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TOWARDS A THEATRICAL ATTITUDE IN MAN
The feeling of theatricality

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ATTITUDE IN MAN**

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INTRODUCTION

The origins of drama have had several interpretations. Generally speaking, authors prefer some specific elements as decisive, or to avoid the point. The problem to some extent seems to be solved when a scholar stated that drama has existed from time immemorial, or as Aristotle stated that it is a natural and instinctive attitude in man. However, advances in the study of the development of man and in the theory of theatre have incorporated new arguments for this search.

A short review of the literature could help to explain these aspects. Aristotle in his *Poetics* (chapter 4, v.1448), stated that theatre would be a product of imitation, and that "instinct of imitation" is implanted in man from childhood, which is precisely the difference between man and other animals. A similar opinion has been stated by Rainer Friedrich (1983), saying that in its primal state, the mimesis would have been very crude, "almost instinctual" and still far from the art of drama. Its fusion with religion gave rise to ritual; and ritual in turn, to drama. So, the dramatic mimesis and religious union enables an elaborated form of art that could make possible drama, as a complex art, as stated Karl Mantzius (1903). In the same sense,

he says that it is a tendency of human nature to reproduce and communicate to others the impressions received from the surrounding world, which is basic to art, and to this end "reproduction" became "the first movement of dramatic art" in older societies. Also, N. Evreinoff (1930, p 24)) pointed out that the origin of all arts was a "feeling of theatricality", and not man utilitarianism. This attitude would be a congenital instinct; this theatricality would precede the aesthetic conscious and even religious roots: it would be like a "pre-art".

Another group of authors tend to prefer some particular element of theatre as decisive. Gordon Craig (1925, pp. 138139) in his *On the Art of the Theatre*, expressed that drama is composed of five elements: action (the spirit of acting), words (the body of the play), line and color (the heart of the scene), and rhythm (the essence of dance). However, the theatrical art has sprung from "action-movement-dance". Similar to that, Antonin Artaud in his classical *The Theatre and its Double* (1938), suggested that drama ought to return to the fundamental "magic notion", "physical knowledge of images", "trances", and "communicative power or magic mimicry of gesture". Both of these authors, without reference to time and place emphasized movement and signs as relevant in some kind of magic operation (at least in Artaud).

Many authors; in contrast, put dance at the centre of the origins of drama. Allardyce Nicoll (1923, p. 9; and 1949, p. 25), in spite of the fact that he realized that theatre existed in all ages, and that the essential elements of dramatic forms lie in the *Poetics* of Aristotle, stating what it is assumed by mimetic dances in prehistory are vague conjectures, although it may be suspected that the dances took "on something approaching a theatrical appearance", and where popular entertainers contributed to its later dramatic artistry. Richard Wagner in *The Art-Work of the Future*" (cited by J. L. Styan, 1981, p. 5) pointed out that by "dance, tone and poetry" man created a form of art in which he was himself involved. By tone he meant "a kind of half-speech and half-song imagined from some pre rational time", when both dance and poetry had their beginning, the nearest ancestor to the later Greek choric verse.

An interesting opinion has been suggested by Lucien Dubech (1931, pp. 1-5), to whom poetry is the synthesis of all genres and thus, epic poetry would be the origin of all dramatic genres. Since heroic verse through elegiac poetry is achieved the lyric verse of Greeks, which combined with religion, gave the dramatic element of theatre, and this added with music and songs of the imitative dance became tragedy. It was, so to speak, that the participants of the choric songs in honour of Dionysus,

disguised in satire as normal comrades of the god and interpreted for the first time a role: that would be the first drama.

Robert Pignarre (1962), based in ethnological studies, thought he was the discoverer of the older dramatic scene in paleolithic paintings, which represent dancers wearing animal hides. This would be a magic dance from which derived the ritual drama. Researches conducted in others fields close to theatre put its origins far from the assumed first dramatic forms. Such representations emerged in Japan and Egypt. The first antecedents of drama in the primitive age of Japan were that of sympathetic magic and unconscious drama before the VII century B.C. Primal forms of refined drama were Kagura, Haitomai, Tattsumai, Kumemai, kishimai and others whose representations occurred in the year 712-780 B.C. However, in 702 B.C. Bugaku drama birth to the well known Japanese Noh, and at the same time also emerged two popular forms, the Bunraku (puppets) and Kabuki, the live traditional drama (Dunn,1983, p. 234).

Regarding Egypt, George Freedly (1968) explains that Egyptian drama goes back at least to 3.000 B.C. The content of the *Pyramid Texts* seems to indicate that it could be extended even as far back as 4.000 B.C., stating that according to Herodotus, the Dionysiac festival had its inception in Egypt and

was transferred to Attica. Some evidence of the Greek drama in Syria exists from about 1250 B.C., and the famous *Abydos Passion* play (sometimes called *Osiris*) is about 1.868 B.C. Even more, it is believed that Sanskrit dramas (i.e. *Rig Veda Hymns*) occurred between XVI and XVII centuries B.C. In this theatre, the main factors involved were imitation (of animal comportment), perhaps movement and cry. Later on, these elements became in dance and in turn, in drama properly, which included music, chorus, dance and movement.

The actual dramatic expressions of indigenous people in Africa or North America are not entirely conclusive with respect to the predominance of dance, since they are affected by the oral tradition or by Shamanism. While researching on the *mise en scene* theory conducted by André Veinstein (1962, pp. 309-332), he sent a questionnaire to several theatre researchers about the origin of drama. He assumed as a premise that this occurred by means of dance, poetry or music. From all the responses it has been selected here the most prominent and connected to this theme. He cited that F.F. Hoffmann and E. Legband (from Germany) stated that neither in Europe nor the East, the cult was of the greatest importance, and there were contributors of music, words, and dance. Another stimulus they pointed out, was the imitative instinct, expressed as a mimic attitude. In turn, W.

Liebeneiner (also from Germany), thought that the instinctive impulse, primal rituals, magic and dramatic representations had their origin in gesture, to which it was added words and music. J. Burrell (from United Kingdom) stated that the most important factor involved was poetry. E. Laplane (from Spain) expressed that chorea's dances staged in a circular place, in honour of Dionysus, were most significant ones. H. Schnitzler (from U. S.A.) stated that the origin of drama was the product of the fusion of poetry, dance and music.

It is important to point out as well, that from the pantomime views, R. J. Broadbent (1964, pp. 1-14) stated that this pantomime or mimicry, had its origin in nature itself, where it can find this practised "from the beginning of all time", and in an instinctive form in every person in greater or lesser degrees. The word pantomime means "an imitation of nature" (pan=nature, and mimos = imitator). A psychosociological approach has been made by G. Baudoin (1946), who considered drama as a historical dialectic, "representation of a hard progress of human consciousness linked to the elaboration of myths or mental expressions in order to assure the cohesion of the social group", perceptible through the "cry, gesture and contagious attitude, which were the most simple movements of primal souls".

