

Sophocles and his Doubles: Chapter One

This is the first chapter of my Berkeley doctoral dissertation, *The Pathos of Reason*. It's a Reading of Aristotle's *Poetics* according to his *Physics*, *Metaphysics*, *Rhetoric*, etc. that is heading toward the introduction to Kant's *Critique of Judgment* with occasional debarkations in Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy*. The original draft of this chapter written in 1991 and 1992 also included Chapter Two of the dissertation which is the second chapter of the current version.

Chapter One: The Concept of Praxis in Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics and Poetics

Some Preliminaries: Form and Matter

Things that require matter for their existence exist as particular instantiations of an essential form¹. This essence is the rational existence of the thing, the noumenon, intelligible form, or "eidos" that defines a thing as a member of a species². Thus Aristotle has little use for the singular. If we encounter a human being, say Oedipus, we encounter a particular member of the species *anthropos*. In essential terms, Oedipus is a "noetikos dipous," or "rational biped," the thinking being that goes on two feet. Thus this intelligible or essential value is the form of particular things taken as members of their species. In its essential status, this form exists prior to the contingent material existence it would have when realized in particular individuals.

This may recall, however remotely, the Platonic theory of forms where the essential or intelligible existence of an idea is distinct from its merely derivative imitation or existence in matter³. Aristotelian metaphysics sees

things differently. Here the ascendancy of form remains, but is qualified by a much greater emphasis upon the particular and the individual⁴. For Aristotle, the formal properties of an object, by which the object has a defined, identifiable existence, reside only contingently in the material condition that allows their expression. Thus, Plato notwithstanding, the material and particular existences of such objects as individual members of a species are still, fundamentally, dependent upon the matter in which they exist. We have in the Aristotelian theory a sort of empirical idealism in which the intelligible natures of temporal beings do not exist apart from the particular and material ground in which they are given as concrete members of their species. If there were no particular *anthropoi*, there would be no form "noetikos dipous," or "rational biped," as the universal and essential form of a human being. Thus, for Aristotle, the form of a being that exists in matter is not in itself contingent, yet it makes no sense to think of such a being apart from its necessarily particular realization within matter and history. An intelligible existence is always formal, as it is for Plato, but it is also dependent upon the possibility of its material existence within the contingent and particular order of time, cause and consequence.

In Aristotelian terms, the existence of a particular individual is contingent. Any particular or material instance of a form is limited by the conditions of its matter. Aristotle says that such objects "may or may not be"⁵. The historical existence of a particular individual, say that of an *anthropos*, "rational biped," or "noetikos dipous," will cease in the event of death. In such a case, the form no longer applies to the definition of that historical individual as a particular living person. A corpse could be called a person "in name only," but not in any formal or essential manner⁶. Thus, in Aristotelian thought, material existence is the ground of the necessity and possibility of things that exist only contingently. But, even as such, it is also their susceptibility to accident, alteration and decay⁷. The form and thus the natural existence of an object is dependent for its expression upon the matter of its substrate, and through this material ground of its existence, the object is subject to destruction, alteration and decay.

This contingency of the material condition through which a form's reality is given is a problem for human existence and is, thus, a concern of the ethics which studies the practical details of human life ⁸. Ethics is the science or, in Aristotelian terms, the “episteme,” which takes up the problems of anthropoi in their relation to the contingencies of their life. Since, for Aristotle, life is a praxis ⁹, the project of the ethics is to consider systematically the practical possibilities, limitations and problems of the particular lives of different kinds of people. Life is a praxis that is beset by the urgency and exigency of its circumstances. The extent of this problem becomes apparent when we consider how immensely heterogeneous the experience of a life can be. The variety of particular experiences exceeds the much more narrowly defined requirements of a conduct of life within nature.

i) Technai

If plants and animals can function well enough with the powers that nature provides them, humans have a proliferation of specific needs apart from their natural existence. Thus, to a certain extent, our life as cultured beings, whatever the advantages of culture may be, can proceed only under the possibilities offered by an order of causation supplemental to the spontaneous somatic and instinctual powers our organisms have from nature. There must be some causal regimen that can restore to culture something approaching the functionality of nature. To a significant extent, this gap between the contingencies of the manifold particulars of experience and the more limited requirements of human existence can be mediated by the arts or “technai” which, Aristotle tells us, “partly completes what nature cannot bring to a finish, and partly imitates her” ¹⁰.

A techne is a plan or design, a formal specification of how we might approach the physical properties of matter so as to impose upon the circumstances of our natural existence an aim that we could not achieve through nature alone ¹¹. Thus if we desire to build a house, our architectural techne must tell us how properly to engage the tensile strength of steel nails within the fissile properties of wood. Wood and steel have many properties, some of which we desire for the purposes of our “poiesis,” or technical production, and others which we must avoid as counter-productive. For instance, a steel alloy that had Teflon's coefficient of friction might do well for stage props, but it could not serve the ends for which galvanized or coated

nails are intended. Implicit in the formulation of a techne is the assumption that matter is the totality of its properties, and that it is the function of the techne to selectively elicit the properties that conform to the end, telos, or final cause specified by the techne for an effective poiesis.

Thus a techne is always a reduction of the material and natural possibilities of experience ¹². Technai find in the material particularity of experience events whose particulars can be construed as the material properties of *their* project, their productions or “poieseis.” As such, the technical vision can conceive matter in terms of specific properties that it can elicit and organize. A techne finds in particulars, so construed, the properties through which matter can become *its* material, the material cause of *its* poiesis or production. Thus, under such an understanding, matter is regarded only according to the properties which are of use to the techne, and through these properties the matter is subordinated, governed and formed by the techne as a material cause.

The plan (eidos) of a techne is a universal and essential form that can address matter as an event that submits directly to its process without its artisan having to trouble him or herself with the particulars of the stuff that he or she is working with. For Aristotle, contingency¹³, particularity and necessity belong to the material substrate in which a form is realized ¹⁴. Yet a technical production or “poiesis” realizes its form or eidos within the matter, through the properties of the matter, without having to address the particulars as such ¹⁵. Significantly, techne's distance from the particular means that, generally, there are fewer accidents in techne (as is also the case in nature, or physis) than in more casual human activities.

According to the Aristotelian understanding of causation, a techne is a form whose applicability is largely independent of time considered as a vector of contingency ¹⁶. The unfolding of time in the process of production is a medium for the propagation of the form of the techne in matter. And, in this event,

the artisan is not thinking discursively or deliberately as would be the case of an ethical subject, that is an agent or a “subject of praxis.” Rather, the form of the artisan’s mind, which is equivalent to its cognitive state, or “hexis,” is the same as that of the formal and final causes, the forms or “eide” that the techne is originating within its material¹⁷. As such, technai are forms by which the human experience, despite its separation from nature, becomes intelligible, organized, systematic and liveable. Thus, at one and the same time, technai integrate the possibilities of human life after the formal organization of nature and distinguish it from nature¹⁸ and the matter or material cause in which technical productions transpire.

Technai are abstractions that stand apart from the immediacy and exigency of experience. They interpret matter’s contingencies as the properties in conformity with their aims. If nature is predictable for anthropoi, this is largely because their technai have filtered the forms and possibilities of culture out of what might otherwise be an impracticable totality of exigent particulars. Technai are like nature and its productions in that they generate stable and predictable forms within the temporality of human experience. Thus we might say that the discovery of culture demands technai as a way of extending natural experience beyond the demand of mere nature or physis.

ii) Praxis

As noted previously, techne is a unique mode of causation in that it is a human event that approximates the causality exhibited by nature (physis) in the growth of organisms. Nature is, etymologically, at least, that which grows (phyein.) In similar terms, the Aristotelian word for matter is “hyle,” or “wood.” The growth of an organism, the realization of its form or eidos within time and history is similar to the process of poiesis in which the eidos of the techne “grows” or takes shape under the ministrations of the artisan. Neither growth or poiesis involve thought or deliberation as to the particular¹⁹. But what does all this emphasis on “nature” have to do with the subject of culture? In a sense, the subjectivity of the technical hexis is no subjectivity at all since its concern is with the universal form of its eidos rather than with the material particularity of experience. In this sense, too, techne is a hexis similar to the formal state within which natural forms are realized.

Even so, cultural knowledge opens up a whole new order of contingency that exceeds the possibilities of the technical organization or naturalization of experience²⁰. In

the Aristotelian vision, the techne reproduces the order of nature and nature’s relative immunity to contingent events. The problem is that the life of anthropos is too complicated in its particularity to be addressed adequately through a regimen of universals²¹. It is unadapted to an existence in nature without technology, nor can it be contained within the experience of the “natural” consistency of the technical poiesis.

In its particularity, the experience of life exceeds the general grasp of techne and its more universal level of causality. The more immediate experience of life in its particularity does not unfold according to any such determinate or intelligible plan²². Life unfolds in time as a series of largely unpredictable particular events and cannot, as such, be contained within the limits possible through the technai. Its events must be encountered as exigencies, that is as particulars of a higher order of contingency than the properties of the matter or the material causes of the technai.

Here we encounter the subject proper and its need of praxis as a way of handling the urgent, the exigent and the particular. This is the ethical subject or subject of praxis, or, in Aristotelian terms, the “ethos” or “character.” The subject of praxis, must accommodate itself in a situation whose circumstances remain particular, and are, on that account, in and of themselves, incorporated, neither naturally nor technically, into any causal scheme that permits the conduct of life. The various arts, economics, carpentry, producing dramas, etc., order experience, but they leave too many particulars undetermined for experience to be rational. No matter how well one might order the material exigency of experience according to the formal projects of the technai, the experience of life always exceeds the grasp of the technical hexis.

The Causes of Praxis in the Nicomachean Ethics

i) Ethos

Praxis is, for Aristotle, the preeminent expression of character or ethos in the contingent material world of experience. Praxis should respond and inform the material condition of experience, which is to say that the human experience should always be governed by the forms of praxis. Otherwise, as in the reversal of tragedy, this experience of life as praxis would change into the opposite state which is “pathos” or suffering. Matter is problematic in Aristotelian thought. In some sense it is infinite or unlimited in that there is not much one can do in or with it without the mediation of techné. A definition of matter serviceable for a discussion of the possibilities of agency might regard it as an unregulated or amorphous condition of things which must be mediated by the arts to be compatible with the needs and specifications of individuals within cultures. But where the arts can apply their forms universally apart from the problems of the contingent particular existence, praxeis are different from poieseis, or the products of the arts, in that praxeis proceed from deliberation and treat the particulars that remain despite the mediation of the arts.

This attention to the variable and the particular includes also what varies in the physical and moral or emotional constitutions of different individuals. On the one hand, the particulars of praxis involve the circumstances of the world at large which present themselves as the objects of deliberation, for example, events that inspire fear or confidence. But beyond this, in more subjective terms, the contingencies that affect the conduct and success of praxis also include the moral, emotional and physical condition of the individual agent. We would expect praxeis to differ according to the specific combination of preferences, inclinations, abilities, values and so on that make a person a certain type of ethos and, consequently, a certain kind of agent.

If praxis is to be proper, it must spring from “a state of character (ethike hexis) concerned with choice (prohairesis), lying in a mean, i.e. the mean relative to us, this being determined by a rational principle (logos)” (EN 2.6). Thus we have a state of ethos or ethical condition governed by a norm and concerned with choice. Choice is the culmination of a process of deliberation, hence the end of a certain cognitive process. But deliberation itself

begins with a moral state of informed desiring which originates in wish (boulesis), which “is for the end” (EN 3.4) and depends on ethos.

