

SOME PASSAGES IN ARISTOTLE'S *POETICS*

I

1450^a10-14 οἷς μὲν γὰρ μιμοῦνται δύο μέρη ἐστίν, ὥς δὲ μιμοῦνται ἓν, ἃ δὲ μιμοῦνται τρία, καὶ παρὰ ταῦτα οὐδέν. τούτοις μὲν οὖν οὐκ ὀλίγαι αὐτῶν ὥς εἰπεῖν κέχρηται τοῖς εἶδεσιν· καὶ γὰρ ὅψις ἔχει πᾶν καὶ ἦθος καὶ μῦθον καὶ λέξιν καὶ μέλος καὶ διάνοιαν ὡσαύτως.

VAHLEN (*Beiträge zu Ar. Poetik* (1914), 21-4) regards this as one of the most obscure passages in the treatise. But he himself has furnished the material for an understanding of it, and perhaps a little more can be done.

1. *Μιμοῦνται* requires a subject, and *αὐτῶν* some noun as a point of reference. This leads one to suspect an accidental omission, such as *οἷς μὲν γὰρ μιμοῦνται* <οἱ ποιηταί> δύο, κτλ.

2. The words *τρία, καὶ παρὰ ταῦτα οὐδέν* must, with the usual punctuation given above, mean 'and there is nothing else besides these six' (Bywater). But the analysis which has just been completed shows, not that there are only six parts, but that there are at least six. The necessity referred to in 1449^b32 and 1450^a7 is not demonstrative but hypothetical necessity (for which see *Metaph.* A. 1015^a20 foll.); the parts are inescapable requisites of imitation of the kind under discussion. On the other hand, Aristotle did make some show of demonstrating *a priori*, in the sentence beginning (1449^b36) *ἐπεὶ δὲ πράξεώς ἐστι μίμησις*, that the objects of imitation are reducible to three, namely, the action, and the moral and intellectual qualities of those who perform it. This was, I think, the point of *πέφυκεν αἷτια δύο τῶν πράξεων εἶναι, διάνοια καὶ ἦθος* (secl. Else and Kassel) which I should prefer to retain. We should, then, omit the comma at *τρία* and translate 'the objects of imitation are three and no more'. It is a reminder of what was recently established. Admittedly, *τούτοις* at the beginning of the next sentence must mean the six parts.

3. Coming now to the principal difficulty, the most helpful proposal hitherto made is that of Vahlen, that *τοῖς εἶδεσιν* should be changed to *ὥς εἶδεσιν*, since 1452^b14 appears to be a reference back to this passage. This, as he admits, still leaves *ὥς εἰπεῖν* to be explained. His proposal <καθ' ἑκαστον> αὐτῶν ὥς εἰπεῖν yields, it seems to me, a hazy expression 'not a few people have made use of these, taking them, so to speak, severally', and I should prefer to deal with *αὐτῶν* in the way already indicated. But there is an alternative way of achieving what Vahlen aimed at: we can regard *ὥς εἰπεῖν* as a garbled form of *ὥς εἶδεσιν*. On this view *τοῖς εἶδεσιν* will be a correction, itself faulty, which has been left standing side by side with the corrupted word.

4. As for the remainder, Vahlen's further emendation *καὶ γὰρ ὅψις, or ὅψιν, ἔχειν πᾶν* (with *πᾶν* taken as accusative) seems entirely satisfactory. 'Several poets have made out of these parts so many types (of tragedy). According to them, visual effects take in everything, and so do character, plot, diction, song and thought.'

2

1450^b12-16. τέταρτον δὲ τῶν μὲν λόγων ἢ λέξις . . . λέγω δέ, ὥσπερ πρότερον εἴρηται, λέξιν εἶναι τὴν διὰ τῆς ὀνομασίας ἐρμηνείαν, ὃ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἐμμέτρων καὶ

ἐπὶ τῶν λόγων ἔχει τὴν αὐτὴν δύναμιν . . . τῶν δὲ λοιπῶν [πέντε] ἡ μελοποιία μέγιστον τῶν ἡδυσμάτων. ἡ δὲ ὅψις ψυχαγωγικὸν μέν. . .

Vahlen, in his paper on Aristotle's account of the component parts of tragedy (first published in 1864, and reprinted in *Gesammelte Philologische Schriften*, i, p. 268), has I think, given the true sentence-division, and is quite right in thinking that there is an antithesis between the dialogue and the lyrical parts of tragedy (τῶν μὲν λόγων . . . τῶν δὲ λοιπῶν). But his exposition of his reading leaves something to be desired. He says that λέξις and μελοποιία are here treated by Aristotle 'as a pair of companion devices for making an impression on our sense of hearing, which are related to one another like speech and song, and do not traverse the whole of a tragedy as do the other organic parts, but in conformity with its clear division into a spoken and a sung part, become even spatially distinct'. To this Bywater (*Commentary*, p. 175) is able to reply with some force that 'Such a division of the fourth part, it seems to me, is wholly inconsistent with the general scheme of the six parts, which is throughout this chapter so clearly before Aristotle's mind'.

There is the further objection that Vahlen's view would imply that diction is of no importance in the lyrics. But I suggest that he is basically right. Aristotle does not separate diction and musical composition as sharply as he supposes, but does *bracket them as equals* for the fourth place. Diction alone applies to the dialogue. Both enter into τὰ λοιπά, the lyrical parts, but it is music which above all gives these their savour. Unlike Vahlen, I should understand τῶν λοιπῶν as objective genitive after ἡδυσμάτων, as though it were μέγιστον ἐν τῷ ἡδύνειν τὰ λοιπά. Bywater translates 'As for the two remaining parts', but such a use of the genitive is strange. Aristotle himself makes the statement more difficult than it need have been by using λόγοι, in the same vicinity and even before the antithesis to τῶν μὲν λόγων has appeared, with the meaning 'prose'.

