries of Ancient Greece world, to Thrace. There are no common points in the civilization and religion of ancient Greeks and the civilization and religion of Homeric world. A Dionysus religion experience, reversely from the Apollo tendency is designed more than integrating individuals to their place in the world, to carry them to union with god who invades their souls, with the trance to the outer world and to the ecstasy. And this can be indicated as the proof of its absolute otherhood. It means at the beginning, trance applications of Thrace Dionysus that lead to more or less pathological crisis, were making deviant, abnormal and dangerous behaviours before the eyes of ancient Greeks. But

---

<sup>38</sup> *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, Friedrich Nietzsche, Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy, edited by Raymond Geuss and Ronald Speirs (Translated by Ronald Speirs), Cambridge University Press, UK 2007, pg.14

<sup>39</sup> *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, Friedrich Nietzsche, Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy, edited by Raymond Geuss and Ronald Speirs (Translated by Ronald Speirs), Cambridge University Press, UK 2007, pg.16

<sup>40</sup> *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, Friedrich Nietzsche, Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy, edited by Raymond Geuss and Ronald Speirs (Translated by Ronald Speirs), Cambridge University Press, UK 2007, pg.27

exactly these behaviours were involving the sprout that shall provide the final evolution of ancient Greece and real mysticism. Collective madness within the trance and soul invasion, *mania*, there was continuity between reaching to the integrity of ego through running out of the world, condemning the earthly existence, suffering applications and immortality of soul belief.<sup>41</sup>

Dionysus religion shall not detach human from earthly life via suffering and by giving up all worldly things technique, more than that it makes blurry the boundaries between the divine and human, human and brutish, this world and the hereafter and unites the estranged and isolated. If one of the most significant characteristics is continuously making blurry the boundaries between the dream and reality, providing the hereafter to appear suddenly here, letting us be entranced and be set free from the ego, it means that for the first time out of the theatrical illusion game that is placed in the Greek stage, so-called god's ambiguous and riddle figure is smiling towards us.<sup>42</sup> The tragedy is formed of the clashing and union of these two opposite powers that encountered at some period of history.

According to many sources the origin of tragedy is based on Dionysus Dithyrambos. Dithyrambos that is the form of songs that are sung in the feasts in the name of wine god Dionysus in Greece during 7<sup>th</sup> century B.C., has been settled as a literature form by the end of 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Yet Nietzsche as well call the Greek Tragedy because of this reason as, Dionysus chorus that is satisfied with the imagery world of Apollo. At the beginning tragedy is solely "chorus" not the "drama"; it is nothing but an objective poetry and a song that is expressing the situation of the known mythological beings, even the dresses of the mythological beings are worn. Reading of a poem accompanied by a flute by a male chorus of fifty kids surrounding around the altar in the middle of the orchestra, indicates that tragedy shall be happened as a result of a religious ritual and its initial origin is based on really to the drunkenness of wine and also based on the Dionysus song that is sung extemporally probably within an ecstatical dance by the accompany of people's voices one by one and vehemently. Formerly a dithyrambos chorus that

---

<sup>41</sup> Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece, Jean Pierre Vernant – Pierre Vidal-Naquet (Translated by Janet Lloyd), Zone Books (Sixth Printing), NY 2006, pg.384

<sup>42</sup> Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece, Jean Pierre Vernant – Pierre Vidal-Naquet (Translated by Janet Lloyd), Zone Books (Sixth Printing), NY 2006, pg.187-188

consist of a male chorus dressed like the Satyres<sup>43</sup> and Silenus tries to express via an implication what has lost itself to excitement. Chorus indicates instantly someone that the audience shall comprehend rapidly from the pains he/she had and from the contests he/she attended. Than god gets into te action with the purpose of telling the adventures that enables the active contribution of its cortege: In this situation while enthusiastic chorus songs are being sung, Dionysus is merely a live figure or so-called the living sculpture of god as Nietzsche pointed out. At the beginning periods of this performance art the crowds that are making crazy movements are dressed like the Satires, they paint their faces with fume colors, red dyes and other plant extracts, while going up hill and down dale with flower garlands on their heads, they were not doing this as intemperance or pleasure: The sudden strong blossom of Spring increases the vital powers to do such an intemperance here and getting into trance, hallucinations and believeing in the own magic is revealed all around and creatures that have the similar spiritual attitude were wandering the country as groups. There it is the cradle of performance art: Because the performance art does not begin with someone wearing a mask and creating an illusion in the others; more than that, it begins with the human to get in trance, starts to believe that he/she is truly transformed and mesmerised. In this state of getting into trance and situation of “feeling hazy” and *ecstasis*<sup>44</sup> only one more step is required: We shall never get back to ourselves, on the contrary we shall be transferred into someone elses beingness, so that we start to behave as if we are mesmerised. That’s why as a result the deep astonishment during watching the theatre performance makes one emotional: The ground is shaken that means the belief in the rigidness and impenetrableness of individual is shaken. How to Dionysus fan believes in its own transformation, te author of the play also believes in the truthness of its figures as Nietzsche pointed out.

As we can understand from this entire duality, against the expectation of knowing the limits of Apollo who is an ethical god, uplifting himself/herself and exceeding the limits shall be counted among the real enemy demons of non-Apollo

---

<sup>43</sup> Satyr is one of a class of lustful, drunken woodland gods. In Greek art they were represented as a man with a horse's ears and tail.

<sup>44</sup> *ecstasis*: To be or stand outside oneself, a removal to elsewhere

universe. However, Prometheus had to be torn apart by the vultures on account of his Titanic love for mankind; Oedipus had to be plunged into a confusing maelstrom of atrocities because his unmeasured wisdom solved the riddle of the Sphinx; these examples show how the Delphic god interpreted the Greek past. That's why the Apolline Greek, too, felt the effect aroused by the *Dionysiac* to be 'Titanic' and 'barbaric'; at the same time, he could not conceal from himself the fact that he too was related inwardly to those overthrown Titans and heroes. But the 'Titanic' and 'barbaric' was ultimately just as much of a necessity as the Apolline. Let us now imagine how the ecstatic sounds of the Dionysiac festival, with its ever more seductive, magical melodies, entered this artificially dammed-up world founded on semblance and measure, how in these melodies all the unmeasurable excess in nature found expression in pleasure, suffering and knowledge, in a voice which rose in intensity to a penetrating shout; let us imagine how little the psalm-singing artist of Apollo and the ghostly sound of his harp could mean in comparison with this daemonic popular song! The Muses of the arts of 'semblance' grew pale and wan when faced with an art which, in its intoxication, spoke the truth; the wisdom of Silenus called out 'Woe, woe!' to the serene Olympians. *Excess* revealed itself as the truth; contradiction, bliss born of pain, spoke of itself from out of the heart of nature. Thus, wherever the Dionysiac broke through, the Apolline was suspended and annulled.<sup>45</sup> With the effect of Dionysus tragedy, state and society, indeed all divisions between one human being and another, give way to an overwhelming feeling of unity which leads men back to the heart of nature.<sup>46</sup>

We see this similar inevitable duality among the gods that is on the principles of this belief in tragic human as well. *Daimon-Mania* is a term that is used to express the divine power that is in harmful action many times in the center of human life. An accursed numen that becomes manifest in various forms at different moments in humans' spirit and out of the human spirit; that is the power of disaster which involves apart from the murderer the murder itself, its farthest

---

<sup>45</sup> *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, Friedrich Nietzsche, Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy, edited by Raymond Geuss and Ronald Speirs (Translated by Ronald Speirs), Cambridge University Press, UK 2007, pg.27

<sup>46</sup> *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, Friedrich Nietzsche, Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy, edited by Raymond Geuss and Ronald Speirs (Translated by Ronald Speirs), Cambridge University Press, UK 2007, pg.39

predecessors, the psychological motivation of mistake, the consequences of mistake, contamination that it causes, the punishment that is prepared for the criminal and for its entire lineage of the criminal.<sup>47</sup> Also tragic man is *ethos-daimon*; at the moment that every action appears as the manifest of the power of the hereafter (*daimon*), seems compatible with the logic of a character (*ethos*) and the style. *Ἠθος Ἀνθρώπου Δαιμόνων* (*Ethos anthropos daimon*) by the way claims the following: “It is his character, in man, that one calls *daimon* and, conversely, what one calls character, in man, is in reality a *daimon*”. For our mentality today (and Aristotle) the two interpretations are mutually exclusive. Tragedy never provides a solution that could eliminate the conflicts either by reconciling them or by stepping beyond the oppositions.<sup>48</sup> Tragedy is a question that shall not involve answer. And when we exclude Dionysus, with an Apollo way of tendency like Aristotle did, like the criticism that is done by Nietzsche to Socrates, we shall have the eyes that are never burn in flames of the fine illusion within the enthusiasm of the artist, and this eye is devoid of looking to the cliffs with pleasure in a Dionysus way. As Plato tells within "the supreme and very appreciated" tragedy art what shall be seen really? With resultless reasons, in a way to be appeared with results as if to be seen reasonless really without any unwisely, for sensitive and angry people all of them to stand against calm people, something diversified and colorful that shall be a dangerous capsule as Nietzsche pointed out. Yes, this is the scene that we see when we look at the tragedy with pure Apollo image. One of the most significance deficiencies in defining tragedy by Aristotle is that excluding the “Dionysus” with an Apollo point of view that knows the temperance of everything. For example when we review Aristotle through “the Bacchae”, we can define easily an immortal that was punished by the god-rulership because of his persistent pride and anger that has gone out of control. We see against him sort of a god to spread goodness and compassion. Persisting on a passion of an immortal, staying on the course despite the warnings of oracles, the elders of the city and the god in form of human brings his irresistible misfortune. The message that shall be received from this story

---

<sup>47</sup> Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece, Jean Pierre Vernant – Pierre Vidal-Naquet (Translated by Janet Lloyd), Zone Books (Sixth Printing), NY 2006, pg.36

<sup>48</sup> Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece, Jean Pierre Vernant – Pierre Vidal-Naquet (Translated by Janet Lloyd), Zone Books (Sixth Printing), NY 2006, pg.37-38

is the necessity of us in our lives not to fall into this same mistake and to obey the social laws. Thus, the tragedy totally becomes earthly and plays the role to be a tool to absolutize and adopt the ethical judgements that is fictionalized by a proper period's dominant discourse. However the function of tragedy is far distant from this didactic concern and much more comprehensive. The tragedy of Aristotle is formed under the dominancy of an Apollo way of principle there shall be nothing impossible (irrational, unnatural) in tragedy. Tragedy procures a social pedagogic function more than an ontological confrontation deed in the hands of Aristotle. However, ancient Greek tragedy is totally different from the dramatic texts and characters that we know today. In tragedy the good and the bad is not separated from each other with sharp lines. When we review the texts we see both the causal agent and the victim, but we shall never understand how the causal agent is or who the victim is; because yet there is no concept of freewill and all the titles that we know such as justice, right-wrong, paying a price, punishment, enforcement of the acts are referenced to different meanings than today. That's why we shall wander on the same dynamic ground via avoiding definite judgements and taking into account always this duality while making evaluations.

