

ΤΡΙΤΟ ΣΥΝΕΔΡΙΟ
ΑΡΧΑΙΟΥ ΔΡΑΜΑΤΟΣ

ΠΟΛΙΤΙΚΕΣ ΒΙΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΟΛΙΤΙΚΕΣ ΒΙΟΥ

ΣΤΟ ΑΡΧΑΙΟ ΘΕΑΤΡΟ:
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ΣΤΟΝ ΕΙΚΟΣΤΟ ΠΡΩΤΟ

ΑΦΙΕΡΩΜΕΝΟ ΣΤΗ ΧΑΡΑ ΜΠΑΚΟΝΙΚΟΛΑ

ΕΠΙΜΕΛΕΙΑ:
ΑΝΔΡΕΑΣ Γ. ΜΑΡΚΑΝΤΩΝΑΤΟΣ & ΚΑΙΤΗ ΔΙΑΜΑΝΤΑΚΟΥ



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Από τον κλασικό πέμπτο αιώνα στον εικοστό πρώτο

Επιμέλεια: Ανδρέας Γ. Μαρκαντωνάτος, Καίτη Διαμαντάκου

Γραφιστική επιμέλεια-σχεδιασμός: Λίλα Μαραζάκη

ISBN 978-960-7622-35-8

Πρώτη έκδοση: 2024

Εκτύπωση & Βιβλιοδεσία: Grafima A.E.

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Αφιερωμένο στη Χαρά Μπακονικόλα

1-3 Νοεμβρίου 2023, Αθήνα

Κεντρικό Κτήριο Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών
&
Αμφιθέατρο Βιβλιοθήκης Φιλοσοφικής Σχολής
Εθνικού και Καποδιστριακού Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών

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ΠΕΡΙΕΧΟΜΕΝΑ

Χαιρετισμοί

Αντιπρύτανης Ακαδημαϊκών, Διεθνών Σχέσεων και Εξωστρέφειας του Ε.Κ.Π.Α. Σοφία Γ. Παπαϊωάννου Χαιρετισμός αντί Προλόγου	11
Μέλος του Συμβουλίου Διοίκησης του Ε.Κ.Π.Α. Αχιλλέας Γ. Χαλδαιάκης	17
Κοσμητέων της Φιλοσοφικής Σχολής του Ε.Κ.Π.Α. Γεράσιμος Γ. Ζώρας	19
Πρόεδρος του Τμήματος Θεατρικών Σπουδών του Ε.Κ.Π.Α. Γιώργος Π. Πεφάνης	21
Πρόεδρος του Ελληνικού Ιδρύματος Πολιτισμού Νίκος Α. Κούκης	25

Για τη Χαρά Μπακονικόλα

Καίτη Διαμαντάκου Η Χαρά Μπακονικόλα και η συμβολή της στη μελέτη του (αρχαίου) θεάτρου	27
Ξένια Γεωργοπούλου Η βία στα κείμενα της Χαράς Μπακονικόλα. Ένας μικρός πρόλογος κι ένα μεγάλο «ευχαριστώ»	35

Εισαγωγική Εισήγηση

Ανδρέας Γ. Μαρκαντωνάτος Σκηνικές πολιτικές βίου εναντίον βίαιης τεχνολογικής εκτροπής	39
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Κεντρικές Εισηγήσεις

- Βάλτερ Πούχνερ | Αιώνιος βίος και βία διαχρονική.
Από το αρχαίο ελληνικό θέατρο στη σύγχρονη σκηνή.....59
- Σάββας Πατσαλίδης | Περί εξουσίας, νεκροπολιτικής και
σύγχρονης τραγωδίας.....67

Αρχαία ελληνική τραγωδία

- Σπύρος Συρόπουλος | Η Βία των Αδυνάμων: συναισθηματικός
και ψυχολογικός εκβιασμός στα πλαίσια της *ικεσίας*101
- Χρύσα Ευστ. Αλεξοπούλου | *Οὐ τοῦ κρατοῦντος ἡ πόλις νομίζεται;*
(738) - *οὐ γάρ δὴ προδοῦσ' (αὐτόν) ἀλώσομαι* (46):
Πολιτικές βίας καὶ βίου στή σοφοκλεία *Ἀντιγόνη*.....123
- Ευφημία Καρακάντζα | Αρχαία ελληνική τραγωδία και
'ζωή στο όριο'. Μελέτες περίπτωσης: *Αίαντας* και *Αντιγόνη*
του Σοφοκλή135
- Ελένη Γκαστή | Μορφές προδρομικού διανθρωπισμού στον Σοφοκλή:
Η έννοια της *παλάμης*153
- Ιωάννης Περυσινάκης | Πολιτικές βίας και πολιτικές βίου
στην *Ανδρομάχη* του Ευριπίδου: Ανάγνωση και ερμηνεία.....165
- Καίτη Διαμαντάκου | Ο υπερπληθυσμός της γης και η βιοπολιτική
διαχείρισή του: Σπερματικά ίχνη ενός σύγχρονου
ζητήματος στο έργο του Ευριπίδη.....195
- Ελένη Ι. Καράμπελα | Εξουσία και αδικία στη *Μήδεια* του Ευριπίδη:
Η αναίρεση της σοφίας και η ματαίωση της σωτηρίας.....213
- Μαρία Γεωργούση | Τα είδη της γνώσης και η μετα-γνώση
στη *Μήδεια* του Ευριπίδη.....233
- Δήμητρα Αναστασιάδου | Η θυσία ως *μηχανή σωτηρίας*
στον Ευριπίδη.....245
- Βασιλική Κουσουλίνη | Μεταθανάτιος Βίος, Τεχνολογία και
μεταθανάτια Βία: Η *δέλτος* της Φαίδρας στον *Ιππόλυτο*
του Ευριπίδη.....261

Λαμπρινός Ευστ. Πλατυπόδης | Η εξουσία ως άσκηση βίας,
η απαξίωσή της, αλλά και η αδήριτη ανάγκη διαιώνισής της
στην *Ιφιγένεια τὴν ἐν Ταύροις* του Ευριπίδη281

Κατερίνα Συνοδινού | Η δύναμη της χειραφέτησης:
Η περίπτωση της Ιφιγένειας στην *Ιφιγένεια ἐν Αυλίδι*
του Ευριπίδη293

Αρχαία ελληνική κωμωδία

Θεόδωρος Γ. Παππάς | Η απειλή σεξουαλικής βίας και άλλα
βωμολοχέυματ' ἀγεννή στην αριστοφανική κωμωδία317

Νίκος Γ. Χαραλαμπίδης | Η δυστοπική μητριαρχία
τῶν ἀριστοφανικῶν Ἐκκλησιαζουσῶν.....345

Άννα Μαυρολέων | *Λυσιστράτη – Θεσμοφοριάζουσες – Εκκλησιάζουσες*:
Η κωμική ουτοπία ως πρόταση πολιτικού βίου371

Δημήτριος Σταμάτης | *Ὅπως μὴ πάλιν πλανῆ μ' ἔρις* (OxyP iii 413v, n. 28).
Ὅψεις ἐμφυλης ερωτικής βίας ἀπὸ το συναξάρι
του θεατρικού Μίμου387

Αρχαιόθεμη ελληνική και παγκόσμια δραματουργία

Κυριακή Πετράκου | Μεταπολεμικές εκδοχές του μύθου
των Ατρείδων411

Βαρβάρα Γεωργοπούλου | Γυναίκες εν διωγμῶ:
Ο μύθος των Δαναΐδων στο νεοελληνικό θέατρο433

