

Poetics

Aristotle

Greek original

ΠΕΡΙ ΠΟΙΗΤΙΚΗΣ.

Περὶ ποιητικῆς αὐτῆς τε καὶ τῶν εἰδῶν αὐτῆς, ἥν τινα δύναμιν ἕκαστον ἔχει, καὶ πῶς δεῖ συνίστασθαι τοὺς μύθους, εἰ μέλλει καλῶς ἔξειν ἢ ποιήσιν, ἔτι δὲ ἐκ πόσων καὶ ποίων ἐστὶ μορίων, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ περὶ τῶν ἄλλων ὅσα τῆς αὐτῆς ἐστὶ μεθόδου, λέγωμεν, ἀρξάμενοι κατὰ φύσιν πρῶτον ἀπὸ τῶν πρώτων.

Ἐποποιία δὴ καὶ ἡ τῆς τραγωδίας ποιήσις, ἔτι δὲ κωμωδία καὶ ἡ διθυραμβοποιητικὴ καὶ τῆς αὐλητικῆς ἢ πλείστη καὶ κιθαριστικῆς, πᾶσαι τυγχάνουσιν οὔσαι μιμήσεις τὸ σύνολον.

Διαφέρουσι δὲ ἀλλήλων τρισίν· ἡ γὰρ τῷ γένει ἐτέροις μιμεῖσθαι, ἡ τῷ ἔτερι, ἡ τῷ ἐτέρως καὶ μὴ τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον.

Ὡς περ γὰρ καὶ χρώμασι καὶ σχήμασι πολλὰ μιμοῦνται τινες ἀπεικάζοντες, οἱ μὲν διὰ τέχνης οἱ δὲ διὰ συνηθείας, ἕτεροι δὲ διὰ τῆς φωνῆς, οὕτω κὰν ταῖς εἰρημέναις τέχναις, ἅπασαι μὲν ποιοῦνται τὴν μίμησιν ἐν ῥυθμῷ καὶ λόγῳ καὶ ἁρμονίᾳ, τούτοις δ' ἡ χωρὶς ἡ μεμιγμένοις,

οἷον ἁρμονία μὲν καὶ ῥυθμῷ χρώμεναι μόνον ἢ τε αὐλητικὴ καὶ ἡ κιθαριστικὴ, κὰν εἴ τινες ἕτεραι τυγχάνωσιν οὔσαι τοιαῦται τὴν δύναμιν, οἷον ἢ τῶν συρίγγων.

Αὐτῷ δὲ τῷ ῥυθμῷ μιμοῦνται χωρὶς ἁρμονίας οἱ τῶν ὀρχηστῶν· καὶ γὰρ οὗτοι διὰ τῶν σχηματιζομένων ῥυθμῶν μιμοῦνται καὶ ἦθη καὶ πάθη καὶ πράξεις.

Ἡ δὲ ἐποποιία μόνον τοῖς λόγοις ψιλοῖς ἢ τοῖς μέτροις, καὶ τούτοις εἴτε μινύσα μετ' ἀλλήλων, εἴθ' ἐνὶ τινὶ γένει χρωμένῃ τῶν μέτρων τυγχάνουσα μέχρι τοῦ νῦν.

Οὐδὲν γὰρ ἂν ἔχοιμεν ὀνομάσαι κοινὸν τοὺς Σώφρονος καὶ Ξενάρχου μίμους καὶ τοὺς Σωκρατικούς λόγους,

οὐδὲ εἴ τις διὰ τριμέτρων ἢ ἐλεγείων ἢ τῶν ἄλλων τινῶν τῶν τοιούτων ποιοῖτο τὴν μίμησιν·

πλὴν οἱ ἄνθρωποι γε συνάπτοντες τῷ μέτρῳ τὸ ποιεῖν ἐλεγειοποιούς τοὺς δὲ ἐποποιούς ὀνομάζουσιν, οὐχ ὥς τοὺς κατὰ μίμησιν ποιητὰς ἀλλὰ κοινῇ κατὰ τὸ μέτρον προσαγορεύοντες.

Καὶ γὰρ ἂν ἱατρικὸν ἢ μουσικὸν τι διὰ τῶν μέτρων ἐκφέρωσιν, οὕτω καλεῖν εἰώθασιν. Οὐδὲν δὲ κοινόν ἐστιν Ὀμήρῳ καὶ Ἐμπεδοκλεῖ πλὴν τὸ μέτρον· διὸ τὸν μὲν ποιητὴν δίκαιον καλεῖν, τὸν δὲ φυσιολόγου μᾶλλον ἢ ποιητήν.

Ὅμοίως δὲ κὰν εἴ τις ἅπαντα τὰ μέτρα μινύων ποιοῖτο τὴν μίμησιν, καθάπερ Χαιρήμων ἐποίησε Κένταυρον μικτὴν ῥαψωδίαν ἐξ ἀπάντων τῶν μέτρων, οὐκ ἤδη καὶ ποιητὴν προσαγορευτέον. Περὶ μὲν οὖν τούτων διωρίσθω τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον.

Εἰσὶ δὲ τινες οἱ πάσι χρῶνται τοῖς εἰρημένοις, λέγω δὲ οἷον ῥυθμῷ καὶ μέλει καὶ μέτρῳ, ὥς περ ἡ τε τῶν διθυραμβικῶν ποιήσις καὶ ἡ τῶν νόμων καὶ ἡ τε τραγωδία καὶ ἡ κωμωδία· διαφέρουσι δέ, ὅτι αἱ μὲν ἅμα πᾶσιν αἱ δὲ κατὰ μέρος.

Ταύτας μὲν οὖν λέγω τὰς διαφορὰς τῶν τεχνῶν, ἐν οἷς ποιοῦνται τὴν μίμησιν.

Ἐπεὶ δὲ μιμοῦνται οἱ μιμούμενοι πράττοντας, ἀνάγκη δὲ τούτους ἢ σπουδαίους ἢ φαύλους εἶναι (τὰ γὰρ ἦθη σχεδὸν ἀεὶ τούτοις ἀκολουθεῖ μόνοις· κακία γὰρ καὶ ἀρετὴ τὰ ἦθη διαφέρουσι πάντες), ἦτοι βελτίονας ἢ καθ' ἡμᾶς ἢ χείρονας ἢ καὶ τοιούτους, ὥς περ οἱ γραφεῖς·

Πολύγνωτος μὲν γὰρ κρεῖττους, Παύσων δὲ χείρους, Διονύσιος δὲ ὁμοίους εἵκαζεν.

Δῆλον δὲ ὅτι καὶ τῶν λεχθεισῶν ἐκάστη μιμήσεων ἔξει ταύτας τὰς διαφοράς, καὶ ἔσται ἐτέρα τῶ ἕτερα μιμεῖσθαι τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον.

Καὶ γὰρ ἐν ὀρχήσει καὶ αὐλήσει καὶ κιθαρίσει ἔστι γενέσθαι ταύτας τὰς ἀνομοιότητας, καὶ περὶ τοὺς λόγους δὲ καὶ τὴν ψιλομετρίαν, οἷον Ὅμηρος μὲν βελτίους, Κλεοφῶν δὲ ὁμοίους, Ἑγήμων δὲ ὁ Θάσιος ὁ τὰς παρωδίας ποιήσας πρῶτος καὶ Νικοχάρης ὁ τὴν Δηλιάδα χεῖρους.

Ὅμοίως δὲ καὶ περὶ τοὺς διθυράμβους καὶ περὶ τοὺς νόμους, ὡς Πέρσας καὶ Κύκλωπας Τιμόθεος καὶ Φιλόξενος, μιμήσαιο ἄν τις.

Ἐν αὐτῇ δὲ τῇ διαφορᾷ καὶ ἡ τραγωδία πρὸς τὴν κωμωδίαν διέστηκεν· ἡ μὲν γὰρ χεῖρους ἢ δὲ βελτίους μιμεῖσθαι βούλεται τῶν νῦν.

Ἔτι δὲ τούτων τρίτη διαφορὰ τὸ ὡς ἕκαστα τούτων μιμήσαιο ἄν τις.

Καὶ γὰρ ἐν τοῖς αὐτοῖς καὶ τὰ αὐτὰ μιμεῖσθαι ἔστιν ὅτε μὲν ἀπαγγέλλοντα ἢ ἕτερόν τι γινόμενον, ὥσπερ Ὅμηρος ποιεῖ, ἢ ὡς τὸν αὐτὸν καὶ μὴ μεταβάλλοντα, ἢ πάντας ὡς πράττοντας καὶ ἐνεργοῦντας τοὺς μιμουμένους.

Ἐν τρισὶ δὴ ταύταις διαφοραῖς ἡ μίμησίς ἐστιν, ὡς εἵπομεν κατ' ἀρχάς, ἐν οἷς τε καὶ ἂ καὶ ὤς.

Ὡστε τῇ μὲν ὁ αὐτὸς ἂν εἴη μιμητὴς Ὅμηρῳ Σοφοκλῆς, μιμοῦνται γὰρ ἄμφω σπουδαίους, τῇ δὲ Ἀριστοφάνει· πράττοντας γὰρ μιμοῦνται καὶ δρῶντας ἄμφω. Ὅθεν καὶ δράματα καλεῖσθαι τινες αὐτὰ φασιν, ὅτι μιμοῦνται δρῶντας.

Διὸ καὶ ἀντιποιοῦνται τῆς τε τραγωδίας καὶ τῆς κωμωδίας οἱ Δωριεῖς, τῆς μὲν κωμωδίας οἱ Μεγαρεῖς, οἱ τε ἐνταῦθα ὡς ἐπὶ τῆς παρ' αὐτοῖς δημοκρατίας γενομένης, καὶ οἱ ἐκ Σικελίας (ἐκεῖθεν γὰρ ἦν Ἐπίχαρμος ὁ ποιητής, πολλῶ πρότερος ὢν Χωνίδου καὶ Μάγνητος), καὶ τῆς τραγωδίας ἔνιοι τῶν ἐν Πελοποννήσῳ, ποιούμενοι τὰ ὀνόματα σημεῖον.

Οὗτοι μὲν γὰρ κώμας τὰς περιοικίδας καλεῖν φασίν, Ἀθηναῖοι δὲ δήμους, ὡς κωμωδοὺς οὐκ ἀπὸ τοῦ κωμάζειν λεχθέντας, ἀλλὰ τῇ κατὰ κώμας πλάνῃ ἀτιμαζομένους ἐκ τοῦ ἄστεως· καὶ τὸ ποιεῖν αὐτοὶ μὲν δρᾶν, Ἀθηναίους δὲ πράττειν προσαγορεύειν.

Περὶ μὲν οὖν τῶν διαφορῶν, καὶ πόσαι καὶ τίνες τῆς μιμήσεως, εἰρήσθω ταῦτα.

Ἐοίκασι δὲ γεννηῆσαι μὲν ὅλως τὴν ποιητικὴν αἰτία διὰ δύο τινές, καὶ αὗται φυσικαί.

Τὸ τε γὰρ μιμεῖσθαι σύμφυτον τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἐκ παίδων ἐστί, καὶ τούτῳ διαφέρουσι τῶν ἄλλων ζώων ὅτι μιμητικώτατόν ἐστι καὶ τὰς μαθήσεις ποιεῖται διὰ μιμήσεως τὰς πρώτας, καὶ τὸ χαίρειν τοῖς μίμημασι πάντας.

Σημεῖον δὲ τούτου τὸ συμβαῖνον ἐπὶ τῶν ἔργων· ἂ γὰρ αὐτὰ λυπηρῶς ὀρώμεν, τούτων τὰς εἰκόνας τὰς μάλιστα ἡκριβωμένας χαίρομεν θεωροῦντες, οἷον θηρίων τε μορφᾶς τῶν ἀτιμοτάτων καὶ νεκρῶν.

Αἴτιον δὲ καὶ τούτου, ὅτι μανθάνειν οὐ μόνον τοῖς φιλοσόφοις ἡδιστον ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ὁμοίως· ἀλλ' ἐπὶ βραχὺ κοινωνοῦσιν αὐτοῦ.

Διὰ γὰρ τοῦτο χαίρουσι τὰς εἰκόνας ὀρώντες, ὅτι συμβαίνει θεωροῦντας μανθάνειν καὶ συλλογίζεσθαι τί ἕκαστον, οἷον ὅτι οὗτος ἐκεῖνος, ἐπεὶ ἐὰν μὴ τύχῃ προεωρακώς,

οὐ διὰ μίμημα ποιήσει τὴν ἡδονὴν ἀλλὰ διὰ τὴν ἀπεργασίαν ἢ τὴν χροίαν ἢ διὰ τοιαύτην τινὰ ἄλλην αἰτίαν.

Κατὰ φύσιν δὲ ὄντος ἡμῖν τοῦ μιμεῖσθαι καὶ τῆς ἁρμονίας καὶ τοῦ ρυθμοῦ (τὰ γὰρ μέτρα ὅτι

μόρια τῶν ῥυθμῶν ἐστί, φανερόν) ἐξ ἀρχῆς οἱ πεφυκότες πρὸς αὐτὰ μάλιστα κατὰ μικρὸν προάγοντες ἐγέννησαν τὴν ποιήσιν ἐκ τῶν αὐτοσχεδιασμάτων.

Διεσπάσθη δὲ κατὰ τὰ οἰκεῖα ἦθη ἢ ποιήσις· οἱ μὲν γὰρ σεμνότεροι τὰς καλὰς ἐμιμοῦντο πράξεις καὶ τὰς τῶν τοιούτων, οἱ δὲ εὐτελέστεροι τὰς τῶν φαύλων, πρῶτον ψόγους ποιοῦντες, ὥσπερ ἔτεροι ὕμνους καὶ ἐγκώμια.

Τῶν μὲν οὖν πρὸ Ὀμήρου οὐδενὸς ἔχομεν εἰπεῖν τοιοῦτον ποίημα, εἰκὸς δὲ εἶναι πολλούς·

ἀπὸ δὲ Ὀμήρου ἀρξαμένοις ἔστιν, οἷον ἐκείνου ὁ Μαργίτης καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα, ἐν οἷς καὶ τὸ ἀρμόττον ἱαμβεῖον ἦλθε μέτρον. Διὸ καὶ ἱαμβεῖον καλεῖται νῦν, ὅτι ἐν τῷ μέτρῳ τούτῳ ἱάμβιζον ἀλλήλους.

Καὶ ἐγένοντο τῶν παλαιῶν οἱ μὲν ἡρωϊκῶν οἱ δὲ ἱάμβων ποιηταί.

Ὡσπερ δὲ καὶ τὰ σπουδαῖα μάλιστα ποιητῆς Ὀμηρος ἦν (μόνος γὰρ οὐχ ὅτι εὔ, ἀλλ' ὅτι καὶ μιμήσεις δραματικὰς ἐποίησεν), οὕτω καὶ τὰ τῆς κωμωδίας σχήματα πρῶτος ὑπέδειξεν, οὐ ψόγον ἀλλὰ τὸ γελοῖον δραματοποιήσας· ὁ γὰρ Μαργίτης ἀνάλογον ἔχει, ὥσπερ Ἰλιάς καὶ Ὀδύσσεια πρὸς τὰς τραγωδίας, οὕτω καὶ οὗτος πρὸς τὰς κωμωδίας.

Παραφανείσης δὲ τῆς τραγωδίας καὶ κωμωδίας οἱ ἐφ' ἑκατέραν τὴν ποιήσιν ὁρμῶντες κατὰ τὴν οἰκεῖαν φύσιν, οἱ μὲν ἀντὶ τῶν ἱάμβων κωμωδοποιοὶ ἐγένοντο, οἱ δὲ ἀντὶ τῶν ἐπῶν τραγωδοδιδάσκαλοι, διὰ τὸ μείζω καὶ ἐντιμότερα τὰ σχήματα εἶναι ταῦτα ἐκείνων. Τὸ μὲν οὖν ἐπισκοπεῖν εἰ ἄρα ἔχει ἤδη ἡ τραγωδία τοῖς εἶδεσιν ἱκανῶς ἢ οὐ, αὐτὸ τε καθ' αὐτὸ κρινόμενον καὶ πρὸς τὰ θέατρα, ἄλλος λόγος.

Γενομένη δ' οὖν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς αὐτοσχεδιαστικὴ καὶ αὐτὴ καὶ ἡ κωμωδία, καὶ ἡ μὲν ἀπὸ τῶν ἐξαρχόντων τὸν διθύραμβον, ἡ δὲ ἀπὸ τῶν τὰ φαλλικά, ἃ ἔτι καὶ νῦν ἐν πολλαῖς τῶν πόλεων διαμένει νομιζόμενα, κατὰ μικρὸν ἡυξήθη προαγόντων ὅσον ἐγένετο φανερόν αὐτῆς,

καὶ πολλὰς μεταβολὰς μεταβαλοῦσα ἡ τραγωδία ἐπαύσατο, ἐπεὶ ἔσχε τὴν αὐτῆς φύσιν.

Καὶ τό τε τῶν ὑποκριτῶν πλῆθος ἐξ ἑνὸς εἰς δύο πρῶτος Αἰσχύλος ἤγαγε, καὶ τὰ τοῦ χοροῦ ἡλάττωσε, καὶ τὸν λόγον πρωταγωνιστὴν παρεσκεύασεν· τρεῖς δὲ καὶ σκηνογραφίαν Σοφοκλῆς.

