

# Katharsis (according Aristotle)

## Introduction

The Aristotelian term katharsis is related-among others- with tragedy and music (mimetic arts) So, in my effort to approach the meaning of katharsis. I will exam the follow:

What is art-artist for Aristotle.

What are pleasures? What is mimesis?

The tragedy katharsis and wider its relation with the music.

## Aristotle's Philosophy of Art

While Aristotle had a comprehensive concept of *techne* for which both "craft" and "art"\* in its older sense are rough but imperfect, he has also capable of demarcating within this larger notion a restricted group of activities for which the normal modern use of "art" is the only simple equivalent, though "mimetic art(s)" is perhaps a preferable description.

History downs with the struggle of natural man to exist, and continues with his successive efforts to rise above nature. Sense and imagination grow rational and man begins to calculate: "Sensory imagination is found in all animals, but deliberative imagination in those alone which can calculate rationally for the task of deciding whether to do this or that already involves calculation, and man's pursuit of the greater (good) necessarily implies that he has a standard unit to measure by. It follows that the can construct a unity out of several *phantasmata*. It's from memory and recollection that anticipative imagination arises. In man out of memory develops experience (*empeiria*);for the several memories of the same thing produce finally the capacity for a single experience. And experience seems pretty much like science and **art** but really science and art come to men through experience."

The ideal in the artist's mind is ,though rationalized, still a *phantasma*, and in the practical sphere imagination cannot be parted from appetite. Aristotle never quite explains how the form, which is universal, is particularized in appetite and action, but his whole doctrine of art and conduct becomes unintelligible if we forget that despite his sometimes misleading language his problem is not with a universal and a particular which are first separate and then fused.

For Aristotle and this is true of Plato too(cp. P.p. 128-9) practical thought is one with the desire and the ability to effect an end :it is not a purely theoretical knowledge of what is, not a rule of which the purely intellectual grasp leads without more ado to its application. No doubt the union of thinking, desiring and making, which essentially involves, is menaced by the threat of divorce, as its precursor and lower analogue, the immediate oneness of sense-appetite and reaction in the brutes, is not.

\*In what follows "art" (*techne*) means skill-practical thinking which is not divided from the making in which it issues. Aristotle does not clearly distinguish what would be now called "the fine arts" from the useful arts in mind when discussing

Aristotle accepts unequivocally that poetry, painting, sculpture, music and dancing are all forms of *techne* (Poetics, music and dance at 47a 21-8, and the visual arts at 47a 20, as at PA 640a 32, Pol. 1281b 12-15). In Aristotle's system, the mimetic artist is devoted to the realization of aims which are determined independently of him by the natural development of his art, and by objective principles which emerge from this development.

If we try to summarize, art is defined by Aristotle as the realization in external form of a true idea, and is traced back to that natural love of imitation which characterizes man, and to the pleasure which we feel in recognizing likenesses. Art however is not limited to mere copying; it idealizes nature and completes its deficiencies: it seeks to grasp the universal type in the individual phenomenon.

But Aristotle never really wrote a treatise on art. In what he did write, however, he occasionally used art as a means by which to understand other realities. A few examples are found in the Nicomachean Ethics, specifically in contrast to virtue (Book II) and prudence (Book VI). In order to understand Aristotle's general philosophy of art, then, we must examine in detail his arguments concerning both art and that with which he contrasts it; otherwise, we will not fully comprehend his doctrine of Art.

In Book II of the Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle begins his investigation of virtue and notes first that it is a habit. Humans have a natural capacity for virtue, but we must actualize that capacity by doing good acts. Thus, virtues are acquired as arts are: one becomes a builder by building, and one becomes just by doing just acts (1103a19-1103b2). But, Aristotle points out, one must perform these acts well, for "building well makes good builders, and building badly makes bad ones" (1103b10-11). Likewise, in virtue, good actions towards others make us just, and bad ones make us unjust. Thus, for art, building is common to both good and bad builders, and for virtue, acting towards others is common to both good and bad builders, and for virtue, acting towards others is common to both the just and unjust; thus what differentiates them is (in the case of building) what is built or (in the case of justice) what is and how it is performed. Aristotle summarizes this by saying "a habit (of character) results from (the repetition of) similar activities" (1103b21).

