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Neither "*pathēmatōn*", nor "*symptōmatōn*", or "*kataphaseōn*" *katharsin*: The non-cathartic philosophy of "*non-decision*" and "*ephexis* in decision"¹

Marina Christodoulou

Alpen-Adria-Universität Klagenfurt & Université Toulouse II –Jean Jaurès

Dr. Phil. in Philosophy

ORCID ID: 0000-0002-5721-833X

marinach@edu.aau.at

marina.n.christodoulou@gmail.com

¹ Παθημάτων [πάθημα]; συμπτωμάτων [σύμπτωμα]; καταφάσεων [κατάφασις]. Translation of the terms: *πάθημα*: passion, emotion, feeling, affect, sensation etc.; *σύμπτωμα*: symptom; *κατάφασις*: decision; it can also take the meaning of *assertion*, (or even of doctrine and dogma), where skepticism, skeptical *epochē*, and the (ancient and mostly the Nietzschean) *ephexis*, as well as the Laruelian "*non-decision*", can then mean a *non-assertion* (*aphasia* in skeptical terms), a mistrust or a "suspending of judgement" (skeptical *epochē*) and thus an avoidance of, and distancing strategy away from dogmatism or from asserting/deciding dogmatically or reaching, or, rather, possessing the truth (which is a certain "pathos" according to Nietzsche, and it is implied to be such for Skepticism, too) that can come in the name of the absolute, the real, or the One. This openness is thus an openness to diverse and divergent views and ideas, to intellectual integrity (openness, freedom, curiosity, courage, creativity, experimentality, hypothesis, etc.), and to pluralism (such a plea for pluralistic voices was philosophically attempted, in contemporary times, by William James, François Laruelle, Bouveresse, and others), or to the Nietzschean *tasting* (*sapio* – *sisyphos* – *sisyphus*) or the *a/essaying* (I would say) of different ideas without fixating to/on any of them (dogmatism, fanaticism, one-sidedness, rushing to views/ideas/decisions/assertions, being absolutely confident and certain regarding one's decisions/assertions, in opposition to a strategy/method of constant self-refutation [*peritropē*]). – *Ephexis* includes more caution rather than *epochē*, less rashness, or even I would say, less (neurotic) compulsion. – Aphorism for Nietzsche, (as well as, I would say, the essay), integrates such a spiritual freedom, integrity, and discipline, and a moving away from the "pathos" (a word that Nietzsche is using to describe the philosophical *prejudices* or *pre-suppositions*, as Gilles Deleuze would call them, which are the obstacles to doing philosophy) of possessing or willing to reach the truth; the latter fixation with truth is one of the constant passions/*pathē* (πάθη) or vices of systematic thought; see on this, Nietzsche (1889/2005), 159 [Arrows and Epigrams, §26]: "I distrust all systematizers and avoid them. The will to a system is a lack of integrity." Thus the aphorism, and, I would add, the essayistic forms, which are aphoristic, in essence, too, become exemplars of the skeptical method or style, as well as of the Nietzschean *ephexis*, which I will examine further later. For "the pathos of *possessing* truth", or "pathos of *seeking* truth", see Nietzsche (1878/1986/1996), 201 [§633], and for the reference to Deleuze, see Deleuze and Guattari (1991/1994). See also, on the use of some of the above terms by Friedrich Nietzsche, the following quotation, among many others, where these terms or phrases are used: Nietzsche (1888/1895/2005), 46 [§47]: "[...] discipline of spirit, integrity or spiritual rigour of conscience, or noble assurance and freedom of the spirit."

ABSTRACT

Professor Mihail D. Petruševski was a Macedonian Philologist who proposed that *pathēmatōn katharsis* or *katharsis pathēmatōn* (παθημάτων κάθαρσις or κάθαρσις παθημάτων), as it appears in the first line of the definition of Tragedy (in Aristotle's *Poetics*), was an error of copying, and the correct phrase Aristotle most probably used was *pragmatōn systasis* or *systasis pragmatōn* (πραγμάτων σύστασις or σύστασις πραγμάτων; the order, system, concatenation of things, facts, or events). *Catharsis* was favored and given a medical-pathological interpretation by Bernays, and others before him, which created a tradition and a consensus on how to understand *catharsis* and consequently the essence of Tragedy itself. I argue here in favor of Mihail D. Petruševski's linguistic-philological proposal, and I extend it to include philosophy, where I propose and argue that we have a cathartic understanding of philosophy as well, that is, a cathartic understanding of the exogenous affects it produces or brings on the reader, in parallel to our perception that there is the *telos* and the essential exogenic element of *catharsis* in our interpretation of what Tragedy, arts, in general, and psychoanalysis, do, shall do, aim at, or shall aim at, and be practised for. I will try to propose and argue on how the philological discovery of Petruševski can or shall be applied to Philosophy, and to other discourses and disciplines, and the pivotal ethico-political importance of this discovery to our general habits of thought and to our habits or forms of life.

Keywords: catharsis, ephexis, passion, symptom, decision, philosophy, psychoanalysis, anthropology, Nietzsche, Laruelle, Petruševski, Pragmatism, habit, ritual, methodology, meta-philosophy

Preamble

Professor Mihail D. Petruševski was a Macedonian Philologist who proposed that *pathēmatōn katharsis* or *katharsis pathēmatōn* (παθημάτων κάθαρσις or κάθαρσις παθημάτων), as it appears in the first line of the definition of Tragedy (in Aristotle's *Poetics*), was an error of copying, and the correct phrase Aristotle most probably used was *pragmatōn systasis* or *systasis pragmatōn* (πραγμάτων σύστασις or σύστασις πραγμάτων; the order, system, concatenation of things, facts, or events). *Catharsis* was favored and given a medical-pathological interpretation by Bernays, and others before him, which created a tradition and a consensus on how to understand *catharsis* and consequently the essence of Tragedy itself. I argue here in favor of Mihail D. Petruševski's linguistic-philological proposal, and I extend it to include philosophy, where I propose and argue that we have a cathartic understanding of philosophy as well, that is, a cathartic understanding of the exogenous affects it produces or brings on the reader, in parallel to our perception that there is the *telos* and the essential

exogenic element of *catharsis* in our interpretation of what Tragedy, arts, in general, and psychoanalysis, do, shall do, aim at, or shall aim at, and be practised for.

At first, I will attempt to give my own account and interpretation of the theory of *catharsis* as the proclaimed essential part of Tragedy, in parallel to Petruševski's proposal and theory that the essence of Tragedy shall be found in the *pragmatōn systasis* rather than the *pathēmatōn katharsis*, to which theory I will agree. Then, since I am writing this essay as a philosopher, who is however informed by philological literature, I will not dive further into the original meaning that *catharsis* or more particularly *pathēmatōn katharsis* has in the work of Aristotle, nor in the original meaning or further interpretations of the *pragmatōn systasis*, but I will, instead, give my own hypothesis of its interpretation, which hypothesis might be more in line with how *catharsis* is understood within our modern and contemporary aesthetics and, consequently, our ethics and their political repercussions. My main objective is to give to *catharsis* such an interpretation that can be said to be a pragmatic interpretation, which, I think, fits what we are trying pragmatically to do with, at once, our art, our philosophy, and our psychoanalysis; three of the major contemporary discourses that shape our ethico-political *bios* (βίος). I will make the hypothesis that there are, at first, anthropological situated facts (ontologies, epistemologies, causations and origins) for that obsession with *catharsis*, which, anthropological facts, are then synthesizing our psychic world; this same psychic synthesis influenced and determined, or, even, compelled the interpretation of Aristotle's *Poetics* (Περὶ ποιητικῆς) as essentially pertaining to *catharsis*, and also formed, independently, but also as a result of re-enforcement, the guiding motive (as much as motif) and essence of all the rest of the aforementioned discourses.

I will offer arguments throughout this essay, regarding why we shall replace this *catharsis*-obsession not only in the reading of that specific Aristotelian passage –this was already done by the Macedonian non-*catharsis* but rather *systasis* school–, but also in the reading, and the producing of all of our humanistic arts, texts, discourses, or other endeavours (even quotidian endeavours, related to all of our habits). In other words, I will expand this prejudice, on *catharsis*, as constituting the (hermeneutical) motive at the ground of all of our discourses, and especially of Philosophy.

I will mostly focus on philosophy, which I will call "cathartic philosophy", and I will propose anti-habits or counter-habits of thought, and, in extension, of life, which are most preeminently *ephexis* (ἔφεξις) and *non-decision*, where, in both cases, there is a "respectful" distance between the reader/spectator/auditor/otherwise receiver of a text, narrative, image, sound, idea, argumentation, or discourse, and an distancing from arriving at a final "decision" (in François Laruelle's terms) as comprehension, sense, interpretation, judgment, conclusion, or *kataphasis* (κατάφασις is the word I will use in an anachronistic transcription of "decision").

In short, I will try to propose and argue on how the philological discovery of Petruševski can or shall be applied to Philosophy, and to other discourses and disciplines, and the pivotal ethico-political importance of this discovery to our general habits of thought and to our habits or forms of life.

Introduction: From Philology to “Cathartic Philosophy”

In *Poetics* (*Περὶ ποιητικῆς*) 6, 1449b, 24–28, Aristotle gives the following definition of Tragedy together with its *telos*, or aftereffect: “ἔστιν οὖν τραγωδία μίμησις πράξεως σπουδαίας καὶ τελείας μέγεθος ἐχούσης, ἡδυσμένω λόγῳ χωρὶς ἐκάστῳ τῶν εἰδῶν ἐν τοῖς μορίοις, δρώντων καὶ οὐ δι’ ἀπαγγελίας, δι’ ἐλέου καὶ φόβου περαινούσα τὴν τῶν τοιούτων παθημάτων κάθαρσιν.”² However, a first question is: does this phrase mean that the *katharsis* is achieved or performed through the arousal of pity and fear and other relevant or similar passions (*τοιούτων παθημάτων*), that is, is it performed in the psyche of the audience that follow the dramatization of events? Here it should be noted that the definition of pity and fear, as well of passions, *pathēmata* or *pathē* (*παθήματα* or *πάθη*), according to what it meant to Aristotle is another big issue. In other words, does he imply there an extra-textual effect of tragic *poiēsis* (*ποίησις*), when it is performed in theatric acts, or, is the *katharsis* accomplished or performed in an intra-textual manner, that is, due to the composition or the structure of the narrative, which, as a close system, performs justice (*dikē* / *δίκη*), or distributes justice (*moirasma* / *μοίρασμα*)³, accordingly, both to the good and the bad, as a counter-*hybris* (*ὑβρις*) in very simplistic terms. This latter is independent of the effect on the audience and is performed through and within narrative means. The first interpretation, which is a quite therapeutic one, I think, is of preference to hungry egotistical audiences who perceive *poiēsis* (every kind of art, i.e., literature, tragedy, as well as every other narrative, discourse, or textual materiality) as an *organon*, namely a means towards their own sensation-seeking, or their comfort, or their therapy, or their affective service. This is, however, the interpretation, which either as a cause or an effect, brought the attention to the *pathēmatōn katharsis* definition and purpose, or *telos* (*τέλος*; to have a *telos* is not even a given or an indebtedness

²The edition in the Ancient Greek original and the translation in English are from The Perseus Project (online), which uses the following two editions: Aristotle, *Aristotle’s Ars Poetica*, ed. R. Kassel, Clarendon Press Oxford, 1966 (The Perseus Project), available: <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3atext%3a1999.01.0055> (for the original); and Aristotle, *Poetics*, in *Aristotle in 23 Volumes*, Vol. 23, translated by W.H. Fyfe, Harvard University Press – William Heinemann Ltd., Cambridge, MA – London, 1932 (The Perseus Project), available: <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3atext%3a1999.01.0056> (for the translation). The translation given by W.H. Fyfe is the following: “Tragedy is, then, a representation of an action that is heroic and complete and of a certain magnitude—by means of language enriched with all kinds of ornament, each used separately in the different parts of the play: it represents men in action and does not use narrative, and through pity and fear it effects relief to these and similar emotions.”

³ See Appendix 2: *Philosophy vis-à-vis Anthropology*.

of any text or discourse) and *ousia* (οὐσία: essence, substance) of tragedy, as much as of other textual materialities, narratives, and at last, discourses. The *pathēmatōn katharsis* focus and subsequent definition is made to the expense of another recurring definition within the Aristotelian text, which is of Tragedy as *pragmatōn systasis*. The latter is not only a recurring phrase in *Poetics*, but, according to some philologists, it is the correct phrase that Aristotle used to define Tragedy, and *pathēmatōn katharsis* is an error in the copying of the manuscripts, due to many reasons, such, as Mihail Petruševski says,⁴ the fact that both phrases have the same number of characters and the same word endings (*pathēmatōn katharsin* – *pragmatōn systasin* / παθημάτων κάθαρσιν – πραγμάτων σύστασιν). Therefore, if in a manuscript the phrase was fading, it could be replaced by either/or; or it is maybe because of a prejudice and a presupposition that this was consciously or unconsciously decided to be the correct phrase due to the notion of *katharsis* appearing in Aristotle's *Politics* (8, 7, 1341b32), something that could not only have influenced the copier of the manuscripts but, also, the interpreters, in shifting their attention to *pathēmatōn katharsis* rather than *pragmatōn systasis*. However, as Petruševski writes in the process of arguing for his proposed correction, there are six instances in *Poetics* where *pragmatōn systasis* appears, which is a quite recurring occurrence to not be taken seriously. Thus in the definition of Tragedy the most important element becomes the pursuit (might be said the *telos* as well) of the arousal of the emotions or passions of fear and pity, through the successful *concatenation* of facts or events (that are sufficient, appropriate and successful in arousing such emotions or passions), that is, dramatic things, happenings, facts, events, acts, mythic elements or mythemes, plots, actions brought together and the structure or the way that they are brought together or are happening, or simply, I would say, *through the successful concatenation of the drama* (δράμα), and what *drama* meant originally, namely, the *deed* or *act*, deriving etymologically from *draō* (δράω), which meant, among other things, *to do*, or *accomplish*, before coming to more technically mean, in the theatrical performances, the theatrical act or play and becoming more technically classified as one of the three types of ancient Greek poetry (the other being epic and lyric poetry). Therefore, Petruševski's proposal for such a correction is more in equivalence with what Tragedy is, which is a *drama*, that is, a movement or interchange of a series of events, incidents, or, simply, of things happening.

In the first sentence of his treatise on *Poetics*, where Aristotle talks about Tragedy (before, he talked about of other poetic kinds) it seems more plausible and justifiable that Aristotle or any other philosopher, would have given a more

⁴ Mihailo/Mihajlo/Mihail or Michail Petruševski / Михаил Петрушевски, or M.D. Petruševski; sometimes written, in non-Macedonian contexts, as Petrushevski. M.D. Petruševski first came to the solution of the tragic *katharsis* in Aristotle's *poetics* in 1942, and published his first article dealing with his finding in 1948 and then in 1954. See Petruševski (1948), and Petruševski (1954a).

structural definition of Tragedy as extracted from its structural elements, than a definition based on the aftereffects that such a successful *concatenation of the tragic drama* could evoke to the audience; we are there not yet in the *theatron* (θέατρον), we are still on paper, on the textual and narratological elements of what he begins to reflect upon. If *pathēmātōn katharsis* appeared later, it would be more convincible. In other words, according to Aristotle, or, in general, according to the most systematic philosophical practice as fore mostly introduced and initiated by Aristotle, in the beginning one starts with definitions, which include the famous *onomatōn episkepsis* (ονομάτων επίσκεψις), that is, the visiting and re-visiting of the meanings of words; these definitions try to capture the *ousia* (οὐσία: essence, substance) of what something/an existent/a being/an ontic (*to on / τό ὄν*) is, especially in the case of Aristotle, whose work, and mostly his *Metaphysics*, is all about the *is*, that is, *ousiai* (οὐσίαι).

At last, in order to further justify the structural definition of the essence of Tragedy in the famous first phrase of the definition of Tragedy in the *Poetics*, where the error occurs, I would pay attention to the following words and phrases that Aristotle is using: *teleias* (τελείας), *hēdysmenō logō* (ἡδυσμένῳ λόγῳ), *moriois* (μορίοις), *drōntōn kai ou di' arangelias* (δρώντων καὶ οὐ δι' ἀπαγγελίας). Taking one by one, firstly, *teleias* signifies a completeness of something in itself, thus, here, a self-completeness would be a textual, or a narrative completeness, which is a self-completeness deriving from the composition of things, of which, composition, each text, or narrative, or I would further say, each discourse, consists of (acts, events, facts, myths, rhetorical elements, signs, signifiers, arguments, propositions, hypotheses, etc.); these are, consequently, strictly endogenic factors, and *not* exogenic ones, such as the effect to the audience, be it *catharsis*⁵ or other. Secondly, *hēdysmenō logō*, means pleasurable means of expression, or simply pleasurable language; language is appearing here, thus we are in the realm of language, the intra-realm of Tragedy or any other art, or discourse. Thirdly, *moriois*, means parts or components, and, more specifically, linguistic parts or components: *hēdysmenō logō chōris hekastō tōn eidōn en tois moriois* (ἡδυσμένῳ λόγῳ χωρὶς ἐκάστῳ τῶν εἰδῶν ἐν τοῖς μορίοις), thus we are still in the composition or the structural part of the Tragedy, or its constitutive substances, that is, at its *pragmata* (πράγματα), whichever these *pragmata* one finds them to be

⁵I should preliminary note here, that, although the distinction is not always that clear, and therefore I might be slightly inconsistent, when I use *katharsis* with the letter 'K', I mean the transcription of the Greek term as it is actually used in Aristotle's work or in the commentaries of his work; when I use the word *catharsis*, a more Latinised version of *katharsis* and the version of the word as it is used in English today, I rather mean my own interpretative attention to this word and also my understanding of it (as it came to be as an idea and term in the contemporary or near-contemporary intellectual milieu), together with my general proposal that *catharsis* is used implicitly, mostly, but also explicitly, as a universal implicit *telos* or pursuit of all *humanistic* discourses. And I underline here the *humanism*, since these discourses are made *by* humans, *for* humans, with and for *humanistic* and *anthropocentric* only intentions, purposes, or even anthropic-obsessions, or, as I would call them, "anthropomanias".

in Tragedy, or each other text or, consequently, discourse. Fourthly, regarding *drōntōn kai ou di' apangelias* (δρώντων καὶ οὐ δι' ἀπαγγελίας), I will partly take the definition from the beginning in order to explain their meaning: Tragedy is the imitation (*mimesis* / μίμησις) of acts, events, etc., which are having a magnitude or amplitude, and it (*mimēsis*) is complete in itself; it is expressed or executed in a pleasurable (expressions/means of) language, with each of the Tragedy's linguistic means being used separately in the different parts of the work (*hēdysmenō logō chōris hekastō tōn eidōn en tois moriois*); the *mimēsis* (μίμησις) of acts, or simply the plot, is executed or expressed or performed in a dramatic (in terms of theatrical acts, or events), and not in a narrative form (*drōntōn kai ou di' apangelias*). So, the way that the *mimēsis*, (for others the *katharsis*, too), is performed in Tragedy, "operated", "brought to completion" or "carried forward",⁶ or is *plotted*, (I would say), and consequently the way that Tragedy itself, as a form of *poiēsis* or as a discourse, is performed, or is executed, is through drama and not diction or recitation; we are still thus in the realm of diction, language, text, discourse, and the composition, concatenation, or even the systematicity of their parts.