Δέσποινα Κοσμοπούλου | Θεμιτά και θέσφατα:
Η υπέρβαση των ορίων στην *Ιφιγένεια* του Ζαν-Ρενέ Λεμουάν
και στην *Ιφιγένεια ἐν Ληξουρίῳ* του Πέτρου Κατσαΐτη447

Αθανάσιος Μπλέσιος | *Η Φαίδρα καίγεται* της
Αμάντας Μιχαλοπούλου463

Κωνσταντίνα Ζηροπούλου | Το αίνιγμα των *Βακχῶν* στη
μετανθρωπιστική πραγματικότητα της *Κρεουργίας*
του Γιάννη Μαυριτσάκη475

Ιωάννα Ρεμεδιάκη Η σφαγή του Αίαντα.....	495
Γιώργος Κράιας Από τη «βία της εξουσίας» στον <i>Φιλοκτήτη</i> του Σοφοκλή στη «βία στην εξουσία» στον <i>Philoktet</i> του Heiner Müller	509
Θεοδούλη (Λίλυ) Αλεξιάδου Η απόφαση του Φιλοκτήτη: Ποιητικά και δραματικά διακείμενα του τραγικού μύθου	525
Σοφία Φελοπούλου <i>Τοπία</i> γραφής, <i>τοπία</i> βίας στο <i>Tebas Land</i> του Sergio Blanco	543
Έλση Σακελλαρίδου <i>Deborah's Daughter</i> : Μια οικο-φεμινιστική μεταγραφή του δίδυμου Δήμητρας/Περσεφόνης στο σύγχρονο αγγλόφωνο θέατρο.....	557
Θάλεια Μπουσιοπούλου <i>Communitas</i> και <i>immunitas</i> του Roberto Esposito στη θεατρική τετραλογία του Wajdi Mouawad <i>Το αίμα των υποσχέσεων</i> . Από τον αρχαίο τραγικό μύθο στη σύγχρονη βιοπολιτική.....	569
Κωνσταντίνος Μπόμπας Έμφυλες διαστάσεις της βιοπολιτικής του χώρου και αντιμεταθέσεις του τραγικού σε έργα των Heiner Müller, Wajdi Mouawad και Δημήτρη Δημητριάδη.....	587
(Χορο)Θεατρική Σκηνή	
Νίνα Παπαθανασοπούλου Πολιτικές βίας στον <i>Αγαμέμνονα</i> του Αισχύλου, την <i>Ιφιγένεια εν Αυλίδι</i> του Ευριπίδη και την <i>Clytemnestra</i> της Μάρθα Γκράχαμ.....	605
Έλενα Σταματοπούλου Αρχαία τραγωδία και κυρίαρχη ιδεολογία. Οι <i>Πέρσες</i> του Αισχύλου στη μεταπολεμική Ελλάδα	629
Αλεξάνδρα Βουτζουράκη Η εκμετάλλευση των <i>Περσών</i> ως μέσο προπαγάνδας την περίοδο του Εμφυλίου. Η δεξιά και η αριστερή οπτική	655
Κατερίνα Αρβανίτη Σκηνικές αναπαραστάσεις της βίας στις νεοελληνικές προσεγγίσεις των αριστοφανικών <i>Ιππέων</i> .677	

Κλειώ Φανουράκη | Αντι(σ)-Τάσεις βίας και εκφοβισμού
στη σύγχρονη εποχή μέσα από τη ματιά των νέων, με
αφορμή την *Αντιγόνη* του Σοφοκλή – Επίμετρο για
τη Χαρά Μπακονικόλα697

Καταληκτική Εισήγηση

Θόδωρος Γραμματάς | Οι αξίες του αρχαίου ελληνικού δράματος
στην αρχή της νέας χιλιετίας. Προς έναν νέο
μετα-ουμανισμό713

Περιλήψεις - Abstracts 725

Βιογραφικά Συγγραφέων 757

ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΕΙΣ

ABSTRACTS

The Decision of Philoctetes: Poetic and Dramatic Intertexts of the Tragic Myth

Theodouli (Lily) Alexiadou

A 20th and 21st-century poet and a poetess, Seamus Heany and Ursula Krechel, engage in conversation with Sophocles' *Philoctetes* and give their own version, on the borders of theatrical discourse and poetry. In this study we approach Irish poet Seamus Heany's poetic drama *The Cure at Troy* (1990) and German poetess and playwright Ursula Krechel's extended poem *Stimmen aus dem harten Kern / Voices from the Bitter Core* (2005). Heany's work exposes the inner conflict of Philoctetes, who is torn between a sense of personal grief and an inner mandate to understand individual passion through a less egocentric vision. In Krechel's extended poem, Philoctetes chooses between solitary uselessness and collective survival and looks forward to rejoining the battle, free from the trauma of exclusion. The myth of Philoctetes is a typical example of Giorgio Agamben's «life exposed to death». The question of belonging and not belonging, of exclusion or inclusion in a society that wants to destroy the 'other' and tolerates only certain functions, of the utilitarian ethics of survival, make the hero's final decision a moral choice between life and death, with both individual and collective consequences. Contemporary renegotiations of the myth and our current reading response highlight a conscious present reception and contribute to Philoctetes' intertextual corpus with questions concerning the politics of life and violence that are universal, intertemporal and still present.

Keywords: Philoctetes – Seamus Heany – Ursula Krechel – biopolitics
–cultural politics

Politics of Violence and Life in Sophocles' *Antigone* (Οὐ τοῦ κρατοῦντος ἡ πόλις νομιζεται; 738 / οὐ γὰρ δὴ προδοῦς' (αὐτὸν) ἀλώσομαι, 46)

Chryssa Efst. Alexopoulou

In today's world of post-modern democracies with institutionally secured rights, the politics of violence continues to be present in various fields and exercised by various means, even with the help of the possibilities offered by technological progress. Thus, violence continues to be a means of exercising power against individuals, small social groups, and weak states, and finally, it becomes a political choice of governments, states, and coalitions to impose their power, a power with various faces or guises. At the same time, the awareness and disclosure of violent practices sensitize individuals and societies and drive the quest for protective policies and the pressure to implement such policies aiming at defending the lives and dignity of individuals and groups. The juxtaposition of politics of violence and life, of course, has roots in the distant past and has been recorded in all types of Ancient Greek Writing. Within the framework of the Conference, the paper aims to present the politics of violence and life that are found in Sophocles' *Antigone* (442 BC) and are expressed through the speech and actions of the tragic heroes. Laws, institutions, orders, rights, *polis*, and *oikos* become contradictory points, integrated into the violence or life politics of the opponents. The heroes travel difficult internal distances, and, on these routes, they face dilemmas, they make decisions in a specific dramatic environment, but also within the political framework of the *city-state*, and during the historical timeframe in which the play was set. In the attempted approach-“reading” of the play, the timeframe of composition and the circumstances of the epoch are treated as essential parameters for the reception and understanding of the drama's messages.

Keywords: law-institutions – polis-oikos – power

Sacrifice as Salvation Mechanism in Euripides' Work

Dimitra Anastasiadou

Sacrifice functions as *salvation mechanism* in the tragedies of Euripides (Eur., *Phoen.*, 890) with Polyxena being the sacrificial victim in *Iphigenia in Aulis* and the *The Trojan Women*, Macaria in *Heracleidae* and Menoeceus in *The Phoenician Women*. The sacrificial victim is offered as a mechanism and as an invention redeeming the human condition, offering a way out. What kind of meanings stirs up the fact that for the completion of a play, the democracy, the reconciliation of the city, the departure as well as the return from a campaign, the sacrifice and the blood of innocent victims is required? How could you interpret the fact that the sacrifices of innocent people introduce the human adventure as a tragic truth transferred through the years in people's oral narrations? Is it that the sacrificial victim in the end – puzzled and uncertain – becomes the limit to the dangerous passages from culture to savagery, from “here” to “there”, from the world to the underworld, from light to darkness, from “oikos” to “polis” and this is described timelessly and in equivalent ways. Has the sacrificial hero always been introduced as the only way of salvation? Is it that the example of his sacrifice is guiding the individual and collective memory of the town, home and community? Do sacrifice and victim haunt the vivid narration and turn into a tribute – a keystone – of the human condition?