In Chapter four, Aristotle discusses habits in relation to the agent and then in relation to the act itself. Indeed, the source of a good action determines whether it is simply a virtuous act or if it comes from a virtuous character (habit). For the latter to be the case, one must produce a good act or work not by accident or from a teacher's guidance, but by oneself and in the proper way. He then states the products themselves "determine by their own qualities whether they have been produced well"

In contrast to art, actions done in accord with virtue must have more than simply the right qualities of the act: the agent must be in the proper state. This is not the case for art, where the moral disposition of the artist, has no bearing on the product *per se*. Thus, the good of virtue is the good of the agent. Aristotle has thus treated in Book II the general properties of art and virtue. He uses art here to contrast it his primary topic (virtue).\*

In chapter III Aristotle discusses the virtue of art. The things which can be otherwise (that is, contingent things) are either productions or actions. Since these are different, the habits of reason concerned with them are not only different, but are mutually exclusive because they belong to different species of knowledge. He then defines art as a habit "involving true reason concerned with production" (1140a10). Art involves reason insofar as it determines how a certain product fulfills its *telos* is determined intrinsically to the product. He then reminds us of the discussion from Physics II: the principles of art are external (i.e. in the producer) and are about contingent things, while the opposite is true on both accounts for the principles of nature.

\*In the book VI he discusses the intellectual virtues and he makes a list of them "in which the soul grasps truth in its affirmation or denial" *art, scientific knowledge, prudence, wisdom and understanding*.

Thus we have seen that Aristotle relies heavily on an idea of art to define and explain action and, more specifically, prudence. This conclusion is derived primarily from a basic understanding that the end of art is a product external to the agent, while the other intellectual virtues produce some kind of regard for the world (either theoretically or practically). This discussion is important for understanding Aristotle's works on specific types of art, including poetry.

## Pleasures

In a study of pleasure which is common to texts of the Eudemian and Nicomachean Ethics Aristotle says that pleasures are *energeiai* (EN VII 1153a-915).

In a second study which is found only in the Nicomachean he says that pleasures complete or perfect *energeiai*. For Aristotle pleasure is not a *genesis* (coming into being) or *kinesis* (change).

Plainly Aristotle is refusing to identify the pleasure with the enjoyed activity. Unlike desires, pleasures are so bound up with the activities they complete that there is disagreement on whether the pleasure is simply identical with the activity. But it doesn't look as though the pleasure is just thinking or perceiving for that would be absurd. (1175b32-5)

So, Aristotle conceives of pleasure primarily as a level or aspect of experience which supervenes on and completes (like the "bloom" of those in their physical prime) any activity in which man's abilities are put successfully to their natural use.

The verbs he associates with it are *chairein*, *hedestai*, *areskein*, *terpein*, *agapan*

When Aristotle rejects the thesis that pleasure is a process, he is offering to tell us that our real pleasures are, what is really enjoyed or enjoyable. When he rejects a thesis in the same form of words he is offering to tell us what the nature of enjoying is by reviewing the logical characteristics of pleasure verbs. If I enjoy building or dining quickly I don't quickly enjoy building or dining.

Aristotle refers many times to pleasure in his "system"

-Natural pleasure taken in mimetic works. The cause of this pleasure is that the experience entails a process of understanding and learning.\*

-pleasure due to the execution, surface or some other such aspect of a work of mimetic art; this is independent of the work's mimetic status.

-"pleasurably garnished" language (definition of tragedy) and then explained as "language with rhythm\*\* and melody"

\*At the opening of the *Metaphysics* Aristotle makes the famous pronouncement that "all men by nature desire knowledge" and he goes on to relate this postulate to the observation that we value the senses regardless of utility for the pleasure they afford us.