The objective of this book is not to make an exhaustive recital of quotations on this theme by well known authors, but only to emphasize the broad variety of ways in which this matter has been approached. Neither, it is not the aim to pursue an historical enquiry, but to establish clearly as it is possible, on a scientific and artistic base, the theatrical elements in man, which enable drama theory to seek out their manifest forms from its origin; thus this main review of generic arguments is connected with a sociohistorical interpretation of the dramatic function, The first steps of man associated to theatre, the magic Era, the Greek Mythology, the ritual theory, and the prospects to the present time, and finally to discuss the basic feature of an aesthetic of the forms and movement, which in turn will help to develop an approximate concept of the present drama inside a cultural framework.

CHAPTER I. THE DRAMATIC FUNCTION

In this book it will be important to make clear that the main factors involved in any drama/theatre are those included in the so called "dramatic function", which comprises at present the following elements: (1) a text, considered in an hypothetical existence, for the origin of drama could be either an schematic idea or a simple pretext to act; (2) actor/s, what according to Grotowski, there must be at least one; 3) audience, which in drama is part of the spectacle, say, as a social form of human relationship. This does not imply that the spectators is a variable factor, but a constant: its presence is not alternative, but seems to be imperative for some authors, (4) the so called by Stanislavsky "like if" factor, for a dramatic performance is to make believe something, by means of game or diversion. It is the subjunctive tense stated also by Turner and Schechner, and represent the weakest element in this function, absent in many dramas like non-narrative dance, conceptual drama and perhaps in oldest drama; and (5) the theatrical space, basic feature in drama, always present and is the significant scene. Related to this, some authors extend. the concept of dramatic space, defined like a relationship between actor and audience, linked by the dramatic action or dramatic intention, through which drama

creates special sites of dramatic participation, immaterial spaces where people meet their own particular participation and where things are happening. Any human activity connected with these conceptual factors could be considered as drama, and any approach to them could be a dramatic attitude, susceptible to be drama and to certain extent art, in a determined condition of the human, social, cultural or aesthetical development.

CHAPTER II. THE EARLY THEATRE

It is not easy to image how the Prehistoric man realized his own reality (i.e. the Australanthrop). Man has inherited a considerable amount of myths and rituals from a broad variety of artistic cultures, from which their origins have been well determined. In this search also exists the scientific works on the antiquities, stories and theatrical interpretations. From these, the extracted image of man is really profound and coherent, as well as divergent. Nevertheless, it makes possible a general assessment in the sense of a conscious act of reviewing the transformation of perceptions of mans reality one of whose components is art and drama-, until his own history.

The religious and evolutionary view of man during the XIX century was that of an almost ancestral simian, improved with time, but with a deep zoological reference. This was a common base of discussion of the problem in the scientific and religious groups. Today, it is seeming clear enough that this was not indeed the best way to undertake the search of the origins of man. Successive advances in the research have changed this monstrous image of the Prehistoric man for one in which he has his own route of development, since the appearance of the Anthropids, with specific features not connected with monkeys.

The mind is confounded behind facts which earlier references were well known but misinterpreted. The human being has been seen and interpreted with the eyes of each epoch, including the present one.

Man, image during the XX century actually comports a well-defined characterization. Anthropids had (1) a standing position, perhaps the most important feature of him, (2) free hands for locomotive functions, and (3), a short face. All these features related one to another since the Australopithec (Le Roi, 1971, pp. 14-16).

Free hands implied a technical activity. Their freedom during active processes, associated with a small face in need of offensive canines imposed the utilization of any artificial organ, which were the utensils. Thus, to the first three biological features, must be added a new one: the possession of utensils. Altogether they are really the fundamental criteria for the study of mankind and culture.

It could be argued that the brain volume is as important as these features already mentioned. All indeed, is in close connection within the species development, but it seems that this character will redeem a decisive role later on during the social formation of man. To sum up, from the origins: spine, face, and

hands together with utensils are indissolubly linked with the evolution of man and established his definitive specificity.

As regards to the standing position, it made possible some neurologic development and consequently an increase in the volume of the brain. The face-hands relationship remained always closely related with the brain's development, now and in the past. Therefore, it can be stated that hand tools and facial language are both poles of the same nervous system, as has been argued by Le Roi (Ibid), from the Homo sapiens.

Generally speaking, strict neutrality does not exist in nature. Every characteristic of an animal is on balance either to its advantage or disadvantage. It is because of this that it is not only possible but objectively correct to think that every characteristic has a selective value or has had one in the past. Where there is such selective value there is a function, and it is therefore not naive to assume that every characteristic of a living plant or animal has a function although the nature of the function may continue to baffle us even after long and arduous study (Hinton, 1978, p. 97).

The importance of all these facts are that for once, for the first-time man had the capability of mimicry, manipulating utensils, feeding and defending for himself with elements gathered from nature. Then, also for the first time and for ever,

he could use implements which opened infinite possibilities for the satisfaction of his needs. In fact, this emancipation and increased capability of his hands -an immense initial revolution for during the past world- added perhaps the most valuable link to his whole history when with those hands he could grasp a stick or to supply himself with stones as an instinctive search for vital purposes.

At this time, although the studies up until the middle Paleolithic Era are scarce, it is possible to assert that already man babbled his first oral expressions, perhaps simple and guttural emissions of sound endowed with a certain indescribable meaning: fear, glee, hunger, warning, fury... There is no doubt about the eminently social character of this language. The capability of "play" with his hands and to make some coarse objects is, besides the "talking", one of the fundamental features of him. The importance of this conduces to state that man could think because he first talked. Hence, it can also be assumed that man talks because he makes objects, and consequently man makes objects because he has free hands. So, to make objects and to talk, implies thinking, and therefore to produce things of all kinds amongst which is the imaginative idea of the world in which he lives: a world of credulity, fear, imagination, discovering, researching and all other things (Le Roi, p. 115).

Hands liberate the world. That is the conclusion. In a broad perspective, beginning from the fishes of the Primary Era to man in Quaternary, it is believed that a series of successive liberations have occurred from the body with respect to the liquid elements, the ground, the hands of man consequential to the locomotive process and finally his brain and utensils. By these means the living world got maturity, advancing age by age, selecting forms and constructing a regular and ascendant path over which any new liberation impressed a new considerable acceleration.

These language aspects involve an increased complexity of relationship. Face and hands were developed through two poles of the same biological device, an specific neuromotor system. Similar relationship exist in the brain cortex, between the fibres of manual projections and the facials. Therefore, hands and facial organs are linked between these two poles of the brain, and altogether are responsible for producing symbols of communications. For this, man makes utensils and images symbols by means of the same process, involving different parts of the brain. Following this scheme, it can be stated that there is a possibility of language since the moment in which man produce utensils, utensils and language are initiated in the same

neurologic system. Both equally are associated in the social structure of man (Ibid).

If the theory of the brain and hands in man is the starting point of his real evolution, then man is first of all perceptible of his own corporal reality. And thereafter he observes the actions of his hands. These are the instruments made by him to exert his own conscious thoughts, even those which are beyond his reality.

