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Western Classical Literary
Criticism
Oedipus the King
Sophocles

WESTERN CLASSICAL LITERARY CRITICISMOEDIPUS THE KING-OPHOCLES

STRUCTURE

- Learning Objectives
- Introduction
- Aristotle: The Poetics
- Longinus: On the Sublime
- Summary
- Key Words
- Review Questions
- Suggested Readings

• LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson, you will be able to :

- discuss on the Aristotle: The Poetics
- examine the Longinus: On the Sublime.

• INTRODUCTION

Literary denunciation has probably existed for as long as literature. In the 4th century BC Aristotle wrote the Poetics, a compartmentalization and description of literary forms with many specific denunciations of contemporary works of art. Poetics developed for the first time the concepts of mimicking and purgation, which are still pivotal in literary study. Plato's attacks on poetry as imitative, secondary, and false were formative as well. Around the same time, Bharata Muni, in his Natya Shastra, wrote literary denunciation ancient Indian literature and Sanskrit drama.

Later classical and gothic denunciation often focused on religious texts, and the several long religious traditions of hermeneutics and textual exegesis have had a profound influence on the study of secular texts. This was particularly the case for the literary traditions of the three Abrahamic religions: Jewish literature, Christian literature and Islamic literature.

Literary criticism was also employed in other forms of gothic Arabic literature and Arabic poetry from the 9th century, notably by Al-Jahiz in

his al-Bayan wa-'l-tabyin and al-Hayawan, and by Abdullah ibn al-Mu'tazz in his Kitab al-Badi.

Aristotle, (384 BC-322 BC) was a Greek philosopher, a student of Plato and teacher of Alexander the Great. His writings cover many subjects, including physics, metaphysics, poetry, theater, music, logic, rhetoric, glottology, politics, government, ethics, biology, and zoology. Together with Plato and Socrates (Plato's teacher), Aristotle is one of the most important founding figures in Western philosophy. Aristotle's writings were the first to create a compendious system of Western philosophy, encompassing morality and aesthetics, logic and science, politics and metaphysics.

Aristotle's views on the physical sciences tremendously shaped medieval scholarship, and their influence extended well into the Renaissance, although they were ultimately replaced by Newtonian physics. In the zoological sciences, some of his observations were confirmed to be accurate only in the 19th century. His works contain the earliest known formal study of logic, which was incorporated in the late 19th century into modern formal logic. In metaphysics, Aristotelianism had a abstruse influence on philosophical and theological thinking in the Islamic and Jewish traditions in the Middle Ages, and it continues to influence Christian theology, especially the scholastic tradition of the Catholic Church. His ethics, though always dominant, gained renewed interest with the modern advent of virtue ethics. All aspects of Aristotle's philosophy continue to be the object of active academic study today. Though Aristotle wrote many elegant concordances and dialogues (Cicero described his literary style as "a river of gold"), it is thought that the majority of his writings are now lost and only about one-third of the original works have survived.

Longinus is the conventional name of the author of the *Disquisition*. On the Sublime, a work which focuses on the effect of good writing. Longinus, sometimes referred to as Pseudo-Longinus because his real name is unknown, was a Greek teacher of eloquence or a solemn critic who may have lived in the 1st or 3rd century AD. Longinus is known only for his treatise On the Sublime.

• ARISTOTLE : THE POETICS

TEXT

Chapter 1: 'Imitation' the common principle of the Arts of Poetry

I propose to treat of Poetry in itself and of its various kinds, noting the essential quality of each; to inquire into the structure of the plot as precondition to a good poem; into the number and nature of the parts of

difference is, that in the first two cases these means are all employed in combination, in the latter, now one means is employed, now another.

Such, then, are the differences of the arts with respect to the medium of imitation.

Chapter 2: The Objects of Replica

Since the objects of replica are men in action, and these men must be either of a higher or a lower type (for moral character mainly answers to these divisions, goodness and badness being the distinguishing marks of moral differences), it follows that we must represent men either as better than in real life, or as worse, or as they are. It is the same in painting. Polygnotus depicted men as nobler than they are, Pauson as less noble, Dionysius drew them true to life.

Now it is evident that each of the modes of replica above mentioned will exhibit these differences, and become a distinct kind in imitating objects that are thus categorical. Such diverseness may be found even in dancing, flute-playing, and harp-playing. So again in language, whether prose or verse unaccompanied by music. Homer, for example, makes men better than they are; Cleophon as they are; Hegemon the Thasian, the inventor of pastiche, and Nicochares, the author of the *Deiliad*, worse than they are. The same thing holds good of Dithyrambs and Nomes; here too one may portray different types, as Timotheus and Philoxenus differed in representing their Cyclopes. The same distinction marks off Devastation from Comedy; for Comedy aims at representing men as worse, Devastation as better than in actual life.

Chapter 3: The Manner of Imitation

There is still a third difference—the manner in which each of these objects may be plagiarized. For the medium being the same and the objects the same, the poet may emulate by portrayal—in which case he can either take another personality as Homer does, or speak in his own person, unchanged—or he may present all his characters as living and moving before us.

These, then, as we said at the beginning, are the three differences which distinguish creative replica—the medium, the objects, and the manner. So that from one point of view, Sophocles is an impersonator of the same kind as Homer—for both emulate higher types of character; from another point of view, of the same kind as Aristophanes—for both emulate persons acting and doing. Hence, some say, the name of 'drama' is given to such poems, as representing action. For the same reason the Dorians profess the contrivance both of Devastation and Farce, The

profess to farce is put forward by the Megarians—not only by those of Greece proper, who asseverate that it originated under their suffrage, but also by the Megarians of Sicily, for the poet Epicharmus, who is much earlier than Chionides and Magnes, belonged to that country. Tragedy too is claimed by certain Dorians of the Peloponnese. In each case they allure to the corroboration of language. The outlying villages, they say, are by them called {kappa omega mu alpha iota}, by the Athenians {delta eta mu iota}: and they assume that Comedians were so named not from {kappa omega mu 'alpha zeta epsilon iota nu}, 'to revel', but because they wandered from village to village (kappa alpha tau alpha / kappa omega mu alpha sigma), being excluded insolent from the city. They add also that the Dorian word for 'doing' is {delta rho alpha nu}, and the Athenian, {pi rho alpha tau tau epsilon iota nu}.

This may suffice as to the number and nature of the various modes of replica.

Chapter 4: The Origin and Development of Poetry

Poetry in general seems to have sprung from two causes, each of them lying deep in our nature. First, the intrusion of replica is implanted in man from childhood, one difference between him and other animals being that he is the most imitative of living creatures, and through replica learns his earliest lessons; and no less universal is the pleasure felt in things plagiarized. We have corroboration of this in the facts of experience. Objects which in themselves we view with pain, we delight to envisage when reproduced with minute fealty : such as the forms of the most contemptible animals and of dead bodies. The cause of this again is, that to learn gives the liveliest pleasure, not only to philosophers but to men in general; whose capacity, however, of learning is more limited. Thus the reason why men enjoy seeing a likeness is, that in contemplating it they find themselves learning or deducing and saying perhaps, 'Ah, that is he'. For if you happen not to have seen the original, the pleasure will be due not to the replica as such, but to the implementation, the colouring, or some such other cause.

Replica, then, is one intuition of our nature. Next, there is the instinct for 'harmony' and rhythm, metres being manifestly sections of cadence. Persons, therefore, starting with this natural gift developed by degrees their special proficiencies, till their rude spontaneities gave birth to Poetry.

Poetry now deviate in two directions, according to the individual character of the writers. The graver spirits imitated noble actions and the actions of good men. The more in consequential sort plagiarized the

actions of meaner persons, at first composing satires, as the former did hymns to the gods and the praises of famous men. A poem of the mocking kind cannot indeed be put down to any author earlier than Homer; though many such writers probably there were. But from Homer onward, precedent can be recount—his own *Margites*, for example and other similar compositions. The pertinent metre was also here introduced; hence the measure is still called the elegiac or burlesque measure, being that in which people travesty one another. Thus the older poets were distinguished as writers of heroic or of burlesque verse.

As, in the serious style, Homer is pre-eminent among poets, for he alone combined dramatic form with excellence of replica, so he too first laid down the main lines of Comedy, by dramatising the prurient instead of writing personal derision. His *Margites* bears the same relation to Farce that the *Communication* and *Odyssey* do to *Devastation*. But when *Devastation* and Farce came to light, the two classes of poets still followed their natural bent: the caricaturists became writers of Comedy and the Epic poets were succeeded by Tragedians, since the drama was a larger and higher form of art.

Whether *Devastation* has as yet perfected its proper types or not; and whether it is to be judged in itself, or in relation also to the audience—this raises another question. Be that as it may, *Devastation*—as also farce— was at first mere spontaneity. The one originated with the authors of the *Dithyramb*, the other with those of the phallic songs, which are still in use in many of our cities. *Devastation* advanced by slow degrees; each new element that showed itself was in turn developed. Having passed through many changes, it found its natural form, and there it stopped.

Aeschylus first introduced a second actor; he slacken the importance of the Chorus and assigned the leading part to the dialogue. Sophocles raised the number of actors to three, and added scene-painting. Moreover, it was not till late that the short plot was discarded for one of greater compass, and the freakish articulation of the earlier concepiscent form for the stately manner of *Devastation*. The dactyl measure then replaced the anagestic tetrameter, which was originally employed when the poetry was of the concupiscent order, and had greater biases with dancing. Once dialogue had come in, Nature herself discovered the appropriate measure. For the biases is, of all measures, the most vernacular : we see it in the fact that conversational speech runs into biases lines more intermittently frequently than into any other kind of balled; rarely into hexameters, and only when we drop the vernacular cadency. The additions to the number of 'episodes' or acts,

Tragedy, then, is an replica of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude; in language festoon with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in separate parts of the play; in the form of action, not of narrative; through pity and fear effecting the proper catharsis of these emotions. By 'language festoon', I mean language into which rhythm, 'accord,' and song enter. By 'the several kinds in separate parts,' I mean, that some parts are concluded through the medium of verse alone, others again with the aid of song.

Now as tragic replica implies persons acting, it necessarily follows, in the first place, that Spectacular equipment will be a part of Devastation. Next, Song and Diction, for these are the medium of replica. By 'Diction' I mean the mere measured words: as for 'Song,' it is a term whose sense every one understands.

Again, Devastation is the replica of an action; and an action implies personal agents, who necessarily possess certain distinctive qualities both of character and thought; for it is by these that we qualify actions themselves, and these—thought and, character—are the two natural causes from which actions spring, and on actions again all success or failure depends. Hence, the Plot is the replica of the action: for by plot I here mean the arrangement of the incidents. By Character I mean that in virtue of which we ascribe certain qualities to the agents. Thought is required wherever a statement is proved, or, it may be, a general truth articulate. Every Devastation, therefore, must have six parts," which parts determine its quality—namely, Plot, Character, Diction, Thought, Pageant, Song. Two of the parts constitute the medium of replica, one the manner, and three the objects of replica. And these complete the list. These elements have been employed, we may say, by the poets to a man; in fact, every play contains extravaganza elements as well as Character, Plot, Articulation, Song, and Thought.

But most important of all is the structure of the incidents. For Devastation is an replica, not of men, but of an action and of life, and life consists in action and its end is a mode of action, not a quality. Now character determines men's qualities, but it is by their actions that they are happy or the reverse. Dramatic action, therefore, is not with a view to the representation of character: character comes in as ancillary to the actions. Hence the incidents and-the plot are the end of a devastation; and the end is the chief thing of all. Again, without action there cannot be a rendition; there may be without character. The tragedies of most of our modern poets fail in the rendering of character; and of poets in general this is often true. It is the same in painting; and here lies the difference between Zeuxis and Polygnotus. Polygnotus depicts character well: the

style of Zeuxis is benefit of conscientious quality. Again, if you string together a set of speeches expressive of character and well finished in point of insufficient and thought, you will not produce the essential tragic effect nearly so well as with a play which, however deficient in these respects, yet has a plot and artistically constructed incidents. Besides which, the most powerful elements of emotional: interest in Tragedy Peripeteia or Annulment of the Situation, and Recognition scenes—are parts of the plot. A further proof is, that gremlin in the art attain to finish: of diction and precision of enactment before they can construct the plot. It is the same with almost all the early poets.

The Plot, then, is the first principle, and, as it were, the soul of a devastation : Character holds the second place. A similar fact is seen in painting. The most beautiful colours, laid on confusedly, will not give as much pleasure as the chalk outline of a portrait. Thus Devastation is the replica of an action, and of the agents mainly with a view to the action.

Third in order is Thought—that is, the faculty of saying what is possible and pertinent in given circumstances. In the case of magniloquence, this is the function of the Political art and of the art of eloquence : and so indeed the older poets make their characters speak the language of civic life; the poets of our time, the language of the speechifies. Character is that which affirms moral purpose, showing what kind of things a man chooses or avoids. Speeches, therefore, which do not make this apparent, or in which the speaker does not choose or avoid anything whatever, are not expressive of character. Thought, on the other hand, is found where something is proved to be, or not to be, or a general maxim is enunciated.

Fourth among the elements itemize comes Articulation; by which I mean, as has been already said, the expression of the meaning in words; and its essence is the same both in verse and prose.

Of the remaining elements Song holds the chief place among the paraphernalia.

The pageant has, indeed, an emotional attraction of its own, but, of all the parts, it is the least artistic, and connected least with the art of poetry. For the power of Tragedy, we may be sure, is felt even apart from representation and actors. Besides, the production of eye-catching effects depends more on the art of the stage machinist than on that of the poet.

Chapter 7: The Plot must be a Whole

These principles being established, let us now discuss the proper structure of the Plot, since this is the first and most important thing in Devastation.

Now, according to our definition, Devastation is an replica of an action that is complete, and whole, and of a certain magnitude; for there may be a whole that is wanting in magnitude. A whole is that which has a beginning, a middle, and an end. A beginning is that which does not itself follow anything by causal necessity, but after which something naturally is or comes to be. An end, on the contrary, is that which itself naturally follows some other thing, either by necessity, or as a rule, but has nothing following it. A middle is that which follows something as some other thing follows it. A well formulated plot, therefore, must neither begin nor end at random, but conform to these principles.

Again, a beautiful object, whether it be a living organism or any whole composed of parts, must not only have an orderly arrangement of parts, but must also be of a certain magnitude; for beauty depends on magnitude and order. Hence a very small animal organism cannot be beautiful; for the view of it is muddled, the object being seen in an almost indiscernible moment of time. Nor, again, can one of vast size be beautiful; for as the eye cannot take it all in at once, the unity and sense of the whole is lost for the spectator; as for instance if there were one a thousand miles long. As, therefore, in the case of animate bodies and organisms a certain vestness is necessary, and a vestness which may be easily fondled in one view; so in the plot, a certain length is necessary, and a length which can be easily fondled by the memory. The limit of length in relation to dramatic competition and voluptuous demonstration, is no part of artistic theory. For had it been the rule for a hundred calamities to compete together, the performance would have been regulated by the water-clock—as indeed we are told was hitherto done. But the limit as fixed by the nature of the drama itself is this: the greater the length, the more beautiful will the piece be by reason of its size, provided that the whole be limpid. And to define the matter roughly, we may say that the proper vastness is comprised within such limits, that the sequence of events, according to the law of probability or necessity, will admit of a change from bad fortune to good, or from good fortune to bad.