In a similar way another example that serves this duality to get lost is the form change in chorus hero relationship in later period tragedies. In late period tragedies, we see that with the effect of rational thinking above mentioned chorus and helpless hero theme to be replaced by dialogue. This situation is a risk when evaluating from the point of view of Nietzsche. Because the feeling that performance accompanied by music awakens in the audience is very strong in chorus and hero relationship. At the beginning in tragedy under equal circumstances there are no two leading actors/actresses, the relationship between the conductor and hero is not that similar as well, because one of them is put under the command of the other. However under equal circumstances when two actors/actresses get into a dialogue logic get involved and the power of the music gives way to the power of speech. Philosophical thought steps forward here in front of art and pushes the art to sit on the foundation of dialectics in a tightly way. With this logical schematization the Apollo tendency gets cocooned as we see the similarly in transfer to excitement that is familiar to nature in Euripides and Dionysus. This is



destruction from this point of view: tragedy that arises from the deep origins of the feeling of pain is pessimistic as per its nature; life in it is fearful and the human is very fool. The tragedy hero does not appear while challenging against its destiny, what he suffers is actually not what he/she deserves. Rather in a blind situation and with his/her masked head he/she drags into his/her own misfortune. His/her desperate but noble situation that nails him/her short time ago within the world of horror that he/she encountered rankle our hearts a sadness. However, talking is optimistic as per its nature: It believes in cause and effect, thus it believes in the relationship of crime and punishment, virtue and fortune. Its estimations must be fully correct it denies the things that it can not analyse in an abstract way. The dialogue reaches its goal continuously all results are bright and conscious for it. For example, Socrates who is the dialectics hero in Plato theatre reminds us the similar character of Euripides hero that gets into danger of losing our tragic feeling of pain since he had to defend his behaviours with thesis and antithesis: Because everyone would like to appreciate the positive phenomenon in the core of dialectics that shall only breathe under the cool brightness and feasts at each final chapter. The so-called oral dialogue mentioned here is not solely in equalitarian character, it is also secular. It belongs to the age of human contrarily to the magical religious word that works properly with the things that harmonizes the nonhuman powers' and forces' world. It no longer depends on the interplay of transcendental religious forces for its efficacy. It is founded in essence on social agreement manifested as either approval or disapproval.<sup>49</sup> As Nietzsche pointed out, when this factor penetrates into tragedy there shall be a contradiction like the day and night, music and mathematics. The hero who is required to defend his/her behaviours via thesis and antithesis faces with the risk of us to lose our feeling of pain to him/her, because the following misfortune happens merely when he/she makes a mistake anywhere. However the audience of early period tragedies shall not return to their homes with sharp judgements and absolute feelings, can not return that way, because a tragedy would never gives us a judgement and a conclusion, on the contrary it gives us the choice and opportunity to take our own decisions after presenting us the different

---

<sup>49</sup> The Masters of Truth in Archaic Greece, Marcel Detienne (Translated by Jone Lloyd, foreword by Pierre Vidal-Naquet), Zone Books, NY 1996, pg.99

situations, their reasons and clues. That's why it is timeless and it sprays entire dilemmas, contradictions and deceiving himself/herself of human and causal agent victim roles to his/her face and afterwards it retreats and lets the audience to stand face to face with himself/herself. From this point of view, it shall not say anything new but it tells that with such a language that it commands you to be destroyed for you to question everything you know from the beginning on. Because it knows that there will be no formation of new things before destroying the old ones. Every law, all natural order, indeed the moral world, may be destroyed by Oedipus' actions, yet by these very actions a higher, magical circle of effects is drawn which found a new world on the ruins of the old one that has been overthrown.<sup>50</sup> This period of destruction and formation is not a situation to be comprehended with the rational human behavior today, but as a result of an ecstasy, it appears in form of being one with the nature and again as a result of this seeing the real face of incidents and human nature.

Here, the art of Dionysus is also related to the play that is done through enthusiasm and ecstasy. The two powers have priority that brings the naïve nature human to the enthusiasm level that puts the one into trance: Spring stimulation and narcotic drink. During the Carnival days that are upside down, the dominant system is required to be all mixed up: activities such as women disguised as men, men dressed like animal or women, slaves to take places of their masters, symbolic king dismisses the city king are exhibited during the entire carnival. During these entire days filthiness, animallikeness, ridiculousness, dreadfulness and abnegation of all sorts of permanent values flood in onto the culture world. The ancient Greek children learn their social identities on such a way.<sup>51</sup>

The subject in Dionysus is totally lost against the general humanity even against the power that general natural life ascertained. The Dionysus feasts establishes a union not only among the humans but at the same time among the human and nature. Entire boundaries that are specific to classes that determine the necessities and arbitrariness among the human are vanished; slave is free man, the

---

<sup>50</sup> *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, Friedrich Nietzsche, Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy, edited by Raymond Geuss and Ronald Speirs (Translated by Ronald Speirs), Cambridge University Press, UK 2007, pg.47

<sup>51</sup> *Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece*, Jean Pierre Vernant – Pierre Vidal-Naquet (Translated by Janet Lloyd), Zone Books (Sixth Printing), NY 2006, pg.200

noble and someone belongs to a lower class come together on the same Bacchae chorus. The sayings that tell “the harmony of the world” blow backwards and forwards within increasingly growing crowds and the human expresses himself/herself via singing songs and dancing in a more supreme way and as a member of a more ideal togetherness. He/she has forgotten to walk and speak. More than that he/she feels mesmerised. He/she presumes himself/herself the god. However he/she had experienced this situation in other times only in the dream and now he/she senses this like that individually. What do the paintings and sculptures mean to him/her? Human is now no more the artist but the work of art itself; he/she wanders in a supreme and trance way as they see the gods in their dreams. If being in a trance is the play of nature with human, than the creation of the artist in Dionysus way is the play with being in a trance. This situation can only be understood via mimesis, if the human did not experience this, this is similar to feel like dreaming while dreaming as Nietzsche pointed out. From this aspect realizing the truth of human in a Dionysus way overcomes against all sorts of numen that stimulates to action; No more solace now works, longing passes beneath the world after death even far beyond the gods; existence is negated with a sparkling reflection in gods or in an immortal beyond. Once truth has been seen, the consciousness of it prompts man to see only what is terrible or absurd in existence wherever he looks. Here approaches the art as the savior, only it can break the repulsion thought about the dreadfulness and nonsense of existence with the imaginations it has let the human experience.<sup>52</sup>

As we forementioned on the previous chapters we see different forms of this trance state and feelin of transcendency in ancient Greekt thought. At least the old Greeks build their lives and philosophies on the possibleness of this. This shall not only consist of revealing an innovative form of art; on the contrary Greek tragedy with the innovations it brought in the fields of language, form and content, it constitutes the aspects of their search for truth. Well, what do we mean here by the truth? What sort of truth shall these texts promise us that stand on an extremely

---

<sup>52</sup> *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, Friedrich Nietzsche, Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy, edited by Raymond Geuss and Ronald Speirs (Translated by Ronal Speirs), Cambridge University Press, UK 2007, pg.40

fluctuating ground where dual thoughts and questions in place of answers, dilemmas and contradictions exist that we mentioned from the beginning on?

To be able to investigate the answer of this question on the following chapter we will mention the concept of truth in Ancient Greek thought.

#### 4. CONCEPTION OF TRUTH WITHIN THE ANCIENT GREEK PHILOSOPHY

The subject we deal with in this chapter is parallel to the “reality of fiction” part that was mentioned at the beginning part of the thesis. Based on the negative meaning that the 5<sup>th</sup> century philosophical thought gives to it (against the episteme or certitude) we will mention an etymological origin that is against the fact that the doxa world shall not bring us to knowledge and thus to the truth.

*Aletheia* that represents the truth in ancient Greece shall not indicate the reality and truth as it is presumed. The prehistory of philosophical *Aletheia* shall bring us to the thought system of the oracle, poet and the just king that means to the three figures that a specific type of statements are defined by *Aletheia*. Defining the meaning of truth before rationality let us find how the truth is represented in mythological thought. Here mentioning the mythic way of thinking is significant from the following aspect; we mention from the beginning on that the Greeks are a society evolved from the mythic way of thinking. Even we additionally mentioned on the transition from the mythological tradition to democratic tradition part, how this change has been realized in details. That’s why knowing the representation of the word in mythic way of thinking will help us to validate that we speak of the similar content.

Some values, even while undergoing a change in meaning, remain important throughout the transition from one system of thought (the mythical to the other (that of reason)).<sup>53</sup> Among one of these is that the poet has as much privilege to tell the truth as the oracle and the just king. So, how shall this happen? How the word of a poet shall be accepted and considered *alethes*? To be able to give an answer to this question we need to mention the word meaning of *aletheia*; because we shall only find why the truth concept we search for is in the privilege of the poet as well (in the meaning of the tragedy author as mentioned within this thesis), logically merely within the origin of the word.

---

<sup>53</sup> The Masters of Truth in Archaic Greece, Marcel Detienne (Translated by Jone Lloyd, foreword by Pierre Vidal-Naquet), Zone Books, NY 1996, pg.37

In this thesis as we can see in many sections the duality dominates within the lexical semantical meaning of the word as well. The words *Aletheia* and *Lethe*. *Lethe* is stemming from the name of the river where the death is gone and when drink from the water of it, they forget their pasts in Hades. *Lethe*, while being dedicated to forgetting, silence, death, darkness and condemnation with this structure, *Aletheia* is given as reference to praising, word, brightness and remembering. But as presumed these two terms are not in a position to get across with one another or negating each other. The antithetical powers of *Aletheia* and *Lethe* are not contradictory: in mythical thought, opposites are complementary.<sup>54</sup> In fact without the *lethe* part there shall be no *Aletheia*. The field of poetic speech is balanced by the tension between these two groups of powers. Each power is matched by another in the opposite group: in one group night, silence, and oblivion; in the other light, praise, and memory. This structure that is adjusted with the opposite powers' tension is built by the poet. And he/she achieves it through the *logos*. *Logos* is remembering. Exploits that go unremarked die: "Mortal men forget whatever has not intermingled in the glorious streams of verses, and come to flower through a poet's skill." Only through the bard's speech can silence and death be eluded. The positive values, the very existence of efficacious speech are manifested in the voice of this special man, the poet, and in the harmonious vibration in which his praise floats aloft, in this living speech that is the power of life. A poet bestows through his praise a "memory" on man, who is not naturally endowed with it.<sup>55</sup> When the Muses tell the truth, they simultaneously bring "a forgetting of ills and a rest from sorrow". Through their charm and the pleasure they provoke, a mortal can escape every day time, the time of wretchedness and troubles. He becomes overwhelmed by forgetfulness: "When a man has sorrow fresh in the troublement of his spirit and is struck to wonder over the grief in his heart, the singer, the servant of the Muses singing the glories of ancient men, and the blessed gods who have

---

<sup>54</sup> The Masters of Truth in Archaic Greece, Marcel Detienne (Translated by Jone Lloyd, foreword by Pierre Vidal-Naquet), Zone Books, NY 1996, pg.86

<sup>55</sup> The Masters of Truth in Archaic Greece, Marcel Detienne (Translated by Jone Lloyd, foreword by Pierre Vidal-Naquet), Zone Books, NY 1996, pg.48

their homes on Olympus, makes him presently forget his cares, he no longer remembers sorrow." The poet's memory is oblivion for others.<sup>56</sup>

If because of this thought the tragedy author poet is really and truly inspired, his speech tended to be identified with "truth". His truth is a performative "truth", never challenged or demonstrated.<sup>57</sup> And just because of this reason the tragedy shall not require reasoning apart from its existence, it tells the truth. When it is taken into account that the ones to have this privilege are diviners, poets, and just kings, we shall better understand why the tragedy has created its own reality. In the ancient Greece, both poet and diviner have direct access to the beyond; they can see what is invisible. With this inspired knowledge, the poet uses his sung speech to celebrate human exploits and actions, which thus become glorious and illuminated, endowed with vital force and the fullness of being.<sup>58</sup> According to this thought the word of the poet shall not look for reconciliation with his/her audiences or the acquiescence of a social group that shall not be superior than the just king even just for a moment; this word is spread with the glory of the word prophecy. The magical – religious word as long as exceeds the time of human, exceeds also the human themselves. A poet, when labializes the words of praise, he/she makes this because of *Aletheia* and in the name of that. As his/her wisdom (*nous*), his/her words are also *alethes*. When poet berhymes, he/she follow the road of justice, his/her *Aletheias* are consolidated with the *dike*<sup>59</sup>. In fact in a religious thought system where the dramatic word prevails, there is no distance between the 'truth' and 'justice'. The truth in ancient Greece, from this point of view is always linked with certain social functions.<sup>60</sup> This type of speech always conforms with the cosmic order; it both creates and is the necessary instrument for this order.<sup>61</sup> This magicoreligious speech is not the manifestation of an individual's will or thought, nor does it constitute the expression

---

<sup>56</sup> The Masters of Truth in Archaic Greece, Marcel Detienne (Translated by Jone Lloyd, foreword by Pierre Vidal-Naquet), Zone Books, NY 1996, pg.81

<sup>57</sup> The Masters of Truth in Archaic Greece, Marcel Detienne (Translated by Jone Lloyd, foreword by Pierre Vidal-Naquet), Zone Books, NY 1996, pg.52

<sup>58</sup> The Masters of Truth in Archaic Greece, Marcel Detienne (Translated by Jone Lloyd, foreword by Pierre Vidal-Naquet), Zone Books, NY 1996, pg.16

<sup>59</sup> *dike*: The goddess of Justice

<sup>60</sup> The Masters of Truth in Archaic Greece, Marcel Detienne (Translated by Jone Lloyd, foreword by Pierre Vidal-Naquet), Zone Books, NY 1996, pg.67

<sup>61</sup> The Masters of Truth in Archaic Greece, Marcel Detienne (Translated by Jone Lloyd, foreword by Pierre Vidal-Naquet), Zone Books, NY 1996, pg.76

of any particular agent or individual. It is the attribute and privilege of a social function.<sup>62</sup> The truth, as a consequence, thus is established with the spreading of the magical and religious word, it is established on remembering and forgetting that is articulated to it.