Towards the year 7.000 B. C., in the Neolithic Era, cities exist for everywhere in the Old World. The human group, passing through his social behaviour, reaching agriculture and metallurgic levels, centres its activity in the city and it starts the development of his civilization. At this stage, writing emerges – although the first Paleolithic-man showed a well-known scheme of graphic notation - to symbolize his necessities: writing the economic account of the interchange of agriculture goods. Le Roi states indeed the idea that at this moment an agrarian capitalism was settle, and thereafter the writing became a utensil of the historical memory of man. Man, through all history has testified his thoughts in material symbols. The most remote and abundant impressions have come since the Paleolithic -35.000 B. C.-; which are diffused forms and coloured ornaments. If this is art or not, is a matter difficult to discern. Nevertheless, it is

certainly a symbol, dealing probably with mythological image. Thus, technical skills and mythology content, are distinctive aspects in these graphic symbols of the Middle Paleolithic. At the same time, these forms are means of communication, which can exist only in the reflective intellectuality of man, related perhaps to other representations as mimicry, mimic properly, sounds and imitative art. This art, forms and materials, were inserted in an oral context which linked these symbols with their real values. This implies the establishment of a natural space of representation. Then, symbols became strictly in signs, useful utensils to serve a thorough and detailed memory of man already grouped in an urban era -and metallurgical as well-. Later on, around the year 1.500 B. C., the first alphabet was installed in Greece.

What made these utensils active and effective was the gesture, for it supposed the presence of a memory and a programmed behaviour (Ibid.). Thus, man acted properly because balanced from his origins the traditional knowledges with ideas and physical effort.

The forms and movement conducted man to submit his perceptions to produce emotions, and by this means, to insert himself into his social group. In this way, aesthetic values were introduced in his own human development. In fact, social or

religious events were performed in an aesthetic sense, and were indeed very profound ceremonies from which theatre could not be separated. Action, decorating, and acting were at this level, one combined with other; mythological events, historical facts or performances at the same time.

To separate when these actions became drama is not clearly defined. Perhaps this moment never existed or there was no evidence of it. What is important is that when a man appeared in the Upper Paleolithic -dressed in showy costumes and with a well decorated face-, representing with mimic dance the behaviour of an animal, he did not separate purely ceremony from art. At this stage what really existed was an undifferentiated idea of social, religious and theatrical events. All these together occurred at the same time and in a strict and deep internal relationship, known as the coexistence of aesthetic multiform, with several degrees of artistic sensibility.

In this case, the relationship actor-action seems to be less important than the actor-spectator one, in which prevails common values. This latter, by far responds to practical necessities, and the performance realizes this function.

The testimonies of technical skills in man assure a complete series of documents from the Australanthropid -End of Tertiary-, which besides delivering data on brain development,

allows the formation of a scheme for the origins of the dramatic elements, or better, an interpretative attempt to the theatrical attitude in man. Until then, the Upper Paleolithic antecedents are rare. At this point, it becomes important to analyse the biological pattern of man. From the writing onwards -emerged with 5.000 years of delay from the language-, it is possible to access certainly to thirty millennia of testified evolution.

The dramatic representation can be searched first and partially, only through the organs of symbolic reflexing, which are derived from the biological and technical conduct of man since the Homo Sapiens. Once again, as it was stated from the mammals, comes out directly through the dominant system of reference and motricity, in other words by vision, audition, and movement. It is, so to say, the same via as the techniques and body-language or hands.

What is distinguishes as dance, mime, drama, and music, graphism and plastic activities, belong to the same source of the other technical manifestations. Thus, sonorous and moving forms, according to Le Roi (p. 353) existed practically from the appearance of the first Australanthrop at the end of Tertiary.

For many years research into this aspect of the origins of the theatre remained unseen and it is believed that the neuroscience research of the so-called Parma Group, which

advanced studies in the 1980s, showed that there are certain groups of special cells in the brain called *mirror neurons* that allow us to understand others, and that were the nucleus of the way life lives, link us between us, from a mental and emotional point of view. Undoubtedly, mirror neurons provided, "for the first time in history, a plausible neurophysiological explanation of complex forms of social cognition and interaction", important in this subject (Iacoboni, Marco. 2019, pp.1-2).

In relation to theatre, according to these new theories, the tendency to imitate seems to be intensely present at the birth of the human being and never decline, studies since the nineteenth century, show that imitation exists in almost the entire animal kingdom. In fact, imitation is considering now a day a characteristic so intrinsic to human behavior that various authors-built theories that place it at the head and center.

The best known is perhaps that of Susan Blackmore, who in her book *The Machine of Memes* (Iacoboni, 2019, pp.23-25), argues that what fundamentally distinguishes humans from all other animals is not the language in reality, but the ability to imitate. Meltzoff later explained, that it must also have present an innate mechanism in the newborn's brain that allows for such rudimentary imitative behavior. This demonstration was revolutionary because it was always argued that babies learn to

imitate in the second year of life - originated from Jean Piaget's work, but Meltzoff's data indicated that they can actually learn by imitation, especially among the wandering strips.

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diversity of cultures around the world. It also created thousands of languages over tens of thousands of years, and continues to generate regional accents".

In the book *The Meme machine*, Susan Blackmore took the key term of Richard Dawkins's title who was perfectly aware of the power of imitation to convey manners, practices, ideas, and even complete belief systems, and coined the term "meme," about thirty years ago in his well-known book *The Selfish Gene*. His idea was to "imitate." Its term (i.e. its meme) was so successful that it was already included in the *Oxford English Dictionary* with the following definition: "Element of a culture that can be considered transmitted by non-genetic means, especially imitation (Iacononi, 2019, pp.24-28).

The first point of interest in this chain was imitation, and it is the starting point of human actions. Instead, the ideomotor model of human actions assumes that the starting point of actions is the intentions associated with them, and that actions should mostly be considered a means of achieving those intentions. In his book *Hand and Mind*, David McNeill argues that "gestures and language make up one system," that "gestures are an integral part of language, as much as words, phrases, and sentences" (Iacononi, 2019, pp.38-40).

The lack of correlation between words and gestures seems to indicate a copious mental activity that favors the incorporation of new concepts into young apprentices. There are many research papers that confirm this, the gestures that accompany the discourse play a double role: they help speakers express their thoughts and help listeners/viewers understand what is being said, whether they are in an "iconic" or "rhythmic" way. In 1866, the Société de Linguistique in Paris banned conjecture about the origins of language. Around the same time, the British Academy warned its members not to talk about it, and unsurprisingly, the bans did not take effect. Speculation about the origins of language did not cease and it is likely never to cease, especially after the discovery of mirror neurons.

There is an ancient tradition that proposes that the origins of language are manual and gesture. This idea was dominant in the 18th century, the Enlightenment. But the gestures lead the way; words follow them. Syntax, is what establishes a kind of hierarchical structure between the words that make up a sentence (Iacoboni, 2019, pp.40-43).

CHAPTER III. THE MAGIC ERA

According to Rielg (cited by Hauser, p. 12), every kind of art has its origin in nature and is of imitative character. He also introduced the notion of "artistic creation" under which idea the artistic forms are rather independent from the material and instruments, and meets itself in a final struggle of "artistic intention" against the material reality. Nevertheless, in every day life is difficult to support any theory of art separated from life and reality. This is what happened in the Paleolithic, which produced an art based on movement and life; art of high effect and reproduction of reality, distancing of fixed and rigid rules. In reality, this was an art of hunters, of men living in unstable social conditions, normally in small groups and with a notable singularity (Johanson, 1976, pp. 790-811). Probably they did not believe in any god, any world, nor existence beyond death. All this indicates that this art served as a means of a magic, whose principal function was to realize economic objectives. But it was not a religion. It had nothing in common with the idea of religion: no prayer, no belief and no relation with any transcendental spiritual being. It was, as Hauser stresses, a mere

exercise. Then, imitation was not separated from reality, rather it was its continuity.