However, what does *katharsis* mean in the first place? The most popular transcriptions, by philologists, are *katharsis* as purification (*purificatio*), as emotional discharge or lustration (*lustratio*), and as purgation (*purgatio*). There is an array of different attempts to give meanings and interpretations to *katharsis*,⁷ and here I will only mention the very influential interpretation of Jacob (Jakob) Bernays, who, in his book *Grundzüge der verlorenen Abhandlung des Aristoteles über Wirkung der Tragödie* (1857),⁸ medicalized the interpretation of *katharsis*, and this is the interpretation which did not only infiltrate philologists, but it is also the interpretation that infiltrated and metastasized to non-philological discourses, such as philosophy (e.g., Nietzsche) and psychoanalysis (e.g., Freud), but also the public general scientific and intellectual culture and the pop-culture. This medicalized-therapeutic interpretation is important to keep in mind for some of the claims and hypotheses that I will make later. This interpretation by Bernays is anticipated in a less systematic way by the "pathological" interpretation of *katharsis*, by H. Weil (1848), as the therapy of morbid passions, such as pity and fear. Bernays (1857) maintains, in Section IV, that there is a lost treatise by Aristotle on the effects of the Tragedy. Moreover, Bernays is once more prejudiced regarding this interpretation of him by another treatise of Aristotle, which is the *Politics* (1341b32), as well as other exogenic factors, such as the fact that Aristotle's father Nicomachus was a doctor, and thus Aristotle would

⁶ All three are verbs used by Else (1957), 438, to explain how *catharsis* is operated according to the cathartic school.

⁷ See Appendix 1: *Catharsis*.

⁸ Bernays (1857). Cf. also, Bernays (1853/1880), Bernays (1859/1880), Bernays (1880/1968), Bernays (1857/1970), and Bernays (2006). For some secondary literature on Bernays, see Vöhler and Linck (2009), Trembl (1997), Gödde (2009), and for a recent discussion of Bernays's influence on Nietzsche, see Huang (2021).

plausibly, according to Bernays, have in mind such a medicalized definition, and other relevant argumentations or rather justifications of his argument and hypothesis.

The most serious and an-orthodox or even heretical challenge made to the *pathēmatōn katharsis* status quo, was Petruševski's challenge, first in 1948 and more systematically in 1954, where he linguistically emended the *pathēmatōn katharsis* phrase to *pragmatōn systasis: tēn tōn toioutōn pragmatōn systasin* (τὴν τῶν τοιούτων πραγμάτων σύστασιν), instead of *tēn tōn toioutōn pathēmatōn katharsin* (τὴν τῶν τοιούτων παθημάτων κάθαρσιν). In 1919, a relevant proposal was made by Heinrich Otte, namely that *pathēmatōn* should be replaced by *pragmatōn*, an ambivalent and very much criticized proposal, which Petruševski supports, but extends in an unprecedented way, which can be seen independently of Otte's proposal. In 1992, Elena Koleva with her work "The Composition of Acts as a Poetic Principle", further confirmed Petruševski theoretically.⁹ – This same Journal that accommodates the present essay, is named *Systasis* due the aforementioned phrase, and is directly related to this Macedonian Petruševski-Koleva originality. Katerina Kolozova is the third piece in this Macedonian tradition, through whom I personally came to hear of Petruševski, at a time when, by coincidence, I happened to be thinking about Tragedy, *catharsis*, and how *catharsis* infiltrated philosophy itself, in a way that I found quite controversial, ambivalent, arbitrary and scandalous–.¹⁰

Before moving forward, it is worth mentioning that there were lighter and more "conservative" attempts to challenge the imperialism and authority of *katharsis* in *Poetics*, as well as in relation to Tragedy, in general, such as Gerald F. Else's challenge, where he tried to reconstruct the meaning of the term or the notion of *katharsis* (κάθαρσις),¹¹ instead of replacing it with *systasis* (σύστασις); in doing so, as it will become obvious, he favours a structural interpretation of *katharsis*, which has common ground with Petruševski's interpretation, but derives from different ideas and arguments. Else revisits older unorthodox approaches to the interpretation of key terms of *Poetics*, such as that of *katharsis*, and ends up diagnosing a "deep-seated prejudice", which "has been taken for granted, without argument, that the catharsis-clause, whatever it means, has to do with the emotional reaction of the spectator."¹² For Else, the catharsis is not a change or end-product in the spectator's soul, or in the fear and pity (i.e., the dispositions to them) in his soul, but a process carried forward in the emotional material of the play by its structural elements, above all by the recognition. For the recognition is the pay-off, to use a vulgar but expressive modernism; or, in more conventional figure, it is the hinge on which the emotional structure of the play turns. The catharsis, that is, the purification

⁹ See primarily Otte (1917–8/1919), 145–149, and also Otte (1912), Koleva (1992), and Kolozova (2015). For some further works that discuss *catharsis*, or object the traditional definition of *catharsis*, or object to *catharsis* as the pivotal part of Tragedy and of Aristotle's treatise on Tragedy within *Poetics* (including or excluding reference to Petruševski's contribution), see Appendix 1: *Catharsis*.

¹⁰ Another contributor in this Macedonian tradition is Ivan Djeparoski. See Djeparoski [Депароски] (1979), and Djeparoski [Депароски] (2020).

¹¹ Else (1957).

¹² Ibid. 227.

Neither "*pathēmatōn*", nor "*symptomātōn*", or "*kataphaseōn*" *katharsis*:
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of the tragic act by the demonstration that its motive was not *μαρόν*, is accomplished by the whole structure of the drama, but above all by the recognition.¹³

Two questions remain. First, is the expectation 'our or that of the hero? The question needs only to be stated to answer itself; for the whole *raison d'être* of the paradoxicality was (9. 52a2-4) its emotional effect on 'us,' the audience (or the reader). The rest of the paradox is that *we* are affected, surprised, moved to pity, etc., not that the hero is. It lies in the nature of the case that the hero will be surprised and emotionally affected also. Only—and this is the decisive argument against those (Vahlen, Lock, Lucas) who make the reversal of the hero's intention or expectation the essence of *peripety*—his realization of the change and his consequent emotional reaction to it are subsumed by Aristotle under 'recognition.'¹⁴

Furthermore, building onto this structural interpretation of *catharsis*, rather than the medicalized-therapeutic one, Else elsewhere, while commenting on the passions of pity and fear, the *mimēsis*, and what carries forward the *catharsis*, explains:

δι' ἐλέου και φόβου: the preposition can perfectly well mean 'through (a sequence of), in the course of,' referring not to an emotional end-effect with which we leave the theater, but to pity and fear as they are incorporated in the structure of the play by the poet.¹⁵

What, now, 'carries forward' the purification through the course of the play? Not the text, as a body of words, or the performance of the text in a theater, but the *process of imitation* which tragedy essentially is. Tragedy, which imitates action, is itself an action. According to Aristotle's analysis, which is put forward and strongly emphasized later in this same chapter, this action is represented by the plot: the plot *is* the imitation of it. Plot is the *ἀρχή και οἶον ψυχῆ* of tragedy: i.e., its principle of motion, its soul, as it were. The purification, then, is carried forward by the plot, the 'structure of events' which is the poet's own indispensable contribution to the play. What this means cannot be seen clearly or fully until we have studied chapters 13 and 14. But there is a corollary that can be seen at once: this reading makes *catharsis* a process not an end-result, and *a process operated by the poet through his 'structure of events.'* It follows that some tragedies will accomplish it supremely well, others less well, still others, it may be, not at all. If *catharsis* depends on the constructive activity of the poet, it ceases to be a standard result, automatically attained by any play called 'tragedy.'

As for *κάθαρσιν* itself, we shall have to reserve our explanation of it also till later. Again, however, one fact is clear at once. If the *παθημάτων* are incidents or actions rather than emotions, then *κάθαρσιν* must mean purification of some kind, not purgation: for the incidents are certainly not to be purged out of the play.¹⁶

In the note on that same comment, he cites the relevant words used by Aristotle, which justify his interpretation: "'built into the events,' i.e. woven into the plot, 14.53b13."¹⁷ Else, in juxtaposing his theory with that of Bernays and of others who support the medicalized-therapeutic theory of *catharsis*, says that, unlike theirs, the

¹³ Ibid. 439.

¹⁴ Ibid. 345.

¹⁵ Ibid. 229.

¹⁶ Ibid. 230–231.

¹⁷ Ibid. 229, n. 29.

weakness of his theory “does not fit the *Politics* passage” (8. 7. 1341b 38 ff.)¹⁸ and, I would add, that certain theories become “weak” because of not fitting the humanistic political message, too, where everything is created in the service of the human / humanity / humanism, or as Else says about Tragedy, “the whole *raison d’ être*” of Tragedy, and I would add, of our humanistic discourses, as much, becomes their “emotional effect” (and affect, I add) “on ‘us,’ the audience (or the reader)”.¹⁹ But no discourse, idea, text, narrative, thought, or other, is there to pamper us, or clean us, or comfort us, or accommodate us (the human in general, or the “me” as human, and the “me” as man for most of history).

I will, later, talk, accordingly, of the “pious virtue of pamper-diapers” in relation to philosophy, in the same sense. Part of my proposed anti- or counter-habits of thought, and in extension of life, as I will further explain later, which are most preeminently *ephexis* and *non-decision*, is that in both cases there is a “respectful” distance between the reader/spectator/auditor/otherwise receiver of a text, narrative, image, sound, idea, argumentation, or discourse, and a distanciation from arriving at a *final ‘decision’* (in François Laruelle’s terms) as comprehension, sense, interpretation, judgment, conclusion, or *kataphasis* (κατάφασις; *kataphasis* is the word I will use in an anachronistic transcription of ‘decision’).

The distanciation from the needy pampering of our needs by the discourse of an Other, as well as by the whole existence of the Other, as much as our need to pamper the Other in this way, so as to like us or fulfill our needs and accommodate us or be of our service, is two-way: it appeals to the receiver of an art, a theory, discourse, etc., as well as to the creator, who most of the time exploits ideas, thoughts, and the discourses of others or even of their own, to their own comfort and service, and through them attempts to exploit others, too; and I am especially talking from and through the example most known to me, which is that of the philosopher, but such exploitation and lust for *decision*, as well as of getting asphyxiatingly *close* to things so much that they will merge with oneself, applies to all our humanistic and anthropocentric discourses. We do not care for the hero of the tragic or other narrative, no more than for the author behind him, and no more than for the idea or proposal of a philosophical “narrative” or discourse; we, with full audacity and imprudence (in the very ancient sense of *anaideia* / ἀναίδεια as lack of *aidōs* / αἰδώς), and in a total *hybris* (ὑβρις), seek for sensations and emotions for ourselves, as one enjoyment²⁰ among others; as long as we gain them, we turn off the television, we walk out the door of the theatre, we fold the book, and we feel catharted, de-toxified from emotions and affective responsibilities we should be having in relation to ourselves and

¹⁸ Ibid 231, n. 36.

¹⁹ Ibid. 345.

²⁰ Cf. Christodoulou (2018).

to others, –we feel absolved from everything; this delusional and made-up catharsis has become the quick, easily digested *lysis* (λύσις: solution, resolution, resolve, disentanglement, loosening, rupture, or even determination, and decision) to all responsibility and minimal inter-subjectivity and sociality. We can see here a parallelism with the seeking for enjoyments in technological achievements and comforts, where, as long we fulfill our sensations, we throw the no-longer used achievements and comforts away at the expense of others and the general environmental ecology.

Therefore, I would say, we shall keep an *ephexis* to *systasin pragmatōn*, a contemplative and non-‘decisive’ distance that will permit to examine *systasis* for what it is or could be, except from what it comfortably serves us to be, that is, what it *is* independently of our presumptions, prejudices, biases, and pampering zones, thus what the *systasis* of the other or of another *is*, or of the *cosmos* (κόσμος), *physis* (φύσις), etc. The easiest *systasis pragmatōn* for the pampered, within humanism, human, is the *systasis pragmatōn* that was divinely created for his own purposes and accommodation, and it is very easy to develop and get habituated to rituals that will discharge him, purify him, clarify, cathart him, clean and clear him out from getting to know and from being kin to the *systasis pragmatōn* as a *physis*, which is not external to him but incorporates him, which “impure”, “filthy” *physis* the catharted separatist man constantly renders to a separated external *nature*. If an *ephexis* to *systasin pragmatōn* is violated, then its cause is the sought *catharsis* of the responsibility to getting to know and understand it, as well as to (ethologically, ethically and politically) act on that understanding in an act of minimal kinship or sociality. *Catharsis* in this sense becomes the impediment or the hindrance of *ephexis*, and thus of the approaching of the *systasis pragmatōn*, as the *systasis* of the world, the *cosmos*, the object, the other, oneself, reality, etc. *Catharsis* is, in other words, one step before breaking with the “Reality-Principle” [Freud’s *Realitätsprinzip*] for the sake, or not, of a “Pleasure-Principle” [Freud’s *Lustprinzip*]. *Catharsis* has, thus, a central role, not only in anthropology and the rituals of purification, the notions of the clean or the pure and the filthy, but also in neurosis, psychosis, and perversion, where, in each of them, there is *catharsis* and cathartic rituals taking place; culture(s) or civilization(s), and their partly institutions (religion, art, philosophy, etc.), along with their embedded humanism, have imperialized habitudes all over. These humanistic, or rather masculinistic-patriarchal cultures, promote such cathartic rituals that condemn humans to remain ignorant of the *systasis pragmatōn*, that is, generally, of the real and reality, and, thus, the ‘Reality-Principle’ becomes ignored or unattained and predisposes humans to neurosis, psychosis, and perversion; such a neurotico-psychotico-perverted culture is not a future or a parallel imagined dystopia but it is escalating since classical times (with *anthrōpos* / ἄνθρωπος at the centre of the universe), or even before, since the establishment of patriarchal culture, and it is more systematically escalating since

we have defined Humanism and programmatically rendered it our holy grail; more escalations can be seen in capitalism and neo-liberalism, and in every major crisis within them, such as recently the ongoing pandemic crisis (although the series of crises is the *modus operandi* or the set of tactics of the capitalistic habitus).

What I am further trying to do here, among other proposals, is to show that there are reasons and arguments that can be apposed in regard to why this “deep-seated prejudice”, which “has been taken for granted, without argument, that the catharsis-clause, whatever it means, has to do with the emotional reaction of the spectator”²¹, was initiated in the first place, and that it is a prejudiced proposition which has been taken for granted *willingly* or *deliberately*; I will offer arguments throughout this essay, regarding why we shall replace this catharsis-obsession not only in the reading of this specific Aristotelian passage –this was already done by the Macedonian non-cathartic but rather *systasis* school–, but also in the reading, and the producing of all of our humanistic arts, texts, discourses, or other (even quotidian, related to all of our habits) endeavours. In other words, I will expand this prejudice as being the (hermeneutical) motive at the ground of all of our discourses, and especially of Philosophy.²²

Continuing with some further notes on the Aristotelian *catharsis* controversy, Georgoulis (1955) agrees that *katharsis* is not the right word at the first introductory definition of Tragedy, and placing *katharsis* there is a modern aesthetic prejudice or, I would say, an aesthetical anachronism, since one is imposing modern aesthetic categories on an ancient text. Georgoulis, on other hand, in the same article, proposes, instead, the replacement of *pathēmatōn katharsin* with *pathēmaton mimēsin*, thus moving in-between the traditional interpretation and the one of Petruševski, who he knew well, and calls “a friend”. – He also published a further commentary on Petruševski’s famous 1954 article (Georgoulis 1963). – Georgoulis is proposing that the essential characteristic of Tragedy is the *mimēsis* of fearful/horrific (*phobera* / φοβερά) and pitiful (*eleēina* / ἐλεεινά)²³ passions/sensations/affects/emotions. However, a just critique is that the replacement of *katharsin* with *mimēsin* could be considered a pleonasm or a redundancy, or even a tautology, since the word *mimēsis* is already mentioned few words before, and such broad speech would be an unnecessary repetition, unlike the thinking and writing habits of Aristotle.

Furthermore, another note, is that there must be caution as to the meaning of these words, which are not exactly fear and pity as we mean them today, but more general categories of emotions/passions that shall be seen as quantities of emotions, than qualities; paying attention to the words that Aristotle uses in the first sentence

²¹ Else (1957), 227.

²² Cf. n. 33 in this paper.