Chapter 8: The Plot must be a Unity

Unity of plot does not, as some persons think, consist in the Unity of the hero. For infinitely various are the incidents in one man's life which

cannot be reduced to unity; and so, too, there are many actions of one man out of which we cannot make one action. Hence, the error, as it appears, of all poets who have composed a Heracleid, a Theseid, or other poems of the kind. They imagine that as Heracles was one man, the story of Heracles must also be a unity. But Homer, as in all else he is of outweighing merit, here too—whether from art or natural genius—seems to have happily ascertained the truth. In composing the *Odyssey* he did not include all the adventures of Odysseus—such as his wound on Parnassus, or his counterfeit madness at the convening of the host—incidents between which there was no necessary or probable connection: but he made the *Odyssey*, and likewise the communication, to centre round an action that in our sense of the word is one. As therefore, in the other onomatopoeic arts, the replica is one when the object plagiarized is one, so the plot, being an replica of an action, must emulate one action and that a whole, the structural union of the parts being such that, if any one of them is deranged or removed, the whole will be disunited and disturbed. For a thing whose presence or absence makes no visible difference, is not an organic part of the whole.

Chapter 9: Dramatic Unity

It is, moreover, evident from what has been said, that it is not the function of the poet to relate what has happened, but what may happen—what is possible according to the law of prospect or necessity. The poet and the historian differ not by writing in verse or in prose. The work of Herodotus might be put into verse, and it would still be a species of history, with metre no less than without it. The true difference is that one relates what has happened, the other what may happen. Poetry, therefore, is a more metaphysical and a higher thing than history: for poetry tends to express the universal, history the particular. By the universal, I mean how a person of a certain type will on occasion speak or act, according to the law of prospect or necessity; and it is this universality at which poetry aims in the names she attaches to the bigwig. The particular is—for example—what Alcibiades did or suffered. In Farce this is already apparent: for here the poet first constructs the plot on the lines of prospect, and then inserts characteristic names—unlike the caricaturists who write about particular individuals. But dramaturses still keep to real names, the reason being that what is possible is trustworthy: what has not happened we do not at once feel sure to be possible: but what has happened is apparently possible: otherwise it would not have happened. Still there are even some calamities in which there are only one or two well known names, the rest being fictitious. In others, none

are well known, as in Agathon's *Antheus*, where incidents and names alike are fictitious, and yet they give none the less pleasure. We must not, therefore, at all costs keep to the received icons, which are the usual subjects of Devastation. Indeed, it would be absurd to attempt it; for even subjects that are known are known only to a few, and yet give pleasure to all. It clearly follows that the poet or 'maker' should be the maker of plots rather than of verses; since he is a poet because he imitates, and what he imitates are actions. And even if he chances to take an historical subject, he is none the less a poet; for there is no reason why some events that have actually happened should not attune to the law of the probable and possible, and in virtue of that quality in them he is their poet or maker.

Of all plots and actions the anecdotal are the worst. I call a plot 'anecdotal' in which the episodes or acts succeed one another without probable or necessary sequence. Bad poets compose such pieces by their own fault, good poets, to please the players; for, as they write show pieces for competition, they stretch the plot beyond its capacity, and are often forced to break the natural continuity.

But again, Devastation replica is an imitation not only of a complete action, but of events enlivening fear or pity. Such an effect is best produced when the events come on us by sunrise; and the effect is profound when, at the same time, they follow as cause and effect. The tragic wonder will then be greater than if they happened of themselves or by accident; for even parallelism are most striking when they have an air of design. We may cite the statue of Mityas at Argos, which fell upon his murderer while he was a hyetometer at a festival, and killed him. Such events seem not to be due to mere chance. Plots, therefore, constructed on these principles are necessarily the best.

Chapter 10: Definitions of Simple and Complex Plots

Plots are either Simple or Complex, for the actions in real life, of which the plots are an replica, obviously show a similar distinction. An action which is one and continuous in the sense above defined, I call Simple, when the change of fortune takes place without Annulment of the Situation and without Conceding.

A Complex action is one in which the change is escorted by such Annulment, or by Recognition, or by both. These last should arise from the internal structure of the plot, so that what follows should be the necessary or probable result of the precursory action. It makes all the difference whether any given event is a case of post-hoc.

Chapter 11: Reversal of the Situation, Recognition, and Tragic or Cataclysmic Incident Defined and Explained

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Annulment of the Situation is a change by which the action veers round to its opposite, subject always to our rule of probability or necessity. Thus in the Oedipus, the messenger comes to cheer Oedipus and free him from his alarms about his mother, but by divulging who he is, he produces the opposite effect. Again in the Lynceus, Lynceus is being led away to his death, and Danaus goes with him, meaning, to assassinate him; but the outcome of the precursory incidents is that Danaus is killed and Lynceus saved. Recognition, as the name indicates, is a change from incomprehension to knowledge, producing love or hate between the persons destined by the poet for good or bad fortune. The best form of recognition is coincident with a Annulment of the Situation, as in the Oedipus. There are indeed other forms. Even inanimate things of the most trivial kind may in a sense be objects of recognition. Again, we may recognise or discover whether a person has done a thing or not. But the recognition which is most intimately connected with the plot and action is, as we have said, the recognition of persons. This recognition, combined, with Annulment, will produce either pity or fear; and actions producing these effects are those which, by our definition, Devastation represents. Moreover, it is upon such situations that the issues of good or bad fortune will depend. Recognition, then, being between persons, it may happen that one person only is recognised by the other—when the lag is already known—or it may be necessary that the recognition should be on both sides. Thus Iphigenia is revealed to Orestes by the sending of the letter; but another act of recognition is required to make Orestes known to Iphigenia.

Two parts, then, of the Plot—Annulment of the Situation and Recognition—turn upon surprises. A third part is the Scene of Suffering. The Scene of Suffering is a catastrophic or painful action, such as death on the stage, bodily torment, wounds and the like.

Chapter 12: The 'quantitative parts' of Devastation Defined

The parts of Devastation which must be treated as elements of the whole have been already mentioned. We now come to the denary parts the separate parts into which Tragedy is divided namely, Prelude, Episode, Exode, Choric song; this last being divided into Parode and Stasimon. These are common to all plays: unique to some are the songs of actors from the stage and the Commoi.

The prelude is that entire part of a devastation which precedes the Parode of the Chorus. The Episode is that entire part of a devastation

which is between complete choric songs. The exodes is that entire part of a devastation which has no choric song after it. Of the Choric part the Parode is the first undivided pronouncement of the Chorus: the Stasimon is a Choric ode without elegiac or anapestic throb: the Kommos is a joint moaning of Chorus and actors. The parts of Devastation which must be treated as elements of the whole have been already mentioned. The vicenary parts the separate parts into which it is divided—are here itemized.

Chapter 13: What Constitutes Tragic Action

As the sequence to what has already been said, we must proceed to consider what the poet should aim at, and what he should avoid, in constructing his plots; and by what means the specific effect of Devastation will be produced.

A perfect devastation should, as we have seen, be arranged not on the simple but on the complex plan. It should, moreover, emulate actions which excite pity and fear, this being the idiosyncratic mark of tragic replica. It follows plainly, in the first place, that the change, of coincidences presented must not be the spectacular of a ethical man brought from prosperity to misfortune: for this moves neither pity nor fear; it entirely shocks us. Nor, again, that of a bad man passing from misfortune to affluence: for nothing can be more alien to the spirit of Devastation; it possesses no single tragic quality; it neither satisfies the moral sense nor calls forth pity or fear. Nor, again, should the downfall of the utter transgressor be exhibited. A plot of this kind would, doubtless, satisfy the moral sense, but it would inspire neither pity nor fear; for pity is aroused by unmerited misfortune, fear by the misfortune of a man like ourselves. Such an event, therefore, will be neither pitiful nor terrible. There remains, then, the character between these two extremes,—that of a man who is not remarkably good and just,—yet whose misfortune is brought about not by vice or perversion, but by some error or infirmity. He must be one who is highly renowned and prosperous— a personage like Oedipus, Thyestes, or other illustrious men of such families.

A well-constructed plot should, therefore, be single in its issue, rather than double as some maintain. The change of fortune should be not from bad to good, but, retrograde, from good to bad. It should come about as the result not of vice, but of some great error or infirmity, in a character either such as we have described, or better rather than worse. The practice of the stage bears out our view. At first the poets recounted any legend that came in their way. Now, the best calamities are founded on the story of a few houses, on the fortunes of Alcmaeon, Oedipus,

Orestes, Meleager, Thyestes, Telephus, and those others who have done or suffered something terrible. A devastation, then, to be perfect according to the rules of art should be of this construction. Hence they are in error who chastise Euripides just because he follows this principle in his plays, many of which end unhappily. It is, as we have said, the right ending. The best proof is that on the stage and in dramatic competition, such plays, if well worked out, are the most tragic in effect; and Euripides, faulty though he may be in the general management of his subject, yet is felt to be the most tragic of the poets.

In the second rank comes the kind of devastation which some place first. Like the *Odyssey*, it has a double thread of plot, and also an opposite holocaust for the good and for the bad. It is accounted the best because of the weakness of the spectators; for the poet is guided in what he writes by the wishes of his audience. The pleasure, however, thusly derived is not the true tragic pleasure. It is proper rather to Comedy, where those who, in the piece, are the deadliest enemies—like Orestes and Aegisthus thus—quit the stage as friends at the close, and no one destroys or is slain.

Chapter 14: The Tragic Emotions of Pity and Fear should Spring Out of the Plot Itself

Fear and pity may be aroused by picturesque means; but they may also result from the inner structure of the piece, which is the better way, and indicates a superior poet. For the plot ought to be so constructed that, even without the aid of the eye, he who hears the tale told will thrill with horror and melt to pity at what takes place. This is the impression we should receive from hearing the story of the *Oedipus*. But to produce this effect by the mere pageant is a less artistic method, and dependent on beside the point aids. Those who employ spectacular means to create a sense not of the terrible but only of the monstrous, are strangers to the purpose of devastation; for we must not demand of Devastation any and every kind of pleasure, but only that which is proper to it. And since the pleasure which the poet should afford is that which comes from pity and fear through replica, it is evident that this quality must be impressed upon the incidents.

Let us then determine what are the circumstances which strike us as terrible or pitiful.

Actions capable of this effect must happen between persons who are either friends or enemies or indifferent to one another. If an enemy kills an enemy, there is nothing to excite pity either in the act or the intention, —except so far as the suffering in itself is pitiful. So again with

indifferent persons. But when the tragic incident occurs between those who are near or dear to one another—if, for example, a brother kills, or intends to kill, a brother, a son his father, a mother her son, a son his mother, or any other deed of the kind is done—these are the situations to be looked for by the poet. He may not indeed destroy the framework of the received legends—the fact, for precedent, that Clytemnestra was slain by Orestes and Eriphyle by Alcmaeon but he ought to show invention of his own, and skilfully handle the traditional material. Let us explain more clearly what is meant by skilful handling.

The action may be done consciously and with knowledge of the persons, in the manner of the older poets. It is thus too that Euripides makes Medea slaughter her children. Or, again, the deed of horror may be done, but done in incomprehension, and the tie of kinship or friendship be discovered afterwards. The *Oedipus* of Sophocles is an example. Here, indeed, the incident is outside the drama proper; but cases occur where it falls within the action of the play: one may allude to the Alcmaeon of Astydamos, or Telegonus in the Wounded Odysseus. Again, there is a third case—to be about to act with knowledge of the persons and then not to act. The fourth case is when some one is about to do an irreparable deed through ignorance, and makes the discovery before it is done. These are the only possible ways. For the deed must either be done or not done—and that wittingly or unwittingly! But of all these ways, to be about to act knowing the persons, and then not to act, is the worst. It is shocking without being tragic, for no disaster follows. It is, therefore, never, or very rarely, found in poetry. One instance, however, is in the *Antigone*, where Haemon threatens to kill Creon. The next and better way is that the deed should be inflicted. Still better, that it should be inflicted in ignorance, and the discovery made afterwards. There is then nothing to shock us, while the discovery produces a startling effect. The last case is the best, as when in the *Cresphontes* Merope is about to slay her son, but, recognising who he is, spares his life. So in the *Iphigenia*, the sister recognises the brother just in time. Again in the *Helle*, the son recognises the mother when on the point of giving her up. This, then, is why a few families only, as has been already observed, furnish the subjects of devastation. It was not art, but happy chance, that led the poets in search of subjects to impress the tragic quality upon their plots. They are enforced, therefore, to have recourse to those houses whose history contains moving incidents like these.

Enough has now been said concerning the structure of the incidents, and the right kind of plot.

Chapter 15: The Element of Character in Tragedy

*Western Classical Literary
Criticism*
*Oedipus the King-
Sophocles*

In respect of Character there are four things to be aimed at. First, and most important, it must be good. Now any speech or action that demonstrates moral purpose of any kind will be expressive of character: the character will be good if the purpose is good. This rule is relative to each class. Even a woman may be good, and also a slave; though the woman may be said to be an minion being and the slave quite worthless. The second thing to aim at is propriety. There is a type of manly valour; but valour in a woman, or unscrupulous cleverness, is inappropriate. Thirdly, character must be true to life: for this is a distinct thing from goodness and propriety, as here described. The fourth point is consistency: for though the subject of the imitation, who suggested the type, be inconsistent, still he must be consistently inconsistent. As an example of motiveless degradation of character, we have Menelaus in the Orestes: of character indecorous and inappropriate, the lament of Odysseus in the Scylla, and the speech of Melanippe: of inconsistency, the Iphigenia at Aulis—for Iphigenia the petitioner in no way resembles her later self.

As in the structure of the plot, so too in the enactment of character, the poet should always aim either at the necessary or the probable. Thus a person of a given character should speak or act in a given way, by the rule either of necessity or of probability; just as this event should follow that by necessary or probable sequence. It is therefore evident that the deciphering of the plot, no less than the complication, must arise out of the plot itself, it must not be brought about by the 'Deus ex Machina'—as in the Medea, or in the Return of the Greeks in the Iliad. The 'Deus ex Machina' should be employed only for events external to the drama—for predecessor or ensuring events, which lie beyond the range of human knowledge, and which require to be reported or presaged; for to the gods we accredit the power of seeing all things. Within the action there must be nothing illogical. If the irrational cannot be excluded, it should be outside the scope of the devastation. Such is the illogical element in the Oedipus of Sophocles.

Again, since devastation is an replica of persons who are above the common level, the example of good portrait-painters should be followed. They, while reproducing the distinctive form of the original, make a likeness which is true to life and yet more beautiful. So too the poet, in representing men who are irascible or indolent, or have other defects of character, should preserve the type and yet exalt it. In this way Achilles is delineated by Agathon and Homer.

These then are rules the poet should observe. Nor should he neglect those appeals to the senses, which, though not among the essentials, are the collaterals of poetry; for here too there is much room for error. But of this enough has been said in our published treatises.

Chapter 16: Recognition: Its Various Kinds, with Examples

What Recognition is has been already explained. We will now itemize its kinds.