Ἔτι δὲ τὸ μέγεθος ἐκ μικρῶν μύθων καὶ λέξεως γελοίας, διὰ τὸ ἐκ σατυρικοῦ μεταβαλεῖν, ὅψε ἀπεσεμνύνθη, τό τε μέτρον ἐκ τετραμέτρου ἱαμβεῖον ἐγένετο·

τὸ μὲν γὰρ πρῶτον τετραμέτρῳ ἐχρῶντο διὰ τὸ σατυρικὴν καὶ ὀρχηστικωτέραν εἶναι τὴν ποιήσιν, λέξεως δὲ γενομένης αὐτὴ ἡ φύσις τὸ οἰκεῖον μέτρον εὔρεν· μάλιστα γὰρ λεκτικὸν τῶν μέτρων τὸ ἱαμβεῖόν ἐστιν. Σημεῖον δὲ τούτου·

πλεῖστα γὰρ ἱαμβεῖα λέγομεν ἐν τῇ διαλέκτῳ τῇ πρὸς ἀλλήλους, ἐξάμετρα δὲ ὀλιγάκις καὶ ἐκβαίνοντες τῆς λεκτικῆς ἁρμονίας.

Ἔτι δὲ ἐπεισοδίων πλήθη καὶ τὰ ἄλλα ὥς ἕκαστα κοσμηθῆναι λέγεται.

Περὶ μὲν οὖν τούτων τοσαῦτα ἔστω ἡμῖν εἰρημένα· πολὺ γὰρ ἂν ἴσως ἔργον εἶη διεξιέναι καθ' ἕκαστον.

Ἡ δὲ κωμωδία ἐστίν, ὥσπερ εἶπομεν, μίμησις φαυλοτέρων μὲν, οὐ μέντοι κατὰ πᾶσαν κακίαν, ἀλλὰ τοῦ αἰσχροῦ ἐστὶ τὸ γελοῖον μόριον.

Τὸ γὰρ γελοῖόν ἐστιν ἀμάρτημά τι καὶ αἷσχος ἀνώδυνον καὶ οὐ φθαρτικόν, οἷον εὐθύς τὸ γελοῖον πρόσωπον αἰσχρόν τι καὶ διεστραμμένον ἄνευ ὁδύνης.

Αἱ μὲν οὖν τῆς τραγωδίας μεταβάσεις, καὶ δι' ὧν ἐγένοντο, οὐ λελήθασιν, ἡ δὲ κωμωδία διὰ τὸ μὴ σπουδάζεσθαι ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἔλαθεν· καὶ γὰρ χορὸν κωμωδῶν ὁψέ ποτε ὁ ἄρχων ἔδωκεν, ἀλλ' ἐθελονταὶ ἦσαν.

Ἦδη δὲ σχήματά τινα αὐτῆς ἐχούσης οἱ λεγόμενοι αὐτῆς ποιηταὶ μνημονεύονται. Τίς δὲ πρόσωπα ἀπέδωκεν ἢ προλόγους ἢ πλήθη ὑποκριτῶν καὶ ὅσα τοιαῦτα, ἡγνότηαι.

Τὸ δὲ μύθους ποιεῖν Ἐπίχαρμος καὶ Φόρμις.

Τὸ μὲν οὖν ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐκ Σικελίας ἦλθεν, τῶν δὲ Ἀθήνησιν Κράτης πρῶτος ἦρξεν ἀφέμενος τῆς ἱαμβικῆς ιδέας καθόλου ποιεῖν λόγους καὶ μύθους.

Ἡ μὲν οὖν ἐποποιία τῇ τραγωδίᾳ μέχρι μόνου μέτρου μετὰ λόγου μίμησις εἶναι σπουδαίων ἠκολούθησεν· τῷ δὲ τὸ μέτρον ἀπλοῦν ἔχειν καὶ ἀπαγγελίαν εἶναι, ταύτη διαφέρει.

Ἔτι δὲ τῷ μήκει· ἡ μὲν γὰρ ὅτι μάλιστα πειρᾶται ὑπὸ μίαν περίοδον ἡλίου εἶναι ἢ μικρὸν ἐξαλλάττειν, ἡ δὲ ἐποποιία ἀόριστος τῷ χρόνῳ, καὶ τούτῳ διαφέρει.

Καίτοι τὸ πρῶτον ὁμοίως ἐν ταῖς τραγωδίαις τοῦτο ἐποιοῦν καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἔπεσιν.

Μέρη δ' ἐστὶ τὰ μὲν ταῦτά, τὰ δὲ ἴδια τῆς τραγωδίας.

Διόπερ ὅστις περὶ τραγωδίας οἶδε σπουδαίας καὶ φαύλης, οἶδε καὶ περὶ ἐπῶν· ἃ μὲν γὰρ ἐποποιία ἔχει, ὑπάρχει τῇ τραγωδίᾳ, ἃ δὲ αὐτῇ, οὐ πάντα ἐν τῇ ἐποποιίᾳ.

Περὶ μὲν οὖν τῆς ἐν ἑξαμέτροις μιμητικῆς καὶ περὶ κωμωδίας ὕστερον ἐροῦμεν, περὶ δὲ τραγωδίας λέγωμεν, ἀπολαβόντες αὐτῆς ἐκ τῶν εἰρημένων τὸν γινόμενον ὅρον τῆς οὐσίας.

Ἔστιν οὖν τραγωδία μίμησις πράξεως σπουδαίας καὶ τελείας, μέγεθος ἐχούσης, ἡδυσμένῳ λόγῳ, χωρὶς ἐκάστου τῶν εἰδῶν ἐν τοῖς μορίοις, δρώντων καὶ οὐ δι' ἀπαγγελίας, δι' ἐλέου καὶ φόβου περαίνουσα τὴν τῶν τοιοῦτων παθημάτων κάθαρσιν.

Λέγω δὲ ἡδυσμένον μὲν λόγον τὸν ἔχοντα ῥυθμὸν καὶ ἁρμονίαν καὶ μέλος,

τὸ δὲ χωρὶς τοῖς εἶδεσι τὸ διὰ μέτρων ἔνια μόνον περαίνεσθαι καὶ πάλιν ἕτερα διὰ μέλους.

Ἐπεὶ δὲ πράττοντες ποιοῦνται τὴν μίμησιν, πρῶτον μὲν ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἂν εἴη τι μόνιον τραγωδίας ὁ τῆς ὀψεως κόσμος, εἴτα μελοποιία καὶ λέξις· ἐν τούτοις γὰρ ποιοῦνται τὴν μίμησιν.

Λέγω δὲ λέξιν μὲν αὐτὴν τὴν τῶν μέτρων σύνθεσιν, μελοποιίαν δὲ ὅ τὴν δύναμιν φανεράν ἔχει πᾶσαν.

Ἐπεὶ δὲ πράξεώς ἐστι μίμησις, πράττεται δὲ ὑπὸ τινων πραττόντων, οὐς ἀνάγκη ποιούς τινας εἶναι κατὰ τε τὸ ἦθος καὶ τὴν διάνοιαν (διὰ γὰρ τούτων καὶ τὰς πράξεις εἶναι φάμεν ποιὰς τινας,) πέφυκεν αἷτια δύο τῶν πράξεων εἶναι, διάνοια καὶ ἦθος, καὶ κατὰ ταύτας καὶ τυγχάνουσι καὶ ἀποτυγχάνουσι πάντες.

Ἔστι δὲ τῆς μὲν πράξεως ὁ μῦθος ἢ μίμησις· λέγω γὰρ μῦθον τοῦτον τὴν σύνθεσιν τῶν πραγμάτων, τὰ δὲ ἦθη, καθ' ἃ ποιούς τινας εἶναι φάμεν τοὺς πράττοντας, διάνοιαν δέ, ἐν ὅσοις λέγοντες ἀποδεικνύασί τι ἢ καὶ ἀποφαίνονται γνώμην.

Ἀνάγκη οὖν πάσης τραγωδίας μέρη εἶναι ἔξ, καθ' ἃ ποιὰ τις ἐστὶν ἡ τραγωδία· ταῦτα δ' ἐστὶ μῦθος καὶ ἦθη καὶ λέξεις καὶ διάνοια καὶ ὄψις καὶ μελοποιία.

Οἷς μὲν γὰρ μιμοῦνται, δύο μέρη ἐστίν, ὡς δὲ μιμοῦνται, ἓν, ἃ δὲ μιμοῦνται, τρία, καὶ παρὰ ταῦτα οὐδέν.

Τούτοις μὲν οὖν οὐκ ὀλίγοι αὐτῶν ὡς εἰπεῖν κέχρηται τοῖς εἶδεσιν· καὶ γὰρ ὄψεις ἔχει πᾶν καὶ

ἦθος καὶ μῦθον καὶ λέξιν καὶ μέλος καὶ διάνοιαν ὡσαύτως.

Μέγιστον δὲ τούτων ἐστὶν ἡ τῶν πραγμάτων σύστασις· ἡ γὰρ τραγωδία μίμησις ἐστὶν οὐκ ἀνθρώπων ἀλλὰ πράξεως καὶ βίου καὶ εὐδαιμονίας καὶ κακοδαιμονίας· καὶ γὰρ ἡ εὐδαιμονία ἐν πράξει ἐστί, καὶ τὸ τέλος πράξις τις ἐστίν, οὐ ποιότης. Εἰσὶ δὲ κατὰ μὲν τὰ ἦθη ποιοὶ τινες, κατὰ δὲ τὰς πράξεις εὐδαιμόνες ἢ τούναντίον.

Οὐκ οὖν ὅπως τὰ ἦθη μιμῶνται πράττουσιν, ἀλλὰ τὰ ἦθη συμπεριλαμβάνουσι διὰ τὰς πράξεις. Ὡστε τὰ πράγματα καὶ ὁ μῦθος τέλος τῆς τραγωδίας· τὸ δὲ τέλος μέγιστον ἀπάντων.

Ἔτι ἄνευ μὲν πράξεως οὐκ ἂν γένοιτο τραγωδία, ἄνευ δὲ ἠθῶν γένοιτ' ἂν.

Αἱ γὰρ τῶν νέων τῶν πλείστων ἀήθεις τραγωδαὶ εἰσὶ, καὶ ὅλως ποιηταὶ πολλοὶ τοιοῦτοι, οἷον καὶ τῶν γραφέων Ζεῦξις πρὸς Πολύγνωτον πέπονθεν· ὁ μὲν γὰρ Πολύγνωτος ἀγαθὸς ἠθογράφος, ἡ δὲ Ζεύξιδος γραφή οὐδὲν ἔχει ἦθος.

Ἔτι ἐάν τις ἐφεξῆς θῇ ῥήσεις ἠθικὰς καὶ λέξεις καὶ διανοίας εὖ πεποιημένας, οὐ ποιήσει ὁ ἦν τῆς τραγωδίας ἔργον, ἀλλὰ πολὺ μᾶλλον ἢ καταδεστέροις τούτοις κεχρημένη τραγωδία, ἔχουσα δὲ μῦθον καὶ σύστασιν πραγμάτων.

Πρὸς δὲ τούτοις τὰ μέγιστα οἷς ψυχαγωγεῖ ἡ τραγωδία, τοῦ μύθου μέρη ἐστίν, αἱ τε περιπέτειαι καὶ ἀναγνώσεις.

Ἔτι σημεῖον ὅτι καὶ οἱ ἐγχειροῦντες ποιεῖν πρότερον δύνανται τῇ λέξει καὶ τοῖς ἠθεσιν ἀκριβοῦν ἢ τὰ πράγματα συνίστασθαι, οἷον καὶ οἱ πρῶτοι ποιηταὶ σχεδὸν ἅπαντες.

Ἀρχὴ μὲν οὖν καὶ οἷον ψυχὴ ὁ μῦθος τῆς τραγωδίας, δεύτερον δὲ τὰ ἦθη.

Παραπλήσιον γάρ ἐστι καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γραφικῆς· εἰ γὰρ τις ἐναλείψει τοῖς καλλίστοις φαρμάκοις χύδην, οὐκ ἂν ὁμοίως εὐφράνειεν καὶ λευκογραφήσας εἰκόνα.

Ἔστι τε μίμησις πράξεως, καὶ διὰ ταύτην μάλιστα τῶν πραττόντων. Τρίτον δὲ ἡ διάνοια.

Τοῦτο δ' ἐστὶ τὸ λέγειν δύνασθαι τὰ ἐνόητα καὶ τὰ ἀρμόττοντα, ὅπερ ἐπὶ τῶν λόγων τῆς πολιτικῆς καὶ ῥητορικῆς ἔργον ἐστίν·

οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἀρχαῖοι πολιτικῶς ἐποιοῦν λέγοντας, οἱ δὲ νῦν ῥητορικῶς.

Ἔστι δὲ ἦθος μὲν τὸ τοιοῦτον ὃ δηλοῖ τὴν προαίρεσιν ὁποῖα τις· διόπερ οὐκ ἔχουσιν ἦθος τῶν λόγων ἐν οἷς μὴδ' ὅλως ἔστιν ὃ τι προαίρεται ἢ φεύγει ὁ λέγων.

Διάνοια δέ, ἐν οἷς ἀποδεικνύουσι τι ὥς ἔστιν ἢ ὥς οὐκ ἔστιν, ἢ καθόλου τι ἀποφαίνονται.

Τέταρτον δὲ τῶν μὲν λόγων ἡ 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 ὄψις ψυχαγωγικὸν μὲν, ἀτεχνότατον δὲ καὶ ἥκιστα οἰκεῖον τῆς ποιητικῆς· ἡ γὰρ τῆς τραγωδίας δύναμις καὶ ἄνευ ἀγῶνος καὶ ὑποκριτῶν ἐστίν. Ἔτι δὲ κυριωτέρα περὶ τὴν ἀπεργασίαν τῶν ὄψεων ἡ τοῦ σκευοποιοῦ τέχνη τῆς τῶν ποιητῶν ἐστίν.

Διωρισμένων δὲ τούτων, λέγωμεν μετὰ ταῦτα ποῖαν τινὰ δεῖ τὴν σύστασιν εἶναι τῶν πραγμάτων, ἐπειδὴ τοῦτο καὶ πρῶτον καὶ μέγιστον τῆς τραγωδίας ἐστίν.

Κεῖται δ' ἡμῖν τὴν τραγωδίαν τελείας καὶ ὅλης πράξεως εἶναι μίμησιν, ἐχούσης τι μέγεθος· ἔστι γὰρ ὅλον καὶ μὴδὲν ἔχον μέγεθος.

“Ὅλον δ’ ἐστὶ τὸ ἔχον ἀρχὴν καὶ μέσον καὶ τελευτήν.

Ἀρχὴ δ’ ἐστὶν ὃ αὐτὸ μὲν μὴ ἐξ ἀνάγκης μετ’ ἄλλο ἐστί, μετ’ ἐκεῖνο δ’ ἕτερον πέφυκεν εἶναι ἢ γίνεσθαι.

τελευτὴ δὲ τοῦναντίον ὃ αὐτὸ μετ’ ἄλλο πέφυκεν εἶναι, ἢ ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἢ ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ, μετὰ δὲ τοῦτο ἄλλο οὐδέν.

μέσον δὲ ὃ καὶ αὐτὸ μετ’ ἄλλο καὶ μετ’ ἐκεῖνο ἕτερον.

Δεῖ ἄρα τοὺς συνεστῶτας εὖ μύθους μήθ’ ὁπόθεν ἔτυχεν ἄρχεσθαι μήθ’ ὅπου ἔτυχε τελευτᾶν, ἀλλὰ κεχρηῆσθαι ταῖς εἰρημέναις ιδέαις.

Ἔτι δ’ ἐπεὶ τὸ καλὸν καὶ ζῶον καὶ ἅπαν πρᾶγμα ὃ συνέστηκεν ἐκ τινων, οὐ μόνον ταῦτα τεταγμένα δεῖ ἔχειν, ἀλλὰ καὶ μέγεθος ὑπάρχειν μὴ τὸ τυχόν· τὸ γὰρ καλὸν ἐν μεγέθει καὶ τάξει ἐστί,

διὸ οὔτε πάμμικρον ἂν τι γένοιτο καλὸν ζῶον (συγχεῖται γὰρ ἡ θεωρία ἐγγὺς τοῦ ἀναισθήτου χρόνου γινομένη) οὔτε παμμέγεθες· οὐ γὰρ ἅμα ἡ θεωρία γίνεται, ἀλλ’ οἴχεται τοῖς θεωροῦσι τὸ ἐν καὶ τὸ ὅλον ἐκ τῆς θεωρίας, οἷον εἰ μυρίων σταδίων εἴη ζῶον.

Ὡστε δεῖ καθάπερ ἐπὶ τῶν σωμάτων καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ζώων ἔχειν μὲν μέγεθος, τοῦτο δὲ εὐσύνοπτον εἶναι, οὕτω καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν μύθων ἔχειν μὲν μήκος, τοῦτο δ’ εὐμνημόνευτον εἶναι.

Τοῦ δὲ μήκους ὅρος πρὸς μὲν τοὺς ἀγῶνας καὶ τὴν αἴσθησιν οὐ τῆς τέχνης ἐστίν· εἰ γὰρ ἔδει ἑκατὸν τραγωδίας ἀγωνίζεσθαι, πρὸς κλεψύδραν ἂν ἠγωνίζοντο, ὥσπερ ποτὲ καὶ ἄλλοτε φασίν.

Ὁ δὲ κατ’ αὐτὴν τὴν φύσιν τοῦ πράγματος ὅρος, αἰὲ μὲν ὁ μείζων μέχρι τοῦ σύνδηλος εἶναι καλλίων ἐστὶ κατὰ τὸ μέγεθος, ὡς δὲ ἀπλῶς διορίσαντας εἰπεῖν, ἐν ὅσῳ μεγέθει κατὰ τὸ εἰκὸς ἢ τὸ ἀναγκαῖον ἐφεξῆς γιγνομένων συμβαίνει εἰς εὐτυχίαν ἐκ δυστυχίας ἢ ἐξ εὐτυχίας εἰς δυστυχίαν μεταβάλλειν, ἱκανὸς ὅρος ἐστὶ τοῦ μεγέθους.