There are two separate sets of principles, or “aretai,” which contribute to choice and praxis. One set is concerned with what sort of ethos the agent has, the other with the cognitive processes involved in practical reasoning. Aristotle refers to these principles or powers (“dynameis”) as moral and intellectual virtues, “ethikai kai dianoetikai aretai” (EN 1.13). If the moral and intellectual powers of the soul, or “psyche,” are means by which human experience can be rational and regulated, through appropriate choice and praxis, this success must be measured against the material causes of praxis considered subjectively, or, in Aristotelian terms, affectively. Taken subjectively, the material causes of praxis are the pathe, or affects. The pathe include “appetite (epithymia) anger, fear, confidence, envy, joy, friendly feeling (philia), hatred, longing, emulation, pity, and in general the feelings accompanied by pleasure and pain” (EN 2.5). Pathe are the material that the psyche contributes to experience. We feel, suffer or undergo these pathe and it is in regard to their promptings and urgencies that choices must be made. If one’s moral condition, the sum of one’s ethical hexeis, disposes one to specific types of choice, it follows that choice, what we select in preference to something else, is the outcome of a moral state.

This condition, which we articulate in wishes, choices and praxeis, arises from our capacity to be moved or affected, to experience the pathe, to specific degrees in specific circumstances. Here we can see that the subjectivity of the affective states responds in very specific ways to the particular contingencies of circumstance. In other terms, the psychic materia of the pathe is motivated by what is variable and exigent in the material situation of the world. If the pathe, for Aristotle, constitute affective responses to stimuli from the environment, his ethics concerns the manner in which such pathe or affects--these less than rational material of inner experience attendant upon perception--

should be most optimally integrated within ethos.

Moral excellence (ethike arete) is the ability of the ethos to feel pathe to the proper extent and to respond accordingly. Reckless, courageous and cowardly men will respond differently to the same dangerous situation, but the courageous man is most likely to respond well. A virtuous ethos state will determine, appropriately, the extent which one is affected by given circumstances and, therefore, incline one to make the right choice with regard to the pathos invoked. Thus, such an agent will act accordingly. “Right” is determined by a mean defined by the orthoi logoi relative to the agent. Thus virtue involves a disposition to choose the mean where any of the pathe are involved (EN 2.6).

The ethos is, in this sense, the sum of its ethikai hexeis or character states. Virtuous hexeis, or any hexeis, for that matter, are acquired through habituation ²³. With the proper upbringing, one can be habituated to the mean states which limit the pathe and call for the praxis appropriate to the circumstances which evoke such pathe. For example, when confronted by dangerous events, the pathos fear is excited. The mean with regard to such a state is courage. If one feels more fear than the situation demands and shrinks back, one is timorous; if one feels no fear where fear is a rational response, one may act recklessly. In Books Three through Five of the Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle lists other such rational mean states--temperance, liberality, pride, good temper, friendliness, truthfulness, etc.--and their corresponding states of excess and deficiency. Thus pathe constitute a sort of psychic material which, properly governed, constitutes the substrate of the integrated ethos.

ii) Dianoia

For the disposition to feel pathe in the appropriate degree to become a praxis of the rational sort, there must first be structures and mechanisms by which such affective materia can become discursive and contribute to the self-awareness of the subject of praxis. Here the manifold faculties of practical reasoning--thought concerned with the execution of praxis-- enter the picture. These are the intellectual virtues (dianoetikai aretai). Preeminent among such powers is practical wisdom (phronesis) which Aristotle defines as “a true and reasoned state of capacity to act with regard to the things that are good or bad for man” (EN 6.5). This “practical wisdom” is the ability “to deliberate well about what is good and expedient for oneself *not in some particular respect* but about what conduces to

the good life in general” (EN 6.5).

Praxis implies deliberation and deliberation implies choice (EN 3.3). Deliberation (bouleusis) is itself the instrumental modality of practical reasoning. It is concerned with means rather than ends (EN 3.3)--that “*particular respect*” about which the deliberation of phronesis is less concerned. Praxis responds to the variable. More specifically, praxis deals with situations that can be made otherwise by our own efforts. “All deliberation is investigation (zetesis)...about things which might be brought about by own efforts” (EN 3.3). This investigation into the possibilities of praxis involves instruments, their use, and generally the means of bringing something about. Deliberation is thought that discriminates among means on behalf of praxis. It converts the particulars of circumstance into the specifics of an agenda by assigning instrumental dimensions to the material of the circumstances in which it is engaged. Deliberation brings matter and mind together prior to choice and prior to their ultimate convergence in the execution of that choice as a praxis. Thus deliberation is the efficient and instrumental modality of praxis. But, in and of itself, it appears to be amoral. That is, deliberation involves the mere analysis of circumstances apart from the moral quality which will attach to a praxis through the intention that informs the end of that praxis. Morality concerns ends where deliberation concerns means. For the deliberation, choice and praxis to be complete and virtuous, they must be integrated within the agenda of phronesis, or practical wisdom (EN 6.5). This contribution of the big picture should expand upon deliberation’s attention to the particular.

Phronesis or practical wisdom culminates in choice and must integrate various other subordinate aretai, or powers ²⁴. In this brief description of integrated and subordinated psychic forms and materials we can see the hierarchical tendency of Aristotelian thought. Generally, inferior elements in a system are related to superior elements as matter, potential, or substrate is related to form. And

superior elements are, in relative terms, the final cause, telos or end of the material that they subsume, order, integrate, differentiate, specify, etc.²⁵. But, if this is so, how do we explain the coordination of such separate faculties as the moral and intellectual virtues within the single focus of choice and praxis? How do we coordinate these separate causes of praxis which Aristotle, in his Poetics, characterizes as ethos and dianoia? Briefly, Aristotle's vast integral systems appear to function as such by virtue of the fact that just about everything is, in one way or another, defined in terms of just about everything else. But the system does not simply replicate its structures as analogies to each other without invoking principles of mediation including elaborate schemes of mutually implicated cognitive powers. In this regard, we note that dianoia, or "thought," which in the Poetics is given with ethos as a cause of praxis, is actually an affect, or pathos: specifically, a cognitive affect: "dianoia, loving, and hating are pathe not of mind (nous), but of that which has mind, so far as it has it. That is why when this vehicle decays, memory and love cease; they were not of mind, but of the composite which has perished; mind is no doubt something more divine and impassible (DA 1.4)."

Dianoia does not belong to the unconditioned or theoretical cognitive state of philosophy and the mind that thinks universally and essentially without regard to the particular and the material: nous (intuition, mind, divine intelligence, etc.) Rather dianoia is a sort of psychic material that belongs to the soul as a composite entity. In the case of unconditional thought, the soul serves merely as a vehicle or substrate within which the human cognitive process can, in the contemplation, or "theoria" of philosophy, think the divine, eternal or essential intelligence.

As elsewhere, the possibility of human consciousness has two distinct and separate origins: sky and earth, reason and the irrational, mind and matter. In Aristotle this dichotomy is preserved in a series of grades running from nous down through pathos: from unconditioned form down to matter, emotion, suffering and accident. In the first book of the Nicomachean Ethics we are told that the virtues of ethos belong to the irrational (alogon) part of the soul--but specifically that part of the soul which responds to instruction (EN 1.13). Thus, in some sense, to the extent that dianoiai are pathe, ethos, which is concerned with pathe, and belongs to the irrational part of the soul, is the origin²⁶ of its particular thoughts or dianoiai. Thus, praxis is always an expression of "character." Yet we cannot exactly say that ethos is the

origin of the dianoetikai aretai, which ascend toward nous. We might think of dianoia as the capacity of the ethos--which must register its experiences in terms of such affects as friendliness, pity, fear, anger, and the like--to relate such psychic materia to its practical or deliberative machinery. Through the process of deliberation, the ethikai kai dianoetikai aretai can converge in choice and praxis²⁷. Dianoia is, in a sense, the cognitive dimension of the pathe. Through it, these intrinsically moral feelings can be assimilated to the process of deliberation as value judgements.

In as much as they are concerned with the particular, thinking and feeling appear to have a common origin and end in ethos. These formal and affective powers come together in the process of the deliberation that leads to choice and praxis. And this praxis should be an end in itself (EN 6.5), and thus a direct expression of ethos and its morality. As a consequence of this line of argument, we can arrive at the conclusion that praxis is very unlike the formal regimes of techne, episteme, and theoria in that its aim will, like its origin, speak directly to the material condition of the ethos and its subjectivity. Praxis must be an end in itself. But even as such, this end is the contingent and even impassioned condition of an ethos thinking practically on the promptings of the pathe that constitute its immediate connection to the world of its subjectivity. Thus, again, dianoia is at once thinking and feeling²⁸. These pathe are separated out into cognitive and affective modalities and then brought together in a choice that returns the thoughts and their cognitive process to the ethos. And it is this way that the ethos becomes an agent and commits praxeis which should be ends in themselves. In a sense the deliberative process involves the replication or instrumentalization of ethos within the cognitive structures available to it through dianoia, the mediating cognitive affect. The ethos then draws this expression back into itself in choice and praxis in their most rational sense.

As the culmination of the process of deliberation, choice is the convergence of the intellectual and moral virtues. It is also

a direct expression of ethos as the origin of praxis; “by choosing what is good or bad, we are of a certain ethos” (EN 6.2). Choice “is thought to be most closely bound up with virtue and to discriminate ethe better than praxeis do” (EN 6.2). For we pursue and avoid given objects, and hence choose or eschew them, according to the standing of our ethos to the pathe. This convergence of thinking and feeling in dianoia ²⁹ will be repeated (sublimated?) on the highest level in the proper sort of praxis. Choice should be desiderative reason or rational desire: “orektikos nous he prohairesis e orexis dianoetike” (EN 6.2). In such a case, the choice should be determined by a rational mean state:

the origin of praxis, its efficient, not its final cause is desire and reasoning with a view toward an end (orexis kai logos ho heneka tinos). This is why choice (prohairesis) cannot exist without either without reason and thinking (nous kai dianoia) or without a moral state; for good praxis and its opposite cannot exist without a combination of thought and ethos (ethos kai dianoia) (EN 6.2).

Nussbaum translates “orektikos nous e noetikos orexis” as “desiderative deliberation or deliberative desire” (*Fragility*, 308). This is correct in that it to the extent that we can talk about “reason,” or “nous,” in this situation, it is engaged in the function of deliberation. But to translate it as “deliberation” ignores the much larger formal complexity of the provenance and possibility of deliberation within an extremely elaborate formal and causal scheme that defines practical reasoning through reference to cognitive powers that Aristotle distinguishes from the practical. This, for me, typifies her approach to Aristotle which is to domesticate the metaphysician for a philosophy without metaphysics. Her Aristotle is phenomenologically correct.

In my view, there is much more involved. There is an intricate engagement the mind’s many dynameis or powers in a highly synthetic and composite activity in which various relatively material and formal powers converge under the formal possibilities of different kinds of thinking. There are different relations of the cognitive powers to each other, only one of which is practical. As might be suspected in thinking that privileges the formal and the eternal over the material and the contingent, the most complete activity of cognition occurs in the essential vision of nous. But here the whole force of nous is reduced

to deliberation, “bouleusis”; yet bouleusis is, very specifically, the state of an agent’s engagement with the materials of perception as they may be known only practically and not with regard to the technai or epistemai since these latter forms or states of cognition do not deliberate. My approach is to give Aristotle his due as a metaphysician, but then to demonstrate how tragedy generates appearances in which knowledge becomes a state of ethical awareness, and, in this sense, recalcitrantly if dysfunctionally practical.

Let’s consider the issue with regard the function of the pathe within the regime of practical reasoning. For Aristotle, the affects are causes of praxis in as much as they are part of an economy of appetite and desire. Nussbaum’s account is that “there must be a kind of reasonableness to the appetitive forces themselves--something like a listening attentively and responsively to parental injunction. The intentional selectivity of appetite shows how it can be engaged for positive support in search of the good” (*Fragility* 286). This is an interpretation of Aristotle’s assertion that “the appetitive and in general the desiderative partake of it [“reason”: “logos”] in a certain way, in as much as they are obedient to it” (EN 1.8, 1102 b, her translation). According to Nussbaum, this follows from the above considerations that there is a kind of rationality intrinsic to the desires.