²³ Concerning φοβερά and ἐλεεινά: “δι’ ἐλέου καὶ φόβου περαίνουσα τὴν τῶν τοιούτων παθημάτων κάθαρσιν”: here fearful/horrific are corresponding to the τοιούτων, which refers to passions appropriate or capable/efficient in arousing pity and fear (according to the meaning of these words in Ancient Greek).

of his treatise on Tragedy, in the *Poetics*, it is observed that he utilizes the words *spoudaias*, *teleias* and *megethos* (σπουδαίας, τελείας and μέγεθος), thus signifying qualities, or the importance, the amplitude, or the magnitude of things; with these adjectives he refers to Tragedy, but, if Tragedy is the main subject of investigation, research, reference and disquisition there, more or less, deductively, the same measures and characteristics are sympathetically transmitted and attributed to its lesser constitutive elements, which are the constitute elements utilized for its definition or essence (and in the other way round, inductively): these are the emotions that are aroused *through* its *composition* of dramatic elements (*drōntōn* [...], *di' eleou kai fobou* / δρώντων [...], δι' ἐλέου καὶ φόβου). Given these reflexions, in general, I would interpret *phobera* (φοβερά) as being the important, wonderful, terrific, formidable, severe, the ones having magnitude or amplitude, and *eleeina* (ἐλεεινά) as being the deplorable, or object (passions, sensations, effects, emotions etc.). Two further comments concern the notion of *pathēmata* (παθήματα), which can be translated as emotions, affects, or rather passions, and the notion of *pragmatōn systasis*, which can be translated as composition, concatenation, assemblage, weaving, or system of things, mythemes, acts, actions, elements, events. For the contexts and purposes that I will be using this phrase later, I will stay with the *pragmatōn* as more literally meaning things, and with *systasis* as meaning composition, construction, or system/systematicity, and I will apply it to all textual elements or signs, which then produce, on a second level, signifiers, rhetorical elements, elements of discourses, tropes, arguments, or other "things". In that way, I will be able to apply both the *pathēmatōn katharsis* and the *pragmatōn systasis* to other discourses: the artistic, the technological, the psychoanalytical, and more particularly and emphatically to the philosophical one.

Since, as said, I am writing this essay as a philosopher, I will not dive further into the original meaning that *katharsis* or more particularly the *pathēmatōn katharsis* or the *pragmatōn systasis* had or were given, but I will give my own hypotheses on their interpretation, which interpretation will ponder on how *catharsis* is received, understood and interpreted within our modern and contemporary aesthetics and, therefore, our ethico-political discourses. This interpretation can be said to be a pragmatic one, examining the pragmatic outcomes of art, philosophy, and psychoanalysis and our motivations or expectations from art, philosophy, and psychoanalysis, which are three of the core discourses that constitute our (ethico-political) *bios*. In other words, I am starting from a phenomenological or auto-phenomenographical standpoint, where I observe some affective commonalities between these three major discourses, that is, how their structure or systematicity – it could be rather said, their *systasis*, or *pragmatōn systasis*, their system of elements, events, methods, arguments, technics, or habits – works and affects the subject, or works in affecting the subject; through such an observation and phenomenological analysis, I happened to notice

that all three sublimate, pay attention to, and locate their essence (*ousia* / οὐσία) to their *pathēmatōn katharsis*, instead of their *pragmatōn systasis* (a more qualitative and pragmatic analysis of their aim/*telos*) or/and their *pathēmatōn mimēsis*, along with, I would add, their *pragmatōn mimēsis* (both latter ones constituting a more descriptive analysis of their essence or/and *telos*), in the same way that philologists and other scholars pay attention to, sublimate, and locate the *ousia* of the tragic discourse, namely of Tragedy, as well as, more extensively, of *poiēsis* (ποίησις: creative discourse) or *technē* (τέχνη: art; technical discourses, technics, creative technics), in general, to the *katharsis* rather than the *systasis* or/and *mimēsis*. – It is not by chance, I think, that *pathēmatōn katharsis* could be said to also constitute the given *ousia* of Technology, as mostly understood today, that is, the material technological achievements and comforts, as a continuation from the *technē* (τέχνη), and the technics. – This was my initial random observation on the cathartic motive of different discourses and disciplines, and then, shortly after formulating it, as aforementioned, I happened to come across Petruševski's proposal, through a paper of Katerina Kolozova on it (Kolozova 2015), which lead me to a more extensive analysis of my initial intuition that art, philosophy, and psychoanalysis, as well as technology, essentially operate, mistakenly so, on a cathartic conviction; for me, this is a “tragic” error, since such a substantial conviction, which is an ontological(-izing) and essentializing one, cannot but have repercussions and expected practical and dangerous discontents on ethics and politics. In other words, this one obsessive ontological error, or even delusion, as to how art, philosophy, psychoanalysis, and technology operate and towards which essential (related to their essence/*ousia*) *telos* (τέλος: purpose, aim result), could be the same ontological(-izing) fallacy regarding the *ousia* of *poiētikē technē* (ποιητική τέχνη), including Tragedy, which lead philologists to the interpretational frenzy and obsession with *katharsis*. I think, and I propose, that this error shall not be taken lightly, since ontologies, and thus the given essences of things, discourses, and beings (*onta* / ὄντα), in general, necessarily create ethologies (habits of being) of those same things, discourses, beings (*onta*), and then, ethologies necessarily lead to the corresponding assumed ethics of and for those same ones, which, finally, they create politics, and, consequently, in the larger scheme, our forms (as habits, styles, or ways) of life. I therefore argue against what I will call “cathartic philosophy”, which is my focus here, and in parallel against “cathartic art” and “cathartic psychoanalysis/psychotherapy”. I will make the hypothesis that there are, at first, anthropologically situated facts (ontologies, epistemologies, causations and origins) for that obsession with *katharsis*, which anthropological facts are then synthesizing our psychic world; this same psychic synthesis influenced and determined, or, even, compelled the interpretation of Aristotle's *Poetics* as essentially pertaining to *katharsis*, and also formed, independently, but also as a result of re-enforcement, the guiding motive and essence of all the rest of the aforementioned discourses.

Essaying-in-philosophy as an *ephexis* in (a) 'decision' (κατάφασις), sympathetic to *ostranenie* but allergic to *catharsis*: the case of the philosophical "pampering" and "spoonfeeding"

In order to further make my point on the importance and the applications that Petruševski's discovery or proposal can have on Philosophy, I will, at first, go through some basic elements of Nietzsche's use of *ephexis*, as well as his preference of the aphorism, and his conception of the philosopher, who, according to Nietzsche²⁴, is the one wandering, holding and *tasting/savoring* (*sapio-sapiens-sisyphos*) different opinions, yet not remaining, obsessing or clinging to any of them. I will, as well, go through some basic elements of François Laruelle's 'non-standard-philosophy' or simply 'non-philosophy', and the philosophical reflex, tendency, impulse, bias, or presupposition that is prior to all Philosophy, which holds that one needs to arrive at a philosophical decision (what I translated, into ancient Greek, in an anachronistic manner, as *kataphasis* / *κατάφασις*), where every philosophical position or theory is one such decision (rationalism, idealism, empiricism materialism, etc.).^{25,26}

After all these short preambles, I will arrive at the mid-conclusion or the semi-"decision", or, rather, the quasi-"decision", of how the essay is at first to be understood as an extended aphorism or a plurality/society/community/kinship of aphorisms coming together (a *systasis* of aphorisms), and that both the essay, as a form, and the essayistic style, within other forms (fictional and non-fictional ones, e.g., the treatise, and the novel), are to be understood as, what I propose to be, an *Ephexis*

²⁴ See Shapiro (2017), 89–90, Acharya (2011), 279–280, and Babich (2006), 112, n.20.

²⁵ Again, I will not appose here a detailed textbook overview or commentary on François Laruelle's philosophy, which is very rich and complex in itself, but only scarce elements of it, intermixed with my own interpretation of it. I am not citing any specific of his works, since I am apposing my general impression and understanding after reading a variety of his works, as well as commentaries on his work. However, in very few words, he proposed the concept or the practice of "non-standard philosophy", or simply of "Non-Philosophy". I quote from only one place of his work, although a vast number of other definitions are available, which cover different aspects of this multi-faceted practice and concept of "Non-Philosophy". I choose a citation from the very first page of François Laruelle's *Philosophy and Non-Philosophy* (1989/2013), 1 (Preface): "Rather than a new philosophy, this work proposes a new practice of philosophy that detaches it from its own authority and includes it within a thought whose origin is wholly other than philosophical—a thought of the One rather than of Being—and which is also scientific rather than ontological." The description of the aforementioned book is also enlightening on what non-philosophy is: "Non-philosophy is not the negation of philosophy, but the suspension of philosophy's claim to think the real (Principle of Sufficient Philosophy), and it is the invention of new usages of thought and language that disrupt the rational narrative of the real."

²⁶ Some of the following passages from this section on *ephexis*, as well as some other parts from the following sections, were written, at first, for my Thesis (Christodoulou 2022a), and then they appear in an article currently under publication (Christodoulou 2022b). However, the original propositions on how the philological discovery of Petruševski can or shall be applied to Philosophy, and the pivotal ethico-political importance of this discovery to our general habits of thought and forms of life, is the exclusive *donné* to and of this article, which I prefer to call essay, in terms of style or form.

off/from/to/in (philosophical) decision. This means that the essayistic element (form or/and style) is to be understood as a democratic representative of thought, as an open-er of/to dialogue, that is, as an extended proposition, and, thus, as the exemplary *non-philosophical* form/style, namely, as the form/style that could afford and realize best what Laruelle sees in philosophy; and, at last, since the essay impregnates all of the above, it will also deserve the proposal of being the most *pure* and most representative philosophical form or style, because, anyway, it can, as such, that is, as an essay/aphorism, be located/excavated in the origins of philosophy. Probably the treatise, with its systematic structure that prevailed later, is to be received as a *hybrid* form, or a pollutant form/style located in-between theologico-rhetorical²⁷ (highly obsessive argumentation, analyticity, compulsive need and effort to persuade, and thus invention and employment of various argumentative and logical structures) and philosophical thought. I will all along propose that philosophical thought (every other philosophical thought/theory, and philosophical thought *par excellence*) does not or shall not bother to persuade, or to battle towards all the possible counter-arguments, which, philosophical thought, via all these methods/ways, intends to prove itself as invincible to them and as the only one crowned authenticity of all thought (scientific, fictional thought, etc.), or of all other philosophical positions/decisions/theories (see Laruelle's "democracy of all thought"), posing thus as a dictatorial voice, as it often does in the treatise.

Philosophy and philosophical movement (because it shall be seen as a movement, and as a thought-in-motion, rather than as a road, a method/a *mētis* (μητις) *towards* an arrived at/stable decision-place) is more like a trickster (such tricksters existed in the first philosophers, such as in Socrates and the Cynics, and possibly in many of the pre-Socratics, as anecdotal references inform), who jumps in to propose, to tease, to humorize and to terrorize (the grotesque), to disturb, to shake the waters, and then to move somewhere else –to taste (*sapio*) another conceptual plane of thought. In short, the essay is an *asketic* [from *askēsis* / ἄσκησις; rather than *ascetic*, from asceticism, although both *askēsis* and then asceticism are deriving from the same ety-

²⁷ All universities were once theological colleges – scholasticism, seminar, canon, ... -. It could be even observed that rationalism, which came to be one of the core values in philosophical discourse, style, and methodology, has been the reminiscent of the close encounters of philosophy with Theology, and more specifically with the (rationalistic) theological argumentation.

mology of *askeō* / ἀσκέω], *curious*²⁸, *honest*, *hopeful*²⁹, *wonder-ful* (non-contemptuous),³⁰ (and *wander-ful*) attempt (*essay*) towards thinking, as it is Philosophy: *anarchic* in its essence and its praxis,³¹ or as it thus shall be, instead of having become a discipline of *asceticism* and *contempt* (*mépris*). My hypothesis and aimed partly-conclusion is that *essaying-in-philosophy* is an *ephexis* in/from decision, or, in other words, that to attempt to philosophize is to approach philosophy by the way or the method of keeping an *ephexis*, a distance, a suspension, a withdrawal from *interpretation*, according to Nietzsche; and in combination to Laruelle's philosophical *decision*, it is an *ephexis* in/from arriving at a decision, that is, an *ephexis* from our reflex, impulse, tendency or even philosophical compulsion of arriving at a philosophical decision; and from the pre-condition of this reflex, which is the presumption or presupposition of the *sufficiency* of philosophy, and the openness (lack of *resistance*; Laruelle calls for the "least resistance" possible in his "non-standard-philosophy") towards philosophy as being able of delivering us (to) the real (*le Réel*; or the *One*, in Laruelle's terms).

²⁸ For the substance of philosophy, as a disturbance of mental habits, and for an exposition of new forms and ways/methods of thinking, for the role of *curiosity* (except from its aforementioned role and praise in the authors of enlightenment), on *askēsis*, and on the essay, see Foucault (1984/1990), 8–9. Another philosopher, who reveals the importance of *askēsis*, especially in ancient philosophy, is Pierre Hadot. For ancient philosophers, philosophy was mostly a living philosophy, or a philosophy *of, in, and for* life, that is, a philosophy of praxis, and a praxis of philosophy, or a (spiritual) exercise (*askēsis*); philosophy was an act transforming one's *theory* or view/vision of the *cosmos/world*, and oneself. To think differently meant to live differently, or, in other words, new *forms-of-thought* lead to new *forms-of-life*. The formal elements of the method of the philosophical discourse can be listed or broken down (at least according to the stoico-platonic list as survived by Philo of Alexandria) to "research (*zetesis*), thorough investigation (*skepsis*), reading (*anagnosis*), listening (*akroasis*), attention (*prosoche*), self-mastery (*enkrateia*), and indifference to indifferent things." See Hadot (1995), 84.

²⁹ Alluding to Charles S. Peirce's account on the importance of *hope*, as well as of *doubt*, in Philosophy and philosophical methodology, more specifically, the role of *hope* as a motivating "sentiment" for inquiry, or, even, *hope's* precondition for inquiry. See Stern (2021), and Hookway (2012), 59–60, where he says that Peirce described the final opinion or truth as a *hope*; this is a statement that reminds, as well, Laruelle's "final decision". See also, Cooke (2005), Pihlström (2009), 111–116 ("Pragmatist metaphysics of hope"), Westbrook (2005), and Bergman, Paavola, and Queiroz (eds.), 'Hope', articles compiled in: *Digital Companion to C. S. Peirce*, created and maintained by Mats Bergman, Sami Paavola, and João Queiroz, online at: <http://www.commens.org/keywords/keyword/hope>.

³⁰ Referring to Peter Sloterdijk's relevant statement on wonder and the ancient *thaumazein* in Sloterdijk (2011/2016), 1–3. Sloterdijk speaks of *contempt* as the origin of philosophy as seen today, which contempt (*mépris*) can, in a way, be seen as the other of *wonder*.

³¹ To follow and to build upon Catherine Malabou's "anarchic" thought and thought on anarchy: on the being as anarchic, and the clitoris as an anarchist. Catherine Malabou, characterizes the being as an anarchist in her talk "Why the Need for a Philosophical Exploration of Anarchism Today?": see Malabou (2021). Her main inquiry is about the un-governable part of each being. This is part of her philosophical thought or of her specific project on anarchism and philosophy; the clitoris, as Catherine Malabou declared her, is an anarchist, as well: see, Malabou (2020). This essay is part of her larger project, in process, on Philosophy and Anarchism.

It should not be omitted that Viktor Shklovsky, within Russian Formalism, in his essay “Art as Technique” (1917),³² developed the concept of *ostranenie* (found as *defamiliarization*, or *estrangement*, as well). – It should also be noted that Paul Ricoeur’s “hermeneutics of faith” (the attempted restoration of a/the text’s meaning/meanings) and “hermeneutics of suspicion” (the attempted retrieval of a/the meaning/meanings that were concealed or masked), – although too much suspicion and untruthfulness is a discontent of modernity, and can lead to what I call a “philosophical psychosis”; some deconstructionists have already criticized such hermeneutics, as for example Shoshana Felman³³ – can be proposed as accompanying methods to both the Nietzschean “*ephexis*”, the Laruellian “*non-decision*”, as well as the Shklovskian “*ostranenie*”. –³⁴ Through *ostranenie*, one gives back life, or revitalizes something that, in Shklovsky’s case, in literature, has become a cliché, or nearly a digested automation, that is, an over-familiarization. This happens also in the everyday use of language, where one, through over-familiarization, canons, automations, and clichés, becomes desensitized in sensing/feeling the objects that language refers one to. The purpose of art, for Shklovsky, is to function as a technique, a tool, or as a device towards resensitizing or re-stimulating the senses in order to directly feel, or rather to *see* objects, namely, it could be said, to *see* them through “cognition” and “presentation”, instead of grasping them indirectly through re-presentation or re-cognition. Or, to use

³² Also translated as “Art as Device”, and comprising the first chapter of his work *Theory of Prose* [*O teorii prozy*], first published in 1925. The title of the original essay is “Iskusstvo, kak priyom”, in *Sborniki II* (1917). See Shklovsky (1917/1997), 3–5; or Shklovsky (1917/2012), 5–22; or Shklovsky (1917/1991), 1–14. I am using here the first publication.

³³ See Felski (2011).

³⁴ See Ricoeur (1965/1970), Josselson (2004), and Felski (2011), as well as Michel Foucault’s essay (1964), “Nietzsche, Freud, Marx”, which is an essay on interpretation, where interpretation is lost to interpretations, and meaning is lost to interpretations *only*. This essay introduced the term “masters of suspicion”, which is re-used later in the aforementioned work by Ricoeur. What they both refer to is the disguised, concealed, distorted or underlying motive and meaning that each of these three “masters of suspicion”, as much as radicals or heretics of hermeneutics and of interpretation, I would say, (Nietzsche, Freud, Marx) see lying behind all textuality, discourse, and culture in general, which could serve as the *passepourtout* or skeleton key that goes everywhere, fits, and unlocks everything (in culture and in the different discourses, as well as, in retrospect, in their own discourses): will to power (Nietzsche), libido (Freud), class (Marx). Accordingly, Deleuze, in a way, re-tells this whole Foucault-Ricoeur concept, when enumerating the three aspects or principles that would make any book worth existing, a tripartite function or legitimation of a worth writing book (“*bon ouvrage*”), which also reminds the hidden pragmatist, but not always hidden, Deleuze: spotting an error in books on the same or neighboring subject (polemical function), adding something that you think was ignored or forgotten on that subject (inventive function), and, at last, creating a new concept (creative function). See Villani (1999), 56–59 or Deleuze (1986/2020), 86–87. Moreover, in Villani (1999), 129, we find a characterization or definition, by Deleuze, of thought as a monster, due to indeterminacy. This can, once more, be considered in line with the anti-habits of thought I will be proposing here, of *ephexis*, “non-decision”, and other, as well as with the Deleuzian “rhizome”, the method of “diffraction”, and other. See for the definition of thought, or of such thought, as a monster, Villani with Deleuze (1999b), 129 [first question of “Réponses à une série de questions” (Novembre 1981)].