Μῦθος δ’ ἐστὶν εἷς, οὐχ ὥσπερ τινὲς οἴονται, ἐὰν περὶ ἓνα ἧ· πολλὰ γὰρ καὶ ἄπειρα τῷ γένει συμβαίνει, ἐξ ὧν ἐνίων οὐδέν ἐστιν ἓν. Οὕτω δὲ καὶ πράξεις ἐνὸς πολλαί εἰσιν, ἐξ ὧν μία οὐδεμία γίνεται πρᾶξις.

Διὸ πάντες εὐοίκασιν ἀμαρτάνειν, ὅσοι τῶν ποιητῶν Ἡρακλεῖδα καὶ Θησηΐδα καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα ποιήματα πεποιήκασιν· οἴονται γὰρ ἐπεὶ εἷς ἦν ὁ Ἡρακλῆς, ἓνα καὶ τὸν μῦθον εἶναι προσήκειν.

Ὁ δ’ Ὀμηρος, ὥσπερ καὶ τὰ ἄλλα διαφέρει, καὶ τοῦτ’ ἔοικε καλῶς ιδεῖν, ἥτοι διὰ τέχνην ἢ διὰ φύσιν· Ὀδύσσειαν γὰρ ποιῶν οὐκ ἐποίησεν ἅπαντα ὅσα αὐτῷ συνέβη, οἷον πληγῆναι μὲν ἐν τῷ Παρνασσῷ, μανῆναι δὲ προσποιήσασθαι ἐν τῷ ἀγερμῷ, ὧν οὐδὲν θατέρου γενομένου ἀναγκαῖον ἦν ἢ εἰκὸς θάτερον γενέσθαι, ἀλλὰ περὶ μίαν πρᾶξιν, οἷαν λέγομεν, τὴν Ὀδύσσειαν συνέστησεν, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ τὴν Ἰλιάδα.

Χρὴ οὖν, καθάπερ καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἄλλαις μιμητικαῖς ἢ μία μίμησις ἐνός ἐστιν, οὕτω καὶ τὸν μῦθον, ἐπεὶ πράξεως μίμησις ἐστὶ, μιᾶς τε εἶναι καὶ ταύτης ὅλης, καὶ τὰ μέρη συνεστάναι τῶν πραγμάτων οὕτως ὥστε μετατιθεμένου τινὸς μέρους ἢ ἀφαιρουμένου διαφέρεσθαι καὶ κινεῖσθαι τὸ ὅλον· ὃ γὰρ προσὸν ἢ μὴ προσὸν μηδὲν ποιεῖ ἐπίδηλον, οὐδὲ μόνον τοῦ ὅλου ἐστίν.

Φανερόν δὲ ἐκ τῶν εἰρημένων καὶ ὅτι οὐ τὸ τὰ γενόμενα λέγειν, τοῦτο ποιητοῦ ἔργον ἐστίν, ἀλλ’ οἷα ἂν γένοιτο, καὶ τὰ δυνατὰ κατὰ τὸ εἰκὸς ἢ τὸ ἀναγκαῖον.

Ὁ γὰρ ἱστορικὸς καὶ ὁ ποιητὴς οὐ τῷ ἢ ἔμμετρα λέγειν ἢ ἄμετρα διαφέρουσιν· εἴη γὰρ ἂν τὰ

Ἡροδότου εἰς μέτρα τεθῆναι, καὶ οὐδὲν ἦττον ἂν εἴη ἱστορία τις μετὰ μέτρου ἢ ἄνευ μέτρων· ἀλλὰ τούτῳ διαφέρει, τῷ τὸν μὲν τὰ γενόμενα λέγειν, τὸν δὲ οἷα ἂν γένοιτο.

Διὸ καὶ φιλοσοφώτερον καὶ σπουδαιότερον ποίησις ἱστορίας ἐστίν· ἢ μὲν γὰρ ποίησις μᾶλλον τὰ καθόλου, ἢ δ' ἱστορία τὰ καθ' ἕκαστον λέγει.

Ἔστι δὲ καθόλου μὲν, τῷ ποίῳ τὰ ποῖ' ἅττα συμβαίνει λέγειν ἢ πράττειν κατὰ τὸ εἰκὸς ἢ τὸ ἀναγκαῖον, οὗ στοχάζεται ἢ ποίησις ὀνόματα ἐπιτιθεμένη· τὰ δὲ καθ' ἕκαστον, τί Ἀλκιβιάδης ἔπραξεν ἢ τί ἔπαθεν.

Ἐπὶ μὲν οὖν τῆς κωμωδίας ἤδη τοῦτο δῆλον γέγονεν· συστήσαντες γὰρ τὸν μῦθον διὰ τῶν εἰκότων οὕτω τὰ τυχόντα ὀνόματα ἐπιτιθέασιν, καὶ οὐχ ὥσπερ οἱ ἱαμβοποιοὶ περὶ τῶν καθ' ἕκαστον ποιοῦσιν.

Ἐπὶ δὲ τῆς τραγωδίας τῶν γενομένων ὀνομάτων ἀντέχονται. Αἴτιον δ' ὅτι πιθανόν ἐστὶ τὸ δυνατόν· τὰ μὲν οὖν μὴ γενόμενα οὕτω πιστεύομεν εἶναι δυνατά, τὰ δὲ γενόμενα φανερόν ὅτι δυνατά· οὐ γὰρ ἂν ἐγένετο, εἰ ἦν ἀδύνατα.

Οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν ταῖς τραγωδίαις ἐνίαις μὲν ἐν ἡ δύο τῶν γνωρίμων ἐστὶν ὀνομάτων, τὰ δὲ ἄλλα πεποιημένα, ἐν ἐνίαις δὲ οὐθέν, οἷον ἐν τῷ Ἀγάθωνος ἀνθει· ὁμοίως γὰρ ἐν τούτῳ τὰ τε πράγματα καὶ τὰ ὀνόματα πεποιήται, καὶ οὐδὲν ἦττον εὐφραίνει.

Ὡστ' οὐ πάντως εἶναι ζητητέον τῶν παραδεδομένων μύθων, περὶ οὓς αἱ τραγωδαὶ εἰσὶν, ἀντέχεσθαι. Καὶ γὰρ γελοῖον τοῦτο ζητεῖν, ἐπεὶ καὶ τὰ γνώριμα ὀλίγοις γνώριμά ἐστιν, ἀλλ' ὅμως εὐφραίνει πάντας.

Δῆλον οὖν ἐκ τούτων ὅτι τὸν ποιητὴν μᾶλλον τῶν μύθων εἶναι δεῖ ποιητὴν ἢ τῶν μέτρων, ὅσω ποιητὴς κατὰ τὴν μίμησιν ἐστὶ, μιμεῖται δὲ τὰς πράξεις.

Κἂν ἄρα συμβῇ γενόμενα ποιεῖν, οὐθέν ἦττον ποιητὴς ἐστίν· τῶν γὰρ γενομένων ἓν οὐδὲν κωλύει τοιαῦτα εἶναι οἷα ἂν εἰκὸς γενέσθαι καὶ δυνατὰ γενέσθαι, καθ' ὃ ἐκεῖνος αὐτῶν ποιητὴς ἐστίν.

Τῶν δὲ ἀπλῶν μύθων καὶ πράξεων αἱ ἐπεισοδιώδεις εἰσὶ χεῖρισται. Λέγω δ' ἐπεισοδιώδη μῦθον, ἐν ᾧ τὰ ἐπεισόδια μετ' ἄλληλα οὐτ' εἰκὸς οὐτ' ἀνάγκη εἶναι.

Τοιαῦτα δὲ ποιοῦνται ὑπὸ μὲν τῶν φαύλων ποιητῶν δι' αὐτούς, ὑπὸ δὲ τῶν ἀγαθῶν διὰ τοὺς ὑποκριτάς· ἀγωνίσματα γὰρ ποιοῦντες, καὶ παρὰ τὴν δύναμιν παρατείναντες μῦθον, πολλάκις διαστρέφειν ἀναγκάζονται τὸ ἐφεξῆς.

Ἐπεὶ δὲ οὐ μόνον τελείας ἐστὶ πράξεως ἢ μίμησις ἀλλὰ καὶ φοβερῶν καὶ ἐλεεινῶν, ταῦτα δὲ γίνεται καὶ μάλιστα, καὶ μᾶλλον ὅταν γένηται παρὰ τὴν δόξαν, δι' ἄλληλα.

τὸ γὰρ θαυμαστὸν οὕτως ἔξει μᾶλλον ἢ εἰ ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτομάτου καὶ τῆς τύχης, ἐπεὶ καὶ τῶν ἀπὸ τύχης ταῦτα θαυμασιώτατα δοκεῖ, ὅσα ὥσπερ ἐπίτηδες φαίνεται γεγονέναι, οἷον ὡς ὁ ἀνδριὰς ὁ τοῦ Μίτυος ἐν Ἄργει ἀπέκτεινε τὸν αἴτιον τοῦ θανάτου τῷ Μίτυϊ, θεωροῦντι ἐμπεσῶν· ὅμοιος γὰρ τὰ τοιαῦτα οὐκ εἰκὴ γενέσθαι,

ὥστε ἀνάγκη τοὺς τοιούτους εἶναι καλλίους μύθους.

Εἰσὶ δὲ τῶν μύθων οἱ μὲν ἀπλοῖ οἱ δὲ πεπλεγμένοι· καὶ γὰρ αἱ πράξεις, ὧν μιμήσεις οἱ μῦθοι εἰσιν, ὑπάρχουσιν εὐθὺς οὕσαι τοιαῦτα.

Λέγω δὲ ἀπλῆν μὲν πρᾶξιν, ἥς γινομένης, ὥσπερ ὥρισται, συνεχοῦς καὶ μιᾶς ἄνευ περιπετείας ἢ ἀναγνωρισμοῦ ἢ μετάβασις γίνεται,

πεπλεγμένην δέ, ἐξ ἧς μετ' ἀναγνωρισμοῦ ἡ περιπέτεια ἢ ἀμφοῖν ἢ μετάβασίς ἐστιν.

Ταῦτα δὲ δεῖ γίνεσθαι ἐξ αὐτῆς τῆς συστάσεως τοῦ μύθου, ὥστε ἐκ τῶν προγεγενημένων συμβαίνειν ἢ ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἢ κατὰ τὸ εἰκὸς γίνεσθαι ταῦτα· διαφέρει γὰρ πολὺ τὸ γίνεσθαι τάδε διὰ τάδε ἢ μετὰ τάδε.

Ἔστι δὲ περιπέτεια μὲν ἢ εἰς τὸ ἐναντίον τῶν πραττομένων μεταβολή, καθάπερ εἴρηται· καὶ τοῦτο δέ, ὥσπερ λέγομεν, κατὰ τὸ εἰκὸς ἢ ἀναγκαῖον,

ὥσπερ ἐν τῷ Οἰδίποδι ἐλθὼν ὡς εὐφρανῶν τὸν Οἰδίπου καὶ ἀπαλλάξων τοῦ πρὸς τὴν μητέρα φόβου, δηλώσας ὅς ἦν, τὸ ὑναντίον ἐποίησεν.

Καὶ ἐν τῷ Λυγκεῖ ὁ μὲν ἀγόμενος ὡς ἀποθανούμενος, ὁ δὲ Δαναὸς ἀκολουθῶν ὡς ἀποκτενῶν· τὸν μὲν συνέβη ἐκ τῶν πεπραγμένων ἀποθανεῖν, τὸν δὲ σωθῆναι.

Ἀναγνώρισις δ' ἐστίν, ὥσπερ καὶ τοῦνομα σημαίνει, ἐξ ἀγνοίας εἰς γνῶσιν μεταβολή ἢ εἰς φιλίαν ἢ ἔχθραν τῶν πρὸς εὐτυχίαν ἢ δυστυχίαν ὠρισμένων.

Καλλίστη δὲ ἀναγνώρισις, ὅταν ἅμα περιπέτεια γίνωνται, οἷον ἔχει ἢ ἐν τῷ Οἰδίποδι.

Εἰσὶ μὲν οὖν καὶ ἄλλαι ἀναγνώρισις· καὶ γὰρ πρὸς ἄψυχα καὶ τὰ τυχόντα ἔστιν ὅτε, ὥσπερ εἴρηται, συμβαίνει, καὶ εἰ πέπραγέ τις ἢ μὴ πέπραγεν, ἔστιν ἀναγνώρισις.

ἀλλ' ἢ μάλιστα τοῦ μύθου καὶ ἢ μάλιστα τῆς πράξεως ἢ εἰρημένη ἐστίν. Ἡ γὰρ τοιαύτη ἀναγνώρισις καὶ περιπέτεια ἢ ἔλεον ἔξει ἢ φόβον, οἷων πράξεων ἢ τραγωδία μίμησις ὑπόκειται. Ἔτι δὲ καὶ τὸ ἀτυχεῖν καὶ τὸ εὐτυχεῖν ἐπὶ τῶν τοιούτων συμβήσεται.

Ἐπεὶ δ' ἡ ἀναγνώρισις τινῶν ἐστίν ἀναγνώρισις, αἱ μὲν θατέρου πρὸς τὸν ἕτερον μόνον, ὅταν ἢ δῆλος ἕτερος τίς ἐστιν, ὅτε δ' ἀμφοτέρους δεῖ ἀναγνώρισαι, οἷον ἢ μὲν Ἰφιγένεια τῷ Ὀρέστη ἀνεγνώρισθη ἐκ τῆς πέμψεως τῆς ἐπιστολῆς, ἐκείνῳ δὲ πρὸς τὴν Ἰφιγένειαν ἄλλης ἔδει ἀναγνώρισεως.

Δύο μὲν οὖν τοῦ μύθου μέρη περὶ ταῦτ' ἐστί, περιπέτεια καὶ ἀναγνώρισις, τρίτον δὲ πάθος. Τούτων δὲ περιπέτεια μὲν καὶ ἀναγνώρισις εἴρηται,

πάθος δ' ἐστὶ πρᾶξις φθαρτικὴ ἢ ὀδυνηρά, οἷον οἳ τε ἐν τῷ φανερωῷ θάνατοι καὶ αἱ περιωδυνίαι καὶ τρώσεις καὶ ὅσα τοιαῦτα.

Μέρη δὲ τραγωδίας, οἷς μὲν ὡς εἶδеси δεῖ χρῆσθαι, πρότερον εἵπομεν· κατὰ δὲ τὸ ποσόν, καὶ εἰς ἃ διαιρεῖται κεχωρισμένα, τάδε ἐστί, πρόλογος ἐπεισόδιον ἔξοδος χορικόν,

καὶ τοῦτου τὸ μὲν πάροδος τὸ δὲ στάσιμον, κοινὰ μὲν ἀπάντων ταῦτα,

ἴδια δὲ τὰ ἀπὸ τῆς σκηνῆς καὶ κόμμοι.

Ἔστι δὲ πρόλογος μὲν μέρος ὅλον τραγωδίας τὸ πρὸ χοροῦ παρόδου,

ἐπεισόδιον δὲ μέρος ὅλον τραγωδίας τὸ μεταξὺ ὅλων χορικῶν μελῶν,

ἔξοδος δὲ μέρος ὅλον τραγωδίας μεθ' ὃ οὐκ ἔστι χοροῦ μέλος,

χορικοῦ δὲ πάροδος μὲν ἢ πρώτη λέξις ὅλου χοροῦ,

στάσιμον δὲ μέλος χοροῦ τὸ ἄνευ ἀναπαίστου καὶ τροχαίου,

κόμμος δὲ θρῆνος κοινὸς χοροῦ καὶ ἀπὸ σκηνῆς.

Μέρη δὲ τραγωδίας, οἷς μὲν δεῖ χρῆσθαι, πρότερον εἵπαμεν, κατὰ δὲ τὸ ποσὸν καὶ εἰς ἃ διαιρεῖται κεχωρισμένα, ταῦτ' ἐστίν.

᾿Ων δὲ δεῖ στοχάζεσθαι καὶ ἃ δεῖ εὐλαβεῖσθαι συνιστάντας τοὺς μύθους, καὶ πόθεν ἔσται τὸ τῆς τραγωδίας ἔργον, ἐφεξῆς ἂν εἴη λεκτέον τοῖς νῦν εἰρημένοις.

Ἐπειδὴ οὖν δεῖ τὴν σύνθεσιν εἶναι τῆς καλλίστης τραγωδίας μὴ ἀπλὴν ἀλλὰ πεπλεγμένην, καὶ ταύτην φοβερῶν καὶ ἐλεεινῶν εἶναι μιμητικήν (τοῦτο γὰρ ἴδιον τῆς τοιαύτης μιμήσεώς ἐστιν), πρῶτον μὲν δῆλον ὅτι οὔτε τοὺς ἐπιεικεῖς ἄνδρας δεῖ μεταβάλλοντας φαίνεσθαι ἐξ εὐτυχίας εἰς δυστυχίαν (οὐ γὰρ φοβερὸν οὐδὲ ἐλεεινὸν τοῦτο, ἀλλὰ μιαιρόν ἐστιν)

οὔτε τοὺς μοχθηροὺς ἐξ ἀτυχίας εἰς εὐτυχίαν (ἀτραγωδότατον γὰρ τοῦτ' ἐστὶ πάντων· οὐδὲν γὰρ ἔχει ὧν δεῖ· οὔτε γὰρ φιλόανθρωπον οὔτε ἐλεεινὸν οὔτε φοβερόν ἐστιν),

οὐδ' αὖ τὸν σφόδρα πονηρὸν ἐξ εὐτυχίας εἰς δυστυχίαν μεταπίπτειν. Τὸ μὲν γὰρ φιλόανθρωπον ἔχοι ἂν ἡ τοιαύτη σύστασις, ἀλλ' οὔτε ἔλεον οὔτε φόβον· ὁ μὲν γὰρ περὶ τὸν ἀνάξιόν ἐστι δυστυχοῦντα, ὁ δὲ περὶ τὸν ὅμοιον, ἔλεος μὲν περὶ τὸν ἀνάξιον, φόβος δὲ περὶ τὸν ὅμοιον, ὥστε οὔτε ἐλεεινὸν οὔτε φοβερόν ἐσται τὸ συμβαῖνον.