The pleasurable and the painful, the to be pursued and the to be avoided, are marked out for us in the very way things present themselves to desire; and we might say that it is really desire itself that does the marking, showing us the sort of situation we are dealing with. We do not notice intellectually that there is something here that corresponds to desire; we recognize this with desire itself. We would not have been able to perceive those ethically relevant features without a passionate reaction...A well-formed character is unity of thought and desire, in which choice has so blended these two elements, desire being attentive to

thought and through responsive to desire, that either one can guide and their guidance will be one and the same (*Fragility* 308).

While I generally agree that pathē constitute incipient and rudimentary value judgments and that these material powers of judgment may converge with the formal in a well integrated character, it does not seem Aristotelian to put desire and reason on the same level without much very rational qualification. As Lear notes, we do have strong propensity toward the rational and the philosophical and he characterizes this as “epistemophilia,” or “the desire to understand³⁰ .” But this desire is a sort of pursuit of the logos or formal state of definition by a mind that lacks the degree of definition that it seeks in the logos. It seems too romantic, as well as too strangely similar to the Kantian aesthetic, to talk about the equivalence of reason and desire. If the heart has its reasons, this is only a consequence of the metaphysical, that is, essential and substantial, saturation of all that exists. As Aristotelian beings, we have teleological drive to realize our nature, which is to be noetikos, for we are by definition the noetikoi dipodes; but, if this is our nature, we can fulfill it through, among other considerations, the technai of culture, including education, since the orthoī logoi that define the rational mean states of response to give pathē are instilled through the poiesis of such a technē³¹. This is just one example of the specifically formal means through which the dispensation of the intelligible perpetuates itself.

The rationality of desire is a consequence of the superior rationality of the metaphysical abundance of reason. Consequently, in the Aristotelian universe nothing exists that is not, in principal, rational, and metaphysically so. Nussbaum takes for granted this very rationality that Aristotle grounds in the maddening subtlety of his formal and causal scheme and ascribes it to indisputable common sense of a well-mannered cosmos. On this basis her view of the power of the epistēmai is summed up as follows: “We have no access to truth beyond the deepest and most pervasive appearances...[the] account that has succeeded in correctly articulating those appearances...will have the strongest claim to truth” (*Fragility*, 287). This really makes Aristotle seem like a Nietzsche.

Saving the Appearances: An Ethical Poiesis

The Conversion of Praxis into its Opposite

In the Nicomachean Ethics, successful praxis is said to be an end in itself and, therefore, superior to the moral and intellectual causes that lead to it. In this, praxis also differs from poiesis, “for while making (poiesis) has an end other than itself, praxis cannot: for good praxis is itself its end” (EN 6,5). So if praxis is to be successful as such, it must issue from a good prohairesis since prohairesis is the moment in which the instrumental causes of practical reasoning are brought back into the ethos in its commitment to praxis. Thus moral and intellectual faculties converge in praxis, and this convergence is fundamentally ethical. This is also true in a more obvious sense. Praxis, which coincides with prohairesis, is the preeminent mark of character since it is by virtue of their character that agents engage in praxeis typical for them.

It is in this context of character and choice that praxis establishes the relation of the faculties of practical reasoning governed by choice to the external order of necessity and consequence. Thus praxis is the fulfillment and completion of the deliberative process which culminates within the material realities of the body and environment, and, consequently, it is the fulfillment of life. To be happy (eudaimonein) is the goal of a human life, the best and fullest of praxeis. “Both acting well and living well are the same thing as being happy” (EE 2,1). But, as is evident from the complexities involved in the construction of choice and praxis, happiness, or “eudaimonia,” has to be a highly elaborate, very synthetic affair--the integration of the many causes that add up to a successful course of deliberation, choice and praxis.

Aristotle says that eudaimonia is contingent and may fail either morally or circumstantially. Moral failure merits blame whereas cases of praxis that fail due to circumstance elicit the affects of pity and fear³². Let's consider first

the moral issue. In their moral and emotional life, agents may be incapable of balancing their fears, desires and affects to the point that these causes of practical reasoning cohere properly within stable courses of praxeis that contain their ends within themselves and, as such, remain complete. For example, one may fear or desire excessively or not enough and, in either case, respond inappropriately to one's circumstances. In such a case, the praxis will be ethically or morally deficient. It will be diminished by a "character flaw," a failure of ethos to keep its responses to its pathe within the limits that define the hexeis proper to it, that is, its appropriate mean states. As a consequence, the praxis ceases to be an end in itself.

Yet, a balanced life is no guarantee against ruin. In the first book of the Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle says of happiness that, depending upon what one intends to accomplish, friends, riches and political power may be useful; and happiness will lose its luster without good birth, good children, beauty, and prosperity (EN 1,8) ³³. Thus one may be vulnerable through accidental harm to one's person or property, or through other events beyond one's control such as misfortunes involving family, friends or political allies and so on. Nevertheless, the most secure fortune belongs to agents capable of happiness. In the event of a reversal, the agent who has lost eudaimonia was capable of it in the first place, and is, on that account, more likely to recover than one who had good fortune only incidentally. A prudent agent is likely to remain practical even after a reversal. On the other hand, the fortune of lesser agents is less rational, more incidental and contingent ³⁴.

In any case, whether one fails because of blameworthy praxis or for reasons that are merely circumstantial, the consequences are similar. Whether one is just or vicious, foolish or prudent, setbacks can be permanent. As in the reversal of tragedy (Po 11, 1452 b), there are events short of death where the loss of happiness is irremediable. In such a case, like that of Oedipus, the subject may wholly lose its status as an agent capable of praxeis that contain their consequences. For Aristotle, the lack of the evolved causality implicit in the ability to act constitutes the condition of pathos, or "suffering," and this condition is what distinguishes victim from agent in Aristotelian thought. In such a case, the formal priority is lost. The status of agent or subject of praxis has declined to the condition of "subject matter," that is to the material condition under which we think events such as the material cause and accident ³⁵, both of which are, in a proper Aristotelian sense, pathe ³⁶.

Plot, Techne and Hamartia

The main focus of the ethics concerns the success or failure of praxis at the universal or moral level of character: how people do or do not observe the limits or orthoi logoi of what would be for them rational mean states in which their lives could be lead most in accord with the possibility of eudaimonia. The Aristotelian argument is that virtuous people are aware of the appropriate limits, respond to their pathe accordingly, and, consequently, pursue a course of deliberation appropriate to these limits. Yet tragedies of the sort preferred by Aristotle present agents capable of such praxis coming to bad ends despite the fact that their praxeis issued from appropriately reasonable character states.

Tragedy presents of a special set of problems treated in the beginning of book three of the Nicomachean Ethics. There Aristotle discusses unexpected reversals that evolve out of praxeis that fail for no moral reasons, but only because their deliberation was mistaken as to the particulars of circumstance. If one is mistaken about a matter of perception, the breakdown of the deliberative process is not ethical but dianoetic or instrumental and this at the level of the most rudimentary of cognitive powers, that of perception. In the execution of its praxis, the ethos of such an agent is guided by the appropriate intentions and desires. Consequently, both the end for which the praxis was attempted and the manner in which it was deliberated are without blame. Such errors, or hamartiai, that are mistaken merely as to the particulars do not occur voluntarily. Thus, they are to be distinguished from those that are the voluntary consequences of misguided deliberative processes of a vicious person. The latter can be blamed.

Now every wicked man is ignorant of what he ought to do and what he ought to abstain from, and it is by reason of error (hamartia) of this kind that men become unjust and in general bad; but the term "involuntary" tends to be used not if a man is ignorant of what is to his advantage--for it is not mistaken purpose

that causes involuntary praxis (it leads rather to wickedness), nor ignorance of the universal (for that men are blamed), but ignorance of particulars, i.e. of the circumstances of the praxis and the objects with which it is concerned. For it is on these that both *pity* and pardon depend, since the person who is ignorant of any of these acts involuntarily. Perhaps it is just as well, therefore, to determine their nature and number. A man may be ignorant, then, of who he is, what he is doing, what or whom he is acting on, and sometimes also what (e.g. what instrument) he is doing it with, and to what end (e.g. he may think his act will conduce to some one's safety), and how he is doing it (e.g. gently or violently)...a man might say he "let it go off when he merely wanted to show its working," as the man did with the catapult. Again, one might think one's son was an enemy, as Merope did, or that a pointed spear had a button on it, or that a stone was pumice-stone; or one might give a man a draught to save him, and really kill him...the ignorance may relate to any of these things, i.e. of the circumstances of the praxis, and the man who was ignorant of any of these is thought to have acted involuntarily, and especially if he was ignorant of the most important points; and these are thought to be circumstances of the praxis and its end. Further, the doing of an act that is called involuntary in virtue of ignorance of this sort must be painful and involve repentance (EN 3.1, 1110 b-1111 a).

In the case of praxeis that fail for moral reasons, we can find the problem in ethos in the improper accord of its moral apparatus and the psychic materia of its affects, aversions and desires. In the case of events of the sort just elaborated, on the other hand, we do not blame the agents. Given the neutral moral valence of such reversals, their pain is undeserved and prompts pity, as is the case with the victim of the tragic reversal described in the thirteenth chapter of the Poetics. As noted previously, the pathe constitute rudimentary value judgments even as they comprise the material of practical reasoning. Since, in this respect, we should be able to pity the victim of a reversal, a tragedy should not involve the fortune of an exceptionally good agent³⁷. We would find the misfortune of such agents "repulsive" (miairon), just as we would find vicious characters coming to a bad end as a consequence of their doings "humane" (philanthropos) (Po 13, 1452 b). In either of these cases, there is either pain or there is pleasure, but not the pleasure or the pain associated with the tragic elicitation and catharsis of the affects of pity

and fear³⁸.

Thus the kind of accident that results from this specific breakdown of the juncture between the powers of perception and deliberation must additionally apply to agents whose morality is such that their reversal can elicit in us pity and fear rather than either our pleasure or our disgust. This position in our emotional register is occupied by what Aristotle calls a "metaxy": "the sort of man who is in between...who does not differ with respect to virtue or justice, and who changes to misfortune, not because of badness or wickedness, but because of some hamartia" (Po 13, 1453 a). It is now apparent that the ethos and dianoia that tragedy would present through the imitation of praxeis, can be termed, for the purposes of this argument, "metaxy" and "hamartia."

The aim of the tragic plot is not merely to generate or produce the affect of pity; beyond this, it must generate the pathe of fear and wonder (Po 9, 1452 a). I will save my detailed discussion of wonder, or "thauma," for the next chapter. Here I note that wonder is an affect whose bias is toward epistemic and theoretical thinking, that is, toward dianoia in its ascent above the contingent and affective grounds of the ethos taken as the subject of practical reasoning. On the other hand, pity and fear are very much concerned with practical reasoning since their affective bias acknowledges the limits of praxis and practical possibility.

Practical knowledge as tragic knowledge

With this hexis that involves the pity and fear that apply to those whom we can pity and fear, we have arrived at a general assertion on the nature of the subject of Aristotelian praxis, the ethos. The ethos is that which has the capacity for praxis. It is manifest in word and in deed as the sum of its ethikai hexeis. Considered more in terms of their potentiality rather than in terms of their actualization in praxis, these character states are the possibility

of the empirical self-awareness of anthropos. And, since anthropos is, in turn, the noetikos dipous, the animal whose life should be equivalent to a praxis that issues from choice, noetike orexis or “rational desire,” the ethos and the character states proper to it are the peculiar possession of anthropos. Other animals are moved by their nature to feel, desire and avoid³⁹, but anthropoi, additionally, construct their desires and aversions through the manifold formal powers of deliberation, and then choose and act.

i) The objective universal

We have noted that Aristotle regards life as a praxis. Let us consider the affects as a material recognition of the limits of such a praxis. Implicit in these pathe of pity and fear and the character states associated with them is the apprehension that the success of praxis will always remain uncertain. By divesting the moral differences of specific individuals, we get a presentation of a norm, a “universal” presentation of the problems involved in choice and, thus, the affects involved in such a recognition of the limits of praxis which are elicited through an imitation of praxis⁴⁰.

