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On the Implications for Aristotle's *Poetics* of the Possible Correspondence Between the *Hamartia* of *Poetics* 13 and the *Hamartema* of *Nicomachean Ethics* V.8

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Abstract

One of the most persistent controversies surrounding Aristotle's *Poetics* concerns the meaning of *hamartia* (broadly: “mistake”) in Ch. 13, which Aristotle supplies as the cause of the downfall of the tragic agent. In short, it is unclear whether the agent is meant to be culpable for this mistake. While most recent interpreters have tended to exclude this possibility due to its seeming incompatibility with paradigmatic tragedies, some – such as Joe Sachs and Michael Davis – give reason for maintaining that this is the case. One great virtue of this possibility is that it allows the *hamartia* of the *Poetics* to be brought into alignment with the culpable specific sense of the *hamartema* (“mistake” or “mistake in deed”) of the *Nicomachean Ethics* V.8, which in turn allows the *Poetics* to considered within the greater context of Aristotle's moral and cognitive systems. In this thesis, then, I supplement the arguments of these interpreters by drawing out the implications of this transposition for several of the lingering interpretive difficulties of the *Poetics.*

Sachs provides justification that the tragic agent ought to be culpable for his mistake. If tragedy famously produces “by means of pity and fear, the *katharsis* of such feelings” it is difficult to see how a tragedy in which all blame for such feelings could be divested onto external forces could be sufficiently complicated to produce its powerful distinctive effect. Sachs, however, does not explain how a spectator could ultimately feel pity – which requires that its object be undeserving of its suffering – for an agent who is culpable for his mistake. The resolution of this question requires recourse to the cognitive apparatus and its mechanisms for assigning blame. Now, an agent only properly considers himself guilty for a mistake – rather than merely unfortunate for having been caught – when he considers the mistake to be the result of having previously voluntarily lapsed against his own perceived best interests. It depends, then, on the peculiarly human phenomenon of unrestraint (*akrasia*), which turns out, on one hand, to be entirely within the agent's control to avoid and, on the other, to depend for its possibility on certain faults of physiology and habituation. On the basis of this double root, one of the central difficulties of the *Poetics* – the nature of the tragic effect – can be decoded as resulting from the simultaneous holding in check of ordinary habits of blaming and excusing. That this accounts for *katharsis* will indicate a correspondence between “fear and pity” and restraint and unrestraint operating at the *melankholic* heart of the human condition in periodic need of exorcism.

Davis complements this account by distinguishing between the tragic agent – whose mistake depends on his being caught in impulses – and the man of foresight – capable of actual deliberation concerning the situation – who is therefore analogous to the poet who comprehends the tragic action. This resolves further difficulties in the *Poetics* by showing that the tragic story is effectively the imagining of “what would happen to [one] if he were he not to know” and that it operates in two dimensions – by the actions of the tragic agent, and by the imaginative action of the poet or man of foresight – which are capable of being combined, producing the modified tragic form known as the “melodrama”.

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Hamartiai are my own.

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1. Introduction and Context: The Possible Link Between the *Hamartia* of the *Poetics* and the *Hamartema* in the Specific Sense of the *Nicomachean Ethics*

One of the most persistent controversies surrounding the *Poetics* concerns the meaning of *hamartia* in Ch. 13. Aristotle writes, regarding the proper agent of tragedy, that "this is the sort of person who is not surpassing in virtue and justice, but does not change into misfortune through bad character and vice, but on account of some *hamartia*, if he is among those who are in great repute and good fortune, such as Oedipus and Thyestes and conspicuous men from such families".[1] The heart of the controversy can be reduced to the question of whether this agent should be culpable for his downfall, should not be, or whether both possibilities are acceptable.[2]

Hamartia has three basic senses: "to miss the mark (literally); to fail in some object or make a mistake; and to offend morally, to do wrong"; by the time of Aristotle's writing, the moral sense was overtaking the "mistaken" sense, but not in Aristotle's own usage.[3] Aristotle refurbishes the original literal sense of a projectile missing its target in his doctrine of the mean, whereby excellence (*aretê*) is a kind of mean-condition (*mesotes*), inasmuch as it aims at a mean of appropriateness in a given situation, and mistakes (*hamartiai*) happen because it is hard to hit the mark exactly. Different mistakes reflect differently on their agent: in *Ethics* V.8, under the genus of mistakes (*hamartemata*) – as distinct from the genus of voluntary injustices (*adikemata*) – Aristotle divides unforeseeable instances of bad luck (*atuchemata*) from the results of culpable negligence (also *hamartemata* – now applied in a specific sense).[4] Thus, for Aristotle, not all error or missing-the-mark constitutes moral wrongdoing, and the controversy of *Poetics* Ch. 13 accords nicely to the system of the *Ethics*: does the *Poetics*' *hamartia* correspond to the *Ethics*' *hamartema* in the specific sense, in the general sense, or do neither fit?

Contemporary interpretations have tended to divide between the last two options. Sorabji notes

1 *Poet.* 1453a7-13, trans. Sachs. All subsequent excerpts from the *Poetics* are translated by Sachs unless otherwise noted.

2 The complexity of the problem owes variously to: the shifting senses of the word itself; its relation or non-relation to the moral apparatus established in the *Nicomachean Ethics*; its compatibility with specifications laid out earlier in the *Poetics*; its plausibility with regards to extant tragedies; and a modern history of misinterpretation which unduly identified *hamartia* as "fatal flaw." I submit that it can be helpfully considered by reduction as stated.

3 Stinton, '*Hamartia* in Aristotle and Greek Tragedy', 222.

4 The difference between "*hamartia*" (plural "*hamartiai*") and "*hamartema*" (plural "*hamartemata*") is uncertain. Earlier contemporary interpreters, such as Manns, take *hamartia* to be something like a flaw in the agent's character – "a weakness, a moral Achilles' heel" – from which results the *hamartema* (Bremer, *Hamartia*, 91-92, cf. 25-26). More recently, Dawe argues instead that *"hamartia* is the subjective word, *hamartema* the objective. *Hamartia* refers primarily to the false *decision* in the mind, *hamartema* to the false *act*" (Dawe, 'Some Reflections on Ate and Hamartia', 120). If the general sense of these distinctions is admitted, *hamartia* would be something like the agent's misconception of the relevant particulars, where *hamartema* would be the deed done. But these distinctions are not always recognized.

that if Oedipus' parricide and incest comprise his *hamartia*, it is difficult to see how he could be culpable in failing to have anticipated them – he would seem rather to have been unlucky.[5] If this difficulty is to be resolved with the link between the texts intact, it must be that Aristotle means *hamartia* to correspond to *hamartema* in the general sense. Belfiore argues, however, that neither the general nor the specific sense will do, since culpable *hamartia* would seem to be entirely excluded by Aristotle's statement in Ch. 13 that "tragedy represents bad fortune caused by *hamartia* and not by vice".[6] If the agent can be held culpable for his *hamartia,* this would seem to necessitate that he be in a vicious condition, which in turn suggests that his subsequent suffering would not be bad "fortune" but rather foreseeable comeuppance. Sherman puts the matter as follows:

> The implication drawn... is that *hamartia* proper... at least as understood in V.8... is a kind of culpable ignorance.... Needless to say, as an interpretation which bears on the *Poetics* there are grave problems. To turn to Oedipus, the claim would be that Oedipus' illusion about his family identity could have been avoided; there was information of which he could have availed himself, possibilities for further application and control which he failed to take. But this is implausible. Similarly, it would be absurd to hold that Thyestes, whose *hamartia* is also cited in *Poetics 13,* was negligent in failing to look for morsels of his children in the plate of meat served up to him.[7]

Thus the prospect of connecting the *hamartia* of *Poetics* 13 with the *hamartema* of *Ethics* V.8 would seem to be a dead end.

Some recent interpreters, however, give reason for maintaining that *hamartema* in the specific sense fits with the *hamartia* of the *Poetics*. Joe Sachs makes the case that a tragedy in which the agent was not in any way culpable for the outcome could not produce the powerful specialized effect associated with tragedy.[8] Michael Davis presses a distinction between the man of insight and the tragic agent that requires that the latter's mistake could have reasonably been avoided.[9] As for Oedipus and

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5 Sorabji, *Necessity, Cause and Blame*, 296-297. Sorabji writes: "If we now compare this evidence with *NE* V.8, we seem to get a very paradoxical result: if Oedipus' parricide is to be fitted into one of the categories of *NE* V.8, it is not a *hamartema* at all, but an *atuchema*. For it was contrary to reasonable expectation for Oedipus that he should be slaying his father. The cause of this lay not in his own negligence, but in the external fact that the passer-by happened to be his father."

6 Belfiore, *Tragic Pleasures*, 167-168.

7 Sherman, '*Hamartia* and Virtue', 186.

8 Sachs, Introduction to Aristotle's *Poetics*. Hereafter referenced as "Sachs". See also Sachs, 'Tragic Pleasure'.

9 Davis, Introduction to Aristotle's *On Poetics*. Hereafter referenced as "Davis". See also Davis, *Aristotle's Poetics: The*

Thyestes, both Sachs and Davis would suggest alternate interpretations of the relevant *hamartiai*: for Oedipus (at least Sophocles' Oedipus), not parricide and incest but an earlier act of *hubris,*[10] and for Thyestes – of whom there is no extant Greek tragedy – either some other *hamartia* from his profile or a less straightforward treatment of the instance of cannibalism. While it is true that the tragic agent is to undergo a change into bad fortune by way of a *hamartia* and not vice, Aristotle's ethical theory allows for an agent to culpably perform vicious deeds without needing himself to be vicious – and certainly without needing to consider himself vicious – and involves senses in which an agent's comeuppance may nevertheless be said to constitute bad fortune.[11] Thus, objections on these grounds are far from conclusive.

In this thesis, then, I follow through several of the implications of the possibility that the *hamartia* of the *Poetics* can be synchronized with the *hamartema* in the specific sense of the *Ethics*. Rather than defend this point specifically, my approach will be to enact the transposition this linkage enables, in order to show how applying the system of the *Ethics* in this way provides an elegant and plausible resolution to several of the lingering riddles of the *Poetics*. To this end, I follow and integrate the compatible suggestions of Sachs and Davis, which presume this link, in order to furnish the full explanation of the tragic effect their approach implies. Since the tragic effect works upon a human spectator, this explanation will entail recourse to the cognitive apparatus and especially its mechanisms of establishing blame.

2. Cases at Hand: Three Interpretive Problems of the *Poetics*

Sachs' key to the text allows Aristotle's account of dramatic poetry to be linked within the greater context of his cognitive and moral theory. We begin, beforehand, by establishing a summary of the interpretive problems this approach will ultimately help to resolve. First, (2.1) if dramatic poetry is

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Poetry of Philosophy.

10 Davis writes: "[Oedipus] promises to pursue the murderer of Laius as though Laius were his father. And he begins *OT* by addressing those assembled around him as *tekna Kadmou* – children of Cadmus. Oedipus treats them as though they were his children; he does not realize that he too is a child of Cadmus, that those who, under his care as kind, may be like children, are also his brothers and sisters, his fellow citizens" (Davis *xxi*).

Sachs writes: "[*OT*] is shaped by [Oedipus'] decision to save Thebes from a plague by taking the city or into himself and destroying its destroyer, a deliberate choice in which thought, the desires of a decent person, and spiritedness all converge in one aim" (Sachs 10).

11 cf. *EN* 1135b20-27. Concerning bad "fortune", besides that Aristotle might mean it relative to the agent (i.e., from the agent's perspective), we will see (Ch. 4.6) that Aristotle allows the agent's root vice to be considered from a perspective showing it to be pathological and therefore blameless.

not only defined by imitating *people acting* (*prattontas* and *drontas*) but should imitate *an action* (*praxeon*), then *whose* action or *what sort* of action does Aristotle mean? The second problem relates to Aristotle's famous but opaque tenets of tragedy. These specify that the protagonist of a tragedy should be neither vicious nor especially virtuous, of great repute and in good fortune, and should undergo a change into bad fortune as a result of some mistake (*hamartia*), in a way that defies both the character and the spectator's expectations and yet is entirely plausible. This being so, (2.2) how is it that watching such a character should, by means of the induction of pity and fear in the spectator, produce in him the cleansing (*katharsis*) of such feelings, along with wonder (*thaumazein*) and *philanthropia*? I take this to be the central problem of the text, and it is that to which Sachs' solution directly applies. Third, in Chapter 13, Aristotle makes the case that the most beautiful (*kalliste*) tragic story should follow a change from good into bad fortune, but in Chapter 14 he says that the most powerful (*kratiston*) story is the one in which someone realizes their mistake before doing it. Given the ambiguous difference between *kalliste* and *kratiston* in the context, (2.3) how are these apparently contradictory positions to be reconciled?

2.1. In What Sense is Action the Object of Tragic Imitation?

All poems, says Aristotle, are not only imitations but imitations *of* actions and people acting.[12] Comedy and tragedy are called "dramas" in virtue of imitating actions "with people performing deeds and acting [*drontas*]". Aristotle's definition of tragedy adds a further wrinkle.[13] The relevant parts have it that tragedy is:

- an imitation of an action (*praxeos*) of serious stature and complete
- imitating people acting (*dronton*) and not using narration

Tragedy is not only "imitating people acting" but is "an imitation of action". The former posit is

12 Aristotle identifies the various forms of what has come to be called poetry as having the common factor of being imitations, and imitations of a specific kind. All poetry exists at the nexus of three defining ranges of mediums, objects, and ways. Poetry's medium is "rhythm, speech, and harmony" (in varying proportions); its object is "those acting" (who are of either a better (*spoudaios*) or worse (*phaulos*) type); and its way is by the poet's either making himself a reporter of actions or by presenting agents directly.

13 "Tragedy, then, is an imitation of an action that is of serious stature and complete, having magnitude, in language made pleasing in distinct forms in separate parts, imitating people acting and not using narration, accomplishing by means of pity and fear the cleansing of these states of feeling" (1449b22-29).

unanimously agreed upon but the latter turns out to be controversial. Every tragedy has six aspects – story, states of character, wording, thinking, spectacle, and song-making – and "not a few poets, so to speak, have used these as forms of tragedy".[14] Aristotle holds that tragedy should take its form not from just any of these but by story (*muthos*) specifically, by which he means "the imitation of the action" or "the composition (*sunthesis*) of things done" or "the organization (*sustasis*) of things done".[15] Aristotle will say that the *muthos* is "the source (*arche*) and like the soul (*psuche*) of the tragedy".[16] Evidently, Aristotle takes the imitated action to be like a governing or organizing principle (*arche*) according to which every other aspect of tragedy will, as it were, have its movements ordered and in turn function as the materials from which the story as a whole will derive its peculiar state of being-at-work (*energeia*) at any given time. The same could apparently be argued about any of the other aspects of tragedy, however, and it is on this point that Aristotle addresses the objection that character, rather than action, might be the first and greatest part of tragedy.[17]

Aristotle's answer appeals to the importance of tragedy to be imitative "not of human-beings, but of actions and of life".[18] In life, character is developed for the sake of acting well and not the other way around, as it is one's success or failure in the realm of action that determines one's fate. When making poetry with people acting this order can be inverted but, it is observed, the distinctive effect of tragedy will fail to be produced; even the most threadbare story has greater potential for the tragic effect than a "row of phrases that show character, well made in both wording and thinking". For reasons Aristotle does not here elaborate, tragedy must imitate a first-order experience of living in a common and hazardous world, rather than a second-order experience based on such actions.