Ὁ μεταξὺ ἄρα τούτων λοιπός. Ἔστι δὲ τοιοῦτος ὁ μήτε ἀρετῇ διαφέρων καὶ δικαιοσύνη, μήτε διὰ κακίαν καὶ μοχθηρίαν μεταβάλλων εἰς τὴν δυστυχίαν ἀλλὰ δι' ἁμαρτίαν τινά, τῶν ἐν μεγάλῃ δόξῃ ὄντων καὶ εὐτυχία, οἷον Οἰδίπους καὶ Θυέστης καὶ οἱ ἐκ τῶν τοιούτων γενῶν ἐπιφανεῖς ἄνδρες.

Ἀνάγκη ἄρα τὸν καλῶς ἔχοντα μῦθον ἀπλοῦν εἶναι μᾶλλον ἢ διπλοῦν, ὥσπερ τινὲς φασιν, καὶ μεταβάλλειν οὐκ εἰς εὐτυχίαν ἐκ δυστυχίας ἀλλὰ τοῦναντίον ἐξ εὐτυχίας εἰς δυστυχίαν, μὴ διὰ μοχθηρίαν ἀλλὰ δι' ἁμαρτίαν μεγάλην, ἣ οἷου εἴρηται, ἣ βελτίονος μᾶλλον ἢ χείρονος.

Σημεῖον δὲ καὶ τὸ γιγνόμενον· πρὸ τοῦ μὲν γὰρ οἱ ποιηταὶ τοὺς τυχόντας μύθους ἀπηρίθμουν, νῦν δὲ περὶ ὀλίγας οἰκίας αἱ κάλλιστα τραγωδαὶ συντίθενται, οἷον περὶ Ἀλκμαίωνα καὶ Οἰδίπουν καὶ Ὀρέστην καὶ Μελέαγρον καὶ Θυέστην καὶ Τήλεφον, καὶ ὅσοις ἄλλοις συμβέβηκεν ἡ παθεῖν δεινὰ ἢ ποιῆσαι.

Ἡ μὲν οὖν κατὰ τὴν τέχνην καλλίστη τραγωδία ἐκ ταύτης τῆς συστάσεώς ἐστιν.

Διὸ καὶ οἱ Εὐριπίδῃ ἐγκαλοῦντες τὸ αὐτὸ ἁμαρτάνουσιν, ὅτι τοῦτο δρᾷ ἐν ταῖς τραγωδαῖς καὶ πολλὰ αὐτοῦ εἰς δυστυχίαν τελευτῶσιν. Τοῦτο γὰρ ἐστιν, ὥσπερ εἴρηται, ὀρθόν.

Σημεῖον δὲ μέγιστον· ἐπὶ γὰρ τῶν σκηνῶν καὶ τῶν ἀγώνων τραγικώταται αἱ τοιαῦται φαίνονται, ἂν κατορθωθῶσιν, καὶ ὁ Εὐριπίδης, εἰ καὶ τὰ ἄλλα μὴ εὖ οἰκονομεῖ, ἀλλὰ τραγικώτατός γε τῶν ποιητῶν φαίνεται.

Δευτέρα δ' ἡ πρώτη λεγομένη ὑπὸ τινων ἐστὶ σύστασις, ἣ διπλὴν τε τὴν σύστασιν ἔχουσα, καθάπερ ἡ Ὀδύσσεια, καὶ τελευτῶσα ἐξ ἐναντίας τοῖς βελτίοσι καὶ χείροσιν.

Δοκεῖ δὲ εἶναι πρώτη διὰ τὴν τῶν θεάτρων ἀσθένειαν· ἀκολουθοῦσι γὰρ οἱ ποιηταὶ κατ' εὐχὴν ποιοῦντες τοῖς θεαταῖς.

Ἔστι δὲ οὐχ αὕτη ἀπὸ τραγωδίας ἡδονή, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον τῆς κωμωδίας οἰκεία· ἐκεῖ γάρ, ἂν οἱ ἔχθιστοι ὦσιν ἐν τῷ μύθῳ, οἷον Ὀρέστης καὶ Αἰγισθος, φίλοι γενόμενοι ἐπὶ τελευτῆς ἐξέρχονται, καὶ ἀποθνήσκει οὐδεὶς ὑπ' οὐδενός.

Ἔστι μὲν οὖν τὸ φοβερόν καὶ ἐλεεινὸν ἐκ τῆς ὀψεως γίνεσθαι, ἔστι δὲ καὶ ἐξ αὐτῆς τῆς συστάσεως τῶν πραγμάτων, ὅπερ ἐστὶ πρότερον καὶ ποιητοῦ ἀμείνωνος.

Δεῖ γὰρ καὶ ἄνευ τοῦ ὁρᾶν οὕτω συνεστάναι τὸν μῦθον ὥστε τὸν ἀκούοντα τὰ πράγματα γινόμενα καὶ φρίττειν καὶ ἐλεεῖν ἐκ τῶν συμβαινόντων· ἅπερ ἂν πάθοι τις ἀκούων τὸν τοῦ

Οιδίποδος μῦθον.

Τὸ δὲ διὰ τῆς ὄψεως τοῦτο παρασκευάζειν ἀτεχνότερον καὶ χορηγίας δεόμενόν ἐστιν.

Οἱ δὲ μὴ τὸ φοβερόν διὰ τῆς ὄψεως ἀλλὰ τὸ τερατῶδες μόνον παρασκευάζοντες οὐδὲν τραγωδία κοινωνοῦσιν· οὐ γὰρ πᾶσαν δεῖ ζητεῖν ἡδονὴν ἀπὸ τραγωδίας, ἀλλὰ τὴν οἰκείαν.

Ἐπεὶ δὲ τὴν ἀπὸ ἐλέου καὶ φόβου διὰ μιμήσεως δεῖ ἡδονὴν παρασκευάζειν τὸν ποιητὴν, φανερόν ὡς τοῦτο ἐν τοῖς πράγμασιν ἐμποιητέον.

Ποῖα οὖν δεινὰ ἢ ποῖα οἰκτρὰ φαίνεται τῶν συμπιπτόντων, λάβωμεν. Ἀνάγκη δὲ ἢ φίλων εἶναι πρὸς ἀλλήλους τὰς τοιαύτας πράξεις ἢ ἐχθρῶν ἢ μηδετέρων.

Ἄν μὲν οὖν ἐχθρὸς ἐχθρόν ἀποκτείνῃ, οὐδὲν ἐλεεινὸν οὔτε ποιῶν οὔτε μέλλον δείκνυσι, πλὴν κατ' αὐτὸ τὸ πάθος·

οὐδ' ἂν μηδετέρως ἔχοντες.

Ὅταν δ' ἐν ταῖς φιλαῖς ἐγγένηται τὰ πάθη, οἷον εἰ ἀδελφὸς ἀδελφὸν ἢ υἱὸς πατέρα ἢ μήτηρ υἱὸν ἢ υἱὸς μητέρα ἀποκτείνει ἢ μέλλει ἢ τι ἄλλο τοιοῦτον δρᾷ, ταῦτα ζητητέον.

Τοὺς μὲν οὖν παρελημμένους μύθους λύειν οὐκ ἔστιν, λέγω δὲ οἷον τὴν Κλυταιμνήστραν ἀποθανοῦσαν ὑπὸ τοῦ Ὀρέστου καὶ τὴν Ἐριφύλην ὑπὸ τοῦ Ἀλκμαίωνος·

αὐτὸν δὲ εὐρίσκειν δεῖ, καὶ τοῖς παραδεδομένοις χρῆσθαι καλῶς. Τὸ δὲ καλῶς τί λέγομεν, εἵπωμεν σαφέστερον.

Ἔστι μὲν γὰρ οὕτω γίνεσθαι τὴν πράξιν ὥσπερ οἱ παλαιοὶ ἐποιοῦν, εἰδότας καὶ γινώσκοντας, καθάπερ καὶ Εὐριπίδης ἐποίησεν ἀποκτείνουσιν τοὺς παῖδας τὴν Μήδειαν·

ἔστι δὲ πράξαι μὲν, ἀγνοοῦντας δὲ πράξαι τὸ δεινόν, εἴθ' ὕστερον ἀναγνωρίσαι τὴν φιλίαν, ὥσπερ ὁ Σοφοκλέους Οιδίπου. Τοῦτο μὲν οὖν ἔξω τοῦ δράματος, ἐν δ' αὐτῇ τῇ τραγωδίᾳ, οἷος ὁ Ἀλκμαίων ὁ Ἀστυδάμαντος ἢ ὁ Τηλέγονος ὁ ἐν τῷ τραυματίᾳ Ὀδυσσεῖ.

Ἔτι δὲ τρίτον παρὰ ταῦτα τὸν μέλλοντα ποιεῖν τι τῶν ἀνηκέστων δι' ἄγνοιαν ἀναγνωρίσαι πρὶν ποιῆσαι.

Καὶ παρὰ ταῦτα οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλως· ἢ γὰρ πράξαι ἀνάγκη ἢ μή, καὶ εἰδότας ἢ μὴ εἰδότας.

Τούτων δὲ τὸ μὲν γινώσκοντα μελλῆσαι καὶ μὴ πράξαι χεῖριστον· τό τε γὰρ μιὰν ἔχει, καὶ οὐ τραγικόν· ἀπαθὲς γάρ. Διόπερ οὐδεὶς ποιεῖ ὁμοίως, εἰ μὴ ὀλιγάκις, οἷος ἐν Ἀντιγόνη τὸν Κρέοντα ὁ Αἴμων.

Τὸ δὲ πράξαι δεύτερον.

Βέλτιον δὲ τὸ ἀγνοοῦντα μὲν πράξαι, πράξαντα δὲ ἀναγνωρίσαι· τό τε γὰρ μιὰν οὐ πρόσεστι, καὶ ἡ ἀναγνώρισις ἐκπληκτικόν.

Κράτιστον δὲ τὸ τελευταῖον, λέγω δὲ οἷον ἐν τῷ Κρεσφόντῃ ἢ Μερόπῃ μέλλει τὸν υἱὸν ἀποκτείνειν, ἀποκτείνει δὲ οὐ ἀλλ' ἀνεγνώρισεν, καὶ ἐν τῇ Ἰφιγενείᾳ ἡ ἀδελφὴ τὸν ἀδελφόν, καὶ ἐν τῇ Ἑλλῇ ὁ υἱὸς τὴν μητέρα ἐκδιδόναι μέλλον ἀνεγνώρισεν.

Διὰ γὰρ τοῦτο, ὅπερ πάλοι εἴρηται, οὐ περὶ πολλὰ γένη αἱ τραγωδίαί εἰσιν. Ζητοῦντες γὰρ οὐκ ἀπὸ τέχνης ἀλλ' ἀπὸ τύχης εὖρον τὸ τοιοῦτον παρασκευάζειν ἐν τοῖς μύθοις· ἀναγκάζονται οὖν ἐπὶ ταύτας τὰς οἰκίας ἀπαντᾶν, ὅσαις τὰ τοιαῦτα συμβέβηκε πάθη.

Περὶ μὲν οὖν τῆς τῶν πραγμάτων συστάσεως, καὶ ποίους τινὰς εἶναι δεῖ τοὺς μύθους, εἴρηται ἱκανῶς.

Περὶ δὲ τὰ ἥθη τέτταρά ἐστιν ὧν δεῖ στοχάζεσθαι, ἐν μὲν καὶ πρῶτον, ὅπως χρηστὰ ἦ.

Ἔξει δὲ ἥθος μὲν, ἐὰν ὥσπερ ἐλέχθη ποιῇ φανεράν ὁ λόγος ἢ ἡ πρᾶξις προαίρεσιν. τινα, φαῦλον μὲν ἐὰν φαῦλην, χρηστὸν δ' ἐὰν χρηστήν.

Ἔστι δὲ ἐν ἐκάστῳ γένει· καὶ γὰρ γυνή ἐστι χρηστή καὶ δοῦλος· καίτοι γε ἴσως τούτων τὸ μὲν χεῖρον, τὸ δὲ ὅλως φαῦλόν ἐστιν.

Δεύτερον δὲ τὰ ἀρμόττοντα· ἔστι γὰρ ἀνδρεῖον μὲν τὸ ἥθος, ἀλλ' οὐχ ἀρμόττον γυναικὶ τὸ ἀνδρείαν ἢ δεινὴν εἶναι.

Τρίτον δὲ τὸ ὁμοιον· τοῦτο γὰρ ἕτερον τοῦ χρηστὸν τὸ ἥθος καὶ ἀρμόττον ποιῆσαι, ὥσπερ εἴρηται.

Τέταρτον δὲ τὸ ὁμαλόν· κἂν γὰρ ἀνώμαλός τις ἦ ὁ τὴν μίμησιν παρέχων καὶ τοιοῦτον ἥθος ὑποτιθείς, ὅμως ὁμαλῶς ἀνώμαλον δεῖ εἶναι.

Ἔστι δὲ παράδειγμα πονηρίας μὲν ἥθους μὴ ἀναγκαῖον οἷον ὁ Μενέλαος ὁ ἐν τῷ Ὀρέστη,

τοῦ δὲ ἀπρεποῦς καὶ μὴ ἀρμόττοντος ὁ τε θρῆνος Ὀδυσσεύς ἐν τῇ Σκύλλῃ καὶ ἡ τῆς Μελανίππης ῥῆσις,

τοῦ δὲ ἀνωμάλου ἢ ἐν Αὐλίδι Ἰφιγένεια· οὐδὲν γὰρ ἔοικεν ἡ ἱκετεύουσα τῇ ὑστέρᾳ.

Χρὴ δὲ καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἡθεσιν, ὥσπερ καὶ ἐν τῇ τῶν πραγμάτων συστάσει, αἰεὶ ζητεῖν ἢ τὸ ἀναγκαῖον ἢ τὸ εἰκός, ὥστε τὸν τοιοῦτον τὰ τοιαῦτα λέγειν ἢ πράττειν ἢ ἀναγκαῖον ἢ εἰκός,

καὶ τοῦτο μετὰ τοῦτο γίνεσθαι ἢ ἀναγκαῖον ἢ εἰκός. Φανερόν οὖν ὅτι καὶ τὰς λύσεις τῶν μύθων ἐξ αὐτοῦ δεῖ τοῦ μύθου συμβαίνειν, καὶ μὴ ὥσπερ ἐν τῇ Μηδείᾳ ἀπὸ μηχανῆς καὶ ἐν τῇ Ἰλιάδι τὰ περὶ τὸν ἀπόπλου.

ἀλλὰ μηχανῇ χρηστέον ἐπὶ τὰ ἔξω τοῦ δράματος ἢ ὅσα πρὸ τοῦ γέγονεν, ἃ οὐχ οἷόν τε ἄνθρωπον εἰδέναι, ἢ ὅσα ὕστερον, ἃ δεῖται προαγορεύσεως καὶ ἀγγελίας· ἅπαντα γὰρ ἀποδίδομεν τοῖς θεοῖς ὁρᾶν.

Ἄλογον δὲ μὴδὲν εἶναι ἐν τοῖς πράγμασιν, εἰ δὲ μή, ἔξω τῆς τραγωδίας, οἷον τὰ ἐν τῷ Οἰδίποδι τῷ Σοφοκλέους.

Ἐπεὶ δὲ μίμησίς ἐστιν ἡ τραγωδία βελτιόνων, ἡμᾶς δεῖ μιμεῖσθαι τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς εἰκονογράφους· καὶ γὰρ ἐκεῖνοι ἀποδιδόντες τὴν ἰδίαν μορφήν, ὁμοίους ποιοῦντες, καλλίους γράφουσιν. Οὕτω καὶ τὸν ποιητὴν μιμούμενον καὶ ὀργίλους καὶ ῥαθύμους καὶ τᾶλλα τὰ τοιαῦτα ἔχοντας ἐπὶ τῶν ἡθῶν, ἐπιεικείας ποιεῖν παράδειγμα ἢ σκληρότητος δεῖ, οἷον τὸν Ἀχιλλεῖα Ἀγάθων καὶ Ὀμηρος.

Ταῦτα δὲ δεῖ διατηρεῖν, καὶ πρὸς τούτοις τὰ παρὰ τὰς ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἀκολουθούσας αἰσθήσεις τῇ ποιητικῇ· καὶ γὰρ κατ' αὐτὰς ἔστιν ἀμαρτάνειν πολλάκις. Εἴρηται δὲ περὶ αὐτῶν ἐν τοῖς ἐκδεδομένοις λόγοις ἱκανῶς.

Ἀναγνώρισις δὲ τί μὲν ἐστιν, εἴρηται πρότερον· εἶδη δὲ ἀναγνωρίσεως, πρώτη μὲν ἡ ἀτεχνοτάτη, καὶ ἥ πλεῖστοι χρῶνται δι' ἀπορίαν, ἡ διὰ τῶν σημείων.