The production of the tragic drama permits an imitation of complete praxis, praxis with a beginning, middle and end with the ethical and dianoetic causes of practical reasoning apparent and in place⁴¹. “Tragedy, therefore, is imitation of worthy and complete praxis (praxeos teleias) having magnitude, in speech made pleasing with each form [of pleasing ornamentation] used separately in the parts of tragedy, performed and not narrated, achieving through pity and fear, a catharsis of such affections” (Po 6, 1449 b). It is, moreover, “an imitation of praxeis acted by certain agents who of necessity are of a certain kind by virtue of ethos and dianoia, for it is because of these that we say that praxeis are of a certain kind, these two, ethos and dianoia, being the natural causes of praxeis” (Po 6, 1449 b-50 a). The imitation of a complete praxis is, in this, a presentation of praxis kata holon, or universal praxis, praxis katholou. Hence, in this view, a complete praxis is as intrinsically and ideally existent as any activity or event that is by its intelligible definition, or essence, a proper object of episteme as the possibility of philosophy.

Indeed, it is in this sense that Aristotle says that tragedy is “more philosophic and more worthy than history” (po 9, 1451 b). Presumably, from this perspective, the typological imagination of a genre that stages contingency is more in accord with the demands of thinking epistemically and universally than are events that emerge

in the context of actual praxeis. Such historical praxeis constitute a condition whose incidents (pragmata) combine the causal sequences of too many uncoordinated praxeis and accidents. Thus, they do not admit inclusion within a manner of thinking that measures thought in accordance with the possibility of philosophy. Consequently, reflection upon such events would be too caught in the historical conditions of praxis to admit the systematic coordination of things determinate according to an absolute and intelligible whole. Thus the existence of creatures whose life is praxis is, in its particular courses, unlikely to be much more kata holon than the function and scope of the practical reasoning that must think the particulars. Thus, from this perspective, tragedy forgoes historical reflection upon the complicated praxeis of less than typical ethe beset by the elaborate contingencies of accidents that actually have happened. In some sense, tragedy’s presentation of ethe as they might be, “hoia an genoito” (Po 9, 1451 a), requires a presentation of “reversals as they could occur.” But this reformulation of “ethe as they ought to be typically presented⁴²” may also raise, in the context that I am about to develop, serious problems for such an ideal interpretation for the relation between history and praxis.

If tragedy is more philosophical than history, it is also less philosophical than philosophy and much simpler. Here I would like to consider the universality of tragedy in a more general, rhetorical sense. My supposition is that the tragic contemplation of praxis reduces the manifold elaborations of the ethics to a universal apprehension of the limits that apply to the possibility of happiness. Further, I suppose that this elaboration can be made dramatically in the less than epistemic medium of a techne that imitates praxeis. We can, in a sense, make assertions of this sort in light of the fact that the pathe, even as material responses to the particularity of experience, are themselves visceral responses to typical situations. The affects, even in their particularity, respond to a limited number of circumstances, and as soon as we begin to

reflect upon them we are already back in the language of familiar experience. In the Aristotelian view, given pathe have specific originating conditions and are marked by specific sensations⁴³.

If the foregoing, in a sense, can be thought to constitute a sort of biography of the affects, if not their psychology, it may be that we can find further organization and differentiation of the affects even in the pathe of tragedy. Pity and fear are affects that grow loud in the production of tragedy and speak in very general terms to the limitations of praxis. On the other hand, other affects such as anger or friendship differentiate more specifically the options of a praxis that is already possible. Pity and fear concern life and its praxeis directly and singularly according to their exigency, while other affects address the possibilities of life and its praxis in much more limited terms. Consider pity. Pity is an affect that works as a very inclusive value judgement in that for it to apply one need only establish that the victim is not wholly good (epieikos, “equitable”), in which case we would regard such unmerited affliction as repulsive (mieron). Should the vicious suffer, this would be simply humane (Po 13, 1453 a). Moreover, when it is established that the object of one’s concern is an ordinary or “representative” anthropos, that is, that the limiting cases of moral excellence and turpitude do not apply, further specific judgments on the character of the victim are suspended. And through the pathos of pity, a sort of empathy obtains for the plight of the victim⁴⁴.

The subjective universal

I have just examined how the term “universal” can refer to a typicality more definite than the random course of history. Yet I still wish to distinguish another sense of the designation of the term “universal” from this more powerful sense of universality commanded by inclusive, systemic and epistemic notions of the whole just elaborated. If agents cannot qua agents have epistemic knowledge, how might we consider under the conditions of a thinking, so restricted, the general sense of what it is to be an agent, or, perhaps, what it is to act? Human experience and its praxeis are limited by the limited number of pathe (including passion, gentleness, fear, pity, courage, joy, loving, and hating, and so forth) and by the limited number of character states that we may associate with them. Given this there are only so many ways of being in or out of character or in or out of praxis, all of which can be examined by ethicists, historians, rhetoricians and the like. But what, from the perspective of the practical

awareness of ethe regarded as the subjects of praxis is it like to be an identity involved in any of these states of acting or feeling?

Is there a sense of inevitability and exclusiveness to typify a subject’s awareness of itself under the conditions proper to the elicitation of given pathe such as pity and fear, given that all anthropoi may undergo such affects as a matter of self-awareness if not self-knowledge? Is there a peculiar way in which anthropoi can know themselves as such even in the most rudimentary awareness of a pathos and the character state corresponding to it? When we talk about a practical self-awareness and the sense of being in the world that this entails for a practical subject, are we, finally, dealing with a sense of the whole different from that of episteme? Epistemic knowledge can correlate the universal status of all things as parts of to pan, the whole of existence with the essential status that things have qua things that exist by virtue of their intelligible definition⁴⁵. On the other hand, pathe totalize consciousness in a different way. Where the epistemic thought establishes the relations among things, the relation of essence to accident, etc., the pathe unify thought about the particularity of circumstance. From the perspective of epistemic knowledge, these pathe place the emphasis upon attribute and accident. They take command of one’s knowledge and focus it upon the deliberative possibilities and biases of the very particular aims of a specific kind of praxis. This specificity is important. Where there is only one cognitive state for episteme, there are many for praxis. When one is afraid, for example, one’s practical thinking becomes focussed within boundaries defined on either extreme by aggression and submission, specific sorts of pursuit and avoidance.

Yet, despite this focus on the particular, is it possible that, even under the conditions of this practical reasoning, ethe can know themselves qua ethos? One way to approach this issue is to consider how some of these pathe are oriented toward other subjects. As Aristotle tells us in the Rhetoric, we can fear for others as well as for ourselves, and other affects, such as friendship (Rh 2.4) and pity (Rh 2.8) are

chiefly concerned with what we want for others. Pity is a case in point. Presumably we can pity more people than we could either love or hate, since pity is not limited by acquaintance or other classification apart from the moral stipulation that the proper object of pity, as in section thirteen of the *Poetics*, is neither wholly good or evil.

The subjects of the tragic *techné*'s audience know what sort of *ethos* an agent has by virtue of the *praxeis* and dialog that preceded the reversal. We can assume that we know the subject of the tragic drama as a *metaxy*. Yet, under the urgency of a real life confrontation with the similar plight of a stranger, spectators of a tragic performance, now subjects of the *praxis* of *life*, would still be moved to pity and fear since they cannot know whether or not the victim is suffering entirely deservedly or undeservedly⁴⁶. Without being given any reason to regard an unknown victim otherwise, we would tend to think of him or her as a *metaxy*. Like pity, fear and probability, this notion of *metaxy* seems to be a value intrinsic to the *pathe* that contribute to our affective biases as ethical subjects. As we learn in the *Rhetoric*, pity involves fear as a reference of the plight of the afflicted to similar possible outcomes for ourselves or those near to us (Rh 2,8). Thus there may be in our affective nature a community sense that disposes us to think about the consequences of *praxis* in terms of their bearing on every spectator or every *anthropos*⁴⁷.

Thus here “universal” has come to refer to a sort of empirical awareness of ourselves as subjects under which we apprehend the suffering of others whom we can construe as *metaxeis*. Given the broad scope of this *pathos* of pity, the ethical *hexis* of the tragic spectators' pity and fear may provide, in this case, a general sense of what it is to be a practical subject. In its staging of an agent's predicament, tragedy may, on these affective grounds, elicit some sense of what it is to act in a world where the chances of sustaining complete and self-contained *praxeis* are as contingent as the knowledge of practical reasoning. Implicit in our capacities for pity and fear is the apprehension that these *pathe* have their reasons. In this sense, the affective grounds of practical reasoning are self explanatory. What one knows about oneself is, roughly, what one knows about the consequences of the limits of one's practical knowledge. And these limits are expressed in tragedy, at least, by pity and fear⁴⁸.

We are, by virtue of our affects of pity and fear, that is, by virtue of what we are inclined to pity and fear, bound to have a concept of the *metaxy* as a representative *anthropos*. Fundamentally, perhaps, we must address our

reflection upon the larger consequences of contingency not to ourselves, but to someone like ourselves, the *metaxy*, hence, one of our kind. Here the objective sense of universality is reduced to much more social and biological sense of genus, family or kind. And, it may be that we think about our identities, our lives and *praxeis* in terms of life in these absolutely and irreducibly generic terms⁴⁹. The fact that we are agents possessed of a practical self-consciousness means that there will always be those whom we can pity and fear. Thus, through its presentation of its *metaxy* and the *hamartiai* and unpremeditated harm that constitutes the reversal of its fortunes, tragic drama may bring home to us the very real possibility of our own contingent status as agents. The tragedian's *techné* might elicit and construct the *pathe* of pity and fear under which we envision the *metaxy*, presented as a generic sense of ourselves, involved in these catastrophic reversals of fortune. Given this, the pity and fear of tragedy are quite real. Consequently, the project of tragedy may be to pose the question of the difficulties of the specifically human being directly in terms of *praxis*. This larger, looser sense of the universal might refer to the position of an agent as the subject of merely practical knowledge, that is a subject that knows nothing beyond the limited possibilities of merely practical reason⁵⁰.

Discarding the universals: the return of the appearances

At this point, I would like to suggest that the manner in which tragedy presents its appearances denies the power of practical reasoning a grasp of its particulars even in the limited sense just described. The effect of the production of a tragic drama is to generate a practical awareness that the moment in which we live and act, no matter how fortunate, is, according to the Sophoclean dictum, only an appearance, *phainomenon*, or “seeming.” In the *hexis* of its aesthetic, tragedy confronts us with an emphatic distinction between the real condition of the perceived particulars and the pretensions, however relative, of even practical

knowledge.

Consider the case of Oedipus. Oedipus just happens to be returning from Delphi while his father is approaching it; Oedipus just happens to find his way back to Thebes and his mother while fleeing from his adoptive parents in Corinth; the Corinthian shepherd who comes to comfort Oedipus just happens to be the one that saved him in the first place and thus will make his discovery of his identity inevitable. The coincidences appear to amass beyond our ability to discern them⁵¹. This is either more or less than a casual case of hamartia. In any event, it does not seem Aristotelian. Peculiarly, the production of a drama such as Oedipus Tyrannus achieves this effect by maintaining, to the greatest extent possible, the causal connections between events in the plot in accordance with the Poetics' criteria of probability and necessity⁵².