\*\*Stephen Daedalus in James Joyce's *Portrait of the artist as a young Man* to illustrate Aristotle's idea of rhythm: *Rhythm is the first formal aesthetic relation of part to part in any aesthetic whole or of an aesthetic whole to its part or parts or of any part to the aesthetic whole of which it is part*

## Katharsis and tragedy

The definition of tragedy in chapter 6 of Poetics is :

“A tragedy is the imitation of an action which is serious and, having grandeur, complete in itself , done in language seasoned with embellishments, each appearing separately in different parts of the work, In dramatic rather than narrative form, accomplishing by way of pity and fear the catharsis of such feelings (6,1449b22-28)

### a.Mimesis

Concerning the beginning of the definition we can be rather rash. Aristotle points out that tragedy is an imitation , *a mimesis*, which is not exactly the same as “imitation” in our modern use of language .In fact Aristotelian *mimesis* or “imitation” has a much wider import. Music is *mimesis* and the most imitative art,\*according to Aristotle.

Music imitates states of mind. In this case we would rather say that it expresses states of mind. The imitation of a state of mind will have a contagious effect on other minds so that one state of mind will suggest another mind to be dominated by the “same” state of mind. To distinguish between imitation and expression is, in such cases, difficult. Tragedy as an imitation gives a picture of life, but this imitation is not completely of the same character as the thing give pleasure just by means of being imitations. Things giving us pain in reality will as imitations give us pleasure\*\*.

Aristotle –as Plato- bases poetry on imitation. But he begins characteristically by tracing its development from a primitive stage and his final results differ greatly from Plato’s .Though man’s joy in disinterested sense-perception is an earnest of his desire for knowledge, he learns at first through his natural attitude for imitation. The fine arts too-as the useful arts- the end of which is especially pleasure, all derive from this imitative faculty; for in recognizing the relation of copy to original there is a pleasure over and above the pleasure we take in the copy of simply an object beautiful to look upon. This is shown by the fact that the realistic representation even of an object in itself painful to behold gives us pleasure. From imitation and from an equally natural and fundamental sense of harmony and rhythm, sprang those rude improvisations in dance and song from which civilized poetry developed.(Poetics 1148b-24)

\*Aristotle undoubtedly aware of the specific issue of the formal relation between mimetic art and its objects. This is apparent in the passage from book 8 of the politics (1340a28ff)where he distinguishes between the true mimesis of human character which he states to be possible in music and the weaker relationship-“symbolic, rather than properly mimetic, representation to be found in the portrayal of character in visual media. It’s regrettably common for this passage to be erroneously paraphrased as claiming that music is, tout court, the most mimetic of the arts but we must correct this by observing that Aristotle refers only to the mimesis of character. Understanding of the point is obscured by ignorance of Greek music but it appears to be the case that what is involved is a putatively precise correspondence between the expressive moment of music and the “kinetic” dimension of active human character.

\*\* It was generally accepted among the Greeks that emotions, when aroused by mimetic performances, are enjoyable. (1448b10-12) “ We derive pleasure from looking at representations even of things that are in actuality painful to complete, like the most despised animals and corpses; these objects are “impure” once again evoking the idea of Katharsis”

### b.Katharsis

In tragedy definition in ch.6, its end or purpose is affirmed to be the *Katharsis* of the emotions of *eleos* (pity),and *phobos* (fear)\*.Elsewhere in the Poetics the stimulation of these emotions leading to the pleasure resulting from them is itself regarded as the end of tragedy. Before discussing the meaning of katharsis it is necessary to look further at the emotions in question .Emotions other than pity and fear are occasionally mentioned ,wonder or surprise connected with *to thaumaston* and amazement *ekplexis*, but surprise is

in any case as accentuating pity and fear rather than as an independent end. That the sufferings represented in tragedy should awaken pity needs no comment.\*\* The distinction between *eleos* and the milder *philanthropia* (52b38-53a) suggests that pity is a powerful emotion and its association with undeserved suffering implies perhaps some sense of outrage. Since pity, especially in tragedy is often pity for the dead or the bereaved it is akin to the shared or public lamentation which is part of life in small and closely knit communities.

