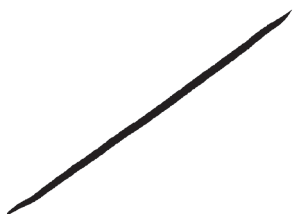


THE RECEPTION OF ATTIC DRAMA IN MODERN TIMES: AN OUTLINE

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Abstract: This article suggests that the history of the performative revival of Attic theatre in post-revolutionary Greece of the 19th century, with numerous native variations and transformations—which justifiably paves the way for particularly audacious attempts at reconstitution and, on fortunate occasions, successful restaging of ancient performances during the immediately following tumultuous century—serves, on the one hand, as an enlightening reflection of the turbulent historical development of post-revolutionary Greece and, on the other hand, as a resonant sounding board for various theoretical configurations concerning the comprehensive study of Athenian theatre in the wider world. It is well-known that the global community has embraced with genuine enthusiasm the rich theatrical legacy of the ancient Greeks. As a happy consequence, on a universal scale, productions of Attic plays have proliferated to such an extent that more ancient Greek dramas have been staged in recent decades than during these past few centuries.

Keywords: Attic drama, reception, adaptation, performance and literary reception.

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Introduction

The concept of the reception of Attic drama in the modern era has long been defined with satisfactory adequacy, and in the last two decades, it has become familiar among scholars of Athenian theatre, primarily of the classical period, and not only.¹ However, it is particularly striking that the final semantic illustration of the above term is still pending, mainly because the astonishing complexity and multiplicity of associated meanings and significances greatly hinder the full interpretive access to the core of the reception theory itself and its implications for literary and, more broadly, artistic issues.² Thus, in this article, readers should always bear in mind that theoretical thought about the literary and stage reception of ancient Greek theatre, despite its apparent solidity, cannot be put in competition with the insatiable curiosity of the contemporary artist, who continuously strives to innovate and, most importantly, discover many and various unprecedented methods for reimagining the past.

1 It must be noted from the outset that the bibliography on the topic at hand is extensive, and therefore the references in this article have been deliberately kept to a minimum, with the aim of not overburdening the reader with an abundance of information. Moreover, references to adequately informed bibliographic sources serve as a starting point for further exploration of the related complex issues.

2 See primarily the fundamental theoretical contribution of Hardwick 2003. Regarding the reception of the Greco-Roman tradition, see, for example, the emblematic work of Highet 1949; and also, the collective volumes: Hardwick-Stray 2008 and Grafton-Most-Settis 2010 with a plethora of enlightening chapters on a wide range of related reception topics.

It is worth noting from the outset that the ways in which the works of Attic drama are received by newer and contemporary authors, artists, and scholars—whether they happen to be, among others, writers and directors, poets and actors, philologists and theatre scholars, philosophers and psychoanalysts, translators and composers, people of cinema and television, or even painters and sculptors—are potentially countless. This has been emphatically proven by the numerous forms and diverse ways through which all these masterpieces of Athenian theatre are re-presented, whether partially or wholly, individually or combined, authentically recreated or radically transformed, to the audience of our own time.

Even more significant, given the lesser or greater resonance of the truly daring experiments, which can arise at any moment from the continuous and vibrant readjustment and sometimes catalytic deconstruction of the ancient theatrical tradition within the framework of literary and more generally artistic creation, the systematic study of the celebrated *Nachleben* of Attic drama, especially in the modern and contemporary era, undoubtedly broadens the interpretive horizons of both established experts and younger researchers. The thorough analysis of iconoclastic and pioneering revivals of Athenian tragedy and comedy, as well as the examination of reputable and in many cases widely recognized approaches to the ancient dramatic corpus, undoubtedly facilitates the revelation of all those invisible ‘threads’ that creatively connect the Attic theatrical works with intersecting currents of formative ideas and influential theories of our time. The elucidation of aspects and manifestations of our times’ receptive ability ultimately allows the open-minded critic to easily discern, under the transparent membrane of each reimagined ancient text, contemporary artistic movements and modern aesthetic currents. In essence, these new ways in which the present receives the past are luminous beams that shoot from unsuspected angles and shed revealing light on the complex issues of our own lives—in other words, they act as a screen that ‘filters’ the works and days of our world with sometimes unexpectedly adept methods.³

Greece and beyond

The history of the performative revival of Attic theatre in post-revolutionary Greece of the 19th century, with numerous native variations and transformations – which justifiably paves the way for particularly audacious attempts at reconstitution