Τούτων δὲ τὰ μὲν σύμφυτα, οἷον

λόγχην ἣν φοροῦσι Γηγενεῖς

ἢ ἀστέρας οἶους ἐν τῷ Θυέστη Καρκίνος, τὰ δὲ ἐπικτήτα, καὶ τούτων τὰ μὲν ἐν τῷ σώματι, οἷον οὐλαί, τὰ δὲ ἐκτός, τὰ περιδέραια, καὶ οἷον ἐν τῇ Τυροῖ διὰ τῆς σκάφης.

Ἔστι δὲ καὶ τούτοις χρῆσθαι ἢ βέλτιον ἢ χεῖρον, οἷον Ὀδυσσεὺς διὰ τῆς οὐλῆς ἄλλως

ἀνεγνωρίσθη ὑπὸ τῆς τροφοῦ καὶ ἄλλως ὑπὸ τῶν συβοτῶν·

εἰσὶ γὰρ αἱ μὲν πίστεως ἔνεκα ἀτεχνότεραι, καὶ αἱ τοιαῦται πᾶσαι, αἱ δὲ ἐκ περιπετείας, ὥσπερ ἡ ἐν τοῖς Νίπτροις, βελτίους.

Δεύτεραι δὲ αἱ πεποιημέναι ὑπὸ τοῦ ποιητοῦ, διὸ ἀτεχνοὶ· οἷον Ὀρέστης ἐν τῇ Ἰφιγενείᾳ ἀνεγνώρισε τὴν ἀδελφήν, ἀναγνωρισθεὶς ὑπ' ἐκείνης· ἐκείνη μὲν γὰρ διὰ τῆς ἐπιστολῆς, ἐκεῖνος δὲ διὰ σημείων.

Ταῦτα οὖν αὐτὸς λέγει ἃ βούλεται ὁ ποιητής, ἀλλ' οὐχ ὁ μῦθος. Διὸ ἐγγὺς τῆς εἰρημένης ἀμαρτίας ἐστίν· ἐξῆν γὰρ ἂν ἔνια καὶ ἐνεγκεῖν. Καὶ ἐν τῷ Σοφοκλέους Τηρεῖ ἡ τῆς κερκίδος φωνή.

Τρίτη δὲ ἡ διὰ μνήμης, τῷ αἰσθέσθαι τι ἰδόντα, ὥσπερ ἡ ἐν Κυπρίοις τοῖς Δικαιογένους, ἰδὼν γὰρ τὴν γραφὴν ἔκλαυσεν, καὶ ἡ ἐν Ἀλκίνου ἀπολόγῳ, ἀκούων γὰρ τοῦ κιθαριστοῦ καὶ μνησθεὶς ἐδάκρυσεν· ὅθεν ἀνεγνωρίσθησαν.

Τετάρτη δὲ ἡ ἐκ συλλογισμοῦ, οἷον ἐν Χοηφόροις, ὅτι ὁμοίος τις ἐλήλυθεν, ὁμοῖος δὲ οὐθεὶς ἀλλ' ἢ Ὀρέστης· οὗτος ἄρα ἐλήλυθεν. Καὶ ἡ Πολυεΐδου τοῦ σοφιστοῦ περὶ τῆς Ἰφιγενείας· εἰκὸς γὰρ τὸν Ὀρέστην συλλογίσασθαι ὅτι ἢ τ' ἀδελφὴ ἐτύθη καὶ αὐτῷ συμβαίνει θύεσθαι. Καὶ ἡ ἐν τῷ τοῦ Θεοδέκτου Τυδεΐ, ὅτι ἐλθὼν ὡς εὐρήσων υἱὸν αὐτὸς ἀπόλλυται. Καὶ ἡ ἐν τοῖς Φινεΐδαῖς· ἰδοῦσαι γὰρ τὸν τόπον συνελογίσαντο τὴν εἰμαρμένην, ὅτι ἐν τούτῳ εἴμαρτο ἀποθανεῖν αὐταῖς· καὶ γὰρ ἐξετέθησαν ἐνταῦθα.

Ἔστι δὲ τις καὶ συνθετὴ ἐκ παραλογισμοῦ τοῦ θεάτρου, οἷον ἐν τῷ Ὀδυσσεῖ τῷ ψευδαγγέλῳ· τὸ μὲν γὰρ τόξον ἔφη γνώσεσθαι ὃ οὐχ ἑωράκει, ὃ δέ, ὡς δι' ἐκείνου ἀναγνωριούντος, διὰ τούτου ἐποίησε παραλογισμόν.

Πασῶν δὲ βελτίστη ἀναγνώρισις ἡ ἐξ αὐτῶν τῶν πραγμάτων, τῆς ἐκπλήξεως γιγνομένης δι' εἰκότων, οἷον ἡ ἐν τῷ Σοφοκλέους Οἰδίποδι καὶ τῇ Ἰφιγενείᾳ· εἰκὸς γὰρ βούλεσθαι ἐπιθεῖναι γράμματα. Αἱ γὰρ τοιαῦται μόναι ἄνευ τῶν πεποιημένων σημείων καὶ περιδεραίων.

Δεύτεραι δὲ αἱ ἐκ συλλογισμοῦ.

Δεῖ δὲ τοὺς μύθους συνιστάναι καὶ τῇ λέξει συναπεργάζεσθαι ὅτι μάλιστα πρὸ ὁμμάτων τιθέμενον· οὕτω γὰρ ἂν ἐναργέστατα ὀρῶν, ὥσπερ παρ' αὐτοῖς γιγνόμενος τοῖς πραττομένοις, εὐρίσκοι τὸ πρέπον, καὶ ἥκιστ' ἂν λανθάνοιτο τὰ ὑπεναντία.

Σημεῖον δὲ τούτου ὃ ἐπετιμᾶτο Καρκίνῳ· ὁ γὰρ Ἀμφιάραος ἐξ ἱεροῦ ἀνῆει, ὃ μὴ ὀρῶντα τὸν θεατὴν ἐλάνθανεν, ἐπὶ δὲ τῆς σκηνῆς ἐξέπεσε, δυσχερανάντων τοῦτο τῶν θεατῶν.

Ὅσα δὲ δυνατόν, καὶ τοῖς σχήμασι συναπεργαζόμενον. Πιθανώτατοι γὰρ ἀπὸ τῆς αὐτῆς φύσεως οἱ ἐν τοῖς πάθεσιν εἰσι, καὶ χειμαίνει ὁ χειμαζόμενος καὶ χαλεπαίνει ὁ ὀργιζόμενος ἀληθινώτατα.

Διὸ εὐφυοῦς ἡ ποιητικὴ ἐστίν ἢ μανικοῦ· τούτων γὰρ οἱ μὲν εὐπλαστοὶ οἱ δὲ ἐξεταστικοὶ εἰσιν.

Τοὺς τε λόγους τοὺς πεποιημένους δεῖ καὶ αὐτὸν ποιοῦντα ἐκτίθεσθαι καθόλου, εἴθ' οὕτως ἐπεισοδιοῦν καὶ παρατείνειν.

Λέγω δὲ οὕτως ἂν θεωρεῖσθαι τὸ καθόλου, οἷον τῆς Ἰφιγενείας. Τυθείσης τινὸς κόρης καὶ ἀφανισθείσης ἀδήλως τοῖς θύσασιν, ἰδρυνθείσης δὲ εἰς ἄλλην χώραν, ἐν ἣ νόμος ἦν τοὺς ξένους θύειν τῇ θεῷ, ταύτην ἔσχε τὴν ἱερωσύνην. Χρόνῳ δ' ὕστερον τῷ ἀδελφῷ συνέβη ἐλθεῖν τῆς ἱερείας. Τὸ δὲ ὅτι ἀνείλθεν ὁ θεὸς διὰ τιν' αἰτίαν ἔξω τοῦ καθόλου ἐλθεῖν ἐκεῖ, καὶ ἐφ' ὃ τι δέ, ἔξω τοῦ μύθου. Ἐλθὼν δὲ καὶ ληφθεὶς θύεσθαι μέλλων ἀνεγνώρισεν, εἴθ' ὡς Εὐριπίδης εἴθ' ὡς

Πολύειδος ἐποίησεν, κατὰ τὸ εἰκὸς εἰπὼν ὅτι οὐκ ἄρα μόνον τὴν ἀδελφὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτὸν ἔδει τυθῆναι· καὶ ἐντεῦθεν ἡ σωτηρία.

Μετὰ ταῦτα δὲ ἤδη ὑποθέντα τὰ ὀνόματα ἐπεισοδιοῦν,

ὅπως δὲ ἔσται οἰκεῖα τὰ ἐπεισόδια σκοπεῖν, οἷον ἐν τῷ Ὅρέστη ἡ μανία δι' ἧς ἐλήφθη, καὶ ἡ σωτηρία διὰ τῆς καθάρσεως.

Ἐν μὲν οὖν τοῖς δράμασι τὰ ἐπεισόδια σύντομα, ἡ δ' ἐποποιία τούτοις μηκύνεται.

Τῆς γὰρ Ὀδυσσεΐας μακρὸς ὁ λόγος ἐστίν, ἀποδημοῦντός τινος ἔτη πολλὰ καὶ παραφυλαττομένου ὑπὸ τοῦ Ποσειδῶνος καὶ μόνου ὄντος, ἔτι δὲ τῶν οἴκοι οὕτως ἐχόντων ὥστε τὰ χρήματα ὑπὸ μνηστήρων ἀναλίσκεσθαι καὶ τὸν υἱὸν ἐπιβουλεύεσθαι· αὐτὸς δὲ ἀφικνεῖται χειμασθείς, καὶ ἀναγνωρίσας τινὰς αὐτοῖς ἐπιθέμενος αὐτὸς μὲν ἐσώθη, τοὺς δ' ἐχθροὺς διέφθειρεν.

Τὸ μὲν οὖν ἴδιον τοῦτο, τὰ δ' ἄλλα ἐπεισόδια.

Ἔστι δὲ πάσης τραγωδίας τὸ μὲν δέσις τὸ δὲ λύσις, τὰ μὲν ἔξωθεν καὶ ἔνια τῶν ἔσωθεν πολλάκις ἡ δέσις, τὸ δὲ λοιπὸν ἡ λύσις.

Λέγω δὲ δέσιν μὲν εἶναι τὴν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς μέχρι τούτου τοῦ μέρους ὃ ἔσχατόν ἐστιν, ἐξ οὗ μεταβαίνει εἰς εὐτυχίαν, λύσιν δὲ τὴν ἀπὸ τῆς ἀρχῆς τῆς μεταβάσεως μέχρι τέλους,

ὥσπερ ἐν τῷ Λυγκεῖ τῷ Θεοδέκτου δέσις μὲν τὰ τε προπεπραγμένα καὶ ἡ τοῦ παιδίου λῆψις, λύσις δ' ἡ ἀπὸ τῆς αἰτιάσεως τοῦ θανάτου μέχρι τοῦ τέλους.

Τραγωδίας δὲ εἶδη εἰσὶ τέσσαρα· τοσαῦτα γὰρ καὶ τὰ μέρη ἐλέχθη.

Ἡ μὲν πεπλεγμένη, ἥς τὸ ὅλον ἐστὶ περιπέτεια καὶ ἀναγνώρισις·

ἡ δὲ παθητική, οἷον οἱ τε Αἴαντες καὶ οἱ Ἰξίονες·

ἡ δὲ ἠθική, οἷον αἱ Φθιώτιδες καὶ ὁ Πηλεΰς·

τὸ δὲ τέταρτον, οἷον αἱ τε Φορκίδες καὶ Προμηθεὺς καὶ ὅσα ἐν ᾄδου.

Μάλιστα μὲν οὖν ἅπαντα δεῖ πειρᾶσθαι ἔχειν, εἰ δὲ μή, τὰ μέγιστα καὶ πλεῖστα, ἄλλως τε καὶ ὡς νῦν συκοφαντοῦσι τοὺς ποιητάς· γεγονότων γὰρ καθ' ἕκαστον μέρος ἀγαθῶν ποιητῶν, ἕκαστον τοῦ ἰδίου ἀγαθοῦ ἀξιοῦσι τὸν ἕνα ὑπερβάλλειν.

Δίκαιον δὲ καὶ τραγωδίαν ἄλλην καὶ τὴν αὐτὴν λέγειν οὐδὲν ἴσως τῷ μύθῳ. Τοῦτο δέ, ὣν ἡ αὐτὴ πλοκὴ καὶ λύσις.

Πολλοὶ δὲ πλέξαντες εὖ λύουσι κακῶς·

δεῖ δὲ ἄμφω ἀεὶ κροτεῖσθαι.

Χρὴ δέ, ὅπερ εἴρηται πολλάκις, μεμνηθῆναι καὶ μὴ ποιεῖν ἐποποιικὸν σύστημα τραγωδίας. Ἐποποιικὸν δὲ λέγω τὸ πολὺμυθον, οἷον εἴ τις τὸν τῆς Ἰλιάδος ὅλον ποιοῖ μῦθον.

Ἐκεῖ μὲν γὰρ διὰ τὸ μῆκος λαμβάνει τὰ μέρη τὸ πρέπον μέγεθος, ἐν δὲ τοῖς δράμασι πολὺ παρὰ τὴν ὑπόληψιν ἀποβαίνει.

Σημεῖον δέ, ὅσοι πέρσιν Ἰλίου ὅλην ἐποίησαν καὶ μὴ κατὰ μέρος, ὥσπερ Εὐριπίδης Νιόβην, καὶ μὴ ὥσπερ Αἰσχύλος, ἢ ἐκπίπτουσιν ἢ κακῶς ἀγωνίζονται, ἐπεὶ καὶ Ἀγάθων ἐξέπεσεν ἐν τούτῳ μόνῳ.

Ἐν δὲ ταῖς περιπετείαις καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἀπλοῖς πράγμασι στοχάζονται ὥν βούλονται θαυμαστῶς·

τραγικὸν γὰρ τοῦτο καὶ φιλάνθρωπον.

Ἔστι δὲ τοῦτο, ὅταν ὁ σοφὸς μὲν μετὰ πονηρίας δὲ ἐξαπατηθῇ, ὥσπερ Σίσυφος, καὶ ὁ ἀνδρεῖος μὲν ἄδικος δὲ ἡττηθῇ.

Ἔστι δὲ τοῦτο εἰκὸς, ὥσπερ Ἀγάθων λέγει· εἰκὸς γὰρ γίνεσθαι πολλὰ καὶ παρὰ τὸ εἰκὸς.

Καὶ τὸν χορὸν δὲ ἓνα δεῖ ὑπολαβεῖν τῶν ὑποκριτῶν, καὶ μόνιον εἶναι τοῦ ὅλου, καὶ συναγωνίζεσθαι μὴ ὥσπερ παρ' Εὐριπίδῃ ἀλλ' ὥσπερ παρὰ Σοφοκλεῖ.

Τοῖς δὲ λοιποῖς τὰ διδόμενα μᾶλλον τοῦ μύθου ἢ ἄλλης τραγωδίας ἐστίν· διὸ ἐμβόλιμα ἄδουσιν, πρῶτου ἄρξαντος Ἀγάθωνος τοῦ τοιούτου. Καίτοι τί διαφέρει ἢ ἐμβόλιμα ἄδειν ἢ ῥῆσιν ἐξ ἄλλου εἰς ἄλλο ἀρμόττειν ἢ ἐπεισόδιον ὅλον;

Περὶ μὲν οὖν τῶν ἄλλων ἤδη εἴρηται, λοιπὸν δὲ περὶ λέξεως ἢ διανοίας εἰπεῖν.

Τὰ μὲν οὖν περὶ τὴν διάνοιαν ἐν τοῖς περὶ ῥητορικῆς κείσθω· τοῦτο γὰρ ἴδιον μᾶλλον ἐκείνης τῆς μεθόδου.

Ἔστι δὲ κατὰ τὴν διάνοιαν ταῦτα, ὅσα ὑπὸ τοῦ λόγου δεῖ παρασκευασθῆναι.

Μέρη δὲ τούτων τό τε ἀποδεικνύειν καὶ τὸ λύειν καὶ τὸ πάθη παρασκευάζειν, οἷον ἔλεον ἢ φόβον ἢ ὀργὴν καὶ ὅσα τοιαῦτα, καὶ ἔτι μέγεθος καὶ μικρότητα.

Δῆλον δὲ ὅτι καὶ ἐν τοῖς πράγμασιν ἀπὸ τῶν αὐτῶν ἰδεῶν δεῖ χρῆσθαι, ὅταν ἢ ἐλεεινὰ ἢ δεινὰ ἢ μέγала ἢ εἰκότα δέῃ παρασκευάζειν.

Πλὴν τοσοῦτον διαφέρει, ὅτι τὰ μὲν δεῖ φαίνεσθαι ἄνευ διδασκαλίας, τὰ δὲ ἐν τῷ λόγῳ ὑπὸ τοῦ λέγοντος παρασκευάζεσθαι καὶ παρὰ τὸν λόγον γίνεσθαι. Τί γὰρ ἂν εἴη τοῦ λέγοντος ἔργον, εἰ φανοῖτο ἡδέα καὶ μὴ διὰ τὸν λόγον;

Τῶν δὲ περὶ τὴν λέξιν ἐν μὲν ἐστὶν εἶδος θεωρίας τὰ σχήματα τῆς λέξεως, ἃ ἐστὶν εἰδέναι τῆς ὑποκριτικῆς καὶ τοῦ τὴν τοιαύτην ἔχοντος ἀρχιτεκτονικῆν, οἷον τί ἐντολὴ καὶ τί εὐχὴ καὶ διήγησις καὶ ἀπειλὴ καὶ ἐρώτησις καὶ ἀπόκρισις, καὶ εἴ τι ἄλλο τοιούτον.