Plato's strictures on the oral weakness caused by indulgence in epic and tragedy suggest that the audience luxuriated in community sorrow "surrendering itself" to lamentation and taking part in the mourning along with actors and chorus.

The word *katharsis* is used most of the times in two relevant Greek contexts: in medical texts, it refers to **purgation** (to the effects of emetics and laxatives); and in religious context, it refers to **purification**.

It has been maintained that Aristotelian *katharsis* presupposes the Hippocratic doctrine of the four humours. The balance of the body and the mind had to be kept by means of purging the evil humours. The melancholy was derived from the black bile, and the arts were means to a purging of such a disturbance of the mind and the body. J. Tate has formulated this interpretation as follows:

"the music, the dance and the sacred spectacle by exciting the soul counteract the influence exercised upon the soul by the black bile. When the artificially induced excitement is over, the sufferer is found to be free (for a season) from atrabilious disorders of mind. In calling this the relief "as it were a *katharsis* and a cure" Aristotle was using the word *katharsis* ...in its medical sense, but clearly also with a certain play on its religious sense, in which he used the word a little earlier...He is making a decided point in calling the religious and medical effects by the same name".

From fragment of Aristoxenus: asserts that Pythagorians used medicine for the purification of the body and music (*mousike*) for that of the soul. Whatever may have been distinctive about the former it is the musical and spiritual type of Pythagorians *katharsis* which may represent an important precedent for Aristotle's use of the term. It is true that the Pythagorean *katharsis* which Aristoxenus at tests might with some reason called religious (or magical) and so be regarded as a sub-class than the fact that the Pythagoras application of music for cathartic effect must have differed appreciably from the ecstatic or frenzied type of Corybantic *Katharsis*.

\*Aristotle cannot have real pity and genuine fear in mind at all; for he refers to the pleasure which comes from the pity and the fear 14,1453b12) and genuine pity and real fear do not cause pleasure.

\*\* In all countries in which the Christian tradition has been dominant pity as half-sister to forgiveness, is strongly approved and those who experience it feel that they have acquired merit. In the ancient world it was less generally admired, since it came into conflict with the belief all but universal that it was meritorious to hate one's enemies; and to hate one's friends' enemies was a part of loyalty. But on balance pity was admired.

*Katharsis*, rendered "purification", is a word with a strong suggestion of uplift, and the earlier commentators were content to take the sentence as meaning that tragedy was morally improving. Castelvetro thought that pity and fear experienced in the theater hardened up these emotions so that they were less a source of weakness on the emotions in such a way as to make men more inclined to virtue by banishing undesirable passions. Thus Corneille adapted Aristotle to his own purposes, arguing that the audience observed the

excessive passions of the characters and were filled with pity and dread at their misfortunes, both realized and impending, with the consequence that their own tendencies to excessive passion were removed

On this view the meaning is that tragedy purifies the spectators by freeing them from undesirable or excessive emotions. What is purified (or diminished) is the emotional capacity of the spectator over a considerable period of time after the performance, what purifies is the emotional experience given by the performance itself. Similarly it should not be argued that, because removal of impurity leaves a pure residue, this view asserts, like the previous one, that the spectator at the tragedy experiences emotions purer than those roused by real events. The katharsis affects not the emotional stability of the spectator.