What we trace here is a lost identicalness that it is covered as if we possess no such sort of a comprehension before, in a transition from a thought system where the effective word is dominant to a rational thought system where the knowledge is the sole dominant power. Sokrates is suspended from the truth with the absolute power that was brought by philosophy through the excluding of tragedy and contrariness to facts by the knowledge that excludes everything remains behind. Because the tragedy is in contradiction with the truth while representing the action and life. Of course philosophy is in contradiction with the truth. Maybe if one of the statements is true that are in contradiction with one another, it is in contradiction with the philosophical logic that presumes the other is inevitably wrong. From this aspect the tragedy seems connected to another logic that shall not create a sharp disconnection between the right and wrong to human; even during the period when the tragedy has developed, since it acts related with the problems it considers not to prove the absolute validity of a hypothesis, through *dissoi logoi*<sup>63</sup>, since it attempts to form dual expressions that collides intrinsically with the adversenesses without disproving each other where each of two opposite proofs shall be dominant according to the will and word of the sophist, this shall be the logic of sophists and rhetoric that spare a space still for uncertainty.<sup>64</sup> However, there is no mental universe as such, over and above the collection of diverse practices that man follows and constantly renews within the field of social life and cultural creation.<sup>65</sup> The uncertain knowledge has no derogatory meaning that the 5<sup>th</sup> century philosophical thought shall give to that (against the episteme or certitude). In a fundamentally

---

<sup>62</sup> The Masters of Truth in Archaic Greece, Marcel Detienne (Translated by Jone Lloyd, foreword by Pierre Vidal-Naquet), Zone Books, NY 1996, pg.75

<sup>63</sup> *Dissoi logoi*, also called *dialexeis*, is a two-fold argument, which considers each side of an argument in hopes of coming to a deeper truth. The *dissoi logoi* doctrine provides historical insight into early sophistic rhetoric.

<sup>64</sup> Marcelle Detienne, "Les Maîtres de vérité dans la Grèce archaïque", François Maspero, Paris, 1967, pg.119-124

<sup>65</sup> Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece, Jean Pierre Vernant – Pierre Vidal-Naquet (Translated by Janet Lloyd), Zone Books (Sixth Printing), NY 2006, pg.30



ambiguous world, these mental techniques allowed the domination of men through the power of ambiguity itself. Discourse was certainly an instrument, but not a way to know reality. Logos was a reality in itself, but not a signifier pointing to the signified. In this type of speech there was no distance between words and things. The ambiguity is no longer an aspect of *Aletheia*.<sup>66</sup> The truth that is mentioned here is not the Aletheia of the philosophers, it is of the poets. Early *Aletheia* meant neither agreement between a proposition and its object nor agreement between judgments. It was not the opposite of lies or falsehood.<sup>67</sup> The truth that we mention and that is the subject in tragedies is the truth of the poet.

After Nietzsche the field and boundaries of poetry is the expression of truth without make up and just because of this reason a man of culture while reviewing that shall shake off the alleged truth's liar face. After all these mysterious treasures that have been created at some period of history reflect us the naked, wild and raw truth. Here the main question that we shall ask ourselves is putting our philosopher glasses at one side, what we see when we consider the tragedy as pure work of art not via a philosophical activity that shall took importance after itself. What Plato did about the ancient art, if we consider the criticism that it is the imitation of the realm, that means that belongs to a level that is lower than the experimental world; is it not fair to ask the following question: In this universe that we live in if we shall not reach the knowledge via doxological activity that means the limitedness of body, if everything is an illusive world made up of images, than the poet shall not realize this in the most realistic way with the expression of Plato in the capacity of "the master of illusion"<sup>68</sup>? Shall this knowledge necessarily be reached through optimistic and result oriented dialogue? However knowledge kills the action, being hidden via illusion is also involved in the action. What if there is another god that we did not meet yet and if this god pushes us through a magic to an act that shall demolish all the social codes when necessary that we are afraid of even to express ourselves (like killing its own children) and shows us the purest and direst truth that

---

<sup>66</sup> The Masters of Truth in Archaic Greece, Marcel Detienne (Translated by Jone Lloyd, foreword by Pierre Vidal-Naquet), Zone Books, NY 1996, pg.118-119

<sup>67</sup> The Masters of Truth in Archaic Greece, Marcel Detienne (Translated by Jone Lloyd, foreword by Pierre Vidal-Naquet), Zone Books, NY 1996, pg.52

<sup>68</sup> Plato Complete Works, John M. Cooper, Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., Indianapolis / Cambridge, 1997, Sophist, 234 B-C

we did not experience before via realizing this with some powers that the wild nature gave him? Because yet this connection as it is in the dialogue shall not solely be among the human and human, there will be a link among the nature, universe and all powers, this pushes our tragic heroes to do any kind of madness, makes them fearless, makes them forget themselves, makes them immortal in their mortal bodies.

On the following chapter we will mention these heroes and how the truth is represented over their bodies. But first of all, we shall mention why body in Ancient Greek tragedies have that much privilege.

## 5. THE BODY IN TRAGEDY

The body is tragedy's currency. Classical Athenian tragedy focuses audience attention on the body, both in the form of the actor's body through character and the textual body (the body described and produced by logos, the body within the text). The actor's body is a central icon in tragedy and the character's body is a locus of language. The actors' body undergoes theatrical becomings or metamorphoses – changing from human body to animal body from male body to female body, from mortal body to immortal body, from live body to dead body. Euripides' *Bacchae*, for example, foregrounds these processes on stage, when Pentheus dresses as the female, changing from male to female, from live body to dead body, from whole body to fragmented body.

Athenian tragedy also displays a deep concern with the “boundaries of the body”. This theme appears to be a future of the genre and reflects Dionysus' role as confounder of boundaries. The boundaries between male and female, human and animal, Greek and barbarian, noble and poor, appear, for example, to be explored, questioned and destabilised on the tragic stage. Euripides' *Medea* is a prime example of this.<sup>69</sup> In the theatre of Dionysus, the god of concealing and revealing, the body is variously concealed, disguised and revealed. Tragedy is driven by powerful depictions of the intense suffering of the body-self in all its permutations. Dramatists trade on the suffering of tragic bodies, on both recognisable and unrecognisable somatic experience for the audience. Tragedy functions in this sense as a place or space of both otherness and familiarity. As Aristotle contends in *Poetics* 1452b, the suffering body is the customary subject of tragedy. Theatre may be defined as the adventure of human body but it would be more apt to call classical Athenian tragedy is the misadventure of the human body. The body in tragedy is most often presented in an extreme condition of suffering and in this condition, the body is most removed from the model of strength and integrity. The dramatisation of the suffering body seems to have had a deep impact on audiences.<sup>70</sup> The

---

<sup>69</sup> *Becoming Female “The Male Body in Greek Tragedy”*, Katrina Cawthorn, Gerald Duckworth & Co., London, 2008, sf 19

<sup>70</sup> *Becoming Female “The Male Body in Greek Tragedy”*, Katrina Cawthorn, Gerald Duckworth & Co., London, 2008, sf 21

audience is affected by the suffering of protagonists via the characterisation of acts of violence committed against bodies. Acts of violence force the fluids and innards that should stay inside bodies to come out and bodies change from their original form into something else. The state of suffering itself frequently perceived as more distressing than dying or death. Hippolytus laments “a quick death is the easiest of ends” and pleads, “O the pain, the pain that comes upon me... May death is the healer come for me at last! You kill me ten times over with this pain”<sup>71</sup> Also in Aeschylus’ *Prometheus Bound* 745-8, Io sings with a similar sentiment: “Why should I go living? Why not hurl myself at once down from this rocky cliff, be dashed in pieces and find relief from all my pain? Better to die once, then suffer torment all my living days.” In these examples, tragic suffering is so acute that subjects desire death as an escape from *ponos*<sup>72</sup>, as a welcome relief from the pressures of suffering.<sup>73</sup>

Another interesting point of this subject is relation between logos and soma. This mutually profitable relationship is evident in an expression of the combined power of the body and language. According to a view people don’t think about their bodies when they don’t hurt; and consequently, that awareness of the body entails an unwelcome recognition of vulnerability and mortality (so that correspondingly, not thinking about the body becomes a way of denying mortality). The profound cultural component in the perception and construction of the body is overlooked in this view that the ancient Greeks thought of the body only when experiencing in pain.<sup>74</sup> Because the model of the intrinsic mind / body connection at the time of Athenian tragedy suggests that mental and physical pain are also inseparable. Signs of tragic grief are expressed via the body – the ritualistic keening of mourning and the tearing of hair, skin and clothes. The representation of the suffering of mourning mothers, founded on the expression of intense bodily intimacy and love, is projected

---

<sup>71</sup> Euripides, *Hippolytus* 1046-7, 1371

<sup>72</sup> *Ponos*: is the personification of Hardship and Toil

<sup>73</sup> *Becoming Female* “The Male Body in Greek Tragedy”, Katrina Cawthorn, Gerald Duckworth & Co., London, 2008, sf 22-23

<sup>74</sup> *Becoming Female* “The Male Body in Greek Tragedy”, Katrina Cawthorn, Gerald Duckworth & Co., London, 2008, sf 29

as a combined sensation of physical and emotional pain in a holistic experience of suffering where the mind and body are intricately involved.<sup>75</sup>

Additionally, at the beginning of the thesis, since tragedy is ain't only a text, but also texts written for stage acting, the fact that it is an artwork that involves inside many layers such as chorus, voice, scene, music, choreography and similar I have already mentioned that I will emphasize how it is transformed into a shuddery experience for the readers and audiences. It is literally hair standing because it's described as eliciting these extreme physical reactions from its audience: "shuddering, trembling, hair standing on end, aphaisa, dizziness, pounding or leaping heart, cold chills in the belly and a tension in the whole body. Researchers points of evidence of actors using specific visual and oral techniques designed produce emotional reactions. Yet some bodily experiences are depicted as beyond the reach of *logos* – the intensities of mourning, the pain of childbirth and the experience of pleasure. Sometimes 'words can fail'. Euripidean tragedy at times tries to gesture at these experiences that are beyond words. For example, the pains and tormenting ramifications of *eros* are an important theme in Euripides' *Hippolytus* and *Sophocles*' *Trachiniae*. The embodied language of mourning women in the literary remains might best express the ability of the body to reach emotions beyond the scope of language, as illustrated by the keening and accompanying gestures of the women who have lost husbands, sons, daughters, brothers, sisters and city in Euripidies' *Trojan Women*. The genre of tragedy seems to display an extensive repertoire of the noises of pain, suffering and mourning. All these images, noises and gestures of the body might express or flesh out emotions that words cannot convey. Tragic language is not restricted to words, but also extends to sounds and gestures. These sounds and gestures are a profoundly important part of tragedy's tableau and might also obscure their basis or reliance on the body less than words. It would, however, be unwise to diminish the importance of *logos* in tragedy, to reverse this prejudice by privileging the body, by asserting it is more important than speech in tragedy. Speech is unquestionably intrinsic and integral to tragedy's power, to the articulation and expression of the body. The plays

---

<sup>75</sup> *Becoming Female "The Male Body in Greek Tragedy"*, Katrina Cawthorn, Gerald Duckworth & Co., London, 2008, sf 34

affect the reader because of tragic language, but this tragic language remains grounded in the visceral body, relying on the body for its impact. In other sense, these images, noises and gestures of the body might also be interpreted as another form of language. The noises of the suffering body are part of a “primal language”. Ancient Greek language had an extraordinarily wide range of exclamatory semi-animalistic cries that are far more visceral than our alas. Primal sounds might perform the task of conveying suffering more effectively than words here. Pain break down cultured language and returns the human to language’s origin.<sup>76</sup> Tragedy stages the kinds of concerns that other genres and discourses tend to repress, sublimate and vilify, reveling instead in the abject corporeality of bodies. Disease, madness, eros and suffering are its natural terrain. Drama is a genre in which real grotesque bodies are always given the last word.<sup>77</sup>

As we shall understand from all of these this primitive language is the language of Dionysus and it involves the truth in it. This is such a truth that even thought you bring together the fanciest and the most valuable words and even you build the most beautiful sentence of the world in a single body, it establishes a perfect harmony that shall not be overturned. At this divine layer where body, gestures, voice and expression meet, there is still space for words, but as we discussed at the beginning only interpreting the tragdies via looking at the words and their ways of writing is something like seeing a man from a kilometer mixing him up with a woman.