³ See, for instance, van Steen 2016 and more generally van Zyl Smith 2016 with numerous well-informed contributions to a more detailed study of the revival of ancient Greek theatre. Additionally, see Bacopoulou-Halls 1987; Kyriakos 2015 with several interesting research papers on the contemporary reception of Attic drama; Mavroleon 2016 and 2019. Regarding the history of the reception of ancient theatre from the Hellenistic period to our times, see, for example, Garland 2004; and the relevant chapters in: Bushnell 2005; Gregory 2005; Easterling 1997; Markantonatos 2012 and 2020; Markantonatos-Tsangelis 2008; Markantonatos-Pappas 2011; Markantonatos-Diamantakou 2022; Markantonatos-Georgopoulou-Kosmopoulou 2023 and McDonald-Walton 2007.

and, on fortunate occasions, successful restaging of ancient performances during the immediately following tempestuous century—serves, on the one hand, as an enlightening reflection of the turbulent historical development of liberated Greece and, on the other hand, as a resonant sounding board for various theoretical reconfigurations concerning the comprehensive study of Athenian theatre in the wider world. The central premise of that period was undoubtedly the urgent crystallization and promotion of a new national identity, one that, among other things, should be rooted in the profound awareness of the unparalleled ancient glory as the starting point for every neo-Hellenic endeavor towards Europeanization and subsequent modernization of its emerging spirit. This inseparable connection of a neophyte national self-conception—one that could be vividly imprinted on the collective unconscious—with an invaluable ancestral legacy is reflected as a substantial social category and essentially as a coveted cultural asset, among much else, in the various critical methodologies aimed at the interpretative and performative approach to Attic drama.

As the unrestrained romanticism of the early 19th century gradually morphed into a dignified neoclassicism, which eagerly endorsed the lofty ideals of what we might call ethnocentric patriotism in the first decades of the 20th century in Greece, the arrival of modernism as the dominant force in Europe prepared the discerning theatre enthusiasts for decidedly more realistic attempts at the performative revival of Attic drama. The pioneering directorial efforts of the American wife of the renowned poet Angelos Sikelianos, Eva Palmer, and, most notably, her exhaustively studied choreographic reconstructions of the movements of the choral group on the *orchestra* – which added a distinctive touch of modernity to the famous Delphic Festivals of 1927 and 1930 – undoubtedly constitute a profoundly important milestone in the history of the revival of ancient Greek theatre in our country.⁴

The decade of the 1950s could be described, without exaggeration, as a *decennium mirabilis* for the further progress of the total revival of ancient drama in modern Greece. After Dimitris Rontiris, a gifted student of the distinguished German director Max Reinhardt and a conscientious heir to the directorial tradition of Thomas Oikonomou and Fotis Politis, successfully attempted to present Sophocles' *Electra* in the open-air theatres of the Herodes Atticus Odeon in 1936, as part of the “Ancient Drama Week,” and in Epidauros in 1938, he inaugurated

4 See the following in-depth contributions: Andreiadis 2005; Arvaniti 2020; Constantinidis 2001; Georgopoulou 2008 and 2009; Georgousopoulos 1982; Glytzouris 2011; Grammatas 2006; Ioannidou 2016; Kosmopoulou 2018; Mavromoustakos 2005; Sideris 1972. Also, see the following academic works with a robust theoretical background and distinct socio-political focus: Diamantakou 2021; Patsalidis 1997; Pefanis 2007; Puchner 2015; Tsatsoulis 2017; van Steen 2000, 2011, and 2015.

and simultaneously solidified, as the artistic director of the National Theatre, the significantly artistically enriched annual Epidaurus Festival during the crucial years of 1954 and 1955. Furthermore, following an idea from Georgios Rallis, Minister of the Presidency in the government of Alexandros Papagos, with the long-term goal of further enhancing both culture and tourism, the Athens Festival was established during the same period (August 1955). Within this framework, four years later (1959), the highly debated Aristophanic play *Birds* was performed with ingenious directorial guidance by Karolos Koun and a masterful musical score by Manos Hatzidakis. It was indeed a particularly innovative theatrical production for its time, but it provoked unacceptable satirical comments from many spectators, who seemed scandalized, apparently due to the use of overt Christian symbols during a paganistic sacrifice scene on stage. It is worth noting that the enlightened director introduced innovative ideas once again later in 1965 when he presented Aeschylus' *Persians* to highlight the perilous fascination and uncontrollable frenzy of the human soul in the face of what exceeds all possibility, especially any sinister design. It is also known that in 1958, the talented actor and director Alexis Minotis first presented *Oedipus at Colonus* by Sophocles at the Epidaurus Theatre in a fairly faithful Modern Greek rendition by the distinguished writer and educator Ioannis Gryparis. Furthermore, the masterful performance of the eponymous role by Alexis Minotis himself in successive stagings of the aforementioned tragedy was rightfully recognized as the highlight of his over six-decade-long theatrical career and a milestone in the history of the evolution of acting in Greece.⁵