What such a production does, paradoxically, is save the appearances, that is, the appearance of sufficient connection between cause and consequence within the plot, while preventing these appearances the possibility of being construed as part of any systemic, epistemic whole, or even the whole of any practicable or intelligible perception of the world as a venue suited for praxis. Thus this sort of tragedy saves the appearances, the connection of cause and consequence which constitutes the very facticity of our experience of the particular, but denies these particulars any place within the structure of an intelligible cosmos. Causal connections, intelligible in themselves, get implicated in a larger scheme that raises more questions than it answers. Presentations of causality have now become aesthetic rather than practicable.

These coincidences pile up “unexpectedly” and “as if by design” (Po 9, 1452 a). Such events run contrary to the systemic and universal discourses of science and philosophy, but, additionally, they contradict the most rational of desires, the desire for eudaimonia. In his pursuit of that most rational of praxeis, Oedipus is caught in a process of unrelenting hamartiai and confounded at every turn⁵³. Given our knowledge of the predicament of Oedipus, the futility of his efforts becomes increasingly apparent. We begin to see that the standards of necessity and probability no longer allow him to secure the facts of identity and biology against the particulars of perception for practical reasoning as would be the case in any normal universe. Such appearances now serve only to exhibit their ironic recalcitrance to the possibility of praxis containing its own consequences and remaining an end in itself. Thus these appearances retain their particularity against the universal,

systematizing drives of an epistemology that would incorporate them through the minor premises of its syllogisms. And, again, even in the weaker sense of the universal noted above, there is not predictable consistency of events for praxis, only the deadly mere appearance of normalcy.

Through these relentless hamartiai, we can see that a tragic destiny has commandeered the appearances which can no longer serve phronesis since they are no longer the rational phainomena that constitute a condition of the possibility of eudemian praxis⁵⁴. Rather, they now serve as proof against the possibility of happiness. In this sense, the intellectual truth of tragic knowledge, the truth most compatible with episteme, may be that appearances remain appearances and contribute nothing as such to the practical or theoretical understanding of events⁵⁵.

Saving the affects

Since tragedy is concerned with the generation of the affects of pity, fear and wonder, to the extent that we are to talk about a tragic knowledge, it may be insufficient to consider such knowledge only in terms of its rather limited affinity to the discursive possibilities of science and philosophy. Wonder or “thauma” is the cognitive pathos proper to learning and the beginning of philosophical enquiry⁵⁶. On the other hand, the wonder of tragedy does not presage the incorporation of the perceived particular into the universal scheme of any more objective knowledge. Rather, it accompanies the piteous and fearful unfolding of the drama’s plot. Especially when taken in this context, if we are to talk of a specifically tragic version of the practical self-awareness discussed above, such knowledge might itself be understood better either as a pathos or as a moment that has marked affinities to the pathe of tragedy. The tragic knowledge may be an affective recognition of a predicament that faces a metaxy, especially when we consider how dianoia itself is a pathos, something that consciousness undergoes⁵⁷.

Pity and fear are affects that mark the

limits of praxis, and wonder itself is the affect that marks the indeterminate state of a perception that demands explanation but has not become implicated in the discursive structures that would make its causes intelligible. Thus, for Aristotle, wonder is an affect proper to the beginning of philosophical enquiry. In the context of tragedy's imitation of praxeis that are at once piteous and fearsome, this wonder may indicate a divestment of the discursive content of even practical knowledge if we understand such content in terms of a reasonable understanding of the connection of causal sequences explicably in terms of their origins and practical consequences. This qualification "explicably" is stated in order to preclude from our definition of "intelligible" the uncanny accretion of coincidences that contributes to the fearfulness of the plot of Oedipus.

The question here is whether or not the practical subject or ethos can be said to know anything simply on the basis of its pity and fear. Do the praxeis imitated on stage become mere phainomena, seemings or appearances of the order that tragedy presents against the possibility of eudaimonia? Do they become a manner of presenting as unavoidable the mere phenomenality of everything we assume to know about our world? If so, is ethos itself a seeming? And if any of this is the case, what value do we assign to this term "seeming?" Is a seeming that which is not real? Or might this tragic seeming, as in the Birth of Tragedy, address an order of reality that is manifest only in its appearance and grasped only in terms of the pathe evident in its presentation? Might we describe this condition as a raw facticity of experience that makes up a kind of phronesis divested of the possibility of its discursive or dianoetic knowledge? If so, the Aristotelian practical knowledge would give way to the tragic knowledge that the formal possibilities of thinking life and happiness, too, are only seeming⁵⁸.

Saving the Appearances

Tragedy involves an imitation of praxis in its contingent unity, and this imitation serves as a sort of demonstration not of praxis itself and not even as a demonstration of how praxis fails in any specific circumstances that we might encounter in any life that an Aristotelian might envision. The uncanny effect of a causal ordering of circumstances so minutely tailored against the happiness of a particular agent does not suit science and philosophy, which command their particulars under the taxonomic and generic possibilities of the universal. Pushed to its

ultimate conclusion, tragedy's asymptotic explosion of happenstance may render meaningless the functions of systemic and epistemic thought that suppress the singular to save the whole. Such aporiai may make the improbable unmanageable, as it were, destroy the value of statistics, and, in so doing, release the particular from the grasp of the universal. The production of the tragic aporia may demonstrate, under appearances that are too unlikely for science and philosophy, the reality of the pathe and the ethikai hexeis to which they refer.

The aporia of tragedy seems to confuse the distinction between the improbable and the impossible by staging, under the conditions of coincidence, hamartiai that run consistently contrary to our expectation of life in a rational universe. In terms of Aristotelian dramatic theory, we should probably regard the fantastic events of the plot as eikota adynata, "impossible probabilities"⁵⁹ according to the credo of chapter twenty four of the Poetics (1460 a). As I will explain in the next chapter, Aristotelian thought denies meaning to all coincidences and accidents, even when they elicit feelings such as surprise, wonder, relief, fear, and so on, and appear to happen "as if by design." Yet, as I will argue, were such events to happen apart from the poiesis of our dramatic techne, they would have transpired too consistently without the possibility of an explanation to be dismissed as Aristotelian accidents. Consequently, we should not dismiss this as an example of the transparently impossible eikota adynata of the sort discussed as elements of the tragic techne in the Poetics⁶⁰ In their own way, these imitations of praxis that constitute the phainomena of the stage remain both probable and persuasive, eikota and pithana, despite their departure from the order of Aristotelian normalcy.

When taken as an imitation of the phenomenal conditions under which praxis occurs, this aporetic presentation is a singular event in that its particulars connect without the benefit of any explicable systemic organization of the appearances. The appearances remain appearances, but this does

nothing for the visions of sciences and theories that must be able to regard appearances as particulars subordinate to the general, inclusive and universal biases of intelligible being. Since the particularity of experience does not admit the introduction of any larger conceptual construction of the purposes or ends by which we might understand the operation of such appearances within the big plan, we are, are left with a situation peculiarly reminiscent of the Kantian aesthetic. We now have circumstances in which the data of experience have assumed a purposive organization of their own apart from the determinate cognitive state that would obtain if we were to think such singular appearances in accordance with a determinate purpose whose mechanism we could explain.

The problem remains, how do we save the appearances generated by the tragic techne for comprehension within Aristotelian epistamai and technai? Aristotelian thought presupposes, at least, the compatibility of phenomena with our ability to think them scientifically and philosophically. The simplest resolution of this difficulty is to ignore the impossibly probable counter-purposive material of perception, the wholly incommensurable ordination of the plot's consequences in its presentation of a consistent but inexplicable destiny. It is simpler to approach the requirements of universality through the affects. Pity and fear remain as predictable as they always have been, even for the tragic aesthetics. The predicaments of the metaxy confronted with hamartiai of severe consequence are always pitiful and fearsome. As such, we can regard the affects elicited by the production of tragedy as the materia of an Aristotelian techne since the function of this techne is the elicitation and catharsis of such affects. Aristotle does not appear to see any problems here for his theory of knowledge but is, rather, concerned only with the empirical effect of events that unfold wondrously and contrary to expectation. Given that the appropriate tragic affects are elicited by such an ordination of praxeis, this is a good way to elicit such affects. In this, we can suppose that in the Aristotelian theory of the soul, this dramatic techne is one that works with the materia of the affects and the production of these affects is more consequential for an explanation of the techne than is the manner in which they are elicited. There are precedents for such an approach in both the Rhetoric and the Politics where Aristotle discusses, respectively, the rhetorical art of persuasion and the role music in education.

Rhetoric

In the first place, these technai need not present accounts that correspond in any strict way to an epistemic understanding of the dispensation of the whole. In the case of rhetoric, persuasion may be accomplished by employing an other than scientific standard of proof in a discourse whose aim is persuasion rather than proof. The rhetorical techne can employ “enthymemes,” syllogisms which address the pathe rather than a fully syllogized course of reason⁶¹, and construct for its audience persuasive appeals on the basis of typicality and probability. “There are few facts of the necessary type that can form the basis of rhetorical syllogisms. Most of the things about which we make decisions, and into which therefore we inquire, present us with alternative possibilities. For it is about our praxeis that we deliberate and enquire, and all our actions have a contingent character; hardly any of them are determined by necessity... It is evident, therefore, that the propositions forming the basis of enthymemes, though some of them may be ‘necessary,’ will most of them be only usually true” (Rh 1.2, 1357 a). Thus, rhetoric’s syllogisms are adapted to the merely probable limitations of the world in which we live, act and deliberate. Since epistemic knowledge is of only qualified value in the praxis of life, rhetorical reasoning adapts the form of the syllogism to the more material registers of dianoia and its structuring as discourse. Thus “rhetoric may be defined as the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion” (Rh 2.1, 1355 b). Thus the application and reception of this techne is not in any strict Aristotelian sense a discourse of reason or practical reasoning. As such, the rhetorical presentation cannot and need not engage the intellectual capacities of its audience in a rigorously scientific fashion. What we have in the case of the Rhetoric is a techne which regards the values and affects of its audience as material causes to be shaped and directed.

Rhetoric is a techne that moves the pathe of its audience and does not bother with

anything so formal as a complete argument. In the less than epistemic status of its propositions, at least, rhetoric is similar to the tragic technē. Both arts deal with character in terms of a typology of probabilities that is at once persuasive and more universal than history. But, beyond this, both rhetoric and the technē of tragedy work on the pathe of their subjects by imitating the deliberative processes and conditions of practical knowledge under which praxis is attempted. In this, tragic speech, like all discourse about the practical conduct of life is laden with a gnomic and tentative sort of utterance characteristic of enthymemes⁶². Thus both the tragic and rhetorical technai generate plotted narratives that manipulate their subjects through their appeal to the conditions and issues of practical knowledge. Despite these similarities, tragedy differs from rhetoric in that it does not appear to have any definite proposition upon which its audience is intended to act. The poiesis of tragedy is an exhibition of particulars that have been divested of their capacity to mean anything, however tentative, fictitious or even rhetorical. The illusion of epistemic certainty, or of a practical knowledge that approaches that condition is shattered irretrievably, at least on the level of causal connections. Tragedy severs completely the relation of the circumstantial reference of its narrative from any intelligible and practicable value such appearances may have either praxis or for understanding appearances.

Music

Both Rhetoric and Tragedy are concerned with the pathe and with persuasive presentations. Both deal, in their respective ways with what is probable and universal in ethe and their interactions with each other in their experience of the world. But, even as such, these discourses are less than epistemic. The universality of ethe and their hexeis may be elicited in terms that speak to the universal situation of anthropoi in situations in which the real particulars of individual existence are forgotten. In this, we might say that rhetoric, rather ideally, attempts to extend the universality of character over its merely probable construction of circumstance. And this technē can be persuasive because it does have a certain value in predicting the outcome of a situation. A rhetorician can make a very good case that such a kind of man is likely to engage in such a praxis in given circumstances. Tragedy, on the other hand, seeks to break down this connection between the universal probability of character and the more

tentative probability of the particular empirical circumstances of individual praxis. Yet, in a conservative reading, at least⁶³, we are still left with a the probability of an ethos confronted by an unintelligible and impracticable destiny. But this study of the character state of a tragic protagonist is, even as such, an extension of the project of the ethical episteme. I will now give a more aesthetic account of the tragic hexeis by bringing in some of Aristotle's thinking on music.

