

SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)  
Space Culture –Public Engagement in Space through Culture (9)

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THE NEED FOR A CATHARSIS INTO THE SPACE PROGRAMME. UTILIZING THE GREEK  
TRAGEDY'S COERSIVE SYSTEMS INTO SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH.

**Abstract**

Greek philosopher Aristotle explains in the *Poetics* the basics of the dramatic form Tragedy. The state acts as a creative patron and supports Tragedy ultimate goal: the Katharsis (Catharsis) – or purification of the masses. *Tragic plays* achieves this by structuring the dramatic forms into two main characters: The Tragic Hero, who follows a personal quest and the Chorus, who represents the mass. Greeks believed that in order to access the catharsis of the masses, the narrative's arc had to follow a pattern. The Peripeteia, which involves a radical change into the main character's destiny; Anagnorisis, the act of reflecting or the recognition of the main character's flaw and the Catastrophe; the consequences of the main hero's errors. This also marks the start of cultural ownership by the State through the commissioning of theatrical productions. The State was indeed acting as a patron. Therefore Greek Tragedy belonged to an ideology, in its needs to respond to a political agenda and fulfill a societal purpose: the one of the purification of the masses. This catharsis, which results in the spectatorship's ultimate empathy and purification, can only happen if triggered by the fear of the catastrophe (Bueti, 2012). Tragedy established the coercion of the people with the state.

On the other side of the spectrum and of State's endorsed activities, Space Education and Outreach is oscillating through flux of interest and disinterest from members of the public. While space and its exploration involves a real level of adversity, this is often not communicated to members of the public despite the fact that for most, any human preparation for outer space involves preparing for unexpected failures. (Handberg, 2003). "We are in a risky business, and we hope that if anything happens to us it will not delay the program." Grissom, Commander of Apollo 1.

So; would Space Education and Outreach benefit from following the Greek Tragedy coercive systems and narrative arc into the delivery of space missions to members of the public?

This paper proposes to apply Greek Tragedy and its methods and narrative arc to the communication systems of Space Education and Outreach. In this it will simultaneously convey the idea of human adversity and risk; paired with great discovery and exploration. I will explain the value and systems of such an antic perspective into the current space outreach communication, using 3 projects I worked on as the basis of the study.