Tragedy imitates with people acting, organized according to action, and specifically "an action" of serious stature and complete. What does Aristotle mean by "an action"? In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, an action always originates with an acting human-being; its unity is forged in his imagination.[19] Yet, Aristotle is able to say that the *Odyssey* models an action "of the sort" he means, even though

14 *Poet.* 1450a13-16.
15 *Poet.* 1450a2-3; 16-17.
16 *Poet.* 1450a37-39.
17 *Poet.* 1450a15ff.. The force behind this objection is at first difficult to grasp, as if someone were to maintain that biography was the paradigm for tragic poetry. The problem becomes more apparent when we acknowledge the close relationship between action and character. Character itself is invisible; it only becomes disclosed in the actions someone takes in the circumstances put upon them in life. To suggest that character, rather than action, might be the organizing principle of tragedy would be to emphasize that the poetic organization of actions serves primarily to showcase character, and the same argument could be applied to any of the other aspects of tragedy.
18 *Poet.* 1450a16.
19 cf. *EN* 1142a25-27ff.; *DA* 431b3-10.

Telemachus sometimes takes the spotlight.[20] We can bring the sort of action Aristotle means into clearer sight by way of his presentation of two infelicities of the poets concerning preparing an action suitable for drama. These are, first, that the poets cling to the particulars of history, and, second, that they model their stories on unsuitable unities, such as the merely temporal unities of human lives or entire wars.[21] These criticisms suggest that the sort of organizing action Aristotle means must be relatively universal and atemporal. At the same time, however, this action should presumably bear some kinship to the personal action discussed in the *Ethics*. Can the nature of the action of the *Poetics* be clarified?

2.2. How Does the Tragic Effect Work?

Aristotle's famous definition of tragedy ends with a new assertion concerning what Aristotle will call the "special property (*idion*) of this kind of imitation":[22]

- accomplishing by means of pity and fear the *katharsis* of *pathêmata* of this sort

This assertion is elaborated with others. The production of fear and pity requires that the whole action governing the tragedy not only follow the rule of plausibility simply, but also do so in a way that is paradoxical such that the outcome is a source of wonder.[23] Such a paradoxical action is "complex" insofar as it involves involve "a recognition or a reversal or both".[24] A reversal (*peripeteia*) is the "change to the contrary of the things being done," and a discovery is "a change from ignorance to knowledge, whether toward friendship (*philia*) or enmity".[25] Now, since Aristotle makes clear that the recognition is a violation of expectation belonging to the characters in the play, and since recognition and reversal need not coincide, reversal must be a violation of expectation belonging to the spectators.[26] As well, since the spectators tend to know the myth in outline in advance, this violation of expectation

20 *Poet.* 1451a28-33.

21 *Poet.* 1451a38ff.; 1451a17ff.; 1459a20ff.. As regards the first criticism, the poet is not bound by the same laws as the historian and, despite the likely plausibility of things that *did* happen, deals with things that *could* happen, or at the universal rather than particular level. As regards the second, "pretty nearly most of the poets" do not recognize that the unity constituted by a temporal phase is far too complex to serve as a model for a story, and as such tend to produce stories which amalgamate the suitable model of "an action" with unsuitable temporal ones (1459a20-25; 1459a32-34; 1451a15-20ff.; 1459a38-b2). Homer's brilliance is shown by his not even attempting to order his stories around temporal unities but instead selecting out one part of the event and supplementing it as needed with episodes from others.

22 *Poet.* 1452b34-35.

23 *Poet.* 1452a1-5.

24 *Poet.* 1452a17, trans. Davis.

25 *Poet.* 1452a22ff., trans. Davis.

26 *Poet.* 1452b2-9; 1452a33-34; Davis *xx.*

can not be the revelation of an unexpected outcome simply, but the revelation of its unexpected plausibility given the circumstances.[27] Aristotle says the production of the specialized property requires the simultaneous occurrence of reversal and recognition, that is, of the character and the audience's simultaneous recognition that their expectations have been violated.[28] It is only in this simultaneity, Aristotle says, that "being unfortunate and being fortunate will stand side-by-side" and so allow "either pity or fear" to make its appearance.[29]

Since tragedy must involve a change of fortune, Aristotle turns to discuss suitable characters and trajectories. Aristotle lists three kinds which are unsuitable:

- Equitable men (*epieikeis*) are not to be shown changing from good to bad fortune since this is neither frightening nor pitiable but repellent (*miaron*).

- People of bad character are not to be shown changing from bad to good fortune since this is neither pitiable nor frightening, nor does it produce *philanthropia.*

- Someone of extremely bad character should not fall from good to bad fortune since, while this would produce *philanthropia,* it would not produce fear or pity.

What remains is the one between these:

- “[T]he sort of person who is not surpassing in virtue and justice, but does not change into misfortune through bad character and vice, but on account of some *hamartia*, if he is among those who are in great repute and good fortune such as Oedipus and Thyestes and conspicuous men from such families.”

Aristotle says in this section that we feel fear in connection with someone like ourselves and pity in

27 cf. Corcoran, 'The Problem of Dramatic Expectation', 285-287. Corcoran writes, regarding the reversal in the *Oedipus*: "Of course the Messenger is surprised; of course Oedipus is surprised; and of course... the audience does know Oedipus' identity. But none of this changes the fact that it is quite a peculiar or perhaps *amazing* sequence of actions in which we discover we may have murdered our father and married our mother. This is the kind of thing that does not normally happen, it is against all normal expectation. Wonder is a function of the construction of events, and events that are contrary to the expectation of the audience make the most wondrous of reversals" (287).

28 *Poet.* 1452a33ff..

29 *Poet.* 1452a40-b4.

connection with a person undeserving of misfortune. The production of fear and pity specific to a tragedy depends, then, on a character who, *qua* the stimulation of fear in the spectator, is not only facing misfortune, but also like the spectator in some relevant respect, and, *qua* the stimulation of pity, is not only "other" than the spectator, but also undeserving of the misfortune. The character suitable to this function is not the *epieikês* nor someone of extremely bad character but one who, somewhere between, is "not surpassing in virtue and justice". The change he undergoes cannot be the result of bad character or vice but some *hamartia.*[30] In tragedy, the missing of the mark specifically concerns the mistaking of a friend (*philos*) for an enemy. This causes the transition into bad fortune, reversal and recognition, and then the third ingredient of the action specific to tragedy, suffering.[31]

The witnessing by the spectator of such an agent unexpectedly missing the mark and falling from good to bad fortune is said "by means of pity and fear" to accomplish the *katharsis* of such *pathêmata.* It is yet unclear, however, how these means should result in the distinctive effect entailing the *katharsis* of such *pathêmata,* along with wonder and *philanthropia.*[32]

2.3. Which Organization of Tragedy is Best?

In Chapter 13, Aristotle forwards the following hierarchy of sorts of organizing tragic action (highest to lowest):

- The single organization: The changing from good fortune to bad of a person.

30 The root sense of the word *hamartia* is of missing a mark with a spear or arrow, a word Aristotle assigns technical significance and involves within a central theoretical model of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (Sachs 8-9). By this model, the launcher is one's character, the shots are one's actions, and the mark is the beautiful (1115b12-13; 1122b 6-7). The hitting of the mark is the acting in accordance with some extreme of appropriateness, of which the enduring tendency or comportment to do so is just what it is to be excellent in the given respect. A missed mark occurs when someone turns out not to have acted for the sake of the result he supposed but toward the outcome of some other result he did not mean for, which in the general sense of the term includes accidents due to justifiable misapprehension but in its specific sense reduces to misapprehension owing to one's own negligence (1135b12ff.).

31 *Poet.* 1453a13-18; 452b10-14.

32 Aristotle's novel use of the word for cleansing or purification occurs also in a famous and pertinent passage in the *Politics:* "For the passion that occurs strongly in connection with certain sorts of souls is present in all, but differs by greater and less – for example, pity and fear, and further, inspiration [*enthusiasmos* – literally "possessed-by-a-god"]. For there are certain persons who are possessed by this motion, but as a result of the sacred tunes – when they use the tunes that put the soul in a frenzy – we see them calming down as if obtaining a cure and a purification [*katharsis*]. This same thing, then, must necessarily be experienced also by the pitying and fearful as well as by the generally passionate, and by others insofar as each individual has a share in such things, and there must occur for all a certain purification [*katharsis*] and a feeling of relief accompanied by pleasure" (1342a5-15).

- The double organization: The changing from bad fortune to good for the better person(s), and the changing of good fortune to bad for the worst person(s).

One man's downfall is sufficient to produce the tragic effect. The appeal of the double organization stems from the spectators' desires to have the story end according to prayer, i.e., for the outcome to be determined by favorable – even impossibly favorable – fortune.[33] The poets are motivated to gratify this desire, despite its pleasure being more native to comedy, where no deed leaves too much of a mark. The single downward trajectory is the "most beautiful" (*kalliste*) and "most tragic" organization of the story.[34]

In Chapter 14, Aristotle forwards a second hierarchy of sorts of organizations. This hierarchy can be reduced to two tiers (lowest to highest):[35]

- "...to act [*praxai*], and, being ignorant, to do [*praxai*] what is terrible and then afterward to recognize the friendship..."

- "...to intend to do [*poiein*] something beyond cure because of ignorance but to recognize before doing it [*poiêsai*]."

The former, modeled by Sophocles' *Oedipus*, is not repellent (*miaron*), and the recognition is astounding (*ekplektikon*). The latter, however, modeled by Euripides' *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, is "most powerful" (*kratiston*). Even within the immediate context, Aristotle does not explain how this is so. Moreover, this position seems to be in direct contradiction to that of the previous chapter: how can someone's fortune change from good to bad if they foresee and avoid the bad outcome in the nick of time, and is this not tantamount to the happy but unsuitable ending of the panderer?

I submit that headway toward the unlocking of this and the earlier difficulties can be made following Sachs' proposed approach to the second, most basic, difficulty in particular.

33 *Poet.* 1453a34-40; cf. *EN* 1111b19-31.
34 *Poet.* 1453a19; 1453a23.
35 *Poet.* 1453b26-37 trans Davis. The hierarchy can be reduced once adapted to the principles of tragedy already established, namely, the need for a *hamartia* and *anagnorisis*.

3. Sachs' Account of the Tragic Effect

The basic problem of the *Poetics* (Ch. 2.2, above) is how seeing a person relatively similar to oneself undergoing a change from good to bad fortune due to a *hamartia* should induce not only fear and pity on their behalf but "the *katharsis* of such *pathêmata*." Insofar as the protagonist is *like us,* we dread his possible bad fate, and once it is upon him, insofar as he *does not deserve it*, we feel badly for him, but this sequence taken alone does not explain an emotional effect of much specialty and impact. Sachs' point of entry follows from a consideration of the reason behind the pairing of pity with fear, two *pathê* Aristotle takes as bearing a peculiar inter-subjective relation.

3.1. The Importance of Culpability: The Justification for the Linking of the *Hamartia* of the *Poetics* with the *Hamartema* in the Specific Sense of the *Ethics*

Sachs advises that it is instructive to consider what is lacking when one of the feelings occurs in absence of the other. A story in which a character changes from good to bad fortune which evokes fear but not pity is like a horror movie, and one which evokes pity but not fear is like a tear-jerker.[36] Further, if both feelings are produced, but only one after the other, the result is no better than a double feature of the above. If it is accepted that such a production (first one feeling in isolation, then the other) does not measure up to the characteristic effect of tragedy, this, says Sachs, would be "because the de-linking of fear and pity distances us from their sources". In each case, in the absence of the other feeling, the imposing evil attaches to some external misfortune – be that a serial killer lurking in the neighbourhood or a terminal disease afflicting a loved one – which appears as the source of the disturbance. The viewer feels emotion, but is only called to dwell upon the fallout of bad luck, a burden rather easily shed after the drama ends. The relegation of the disturbance to the periphery could be disrupted, and the feelings of fear and pity complicated, by making the protagonist himself the source of the eventual suffering that he undergoes.

It turns out that Aristotle has a technical model for just this case. In *Nicomachean Ethics* V.8, *hamartemata* is the general class assigned to harms done in ignorance of some relevant particular so that the result is not what was supposed. It breaks into two species, only one of which is a *hamartema* in the specific sense:

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36 Sachs 6.

- *Atuchemata* – accidents – are harms that occur contrary to reasonable expectation. Their occurrence is mostly the result of coincidence, with the origin of the harm tracing to something external.

- *Hamartemata* in the specific sense – acts of negligence – are harms that occur in accordance with reasonable expectation. The harm traces to the agent himself and the blame rests with him.

In the case of the latter, an agent deliberates and then acts but the outcome of his action is not what he supposed it would be, and yet, the harm done is still his fault, since he himself was somehow an antecedent cause of his own subsequent failure of perception. The agent aims at an action that he takes to be beautiful but – due to being under some self-induced shroud of ignorance – misses the mark, and only too late realizes his mistake. The result, to an outsider, would be in line with expectation, but to the agent was contrary to his intended outcome.

Sachs' suggestion, then, is tantamount to the thesis that the *hamartia* of the *Poetics* must be the *hamartema* in the specific sense of the *Ethics* in order for the protagonist to both have noble expectations violated and to be the blameworthy source of this violation and its consequences, so that the fear and pity felt by the spectator may be sufficiently complicated that it may produce anything like the powerful distinctive effect we associate with tragedy.

3.2. The Mechanisms of the Tragic Effect in Outline

How is it, then, that fear and pity function within a tragedy? First, let us review Aristotle's presentation of the two *pathê*.[37] In the *Rhetoric,* Aristotle defines fear as:

- a certain pain or distress from the imagining of an impending evil of a destructive or painful sort

37 *Rhet.* 1382a-1383a12; 1385b11-1386b7. In this thesis, I keep with Sachs in freely transposing the definitions of pity and fear given in the *Rhetoric* with the pity and fear of the *Poetics*. This follows from Sachs' basic premise that when contemplating a story – watching an other like us act – our capacities for empathy and dread become blended, and that an adequate account of this blending, drawing for precision on the definitions in the *Rhetoric*, is required to explain tragedy's powerful specialized effect (5-6). In any case, however, the use of pity and fear in the *Poetics* (cf. 1453a4-8) implies all of the key components of their definitions in the *Rhetoric*, and this connection is frequently taken for granted.

- ...whatever is pitied when it happens or is about to happen to others.

And pity as:

- a certain pain at an evil of a destructive or painful sort that appears to happen to someone who doesn't deserve it
- ...whatever things people fear for themselves... when they happen to others.

Fear and pity bear a close correlation but one that is not entirely symmetrical. What we fear for ourselves, we pity when it happens to others. Yet, fear is more sensitive to the imagined and impending, and pity to the occurring. As well, pity (for another) requires that he does not deserve the evil that is upon him, while fear (for oneself) has no such stipulation. Further, Aristotle has said in the *Poetics* that:

- ...pity being for a person undeserving of misfortune and fear for one like us...

This makes clear that we may feel fear for another insofar as he is like us, and, presumably, pity for ourselves insofar as we are like an other.

Now, since, in a tragedy, there is not only recognition but reversal, and reversal is to be synchronized with recognition, the spectator must experience the story from somewhere within the same limited horizon as the protagonist. The spectator begins the story, when the suffering is only prospective, fearing for the protagonist insofar as he is like himself. The spectator even imaginatively pities the protagonist in advance insofar as he anticipates an undeserved negative prospect, perhaps one even predetermined by the familiar premises of the myth. The story builds to a simultaneous reversal and recognition followed by suffering. The spectator should finally feel, presently, the pity thus prepared, insofar as the protagonist was undeserving of the evil now upon him. Yet, following the reversal and recognition, a shroud will have been lifted. It is only following the revelation of the plausibility of the tragic outcome that the altogether scenario can come into focus as being, far from bizarre coincidence, causally robust and indeed even paradigmatic of the relevant *hamartia*. Only now can the protagonist be properly judged and, as Sachs' hypothesis goes, judged blameworthy, not merely for having made the wrong choice, but for having previously induced the delusion now recognized to have caused him to err against his intention. The spectator's ability to pity the (guilty) protagonist

would thereby be challenged, and in remaining would have to be modulated, since pity depends on the protagonist being in some respect undeserving of his suffering.