3

1452^a32-6 καλλίστη δὲ ἀναγνώρισις, ὅταν ἄμα περιπετεία γένηται, οἷον ἔχει ἡ ἐν τῷ Οἰδίποδι. εἰσὶν μὲν οὖν καὶ ἄλλαι ἀναγνώρισεις· καὶ γὰρ πρὸς ἄψυχα καὶ τὰ τυχόντα †ἐστὶν ὥσπερ εἴρηται συμβαίνει† καὶ εἰ πέπραγέ τις ἢ μὴ πέπραγεν ἔστιν ἀναγνώρισις.

This passage is more troublesome than has been generally realized. The above is Kassel's text. The emendation to the dative περιπετεία is due to Gomperz. B has περιπετεία γένηται, A περιπέτειαι γίνονται. The words from καὶ γὰρ πρὸς τὸ ἀναγνώρισις inclusive are omitted by B. Kassel obelizes ἐστὶν ὥσπερ εἴρηται συμβαίνει. Bywater reads ὅταν ἄμα περιπέτειαι γίνωνται, οἷαν ἔχει, the οἷαν being his own emendation, made on the ground that 'If (with Vahlen) we retain the manuscript reading οἷον (= e.g.) it becomes necessary to understand περιπέτειαν after ἔχει (p. 202). He follows Spengel in changing ἔστιν ὥσπερ to ἔστιν ὡς ὅπερ. He notes that 'the formal incongruity of number in the juxtaposition of ἀναγνώρισις and περιπέτειαι is certainly not greater than that in 9, 1451^b3 μετὰ μέτρον ἢ ἄνευ μέτρων, or Thuc. 2. 4. 2 λίθοις τε καὶ κεράμῳ βαλλόντων.'

It is not, however, only the combination of singular and plural that is strange, but the suggested phrase οἷαν ἔχει ἡ ἐν τῷ Οἰδίποδι (ἀναγνώρισις). Perhaps ἔχει *can* mean 'carries with it'. But surely recognition and reversal are simply two inter-related aspects of the complex plot; neither is a substance carrying the other as an attribute.

But the text of Kassel, based rather upon B, is exposed to criticism also. From parallel instances it seems that *ὅταν γένηται* should mean 'when finally it occurs', or 'when it occurs, as it will sooner or later', rather than 'whenever it occurs'. The difference between *ὅταν* with the aorist and with the present subjunctive is in my opinion always perceptible in Aristotle, and the latter alone is frequentative. Elsewhere¹ I have tried to maintain that in *Metaph. A* 985^a18–20 *Ἀναξαγόρας τε γὰρ μηχανῇ χρῆται τῷ νῶ πρὸς τὴν κοσμοποιάν, καὶ ὅταν ἀπορήσῃ διὰ τίν' αἰτίαν ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἐστί, τότε παρέλκει αὐτόν*, the sense of the criticism is that Anaxagoras, when he is finally perplexed, draws in Mind like a despairing dramatist introducing the God. Aristotle does not say here, any more than does the Socrates of the *Phaedo*, that Anaxagoras appealed to Mind repeatedly and in a care-free manner.

Consider, again, the following passages:

E.N. 9. 1165^b6–11 πλείστοι διαφοραὶ γίνονται τοῖς φίλοις, ὅταν μὴ ὁμοίως οἴωνται καὶ ὡσι φίλοι. ὅταν μὲν οὖν διαψευσθῇ τις καὶ ὑπολάβῃ φιλεῖσθαι διὰ τὸ ἦθος, μηδὲν τοιοῦτον ἐκείνου πράττοντος, εἰς αὐτὸν αἰτιώτ' ἂν. ὅταν δ' ὑπὸ τῆς ἐκείνου προσποιήσεως ἀπατηθῇ, δίκαιον ἐγκαλεῖν τῷ ἀπατήσαντι.

'Most disputes occur *whenever* the men are not friends on the terms on which they think they are. So *when* the moment of disillusionment comes, and a man has believed himself loved for his character while the other did nothing to indicate this, he has himself to blame. *When*, on the other hand, he finds himself deceived by the other's pretence, he is justified in blaming him.' Here *ὅταν ἀπατηθῇ* is very similar to *ὅταν ἡττηθῇ* in *Poetics*, 1456^a23, which, if my argument later in this paper is cogent, refers to a particular case.

E.N. 5. 1133^a31–33^b3 ἔσται δὲ ἀντιπεπονθός, ὅταν ἰσασθῇ, ὥστε ὅπερ γεωργὸς πρὸς σκυτοτόμον, τὸ ἔργον τὸ τοῦ σκυτοτόμου πρὸς τὸ τοῦ γεωργοῦ. εἰς σχῆμα δ' ἀναλογίας οὐ δεῖ ἀγεῖν ὅταν ἀλλάζωνται (εἰ δὲ μή, ἀμφοτέρας ἔξει τὰς ὑπεροχὰς τὸ ἕτερον ἄκρον), ἀλλ' ὅταν ἔχωσι τὰ αὐτῶν.

'There will be reciprocity *when and only when* equality has been brought about, such that, as the farmer is to the shoemaker, so the shoemaker's product is to the farmer's. One ought not to bring them into the form of a proportion *when* their exchange is an accomplished fact—for in that case one extreme will doubly exceed the mean—but *when, on each occasion*, they have their own products in their hands'.

E.N. 7. 1147^a25–34 ἡ μὲν γὰρ καθόλου δόξα, ἥ δ' ἑτέρα περὶ τῶν καθ' ἕκαστά ἐστιν, ὧν αἴσθησις ἥδη κυρία. ὅταν δὲ μία γένηται ἐξ αὐτῶν . . . (31) ὅταν οὖν ἡ μὲν καθόλου ἐνῇ κωλύουσα γεύεσθαι, ἡ δέ, ὅτι πᾶν γλυκὺ ἡδύ, τοῦτ' ἐν γλυκύ (αὕτη δὲ ἐνεργεῖ), τύχῃ δ' ἐπιθυμία ἐνοῦσα, ἡ μὲν οὖν λέγει φεύγειν τοῦτο, ἡ δ' ἐπιθυμία ἀγει.