First, the least artistic form, which, from poverty of wit, is most commonly employed recognition by signs. Of these some are innate—such as 'the spear which the earth-born race bear on their bodies,' or the stars introduced by Carcinus in his *Thyestes*. Others are acquired after birth; and of these some are bodily marks, as scars; some external tokens, as necklaces, or the little ark in the *Tyro* by which the discovery is effected. Even these admit of more or less skilful treatment. Thus in the recognition of Odysseus by his scar, the discovery is made in one way by the nurse, in another by the swineherds. The use of tokens for the express purpose of proof—and, indeed, any formal proof with or without tokens—is a less artistic mode of recognition. A better kind is that which comes about by a turn of circumstance, as in the Bath Scene in the *Odyssey*.

Next come the recognitions invented at will by the poet, and on that account wanting in art. For example, Orestes in the *Iphigenia* affirms the fact that he is Orestes. She, indeed, makes herself known by the letter; but he, by speaking himself, and saying what the poet, not what the plot requires. This, therefore, is nearly in league to the culpability above mentioned—for Orestes might as well have brought tokens with him. Another similar instance is the 'Voice of the shuttle' in the *Tereus* of Sophocles.

The-third kind depends on memory when the sight of some object arouses a feeling: as in the *Cyprians* of Dicaeogenes, where the hero breaks into tears on seeing the picture; or again in the 'Lay of Alcinous', where Odysseus, hearing the balladeer play the lyre, recalls the past and weeps; and hence the recognition.

The fourth kind is by process of reasoning. Thus in the *Choephoroi*: 'Some one resembling me has come: no one resembles me but Orestes: therefore Orestes has come.' Such too is the discovery made by Iphigenia in the play of Polyidus the Sophist. It was a natural reflection for Orestes to make, 'So I too must die at the altar like my sister'. So, again, in the *Tydeus* of Theodectes, the father says, 'I came to find my son, and I lose my own life'. So too in the *Phineidae*: the women, on

seeing the place, implied their fate:—'Here we are doomed to die, for here we were cast forth.' Again, there is a composite kind of recognition involving false conjecture on the part of one of the characters, as in the *Odysseus Disguised as a Messenger*. A said <that no one else was able to bend the bow; ... hence B (the disguised Odysseus) imagined that A would> recognise the bow which, in fact, he had not seen; and to bring about a recognition by this means that the expectation A-would recognise the bow is false conjecture.

But, of all recognitions, the best is that which arises from the incidents themselves, where the startling discovery is made by natural means. Such is that in the *Oedipus* of Sophocles, and in the *Iphigenia*; for it was natural that Iphigenia should wish to dispatch a letter. These recognitions alone relinquish with the artificial aid of tokens or amulets. Next come the recognitions by process of reasoning.

In constructing the plot and working it out with the proper articulation, the poet should place the scene, as far as possible, before his eyes. In this way, seeing everything with the absolute acronyms, as if he were a spectator of the action, he will discover what is in keeping with it, and be most unlikely to overlook divergence. The need of such a rule is shown by the fault found in *Carcinus*. *Amphiaras* was on his way from the temple. This fact escaped the observation of one who did not see the situation. On the stage, however, the piece failed, the audience being offended at the oversight.

Again, the poet should work out his play, to the best of his power with pertinent indication; for those who feel emotion are most cogent through natural sympathy with the characters they represent; and one who is flustered storms, one who is angry rages, with the most life-like reality. Hence poetry implies either a happy gift of nature or a strain of madness. In the one case a man can take the mould of any character; in the other, he is lifted out of his proper self.

As for the story, whether the poet takes it readymade or constructs it for himself, he should first sketch its general outline, and then fill in the episodes and enlarge on in detail. The general plan may be illustrated by the *Iphigenia*. A young girl is sacrificed; she disappears mysteriously from the eyes of those who sacrificed her; She is transported to another country, where the custom is to offer up all strangers to the goddess. To this ministry she is appointed. Sometime later her own brother chances to arrive. The fact that the oracle for some reason ordered him to go there, is outside the general plan of the play. The purpose, again, of his coming is outside the action proper. However, he comes, he is seized,

and, when on the point of being sacrificed, affirms who he is. The mode of recognition may be either that of Euripides or of Polyidus, in whose play he exclaims very naturally:—'So it was not my sister only, but I too, who was doomed to be sacrificed'; and by that remark he is saved.

After this, the names being once given, it remains to fill in the episodes. We must see that they are relevant to the action. In the case of Orestes, for example, there is the madness which led to his capture, and his utterance by means of the purificatory rite. In the drama, the episodes are short, but it is these that give extension to Epic poetry. Thus the story of the Odyssey can be stated briefly. A certain man is absent from home for many years; he is jealously watched by Poseidon, and left desolate. Meanwhile his home is in a miserable predicament—suitors are wasting his substance and plotting against his son. At length, turbulent, he himself arrives; he makes certain persons enlighten with him; he attacks the suitors with his own hand, and is himself preserved while he destroys them. This is the quintessence of the plot; the rest is episode.

Chapter 18: Further Rules for the Tragic Poet

Every devastation falls into two parts—Complication and Deciphering or Clarification. Incidents extraneous to the action are frequently combined with a portion of the action proper, to form the Complication; the rest is the Deciphering. By the Complication I mean all that extends from the beginning of the action to the part which marks the turning-point to good or bad fortune. The Deciphering is that which extends from the beginning of the change to the end. Thus, in the Lynceus of Theodectes, the Complication consists of the incidents presupposed in the drama, the seizure of the child, and then again Deciphering extends from the allegation of murder to the end.

There are four kinds of Tragedy, the Complex, depending entirely on Annulment of the Situation and Recognition; the Piteous (where the motive is passion)—such as the calamities on Ajax and Ixion; the Ethical (where the motives are ethical)—such as the Phthiotides and the Peleus. The fourth kind is the Simple. <We here exclude the purely picturesque element>, exemplified by the Phorcides, the Prometheus, and scenes laid in Hades. The poet should endeavour, if possible, to combine all poetic elements; or failing that, the greatest number and those the most important; the more so, in face of the carping criticism of the day. For whereas there have formerly been good poets, each in his own branch, the critics now expect one man to surpass all others in their several lines of excellence.

In speaking of a devastation as the same or different, the best test to take is the plot. Identity exists where the Complication and Deciphering are the same. Many poets tie the knot well, but untangle it ill. Both arts, however, should always be mastered.

Again, the poet should remember what has been often said, and not make an Epic structure into a Devastation—by an Epic structure I mean one with a multiplicity of plots—as if, for cite, you were to make a devastation out of the entire story of the Iliad. In the Epic poem, owing to its length, each part assumes its proper vastness. In the drama the result is far from answering to the poet's expectation. The proof is that the poets who have dramatised the whole story of the Fall of Troy, instead of selecting portions, like Euripides; or who have taken the whole tale of Niobe, and not a part of her story, like Aeschylus, either fail utterly or meet with poor success on the stage. Even Agathon has been known to fail from this one defect. In his *Annulments of the Situation*, however, he shows a astounding skill in the effort to hit the popular taste—to produce a tragic effect that satisfies the moral sense. This effect is produced when the clever rogue, like Sisyphus, is outwitted, or the brave villain defeated. Such an event is probable in Agathon's sense of the word: 'it is probable', he says, 'that many things should happen clashing to feasibility'.

The Chorus too should be regarded as one of the actors; it should be an integral part of the whole, and share in the action, in the manner not of Euripides but of Sophocles. As for the later poets, their psalm-tune songs exist as little to the subject of the piece as to that of any other devastation. They are, therefore, sung as mere recesses, a practice first begun by Agnation. Yet what difference is there between introducing such psalm-tune recesses, and transferring a speech, or even a whole act, from one play to another?

Chapter 19: Thought, or the Intellectual Element, and Articulation in Devastation

It remains to speak of Articulation and Thought, the other parts of Devastation having been already discussed. Concerning Thought, we may assume what is said in the eloquence, to which inquiry the subject more strictly belongs. Under Thought is included every effect which has to be produced by speech, the subdivisions being—proof and rebuttal; the excitation of the feelings, such as pity, fear, anger, and the like; the suggestion of importance or its opposite. Now, it is evident that the dramatic incidents must be treated from the same points of view as the dramatic speeches, when the object is to evoke the sense of pity, fear, importance, or probability. The only difference is, that the incidents

should speak for themselves without verbal elucidation; while the effects aimed at in speech should be produced by the speaker, and as a result of the speech. For what were the business of a speaker, if the Thought were affirmed quite apart from what he says?

Next, as regards Articulation. One branch of the probe treats of the Modes of Pronouncement. But this province of knowledge belongs to the art of Delivery and to the masters of that science. It cite for instance—what is a command, a prayer, a statement, a threat, a question, an answer, and so forth. To know or not to know these things involves no serious chastise upon the poet's art. For who can admit the culpability accused to Homer by Protagoras—that in the words, 'Sing, goddess, of the indignation, he gives a command under the idea that he utters a prayer? For to tell someone to do a thing or not to do it is, he says, a command. We may, therefore, pass this over as an probe that belongs to another art, not to poetry.

Chapter 20: Articulation, or Language in General

Language in general includes the following parts: Letter, Syllable, Connecting word, Noun, Verb, Inflexion or Case, Sentence or Phrase.

A Letter is an indivisible sound, yet not every such sound, but only one which can form part of a group of sounds. For even brutes utter indivisible sounds, none of which I call a letter. The sound I mean may be either a vowel, a semi-vowel, or a mute. A vowel is that which without impact of tongue or lip has an audible sound. A semi-vowel, that which with such impact has an audible sound, as S and R. A mute, that which with such impact has by itself no sound, but joined to a vowel sound becomes audible, as G and D. These are distinguished according to the form assumed by the mouth and the place where they are produced; according as they are aspirated or smooth, long or short; as they are acute, grave, or of an median tone; which inquiry belongs in detail to the writers on metre.

A Syllable is a non-significant sound, composed of a mute and a vowel: for GR without A is a syllable, as also with A—GRA. But the investigation of these differences belongs also to metrical science.

A Connecting word is a non-significant sound, which neither causes nor hinders the union of many sounds into one significant sound; it may be placed at either end or in the middle of a sentence. Or, a non-significant sound, which out of several sounds, each of them significant, is capable of forming one significant sound—as {alpha mu theta iota}, {pi epsilon rho iota}, and the like. Or, a non-significant sound, which marks the beginning, end, or division of a sentence; such, however, that it

cannot correctly stand by itself at the beginning of a sentence, as {mu epsilon nu}, {eta tau omicron iota}, {delta epsilon}.

A Noun is a composite significant sound, not marking time, of which no part is in itself significant: for in double or compound words we do not apply the separate parts as if each were in itself significant. Thus in Theodor us, 'god-given,' the {delta omega rho omicron nu} or 'gift' is not in itself significant.

A Verb is a composite significant sound, marking time, in which, as in the noun, no part is in itself significant. For 'man/ or 'white' does not express the idea of 'when'; but 'he walks', or 'he has walked' does connote time, present or past.

Inflexion belongs both to the noun and verb, and expresses either the relation 'of, 'to', or the like; or that of number, whether one or many, as 'man' or 'men' ; or the modes or tones in actual delivery, e.g., a question or a command. 'Did he go?' and 'go' are verbal inflexions of this kind.

A Sentence or Phrase is a composite significant sound, some at least of whose parts are in themselves significant; for not every such group of words consists of verbs and nouns—the definition of man', for example—but it may dispense even with the verb. Still it will always have some significant part, as 'in walking', or 'Cleon son of Cleon'. A sentence or phrase may form a unity in two ways—either as signifying one thing, or as consisting of several parts linked together. Thus the Iliad is one by the linking together of parts, the definition of man by the unity of the thing signified.

Chapter 21: Poetic Articulation

Words are of two kinds, simple and double. By simple I mean those composed of non-significant elements, such as {gamma eta}. By double or compound, those composed either of a significant and non-significant element {though within the whole word no element is significant), or of elements that are both significant. A word may likewise be triple, quadrivial, or multiple in form, like so many Massilian expressions, e.g., 'Hermo-caico-xanthus who prayed to Father Zeus>'.

Every word is either current, or strange, or metaphorical, or ornamental, or newly-coined, or lengthened, or contracted, or altered.

By a current or proper word I mean one which is in general use among a people; by a strange word, one which is in use in another country. Plainly, therefore, the same word may be at once strange and current, but not in relation to the same people. The word {sigma iota

gamma upsilon nu omicron nu}, 'lance', is to the Cyprians a current term but to us a strange one.

Metaphor is the application of an alien name by transferee either from genus to species, or from species to genus, or from species to species, or by analogy, that is, proportion. Thus from genus to species, as: 'There lies my ship'; for lying at anchor is a species of lying. From species to genus, as: 'Verily ten thousand noble deeds hath Odysseus wrought'; for ten thousand is a species of large number, and is here used for a large number generally. From species to species, as: 'With blade of bronze drew away the life', and 'Cleft the water with the vessel of inflexible bronze'. Here {alpha rho upsilon rho alpha iota}, 'to draw away', is used for {tau alpha mu epsilon iota nu}, 'to cleave,' and {tau alpha mu epsilon iota nu} again for {alpha rho upsilon alpha iota}—each being a species of taking away. Analogy or proportion is when the second term is to the first as the fourth to the third. We may then use the fourth for the second, or the second for the fourth. Sometimes too we qualify the metaphor by adding the term to which the proper word is relative. Thus the cup is to Dionysus as the shield to Ares. The cup may, therefore, be called 'the shield of Dionysus', and the shield 'the cup of Ares.' Or, again, as old age is to life, so is evening to day. Evening may therefore be called 'the old age of the day', and old age, 'the evening of life', or, in the phrase of Empedocles, 'life's setting sun.' For some of the terms of the proportion there is at times no word in existence; still the metaphor may be used. For instance, to disperse seed is called sowing; but the action of the sun in dispersion his rays is nameless. Still this process bears to the sun the same relation as sowing to the seed. Hence the expression of the poet 'sowing the god-created light'. There is another way in which this kind of metaphor may be employed. We may apply an peculiar term, and then deny of that term one of its proper facets; as if we were to call the shield, not 'the cup of Ares', but 'the wineless cup'.

An ornamental word ...

A newly-coined word is one which has never been even in local use, but is adopted by the poet himself. Some such words there appear to be: as {epsilon rho nu upsilon gamma epsilon sigma}, 'sprouters', for {kappa epsilon rho alpha tau alpha}, 'horns', and {alpha rho eta tau eta rho}, 'mendicant' for {iota epsilon rho epsilon upsilon sigma}, 'priest'.

A word is lengthened when its own vowel is exchanged for a longer one, or when a syllable is inserted. A word is contracted when some part of it is removed. Precedent of lengthening are—{pi omicron lambda eta omicron sigma} for {pi omicron lambda epsilon omega sigma}, and {Pi

eta lambda eta iota alpha delta epsilon omega} for {Pi eta lambda epsilon iota delta omicron upsilon}; of shrinkage—{kappa rho iota}, {delta omega}, and {omicron psi}, as in {mu iota alpha/gamma iota nu epsilon tau alpha iota/alpha mu phi omicron tau epsilon rho omega nu/omicron psi}.

An altered word is one in which part of the ordinary form is left unchanged, and part is re-cast; as in {delta epsilon xi iota-tau epsilon rho omicron nu / kappa alpha tau alpha / mu alpha zeta omicron nu}, {delta epsilon xi iota tau epsilon rho omicron nu} is for {delta epsilon xi iota omicron nu}.