Παρὰ γὰρ τὴν τούτων γνώσιν ἢ ἄνοιαν οὐδὲν εἰς τὴν ποιητικὴν ἐπιτίμημα φέρεται, ὃ τι καὶ ἄξιον σπουδῆς. Τί γὰρ ἂν τις ὑπολάβοι ἡμαρτησθαι ἃ Πρωταγόρας ἐπιτιμᾷ, Ὅτι εὐχεσθαι οἰόμενος ἐπιτάττει εἰπὼν

Μῆνιν ἄειδε θεά;

Τὸ γὰρ κελεῦσαι, φησί, ποιεῖν τι ἢ μὴ ἐπίταξις ἐστίν.

Διὸ παρείσθω ὡς ἄλλης καὶ οὐ τῆς ποιητικῆς ὄν θεώρημα.

Τῆς δὲ λέξεως ἀπάσης τάδ' ἐστὶ τὰ μέρη, στοιχεῖον, συλλαβή, σύνδεσμος, ὄνομα, ῥῆμα, ἄρθρον, πτώσις, λόγος.

Στοιχεῖον μὲν οὖν ἐστὶ φωνὴ ἀδιαίρετος, οὐ πᾶσα δέ, ἀλλ' ἐξ ἧς πέφυκε συνετὴ γίνεσθαι φωνή· καὶ γὰρ τῶν θηρίων εἰσὶν ἀδιαίρετοι φωναί, ὧν οὐδεμίαν λέγω στοιχεῖον.

Ταύτης δὲ μέρη τό τε φωνῆεν καὶ τὸ ἡμίφωνον καὶ ἄφωνον. Ἔστι δὲ φωνῆεν μὲν ἄνευ προσβολῆς ἔχον φωνὴν ἀκουστήν, οἷον τὸ Α καὶ τὸ Ω, ἡμίφωνον δὲ τὸ μετὰ προσβολῆς ἔχον φωνὴν ἀκουστήν, οἷον τὸ Σ καὶ τὸ Ρ, ἄφωνον δὲ τὸ μετὰ προσβολῆς καθ' αὐτὸ μὲν οὐδεμίαν ἔχον φωνήν, μετὰ δὲ τῶν ἐχόντων τινὰ φωνὴν γινόμενον ἀκουστόν, οἷον τὸ Γ καὶ τὸ Δ.

Ταῦτα δὲ διαφέρει σχήμασί τε τοῦ στόματος καὶ τόποις καὶ δασύτητι καὶ ψιλότητι καὶ μήκει καὶ βραχύτητι, ἔτι δὲ ὀξύτητι καὶ βαρύτητι καὶ τῷ μέσῳ· περὶ ὧν καθ' ἕκαστον ἐν τοῖς μετρικοῖς

προσῆκει θεωρεῖν.

Συλλαβὴ δ' ἐστὶ φωνὴ ἄσημος, συνθετὴ ἐξ ἀφώνου καὶ φωνῆν ἔχοντος· καὶ γὰρ τὸ ΓΡ ἄνευ τοῦ Α συλλαβή, καὶ μετὰ τοῦ Α, οἷον τὸ ΓΡΑ. Ἀλλὰ καὶ τούτων θεωρῆσαι τὰς διαφορὰς τῆς μετρικῆς ἐστίν.

Σύνδεσμος δ' ἐστὶ φωνὴ ἄσημος, ἥ οὔτε κωλύει οὔτε ποιεῖ φωνῆν μίαν σημαντικὴν, ἐκ πλειόνων φωνῶν πεφυκυῖαν συντίθεσθαι, καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἄκρων καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ μέσου, ἢν μὴ ἀρμόττει ἐν ἀρχῇ λόγου τιθέναι καθ' αὐτόν, οἷον μὲν, ἦτοι, δῆ. Ἡ φωνὴ ἄσημος ἐκ πλειόνων μὲν φωνῶν μιᾶς, σημαντικῶν δέ, ποιεῖν πεφυκυῖα μίαν σημαντικὴν φωνήν.

Ἄρθρον δ' ἐστὶ φωνὴ ἄσημος, ἥ λόγου ἀρχὴν ἢ τέλος ἢ διορισμὸν δηλοῖ, οἷον τὸ φημί καὶ τὸ περί καὶ τὰ ἄλλα. Ἡ φωνὴ ἄσημος, ἥ οὔτε κωλύει οὔτε ποιεῖ φωνῆν μίαν σημαντικὴν ἐκ πλειόνων φωνῶν, πεφυκυῖα τίθεσθαι καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἄκρων καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ μέσου.

Ὄνομα δ' ἐστὶ φωνὴ συνθετὴ, σημαντικὴ ἄνευ χρόνου, ἥς μέρος οὐδέν ἐστι καθ' αὐτὸ σημαντικόν· ἐν γὰρ τοῖς διπλοῖς οὐ χρώμεθα, ὥς καὶ αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτὸ σημαῖνον, οἷον ἐν τῷ Θεοδώρῳ τὸ δῶρον οὐ σημαίνει.

Ῥῆμα δὲ φωνὴ συνθετὴ, σημαντικὴ μετὰ χρόνου, ἥς οὐδέν μέρος σημαίνει καθ' αὐτό, ὥσπερ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ὀνομάτων· τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἄνθρωπος ἢ λευκὸν οὐ σημαίνει τὸ πότε, τὸ δὲ βαδίζει ἢ βεβάδικε προσσημαίνει τὸ μὲν τὸν παρόντα χρόνον τὸ δὲ τὸν παρεληλυθότα.

Πτώσις δ' ἐστὶν ὀνόματος ἢ ῥήματος ἢ μὲν τὸ κατὰ τούτου ἢ τούτῳ σημαίνουσα καὶ ὅσα τοιαῦτα, ἢ δὲ τὸ κατὰ τὸ ἐνὶ ἢ πολλοῖς, οἷον ἄνθρωποι ἢ ἄνθρωπος, ἢ δὲ κατὰ τὰ ὑποκριτικά, οἷον κατ' ἐρώτησιν ἢ ἐπίταξιν· τὸ γὰρ ἐβάδισεν ἢ βάδιζε πτώσις ῥήματος κατὰ ταῦτα τὰ εἶδη ἐστίν.

Λόγος δὲ φωνὴ συνθετὴ σημαντικὴ, ἥς ἔνια μέρη καθ' αὐτὰ σημαίνει τι·

οὐ γὰρ ἅπας λόγος ἐκ ῥημάτων καὶ ὀνομάτων σύγκειται, οἷον ὁ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὀρισμός, ἀλλ' ἐνδέχεται ἄνευ ῥημάτων εἶναι λόγον. Μέρος μέντοι ἀεὶ τι σημαῖνον ἔξει, οἷον ἐν τῷ βαδίζει Κλέων ὁ Κλέων.

Εἷς δ' ἐστὶ λόγος διχῶς· ἢ γὰρ ὁ ἐν σημαίνων, ἢ ὁ ἐκ πλειόνων συνδέσμων, οἷον ἡ Ἰλιάς μὲν συνδέσμῳ εἷς, ὁ δὲ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τῷ ἐν σημαίνειν.

Ὀνόματος δὲ εἶδη τὸ μὲν ἀπλοῦν (ἀπλοῦν δὲ λέγω ὃ μὴ ἐκ σημαινόντων σύγκειται, οἷον γῆ) τὸ δὲ διπλοῦν·

τούτου δὲ τὸ μὲν ἐκ σημαίνοντος καὶ ἀσήμου, τὸ δὲ ἐκ σημαινόντων σύγκειται.

Εἷη δ' ἂν καὶ τριπλοῦν καὶ τετραπλοῦν καὶ πολλαπλοῦν ὄνομα, οἷον τὰ πολλὰ τῶν Μεγαλιωτῶν Ἑρμοκαϊκόξανθος.

Ἄπαν δὲ ὄνομα ἐστὶν ἢ κύριον ἢ γλῶττα ἢ μεταφορὰ ἢ κόσμος ἢ πεποιημένον ἢ ἐπεκτεταμένον ἢ ὑψηρημένον ἢ ἐξηλλαγμένον.

Λέγω δὲ κύριον μὲν ὃ χρῶνται ἕκαστοι,

γλῶτταν δὲ ὃ ἕτεροι, ὥστε φανερόν ὅτι καὶ γλῶτταν καὶ κύριον εἶναι δυνατόν τὸ αὐτό, μὴ τοῖς αὐτοῖς δέ· τὸ γὰρ σίγυνον Κυπρίοις μὲν κύριον, ἡμῖν δὲ γλῶττα.

Μεταφορὰ δ' ἐστὶν ὀνόματος ἀλλοτρίου ἐπιφορὰ ἢ ἀπὸ τοῦ γένους ἐπὶ εἶδος, ἢ ἀπὸ τοῦ εἶδους ἐπὶ γένος, ἢ ἀπὸ τοῦ εἶδους ἐπὶ εἶδος, ἢ κατὰ τὸ ἀνάλογον.

Λέγω δὲ ἀπὸ γένους μὲν ἐπὶ εἶδος, οἶον

Νηϋς δέ μοι ἦδ' ἔστηκε·

τὸ γὰρ ὀρμεῖν ἐστὶν ἐστάναι τι. Ἀπ' εἶδους δὲ ἐπὶ γένος·

Ἡ δὲ μυρί' Ὀδυσσεὺς ἐσθλὰ ἔοργεν·

τὸ γὰρ μυρίον πολὺ ἐστίν, ὥ νῦν ἀντὶ τοῦ πολλοῦ κέχρηται.

Ἀπ' εἶδους δὲ ἐπὶ εἶδος, οἶον

χαλκῷ ἀπὸ ψυχὴν ἀρύσας

καὶ τεμὼν ἀτειρέϊ χαλκῷ· ἐνταῦθα γὰρ τὸ μὲν ἀρύσαι ταμεῖν, τὸ δὲ ταμεῖν ἀρύσαι εἴρηκεν· ἄμφω γὰρ ἀφελεῖν τι ἐστίν.

Τὸ δὲ ἀνάλογον λέγω, ὅταν ὁμοίως ἔχη τὸ δεύτερον πρὸς τὸ πρῶτον καὶ τὸ τέταρτον πρὸς τὸ τρίτον· ἐρεῖ γὰρ ἀντὶ τοῦ δευτέρου τὸ τέταρτον ἢ ἀντὶ τοῦ τετάρτου τὸ δεύτερον.

Καὶ ἐνίοτε προστιθέασιν ἀνθ' οὗ λέγει πρὸς ὃ ἐστίν. Λέγω δὲ οἶον ὁμοίως ἔχει φιάλη πρὸς Διόνυσον καὶ ἀσπίς πρὸς Ἄρην· ἐρεῖ τοίνυν τὴν φιάλην ἀσπίδα Διονύσου καὶ τὴν ἀσπίδα φιάλην Ἄρεως.

Ἡ ὁ γῆρας πρὸς βίον, καὶ ἐσπέρα πρὸς ἡμέραν· ἐρεῖ τοίνυν τὴν ἐσπέραν γῆρας ἡμέρας καὶ τὸ γῆρας ἐσπέραν βίου ἢ ὥσπερ Ἐμπεδοκλῆς δυσμὰς βίου.

Ἐνίοις δ' οὐκ ἔστιν ὄνομα κείμενον τὸ ἀνάλογον, ἀλλ' οὐδὲν ἦττον ὁμοίως λεχθήσεται· οἶον τὸ τὸν καρπὸν μὲν ἀφιέναι σπείρειν, τὸ δὲ τὴν φλόγα ἀπὸ τοῦ ἡλίου ἀνώνυμον· ἀλλ' ὁμοίως ἔχει τοῦτο πρὸς τὸν ἥλιον καὶ τὸ σπείρειν πρὸς τὸν καρπὸν, διὸ εἴρηται

σπείρων θεοκτίσταν φλόγα.

Ἔστι δὲ τῷ τρόπῳ τούτῳ τῆς μεταφορᾶς χρῆσθαι καὶ ἄλλως, προσαγορεύσαντα τὸ ἀλλότριον ἀποφῆσαι τῶν οἰκείων τι,

οἶον εἰ τὴν ἀσπίδα εἴποι φιάλην μὴ Ἄρεως ἀλλ' οἴνου.

Πεποιημένον δ' ἐστὶν ὃ ὅλως μὴ καλούμενον ὑπὸ τινων αὐτὸς τίθεται ὁ ποιητής· δοκεῖ γὰρ ἔνια εἶναι τοιαῦτα, οἶον τὰ κέρατα ἐρνύγας καὶ τὸν ἱερέα ἀρητῆρα.

Ἐπεκτεταμένον δ' ἐστὶν ἢ ἀφηρημένον τὸ μὲν, ἐὰν φωνήεντι μακροτέρῳ κεχρημένον ἢ τοῦ οἰκείου ἢ συλλαβῇ ἐμβεβλημένη, τὸ δ' ἐὰν ἀφηρημένον τι ἢ αὐτοῦ,

ἐπεκτεταμένον μὲν οἶον τὸ πόλεως πόληος καὶ τὸ Πηλείδου Πηληϊάδεω, ἀφηρημένον δὲ οἶον τὸ κρῖ καὶ τὸ δῶ καὶ

μία γίνεται ἀμφοτέρων ὄψ.

Ἐξηλλαγμένον δ' ἐστίν, ὅταν τοῦ ὀνομαζομένου τὸ μὲν καταλείπη τὸ δὲ ποιῇ, οἶον τὸ

δεξιτερὸν κατὰ μαζόν

ἀντὶ τοῦ δεξιόν.

Αὐτῶν δὲ τῶν ὀνομάτων τὰ μὲν ἄρρενα τὰ δὲ θήλεα τὰ δὲ μεταξύ,

ἄρρενα μὲν ὅσα τελευτᾷ εἰς τὸ Ν καὶ Ρ, καὶ ὅσα ἐκ τούτου (ταῦτα δ' ἐστὶ δῦο, Ψ καὶ Ξ), θήλεα δὲ ὅσα ἐκ τῶν φωνηέντων εἰς τε τὰ ἀεὶ μακρά,

οἶον εἰς Η καὶ Ω, καὶ τῶν ἐπεκτεινομένων εἰς Α·

ὥστε ἴσα συμβαίνει πλήθει εἰς ὅσα τὰ ἄρρενα καὶ τὰ θήλεα· τὸ γὰρ Ψ καὶ τὸ Ξ ταῦτά ἐστιν.

Εἰς δὲ ἄφωνον οὐδὲν ὄνομα τελευτᾷ, οὐδὲ εἰς φωνῆεν βραχύ.

Εἰς δὲ τὸ Ι τρία μόνα, μέλι κόμμι πέπερι. Εἰς δὲ τὸ Υ πέντε, τὸ πῶϋ, τὸ νᾶπυ, τὸ γόνυ, τὸ δόρυ, τὸ ἄστυ. Τὰ δὲ μεταξὺ εἰς ταῦτα καὶ Ν καὶ Σ.

Λέξεως δὲ ἀρετὴ σαφὴ καὶ μὴ ταπεινὴν εἶναι.

Σαφεστάτη μὲν οὖν ἐστὶν ἢ ἐκ τῶν κυρίων ὀνομάτων, ἀλλὰ ταπεινὴ· παράδειγμα δὲ ἡ Κλεοφῶντος ποιήσις καὶ ἡ Σθενέλου.

Σεμνὴ δὲ καὶ ἐξαλλάττουσα τὸ ιδιωτικὸν ἢ τοῖς ξενικοῖς κεχρημένη. Ξενικὸν δὲ λέγω γλῶτταν καὶ μεταφορὰν καὶ ἐπέκτασιν καὶ πᾶν τὸ παρὰ τὸ κύριον.

Ἄλλ' ἂν τις ἅπαντα τοιαῦτα ποιήσῃ, ἢ αἰνίγμα ἔσται ἢ βαρβαρισμός. Ἄν μὲν οὖν ἐκ μεταφορῶν, αἰνίγμα, ἐὰν δὲ ἐκ γλωττῶν, βαρβαρισμός.

Αἰνίγματος γὰρ ἰδέα αὕτη ἐστί, τὸ λέγοντα ὑπάρχοντα ἀδύνατα συνάψαι. Κατὰ μὲν οὖν τὴν τῶν ὀνομάτων σύνθεσιν οὐχ οἷόν τε τοῦτο ποιῆσαι, κατὰ δὲ τὴν μεταφορὰν ἐνδέχεται, οἷον

Ἄνδρ' εἶδον πυρὶ χαλκὸν ἐπ' ἀνέρι κολλήσαντα,

καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα.

Ἐκ δὲ τῶν γλωττῶν ὁ βαρβαρισμός.

Δεῖ ἄρα κεκρᾶσθαι πως τούτοις· τὸ μὲν γὰρ μὴ ιδιωτικὸν ποιήσῃ μηδὲ ταπεινὸν ἢ γλῶττα καὶ ἡ μεταφορὰ καὶ ὁ κόσμος καὶ τᾶλλα τὰ εἰρημένα εἶδη, τὸ δὲ κύριον τὴν σαφήνειαν.

Οὐκ ἐλάχιστον δὲ μέρος συμβάλλονται εἰς τὸ σαφὲς τῆς λέξεως καὶ μὴ ιδιωτικὸν αἱ ἐπεκτάσεις καὶ ἀποκοπαὶ καὶ ἐξαλλαγαὶ τῶν ὀνομάτων· διὰ μὲν γὰρ τὸ ἄλλως ἔχειν ἢ ὡς τὸ κύριον παρὰ τὸ εἰωθὸς γινόμενον τὸ μὴ ιδιωτικὸν ποιήσῃ, διὰ δὲ τὸ κοινωνεῖν τοῦ εἰωθότος τὸ σαφὲς ἔσται.