The phenomenon being studied is a recurrent one and, if it were not so, the analysis would be unprofitable. But the *ὅταν* clauses do not, I think, drive home this fact of frequent repetition. *ὅταν μία πρότασις γένηται* means rather 'at the decisive moment when one premiss comes into being'. Below we have *ὅταν . . . ἐνῇ . . . τύχῃ δ' ἐνοῦσα*. Formally the present and aorist subjunctive are here combined. But this is Hobson's choice, since *ἐνεσσι* has no aorist, and the immediately following periphrasis with *τύχῃ* removes any misapprehension.

These considerations lead us back, in the *Poetics* passage, to the *περιπέτεια*

¹ *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, suppl. vol. xxxix (1965), p. 7.

γίνονται of cod. A. I venture to propose (1) that for καλλίστη δὲ ἀναγνώρισις we read κάλλισται δὲ ἀναγνώρισεις, (2) that we accept γίνονται from the later Greek manuscripts, (3) that οἶον be understood to mean τὸ ἅμα περιπετεῖαν γίνεσθαι. Translate: 'Recognitions are best whenever reversals occur simultaneously with them, a feature which that in the *Oedipus* possesses'. As for the remainder, ἄλλαι means 'other than the recognition of persons, not 'other than the best'. In deciding whether to accept Spengel's correction of ἐστὶν ὥσπερ to ἔστιν ὡς ὅπερ, we have to ask whether Aristotle would regard recognition of inanimate objects as recognition only in a qualified sense. I can find no reason why he should say so, and would put forward the suggestion that ἐστὶν ὥσπερ εἴρηται should be ejected as a gloss on ὑπόκειται, 1452^{b1}. The point is, not that recognition of material objects is not ἀναγνώρισις, but that only recognition of persons can be accompanied by 'reversal'.

4

1455^a26-9 σημεῖον δὲ τούτου ὃ ἐπετιμᾶτο Καρκίνῳ. ὃ γὰρ Ἀμφιάραος ἐξ ἱεροῦ ἀνῆλθε, ὃ μὴ ὁρῶντα τὸν θεατὴν ἐλάνθανεν, ἐπὶ δὲ τῆς σκηνῆς ἐξέπεσεν δυσχερανάντων τοῦτο τῶν θεατῶν.

The problems which have been raised about this are well known. Vahlen regards it as imperative to insert an ἄν with ἐλάνθανεν, on the ground that ἐπὶ δὲ τῆς σκηνῆς is adversative here, as at 1460^a15 ἐπὶ σκηνῆς ὄντα. Kassel has followed Butcher in bracketing τὸν θεατὴν. These corrections are not plausible, and leave us in the dark regarding the nature of the criticism referred to. The unaltered text makes good sense if (i) μὴ ὁρῶντα is regarded as conditional and ἱεροῦ as the antecedent of ὃ, and (ii) ἐλάνθανεν is given its proper force as an imperfect. 'Amphiaraus was coming up (presumably, on to the stage) from a temple, of which any spectator who could not see it was, and remained, unaware.' Some scenery, then, which represented a temple was not recognizable as such, or was quite invisible, from a part of the auditorium, and the meaning of dialogue or action became obscure for many spectators. If the poet had taken care to visualize his production, he would have foreseen this and, if he could not alter the setting, have given Amphiaraus a line to indicate where he came from. The difference between μὴ ὁρῶντα and ἐλάνθανεν is that between not seeing and not knowing about. Compare the δεῖ μὴ λανθάνειν which is frequent in Aristotle. The direction to the poet is, I think, that he should visualize the production rather than that he should render vivid to himself the actual events, but I agree with D. W. Lucas (*Aristotle's Poetics*, p. 174) in thinking that this distinction is not vital. On this view δέ is still adversative, since it expresses what actually happened in contrast to the general fact of which Carcinus ought to have been aware.

5

1456^a3 μάλιστα μὲν οὖν—^a32 ἐπεισόδιον ὄλον;

In its traditional form this whole passage is intolerably confused, and unintelligible in some of its detail. I wish to argue that good sense can be restored by transposing 1456^a7-18, from δίκαιον to ἀγωνίζονται, and ^a18-31, from ἐπεὶ καὶ Ἀγάθων to ὄλον, and accepting two emendations which have already been proposed.

In the received order, the passage consists of these elements:

(a). 56^a3–7. The tragedian should endeavour to make himself competent in all four types (probably that of action, simple and complex, that of character, and that of emotional shock), especially in view of the blackmailing requirement which they (the public) now make, that a single author should excel the specialists in each kind.

(b). 56^a7–18. In pronouncing whether plays are the same or different, one must look above all to the plot, and two plots are the same if they have an identical complication and denouement. Some poets are strong in the former but weak in the latter, but the two should be fitted together. Again, it may be repeated that one should not cram into a tragedy an amount of incident more suited to an epic. The great tragedians did not make the mistake of trying to adapt for the stage the whole action of the *Iliad*, and those who have tried to do this or something similar have failed on the stage.

(c). 56^a18–25. In this respect alone Agathon failed as a dramatist. But in tragedies of both simple and complex action others (?) achieve their aim (*or*, aim with great skill at what they wish). It is a tragic situation, and one satisfactory to the sense of justice, when a clever villain is outwitted. And it is not improbable, according to a maxim of Agathon, that this might occur.

(d). 56^a25–31. The chorus should be regarded as one of the actors and an organic part of the whole. The choral songs of many modern dramatists are totally irrelevant to the plot, and might come from another tragedy; Agathon commenced this practice. What is the difference between this and transferring a speech, or a whole act, from one tragedy to another?

There is a violent discontinuity between (a) and (b). There is an appearance of continuity between (b) and (c), in so far as the fault for which Agathon earned unpopularity could have been that of compressing too much action into a tragedy. The central part of (c) is, as it stands, meaningless, but it may be noted that Agathon is twice mentioned here. He is mentioned again in (d), and indeed his name holds these two sections together.