Whatever this latter respect may be, it would transcend the particulars of the situation – the protagonist being guilty thereby – and reveal some underlying principle of absolution for human-beings. It is in the simultaneous impulse to hold the agent to his mistake and to free him from it that has the ultimate impact of "leav[ing] us gazing at a human image with our habits of blaming and excusing blocked. We are not left saying "he got what he deserved," but we can't say either that he was a helpless victim of a heartless or hideous universe. The poet has knocked all our moralism and sentimentality out of us".[38] This impact, broadly speaking, accounts for the various elements of the tragic mixture of *katharsis, thaumazein*, and *philanthropia*.[39]

However intriguing in outline, Sachs' approach has not disclosed the precise sense in which someone who commits a *hamartema* in the specific sense may nevertheless not be blameworthy. This point's being made clear is necessary for an adequate explanation of the mechanisms of tragedy for human-beings under our premise.

4. The Human Cognitive Apparatus and its Mechanisms of Assigning Blame

If we wish to identify the sense in which a spectator feels that an agent is undeserving of suffering that, in another sense, the spectator perceives the agent to have brought upon himself, we must make recourse to the human cognitive apparatus and its bases for establishing guilt. Genuinely experienced guilt, however – and not just regret following the misfortune of having being caught – depends on the agent feeling he voluntarily acted against his own perceived best interests at some point in his past, i.e., on the phenomenon of *akrasia*.[40] The very possibility of acting against one's own

38 Sachs 16. Sachs writes, earlier: "Our pity cannot stand alone as a sense of the unfairness or unspeakable ugliness of it all, and our fear cannot prompt us to feel that wrongdoer has been taught a lesson. Our fear, directed at something good in the tragic figure that we share, cuts off any wallowing in sentimental pity. Our pity, insisting on the undeserving nature of the suffering, blocks any relief in indignant moralism" (13).

39 *Katharsis* is the "washing our pity clean of sentimentality and our fear clean of self-righteousness" (13). *Thaumazein* is just a more positive and apt description of this same effect: it is characterized by the sudden loss of the sense that we understand what is going on, as in the metaphor of having the ground "drop out" (*ekplêxis*) from under one's feet (15). (Sachs notes that Aristotle interchanges *ekplêktikos* for *thaumazein* at 1455a16-17 and 1460b22-26, thereby linking the two terms.) *Philanthropia* follows the awareness of one's sharing in a condition general to all human-beings. I discuss the mechanics and elements of the tragic effect in detail in Ch. 5.1-2, below.

40 For Aristotle, virtue is conduct according to what is best by nature for the being, i.e., for animals, what is most pleasurable for them in the true sense of the word pleasure (1099a13-14; 1174b14ff.). For an agent to feel that he has truly acted badly, then – and not just due to incomplete information or because of the way things happened to turn out – depends on his capacity to voluntarily act against his own perceived best interests.

perceived best interests depends on the distinctly human capacity to disclose truth in alternate ways: according to reasoning, and according to perception and imagination – upon which reasoning is founded. In this chapter, then, I establish the workings of the cognitive apparatus from *aísthēsis* to *akrasia* for two purposes. First, to fully explicate the mechanisms of blame-assignment necessary to ultimately resolving the mechanisms of the tragic effect. Second, to provide a reference-framework for the ensuing discussion of the tragic effect at-work.

4.1. Sense-Perception[41]

To perceive or sense is dependent on having "a kind of mean between the contrary attributes in the things perceived, for the mean has the discriminating power, since it comes to be either of two extremes in relation to the other".[42] Sense-perception is a development in the soul (the principle of formation of the bodily material) corresponding to the development of a localized material site – the

41 Sense-perception is a higher-order development within Aristotle's account of nature. Its circumstances can be summarized as follows.

The base of Aristotle's account of nature is a maelstrom of elemental things in endless reciprocal transformation into one another. What appear to us as compound things, such as flesh and bone, are just clusters of elemental things temporarily keeping within given limits (*Gen. et Corr.* 334b8ff.). Compound things literally embody elemental things and appear to the human eye as delineated from their surroundings. They are alternately able to be broken down into their constituent things or assembled into artifacts (e.g. bricks and stones into a house). On theoretical reduction, however, Aristotle seems to agree with the sophist Antiphon that compound things are only heaps of elemental things, with their principle of embodiment deriving from the observer (*Met.* 1043b19-24; 1041b28-30; compare with *Phys*. 193a13-18). This agreement ceases at the point where compound things are recognized to be ensouled, i.e., to exhibit life. Aristotle uses the soul to designate a distinct kind of principle of embodiment. All ensouled things evidence some minimum capacity for self-originating motion, and just this is what it is to be a natural thing in the primary sense (compare *DA* 413a22-24 with *Met.* 1015a15-19). In addition to being subject to the motions of the cosmic churn, natural living things exhibit themselves as distinct loci of motions with regards to proximate material, both that which is the basis for their continuing to be so (i.e., their constitution) and surrounding things.

The kinds of ensouled things accord to a tripartite hierarchy, with each higher tier "present in potency in the previous one" (*DA* 414b20ff.). The minimum standard of life belonging to all ensouled things can be seen in isolation in plant life. The characteristic potencies of plants are for begetting offspring and for ingesting food (and so perpetuating themselves into the future), which have the common defining potency to "beget one like itself" (416b24-25). In their efforts at perpetuation, plants seem to exhibit some basic sense of their surroundings: the flower grows toward the sun and its roots grasp for nutrients. Yet, Aristotle distinguishes plants from animals by the latter's development of the potency for sense-perception (*aísthēsis*), involving at a minimum the senses of touch and taste, and accompanied by a cluster of other potencies ushering in the production of an internal resemblance of surroundings and the beginnings of consciousness. How is the radical development of sense-perception in animals markedly distinct from the basic adaptation to surroundings already present in plant-life? A preliminary answer is provided as follows: "It is also clear why plants do not perceive, although they have a part of the soul and are affected by tangible objects; for they are cooled and warmed. The reason is that they do not have a mean, nor a first principle of a kind such as to receive the forms of objects of perception; rather they are affected by the matter as well" (424a33-424b5, trans. Hamlyn).

42 *DA* 424a1-15.

given organ – by which the thing becomes specially reactive to a specific vector of contrariness.[43] When the animal comes into contact with another thing, all basic material interactions will occur, but now, in virtue of the receptive mean, the animal opens to an extra dimension of affection (*pathê*).[44] To the extent that the organ is at material or elemental odds with the contacting thing along the relevant vector of contrariness, the thing will trigger the specialized and localized material alteration and corresponding change in the soul.[45]

Surprisingly, the basic sensory organ – corresponding to the sense of touch possessed by all animals – is not the flesh.[46] Aristotle posits that the flesh is only a sort of medium for another organ, as if animals were moving cases of water which, on contact, rippled to a core.[47] A centralized organ is needed to account for the ability of the animal to reconcile information received by multiple sensory means – at the least, touch and taste – to be able to judge, for example, that *this sweetness* and *that whiteness* belong to the same thing.[48] This organ is in "immediate connection" with the flesh and is the

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43 The discussion in this section assumes familiarity with Aristotle's hylomorphism. Any tangible thing combines form (*eidos*) and material (*húlē*). The presence of a house, for example, depends on the proper organization or formation of the appropriate underlying material. Both aspects have being, but are bound by a correspondence. We can engage the house itself (as a place for leisure, family, e.g.), or attend to its brickwork if repairs are needed. If the house is left to fall into disarray, the house as such disappears into its sheer opposite non-being, but its materials remain scattered about.

44 In the basic case of one inanimate tangible thing contacting another, a reciprocal reaction is caused. Each thing both *makes* (*poien*) the other do something, and *suffers* (*pathêin*) the other doing something. Depending on the elemental configuration of the things, the results of such contact will vary. It could be the case that nothing happens, that one entirely consumes the other, or that some striking effect is triggered, like the sudden outburst of a flame. In the case of inanimate tangible things – ultimately "heaps" of elemental things – their interaction will be exhaustively determined by the properties and potencies of the collection of elemental things they each embody.

45 The continued functioning of a sensory mean depends on two material conditions:

- That it sustains the given material configuration by which it qualifies as a sensory mean at all.
- That it remains materially neutral with regards to the vector it is charged with registering.

Now, the animal's potency for sense-perception – with at the minimum the sense of touch – depends on an organ with an elemental constitution sufficiently diverse to meet the conditions above. Plants, says Aristotle, are too earthy – they are the equivalent of bones and hair (435a20ff.). While they differ from rocks by having a real independent sphere of control, they are entirely caught up in this function. If all elemental and compound things are just like a mixture of particles in a flow, and a plant is like a tangle of torn netting caught in their current, the animal's sensory mean allows it to be like mended netting which can thereby begin to have things pass through it at differing degrees of resistance. It is in this way that animals are given not just to "be affected by the matter" but to receive material *indicators* or *semblances* of surrounding things.

46 *DA* 423a1ff.. The responsiveness of skin to contact should not indicate that the flesh is the basic sense organ since even if we were encased in an external membrane we would still feel through it.

47 The difference between the senses of touch and taste and those higher developments of smell, hearing, and sight turn out to be just that the former transfer impressions through an internal medium and the latter through an external one, at a degree of remove. For this reason, the latter are perceived as being separate, where the former's difference "escapes notice" and so are perceived as within the limits of the animal's self (432b6-17). It is as if the seat of sensation was a man and the flesh was a shield he had equipped, reverberating under strikes.

48 *DA* 426b15ff.; 434b12ff.

terminus of all external senses.[49]

The central organ is the origin (*arche*) of the animal's potency for self-directed movement. The thing that causes the animal to move "is the soul, distinct from the magnitude just described and yet located therein".[50] The central organ, then, is simultaneously the *material terminus* of material sense impressions and the seat of the animal *soul* – in virtue of which the animal is able to initiate movement. This is to say that the reconciliation of the senses that takes place is not strictly material.[51] Animals, unlike plants, possess an integrated streaming rendering of impinging phenomena founded on a common material termination point of semblances of such phenomena.[52] This rendering, the perceiving aspect of the soul, is the governing principle and the origin of the animal's ability to initiate movement through its divided material parts.[53] While the rendering's being-at-work at any given time is founded on material with the potency for sustaining the rendering in its good functioning, the rendering itself has the potency to induce movement back through that material foundation.[54] The animal's material receptions travel to the central organ where they are materially compiled while being formally rendered, and it is out from this perception that the animal then reacts against its surroundings.

The phenomena stemming from the higher senses are rendered as distant and those of the basic senses are rendered as proximate – within the limits of the animal's own body – so much so that the perception of these senses usually occurs beneath the animal's notice.[55] The animal is preoccupied with its surroundings – reading its proximate impressions into them, as it were – a feature that opens the possibility for better or worse sub-notice or "tacit" adaptation to surroundings.[56]

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49 *Insomn* 455a20-25; *PA* 656a26-33. cf. *GA* 744a2ff.; 781a21ff.. Animals are not distinguished from plants by merely being responsive to their surroundings – by mere flesh – but by a nervous system connecting to a unifying centre.

50 *MA* 703a1-3; cf. 703b1-2.

51 One is able to draw distinctions between, for example, the white and sweet aspects of sugar, but this always occurs while they are somehow being held together as one for comparison (*DA* 426b27ff.). Since these different aspects, in their difference, are just as intransigent as opposites like white and black, the sense in which they are unified cannot be material, which could at best arrange them side-by-side as numerically distinct parts. Aristotle says that the kind of distinguishing that holds-together happens as "an indivisible act in an indivisible time".

52 cf. *Phys.* 218b29-35; *EN* 1174b6-9. In other words, perception, despite its multifarious material basis, must emerge above this basis as an integrated whole.

53 *MA* 702b13-703a3.

54 cf. *DA* 427a3-6. I take *aísthēsis* to be a potency that, while having a material correspondence and dependency, is properly understood as the presence of a phenomenal rendering, private to the animal that has it. Any potency or *pathê* dependent on *aísthēsis*, when at-work, must manifest within the animal's sensorial rendering.

55 *DA* 432b6-17.

56 The currency of animal motivation is pleasure and pain. Should the body be done violence, as in the case of touching something scorching hot, the respective part of the material mean will surge beyond its limits just as the progressive destruction of the respective part of the body is occurring. Within the animal's rendering, the relevant aspect of one's constitutive state will erupt into sharp distortion at the same time that one's bodily foundation will be undergoing destruction, and just this coincidence at the material level is experienced as bodily pain at the sensorial level. Thus, the advent of the sense-perception and the soul's rendering of its surroundings is accompanied by the capacity for new *pathê* such as pleasure and pain and desire and aversion

4.2. The Imagination in its Anticipatory Function

Aristotle identifies the imagination as "a motion coming about as a result of the being-at-work of sense perception and corresponding to it".[57] The appearances in the soul's rendering of its surroundings not only derive from a material conflux of semblances, but also feed back into it, lingering and affecting future sensorial appearances. This residue will not only prove highly beneficial to the animal but will turn out to be the grounding for higher order functions such as rational thought.

The influence of the imagination is ordinarily concealed by perception, like a small fire burning beside a larger one.[58] In *On Dreaming,* Aristotle elaborates on the material process of the imagination in isolation from the perception of one's surroundings.[59] While dreaming, residual semblances of earlier

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Aristotle defines pleasure and pain as the "being-active in the mean state in the perceptive part, in relation to the good or bad as such" (*DA* 431a10-16). This definition is consistent with Aristotle's correction to his predecessors' account of pleasure. In short, pleasure is just the being-at-work of a relatively stable individual comportment or characteristic (*hexis*), rather than the motions (*kineseis*) accompanying the coming-into-being of some characteristic. The latter, according to Aristotle, is only pleasurable incidentally.

Pleasure tends to be misinterpreted because, in the most basic cases of pleasure, as when someone hungry savours food, there is an obvious correspondence to the body's being replenished, and so pleasure seems to be just the manifestation in perception of a material alteration within the body (*EN* 1173b14-16). It would thus be the case that the body has a certain natural best condition and that pleasure coincides with its restoration to this condition and pain with its deficiency from it (1173a29ff.). Yet, there are many pleasures which do not fit the restoration/depletion model of eating/hunger, such as the pleasures of mathematics, scent, certain things seen and heard, and memories and hopes, which often arrive without any antecedent pain (1173b16-21). Pleasure, then, must originate at the level of perception, and this is why the experience of it is more characteristic of a *whole,* arriving already completed and infusing an experience all at once, than a *part,* which manifests in perception as localized activity oriented at bringing something else into being (1174a14-28). Bodily injury and replenishment are experienced as painful or pleasurable, but their occurrences are incidental to pleasure as such, or are the conditions for what is only one sort of pleasure. Pleasure, then, properly speaking, is not limited by what is most natural and good for the animal's body but rather by what is most natural and good for the animal's perceiving or sensorial being-at-work. This distinction is not recognized by animals lacking reason who, aside from behaviours impelled by the pre-dispositions of their species, seek the perceptions involving bodily abundance (*EN* 1118a18-26ff.).

Aristotle writes that the "fleeing and the desiring, in their being-at-work, are the same thing [as pleasure]" (*DA* 431a10-16). If pleasure is the "bloom" that comes over the rendering when the animal is perceiving something natural to it, desire is the orientation toward some perceived object promising the intensification of this bloom, and pursuit is the mobilization of the body toward the drawing present of this end.

57 *DA* 429a2-4. The most basic animals, such as larvae, sponges, and oysters, have only pleasure/pain and desire/aversion. In their lightless and timeless renderings, there is only a fluctuating bloom and a flow of cues suggesting whether to extend or recoil. In all but these, however, the potencies for imagination, memory, and local motion are also present.

58 *Insomn* 461a1-3.