How we mentioned the layers in language and staging and how it influences truly the audience, now we shall take a deeper look into the examples how this truth is represented in tragedies via body.

---

<sup>76</sup> *Becoming Female “The Male Body in Greek Tragedy”*, Katrina Cawthorn, Gerald Duckworth & Co., London, 2008, sf 40-41

<sup>77</sup> *Becoming Female “The Male Body in Greek Tragedy”*, Katrina Cawthorn, Gerald Duckworth & Co., London, 2008, sf 43

## 6. THE REPRESENTATION OF TRUTH ON BODY IN TRAGEDIES

The truth in tragedies is represented over body as we forementioned on the previous chapter. Since in Greeks there was not yet a distinction between the body and mind logos begins to talk only via soma. And this indicates us that we shall not think language independent from the body. In every tragedy the revealing of truth, in other words “being seen of it apparently” is realized certainly via a transformation in the body. This transformation, either happens in the body of the tragedy hero; or finding Pentheus’s body in a female shape and to appear afterwards to the Bacchae in form of a lion or seeing the truth of Oedipus only after making himself blind; or as it is in Antigone’s wish to bury a dead body convenient with the tradition, rituel, law in form of abstract concepts (justice, law etc.) to be concretized over a body. After my presumption, the fact that tragedies are such texts that are that much alive and let the ones to live the action would only happen via describing these images only at this level in details and for every abstract concept via finding an equivalent absolutely in a body. This equivalent brings us to a journey where the action of reading shall not only happen solely as a mental activity, but also where reading literally turns into “shuddery” experience in the body of an audience. Let’s consider the following example:

“...he struck his eyes again and yet again with the brooches. And the bleeding eyeballs gushed and stained his beard – no sluggish oozing drops but a black rain and bloody hail poured down.”<sup>78</sup>

This detailed imagery that the messenger narrates in Oedipus, is not only reviving this scene before our eyes; it also results in the tingling of our eyes, a shiver ran down our spine or even our palms to get sweat. Maybe the messenger shall only describe in this way and wanted to leave the impression of the same painful impression before the eyes of the ones that did not experience the incident. The only thing that we know is that such kind of a body identification when mostly thought

---

<sup>78</sup> Oedipus The King, Sophocles (Translated & with an Introduction by David Grene), The University of Chicago Press, London 2010, 1275

with the staging layer of us as readers makes it inevitable that period's Athenian audience to be identified with the hero and even with the god. In this manner if we will be talking about sharing the truth, this truth shall be such a truth that is "tangible proof" as the body that we live in.

Well than what it reminds us of when we say body? Of course Dionysus who is the god of entire body madnnesses, pleasures and pains. In Greek language we think that Apollo represents the world of thoughts and Dionysus represents the physical bodily universe. In addition to this we mentioned the desire to become a god via pain of Greeks on the previous chapter. If we will be talking about a truth that is only revealed through the body (death or being wounded), there we will be absolutely speaking of Dionysus and his effects. On that occasion let's begin with the "Bacchae" tragedy where Dionysus has the main role.

### **6.1. Union of Wisdom and Divine Madness – "The Bacchae"**

Among the entire sources belonging to the 5<sup>th</sup> century Athens and belonging to Dionysus, "The Bacchae" of Euripides has a particular importance. In this play the protagonist is Dionysus. The continuous intertwining relationship among the Dionysus of city religion – the god of the official cult –, the Dionysus of the tragic representation – the god that is the master of the theatrical illusion –, is emphasized at the beginning of the play with the duality of Dionysus or with the duplication of staging. He introduces himself in Theologeion as the god, on the stage as Lydian foreigner in a female figure. In both of this he is dressed up in a similar manner and he carries the same mask, he can neither be dissociated nor separate identities are at stake. After the belief human as well, after eating and shivering Dionysus rise from the ashes of the Titans that were burnt by the thunders, for this reason in itself there is duality: The god ore in Titans partially is transferred to the human. It was necessary to pray to be able to dissociate this ore from the Titan bodies' earth component, giving himself/herself to Bakkhos (Dionysus) ve becoming godlike via taking the wine into the bodies that is actually him. Within the verses of the text this subject is uttered:



STROPHE II:

“...Blessed is he who in his good fortune  
Knows the rites of the god;  
Who leads a life of reverence;  
Whose spirit is one with the sacred band;  
Who dances in the mountains  
In the holy rituals...”<sup>79</sup>

While these two are things to fulfill each other, the contradiction comes out from here: This religion (The religion of Dionysus) tries to improve *psyche* that is the truth which is relative to divinity that we all have partially inside. *Psyche* that we mentioned at the beginning by the way is unfamiliar to this world and the one and only longing is to return its celestial origin, leaving the dungeon that it is gyved inside and getting rid of this via being united with the god. To coalesce with the order of the world the Dionysus spirit invasion crisis that is to be considered a temporary device, the only way to exceed the humanity state and escaping from the world was via identifying with god climbing to a such an existence level that is deprived of the ordinary religious applications and more than that has no meaning in city religious system. But the desire to salvation from this body shall not be comprehended as a longing to another world after death, ascetism, reclusion as it is in many modern religions. No hint of any preoccupation with salvation or immortality is to be found in the relevant rituals and pictorial representations or in the Bacchae. Everything is played out in the here and now. The undeniable desire to be free, to escape into an elsewhere is expressed not as a hope for another, happier life after death, but within the present life, through the experience of an extra dimension, an expansion of the human condition, which thereby accedes to a blessed others.<sup>80</sup> Here the purpose is obtaining a change of state through ritual dresses, music and dance as a group within the wild nature environment truly or in an imitated way. The trance of Dionysus connect individuals from the beginning on

---

<sup>79</sup> The Bacchae, Cambridge University Press,  
[https://assets.cambridge.org/97805216/53725/excerpt/9780521653725\\_excerpt.pdf](https://assets.cambridge.org/97805216/53725/excerpt/9780521653725_excerpt.pdf)

<sup>80</sup> Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece, Jean Pierre Vernant – Pierre Vidal-Naquet (Translated by Janet Lloyd), Zone Books (Sixth Printing), NY 2006, pg.387-388

again to each other and makes them feel one to themselves; that's why *principium individuationis*<sup>81</sup> is to be seen as the sustainable infirmity state of the will. How miserable is the will, everything becomes that much degenerated at that scale, how the individual is self confident to himself/herself and developed with freewill (as the Pentheus at the beginning), the organism that it works for weakens that much as Nietzsche pointed out. The satyres, take possession of the ones that do not deny god with a joyful and relaxing trance, the ones to question together with god the categories, the ones to erase the boundaries among the animal and human, human and gods, the ones to forget social and sexual roles and ages, the ones to accept dancing without fear or ridicule, as do the two white-haired old men in *Bacchae*, Teiresias and Cadmus, wise enough to recognize and accept the divine madness.<sup>82</sup>

TEIRESIAS:

"... Maybe some one will say, I have no respect for my grey hair in going to dance with ivy round my head; not so, for the god did not define whether old or young should dance, but from all alike he claims a universal homage, and scorns nice calculations in his worship."<sup>83</sup>

Even Cadmus and Teiresias are like desiring to prove that they gained vitality not of words but of in physical terms as well with the energy that these gods gave them via their following expressions; "...Never shall I weary, night or day, of beating the earth with my thyrsus. What joy to forget our years?" and "...For I too am young again, and will essay the dance."<sup>84</sup>

Against all of these we see Pentheus that is trying to control things with his intelligence. He is the defender of the rational mind. His truth is realized through providing an order with his governmental and military powers. Pentheus is shamed of the states of Teiresias and Cadmus and ignores the god that they are gone for worship. And they say the following sentences as response:

---

<sup>81</sup> *Principium individuationis* describes the manner in which a thing is identified as distinguished from other things.

<sup>82</sup> *Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece*, Jean Pierre Vernant – Pierre Vidal-Naquet (Translated by Janet Lloyd), Zone Books (Sixth Printing), NY 2006, pg.204

<sup>83</sup> <http://classics.mit.edu/Euripides/bacchan.html>

<sup>84</sup> <http://classics.mit.edu/Euripides/bacchan.html>

TEISERIAS:

“Hearken to me, Pentheus; never boast that might alone doth sway the world, nor if thou think so, unsound as thy opinion is, credit thyself with any wisdom.”

CADMUS:

“...for now, thou art soaring aloft, and thy wisdom is no wisdom.”<sup>85</sup>

All these are the illusion that Pentheus believes himself to reach wisdom with the limited knowledge in his hands. But this illusion is not damaged as presumed with the objection of the ones who are trusty with their words, that their words are considered the truth (*see The Concept of Truth in Ancient Greek Philosophy*), it is only damaged with the fact that the god lets him physically transformed and via letting him to experience this. Of course here it can be discussed what is illusion, does it refer to Pentheus before his transformation, or his state in wine drunkenness? In fact we will never know this completely, but contrarily to presumptions Pentheus when getting transformed into a body that he does not want actually to be in will experience the truth and synchronously will experience his disaster.

Pentheus, at the beginning of the text who is self-confident, never suspects the things he said who considers only a single truth that is brave and masculine, gets into his disaster with showing Dionysus him the truth. But how does Dionysus shows him this truth? Via putting the king into a shape of woman who is the symbol of being masculine with all his characteristics! Because in Dionysus being masculine and being feminine comes together. God Dionysus shows himself to the king with the face of a Lydian woman. This face is the symbol of felicity and perfection that a human can reach at last. Being one of the masculine and feminine, satisfying of the human with all the desires in himself/herself is the ending of separation that Plato mentions in the feast. As can be seen here again the duality is the case. If we would like to mention the dualities that are the subject in the text at many levels we shall make such a summary:

---

<sup>85</sup> <http://classics.mit.edu/Euripides/bacchan.html>

Male and Female: Dionysus is a male god with a female appearance. His dress and his hair are those of a woman, and he transforms the virile Pentheus into a woman by making him wear the costume of his devotees. At that moment Pentheus let himself believe in to be a woman and will seem completely like a woman.

Young and Old: The difference between these two states is wiped out in the Dionysus cult. “Did the god declare that just the young or just the old should dance? No, he desires his honor from all mankind. He wants no one excluded from his worship.” Teiresias declares (206-9).<sup>86</sup>

Human, Animal: Dionysus feasts shall not establish only among a human and a human, but also among a human and the nature. The thing that establishes the necessity and arbitrariness among the human, all the boundaries that are specific to classes are vanished: slave is a free man, the noble and someone from a lower class gets together within the same Bacchae chorus.

The far and the near, the beyond and the here and now: Dionysus does not tear one from this world, but by his presence he transfigures it.

Mad-Moderate: The one in a frenzy, the one who is mad (*mainomenos*) also *sophos* and *sophistês*.<sup>87</sup> Teiresias explains this within the text as follows:

“This god too hath prophetic power, for there is no small prophecy inspired by Bacchic frenzy; for whenever the god in his full might enters the human frame, he makes his frantic votaries foretell the future.”<sup>88</sup>

The closeness of madness and the divination power is a widespread belief among the Greeks. In Greek language the same word means both madness and the oracle.