The relationship between mimic and magic dance reflects some aesthetic pleasure but it was primarily a means to obtain things, objective materials. And to this end, art was really effective. It is supposed that this magic era was the first known in art, probably preceded by an initial pre-magic state, in which man was clearly a singularity insert and inseparable from the artistic nature. The artistic idea was as yet a vague project in progress. The idea of imitation and the possibility of producing art was in increasing development. This was the distinctive era of the experiments and experiences of man, and also that of the pre-magic discoveries of the Paleolithic.

The change came when man produced his own food. This, together with animal breeding and vegetal culture was the decisive change in the route of man, which implied his victory over nature and his independence from a random destiny. The idea of the concept became important in art, the development of ideas: to create symbols, not images (Hauser, p. 22). The ritual and cult ceremonies replaced the magic ones. It was already the Neolithic Period. The cultural state of man settles the animism, spirits adorations, the faith in the soul and the death cult. With faith and cult, emerges as well the necessity of idols, amulets,

sacred symbols, religious offerings and funeral monuments. This sense of art dominated the whole Bronze and Iron Ages of the Old Orient and ancient Greeks (5.000-500 BC). Its long duration can only be explained by sociological reasons: (1) severe and conservative organization of the economy, (2) autocratic forms of government, and (3), hieratic perspective of the society as a whole, impregnated by cults and religion.

This change is also expressed in the emergence of the commerce, workmanship and later, the urban life, which in turn brought about the increase of riches and accumulation of lands into a few hands. The artistic production of images, spirits, gods' ornaments, and dressings became specialization. The artist was now a specialist in his occupation. There would no longer be an inspirited magician or dancer. The professional speciality of the artist produced at the cultural centers of the cities, in temples and in the real court, an expert, informed and exacting minority elite.

CAPTER IV. THE GREEK MYTHOLOGY

Classical drama appears in Greece some time during the sixth century B.C., and in connection with the worship of Dionysus. It is possible that the real impulse to this drama lay not wholly in "goat-songs" and "circular dancing places", but also in the cardinal, the essentially dramatic conviction of the religion of Dionysus, that the worshippers can not only worship, but can become his god. Athene, Zeus and Pseidon have no drama because not one of them in their wildest moments believed he could become and be Athene, Zeus or Poseidon. Only this orgiastic religion, at these moments of conviction, could come about. In Greece, and perhaps only in such an orgiastic religion did the drama take its rise (Harrison, 1927, pp. 567-571).

As pointed. out by I. M. Lewis (1978, p. 11), belief, ritual and spiritual experience are on the borders of religion, specially the last one where classical drama probably acquired their non-theatrical elements (i. e. ideologic and religious sense) of development.

Social background. details of this cult indicate that Dionysus feasts exercised a similar appeal in both women and men of low social status. In fact, Dionysus was the "least

political" of the Greek gods (Kitagawa and Log, 1961, p. 327); being simply a god. of the people, offering freedom and joy to all, including slaves excluded from the old cults, as well as freemen. Apollo, in contrast moved only in the high levels of society. So, Dionysus was a so-called peripheral cult, involving spirits which offer an escape from the problems of the people associated to cathartic rituals.

Dionysus is considered to be a founder of these festivals. According to some authors, an exuberant phallic worship was associated with these feasts. However, phallicism was not the content of the Dionysia, but one of its revelations, which confirms the mystery and its binding power (Ibid. Ancient studies of his religion indicates that this cult came to Greece from Thrace or from Phrygia –a Thracian tribe-, whose frenetic and ecstatic character is demonstrated by Euripides in *The Bacchae*, as it stated by Mircea Eliade (1907, pp297-299). According to this scholar, the relation of some elements in Greek cults does not link it with the phenomenon. In the Dionysian bacchanalia it is describe the insensibility of the Bacchae, the enthusiasm of the feast, the various oracular techniques, necromancy or the conception of Hades. All these aspects have similarities with shamanism, but such coincidences are better explained by the survival in ancient Greece of magical conceptions and archaic

techniques of ecstasy of universal occurrence. There is nothing shamanic about the oracle of Delphi and Apollonian fanaticism. The healers, the diviners or the ecstasies supposed to be connected with shamanism, have no relation with Dionysus. The Dionysiac mystical current appears to have an entirely different structure and Bacchic enthusiasm does not resemble the Shamanic form of ecstasy (Eliade, 1974, pp. 387-388).

On the other hand, Tragedy had its origin in the dithyramb, a no dramatic genre. The dramatic elements here were taken from the mime, specially in that to convert the actor's fiction character in the action, and as to transferring the epic past into the present time. The mime presented to the people brief and fragmentary sketches, completely naturalists, rich in themes and social types of the daily life. They could have been comics, but they always were actors. They did not want to instruct people but only give them enjoyment. Its evolution is much longer than the tragedy. This mime is not only more ancient than tragedy but probably its origins are in the prehistoric period, closely connected to the magic-mimic, choral dancing, vegetation rites, hunter witchcraft, and the death cult (Hauser, 1976, pp. 108-118). The Greek democracy used religion to bind people with the new state, transformed tragedy in the best link amongst religion and politics. However, in the advanced classicism the main factors

involved in tragedy will be the rational ones or Apollonia, in detriment of the Dionysiac. From then onwards, drama history is well known.

CHAPTER V. THE RITUAL THEORY OF MYTH AND DRAMA

From its very beginning's theatre has been tie to other activities that make difficult to understand well its origins, between these actions can be mentioned religious ceremonies seen before, the idea of the Aristotelian mimetic instinct, the theory of the art and the theory of rituals. The aim of this section is to analyze the ritual theory of theater; starting with the conceptual approaches that have taken place on the subject either by the model of the School of Cambridge, the sacrifice rituals, and that of the shamanism.

Like any other art, the theatre has diffused its theoretical beginnings, and always try to look for in relation to other external associations mainly to the human inheritance as Aristotle says in his *Poetics*. This, as well, in his first states would have been very brutal, almost instinctive and therefore, far from an art that with time would be the theater. Therefore, these ancestral mimetics manifestations must have happened through several intermediate evolutionary stages until finally becoming a dramatic art. On the other hand, also it is considered that the fusion of the mimetic spectacle with the religious would

have given as a result the ritual and, this in turn, would have been transformed into theater. In the rituals, the dramatic mimesis and the religious ceremony would conform a undifferentiated tie, complicated connection that would allow the mimesis to develop a high degree of elaboration that would result in a complex art as it is theater. This apparently clear relationship that explains the connection of the theater with the ritual, nevertheless, has its problems, specially from the methodologic point of view. Following the ideas already expressed, the ritualist ancestral theater track could be looked for to see since where it extends. This is the own classic Greek tragedy. Originated in the religious festivals in honor of Dionysus and offered (acted), part of the Dionysian cult, the Greek tragedy is seen very near to this ritual origin. Nevertheless, there is an evident difficulty in this, the revision of all the known Greek tragedies -including the plots of those lost works-, with the single exception of *Bacchae* by Euripides and *lykurgia* -Lykurgeia, lost-, by Aeschylus, reveals that non of them has any relation with the Dionysian celebrations. Furthermore, as Rainer Friederich (1983, p. 159) says, to whom these sections will follow, the un-Dionysian character of the Greek tragedy has been transmitted by the same Aeschylus, who has revealed in his works that would correspond to subjects treated in the epic of Homaro, with which some

scholars have think that the subjects as much as the same notion of the mythical hero was non Dionysian, even un-Dionysian.