In the final book of the Politics we learn that music has powers similar to those of Rhetoric. Both address the pathe. Yet instead of structuring in its subjects the discourse of practical reason to the point at which these subjects can be moved to enact the purposes of the rhetorician, music forgoes even the discursive structure of impassioned and persuasive language. In chapter five of book eight, Aristotle states the following as an answer to the question of whether or not music has influence over character and the soul.

It must have such an influence if characters are affected by it. And that they are so affected is proved in many ways, and not least by the power which the songs of Olympus exercise; for beyond question they inspire enthusiasm, and enthusiasm is an emotion (pathos) of the ethical part of the soul. Besides, when men hear imitations, even apart from the rhythms and tunes themselves, their feelings move in sympathy (pantes sumpatheis) Since then music is a pleasure, and virtue consists in rejoicing and loving and hating aright, there is clearly nothing which we are so much concerned to acquire and to cultivate as the power of forming right judgments, and of taking delight in good dispositions and noble actions (epieikesin ethesi kai tais kalais praxessin). Rhythm and melody supply imitations of anger and gentleness, and also of courage and temperance, and all the qualities contrary to these, and of the other qualities of character, which hardly fall short of the actual affections as we know from our own experience, for in listening to such

strains our souls undergo a change (metaballomen gar ten psychen). The habit of feeling pleasure or pain at mere representations is not far removed from the same feeling about realities; for example, if one delights in the sight of a statue for its beauty only, it necessarily follows that the sight of the original will be pleasant to him.... Even in mere melodies there is an imitation of character (homoimoma tois ethesin), for the musical modes differ essentially from one another, and those who hear them are differently affected by each. Some of them make men sad and grave like the so-called Mixolydian, others enfeeble the mind, like the relaxed modes, another, again, produces a moderate and settled temper, which appears to be the peculiar effect of the Dorian; the Phrygian inspires enthusiasm.(1340 a-b).

Thus music has the “power of forming character” as it imitates the affective states of the soul (1340 b 11). It is a techne concerned very much with the ethos in that it awakes within the ethe of its audience the pathe, the rudimentary powers of our practical engagement with the world, even if it does not construct them to the point that we are inclined to act on them. In this way, music is like a rhetoric which excites ethe into character states that are, in themselves, conditions of the possibility of praxis, although, unaided, its lack of discursive structure prevents it from pressing these character states into a committed course of praxeis. Thus music is ethical, but only indirectly practical. It reproduces specific ethikai hexeis by eliciting the pathe appropriate to them, but it doesn’t provide or demand any dianoetic structures of practical reasoning such as we find in rhetoric. We find in music a separation of the practical subjectivity of the ethos from the powers and functions of practical reasoning that Aristotle usually associates with the subjectivity of such cognitive states.

Thus we appear to have in the Aristotelian understanding of music something more like the hexeis that Nietzsche describes in Beyond Good and Evil. The Nietzschean praxis is peculiarly like the Aristotelian imitation of praxis in that in either case the concern is not with successful, self-contained praxeis, but rather with the elicitation of the subjective possibilities of the character states under the form provided by the practical engagement of an ethos with its circumstances. We have, peculiarly, in Nietzsche, and I would argue, in the presentation of praxis of the kind described in the Poetics, an alteration of the Aristotelian definition of praxis as a self-contained end in itself in which the pathe are merely subordinate material. In the case of Nietzsche, the contingency of

praxis does itself take on its own ethical value apart from the success of agents who assume a risk in committing themselves to praxis. Thus in this order of ethical subjectivity choice becomes equivalent with the stake of a risk, rather than with a rational desiring that would make probable its successful outcome in praxis. In this sense, there is a convergence of the priority of praxis, the Aristotelian engagement of ethos with the real order of consequences with the character states and the pathe of pity, fear and wonder that mark them. As in the Kantian aesthetic, there is a convergence of the formal and material powers of reasoning in ethikai hexeis that are ends in themselves. These character states include praxeis as necessary and eminently important forms of their possibility, their aesthetic, their experience, their subjective self-awareness of themselves in their distinctness and singularity. But strangely enough, since the production of these states need not be contained within the Aristotelian limits of the autonomy and the autotelicity of praxis, these “art states” can exceed any merely Aristotelian definition and spill over into the pathos of events like music and the reversal of tragedy. As such praxis is not more or less important than what might otherwise be regarded as its rudiments, but rather, a necessary formal construction or power within this character state in which the distinction between praxis and pathos is lost. This too is an argument against including the Poetics within the purview of Aristotelian thought simply on the basis of the fact that its plot is an imitation of praxeis.

Tragedy

Perhaps, even in the terms just elaborated, tragedy may be a sort of rhetoric that addresses itself, through the paradoxical autonomy of its imitated praxeis, perhaps, to the pathe of its spectators. But, again, it seems to lack the defined aims and purposes about which the rhetorician’s appeals are structured, at least in Aristotelian terms. Yet, even if this is the case, why must the appearances of the plot preferably

be of the class of incidents that happen unexpectedly, but “as if by design” counter to the possibility of scientific understanding? Should a rhetorical techne have among its elements a mechanism that generates more questions than it resolves and puts the discursive ends of rhetoric into doubt? Perhaps tragedy is more like music. We could argue that the drama’s imitation of praxis is a construction of appearances that accomplishes ends similar to those of music by speaking directly to the power of practical reasoning implicit in the affective awareness of the practical predicament, and not merely through the enthymematic taxis or arrangement of the affects of rhetorical discourse.

One point that tragedy does have in common with certain musical modes is its catharsis of affects. In chapter seven Aristotle says:

In education the most ethical modes (tais ethikotatais) are to be preferred, but in listening to the performances of others we may admit the modes of action and passion (tais praktikais kai tais enthousiastikais) also. For feelings such as pity and fear, or, again, enthusiasm, exist very strongly in some souls, (ho gar peri enias sumbaine pathos psuchas ischuros) and have more or less influence over all. Some persons fall into a religious frenzy, whom we see as a result of the sacred melodies--when they have used the melodies that excite the soul to mystic frenzy-- restored as though they had found healing and purgation. Those who are influenced by pity and fear, and every emotional nature, must have a like experience, and others in so far as each is susceptible to such emotions, and all are in a manner purged and their souls lightened and delighted. The purgative melodies likewise give an innocent pleasure to mankind. (1342 a).

Is it going too far to say that tragedy’s imitation of the conditions of the possibility of both practical reasoning and its knowledge puts us into a state of mind to know, through pity and fear, our practical predicament as such? Tragedy generates these affects in the media most proper to their elicitation, the words and deeds of the stage, without the recourse to the larger practical, epistemic and theoretical possibilities that Aristotelian thought could bring to bear. Consequently, we have these affects intensely focussed in a character state limited to the urgency and exigency of one undergoing or about to undergo the pathos of reversal. Thus, in a manner suggestive of Birth of Tragedy discourse on this subject, tragedy may be like music in that it puts us in a position of experiencing its

characteristic affects even while denying us the properly discursive ability to situate them within the rational, Apollinian universal contexts that make possible a sufficiently practicable and intelligible experience. With this in mind, should we regard the wonder of tragedy as becoming part of its affinity to music?

Beneath the rational phenomena that yield to the discursive elaboration of identity, tragedy may find for us a succession of affective states not firmly bound to the terms even of a rhetorical discourse. The final pathos of dianoia may be something like a musical mood that is able to articulate itself as such even in its appropriation of the forms and media of the dramatic techne in its most rational construction. If tragedy is more philosophical than history, this is so, presumably, because the situations that it invokes make ethe more apparent in their typicality than would the presentation of these ethe amid the routine and all too intelligible accidents of everyday life including teleological explanations of tragedy. But, even as such, if we are to speak of a universality of inner experience as applying to an Aristotelian account of the tragic ethos, this universality of character comes at the cost of the singularity of everything else. Thus, in becoming more universal and philosophical than history in its presentation of character, tragedy may also, in its destruction of the typicality of experience, become more particular and less discursive than rhetoric ⁶⁴.

Endnotes

1 .See Mp 12.1 on perishable sensible substance.

2 .See Lear, pp. 274-5, for discussion of species and their relation to the universal and the particular.

3 . Such is the situation in the case of technical poiesis. Compare this to Plato's notion of how the forms are instantiated as mere "imitations of imitations" of the ideal forms (Republic 10, 597 e).

4 . Here I distinguish particularity from singularity. Singularity refers to appearances that elude the formal grasp of the universal over the particular. While the notion is prominent in Kantian and Nietzschean aesthetics, the systemic project of Aristotelian thought has no use for it, even here. Tragedy, I argue presents conditions under which singularity can return against the projects of Aristotelian reason.

5 . "A probability is a thing that usually happens; not, however, as some definitions would suggest, anything whatever that usually happens, but only if it belongs to the class of the 'contingent' or 'variable'" (Rh 1.2, 1357 a). For fuller account, see Mp 12.2. Aristotle speaks of generation and destruction as "change in respect to 'thisness'". Otherwise there may be change in respect to quality, quantity and space (1069 b).

6 . See, for instance, DA 2.1, 1412 a.

7 . In Ph 2.7 Aristotle tells us that the physicist argues from these kinds of motion. In Ph 2.8, he goes on to say that nature consists of matter and form "of which the latter is the end, and since all the rest is for the sake of the end, the form must be the cause in the sense of that for the sake of which" (199 a). Accidents are failures to attain such forms in matter, whether in techne or in a natural product. "If then in art there are cases in which what is rightly produced serves a purpose, and if where mistakes occur there was a purpose in what was attempted, only it was not attained, so it must be also in natural products, and monstrosities will be failures in the purposive effort" (199 b).

8 . See EN 1.7-8. "If there is an end for all that we do, this will be the good achievable by action." Happiness is itself a praxis and to be achieved through praxis. It is "final without qualification ...always desirable in itself and never for the sake of something else" (1.7, 1097 a).

9 ."Life is a praxis and its telos is a certain praxis, not a quality" (Po 6, 150 a).

10 . Aristotle says that if a house "had been a thing made by nature, it would have been made as it is now by art; and if things made by nature were also made by art, they would come to be in the same way as by nature. Each step then in the series is for the sake of the next; and generally art partly completes what nature cannot bring to a finish, and partly imitates her. If, therefore, artificial products are for the sake of an end, so clearly also are natural products" (Ph 2.8 199 a).

Thus despite the affinities of nature and art, art is a human mode of completing what nature leaves incomplete. If nature provides us with caves and thickets for shelter, we do better for ourselves through the art of house building. See Nussbaum, chapter four, "The Protagoras: a science of practical reasoning." There she gives a good account of the Platonic conception of technai and their origin. Early humans lived miserably in nature, unpredictably at the whims of tyche until Prometheus gave them the technai whereby they could improve their lives. "Human existence became safer, more predictable; there was a measure of control over contingency" (91). "Socrates argues that really decisive progress in human social life will be made only when we have developed a new techne, one that assimilates practical deliberation to counting, weighing and measuring" (89-90). This use of the term techne is equivalent to "episteme" according to Nussbaum.

11 . Aristotle sees nature and techne as having similar modes of production or poiesis. In Ph 2.8 he notes that "If the shipbuilding art were in the wood, it would produce the same results *by nature*" (199 b).