Keywords: alvation mechanism – sacrifice – *Iphigenia in Aulis* – *The Phoenician Women* – Euripides

Theatrical Representations of Violence in Modern Greek Productions of Aristophanes' *The Knights*

Katerina Arvaniti

The present article focuses on the theatrical representations of comic violence encountered in contemporary productions of Aristophanes' *The Knights*. More particularly, it discusses the characteristic scenes of bodily violence (punches, kicks and beatings) that are dominant in

the original text, as well as the way they were visualized on the Greek stage in the second decade of the 21st century. In this context, I shall deal with three distinct directorial approaches that were presented at the ancient theatre of Epidaurus: Vasilis Nikolaidis' stage reading of 2010, Stamatis Fasoulis' adaptation of 2012 and Konstantinos Rigos' choreographed perspective of 2021.

Keywords: comic violence – festival of Epidaurus – performances

***Phaedra on Fire*, by Amanda Michalopoulou**

Athanasios G. Blesios

Our paper deals with the dramatic version of the myth of Hippolytus and Phaedra by Amanda Michalopoulou, with the title *Phaedra on fire*, which takes place in a contemporary environment. The play was represented in the Little Theatre of Epidaurus in 2021. The play is based on the axis of the relation between love and person identity. Theseus is absent, as well as the Nurse, but in her place appears Phaedra's friend from childhood, Lioni, who has two daughters, Artemis and Aphrodite. The gap between Phaedra and Hippolytus seems unbridgeable, as her effort for the conquest of her love object, which is the young man, is unsuccessful. Phaedra cannot accept his love rejection. The violence resides in the human relations and will take place in the plot ending with an imaginative way. Hippolytus dies from the furious bull, who gets out of the fire flames, as a result of Phaedra's action to set a fire. However, the heroine has been rescued by the hero. The differentiations from the myth and the ancient tragedy *Hippolytus* by Euripides are crucial, so as to convey a contemporary sensibility and explication of the myth, which must finally deal with the function of the language and the handling of the mental wound by Phaedra.

Keywords: dramaturgy – ancient tragedy – Phaedra – Hippolytus – love – violence

Gendered Dimensions of Biopolitics and Transpositions of the Tragic in Plays of Heiner Müller, Wajdi Mouawad and Dimitris Dimitriadis

Constantin Bobas

A question that is raised initially in this paper concerns the identification of biopolitics and biopower as a political, social and cultural development that could be sought in other historical periods, particularly in relation to the movement of Humanism and the discovery of antiquity in the Modern Times. In this context, the presence of the theatre and its tragic dimension is approached in conjunction with the correspondence between human destiny and the tragic structure which parallels the biopolitical regulation of social reality in the field of gender relations. The plays *Medea Material* by Heiner Müller, *Scorched* by Wajdi Mouawad and *The Stunning of Animals before the Slaughter* by Dimitris Dimitriadis are developed in a thematic and dramatic dimension that allows the examination of the tragic in relation to the biopolitical as it appears in gender relations as power relations of a general social scope. Indeed, the expression of female figures in these works articulates a new version of the tragic that allows for a better understanding of the structures of contemporary political and social reality, suggesting the change or transformation of problematic situations or perceptions. Consequently, the main aim of this proposal is to investigate certain structural elements underlying the tragic, in its contemporary theatrical expressions or transcriptions, as a vector for undoing or transforming the functioning of gendered and, by extension, social relations as defined by biopolitical power.

Keywords: tragic – tragedy – gender relations – biopolitics

Roberto Esposito's *Communitas* and *Immunitas* in Wajdi Mouawad's Theatrical Tetralogy *The Blood of Promises*. From Ancient Tragic Myth to Contemporary Biopolitics

Thalia Bousiopoulou

Lebanese-Canadian playwright Wajdi Mouawad often incorporates ancient Greek tragic myths in his theatrical works. In his theatrical tetralogy *Le sang des promesses* (The Blood of Promises) –especially in the first three– ancient tragic figures and themes emerge, such as Antigone and the question of the burial of the dead, the retelling of the myth of Oedipus in a modern historical context and recurring motifs like the oracle. The concept of community is a major focus of this group of works, where the author explores how modern individuals can break free from their self-imposed limitations and enter the dangerous realm of the human community by drawing on ancient myths. According to the Italian philosopher Roberto Esposito, the essential meaning of *Communitas* does not consist in its usual conception as a dialectical relationship between the private and the common, but is revealed in the etymology of the term, *munus*, which has the meaning of gift – a gift that is given, not collected. In dialectical opposition to *Communitas* emerges, according to Esposito, *Immunitas*, a term that refers to the concept of biopolitics, present throughout time in human societies, but in more intensive and therefore differentiated terms in modern times. The communities formed in Mouawad's tetralogy are founded precisely on the notions of obligation, in the form of promise, of giving rather than collecting, of risking individuality rather than the *conservatio vitae* that contemporary biopolitics prescribes. Ancient tragic myths provide exemplary forms of such communities.

Key-words: Drama – Mouawad – Esposito – *Communitas* – *Immunitas*

The Dystopian Matriarchy of Aristophanes' *Ecclesiazusae*

N. G. Charalabopoulos

In his *Ecclesiazusae* Aristophanes exposes the tragicomic consequences of the assumption of political power by women and the subsequent transformation of the Athenian society into an extended household. Such a constitutional change is intended to result in the elimination of both social injustice and personal misery for each and every citizen. By applying the logic of the inverted mirror the ancient poet creates a comic utopia featuring the shared ownership of goods, sexual libertarianism, and an orgy of gastrimargy. Three features of the old order are never to be found in New Athens: (a) the gap between rich and poor, because there will be no individual property; (b) the need for earning one's living, for everybody will be fed and taken care of from the public treasury; and (c) the bias in favour of the young and beautiful in the field of sexual intercourses, given that all ugly and aged men and women will be given a free priority pass.

Intriguingly, this idyllic atmosphere lasts only up until the implementation of the new legislation. Two snapshots from the life under the new matriarchal regime provide more than sufficient pieces of evidence for dispelling the myth of the eutopian city. In the first scene a law-abiding citizen has removed all his belongings from his house so that he may offer them to the common treasury – under the watchful eye of a renegade co-citizen (ll. 730-876). The second scene (ll. 877-1111) tells the story of a young man in love who puts a fight against but eventually succumbs to the Old Women forcing him to have sex with him prior to his making love to his girlfriend. Put it bluntly, the New Athens is a nightmare dressed like a daydream. The law-abiding citizen is ready to enter into an armed conflict with those resisting the new order, while the young man laments himself as he is about to meet a horrendous death (*θάψαι με*), l. 1107).

The present paper examines the dark side of the life in the Athens of the *Ecclesiazusae* and its gradual (?) transformation into an archetypal matriarchal dystopia.