If section (b) is removed from its present position and placed after (d), its purport is at once seen, because it is in the course of his remarks in (d) that Aristotle has become interested in the sameness or difference of two plays. At the same time, when (c) is linked up with (a) its meaning begins to stand out, though some emendations are necessary. Finally the strength and weakness of Agathon now emerges as the subject of discussion throughout 1456^a18 *ἐπεὶ καὶ Ἀγάθων*—32 *ἐπεισόδιον ὅλον*;

The transposition provides a subject for *βούλονται* in 1456^a20, which is now at once seen to belong to the series *συκοφαντοῦσι* and *ἀξιοῦσι* (1456^a5 and 7); but *στοχάζονται* is unintelligible. Christ's emendation to *στοχάζεται*, scil. *ὁ Ἀγάθων*, seems right. The phrase *τραγικὸν γὰρ τοῦτο καὶ φιλόανθρωπον* occurs in an impossible position, in advance of the mention of the fact which it explains. Susemihl has rightly proposed that it should come in after *ἡττηθῇ*, and a further sign of its being out of place is the repetition of *ἔστιν δὲ τοῦτο*, which is not needed at all in line 21, and is in its proper place in line 23, *ἔστιν δὲ τοῦτο καὶ εἰκός, κτλ.* I would suggest, then, *στοχάζεται ὃν βούλονται θαυμαστῶς, ὅταν ὁ σοφὸς μὲν μετὰ πονηρίας <δ> ἐξαπατηθῇ, ὥσπερ Σίσυφος, καὶ ὁ ἀνδρεῖος μὲν ἀδίκος δ' ἡττηθῇ· τραγικὸν γὰρ τοῦτο καὶ φιλόανθρωπον, ἔστιν δὲ τοῦτο καὶ εἰκός, ὥσπερ Ἀγάθων λέγει.* In the previous note, I have called attention to the special force of an aorist subjunctive after *ὅταν*. As for *θαυμαστῶς*, this is used in a quite straightforward way and corresponds to the English 'admirable' or 'astonishing'.

With these emendations, and with 1456^a7 δίκαιον δέ—^a18 ἀγωνίζονται removed and placed after ἐπεισόδιον ὅλον, the whole passage from 1456^a3 may be translated: 'One should endeavour to become competent, if possible, in all of these, and if not, in the more important of them, especially in view of the blackmail which (the public) now apply to the poets. After good poets in every genre have appeared, they now require a single author to excel each in his speciality; for it was in this respect alone that Agathon also displeased them. But in his tragedies of action, complex and simple alike, he aims with wonderful tact at what they want, when the clever villain is well and truly outwitted, like Sisyphus, and the brave, but unjust man is at last defeated. For this situation is tragic, giving scope for human feeling. It is, moreover, *probable*, as Agathon explains; for it is probable that there should be some events contrary to probability. But the chorus should be regarded as one of the actors, an organic part of the whole—the choral songs of [some writers] are no more related to their plot than to some other tragedy; they sing interludes, and this practice stems from Agathon. Yet what difference is there between this singing of interludes and the transfer of a speech from one work to another, or of a whole act? And in pronouncing whether a tragedy is the same or another, it is fair to look above all to the plot. This means that plots are the same whose complication and denouement is the same.'

Agathon is thrice mentioned by name, but I think it is only when the faulty text is corrected that we can link up these references and understand what is being said about him. What Aristotle tells us is not that he injudiciously planned a tragedy on an epic scale, and paid the penalty for this; but that, while excelling in ingenuity of plot, he could not meet the unfair demand that he should beat other playwrights on their own ground. The outwitting of Sisyphus, and the defeat of a bold but unjust man, must be examples taken from his plays, and the latter situation is said to be φιλάνθρωπον. It need not be explained here that two views have been taken about the meaning of this term in ch. 13. Some of those who believe that it is equivalent to 'the sense of justice', or satisfaction at seeing a guilty person punished, suggest that it must have that sense at least in the present passage, for instance Butcher, *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art*⁴, p. 303 n. 2. This is not perfectly clear even with the traditional text, and if τραγικόν—φιλάνθρωπον is brought in after ἡττηθῇ it will refer primarily to the second of the two examples given, for which the meaning 'sympathy with a human being' is perfectly suitable.

It follows, if my suggestion is correct, that the treatment of plot in the *Poetics* really ended with the words ἢ ἐκπίπτουσιν ἢ κακῶς ἀγωνίζονται in 1456^a18. It will perhaps be objected that ἐπεὶ καὶ Ἀγάθων ἐξέπεσεν is shown to be in its right place by the preceding ἐκπίπτουσιν; but this argument is neutral. This may be precisely the cause by which someone who found a displaced page of manuscript, and was uncertain which way round to turn it, was led into error.

6

1457^b22–5 ἢ ὁ γῆρας πρὸς βίον, καὶ ἑσπέρα πρὸς ἡμέραν· ἐρεὶ τοίνυν τὴν ἑσπέραν γῆρας ἡμέρας ἢ ὥσπερ Ἐμπεδοκλῆς, καὶ τὸ γῆρας ἑσπέραν βίου ἢ δυσμὰς βίου.

Bywater's text, upon which he comments (p. 285): 'The actual words of Empedocles, which Aristotle supposes us to know, are not to be found among his fragments; all that can be said of them is that they must have been some-

thing like γήρας ἡμέρας but different from that in point of phraseology. . . . This allusive way of referring to something supposed to be known to the reader is not uncommon in Aristotle.' Instances are given. Rostagni, taking a similar view, prints ἐσπέραν βίου and δυσμὰς βίου in inverted commas and says both are attributed to Empedocles not as literal citations, but as an idea.

These editors seem to overlook the fact that, whatever Aristotle may do when confirming from the poets some assertion of doctrine, in an illustration of metaphorical language the actual words used are indispensable. The practice of allusive reference, mentioned by Bywater, is indeed common; it is also very typical of Aristotle to give the keywords of a poetical quotation, leaving it to his hearers to supply for themselves the operative words. But then the opposite practice is also frequent, as in *Ethics*, 6. 1140^a19 καθάπερ καὶ Ἀγάθων φησιν, 1141^a14 ὥσπερ Ὁμηρός φησιν ἐν τῷ Μαργίτῃ, 1151^b23 ὥσπερ Ἀναξανδρίδης ἔσκωψεν, 1151^b31 ὥσπερ καὶ Εὐήνος λέγει, all followed by quotations in extenso.