The important thing from the point of view of tragic katharsis is that it gives real meaning to the purge of emotion. An excess of bile involves an increase in the same way as blood-letting relieves the over-sanguine. We naturally think of emotions as reactions to stimulate. If they are excessive or unbalanced, it may be because a man is traumatic experiences, whether in the womb or later in life. The Greek doctrine of humours implies that each man has an emotional capacity directly related to his physical make-up, and an excess of humours is marked, the emotional congestion can become serious, and the pleasure, when it is relieved, proportionately greater. So the release of accumulated pity and fear by pity and fear experienced in the theatre presents no problem.

It is questionable whether it is strictly correct to describe katharsis of the emotions as a metaphorical expression, since the process actually worked on the humours through the emotions. Had Aristotle asked, he would probably have allowed that both corybantic music and tragic drama had an effect on the balance of the physical components in those who listened to them. As the changes could not be observed and the whole matter was obviously speculative in the highest degree, he may well have thought this aspect of the subject unimportant, but given the physiological beliefs then current, it does not seem possible to escape from the conclusion that the kathartic process was both physical and psychological.

**Music/katharsis** Aristotle in his last book of *The Politics* discusses the importance of music in society and in education and he refers the term katharsis again:

“We say however that music is to be studied for the sake of many benefits and not of one only. Is it to be studied with a view to education, with a view to Katharsis—we use this term without explanation for the present; when we come to speak of poetry, we shall give a clearer account of it—and thirdly with a view to the right use of leisure and

for relaxation and rest after exertion. It is clear, then, that we must use all the scales, but not all in the same way. For educational purposes we must use those that express character, but we may use melodies of action and enthusiastic melodies for concerts where other people perform. For every feeling that affects some souls violently affects all souls, melodies or less; the difference is only one of degree. Take pity and fear, for example, or again enthusiasm. Some people are liable to become possessed by the latter emotion, but we see that, when they have made use of the melodies which fill the soul with orgiastic feeling, they are brought back by these sacred melodies to a normal condition as if they had been medically treated and undergone a Katharsis. Those who are subject to the emotions of pity and fear and the feelings generally will necessarily be affected in the same way; and so will other men in exact proportion to

their susceptibility to such emotions. All experience a certain Katharsis and pleasant relief. In the same manner Kathartic melodies give innocent joy to men.”

### **Relation Music/katharsis-character/diagoge**

Aristotle recognized that well-balanced emotional reactions are a crucial factor in making correct choices and thus in forming and maintaining a settled good character. Sometimes one should feel such emotions as pity, anger, or fear, if they are felt towards the right object, to the proper degree, in the correct way and at the right time. Proper compassion, justified anger and the right degree of courage can and should affect moral choice. We must feel the emotions rightly for the circumstances if we have too much fear, we are cowardly, if too little, we are foolhardy.

Aristotle compares songs which arouse ecstasy in some people to “representation” which arouse a wider range of emotions in everybody; this comparison recurs in the later passage on katharsis. Among “representation” he includes unaccompanied mimetic poetry and even prose (e.g. mime) since mimesis and not have “rhythm and songs” to accompany them.

“since music happen to belong among pleasant things and virtue is concerned with feeling delight correctly and loving and hating clearly one should learn, and become habituated to, nothing so much as judging correctly i.e. feeling delight in decent character and fine actions. Rhythms and songs contain especially close likenesses (*homoiomata*) of the true natures of anger and mildness, bravery, temperance and all their opposites and of the other character-traits. This is clear from the facts we are moved in our soul when we listen to such things. Habituation to feeling pain and delight in things are like (sc. the truth) is close to being in the same state regarding the truth.(poetics 1340a14-24)

For Aristotle we are all subject to the emotions to some degree pity and fear as well as ecstasy. Wild kathartic songs arouse ecstasy and bring about katharsis in the extreme case of people prone to these emotions. “Songs relating to action”(specifically tragedy) have just such an effect on people who tend to feel pity and fear to which we all are prone to some extent. Just as this effect to tragedy is accompanied by pleasure (, so the kathartic songs too provide a “harmless delights”

The legislator must allow both kinds of music to be performed in the theater. Aristotle clearly regards both types of song as appropriate for both catharsis and educative entertainment (*diagoge*) which contributes to intelligence.