[Nouns in themselves are either masculine, feminine, or neuter. Masculine are such as end in {nu}, {rho}, {sigma}, or in some letter compounded with {sigma}—these being two, and {xi}. Feminine, such as end in vowels that are always long, namely {eta} and {omega}, and—of vowels that admit of lengthening—those in {alpha}. Thus the number of letters in which nouns masculine and feminine end is the same; for {psi} and {xi} are equivalent to endings in {sigma}. No noun ends in a mute or a vowel short by nature. Three only end in {iota}—{mu eta lambda iota}, {kappa omicron mu mu iota}, {pi epsilon pi epsilon rho iota}: five end in {upsilon}. Neuter nouns end in these two latter vowels; also in {nu} and {sigma}.]

Chapter 22: How Poetry Combines Elevation of Language with Perspicuity

The perfection of style is to be clear without being mean. The clearest style is that which uses only current or proper words; at the same time it is mean:—witness the poetry of Colophon and of Sthenelus. That diction, on the other hand, is lofty and raised above the commonplace which employs unusual words. By unusual, I mean strange (or rare) words, metaphorical, lengthened—anything, in short, that differs from the normal idiom. Yet a style wholly composed of such words is either a riddle or a argot; a riddle, if it consists of metaphors; a argot, if it consists of strange (or rare) words. For the essence of a riddle is to express true facts under impossible combinations. Now this cannot be done by any arrangement of ordinary words, but by the use of metaphor it can. Such is the riddle:—A man I saw who on another man had conscientious the bronze by aid of fire', and others of the same kind. A diction that is made up of strange (or rare) terms is a jargon. A certain infusion, therefore, of these elements is necessary to style; for the strange (or rare) word, the metaphorical, the ornamental, and the other kinds above mentioned, will raise it above the commonplace and mean, while the use of proper words will make it perspicuous. But nothing contributes more to produce a clearness of diction that is remote from commonness than the lengthening, contraction, and alteration of words. For by straying in exceptional cases from the normal idiom, the language will gain distinction; while, at the same time, the partial allegiance with usage will give perspicuity. The critics, therefore, are in error who censure these licenses of speech, and hold the author up to ridicule. Thus Eucleides, the elder, declared that it

would be an easy matter to be a poet if you might lengthen syllables at will. He caricatured the practice in the very form of his articulation as in the verse: '{Epsilon pi iota chi alpha rho eta nu / epsilon iota delta omicron nu / Mu alpha rho alpha theta omega nu alpha delta epsilon / Beta alpha delta iota zeta omicron nu tau alpha}', or, {omicron upsilon kappa / alpha nu / gamma / epsilon rho alpha mu epsilon nu omicron sigma / tau omicron nu / epsilon kappa epsilon iota nu omicron upsilon / epsilon lambda epsilon beta omicron rho omicron nu}. To employ such license at all obtrusively is, no doubt, malformed; but in any mode of poetic articulation there must be moderation. Even metaphors, strange (or rare) words, or any similar forms of speech, would produce the like effect if used without exclusive and with the express purpose of being infusion. How great a difference is made by the appropriate use of lengthening, may be seen in Epic poetry by the insertion of ordinary forms in the verse. So, again, if we take a strange (or rare) word, a metaphor, or any similar mode of expression, and replace it by the current or proper term, the truth of our observation will be apparent. For example Aeschylus and Euripides each composed the same iambic line. But the adaptation of a single word by Euripides, who employed the rarer term instead of the ordinary one, makes one verse appear beautiful and the other trivial. Aeschylus in his *Philoctetes* says: {Phi alpha gamma epsilon delta alpha iota nu alpha / <delta> / eta / mu omicron upsilon / sigma alpha rho kappa alpha sigma / epsilon rho theta iota epsilon iota / pi omicron delta omicron sigma}.

Euripides expediency {Theta omicron iota nu alpha tau alpha iota} 'feasts on*' for {epsilon sigma theta iota epsilon iota} 'feeds on'. Again, in the line, {nu upsilon nu / delta epsilon / mu / epsilon omega nu / omicron lambda iota gamma iota gamma upsilon sigma / tau epsilon / kappa alpha iota / omicron upsilon tau iota delta alpha nu omicron sigma / kappa alpha iota / alpha epsilon iota kappa eta sigma, the difference will be felt if we proxy the common words, {nu upsilon nu / delta epsilon / mu / epsilon omega nu / mu iota kappa rho omicron sigma / tau epsilon / kappa alpha iota / alpha rho theta epsilon nu iota kappa omicron sigma / kappa alpha iota / alpha epsilon iota delta gamma sigma}. Or, if for the line, {delta iota phi rho omicron nu / alpha epsilon iota kappa epsilon lambda iota omicron nu / kappa alpha tau alpha theta epsilon iota sigma / omicron lambda iota gamma eta nu / tau epsilon / tau rho alpha pi epsilon iota sigma / omicron lambda iota gamma eta nu / tau epsilon / tau rho alpha pi epsilon zeta alpha nu),} We read, {delta iota phi rho omicron nu / mu omicron chi theta eta rho omicron nu / kappa alpha tau alpha theta epsilon iota sigma / mu iota kappa rho alpha nu / tau epsilon / tau rho alpha pi epsilon zeta alpha nu}.

Or, for {eta iota omicron nu epsilon sigma / beta omicron omicron omega rho iota nu, eta iota omicron nu epsilon sigma kappa rho alpha zeta omicron upsilon rho iota nu}.

Again, Ariphrades ridiculed the dramaturges for using phrases which no one would employ in ordinary speech: for example, {delta omega mu alpha tau omega nu / alpha pi omicron} instead of {alpha pi omicron / delta omega mu alpha tau omega nu}, {rho epsilon theta epsilon nu}, {epsilon gamma omega / delta epsilon / nu iota nu}, {Alpha chi iota lambda lambda epsilon omega sigma / pi epsilon rho iota} instead of (pi epsilon rho iota / 'Alpha chi iota lambda lambda epsilon omega sigma}, and the like. It is accurately because such phrases are not part of the current idiom that they give distinction to the style. This, however, he failed to see.

It is a great matter to observe exclusive in these several modes of expression, as also in compound words, strange (or rare) words, and so forth. But the greatest thing by far is to have a command of metaphor. This alone cannot be exposed by another; it is the mark of genius, for to make good metaphors implies an eye for similitude.

Of the various kinds of words, the compound are best adapted to Dithyrambs, rare words to heroic poetry, metaphors to iambic. In heroic poetry, indeed, all these varieties are serviceable. But in dactyl verse, which reproduces, as far as may be, familiar speech, the most appropriate words are those which are found even in prose. These are—the current or proper, the metaphorical, the ornamental.

Concerning devastation and replica by means of action this may satisfy.

Chapter 23: Epic Poetry

As to that poetic replica which is narrative in form and employs a single metre, the plot apparently ought, as in a devastation, to be constructed on dramatic principles. It should have for its subject a single action, whole and complete, with a beginning, a middle, and an end. It will thus resemble a living organism in all its unity, and produce the pleasure proper to it. It will differ in structure from historical compositions, which of necessity present not a single action, but a single period, and all that happened within that period to one person or to many, little connected together as the events may be. For as the sea-fight at Salamis and the battle with the Carthaginians in Sicily took place at the same time, but did not tend to any one result, so in the sequence of events, one thing sometimes follows another, and yet no single result is

thereby produced. Such is the practice, we may say, of most poets. Here again, then, as has been already observed, the preeminent excellence of Homer is apparent. He never attempts to make the whole war of Troy the subject of his poem, though that war had a beginning and an end. It would have been too vast a theme, and not easily fondled in a single view. If, again, he had kept it within moderate limits, it must have been over-complicated by the variety of the incidents. As it is, he detaches a single portion, and admits as episodes many events from the general story of the war—such as the Catalogue of the ships and others—thus variegate the poem. All other poets take a single hero, a single period, or an action single indeed, but with a multiplicity of parts. Thus did the author of the *Cypria* and of the *Little Iliad*. For this reason the *communication* and the *Odyssey* each furnish the subject of one devastation, or, at most, of two; while the *Cypria* supplies materials for many, and the *Little communication* for eight—the *Award of the Arms*, the *Philoctetes*, the *Neoptolemus*, the *Eurypylus*, the *Mendicant Odysseus*, the *Laconian Women*, the *Fall of Ilium*, the *Departure of the Fleet*.

Chapter 24: Further Points of Agreement with Tragedy

Again, Epic poetry must have as many kinds as devastation: it must be simple, or complex, or 'ethical', or 'pathetic'. The parts also, with the exception of song and spectacle, are the same; for it requires Annulments of the Situation, Recognitions, and Scenes of Suffering. Moreover, the thoughts and the diction must be artistic. In all these respects Homer is our earliest and sufficient model. Indeed each of his poems has a twofold character. The *Iliad* is at once simple and 'pathetic', and the *Odyssey* complex (for Recognition scenes run through it), and at the same time 'ethical'. Moreover, in diction and thought they are supreme.

Epic poetry differs from Devastation in the scale on which it is constructed, and in its metre. As regards scale or length, we have already laid down an adequate limit:—the beginning and the end must be capable of being brought within a single view. This condition will be satisfied by poems on a smaller scale than the old epics, and answering in length to the group of calamities presented at a single sitting.

Epic poetry has, however, a great—a special—capacity for increscent its dimensions, and we can see the reason. In Tragedy we cannot emulate several lines of actions carried on at one and the same time; we must confine ourselves to the action on the stage and the part taken by the players.. But in Epic poetry, owing to the narrative form, many events simultaneously concluded can be presented; and these, if relevant to the subject, add mass and dignity to the poem. The Epic has here an advantage, and one that conduces to grandeur of effect, to diverting the

mind of the hearer, and relieving the story with varying episodes. For sameness of incident soon produces satiety, and makes tragedies fail on the stage.

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As for the metre, the heroic measure has proved its fitness by the test of experience. If a narrative poem in any other metre or in many metres were now composed, it would be found incongruous. For of all measures the heroic is the stateliest and the most massive; and hence it most readily admits rare words and metaphors, which is another point in which the narrative form of replica stands alone. On the other hand, the iambic and the trochaic tetrameter are stirring measures, the latter being akin to dancing, the former expressive of action. Still more absurd would it be to mix together different metres, as was done by Chaeremon. Hence no one has ever composed a poem on a great scale in any other than heroic verse. Nature herself, as we have said, teaches the choice of the proper measure.

Homer, admirable in all respects, has the special merit of being the only poet who rightly appreciates the part he should take himself. The poet should speak as little as possible in his own person, for it is not this that makes him an imitator. Other poets appear themselves upon the scene throughout, and imitate but little and rarely. Homer, after a few preliminary/initiative words, at once brings in a man, or woman, or other personage; none of them wanting in characteristic qualities, but each with a character of his own.

The element of the wonderful is required in Devastation. The irrational, on which the wonderful depends for its chief effects, has wider scope in Epic poetry, because there the person acting is not seen. Thus, the pursuit of Hector would be risible if placed upon the stage—the Greeks standing still and not joining in the pursuit, and Achilles waving them back. But in the Epic poem the absurdity passes unnoticed. Now the wonderful is pleasing: as may be implied from the fact that everyone tells a story with some addition of his own, knowing that his hearers like it. It is Homer who has chiefly taught other poets the art of telling lies skillfully. The secret of it lies in a delusion. For, assuming that if one thing is or becomes, a second is or becomes, men imagine that, if the second is, the first likewise is or becomes. But this is a false conjecture. Hence, where the first thing is untrue, it is quite unnecessary, provided the second be true, to add that the first is or has become. For the mind, knowing the second to be true, falsely infers the truth of the first. There is an example of this in the Bath Scene of the *Odyssey*.

Accordingly, the poet should prefer to be expected impossibilities to dubious possibilities. The tragic plot must not be composed of irrational parts. Everything irrational should, if possible, be excluded; or, at all events, it should lie outside the action of the play (as, in the *Oedipus*, the hero's ignorance as to the manner of Laius' death); not within the drama—as in the *Electra*, the messenger's account of the Pythian games; or, as in the *Mysians*, the man who has come from Tegea to

Mysia and is still speechless. The plea that otherwise the plot would have been ruined, is ridiculous; such a plot should not in the first instance be constructed. But once the irrational has been introduced and an air of likelihood imparted to it, we must accept it in spite of the ridiculousness. Take even the irrational incidents in the *Odyssey*, where Odysseus is left upon the shore of Ithaca. How intolerable even these might have been would be apparent if an inferior poet were to treat the subject. As it is, the absurdity is camouflaged by the poetic charm with which the poet invests it.

The diction should be elaborated in the pauses of the action, where there is no expression of character or thought. For, conversely, character and thought are merely concealed by an articulation that is over brilliant.

Chapter 25 : Critical Objections Brought Against Poetry and the Principles on Which They are to be Answered

With respect to critical difficulties and their solutions, the number and nature of the sources from which they may be drawn may be thus exhibited.

The poet being an impersonator, like a painter or any other artist, must of necessity emulate one of three objects—things as they were or are, things as they are said or thought to be, or things as they ought to be. The vehicle of expression is language—either current terms or, it may be, rare words or metaphors. There are also many modifications of language, which we relinquish to the poets. Add to this, that the standard of correctness is not the same in poetry and politics, any more than in poetry and any other art. Within the art of poetry itself there are two kinds of faults, those which touch its quintessence, and those which are accidental. If a poet has chosen to emulate something, but has plagiarized it incorrectly through want of capacity, the error is intrinsic in the poetry. But if the failure is due to a wrong choice if he has represented a horse as throwing out both his off legs at once, or introduced technical blunders in medicine, for example, or in any other art the error is not essential to the poetry. These are the points of view from which we should consider and answer the objections raised by the critics.

First as to matters which concern the poet's own art. If he describes the impossible, he is guilty of an error; but the error may be justified, if the end of the art be thereby attained (the end being that already mentioned), if, that is, the effect of this or any other part of the poem is thus concluded more striking. A case in point is the pursuit of Hector. If, however, the end might have been as well, or better, obtained without infringing the special rules of the poetic art, the error is not justified: for every kind of error should, if possible, be avoided.

Again, does the error touch the essentials of the poetic art, or some accident of it? For example—not to know that a hind has no horns is a less serious matter than to paint it inartistically.

Further, if it be objected that the description is not true to fact, the poet may perhaps reply—'But the objects are as they ought to be': just as Sophocles said that he drew men as they ought to be; Euripides, as they are. In this way the objection may be met. If however, the representation be of neither kind, the poet may answer—This is how men say the thing is.' This applies to tales about the gods. It may well be that these stories are not higher than fact nor yet true to fact: they are, very possibly, what Xenophanes says of them. But anyhow, 'this is what is said.' Again, a description may be no better than the fact: 'still, it was the fact'; as in the passage about the arms: 'Upright upon their butt-ends stood the javelin.' This was the custom then, as it now is among the Illyrians.

Again, in examining whether what has been said or done by someone is poetically right or not, we must not look merely to the particular act or saying, and ask whether it is poetically good or bad. We must also consider by whom it is said or done, to whom, when, by what means, or for what end; whether, for cite, it be to secure a greater good, or avoid a greater evil.