There is therefore a strong case for the transposition ἐσπέραν βίου ἢ, ὥσπερ Ἐμπεδοκλῆς, δυσμὰς βίου, even if the manuscript authority for it is not strong. But there is an alternative. If the text of A^c is retained, καὶ τὸ γήρας ἐσπεράν βίου can be regarded as the quotation, and δυσμὰς perhaps as a second Empedoclean version of the metaphor. In this case part of an iambic line is quoted, and what must be abandoned is the view that the quotation is from the *Καθαρμοί*. We know that Aristotle in the dialogue *On Poets* included tragedies among the poems of Empedocles (fragment 70 R).

7

1460^a33–^b2 ὥστε τὸ λέγειν ὅτι ἀνήρητο ἂν ὁ μῦθος γελοῖον (ἐξ ἀρχῆς γὰρ οὐ δεῖ συνίστασθαι τοιούτους), ἂν δὲ θῇ καὶ φαίνεται εὐλογωτέως ἐνδέχεσθαι, καὶ ἄτοπον· ἐπεὶ καὶ τὰ ἐν Ὀδυσσεΐᾳ ἄλογα τὰ περὶ τὴν ἔκθεσιν ὡς οὐκ ἂν ᾖν ἀνεκτὰ δηλὸν ἂν γένοιτο, εἰ αὐτὰ φαῦλος ποιητῆς ποιήσῃ· νῦν δὲ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἀγαθοῖς ὁ ποιητῆς ἀφανίζει ἡδύνων τὸ ἄτοπον.

The punctuation here is my own. There is some divergence of reading, but it is not important, and we learn again in 1460^b26–9 that an error of fact in poetry is not excusable if the story could have been otherwise told without loss of effect. The reading ἂν δὲ θῇ, scil. τοιοῦτον μῦθον or τοιαῦτα πράγματα, is confirmed by 1450^a28 ἐπεὶ εἰάν τις ἐφεξῆς θῇ ῥήσεις ἡθικὰς, κτλ. But what is the meaning of the words from ἂν δὲ θῇ to ἄτοπον? Bywater translates them: 'If the poet has taken such a Plot, however, and one sees that he might have put it in a more probable form, he is guilty of absurdity *as well as a fault in art*' (my italics). One may object to this that the introduction of the absurdity *is* the fault in art. As an alternative, it may be suggested that ἄτοπον in line 35, as well as γελοῖον in line 33, qualifies τὸ λέγειν: 'Hence the claim that the story would thereby have been cancelled is laughable. For such stories ought not to be framed at all. But if a poet takes such a plot and one sees that he might have put it in a more probable form, this claim is also strange.' In the words which immediately follow (1460^b1–2) νῦν δὲ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἀγαθοῖς ὁ ποιητῆς ἀφανίζει ἡδύνων τὸ ἄτοπον, Aristotle has inadvertently applied the same adjective to the strangeness of the story itself. Likewise he has used γελοῖον both of the unrealistically conceived incident and of a defender's inadequate plea on its behalf (1460^a15 ἐπὶ σκηνῆς γελοῖα ἂν φανείη, ^a33 τὸ λέγειν ὅτι ἀνήρητο ἂν ὁ μῦθος γελοῖον).

1460^b13–32 πρὸς δὲ τούτοις οὐχ ἡ αὐτὴ ὀρθότης ἐστὶν τῆς πολιτικῆς καὶ τῆς ποιητικῆς οὐδὲ ἄλλης τέχνης καὶ ποιητικῆς. αὐτῆς δὲ τῆς ποιητικῆς διττὴ ἁμαρτία, ἡ μὲν γὰρ καθ' αὐτήν, ἡ δὲ κατὰ συμβεβηκός. εἰ μὲν γὰρ προείλετο μιμήσασθαι * * ἀδυναμίαν, αὐτῆς ἡ ἁμαρτία· εἰ δὲ τὸ προελέσθαι μὴ ὀρθῶς, ἀλλὰ τὸν ἵππον <ᾧ> ἄμφω τὰ δεξιὰ προβεβηκότα, ἡ τὸ καθ' ἐκάστην τέχνην ἁμαρτημα, οἷον τὸ κατ' ἱατρικὴν ἢ ἄλλην τέχνην [ἣ ἀδύνατα πεποιήται] ὅποιαν οὖν, οὐ καθ' ἑαυτήν. ὥστε δεῖ τὰ ἐπιτιμήματα ἐν τοῖς προβλήμασιν ἐκ τούτων ἐπισκοποῦντα λύειν. πρῶτον μὲν τὰ πρὸς αὐτὴν τὴν τέχνην ἀδύνατα πεποιήται, ἡμαρτηται· ἀλλ' ὀρθῶς ἔχει, εἰ τυγχάνει τοῦ τέλους τοῦ αὐτῆς (τὸ γὰρ τέλος εἴρηται), εἰ οὕτως ἐκπληκτικώτερον ἢ αὐτὸ ἢ ἄλλο ποιεῖ μέρος. παράδειγμα ἡ τοῦ Ἑκτορος διώξις. εἰ μέντοι τὸ τέλος ἢ μᾶλλον ἢ <μὴ> ἦττον ἐνεδέχετο ὑπάρχειν καὶ κατὰ τὴν περὶ τούτων τέχνην, [ἡμαρτησθαι] οὐκ ὀρθῶς· δεῖ γὰρ εἰ ἐνδέχεται ὅλως μηδαμῇ ἡμαρτησθαι. ἔτι ποτέρων ἐστὶ τὸ ἁμαρτημα, τῶν κατὰ τὴν τέχνην ἢ κατ' ἄλλο συμβεβηκός; ἔλαττον γὰρ εἰ μὴ ᾗδει ὅτι ἔλαφος θήλεια κέρατα οὐκ ἔχει ἢ εἰ ἀμυμήτως ἔγραψεν.