The wild and the civilized: Dionysus makes one flee from the town, deserting one’s house, abandoning children, spouse, family, leaving one’s daily occupations and work. He is worshipped at night, out on the mountainside, in the valleys and woods. His servants become wild, handling snakes and suckling the young of animals as if they were their own. They discover themselves to be in

---

<sup>86</sup> Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece, Jean Pierre Vernant – Pierre Vidal-Naquet (Translated by Janet Lloyd), Zone Books (Sixth Printing), NY 2006, pg.398

<sup>87</sup> Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece, Jean Pierre Vernant – Pierre Vidal-Naquet (Translated by Janet Lloyd), Zone Books (Sixth Printing), NY 2006, pg.399

<sup>88</sup> <http://classics.mit.edu/Euripides/bacchan.html>

communion with all beasts, both the wild and the domesticated, and establish a new and joyous familiarity with nature as a whole. Yet Dionysus is also a “civilizing” god.<sup>89</sup>

Another example to duality indicates itself in form of a relationship as seeing and being seen. Dionysus prerequisites being seen. The first sentence of the play is as follows:

“Lo! I am come.”<sup>90</sup>

Dionysus shows up suddenly as if he is coming from another place, from far away and from the hereafter. Providing the acceptance of the existence of Thebai, he changes his appearance; he transforms his face, his appearance, nature into some other form. He hides himself under a human mask; he introduces himself under the cover of a Lydian young stranger. In form of the most invisible he reveals the most explicit. From the point of view of the individual directly encountering turns into a spellbound relationship form; in this relationship the believer and its god, within the inseparable mutualism of seeing and being seen at the reciprocal intersecting glances become one via annihilating all kinds of distances. Within the trance the human being plays the part of god while god plays the part of human being.<sup>91</sup> Dionysus is such a god that human shall only be in a relationship face to face, without being under the influence of his glances that ecstasizes you it ain't possible to come with him eye to eye. What the Dionysus of Bacchae explains to Pentheus who does not believe in him is this; via making him as if he is one of his disciples, he tells that his rite of passage happens with a definitive meeting among god: “I saw him see me.”<sup>92</sup>

The god rises to the sky or falls onto the ground, or even jumps inbetween the two of them or maybe burns in the flames, even he is a human or he is a voice and flame, he is visible or invisible; despite the entire symmetry in the experiences

---

<sup>89</sup> Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece, Jean Pierre Vernant – Pierre Vidal-Naquet (Translated by Janet Lloyd), Zone Books (Sixth Printing), NY 2006, pg.399

<sup>90</sup> <http://classics.mit.edu/Euripides/bacchan.html>

<sup>91</sup> Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece, Jean Pierre Vernant – Pierre Vidal-Naquet (Translated by Janet Lloyd), Zone Books (Sixth Printing), NY 2006, pg.392

<sup>92</sup> <http://classics.mit.edu/Euripides/bacchan.html>

related to god and Pentheus, he stands on the counter pole of Pentheus: He carries to this world the hereafter experience that is stuck directly into our world and into our lives which is equal to revealing another dimension of the existence. Dionysus is there where the familiar objects' and reassuring forms' world is shaken, wherever the play world of reverie that the illusion, the impossible and the nonsense is considered the truth is built.<sup>93</sup> In fact this play world of reverie presents us an alternative reality. For example, what does the following discourse of the Bacchae Chorus mean:

“...what time in Bacchic ecstasy I toss my neck to heaven's dewy breath, like a fawn, that gambols 'mid the meadow's green delights, when she hath escaped the fearful chase, clear of the watchers, o'er the woven nets; while the huntsman, with loud halloo, harks on his hounds' full cry...”<sup>94</sup>

All the ambushes, tight nets and the chasing hunter metaphors here, as they can express us the rules of cities, its laws, the individuals' responsibilities that shall be ethically and socially obeyed, it can also at the same time tell us the boundaries of the body. In both meanings when all the boundaries are vanished in a state of real enthusiasm, everything seems more clearly and openly and these beauties are enjoyed, as mentioned on the following verses:

“... and she with laboured breath at lightning speed bounds o'er the level water-meadows, glad to be far from man amid the foliage of the bosky grove...”<sup>95</sup>

The deserted places mentioned here could be all desires and obsessions that it shall not be possible to reach via noesis or could be effervescence beauties. And this exactly brings us to the “rebirthing” that is the origin of human vitalness like a plant puts forth. And this is expressed by Dionysus to Pentheus as follows:

---

<sup>93</sup> *Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece*, Jean Pierre Vernant – Pierre Vidal-Naquet (Translated by Janet Lloyd), Zone Books (Sixth Printing), NY 2006, pg.397

<sup>94</sup> <http://classics.mit.edu/Euripides/bacchan.html>

<sup>95</sup> <http://classics.mit.edu/Euripides/bacchan.html>

“The god attends us, and now thine eyes behold the things they should.”<sup>96</sup>

Of course he shall not do this all alone only with the wine, while Pentheus is disguising, at the same time he speaks of the fact that he “stomps”. The Bacchae shout out loud to reach to the full of enthusiasm and stomping at the same time and this brings them to be enraptured. Enrapturing state that one of them had easily enures to the others. And this physical and bodily expression way brings the one to the “other” factor that he/she never before experienced.

The tragedy of Bacchae shows the dangers that are involved when a city retrenches within its own boundaries. If the world of the same refuses to absorb the element of “otherness” that every human being and every group unconsciously carry within themselves, just as Pentheus refuses to recognize that mysterious, feminine, Dionysiac element that attracts and fascinates him despite the horror that he claims to feel for it, then all that is stable, regular and the same tips over and collapses and the other, of hideous aspect, absolute otherness and a return to chaos, come to appear as the sinister truth, the other, authentic, and terrifying face of the same. The conflict of Pentheus-Dionysus is the staging of these two opposite attitudes dramatically: At one side technical skills, superiorities in the art of debate and th rationalism of the sophists with the entire denial of the invisible, on the other side religious experiences that give place to irrational impulses and that leads to the private union with the divine. Pentheus in his blindness just like Dionysus is a *mainomenos*. As the human knowledge (*to sophon*) has madness the divine madness as well has wisdom (*sophia*) in it. There is a radical separation of human between the mania that is inspired of gog after the trance state and the clear transformation that characterizes the normal states. These two are like the opposite poles of the chain that only could be brought together by Dionysus and for only within a single *sophia*.<sup>97</sup>

In Bacchae the poet defeats the philosopher and the intemperance of the emotions silences the criticism of mind.

---

<sup>96</sup> <http://classics.mit.edu/Euripides/bacchan.html>

<sup>97</sup> Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece, Jean Pierre Vernant – Pierre Vidal-Naquet (Translated by Janet Lloyd), Zone Books (Sixth Printing), NY 2006, pg.402-403

## 6.2. Oedipus the King – Regarding Seeing and Being Seen

The story of Oedipus who is the most unfortunate heroes of the Helen tragedies can be still counted among the works of art that we shall see the spine of a tragedy in the best form. Turning points of fortune that is mentioned from the beginning of the thesis at many locations is a story where the replacement of the good and bad, the sources of ambivalence of laws and human act subjects are narrated to the reader in a moststriking way. Considering Oedipus in this way helps us to comprehend him in every aspect: Oedipus is neither an expiatory victim nor is he ostracized. He is character in tragedy, placed by the poet at the crossroads of a decision, confronted with a choice that is ever present and ever renewed.<sup>98</sup>

Oedipus, while running after the truth, installed his role of solver of riddles and king dispensing justice, convinced that the gods inspire him, and proclaiming himself the son of *Tuche*, Good Luck, how could Oedipus possibly understand that he is a riddle to himself to be the opposite to what he thinks he is?<sup>99</sup> The talent of Oedipus in solving the riddles that carries him to the throne will also abandon him from the country as well: He shall pay the price of his clairvoyance with his eyes; He will comprehend that the one to reach the top is also at the lowest point before the eyes of gods through the pains he will suffer.

We see the state of understanding in Bacchae the truth via physical and bodily transformation here in paying the price of the bitter truth of Oedipus of transforming his body. Oedipus is obliged to break the holiest laws of nature as the murderer of his father and the husband of his mother. Yes, mythos tells that the Dionysus way if wisdom is a disaster in contradiction with the nature laws and the person who drives the nature to the cliffs of extinction with its knowledge is individually obliged to experience the dissociation of nature in itself. Wisdom, when considered from this aspect is a crime against nature as Nietzsche pointed out. Teiresias, when explained that the power of truth lives in himself, Oedipus who locates the the talent of the oracle to a lower level than his knowledge gives him the

---

<sup>98</sup> Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece, Jean Pierre Vernant – Pierre Vidal-Naquet (Translated by Janet Lloyd), Zone Books (Sixth Printing), NY 2006, pg.11

<sup>99</sup> Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece, Jean Pierre Vernant – Pierre Vidal-Naquet (Translated by Janet Lloyd), Zone Books (Sixth Printing), NY 2006, pg.45



following answer:

“And who has taught you truth? Not your profession surely!”<sup>100</sup>

Here into the knowledge of Oedipus a certainty has been located. He suspects nothing that he knows and he believes that he knows everything with an absolute certainty. But Teiresias lets him to question his knowledge insistently and repeatedly; because he as well as the Leader of the Chorus said is “The oracle that is inspired of gods and reaches to the mystery of truth among the human”. We mentioned this subject before. (*see. Error! Reference source not found.*)

TEIRESIAS:

“Alas, how terrible is wisdom when

it brings no profit to the man that’s wise!”<sup>101</sup>

“...I see that even your own words miss the mark...”<sup>102</sup>

“...you do not see your own that lives within you...”<sup>103</sup>

“It is this very luck that has destroyed you.”<sup>104</sup> (*After Oedipus says that he is the strongest in solving riddles*)

At the same time the oracle that possesses the truth just because of this reason has no fear from the tyrant, because he possesses the power.

TEIRESIAS:

“I have escaped; the truth is what I cherish and that’s my strength.”<sup>105</sup>

---

<sup>100</sup> Oedipus The King, Sophocles (Translated & with an Introduction by David Grene), The University of Chicago Press, London 2010, 355

<sup>101</sup> Ibid, 315

<sup>102</sup> Ibid, 325

<sup>103</sup> Ibid, 335

<sup>104</sup> Ibid, 440

<sup>105</sup> Ibid, 355

“...not fearing your countenance: there is no way you can hurt me.”<sup>106</sup>

Within the Oedipus mythos, the relationship of “seeing and being seen” is at the forefront that we mentioned on the Bacchae. In tragedy everything is formed on this seeing – being seen relationship, as if no themes have been concretized while the tragedy was being written and all story seems to be fictionalized onto this theme. From this point of view it is a very symbolic work of art that has an unbelievable visual influence on the reader. Also, this seeing and being seen relationship is connected to brightness and darkness duality in *Aletheia-Lethe* relationship that we mentioned on the previous chapter (*see. Error! Reference source not found.*). In brightness and sharp eyed and clairvoyance Oedipus that presumes he is in love with *Aletheia*, makes his eyes blind at the end of the story to forget the pain he suffered and to be forgotten (*lethe*) by his citizens and condemns himself to darkness, but ironically he reaches to the truth (*aletheia*) and clean sight only when he was in this state.

At the beginning Oedipus is an open-minded and clair minded person. He disgusts the blind eyes of the oracle that are closed to the daylight and with his own words “who shall not see anything else but darkness”.

OEDIPUS: (*to the Oracle*)

“Your life is one long night so that you can not hurt me or any other who sees the light.”<sup>107</sup>

The blindness incident does not happen interestingly only in the “eyes”, within the piece the blindness of the spirit and ears are also mentioned.

OEDIPUS: (*to the Oracle*)

“...You are blind in mind and ears as well as in your eyes.”<sup>108</sup>

---

<sup>106</sup> Ibid, 445

<sup>107</sup> Ibid, 375

<sup>108</sup> Ibid, 370

In return the oracle makes him warnings over the concept of seeing:

TEIRESIAS:

“Since you have taunted me with being blind,  
here is my word for you.  
You have your eyes but see not where you are  
in sin, nor where you live, nor whom you live with.”