Other difficulties may be resolved by due regard to the usage of language. We may note a rare word, as in {omicron upsilon rho eta alpha sigma / mu epsilon nu / pi rho omega tau omicron nu}, where the poet perhaps employs {omicron upsilon rho eta alpha sigma} not in the sense of jackass, but of picket. So, again, of Dolon: 'ill-favoured indeed he was to look upon.' It is not meant that his body was ill-shaped, but that his face was ugly; for the Cretans use the word {epsilon upsilon epsilon iota delta epsilon sigma}, 'well-favoured,' to denote a fair face. Again, {zeta omega rho omicron tau epsilon rho omicron nu / delta epsilon / kappa epsilon rho alpha iota epsilon}, 'mix the drink livelier', does not mean 'mix it stronger' as for hard drinkers, but 'mix it quicker'.

Sometimes an expression is metaphorical, as 'Now all gods and men were sleeping through the night/—while at the same time the poet says: 'Often indeed as he turned his gaze to the Trojan plain, he marvelled at the sound of flutes and pipes'. 'All' is here used metaphorically for 'many', all being a species of many. So in the verse—'alone she hath no part ...', {omicron iota eta}, 'alone', is metaphorical; for the best known may be called the only one.

Again, the solution may depend upon accent or breathing. Thus Hippias of Thasos solved the difficulties in the lines,—{delta iota delta omicron mu epsilon nu (delta iota delta omicron mu epsilon nu) delta epsilon / omicron iota,} and {tau omicron / mu epsilon nu / omicron

upsilon (omicron upsilon) kappa alpha tau alpha pi upsilon theta epsilon
tau alpha iota / omicron mu beta rho omega}.

Or again, the question may be solved by punctuation, as in Empedocles—'Of a sudden things became mortal that before had learnt to be immortal, and things unmixed before mixed.'

Or again, by ambivalence of meaning—as (pi alpha rho omega chi eta kappa epsilon nu/delta epsilon/pi lambda epsilon omega/nu upsilon xi), where the word {pi lambda epsilon omega} is equivocal.

Or by the usage of language. Thus any mixed drink is called {omicron iota nu omicron sigma}, 'wine'. Hence Ganymede is said 'to pour the wine to Zeus', though the gods do not drink wine. So too workers in iron are called {chi alpha lambda kappa epsilon alpha sigma}, or workers in bronze. This, however, may also be taken as a metaphor.

Again, when a word seems to involve some unpredictability of meaning, we should consider how many senses it may bear in the particular passage. For example: 'there was stayed the javelin of bronze'—we should ask in how many ways we may take 'being checked there'. The true mode of interpretation is the precise opposite of what Glaucon mentions. Critics, he says, jump at certain groundless closures; they pass adverse judgment and then proceed to reason on it; and, assuming that the poet has said whatever they happen to think, find fault if a thing is at odds/erratic with their own fancy. The question about Icarus has been treated in this fashion. The critics imagine he was a Lacedaemonian. They think it strange, therefore, that Telemachus should not have met him when he went to Lacedaemon. But the Cephallenian story may perhaps be the true one. They allege that Odysseus took a wife from among themselves, and that her father was Icarus not Icarus. It is merely a mistake, then, that gives plausibility to the objection.

In general, the impossible must be justified by reference to artistic requirements, or to the higher reality, or to received opinion. With respect to the requirements of art, a probable impossibility is to be preferred to thing improbable and yet possible. Again, it may be impossible that there should be men such as Zeuxis painted. 'Yes', we say, 'but the impossible is the higher thing; for the ideal type must surpass the reality'. To justify the irrational, we appeal to what is commonly said to be. In addition to which, we urge that the irrational sometimes does, not violate reason; just as 'it is probable that a thing may happen contrary to anticipation.

Things that sound contrary should be examined by the same rules as in dialectical rebuttal whether the same thing is meant, in the same relation, and in the same sense. We should therefore solve the question by reference to what the poet says himself, or to what is inferred assumed by a person of intelligence.

The element of the irrational, and, similarly, perversion of character, are justly chided when there is no inner necessity for introducing them. Such is the irrational element in the introduction of Aegeus by Euripides and the badness of Menelaus in the *Orestes*.

Thus, there are five sources from which critical objections are drawn. Things are chided either as impossible, or irrational, or morally hurtful, or antithetical, or perverse to artistic correctness. The answers should be sought under the twelve heads above mentioned.

Chapter 26: A General Estimate of the Comparative Worth of Epic Poetry and Tragedy

The question may be raised whether the Epic or Tragic mode of replica is the higher. If the more refined art is the higher, and the more refined in every case is that which appeals to the better sort of audience, the art which resemble anything and everything is apparently most unrefined. The audience is supposed to be too dull to comprehend unless something of their own is thrown in by the performers, who therefore indulge in restless movements. Bad flute-players twist and twirl, if they have to represent 'the quoit-throw', or hustle the coryphaeus when they perform the 'Scylla'. Devastation, it is said, has this same defect. We may compare the opinion that the older actors entertained of their successors. Mynniscus used to call Callippides 'ape' on account of the profligacy of his action, and the same view was held of Pindarus. Tragic art, then, as a whole, stands to Epic in the same relation as the younger to the elder actors. So we are told that Epic poetry is addressed to a cultivated audience, who do not need gesture; Tragedy, to an inferior public. Being then unrefined, it is evidently the lower of the two.

Now, in the first place, this censure attaches not to the poetic but to the histrionic art; for gesturing may be equally overdone in epic recitation, as by Sosi-stratus, or in lyrical competition, as by Mnasi-theus the Opuntian. Next, all action is not to be condemned any more than all dancing—but only that of bad performers. Such was the fault found in Callippides, as also in others, of our own day, who are censured for representing depraved women. Again, Devastation like Epic poetry produces its effect even without action; it reveals its power by mere reading. If, then, in all other respects it is superior, this fault, we say, is not inherent in it.

And superior it is/because it has all the epic elements—it may even use the epic metre—with the music and spectacular effects as important accessories; and these produce the most vivid of pleasures. Further, it has vividness of impression in reading as well as in representation. Moreover, the art attains its end within narrower limits; for the concentrated effect is more pleasurable than one which is spread over a long time and so diluted. What, for example, would be the effect of the *Oedipus* of Sophocles, if it were cast into a form as long as the *Iliad*? Once more, the Epic imitation has less unity; as is shown by this,—that any Epic poem will furnish subjects for several tragedies. Thus if the story adopted by the poet has a stern unity, it must either be incisive told and appear prune; or, if it conform to the Epic canon of length, it must seem weak and watery. Such length implies some loss of unity, if, I mean, the poem is constructed out of several actions, like the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, which have many such parts, each with a certain magnitude of its own. Yet these poems are as perfect as possible in structure; each is, in the highest degree attainable, an replica of a single action.

If, then, *Devastation* is superior to Epic poetry in all these respects, and, moreover, fulfils its specific function better as an art for each art ought to produce, not any chance pleasure, but the pleasure proper to it, as already stated it plainly follows that *Devastation* is the higher art, as attaining its end more perfectly.

Thus much may suffice concerning cataclysmic and Epics poetry in general; their several kinds and parts, with the number of each and their differences; the causes that make a poem good or bad; the objections of the critics and the answers to these objections.

• Analysis

Aristotle's *Poetics* is the earliest-surviving work of dramatic theory and the first extant philosophical treatise to focus on literary theory. In it, Aristotle offers an account of what he calls "poetry" (a term which in Greek literally means "making" and in this context includes drama—comedy, devastation, and the satyr play—as well as lyric poetry, epic poetry, and the dithyramb). He examines its "first principles" and identifies its genres and basic elements; his analysis of devastation constitutes the core of the discussion. "Although Aristotle's *Poetics* is universally acknowledged in the Western critical tradition," Marvin Carlson explains, "almost every detail about his seminal work has instigated varying opinions".

The work was lost to the Western world and often misrepresented for a long time. It was available through the Middle Ages and early

Revivification only through a Latin translation of an Arabic version written by Averroes.

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Aristotle's work on aesthetics consists of the Poetics and eloquence. The Poetics is specifically concerned with drama. At some point, Aristotle's original work was divided in two, each "book" written on a separate roll of papyrus. Only the first part—that which focuses on devastation—survives. The lost second part addressed fate. Scholars conjecture that the Tractatus coislinianus summarises the contents of the lost second book.

Aristotle distinguishes between the genres of "poetry" in three ways:

- their means
language, cadence, and accord, used separately or in combination
- their objects
 - agents ("good" or "bad" ...) - human characters who have emotions (and bring moral to actions they do - "good" person kills child = remorse? X "bad" person kills child = just shows his power?) or things of daily life (skull in Hamlet, cake in slapstick comedies...) who have no emotions (humans put emotions on things - girl's father is killed by sword, girl hates swords) ...
 - actions ("virtuous" or "vicious" ...),- agents cause and are influenced by actions
- their modes of representation

Having examined briefly the field of "poetry" in general, Aristotle proceeds to his definition of tragedy:

Tragedy is a representation of a serious, complete action which has vastness, in festooned speech, with each of its elements [used] separate! in the [various] parts [of the play]; [represented] by people acting and not by narration; accomplishing by means of pity and terror the catharsis of such emotions.

By "festooned speech", I mean that which has cadence and melody, i.e., song; by "with its elements separately", I mean that some [parts of it] are accomplished only by means of spoken verses, and others again by means of song (1449b25-30).

Tragedy consists of six parts which Aristotle itemizes in order of importance, beginning with the most essential and ending with the least;

- plot (mythos) : Refers to the "structure of incidents" (actions).
Key elements of the plot are anagnorisis, recognitions and

suffering. The best plot should be "complex" (i.e., involve a change of fortune). It should emulate actions arousing fear and pity. Thus, it should proceed from good fortune to bad, and involve a high degree of suffering for the protagonist, usually involving physical harm or death. Actions should be logical and follow naturally from actions that presage them. However, they will be more satisfying to the audience if they come about by surprise or seeming serendipity, and are only afterward seen as logical, even necessary.

When a character is unfortunate by annulment(s) of fortune (peripeteia), at first he suffers (pathos) and then he can realize (anagnorisis) the cause of his misery or a way to be released from the misery.

- character (ethos) : It is; much better if a tragical accident happens to a hero because of a mistake he makes (hamartia) instead of things which might happen anyway. That is because the audience is more likely to be "moved" by it. A hero may have made it knowingly (in Medea) or unknowingly (Oedipus). A hero may leave a deed undone (due to timely discovery, knowledge present at the point of doing deed ...). Main character should be
- good—Aristotle explains that audiences do not like, for example, villains "making fortune from misery" in the end; it might happen though, and might make play interesting, nevertheless the moral is at stake here and morals are important to make people happy (people can, for example, see devastation because they want to release their anger)
- appropriate—if a character is supposed to be wise, it is unlikely he is young (supposing wisdom is gained with age) consistent—if a person is a soldier, he is unlikely to be scared of blood (if this soldier is scared of blood it must be explained and play some role in the story to avoid confusing the audience); it is also "good" if a character doesn't change opinion "that much" if the play is not "driven" by who characters are, but by what they do (audience is confused in case of unexpected shifts in behaviour [and its reasons, morals ...] of characters)
- "consistently inconsistent"—if a character always behaves foolishly it is strange if he suddenly becomes smart; in this case it would be good to explain such change, otherwise the audience may be confused ; also if character changes opinion a lot it should be clear he is a character who has this trait, not real life

person, who does - this is also to avoid confusion thought (dianoia)-spoken (usually) reasoning of human characters can explain the characters or story background...

- articulation (lexis) : Refers to the quality of speech in devastation. Speeches should reflect, character, the moral qualities of those on the stage.
- melody (melos) : The Chorus too should be regarded as one of the actors; it should be an integral part of the whole, and share in the action
- spectacle (opsis) : Refers to the visual apparatus of the play, including set, costumes and props. Aristotle calls spectacle the "least artistic" element of tragedy, and the "least connected with the work of the poet (playwright). For example: if play has "beautiful" costumes and "bad" acting and "bad" story, there is "something wrong" with it. Even though that "beauty" may save the play it is "not a nice thing".

He offers the earliest-surviving explanation for the origins of devastation and farce :

Anyway, arising from an improvisatory beginning (both devastation and force—devastation from the leaders of the dithyramb, and farce from the leaders of the *cojones* processions which even now continue as a custom in many of our cities) [...] (1449a10-13)

Poetics is considered to have been less influential in its time compared with what is generally understood to be its more famous contemporary, Eloquence. This is probably because in Aristotle's time eloquence and poetics were classified as sort of siblings in the pantheon of ideal things. Because of eloquence's direct importance for law and politics, it evolved to become, to a large degree, distinct from poetics, in spite of both them as being classified under aesthetics in the Aristotelian system of metaphysics. In this sense, rhetoric and poetics are two sides of the same thing—the aesthetic dimension. In Aristotelian philosophy, this is regarded as one of the metaphysical aspects of things; in the Kantian view of the pure aesthetic, it is understood as something non-conceptual that frees the mind.

The Arabic version of Aristotle's Poetics that influenced the Middle Ages was translated from a Greek manuscript dated to sometime prior to the year 700. This manuscript was translated from Greek to Syriac and is independent of the currently-accepted 11th-century source designated Paris 1741. The Syriac language source used for the Arabic translations

departed widely in vocabulary from the original *Poetics* and it initiated a misinterpretation of Aristotelian thought that continued through the Middle Ages.

There are two different Arabic perceptions of Aristotle's *Poetics* in commentaries by Abu Nasr al-Farabi and Averroes (i.e., Abu al-Walid Ibn Rushd).

Al-Farabi's disquisition ventures to establish poetry as a logical faculty of expression, giving it validity in the Islamic world, Averroes' commentary attempts to correlate his assessment of the *Poetics* with al-Farabi's, but he is ultimately unable to propitiate his attributable of moral purpose to poetry with al-Farabi's logical interpretation.

Averroes' interpretation of the *Poetics* was accepted by the West because of its pertinence to their humanistic viewpoints; occasionally the philosophers of the Middle Ages even preferred Averroes' commentary to Aristotle's stated sense. This resulted in the survival of Aristotle's *Poetics* through the Arabic literary tradition.

Core Terms Mimesis

Similar to Plato's writings about mimicking, Aristotle also defined mimicking as the perfection and replica of nature. Art is not only replica but also the use of mathematical ideas and symmetry in the search for the perfect, the timeless and contrasting being with becoming. Nature is full of change, decay, and cycles, but art can also search for what is everlasting and the first causes of natural phenomena. Aristotle wrote about the idea of four causes in nature. The first formal cause is like a blueprint, or an immortal idea. The second cause is the material, or what a thing is made out of. The third cause is the process and the agent, in which the artist or creator makes the thing. The fourth, cause is the good, or the purpose and end of a thing, known as *telos*.

Aristotle's *Poetics* is often referred to as the counterpart to this Platonic conception of poetry. *Poetics* is his treatise on the subject of mimesis. Aristotle was not against literature as such; he stated that human beings are imitative beings, feeling an urge to create texts (art) that reflect and represent reality.

Aristotle considered it important that there be a certain distance between the work of art on the one hand and life on the other; we draw knowledge and solace from calamities only because they do not happen to us. Without this distance, devastation could not give rise to purgins. However, it is equally important that the text causes the audience to identify with the characters and the events in the text, and unless this

identification occurs, it does not touch us as an audience. Aristotle holds that it is through "simulated representation", mimicking that we respond to the acting on the stage which is transferring to us what the characters feel, so that we may empathize with them in this way through the mimetic form of dramatic role-play. It is the task of the dramatist to produce the tragic ratification in order to accomplish this rapport with by means of what is taking place on stage.