Freud's terms, I would say or interpret Shklovsky's theory, thus: art shall provoke the *uncanny*, it shall de-habitualize, or rather, I would say, "un-addictionalize" (*sic*). Through the *form* of literature, one shall, according to Shklovsky, estrange objects, so as that there is no automatic knowledge, recognition, or representation of them, through the familiar language forms, but rather form shall complicate things so that one needs *effort* or *labour* to perceive them; or as I say, so that one is not "spoonfed", but rather works through form in order to grasp the content, as well as the process of writing or of creation of that content:

... Habitualization devours works, clothes, furniture, one's wife, and the fear of war. ... And art exists that one may recover the sensation of life; it exists to make one feel things, to make the stone *stony*. The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects 'unfamiliar', to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged. *Art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object; the object is not important ...*

[...] Art removes objects from the automatism of perception in several ways. Here I want to illustrate a way used repeatedly by Leo Tolstoy, that writer who ... seems to present things as if he himself saw them, saw them in their entirety, and did not alter them.

Tolstoy makes the familiar seem strange by not naming the familiar object. He describes an object as if he were seeing it for the first time, an event as if it were happening for the first time.³⁵

In the same way, if for art/literature the purpose is to defamiliarize through *form*, I would say that, correspondingly and supplementarily, the purpose of philosophy is to defamiliarize and provoke the sentiment of the uncanny, through *content*; in order that one, as Nietzsche said, becomes a child, and sees afresh percepts and concepts without the old automated reflexive assumptions, and presuppositions. This shall be done fully, constantly, and permanently, and not defamiliarize, re-sensitize, and provoke the uncanny or the uneasiness momentarily, only, while quickly allowing the reader/audience to escape and return to their familiar comfort through *catharsis*; which *catharsis*, would be an annihilation and a negation of all provoked uncanniness and *ostranenie*. Thus, one should "stay with the trouble"³⁶, if an aesthetic effect is meant to have ethical and political repercussions. Moreover, as I would like to stress here, literature/art and philosophy, are not pure forms and cannot ontologically exist separately, namely, content and form exist in a frictionous relationship. Nietzschean, Deleuzian, Derridean, Laruellian, and new-materialistic (*ephexi-ve*, rhizomatic, cartographic, diffractive, archipelagic, "least-resistant",

³⁵ Shklovsky (1917/1997), 4. Foucault had similar thoughts on the role of philosophy, which, according to him, is not to uncover the hidden but to re-make visible what is or should be already visible, namely the proximate, the immediate and the intimate or familiar, which, because it is such, escapes our attention and involvement. See Foucault (1978/1994), 540–541.

³⁶ Phrase borrowed from Haraway (2016). Her connotations are different, I abuse the phrase to fit it and re-animate it within my own context.

etc.) readings and methods in philosophy, I think, start from and aim to similar techniques or devices of philosophy.

In the aforementioned essay, I would say that Shklovsky already attacked our automation or habitualization (or rather, a *habitualization* that becomes so *familiarized* that it becomes an *automation*) of perceiving things, through the ordinary use of language, that is, through the normative/ordinary *form* of language, and adapted, what could be called, a methodological defamiliarization or estrangement. This was executed/performed via the employment of the technic/method of a *form/style* that defamiliarized and estranged, that is, a form that did not offer the normative tools and ways to come to understanding, which would be a familiar way towards an automated understanding (of the content), an *exegesis*, a hermeneutics, and thus an automated perception.

Laruelle offered, as I read him, in parallel, a method, or an understanding of philosophy, corresponding to a methodological defamiliarization or estrangement, but, this time, executed/performed via the employment of the technic/method of a *content* that defamiliarized and estranged, that is, a content that did not offer the normative signs and concepts to come to a sense, an interpretation or an understanding, which would be a set of familiar signs and concepts towards an automatic progression to executing or arriving at a philosophical *decision*. In other words, what the Russian Formalists offered, as a sort of radical “de-colonization” of form, (mostly or principally in literature, but not exclusively there), Laruelle offered to Philosophy (principally, but not exclusively, there). Nietzsche, of course, with his philological methods, already estranged the (creative) *way/mētis* through which we arrive to an understanding or an *exegesis*, and therefore our automated reflex of understanding, or of approaching the content, and of arriving at the philosophical decision, which decision, somehow is the implied and implicit unfathomable *telos* of the philosophical discourse: the philosophical *catharsis*. Both Nietzsche and Laruelle, two prominent examples among others, by “exposing” our epistemological and affective automations or reflexes, in face of the practice of doing philosophy, or of executing the philosophical discourse, already simultaneously expose that philosophy is not purely or not exclusively (about) *content*, and neither is literature *form/style*.

In the same way, as mentioned before, within the feminist-materialist “diffractive methodologies”, implied at first by Trinh Minh-ha, then more systematically proposed by Donna Haraway (“diffraction”), and Karen Barad (“diffractive readings”/“diffractive methodologies”), and others, there is Ashley J. Bohrer’s principle of “equiprimordiality”,³⁷ according to which there is no priority of any form or discourse or body of literature over the other. Another principle of “diffraction” is that each body of literature becomes available to us through its relation to other ones. Moreover, diffraction supports Haraway’s situated knowledges, as well as it accepts

³⁷ See Barad (1996), Barad (2003) or Barad (2003/2008), Barad (2007), Barad (2011), Barad (2014), Haraway (1997), Haraway (1992/2004), and Bohrer (2019). For synonyms, antonyms, hypernyms, hyponyms, keywords, and genealogies of “diffraction”, as partly employed here, see Geerts and Van Der Tuin (July 27, 2016).

contradictions, and disapproves of what Haraway calls "the god-trick of seeing everything from nowhere" or what can be called the bird's eye view or the view from nowhere. Thus the convergences with Laruelle's principles of non-philosophy are easy to detect. As, also said, "diffraction" is at first a natural (mostly natural having the meaning of innate, appropriate, idiosyncratic, or "essential") phenomenon, as much as a natural phenomenon is, (it can be argued), the primordial egalitarianism of human societies, since societies must have been formed in order to ensure such egalitarian social arrangement, thus sociality can be said to "naturally" be egalitarian – whether in contrast and as a counter-arrangement to a non-egalitarianism in the natural pre-social order, or not, is not important, since it is difficult to distinguish a Rousseau-type of a "state of nature" as coming chronologically before a state of culture –. In the same way it could be said, that "diffraction", being a natural phenomenon, or, as expressed before, as much as it *is* a natural phenomenon, it is as well a "natural" reading or methodological strategy; that is, texts and discourses are meant ("naturally") to be read, treated, interpreted, written, and so forth, *diffractively*. Rosi Braidotti's "cartographic" approach is equally important, and interrelated to "diffraction" as well as the Deleuzian "rhizomatic thinking".³⁸

Returning to *catharsis*, I would say that there is a "clinical observation" appropriate to all discourses, and especially to Philosophy, Art, and Psychoanalysis, which are my focus here; what has been said about *catharsis* in the artistic but also philosophical domain, that is, about *catharsis* both in the affective and cognitive domain, can be as well said about *catharsis* in psychoanalysis, and whence we can, comparatively to the "philosophical decision", talk of a "*diagnostic decision*".

There is an importance in the symptom, or in the trouble of the symptom – "Staying with the trouble" (Haraway); "Enjoy your symptom!" (Žižek); "Vivre la pulsion" (Lacan) –³⁹: the importance of not completely annihilating it. Psychoanalysis along with all other western colonization discourses are "colonizing" the symptom, and together with it the psyche. As much as tragedy, and art in general, are *not* being about *catharsis*, but about the excitation (brought by the irritation of *ephexis*, and thus of de-familiarization), the *plaisir*, the "staying with the pleasure", than the pleasure-principle of *plaisir-deplaisir*, namely of tension–de-tension, or *pulsion*/ nirvana–calm/ tranquilization, the same shall be the case for philosophy and psychoanalysis.

The symptom is already a manifestation of auto-therapy, and the quotidian addictions are usually or always such therapeutic traces (symptoms): a battle has taken place, or a *conflict*; as I would propose, psychoanalysis should not rather *not*

³⁸ Cf. indicatively, Braidotti (2005), Dogurga, (2015), Braidotti (2006a), Braidotti (2006b); for selections from Braidotti (2006b), see Braidotti (Fall 2005/Spring 2006).

³⁹ Referring to the following authors/works, although their intended meaning differs: Haraway (2016), and Žižek (1992/2008).

focus on the *conflict*, as it usually does to interpret and locate the origins of diagnoses, because such a focus motivates the *catharsis-telos*.

A focus to rather “stay with the symptom”, and an *ephexis* towards one’s symptom, that is, to take a philological method of encountering and confronting the symptom: philosophize it, without arriving at a “*diagnostic decision*”, or simply a diagnosis; rather stay with the clinic, that is, the observation; practise an *ephexis* to the “*diagnostic decision*” (diagnosis); the symptom is psychogenic and psychedelic, it is even “shamanic”.

We need rituals to encounter and make peace with the symptoms rather than to colonize them, and thus eradicate them in this purification process that psychoanalysis is, as another child of colonization of the *psyche*, the being, and life⁴⁰: another instance of *Mētis* becoming Athena (rational, patriarchal, knowledge-decision seeking, linear, conclusive). And another instance of the obsession of Civilization with the pure (purification to the degree of puritanism), or the *katharon* (from which *katharsis* derives; *καθαρόν* - *κάθαρσις*); however, what’s left of psycho-catharsis, are new troubles and in the very *catharsis* nothing:

Te depuras, te depuras...

¡Cuidado! Podría no quedar nada!

[You scrub (purify/clean) and scrub yourself..

Careful! You might be left with nothing (/ There might be nothing left – of you).]

No descubras, quepuede no haber nada.

Y nada no se vuelve a cubrir.

[Don’t uncover, because there might be nothing.

And nothing can’t be covered again.]⁴¹

I would say that addictions possibly become and stay addictions, because we are addicted not to the high, the tension, the drive (*pulsion*), the nirvana, the ecstasy, the irritation and irritability, but because we are addicted to the calmness, the tranquilization, the de-pression, that is, the *catharsis*, and the stubbornness or the effect of *de-plaisir*, of which addiction consists of. There is a certain addiction, a yearning to the stubborn factor, what Freud called the “death-drive”, a craving to return to the inorganic stubbornness, which is translated as death. But this is quite different. This yearning or drive might exist, as the living being is in between the tensions of irritability and stubbornness, which make up its addiction to life/living,⁴² but the

⁴⁰ Cf. Christodoulou (2016a).

⁴¹ Porchia (1943). The first translation is mine, based on the translation of *Voces* in Greek as *Φωνές*; the second is from online databases. Cf. Christodoulou (2016b), and Christodoulou (2017).

⁴² See Christodoulou (2022a). In order that this section becomes clearer, I propose a short summary of my doctoral research, where I conceptualized life as an addiction: The doctoral Thesis, entitled “Life as Addiction”, in terms of content, attempts, or essays, to conceptualize life, as a habit, or rather as an addiction, as well as to re-conceptualize philosophically the concept of addiction, and more specifically the concept of the addiction to

addiction is not towards the *catharsis* of stubbornness and death. We are addicted not to *die*, but to *live furthermore* (*vivre encore*), in order to inhale, drink, eat, inject, play, act, the void of stubbornness, and release irritability furthermore.

We inhale, drink, eat, inject, out of stubbornness, out of the indifference of stubbornness, out of its calmness, and "deathness", and we consume irritability enhancers; when the addiction to life suffers, it is our irritability always that suffers, that is, of either under-irritability (too much stubbornness) or over-irritability, in reality only the latter, in the case of the human being; because the living beings, and especially the humans, are over-irritable beings.

The imperative for constant *jouissance* as I will say, is ever more extreme and characteristic of current post-industrial capitalistic times, with the constant speeds, fluidities, exhaustion, burn-out, the exuberance, the totalitarianism of Choice, etc. All of which motivate an over-irritability which becomes pathogenic to the subject.

Thus we become addicts to secondary addictions (life is the primary addiction, according to research of my Thesis), out of a void in the addiction to life, what can be roughly called an existential void, which I consider a very light term, since the addiction to life is much more fundamental, principal, vital, and ontogenic. When

life. In terms of style/form/method, a particularity of this Thesis is its engagement with, and commitment to a specific style, or form, of philosophical methodology, of philosophical thinking, writing and practice, which is more aphoristic and essayistic, and also an interdisciplinary methodology bringing together Science (especially Biology), Art, Literature/Philology, Anthropology, Philosophy and the Posthumanities. It is an original (and very heterogeneous in its resources and influences) conceptualization / concept-formation of life as an addiction; we, as living beings, are addicted to living, that is to life itself. I argue that life itself is an addiction: we are addicted to living (to whichever biochemical or other homeostasis or endo-stasis or state we call life), as much as all beings (either inorganic, organic, living, or other non-materially manifested or detected, non-earthly, or non-known manner) are addicted to be-ing, and this is how they manage to keep on *be-ing*, or "to go on being". I also mean "life" as a mode of being, which mode, the "beings" (either inorganic, organic, or living) have developed as a mode or form of addiction to being. I define and describe the addiction to life, as being two-fold, or comprised of a two-fold, which I call the two-fold of addiction. This two-fold consists of what I define as stubbornness and irritability. I propose the concepts of stubbornness and irritability as formative of the addiction to life, and of life itself, based on authors such as Hans Jonas, some vitalists, Jakob Johann Freiherr von Uexküll, and others. Inasmuch as addiction is two-fold, it is comprised of both stubbornness and irritability, at various degrees in each different living organism, as it does in the "being" of organic and inorganic entities –in the inorganic case, "addiction" is not quite an addiction, because it consists only of stubbornness–. I mostly focus on living organisms, whose being is manifested as life, especially as they differ in terms of living-forms and "taxonomic ranks" (*taxons*). In addition to trying to define life as addiction, based on biology, metaphysics, and ontology, I also endeavor to a phenomenological definition of life, and, in the Conclusion, an anthropological-philosophical one is attempted as well, accompanied by a feminist and post-humanistic / posthumanities perspective –(we are "addicted to" the human, as well as to humanism and the Humanities)–. Moreover, as said, in this work, except from engaging in a re-conceptualization of habits of life or forms-of-life, or even styles-of-life, which are conceptualized in accordance to what I call the ontological, fundamental, originary, or primary addiction to life; in parallel, I also attempt to propose a re-conceptualization of habits-of-thought, that is, of philosophy not only as the highly systematic institutionalized discourse (to which in a sense we are "addicted to"), but also and foremostly as an essayistic one.

one is addicted to the secondary addictions, he/she is acting within ordealic rituals, where he assays to prove to oneself and to others that he is still alive. Addictions intensify the living experience, the irritability of living, and the addictive experience affirms, and confirms that one is still able to feel alive, and furthermore remain alive after the ordeal, or the trial of the addictive rituals. In other words, addictive processes and substances are aids to live, they are quotidian rituals, and habits, secondary addictions, aiding the fundamental ontical and ontological addiction to life, parts of Braidotti's "whatever gets you through the day".⁴³

∞

Back to a more concise definition of *ephexis* (ἐφεξις), which will lead to some further formulations on *catharsis*: it is a term similar to *epochē* (ἐποχή), yet different, which Nietzsche employs when defining philology "*als Ephexis in der Interpretation*", and it is the "philological way" or method in which Nietzsche reads and writes philosophy.⁴⁴

Nietzsche in his philosophical writings applies his philological training; that is, his methodology is philological. His books are products that come with embedded instruction manuals on how to be read, and, through these instructions, Nietzsche asks from his readers to be read as thoroughly as a philologist would read his writings: slowly, keeping a distance (*ephexis*), paying attention to all the senses, tasting all the possibilities that can be raised, etc. In the preface to *Daybreak*, he writes: "It is not for nothing that I've been a philologist, perhaps I am philologist still, that is to say a teacher of slow reading...."⁴⁵ In the preface to *The Genealogy of Morals*, he sets out his methodological instructions once more: "people find difficulty with the aphoristic form: this arises from the fact that today this form is *not taken seriously enough*. An aphorism, properly stamped and molded, has not been "deciphered" when it has simply been read; rather, one has then to begin its *exegesis*, for which is required an art of exegesis."⁴⁶ In the third essay of the same book ("What is the Meaning of Ascetic Ideals?"), he, thus, provides a demonstration or a model of reading for his aphorisms: "an example of what I regard as "exegesis" in such a case—an aphorism is prefixed to this essay, the essay itself is a commentary on it. To be sure, one thing is necessary above all if one is to practice reading as an *art* in this way, something that has been unlearned most thoroughly nowadays—[...]."⁴⁷ The aphorism or epigraph, on which he demonstrates his proposed reading, comes from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. In the

⁴³ Cf. Braidotti (2006a).

⁴⁴ See Stegmaier (2009), and Berry (2005).

⁴⁵ Nietzsche (1881/1997), 5 ("Preface", §5).