59 If sleep is the "seizure of the primary sense-organ, rendering it unable to actualize its powers" (or the temporary recession of the perceiver into the processes of the body), dreaming is an "affection of the faculty of perception" but only that part which remains at-work: the imagination (*On Sleep* 458a28-30; *Insomn* 459a8-10).

sensorial renderings continue to course through the body and may pass through the central organ.[60] It is possible for dreams to follow a semblance of familiar order because the materials that underlie their appearance flow in the same sequences in which they were originally perceived. In waking perception, the imagination continues to be at-work but now alongside the appearance of the surrounding state of affairs; materials are no longer left to flow according to bodily processes but are harnessed by the sensory rendering in some beneficial way. This application of the imagination is not something that the animal controls; indeed, should the animal become aware that some image appearing to it derives from something no longer present, the image will be recognized as such and its bearing on present reality perceived as second-order.[61] While humans are able to hunt through retained images or conjure amalgamations as they will, there must be a more basic application of imagination that depends on its being experienced tacitly in the way characteristic of the basic senses.

Two sources, taken together, suggest how the imagination might be put to use in this way, based on how perceptions are retained. First, in Chapter 2 of *On Memory*, the exclusively human potency for the deliberate recall of memories is said to be possible in virtue of the property of motions to follow one another according to natural sequences, whether by necessity (and so every time) or by habit (*ethos*) (and so for the most part).[62] These sequences are not just isolated strings but form networks.[63] Presumably, then, as animals are subjected to their manifold surroundings and impressing phenomena, these will tend to be perceived and retained according to the natural sequences they follow. Second, in *Posterior Analytics* II.19, Aristotle calls attention to the tendency of retained perceptions toward consolidation. Several memories, occurring often in connection with the same thing, settle in the soul as the universal that was present through each of them.[64] Repeated perceptions, then, are not retained singly, but tend toward disclosing their common significance.

These two sources suggest the following system by which perceptions are retained. The animal's

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60 When, according to Aristotle's account of sleep, the blood is given to travel toward the central organ:

> the changes present within it – some potentially, some actively – travel down with it. They are so disposed that in *this* change, *that* one will emerge from the blood, and as *this* one perishes, *that* one. They are disposed to one another like the artificial frogs that rise to the surface of the water as salt is being dissolved. In a similar way, these changes are in us potentially, and become active when what arrests them is relaxed. And as they are released, they are active in the little blood that remains in the sense-organs, taking on a resemblance, as cloud-shapes do, which in their rapid changes we liken to humans and centaurs. Each of them is, as has been said, a remnant of a percept in activity; and when the real percept has departed, it persists, and it is true that it is like Coriscus, but it is not Coriscus. (*Insomn* 461b11-14, trans. Lorenz, *The Brute Within,* 155-156)

61 *DA* 427b18-21; *Mem* 449b18-23; *Mem* 450a19-21; compare *Mem* 452b25.

62 *Mem* 451b10.

63 *Mem* 452a15.

64 *PA* 100a3-9.

perceptions are limited by the surrounding state of affairs which manifests continually according to the orders of natural sequence. As the animal proceeds through its usual motions, phenomena appear in continuous sequence, but are retained such that recurrent sequential relations between recognized phenomena are compiled, leading toward the internal disclosure of the necessary causal connections underlying what tended to appear according to habitual sequence. Such retentions, as well, are always associated with an experience of pleasure or pain.

I therefore suggest the following function of the imagination at-work supplementing perception. Perceptions are retained and systematized as an internal microcosm of the surrounding causal structure.[65] When the sense-perception is at-work perceiving some variety of phenomena, the imagination is also at-work such that the animal does not perceive just these phenomena, but renders them together with the predominant sequential chains associated with them. In this way, the imagination serves as a bridge from the sphere of immediately presenting phenomena to those beyond the horizon. The brackish water here is depreciated as an object of desire given the previously encountered fresh water now imagined to be available down such-and-such a route. The imagination infuses the state of affairs with the animal's retained and compiled perceptions and so functions like a probability map suggesting where, on aggregate of past experience, the phenomena's causal associations indicate more or less pleasure or pain than would otherwise be apparent. These probabilistic supplementations effectively charge the phenomena, rendering some objects as deceptively painful or pleasurable and opening passages toward desirable objects beyond the immediate horizon. This function of the imagination accounts for the animal's potency for adaptive behaviour. Each animal, however, comes pre-clothed, as it were, in the material arrangement characteristic of its species, fitting it with certain such advantages in advance.

4.3. Habit, Comportment (or Characteristic), and Character – the Effort Towards Accurate Perception

The imagination produces the supplementary perceptions that enable the animal to comport itself to resist immediate pleasures in favour of greater pleasures beyond the horizon. In this function the imagination can be honed or allowed to atrophy. An animal's having the default arrangement of qualities and potencies natural to its species does not yet guarantee its being-at-work in the ways that

65 This or that perceived sequence can be said to persist as a flow of material semblances (as in dreaming), but altogether they are retained as an interconnected manifold of material semblances, like patterns set into wax (*Mem* 450a31-b11).

are best for it, i.e., most pleasant to it by nature.[66] Among those beings to which some characteristic work or action belongs, this work can be done more or less well, in the same way that a harpist at his craft may be either serious or mediocre.[67] It is only in rising from merely being at-work to being at-work *well* that the animal fulfills its natural potential to experience the full extension of pleasurable perception available to it.[68]

The first step to achieving a well-tuned anticipatory imagination, by way of a collection of overall good characteristics (*hexeis*), is habituation (*ethos*), which Aristotle presents as sheer repetition.[69] The animal is put through the motions distinctive of some sort of being-at-work before it itself has the motivation to originate such motions. The forcing of the animal through a sequence of perceptions facilitates its becoming aware for itself of the source of a valuable pleasure.[70] It is the proverbial leading of the horse to water, who must itself, in the end, drink. If it does, on tasting from the source of pleasure, the animal gains its own motivation to behave in the way conducive to consistently reaching that pleasure.

The purpose of habituation, then, is to shift the animal's attention away from immediately imposing desires. In youth especially, the animal is assailed by painful feelings compelling it to seek relief by seizing whatever counter-irritants are at hand. At this point, the animal is at-work insofar as it is living and perceiving simply, but its governance and movements are effectively hijacked and rendered passive by external sources; it is like a weed caught in a river's flow. Habit serves, in the first place, to counteract the one sort of external imposition with another. This counteractive function of habituation allows the young animal to come into its own and be capable of being-at-work for itself and

66 *EN* 1103a27ff.; 1099a14-18.

67 *EN* 1097b22ff..

68 This entails the achievement and maintenance of the optimal set of active states (*hexeis*), and corresponding alterations to its pre-existing structure of material qualities (*diatheses*), enabling the animal to consistently assume its best way of being-at-work. In human beings, the set of *hexeis* developed from one's given potencies is their character (*êthos*) and excellent character corresponds to the excellent way of being at work which is happiness (*eudaimonia*) (cf. 1153b10-14). In human beings, however, character must be accorded to reason, the influence of which will be discussed in the following section. The discussion here is generalized to apply to animals as well.

69 *EN* 1103a21-24. Aristotle speculates on the etymological link between the Greek words for character (*êthos*) and habit (*ethos*): it is because character comes into being as a consequence of habit that character gets its name by a small inflection from habit (1103a15-17). The words do not mean the same thing. Sachs writes:

> How the condition meant by character derives from habit is more complex. Ethical virtue is by no means simply a set of socially approved habits. It requires [1] a pre-existent natural capacity meant to be completed properly in a certain way... ; [2] an appropriate habit, which might be imposed by parents or by other social training, is a second necessary condition for its development. But there is a third and crucial necessary factor that brings a virtue into being, that is [3] the deliberate contribution of the person who comes to have it, the *hexis* or active condition... as a result of which Aristotle considers us to be responsible for our own characters. (Sachs, *Nicomachean Ethics,* 22, note 25)

70 cf. Burnyeat, 'On Learning to Be Good', 71-73.

developing good *hexeis*.[71]

This overall comportment of various *hexeis* must not only be established but subsequently maintained. When the animal's imagination is at-work in a good way as a result of good *hexeis*, the previously imposing immediate objects of desire recede into the background, as it were, and new avenues open to objects of desire beyond the horizon. So long as the animal then pursues its desires in the way it has been habituated and acquires the pleasures it expects, its *hexeis* will be maintained. If, however, the animal is somehow brought to pursue contrary pleasures, its existing *hexeis* are endangered.[72] The signs of degeneration are mitigated to the extent that the animal did not itself originate the motion that resulted in the bad behaviour.[73] In order to know whether the animal is in danger of lapsing into inferior *hexeis*, then, one must consider whether their behaviour was voluntary.

Aristotle divides involuntary behaviour into two species: that which is compelled by force and that is which is done in ignorance.[74] Now, force is only determinate when the source of motion is "from outside, while the one who is forced contributes nothing", as when one is moved entirely by a strong wind. Otherwise, external influences only amplify the perennial uncertainty of life, the medium in which one does well or badly according to the factors they do control.

As for ignorance, only a specific kind is properly involuntary. This is when the ignorance is exclusively of any of the relevant particulars.[75] The sign of this is that the animal regrets what was done upon perception of its error. Otherwise, the mistake is not properly "involuntary" but rather "non-voluntary"; the animal is indeed behaving in ignorance of its own best interests but the mistaking of particulars is only a symptom of confusion rooted at the general level, warranting corrective measures.[76]

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71 cf. *EN* 1103b22. Habituation can be conceived as functioning to counteract the drive toward immediate pleasures or that away from immediate pains, either in a general sense or with regard to some specific set of behaviours pertinent to the species. In human-beings, these categories are filled, respectively, by temperance, endurance, and the rest of the virtues.

72 The satisfaction of different desires and corresponding movements constitute habituation to a different way of being-at-work which may be outside the range of what is best for the animal. If the animal is seen to be making such movements, it is a sign that it does not have the proper *hexeis,* whether due to never having them in the first place or to subsequently going astray.

73 While bad behaviour still produces the perceptions which may lead to the experiencing of the wrong pleasure and puts the animal in danger of developing a bad overall comportment, an animal that moves in such a way due to external factors but otherwise means to stay within its existing *hexeis* is likely to return to them upon regaining control.

74 Ignorance (*agnoia*) does not depend on the animal's having the faculty of reason since Aristotle holds that irrational animals are capable of behaving more or less voluntarily. Ignorance can be for want of the sort of truth disclosed in perception and imagination.

75 The relevant particulars are: *who is acting*, *what the act is*, *what it is concerned with or consists in, with what (instrument),* and *in what manner,* and, of these, especially, "*the things in which the action consists and for the sake of which it is done*" (1111a4-19).

76 These kinds of ignorance are:

Every animal would wish to accord itself to the ways of being-at-work most natural to it. Its ability to do so, however, depends on the initial fostering and continued maintenance of its rendering such that the right objects appear to it as pleasurable. Since a bad *hexeis* – as though a damaged lens – corrupts the very means by which the animal judges its own best behaviour, outside forces are needed to correct it. Thus, animals generally remain under a shroud of perceptual ignorance limiting their capability to behave according to their own best interests, depending for their well-being on the good fortune of having been well-habituated.

4.4. Intellect: Exemplification[77] and Deduction

In animals having a certain advanced natural potency, the cognitive process involves an additional faculty.[78] The anticipatory function of the imagination was described as depending on the tendency of retained perceptions toward consolidation within a singular network of causal relations. This *tendency*, however, is capable of undergoing the radical leap from the particular to the general; through the accumulation of particular examples, such as, "this thing was beneficial to Callias when he was sick with this disease, and to Socrates, and one by one in this way to many people," it is possible to

- Ignorance of general limits to which the animal was already expected to have been adapted (*EN* 1110b33-35; 1113b33-1114a4).

- Ignorance of what should be pursued or avoided owing to the animal's having already fallen into a poor overall comportment (*EN* 1110b28-34).

- Ignorance induced by the animal itself at an earlier time (e.g. by ingesting a forbidden substance) (*EN* 1113b29-33).

77 Sachs writes: "*Epagogê* is usually translated "induction," which suggests a generalization from many examples, but Aristotle makes clear in many places (for instance, *Posterior Analytics* 71a 7-9 and *Physics* 247b 5-7) that a single act of being brought face to face with the universal in a particular is sufficient" (Sachs, *Nicomachean Ethics,* 105, note 47).

78 While the perceptive potency is always founded in the body such that the wrong bodily constitution corrupts the functioning of the sensory mean, Aristotle's contention is that the intellect, insofar as it is at-work, can exert its general mastering function with regard to any object without being corrupted in the same way. This is because:

- If what is called the intellect, in being receptive to the forms of objects, is like the perceptive mean, it needs to maintain neutrality with respect to its objects like any other mean (429a15-18; cf. 429a13ff., 431a17-20).

- The intellect, however, is remarkable for its capacity for the "thinking of all things... in order to master them". I.e., if it is at-work at all in its characteristic function, it is neutral with regard to its object.

- As a mean, then, it must be "unmixed" with the body.

This contention rules out the body as such as the material of intellectual activity properly speaking: where the being-at-work of perception as a potency for enacting motion depends on a material influx through the body, the being-at-work of the intellect as a potency depends on perception and imagination (*DA* 431a10-20; 431b2-5).

arrive at judgements such as, "it was beneficial to *all* such people marked out as being of one kind".[79] In thought – out of the many instances – the universal whole (*katholou*) is finally brought to notice. It is only with the advent of this capacity that an animal is able to sharply resolve causal relations and origins (*archai*). Without it, an animal may be aware *that* fire is hot, and even to adapt itself to this fact, but is unable to identify precisely *why* it is so.[80]

In animals with this capacity, the *katholou* emerges from an example (*epagogê*), that is, from an arrangement of particular phenomena taken as representative of something more fundamental (*PA* 71a7-9; *Phys.* 247b5-12). Aristotle gives an example of how an *arche katholou* comes to be understood out of what was previously only consolidated in the soul: it is "as in a battle when a rout occurs, if one man makes a stand another does and then another, until a position of strength is reached".[81] Aristotle is describing a distinctive way of processing retained perceptions or, as they manifest in the soul's rendering of its surroundings, images. The images must be turned, as it were, in a way incidental to their original sensory intake and assembly. This is not just any incidental way of re-arranging images, but one which is proper to the things as they are in some permanent respect. The animal looks from a given selection of phenomena to the principle that would account for their appearance. This capacity requires or is just precisely the adaptation to the foundational premise that any discrepancy can be resolved.[82] The utilization of the imagination characteristic of the intellect's processing of *epagogê* is the adapting of images to fit the strictures of a definite array. Ultimately, all particulars are meant to coordinate to a single array: the way things are.

Different arrangements of particulars have different utility for clarifying principles. The naked eye is disadvantaged for seeing to the principle governing glass' permeability to light; if, however, the viewer was shrunken down to be able to see glass' perforated material structure, then, from this striking and advantaged perspective, the principle would become clear. Deducing or syllogizing is an activity facilitating such cognitive transportation to advantaged perspectives. In syllogizing, one thing (namely, a single thing posited to be true of a single thing) is compared to another that shares a term with it such that a third thing follows out of necessity, and by this reckoning-together the animal can triangulate how particulars would appear from a foreign perspective.[83]

79 *Met.* 980b30-a2; 981a7-13.
80 *Met.* 981b10-14.
81 *PA* 100a3-9; 100a10ff..
82 Thus the most basic principle – the principle to which adaptation is a necessary condition for intellection – is that "it is not possible for the same thing at the same time both to belong and not belong to the same thing in the same respect" (*Met.* 1005b18-26).
83 Someone may notice that:

Human-beings, then, have the capacity not only to adapt themselves according to *archai* in their attempts to seize objects of desire, as animals do, but also to raise such *archai* to explicit consideration, as if bringing them to the visible forefront. In this, the animal snaps out of taking appearances for granted – relying on instinctive and conditioned interpretation of them – and attempts to resolve apparent discrepancies by extrapolating causes. The human-being is able to retain and network such determined causes and, further, to augment this network by comparing relations against one another in order to see what follows from their common terms, as if using a system of mirrors to expand his range of perspective. This capacity, utilizing the imagination in a second function, constitutes a receptive mean state supplementary to sense-perception enabling the resolution of surroundings at a high degree of exactness.