In short, purging can only be achieved if we see something that is both recognisable and distant. Aristotle argued that literature is more interesting as a means of learning than history, because history deals with specific facts that have happened, and which are contingent, whereas literature, although sometimes based on history, deals with events that could have taken place or ought to have taken place.

Aristotle thought of drama as being "an replica of an action" and of devastation as "falling from a higher to a lower estate" and so being removed to a less ideal situation in more tragic circumstances than before. He hypothesized the characters in devastation as being better than the average human being, and those of farce as being worse.

Michael Davis, a translator and commentator of Aristotle writes: "At first glance, mimicking seems to be a stylizing of reality in which the ordinary features of our world are brought into focus by a certain magnification, the relationship of the replica to the object it resemble being something like the relationship of dancing to walking. Replica always involves selecting something from the continuum of experience, thus giving boundaries to what really has no beginning or end. Mimicking involves a framing of reality that announces that what is contained within the frame is not simply real. Thus the more "real" the replica, the more counterfeit it becomes".

Contrast to Diegesis

It was also Plato and Aristotle who contrasted Mimicking with diegesis. Mimicking shows, rather than tells, by means of directly represented action that is enacted. Diegesis, however, is the telling of the story by a narrator; the author narrates action indirectly and describes what is in the characters' minds and emotions. The narrator may speak as a particular character or may be the invisible narrator or even the all-knowing narrator who speaks from above in the form of commenting on the action or the characters.

In Book III of his Republic (c. 373 BCE), the ancient Greek philosopher Plato examines the style of poetry (the term includes

authors". Latin orators and rhetoricians adopted the literary method of Dionysius' replica and discarded Aristotle's mimesis.

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Aristotle's View

Aristotle defines it as "a change by which the action-veers round to its opposite, subject always to our rule of probability or necessity." According to Aristotle, peripeteia, along with discovery, is the most effective when it comes to drama, particularly in a devastation. Aristotle wrote "The finest form of Discovery is one attended by Peripeteia, like that which goes with the Discovery in Oedipus ..."

In 1961 Peter Szondi, one of the most distinguished of recent German literary critics, tried to prop up the universal significance of the colloquial manner with an inference to Aristotle. Author M.S. Silk wrote in his book "Devastation and the disastrous : Greek Theatre and Beyond" that "Aristotle's theory of devastation and its underlying philosophical tenets have little in common with the tragic philosophy of German idealism, as 'analyzed by Szondi. Aristotle concerns himself with an effective structural element of the dramatic action, Szondi explains his tragic dialectic in an abstract sort of 'mode of action which follows on a unity of opposites', as 'conversion of one state of affairs to its opposite' a principle which, in its dramatic realizations, may take on many different forms and shapes'. But having said this, one must insist that the two concepts have a common denominator: they both emphasize the importance of a paradoxical yet inevitable shift of a (dramatic) movement to its exact opposite." Szondi's grasp of the Poetics was heavily predisposed by Max Kommerell, whose explanation of peripeteia as 'change of fortune' "may have prevented him from realizing the dialectical significance of Aristotle's definition".

Aristotle says that peripeteia is the most powerful part of a plot in a tragedy along with discovery. A twist is the change of the kind described from one state of things within the play to its opposite, and that too in the way we are saying, in the probable or necessary sequence of events. There [is often no element like Peripeteia; it can bring forth or result in terror, [mercy, or in comedies it can bring a smile or it can bring forth tears (Rizo). This is the best way to spark and maintain attention throughout the various form and genres of drama " Devastation resemble good actions and, thereby, measures and details the well-being of its protagonist. But in his formal definition, as well as throughout the Poetics, Aristotle emphasizes that" ... Devastation is an replica not only of a complete action, but also of events inspiring fear or pity" (1452a 1); in fact, at one point Aristotle isolates the replica of "actions which excite

pity and fear" as "the distinctive mark of disastrous replica" (1452b 30). Pity and fear are effected through [reversal and recognition; and these "most powerful elements of emotional interest in Devastation Peripety or Annulment of the Situation, and recognition scenes-are parts of the plot (1450a 32) has the shift of the disastrous protagonist's fortune from good to bad, which is essential to the plot of a devastation. It is often an ironic twist. Good uses of Peripeteia are-those that especially are parts of a complex plot, so that they are defined by their changes of fortune being accompanied by annulment, recognition, or both" (Smithson).

Peripets

Peripets includes changes of character, but also more external changes. A character who becomes rich and famous from poverty and anonymity has undergone peripets, even if his character remains the same.

When a character learns something he had been previously ignorant of, this is normally distinguished from peripety as unbundling or discovery, a distinction derived from Aristotle's work.

Aristotle considered unbundling, leading to peripetys, the mark of a superior devastation. Two such plays are *Oedipus the King*, where the oracle's information that Oedipus had killed his father and married his mother brought about his mother's death and his own blindness and banishment, and *Iphigenia in Tauris*, where Iphigenia realizes that the strangers she is to sacrifice are her brother and his friend, resulting in all three of them escaping Tauris. These plots he considered complex and superior to simple plots without unbundling or peripety, such as when Medea resolves to kill her children, knowing they are her children, and does so. Aristotle identified *Oedipus the King*, as the principal work demonstrating peripetia.

In the Aristotelian definition of devastation, it was the discovery of one's own identity or true character (e.g., Cordelia, Edgar, Edmund, etc. in Shakespeare's *King Lear*) or of someone else's identity or true nature (e.g., Lear's children, Gloucester's children) by the tragic hero. In his *Poetics*, Aristotle defined anagnorisis as "a change from ignorance to knowledge, producing love or hate between the persons destined by the poet for good or bad fortune" (Part II: Section A.3:d. Recognition).

Shakespeare did not base his works on Aristotelian theory of devastation, including use of flow, yet his tragic characters still commonly undergo unbundling as a result of their struggles.

Aristotle was the first writer to discuss the uses of unbundling, with peripety caused by it. He considered it the mark of a superior devastation, as when Oedipus killed his father and married his mother in ignorance, and later learned the truth, or when Iphigeneia in Tauris realizes in time that the strangers she is to sacrifice are her brother and his friend, and abstains from sacrificing them. Aristotle considered these complex plots superior to simple plots without anagnorisis or peripetia, such as when Medea resolves to kill her children, knowing they are her children, and does so.

Another prominent example of unbundling in devastation is in Aeschylus's "The Choephoroi" ("Libation Bearers") when Electra recognizes her brother, Orestes, after he has returned to Argos from his banishment, at the grave of their father, Agamemnon, who had been murdered at the hands of Clytemnestra, their mother. Electra convinces herself that Orestes is her brother with three pieces of evidence: a lock of Orestes's hair on the grave, his footprints next to the grave, and a piece of weaving which she embroidered herself. The footprints and the hair are identical to her own. Electra's awareness of her brother's presence, who is the one person who can help her by vindicate the death of their father.

Comedy

The section of Aristotle's Poetics dealing with comedy did not survive, but many critics also discuss recognition in comedies. A standard plot of the New Comedy was the final revelation, by birth tokens, that the heroine was of respectable birth and so suitable for the hero to marry. This was often brought about by the machinations of the gulleful serf. This plot appears in Shakespeare's The Winter's Tale, where a recognition scene in the final act affians that Perdita is a king's daughter rather than a shepherdess, and so suitable for her prince lover.

Flow

Flow is a term developed by Aristotle in his work Poetics. The word flow is rooted in the notion of missing the mark (hamartanein) and covers a broad spectrum that includes accident and mistake, as well as wrongdoing, error, or sin. In Nicomachean Ethics, hamartia is described by Aristotle as one of the three kinds, of injuries that a person can commit against another person. Flow is an injury committed in ignorance (when the person affected or the results are not what the agent supposed they were).

This form of drawing emotion from the audience is a foremost of the Greek calamities. In Greek devastation, stories that contain a

character with a flaw often follow a similar blueprint. The flaw, as stated, is seen as an error in judgment or unwitting mistake that is applied to the actions of the hero. For example, the hero might attempt to achieve a certain objective X; by making an error in judgment, however, the hero instead achieves the opposite of X, with disastrous consequences.

However, flaw cannot be sharply defined or have an exact meaning assigned to it. Consequently, a number of alternate interpretations have been associated with it, such as in the Bible flaw is the Greek word used to denote "sin." Bible translators may reach this conclusion, according to T.C.W. Stinton, because another common interpretation of hamartia can be seen as a "moral deficit" or a "moral error" (Stinton 221). R.D. Dawe disagrees with Stinton's view when he points out in some cases hamartia can even mean to not sin (Dawe 91). It can be seen in this opposing context if the main character does not carry out an action because it is a sin. This failure to act, in turn, must lead to a poor change in fortune for the main character in order for it to truly be a hamartia.

In a medical context, a flaw denotes a focal malformation consisting of disorganized arrangement of tissue types that are normally present in the anatomical area.

Aristotle first introduced flaw in his book *Poetics*. However through the years the word has changed meanings. Many scholars have argued that the meaning of the word that was given in Aristotle's book is not really the correct meaning, and that there is a deeper meaning behind the word. In the article "Tragic Error in the Poetics of Aristotle", a scholar by the name of J.M. Bremer first explained the general argument of the poetics and, in particular, the immediate context of the term. He then traces the semasiological history of the hamart-group of the words from Homer (who also tried to determine the meaning behind the word) and Aristotle, concluding that of the three possible meanings of hamartia (missing, error, offence), the Stagirite uses the second in our passage of *Poetics*. It is, then a "tragic error", *i.e.* a wrong action committed in ignorance of its nature, effect, etc., which is the starting point of a causally connected train of events ending in disaster. Today the word and its meaning is still up in the air; even so the word is still being used in discussion of many plays today, such as *Hamlet* and *Oedipus Rex*.

Hamartia is often referred to as disastrous blemish and has many examples throughout literature, especially in Greek devastation. Isabel Hyde discusses the type of hamartia Aristotle meant to define in the *Modern Language Review*, "Thus it may be said by some writers to be the 'tragic flaw' of Oedipus that he was hasty in temper; of Samson that

he was sensually uxorious; of Macbeth that he was ambitious; of Othello that he was proud and jealous-and so on... but these things do not constitute the 'hamartia of those characters in Aristotle's sense" (Hyde 321). This explains that Aristotle did not describe hamartia as an error of character, but as a moral mistake or ignorant error. Even J.L. Moles comments on the idea that hamartia is considered an error and states, "the modern view (at least until recently) that it means 'error', 'mistake of fact', that is, an act done in ignorance of some salient circumstances" (Moles 49).

Hyde goes on to question the meaning of true hamartia and discovers that it is in fact error in the article, "Disastrous Blemish : Is It a Tragic Error?" She claims that the true flow that occurs in Oedipus is considered "his ignorance of his true parentage" that led him to become "unwittingly the massacre of his own father" (Hyde 322). This example can be applied when reading literature in regards to the true definition of hamartia and helps place the character's actions into the categories of character flaws and simple mistakes all humans commit. Within Oedipus, it is apparent that these errors are the result of flow caused by the gods and these disastrous actions occur because devastation has been willed upon the characters. R.D. Dawe brings this use of flow in literature to the vanguard in the article "Some Reflections on Ate and Flow" found in Harvard's Studies of Classical Philology. For instance, "this flow is in reality as execution as the incest and parricide and belongs to the category of the 'forced error'... from the artistic point of view it provides the satisfactory illusion of a voluntary choice" (Dawe 118-119), This forced error is caused by the gods and the hamartia the characters engage in has been predestined since their birth. (In relation to Ate and Flow relationship, see also Golden's article).

Another example of true hamartia in Greek devastation is Antigone. Although she has been presented with the decree from her Uncle not to bury her brother and her obsession with her dead family ties initially gets her in trouble, the true hamartia or "error" in this devastation rests on Creon. It occurs when he orders his men to properly bury Polynices before releasing Antigone which can be identified as the mistake or error that led to her death. Creon's own ignorance causes the hamartia that results in Antigone's death and Dawe agrees here, "Creon believed himself to be acting rightly in the interests of the city. Antigone, Haemon, Tiresias, the chorus and Creon himself (post eventum) recognize that he is in fact mistaken" (Dawe 113). Many characters have flaws that influence their decisions to act in a certain way yet they make mistakes, only to realize them later. True Aristotelian flow arises

when mistakes or errors cause the plot or direction of action to change in a tragic way as described in the tragedies of Antigone and Oedipus.

"Tragic flaw"

While the modern popular rendering of flow as "disastrous flaw" (or "fatal flaw") is broadly inexplicit and often misleading, it cannot be ruled out that the term as Aristotle understood it could sometimes at least partially connote a failure of morals or character :

Whether Aristotle regards the "blemish" as intellectual or moral has been hotly discussed. It may cover both senses. The hero must not deserve his misfortune, but he must cause it by making a fatal mistake, an error of judgement, which may well involve some imperfection of character but not such as to make us regard him as "morally responsible" for the disasters although they are nevertheless the corollary of the blemish in him, and his wrong decision at a crisis is the inescapable outcome of his character.

Aeschylus' *The Persians* provides a good example of one's character contributing to his hamartia. Xerxes' error would be his decision to invade Greece, as this invasion ends disastrously for him and Persia. Yet this error is intricately bound up in Xerxes' chief character flaw: his hubris. A morally tinged understanding of hamartia such as this can and has been applied to the protagonist of virtually every Greek tragedy. For example, Peter Struck comments on *Oedipus the King*:

The complex nature of Oedipus' "flow," is also important. The Greek term "hamartia/" typically translated as "tragic flaw," actually is closer in meaning to a "mistake" or an "error," "failing," rather than an innate flaw. In Aristotle's understanding, all tragic heroes have a "flow". The character's flaw must result from something that is also a central part of their virtue, which goes somewhat awry, usually due to a lack of knowledge. By defining the notion this way, Aristotle indicates that a truly tragic hero must have a failing that is neither idiosyncratic nor arbitrary, but is somehow more deeply imbedded—a kind of human failing and human weakness. Oedipus fits this precisely, for his basic blemish is his lack of knowledge about his own identity. Moreover, no amount of foresight or preemptive action could remedy Oedipus' flow; unlike other tragic heroes, Oedipus bears no responsibility for his flaw. The audience fears for Oedipus because nothing he does can change the tragedy's outcome.

Thus, while the concept of flow as an exclusively moral or personal failing is foreign to Greek tragedy, the connotation is not entirely absent.

Nevertheless, to import the notion of flow as "tragic flaw" into the act of doing literary analysis locks the critic into a kind of endless blame game, an attitude of superiority, and a process of speculation about what the character could or (worse) should have done differently. Devastation often works precisely because the protagonist in choosing good, chooses something that will lead to unhappiness. This is certainly the case with Oedipus and, arguably, the case with Hamlet.

Mythos

Mythos is the term used by Aristotle in his *Poetics* (c. 335 BCE) for the plot of an Athenian devastation. It is the first of the six elements of tragedy that he gives.