It is evident that during the post-dictatorship period (1974-today), the dominant interpretive framework, which had largely aimed to bridge the revival of ancient performance with the foundational conditions of a more substantial national resurgence, significantly declined and gradually gave way to purely postmodernist and noticeably international directorial endeavors. Once again, the performative revival of Attic drama, primarily in its tragic and comedic facets, allows audiences and critics to more clearly discern the dominant *zeitgeist* in Greece. Simultaneously, in its most inspired manifestations, it constructs solid bridges of communication between the domestic intellectual life and globally established theoretical considerations in the field of interpretive approaches to ancient Greek dramas.

One could argue that this complex synthesis, associated particularly with modern reinterpretations of iconic tragic and comedic works in Greece over the past half-century, on the one hand, reflects corresponding theatrical

5 See, for example, Georgousopoulos-Gogos 2003; Hunratty-Ioannidou 2011.

developments on a universal level. On the other hand, in several instances, it prefigures the introduction of pioneering aesthetic ideas and perspectives into the rapidly evolving domestic artistic milieu. Talented directors, such as, for instance, Alexis Solomos, Takis Mouzenidis, Spyros Evangelatos, Andreas Voutsinas, Minos Volanakis, Yannis Houvardas, and Theodoros Terzopoulos, but also younger fellow artists, like Michael Marmarinos, Katerina Evangelatou, Yannis Moschos, and Dimitris Karantzas, have managed through their various theatrical accomplishments to successfully present —despite the lively disputes over their bold and sometimes iconoclastic choices— the Attic tragic and comic plays to a demanding Greek and international audience. It is imperative to emphasize that these inspired theatre directors, as independent and often self-fashioned intellectual personalities, with a notable presence in Greek public life, managed to engage in fruitful dialogue with foreign reformist artists and interpreters of Athenian drama.⁶ This was part of a renewal and potentially revolutionary effort to redefine, sometimes even from the ground up, the intellectual domain of ancient texts. They undertook this challenging endeavor by adopting various approaches—in fact, they introduced innovations at times with ritualistic rigor; at times with radical impetus, particularly aimed against all forms of patriarchal symbolism, whether gender-related or nationalistic, and at other times with resourceful deconstructive spontaneity.

In conclusion, the performative reception of Attic drama in Greece over the last approximately two centuries has been involved in a complex journey. Its primary starting point was the crucial challenge of acquiring national identity by means of gradually forming inseparable unity between the illustrious classical antiquity and the trouble-worn modern Greek state. It later evolved into an influential step of democratic sensitivity and social inquiry, all the while not relinquishing ancestral rights that have allowed, from ancient times to the present day, fruitful cross-cultural dialogue with the great intellectual and aesthetic *desiderata* of each era. Recent theatrical productions often pleasantly surprise Greeks and foreigners alike with the originality of directorial solutions and acting techniques they methodically and skillfully put into good use in the context of globally acclaimed theatre festivals. Moreover, the contemporary domestic performative initiative greatly facilitates the gradual assimilation of ancient Greek tradition by the generally skeptical and occasionally reactionary modern Greek society. This is true even when such innovative stage attempts end up fruitless and devoid of a coherent meaning, sometimes becoming an inseparable part of an impenetrable and unpleasant subculture.