⁴⁶ Nietzsche (1887/1967/1989), 22–23.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 23.

demonstration this aphorism is stretched and contorted into a fifty-page commentary or essay, elaborated using his "art of interpretation" or "art of exegesis" [*Kunst der Auslegung*];⁴⁸ another manifestation of the close relativity between the aphorism and the essay. It could be said, following Nietzsche's practical demonstration, that if an aphorism is read correctly, it becomes a provocation, an occasion, or a call for the writing of an essay. This is what I call an inspiration, when an occasion, either written or other (linguistic or not) provokes one to create something else, either linguistic or not, another sensation, another feeling, or another thought, mostly. If an aphorism is not provocative and inspirational, then it is not an aphorism but a mere phrase or fragment. To read by writing and to write by reading is one and the same art of interpretation. Such an art, as Nietzsche says in the *Daybreak*, is like "is a goldsmith's art and connoisseurship of the word which has nothing but delicate, cautious work to do and achieves nothing if it does not achieve it *lento*."⁴⁹

Philology is definitely a slow art, in a time of multiple speeds, but such speeds, as historical events show, are also quick for dogmatism, indoctrination, fanaticism and fascism, which all can be prevented and possibly overturned by slow, careful, skeptical reading or listening of/to the Other, and with the attunement to the thoughts and expositions of others, the sensitivity to, or even the acknowledgement of the Other, amidst the solipsism that speeds only leave space for. In *The Gay Science*, he writes, accordingly that "philologists [...] are the destroyers of every faith that rests on books."⁵⁰

Back to Nietzsche's "art of interpretation" or *exegesis*, in the *Antichrist* we find a clearer description of that art, which is philological in method, and must have been also a direct influence to Deleuze, and his pre-philosophical presumptions and presuppositions, as mentioned before. I quote from Nietzsche:

'Faith' means not *wanting* to know the truth. The pietist, the priest of both sexes, is false because he is sick: his instinct *demands* that truth be denied at every point. 'Whatever makes things sick is *good*; whatever comes from fullness, from over-fullness, from power is *evil*: this is how the faithful see things. *Not being free not to lie* – I can pick out someone who is predestined for theology in this way. – Another mark of a theologian is his incapacity for philology. Philology should be understood here in a very general sense, as the art of reading well, – to be able to read facts *without* falsifying them through interpretations, *without* letting the desire to understand make you lose caution, patience, subtlety. Philology as *ephexis* in interpretation [*Philologie als Ephexis in der Interpretation*]: whether it concerns books, newspaper articles, destinies, or facts about the weather, - not to mention 'salvation of the soul' . . . ⁵¹

⁴⁸ See also Janaway (2007).

⁴⁹ Nietzsche (1881/1997), 5.

⁵⁰ Nietzsche (1887/1974), 311 ("Book Five", §358). See also, *ibid.* 157–158 ("Book Two", §102: "A remark for philologists").

⁵¹ Nietzsche (1888/1895/2005), 51 (§52). Judith Norman transcribes *ephexis* as a "suspension of judgement", which as I will explain below, is inaccurate, and corresponds rather to *epochē*. R.J. Hollingdale's transcription as "undecisiveness", I think, is much more accurate. See for the latter, Nietzsche (1888/1895/2003).

Some scholars have simply equalized *ephexis* to skepticism, which is sometimes called *ephecticism*, and translated it as they would have translated the skeptical *epochē*, namely, as a suspension of judgement, or as the critical suspension of intuitions (*δόξαι / doxai*) in phenomenological analysis; but *ephexis* means rather the less straightforward movement of stopping or holding back; according to Jessica Berry (2005) and Werner Stegmaier (2009), it is rather the cautious doubt of the scientific method.⁵² In that manner the philological method is the method that steps in subtlety, patiently, cautiously, carefully, and slowly, recognizing and admitting the complexity of judgement, or of the Laruelian “decision”. It is, I think, close to Deleuze’s “rhizomatic” undecidability and it connotes an *undecisiveness*,⁵³ close to Laruelle’s critique of, or opposition to the ‘philosophical decision’. Nietzsche, as a philologist, was too careful with words; he must have had a reason not to use the term skepticism, or *epochē*. With *ephexis*, he wanted to express something different. *Ephexis* (ἐφεξις), or *epischesia* (ἐπισχεσία), has indeed the same root as *epochē* (ἐποχή), from the verb *epēchō* (ἐπέχω), and in the LSJ it is translated as an excuse, a pretext, or a checking and stopping.⁵⁴ In the same dictionary, *epochē* is given the following translations: check, cessation, retention suppression, suspension of judgement (in Philosophy), stoppage, pause, position, fixed point in time, period of vibration (in Music). So, *epochē* has more technical and charged meanings as it is used in different discourses. Nietzsche maybe chose *ephexis* as a more neutral and not philosophically charged term, so as to charge it with his own meaning. He uses the term to explain his ‘art of interpretation’ that Philology is, which he accompanies with the words “art of reading with profit”, “the capacity for absorbing facts *without* interpreting them falsely”, “caution”, “patience”, “subtlety in the effort to understand them”. Judging also from the rest of his apposed instructions on reading his philosophy, then *ephexis* is less decisive, determined, and straightforward than *epochē*. It is subtler, more careful, more tarrying, less programmed, when attached to a specific theory, school, discourse, or method, like *epochē* is attached to the “program” of skepticism; *ephexis* is a more cautious, patient, subtle suspension of interpretation rather than of judgement, since judgement is more final and decisive, it is very close to a philosophical decision ready to be made, which “decision”, as Laruelle says, already presupposes a “philosophical sufficiency”, a sufficiency that, I would say, is the aim of the system (both as a holistic structure and as a systematic methodical exposition). *Ephexis* is more like holding back from the philosophical reflex, tendency, or impulse to *decide*, to arrive at a conclusive judgement, it is an open, even aporetic, interpretation always in *doubt*. While Nietzsche is speaking of an *ephexis in interpretation*, I would add that

⁵² See Wash (2021).

⁵³ For R.J. Hollingdale’s transcription of *ephexis* as *undecisiveness* in “The Anti-Christ”, see Nietzsche (1888/1895/2003).

⁵⁴ Liddell and Scott (1940).

he also implies, what I would call, an *ephexis* in *criticism*, which is the reflex of finding omissions, errors and counter-arguments, which would maintain one's cognitive (and affective) consonance; the impulse to speak and to *be listened to* rather than to carefully *listen to*. This listening to is the main part of Nietzsche's aesthetic reading method, which can be allegorized as an *archaeological* and consequently as a *psycho-analytical art of reading* (in my own formulation): listening carefully, excavating in the text, letting the text speak of itself and of its own case, rather than categorizing it and classifying it in pre-existing patterns, motifs –and motives–, concepts, schools, discourses, etc. This psychoanalytical (psychoanalysis as a therapeutic act, psychoanalysis on the divan) allegory is also more representative of *ephexis* rather than of *epochē*, because, the latter, merely rests at the skeptical moment of withholding from any decision at all, while with *ephexis*, as it is within the psychoanalytic setting, one aims at reaching a result, at arriving at an interpretative decision, but *not a judgment* (both as judgment in the sense of judging and criticizing and also in the sense of a contemplation, regard, theory, or "decision"). (For that matter, *ephexis* might have been a better term for what phenomenologists try to convey, instead of the chosen term of the "phenomenological *epochē*".)

Moreover, a further, more avant-garde and free-associative interpretation I would give to *ephexis*, is as *epi + hexis* (ἐπί + ἕξις), as "against habit", that is, against the familiar, the habitual, close to the, pre-mentioned, Russian Formalists' (especially Viktor Shklovsky's) *defamiliarization*, *ostranenie* or *estrangement*, which are theorized, by them, as the foremost functions of literature.

Ancient Tragedy has a similar "*systasis*" in trying to estrange the spectators on multiple levels, but especially on the affective level. I see Philosophy as having a similar function, although, as I would do in the case of Tragedy and in the case of any other literary or artistic form, I would withdraw, or, at least, not pay attention to *catharsis*. In the case of Philosophy, *catharsis* is found or is structurally equivalent to the systematic *conclusion*, which puts everything back to place, and into the point of view, or the situatedness, or under the re-definition, the re-exegesis, and under the submission, of what is concluded (*decided*). Both the *systematic conclusion* (*decision*), as much as the *catharsis*, is, in my view, erasing and nullifying the whole previous structure of things, what Aristotle called, in his *Poetics*, *hē tōn pragmatōn systasis* (ἡ τῶν πραγμάτων σύστασις)⁵⁵ (meaning, as explained, "the organization of the events/incidents", the mythos, the plot, or, also, in Ricoeurian terms, the "emplotment"). One should leave the tragic assemblage, the theatre, the literary reading, the work of art, and the philosophical work, the "philo-fiction", estranged and "ostranened", and not "catharted" or "concludeded" (*sic*) or "decideded" (*sic*). Without *ephexis*, in that avant-guardist sense, one will immediately return, upon closing the book or stepping out of the theatre, to their habitual (*hexis* / ἕξις) self and their habitual

⁵⁵ Aristotle, *Poetics* 50a15.

affective, thinking, and acting ways. Only a destructive and self-destructive art or philosophy shall aim to this, except if it is encouraged to do so by the politics that do not want it to be more powerful than the sovereigns are.

For Nietzsche, a truth in order to be caught has to either “be *surprised* or left alone”⁵⁶ –as much as everything else, especially moving living beings–; in the same way, for a reader to be caught, in his affections or his thoughts, he must be surprised or estranged, or left alone. In the same way, Montaigne introduced his essays by providing these two alternatives: either the reader invests their time to Montaigne himself being the substance of his book, or they do not waste it at all. Montaigne says frankly that if his fame or the servitude of the reader were his purpose, he would have “put it on finer clothes”. Those ‘finer clothes’, according to me, would be the systematic highly argumentative and strictly structured clothes, which are the clothes that one learns to be dressed with when mimicking the given paradigm of philosophy. But, Montaigne, as much as every essayist, or every anti-philosopher, or non-standard-philosopher, have *not* this purpose; their writings are solely a consignment and a *trust* of their living selves to friends,⁵⁷ known or unknown ones, for the re-animation of these selves whilst alive or not alive: their substance or their essence, in words, where by *essence* I mean an archive of oneself’s (*sic*) being.

Returning to Nietzsche, his proposed method might be then a method where the “eternal recurrence” becomes an aesthetical instruction or suggestion: the tarrying over and over again with multiple suspensions of judgement and of intuitions (*doxai / δόξαι*), or prejudices and presuppositions, and distanciations from judgement or philosophical *decisions* (as Laruelle calls them), which will never become finalized decisions, but always remain open arbitrary *aporias*, as much as the platonic dialogues are; which, dialogues, are, again, close relatives of the essay; for, the essay is always a dialogue, with a friend, in a prosaic form.

Changing Philosophical Habits: tasting, attempting, trying, assaying, essaying: On the pre-philosophical and philosophical bondages of thought; Philosophical curiosity, courage, hope, honesty, wonder Vs. Philosophical catharsis and contempt

Which are the pre-philosophical assumptions related to the intentions of the author, the situatedness of the author, and the disposition of the author that bondage or liberate philosophical thought? What does philosophizing feel like? Which is/are the philosophical emotions, sentiment(s), or disposition? Dispositions, sentiments, drives, emotions, or habits, such as inspiration, curiosity, courage, hope, wonder

⁵⁶ Nietzsche (1887/1974), 345 (Book Five, Aphorism 381): “[...] At least there are truths that are singularly shy and ticklish and cannot be caught except suddenly—that must be *surprised* or left alone. [...]”

⁵⁷ Cf. Montaigne (1570–1592/1993), 23, and Stegmaier (2009), 9.

(and wander), awe, etc., used to be legitimate initiators of philosophical thought, but canonical philosophical thought is rejecting them as amateuristic, too artistic, too carnivorous, animalistic, too fleshy, or bodily. Such fasting and hunger is not philosophical and it suffocates philosophical thought, in the name of professionalism and seriousness, which resembles all capitalistic productive goals. Deleuze, for that matter, speaks of *style* in philosophy, as encompassing the "philosophical trinity" of *concepts*, *percepts*, and *feelings* or *affects*.⁵⁸

In the Enlightenment, *curiosity* used to be praised and directly referred to as a motivator of thought and of research.⁵⁹ Nietzsche and along with him Deleuze praise the *saddening* (grieve, cry, suffer, feel, etc.) as well as, I would say, the "suddening" (interrupt, disturb, shake, etc.) functions of philosophy. Following Diogenes,⁶⁰ Deleuze also talks of the capacity of philosophy or even its task to make one *grieve* (or cry, as László F. Földényi alludes to)⁶¹, harm stupidity and render it shameful. According to Nietzsche, who borrows from Schopenhauer, the philosopher is sent like an arrow, with no specific aim, except, as he says in *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, to taste (*sapio*) around possibilities; this is exactly what Deleuze expressed in the concepts or the methods of 'nomadic' thought, and 'deterritorialization'. Schopenhauer speaks accordingly of "the courage to hold no question close to one's heart", which is reflected in Nietzsche's *ephexis*, as well as in Deleuze's pre-philosophical suppositions, or philosophical pre-suppositions, mostly examined in *What is Philosophy?*, with Félix Guattari (Deleuze and Guattari 1991/1994).

Then there is the Peircean account of *hope* as a sentiment that motivates (philosophical) inquiry or the search for both answers and new questions/problems, as well as the Peircean genuine *doubt*; Peirce distinguishes between a true or genuine doubt and an artificial one: for example, Cartesian doubt is artificial, or I would say histrionically performative, it does not –pragmatically– offer anything, or taking the arrow further, in the Nietzschean sense⁶², as much as, I think, in an analogous way, the Aristotelian version (or, more accurately, the version of some of Aristotle's interpreters, and the consequent pop-version) of *catharsis* does not either –they are both static, artificial, and performative, temporary, and also, a sort of, for the sake of methodology (a kind of a performance or a showing-off of the methodological

⁵⁸ See Deleuze (1989/1995), 164–166.

⁵⁹ See indicatively, Jacques-Chaquin and Houdard (1998), and Citton (2018).

⁶⁰ See Deleuze (1962/1986), 210, n. 30.

⁶¹ See Földényi (2006/2020).

⁶² Nietzsche thought of concepts as an arrow: you shoot them and the next philosopher/thinker/inquirer takes the arrow and shoots it further, there is no back and forth of the arrow, or, what I would call, based on Deleuze's method, a "conversational" route of the arrow, only a "responsive" route. This means that there is no objective (pragmatic objective) in conversational routes, pragmatic objectives are only met through responses. Conversational routes, it might be said, are *arboric*, while responsive routes are *rhizomatic*.

strategy/process/methodicality, which is merely *methodological*, as a systematic link/glue of parts –so that these parts, or thoughts, appear systematic). The genuine doubt induces an anxiety, an unrestlessness, or a concernment and thus irritates one to inquire. I think that *curiosity* is made up of at least these two “sentiments” or “conditions”, namely of *hope* and genuine *doubt*.

If one was to be genuinely disturbed and “saddened” by their beliefs that, for instance, one is a bat in a bar, or that one is surrounded by zombies, or that god is playing with them, then one’s response would *not* have been the consistency, the serenity, the laboratory-conditioned stability, the non-disturbance, the un-uncanniness of our situatedness in the world, and the suspension of our *élan vital* in and of the world, needed to write a text, and even more a systematic one, or even rather an academic contribution to an edited and reviewed book or journal, or a speech, but other sort of rituals (be it neurotic, or psychotic) and self-preservative actions.

On the opposing hand, we have philosophy motivated by contempt (*mépris*), as Sloterdijk says,⁶³ instead of curiosity, wonder, etc., and also what I propose, a “cathartic philosophy”, or the ideal of a “cathartic philosophy”. The most known interpretation of artistic creation, and especially of Tragedy, is as being a cathartic enterprise or as having a cathartic end, which is inspired by the interpretation of Aristotle’s *Poetics* (which, as Petruševski argues, as a text is not surviving entirely authentic).⁶⁴ There are multiple different theories on tragedy and/or (with or without) its *catharsis*, such as Nietzsche’s rhythmic theory or interpretation in *The Birth of Tragedy*, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing’s moral interpretation, Jacob Bernays’s pathological interpretation (toxins, pathological discharge, etc.), but most of them are based on putting at the centre of artistic creation *catharsis*. This centering of *catharsis*, as said, has been challenged by the classicist Mihail D. Petruševski, who renders *systasis tōn pragmatōn* (structure or composition of events) at the center of *poiēsis*, that is, artistic creation (in particular, of Tragedy) instead of *pathēmatōn katharsin*.

The question, the all-time *aporia* of the philosophy of art, as to why Annas-Kareninas and Antigones make us cry more than their omni-present “real” counterparts, can be answered in multiple ways, which all report to the parallel lives, and parallel sufferings of people, especially, I would say, of women, –as Nicole Loraux emphasized and brought them to light in art/Tragedy in *Tragic Ways of Killing a Woman*

⁶³ See in Sloterdijk (2021): “Je me demande si l’étonnement est véritablement l’origine de la philosophie comme le soutiennent Aristote et Platon, pour moi, sa véritable origine c’est le mépris. Le philosophe se moque de ce que disent les gens. L’intellectuel, lui, n’a pas le droit au mépris, il est condamné à plonger dans le débat et de rencontrer ses semblables avec un regard égal.” My translation: “I wonder if astonishment is really the origin of philosophy, as Aristotle and Plato argue, for me, its real origin is contempt. The philosopher mocks what people say. The intellectual, he has no right to contempt, he is condemned to dive into the debate and to meet his similar ones with an equal gaze.”

⁶⁴ See Petruševski (1973).

(*Façons tragiques de tuer une femme*)⁶⁵,— both in reality and in art; despite these killings are *glorified* in art, and thus also add a sense of *awe*, which is an adding ingredient contributing to the *sublime* empathies—almost of a metaphysical, or even of a theological, dimension—arisen within the artistic realm, but *not* within the realm of the real. One answer is that works of art, in this instance, tragedies, through their own means of *re-presenting*, they can put things into a more logical order, and re-present more boldly, or more directly, even more economically and emphatically, in terms of the material or formal (in terms of *form*) spacio-temporal economy of the stage (or the canvas, or any other *form*), which performative means/ways/technics/methods can, in effect, absorb and direct the attention of the audience, and make them more easily process and digest what they are experiencing; whilst in the everyday real life setting, the attention is diffused, and easily distracted, either consciously or unconsciously. Moreover, one can more easily (psychologically and cognitively) afford to empathize with the fictional characters, when and because they are *fictional*, since they can get away with their empathetic turbulence as long as they step out of the theatre, and they will experience no moral conflict and obligation to act, and no cognitive dissonance with their already densely pre-built life and self-narrative; and this is, in my opinion, the “devil” of *catharsis*—as well as of “cathartic” psychoanalysis (and “cathartic” philosophy) or other *catharsis*-orientated therapies and discourses or disciplines— that is, of the clearance and cleansing of all that has been arisen during the artistic performance. —or during any other discourse, ritual, reading, spectacle, analysis, dialogue, etc.—. Furthermore, the violence on women, and especially everyday women (although everyday women are quite missing from Tragedies), which, violence, is depicted in tragedies, does not seem that important, because, after all, even heroes, kings, and, even, gods and *men* suffer in them. One can even derive a pleasure in the sufferings of their superiors; or, through tragedies and art, the superiors/the sovereigns can appeal to the empathy of their proletariat, and propagate their “poor” humaneness.