The basic concepts

The Greek word used in antiquity for ritual is *drömenon* (from *draomenon*), which means “a thing (being) done, and the other one used for myth or libretto is *legomenon*, “a thing (being) spoken”, .The most original ritual is just a *drömenon*, without a *legomenon*, and strictly as it point out by Jane A. Harrison (1927, p.. 476) “a thing re-done and/or pre-done, and done collectively at regular intervals”, in which the mimesis is clearly implicit.

What is interesting in this definition is that it is not only simple, but it implied the dramatic mimesis, although rudimentary, which could be evidence par example in the case of the hunting dances of ancient tribes in which the tribe uses mime to imitate the hunting –by means of re-enactment-, represented an action through which the tribe –a group-, expressed a successful hunting seasons and discharge their emotions cathartically. Therefore, they use not only the mimesis but the two concepts mentioned above on ritual: made "one thing re-done" to develop the representation of past experiences, and yet, the dance correspond also to a "pre-done thing", as the magic ceremony

anticipate the next hunt with pantomime. Nevertheless, there is still a long distance off from the genre of drama.

According to the magical belief prevailing here, everything would be connected to everything, under the omnipresence of Life, which allows to be acted upon after the principle "like affects like". This significantly enhances the mimetic element of magic belief. The tribal community is in intense emotional tension because of the hunt depends their food supply (or rather, survival), this deep desire for success, mixed with fear of failure or aggression shared of the hunting, all of which will be growing until reaches the point the dance precipitated in with which participants feel directly effects of a cathartic discharge. The ritual is completed with elements of emotional stress and the collective social grouping, both needed by the tribe in order to feel that this act is sacred, that is matter for ritual.

Should also be recognized that the use of the term ritual led to some ambiguity, particularly through the development of the concept by F. Nietzsche and his explanation of the ritual as "the eternal return to the identical", even with its implicit ahistorical and cyclical thinking. These two concepts of ritual led to two different accounts of the relationship drama-ritual, which over time have no not been well studied and this give way

to a change in this search because then it was not important to explain the origins ritual for drama but to clarify the essence ritual of drama

The ritual model of the School of Cambridge

During the first two decades of the XX century, researchers such as J. G. Frazer (1915), J. A. Harrison (1927), F. Cornford (1914) and A. B. Cook (1940) developed an explanation of how the ritual became drama. According to Frazer, the influence of the work of Nietzsche in this has been significant, in fact his book, *The Birth of Tragedy* was the actual origin of the ritual theory. The center of this theory is the natural struggle of two opposing natural forces, the Dionysian and Apollonian, in a mysterious marriage which give birth to Greek tragedy. That is to say, the transition from the primary ritual of Dionysus to a dramatic art. In theatrical terms, this would summarize and associate the dialogues, characters and stage with the primitive rite that consisted only of the chorus of satyrs, the Apollonian elevates this uncouth Dionysian feast to undramatic art. It is for this reason that many critics expect to find in a predominantly Greek works Apollonian elements, but reality has shown that did not happen and if, for example, Dionysius was expected to speak the

fine language of Apollo, but ultimately “Apollo speaks the language of Dionysus”(Ibid. p. 161).

In section 10 of his work, Nietzsche (1956) described the tragedy in terms of rituals. Here since the beginning presents only the suffering of Dionysus, which for him is the only character on stage, and according to this scheme, even in plays of Aeschylus and Sophocles, would remain him as the only central dramatic character, and all the other famous characters known -like Oedipus or Prometheus- would be masks of this original hero.

This is in short, the theory of tragedy as ritual by the Cambridge School, who took this view of Nietzschean natural ritual and gave it a scientific veracity and validity. In his statement he points out that the Greek drama had to be derived from a highly developed ritual, such as the vegetation and fertility ones, based on seasonal cycles, and conceived as a sort of Ur-ritual, considered one of the most complete and original from the ancient world. This ritual follows the pattern of the seasonal rhythm which can be reduced to the alternation of life in autumn and winter and blooming in spring and summer from which intuition could lead to probably the origins of religious drama or medieval mysteries-, in which the plays were acted and performed in ceremonies, but they were not to indoctrinate or to

entertain his audience, but to have magical purposes, trying to reproduce the effects of an undercover myth, corresponding to magical ceremonies in which the acting was in the form of mimicry or sympathy.

This irreducible seasonal pattern can be generalized to a number of such patterns of ritual, as the death and rebirth, destruction and renewal, removal and re-establishment, aging and rejuvenation, and pollution and purgation. From this abstraction T. H. Gaster (1950) derived a basic ritual pattern, which could lead to the theater:

mortification-->purgation-->invigoration-->jubilation

Rebuilding the hunting ritual, one might say that being seasonal, as a rite of spring, this would also have originally a magical purpose, its performing -acting or performance- made in late winter or early spring, was to help nature to bear its mortification and to induce a new life for all human beings. Many rites derive of this model of seasonal ritual. In the phase of mortification, would be located the parish or community festivals, as well as in summer the ritual combats or the appearance of life or the New Year after winter. In the third phase would be the death or the Old year, but when it is joining to elements of sexual

promiscuity, that would pass to the fourth phase, of joy, which usually ended with a general ceremonial meat.

The so call *rites de passage* are more complex rituals, in which the passage from childhood to manhood is expressed in terms of death and rebirth, showing all phases.

The seasonal rituals focus on the dying year and its rebirth as New Year had to pass through several phases before become drama. First, the year was personified in a cult as the year god, or a divinity or a divine hero, according the respective context, then this year god adopted a name: Dionysus (in Greece) or Osiris (in Egipt). Next, came a crucial stage, when the year god was given a life-story, a mythos (*drömenon*). So, it was this fusion of ritual and myth which put rituals as part of drama, in fact it gave the plot needed (the *legomenon*). In ancient Greece this myth was the life-story of Doinysus, the year god and vegetation god. From this basic ritual and myth pattern Murray and Cornford derived two ritual sequences with dramatic prospects, a tragic and a comic one.

The tragic sequence would be then as follows:

Agon->Pathos->Rhesus->Thrënos->Theophany

In this sequence Dionysus fights (*Agon*) and dies, he suffers dismemberment (*Pathos*), and since a god's death cannot be shown or acted, it is presented a long undramatic messenger's report (*Rhesis*), after which the god is mourned (*Thrēnos*), and finally would come the discovery of the god body, his resurrection and his epiphany in glory (*Theophany*). The emphasis on suffering and death of god give rise to tragedy.