6 See also, for instance, Cole 2019; Rodosthenous 2023.

Attic Drama and the World

Given the brief scope of this article, the description of the performative revival of Attic drama in Greece and worldwide had to be as concise as possible, with particular emphasis on local matters always in relation to the broader theatrical panorama. It is well-known that the global community has embraced with genuine enthusiasm the rich theatrical legacy of the ancient Greeks. As a fortunate consequence, on a universal scale, productions of Attic plays have proliferated to such an extent that more ancient Greek dramas have been staged in recent decades than during these past few centuries! However, it would be unjust for the Attic dramatic genre itself if this article focused solely on the multifarious ways in which the ancient theatrical tradition has been embraced by Greeks and foreign professionals of the stage. The resonance of this tradition is so profound throughout the centuries that it would not be an exaggeration to claim that its myriad themes and lofty ideas have permeated world literature and significantly shaped contemporary playwriting. The profound impact of Attic drama on modern theatrical practice is only a small part of its strong aesthetic and ideological influence on global intellectual matters, which has been steadily growing in recent decades, especially following a period of relative skepticism, particularly after the two World Wars. Wherever one looks in the realm of art and, in general, artistic creation, whether in opera and musical theatre, in cinema and television, in music and painting, or in so many other fields of the fine arts, one could easily observe that the central themes and foundational principles of ancient Greek theatre continue to be a common denominator in countless forms of aesthetic creativity within the framework of Western civilization.

In order to highlight the depth and extent of the influence that Attic theatrical tradition has exerted on a wide range of artistic forms in the modern world, we choose to present here the as detailed as possible account of a single emblematic case of multi-layered and lively literary and performative reception: a well-known tragedy by Sophocles has been transformed in a truly innovative way into an African-American gospel performance, with recognizable fundamentals, largely drawn from modern musicals and traditional oratorios. We refer to Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus*, which was thoroughly reimagined and initially presented before a distinctive African-American audience in North America under the atypical title *Gospel at Colonus*. Subsequently, it garnered undivided admiration on both sides of the Atlantic. This fact demonstrates the impressive penetration of Attic theatre into all fields of art and all social strata, regardless of racial origin and religious belief. Indeed, this enthusiastic reception led to the remarkable text

of this tragedy being transformed into a completely different literary genre with an unprecedented aesthetic and ideological purpose. This transformation was achieved through the radical re-adaptation of selected scenes, the reconstruction and enrichment of the original plot, as well as the reshaping of its integral musical and choreographic component.⁷

It is worth noting that in the latter half of the previous century, several highly successful operatic adaptations of Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus* can be found. Moreover, in the aftermath of the Second World War, there is a notable resurgence of artistic interest in the mythological cycle of the Labdacids, especially the ambivalent figure of Oedipus, who unwittingly committed patricide and incest. Beyond the lyrical drama by Nobel laureate poet and essayist T.S. Eliot, "The Elder Statesman" (1958), where Christian eschatological ideas provide the framework for a somewhat trivial story of conscious guilt and psycho-soteriological deliverance, there is the musical-theatrical re-adaptation of Sophocles' drama into the Christian-centered work of Roy Travis, duly titled "The Passion of Oedipus" (1965). Furthermore, the meticulously crafted operatic experiment by Theodor Antoniou, "Oedipus at Colonus" (1998), deserves special attention. More significantly, on November 8, 1983, in the context of the renowned Music Academy of Brooklyn's Next Wave Festival, the Christian allegory *Gospel at Colonus* was presented, initially intended as a companion piece to the work of Lee Breuer and Bob Telson, titled "Sister Suzie Cinema." However, it later evolved into a large-scale musical theatre production of superior scope. This transformation further underlines the remarkable versatility and adaptability of Attic theatre, which continues to inspire and resonate with diverse artistic and cultural contexts, transcending boundaries of time, place, and tradition. Lee Breuer, a pioneering director, and Bob Telson, a talented composer, also skillfully attempted to transform the English rendition of *Oedipus at Colonus*, which had been meticulously crafted by the poet, literary critic, and translator Robert Fitzgerald, into an African-American Pentecostal service—rich in religious devotion and profound mysticism. To the pleasant surprise of all those involved in the production of this highly demanding performance, the reviews were truly laudatory. The receptive audience in both Europe and North America welcomed the new play with spiritual fervor and wholehearted admiration. Furthermore, the distribution companies for the recorded and filmed version of the production eagerly took on the global promotion of this extraordinarily innovative approach to Attic drama.

⁷ See primarily Markantonatos 2007, 231-255 with an exhaustive bibliography on the contemporary reception of Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus*. Also, see the recent relevant survey by Scharffenberger 2017.