Keywords: Aristophanes – utopian literature – dystopia – democracy – sex

The Overpopulation of Earth and its Biopolitical Management: Spermatoc traces of a contemporary issue in Euripides' work

Kaiti Diamantakou

Although the most widespread *locus communis* concerning the reasons for the outbreak of the Trojan War is the chain reaction caused by the omission of Eris' invitation to the weddings of Peleus and Thetis, culminating in the abduction of Helen by Paris, there was an alternative –much less widespread perhaps– version: the Trojan War as a solution to which Zeus resorted in order to combat the overpopulation of the earth. This version, the first Greek literary record of which dates back to the epic *Cypria*, is mentioned at key points (*prologue* and *exodus*) in three surviving tragedies exclusively by Euripides: *Helen*, *Orestes* and *Electra*. The paper focuses on these three references and speculates on the reasons for which this archaic motif is re-activated by Euripides in these specific –close in time, in the middle and late phases of the Peloponnesian War– tragedies. This alternative version is also linked to the later philosophical concerns of Plato and Aristotle regarding the relationship between population and sources of wealth and is discussed as a germinal theatrical expression of the contemporary international and interdisciplinary reflection on the overpopulation of planet earth, its dangers and the biopolitical solutions that are proposed for its regulation.

Keywords: Euripides – overpopulation – Trojan War – war – biopolitics

Anti(s)-Tendencies of Violence and Intimidation in the Modern Era through the Eyes of Young People, on the basis of Sophocles' *Antigone*

Clio Fanouraki

This paper will present experimental digital adaptations of excerpts from Sophocles' *Antigone* through the eyes of young researchers-creators, students of the Department of Theatre Studies of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, on the occasion of their training in the teaching of theatre in secondary education, with the use of digital

technologies, and with the aim of applying them to adolescents and young people (18 and above), of formal and non-formal education. Based on digital photography/still image, and their use through the interactive Web 2.0 collaborative free on line tool Padlet, the case-study focuses on creative transcriptions of the ancient text, on creative writing and writing for theatre, with emphasis on the levels and means by which violence is practiced in modern times and on the basis of different perspectives on the relationship between “victim and perpetrator”, as well as on human interventions in the physical environment, in the body and in the mind. Can you meet your own Antigone today in the city or in the “place” where you live? If so, what comes out of this encounter, making theatre for young people?

Keywords: *Antigone* – theatre for teenagers and young people – Padlet *Antigone/Athens 2023* – writing based – digital theatre/drama.

Landscapes of Writing, Landscapes of Violence in Sergio Blanco's Tebas Land

Sofia Felopoulou

Tebas Land, a 2012 play by the Uruguayan Sergio Blanco, presented in 2022 on the Greek stage – could also be rendered as *Chora Thebes* or *Landscape Thebes* (according to the *landscape*) – addresses the issue of patricide, paternal violence, homophobia, social exclusion, justice, the politics of repression and ultimately the repression and enslavement of the human condition by eternal stereotypes. Thebes is the place of patricide, conscious or unconscious, the stage place and the imaginary dramatic space, while at the same time it is a human and social *landscape*, in which documentary materials are placed that allow for browsing, observation and reflection. It is also a textual place and a *landscape* that guides through the writing, to the creation of the play itself (as text and as performance). *Play within the play*, it could even be called, but also, maybe, a hybrid of the Theatre of the Real, which constructs documents, witnesses, and testimonies, which it presents as real, with truth and reality intertwining, a “fake” kind of

vréel (*vrai et réel*). The author calls it a play of *autofiction*, a fiction of the self, in which the self is mainly the (autobiographical) author, but also the (heterobiographical) patricide, both on the verge of writing and performing.

Keywords: autofiction – landscape – parricide – violence – play within the play.

The Prehistory of Transhumanism in Sophocles: The Concept of *παλάμη*

Eleni Gasti

The forms of transhumanism found in the work of Sophocles are directly related to the sophistic movement and the optimistic theory of civilization. Unlike the pessimistic theory of civilization, which sees technological achievements as an undesirable result of intellectual decline or deviation from a correct ideal, the rationalist theories of the Sophists support the transformation of the human condition through deliberate wisdom that helps people compensate for their physical weaknesses. In this context, the concept of *παλάμη* refers to both the ingenuity and the skill of the human hand in the construction of its inventions. An examination of the concept of *παλάμη* in Sophocles' *Philoctetes* shows that the tragic poet, as a forerunner of transhumanist thinkers, highlights the potential benefits and risks of technological intelligence and, without denying progress, stresses the moral limits of its use. Furthermore, it is emphasized that practical intelligence (*παλάμη*) is essentially neutral and that its positive or negative evaluation depends on the way in which humans use it. In particular, when *παλάμη* functions as a device and technique for controlling others, it acts as an obstacle to social progress.

Keywords: transhumanism – Sophistic movement – technological achievements – moral limits – neutrality of practical intelligence

Persecuted Women: The Myth of the Danaides in Modern Greek Theatre

Varvara Georgopoulou

The first attempt to dramatize the Danaides myth in the modern Greek theater is that of the young Kalvos (1815). The relationship of the Danaids with the ancient Greek myth is part of the general research topic of Andreas Kalvos' archaeology, which has occupied most of the research related to the poet. On the person of the dynastic father-Danaos, who gathers all the faults of tyrants, Kalvos condemns authoritarianism and stands in favor of freedom, which in the work focuses on the erotic choice. The next chronologically based work that derives its premise from the myth of the Danaids is the unknown work by a Kefalonian author, N. Livadas, written around 1930. Although dramaturgically unskilled, it is impressive for the author's antiquarian knowledge. The myth will give Margarita Lymperaki (1954), one of the most important and unique female voices in the field of modern Greek drama, the sure trigger to move once more in her familiar space: the primordial struggle of the two sexes. Finally, Zoi Karelli in her *Iketides* (1962) will highlight the socio-political and existential core of the myth.

Keywords: Myth, Danaides – A. Kalvos – N. Livadas – M. Lymberaki – Z. Karelli

The Wisdom of Medea and Homo Sapiens. A Contemporary Anthropological Approach

Maria Georgousi

With the task at hand, we shall endeavor to discern the nature and quality of the wisdom possessed by Medea, and to understand how it is possible for the intellectual power, the wealth of knowledge, and the ability of the Eastern heroine in interpreting oracles not to constitute effective deterrent factors, so as to avert absolute destruction and, simultaneously, self-destruction, but rather to prove to be allies in the cold and calculating execution of the predetermined murderous actions

of the protagonist. Therefore, we intend to argue that the intelligence, knowledge, and wisdom possessed by Medea (characteristics which the etymology of her name suggests) are related to the manifestation of absolute violence and destruction, and are indeed ontologically and existentially connected to it, being interwoven with the commission of the utmost form of violence.

Keywords: Medea – intellectual power – knowledge – wisdom – destruction – self-destruction – ontological connection

Currentness and Timeliness of the Values of Ancient Greek Drama. Towards a New Post-Humanism

Theodoros Grammatas

The modern performances of ancient drama, with the modern and often subversive views of directors, come to question, subvert, and even revise the value content of the works of ancient drama. While at a first reading the stage effect seems to negate or even completely erase the concept of “classic”, in favor of a “modern”, and/or “postmodern” point of view. Finally, a new meaning and a modernization of it is erased, which anything but contradicts the essential messages emanating from it. On the contrary, there is a redefinition and a re-signification, which, according to the data of the modern era, extends towards the creation of a “post-humanism”, which is so much needed in our time.