Ὡστε οὐκ ὀρθῶς ψέγουσιν οἱ ἐπιτιμῶντες τῷ τοιούτῳ τρόπῳ τῆς διαλέκτου καὶ διακωμωδοῦντες τὸν ποιητὴν, οἷον Εὐκλείδης ὁ ἀρχαῖος, ὡς ῥάδιον ποιεῖν, εἴ τις δώσῃ ἐκτείνειν ἐφ' ὅποσον βούλεται, ἱαμβοποιήσας ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ λέξει·

ἡτίχαριν εἶδον Μαραθῶνάδε βαδίζοντα,

καὶ

οὐκ ἂν γεράμενος τὸν ἐκείνου ἐλλέβορον.

Τὸ μὲν οὖν φαίνεσθαι πως χρώμενον τούτῳ τῷ τρόπῳ γελοῖον, τὸ δὲ μέτρον κοινὸν ἀπάντων ἐστὶ τῶν μερῶν·

καὶ γὰρ μεταφοραῖς καὶ γλῶτταις καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις εἶδεσι χρώμενος ἀπρεπῶς καὶ ἐπίτηδες ἐπὶ τὰ γελοῖα τὸ αὐτὸ ἂν ἀπεργάσαιτο.

Τὸ δὲ ἀρμόττον ὅσον διαφέρει, ἐπὶ τῶν ἐπῶν θεωρεῖσθω, ἐντιθεμένων τῶν ὀνομάτων εἰς τὸ μέτρον.

Καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γλώττης δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν μεταφορῶν καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἰδεῶν μετατιθεῖς ἂν τις τὰ κύρια ὀνόματα κατίδοι ὅτι ἀληθῆ λέγομεν· οἷον τὸ αὐτὸ ποιήσαντος ἱαμβεῖον Αἰσχύλου καὶ Εὐριπίδου, ἐν δὲ μόνον ὄνομα μεταθέντος, ἀντὶ κυρίου εἰωθότος γλῶτταν, τὸ μὲν φαίνεται καλὸν τὸ δ' εὐτελές. Αἰσχύλος μὲν γὰρ ἐν τῷ Φιλοκτήτῃ ἐποίησε

φαγέδαινα ἢ μου σάρκας ἐσθίει ποδός,

ὁ δὲ ἀντὶ τοῦ ἐσθίει τὸ θοινᾶται μετέθηκεν. Καὶ
νῦν δέ μ' ἐὼν ὀλίγος τε καὶ οὔτιδανὸς καὶ ἄκιкус,
εἴ τις λέγοι τὰ κύρια μετατιθεῖς
νῦν δέ μ' ἐὼν μικρός τε καὶ ἀσθενικὸς καὶ ἀειδής.

Καὶ

δίφρον ἀεικέλιον καταθεῖς ὀλίγην τε τράπεζαν.

Δίφρον μοχθηρὸν καταθεῖς μικράν τε τράπεζαν.

Καὶ τὸ ἡῖόνες βοόωσιν ἡῖόνες κράζουσιν.

Ἔτι δὲ Ἀρειφράδης τοὺς τραγωδοὺς ἐκωμῶδει, ὅτι ἂ οὐδεὶς ἂν εἴποι ἐν τῇ διαλέκτῳ, τούτοις
χρῶνται, οἷον τὸ δωμάτων ἅπο ἀλλὰ μὴ ἀπὸ δωμάτων, καὶ τὸ σέθεν, καὶ τὸ ἐγὼ δέ νιν, καὶ τὸ
Ἀχιλλέως πέρι ἀλλὰ μὴ περὶ Ἀχιλλέως, καὶ ὅσα ἄλλα τοιαῦτα.

Διὰ γὰρ τὸ μὴ εἶναι ἐν τοῖς κυρίοις ποιεῖ τὸ μὴ ἰδιωτικὸν ἐν τῇ λέξει ἅπαντα τὰ τοιαῦτα· ἐκεῖνος
δὲ τοῦτο ἡγνώνει.

Ἔστι δὲ μέγα μὲν τὸ ἐκάστῳ τῶν εἰρημένων πρέπόντως χρῆσθαι, καὶ διπλοῖς ὀνόμασι καὶ
γλώτταις, πολὺ δὲ μέγιστον τὸ μεταφορικὸν εἶναι.

Μόνον γὰρ τοῦτο οὔτε παρ' ἄλλου ἔστι λαβεῖν εὐφυΐας τε σημείον ἔστιν· τὸ γὰρ εὖ μεταφέρειν
τὸ τὸ ὅμοιον θεωρεῖν ἔστιν.

Τῶν δ' ὀνομάτων τὰ μὲν διπλᾷ μάλιστα ἀρμόττει τοῖς διθυράμβοις, αἱ δὲ γλῶτται τοῖς ἡρωϊκοῖς,
αἱ δὲ μεταφοραὶ τοῖς ἱαμβείοις.

Καὶ ἐν μὲν τοῖς ἡρωϊκοῖς ἅπαντα χρήσιμα τὰ εἰρημένα· ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἱαμβείοις, διὰ τὸ ὅτι μάλιστα
λέξιν μιμεῖσθαι, ταῦτα ἀρμόττει τῶν ὀνομάτων ὅσοις κἂν ἐν λόγοις τις χρήσαιτο· ἔστι δὲ τὰ
τοιαῦτα τὸ κύριον καὶ μεταφορὰ καὶ κόσμος.

Περὶ μὲν οὖν τραγωδίας καὶ τῆς ἐν τῷ πράττειν μιμήσεως ἔστω ἡμῖν ἱκανὰ τὰ εἰρημένα.

Περὶ δὲ τῆς διηγηματικῆς καὶ ἐν μέτρῳ μιμητικῆς, ὅτι δεῖ τοὺς μύθους καθάπερ ἐν ταῖς
τραγωδαῖς συνιστάναι δραματικούς, καὶ περὶ μίαν πρᾶξιν ὅλην καὶ τελείαν, ἔχουσαν ἀρχὴν καὶ
μέσον καὶ τέλος, ἵν' ὥσπερ ζῶον ἐν ὅλον ποιῇ τὴν οἰκείαν ἡδονήν, δῆλον,

καὶ μὴ ὁμοίας ἱστορίας τὰς συνήθεις εἶναι, ἐν αἷς ἀνάγκη οὐχὶ μιᾶς πράξεως ποιεῖσθαι δῆλωσιν
ἀλλ' ἐνὸς χρόνου, ὅσα ἐν τούτῳ συνέβη περὶ ἓνα ἢ πλείους, ὧν ἕκαστον ὡς ἔτυχεν ἔχει πρὸς
ἄλληλα.

Ὡς περ γὰρ κατὰ τοὺς αὐτοὺς χρόνους ἦ τ' ἐν Σαλαμῖνι ἐγένετο ναυμαχία καὶ ἡ ἐν Σικελίᾳ
Καρχηδονίων μάχη, οὐδὲν πρὸς τὸ αὐτὸ συντείνουσιν τέλος, οὕτω καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἐφεξῆς χρόνοις
ἐνίστε γίνεται θάτερον μετὰ θατέρου, ἐξ ὧν ἐν οὐδὲν γίνεται τέλος.

Σχεδὸν δὲ οἱ πολλοὶ τῶν ποιητῶν τοῦτο δρῶσιν.

Διό, ὥσπερ εἵπομεν ἤδη, καὶ ταύτῃ θεσπέσιος ἂν φανείη Ὅμηρος παρὰ τοὺς ἄλλους, τῷ μὴδὲ
τὸν πόλεμον, καί περ ἔχοντα ἀρχὴν καὶ τέλος, ἐπιχειρῆσαι ποιεῖν ὅλον· λίαν γὰρ ἂν μέγας καὶ
οὐκ εὐσύννοπος ἔμελλεν ἔσεσθαι· ἢ τῷ μεγέθει μετριάζοντα καταπεπλεγμένον τῇ ποικιλίᾳ. Νῦν
δ' ἐν μέρος ἀπολαβὼν ἐπεισοδίοις κέχρηται αὐτῶν πολλοῖς, οἷον νεῶν καταλόγῳ καὶ ἄλλοις
ἐπεισοδίοις, οἷς διαλαμβάνει τὴν ποίησιν.

Οἱ δ' ἄλλοι περὶ ἓνα ποιοῦσι καὶ περὶ ἓνα χρόνον, καὶ μίαν πρᾶξιν πολυμερῆ, οἷον ὁ τὰ Κύπρια ποιήσας καὶ τὴν μικρὰν Ἰλιάδα.

Τοιγαροῦν ἐκ μὲν Ἰλιάδος καὶ Ὀδυσσεΐας μία τραγωδία ποιεῖται ἐκατέρας ἢ δύο μόναι, ἐκ δὲ Κυπρίων πολλάι, καὶ ἐκ τῆς μικρᾶς Ἰλιάδος πλέον ὀκτώ, οἷον ὅπλων κρίσις, Φιλοκτήτης, Νεοπτόλεμος, Εὐρύπυλος, πτωχεία, Λάκαιναι, Ἰλίου πέρσις καὶ ἀπόπλους καὶ Σίνων καὶ Τρώαδες.

Ἔτι δὲ τὰ εἶδη ταῦτα δεῖ ἔχειν τὴν ἐποποιίαν τῇ τραγωδίᾳ· ἢ γὰρ ἀπλὴν ἢ πεπλεγμένην ἢ ἠθικὴν ἢ παθητικὴν δεῖ εἶναι.

Καὶ τὰ μέρη ἔξω μελοποιίας καὶ ὅψεως ταῦτά· καὶ γὰρ περιπετειῶν δεῖ καὶ ἀναγνωρίσεων καὶ παθημάτων.

Ἔτι τὰς διανοίας καὶ τὴν λέξιν ἔχειν καλῶς. Οἷς ἅπασιν Ὅμηρος κέχρηται καὶ πρῶτος καὶ ἱκανῶς. Καὶ γὰρ καὶ τῶν ποιημάτων ἐκάτερον συνέστηκεν ἢ μὲν Ἰλιάς ἀπλοῦν καὶ παθητικόν, ἢ δὲ Ὀδύσσεια πεπλεγμένον· ἀναγνώρισις γὰρ διόλου καὶ ἠθικὴ. Πρὸς δὲ τούτοις λέξει καὶ διανοίᾳ πάντας ὑπερβέβληκεν.

Διαφέρει δὲ κατὰ τε τῆς συστάσεως τὸ μῆκος ἢ ἐποποιία καὶ τὸ μέτρον.

Τοῦ μὲν οὖν μήκους ὁρος ἱκανὸς ὁ εἰρημένος· δύνασθαι γὰρ δεῖ συνορᾶσθαι τὴν ἀρχὴν καὶ τὸ τέλος. Εἴη δ' ἂν τοῦτο, εἰ τῶν μὲν ἀρχαίων ἐλάττους αἱ συστάσεις εἶεν, πρὸς δὲ τὸ πλῆθος τῶν τραγωδιῶν τῶν εἰς μίαν ἀκρόασιν τιθεμένων παρήκοιεν.

Ἔχει δὲ πρὸς τὸ ἐπεκτείνεσθαι τὸ μέγεθος πολὺ τι ἢ ἐποποιία ἴδιον διὰ τὸ ἐν μὲν τῇ τραγωδίᾳ μὴ ἐνδέχεσθαι ἅμα πραττόμενα πολλὰ μέρη μιμεῖσθαι, ἀλλὰ τὸ ἐπὶ τῆς σκηνῆς καὶ τῶν ὑποκριτῶν μέρος μόνον· ἐν δὲ τῇ ἐποποιίᾳ, διὰ τὸ διήγησιν εἶναι, ἔστι πολλὰ μέρη ἅμα ποιεῖν περαινόμενα, ὑφ' ὧν οἰκείων ὄντων αὖξεται ὁ τοῦ ποιήματος ὄγκος.

Ὡστε τοῦτ' ἔχει τὸ ἀγαθὸν εἰς μεγαλοπρέπειαν καὶ τὸ μεταβάλλειν τὸν ἀκούοντα καὶ ἐπεισοδιοῦν ἀνομοίοις ἐπεισοδίοις· τὸ γὰρ ὅμοιον ταχὺ πληροῦν ἐκπίπτειν ποιεῖ τὰς τραγωδίας.

Τὸ δὲ μέτρον τὸ ἡρωϊκὸν ἀπὸ τῆς πείρας ἤρμοκεν. Εἰ γάρ τις ἐν ἄλλῳ τινὶ μέτρῳ διηγηματικὴν μίμησιν ποιοῖτο ἢ ἐν πολλοῖς, ἀπρεπὲς ἂν φαίνοιτο·

τὸ γὰρ ἡρωϊκὸν στασιμώτατον καὶ ὀγκωδέστατον τῶν μέτρων ἐστίν, διὸ καὶ γλώττας καὶ μεταφορὰς δέχεται μάλιστα· περιττὴ γὰρ καὶ ἡ διηγηματικὴ μίμησις τῶν ἄλλων.

Τὸ δὲ ἱαμβικὸν καὶ τετράμετρον κινητικά, τὸ μὲν ὀρχηστικόν, τὸ δὲ πρακτικόν.

Ἔτι δὲ ἀτοπώτερον εἰ μὴ γινύοι τις αὐτά, ὥσπερ Χαιρήμων.

Διὸ οὐδεὶς μακρὰν σύστασιν ἐν ἄλλῳ πεποίηκεν ἢ τῷ ἡρώϊ, ἀλλ' ὥσπερ εἵπομεν, αὐτὴ ἡ φύσις διδάσκει τὸ ἀρμόττον αὐτῇ διαιρεῖσθαι.

Ὅμηρος δὲ ἄλλα τε πολλὰ ἄξιος ἐπαινεῖσθαι, καὶ δὴ καὶ ὅτι μόνος τῶν ποιητῶν οὐκ ἀγνοεῖ ὁ δεῖ ποιεῖν αὐτόν.

Αὐτὸν γὰρ δεῖ τὸν ποιητὴν ἐλάχιστα λέγειν· οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶ κατὰ ταῦτα μιμητής. Οἱ μὲν οὖν ἄλλοι αὐτοὶ μὲν δι' ὅλου ἀγωνίζονται, μιμοῦνται δὲ ὀλίγα καὶ ὀλιγάκις· ὁ δὲ ὀλίγα φροιμισάμενος εὐθύς εἰσάγει ἄνδρα ἢ γυναῖκα ἢ ἄλλο τι ἥθος, καὶ οὐδὲν ἄηθες, ἀλλ' ἔχοντα ἥθη.

Δεῖ μὲν οὖν ἐν ταῖς τραγωδίαις ποιεῖν τὸ θαυμαστόν, μᾶλλον δ' ἐνδέχεται ἐν τῇ ἐποποιίᾳ τὸ ἄλογον. Διὸ συμβαίνει μάλιστα τὸ θαυμαστόν, διὰ τὸ μὴ ὄρᾶν εἰς τὸν πράττοντα,

ἐπεὶ τὰ περὶ τὴν Ἑκτορος δῖωξιν ἐπὶ σκηνῆς ὄντα γελοῖα ἂν φανείη, οἱ μὲν ἐστῶτες καὶ οὐ διώκοντες, ὁ δὲ ἀνανεύων· ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἔπεσι λανθάνει.

Τὸ δὲ θαυμαστὸν ἡδύ· σημεῖον δέ, πάντες γὰρ προστιθέντες ἀπαγγέλλουσιν ὡς χαριζόμενοι.

Δεδίδαχε δὲ μάλιστα Ὅμηρος καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους ψευδῆ λέγειν ὡς δεῖ. Ἔστι δὲ τοῦτο παραλογισμός. Οἶοντα γὰρ ἄνθρωποι, ὅταν τουδὶ ὄντος τοδὶ ἦ ἢ γινομένου γίνηται, εἰ τὸ ὕστερόν ἐστι, καὶ τὸ πρότερον εἶναι ἢ γίνεσθαι· τοῦτο δ' ἐστὶ ψεῦδος. Διὸ δὴ, ἂν τὸ πρῶτον ψεῦδος, ἄλλου δὲ τούτου ὄντος, ἀνάγκη εἶναι ἢ γενέσθαι ἢ προσθεῖναι· διὰ γὰρ τὸ τοῦτο εἰδέναι ἀληθές ὄν, παραλογίζεται ἡμῶν ἡ ψυχὴ καὶ τὸ πρῶτον ὡς ὄν. Παράδειγμα δὲ τούτου ἐκ τῶν Νίπτρων.

Προαιρεῖσθαι τε δεῖ ἀδύνατα εἰκότα μᾶλλον ἢ δυνατὰ ἀπίθانا·

τούς τε λόγους μὴ συνίστασθαι ἐκ μερῶν ἀλόγων, ἀλλὰ μάλιστα μὲν μηδὲν ἔχειν ἄλογον, εἰ δὲ μή, ἔξω τοῦ μυθεύματος, ὥσπερ Οἰδίπους τὸ μὴ εἰδέναι πῶς ὁ Λαῖος ἀπέθανεν, ἀλλὰ μὴ ἐν τῷ δράματι, ὥσπερ ἐν Ἡλέκτρῳ οἱ τὰ Πύθια ἀπαγγέλλοντες, ἢ ἐν Μυσοῖς ὁ ἄφωνος ἐκ Τεγέας εἰς τὴν Μυσίαν ἦκων.

Ὡστε τὸ λέγειν ὅτι ἀνήρητο ἂν ὁ μῦθος γελοῖον· ἐξ ἀρχῆς γὰρ οὐ δεῖ συνίστασθαι τοιούτους· ἂν δὲ θῇ, καὶ φαίνεται εὐλογώτερον, ἀποδέχεσθαι καὶ ἄτοπον,

ἐπεὶ καὶ τὰ ἐν Ὀδυσσεΐᾳ ἄλογα τὰ περὶ τὴν ἔκθεσιν, ὡς οὐκ ἂν ἦν ἀνεκτά, δῆλον ἂν γένοιτο, εἰ αὐτὰ φαῦλος ποιητὴς ποιήσειεν· νῦν δὲ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἀγαθοῖς ὁ ποιητὴς ἀφανίζει ἡδύνων τὸ ἄτοπον.