Tragedy, and generally Art, serves the function of teaching hard-core “stoico-cynicism” in the face of suffering, especially apathy towards the suffering of women. It is also a cleansing/purifying act: ones goes to a performance, “secretes” everything out and is detoxified, relieved, and absolved when the resolution comes with *catharsis*/purification — I would express it, resolution as the *final lysis*, as parallel to the *final ‘decision’*, and as a parallel to the fascist *‘final solution’*, which all contribute and aim to the *final catharsis*—; one then leaves the theatre *as* they entered it. It also teaches one that all the themes it re-presents are part of daily life, and as such, must be accepted and borne “stoico-cynically”; after all, even heroes, kings, and gods suffer through them. Furthermore, Tragedy’s greatest crime is the disinfection and

⁶⁵ Loraux (1985/1987).

the purification, the “over-cooking” and the consequential “ashes” at the end –from all the pain and empathy you felt and showed for the characters’ sufferings, and from whatever else you may have had as an emotional, affective, compassionate, “empathetic” reaction towards them (as a feeling, that is)–. In other words, you are subjected to feeling and empathy, then discharge it, disinfect it, purify it, and “cook” it⁶⁶; the emotional and compassionate instincts kick in and then the realisation, the outburst, and the capacity to feel is exempted and forgiven. – Art is a cruel invention. –

What I would like to offer in parallel to the *catharsis* in the artistic creation, is the parallel *catharsis* implied in the philosophical one, or, as I called it, the ideal of “cathartic philosophy”. What I mean is that if philosophy ends up, deescalates, or culminates into a *catharsis*, then it does not have much power to change one, or to shake them up. Philosophy shall end into *aporia* (ἀπορία), and its “suddening”, disturbing, uncanny elements, as well as the elements of *honesty*, *hope* –in the case it all ends well, namely, into a *poros* (πόρος), then there is no place for hope, there is only reassurance and certainty–, and *courage*, as all visited above, shall all be left untouched through a non-cathartic process; otherwise, the effect we are left with is both a philosophy that *contempts* (*mépris*) the real and the reality (sentiments, emotions, sufferings, the body) of humans and of other living beings –as much as the reality of non-living ones, which again entails suffering in the sense of the destruction of their “systasis”–, and with a contempt for philosophy itself.

Such contempt is mostly obvious in modern philosophy, which goes hand in hand with institutionalized philosophy: both express contempt for the subject, and mostly for the body (embodiment) of the subject (and its phenomenological and

⁶⁶ Anthropological signs, such as the *raw* and the *cooked*, are the prehistory of psychoanalysis: anthropology is a hidden psychoanalysis, or rather, psychoanalysis is a hidden anthropology, as much as fiction is a hidden reality, and the vice versa. One must then keep in mind the notions of the *raw* and the *cooked* in the anthropological and from then on in the fictional, in the psychoanalytical and the further symbolical perspective. In the fictional realm, for example in tragedies (always deriving from prior anthropological-archaeological-mythological facts, rituals, and discourses, women are *cooked*, or rather, *semi-cooked*, and this is the problem, their half-rawness, that is, *cooked* means they are well fitted into the social and cultural discourse or normativity, or, more precisely, into the patriarchal milieu. Nicole Loraux, I think, is very informative on this “cookedness” (*sic*) [without using this specific term or theorizing on it, but her work demonstrates, however, examples of it] of women in tragedies, in her work *Façons tragiques de tuer une femme* (Loraux 1985/1987).

For the most classical treatment of the signs of the raw and the cooked in anthropology, see, Lévi-Strauss (1964/1967). What *le cuit* means, is the “done”, or the “prepared”, and metaphorically, also, the cooked, which implies the effects that culture and society have on the raw (*le cru*), which render it *cooked*, or “done”. Especially in the case of women, who the patriarchal culture “cooks” all the time, this is obvious in various myths, fairytales, folktales, and other narratives, as for example in the case of Tragedies. Women are represented as tamed, cooked, good women, that is *wo-men next* to men; another well-known example is that of Cinderella: Cinderella is preferred by suitors/men, instead of her sisters, because she is cooked, prepared for their rule, “done” for Patriarchy, while her sisters are raw. The name Cinderella comes, anyway, from the French *Cendrillon*, which means “little ashes”. In German the name of this character (the character that all women shall perform) is, accordingly, *Aschenputtel*, in Italian *Cenerentola*, and in Greek *Stachtoporouta* (Σταχτοπούτα).

cognitive-embodied experience). This same contempt is the "inversion of the eyes"⁶⁷ of western colonizer culture, but also of the human species in general, which is a species that excluded all other species, and all other cultures, disrespectful of the incomprehensible and the untranslatable.

An excellent example, or rather a paradigm, here, is the radical empiricism of William James and of Gilles Deleuze. Radical empiricism is mostly a psychological position rather than an ontological one, that is, a pragmatic radical empiricist view, where one moves from percepts to concepts, and not directly to concepts, and ontology becomes an experience. A pragmatic radical empiricist view is rather a perceptual rather than a conceptual position/view, putting an emphasis and initiating from experience rather than philosophical and other conceptual presumptions and presuppositions. For, conceptions are resulting from a selective attention and a selective blindness: we selectively pay attention to some things and an inattention to others (based on our situatedness, our biases, personal interests, presumptions and presuppositions). Such a reliance and a confidence in the radicality of (perceptual) experience, that radical empiricism shows, is stylistically and methodologically reflected in the borderline distinction between philosophy and literature. This kinship, this porous and communicative border, is what is used as an accusation against William James, Gilles Deleuze, and others, mostly an accusation coming from analytic philosophers, and institutional philosophers, claiming that they are being vague and lacking argumentation. James already answers and even

⁶⁷ I am basing this statement, regarding the "inversion of the eyes", in the reading of the first lines of Rilke's "Eighth Elegy" from *Duino Elegies* (Rilke 1923/1977), 54–59, and on Renaud Barbaras' reading and translation in Barbaras (2011), and in Barbaras (2008/2021), 221–228.

Barbaras' reading is based on the following of Rilke's verses:

"Mit allen Augen sieht die Kreatur
das Offene. Nur unsre Augen sind
wie umgekehrt und ganz um sie gestellt
als Fallen, rings um ihren freien Ausgang.
Was draussen *ist*, wir wissens aus des Tiers
Antlitz allein ; denn schon das frühe Kind
wenden wir um und zwingens, dass es rückwärts
Gestaltung sehe, nicht das Offne, das
im Tiergesicht so tief ist. Frei von Tod."

"All other creatures look into the Open
with their whole eyes. But our eyes,
turned inward, are set all around it like snares,
trapping its way out to freedom.
We know what's out there only from the animal's
face; for we take even the youngest child,
turn him around and force him to look
at the past as formation, not that openness
so deep within an animal's face. Free from death, [...] (Rilke 1923/1977, 54–55)

pre-answers this accusation by holding that philosophy should be vaguer, because life is vague. If, as I argue further in my Thesis (Christodoulou, 2022a), based on the work of Tudi Gozé and István Fazakas (Fazakas and Gozé 2018 or Fazakas and Gozé 2020), psychosis is a disorder of a lack of *trust*, then the radical un-reliance and un-confidence in the radicality of (perceptual) experience, shown by moderns and their heirs, colonial, canonical, institutional, and official philosophers, is an effect of some sort of “*philosophical psychosis*”.

Returning to the kinship between philosophy and literature (as well as to other discourses and disciplines, which I repetitively take side *for*), for James, as for Deleuze later, the advantage of the novel (especially talking here about the American novel), is its “perspectivity” or “perspectivalism”, namely, that it is written from a perspective, which philosophers lack, and instead they write from a view from nowhere, from a bird’s eye view. James alludes to this in a wider manner, opening it up to creative enterprises in general, while Deleuze seems to locate these creative enterprises to the novel (but also largely to theatre and film), and thus focuses directly on the possibilities that the American novel offers. Philosophy in its “official” version, since modernity, is a discipline of argument, but for James it should rather be a discipline of imagination.⁶⁸ Ralph Waldo Emerson, likewise, dislikes argumentation; one can do it, according to him, in the way philosophers engage in it, but not for so long; he likes *assertions, inconsistencies, whims, transitions, and moods*, as much as he dislikes the tension and the schism between the philosopher and the poet.⁶⁹ I agree that a philosopher shall rather exhibit things, in the manner of tasting around things, and that one can argue on them but for a limited duration; one shall then move on to other points of perception, of perspective and of experience, and not obsessively dwell to one proposition, theory, decision, or another. Philosophers in the end become lawyers for one concept, idea, theory, system or another, and they fight with criticisms one another in an abstract philosophical court.⁷⁰ This court-philosophy is alike what philosophers try to accuse sophists for, or they have invented sophistry as a scapegoat to accuse it for what they exactly themselves do. Or most possibly, Plato did invent sophistry, as a pejorative practice, so as to distance himself from himself as a poet and as a sophist (through the persona of Socrates), thus, although being a lawyer of philosophical views, and a master of persuasion, as well as a poet and a mythologist, to the largest degree, he throws away these elements of his thinking into the bin of sophistry and of poetry, while he calls what he is doing philosophy; all

⁶⁸ In the same spirit, John Dewey explicitly states that the philosophy, which he prefers, is imagination, just as the philosophy of John Keats and William Shakespeare. See the end of chapter 2 of Dewey (1934).

⁶⁹ See Kundert (2019). See also, among many other relevant papers, Dewey (Jul., 1903). I think this is something that Emerson (who is not a pragmatist), James, and other pragmatists have in common with Laruelle’s principles of philosophy, although their projects and overall theories are completely different between them.

⁷⁰ Concerning how philosophers become *lawyers*, cf. Rorty (1982), 221.

these are already absurd, and a manifestation of the folly endemic into philosophy, where one, consistently and systematically, negates oneself as a subject, as much as the fascist will negate himself as being a fascist and his fascist views, by *not* labelling them as fascist, but in multiple other names, although they are in essence fascist. James believes that philosophers write neat systems, as if they are desperately attempting to neatly and systematically hide or disguise their interests, purposes, biases, presumptions, sufferings, or the interests, purposes, biases, presumptions of the ones they are of use and of service to; in other words, by concealing and disguising their subjectivity, their experience, and their immanence, through systems built on disembodied metaphysical and ontological premises, rather than radically empirical ones, as James would say, or non-philosophical ones (and everything this includes), as Laruelle would say. This is one more fold of philosophy's "philofolly", next to the "philofolly" that Christine de Pizan has diagnosed in philosophy, where men have turned their supposed love of wisdom (philo-sophy) into a philo-folly, through the rejection of women in philosophy and their obsession and constraining order to only quoting the authors they have read, (and reading only the authors they think they should read), as if they were the only ones, out of, possibly, a personal gender-interest in men only, and a gender-cancelling of others.⁷¹

William James is a pluralist, in a way that recalls Laruelle's pluralistic philosophy, or the "democracy of all thought" and the "least-resistance" towards the arrival at a philosophical decision, which decision implies a conviction and a confidence of arriving at or grasping the real (*le Réel*) or the one truth, or simply the One. Philosophy, through the multiple but secluded philosophical decisions of each philosopher and each school, is ending up in defining concepts by confining and constraining them; "non-standard philosophy" is the opening to the plurality and the democracy of all knowledge and thought, which will move away from the metaphysical level of confidence and assurance of arriving at the real (via a decision), and open up to an immanence of all generic knowledge. This will put an end to the philosophical reflex, impulse, or tendency of philosophers to re-produce philosophy and reassert it through the production of knowledge, their confidence in philosophy's self-sufficiency, and, in extension, to their own delusional arrogance, conceit, and presumption of their self-sufficiency as subjects (coming from a disturbed notion of a divine omnipotent-subjectivity, since the real situated subject is refused). But everything always escapes from every self-sufficient preached system, as it does from life. In that sense, James, and this is what makes him a pragmatist, is refraining from categorizing or characterizing concepts as true or false, right or wrong, but does so according to their *use*. Thus he transposes the traditional "ontological system questions" to "functional questions", as much as Laruelle can be said to transpose

⁷¹ See Pizan (1405/1999).

the “metaphysical questions” to “immanent” ones; immanent to (a) “democracy of all knowledge”, with “the least possible resistance” and non-philosophical “decision”.⁷²

Moreover, what I want to accentuate regarding philosophical (institutionalized, canonical) philosophy, is its methodology, which I see as succumbing to a patriarchy, and thus to a colonization of the Truth, by patriarchal means. Maybe we should, instead, reclaim back words like boring, “I like”, and “he is himself not knowing what he is talking about”, in philosophical discourse and critiques. Where is all this cathartic or even sterilized⁷³ philosophical language taking philosophy? Nowhere, I think. It is only an imposed-rule by male-mentality of a game called “Academia”. Male-mentality is playing all the time-games. It likes imposing rules everywhere and then playing rounds of the game to see who wins it and who doesn’t; who is the alpha male, the leader of the pack, the one deserving the most power. The language, terminology and methodology of the academic (mostly) and prestigious published works of Science and Philosophy are patriarchally originated and dressed. Their main purpose is not a so-called and so much invoked “truth”, but the domination upon the “other” or even the “other-other”, the male-other, i.e. the feminine, for example the females, the nature, and the domination within males, the “others of the same”. This is the truth of the male game-playing culture. And this is the real face

⁷² As mentioned, I think that there are strong correspondences between Laruelle and the American Pragmatism. See Gavin (1992), Grimstad (2013), and Stuhr (2016). In his book, John Stuhr, includes poems, paintings, photographs and multiple kinds of writing, rather than arguments. See also Evans (2017). Concerning the vague, and James’ notion of *anhedonia*, cf. in particular, Slegers (2017).

⁷³ On the *disinfecting* and *aseptic* properties of the “rules of discourses” (“discursive rules”) and “the linguistic conventions” of disciplines, see Sloterdijk with Heinrich (2011), 266ff (emphasis in italics, mine): “Linear mentality, which culminates in discourse culture, is a consequence of the letterpress. It follows from the one-sidedness engendered by alphabetization. A specialized “reader” intelligence is constantly involved in exercising line running skills: *the trained reader is a long-distance runner racing through texts*. This provides an at least partial explanation for the phenomenon of discourse mentality... Our headword is the triumph of discursive one-dimensionality. It is certain that today as yesterday the academy exercises a grasp over discourse that is laden with consequences. *Homo academicus receives premiums for practising the linguistic conventions of his discipline*. Foucault was able to show the extent to which *fields of discourse are fields of power* – whereby he provides a compelling interpretation of the way of being of discursive formations. Each terminological set is inevitably one outcome of a history of power and domination. But it seems to me that it is necessary to take into account even more general, indeed systemic, motifs, to understand the efficiency of scientific language games. *Discursive rules are to specialized languages what asepsis is to medicine. They produce the asepsis necessary for scientific operations and keep infections away from the life world*. I think science is only possible in this form. Only this quasi-ontological disinfection enables theoreticians to operate without constantly injuring themselves. *Rules of discourse ought to be compared to means of disinfection. Should their effects only be superficial – such as for example in the human sciences – then the observable working climates become very infectious*. The human sciences conserve an elevated factor of expression since they cannot reach the level of objectivation of the hard sciences. *The side-effect of this is that scientists feel too much of the persona of the other in their discourse, of his pretensions to assert himself, of his self-hypnosis*. General competition is then transformed into a personal rivalry between self-hypnotists. In the human sciences processes of unmoderated group dynamics rage incessantly.”

of the invoked and ultimate truth. [I do not use here the adjectives or nouns male and maleness axiologically, only descriptively.]

In the first steps of philosophy, in ancient Greece, (mostly but not exclusively) males were doing philosophy while eating and drinking (*symposion* / *συμπόσιον*, *deipnosophistai* / *δειπνοσοφισταί*, etc.). De Sade, an anti-canonical, a heretic and an anti-philosopher, is "doing philosophy" in the Boudoir. Masoch is doing philosophy in the shadow of the Female-Truth, of the Woman-Absolute. These latter two, are considered to be vicious; the ancients are considered to be primal and savage. Today women are placed into philosophical departments, only to turn away suspicions of misogyny, phallocentrism, sexism and inequality. Their rules of the game are ignored, even more their call for the abolishment of antagonistical, Russian-roulette type, pro-dominance games. At least in the Middle Ages they were literally or metaphorically burning them: this is a straight-forward gallant confrontation. Today everything is trying to put up the dressing of the "politically correct".

In our thought we would be very ecological, if it was not for the pollution-cathartic spoon-feeding and pampering of philosophical systematicity

Academic or professional philosophy is generally following the *exogenesis* of philosophy, instead of the genetic process of thought as it is unraveled/unveiled; what I am trying to propose and do here, is, instead, to actually *do* philosophy rather than taking an exo-philosophical point of view, from where one talks about philosophy. I am rather of the opinion or I partake to the voice that philosophy –and borrowing from Raimundo Panikkar's vocabulary⁷⁴ regarding philosophical hermeneutics– shall be "diatopic" and "plurotopic", instead of presupposing a common collective cognitive and affective *topos*; a *topos* completely atopian or utopian, or even of a metaphysical dimension, since it is well argued in contemporary materialist, and, especially, feminist materialist methodologies and epistemologies, how knowledge, as much as affect, I would add, is *situated*, and also, I would further add, geotopical, and affect-topical, specific, or depended, body-topical, bio-topical, visceral, sex/gender-topical, etc.