“...with darkness on your eyes, that now have such straight vision.”<sup>109</sup>

At the same time within the text terms such as escaping from “looking at the face” at every place where the disaster news is felt and expected to come and “can not stand seeing” are used.

JOCASTE:

“...What do you mean? I am terrified when I look at you.”<sup>110</sup>  
“...He might see the city as far off as he might.”<sup>111</sup>

OEDIPUS: *(to Laios's slave who brought the bad news)*

“Old man, look here at me and tell me what I ask you.”<sup>112</sup>

CHORUS:

“O child of Laius,  
would I had never seen you.”<sup>113</sup>

THE MESSENGER: *(After that Jocaste committed a suicide)*

“...The worst of what was done you can not know. You did not see the sight.”<sup>114</sup>

---

<sup>109</sup> Ibid, 410-415

<sup>110</sup> Ibid, 745

<sup>111</sup> Ibid, 760

<sup>112</sup> Ibid, 1120

<sup>113</sup> Ibid, 1213

<sup>114</sup> Ibid, 1235

“...for Oedipus distracted us from seeing.

He burst upon us shouting and we looked to him as he paced frantically around...”<sup>115</sup>

“...As he raved some god showed him the way – none of us there.”<sup>116</sup>

THE MESSENGER: (*While informing the coming of Oedipus to the leader of the chorus*)

“...You, too, will be shown that... Soon you will see a sight to waken pity even in the horror of it.”<sup>117</sup>

LEADER OF THE CHORUS: (*To Oedipus*)

“...This is the terrible sight for men to see.”

“Indeed, I pity you, but I can not look at you, though there’s much I want to ask

And much to learn and much to see. I shudder at the sight of you.”<sup>118</sup>

“I do not know with what eyes I could look upon my father when I die and go under the earth, nor yet my wretched mother?”<sup>119</sup>

Within this entire poem seeing and being seen is like considered equal to the existence. Yes “seeing” maybe is an indefinite and doxologic activity that is realized through the senses, but seeing here is transformed into seeing the light, seeing the truth, seeing beyond what is seen or reversely a word that is used to escape from a disaster that smashes the boundaries of the body that is so bitter not to be seen. At the same time nobody to see or seeing no one is like equal to forgetting or being forgotten:

OEDIPUS:

“...I beg of you in God’s name hide me

---

<sup>115</sup> Ibid, 1250

<sup>116</sup> Ibid, 1255

<sup>117</sup> Ibid, 1290

<sup>118</sup> Ibid, 1300

<sup>119</sup> Ibid, 1370

somewhere outside your country, yes, or kill me,  
or throw me into the sea, to be forever  
out of your sight.”<sup>120</sup>

*(see. The relationship between the darkness and forgetting of Lethe)*

The concept of darkness here is also used the unawareness of Oedipus at the beginning. Unawareness gives reference to unknown and mysterious. The word mysticism is connected to *mystês*, *myêsis*, *mystikos* and *mystêrion* terms that refers to Eleusis. The primary meaning of *Myô* that is the origin of the word means closing up or closing down. Within the context of Eleusis it may be related to the closing of the eyes. In this case *mystai* may have a meaning of having the eyes still shut, the one that did not see yet, someone who did not reach *epopteia*.<sup>121</sup>

Oedipus when he considers himself as wise is in darkness. But when darkness is vanished and everything is illuminated, when the light comes onto the Oedipus, Oedipus will exactly see the daylight for one last time. When Oedipus is illuminated, is brought to daylight, when he is brought forward as a view of dreadfulness before the eyes of everyone, yet for him to see or being seen is no more possible. The citizens of Thebai turn their glances to somewhere else; they do not possess the power to watch this dreadful disasterous view, they are not ready neither this grief to be told nor to be seen. If Oedipus made his eyes blind the reason for this is, as he explained himself, he shall never be staring at any human neither live nor death.

OEDIPUS:

“...Would the sight of children, bred as mine are, gladden me?

No, not these eyes, never. And my city,

its towers and sacred places of Gods...”<sup>122</sup>

---

<sup>120</sup> Ibid, 1410

<sup>121</sup> Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece, Jean Pierre Vernant – Pierre Vidal-Naquet (Translated by Janet Lloyd), Zone Books (Sixth Printing), NY 2006, pg.386

<sup>122</sup> Ibid, 1375

“Why should I see whose vision showed me nothing sweet to see?”<sup>123</sup>

If he could, he would shut his ears as well to be buried into a loneliness that dissociates himself from the society of human.

“...If there were a means to choke the fountain  
of hearing I would not have stayed my hand  
from locking up my miserable carcase,  
seeing and hearing nothing...”<sup>124</sup>

Oedipus reaches to a source of light via making his eyes blind. The light that the gods put onto Oedipus is too dazzling for any mortal eye to withstand. This light throws him out of this world that is made for the brightness of sun, human gaze and social contact. He sends him with two seeing ability to another light, back to the deserted world of night where Teiresias lives that paid the price of entering into the divine light that is dreadful and blinding.<sup>125</sup>

OEDIPUS:

“O, O, O, they will all come,  
all come out clearly! Light of the sun, let me  
look upon you no more after today!”<sup>126</sup>

As can be seen from all these examples in the text through the eyes a relationship is established. But this relationship that has been established with the body is not only limited to the eyes. At the same time feet and walking theme is also at the forefront. While Oedipus was a baby he was thrown out to the mountain

---

<sup>123</sup> Ibid, 1335

<sup>124</sup> Ibid, 1385-1390

<sup>125</sup> Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece, Jean Pierre Vernant – Pierre Vidal-Naquet (Translated by Janet Lloyd), Zone Books (Sixth Printing), NY 2006, pg.120

<sup>126</sup> Ibid, 1180

with his feet bond by his own family and he even gets his name from here.

THE MESSENGER:

“In that your ankles should be witnesses.”

OEDIPUS:

“Why do you speak of that old pain?”

THE MESSENGER:

“I loosed you;

the tendons of your feet were pierced and fettered.”<sup>127</sup>

Of course Oedipus was a baby at that time, he was unable to walk; but via making a reference to a primary pain, we shall understand from his discourses that he still carries the effects on him. After the dialogue above he tells to the messenger “The torture had already started when I was in the bundle”. Here the significance of feet is that it is directly connected to walking. This walking relationship within the text is revealed obviously in the riddle of the Sphinx, He asks to Oedipus the following question:

“There is on earth a being with two, four and three feet and with a single voice that, alone of all those that move on the earth, in the air and in the sea changes its nature. But when it walks supported by the most feet, that is when its limbs are the least rigorous.”<sup>128</sup>

The riddle of the sphinx defines the human over motion and style of walking. Only human changes the nature of motion via realizing the three different types of walking: Four feet, two feet and three feet. The human is a being both remains always the same and also metamorphoses. But “two feet” Oedipus via solving this riddle identifies with both his “three feet” old father who walks by the

---

<sup>127</sup> Ibid, 1030

<sup>128</sup> Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece, Jean Pierre Vernant – Pierre Vidal-Naquet (Translated by Janet Lloyd), Zone Books (Sixth Printing), NY 2006, pg.468

help of a walking stick and with his “four feet” crawling sons (at the same time with his brothers).<sup>129</sup> Besides at the beginning of the text before Teiresias announces his oracle tells Oedipus finally the following:

“...blindness for sight  
and beggary for riches his exchange,  
he shall go journeying to a foreign country  
tapping his way before with a stick.”<sup>130</sup>

The riddle of Oedipus becomes his fate.

### 6.3. Antigone on the Axial Interface of Life and Death

Antigone who takes over the unfortunate heritage of Oedipus is among the most important female characters in history with his insurgent character. She, who objects the masculine society laws to the death, makes this action not for objection to the order; but she makes it to fulfill another law that is to realize the laws of god in a convenient way of its testimony. The action of Antigone is only applying the law against another law. The virgin Antigone realizes the funeral rite of his damned brother who attacked his country Polyneikes despite the absolute command of Creon. Antigone, while scattering earth onto the dead body of Polyneikes should not be in a submitting situation to love in an incest way for the one that is forbidden to be buried among her brothers: Regardless of how sort of life they lived, she cries out loud the equality of the religious duty to be completed for all dead brothers. For her loyalty for family *philia*<sup>131</sup> depends on loyalty to the the dead cult that is the only thing to sustain the religious existence of the *genos*.<sup>132</sup> When she buries her

---

<sup>129</sup> Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece, Jean Pierre Vernant – Pierre Vidal-Naquet (Translated by Janet Lloyd), Zone Books (Sixth Printing), NY 2006, pg.215

<sup>130</sup> Ibid, 455

<sup>131</sup> *philia*: brother love, friendship or affection

<sup>132</sup> *genos*: ancestry



brother, it is not simply that she acts from kinship, as if kinship furnishes a principle for action, but that her action is the action of kinship, the performative repetition that reinstates kinship as a public scandal.<sup>133</sup> And Antigone shall only exist with this action of hers and bring into existence her brother as well, “via acting out”.

Within the text Antigone represents the kinship and the dissolution and Creon represents an emergent ethical order and state authority that is based on the universality principles.<sup>134</sup> From this aspect again as it is in all the pieces in Antigone as well doubleness is dominant. For example; for Antigone *nomos*, represents the reverse of *nomos* under the circumstances where Creon stands. According to the young girl the meaning of the word is a religious rule; For Creon it is the decree that is ordered by the head of state.<sup>135</sup> And just because of this reason both of them from their sides execute what is expected by the law and two of them come to grief.

The law concept of Antigone speaks to us merely like a body begins to talk; While coming and going between the god’s laws and king’s laws; it makes you continuously question which way is to be the right one death-life and many other dualities. It shall not confront the pure religion that the young girl represented or the complete irreligiousness that Creon represented or the religious way of thinking and political way of thinking, but it brings together two religiousness types against each other: At one side a family religion that is focused on the death cult and the hearth and home that is limited by the environment of *philoï* that are close relatives which is completely special; on the other side a public religion that is in tendency of mixing up with the state’s almighty values and the cities’ protective gods.<sup>136</sup> According to that the laws of god are superior than the laws that are made on the hands of human.

ANTIGONE: *(To Creon)*

“It was not Zeus who published this decree,

---

<sup>133</sup> Antigone’s Claim, *Kinship Between Life and Death*, Judith Butler, Columbia University Press, NY 2000, pg.58

<sup>134</sup> Antigone’s Claim, *Kinship Between Life and Death*, Judith Butler, Columbia University Press, NY 2000, pg.3

<sup>135</sup> Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece, Jean Pierre Vernant – Pierre Vidal-Naquet (Translated by Janet Lloyd), Zone Books (Sixth Printing), NY 2006, pg.113

<sup>136</sup> Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece, Jean Pierre Vernant – Pierre Vidal-Naquet (Translated by Janet Lloyd), Zone Books (Sixth Printing), NY 2006, pg.41

Nor have the Powers who rule among the dead  
Imposed such laws as this upon mankind;  
Nor could I think that a decree of yours –  
A man – could override the laws of Heaven  
Unwritten and unchanging. Not of today  
Or yesterday is their authority;  
They are eternal; no man saw their birth.”<sup>137</sup>

Because of this reason Antigone does not fear from being punished or death, on the contrary she realizes the duty that she believes it is correct; that ‘s why as a result of her actions the price she will pay shall notwithholds her from what she will do. The reason that this attitude condemns the young girl to death only reinforces her determination. Torture brings for Antigone the indestructability. Object is no more than than the power to support a form of suffering and thus becomes a form of persistence that survives efforts at its destruction.<sup>138</sup>

Antigone, of course, acknowledges her deed, but the verbal form of her acknowledgment only exacerbates the crime. She not only did it, but she had the nerve to say she did it. Thus Antigone cannot exemplify the ethical consciousness who suffers guilt; she is beyond guilt- she embraces her crime as she embraces her death, her tomb, her bridal chamber.<sup>139</sup>

THE MESSENGER: (*describes Antigone burying the dead*)

“...We rushed upo her swiftly, seized our prey,  
And charged her both with this offence and that.  
She faced us calmly; she did not disown  
The double crime.”<sup>140</sup>

---

<sup>137</sup> Antigone, Oedipus the King and Electra, Sophocles (Translated by H.D.F. Kitto), Oxford University Press, NY 1998, 450

<sup>138</sup> Antigone’s Claim, *Kinship Between Life and Death*, Judith Butler, Columbia University Press, NY 2000, pg.48

<sup>139</sup> Antigone’s Claim, *Kinship Between Life and Death*, Judith Butler, Columbia University Press, NY 2000, pg.34

<sup>140</sup> Ibid, 430

ANTIGONE: (*to Creon*)

“No, I do not deny it. I admit it.”