He has to argue for the more debatable proposition that songs relating to action can produce a “kind of” katharsis no less than do the “kathartic” songs in the extreme case of people prone to enthousiasmos.

And later Aristotle suggests that they combine to perform for adults the function which *paideia* perform for children, the training of both the emotion and the intelligence, with the theater regarded almost as a form of adult education. The emotion and the intelligence are interdependent: the emotion can play an important part in cognition. Thus katharsis and *diagoge* seem to be negative and positive aspects of one and the same process: via katharsis, we moderate our tendency to feel inappropriate emotional reactions, and via *diagoge* we make intellectual progress towards intelligence. Both aspects of this process are needed if we are to achieve virtue.

## General

- Apart from – purification of the mind
- purgation
  - ethical interpretation
  - aesthetical interpretation (G Else “the true pleasure given by tragedy...flows its perfection of form...”\*)

the different meanings of katharsis have to be combined, in one way or another with the reaction of pity and fear. The katharsis happens in the reaction of pity and fear. This reaction is changed from violence into a just mean between the extremes of too strong and too mild. Or the reaction is changed from private violence into a kind of intellectual harmony. Another alternative is that the reaction is changed so that it is dominated by pain but by pleasure. Or this change is a change from physical reaction into a more refined mental or spiritual reaction. These explanations emphasize that the reaction of pity and fear is changed and the change is called katharsis.

In this interpretation katharsis appears to have two aspects, which we could call intrinsic and extrinsic. The intrinsic katharsis is achieved by a tragic play the moment it renders its material essentially tragic by passing it through the mould of the pitiable and the fearful. And the extrinsic katharsis is accomplished by the general defining process called *mimesis* which working in accordance with the laws of probability and necessity propriety and **harmony and rhythm**\*\*, manifests itself in the structure of the events, delineation of character employment of diction, management of thought, arrangement of song and presentation of the spectacle.

The test of katharsis is the creation of an artwork, technically flawless and immaculate like a well formed animal (*zoon*) with all its part finely balanced and harmonized.

\*G.F.Else:Aristotle’s Poetics; The argument,Harvard,Cambridge,Mass.1957,p.195

\*\*The following extract from Problems,XIX:38 may serve as a gloss for the Aristotelian concept of harmony and rhythm:

Why does everyone enjoy rhythm and tune and in general all consonances? Is it because we naturally enjoy natural movements? This is proved by the fact that newly born infants enjoy such. We enjoy different types of songs for their moral character, but we enjoy rhythm because it has a recognized and orderly numerical arrangement and carries us along in an orderly fashion; for orderly movement is naturally more akin to us than one without order, and so more in accordance with nature. Here is a proof of this: if we take our exercise and eat and drink in an orderly fashion, we ruin and spoil it, for bodily diseases are unnatural disturbances of order. But we enjoy harmony, because it is mingling of opposites which bear a relation to each other. Now a relation implies an ordered arrangement, which is naturally pleasant. But everything mixed is more pleasant than unmixed especially if in the sensible world the relation existing in the harmony has the power of the two extremes in equal balance.



### **Relation katharsis of Politics- tragedy katharsis**

Aristotle in his main reference to Katharsis in Politics 8 (1341b 38 ff) promises to explain more clearly the meaning of the term. "in my treatment of poetry" and the need for explanations perhaps implies a degree of his novelty in his adaptation of it. Whether or not the reference in the politics to "treatment of poetry" means the Poetics itself, this passage puts it beyond reasonable doubt that there is a significant link, though not necessarily simple identity, between the Katharsis of Politics and Tragedy Katharsis. This connection, which was perceived by Renaissance writers such as Vettori and given renewed attention from Bernays onwards in the nineteenth century, is only however, the first step in the unrevealing of the problem.