I therefore propose as much as I plea for a consent from the reader, for a "sympathy" with the author, a kinship, a *philia* (*φιλία*), what I would call "a suspension of philosophical psychoticism", a *trust*,⁷⁵ a *syn-askēsis* [my term], of an affective, at least, understanding, which will open a *poros* (*πόρος*) to a cognitive one, and the admittance of the destination of a philosophically destined *aporia*; –although, in reality,

⁷⁴ See Panikkar (1975), and Panikkar (1988).

⁷⁵ I refer here to the proposition that psychosis is a disorder, or a disruption, or a lack of trust. In this sense, I have mentioned a while ago, in reference to my Thesis (Christodoulou 2022a), my notion of the "*philosophical psychosis*".

there is usually *misos* (μίσος) in the beginning, the Deleuzian “misosophy”.⁷⁶ – The tools for such a phenomenologically methodological and methodologically phenomenological “sympathy” are the ones aforementioned, as the *epochē* and *ephexis*, which announce that as much as one needs a distance and a *suspension of disbelief* in fiction, the same is needed in non-fiction, and indeed in the case of philosophical non-/fiction, which, as philosophical, it is already between fiction and non-fiction, as are, to some degree, all other discourses, which are necessarily bounded to their textual or even before that, to their fixation (and probably their origination) within the symbolic and the linguistic, or I would even risk saying, to their *perichōrēsis* [περιχώρησις: dancing around, rotation, circumincession] around a vibrant plastic *kenōtikē kenon* [(my term): *kenōtikōn kenon* / κενωτικόν κενόν: ~emptying void, a *chōros* / χώρος ?, a *chōra* / χώρα ?]; (there can be seen a subtle play with *chōra* [χώρα: place, receptacle, third genre, void?] and *choros* [χορός], *peri-chōrēsis* [dancing around]; philosophy is an inner-staged performative practice, an a-void-ant *poiētikē epistēmē* and *technē* at once).

(The methodology of “diffraction”, as explained before, is also in sympathy with what I call an affective and cognitive sympathy, *philia* (φιλία), or kinship with the author (a mutual *care* even; an ethics of such a mutual affective-cognitive space between the exo-sides of the text shall be revisited and re-issued), and my allusion against criticism, since diffraction incorporates affirmation, and relationalism, and is correspondingly against “reflexivity, negative critique”, and “reading against something”. Parallels to diffractive methodology/reading/writing/criticizing or to “diffractively” treating another text, or thought, or even person, are to be found not only in quantum physics, but also in the Deleuzian *rhizome* and in his “critique” on critiques or rather critics and criticisms.⁷⁷)

In retrospect, what repels me in the treatises and in the systematic or “treatiseal” style of other forms, is that insistence to persuade me, with the pile of arguments and the specific organisation of patiently exposing research questions and hypotheses in the introduction, then arguments and counterarguments, in case I am not persuaded by one argument I will be by the other, and then wrapping up everything again in the conclusion, explicitly announcing how persuasive was the whole project. This whole attempt, or demand, or rather imperative for persuasion, and perpetuation of one’s own theories, repels me as close to dogma, doctrine, scholasticism, and “sophistry”.

Maybe it is the fact that the whole philosophy happened to have the Aristotelian aroma, instead of the Platonic, or the Pre-Socratic, or another oriental one, and it passed with the Aristotelian aroma through Rome, Byzantium, Modernity, and other historical and religious instances, that we went through the road from scholasticism to

⁷⁶ See Appendix 2: *Philosophy vis-à-vis Anthropology*.

⁷⁷ Concerning the *rhizome* (*rhizomatic* in opposition to *arborescent* thought), see Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987), 3–25. Moreover, see the notion of the *affirmative* critique and reading in the work of Rosi Braidotti, who follows Gilles Deleuze’s and Félix Guattari’s affirmative reading.

systematicism, otherwise, maybe, the essayistic tone might have been the prominent one. After all, this whole effort put in a treatise, comes down to opinions, biases, and emotional or libidinal fulfilments, as much as the essay comes down to the latter ones, with the difference that the essayistic (element, subjectivity, point of view) has no reservations in admitting them. The systematic treatise has an immanent violent way of trying to communicate thoughts, and the fact of them being mostly thoughts, rather than a mixture of experiences, emotions, thoughts, etc., makes it even more cruel and unwelcoming. The steps taken within a systematic work are so slow that everything becomes predictable, and even the more daring and original of ideas are buried and lose all of their vitality within the banality and pre-giveness of the style and the form of their exposition. At times, I also get the impression that philosophical methodical-systematic treatises are letters to enemies; they take a defensive and aggressive stand, pre-judging the reader to be an enemy, because their method is made to prevent challenge and disagreement, in a way that, as readers themselves, all they do, when they read, is to lurk at the corner for the next criticism they can come up with, to throw at the writer. The systematic methodical writer makes, in retrospect, the most systematic and methodical critic, or, without pleonasm, *the critic* in all of its essence. On the opposite side, what I like about the essay, –and even more about the aphorism–, is its indifference to persuade, which is welcoming the reader for dialogue, since there is no aggressiveness, defence, and violence to persuade and be proclaimed the winner of the race to truth and to certainty. There is a certain stoic *ataraxia* (*ἀταραξία*) in the essay, leaving outside the political requirements and laws of judgement; it is open to contingency and chance, to unpredictability, to the politically incorrect in all of its senses, to both the significant and the trivial, and to doubt; it is, in that sense, undomesticated, raw – as not “cooked” or not tamed –, in contrast with the domesticated, “cooked-well-done”, colonized, and phallogocentric systematic treatise. It is, in a phrase, like a letter to a friend.

I also praise the importance of inspiration, which has been erased from philosophy as incompatible to systematicity and methodicality. For me, this is how thought and philosophical thought flows, and to quote a poet, because, sometimes, poets are the last depositors of philosophy and are more philosophical than philosophers: As Raymond Chandler states: “A good story cannot be devised; it has to be distilled. [...] Preoccupation with style will not produce it.”⁷⁸

Non-systematicism (as the method and the essence of systematicity) has become an almost *ad hominem* insult or fallacy, with various contents attributed to it each time, depending on who is attacked; this other-than-systematicism-phobia or essayismo-phobic insult and fallacy has been around for years. Systematicism could be said to be a *philosophical grandiosity* (another type of “philosophical psychosis”); if not anything else, the philosopher (as being part of the “Aristotelian” defined

⁷⁸ See Chandler (1947/1997).

human), – since Aristotle has declared the generic human as, roughly, an animal having *logos* – is (the philosopher), in the version of the phrase as expressed by Peter Sloterdijk, the “*zōon logon (megalon) echon*” (adding to the Aristotelian generic human definition of “*ζῶον λόγον ἔχον*”). And the *megalon* of the philosopher (an extra dose of *logos*, therefore and *megalos logos*, in addition, it could be said, to the basic-essential *logos* of the generic human), his grandeur, is possibly his systematic apocalyptic *evangelium*: “It would, of course, be possible to replace the term ‘grandeur’ with less shocking expressions: substantiality, efficacy, pertinence, validity, precision, creativity, potency, operativity.”⁷⁹

The procedural, strategic, methodical way of arriving to knowledge or of thinking is what Spinoza distinguishes as the *inadequate knowledge* (imagination: as recollection and forming of ideas) in a juxtaposition with *scientia intuitiva* (intuitive knowledge/intuition),⁸⁰ which, later, is the *adequate knowledge*;⁸¹ both of which knowledges exist in a spectrum, a continuum, or a proportion, and the *ratio* of which two is what we call *reason* (*lat. ratio*). *Ratio* (reason/ratio-nal-ity?) is what human thinking is, and in retrospect what human mind is, according to Spinoza, and therefore, it could be said, Spinoza’s “image of thought” (in Deleuzian terms). Another complimentary image that thought has for Spinoza, is that of being a ladder (a *scala*), which image Spinoza’s *Ethics* structurally imitate, and, according to Beth Lord, the perfect “image of thought”, according to Spinoza, is that of “the fourth proportional” –thinking is, therefore, in the end, finding the appropriate-proportional *ratio*–.⁸²

Although it is more probable that most would, at first, in confusion, think of reason and ratio-nality as being the ultimate adequate thinking, without recognizing the *proportional* character of reason, and they would also say that systematic-treatise-like thinking is (thus) the adequate one, because they consider the latter to be the epitome of clarity, distinctiveness, order, etc., whereas intuitive thinking is inadequate because it is mutilated, apospasmatic, etc., Spinoza argues that adequate knowledge, and thus intuition, is the one which is being clear, distinct, true, and

⁷⁹ Referring to Sloterdijk with Alliez (2000/2017), 315: “The philosopher is that grandiloquent human being to whom it occurs that the grandeur of the ideas he formulates exceeds his grandiloquence. In Aristotelian terms, he’s the *zōon logon (megalon) echon*. It would, of course, be possible to replace the term ‘grandeur’ with less shocking expressions: substantiality, efficacy, pertinence, validity, precision, creativity, potency, operativity. But, whatever the expression chosen, we accept that there are, in any event, thinking beings through whom something ‘happens’ that affects the state of reality as such. Which amounts to positing that real thought is a production. Parenthetically, it seems necessary here to ask the following question: if philosophical megalomania is a reality, wouldn’t it be entirely reasonable to conceive the parallel existence of a specifically philosophical megalodepression? Is this to say that the thought of our century will have been, to a very large extent, merely the drama of the inter-pathology of ideas and thinkers? *Inter-madness* [inter-folie] – a concept to revisit. [...]”

⁸⁰ For the three kinds of knowledge in Spinoza, i.e., imagination, reason, and intuition, see Spinoza, *Ethics*, IIP40S2 and IIA2 (Spinoza 1677/2018).

⁸¹ For the adequate/inadequate “schema”, see Spinoza, *Ethics*, IIP11C.

⁸² Cf. Lord (2018).

following "the order of the intellect", that is, God's intellect, and everyone has it more or less, as partaking to God's infinite intellect and ideas (only God is fully intuitional, wholly conforming to the intuitional order of the intellect; something relevant to Plato's genus/genre of ideas); while inadequate knowledge, that is, imagination, is the mutilated, confused, and subjected to error one, which, in turn, follows "the common order of Nature", which is the erratic, confused, mutilated order in which things appear to us (equivalent to Plato's genus/genre of the senses/sensibles/imitations/phenomena). I would say that systematic thinking is the first, i.e. the inadequate thinking/knowledge and thought, whereas aphoristic thinking is the latter, the adequate one; a philosophical text or work, or the philosophical reason or thinking, is a continuous *ratio* between the two, usually refuging to inadequate ways when *lacking* intuition, or when abusively and over-arrogantly *wanting* and *attempting* to expose intuition's mechanisms, or when wanting to *attribute* more (narcissistic, egotistic) agency to the objects that have been derived from intuition, or simply when one opportunistically takes advantage of the "apocalypses" and "inspirations" that intuition has provided, in order to show how well his pathways/methods perform, and, again, gain the full agency, the felicitations and the laurels for the object/knowledge/thought/concept he has arrived to. In a way, as I see it, systematic-imaginative thinking (in Spinoza's sense) is *slow intuition*, while intuition is *fast systematicity*. For the time and effort spent during the *slow intuition*, one is compensated with the invention and the gaining of a constructed *agency* "responsible", almost in a God-like way, for the building of the way, the *mētis*, or the ladder, in order to arrive at the knowledge of an object.

The essay (essaying in thought/philosophy, as a style or a form) is *ecological* or *eco-friendly philosophy* –consilience, resonance with the ecosystem, nature, the riddles, and the contingencies of the cosmos, the uncathartic, the impure, living with the *trouble*, admitting the trouble, the uncathartic drama, as well as admitting the interesting, the enchanted, and the sense-ible, the tasty. It seems that towards thinking, in our thought, we are very *ecological*.– That is, there is an *a priori* ecological economy or conscience in our thinking; or, rather, *in our thought we would be very ecological, if it was not for the pollutant spoon-feeding and pampering of philosophical systematicity*, which, systematicity, paradoxically, and through a "double-bind"⁸³ chess movement, embarks in a catharting thought, affect, and action, while at the same time creating the whole *thought-pollution* through its pollutant emissions. There is thus a *pollution-catharsis* principle or rather an obsessive-compulsive or neurotic ritual taking place in the movement of thought within philosophy in general, and more particularly highly systematic and analytic philosophy, as well as in

⁸³ I use the notion of "double-bind" here not only for its psychoanalytical sense, but also due to the fact that it was proposed by British anthropologist Gregory Bateson, who is one of the first proponents of Ecology (as well as of Cybernetics), and who influenced Félix Guattari.

the thinking or the other processes and discourses of psychoanalysis, art, and other discourses / disciplines.⁸⁴

If by being systematic in philosophy, we mean that one is clear, consistent, and argumentative enough, through a logical reasoning, and follows a structure which starts with an introduction where he announces what he plans *to do*, then a part where he *is doing it*, and then a conclusion where he says he *has done it*, – if this is what systematicity is, I consider the very essential act and process of thinking and writing to be systematic enough in itself, provided that one treats the text attentively, and reads the whole and every corner of the text, including the parallel text of the titles and the footnotes, and, if needed, re-reading the text, for, many times, the answers to questions, criticisms, and other aporias, are to be found not in the same line or the next, nor in the same page, but in an altogether different section, contextual unit, or chapter, or even book of the same author or sometimes of another one. Every work, even the essay, the aphorism or the fragment, is systematic enough, provided also that we are not referring to the *spoon-feeding* and *pampering*⁸⁵ systematicity (the “pious virtue of pamper-diapers”) –the reader has to spend some effort, nearly –metonymically– analogous to the author– a systematicity that would appeal to the philosophy undergraduate, or the schoolkid, the general public, or any other type of “private” thinking entity, that is to “idiots”, or pampered baby-readers, that is, readers/philosophers/other thinkers still in their “pampers”, who have not socialized and interfered enough with the “public” milieu of the surrounding philosophy and the other intellectual enterprises; although, *as* a philosopher who, despite of the whole aforementioned apposed train of thought and probably quite systematic discourse, bypasses and exceeds the neatness and the economy of the aphorism, I am condemned to “idiocy” myself/I am an idiot myself, in need of an idiotico-neurotic ritualistic *catharsis* from the filthy e/assays and aphorisms of thought.

⁸⁴ Marielle Macé writes on speech, parole, words (*parole*) and pollution (a reflection on them in ecological terms), but with a different sense and aim. Cf., Macé (2021), Macé and Curial (2021), and Macé (2022-2023).

⁸⁵ I use the word *pampering* having in mind the following interview of Peter Sloterdijk, by Thomas Macho; I quote a selected passage, where he speaks of pampering as the human condition; I propose that systematicism in philosophy and, in general, strict philosophical methodologies are a form of pampering the reader. See Sloterdijk (2013/2016), 84: “[...] As I see it, humanization is a side effect of exceptional pampering. The ‘pampering’ of humans enables them to move into the house of language. Of course I am aware that the term ‘pampering’ sounds outrageous to most people – especially those who are generally regarded as poor wretches anyway. Since the eighteenth century, if not before, ‘pampering’ has been seen as one of the worst statements people can make about other people. Nothing has struck fear into educators and moralists as much as the phenomenon of pampering – and sometimes for good reason, because this fear conceals an insight of great significance. I am actually saying that pampering is the *conditio humana* as such, and those who don’t want to talk about pampering should keep silent about human beings. In fact, the anthropologists of the eighteenth century spoke of pampering, although not from a theoretical perspective but in a moralizing, admonitory tone: do anything you want, as long as you never admit to the tendency to pamper! That was almost the categorical imperative of bourgeois educational theory. I am arguing that anthropologists have seen humans as being so seriously at risk from pampering that they can’t talk about the human constitution except in terms of admonitions.”

Conclusion

Concluding, my main purpose and concern in writing this essay was to show that Petruševski's or other relevant unorthodox or even heretical proposals and interpretations on the classical Aristotelian tragic-poetical discourse, shall not stay secluded as philological commentaries, and that the "orthodox" choice, understanding and interpretation of *catharsis*, shall not only be interpreted as a philological or copyediting mistake, or glitch in the scrolls and their copies and commentaries, or a glitch in the interpretations of scholars, but a choice that shall be studied in its philosophical, anthropological, psychological, unconscious, and conscious sense as a choice *over* something else. I have tried to give some answers on the 'why' of that choice, of the emphasis or monopoly of *catharsis*, which is not a technical error, but a positive choice, and also to propose that this choice is recurrent in different discourses, and consequently in our ethico-political *bios*, which, latter, our mental ontologies (the given essences of our philosophy, art, psychoanalysis) shape and construct—and a call to re-shape them or de-construct and re-construct them. In doing so I visited multiple different notions and concepts such as Laruelle's "*non-decision*", and Nietzsche's *ephexis*, which, again, I reshaped within my own conceptual formation, since this is not supposed to be an interpretative analytical essay on any one of the aforementioned philosophers or philologists, but a synthetic and original or creative conceptual essay, in the very sense of the term, as an attempt, or an essay, and a philosophical *tasting* around ideas, in the original sense of *sapere-sapio*, which Nietzsche also applauds, without sitting, staying, dwelling, tarrying, lingering, being captured obsessively with/to any of them, in the sense of them becoming dogmatic ideologies.

Neither "pathēmatōn", nor "symptomaton", or "kataphaseōn" katharsin.

Appendix 1: Catharsis

There is an array of different attempts to define *catharsis*.

André Lalande gives the following concise definition of *catharsis*: see Lalande (1926/1997), 126:

purification, évacuation, ou, comme on dit souvent, 'purgation', en parlant de la κάθαρσις τῶν παθημάτων d'Aristote (la purgation des passions). *Poétique*, VI, 1449b28.

Terme employé par les psychanalystes, notamment par Breuer et par Freud, pour l'opération psychiatrique qui consiste à rappeler à la conscience une idée ou un souvenir dont le refoulement produit des troubles physiques ou mentaux, et à en débarrasser ainsi le sujet.