12 . This interpretation tends toward the interpolation of Aristotle's hypothetical necessity: the properties of matter are as potentially infinite as the possibility of their individuation through all possible technai. (See Ph 2.9)

A non-Aristotelian thought; the tragic techne has the singular ability to demonstrate that our construction of nature is itself the emergence as potential of the technical hexis, or

cognitive state, from the totality of experience. Construing experience as “natural” is the first act of techne, the techne of techne. Compare Nietzsche’s assertion in § 3 of BGE:

Behind all logic and its seeming sovereignty of movement, too, there stand valuations or, more clearly, physiological demands for the preservation of a certain type of life. For example, that the definite should be worth more than the indefinite, and mere appearance worth less than ‘truth’--such estimates might be, in spite of their regulative importance for us, nevertheless mere foreground estimates, a certain kind of *niaiserie* which may be necessary for the preservation of just such beings as we are. Supposing, that is, that not just man is the “measure of things-- (11. *sic est punctuatio*.)

Thus, from this perspective, we should question the claim that Kantian aesthetics are disinterested. Both beauty and sublimity can be understood as specifically anthropic consequences of the possibilities and limitations that “nature” offers the construction of praxis, the specifically human causal mode. Thus the interest of such aesthetics is real, but as universal and inclusive as our need to think ourselves as anthropoi, the subjects of nature and technical praxis.

13 . This could be an important observation for a discussion of the technicity of the over-determined praxeis leading to the reversal.

14 . “Necessity is in the matter, while ‘that for the sake of which’ is in the definition” (Ph 2.9 200 a).

15 . “It is absurd to suppose that purpose is not present because we do not observe the agent deliberating. Art does not deliberate. If the ship-building art were in the wood, it would produce the same results by nature. If therefore purpose is present in art, it is present also in nature. The best illustration is a doctor doctoring himself: nature is like that” (Ph 2.8 199 b).

16 . “Now mistakes come to pass even in the operations of art: the grammarian makes a mistake in writing and the doctor pours out the wrong dose. Hence clearly mistakes are possible in the operations of nature also” (Ph 2.8, 199 a). The point is that contingency has fewer opportunities in the more universal regimen of the technai.

17 .See Ph 2.3 for explanation of convergence in technai of final, formal, efficient causes within their material substrate.

As in deconstructive thought, this technical hexis

involves cognitive forms without the distinct agency of a practical subject. In such a state, time is merely the condition under which this complex mode of causation effects itself in the contingent domain of cause and consequence. Otherwise, time is less important than the process itself. The so called “efficient cause” is the formal or final cause regarded as the chronological event or process of the techne’s becoming.

18 .Thus, it is evident that the formal project of techne has much in common with the formal properties of the Aristotelian nature, or “physis.” But, even as such, as in Levi-Strauss’ analysis of the incest taboo in “The Structural Study of Myth,” the individuation of culture out of nature discovers problems that are as deeply rooted as the formal projects and properties of the human intellect. An analysis of tragedy might consider how these problems revolve about the specifically human or cultural discovery of diachronic time and its discursive, practical reasoning.

19 . Consider the derivation of ta physika, or the “physics,” “natural things.” Nature, or “physis,” etymologically, at least, is the condition of living things. Might we refer this concept of physis back to the return of autochthonous origins as an issue in tragic mythos? See Levi-Strauss, “The Structural Study of Myth” on autochthony.

20 .Culture and its technological hexis coincides with an introduction of diachronic time into the causal structure of experience.

21 . In sections two through four of her fourth chapter, Nussbaum goes on to explain the manner in which the particularity of circumstance remains despite the hopes of those who would establish an ethical techne. For example, given the heterogeneity of human desires and values, what would serve as a common standard of measurement under which such ethical material could be brought within the pale of single standards? According to Nussbaum, the four features of an Aristotelian techne are: “(1) universality; (2) teachability; (3) precision; (4) concern with explanation” (95).

22 . This is the case, except with very strict qualifications, in the uncanny over-determinations of tragedy. There we have the appearance of a plan; events unfold “hosper epitedes,” “as if by design” (Po 9, 1452 a), yet this design is not rational.

23 .Hence the association of ethos, or “character” and ethikos, or “moral,” both of which begin with eta, and os, or “habit,” spelled with an epsilon. Ethics is a science more of the particulars than, say, a techne, or art. What is adequate for one individual may be excessive or insufficient for another.

The integrated ethos (ethos) is affected or moved only to the proper extent and acts according to the mean which defines rational action and prescribes its limits. Moral integrity or resolution derives from habit or os. Aristotle says that a person is habituated into to proper modes of feeling and response by being taught appropriate praxeis early on (EN 10.9). That is true, but an interesting point for future consideration is that Aristotle regards this habituation through praxis as a techne: as a specific mode of production, or poiesis. Thus to the extent that ethics is concerned with being good and how to be good--with the applied science--it must proceed from a certain poiesis of the norms or logoi through praxeis which are informed by those logoi.

24 .Additionally Aristotle lists “understanding” (synesis), which “is applicable to the faculty of opinion (doxa) for the purpose of judging (krinein) what someone else says where practical wisdom is concerned--and of judging soundly” (EN 6.10); and judgement (gnome) which “is the right discrimination of the equitable:” he tou epieikous krisis orthe (EN 6.11). Thus, in brief, there are faculties within faculties: phronesis > synesis > doxa and krisis, etc. Aristotle goes on to say that the virtues or faculties of practical thought converge with those more proper to the “philosophical wisdom” or sophia: theoria, nous, etc. (EN 6. 12-13).

There seems to be that Kantian annexing of faculties; krisis functions on behalf of both synesis and gnome (compare with Kant’s judgement operating on behalf of either reason or the understanding). One gets the sense that the Ptolemaic universe is a failed attempt to understand Aristotle’s ethics. Is ethics the fate of cosmology, its barely sensible destiny?

25 . Compare the systematic coordination of sciences and arts. All arts being the material causes of the art of politics.

26 . In the same sense that the soul is the origin of all its parts, powers and affects: and the plot is the origin of tragedy. Compare this definition from the Metaphysics: “That at whose will that which is moved is moved and that which changes changes, e.g. the magistracies in cities, and oligarchies and monarchies and tyrannies, are called archai and so are the arts, and especially the architectonic arts” (Mp 5.1, 1013 a). The controlling part is the arche of its subordinates.

27 .Dianoia is at once thinking and feeling. This is not surprising in such a manifold system. Just about everything is in someway analogous to something (if not everything) else. God is nous, the highest possible reason. We can participate in this nous through theoria or contemplation, thus this nous is the highest possible dianoetike arete. And all inferior faculties are the material causes, or substrate of this actualization. As in De Anima, episteme, or certain scientific knowledge, is the material cause of contemplation.

This examination of the concept of dianoia needs a lot more work. The concept of dianoia moves in various directions. As a cognitive affect, dianoia allows Aristotle’s system to mediate the separate domains of the moral and intellectual faculties of the soul on the one hand. Hence we are able to think of human awareness in terms of an integrated personality, or ethos. And, on the other hand, since all praxis is in response to one affect or another, and must ultimately involve all cognitive faculties , up through those of the philosopher, dianoia may also provide mediation between the material elements of the soul, the pathe, and the soul’s attainment of unqualified, rational existence of things in their essences--the noumena that a philosopher thinks as such in contemplation: his participation in nous.

28 . And the other origin in nous, presumably. The affects are intrinsically, if rather materially cognitive. Just as there is apparently no prime matter in Aristotle, we must, presumably, suppose that affect, the psychic materia, is always compounded with some consciousness.

29 . And should we think this convergence of thinking and feeling in every affect? Pathe such as pity, fear, anger, etc., are at least the rudiments of value judgments.

30 . See Lear, p.7.

31 . For poiesis as Bildung, see again EN 10.9.

32 . In EN 3.1 Aristotle draws the distinction between voluntary acts that can be blamed and the kinds of acts that cannot be blamed. Pity and fear are discussed in Po 13 and Rh 2.8 and 2.5. For a discussion of the applications of the Aristotelian distinctions between the voluntary and the “involuntary” and “not voluntary” within the Poetics, see Else, p. 380 ff.

33 . And the lack of such parerga is in the Rhetoric the cause of fear and pity.

34 . No function of man has so much permanence as virtuous activities (these are thought to be more durable than even the knowledge of the sciences), and of these themselves the most valuable are more durable because those who are happy spend their life most readily and most continuously in these; for this seems to be the reason that we do not forget them. The attribute in question (durability), then, will belong the happy man, and he will be happy throughout his life; for always, or by preference to everything else, he will be engaged in virtuous praxis or contemplation, and he will bear the chances of life most nobly and altogether decorously, if he is “truly good” and “foursquare beyond reproach” (EN 1.9, 100 b).

The man who is truly good and wise, we think bears all the chances of life becomingly and always makes (prattein) the best of circumstances, as a good general makes the best use of an army at his command...And if this is the case, the happy man can never become miserable--though he will not reach *blessedness*, if he meet with fortunes like those of Priam (EN 1.10, 1099 b-1101 a).

35 . Tragedy’s “pathos,” or “suffering,” is such a contradiction of the possibilities of agency and happiness. In Aristotelian thought, pathos is the condition of anything that has something done to it (paschein: “to undergo”). In this sense it is the opposite of both technical and practical causality and may well be the condition of the object of techne or praxis. In the case of a techne, pathos is the state of the material cause. Pathos is what the substrate, material subject or “subject matter” undergoes in the process of production. Thus this pathos is the condition of material in which more highly formed causes are at work. These higher causes, the final, formal, and efficient causes, coincide with each other as in the case of

an artisan engaged in the production of the artifact or in the case of the synthesis of all ethical and dianoetic causes in the equivalence of choice and a successful praxis. In the former case the builder building, the formal cause, or eidos, of the building, the building being built, and the cognitive state of the builder are all equivalent, and this equivalence transpires in the wood which is merely the material cause. Thus such formal equivalences never extend to the ultimate matter of their substrate.

In the case of tragedy, we might think of the pathos of suffering as the loss of agency which attends the reversal. We might regard the reversal, or “change to the contrary of the (previous) praxis” (Po 11) as an ethos’ change from its causal status as agent to the material status of effect. Thus, the subject that suffers merely is not capable of acting and in this sense loses its autonomy. It does not have the capacity of agency that would allow it to participate in an activity that is an end in itself.

36 . In Mp 5.21 Aristotle offers a partial description of various uses of the term “pathos”:

“Pathos” means (1) a quality in respect of which a thing can be altered, e.g. white and black, sweet and bitter, heaviness and lightness, and all others of the kind. --(2) The actualization of these--the already accomplished actualizations.--(3) Especially, injurious alterations and movements, and, above all, painful injuries.--(4) Misfortunes and painful experiences on a large scale are called pathe (1022 b).

37 . O. B. Hardison tells us:

The Greek term for the “unqualifiedly good” kind of man referred to in relation to the first possible plot is epieikes. It means something like “equitable”; and the “equitable man” is defined as the most perfect of all possible types in the Nicomachean Ethics, V.10 (1137 b). He is even superior to the “just man,” because he conforms to the spirit rather than the letter of the law (Golden and

Hardison 176).

38 . I am speaking here about the pleasure of tragedy. “Since, then it is through imitation that the poet ought to bring about the pleasure which comes from pity and fear, it is apparent that this pleasure must be produced in the incidents” (Po 14, 1453 b).

39 . See DA 2.3, 414 a-b.

40 . Thus this imitation must convey a sense of the limitations of praxis. Can praxis itself convey a knowledge of its own limitations apart from its discursive elaboration?

41 . Compare with Else who says “Tragedy is an imitation of action, and “action” means “complete action,” action carried through to a natural goal in happiness or unhappiness” (241). Still, there do seem to be problems in considering praxeis which fail as “teleias.”

42 .Halliwell has some salutary observations on idealizing tragedy’s superiority in philosophical terms to history.