4.5. Deliberation, Choice, and Action

Human-beings can apply their capacity of reason not only for the sake of resolving a given state of affairs within an ultimate array, but in a limited one projected by the agent in order to tackle the uncertain and time-sensitive situations characteristic of practical life.[84] In a deliberative deduction,

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- Despite it being a full moon (C), (and without having already looked at this particular full moon), he is not producing the shadows that normally occur during a full moon (B).
- Such shadow effects (B) are the result of a lunar eclipse (A).
- The moon (C) must be eclipsed (A) (*PA* 93a29-b8)

This man does not know what the cause of an eclipse is but only *that* one is occurring. He has so far only facilitated the sort of "seeing behind himself", as it were, characteristic of intellecting at all. Yet, he may have noticed at some point, as a result of stargazing from his perspective on Earth, that:

- The moon (C) always holds its bright side toward the sun (A).
- The moon (C) receives light from the sun (B).
- The moon's *entire* illuminated facet (A) must derive from the sun (B). (89b10-20)

This insight allows him to deduce for himself the reason the moon is eclipsed:

- The strange darkened appearance of the moon called an eclipse (A) falls upon the moon (C).
- Normally the moon (C) receives its light from the sun (B).
- The abnormal privation thereof (B) is just the cause and definition of an eclipse (A). (93a29-b7)

The deductive process that revealed this would not have been necessary had the man been standing on the moon seeing the Earth screen the sun, in which case the universal would have been readily available in the particular (*PA* 90a24-31). Despite being earthbound, however, with his deduction regarding the sun established, the man becomes able, on seeing the signs of an eclipse in front of him, to know the relative positions of the earth, sun, and moon as if he were seeing from the perspective of the moon. This is a basic example of the discursive method by which humans progressively resolve frequently complex clusters of phenomena into consonance with their existing perceptions and understandings.

84 *EN* 1139a5-16.

three terms must come preset:

- that the relevant particulars upon which the scenario is founded are as they appear.
- that the particular end for the sake of which the deliberation is occurring is worthwhile.
- that the agent is himself an *arche* possibly capable of reaching this end through some available means.

The agent then goes about deducing how he might bring the end about. This he does by tracing the conditions of the end's achievement one-by-one back to himself.[85] If he discovers a viable means to the end, and determines it the best among the possible alternatives, he then gets started with acting, effectively demonstrating the resolved syllogism step-by-step through place and time. The project need not be executed in the immediate here and now; it may, utilizing the imagination, mandate a sequence of behaviour spanning into an anticipated future.

It is the having-deliberated that makes the object of desire also the object of "choice" (*proairesis*). Deliberation is a deduction in which the agent, presuming a relation between himself and his end, works through their common terms until this relation is resolved, and this resolution is like the seeing of the path to the end from an advantageous position, allowing the agent to know *why* he is following the steps that he does.[86] While animals that rely on the anticipatory imagination alone adapt themselves to the acquisition of their end, they do not have their plan of attack available for explicit review. The advantage of having the *why* is the ability to both adapt to changes of circumstances swiftly and sharply and to remain steadfast through difficult circumstances provided they were anticipated and accepted in advance.[87] To say that behaviour is "chosen" certifies that the agent has

85 *EN* 1112b16-20: "[T]hey examine how it will come to be through this means, and this in turn through some other, until they come to the first thing that will be responsible for the end, which is the last thing in the process of discovery." cf. *Met.* 1032b5-11.

86 In the *Eudemian Ethics*, Aristotle identifies deliberation and choice with the contemplation of the end for the sake of which the animal acts, and also associates it with the animal's coming to have an opinion about the *why* (1226b20-29; cf. Lorenz, *The Brute Within*, 179-183).

87 Lorenz writes: "It is not difficult to see that there may be important differences between an organism that proceeds on the basis of associations between impressions, formed by experience and habit, and an organism that can grasp 'for the sake of' relations and that can form 'opinions about the why' – opinions that reflect its cognition of an action *being for the sake of a goal*. For one thing, an organism of the latter kind is capable of much greater flexibility in its responses to a changing environment. Consider two organisms. Both of them are able to find their way to a location where there is a supply of fresh water. One of them can rely on practical thought; the other can only proceed by associations of impressions. Suppose that their environment changes so that no water is available any more at the location in question. The thinking organism, as soon as he finds out that the source of water has run dry, will also recognize that going to *this* location is no longer something that contributes to achieving the goal of drinking water, should there be such a goal. Given this recognition, the organism, in so far as it is guided by practical thought, will not go to the same location again,

resolved a plan and is not just pressing toward his end by instinct.

Action (*praxis*) is the following-through of such a choice. Action, however, stands above isolated means-ends relationships. Insofar as as any choice is linked to the perennial well-being of the agent, all actions exist within the single architectonic of his being-at-work. The agent intends not only to seize some particular end, but to behave well always, and just this is the pleasure natural to human-beings – happiness.[88] Action, then, is the sensorial experience, exclusive to the human being, of perpetually enacting his determinations within the world.[89]

4.6. The Dilemma of Self-Restraint and the Possibility of its Failure

Animals with reason disclose truth by two different capacities, opening the possibility for internal discord. They may have deduced one way of acting, but still be imaginatively comported to another until they verify the former through practice. This discord manifests when the agent is well-habituated enough to reason for the sake of good ends but along the way encounters – and sometimes succumbs to – the temptation to abandon them. In such cases, the agent's reason (or residue thereof) bids him to do one thing, while his sense-perception bids him to do another. The resolving of such a conflict turns out to involve several factors.

If knowledge indeed confers an advantage over perception, the very possibility of someone's behaving against their own determined best interests (*akrasia*) can only occur under special conditions:[90]

- The agent must presently "have" knowledge only in the weak sense: knowing, but not attentively considering. They may even be inhibited from doing so by some bodily condition, such as sleep, drunkenness, or passion.[91]

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if its goal is to drink water. So far as the other organism is concerned, it may take a long time before the relevant associations between the impressions in its perceptual apparatus cease to be effective, and cease to guide the organism's behaviour. After all, such associations are based, we said, on experience and habit, not on recognizing that some things are required for, and may contribute to, the achievement of others." (Lorenz, *The Beast Within*, 183)

88 This is in the same way that an excellent poker player aims not to win any given hand per se but to play as well as possible at any given time, with his excellence being vindicated over a long-term aggregate of results.

89 Action is good to the extent that the ends the agent pursues serve his natural best interests, and are not only the projections resulting from confused *hexeis*. The *hexis* which that governs correct action is *phronesis* and the man who characteristically acts well is the *phronimos*.

90 cf. *EN* 1145b22-30.

91 *EN* 1146b32-37; 1147a10-25.

- The agent must have thought with universal terms but not be connecting them to their corresponding particulars. In other words, they have general knowledge but fail to realize its practical import.[92]

Aristotle also expresses these conditions in terms of natural science ("ἔτι καὶ ὧδε φυσικῶς").[93] Universal premises are retained as opinions, concerned with what is true or false absolutely, while particular premises exist as perceptions within the agent's sensorial rendering, concerned with what is better or worse in the here and now; and the latter is properly speaking in charge of movement.[94] A failure of self-restraint may then result from a true opinion being co-opted by warped sense-perceptions. For example, suppose someone believes: (1) that *sweets should be resisted for the sake of health* but also (2) that *every sweet thing is pleasant*. Aristotle says that, within the agent's sensory encounter with some desirable sweet thing, its appearance as desirable effectively functions as though it were the opinion (3) that *every sweet thing should be tasted*, stirring the agent's motion towards it.[95] How is this so? It is the thing's very appearance *as* desirable that presents the agent with a dilemma. If the agent's sensory apparatus were perfectly adapted to the two universal premises in this case, he would only desire things in his best interests (e.g. a sweet taken in moderation or a delicacy worthy of exception to the rule). If, however, a disparity exists between the agent's rational determination and his overall perceptual comportment, the agent will be challenged to determine whether the desirable appearance is indeed good or a deception due to incomplete adaptation. If it is the latter, then, within his perception of the situation, his opinions are effectively being warped, as though one premise (2) was unduly magnified and the other (1) unduly marginalized in his conception. It is only reason that bids him to resist the appearance, or, in other words, to recover and apply the suppressed universal premise.[96] The description ἔτι καὶ ὧδε φυσικῶς is instructive because it reconciles and situates the two conditions above; it makes clear that the problem of restraint arises in the practical realm. Self-restraint is a dilemma for the thinking animal not insofar as he thinks but insofar as he must apply his thought to a world that appears differently to him at different times.

The agent may either respond to the alarm bell of reason or continue on toward the desirable thing: what determines the outcome? Before the agent can reason, he is habituated by being guided to

92 *EN* 1147a1-10.
93 *EN* 1147a25ff..
94 cf. *MA* 700b5-38.
95 *EN* 1147a23-b6; cf. Sachs, *Nicomachean Ethics,* 124, note 187.
96 *DA* 433b5-10.

experience certain pleasures for himself, leading him to disregard, for their sake, other shorter-sighted pleasures.[97] The "character" that ensues from this habituation may come into conflict with the subsequent determinations of reason. Discord is exacerbated by previous lapses (which serve as bad habituation), as well as by temporary thought suppressants such as alcohol. Insofar as a subsequent lapse is the result of a preceding one, the agent can be said to be culpable on that basis for mistakes made in the subsequent state.[98] If this causal analysis is not to result in an infinite regress, however, there must be an initial state of relative cognitive sobriety from which the agent lapses.[99]

At the point of the encounter with an object that is desirable in apparent contradiction to the determinations of reason, then, several factors influence the agent's reaction:

- (A) The intensity (degree of *pathos*) of the desire. Aristotle distinguishes two kinds of *akratic*: the weak (*astheneia*), who fails to follow his deliberation, and the impetuous (*propeteia*), who fails to even deliberate due to the intensity of the passion. The reason for the intensity may lie in the object or in the agent's compromised overall comportment. I take it, then, that although the impetuous man believes something or has already deliberated, when confronted with an intensely desirable object he does not even pause to consider but simply seizes it. For the agent to even react and consider, then, the intensity of the desire must not be so strong that he is simply in its thrall.[100]

- (B) The plausibility of any deliberation or pseudo-deliberation he may perform while in the midst of such a dilemma. The agent may in fact achieve deliberation regarding the present particulars, by which he may or may not decide to abide by the original deliberation. Alternately, he may only go through the motions – external or internal – of deliberating with regards to the present dilemma. This is a speaking of the words without the corresponding being-at-work, characteristic of an actor playing a part onstage, a student still learning, or a

97 cf. Burnyeat, 'On Learning to Be Good', 76-78.
98 cf. *EN* 1114a12-23.
99 Devin Henry distinguishes between these two states (the compromised state versus the initial state) as "drunken *akrasia*" and "genuine *akrasia*" ('Aristotle on Pleasure and the Worst Form of *Akrasia*', 256; 261-262). He notes that: "Interpretations of Aristotle's solution have traditionally fallen into two main camps: those that believe he reduces all *akrasia* to some form of culpable ignorance; and those that believe he allows for genuine cases of *akrasia* in which the agent acts against full knowledge" (256). In this thesis, I accept Henry's solution in favour of the possibility of genuine *akrasia*, but not his conclusion regarding its sufficient cause (see footnote 103, below).
100 *EN* 1150b19-29.

drunk talking philosophy.[101] Such a speaking of words may have more or less superficial plausibility and so rationalizing power toward the seizing of the object of desire.

- (C) The degree to which he has developed a *hexis* for abiding by the antecedent dictates of reason despite immediate suffering. This is something like sheer willingness to obey orders on faith, as one does one's father, despite how things might appear immediately to oneself.[102]

- (D) The degree to which he has experienced the distant pleasure for the sake of which he is to resist the present pleasure. His perception of it may be more or less abstract. Two different agents might have both arrived at a given determination to avoid one source of pleasure for the sake of another, but one agent might have only *deduced* the desirability of the absent source while the other has *experienced* it. In such a case, the agent having-experienced would be put in conflict between two experienced sources of pleasure, with an aversion to succumbing to the present one, where the agent having-deduced would be deciding between the present source of pleasure, the aversion to succumbing to it, and an only hypothetically superior alternative.[103]

- (E) The necessary awareness that "it is from one's being at work involved in each way of acting that one's *hexeis* come about", as is clear from the way people prepare for any sort of competition or performance. A man's actions dictate his state of being, and, as actions are exactly those doings within his power to enact that he deliberates about, he is in control of them.[104]

Let us try to see these factors in relation. The agent determines some way of acting that is in his best interests. Now, out in the world, he desires something in conflict with this determination. If the desire is sufficiently intense, he will simply seize it, and regret doing so later. If not, he will experience a counter-surging impulse to review the reasoned dictate allowing him a moment of consideration which

101 *EN* 1147a18-24.
102 cf. *EN* 1103a2; 1180a18-21.
103 *EE* 1224b15-17; cf. Henry, 'Aristotle on Pleasure and the Worst Form of *Akrasia',* 264-267. Henry argues that the lack of experience with the distant pleasure sufficiently accounts for the agent's failure to restrain himself (266). In my view, this lack of experience is insufficient as an explanation since it fails to account for the agent's internal overcoming of his own necessary awareness that one's actions determine his condition and that he is in control of his own actions (see factor "E" below).
104 *EN* 1114a4-11; 1113b3-14; cf. Gomez, 'Voluntary Action and Responsibility in Aristotle', 8-10.

may qualify as an actual second deliberation or may only be the appearance of such as the respective impulses are resolved imaginatively instead. Insofar as the agent does not simply abide by the pre-established admonition – the father's order, as it were – the weighing will occur. It will be influenced by the foregoing decisions and cognitive condition of the agent, for which the agent is responsible. More deeply, however, it will be influenced by the habits by which the agent was raised and whether he was introduced to the pleasures most natural to him – for which he is not responsible. To this extent, the family and culture that bore the agent shape his capacity for resistance, a fact that Aristotle acknowledges by his remarkably strong emphasis on habituation.[105] Thus far, each factor (A, B, C, D) which might lead the agent to act against his perceived best interests owes back either to a prior lapse made by the agent (which then still needs to be causally accounted for) or ultimately to his upbringing. Yet, insofar as the agent at least "knows better" and has a reaction alerting him to consult such knowledge, his behaviour is not determined by how he was raised. In fact, at the least, he must have observed (E) that "it is from one's being at work involved in each way of acting that one's *hexeis* come about", with one's actions being the means chosen by oneself over other legitimate possibilities.[106] No matter how corrupted one's overall comportment is, he cannot but be aware of better and worse ways of being-at-work; in other words, each adult is equipped with a moral compass showing the direction North (granted that there is variation among individuals in how well this compass is calibrated). It is this factor that imbues the agent with agency proper; it endows his behaviour with moral weight and distinguishes him from the animal or the child whose actions are governed by their feelings but not

105 *EN* 1103b22-27: "In a word, *hexeis* come into being from being at work in similar ways. Hence it is necessary to make our ways of being at work be of certain sorts, for our *hexeis* follow in accordance with the distinctions among these. It makes no difference, then, to be habituated in this way or in that straight from childhood, but an enormous difference, or rather all the difference." cf. 1179b20ff.