Barbara Cassin, Jacqueline Lichtenstein, and Elisabete Thamer give a lengthy definition of *catharsis*, in their entry "Catharsis, Katharsis [κάθαρσις]", in the same line with Lalande but much more extended, without however mentioning Petruševski. They devote the third section of their definition to "The 'Cathartic Method' in Psy-

choanalysis." See Cassin, Lichtenstein, and Thamer (2004/2014), 126–129. I quote the introductory summary of the definition from p.126:

The word *katharsis* initially was connected with rituals of purification before becoming a Hippocratic term in the theory of humors. Aristotle's *Poetics* inflected its meaning by maintaining, in opposition to Plato, that tragedy and theater can care for the soul by giving it pleasure. In the traditional translation as "purgation," it was part of French classical discourse on tragedy (Corneille, 1660) before reappearing in its Greek form in Lessing's works criticizing Corneille's criticism of Aristotle (the Greek word, which was already present in English, then returned in nineteenth-century discussions of Lessing; see RT: *DHLF*, s.v. "Catharsis"). In psychoanalysis and psychotherapy, the "cathartic method" that Freud gradually disengaged from its association with hypnosis is connected with abreaction, the emotional discharge that makes it possible, through language, to eliminate the affect bound up with a traumatic event. The word's oscillation between the meanings "purification" and "purgation" while remaining constant through various languages has continually provided material for polemics and reinterpretations.

See also Leon Golden's work on *catharsis*: Golden (1973a), 473–479, Golden (1976a), 77–85, Golden (1976b), 437–452, Golden (1973b), 45–46, Golden (1962), 51–60, and Golden (1969), 145–153. Moreover, see William Marx's work, on *catharsis*, which work mentions Petruševski: Marx (2015), 63–69, and Marx (2011), 131–154.

Another entry on *catharsis*, which mentions Petruševski, is Brunius' entry "Catharsis", in Brunius (1973), 269–270:

The thesis is that the terminal words in the definition are not *pathematon katharsin* ("catharsis of feeling") but *pragmaton systasin* ("action brought together"). The argument for the thesis is rather detailed. First of all, there are different readings of the manuscripts. Instead of *pathematon* there is an alternative reading of *mathematon* which is nonsensical. Secondly, there is the ambiguous wording in the definition of tragedy which is against Aristotle's rules of definition. Thirdly, there is a switch from objective to subjective qualifications, which is also against Aristotle's rules of definition. Fourthly, there is a commentary in the *Poetics* on the different parts of the definition, but catharsis is not included.

Professor Petrushevski has identified these words as *pragmaton systasin*, and the meaning is then that the tragedy has pity and fear in the actions that are brought together. These words are commented on by Aristotle in the later chapters of the *Poetics*. The explanation of a misreading is that Aristotle's writings were damaged and then edited by copyists who made the emendation because they had read in the *Politics* that Aristotle intended to explain catharsis in the *Poetics*. But in the definition he did not use the word "catharsis." In fact, there is, according to Professor Petrushevski, not a tragical catharsis, only a musical catharsis. In the *Poetics* Aristotle discussed the music of a tragedy, but these parts are lost. Presumably catharsis was discussed in this missing passage of the *Poetics*.

This is a bold and valiant conjecture. It assumes, however, that Aristotle could not fail to follow his own rules of definition. The conventional reading of the terminal words of the definition of tragedy forces us to give three different meanings of "pathematon"—an objective genitive, a separative genitive, a subjective genitive. It seems improbable that Aristotle was so clumsy a writer. This clumsiness is most likely to be due to a copyist. The misreading existed when Iamblichus and Proclus were reading Aristotle's text in late antiquity.

If Professor Petrushevski is right, the discussion of the meaning of catharsis seems to imply that an immense and erudite controversy was created by a mistake of a copyist. The serious discussion

of tragedy is thus changed into a learned absurdity. Although this article has made serious efforts to contribute new interpretations to Aristotle's use of catharsis, the author is inclined to believe in Professor Petrushevski's conjecture. But it may be that his suggested change of the text will not be accepted very soon by other scholars. It is almost too elegant and too reasonable to be accepted at once.

At last, for an emplacement and interpretation of *catharsis* in-between melancholy, Nietzsche, and narratology, see Sorci (2019); and for a compilation of essays on tragedy, in general, and more particularly on tragedy and *catharsis*, see Billings and Leonard (2015). Petruševski's name is, again, not mentioned once.

For certain further theories on *catharsis*, different to the Aristotelian popular one (or rather its interpretation), see the journal volume entitled "Catharsis, Ancient and Modern" (Ugolini 2016). See also Richard Seaford's work around a theory of tragedy, which is more anthropological, closer to the Dionysian cult and the historical event of *monetization* (the 'invention' of money). Along the same line, he theorizes the origins of philosophy as springing from the introduction of coinage, or the monetization of culture, around the end of the 7th century BCE, which introduction of the universal abstract substance of money, offered the notion of a unified mind and consciousness (*monism*), which in turn stimulated the birth of metaphysical thinking and thus of philosophy. See among other of his works, Seaford (2004), and Seaford (2018). Cf. the theory of Alfred Sohn-Rethel on "real abstraction" (Engster and Schlaudt 2018, 284–301).

Appendix 2: Philosophy vis-à-vis Anthropology

Part A

In the treatise it is rather the **ordeal**, where for the essay it is the *assay*. –An ordealic ritual, as part of our addiction to *masturbatory* language, the ecstasy and the *ek-stasis* (ἔκ-στασις) of our words, that is, our addiction to systematicism in our technics, and specifically to argumentation in language, which language is dressing and advocating for the technics.–

Systematic argumentation is fictional, artificial, constructed, pretentious, and performative; discursive, logorrheic, verbose, pleonastic, prolix; also decorative, and soothing, masking the real issue and affect, destructive, manipulative, unreliable; it can take you anywhere without taking you somewhere. It serves as an advocacy, a narrative served at a court, supposedly of and for justice or masked as justice, while it is a court of judging, of soothing and luck, or rather of the soothing of the burden of luck, through the administration of a placebo of treating luck or contingency with *control*, *trust*, and *empathy* towards Time, especially towards the future itself, and the Other. That is, a sort of making and attributing (*moirazō–moirasma–moira*)⁸⁶ justice to our neurotic, psychotic,

⁸⁶ I am alluding to the several instances of the elaboration of the notions of *moirasma* [μοίρασμα] and the *theft of ritual* in Christodoulou (2022a), especially in the Introduction. *Moirasma* [μοίρασμα] derives from the Greek term of *moiraō - moirō* [μοιράω - μοιρῶ], and it roughly connotes, according to my reading, the equal and egalitarian sharing, allocation, or attribution of the fate/destiny (*moira* / μοίρα) parts (*meros* / μέρος) to everyone.

and perverse affective misdemeanors, misendeavours, misadventures, turmoils, discontents, and misfortunes. –Something like psychoanalysis.– In all cases, they are systems of violence, of multiple violences to our common sense, intuition, direct cognitive perceptions, and to our given “immunological” capacities of Autopoiesis.⁸⁷ It is a violence, when, instead of oneself, an other, the (time) argumentation, through the court, and the analysis, are administered by a stranger, who has been trained as a professional in the different discourses of (therapeutic) administration, either of courts, psychoanalysis, science, and religion, with a false attentiveness (and care) *not* deriving from *empathy* or sympathy, nor from any kinship or *philia* whatsoever, nor *trust*, nor potency to *control* anything; in place of an *autopoietic* dynamic of *immunological self-circumscription* and *cognition* to control, trust, and empathize as oneself, as a kin, a friend, and as a community.

Whether truth, through the discourses of systematic argumentation, is revoked, revealed, and served, it is a matter of coincidence or, at best, of good luck. Luck (*l'hazard*) and the technics of mastering it are a summarized history of humanity and are systematized as culture, rituals, technics, habits, religion, and science, generally, as institutions (as collective habits), and Institutions; when this culture becomes arrogant enough, it is then taken by men for civilization. It is equivalent to expecting to have a shamanic experience or a mystical revelation just because you have consumed LSD. It is a large conglomeration of debris, a *hysteresis* (to use Maurizio Ferraris' concept) of lies, serving the constructed lie, the fictitiousness, the artificiality, the ungroundedness, the performativity, the pretentiousness, the, –in truth–, *inexistence* of a Society as such, connoting with, or within, or before it, or above it a principle of *archē* (ἀρχή). And here we go again: of which or what *archē*? One stemming from god-religion, truth/utility-science, or any other discourse or discipline, that is, from any other technique made to master (*archein* / ἄρχειν /) luck?

Through *argumentation*, through (psycho-) *analysis*, through *catharsis*, all serving the same purpose, all the same soothing and contingency-proof technics, all being elements based on and supplementing, intermingling, entangling, involving and covering each other, one becomes absolved of the responsibility; I do not mean responsibility, at first, in the moral sense, or the ethical one, although it comes to an *ethos*, that is, a habit if living, or a *habit pro-* (addiction-to) *life*, or, more precisely, a habit, friendly to the addiction to life (what I have called in my previous research, *life-habit* or what could be called *an ethics of the life-addiction*). At first I mean it in the very fundamental and substratum sense of *autopoiesis* (the *immunological self-circumscription and cognition*), and more precisely what I call the *addiction to life*; being responsible means being *autopoietic*, or, in my own terms, it means being addicted

⁸⁷ I am referring to the theory of *Autopoiesis* as proposed and elaborated by Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela. For the first introduction of the term, see Varela and Maturana (1972/1980).

to life and letting other beings to be addicted to their life, or any other state of inorganic, organic, or other form of terrestrial or extra-terrestrial "being". In other words, responsibility is about admitting and exercising the sole "concern" (Jonas), or the sole "care" (Heidegger), or the sole "self-affection" (Irigaray) of the being, which being is the being's one and own making (*Autopoiesis*), its making of its own being, which is, its "being addicted to being".

Argumentation, through (psycho-) *analysis* and *catharsis* are all facets of the same lifting and absolving of one's addiction to life, and are *un-ethical* technics, and practices, which have all been constituted as the centrifugal quintessence and *telos* of the cultural discourses or technics: philosophy, religion, science, art, and more recently emerging ones, which are sub-areas of the previous ones, such as psychoanalysis. Our way of thinking (as our discourses and disciplines, or our technics) has been, anyway, as alluded, deterministic, based on finding reasons and causes to everything, and, in this manner, pretending to master (*archein* / ἄρχειν) and suppress *luck*. The catholic/holistic, or, rather, totalitarian and collective *suppression* of luck, has become a *repression* in our collective historical, civilizational unconscious, for, the unconscious in not always to be found inside, but it is, rather, a factor to be searched, found, and treated *externally*. The rendering of the unconscious to an internal factor or faculty, is another symptom of the individualization initiated or resulting or itself originating civilization, and especially its modernist version, with its related ethics of liberalism, where "everything goes" as much as "everything *can* go", because everyone and each one is able to make, create, and design their own path, and be whoever they want; all is a matter of willing it in order to quasi-magically realize it, through effort, labour, and hard work, –see, career.

Even, supposedly, leftist and anarchist thinkers, which have become pop rebel heroes (have been *let* to become, for the obvious reasons of not being a threat, and thus of not being truly any rebels or heroes at all, but rather right-ish *reactionaries*, for the loudness of it, and the *jouissance* of the noise of one's individual voice), are not but "self-help" gurus, aligned with right-liberalism and the self-help culture, where you can be everything, and with individualism, where the collective, the group, and the power residing in collective bodies are broken; the first example is the continuous breaking of the collective body of women by patriarchy, so that it is not able to hold any ritualistic power, and thus to take action and make things happen, to hold any type of economy (ontological, libidinal, social, ritual, ethical), to hence not be able to have any chance to any real autonomy and to any minimal governmental state power, of which anarchists preach about, and which is only possible through the collective rituals that support *sharing*, what I explained as *moirasma*, or what can be anthropologically still seen in hunter-gatherer (egalitarian, or "communism-in-motion") societies, such as the rituals of *ekila* (in the BaYaka)

and *epeme* (in the Hadza).⁸⁸ The power of collective bodies, that is, the power of the group, and of *sharing*, as the power of holding the economy-of-sharing or/and the sharing-of-economy, is what Matriarchal Studies, resisting to the discipline of Anthropology, which is, due to its origins, individualistic, are trying to establish and stress.⁸⁹ Every power, which is motivated and is ready to act through ritual, is culminated, deescalated, and degenerated in(to) language, together with the meta-discourse (anthropological, philosophical, psychoanalytical, etc.) attributing the origins of what made us human, and along with it the cultural origins of humanity, to *language* rather than to *ritual*; language being/ becoming that huge *hysteretical* dustbin and garbage-dump of rituals.

Part B

Concerning what I have multiple times called the *violence* of thought, the *philia* of wisdom/thought, which in the end is not always a *philia*, but often a *misos*, and a *mépris* (Sloterdijk), –for Sloterdijk the origin of philosophy is *contempt*, and for Deleuze everything begins with “*misosophy*”–, as well as my remark about the *involuntarity* of thought, its contingency, the force to think, the object of thought as an “*encounter*”, I quote from Deleuze (1968/1994), 138–140: Chapter III: “The Image of Thought”:

'... some reports of our perceptions do not provoke thought to reconsideration because the judgment of them by sensation seems adequate, while others always invite the intellect to reflection because the sensation yields nothing that can be trusted. – You obviously mean distant appearances, or things drawn in perspective. – You have quite missed my meaning ...'. [Plato, *The Republic*, Book VII, 523b, trans. Paul Shorey, in *Plato: The Collected Dialogues*, ed. E. Hamilton and H. Cairns (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963).] This text distinguishes two kinds of things: those which do not disturb thought and (as Plato will later say) those which *force* us to think. The first are objects of recognition: thought and all its faculties may be fully employed therein, thought may busy itself thereby, but such employment and such activity have nothing to do with thinking. Thought is thereby filled with no more than an image of itself, one in which it recognises itself the more it recognises things: this is a finger, this is a table, Good morning Theaetetus. Whence the question of Socrates' interlocutor: is it when we do not recognise, when we have difficulty in recognising, that we truly think? The

⁸⁸ With “Communism-in-motion”, I refer to anthropologist's Morna Finnegan's concept, meaning the non-stable and non-static communistic distribution or allocation of power (as usually thought that Primitive Communism is), and the “pendulum motion” of power (between different hierarchical agents, as for example between genders), which “is kept swinging” [see Power, Finnegan, and Callan (2017), 19; cf. also, Finnegan (2013), 697–715.] Concerning *ekila* and *epeme*, see for example, Power (2015), 333–358, Power and Watts (1997), 537–560, Lewis (2008), 297–315, Power (2021), and Finnegan (2020).

⁸⁹ See the “Modern Matriarchal Studies” field founded by Heide Göttner-Abendroth. See, also, the work of the Radical Anthropologists Chris Knight, Camilla Power, and others, who although belonging to Anthropology, they go against the wave and stress the importance of *rituals* and of the economies of *sharing* (economies springing from and related to these rituals), as opposed to *language*, which, language, is the one often proposed as laying at the origins of human culture.

interlocutor seems already Cartesian. It is clear, however, that the dubitable will not allow us to escape from the point of view of recognition. Moreover, it will only give rise to a local scepticism – or, indeed, to a generalised method – on condition that thought already has the will to recognise what essentially distinguishes doubt from certitude. The same goes for dubitable as for certain things: they presuppose the good will of the thinker along with the good nature of thought, where these are understood to include an ideal form of recognition as well as a claimed affinity with the true, that *philia* which predetermines at once both the image of thought and the concept of philosophy. Certainties force us to think no more than doubts. To realise that three angles of a triangle should be equal to two right angles does suppose thought, it supposes the will to think, to think of triangles and even to think of their angles: Descartes remarked that we cannot deny this equality should we think of it, but we can indeed think, even of triangles, without thinking of that equality. All truths of that kind are hypothetical, since they presuppose all that is in question and are incapable of giving birth in thought to the act of thinking. In fact, concepts only ever designate possibilities. They lack the claws of absolute necessity – in other words, of an original violence inflicted upon thought; the claws of a strangeness or an enmity which alone would awaken thought from its natural stupor or eternal possibility: there is only involuntary thought, aroused but constrained within thought, and all the more absolutely necessary for being born, illegitimately, of fortuitousness in the world. Thought is primarily trespass and violence, the enemy, and nothing presupposes philosophy: everything begins with misosophy. Do not count upon thought to ensure the relative necessity of what it thinks. Rather, count upon the contingency of an encounter with that which forces thought to raise up and educate the absolute necessity of an act of thought or a passion to think. The conditions of a true critique and a true creation are the same: the destruction of an image of thought which presupposes itself and the genesis of the act of thinking in thought itself. [*Ce qui est premier dans la pensée, c'est l'effraction, la violence, c'est l'ennemi, et rien ne suppose la philosophie, tout part d'une misosophie. Ne comptons pas sur la pensée pour asseoir la nécessité relative de ce qu'elle pense, mais au contraire sur la contingence d'une rencontre avec ce qui force à penser, pour lever et dresser la nécessité absolue d'un acte de penser, d'une passion de penser. Les conditions d'une véritable critique et d'une véritable création sont les mêmes: destruction de l'image d'une pensée qui se presuppose elle-même, genèse de l'acte de penser dans la pensée même.*]

Something in the world forces us to think. This something is an object not of recognition but of a fundamental encounter. [*Il y a dans le monde quelque chose qui force à penser. Ce quelque chose est l'objet d'une rencontre fondamentale, et non d'une reconnaissance.*] What is encountered may be Socrates, a temple or a demon. It may be grasped in a range of affective tones: wonder, love, hatred, suffering. In whichever tone, its primary characteristic is that it can only be sensed. In this sense it is opposed to recognition. In recognition, the sensible is not at all that which can only be sensed, but that which bears directly upon the senses in an object which can be recalled, imagined or conceived. The sensible is referred to an object which may not only be experienced other than by sense, but may itself be attained by other faculties. It therefore presupposes the exercise of the senses and the exercise of the other faculties in a common sense. The object of encounter, on the other hand, really gives rise to sensibility with regard to a given sense. It is not an *aisthēton* but an *aisthēteon*. It is not a quality but a sign. It is not a sensible being but the being of the sensible. It is not the given but that by which the given is given. It is therefore in a certain sense the imperceptible [*insensible*].

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