Keywords: Meta-age – virtual reality – ancient principles and values – humanist values – contrasting pairs

Sophocles’ *Ajax* and the Hero’s ‘Bare’ Life

Efimia Karakantza

In this paper I will ‘read’ Sophocles’ *Ajax* with recourse to the concepts of ‘*homo sacer*’, ‘state of exception’ and necropolitics, as elaborated by contemporary political theorists, and philosophers. I begin by

arguing that Ajax is ‘framed’—to recall Judith Butler’s terminology from *Frames of War*—that is, his life is placed in a framework which is “politically saturated” (Butler 2009, 1) so that Ajax is apprehended as physically vulnerable, socially outlawed, a non-political entity which can be disposed of with impunity. The latter formulation leads us closer to Agamben’s *homo sacer*. Ajax bears similarities—I argue—with the Agambenian *homo sacer*, the original conceptual notion describing a person whose life under Roman law was “situated at the intersection of a capacity to be killed and yet not sacrificed, outside both human and divine law”. (Agamben 1998, 74). Thus Ajax’s life is put ‘on the limit’ between life and death, but most importantly between legality and outlawry (sharing similarities with the Greek state of ἀτιμία). The sovereign power, instantiated by the Atreidae, declares that he is an enemy whose body—after his suicide—should remain unburied in order to be further dishonour the hero, thus excluding him and his descendants from the *timai* of the political society of his peers.

Key-words: Sophocles—Ajax—Agamben—*homo sacer*—state of exception—life on the limit—bare life—disenfranchisement—necropolitics

Power and Injustice in Euripides’ *Medea*. The Distortion of Wisdom and the Nullification of Salvation

Eleni Karambela

The question “what is wisdom” preoccupied Euripides throughout his life and in the context of his work, from an early stage, as is already apparent in *Medea*, one of his earliest surviving tragedies. The attempts to define wisdom in individual terms, but especially in political terms, and the search for the causes that negate or distort it, such as power and the associated injustice that lead a person who experiences them to annihilation, make this tragedy exceptionally political, despite its misunderstood interpretation as merely a tragedy of revenge and jealousy, which confines it to the realm of the personal and the private. Salvation as the ultimate goal of every individual and society, as it presupposes a wise management of pain and the

inclusion of the suffering human, is negated in practice, when power is not limited by *aidos* and justice, when it chooses preemptive attack on the other, the exile of pain, and the distortion of wisdom, and when it equates wisdom with rhetorical skill and sophistry, which ensure only a temporary victory, which is misrecognized as salvation, but ultimately proves to be a devastating and unfathomable defeat. With this tragedy, Euripides seems to aim at a reconstruction of the citizen's consciousness on the basis of a wiser management of pain, a redefinition of wisdom as salvation, and a re-establishment of power based on shame and justice.

Keywords: wisdom – salvation – pain – shame, *aidos* – justice – power

Legitimate and Divine Decrees: Exceeding the Boundaries in the *Iphigeneia* of Jean-René Lemoine and the *Iphigeneia en Lixourio* by Petros Katsaitis

Despoina Kosmopoulou

Antiquity is abounded in examples of exceeding the legally, juridically, morally permissible and protected limits of power and violence exercise for the benefit of family, country or democracy, with the extermination of a human life being neither a socio-political crime nor a religious offense, in contrast to any sacrifice for country and family constituted of the highest value. Today, having already entered a posthumanist period, the modern criteria for demarcating violence and power seem to have already changed, as the blind obedience to divine laws and oracles, the submission of individuals to the will of the gods, the service of the country and its rulers or the preservation of democracy have given a way to the need of eliminating social inequalities and unfair means of imposing the rulers on individuals and societies in the name of common good. This is a change which is part of the centuries-long and continuous process of evolution of value codes from then to now, with what this entails for the differentiation of forms of violence at the family, religious and socio-political level. Agamemnon's demand to sacrifice his daughter Iphigenia in honor of

her country is a form of domestic violence as well as religious one – due to the involvement of the oracle in the legitimization of the imposed power – violence. The heroine of the archetype of Euripidean myth and all of its adaptations embodies the sacrifice at the altar of the power of the oracle and her father and the need of her country for a victory in war. Through *Iphigenia of Katsaitis* and *Lemoine*, which are adaptations of the homonymous Euripidean tragedy, and following the theories of reception and intertextuality, we will study the ways in which the ancient drama, through its postmodern legacies, can connect the “there and then” politics of violence and power with the ‘here and now’ national and religious demands for personal sacrifice.

Keywords: intertextuality – reception of ancient Greek drama – violence – Iphigenia

Life after Death, Technology and Postmortem Violence: Phaedra’s Deltos in Euripides’ *Hippolytus*

Vasiliki Kousoulini

In modern Western civilization, we are entitled to speak of the post-human, a human willing and able to defy death. But isn’t the post-human who has the possibility of an afterlife enabled by technology at risk of becoming a victim of violence or committing violence without originally intending to do so? This particular reading of Euripides’ *Hippolytus* examines Phaedra’s tablet (*δέλτος*) in this light. Phaedra’s tablet is presented as a body-less voice coming from elsewhere. In ancient Greek tragedy, the speech from elsewhere is considered post-humanistic, a non-human voice from the realm of the dead. This physical object, intertwined with the heroine’s dead body, continues her life. Phaedra’s corpse and the tablet acquire the capacity to act violently even if this was not in the original intentions of the tragic heroine.

Keywords: Euripides – *Hippolytus* – objects – post-humanism

From the “Violence of Power” in Sophocles’ *Philoctetes* to the “Violence in Power” in Heiner Müller’s *Philoktet*

Georgios Kraias

From the Sophocles’ *Philoctetes*, which amply depicts the violence exercised by those in power against defenceless victims, to the modern stage, where this violence takes even more hideous forms, violence emanating from power remains the common component of all versions of the myth. A typical example is Heiner Müller’s *Philoktet* (1965), where the violence of those in power shows its most horrific face in the brutal (absurd and untimely) murder of Philoktetes by Neoptolemus. But what distinguishes the modern drama from its Sophoclean antecedent is the new position occupied by violence: it is not only a feature inherent to power, but has even overcome power as it controls it and defines it at will. It is no longer the concrete and personified violence of power that prompts developments, but a transcendental violence, of indeterminate origin and catalytic power. The Odysseus-Neoptolemus duo may again symbolize the power and its violence, but the killing of Philoktetes by Neoptolemus reveals an irrational violence, unnatural and inexplicable. And yet, it is precisely this new, irrational face of violence that essentially differentiates the modern drama, since it presents a violence that completely controls the instruments of the power and pushes them to actions that are not at all supported by logic. Thus, with the transition from the ancient to the new age, there is a parallel transition from “violence of power” to “violence in power”, where violence is no longer a characteristic of power, but has assumed power itself and exercises it with unimaginable effects.

Keywords: Sophocles – Heiner Müller – *Philoctetes* – violence – power

Introduction: Theatrical Politics of Life against Violent Technological Misuse

Andreas G. Markantonatos

In my introductory remarks I welcome the wonderful collaboration between the Hellenic Foundation for Culture and the Department

of Theatre Studies at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. I go on to point out that with this third large-scale academic conference on the study of ancient Attic theatre and its reception over the centuries, the Hellenic Foundation for Culture attempts to contribute fruitfully and creatively to the broader effort of deeper understanding of these scenic masterpieces of ancient Greek spirit. In addition, I remark that the specific theme of this three-day conference, which focuses on highlighting two interconnected yet simultaneously contrasting manifestations of Attic drama –the politics of life and the politics of violence –, gives at first glance the impression of a generally recognised multifaceted and dynamic relationship; but in essence, recent rapid developments in the field of modern literary theory and Fourth Industrial Revolution thinking have significantly complicated matters and, more importantly, have encouraged many researchers to attempt more intricate interpretations and sometimes enormously richer analyses.