106 *EN* 1114a32-b25; 1113b7-11; cf. Gomez, 'Voluntary Action and Responsibility in Aristotle', 8-10. Gomez writes:

> In this passage [1114a10-13] Aristotle points out that we know that the kind of person we are is a consequence of the kind of actions we do, and, thus, that when we act unjustly our will to have an unjust character is evidenced. It is not possible for us to decide to act unjustly while we desire to have a just character, and this, in our opinion, applies both to children and adults. It is not possible for you to decide to rob a bank while wishing to be a just person; if you actually wish to be a just person – one might add –, you have to decide to act in a just fashion. There is no reason why an adult person cannot change a disposition [*hexis*] to act viciously. But, according to Aristotle, all this does not imply that if someone is vicious and wishes not to continue being vicious, it will follow from his wish that he will stop from being vicious... What Aristotle asserts here is that if someone has a disposition to act viciously and wishes not to have such a disposition anymore, he won't be able to abandon it just because of his will to change; but this assertion does not imply that the vicious person cannot act virtuously in that moment, even if it costs him a huge effort and dissatisfaction. The person cannot abandon a vicious disposition out of his mere will; for this change to be possible, he must overcome his disposition by performing virtuous actions so that he can modify his old disposition by habituating himself to performing different actions. (9)

their decisions.[107] This being establish, the central issue remains: why would a mature agent voluntarily act against his own perceived best interests?

Aristotle provides a clue with his diagnosis of those people who do not perform the actions corresponding to the best ways of being at work:

> But most people do not perform them, but believe that by taking refuge in talk they are philosophizing and in that way will be people of serious stature, doing something similar to those sick people who listen to the doctors carefully but do none of the things they order.[108]

All people act voluntarily insofar as they cannot help but observe that it is only by being-at-work in certain ways that they become the corresponding sort of person. And yet they believe they can take a shortcut by "taking refuge in talk" rather than actually doing the action. How can they "believe" the latter, when the former awareness, according to Aristotle, accompanies consciousness itself? It would have to be the case that while the agent is in truth able to act voluntarily, he somehow prevents himself from doing so by inspiring false belief.

I submit that this entails voluntarily imagining that the particular situation is a special exception to the general rule (when this is not in fact the case), or that oneself is another sort of man who is unaware of the accountability premise.[109] So long as the agent sustains or is preoccupied with this imagined state of affairs, he allows himself to behave accordingly. It is only the onset of the pain of

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107 cf. *EN* 1095a6-9; 1154b10-11; 1135b27-29; Gomez, 'Voluntary Action and Responsibility in Aristotle', 6.

108 *EN* 1105b12-16.

109 Aristotle tells us that the universal term in a practical syllogism may be attributed either to the thing one is concerned with or oneself (e.g. that he is a man and is such-and-such a type of man), and that action contrary to knowledge becomes possible when these are disconnected from the particulars in front of one (*EN* 1147a5-7).

> Rorty writes: "...[Aristotle] says... that the failure of knowledge in the minor premise may be a failure of knowledge *about what sort of man one is* (*DA* 434a16-21; *NE* 1147a5-7; 1147a29-34). Such a failure of knowledge is a failure to remember one's constitution or character; but this means forgetting what is good for that type of constitution or character. To forget, in the face of sweets, that one is diabetic is to forget what is good for oneself..." ('Akrasia and Pleasure', 273)

> Burger writes: "Like the discussion of *phronesis* in Book VI, the account of practical reasoning in Book VII stresses the importance of knowledge of the particular: the possibility of acting against what one knows to be right is not problematic if that means the agent is exercising knowledge only of the universal premise in determining his action. And that holds, we are now told, not only in regard to the object but also to the agent. Turning once again to health as an illustration, Aristotle explains that in order to act properly, I must know not only that dry food is advantageous for human beings but also that food of a certain sort is dry and – though we might wonder how someone could be unaware of this – that I am a human being. If I am not exercising the knowledge that "this is such" – that the particular food before me is of the desirable sort of the kind of being I am – it would be perfectly understandable that I might act contrary to my general awareness of what is beneficial (1146b30-47b10)." (*Aristotle's Dialogue with Socrates,* 140-141)

regret that marks the end of the spell. Now, in the case of a mistaking of particulars that could befall anyone, the pain of regret is what signals that the act was involuntary. In the case of the *akratic* lapse, the lapse was voluntary, but the the pain of regret is felt, not merely insofar as the agent was coincidentally the origin of the mistaken movement, but "because they were pleased, and wish these things had not become pleasant to them".[110] Nevertheless, wishing for a good end, but not taking the means within his power to achieve it, is the characteristic deficiency of the *akratic*.[111]

Such practice is not without consequence. First, the agent familiarizes himself with the practice of imaginatively instilling such self-paralysis, entrenches bad habits, and possibly induces physiological dependencies, all leading to the intensification of subsequent desires and increasing the challenge of future resistance. Second, the agent's circumstances gradually come to match those of the kind of person he poses as, enforcing the perception that he is such a person. The spiral will continue until the agent refuses to succumb or until the level of virtue (i.e., the lack thereof) he expects from himself synchronizes with the kind of man he imagines himself to be, and he ceases to feel the pangs of regret.

Still, why does the agent imaginatively suppress his agency? The analysis of the *akratic* remains incomplete. He turns out to be, in his original type, a special kind of *akratic*: or rather, indeed, the soft (*malakos*) and luxuriated (*truphē*) man.[112] Aristotle subdivides the *akratic* into two species: the *akratic* proper, who is led by pleasure, and the soft, who escapes the pain that comes from desire.[113] *Akrasia* proper turns out to be less bad than softness on the principle that more demanding conditions merit more forgiveness.[114] Resisting a present object of desire demands that one must "overpower" a present pleasure, whereas endurance against the pain of resisting desire only demands that one "hold out" against escaping the pain that comes from desire.[115] In other words, before there is the man with the drink in front of him, there is the man who chooses to drive himself to the bar.[116] The distinction

110 *EN* 1150b30-33; 1166b22-27.
111 Compare 1166b6-10 with III.4; 1111b19-26.
112 cf. *EN* 1166b7-12.
113 *EN* 1150a25-27.
114 *EN* 1150a28-30.
115 *EN* 1150a34-36; cf. 1151a1-7. The priority of "resisting" over "enduring" here reverses the priority established earlier in the text during the discussion of temperance and courage. There, Aristotle states that resisting pleasure seems to be more voluntary, since there are more opportunities for habituation and one's very being is not threatened when they are upon him (1119a22-28). For this reason, cowardice is taken in that account to be a better – less bad, more forgivable – condition than intemperance. The order is reversed within the analysis of *akrasia* because with no physical harm threatened, and plenty of opportunity for practice it is harder to resist a presently desirable object than a still abstract desire for something to relieve the mild pain of desire. In the former case, one is already drawn into an encounter with the object of desire that has warped his opinions, whereas in the latter, his opinions with regard to any given object of desire remain relatively proportionate.
116 The soft man is like one "who acts like someone who is sick" without realizing "that he is miserable when he is like

between the *akratic* and the soft-*akratic* corresponds to the subsequent distinction Aristotle makes between the impetuous-*akratic* – who fails to even review his deliberation – and the weak-*akratic* – who reviews it but fails to abide by it.[117] Aristotle gives two examples of the impetuous type: those prone to temper, who follow their imaginations rather than reason due to hastiness, and those prone to melancholy (*hoi melankolikoi*), who do so due to the strength of the *pathos*.[118] If the impetuous type can be generalized to those who are simply and strongly captivated by their imaginations, the weak man, lapsing against less intense desires and images, is comparatively soft. The man who initiates the cycle of lapsing, then – the original genuine *akratic* – is less someone already caught-up by the appearance of an intensely desirable thing, and more someone who feels the mild pain of having to hold out against desire at all.

At the point of utmost sobriety (or in only the relatively mild pain of resisting desire), perhaps it can be said that, by sabotaging his choice, the agent effectively chooses to become perceptually drunk.[119] The situation is comparable to the case of ill-advised suicide, when a person chooses to cease to be conscious:

> ...to die as a way of running away from poverty or love or anything painful does not belong to a courageous person, but rather to a coward, for to run away from distressing things is softness, and such a person does not endure death because it is a beautiful thing, but as a way of escaping something bad.[120]

Akrasia begins with an impulse to escape from the immediate pain of desire despite the costs. This is a choice some adults make (or resist) and for which they may be blamed. At the same time, however, from the perspective of an outsider, it is misguided and pathological. If it is a choice, it is mistaken from the outset. While the human-being, over the animal, has the capacity to reckon his perception of things against a singular array, this very capacity can arrive "soft".

There are two factors which may account for the sensitivity toward mild pain.[121] The first is what Aristotle calls the "bad" or "wicked" (*poneria*) nature of human-beings.[122] Because of the

someone who is miserable" (1150b1-6); again, the man with the doctor's prescription who does not follow it. Aristotle also links softness to childishness, playfulness, over-relaxation, and laziness (1150b15-18; cf. 1166b11-12).

117 *EN* 1150b19-20ff..
118 *EN* 1150b27-29.
119 cf. *EN* 1166b9; 1151a5-7.
120 *EN* 1116a14-19; 1166b7-12.
121 *EN* cf. 1154a31-b2.
122 *EN* 1154b26-32.

continually changing material basis of human-beings – a certain defectiveness – they are always in need of different things to maintain their best state. This makes it easy for an agent to take a "cure" in a pained state that induces a taste for a pleasure that ultimately does more harm than good. This is especially true for certain physiological types, such as the melancholic.[123]

The second possible factor is that the agent has been spoiled as a child, or has not been sufficiently habituated to resist immediate desires.[124] If an agent's culpability depends on his having steered himself into a vicious or temporarily vicious state, and this depends on a capacity for imaginatively suppressing his awareness of his own agency, and this in turn depends on his having the vice "in a certain sense" of softness at the time of his first lapse, then the germ of his blameworthiness was already in him by habit, for which he is not blameworthy, as a peculiar capacity for resisting reason.[125] The agent has not adequately experienced the costs of evading his own best interests, and so characteristically allows himself to disguise himself or the situation as something he does not genuinely believe either to be. This original tendency to run from the pain of resisting pleasure, with its corrosive consequences, can manifest generally or only with regards to some specific virtue – for example, with regards to the proper means concerning victory, honour, wealth, and anger.[126] As it can be specific, the agent need not have been spoiled generally, but perhaps rather specifically according to the shortcomings of his predecessors as manifest in their deficient way of habituating. The agent, in other words, may bear "the sins of the fathers."

The blameworthiness of *akrasia* is in the agent: it is he who evades the guidance of his reason. The possibility of *akrasia* also depends, however, on unfortunate circumstances of nature and nurture beyond the agent's control. With this, we are prepared to return to the mechanisms of tragedy.

5. Proposed Resolution of the Interpretive Problems of the *Poetics* (Ch. 2)

We are now prepared to resolve the interpretive difficulties set forward in Ch. 2, above. First, (5.1) we reconsider the central problem of the *Poetics* with the new cognitive justification for pitying an agent who commits a *hamartema* in the specific sense, enabling a clarification of the tragic mechanism as well as the meaning of *katharsis*, *philanthropia*, and *thaumazein*. Second, (5.2) we

123 *EN* 1154b12-14. An example of this case would be when, on a temperamental upswing, the end wished for and deliberated upon is overly ambitious, and leaves the agent straining to live up to it on the downswing.
124 cf. *EN* 1119a36-b7ff..
125 cf. *EN* 1149b20; 1151a6-7.
126 *EN* VII.4.

compare these conclusions against the passage regarding *katharsis* in the *Politics*, which will disclose the urgency of tragic poetry for men as well as its salutary effect. Following this, (5.3) we integrate Davis' compatible suggestion concerning the disparity of awareness separating the tragic agent from the tragic poet, which resolves the discrepancy between Ch. 13 and 14, and also finally the problem of whose action tragic poetry imitates.

5.1. Explanation of the Tragic Effect with Recourse to Cognitive Mechanisms

In a tragedy, an agent, distinguished neither by virtue nor vice, changes from good to bad fortune due to a *hamartia*. From the beginning, this agent must be sufficiently like the spectator that the spectator can feel fear on his behalf. The spectator must then relate to the agent in the same way that he relates to anyone whom he perceives as sharing his tendencies of thought or purpose; the agent is a sort of *philos* or "second-self," albeit one toward whom the spectator's acknowledgment is kept at a one-sided distance, as towards an athlete in a competition.[127] In this distanced identification, the spectator bestows the agent with the same self-awareness that the spectator experiences, i.e., bestows the agent with his very agency.[128] After the reversal and recognition violates the spectator and the agent's expected interpretation of the state of affairs, if the tragedy is to be effective in the specialized sense and not merely a divestment of responsibility onto external forces, the agent must be revealed to be the blameworthy cause of his own mistake and suffering. Thus, the *hamartia* of the *Poetics* corresponds to the *hamartemata* in the specific sense of the *Ethics*; the agent commits the *hamartia* due to having brought distorted perception upon himself by voluntarily lapsing against his perceived best interests such that, within the sphere of the tragedy, he tries to do something noble but brings the opposite into being. At this point, since the agent is responsible for his suffering, or deserves it, he should no longer be able to be the object of pity that the spectator's identification and fear prepared him to be. The spectator has identified with the agent as agent and so cannot but recognize his responsibility for his actions.[129] And yet, the spectator continues to feel pity. In what respect, then, is the agent not blameworthy for having brought distorted vision upon himself?

127 *EN* 1166b34-1167a6ff.; 1170b6-15. Friendship (*philia*) models the self's relation to others: "all the things that have to do with friendship arise out of oneself and extend to others" (1168b3-7). To judge that someone is a *philos* is to be aware that their being is similar to one's own (1170b7-13). A *philos*, then, provides a second self, but one whose ways of being-at-work can be observed from a detached perspective not easily attained with regard to one's own being (1169b34-36).

128 *EN* 1170b9-13; compare *EE* 1226b20-29 and Gomez, 'Voluntary Action and Responsibility in Aristotle', 6.

129 The sort of regret that the spectator imputes the agent to be experiencing – that he not only could but should have behaved otherwise – would be a descendant of the agent's perception of his capability to have behaved differently, in the same way that he currently perceives his potential to do either this or that.

We have seen that underlying the voluntary softness that is the root of culpable perceptual deficiency are the preconditions of volatile bodily constitution or flawed habituation, for which the agent is not responsible. If pity is to exist, it must be insofar as, underlying the agent's agency, he is a product of the forces that shaped his perceptual apparatus. In this sense, the spectator comes to regard the agent as a *philos* in a radical and paradigmatic way similar to how parents regard their children: not as independent agents but as products and reflections of their origin.[130]

This sense of pity transcends the particulars of the agent's circumstances: it applies to *all* men who commit a *hamartia* in the specific sense, despite their culpability in inducing its possibility. In this disclosure of the general aspect, the agent emerges as a paradigm for all such culpable but pitiable men. This paradigm, however, is attached to an opposite. Insofar as the spectator still identifies with the agent as agent, he cannot fully absolve him. Precisely in the emergence of the agent's essential pitiability, then, does its limiting opposite become present. The agent stands as a paradigm of any agent who experiences a *hamartia* of his own doing. Insofar as it is open to all human-beings to be more or less susceptible to such shocks, the agent stands for all men, including the spectator.[131] In this sense, then, the spectator regards the agent as a *philos* in another radical way: not as a favoured athlete or as a child, but as a reflection of his own being, specifically his being in the mode of suffering as the result of distorted perception brought on by himself. Thus, not only is the spectator's pitying raised to an unexpected pitch, but his fearing as well, insofar as he is reminded to dread the punishments he himself is due but which have yet to manifest. Thus, in the standing side-by-side of being unfortunate and being fortunate (i.e., the spectator's being both other and one with the suffering agent), fearing and pitying are brought to appearance.