A careful scrutiny of this section of Politics yield the inference that musical and poetic Katharsis cannot be all of precisely one kind. This is entailed, for one thing, by the very existence of tragic Katharsis, since, despite arguments to the contrary, it is intolerable to suppose that the latter could be wholly assimilated to the Katharsis of those who suffer from abnormal emotional propensities, as indicated at Politics(1342a 5ff):an effect of this kind, which could operate only for an exceptional portion of a tragic audience, could never have earned a place in Aristotle's definition of the genre, the statement of its essence. Moreover, the politics texts itself appears to assert the existence of a range of Kathartic experiences available from music. At one extreme stands the orgiastic experience of "sacred melodies" which allows those in need of it to find "a medical cure", as it were and a Katharsis. Alongside this is the possibility of varying degrees in Katharsis for those who are emotionally susceptible, but whose susceptibilities are less than pathological. It is likely that this range covers most members of the audience of music or poetry and that some form of Katharsis is considered by Aristotle to be the appropriate effect on entire audiences of those type of music or poetry which possess the power to produce it. The possibility of variation in the degree or quality of Katharsis is strengthened by the evidence from the Rhetoric on the differing emotional sensibilities of certain sorts of people. For, as Aristotle puts it just before mentioning orgiastic Katharsis, "the emotion which some souls feel strongly exists in all souls to a greater or lesser degree" And, to reiterate a vital consideration, if this were not so, it is difficult to see how tragic Katharsis could belong in the definition of the genre.

We saw that Politics 8 presupposes the existence of both ritual and medical Katharsis and expects acquaintance with them both as part of the cultural background which gives force to Aristotle's application of the term to a range of emotional experiences provided by music and poetry; but equally, that neither the extreme of orgiastic Katharsis the other forms of psychological Katharsis hypothesized by Aristotle can count in his view as properly religious or medical.

So he takes his interprets in psychological terms and in turn compares for it's therapeutic effects to medicine.

In the context of Politics 8 as a whole, Katharsis is only a marginal concern to Aristotle and it is at one point explicitly contrasted with the main subject of the philosopher's argument, the use of music for emotional and ethical education. The importance of this latter theme is that it leads Aristotle to some general remarks given the close association between music and poetry, can be taken to have wider implications for all mimetic art, as Aristotle's comparative references to the visual arts confirm.

The power of music, and hence its significance for representations of emotions which are correspondingly experienced by the hearer and can play a part in the training of his emotional sensibilities whose ethical functions are important to Aristotle. The paradox which arises out of this is that it may be precisely Aristotle's account of this process of

emotional and ethical habituation through mimetic art which can help to explain the concept of tragic katharsis even though in politics itself the education of the emotion.

### **Conclusion-Questions**

Having read Aristotle's text in the poetics carefully and taken into account what he has written in other books, we cannot get a sufficient reason to distinguish between the change of the pity and the fear or the relief of the mind from pity and fear, between a religious and a medical or therapeutic, a moral or ethical, a psychological or psychiatric, and an aesthetic interpretation in isolation from each other. Our modern distinction sets somehow borderlines where there were no borderlines in Aristotle's time.

The question is if contemporary art has hidden or transformed the same end (goal) of one kind of "katharsis"

What does the modern artist try to achieve? The purification of the audience or maybe his own?

We are in a long process to cross the borders between arts through cooperation or sometimes through confrontation between them. And what is the purpose of this process?

It is undeniable fact that the meaning-role of an artist, or a work of art in our times, seems to be far away from the ideal Aristotelian approach for different social, economical, politic reasons.

But for sure the basic process which characterize the making art as well as the origin of its elements, are strongly connected with Aristotle idea of mimesis and katharsis.

And as Strabo in his Geography writes: *"Accordingly, the outset of the wave has a power sufficient to expel foreign matter. They call this, in fact, a 'purging' of the sea- a process by which dead bodies and bits of wreckage are cast out upon the land by the waves."*

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