“I knew that I should have to die...”

“...For me to meet this doom is little grief...”<sup>141</sup>

Antigone is happy for her action, she has a clean conscience of what she did, because she did what she believed to be true on the gods' way. As a result of her determination she will be convicted at the end: She was convicted not only because of the reason that she has a unshakable, uncompromising, crude part in her character, more than that since she did not know anything especially about love and life, anything that overflows the boundaries of this universe since they are closed to *philia* and death. Two gods that the chorus called via invoking to help, Dionysus and Eros shall not only condemn Creon. These (Dionysus and Eros) are on the sides of Antigone that are working at night, mysteriously, close to the women, as gods that are unfamiliar with politics, but suddenly they turn their back on her as well; because they are gods that represent regenesis and power of their lives even in their relationship with death. We have already mentioned how Dionysus represented life in details on the previous chapter. From the point of Eros, Antigone did not want to disperse to the other, to know Eros and the call from dissociation from the family and *philia* to come to transfer life via uniting with a stranger when her turn is to come.<sup>142</sup> The fact that Antigone is that much a “living dead” makes her deprived of the felicity of the gods of life.

ANTIGONE:

“If I die before my time, why then, I count gain;

To one who lives as I do, ringes about

With countless miseries, why, death is welcome.”<sup>143</sup>

“You chose life, and I chose death.” (*to Ismene*)

“Some thought you wise; the dead commended me.”

---

<sup>141</sup> Ibid, 440-460

<sup>142</sup> Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece, Jean Pierre Vernant – Pierre Vidal-Naquet (Translated by Janet Lloyd), Zone Books (Sixth Printing), NY 2006, pg.102

<sup>143</sup> Ibid, 460

“You live, but I have given  
My life already, in service of the dead.”<sup>144</sup>

*The dike* of the dead is opposed to celestial *dike*; Antigone comes into violent conflict with the throne of the latter because she has wished to recognize only the former.<sup>145</sup> Struggling against being drowned within this dual meaning pool leaves her alone with the necessity of making a choice. This is going to be such a choice that the duality represents a clear singularity that shall not give rise to suspicion in such a world where all around the duality is dominant and to be understood by everyone in a same way: Yes, this is absolute death. Through this action all concepts and meaning collapse and the only truth remains as death.

The thing that directs Antigone’s desire to death is the boundaries of kinship that is understood as the unsuffeability of desire. This is the own limit of culture; a boundary when exceeding beyond leads to inevitable death. Getting closer to life, living the life or thinking over the life could also be possible from the place where her life is already lost, where she is already on the other side.<sup>146</sup> She is already the servant of death. She died when she was alive and for this reason in a way she seem like she crossed over the boundary, to the death that protects the necessity of being understood. Lacan sees the obstinacy of Antigone as the manifestation of the instinct of death; Against Ismene, he participates to the chorus that describes Antigone as nonhuman, also Antigone is not the only human who makes this. And Kreon wants to look out for the best as the unlimited law, but during the application process surpasses the law and transforms the non written laws that are directed his action to self destruction at the same time into the source of his authority. It is thought that Teiresias exactly speaks from this point that does not belong to life completely: His voice belongs both to him and not to him as well; his words are from gods, from the kid that describes the signs and the words that are procured from the others. But he is still the one who speaks. His speaking is not only something coming out of the human life but also notifies and produces another

---

<sup>144</sup> Ibid, 550

<sup>145</sup> Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece, Jean Pierre Vernant – Pierre Vidal-Naquet (Translated by Janet Lloyd), Zone Books (Sixth Printing), NY 2006, pg.40

<sup>146</sup> Antigone’s Claim, *Kinship Between Life and Death*, Judith Butler, Columbia University Press, NY 2000, pg.54

death, the second death that Lacan identifies with the completion of all natural and historical transformations. Coinciding of life and death in the image is at the same time “the position of being” and what is referred with “boundary”. This is a limit that is not precisely thinkable within life but that acts in life as the boundary over which the living cannot cross, a limit that constitutes and negates life simultaneously.<sup>147</sup> For Lacan, to seek recourse to the gods is precisely to seek recourse beyond human life, to seek recourse to death and to instate that death within life; this recourse to what is beyond or before the symbolic leads to a self-destruction that literalizes the importation of death into life. It is as if the very invocation of that elsewhere precipitates desire in the direction of death, a second death, one that signifies the foreclosure of any further transformation. The limit in question is one on which Antigone establishes herself, a place where she feels herself to be unassailable, a place where it is impossible for a mortal being to go beyond the laws.<sup>148</sup>

Antigone’s death is always double throughout the play: she claims that she has not lived, that she has not loved, and that she has not borne children, and so that she has been under the curse that Oedipus laid upon his children, “serving death” for the length of her life. Thus death signifies the unlived life, and so as she approaches the living tomb that Creon has arranged for her, she meets a fate that has been hers all along. Thus death is figured as a kind of marriage to those in her family who are already dead, affirming the deathlike quality of those loves for which there is no viable and livable place in culture.<sup>149</sup>

ANTIGONE:

“Behold me, O lords of my native city!

Now do I make my last journey;

Now do I see the last

Sun that ever I shall behold.

---

<sup>147</sup> Antigone’s Claim, *Kinship Between Life and Death*, Judith Butler, Columbia University Press, NY 2000, pg.49

<sup>148</sup> Antigone’s Claim, *Kinship Between Life and Death*, Judith Butler, Columbia University Press, NY 2000, pg.51

<sup>149</sup> Antigone’s Claim, *Kinship Between Life and Death*, Judith Butler, Columbia University Press, NY 2000, pg.23-24

Never another! Death, that lulls  
All to sleep, takes me while I live  
Down to the grim shore of Acheron.  
No wedding day can be  
Mine, no hymn will be raised to honour  
Marriage of mine; for I  
Go to espouse the bridegroom, Death.”<sup>150</sup>

Antigone could be read like union with death or the desire to divinity. Within the text at many places, a divine respect is dedicated to Antigone who represents the laws of god because of her action. For example; Haemon, when objecting his father Creon, defends Antigone as the implementer of laws of gods and says the following:

CREON:  
“Your every word is in defence of her.”

HAEMON:  
“And me, and you – and of the Gods below.”<sup>151</sup>

Antigone, via implementing the laws of gods becomes the protector of law and as a consequence a just person. This state of being one with the gods uttered by Antigone as follows.

ANTIGONE: (*Niobe, when talking about the legend of Queen of Thebes*)  
“... Like to hers<sup>152</sup>, the  
Cruel death that now awaits me.”

CHORUS:  
“But she was a goddess, and born of the

---

<sup>150</sup> Ibid, 810

<sup>151</sup> Ibid, 740

<sup>152</sup> *Niobe, Queen in Thebes*

Gods;  
We are but mortals, of mortals born.  
For a mortal to share in the doom of a god,  
That brings her renown while yet she lives,  
And a glory that long will outlive her.”<sup>153</sup>

The place where life and death is united is represented within the text as underground and above ground within the context of physical space. If the way that the laws are implemented is to be expressed over a visibility this shall be absolutely done in a public space. The order of Creon that Polyneikes is to be left in “open space” without being buried, gives a reference to *aletheia* that represents brightness and remembering. The truth of the law can only be seen by everyone only by this mean. However, antithetically to punish the Antigone who buried her brother the way that Creon will choose is to condemn her to darkness in the underworld and letting her to be forgotten. And this gives reference to *lethe* that is connected to darkness and forgetting.

TEIRESIAS:  
“...Because you have thrust down within the earth  
One who should walk upon it, and have lodged  
A living soul dishonourably in a tomb;  
And impiously have kept upon the earth  
Unburied and unblest one one who belongs  
Neither to you nor to the upper gods  
But to the gods below, who are despoiled by you.”<sup>154</sup>

It seems like the extent of the punishment is sent to a place where it does not belong to in physical space: The death among the living ones, the living ones into the death ones. Here the thing that breaks the spell is that Antigone to live anyway among the death and that’s why she accepts her punishment without any

---

<sup>153</sup> Ibid, 830

<sup>154</sup> Ibid, 1070

hesitation. There is nothing that Creon could do against this behavior, after all the price that Antigone will pay is not his concern; but he is also caught on the non-breaking connection of family relationship as same as Antigone and the closest people to him, his son and wife commits a suicide and punishes Creon. Thus, the bond of kinship becomes the main issue that determined the fate of both of them.



## CONCLUSION

During the entire thesis at all levels handled duality concept brought us to this point: Mythological – democratic tradition, Apollo-Dionysus, Aletheia-Lethe, death-life, limit-limitlessness, body-psyche, human-god, chorus-hero, being-nothingness, and temperance-transcendency. Jean Pierre Vernant had already told that even the Milesian philosophers' physics thought had developed among series of opposite terms (gods-human, strong-weak, pure-complex, sure-doubtful) within the frame of big oppositenesses that are formed with the religious thoughts of Greeks.<sup>155</sup>

From all these indefinite descriptions that are opposite but fulfill each other the conclusion we shall reach shall be as follows: How shall a perception of truth be formed in an environment that we always encounter in all fields with duality, where there is no single and unique true or false judgements, where the opposites cover and fulfill each other without excluding one another? How shall we explain the fact that all forms' exceeding, otherness with the mixing of play, truth and dream with appearances, all categories that seem to be separated from each other with exact lines, obvious oppositenesses that gain its internal consistency to our world vision to call each other and merging and intertwining instead of staying separate and exclusionist in this manner?<sup>156</sup> I am aware that to realize this from rational point of view is quite difficult, but let's imagine a structure that the meaning will be empty when one of these oppositenesses is vanished for the ones who never gone out of the course of duality both on physical and bodily level, in language level, in their traditions and in their gods. This structure is the transformation as in the Ficino's love definition. Within this thesis before we mentioned that the salvation from the boundaries is only possible through love at different parts. Just as Dionysus did with the effect of narcotic drink and spring passion love as well

---

<sup>155</sup> Jean Pierre Vernant – Jacques Gernet “L'Évolution des idées en Chine et en Grèce, du VIe au IIe siècle avant notre ère”, Article, 1964 sf 323 - “*La pensée physique des Milésiens se meut donc dans le cadre des grandes oppositions établies par la pensée religieuse des Grecs entre toute une série de termes antinomiques : les dieux les hommes ; l'invisible-le visible ; les éternels-les mortels ; le permanent-le changeant ; le puissant-l'impuissant ; le pur-le mélange ; l'assuré-l'incertain.*”

<sup>156</sup> Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece, Jean Pierre Vernant – Pierre Vidal-Naquet (Translated by Janet Lloyd), Zone Books (Sixth Printing), NY 2006, pg.398

takes the human out of his/her nature alienates and brings with the stranger one with. The thing that constitutes its negation is also this transformation and wounding. Nowadays with the gradually being positive and domestication of love this transformation is totally lost. The person remains same with himself/herself and searches in the other only his/her accreditation. Misery and obsession retreat against stimulations that shall not lead to nice feelings and a conclusion. The desire of the other kuckles under the comfort of the same. Comforting and self-indulgency immanence of the same is seeked. Today's love lacks all sorts of transcendency and creach. As Byung Chul Han pointed out in his book namely "The Agony of Eros", this is sort of a slave life. However, what the vision of Dionysus does is to shiver and pulverize the "positivist" vision from inside that only counts itself valid and claims every being has a proper shape in a constant world that provides own and stable identity that surrounds it forever the proper place and to everything. To be able to see Dionysus, it is necessary to enter a different world where it is the "other", not the "same" that reigns.<sup>157</sup> Purely positive thing is lifeless. Negativeness is necessary for aliveness. As Byung Chul Han pointed out, something as long as accommodates a contradiction inside is alive as long as it involves contradiction the force to resist that. Negativity state is not isolated from being.