The ramifications of this mutual polarization are best clarified by its being considered from the cognitive perspective, following Aristotle's link between the reception of an imitation and syllogizing.[132] Aristotle tells us that the poetic image is pleasant to the spectator because, in his contemplation of it, there is a coincidence of learning and syllogizing what each thing is, e.g., that *this man* is in fact *that one*. Syllogizing is an intellectual capacity effectively supplementary to the fundamental intellectual capacity of extrapolating from *epagogê*. Aristotle's favoured model for explaining these capacities is that of the lunar eclipse. If the extrapolation from *epagogê* is like the realization that the cause of the unusual appearance of the scene in front of oneself is a source behind

130 *EN* 1161b17-34; cf. 1159a28-b2.
131 cf. *Pol.* 1342a11-12.
132 *Poet.* 1448b14-17

oneself, such as an eclipsed moon, the capacity for syllogizing expands this capacity by allowing the agent to reckon together images to determine the relative positions of the objects behind his field of vision.[133] In the tragic action, which simulates syllogizing, the agent is shown effectively reading the "shadows" on a *philos*' face straightforwardly as signs of enmity and engaging the perceived threat accordingly; it is only after their recognition, once it is too late, that the agent becomes aware that this appearance was false and caused by a cognitive "screening" originating in and by himself.[134] This causes a cataclysm within the agent's imaginary microcosm,[135] suddenly altering the significance of appearances, and inducing the pain of regret for the lapses that allowed a false rendering to take hold.[136]

The unexpected but plausible resolution of such an action within the imagination of the spectator has a further effect. The spectator also knows, as a man, that he is in control of his actions and that the agent, like him, must retain the blame for the consequences of his lapses. Following the revelation of the agent's causal role in his own suffering, then, the spectator's fear is raised to a new pitch insofar as this experience transcends the particulars of the agent's situation and applies to all humans (more or less), including the spectator. The spectator then comes to realize not only that *this man* was *that one,* but that *that man* is *me,* registering himself in his potential suffering onstage, and coming to dread the onset of punishment for shortcomings of vision already induced. Yet, if the agent, whom the spectator had sympathized with, remains pitiable to the spectator even after it has been revealed that he is culpable for his fate, it shows that humans are forgivable even if they in a sense have caused their own suffering. This in turn suggests that the spectator himself, as a human, is forgivable in this sense for whatever compromised vision or mistakes he brings upon himself. These two conclusions – one from the perspective of the other and one from the perspective of the self – are irreducible, and it is precisely their simultaneous appearance that constitutes the effect of a tragedy.

Thus, Sachs describes the mechanisms of the effect as follows: "Our pity cannot stand alone as a sense of the unfairness or unspeakable ugliness of it all, and our fear cannot prompt us to feel that a

133 See footnote 83, below.

134 *Poet.* 1453b14-27; cf. 1452a30-34. Interpreters are sometimes perplexed by Aristotle's suggestion that the object of the tragic hamartia is the *philos*, mistaken for an enemy. It should be taken into account that Aristotle's technical definition of *philia* as the mutual recognition of the consciousness an other whom one perceives to be like oneself has the corollary that there is some basic "friendship" among all human-beings insofar as they share a common likeness (*EN* 1161b4-8). In this way, *any* conflict among men presumes, in some sense, the mistaking of a *philos* for an enemy. This would indicate that, to the extent that this mistake is disclosed, the scope of the tragic effect exceeds parochial conflicts.

135 See Ch. 4.2, above.

136 The regret following a *hamartia* is distinctive insofar as it simultaneously signals that the immediate action was involuntary (see Ch. 4.3, above), but that it fits within an altogether action, beginning with the original lapse, that was voluntary. It is the agent's realization that the mistake was the result of a confusion of particulars only incidentally, and that the source of the confusion was at the general level. In other words, then, the recognition following a *hamartia* is an involuntary awakening from a non-voluntary state referring back to a voluntary lapse.

wrongdoer has been taught a lesson. Our fear, directed at something good in the tragic figure that we share, cuts off any wallowing in sentimental pity. Our pity, insisting on the undeserved nature of the suffering, blocks any relief in indignant moralism".[137] In ordinary experience, our fearing is inclusive of fear that we may be subject to misfortune beyond our control, and our pitying is inclusive of pity for those whose suffering is not their fault but misfortune, and these general senses cloak the haunting sort of fear one may have for punishment they deserve and the profound sort of pity reserved for a rational agent who deserves in that sense the punishment they have received. This ordinary disguising makes it easy to alternately "sentimentally" forgive or "indignantly" blame oneself or another for culpable mistakes made. The tragic reversal has the effect of disrupting the ordinary experience of fear and pity, suddenly refining them to their specific senses that apply when the cause of the action originates in the agent, and harmonizing them in their mutual appearance and irreducibility such that the spectator becomes aware of their relation. In pitying despite the agent's guilt, the spectator takes the perspective of the observer, and in refusing to absolve, the spectator takes the perspective of the self; altogether, then, the spectator becomes able to see himself and others as agents from the perspective of other and self at once rather than absently shifting between the perspective of one or the other. Thus, "the *katharsis* of these *pathêmata*", in Sachs words, leads to "washing our pity clean of sentimentality and our fear clean of self-righteousness" and *philanthropia* is a byproduct resulting from the heightened identification with the rest of mankind that stems from being able to extend forgiveness to all men without at the same time disregarding the agency that makes them like oneself.

The experiencing of wonder or astonishment (*thaumasomai*) is not different from the *kathartic* effect but only another way of describing it:

> What is characteristic of wonder is the sudden loss of the sense that we understand what is going on. What it knocks away are all our habitual assumptions and opinions. In the state of wonder we are not fitting what is in front of us into the explanatory structures that normally guide our lives, but are in the rare condition of taking in the things before us just as they are.[138]

At the beginning of the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle counts "the attributes of the moon" among natural sources of wonder.[139] In the same way that the advent of an eclipse stirs wonder in the stargazer, the

137 Sachs 13.
138 Sachs 16.
139 *Met.* 982b15-16.

sudden alignment of a refined fear and pity in the spectator causes his surroundings to take on refined significance. The spectator of tragedy, however, has not yet turned to look at the moon directly, as it were, and need not do so in order to be effected. In the poetic image, learning and deducing coincide: the spectator is led through the same motions by which someone could deduce their principle, but need not do so on his first circuit. Rather, as the motions he is tracking imitate an action occurring in the dimension of life, he is liable to have their contemplation undermined by perceptual response, just as he would if he were acting himself. Thus the relevant perceptual reaction – tears – are a more natural response to tragedy than any distinct conclusion.

5.2. *Politics* 1342a5-16: The Tragic Effect as Cure for the *Melankholic* Condition

These conclusions should be consonant with the passage in the *Politics* dealing with *katharsis*:

> For the passion that occurs strongly in connection with certain sorts of souls is present in all, but differs by greater and less – for example, pity and fear, and further inspiration (*enthousiasmos*). For there are certain persons who are possessed by this motion [(i.e., the *enthousiasmos*)], but as a result of the sacred tunes – when they use the tunes that put the soul in a frenzy – we see them calming down as if obtaining a cure and a *katharsis.* This same thing, then, must necessarily be experienced also by the pitying and the fearful as well as by the generally passionate, and by others insofar as each individual has a share in such things, and there must occur for all a certain *katharsis* and feeling of relief accompanied by pleasure.[140]

In this passage, Aristotle establishes a continuum of responsiveness to passions ("greater and less") scaling from that which occurs "strongly only in connection with certain sorts of souls" to that which afflicts all men "insofar as each individual has a share in such things". They are ranked as follows:

- (Greatest) The inspired or enthusiastic (*enthousiasmos*)
- The pitying and fearful
- The generally passionate

140 *Pol.* 1342a5-16 trans. Lord; cf. 1341b38-40.

- (Least) All men in general, "insofar as each individual has a share in such things"

"Enthusiasm" or "inspiration" are synonyms for the word that literally translates to "god-possession". In the pseudo-Aristotelian *Problems, enthousiasmos* is identified as a species of melancholy.[141] We recall that melancholics were characterized by experiencing *pathê* in intense surges, resulting in their being overwhelmed by their imagination and so being especially soft and *akratic* in the impetuous sense.[142] At this point the melancholy condition must be looked at more closely.[143]

Melankholia denotes a bodily disorder – literally "black bile" – which has peculiar consequences for the agent's perception.[144] Black bile is an internal residue especially sensitive to air, and so augmentative of the body's natural balance, alternately making it hotter or colder than normal. It is augmentative to a greater or lesser degree, depending on its quantity, and in various ways, according both to its default calibration (resting more or less hot or cold) and exact positioning (located closer or further from the nutritive, perceptive, or central organs). In being prone to rapid changes of temperature, the melancholic cycles through the constitutions characteristic of various temperaments quickly, making him prone to sudden and intense changes of character. Sensorially, the way things appear to him changes; now the state of affairs appears one way, now another. When hot, the bile prepares generally cheerful feelings, and when cold it prepares generally despondent ones.

Now, melancholy's effect on thought is not necessarily disadvantageous. Melancholics become immersed in images and experience so many of them that they chance upon the image matching the actual state of affairs more than most people.[145] Thus, a melancholic otherwise deficient in rational and deliberative capacities has the advantage of "loose" thinking for landing on the right course of action.[146] Aristotle calls this advantage *euphia*: a certain inborn giftedness. In the *Poetics*, Aristotle says that poets need to be *euphuesis*.[147] They must be capable of whipping themselves into feeling the relevant

141 *Prob* 954a35-36. While there are serious doubts concerning Aristotle's authorship of the *Problems*, it is widely accepted that it reflects his authentic views.

142 See p33-34, below.

143 On one hand, Sachs reminds us not to project upon the ancient disease of melancholy our contemporary associations: "The theory of the four humors came from the Hippocratic tradition, but only centuries later, at the time of Galen, did they become associated with the four kinds of temperament, among which melancholy got a meaning closer to the one we give it" (fn. 205). On the other, however, Francis observes that the physiological condition of melancholy described by Aristotle frequently causes a sort of "madness" not entirely disconnected from our sense of the word (fn. 58).

144 These consequences turn out to make the disorder of special experimental interest and explanatory utility to Aristotle. Reference to *melancholia* occurs frequently throughout the corpus, not only in the biological texts but also the ethical ones.

145 *PN* 463b17-20; 464a32-b5.

146 *EE* 1248a39-40.

147 *Poet.* 1455a29-37; cf. 1459a6-7. Aristotle writes: "...*poiêtikê* belongs either to one with a good nature (*euphuesis*) or to a madman (*manikou*), for of these, the former easily take any shape and the latter are not themselves" (trans. Davis).

experiences of the various players, since “the one who is in a fit of temper produces a storm of distress most truthfully, as the one who is in a fit of temper produces anger”. Yet, as the melancholy becomes more extreme, as in *enthousiasmos*, the melancholic's capacity to distinguish between their visions and reality breaks down, and he verges on true madness. In the case of *enthousiasmos*, presumably, he consider his own agency to be overridden by that of a god.

Melancholy is a disease of special interest to Aristotle insofar as it presents an amplification of the ordinary condition of human-beings such that things appear to them now one way and now another. If *enthusiasmos* constitutes a physiological extreme (at the top tier of Aristotle's scale), it nevertheless represents, in intensified form, man's ordinary condition or affliction, which is represented at the lower tiers of the scale by the generally passionate (the third tier) and by all men “insofar as each individual has a share in such things (the fourth tier). In other words, melancholy, more or less pronounced, underlies every tier of Aristotle's hierarchy of “responsiveness to passions”. At the second tier, however, Aristotle curiously identifies this degree of melancholy affliction as “fearing and pitying”. How does “fearing and pitying” fit within this continuum?

Earlier, we described the dilemma of restraint as a conflict between two counter-surging images: on the one hand, the perception of the desired object *as* desirable and, on the other, the “alarm bell” set off by antecedent thought alerting the agent to the possible distortion in the appearance of the object and reminding him of the dictate of reason. The effort to resolve these countervailing images may spur an actual deliberation or, if the desires are too strong owing to clinical melancholy or prior lapses, only at most the mimicry of such, in which case the images would be worked out against one another.[148] I submit that the image urging to “give way” to the present desire accords with self-pitying (“I lack control; my environmental conditions are so strong as to render me helpless”), and that the image urging to “resist” accords with fearing (“I do not want to let the bad outcome befall me if it is within

148 The suggestion that the dilemma of self-restraint, when it does not trigger an actual deliberation, involves a kind of counter-surging of images is consistent with the description given in *On Memory* of a certain kind of “discomfort” experienced by melancholics (453a14-31). In some persons, the attempt to recollect fails, but their memory continues the bodily motions of searching for the sought-after image even after they have abandoned the effort, causing the aforementioned “discomfort”. This is especially pronounced for melancholics:

> “Those who have moisture around that part which is the center of sense-perception suffer most discomfort of this kind. For when once the moisture has been set in motion it is not easily brought to rest, until the idea which was sought for has again presented itself, and thus the movement has found a straight course. For a similar reason bursts of anger or fits of terror, when once they have excited such motions, are not all once allayed, even though the angry or terrified person sets up counter motions, but the passions continue to move them on, in the same direction as at first.” (453a22-28)

Where the melancholic obsesses over the sought-after idea until it is resolved – tossing and turning as it were – the fearing person induces an image in themselves compelling them to endure, but nevertheless continues to experience visions of destruction compelling them to run.

my control to prevent it, and so I must behave accordingly"). This struggle between "fearing and pitying" is reflective of the melancholic's alternation between hot and cold states, something that occurs at both the clinical and the ordinary degrees of the condition.[149] If "enthusiasm" is an extreme manifestation of the melancholy physiology, "fearing and pitying" seems to be a strong but not extreme manifestation of the everyday stress and strain that man experiences as he alternately fearfully resists and pitifully lapses, something like a bipolar anxiety disorder. As well, the presence of this bifurcated tier among the overall continuum suggests that each other tier on Aristotle's scale, and melancholy in general, has both a "fearing" (surge of agency) and "pitying" (depletion of agency) aspect.

Just as animals, beings characterized by sense-perception exclusively, are always exerting a painful effort just by seeing and hearing, so men, beings characterized by reasoning in addition, are always exerting a painful effort just by applying their thought to their behaviour, and so having to endure the constant push and pull of fear and (self-)pity.[150] Moreover, as the agent periodically lapses, these cycles only intensify. The agent's fear-impulse is amplified because he recognizes his vision as already self-compromised and in need of additional discipline in order to right the course, and his pity-impulse is amplified because he feels additionally burdened by factors beyond his current control, factoring for the lapses of their previous self. The synchronization of fear and pity in the spectator, then, has the effect of temporarily neutralizing this ordinary stress and strain, halting his alternation between a self-pitying "sentimental" outlook and a fearful "moralizing" outlook. The spectator is shown a vision in which his actions are neither beyond his control nor totally within it, restoring to a healthy equilibrium his cycles of perceived agency and non-agency.[151] This salving of melancholy is the relief that accompanies or is part and parcel with the effects of *katharsis, philanthropia*, and

149 *Prob* 954b3-21: "In respect too of facing dangers a melancholy state causes great variation, in that many of those who are in this condition are inconsistent under the influence of fears; for they vary from time to time according to the state in which their bodies happen to be in respect of their melancholy temperament. Now this temperament is itself also inconsistent, just as it produces inconsistency in those suffering from the diseases which it causes; for, like water, it is sometimes cold and sometimes hot. And so the announcement of something alarming, if it occurs at a time when the temperament is rather cold, makes a man cowardly; for it has already prepared a way for the entrance of fear, and fear has a chilling effect (as is shown by the fact that those who are greatly alarmed tremble). If, however, the temperament is inclined to be hot, fear reduces it to a moderate temperature and causes a man to be in his senses and unexcited. So too with the despondency which occurs in everyday life (for we are often in the condition of feeling grief without being able to ascribe any cause for it, while at other times we feel cheerful without knowing why), such feelings as those usually called superficial feelings occur to a slight degree in every one, for something of the force which produces them is mingled in everyone; but those who are thoroughly penetrated by them acquire them as a permanent part of their nature."