The third of the principles recommended for use in defending the work of poets against allegations of error is that the standard of right and wrong in poetry is not the same as it is in social science, or in any other science or art. Aristotle adds to this a distinction between two forms of error within the art of poetry itself, one inherent in it, the other incidental. (αὐτῆς δὲ τῆς ποιητικῆς διττὴ ἁμαρτία· ἡ μὲν γὰρ καθ' αὐτήν, ἡ δὲ κατὰ συμβεβηκός). The sentences in which this distinction is elaborated are corrupt in our texts. So far as I know, editors of the *Poetics*, though they differ from one another in their emendations and analysis of the grammar, agree in supposing that the incidental form of error is a bona fide or unconscious mistake about a matter of fact in an extraneous science or art. The lines 1460^b29–32, ποτέρων—τὸ ἁμαρτημα, τῶν κατὰ τὴν τέχνην ἢ κατ' ἄλλο συμβεβηκός; ἔλαττον γὰρ εἰ μὴ ᾗδει ὅτι ἔλαφος θήλεια κέρατα οὐκ ἔχει ἢ εἰ ἀμυμήτως ἔγραψεν, do at first seem to suggest this.

Bywater in his notes on 1460^b15 (p. 326) and ^b21 (p. 328) takes up the position that 'The general sense of the passage (with the reading τῶ προελέσθαι) is briefly this: If it was through a mistake in his original conception of the thing that either the technical error, or impossibilities, of whatever kind they may be, have got into his description, the error in that case does not belong to the art of the poet *per se*, but only *per accidens*.'

It may be objected that on such an interpretation the subdivision of forms of error belonging to poetry promptly brings us back to a point already reached, and adds nothing to what is secured by the strong affirmation that the standard of rightness in poetry is not what it is in politics, zoology, medicine, and so forth. The words αὐτῆς δὲ would naturally be understood as introducing a further stage of defence rather than an alternative procedure. Meanwhile there is a kind of error which on the accepted view is missing from the classification, namely the conscious inaccuracy of a writer or artist who is aiming at an artistic end still higher than exact imitation of reality. Evidently it will require discussion what this higher end can be if, by hypothesis, the arts are imitative; but this is a form of error which exists in famous works of literature, and might well play a part in an apologia for them. Coleridge, in one of his marginalia to Shakespeare, poses the question, 'Was it without, or in contempt of, historical information that Shakespeare makes the contemporaries of Coriolanus quote Cato and Galen? I cannot decide to my own satisfaction.' His alternatives are the right ones.

In emending the text of the *Poetics*, one should, then, bear in mind the possibility that the second sort of mistake in the sentence beginning *εἰ μὲν γὰρ προείλετο* (1460^b16) is intentional inaccuracy. Without claiming to solve every difficulty, I propose to maintain (1) that one may accept Bywater's analysis of the sentence and reconstruction of the text, and indeed even leave standing his English version, and yet read the passage in this sense, as he does not;

(2) that the remarkable truncated version of these sentences in Riccardianus, 46, for which see Kassel's *apparatus criticus*, does interpret the *κατὰ συμβεβηκός ἀμαρτία* as intentional error;

(3) that 1460^b31–2 *ἐλαττον γὰρ εἰ μὴ ᾗδει κτλ.*, rightly understood, offers no hindrance to this interpretation.

(1) In Bywater's edition the passage reads: *εἰ μὲν γὰρ προείλετο* (lacuna) *ἀδυναμίαν, αὐτῆς ἡ ἀμαρτία· εἰ δὲ τῷ προελέσθαι μὴ ὀρθῶς, ἀλλὰ τὸν ἵππον ἄμφω τὰ δεξιὰ προβεβηκότα, ἢ τὸ καθ' ἐκάστην τέχνην ἀμάρτημα, (οἷον τὸ κατ' ἰατρικὴν ἢ ἄλλην τέχνην) ἢ ἀδύνατα πεποιήται ὅποι ἂν οὖν, οὐ καθ' εἰ αυτήν.*

For a statement of points in which Bywater disagrees with Vahlen in reading or analysis I must refer to his commentary, p. 327. His version of the above is: 'If the poet meant to describe the thing correctly (and failed through) lack of power of expression, his art itself is at fault. But if it was through his having meant to describe it in some incorrect way . . .', etc. *μὴ ὀρθῶς* is regarded as qualifying not *προελέσθαι*, but an unexpressed *μυμήσασθαι* which is dependent on *προελέσθαι*.

To dwell now for a moment on the phrase 'meant to describe it in some incorrect way'. The English words are ambiguous, and may be equivalent either to 'meant to describe it in a way which is in fact incorrect' or to 'meant to describe it in a way which he believed or realized to be incorrect', and one has to refer to Bywater's notes to discover that he intended the phrase in the former sense. More generally, an English phrase of the form 'he meant to do X correctly, or incorrectly' is ambiguous, unless the context indicates in which way it is to be taken. So we might read Bywater's version in the latter way if this is more in accordance with the tenor of the whole passage.

(2) The version of the whole passage in Riccardianus, 46 deserves separate consideration. This manuscript omits 1460^b14–15 *τῆς πολιτικῆς . . . αὐτῆς δέ, 15 διττὴ ἀμαρτία*, and 21–3 *ὅποιαν οὖν . . . πεποιήται*, and has other unique readings consequent on these omissions. On the other hand, its reading *ἀδυναμία* makes it unnecessary to suppose a lacuna where modern editors have done so. If I understand Kassel's report correctly the manuscript has this:

(1460^b13) *πρὸς δὲ τούτοις οὐχ ἡ αὕτη ὀρθότης ἐστὶν τῆς ποιητικῆς· ἡ μὲν γὰρ καθ' αὐτήν, ἡ δὲ κατὰ συμβεβηκός· εἰ μὲν γὰρ προείλετο μυμήσασθαι, ἀδυναμία αὐτῆς ἀμαρτία· (? εἰ) δὲ προελέσθαι μὴ ὀρθῶς, ἀλλὰ τὸν ἵππον ἄμφω τὰ δεξιὰ προβεβηκότα, ἢ τὸ καθ' ἐκάστην τέχνην ἀμάρτημα, οἷον τὸ κατ' ἰατρικὴν ἢ κατ' ἄλλην τέχνην, ἢ ἀδύνατα πεποιήται, ἡμάρτηται, ἀλλ' ὀρθῶς ἔχει, εἰ τυγχάνει κτλ.*