Aristotle’s comments on the quasi-philosophical nature of poetry should not, then, be inflated into a grand claim of gravity and deep truth for the poet’s art, and the function of universals should not be translated into the terms of an artistic idealism. It is a later tradition, stemming from neo-Platonism, which turns art into a vehicle for transcendent ideals, and it is this tradition which leads to such Romantic documents of Shelley’s Defense of Poetry, in which poetry is associated with “ideal perfection” and “eternal truth” (The Poetics of Aristotle 110).

I differ in the larger consequences of this more philosophical status. Halliwell’s universals are “the general categories or concepts used to understand and describe the world” (106). As such these concepts come into the purview of necessity and probability.

Probability and necessity were first mentioned in the final sentence of ch. 7, and they thereafter recur frequently in the Poetics to indicate the standards applied to the internal coherence of a poem. Probability represents a general criterion of regularity which falls short of invariability--Aristotle is fond of explaining it in terms of things which happen or hold “for the most part.” Necessity simply is the invariable--that which happens “always.”... So “probability” stands for general human realities and conditions of existence, “necessity” for the extreme case of such general validity, i.e., the truly universal (106-7).

The merit of this argument is that it extends the typicality of character upon which I have been focussing

out into the probability that constitutes the material and historical consequences of that character in the world of its historical circumstances. Still, I would emphasize the origin of this universality in the characteristic states and propensities of ethe as are discussed in the Ethics, Rhetoric, Poetics, Politics and so forth. Also, one can get a subtler and, consequently, more Aristotelian reading of the Poetics if one considers the definition of necessity beyond “the truly universal.” To read Aristotle in this way is creep back toward the idealism that Halliwell warns us about.

43 It therefore seems that all the affections of soul involve a body--passion, gentleness, fear, pity, courage, joy, loving, and hating; in all these there is a concurrent affection of the body. In support of this we may point to the fact that, while sometimes on the occasion of violent and striking occurrences there is no excitement of fear felt, on others faint and feeble stimulations produce these emotions, viz. when the body is already in a state of tension resembling its condition when we are angry. Here is a still clearer case: in the absence of any external cause of terror we find ourselves experiencing the feelings of a man in terror (DA, 1.1, 403 a).

44 . Compare Else. Note how his Aristotle anticipates Burke:

The Rhetoric teaches us that three things are required to define an emotion: what kind of psychological state it is, what kinds of people it is directed at, and in what kind of situation it is felt. The present passage tells us something about the second of the requisites but the analysis of the third is reserved until 14 53 b 14 ff... Meanwhile we may reemphasize what does appear clearly from our passage: that the tragic fear, like the tragic pity, comports an element of judgment. We vouchsafe “philanthropic” feeling even to the unhappy villain, but deny him fear as well as pity. The reason must be that we judge him not to be homoios: not that he is not human, but that he is not “like (*us*),” a normal and representative human being, so that his misfortunes are not likely to befall us (372-3).

45 .The formal or dianoetic erga of epistemology have, at least, the pretense of impartiality, epistemology is free to establish the terms of the connection the relation of things to things. One wonders whether this impartiality is in fact the partiality of to hen, “the One.” As such, we might regard dianoia, even in its most formal expression, as the pathos of the one, or the pathos that the mind undergoes in its construction of universals, unities, systems, bureaucracies, fraternities, disciplines and the like.

46 .This Burkean argument seems out of place in a discussion of the Aristotelian rhetoric.

47 .We are now approaching the subjective universality of the Kantian aesthetics.

48 . To pursue this argument further, I will have to further distinguish this subjective universality from similar notions of other commentators such as Else and Nussbaum who would make similar arguments for the pathe on Aristotelian grounds.

49 .This view does not seem incompatible with psychoanalysis.

50 . Practical reasoning, the cognitive modality under which a subject as an agent relates to the particularity of its experience, becomes increasingly prominent as we move from Aristotle toward Kant. Knowledge of the world of Aristotelian theory would, for Kant, derive largely from the empirical praxis of experiment. For the tragic vision of Nietzsche, the practical situation of the ethos in the world overwhelms what even Kant had set aside for pure reason.

51 . There appears to be no end to the irony of this drama. In the very least, this proves of irony that, when we look for it, we will not be disappointed in our search.

52 .Po 7, 1451 a; Po 9, 1451 a-b.

53 . As I describe the reversal of Oedipus Tyrannus according to the paradigm of a hamartia, it should be apparent that this descriptions is neither very rational nor very Aristotelian. This judgement would agree with the assertion of Eckart Schütrumpf that “Aristotle’s concept of the hamartia does not come from tragedy; it depends on the discussion of criminal law in Plato’s Laws. It has, however, been developed by Aristotle in such a way that it also incorporates material from tragedy” (143). Schütrumpf continues:

It has often been noted that the tragedy which forms the model for Aristotle’s account of the change from fortune to misfortune through a hamartia is the

Sophoklean Oidipus Tyrannos. I don’t believe, however, that Aristotle expended great effort to analyze this tragedy on the basis of its structure of action; I would suggest instead that he adopted the interpretation of the actions of Oidipus from Oidipus at Kolonos where Oidipus insists that he acted oukh hekon. I would argue further that Sophokles had already used juridical terminology for Oidipus’ defense; note, for example, that he has Oidipus say: nomoi katharos, “not guilty by law” (OC 548). Aristotle was therefore correct in understanding the tragic situation in legal terms. “Involuntary,” akon, oukh hekon was the phrasing of the laws for homicide...Corresponding passages of the philosophy of law in Plato’s Laws and Aristotle’s EN further demonstrate the influence of these legal regulations. Finally, it is the closely related discussion of the voluntary in EN 3 ch. 1-2 that examples of the tragic actions are found which Aristotle in Poetics 13 and 14 adduces the best forms of tragic plot. In no way does the Aristotelian concept of hamartia depart from the traditional modes of thought... The theory developed by Aristotle in the Ethics for the accountability of agents for their actions can be traced to legal concepts, but it illustrates borderline cases such as actions from tragedy as well (154-55).

Where the aim of this study is to demonstrate how the individuation of appearances by the plot of tragedy runs counter to the metaphysical, epistemic, technical and practical regimens of Aristotelian thought, the argument could be expanded to include these terms of legal differentiation. The rationality of experience is not necessarily abetted by the persistent applicability of legal norms within a sensibility where the causal individuation has gone fearfully haywire under the mere phenomenon of some uncanny will. It is also peculiar that if, as I claim, the rational Aristotelian account of the hamartia that I have been developing, is swallowed by the uncanny

coincidences of a plot that uses the same mechanism over and over; these very inexplicable happenings that evolve out of the mechanism of the hamartia must do something to challenge the normative legal applications of the juridical issues surrounding hamartia in tragedy. This normative sense of hamartia becomes, then, like the attempts by the chorus to understand strange tragic occurrences according the traditional, common sense probabilities and maxims that are no longer suited to the circumstances of the tragedy's unfolding.

54 . This despite the general tenor of Aristotelian rationalism in the other treatments of the Poetics that I have been reviewing here. Whatever the merits of these Aristotelian interpretations, as an application of the Aristotelian theoretical vision, even the Poetics has its limitations.

55 . Consider Halliwell's very Aristotelian reading of the Poetics.

Tragedy can pose a challenge for such an assumption by dealing with obscure events whose underlying causes may not be accessible to our ordinary powers of comprehension. Aristotle recognizes in this passage that the genre has particular need for remarkable and disturbing dramatic materials, but he is unwilling to compromise on his standards of unity and coherence of action. The "sense of wonder" to which he refers to which he refers is an experience which startles and challenge our capacity to understand what we witness in a play, but it is not one which allows for a deep or final inscrutability: wonder must give way to how things do after all cohere through "probability or necessity" (The Poetics of Aristotle 111-12).

It is my claim that while Aristotle does not compromise upon the unity of the praxis according to the criteria of probability and necessity, he does not adequately address the occasion of the wonder in the plot of OT.

56 It is through wonder that men now begin and originally began to philosophize; wondering in the first place at obvious perplexities, and then by gradual progression raising questions about the greater matters too, e.g. about the changes of the moon and of the sun, about the stars and the origin of the universe. Now he who wonders and is perplexed feels that he is ignorant (thus the myth-lover is in a sense a philosopher, since myths are composed of wonders); therefore if it was to escape ignorance that men studied philosophy, it is obvious that they pursued science for the sake of knowledge, and not for any

practical utility (Mp 1.2, 982 b.)

57 .We might argue that, given the differentiation implicit in the affects themselves, these pathe, like all pathe, are the most material species of dianoia which too is a pathos. Considered as the formal condition of practical and even epistemic reasoning, dianoia may be the pathos of the cognitive process, the subjectivity of thinking within time the existence of discourse and its objects. As such it would be the most formal of pathe.

58 .This makes even more sense when we consider how much of an Aristotelian Nietzsche is in his psychology. Nietzsche is a tragic irredentist; he would save ta phainomena from the burden of discursive thought. The appearances mean what they mean, but what they mean--the fact of their incommensurability for merely human purposes--is knowledge that Dionysian man can glimpse only for an instant and then under the conditions of great duress (BT § 7, p. 60).

59 .Compare the adynata pithana which are to be preferred over what is merely "apithanon kai dynaton," (Po 25, 1461 b)

60 . Else sums up Aristotle's pronouncements upon the admissibility of the impossible and the irrational (to alogon) in section twenty four of the poetics.

Aristotle has made it plain that (1) the poet ought preferably not to use impossibilities at all; (2) he ought in any case to keep them out of his central plot; but (3) if he does choose to employ them he must make them plausible, for an impossibility which is made plausible is better, if it comes to that, than a possibility is not. As to how an alogon [an irrationality] can be made plausible, the model is Homer. And, finally, the impossible or marvelous is more feasible in epic than in tragedy, because the epic is a narrative and we do not actually see the impossibilities but only hear about them (628-29).

We can admit into tragic drama what

contradicts the injunction in § 9 about maintaining the standards of probability and necessity especially to the extent that such efforts don't go too far in contradicting the empirical evidence of the eyes with regard to the most empirical of media, imitated praxeis. If the dramatist does use them, he should “in any case keep them out of his central plot”: that is, keep them out of the medium through which the empirical data of practical knowledge are communicated. And if he must include them within the praxis of the drama, they must then be plausible. As in the Rhetoric the emphasis is on persuasion, and persuasion is most effective when it makes a credible appeal to the material probabilities of its audience's circumstances. From the normative Aristotelian perspective, the merely probable standards of practical knowledge as presented on the stage can admit as credible events what from the vantage of episteme is impossible.

Aristotle gives as an example of irrationality the fact that at the beginning of the play, Oedipus does not know the circumstances of Laius' murder. If this is an example of to alogon that is excluded from plot proper, how does the Aristotelian argument deal adequately with the extreme improbabilities of the coincidences of this tragedy? Aristotle achieves more wonder than Homer on what, in conventionally Aristotelian terms, are the interactions of causal sequences that are sufficiently motivated on the grounds of probability and necessity.

61 . Rhetoric may present problems for Nussbaum's augment on the rationality of the pathe. If they are intrinsically rational according to an Aristotelian argument, then how is that they are such easy game for rhetoricians? The Aristotelian argument should not be for the intrinsic rationality of these emotions, but that the rationality is held by the techne and the ends for which the techne is employed.

62 . See Rh 2.20-21 on maxims and the enthymeme.

63 .Nietzsche on the “remoter affects” in BGE.

64 . Does tragedy enact something too deep for words? Or does it employ praxis as a the medium of a production that, properly speaking, enacts nothing but, rather, stages the contradiction and impossibility of praxis, in its Aristotelian definition at least, on what should be the grounds of its possibility. Nietzsche's explanation of tragedy becomes more plausible every moment, especially since Aristotle rules out of paideia the study of orgiastic instruments such as flute and [tambourine].