Keywords: technology – theatre – tragedy – ethics – artificial intelligence

Comic Utopia as a Proposal for Political Life

Anna Mavroleon

Women’s plays *Lysistrata*, *Thesmophoriazusae* and *Ecclesiazusae* by Aristophanes provoked politicians, offering a rather subversive solution. Aristophanes’ theatre is no doubt capable of creating its own political and social utopia. While the Peloponnesian war continues to rage, the women’s actions have an immediate impact and the men in the opposing camp respond in every possible way. In this reading, Aristophanes explores the issue of women’s rule and revel in the exchanging of gender roles. *Lysistrata* persuades the women of Athens and Sparta to abstain from their “marital duties” until the two cities bring hostilities to an end. Written in the darkest season the Peloponnesian War, *Lysistrata* (411 BC) was as a hymn to peace, love and womanhood. In *Thesmophoriazusae* (411 BC) the impure male intrusion trying to officiate the female celebrations takes the form of

a comic event. Faithful to tradition and good with management skills, the Athenian women of the *Ecclesiazusae* (392 BC), is a comedy of a more political bent, declare the common ownership of all property. Athenian women, under the initiative of Praxagora, decide to take immediate action. Disguised as men they sneak into the assembly and assume power. However, their political reforms which focus on sharing property and sexual partners will be undermined by successive comic situations.

Keywords: Women's plays – comic utopia – *Lysistrata* – *Thesmophoriazusae* – *Ecclesiazusae*

Politics of Violence in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, Euripides' *Iphigeneia at Aulis* and Martha Graham's *Clytemnestra*

Nina Papathanasopoulou

This paper focuses on the portrayal of Iphigeneia's sacrifice in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, Euripides' *Iphigeneia at Aulis* and Martha Graham's *Clytemnestra* and examines the politics of violence in each of the three works. I first demonstrate that Aeschylus and Euripides interpret the sacrifice of Iphigeneia through the lens of an emergency situation, as violence which authorities and other characters in the play seek to legitimize. In Aeschylus, I propose, the sacrifice of Iphigeneia is presented as mandatory for political, religious, and military reasons, while in Euripides the sacrifice is needed not only for the salvation of Greece but also as a means of avoiding further violence. In her work *Clytemnestra* (1958), Graham deconstructs such legitimization of violence, exploring the underlying structures that shape power relationships and lead to the commission of violence. Graham, I argue, uses her dance's prologue to set the sacrifice of Iphigeneia within a larger conflict, which the choreographer articulates in terms of gender.

Keywords: sacrifice – Iphigeneia – Martha Graham – gender violence – modern dance – legitimization

The Theatre of Sexual Violence in Aristophanic Comedy

Theodore G. Pappas

Aristophanes' use of the threat of violence and fantasies of sexual assault are often presented in a festive, guilt-free, celebratory context. Emphasis is placed on vigorous pleasure of the sexual act, on the secret parts of the female body and on the masculinity of the man. When sex is described as unimpeded, the poet uses metaphors from nature and the period of peace, while the resort to the threat of sexual violence is presented with aggression and an attempt to belittle, question and degrade the victim. Sexual fantasies in Aristophanes are presented and developed with particular freedom and poetic mood, but they are never completed. We only have rape threats and rape fantasies, but no women are raped. In our paper we will examine how the Athenian society, and specifically Aristophanes' male-dominated theater audience, dealt with scenes of verbal violence and sexual threat. In other words, we will see how all these rude obscenities affected the psychology of the viewer of the time; how a scene of verbal violence with sexual fantasies was presented by the comic poet and how it was perceived by the male audience who laughed with pleasure and satisfaction. We will emphasize that the audience of Aristophanes was in its great majority male, just as the distribution of roles was a male affair. This rule that required male actors to perform female roles as well, served not only a theatrical convention of the time, but constituted a functional element that helped to release the dynamics of the comic poet's conception. The way the audience perceives obscenity acted by male actors differs from how it would have been perceived if performed by women. In the latter case, some scenes would have seemed obscene. This play of the sexes, which characterizes the comedy of Aristophanes and the popular theater in general, is charming and allows the poet to realize his comic idea. Ribaldry, therefore, in Aristophanes is not obscene, but serves a specific function.

Keywords: sexual violence – sexual fantasies – obscenity – Aristophanes

Postmodern Biopolitics, Tragedy and the Brand Market

Savas Patsalidis

The article focuses on the issue of biopolitics and how it is recorded/handled in the work of contemporary theatre artists and thinkers. This study particularly emphasizes the degree of difficulty of this transfer/valorization in an era, such as the present, where everything that influences expectations, hierarchies, taste, etc. is diffused everywhere through the cultivation of institutions, values, brands, bodies, commodities, normalizing arrangements, attitudes, educational methods and programs. Contemporary renditions/approaches to ancient tragedy, it is argued, constitute an interesting as well as diverse corpus that attempts a “cohabitation” with the old texts which, to work, presupposes the texts’ re-historicization and re-territorialization. The theoretical mantle in the argument of this paper is, among others, the work of Michel Foucault, Giorgio Agamben and Achille Mbembe, especially his essay on “necropolitics,” which he defines as “the ultimate expression of sovereignty” and which lies, to a large extent, “in the power and capacity to dictate who should live and who should die” (power over death).

Keywords: adaptation – postmodern marketing – performative selfhoods – brands – contemporary tragedy

Policies of Violence and Policies of Life in Euripides’ *Andromache*: A Reading and Interpretation

Ioannis A. Perysinakis

The themes of the Prologue constitute the unifying theme of the play, while *Andromache* is the central, unifying character. The *Andromache* is the tragedy of the vicissitudes in the heroine’s life because of the war, of her ability to endure and confront the tribulations which she undeservedly suffers (99), stoically with hope and awareness, living in accordance with the nature, on the basis of the concordance of each man’s guardian spirit with the will of the administrator of the

whole, according to the Stoics. For Aristotle, “since the plot is a representation of action, it ought to represent a single action, and a whole one at that” (*Poet.* 1451a31-32). The “representation of a single action, and a whole one” is the shelter Andromache seeks at the altar of the temple of Thetis, and the danger to her and her son’s lives; Neoptolemus’ death and Hermione’s departure are parts of the overall action. At least five themes are repeated emphatically: the first is overt misogyny, accusations against women, formulated by women themselves; the second is the antithesis between “Greeks and barbarians”, which Andromache refutes through a universalized conception of ethics: “what is shameful is shameful, here as well as there” (244, Kovacs); the third refers to the misfortunes caused by the Trojan but also -by analogy- by the Peloponnesian war; the fourth is Andromache’s accusation against Menelaus, that he “should not repay trifling injuries with great”; finally, the fifth theme is Apollo’s participation in Neoptolemus’ death and the resultant question, “how then can he be wise?”, which anticipates Plato’s criticism of the gods in the *Republic* (383a7-c6). Thetis, as a *deus ex machina*, functions as a Homeric geometric composition making the end of the play correspond to the Prologue. In addition to her authority as the *deus ex machina*, Thetis is part of an early *theogony*, which lays down the boundaries of the universe. In the *Iliad*, Thetis’ θεοπροπίη (prophecy), as the poet uses it, lays down the development of the plot of the poem. In the *Andromache*, it restores the turmoil of the house (959) and by means of anachronism lays out the borders of the post-heroic world of the play. Neoptolemus, though absent from the action on stage, controls the plot. Correspondingly, in the *Iliad* Achilles dominates the narrative and the plot despite being absent from the action in his tent until book 19. Tellingly, “Zeus’ will” (after *Iliad* 1.5) is also mentioned in the *Andromache* (1269), and in both cases Thetis undertakes to serve it.

Keywords: war – Peloponnesian war – misogyny – Greeks-Barbarians – Thetis moral values and political attitudes

Postwar Versions of the Atreides' Myth

Kyriaki Petrakou

In this paper the plays *Klytemnestra* by Alexandos Matsas (1945) and *Orestes* by Zoe Karelli (1959) are being analyzed, both independently and compared, together with their critical reception, theoretical and performance reviews. The conciliatory messages of both are related to the historical and political context of the time of their writing, as an aftermath of the experience of the Second World war and the 3-year civil war that followed.