This ancient Greek-themed musical certainly deviates from the established parameters of Sophocles' tragedy, especially in terms of the repetitive principal motif — that is, the ineluctable linking of the moving revelation of hopeful mysticism with a deeply pessimistic interpretation of worldly matters. However, the optimistic spirituality prevalent in all the hymnal scenes, along with the evident interdenominational acceptance of redemptive forgiveness within the context of Christian eschatology, appears to provide a robust dramaturgical foundation. Simultaneously, it penetrates beneath the surface of mundane human affairs. Given the broader Christian purgatorial intent of similar religious ceremonies, primarily aimed at strengthening theological, social, and cultural relationships and bonds, it could be argued that these remarkable analogies between the Athenian drama and the Pentecostal liturgy reflect a distinctly mortal perception of the world. In this context, it should be emphasized that in such a complex reception process, narration is an integral part of the musical theatre ensemble. The narrative function is indeed an essential element of traditional African-American church preaching. In *Gospel at Colonus*, an African-American Pentecostal priest and his congregation recount the myth of Oedipus, placing particular emphasis on the hopeful prospect of sin forgiveness after a long period of unbearable suffering. To illustrate the astonishingly auspicious outcome of this idiosyncratic African-American musical, it would suffice to mention the concluding scene. In particular, the backdrop of the closing episode is a massive “cyclorama”, an autoluminescent curved wall that continuously displays numerous African-themed motifs, depicting Judgment Day during the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. The elegiac chants accompanying the slow descent of the psalmists, who stand next to a grand white piano in the role of Oedipus, gradually fade in comparison to an ecstatic outburst of joy emanating from the choral ensemble. This jubilation anticipates and subsequently follows the resurrection of the melodious singer Oedipus and his choral quintet. Indeed, the boundless harmony emanating from the gospel music, the enchanting hymn of the sweet-voiced choir, and the exuberant expressiveness of the improvisational variations not only mitigate any potential negative impressions that might arise from the occasionally awkward dialogues but also highlight the immeasurable power of the musical-dramatic language to breathe new life into Attic theatrical works.

The paradoxical case of *Gospel at Colonus* ends up being indeed an exemplary re-creation of an intricate system of interplay between ancient drama and African-American choral and liturgical traditions. In particular, the biblical and even Pentecostal adaptation of Sophocles' tragedy suggests unprecedented dramatic methods through which the perennial struggles of the human soul could traverse from the distant past to contemporary theatre. Such expansive

conduits connecting joyfully and seamlessly the theatrical productions of the ancient poets with the myriad aesthetic conceptions and literary ramifications of our era are not confined solely to scenic reconfigurations of Athenian dramatic tradition. They are also discernible within a wide spectrum of literary genres and artistic domains.⁸ To remain within the familiar territory of the contemporary assimilation of the complex Oedipal paradigm, it would be fruitful to also recall two widely known French reimaginations of Sophoclean tragic poetry.

The theatrical work of Nobel laureate novelist and playwright André Gide, bearing the intertextually evocative title “Oedipe” (1930), primarily centers on the intense conflict that unfolds throughout its plot between Oedipus, who ardently seeks the truth about his tortured existence, and Tiresias, who, along with Jocasta, clings unwaveringly to soothing notions regarding the shadowy past of the House of Laius. The relentless desire of the eponymous hero to unveil his true identity leads to unexpected twists in the closing scenes of the play. These twists incorporate, among other things, pioneering thematic motifs of *Oedipus at Colonus* into a remarkable convergence of dramatic episodes and prophetic insights into the distant future. In parallel with André Gide’s theatrical reconstruction of these Sophoclean plays, another renowned French author, Jean Cocteau, who was also a painter and a filmmaker, crafted “La Machine Infernale” (1932), a surrealist, neo-romantic drama infused with profound psychoanalytic rudiments. The interpretive weight of this work largely hinges on the purported Freudian implications, which abundantly emerge, primarily from Oedipus’ incestuous relationship with his mother within the wretched Theban palace. Scholars of the play have, moreover, identified and often commended profoundly chilling dramaturgical inventions and techniques, such as the depiction on stage of the first night of the ill-fated couple’s marriage in the royal bedroom—a scene both surrealistically ironic and emotionally charged, as well as the unexpected appearance of Jocasta’s ghost, which, despite the general horror it provokes, conveys surrealistically sarcastic yet simultaneously emotionally poignant messages and comforting admonitions to the deeply tormented Oedipus. Thus, once again, the concluding scene of a theatrical re-creation of a Sophoclean drama induces profound astonishment, heightening the audience’s anticipation for the further unfolding of the fate of the Labdacids, by projecting particularly, in a prophetic manner, the impending redemption of the wandering Oedipus as a heroic figure at the Attic Colonus. In summary, the adaptations and reimaginations of Sophocles’ Oedipus stories by André Gide and Jean Cocteau offer rich and multidimensional perspectives on the enduring relevance and interpretive possibilities of these ancient Greek narratives.