In turn, the comic sequence maintains the basic pattern of the original ritual, as follows:

Birth and Rapid growth of Year-baby-->Agōn-->Pathos
-->Resurrection-->Sacred Marriage

This sequence maintains a comic rhythm with its movements from Death to Life, and from sorrow to joy, finishing with its "happy end".

The key question of how this ritual evolved to drama took place according to this classic version of the ritual theory, saying that the magical element of the traditional ritual weakened when the belief in its effectiveness decayed, at the same time that the elements of the dramatic mimesis grew stronger and attractive, which led to the division between those who preferred to participate directly in the ritual as actors or

performers and those to whom prefer to watch as spectators, finally, then, the myth of the year god Dionysus was replaced by heroic epic, that conformed the mythos or plot, of the new form of theater that emerged.

The problem with this formulation lies in three fundamental facts, (1) the magical element of the year god, whose term is not attested in old sources or Greek religion, (2) it is not known with exactitude how was the Dionysian ritual look like. It is only a conjecture. The studies indicate that the use of general patterns is convincing but scarce in the case of Greece, and this appears then only as a good empirical account of the origins of Greek drama (3), some scholars accepting this theory suggest however that seasonal ritual would not be sufficient to explain the bases of a dramatic genre, giving too much importance to the magical element (as ground for mimesis), and some even suggest that it should be given none at all.

Even so, this theory has had great influence in the development of drama, to such extend that to almost all plays was found a ritual base, being these Elizabethan, contemporary plays or avant-garde theatre – “back to return”-. So, this theory become a most significant term in current dramatic criticism and theory, being at present a true manifesto on the ritual origins of drama.

The sacrificial ritual

Within the criticism to the classic theory, that of W. Burkert (1966) seems to have been strongest, when considering that the seasonal rituals would not have the scope nor the depth of the old rituals, par example, as of Ur-ritual, which he considers the fundamental ritual. This is the case of the sacrifice, incorporating bloodshed and death, which would give more information on the origins of drama. The bloodshed also is in the center of all the pre-Christian religions, and even Christianity set in with a sacrifice, reason why Burkert argues that his fundamental thesis is that of "*homo religiosus*", who acts and becomes conscious of himself as "*homo necans*".

His central point lies in a peculiar characteristic of the old Greek sacrifice, which is that the best parts of the sacrificed animal are consumed by the pious congregation, leaving aside the bones and fat, which are burnt to the Gods, and this fact led to define and call the Greek sacrifice rather as "ritual slaughter" or "ritual killing", where animals are killed for food to eat and became the framework of religious ceremony. Seen from this point of view, the question to answer is why the sacrifice of animals for food was a ritual, that is to say, made a sacred act. In order to give an answer, firstly it must be observed that in this act the parts of the animal to be burn were laid in out in a certain

order, the "right order". According to the Greek tradition: first the bones, suggesting the regular shape of the animal, the fat and other small pieces of meta were placed on all bone, filling up the empty parts. In synthesis, this ordering and all the parts burnt for the gods symbolized, in general, the whole of the animal. The important thing of this is that the form in which these parts were presented to the gods, must be understood as the restitution of the killed animal which is offered to the gods, as the Lords of Life, by the purifying flames of the sacred altar.

This was in effect, a Greek sacrificial custom with skulls and bones-sacrifices, which are attested from the beginning of the Paleolithic age and can even nowadays be found among Siberian hunting tribes. The meaning of this tradition is clear: the animal is not utterly destroyed when eaten by man, because its life is restitutive to the Lord of Life. A most profound analysis of it would be possible to led to speculate that the ritualization of a natural act, such as killing for food, also shows man for the first time transcending the natural state, which marks the beginning of civilization.

From this view it could be possible to conclude that the ritualization of killing for food, as a simple sacrificial ritual, is a decision made on several motives, feelings, and past experiences around the act of killing. First, because it allows man to give

expression to the emotional tensions created by this act. Second, because the act of killing, by being the center of a sacred ceremony, can now be understood as being caused by a superior will and done for the general purpose to assure the continuity of life. Third, the ritual turns killing part of a process which culminates with the restoration of the sacrificed creature, in this way the act of killing is superseded. Finally, in acting this ritual, man restores the equilibrium of the universal order disturbed by his own destructive act, and at the same time he recovers the equilibrium in his own soul.

How does this transition from this ritual of the sacrifices to the drama take place?—The word tragedy is the clue. This term, *tragöidia* in Greek, etymologically at present means "song (*öidē*) sung for the prize of a goat (*tragos*)" or "a song sung to the sacrifice of a goat", both referred to the same, as the goat, won at the Dionysus festival, would be sacrificed in honor of the God. Other scholars indicate that this meaning would be rather "a song of goats", for example of dancers dressed as goats.

Indeed, there is some ancient evidence pointing to a goat sacrifice related to Dionysus and his cult. On the other hand, the centre of the *orchestra* in the Greek theater was a platform called *timele* (from Greek *thyein*, to sacrifice), used whenever the dramatic action required it, like an altar. Pictorial evidence

attests to a connection between Dionysus and the goat, although the nature of it is not known yet.

Therefore, the ritual origin of the Greek tragedy would be explained through *tragöidia*, with its focus on the goat sacrifice, which is the ritual antecedent to tragedy. In this ritual sacrifice, a group of masked men, the dancers, *tragöidoi*, perform the sacrifice of the he-goat in spring time. It is accompanied by lamentations, songs, and mumming, in the end they feast on the goat. Rudiments of an *agön* arisen at an early date under the form of a competition between the groups. In the end, the dancers, *tragöidoi*, received a wine-skin (*askos*, of leather) fill with wine. In this celebration of the ritual goat sacrifice, were used masks, choral songs or laments, dances, the music of the flute, the rudimentary *agön*, and the same name, “man face to face with death”.

The decisive step towards drama was the inclusion of the heroic myth. By adopting these heroic epics to the ritual, *tragöidia* emancipated itself from the *tragos*: it ceased to be a goat and became the art of tragic drama. How this came to pass is not well explained by this theory. According to this, each hero has his own cults and sacrifices. But, exactly, the sacrifice could be just the point where heroic myth and Dionysiac *tragöidia* meet each other.

Shamanism

In prehistoric groups of the Neolithic Age, the social religious behavior presents a broad transition of acting attitudes, ranging from the role of an isolated and individual man, like the shaman simulating a journey to search sick souls, to the dancing feasts of a society of initiated, or a whole tribe acting their myths.

The Tungus (a reindeer group) of Siberia, provides this classical term of shamanism, since shaman is a Tungus word. Shamanism denotes a variety of social roles, one of which is to be an inspired priest who, in a ecstatic trance, ascends to the heavens on "trips". In the course of these journeys to the sky or hell, he assures from the gods benefits for his fellowmen. The specific element of shamanism is the ecstasy induced on his trips, and secondarily are elements such as incorporation of spirits or possession by them which are universally distributed phenomena (Lewis, 1978, pp. 46 and 499). The Tungus word shaman means literally "one who is excited, moved or raised". More specifically, a shaman is a person of either sex who has mastered spirits and who can at will introduce them into his own body. Often, in fact, shaman incarnates these spirits almost permanently and has the possibility of controlling his manifestations going into planned states of trance in appropriate circumstances.