Key-words: postwar era – poetical drama – non-violence message – civil-war

The Power as an Exercise of Violence, its Devaluation, but also the Urgent Need to Perpetuate it in Euripides' *Iphigenia in Tauris*

Lamprinos Efst. Platypodis

In *Iphigenia in Tauris*, as well as in *Iphigenia in Aulis*, we have conflicting and diametrically opposed elements and signals about the power. On the one hand, power is presented as the inexhaustible source of evil and cause of countless suffering, and on the other hand, as the giver of great goods, honor and glory. Iphigenia, Agamemnon's daughter sacrificed at Aulis in order for the Achaioi fleet to sail against Troy, the “absolute” victim of authority as presented in the text, one would expect the indictment and deconstruction of authority to be at the core but also the final goal of its war, however in many places it refers to its advantages. But what makes a special impression is her clear statement about her father's throne. Θέλω δ' ἄπερ σύ, σέ τε μεταστῆσαι πόνων/ νοσοῦντά τ' οἶκον, οὐχὶ τῷ κτανόντι με/ θυμουμένη, πατρῶον ὀρθῶσαι· θέλω (991-993).[Your wish is mine: to release you from torment, and restore our father's afflicted house, for I am not angry at the one who killed me; it is my wish. Trans.: Robert Potter.] Iphigenia longs for the restoration of her royal house, which

is exactly what Orestes also desires. Orestes, after the murder of his mother Clytaemestra and her lover Aegisthos, and while continuing his dramatic course towards purification from the austere crime, does not renounce power, like Hippolytus in Euripides' tragedy of the same name (1013-1015), but on the contrary he makes it clear that his ultimate goal is to claim and possess it. The problem under discussion is what the maintenance, holding and exercise of power entails for those who hold and desire power and what is the attitude of the gods in their claims and actions.

Keywords: Euripides – *Iphigenia in Tauris* – authority – Gods

Eternal Life and Timeless Violence. From the Ancient Greek Theatre to the Modern Stage

Walter Puchner

The violence as well as the pain inflicted have acquired multiple forms in contemporary aesthetics and art, casting ominous shadows on future civilization – considering that artists are largely the seismographs of tomorrow's developments. Using examples from modern and contemporary Greek ancient-themed drama, the paper connects the representation of violence in ancient tragedy with fantasies of the violent future world we have long seen on the contemporary stage: The great problems of the planet, climate change, overpopulation, the elimination of raw materials, the waste of technological civilization, the inequality of wealth, new epidemics, etc. etc. are winding up the spirals of destruction and bringing a cocktail of difficult survival conditions for many people, which will put the traditional ideas of democracy, freedom and prosperity in existential danger.

Keywords: violence – bios (life) – ancient tragedy – ancient-themed drama – contemporary theatre

Ajax' Slaughter

Ioanna Remediaki

This work follows the signs of blood and carnage in Sophocles' and H. Müllers' *Ajax*, signs that the warrior's body caused and also suffered. Butcher and carcass at the same time, the horrible corpse remains unburied, in a state of exception imposed by power; both its religious and political authorities proved to be merciless and inadequate to understand what Odysseus empathetically perceives, achieving for him a proper burial. Ajax, a "dinosaur" in Müller's language, was exterminated in the name of a new order, just as problematic as the old one, in a world that resembles, according to J. Kott, "a giant mousetrap set for people".

Keywords: Ajax – Sophocles – H. Müller – state of exception

Deborah's Daughter: An Ecofeminist Reinscription of the Demeter/Persephone Myth in the Contemporary English Theatre

Elsi (Elizabeth) Sakellaridou

My recent experience from systematic programmes to avert desertification of the Saharian border of South Morocco in juxtaposition with the biopolitical issues raised in this conference brought to my mind the play of the contemporary British dramatist Pam Gems *Deborah's Daughter* (1994) - a rereading of the classical Demeter/Persephone myth - which had caught my critical attention in an earlier paper. Displacing my previous purely feminist perspective which gave priority to the autonomization of the "Kore" (Persephone), I am now revisiting the play with specific focus on the transformation of the "Mother" (Demeter) from a legendary fertility goddess to a contemporary scientist in molecular biology, who proposes a new biotechnological method of farming to increase the production of crops in order to cover the needs of a starving local population in an unspecified North-African state. Her biopolitics clash with all previous forms of politico-economic power, deriving either from the old colonial capitalist regime (with which she

is personally connected as heiress of her deceased husband, an oil-tycoon) or from the continuous military coups and resurgences in the recently founded independent but most unstable postcolonial African countries (where her own anarchist daughter is actively involved). The play skillfully balances its sharp, multi-level critique with humour and mock-romanticism and so it manages to pass its political messages to the audience without becoming didactic. Among many other contemporary anglophone plays which reinscribe classical Greek themes for the post-human era, Gems's text from the 1990s is an impressive and thoughtful forerunner of many 21st century eco-feminist endeavours for the preservation and improvement of the conditions of life on our planet.

Keywords: feminism – ecology – sustainability – violence – power – post-/neo-colonialism – globalization

“Ὅπως μὴ πάλιν πλανῆ μ’ ἔρις (OxyP iii 413v, v. 28). Aspects of Sexual Violence from the Corpus of Theatrical Mime

Dimitrios G. Stamatis

In the cosmopolitan environment, the outcome of the Hellenistic period, the decline of classical drama is followed by the flourishing of lesser hybrid genres such as mime and pantomime. However, these dramatic forms remain obscure and confusing. Among the few texts that allow us to infer an idea about their nature and performance there are some papyri fragments of theatrical Mime dating back to the early centuries AD. In particular, although the ‘adulterous’ mime of OxyP 413 and the fragment with the ‘sufferings of a virgin’ are not characterized by spectacular stage action, they take us on a journey into the world of local quarrels, amorous jealousy and illicit relationships with house slaves, as well as the orgy night rituals. Thus, they constitute important testimonies to the society and customs of important provincial centers of the Roman state. The plot of the first work focuses on the successive intrigues and mental switch-backs of a voluptuous housewife, who, enraged by a love-rejection, decides to exterminate the entire population of the house, escalating –or rather descending the climax– of the deadly

love-sins by the exercise of various forms of violence. In the passage of the ‘suffering youth’ the moral pressures that a virgin is subjected to by her loved-ones are recorded. A full-length mime-drama is thus revealed, the plots of which intertwine around adultery and amorous criminal behaviour, involving brutal punishments and multiple attempted murders. By reviewing this special genre, we aim to detect past representations of life-policies, born in a wider social context of political violence. Allegories, parallel passages and vocabulary are highlighted for the first time, pointing out implicit actions, which contradict social morality and the promises of the emerging religion. As a result, basic concepts of the ancients about the world and man, having a prophetic effect on modern socio-political conditions are identified, enabling our society, to reconsider and interpret the modern reality of gender violence, vulgar eroticism, femicides more effectively...