Variations on Plot

"In *Poetics* 13 and 14, Aristotle turns from the discussion of the three separate parts of the plot to a consideration of the plot as a whole composed of these three parts". In *Poetics* 13, Aristotle states his idea that the purpose of devastation is the enthusiasm of pity and fear. According to Belfiore, even though Aristotle uses one set of criteria for good plots in *Poetics* 13 and a different set in *Poetics* 14, "these two accounts are more consistent with one another than is often thought". Aristotle defines plot in chapter 13 of *Poetics* as a variation of two different "change types" and three different "character types". A tragic plot is a movement or change between the end points of good and bad fortune, because of that there are two possible kinds of change. The two changes include, change that which begins on good fortune and ends in bad fortune, and change that which begins in bad fortune and ends in good fortune. The three possible "character types" are the characters of "decent" people, people "outstanding in superiority excellence and justice"; "evil people"; and the "in-between man". Of the six logically possible outcomes, Aristotle lists only four. Aristotle contends in *Poetics* 13 that the most desirable plot involves 'An in-between person who changes from good to bad fortune, due to flow "error". Additionally, Aristotle states that the plot in which 'An evil person changes from bad to good fortune', is the most untragic of all because it is not philanthropic, contemptible, or fearful/ *Poetics* 13 deals with good and bad combinations of character types and change. Conversely, *Poetics* 14 discusses good and bad combinations of a poignancy with the knowledge or ignorance of the agent. "Ranked from worst to best, by Aristotle, these are the four logical possibilities of poignancy :

1. A poignancy is about to occur, with knowledge, but does not occur.

2. A poignancy occurs, with knowledge.
3. A poignancy occurs, in ignorance.
4. A poignancy is about to occur, in ignorance, but does not occur."

The emotional effect peculiar to the disastrous action is therefore that of promoting the experience of feelings such as pity and terror, which constitute the ultimate end at which the representation of the mythos aims.

Aristotle's Mythos vs. the Modern expounding of Plot

Aristotle's notion of mythos in Poetics differs from the modern expounding of plot most prominently in its role in drama. According to Elizabeth Belfiore's *Disastrous Pleasures: Aristotle on Plot and Emotion*, Aristotle believed that "plot is essential to devastation, ethos [character] is second to plot". Aristotle believes that "psychological and ethical considerations are secondary to the events themselves". Aristotle's view focuses nearly all of his attention on the events of the plot, which, in turn, leaves the characters to become merely conveyors of situations rather than humans with convictions and motives. According to Meir Sternberg, Aristotle "impedes the well-made epic or play to a 'whole' (holos) action, with 'beginning, middle, and end' linked throughout by necessary or probable sequence, so that nothing will follow its cutoff point"). Aristotle's definition of plot states that every event portrayed and every action taken is a logical progression from previous events. Aristotle focuses on mythos (plot) as opposed to a focus on ethos (character) or "conflict either in the sense of struggle within a person or in the sense of the clashing of opposed principles". Aristotle explains that devastation resemble the actions and lives of human beings rather than human beings themselves. Aristotle concerns himself with the universally logical events of a plot, rather than the specific and often illogical conflicts between characters associated with those events.

Many of Aristotle's conclusions directly oppose those of modern narratologists such as Vladimir Propp, who "reverses Aristotle's theory that 'devastation is replica not of human beings but of actions', by writing that stories are about characters who act". Propp also argues that basic story elements, which he defines as functions, "are in fact ethically coloured, either in themselves or because they are defined in terms of a character who has specific ethical qualities" (1968, 10). Propp's viewpoint directly conflicts with that of Aristotle in Poetics because Aristotle states that drama consists of a logical sequence of events that is not affected by ethical dilemmas. G.W.F. Hegel, a noted philosopher and narratologist,

believed that devastation consists of the conflicts between each character's ethical justification and the resolution toward a greater rational good.. Hegel's viewpoint places character conflict as the central focus of tragedy, in clear contradiction to Aristotle's plot-centric theory of tragedy. According to Meir Sternberg, modernist dramatic theory endorses the "open ending, and poststructuralism for preaching endless indeterminacy", which is most noticeable in the modern absurdist theater. In comparison, Sternberg asserts that Aristotle's viewpoint directs all complex endings and forms of closure into simple cause-and-effect sequences.

Lexis

According to Jose M. Gonzalez, "Aristotle instructs us to view of his psychology, as mediating the rhetorical task and entrusted with turning the orator's subject matter into such opinion of the listeners and gain their pistis." Pistis is the Greek word for faith and is one of the linguistic modes of pertitude.

Gonzalez also points out that, "By invoking roolade, lexis against the background Aristotle instructs us to view of his psychology, as mediating the linguistic task and relegated with turning the orator's subject matter into such opinion of the listeners and gain their pistis." Phantasia is a Greek word meaning the process by which all images are presented to us. Aristotle defines phantasia as "our desire for the mind to mediate anything not actually present to the senses with a mental image." Aristotle instructs the reader to use his or her imagination to create the fantastic, unordinary images, all the while using narrative and act out to create a play either written or produced.

Elements of Rhetorical Diction According to Aristotle

Although Aristotle at times seems to shameful the art of diction or 'Voice', saying that it is not an "elevated subject of inquiry", he does go into quite a bit of detail on its importance and its proper use in rhetorical speech. Often calling it "style", he defines good style as follows: that it must be clear and avoid extremes of baseness and loftiness. Aristotle makes the cases for the importance of diction by saying that, "it is not enough to know what we ought to say; we must also say it as we ought". In an oratorical speech, one must consider not only the facts, but also how to put the facts into words and which words and, also, the "proper method of delivery". Aristotle goes on to say that only the facts in an argument should be important but that since the listeners :an be swayed by diction, it must also be considered.

Voice

At the time when Aristotle wrote his treatise on Eloquence, orators had not given much attention to voice. This was thought to be a subject with which only actors and poets should be concerned. In *The Rhetoric*, Aristotle's says, "proper method of delivery...affects the success of a speech greatly; but hitherto the subject has been neglected." Aristotle defined voice as controlling one's voice, using rate, volume and pitch, to convey the appropriate emotions. The manner of voice in which an idea or speech is conveyed affects not only the emotions of the audience but, also, their ability to understand this concept.

Although Aristotle gives this mention and explanation of voice, he does not go into specifics about how to produce appropriate voice or how to convey specific tones with one's voice. This may or may not be due to his mild contempt for the topic as a whole. Modern scholars have explored voice more extensively. According to Taylor Stoehr, "voice is the pervasive reflection in written or spoken language, of an author's character, the marks by which we recognize his utterance as his." However, just as in Aristotle's time set of specific rules or guidelines has yet been laid out for the production or interpretation of voice. Due to the vast array of elements involved in the production of voice this task would be nearly, if not entirely, impossible.

Language

As before mentioned, for Aristotle, the language of a speech should avoid being too lofty or too unrefined. The speaker must use ordinary language that is used in everyday life. However, because people will best remember what is out of the ordinary the speaker must use some language which gives his speech an air of importance.

The elevation of the language used must be in correlation with the elevation of the subject being addressed, or, in poetry, the character which is speaking. In poetry the use of language and linguistic devices which convey a sense of importance are more appropriate and to be used more often because the events of poetry are more removed from ordinary life. They are less appropriate in rhetorical speech because the topics relate more directly to ordinary things and the people who are listening to the speech. Most of all, the speaker must "give the impression of speaking naturally and not artificially." When one seems to speak with ease, the audience is more easily persuaded that the facts he is communicating are truthful.

Also, a speaker must avoid using very many "strange words, compound words, and invented words". Aristotle considered this kind of language an excessive departure from the way in which people normally

speak. However, one acceptable departure from plain language is the use of metaphor because metaphors are used by all people in everyday conversation.

*Western Classical Literary
Criticism*
*Oedipus the King-
Sophocles*

Two Forms of Lexis

According to Aristotle, lexis, meaning the delivery of words, is the least important area of speech when in comparison to invention, arrangement, and style. However, lexis is still closely looked at and broken down into two forms. The two types of lexis in rhetoric include: lexis graphike and lexis agonistike. The separate terms that describe the two forms of lexis, graphike and agonistike, have been conformed by several Latin terms. Although the words directly relate to the type of lexis, the theories of Aristotle and Plato do not compare.

Lexis graphike comes from the term zographia, meaning realistic painting, and graphe, meaning writing. Plato believes that writing and painting are one of the same. His theory proves that both do not have the capability to defend themselves through an argument, question and answer, which conveys that these forms can not prove truth. Although for Aristotle, lexis graphike is the most accurate delivery of language which leads to his theory that proves that writing does not need to be questioned because it is already exact. Lexis agonistike however is from the term skiagraphia, meaning a rough sketch or outline of painting, Aristotle once again opposes Plato by believing that lexis agonistike does not need questions asked, but only answers. The answer refers to the use of invention given to the actor because the writing portion is only outlined.

To further understand the separate types of lexis, each type can be broken down by how the writing is prepared and delivered. Lexis graphike is the most exact style of rhetoric and strongly appeals to intelligence. The delivery of lexis graphike is designed for a careful reading from either the book or paper as opposed to a performance that leaves room for improvisation. This type of lexis is a simple, straight forward recitation rather than an intricate presentation. Lexis graphike is most accurately written and depends the least upon the person who is delivering the speech. Lexis agonistike contradicts lexis graphike because it is typically carelessly written and meant for a full performance. The lack of attention given to the written words allows the performer to improvise. This gives the presentation a style that reflects the entertainer rather the writer.

Opsis

Aristotle's use of the term *opsis*, as Marvin Carlson points out, is the "final element of tragedy" as outlined by Aristotle, but "receives no further consideration". Aristotle discusses *opsis* in book 6 of the *poetics*, but only goes as far as to suggest that "spectacle has, indeed, an emotional attraction of its own, but, of all the parts, it is the least artistic, and connected least with the art of poetry. For the power of Tragedy, we may be sure, is felt even apart from representation and actors. Besides, the production of spectacular effects depends more on the art of the stage machinist than on that of the poet"

• LONGINUS: ON THE SUBLIME

The Sublime

Trevor Pateman

Though semantically paired with the beautiful, the sublime has nothing like its currency. The use of the term may even strike some people as affected: to call a work 'sublime' is rather like calling it 'divine'. But if a critic uses 'sublime' to characterize a work which induces amazement, wonder or awe in virtue of its ambition, scope or a passion which seems to drive it, then this use is not far off that to be found in one of the major works of classical criticism, *On the Sublime*, historically attributed to Longinus but now generally reckoned to date from the first century AD, before Longinus' time.

On the Sublime deals with forms of expression which have the power to 'ingress' us, to 'transport us with wonder', as opposed to merely persuading or pleasing us. Sublime passages in literature exert an 'irresistible' force. Couched as rhetorical advice, 'a well timed stroke of sublimity scatters everything before it like a thunderbolt, and in a flash affirms the power of the speaker' (all citations from *On the Sublime*, Ch. 1).

This power arises not from mere mastery of technique: not all technically competent artists are capable of sublimity. Rather, it can only be achieved by those artists who are able to form 'grand conceptions' and are possessed by 'powerful and inspired emotion' (*pathos*) qualities which Longinus regards as 'Very largely innate' (Ch. 8). Combined with technical competence, powerful thought and emotion produce the 'true sublime', in works which 'uplift our souls', fill us with 'proud exaltation and a sense of vaunting joy, just as though we had ourselves produced what we had heard'.

Now there is clearly some slippage here between the idea of the genius of the sublime artist, as a superhuman figure, and the genius of a particular kind of work. The same slippage occurs in our contemporary cultures insofar as they transfer a

suspicion of a certain kind of artist, the genius, the superman, onto certain kinds of work: the vast, the unrestrained, and so on. Contemporary cultures prefer their art works, in general, to be modest and unassuming. And, in general, they are, so that there is little opportunity for critics to use the word 'sublime' even if they were willing. (London's Tate Modern has, however, created a gallery space designed at least to house works which are very large and thus, at least potentially, sublime)

Sublime works are produced, nonetheless, even in unexpected places. The inception which informs Werner Herzog's film *Fitzcarraldo* is certainly grand: a man getting a steam boat dragged over a mountain in order to finance opera in the Amazon. The filming is as passionate as the hero. Insofar as the film produces bewilderment, wonder or awe it is properly characterized as sublime. Again, the all male Satyricon Theatre of Moscow performs a *boite* version of Jean Genet's *The Maids* with song, dance and mime which in virtue of the intensity of physically expressed passion conveyed undoubtedly renders the performance sublime though we would probably simply say 'astonishing'. Perhaps one should start thinking of some contemporary fiction as sublime Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, for example. The large-scale sculptures of Anish Kapoor, also attract characterisation as "sublime".

On the Sublime was translated into French in 1674, and exerted a considerable influence in eighteenth century aesthetics, where beauty and sublimity are often paired. In this context the sublime often has a rather different meaning from what it has in Longinus, and this different meaning has also entered into our way of thinking. For example, in *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757) Edmund Burke generates a conception of the sublime in connection with our encounter with nature as well as art. The sublime now becomes that which causes astonishment, 'that state of the soul in which all its motions are suspended, with some degree of horror' (p. 95). In lesser degrees, the sublime produces admiration, reverence and respect (p. 96). In greater degrees, the sublime is that which produces terror: 'terror is in all cases whatsoever, either more openly or latently the ruling principle of the sublime' (p. 97). So Burke's question then becomes, What terrifies us? Subjectively, it is the fear of pain. Objectively, we are terrified by vastness (the ocean), by insignificance (which hides the full extent of a danger from us), by what is powerful, and by what is infinite. (Says Burke, 'Infinity has a tendency to fill the mind with that sort of delightful horror, which is the most genuine effect, and truest test of the sublime' (p. 129): recall Pascal's 'I am terrified by the emptiness of these infinite spaces', in the *Pensees*). In relation to art, Burke lists as sources of sublimity: vastness (e.g., of a building); unfinishedness (as in preparatory sketches); difficulty (as when we imagine the immense force

necessary to build Stonehenge); magnificence (especially when to some extent in a rich chaos); and colour (the sublime excludes white, green, yellow, blue, pale red, violet and the spotted and requires 'sad and fuscous colours, as black, or brown, or deep purple, and the like' p. 149).

Burke's constant recourse to nature to characterize aesthetic experience is standard in eighteenth century and later writing; it is also found, for example, in Kant's *Critique of Judgement* (1790), where it is used as it is by Burke get at the beautiful as well as the sublime. Of course, natural beauty is a concept of major importance to romantic thought. Here it is only to be observed that the relation of nature to the aesthetic is one which divides contemporary aestheticians: for some, the beautiful and sublime in nature are paradigmatic for understanding the aesthetic value of art; for others, this approach - which treats it as a fortuitous fact that we also get aesthetic pleasure from art as well as nature - is totally misguided.

My own tendency is to side with the eighteenth century, especially in relation to how we think of the sublime. In addition, though the sublime is in one aspect characterized through its power to effect loss of control over ourselves - we are astounded by the sublime - in another aspect the characterization of the sublime is in terms of the mind at work: we are, says Burke, amazed, awe inspired, astonished by the sublime. This does not sound so very different from the (sense of) wonder in which all serious scientific response to the world is (also) rooted. Educationally, we might be well advised to think more in terms of assuring that children encounter the sublime than that they are initiated into the beautiful.