150 cf. *EN* 1154b7-10.

151 Sachs writes: "[Aristotle's] choice to call these cleansed feelings *pathêmata* rather than *pathê* may be a way of pointing to the persisting feelings that result as distinct from the temporarily intense feelings that are the means to them. When Aristotle speaks later of the fear and pity that are aroused in the first place, he calls them *pathê* (1456a 38-b1)" (12-13).

thaumazein. With this, the interpretive difficulty (2.2) of the *Poetics* (Ch. 2, above) is resolved.

5.3. Davis' Account of the Significance of Genuine Foresight in Tragedy, and its Bearing on Tragic Action and Organization

Interpretive difficulties concerning (2.1) and (2.3) (Ch. 2, above) remain: *whose* action does a poem imitate, and how should one account for the disparity between Ch. 13 and Ch. 14 of the *Poetics*? Davis' concern with the text – entirely compatible with Sachs' approach – fills in a lacuna left by it which permits the resolution of these difficulties. Sachs' approach lead us to conceive of the tragic *hamartia* as being the consequence of foregoing softness. As a result of such practice, the agent culpably misperceives the tragic scenario and proceeds to make the *hamartia.* Now, in the encounter with the tragic scenario, the agent certainly *attempts* to rise above the level of countervailing images and actually deliberate, but still proceeds to miss the mark. Davis addresses the status of this deliberation and its dramatic significance.

Davis offers a point of entry as follows.[152] In Chapter 13, Aristotle specifies that the tragic hero must not be *epieikês*.[153] This word is usually translated "decent" and, in the context, the specification appears to be simply an initial articulation of the ensuing suggestion that the tragic hero should not be defined by virtuousness. In the *Ethics*, however, Aristotle assigns *epieikeia* a technical sense, distinguishing it as virtue in seeing how to apply the law to the particulars to capture its spirit rather than just following it by the letter.[154] Davis' suggestion is that the specification in the *Poetics* that the

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152 Davis' suggestion here is a facet of his altogether interpretation of the *Poetics* as a coded *poîma* reflecting the fundamental structure of human action. In Davis' *Aristotle's Poetics: The Poetry of Philosophy,* he builds the thesis that Aristotle*,* in order to adequately treat the link between *poiesis* and *praxis* (kept separate in the *Nicomachean Ethics* 1140a1-7ff.), must construct them together.

> Human cognition functions by way of the imaginative reckoning of phenomena: e.g. the coming to see that *this man* is really *that one*. It is by such *made* (*poièsai*) reckonings that *actions* are deployed. *Poiêtikê* is remarkable for not simply providing one more piece of evidence to be reckoned and acted upon, but for thematizing this very process. In other words, it does not simply show an apple through an image, but also calls attention in some way to the image of the apple as such (4). The poet recognizes, preserves, and exploits – rather than collapses – the cognitive progression from one imaginative rendering to another, thereby structurally imitating the worldly practice of reckoning images towards greater comprehension of the state of affairs.
>
> The transmission of this feature, according to Davis, requires that the true object of the *Poetics'* concern – *praxis* itself, with its foundation in *poêsis* – can only come into view after concern has been initially displaced onto another object – the art of imitating *praxis*, i.e., *poiêtikê*.

153 *Poet.* 1452b34-1453a9.

154 *EN* 1137b21-27: "[W]henever the law speaks universally, then it is right, insofar as the lawmaker leaves something out and errs by speaking simply, to set straight the thing left out, which even the lawmaker himself would say if he were there, and which, if he had known, he would have put in the law. Hence what is *epieikous* is just, and is better than a

tragic hero must be non-*epieikês* is profitably read with this technical sense in mind. For Davis, *epieikeia* "is the virtue that belongs to the one who is more just than justice, for he sees where the general rules of justice embodied in the law fall short in every particular case. The *epieikês* is thus the man of equity. As one who in principle never errs, he ought never to suffer for making mistakes".[155] Thus, the seeing of a such a man suffer is repulsive (*miaron*), not because he is generally virtuous or just but, specifically, because he successfully determines how the particular case should be handled. To depict him suffering nonetheless would only be pessimistic wallowing in the cruelest kind of misfortune.

The *epieikês* in Davis' estimation, however, represents not only a man who is truly just, but, more generally, a type of man accustomed to considering how the universal should be fitted to the particular scenario.[156] Considered perceptually, the *epieikês* does not merely move through an imagined state of affairs – or resolve a dilemma between two images – impulsively, but is characterized by considering how the relevant universal ought to be applied to the appearing particulars. In other words, to say that the tragic hero must be non-*epieikês* is to say that he must *not* be the type of man who truly rises above taking the appearance of particulars for granted. The tragic hero must not be capable of performing an actual deliberation between one impulse and another in the relevant sense, but must be entirely caught up in those images, like the melancholic or the impetuous *akratic.*[157]

Even if it were not *miaron* to show the *epieikês* undergo a downfall, however, it would simply not make for good drama. Davis explains: "to present in action a successful reflection on action (*epieikeia*) would not arouse wonder and so lead to reflection; it would be too pat, and so essentially invisible... There is no wonder without some appearance of discrepancy".[158] To see the tragic agent successfully resolve their disadvantage of perspective by way of truly coming to see how to attend to the particulars of their scenario broadcasts the moral of the story and leaves no room for the spectator's engagement.

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certain kind of justice, not better than what is simply just, but better than the error that results from speaking simply. This is the nature of what is *epieikês*, a setting straight of a law, insofar as it leaves something out as a result of being universal."

Aristotle also links *epieikeia* with *phronesis*, a virtue concerned with good foresight regarding practical affairs (*EN* 1143a20-29).

155 Davis, *On Poetics*, 32-33, note 82; cf. Davis *xxii*; Davis, *Aristotle's Poetics: The Poetry of Philosophy*, 71-72.

156 Davis *xxv.* Davis writes: "By introducing the *epieikês* Aristotle pointed to a kind of virtue, the highest kind, which is only possible as a reflection on the imperfection of virtue more conventionally understood".

157 This is entirely compatible with Sachs' approach, whereby the agent's going through with the *hamartia* depends precisely on his failure to deliberate properly – i.e. actually – upon the relevant particulars owing to a previously-induced perceptual inebriation in the relevant sense.

158 Davis *xxv*; cf. Davis, *Aristotle's Poetics: The Poetry of Philosophy,* 75.

This appears to be just as true if the recognition – which the *epieikês* is characterized by making in advance – occurs only in retrospect, after the mistaken deed has been done, i.e., by the non-*epieikês*. In order to be capable of the *hamartia,* the agent must have culpably induced a shroud of ignorance at a previous time. In 4.6, we determined that this very possibility is founded in some softness caused not only by the "wicked nature of man" but by some "sin of the father". The agent's shroud of ignorance, then – however unshakable his responsibility for its being upon him – depends on one originally inherited. This agent's recognition of the presence of *a* delusion does not necessitate the recognition of the root ignorance from which he suffers. In other words, the recognition of the non-*epieikês* tragic agent is usually spurious; in his clarity he only returns to an earlier state of ignorance and, indeed, the same one that precipitated his later one.[159] The non-*epieikês* never attains perspective upon his suffering.

The tragic agent must not be *epieikês* since his suffering would be *miaron* and, anyway, his recognition (in advance) would be pat. The *non-epieikês* tragic agent suffers duly, and his recognition (in retrospect) is spurious enough to be problematic and interesting for the spectator. Is there a place in tragedy, then, for the *epieikês*? The prognostic *epieikês* is significant for being analogous to the poet. The *epieikês* is characterized by seeing beforehand how to act, and so never performing the mistake except in his imagination, and therefore expressing his knowledge "even to himself only by articulating what would happen to him were he not to know".[160] This same practice made visible to an audience is just *poiêtikê*.

This conclusion would resolve both of our standing difficulties. Regarding (2.3), we recall that in Ch. 13, Aristotle sets the "single organization" (the changing from good fortune to bad of a person) ahead of the "double organization" as the most powerful form of tragedy. Yet, in Ch. 14, as we recall, Aristotle ranks the organization in which the agent intends to do (*poiein*) but recognizes before doing (*poiêsai*), above the organization in which the agent acts (*praxai*) and, being ignorant, actually *does* (*praxai*) and only then recognizes.[161] How can it be better, on the one hand, for a person to change from good to bad fortune (and not the reverse) and, on the other, for him to "recognize before doing it" and

159 Davis *xxvi.* Davis writes: "Oedipus thinks that he knows who he is, but when he takes the pin of Jocasta's brooch, stabs himself in his eye sockets (*arthra*) and pleads to be set out on Mt. Cithaeron, he is simply reproducing what had been done to him as a baby when his joints (*arthra*) were pinned and he was abandoned on Mt. Cithaeron. If he really knew "who he was" Oedipus would not once again be attempting to take his fate into his own hands. Blinding himself was not an altogether humble thing to do. He still has not learned that he too is one of the *tekna* of Cadmus. However, had he learned who he was, we would have been unable to learn who he was.... Where a character simply reveals who he is, the meaning of the recognition is altogether hidden from view."

160 Davis *xxvi.* Davis writes: "Oedipus could only have expressed wisdom by writing his own tragedy."

161 See p9, above.

not after it is too late?

Davis resolves the difficulty as follows:

> Aristotle's language here is revealing. What the ancients did (*epoioun*) as well as what Euripides did (*epoiesen*) in the Medea was to make the doing (*praxai*) come to be with knowledge. Sophocles makes Oedipus do (*praxai*) terrible things in ignorance and then discover it. The "best" form is characterized as intending to do (*poiein*) and then, discovering, not to do (*poiesai*) it. Now, up to this point Aristotle had been using *poiein* to refer to the activity of the poet and *prattein* to apply to the activity of the character. Leaving this distinction intact, what is best would not be an action within the play but rather the action of the poet.[162]

Following this reading, "to recognize before doing" is characteristic of the *epieikês* and the poet, and not the agent. Aristotle called the "single organization" most *kalliste* and the "recognizing before doing" type of organization most *kratiston.* If this distinction is to be significant, it would mark two different but simultaneously operative dimensions of tragedy, each superior in their own respect, usually kept separate but capable of being brought together at the poet's discretion to modify the typical tragic presentation.[163]

The link between the *epieikês* (the actual deliberator with regard to the tragic scenario) and the poet also illuminates the difficulty (2.1): *whose* action does a tragedy imitate? If the *epieikês* or the poet were to act, they would foresee and avoid the mistake made by the agent. Thus, the actions of the agent

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162 *Ibid*; cf. Davis, *Aristotle's Poetics: The Poetry of Philosophy,* 74-75.

163 From this follows Davis' fascinating interpretation of Aristotle's plot summary and interpretation of *Iphigeneia among the Taurians,* the tragedy that serves as the model, above, for the organization reflective of the poet and the *epieikês*:

> "Orestes is captured on account of his madness (*mania*) and saved through a purification (*katharsis*) (1455b14-15). The language here corresponds to the language of Euripides' play (*Iphigeneia among the Taurians* 83, 1191). Now, Aristotle had called the poets *manikos* earlier in the chapter (1455a33), and the goal of tragedy was said in chapter six to be *katharsis* (1449b28). Without the specific language in which Aristotle discusses the *Iphigeneia*, there would be no reason to connect his summary of it with his account of tragedy. Once we notice this language, however, we wonder whether it is not Aristotle's interpretation of the play that Orestes is meant to be the poet in his role as standing apart from his own passions. Orestes is the spectator "purified" by the action of the play. This confirms Aristotle's earlier suggestion in chapter fourteen that the *Iphigeneia among the Taurians* is an attempt to present the action characteristic of the best man – the *epieikês* – by bringing the spectator on the stage." (*Aristotle's Poetics: The Poetry of Philosophy*, 87-88)

> In dramatic poems of this type, the agent is *epieikês,* i.e., characterized by seeing before making the mistake the right way of engaging the particulars. In this respect, the agent is akin to the tragic poet who comprehends and would avoid the mistake that the tragic agent makes, or even the spectator who is able to have the agent's actions pass before his eyes from a comfortable remove without himself doing them.

represent "what would happen to [the poet] were he not to know" in some specific respect, and the action of the tragedy is designed to exploit and reveal this blind spot.[164] Insofar as the poet's actions are motions planned in advance based on an imaginative projection of the surrounding state of affairs, we may identify the tragic action as a facet of the action of the poet as constructed in his imagination. Specifically, it is the fail case of the relevant *hexis* he maintains so that he continues to perceive his surroundings rightly; it is the nightmare motivating him to take the appropriate care. Thus, the action of the tragedy can involve different agents acting – for example both Odysseus and Telemachus – in the same way that one can imagine not only what would happen to oneself if he was unaware, but also what interested parties might do or say outside of his presence in such a case. The action of a tragedy – or for that matter any action – does not operate in the specific dimensions of historical fact or incidental outcome, but as generally plausible speculations worked out in the imagination. They are nevertheless urgent insofar as they bear upon these concrete fields, and it is for the sake of conveying this phenomenon of urgency that Aristotle says that the actions of the tragedy must be organized "by action," as they are in life, rather than by some other aspect, as they are in various sorts of leisure.[165]

6. Conclusion

All *poiêtikê* imitates – replicates the defining structure of – *action* (*praxis*). Action is time-sensitive behaviour founded on an imaginary rendering-together – or *making* (*poêsis*) – of some perceived state of affairs, always subject to correction according to the wider sphere of *the way things are.* Tragedy in particular imitates an action in which a mistake is made and revealed to be one's own doing. It is remarkable for not only imitating action (based on imaginary-makings), but for making imaginary-making itself thematic by calling attention to the disparity between images and surrounding reality that often results in shipwreck. Human-beings are subject to a class of mistakes unique among animals due to their capacity to act against their own perceived best interests; decisions are made among perceptually shifting appearances, and a dose of poison, as it were, is always available to skew them enough to ensure the wrong decision is made. This provides short-term relief at the expense of long-term pain and a compromised rendering of surroundings. The making, then, that shows the suffering following a *hamartia* – which one cannot simply divest onto misfortune – makes thematic the common condition of human-beings to not only to be plagued by unhappy circumstances and mistaken

164 Davis *xxvi*.
165 cf. *EN* 1140b24-26.

understandings, but to be in the condition of having to perpetually strain against self-inducing them for the sake of relief lest they be punished, and to be haunted by previous lapses and the spectre of imminent punishment. Thus does the *hamartia* of *Poetics* 13 correspond to the *hamartema* in the specific sense of *Ethics* V.8, requiring that the agent be culpable for his mistake in order to bring to bear upon the spectator the limits of culpability.

This specialized effect, resulting from tragedy's character of thematizing image-making itself, can be retained under modified forms.[166] Under just one such modification, the tragic agent successfully renders the situation in advance enabling the avoidance of the prospective *hamartema*. This modification would seem to have the disadvantage of not showing a pitiable outcome and so triggering the *kathartic* reaction. In order to preserve the tragic effect, even in lightened form, the moments of the agent's realization would have to be represented such that the agent and the spectator recognize and experience the nearly-avoided tragedy as though it had happened. This construction, which puts the action of image-making into the action of the drama, has the advantage of thematizing – beyond the disparity between images and the world – the process of reckoning images that occurs in the mind of the image-maker as he imaginatively runs-through various scenarios before acting. This modification, which enframes the original tragic production, enables infinite variation upon its features. It also has the commercial advantage of satisfying spectators' weakness: their wish for the events of the tragedy to end according to prayer. Thus, it is no wonder that the "drama" has become the dominant method of delivering the tragic effect in contemporary times.

166 See footnote 163, above. It would also be possible to express comedy (imitating "a certain sort of *hamartia* and a deformity that is painless and not destructive") as modifying the tragic effect.

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