

EXPERIENCING TRAGEDY

Photo: Paula Neumann

supervisor: Sabine Föllinger
mentors: Winfried Held | Dennis Pausch



Philipps



Universität
Marburg

DFG

Deutsche
Forschungsgemeinschaft

In my PhD-Project I aim to look at Greek Tragedy as a religious experience, happening within the context of the Great Dionysia and creating a distinct religious atmosphere. To do this, I am not just looking at and analyzing the text (my focus is the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus), but also focusing on the context of its performance, the architecture of the theatre and the audience as not just passive viewers but active agents for the creation of atmosphere. The three categories 'space - actions - sensations' are the framework with which I will analyze my materials.

SPACE. Space is one of the fundamentals of theatre; without space, there can be no performance. I distinguish between architectural space (the theatre itself), stage space (the stage and the orchestra) and mythic space (the spaces of the story). Another important factor in this is time, as there is no space without time: The play must be set *somewhere* and *sometime*, just as the performance must be happening at a certain *place* at a certain *time*.

ACTIONS. The performance of a play is, of course, also nothing without its agents and the actions they perform. Just as with space, I distinguish between the external and the internal: I will look at agents without the story, such as the audience, the actors, the actions performed during the festival (such as sacrifices, ritual processions...), and agents within the story, which means of course the characters of the play.

SENSATIONS. During the festival and during the performance, the audience will have been subjected to a lot of sensations, be they audible, olfactory or visual. But just as the audience experiences sensations as viewers of the performance, so do the characters within the story that is being performed. With this category as well I need to distinguish between the outside and the inside of the performance.

Paula Neumann Classics



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