8 See, among others, Andújar-Nikoloutsos 2020; Bosher et al. 2015; Powers 2018; van Weyenberg 2013.

These plays not only reflect the enduring fascination with Oedipus as a character, but also demonstrate the capacity of classical themes to inspire innovative and thought-provoking interpretations in modern literature and theatre, thereby showcasing the enduring power of ancient Greek drama to captivate and engage contemporary audiences.

We could certainly multiply comparable cases and examples, archetypes and worthy imitations and adaptations, which prepared the ground for more occasions of literary reception and more active opportunities for artistic re-creation of antiquity. However, it would be like someone trying to pull a few threads of numerous aspects and expressions of its woven fabric through a brief exploration, with the aim not only of highlighting the exceptionally dynamic character of the reconstitution of ancient tradition in Greece, but also the stunning universality of the resonance of all Attic dramas. Nevertheless, it saddens us to think that we cannot extensively refer to the long modern Greek literary tradition related to the creative assimilation of key themes of tragic poetry, which, among other things, anticipates in several cases similar attempts of reception by foreign poets, writers, visual artists, and filmmakers. For instance, we should at least mention the ancient Greek-inspired poetic composition ‘Oedipus’ (1896) by K. P. Cavafy, stemming from a vivid description of the famous painting ‘Oedipus and the Sphinx’ created by the romantic archeophile Gustav Moreau. This, in turn, contributes to the gradual formation of inconspicuous intertextual scale models that often determine the poetic effect of the ensuing Greek modernism, even if the latter regularly harbors by definition a reflexive hostility towards romantically refined reproductions.

It is also worth mentioning the well-known novel by Aris Alexandrou, ‘To Kivótio’ [*The Box*] (1974), in which, under the guise of a comprehensive assessment, in the conclusion of the book, the chaotic and tragic fate of Oedipus is juxtaposed with the fratricidal passions in post-war Greece of 1945-1949, resulting in painful conclusions about the futility of similar catastrophic internecine conflicts. Moreover, analogous to the bitter irony of K.P. Cavafy’s poetic writing, in 1979, the Greek author and translator Kay Cicellis published a collection of novellas titled ‘O Dromos pros ton Kolōno’ [*The Road to Colonos*] But beyond the modern Greek reception of Attic drama, the distinguished Japanese novelist Haruki Murakami in the early 21st century composed as well an ambitious and playfully allegorical narrative, titled ‘Kafka on the Shore’ (2002), in which the central character, Kafka Tamura, and his adolescent alter ego, Satoru Nakata, make superhuman efforts to overcome the obstacles posed by family curses, both through their individual experiences and their continuous interaction with a peculiar yet captivating group of people.

This quintessential literary reimagining of the tragic myth as a satirical allegory of human fate has its counterpart in the rapidly evolving field of cinematic adaptation of Attic drama. For example, the renowned Italian director Pier Paolo Pasolini in his film ‘Edipo Re’ (1967) manages, on the one hand, to break free from the sterile mannerisms of the cloak-wearing cinematic universe of previous decades, and on the other hand, to propose pioneering interpretations of the ancient texts through persistent portrayals of a dystopian and essentially political reality. Something similar, especially concerning the auditory exploration of the tumultuous mental world of mythological protagonists, was attempted by the notable American director and talented choreographer Amy Greenfield. In her multilayered film ‘Antigone/Rites for the Dead,’ she places special emphasis on the performative dynamics of the story of the Labdacids, aptly choosing to interconnect emblematic episodes from the Sophoclean tragedies *Antigone* and *Oedipus at Colonus* into an inseparable set of evocative images and scenes that allude to contemporary political and social dilemmas as well as timeless human frailties, especially on the American continent.

Epilogue

To sum up: this inevitably ‘endless’ discussion, primarily concerning the global impact exerted and unquestionably continuing to be exerted by the masterpieces of Attic theatre on all forms of language and art, leads to the undeniable observation that each time the artistic immersion in the original matrix of Athenian drama, however it is accomplished, has the beneficial result of transferring the grandiose ancient texts into the arteries of modern thought. This sometimes-daring dialogue between the glorious past—which has now established itself in the collective memory as an unalterable life experience—and contemporary movements of human sensitivity occasionally produces exquisite intellectual fruits across the lengths and breadths of the world. This brief survey of the reception of ancient Greek theatre in our time reaffirms, we hope, the pervasive truth that the more conceptually fertile the exemplary model, the more its applications—in this case, Attic drama as an unparalleled intermediary genre connecting antiquity with the modern world, the past with the present, the deceased with the living throughout the ages.

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