It looks as though someone, in the attempt to make sense, has cut down still further a text which had already suffered by accidental loss of words. Aristotle's first line of defence in the fuller text, namely that the standard of rightness in special sciences or arts is not necessarily the same as that of poetry, has disappeared. The meaning intended appears to be: 'Besides this, the rightness of poetry is not the same (i.e. is not one and the same throughout?) but takes

two forms, one proper and one incidental to it. If (the art) intended to imitate, weakness (therein) is a fault pertaining to the art itself. But if from choice it chose incorrectly—chose to display a horse with both right feet advanced—or if it has represented what is erroneous or impossible in one of the several arts, for instance medicine, error has been committed, but the procedure is sound if the art achieves its aim', etc.

I assume that the construction intended is: *εἰ μὲν γὰρ προείλετο* (scil. *ἡ τέχνη*) . . . *εἰ δὲ* (scil. *προείλετο*) *προελέσθαι μὴ ὀρθῶς*. If so, there is undoubtedly in the second alternative a reference to deliberate inaccuracy. If a digression is permissible, it may be added that this idea of *choosing to make a choice* is not in fact Aristotelian. Not only has Aristotle nowhere included anything of this kind in his discussions of choice in the *Ethics*, but a passage in the Eudemian version can be indicated in which he shows that this would lead to a vicious regress, (1248^a18) οὐ γὰρ δὴ ἐβουλευσατο βουλευσάμενος, καὶ τοῦτ' ἐβουλευσατο, ἀλλ' ἔστιν ἀρχὴ τις· οὐδ' ἐνόησε νοήσας πρότερον νοῆσαι, καὶ τοῦτ' εἰς ἄπειρον· οὐκ ἄρα τοῦ νοῆσαι ἡ νοῆσις (Casaubon, for manuscript reading συνοῦσα) ἀρχή, οὐδὲ τοῦ βουλευσασθαι βουλή. 'A man, surely, does not deliberate after deliberation whether he should do so, and after deciding this in turn by deliberation — — an intuition is not the origin of intuiting, nor a deliberation of deliberating'.

(3) I come to my last point, that in what follows there is nothing fatal to this interpretation. Having turned to the use of these principles in replying to critics of the poets, Aristotle says (1460^b29–31): *ἐτι ποτέρων (πότερον, Hermann) ἐστι τὸ ἀμάρτημα, τῶν κατὰ τὴν τέχνην ἢ κατ' ἄλλο συμβεβηκός; ἔλαττον γὰρ εἰ μὴ ᾗδαι ὅτι ἔλαφος θήλεια κέρατα οὐκ ἔχει ἢ εἰ ἀμμήτως ἔγραψεν*.

This is commonly regarded as a restatement of the distinction made above, αὐτῆς δὲ τῆς ποιητικῆς διττὴ ἀμαρτία, ἡ μὲν γὰρ καθ' αὐτήν, ἡ δὲ κατὰ συμβεβηκός, and I know of no commentator who does not state or imply this. If so, the question suggested to a well-disposed reader of the poets is, to which kind does the alleged fault belong? and an unconscious error in natural history is now given as an instance of the latter kind of mistake. If this is the only valid interpretation my argument has been in vain. But it may well be questioned whether it is even a natural reading of the words. Firstly, on this view ἄλλο in the phrase *κατ' ἄλλο συμβεβηκός* has no discernible function. Secondly, in 1460^b15–16 Aristotle was not saying that the former fault was *κατὰ τέχνην* (τὴν ποιητικὴν) and the latter not, but that both are αὐτῆς τῆς τέχνης (in distinction from *other* faults which arise from non-observance of the standard of a neighbouring art) and that the first belongs to poetry *per se*, the second *per accidens*. One must presume that in lines 29–31 he is still speaking in these terms. Thus the right translation is: 'whether the fault is of *either of the kinds*, which we say belong to the art, or is a mistake in another incidental respect'. The purpose of the addition of ἄλλο then immediately stands out. It will be a consequence of this view that the phrase ἀμμήτως ἔγραψεν in 1460^b32 covers *both* errors which are said in 60^b15 to be αὐτῆς τῆς ποιητικῆς. Can this be maintained? I will try here to view the argument as a whole.

1. Poetry has its own standard of rightness, which is not the same as that of political science or any other science or art. So an error falling within some province of specialist knowledge is not automatically an error in the poet's own craft. He may be a superb craftsman in words, or again the lapse in factual knowledge may be accompanied by want of artistic skill. Thus far it hardly matters whether we are speaking of an unconscious lapse or of intentional

error. No doubt a good poet or artist will, within reasonable limits, secure accurate information, *δεῖ γὰρ εἰ ἐνδέχεται ὅλως μηδαμῇ ἡμαρτηθῆναι*, 1460^b28–9.

Take now (2a) the poet or painter who, intending to imitate, fails because he has not mastered his own technique, and (2b) one who knowingly and from choice misrepresents facts coming within the range of specialist knowledge or introduces what anyone can see to be impossible, with an artistic purpose in view. This purpose might be that of conveying astonishment or fear. These instances have in common the fact of *failure in imitation*, but in the former this is a result of incompetence, in the latter, of choice. In the former case the failure is both *αὐτῆς τῆς τέχνης* and *καθ' ἑαυτήν*, in the latter it is again *αὐτῆς τῆς τέχνης* but *κατὰ συμβεβηκός*, because entailed by the pursuit of an end other than imitation.