Keywords: mime – mime-drama – theatrical mime – sexual violence

Ancient Tragedy and Dominant Ideology: Aeschylus’ *Persians* in Post-War Greece

Elena Stamatopoulou

The present paper aims to monitor the staging of Aeschylus’ *Persians* in post-war Athens and how it operates in relation to the dominant ideology of the time, both politically and artistically. Within this framework, we will attempt to shed light on the use of Aeschylean tragedy in relation to the anti-communist dominant ideology of the era, as well as regarding the proper revival of ancient drama in a period of modern Greek history where dominant discourse held significant power. From the liberation of Athens on October 12, 1944, to the coup d’état by the colonels on April 21, 1967, we will encounter five stagings of *Persians*, indicative of the climate of each period and in conversation with it. On October 26, 1944, an excerpt from *Persians* is included in the celebratory performance held at the National Theater, under the direction of Socrates Karantinos, when the state stage is managed by the People’s Committee. On June 14, 1945, four months after the signing of

the Varkiza Treaty, Linos Karzis' Thymelic Theater stages Aeschylean tragedy at the Herodes Atticus Odeon. From Dimitris Rontiris, a key figure in the "National School" regarding the revival of ancient tragedy, we have two productions of *Persians*. One during the years of his dominance at the National Theater, with numerous repetitions and tours (from October 27, 1946, to June 9, 1950), and another when he has lost state support, with the Peiraic Theater at the configured theater on Prophet Elias Hill on October 3, 1958. On April 20, 1965, *Persians* by the Theater of Art, directed by Karolos Koun, is staged at the Herodes Atticus Odeon, offering a different approach to the issue of revival. Finally, although not staged in Athens, we cannot exclude from the announcement the performance of *Persians*, the first production staged by exiled communists on Agios Efstratios Island in September 1951, directed by Karousos.

Keywords: Ancient tragedy – dominant ideology – anti-communism – revival

The Manipulation of Iphigeneia in Euripides' *Iphigeneia at Aulis* Katerina Synodinou

In her conversion speech, Iphigeneia states some reasons to justify her decision to die willingly for the sake of the Trojan expedition. The question is whether these reasons are valid in context and consequently whether Iphigeneia's self-sacrifice is justified. Iphigeneia seems to be effected by Agamemnon's arguments, which she repeats almost verbatim about the necessity of her sacrifice so that the Trojan expedition could take place, the barbarians would stop seizing Greek women and Greece would stay free. One of Agamemnon's arguments, which Iphigeneia repeats, is the demand of Artemis for her sacrifice. But Artemis' request was conditional. The sacrifice was necessary, only if the Greeks choose to carry on with the expedition. Mised, Iphigeneia marches to her death convinced that she does Artemis' will. Another argument of Iphigeneia, echoing also Agamemnon, refers to the commonplace concerning Greek freedom in opposition

to barbarian slavery. With her death she believes that she ensures that freedom. But Agamemnon least of all could be the embodiment of Greek freedom. He admits that he is a slave to the mob and to the whole of Greece. He is afraid of Calchas, of Odysseus, of his army. Ironically, Iphigeneia asserts the dogma of Greek freedom, when the poet had already shown Agamemnon's slavishness. The war's motives as well do not seem any better. The ostensible reason for the expedition to prevent barbarians from kidnapping Greek women is not valid. Far from being forcibly abducted by Paris, Helen willingly followed him. The motives of war are personal: Agamemnon's ambition for a war of conquest, Menelaus' passion for Helen. The army also are so madly bent on war that whoever withstands their fury will perish. The motives of the war then do not justify an overseas expedition. But Iphigeneia believes that in order to "save"! Greece, she should die. Iphigeneia's case attests to the manipulation which the powerful can exert over helpless people. Iphigeneia is also manipulated by the commonplaces about women's inferior position. It is better, she asserts, that one-man lives than numberless women. In context, her words are in contradiction with the quality of the male characters. In general, the real aims of the expedition, guised as beneficial for the country, are used as a means of manipulating innocent victims such as Iphigeneia. However, through the action of the play, the poet exposes the protagonists' true character and the real motivations of the war.

Keywords: manipulation – Greek – barbarian – free – slave – context

The Violence of the Weak: Emotional and Psychological Intimidation in the Context of Supplication

Spyros Syropoulos

Violence, even if it is not a central theme, dominates the work of the three surviving tragedians because of both the setting and the content of the tragedy. While it is easy to focus on forms of physical coercion or the imposition of physical force, it is less easy to detect elements of violence in the behavior of characters who appear to be weak. We more

easily overlook the expression of violence in a non-physical or physical form, i.e. the exercise of psychological or emotional pressure, or which is often exercised in the context of supplication by the apparently weak, so that his request goes beyond the level of supplication and appeal to divine justice, and to extort the support of the powerful. Emotional abuse (also called psychological abuse) is the use of emotions, employed to manipulate, embarrass, blame, criticize or otherwise try to gain control and power over someone another. The study of three instances in works by Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides where supplication plays an important role in the outcome of the plot, reveals common elements in how the powerless appears to be successfully manipulative at the expense of the ostensibly powerful.

Keywords: violence – tragedy – emotional abuse – supplication

The Exploitation of the *Persians* as a Means of Propaganda during the Civil War. The Perspective of Conservative and Communist Critics

Alexandra Voutzouraki

The *Persians* were used as a means of nationalist propaganda in Greece from the beginning of the 20th century, symbolizing the past, present and future triumphs of the Greek nation. The *Persians*, however, also present a nation that, in the shadow of a great national disaster, the responsibility for which is borne solely by its own actions, does not react, passively accepts the disaster and remains submissive to the bridle. The public admission by the ghost of Darius that Xerxes did not appear to be a worthy leader does not call into question the fact that he is and, more importantly, will remain a leader. The 1946 revival of the 1939 production, directed by D. Rontiris, was staged in the midst of a civil war. It has been preceded by the entry of the General Security into the National Theatre, its cleansing from leftist elements, the creation of a Social Character Control Committee for the staff, etc. and the *Persians* are the opening performance of the National Theatre under this new administrative situation. The *Persians* are no longer an

ethnic but potentially a political entity. Is their selection an attempt to unite the Greeks under the common heroic past, as the right-wing press of the time tried to convince us, or a warning to the communists of the victory of the Greeks against this new authoritarian and illiberal enemy as well, as the conservative propaganda had for so many years treated the communist danger? Does the leftist press propose a different reading of the play? How did the critics of the time view this move by the National and how did they approach the tragedy interpretatively in the light of the topicality and polarization that the Greek intelligentsia was experiencing at the time?

Keywords: critique – *Persians* – Civil War – nationalism – socialism

Bacchae's Enigma in the Posthumanistic Reality of Yannis Mavritsakis' Kreourgia

Konstantina Ziropoulou

This article delves into the study of Yannis Mavritsakis' play *Kreourgia* (2021), which is a contemporary and particularly interesting dramatic adaptation of Euripides' *Bacchae*. In *Kreourgia*, the playwright explores the fundamental dramatic theme of *Bacchae*, namely the affirmation of the omnipotence of the god Dionysus and the establishment of a new religion through the imposition of extreme violence. However, in this adaptation, the focus shifts from the validation of divine sovereignty to the omnipotence of biotechnology applications within a posthumanistic reality. This new reality functions as the absolute regulatory principle, where human will is abolished, and individuals are blindly subject to the dictates of a god-project manager. The setting is a modern technocratic universe, with the dominant screen replacing the palace of Pentheus, regulating life and death within a program orchestrated by Dionysus.

In *Kreourgia*, the dramatis personae of the hypertext are exclusively related to *Bacchae*: Dionysus, Agave, Pentheus, Cadmus, Tiresias, and a messenger appear. Alongside, many of the fundamental motifs

of *Bacchae* are explored and transformed: metamorphosis, disguise, plotting, deception, violence, and punishment. The article analyzes the author's reinterpretation of these motifs and their dramaturgical significance within the context of biopolitics, where processes of transferring the human mind occur. In this environment, mythical figures are deprived of the possibility of a heroic downfall, and the tragic element is definitively removed.

Keywords: *Bacchae* – *Kreourgia* – reception – posthumanism – biopolitics.