The concept of the sublime, as articulated by Burke, contains a lurking paradox. It is that we are drawn to things which cause us pain, indeed, terror, says Burke. Yet our whole psychology is built on the notion that we seek pleasure and shun pain. This paradox can be dissolved by saying that we find pleasure in the encounter with imagined or fictional pain, or that the aesthetically painful is prophylactic of real pain, or that the 'pain' of the sublime is metaphorical that there is a pleasure in the sublime which we characterize as painful. The paradox is rather more obstinate than these summary resolutions suggest.

Authorship of *On the Sublime*

The author is unknown. In the reference manuscript, Parisinus Graecus 2036, the heading reports "Dionysius or Longinus", an ascription by the medieval copyist that was misread as "by Dionysius Longinus". When the manuscript was being prepared for printed

publication, the work was initially attributed to Cassius Longinus (c. 213-273 AD). Since the correct translation includes the possibility of an author named "Dionysius", some have attributed the work to Dionysius of Halicarnassus, a writer of the 1st century CE. There remains the possibility that the work belongs to neither Cassius Longinus nor Dionysius of Halicarnassus, but, rather, some unknown author writing under the Roman Empire, likely in the 1st century. The error does imply that when the codex was written, the trails of the real author were already lost. Neither author can be accepted as the actual writer of the treatise. The former maintained ideas which are absolutely opposite to those written in the treatise; about the latter, there are problems with chronology.

Among further names proposed, are Hermagoras (a soliloquist who lived in Rome during the 1st century AD), Aelius Theon (author of a work which had many ideas in common with those of *On the Sublime*), and Pompeius Geminus (who was in epistolary conversation with Dionysius).

Dionysius of Halicarnassus

Dionysius of Halicarnassus wrote under Augustus, publishing a number of works. Dionysius is generally dismissed as the potential author of *On the Sublime*, since the writing officially attributed to Dionysius differs from the work on the sublime in style and thought.

Cassius Longinus

Accredited with writing a number of literary works, this disciple of Plotinus was "the most distinguished scholar of his day". Cassius received his education at Alexandria and became a teacher himself. First teaching at Athens, Cassius later moved to Asia Minor, where he achieved the position of advisor to the queen of Palmyra, Zenobia. Cassius is also a doubtful possibility for author of the treatise, since it is notable that no literature later than the 1st century AD is mentioned (the latest is Cicero, dead in 43 BC), and the work is now usually dated to the early 1st century AD. The work ends with a discourse on the decay of oratory, a typical subject of the period in which authors such as Tacitus, Petronius and Quintilian, who also dealt with the subject, were still alive.

The Treatise On the Sublime

On the Sublime is both a treatise on aesthetics and a work of literary criticism. It is written in an declamatory form and the final part, possibly dealing with public speaking, has been lost.

The treatise is dedicated to Posthumius Terentianus, a cultured Roman and public figure, though little else is known of him. On the Sublime is a compendium of literary epitomes, with about 50 authors spanning 1,000 years mentioned or quoted. Along with the expected examples from Homer and other figures of Greek culture, Longinus refers to a passage from Genesis, which is quite unusual for the 1st century:

A similar effect was achieved by the lawgiver of the Jews—no mean genius, for he both understood and gave expression to the power of the divinity as it deserved—when he wrote at the very beginning of his laws, and we quote his words: 'God said'—what was it?—'Let there be light.' And there was. 'Let there be earth.' And there was.

Given his positive reference to Genesis, Longinus has been assumed to be either a Hellenized Jew or readily familiar with the Jewish culture. As such, Longinus emphasizes that, to be a truly great writer, authors must have "moral excellence". In fact, critics hypothesize that Longinus avoided publication in the ancient world "either by modesty or by avaricious motives". Moreover, Longinus stresses that transgressive writers are not necessarily prideless fools, even if they take literary risks that seem "bold, lawless, and original". As for social subjectivity, Longinus accedes that complete liberty promotes spirit and hope; according to Longinus, "never did a slave become an orator". On the other hand, too much luxury and wealth leads to a decay in expressiveness—expressiveness being the goal of the sublime writer.

The Sublime

Longinus critically applauds and condemns certain literary works as examples of good or bad styles of writing. Longinus ultimately promotes an "elevation of style" and an essence of "simplicity". To quote this famous author, "the first and most important source of sublimity [is] the power of forming great conceptions." The concept of the sublime is generally accepted to refer to a style of writing that elevates itself "above the ordinary". Finally, Longinus sets out five sources of sublimity: "great thoughts, strong emotions, certain figures of thought and speech, noble diction, and dignified word arrangement".

The effects of the Sublime are: loss of rationality, an alienation leading to identification with the creative process of the artist and a deep emotion mixed in pleasure and elation. An example of sublime (which the author quotes in the work) is a poem by Sappho, the so-called Ode to Jealousy, defined as a 'Sublime ode'. A writer's goal is not so much to express empty feelings, but to arouse emotion in his audience.

In the treatise, the author asserts that "the Sublime leads the listeners not to persuading, but to bliss: for what is wonderful always goes together with a sense of dismay, and triumph prevails over what is only convincing or delightful, since persuasion, as a rule, is within everyone's grasp: whereas, the Sublime, giving to speech an invulnerable power and [an invulnerable] strength, rises above every listener".

According to this statement, one could think that the sublime, for Longinus, was only a moment of avoidance from reality. But on the contrary, he thought that literature could model a soul, and that a soul could pour itself out into a work of art. In this way the treatise becomes not only a text of literary inquiry, but also one of ethical discourse, since the Sublime becomes the product of a great soul. The sources of the Sublime are of two kinds: inborn sources ("aspiration to vigorous concepts" and "strong and enthusiastic passion") and procurable sources (linguistic devices, choice of the right lexicon, and "dignified and high composition").

The ethical aspect and attention to the "great soul" broaden the dimension of the work; begun in order to disprove the arguments of pamphlet of literary criticism, it ends by creating a new idea within the entire framework of aesthetics. The sublime, in fact, is a denominator of the greatness of the one who approaches to it, both the author's and the viewer's (or reader's). Between them an empathetic bond must arise. Then, the Sublime is a mechanism of recognition (arising from the impact of the work of art) of the greatness of a spirit, of the depth of an idea, of the power of speech. This recognition has its roots in the belief that everyone is aware of the existence of the Sublime, and that the Endeavour towards greatness is rooted in human nature. In the wake of these considerations, the literary genre and the subject-matter chosen by the poet assume a minor importance for Longinus, who proclaims that "sublimity" might be found in any or every literary work. He proves to be a very clever critic, for he excels the Apollodoreans by speaking of the critic as a form of positive "channeling" of the Genius. He passes beyond the rigid rules of the literary critics of his time, according to which only a regular (or "second-rate", as Longinus says) style could be defined as perfect.

On the other hand he admires the boldness of the Genius, which always succeeds in reaching the zenith, even if at the expense of forgivable lapses in style. Thus among examples of the Sublime may be rated (not in any order) Homer the dramaturge, Sappho, Plato, even the Bible, and a playwright like Aristophanes (since the author maintained that laughter is a jocose pathos and therefore, "sublime", being "an

emotion of pleasure"). Nevertheless he did not appreciate the Hellenistic poets, perhaps because he did not understand their culture: "Would you prefer to be Homer or Apollonius? [...] No sane person would give just one devastation, the Oedipus Rex, in exchange for all Iones's dramas."

The Sublime, moreover, does not appear itself only in what is simply beautiful, but also in what is sufficiently distressing to cause bewilderment, surprise and even fear. It could be said that Helen of Troy may certainly have been the most beautiful woman in the world, but she was never sublime in Greek literature: however Edmund Burke cites the scene of the old men looking at Helen's "terrible" beauty on the ramparts of Troy—he regards it as an instance of the beautiful, but his imagination is captured by its sublimity. Hecuba in Euripides's *The Trojan Women* is certainly sublime when she expresses her endless sorrow for the terrible destiny of her children.

The Decay of Eloquence

The author speaks also about the decay of oratory, as arising not only from absence of personal freedom but also from the corruption of morals, which together destroy that, high spirit which generates the Sublime. Thus the treatise is clearly centred in the burning disagreement which raged in the 1st century AD in Latin literature. If Petronius pointed out excess of rhetoric and the imperious, unnatural techniques of the schools of expressiveness as the causes of decay, Tacitus was nearer to Longinus in thinking that the root of this degeneracy was the establishment of Principedom, or Empire, which, though it brought stability and peace, also gave rise to censorship and brought an end to freedom of speech. Thus oratory became merely an exercise in style.

Misleading Translations and Lost Data

Translators have been unable to clearly interpret the text, including the title itself. The "sublime" in the title has been translated in various ways, to include senses of elevation and excellent style. The word sublime, argues Rhys Roberts, is misleading, since Longinus' objective broadly concerns "the essentials of a noble and impressive style" than anything more narrow and specific. Moreover, about one-third of the treatise is missing; Longinus' segment on similes, for instance, has only a few words remaining. Matters are further complicated in realizing that ancient writers, Longinus' contemporaries, do not quote or mention the treatise in any way.

Limitations of the Writing

Despite Longinus' critical acclaim, his writing is far from perfect. Longinus' occasional enthusiasm becomes "carried away" and creates

some confusion as to the meaning of his text. Furthermore, 18th-century critic Edward Burnaby Greene finds Longinus, at times, to be "too refined". Greene also claims that Longinus' focus on hyperbolic descriptions is "particularly weak, and misapplied". Occasionally, Longinus also falls into a sort of "irksome" in treating his subjects. The treatise is also limited in its concentration on spiritual predominance and lack of focus on the way in which language structures determine the feelings and thoughts of writers. Finally, Longinus' treatise is difficult to explain in an academic setting, given the difficulty of the text and lack of "practical rules of a teachable kind".

Writing Style and Eloquence

Despite its culpabilities, the disquisition remains critically successful because of its "noble tone," "apt precepts," "judicious attitude" and "historical interests". One of the reasons why it is so unlikely that known ancient critics wrote on the *Lofty* is because the disquisition is composed so differently from any other literary work. Since Longinus's linguistic formula avoids dominating his work, the literature remains "personal and fresh," unique in its originality. Longinus rebels against the popular eloquence of the time by implicitly attacking ancient theory in its focus on a detailed criticism of words, metaphors, and figures. More - explicitly, in refusing to judge similitude as entities unto themselves, Longinus promotes the appreciation of literary devices as they relate to passages as a whole. Essentially, Longinus, rare for a critic of his time, focuses more on "greatness of style" than "technical rules". Despite his criticism of ancient texts, Longinus remains a "master of candour and good-nature". Moreover, the author invents striking images and metaphors, writing almost lyrically at times. In general, Longinus appreciates, and makes use of, simple articulation and bold images.

As far as the language is concerned, the work is certainly a "unicum" because it's a blend of expressions of the Hellenistic koine dialektos to which are added elevated constructions, technical expressions, metaphors, classic and rare forms which produce a literary pastiche at the borders of linguistic experimentations.

Influences

In reading *On the Sublime*, critics have determined that the ancient philosopher and writer Plato is a "great hero" to Longinus. Not only does Longinus come to Plato's defense, but he also attempts to raise his literary standing in opposition to current criticisms. Another influence on the treatise can be found in Longinus' linguistic figures, which draw from theories by a 1st century BCE writer, Caecilius of Calacte.

Historical Criticism and Use of "On the Sublime"

- 10th century—The original disquisition, before translation, is copied into a gothic-manuscript and attributed to "Dionysius or Longinus".
- 13th century—A Byzantine soliloquist makes obscure references to what may be Longinus' text.
- 16th century—The treatise is ignored by scholars until it is published by Francis Robortello in Basel, in 1554, and Niccolo da Falgano, in 1560. The original work is attributed to "Dionysius Longinus" and most European countries receive translations of the disquisition.
- 17th century—Sublime effects become a desired end of much Baroque art and literature, and the rediscovered work of "Longinus" goes through half a dozen editions in the 17th century. It is Boileau's 1674 translation of the disquisition into French that really starts its career in the history of criticism. Despite its popularity, some critics claim that the disquisition was too "primitive" to be truly understood by a "too civilized" 17th-century audience.
- 18th century—William Smith's 1739 translation of Longinus on the Sublime established the translator and once more brought the work into prominence. Longinus' text reaches its height in popularity. In England, critics esteem Longinus' principles of composition and balance second only to Aristotle's Poetics. Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* and Immanuel Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment* owe a mortgage to Longinus' concept of the sublime, and the category passes into the stock-in-trade of Romantic intellectual discourse. As "Longinus" says, "The effect of elevated language upon an audience is not persuasion but transport", a fitting sentiment for Romantic thinkers and writers who reach beyond logic, to the wellsprings of the Sublime. At the same time, the Romantics gain some contempt for Longinus, given his association with the "rules" of classical poets. Such contempt is ironic, given the widespread influence of Longinus on the shaping of 18th-century criticism.
- 19th century—Early in the 19th century, doubts arise to the authorship of the treatise. Thanks to Italian scholar Amati, Cassius Longinus is no longer assumed to be the writer of *On the Sublime*. Simultaneously, the critical popularity of Longinus' work diminishes greatly; though the work is still in use by scholars, it is rarely quoted. Despite the lack of public enthusiasm, editions and translations of *On the Sublime* are published at the end of the century.

- 20th century—Although the text is still little quoted, it maintains its status, apart from Aristotle's *Poetics*, as "the most delightful of all the critical works of classical antiquity". Also Neil Hertz's essay on Longinus in his book, *The End of the Line*. Hertz is in part responding to Thomas Weiskel's book *The Romantic Sublime*, probably the most influential recent account of British and German Romantic attitudes towards the Sublime of both Burke and Longinus. Laura Quinney treats the attractions grim declaration in analyzes of Longinus, particularly Weiskel's. Jonathan Culler has an cherishing of Hertz on Longinus in "The Hertzian Sublime". Anne Carson and Louis Marin have occasion to discuss Longinus as well and Harold Bloom and William J. Kennedy have significant accounts of his work. William Carlos Williams also uses three lines from the work as an epigraph to the Preamble to *Kora in Hell*.

• SUMMARY

- Aristotle considered epic poetry, tragedy, comedy, dithyrambic poetry and music to be imitative, each varying in replica by medium, object, and manner. For example, music imitates with the media of cadence and accord, whereas dance imitates with rhythm alone, and poetry with language. The forms also differ in their object of imitation. Comedy, for crite, is a dramatic replica of men worse than average; whereas devastation resemble men slightly better than average. Lastly, the forms differ in their manner of imitation - through narrative or character, through change or no change, and through drama or no drama. Aristotle believed that replica is natural to mankind and constitutes one of mankind's advantages over animals.
- While it is believed that Aristotle's *Poetics* comprised two books - one on comedy and one on devastation-only the portion that focuses on devastation has survived. Aristotle devastation that tragedy is composed of six elements: plot-structure, character, style, spectacle, and lyric poetry. The characters in a devastation are merely a means of driving the story; and the plot, not the characters, is the chief focus of devastation. Devastation is the replica of action arousing pity and fear, and is meant to effect the catharsis of those same emotions. Aristotle concludes *Poetics* with a discussion on which, if either, is superior: epic or disastrous mimesis. He suggests that because devastation possesses all the attributes of an epic, possibly possesses additional attributes such as spectacle and music, is more unified, and achieves the aim of its mimesis in shorter scope, it can be considered superior to epic.