In 1460^b21 ὥστε δεῖ . . . Aristotle proposes to consider how to meet the objections, beginning with those which touch the poetic or imitative art itself. There is no mention of type (2a), because, if it is beyond dispute that the imitation is not effective, there can be no reply to the objection. This then leaves for justification, among apparent faults in art, the mistake deliberately incurred with an end in view (2b). With this Aristotle is, in my opinion, certainly dealing in lines 23 *ἡμάρτηται*—29 *μηδαμῇ ἡμαρτηθῆναι*. The mention of the pursuit of Hector in the *Iliad*, in particular, takes us back to 1460^a14–27, where admiration is expressed for Homer's skill in handling the untrue and the impossible. If, as can hardly be doubted, in the sentence (1460^a26) *προαίρεϊσθαι τε δεῖ ἀδύνατα εἰκότα μᾶλλον ἢ δυνατὰ ἀπίθανα*, the meaning is that it is right to choose *what one realizes* to be impossible, there is a presumption that *τὸ προελέσθαι μὴ ὀρθῶς* in 60^b18 refers to a similar choice.

The words (1460^b24–26) *ἀλλ' ὀρθῶς ἔχει, εἰ τυγχάνει τοῦ τέλους τοῦ αὐτῆς· τὸ γὰρ τέλος εἴρηται· εἰ οὕτως ἐκπληκτικώτερον ἢ αὐτὸ ἢ ἄλλο ποιεῖ μέρος* have been explained by editors in various ways. Vahlen and Bywater agree in supposing that *τὸ τέλος εἴρηται* refers to one of Aristotle's previous statements that it is legitimate for epic poetry, and to a lesser degree for drama, to aim at representing the marvellous, perhaps 1460^a11–13. They regard the two clauses *εἰ τυγχάνει . . .* and *εἰ οὕτως . . .* as parallel to one another, the latter making more specific what has been said in the former. But I think that the display of the marvellous and irrational has nowhere been said to be an *end* of serious poetry; and the account of the construction is not persuasive. Aristotle in such a case more commonly says *λέγω δ' εἰ οὕτως* etc. Kassel (Index s.v. *τέλος*) refers to 1450^a22, where the plot and the action is said to be the end of drama. But it seems to me that in this context, the appeal is made to some exceptional end, which justifies the lapse from factual accuracy. With others, I am inclined to suspect that *εἴρηται* is not genuine.

Next, it remains for consideration whether the critic's reproof really is of the kind which attaches itself to the imitative art (1460^b29, *ἐτι ποτέρων ἐστι τὸ ἀμάρτημα . . .*). A slight expansion may show how I propose to take the following words, if this is not already clear, namely: *τῶν κατὰ τέχνην (ὧν ἡ μὲν ἐστι καθ' ἑαυτήν, ἡ δὲ κατὰ συμβεβηκός) ἢ κατ' ἄλλο συμβεβηκός*. Supposing the latter to be the case, as when a painter depicts a hind with horns, the error is of type 1 and the principle that the rightness of art is not the same as that of specialist knowledge can be invoked. That a painter should also be a zoologist would be an instance of *τὸ εἶναι κατὰ συμβεβηκός*, one of the main prevailing types of being according to *Metaphysics* Δ7 and E2. In brief, on the usual view

the whole passage refers to unconscious inaccuracy, and in 1460^b22-9 *πρώτον μὲν . . . ἡμαρτηῆσθαι* and 29-32 *ἔτι . . . ἔγραψεν* Aristotle deals in succession with the two kinds of fault distinguished in lines 15-16. My suggestion is that ^b22-9 refers to the incidental fault in the art, and 15-16 to that which cannot be fairly ranked as a fault in art at all.

There is an incidental fault within the art, and a fault incidental *to* the art. The *Eudemian Ethics* can here give us some light. In somewhat the same manner, Aristotle finds there that there are two incidental uses of property in addition to its ordinary use (1231^b38-32^a4). *διχῶς δὲ τὰ χρήματα λέγομεν καὶ τὴν χρηματιστικὴν. ἡ μὲν γὰρ καθ' αὐτὸ χρήσις τοῦ κτήματος ἐστίν, οἷον ὑποδήματος ἢ ἱματίου, ἡ δὲ κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς μὲν, οὐ μέντοι οὕτως ὥς ἂν εἴ τις σταθμῶ χρήσαιο τῷ ὑποδήματι, ἀλλ' οἷον ἢ πώλησις καὶ ἢ μίσθωσις.* To sell or hire out shoes is to make incidental use of them, since so far as the vendor is concerned the prime object is not to walk comfortably, but to make a profit. They are, however, sold as shoes; and this is distinct from the more obviously incidental use of a shoe as a weight.

Returning to this distinction later (*E.E.* 8. 1246^a27-46^b4), Aristotle refers to intentional misuse of knowledge, but unfortunately in a passage corrupt almost beyond possibility of restoration. Here the author starts from a distinction between use of a thing for its natural purpose and two kinds of non-natural use. The thing may be used for a wrong end (*a*) in its natural capacity, as when a man squints so that he sees double, and (*b*) in some way irrelevant to its form and purpose. Knowledge can be brought under these headings, since, e.g., someone who knows how to spell may, intentionally, mis-spell; and if virtue is knowledge, a just man may produce unjust actions by his justice. (But *Ethics*, 5. 1137^a5 ff. *οἱ δ' ἄνθρωποι* has explained why this is not the case, and we are engaged here in an indirect disproof of the thesis that virtue is knowledge.)

The author of *E.E.* is distinguishing ways in which you may use or misuse something which you possess, the author of the *Poetics* is interested in ways in which one who does *not* possess expertise in other arts, or even perhaps in his own, may go wrong or choose to go wrong, or be alleged to go wrong. But, naturally, the distinctions made touch one another. With *Poetics*, 1460^b18 *τὸ προελέσθαι μὴ ὀρθῶς* compare *E.E.* 1246^a33 *ἀμαρτεῖν οἷον ὅταν ἐκὼν μὴ ὀρθῶς γράψῃ*, and with both, Plato, *Hippias Minor* 366 c 2, *ὥσπερ σὺ δυνατὸς εἶ γράψαι τοῦμόν ὄνομα ὅταν βούλῃ*.

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