Shamanism is a religious phenomenon characteristic of Siberian and Ural-Altai communities, also it is found in the Arctic, in Central Asian regions and in southeast Asia, Oceania and amongst many American aboriginal tribes. It is one of the archaic techniques of ecstasy -at once mysticism, magic and religion in the broad sense of the Term-. But, above all, shamanism is a pre-eminently religious phenomenon.

The shaman is also a magician and medicine man. Principally, he is a healer, and he may be priest, mystic, and poet too. The shaman specializes in a trance during which his soul is believed to leave his body. He possesses a clear relation with his helping spirits, which he controls, in the sense that he, a human being, is able to communicate with the dead, demons, and nature spirits, without thereby becoming their instrument (Eliade, 1974, pp. 4-5). Many shamanic elements are found in various forms of archaic magic rites or religions, and unless they have a clearly defined religious phenomenon, these must be considered as "primitive elements" of any religion. They show to what extent shamanism proper preserves a substratum of ancient beliefs and techniques. The most important function of the shaman is healing. Since sickness is thought of as a loss of the soul, the shaman has to hunt it out, whether it has strayed far from the village or has been stolen by demons and is imprisoned in the

other world (Ibid, p. 424). Spirit possession is one of the mystical interpretation of trance.

The other major theory on this subject is which attributes these states to the temporary absence of the victim's soul, and is consequently usually known as "soul-loss". Eliade argue that these two explanations are mutually necessary. Possession can only occur if at the same time that there is a "depossession" of the self, as it is said in the theory of soul loss. Lewis has indicated that the Yaruro Indians of Venezuela believe that when their shamans' journey to the spirit land they leave behind them a mere husk of their personality. This residuum serves as a link in the channel of communication which in trance they establish with the spirit powers.

The main centre of the shaman activity is the séance, which serves to contact the spirits of the upper or lower worlds, and this is the main ritual drama of shamanism, as a possession cult. Shirokoguroff (1935, cited by Lewis, p. 46)) gave a clear description of this atmosphere:

The rhythmic music and singing, and later the dancing of the shaman, gradually involve every participant more and more in a collective action. When the audience begins to repeat the refrains together with the assistants, only those who are defective fail to join the chorus. The tempo of the action increases, the shaman with a spirit is no more an ordinary man or relative, but

is a "placing" (i.e. incarnation) of the spirit; the spirit acts together with the audience, and this is felt by everyone. The state of many participants is now near to that of the shaman himself, and only a strong belief that when the shaman is there the spirit may only enter him, restrains the participants from being possessed in mass by the spirit. This is a very important condition of shamanizing which does not however reduce mass susceptibility to the suggestion, hallucination, and unconscious acts produced in a state of mass ecstasy. When the shaman feels that the audience is with him and follows him becomes still more active and his effect is transmitted to his audience. After shamanizing, the audience recollects various moments of the performance, their great psychophysiological emotion and the hallucinations of sight and hearing which they experienced. They then have a deep satisfaction -much greater than that from emotions produced by theatrical and musical performances, literature and general artistic phenomena of the European complex-, because in shamanizing the audience at the same time acts and participates.

The shaman also incarnates spirits in a controlled spirit possession. His body is a vehicle for the spirits and he acts imitating animals, drumming instruments, and dancing as is demonstrated by Eliade (1967, pp. 440-441) in his description of a Yukagir shamanistic séance in the Northeast of Siberia.

Shamanism has its most profound roots in the social system and the psychology of animistic philosophy of the Tungus and other shamanists. In its present form it has been influenced by the Buddhist ideology of the North Asiatic ethnical groups. Indian influences were neither the first nor the

only Southern influences. From earliest prehistory, Southern and the ancient Near East cultures included all the Central Asia and Siberian ones. According to Vajda (cited by Eliade, 1974, pp. 503-504), the North Asian shamanic complex is the result of exchanges between the agricultural cultures of the South and the traditions of the Northern hunters. It is the result of a cultural integration, more recent than its proper components, which occurred after the Bronze Age. Recent researches have clearly brought out the shamanic elements in the religion of the Paleolithic hunters. Kirchner (cited by Eliade, 1974) has interpreted the relief at the Lascaux Cave as a representation of a shamanic trance, and the "kommandostabe"- batons de commandment-, mysterious objects found in prehistoric sites would be similes of the drumstick. If this is accepted., the prehistoric sorcerers would already have used drums comparable to those of the Siberian shamans. K.J. Narr (Ibid, p. 503-504) considering the problem of the shamanism, evidences the unquestionable of the shamanic elements, rites and symbols, "Animal.: skills and bones found in the sites of the Europeans Paleolithic (before 50.000 ca - 30.00 BC.) can be interpreted as ritual offerings. Probably about the same period and in connection with the same rites, the magic-religious concepts of the periodic return of animals to life from their bones

crystallized, and it is in this "vorstellungswelt" that the roots of the bear ceremonialism of Asia and North America lie”

Shamans, finally, differ greatly in quality and degree. In all of them the ecstasy techniques are necessary for communicating with the spirits, through the performance of the rite. In this sense, shaman completes almost all features of an actor and shamanism become a dramatic action. Shaman wears a ritual gown, usually imitating an animal -a deer, a bird or a bear-. An important device is his drum, which always has only one membrane. Amongst some people, the shaman wears a metal disk called "shamanmirrow". Shamanic symbolism is impressively presented in dramatic enactment and dance. The shaman, garbed in his ritual robes and provided with instruments, lifts his voice in an improvised song to the spirits. This song contains images of nature, similes, dialogue and refrains. The performance always take place in the evening. The theatre is the conical tent or yurt. The stage is the space around the fire where the spirits are invoked. The audience is invited by members of the clan to await the spirits in awe. The stage lighter and decorator, the shaman assistant, tends the fire so as to throw fantastic shadows onto the wall. The sound of his drum excites not only the shaman but also his audience (Eliade, 1974, pp. 503-504).

To sum up, the dramatic structure of the shamanic séance, the spectacle of his ceremony, the exhibition of his magic feast, seems to reveal an authentic theatrical world, where everything seems possible.

Perhaps the most serious kind of criticism to the classic theory of Cambridge comes from E. T. Kirby (1975), who proposed an alternative ritual theory. This author rejected the idea of the God-year, and doubts the assumption that the seasonal ritual was the antecedent of Greek tragedy, and in general, his attack to this theory seems to be born from his need to create a *tabula rasa* in order to make room for his alternative theory. In his view, Greek tragedy –and all drama and theatre– originated from the shamanistic ritual. He argues the scarcity of attested evidence of other theories.

The shamanism and its ritual contain, in fact, a very strong mimetic element. All the shaman's tasks, such as curing the sick and possessed, transporting the souls of the departed to the beyond, all magic, divination, and most important, communicating with the spirit world, involve a great dose of histrionics, all sorts of theatrical paraphernalia, masks, costumes, body painting, and the creation of visual and aural illusions. Furthermore, Kirby emphasizes that as in the religions, the worship and the ritual connected through an ecstatic nature.