This state of involving the negativity leads us to the actual truth. Because at the end of this process the truth to be reached not only shows us fine and good things, but also shows us unsolvable deadlocks, irrevocable losses, huge letdowns, intolerable physical and spiritual pains. Seeing this scene so pure and naked, as a result of being human reaches to our deepest primitive fears and symbolically brings us face to face with death. This state of coming face to face with death feeds the life impulse in a parallel way (because here the comprising of the opposites is at stake) and raises up irrepresable feeling of curiosity that pushes us to enjoy from life more, to have top experiences and to be one with nature. In fact, the desire of Antigone and Oedipus to step forward towards the grave throught spurning their own bodies was originating exactly from this impulse; a meaningless life is nothing else but slavery; the only way to avoid slavery is to avoid the body, or in better

---

<sup>157</sup> Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece, Jean Pierre Vernant – Pierre Vidal-Naquet (Translated by Janet Lloyd), Zone Books (Sixth Printing), NY 2006, pg.394

words facing up to death and disappearing. On such a situation the boundaries are lost, the human reach to a divine power. Maybe he/she was desperate against the oppression of gods until this time but now since injuring itself with own power and pushed to death, the origin of the act and as the one to act as one and single person senses itself: god-human. This union makes it closer to the divine as much as it saves from pitiableness and inability of being human and outclasses it proportionally against all sorts of laws, king and oracle. Maybe the only remedy of human is this who shall not handle the power of god or king under fair conditions: Making duality as one without losing the singularities.

The tragedy establishes its truth in two ways: On language basis and on meaning level. Understanding how the truth is established on language basis would only be possible via comprehending the power of *logos*. *Logos* is an enormous power and it takes its power from discourse and sharing. This discourse that is shared gives power to its reader. Such that we all sense the common grounds of human near-surface time to time, these can be the feelings, decisions and thoughts that we are sure they are correct. But doubt clothes them as a thick blanket and makes them invisible. However as long as we share, those uneasy thoughts, primitive feelings come to light and awakens us from our deep sleep. That's why *aletheia* is awakening and the tragedies achieve this obviously through *logos*. For this reason, tragedy texts are like being written to someone who has heart it for the first time. We all know the basic subjects but these are not spoken as they anyhow exist in collective consciousness. Because of this reason being surprised that much is weird, to the exhibitiv language that that we are not get accustomed to. Yet he/she knew. Greek tragedy author as long as it is not written this way, the reader will make a judgement inevitably, will add his/her interpretation and this time will be the ruler of the work of art. For this reason, with its entire transparency and objectivity he/she wanted to write human and the human states that pass through a life scale. From this point of view, we understand why big poet is the master of the truth via leaving no room for doubt. In tragedy "word" becomes a phenomenon

via holding tightly the sensual body. The tragic Greek word is fatally factic, because it actually seizes the body that murders.<sup>158</sup>

On the meaning level the question how, this truth is to be established; as being a tragedy reader, can be answered when we locate these hazy world's codes into the text. Tragedy shall not promise us single and stable truth in place of it it creates a world simulation of it where various possibilities do exist. Would that be possible to make a judgement at a place where infinite choices and styles of life do exist? Everything that we can find odd with coped cultural codes that are treated into the cracks of modern society we lived in was possible in their texts and in their lives. The most powerful muscle of Greeks was social activities such as pageantry that enable most various and opposite attitudes to be imitated of young men with masks that the origins are based on rites of passage in Sparta. The old Greek children would learn their social identities in this way. During the entire days that the upside-down character of carnival days is dominant it was possible to experience different marginal states such as women in men dress, men dressed like animals or women, slaves to take place of their masters. Within these days abnegation of filthiness, animallikeness, ridiculousness, dreadfulness and all sorts of settled values stream onto the world of culture like a flood; thus all sides of marginality and strangeness is discovered, all possibilities of "otherness" is assumed, to be able to embrace the necessary rules that are to be obeyed from this moment on rule breaches would have been learned.<sup>159</sup> In Greek tragedy, the norm is presented only to be transgressed or because it has already been transgressed. It is in this respect that Greek tragedy derives from Dionysus, the god and confusion and transgression.<sup>160</sup>

When looking from a different point of view in an environment where all kinship relationships intertwine into each other what sort of a judgement would be the concern? In tragedies the relationship of kinship always shows ambivalence:

---

<sup>158</sup> Antigone's Claim, *Kinship Between Life and Death*, Judith Butler, Columbia University Press, NY 2000, pg.64 (Original source: *Anmerkungen zur Antigone*, Friedrich Hölderlin, *Werkw in einem Band*, Mühlin: Hanser Verlag, 1990, pg.64)

<sup>159</sup> Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece, Jean Pierre Vernant – Pierre Vidal-Naquet (Translated by Janet Lloyd), Zone Books (Sixth Printing), NY 2006, pg.200

<sup>160</sup> Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece, Jean Pierre Vernant – Pierre Vidal-Naquet (Translated by Janet Lloyd), Zone Books (Sixth Printing), NY 2006, pg.264

The wife of Oedipus' is her mother, Antigone's father is her brother, because Iokasta is the mother of both of them and their brothers are their nephews, brother is the son of father's Oedipus's. The author of Tragedy, via writing these different experiences and letting them lived expands the emotional scale of the reader and looking at all these incidents from a continuously moving ground like playing hopscotch becomes a habit for the reader after a while. When our eyes gain this angle of three hundred and sixty degrees, the text now gets out of its two-dimensional state for us and it starts to envelop a volume in space. With this state we shall examine the written story from all its edges and from all dimensions and at that moment we start to comprehend the work of art with such a reality as if we are looking at us on the mirror. Even just because of this reason we need to thank the Attican tragedy, since it taught us how the truth can be seen.

Tragedy while establishing with all these ways its own truth saves us from the captivity of the single truth. Because at every place where a single truth is spoken our eyes shall seek domination. Within infinite numbers of possibilities and possiblenesses if we will be talking about a single correctneses truth, then we shall be ready to deactivate for the possibility for other truths. Where do we know that there is only one way out of Plato's cave? What if there is tougher track that reaches to a brighter sun and since there comes only a bit light and we look at just one direction and we bypass the main source? Also, shall we blame the ones who shall not see the light and their necks are chained from the birth because of their fate? At that time with the same logic, then we shall blame Oedipus as well since he got into action without knowing his fate and just because of this reason since he realized his fate. This can be only a mechanism that the power uses. However, the duality is positioned against this; it shows us the possibilities, it shall not dictate us any words, it only shows us and leaves the choice to us. Thus, to whichever side we swim, either the Island of the Blessed or to Tartarus<sup>161</sup> (we shall not stay in the middle of water), the only place that is reached is the truth, but this is not a truth that is imposed by another power, directly the own truth of person that is revealed as a result of the human experience. This pronged thought is a way to think with

---

<sup>161</sup> Plato Complete Works, John M. Cooper, Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., Indianapolis / Cambridge, 1997, Gorgias, 524 a

alternatives. Empedocles, puts before his student Pausanias together with two life styles one choice. One of the ways leads him to comprehend with rigid *prapides* the disciplined training of source of inspiration and the other way is the way of *prapides*, the way of *Melete* that helps on dominating over human through this training. And the other way is the way of *doxa* where the human is left alone to discover many worthless things that are countless. It is natural for man to live in the world of *Peitho*, the world of *doxa*, in which everything is shifting and perpetually mobile.<sup>162</sup> This *doxa* is a world of apprehension that Plato will be talking about later but the first one *doxa*, within the context we talk about is ain't a philosophical opinion: As the 5<sup>th</sup> century philosophical thought (against episteme or cettitude) will give him the indefinite knowledge has no derogatory maning. Secondly the oppositeness between Aletheia and *doxa* is connected to the problem within poetic thought. Here the mentioned Aletheia is not the philosophers but the poet's Aletheia.<sup>163</sup> *Doxa* is the appropriate form of knowledge for a world of change and movement, a world of ambiguity and contingency. It is "imprecise knowledge, but imprecise knowledge of whatever is imprecise."<sup>164</sup> In a fundamentally ambiguous world, these mental techniques allowed the domination of men through the power of ambiguity itself.<sup>165</sup> In an environment where nothing has settled and where we already fly away from reality as our senses misguided and as long as we live where it is not possible to reach to being excluding our senses, why fictions, images and idols shall not be in itself "the real things"?<sup>166</sup>

In the eye of Greeks, the core of this world is exactly this indefiniteness that is told. In such a world the human that are living are also indefinite. That's why the god-hero feels familiar and gives power to us; watching him lets the human experience the victories, the disappointments, pains, fears, contradictions and big

---

<sup>162</sup> The Masters of Truth in Archaic Greece, Marcel Detienne (Translated by Jone Lloyd, foreword by Pierre Vidal-Naquet), Zone Books, NY 1996, pg.127

<sup>163</sup> The Masters of Truth in Archaic Greece, Marcel Detienne (Translated by Jone Lloyd, foreword by Pierre Vidal-Naquet), Zone Books, NY 1996, pg.115

<sup>164</sup> The Masters of Truth in Archaic Greece, Marcel Detienne (Translated by Jone Lloyd, foreword by Pierre Vidal-Naquet), Zone Books, NY 1996, pg.114

<sup>165</sup> The Masters of Truth in Archaic Greece, Marcel Detienne (Translated by Jone Lloyd, foreword by Pierre Vidal-Naquet), Zone Books, NY 1996, pg.118

<sup>166</sup> Plato Complete Works, John M. Cooper, Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., Indianapolis / Cambridge, 1997, Sophist 235 a "Is it obvious by now that he's a kind of cheat who imitates real things?"

pleasures he/she had. And at the stage of final conclusion we sense the power once again; although the hero is persecuted by fate and the gods, his/her death gives both sadness and pride; death and life as a shared, common and inevitable human state gains its importance in itself and increases in value. Human that gets rid of reaching the truth out of chains, actually is freed of domestication and slavery. The real definition of truth is maybe this.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece, Jean Pierre Vernant – Pierre Vidal-Naquet  
(Translated by Janet Lloyd), Zone Books (Sixth Printing), NY 2006

The Birth of Tragedy *and Other Writings*, Friedrich Nietzsche, Cambridge Texts in  
the History of Philosophy, edited by Raymond Geuss and Ronald Speirs  
(Translated by Ronald Speirs), Cambridge University Press, UK 2007

The Masters of Truth in Archaic Greece, Marcel Detienne (Translated by Jane  
Lloyd, foreword by Pierre Vidal-Naquet), Zone Books, NY 1996

Antigone's Claim, *Kinship Between Life and Death*, Judith Butler, Columbia  
University Press, NY 2000

Plato Complete Works, John M. Cooper, Hackett Publishing Company, Inc.,  
Indianapolis / Cambridge, 1997

Poetics, Aristotle, (Translated, with Introduction and Notes by Joe Sachs), St. John's  
Collage, Annapolis, Focus Publishing, Newburyport, MA, 2006

Becoming Female "The Male Body in Greek Tragedy", Katrina Cawthorn, Gerald  
Duckworth & Co., London, 2008

The Courage to Create and Love Concept in Plato's Thought, Eylem Abalıoğlu,  
Plato and Ignorance Research Paper, Lecturer Kaan Atalay, Philosophy and  
Social Thought, Istanbul Bilgi University, 2016

Greek Tragedy in Action, Oliver Taplin, Routledge, New York 1978

Ridgeway, W., The Origin of Tragedy with Special Reference to The Greek  
Tragedians, Cambridge University Press, London 1910



OEDIPUS THE KING, SOPHOCLES, (Translated & with an Introduction by David Grene), The University of Chicago Press, London 2010

ANTIGONE, OEDIPUS THE KING and ELECTRA, SOPHOCLES (Translated by H.D.F. Kitto), Oxford University Press, NY 1998

The Bacchae, Cambridge University Press

[https://assets.cambridge.org/97805216/53725/excerpt/9780521653725\\_excerpt.pdf](https://assets.cambridge.org/97805216/53725/excerpt/9780521653725_excerpt.pdf)

[https://assets.cambridge.org/97805216/53725/excerpt/9780521653725\\_excerpt.pdf](https://assets.cambridge.org/97805216/53725/excerpt/9780521653725_excerpt.pdf)

<http://classics.mit.edu/Euripides/bacchan.html>