On the occasion of his initiation the shaman is said to suffer the *Dionysian pathos* of dismemberment, the selected man to become the new shaman is believed to be driven mad, then taken to the spirit of the world where he is dismembered, cooked and eaten by the spirits. In the end, it is resurrected just like Dionysus, and recognized as the new shaman. Therefore, Kirby holds, Dionysus was originally a shaman.

Actually, there is little, if any, clear evidence of shamanism in ancient Greek culture. Also, it is difficult to see that the Greek tragedy could have sprung from the rudimentary elements in the shaman's rituals, no matters how theatrical they are. This shamanistic theory starts from the assumptions that the more primeval is the more authentic, but it does little to explain the highly developed complex Greek drama.

This vision of Kirby has open a new dimension of drama, a new category of theater activity, as he indicates, to include an explanation of the theatre for all those types of performances that seem to be not clearly connected to theoretical nor practical explanations, as the marionettes, the magicians, the clowns, the swallowing knives, the musical spectacles, and in general, all the so called popular entertainments. As the author express, all of them would be related in their origins to the shamanic spiritism or exorcism, with which they would settle down, including other

aesthetic principles that moved away from the imitation of reality or instinct to play, so classic in the theatre as well, but which according to the classical vision would not have validity. As Kirby (1974) express, "in its origins, the popular entertainments were associate with spiritual trance and derive from the practice of trance, not from the childhood games or of imitation, they did not look for to imitate, to reproduce or to register social forms of existing reality" (p. 14).

In this sense, the dramatic art that derives from the shamanic trance could be characterized as a manifestation or conspiracy of a true and immediate reality. The shaman incorporates the "illusionism" that looks for to break the surface of reality to show a "super-reality", more real than the usual one. It would be, in synthesis, a "virtual reality", more real than that arises from imitation.

FINAL WORDS

The variety of opinions on the origins of drama did not permit to clarify it, but it is interesting to observe that they differ greatly from one to other. From the view of those to which dance was the most important element to those thinking in the instinctual sentiments, the problem of who is correct -or not-, is of no importance to this analysis. What is relevant is to try to make an approach to the main factors involved in this evolution, included in the dramatic function, and consequently, to contribute to the definition of this early drama. However, it must be pointed out that many of these ideas are mainly thoughts -based on real facts, no doubts-, relations and approximations to an error like nature's laws, and indeed as such theories, hidden in the drama of the past, may never come to light. Thirty millennia are enough reason to undertake such a preliminary approach.

The dramatic elements in prehistoric man -with all the problems of data encountered, and trying to be endorsed by facts could be organized in three stages. The first of them, comprises what is so called the earliest dramatic elements. These are defined under a differentiated biological pattern, based on his primal activities of body and brain -small but organically coherent-, which permitted him to establish movements, verbal

and mimic associations, sonorous rhythm and gesture. The australanthrop or Arcanthrop of the End of Tertiary or Lower Paleolithic, gathered around the fire could dare in drama, but the only certain thing to be said is that it was, at maximum, a simple and limited attitude.

This stage encounters man in his plain singularity, rounded by nature and reality. The man of the Lower Paleolithic, with good technical skills had a rich language, a complete gesture, a feeling of the concreteness and provided with a good reference and motricity system. This, allowed him to have the idea of substitution as a dramatic form. Then, came the age in which man developed his first attempts of reflective intellectuality. This means that the Neanderthal Man of the Middle Paleolithic, with his human brain, acquired a symbolic mind, expressed in a religious and aesthetic attitude. Now, man became capable of abstracting concepts and he uses easily language for communicating his acts, transmission of his stories and religious feelings. He used red decoration and combined rhythm with body movement in a simulating act, by which, as it was stated, reality and fiction conformed an unique continuity. Man walks through the path of his own experience and pre-magic discoveries.

The third stage involved the age in which lived the Cro-Magnon Man and Homo Sapiens. It comprised the Upper Paleolithic and the Mesolithic Era. It is undoubting a rich epoch, where man incorporated all the complexities of the economy and highly developed life. His mind produced a well-known intellectuality, concreted in ornaments of caves, the manufacturing of musical instruments and a complete cultural environment formed by poetry, music and painting. His mind, capable of abstraction and thinking, made possible vocal language, and it seems that then the first performances were produced. A magician using ornaments on his body -shells, bones or metallic objects-, could dance a magic or religious scene, imitating clearly something from nature or performing a ritual. To sum up, this was something like theatre. A real presentation indeed, and perhaps an act of dramatization which included a plot. From the pre-magic and magician stages of the Mesolithic, came the roots of important: dramatic events in the future: shamanism, whose origins seems to be in the ritual offering of the Middle Paleolithic, and mime originated in non religious drama of the magician or dancer. From now on, dramatic elements are clearly identified. The ritual performance became a more advanced form, completer and more complex, say real antecedent of the western drama.

The question, if this primal drama is art or not, depends on the aesthetical criteria. If these works are viewed without preconceived ideas of art, and if it is applied an aesthetic based on forms and movement, searching as well into the perceptions of their social organization, it is clear that several categories of values can be established. The only level applicable to this theatrical attitude of man at the end of Tertiary and Lower Paleolithic, would be one based on the organic criterion of value. Equally, with the Middle Paleolithic Man of the magician era, where functional values of the human being lead to a primal non representative aesthetic of forms and movements. What appears without doubt is that both stages are categories of value applicable. In the Homo Sapiens case, where the notion of imitation was already clear, a category based in human experiences is needed.

Aesthetic elements tend to follow a "feedback mechanism" whose scheme starts with the satisfaction of the primary necessities, the pleasurable response to novelty, variety and general stimuli associated with organic functions; and the combination of these latter with ritual processes and contemplation affects. The mechanism functions through the reaction to the enjoyment-uses effects, which has a vast result on perceptions (Dissanayake, 1982, pp. 145-155).

Drama as an artistic reception is reaffirmed in its aesthetic category based on the ritual value. Theatre is at this point a ceremony, for which the artistic pre-eminence is that of the object itself. The principal meaning is centered in the ceremony as a participation event and not as a static contemplative phenomenon. Moreover, what is more interesting is that this object has transcended in time, by means of which it has also become an art category.

According to these antecedents, a successive progression on the dramatic elements can be achieved: the starting point is the mime and dance, then gesture is connected with the language; later on aural representations of music and poetry appeared. Afterwards, painting, and finally when man had at his disposal a well-designed reflective intellectuality, the symbolic function made possible writing.

The Neolithic changes deeply this picture. Man is grouped in urban life and produced his own food. Now the ritual model of the School of Cambridge, the sacrificial ritual, and Shamanism become important, whose origins seems to display an antiquity similar to the ancient sorcerer, and whose dramatic elements are still used in performances.

The only relation that seems to exist between the Paleolithic Era and the Dionysus feasts of Ancient Greece is the

mime, which is the direct inheritor of the magician. This enabled him to maintain the pureness of the specific features of drama: movement, gesture, and most of all, the sense of life and enjoyment. The main function they incorporated was the enjoyment of the people not connected with religious worships or elites. They understood that drama was an historical and social notion.

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