Τῇ δὲ λέξει δεῖ διαπονεῖν ἐν τοῖς ἀργοῖς μέρεσι καὶ μήτε ἠθικοῖς μήτε διανοητικοῖς· ἀποκρύπτει γὰρ πάλιν ἢ λίαν λαμπρὰ λέξεις τὰ τε ἥθη καὶ τὰς διανοίας.

Περὶ δὲ προβλημάτων καὶ λύσεων, ἐκ πόσων τε καὶ ποίων ἂν εἰδῶν εἴη, ὧδ' ἂν θεωροῦσι γένοιτ' ἂν φανερόν.

Ἐπεὶ γὰρ ἐστὶ μιμητὴς ὁ ποιητής, ὥσπερ ἂν εἰ ζωγράφος ἢ τις ἄλλος εἰκονοποιός, ἀνάγκη μιμεῖσθαι τριῶν ὄντων τὸν ἀριθμὸν ἐν τι ἀεί· ἢ γὰρ οἷα ἦν ἢ ἔστιν, ἢ οἷα φασι καὶ δοκεῖ, ἢ οἷα εἶναι δεῖ.

Ταῦτα δ' ἐξαγγέλλεται λέξει ἢ καὶ γλώτταις καὶ μεταφοραῖς. Καὶ πολλὰ πάθη τῆς λέξεώς ἐστιν·

δίδομεν γὰρ ταῦτα τοῖς ποιηταῖς. Πρὸς δὲ τούτοις οὐχ ἡ αὐτὴ ὀρθότης ἐστὶ τῆς πολιτικῆς καὶ τῆς ποιητικῆς, οὐδὲ ἄλλης τέχνης καὶ ποιητικῆς.

Αὐτῆς δὲ τῆς ποιητικῆς διττὴ ἡ ἁμαρτία· ἢ μὲν γὰρ καθ' αὐτήν, ἢ δὲ κατὰ συμβεβηκός.

Εἰ μὲν γὰρ προείλετο μιμήσασθαι ἀδυναμίαν, αὐτῆς ἡ ἁμαρτία· εἰ δὲ τὸ προελέσθαι μὴ ὀρθῶς, ἀλλὰ τὸν ἵππον ἄμφω τὰ δεξιὰ προβεβληκότα ἢ τὸ καθ' ἐκάστην τέχνην ἁμάρτημα, οἷον τὸ κατ' ἱατρικὴν ἢ ἄλλην τέχνην, ἢ ἀδύνατα πεποιήται, ὅποιανοῦν, οὐ καθ' ἑαυτήν.

Ὡστε δεῖ τὰ ἐπιτιμήματα ἐν τοῖς προβλήμασιν ἐκ τούτων ἐπισκοποῦντα λύειν. Πρῶτον μὲν, ἂν τὰ πρὸς αὐτὴν τὴν τέχνην ἀδύνατα πεποιήται, ἡμάρτηται.

Ἄλλ' ὀρθῶς ἔχει, εἰ τυγχάνει τοῦ τέλους τοῦ αὐτῆς· τὸ γὰρ τέλος εἴρηται, εἰ οὕτως ἐκπληκτικώτερον ἢ αὐτὸ ἢ ἄλλο ποιεῖ μέρος. Παράδειγμα ἢ τοῦ Ἑκτορος δῖωξις.

Εἰ μέντοι τὸ τέλος ἢ μᾶλλον ἢ ἥττον ἐνεδέχeto ὑπάρχειν καὶ κατὰ τὴν περὶ τούτων τέχνην, ἡμάρτηται οὐκ ὀρθῶς· δεῖ γὰρ, εἰ ἐνδέχεται, ὅλως μηδαμῇ ἡμαρτῆσθαι.

Ἦτι ποτέρων ἐστὶ τὸ ἀμάρτημα, τῶν κατὰ τὴν τέχνην ἢ κατ' ἄλλο συμβεβηκός; Ἦλαττον γάρ, εἰ μὴ ᾗδῃ ὅτι ἔλαφος θήλεια κέρατα οὐκ ἔχει, ἢ εἰ κακομιμήτως ἔγραψεν.

Πρὸς δὲ τούτοις ἐὰν ἐπιτιμᾶται ὅτι οὐκ ἀληθῆ, ἀλλ' οἷα δεῖ, οἶον καὶ Σοφοκλῆς ἔφη αὐτὸς μὲν οἶους δεῖ ποιεῖν, Εὐριπίδην δὲ οἷοι εἰσὶ, ταύτη λυτέον.

Εἰ δὲ μηδετέρως, ὅτι οὕτω φασίν, οἶον τὰ περὶ θεῶν.

Ἦσως γὰρ οὔτε βέλτιον οὕτω λέγειν οὔτ' ἀληθῆ, ἀλλ' ἔτυχεν ὥσπερ Ξενοφάνης· ἀλλ' οὐ φασὶ τάδε.

Ἦσως δὲ οὐ βέλτιον μὲν, ἀλλ' οὕτως εἶχεν, οἶον τὰ περὶ τῶν ὀπλων,

ἔγχεα δέ σφιν

ὄρθ' ἐπὶ σαυρωτῆρος·

οὕτω γὰρ τότ' ἐνόμιζον, ὥσπερ καὶ νῦν Ἰλλυριοί.

Περὶ δὲ τοῦ καλῶς ἢ μὴ καλῶς ἢ εἴρηταί τι· ἢ πέπρακται, οὐ μόνον σκεπτέον εἰς αὐτὸ τὸ πεπραγμένον ἢ εἰρημένον βλέποντα, εἰ σπουδαῖον ἢ φαῦλον, ἀλλὰ καὶ εἰς τὸν πράττοντα ἢ λέγοντα πρὸς ὃν ἢ ὅτε ἢ ὅτω ἢ οὔ ἔνεκεν, οἶον ἢ μείζονος ἀγαθοῦ, ἵνα γένηται, ἢ μείζονος κακοῦ, ἵνα ἀπογένηται.

Τὰ δὲ πρὸς τὴν λέξιν ὁρῶντα δεῖ διαλύειν, οἶον γλώττη

οὐρῆας μὲν πρῶτον·

Ἦσως γὰρ οὐ τοὺς ἡμιόνους λέγει ἀλλὰ τοὺς φύλακας. Καὶ τὸν Δόλωνα

ὃς δὴ τοι εἶδος μὲν ἦν κακός,

οὐ τὸ σῶμα ἀσύμμετρον, ἀλλὰ τὸ πρόσωπον αἰσχρόν· τὸ γὰρ εὐειδὲς οἱ Κρήτες εὐπρόσωπον καλοῦσιν. Καὶ τὸ

ζωρότερον δὲ κέραιε

οὐ τὸ ἄκρατον ὡς οἰνόφλυξιν, ἀλλὰ τὸ θᾶπτον.

Τὸ δὲ κατὰ μεταφορὰν εἴρηται, οἶον

Ἦλλοι μὲν ῥα θεοὶ τε καὶ ἀνέρες—

εὔδον παννύχιοι·

ἅμα δέ φησιν

ἦτοι ὅτ' ἐς πεδίον τὸ Τρωϊκὸν ἀθρήσειεν,

αὐλῶν συρίγγων θ' ὁμαδόν.

Τὸ γὰρ πάντες ἀντὶ τοῦ πολλοὶ κατὰ μεταφορὰν εἴρηται· τὸ γὰρ πᾶν πολὺ τι. Καὶ τὸ

οἷη δ' ἄμμορος

κατὰ μεταφορὰν· τὸ γὰρ γνωριμώτατον μόνον.

Κατὰ δὲ προσωδίαν, ὥσπερ Ἰππίας ἔλυσεν ὁ Θάσιος τὸ

δίδομεν δέ οἱ

καὶ

τὸ μὲν οὐ καταπύθεται ὄμβρῳ.

Τὰ δὲ διαιρέσει, οἶον Ἐμπεδοκλῆς

Αἶψα δὲ θνήτ' ἐφύοντο, τὰ πρὶν μάθον ἀθάνατα....

ζῶά τε πρὶν κέκριτο.

Τὰ δὲ ἀμφιβολία,

παρώχηκεν δὲ πλέων νύξ·

τὸ γὰρ πλέων ἀμφίβολόν ἐστιν.

Τὰ δὲ κατὰ τὸ ἔθος τῆς λέξεως, οἶον τὸν κεκραμένον οἶνόν φασιν εἶναι, ὅθεν πεποιήται

κνημὶς νεοτεύκτου κασσιτέριοι,

καὶ χαλκέας τοὺς τὸν σίδηρον ἐργαζομένους, ὅθεν εἴρηται ὁ Γανυμήδης Διὶ οἰνοχοεύειν, οὐ πινόντων οἶνον. Εἴη δ' ἂν τοῦτο γε κατὰ μεταφοράν.

Δεῖ δὲ καὶ ὅταν ὄνομά τι ὑπεναντίωμά τι δοκῇ σημαίνειν, ἐπισκοπεῖν ποσαχῶς ἂν σημήνει τοῦτο ἐν τῷ εἰρημένῳ, οἶον

τῇ ρ' ἔσχετο χάλκεον ἔγχος,

τῷ ταύτῃ κωλυθῆναι.

Τὸ δὲ ποσαχῶς ἐνδέχεται ὡδί πως μάλιστ' ἂν τις ὑπολάβοι κατὰ τὴν καταντικρὺ ἢ ὡς Γλαύκων λέγει, ὅτι ἔνιοι ἀλόγως προὑπολαμβάνουσι,

καὶ αὐτοὶ καταψηφισάμενοι συλλογίζονται, καὶ ὡς εἰρηκότες ὅτι δοκεῖ ἐπιτιμῶσιν, ἂν ὑπεναντίον ἢ τῇ αὐτῶν οἰήσῃ.

Τοῦτο δὲ πέπονθε τὰ περὶ Ἰκάριον. Οἶονται γὰρ αὐτὸν Λάκωνα εἶναι· ἄτοπον οὖν τὸ μὴ ἐντυχεῖν τὸν Τηλέμαχον αὐτῷ εἰς Λακεδαίμονα ἐλθόντα. Τὸ δ' ἴσως ἔχει ὥσπερ οἱ Κεφαλήνές φασιν· παρ' αὐτῶν γὰρ γῆμαι λέγουσι τὸν Ὀδυσσεά, καὶ εἶναι Ἰκάδιον ἀλλ' οὐκ Ἰκάριον. Διαμάρτημα δὲ τὸ πρόβλημα εἰκὸς ἐστίν.

Ὅλως δὲ τὸ ἀδύνατον μὲν ἢ πρὸς τὴν ποίησιν ἢ πρὸς τὸ βέλτιον ἢ πρὸς τὴν δόξαν δεῖ ἀνάγειν.

Πρὸς τε γὰρ τὴν ποίησιν αἰρετώτερον πιθανὸν ἀδύνατον ἢ ἀπίθανον καὶ δυνατόν· τοιούτους δ' εἶναι οἷους Ζεῦξις ἔγραφεν.

Ἀλλὰ καὶ πρὸς τὸ βέλτιον· τὸ γὰρ παράδειγμα δεῖ ὑπερέχειν πρὸς ἃ φασὶ τᾶλῳ.

Οὕτω τε καὶ ὅτι ποτὲ οὐκ ἄλογόν ἐστιν· εἰκὸς γὰρ καὶ παρὰ τὸ εἰκὸς γίνεσθαι.

Τὰ δ' ὑπεναντία ὡς εἰρημένα οὕτω σκοπεῖν, ὥσπερ οἱ ἐν τοῖς λόγοις ἔλεγχοι, εἰ τὸ αὐτὸ καὶ πρὸς τὸ αὐτὸ καὶ ὡσαύτως, ὥστε καὶ αὐτὸν ἢ πρὸς ἃ αὐτὸς λέγει ἢ ὃ ἂν φρόνιμος ὑποθῇται.

Ὅρθῃ δ' ἐπιτίμησις καὶ ἀλογία καὶ μοχθηρία, ὅταν μὴ ἀνάγκης οὔσης μηδὲν χρήσῃται τῷ ἀλόγῳ, ὥσπερ Εὐριπίδης τῷ Αἰγεί, ἢ τῇ πονηρίᾳ, ὥσπερ ἐν Ὁρέστῃ τοῦ Μενελάου.

Τὰ μὲν οὖν ἐπιτιμήματα ἐκ πέντε εἰδῶν φέρουσιν· ἢ γὰρ ὡς ἀδύνατα ἢ ὡς ἄλογα ἢ ὡς βλαβερά ἢ ὡς ὑπεναντία ἢ ὡς παρὰ τὴν ὀρθότητα τὴν κατὰ τέχνην· αἱ δὲ λύσεις ἐκ τῶν εἰρημένων ἀριθμῶν σκεπτέαι, εἰσὶ δὲ δώδεκα.

Πότερον δὲ βελτίων ἢ ἐποποιικὴ μίμησις ἢ ἡ τραγικὴ, διαπορήσειεν ἂν τις.

Εἰ γὰρ ἡ ἥττον φορτικὴ βελτίων, τοιαύτη δ' ἡ πρὸς βελτίους θεατὰς ἐστι, δῆλον ὅτι ἡ ἅπαντα

μιμουμένη φορτική.

Ὡς γὰρ οὐκ αἰσθανομένων, ἂν μὴ αὐτὸς προσθῇ, πολλὴν κίνησιν κινεῖται, οἷον οἱ φαῦλοι αὐλῆται κυλιόμενοι, ἂν δίσκον δέξῃ μιμεῖσθαι, καὶ ἔλκοντες τὸν κορυφαῖον, ἂν Σκύλλαν αὐλῶσιν.

Ἡ μὲν οὖν τραγωδία τοιαύτη ἐστίν, ὥς καὶ οἱ πρότερον τοὺς ὑστέρους αὐτῶν ζῶντο ὑποκριτάς· ὥς λίαν γὰρ ὑπερβάλλοντα, πίθηκον ὁ Μυνίσκος τὸν Καλλιπιδὴν ἐκάλει. Τοιαύτη δὲ δόξα καὶ περὶ Πινδάρου ἦν. Ὡς δ' οὗτοι ἔχουσι πρὸς αὐτούς, ἢ ὅλη τέχνη πρὸς τὴν ἐποποιίαν ἔχει.

Τὴν μὲν οὖν πρὸς θεατὰς ἐπικεικὶς φασὶν εἶναι, διὸ οὐδὲν δέονται τῶν σχημάτων, τὴν δὲ τραγικὴν πρὸς φαύλους.

Ἡ οὖν φορτικὴ χεῖρων δῆλον ὅτι ἂν εἴη. Πρῶτον μὲν οὐ τῆς ποιητικῆς ἢ κατηγορία ἀλλὰ τῆς ὑποκριτικῆς, ἐπεὶ ἔστι περιεργάζεσθαι τοῖς σημείοις καὶ ῥαψωδοῦντα, ὅπερ ἐποίει Σωσίστρατος, καὶ διάδοντα, ὅπερ ἐποίει Μνασίθεος Ὀπούντιος.

Εἵτα οὐδὲ κίνησις ἅπαντα ἀποδοκιμαστέα, εἴπερ μὴδ' ὄρχησις, ἀλλ' ἢ φαύλων, ὅπερ καὶ Καλλιπιδῇ ἐπετιμᾶτο καὶ νῦν ἄλλοις, ὥς οὐκ ἐλευθέρας γυναῖκας μιμουμένων.

Ἔτι ἡ τραγωδία καὶ ἄνευ κινήσεως ποιεῖ τὸ αὐτῆς, ὥσπερ ἡ ἐποποιία· διὰ γὰρ τοῦ ἀναγινώσκειν φανερά ὅποια τις ἐστίν. Εἰ οὖν ἐστὶ τᾶλλα κρείττων, τοῦτό γε οὐκ ἀναγκαῖον αὐτῇ ὑπάρχειν.

Ἐπειτα διότι πάντ' ἔχει ὅσαπερ ἡ ἐποποιία·

καὶ γὰρ τῷ μέτρῳ ἔξεστι χρῆσθαι, καὶ ἔτι οὐ μικρὸν μέρος τὴν μουσικὴν καὶ τὴν ὄψιν ἔχει, δι' ἧς αἰ ἡδοναὶ συνίστανται ἐναργέστατα.

Εἵτα καὶ τὸ ἐναργὲς ἔχει καὶ ἐν τῇ ἀναγνωρίσει καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἔργων.

Ἔτι τῷ ἐν ἐλάττονι μήκει τὸ τέλος τῆς μιμήσεως εἶναι· τὸ γὰρ ἀθροώτερον ἥδιον ἢ πολλῶ κεκραμένον τῷ χρόνῳ, λέγω δὲ οἷον εἴ τις τὸν Οἰδίπουν θείῃ τὸν Σοφοκλέους ἐν ἔπεσιν ὅσοις ἡ Ἰλιάς.

Ἔτι ἥττον μία ὅποιαοῦν μίμησις ἢ τῶν ἐποποιῶν. Σημεῖον δέ· ἐκ γὰρ ὅποιασοῦν μιμήσεως πλείους τραγωδαὶ γίνονται. Ὡστ' ἐὰν μὲν ἓνα μῦθον ποιῶσιν, ἀνάγκη ἢ βραχέα δεικνύμενον μύουρον φαίνεσθαι, ἢ ἀκολουθοῦντα τῷ τοῦ μέτρου μήκει ὑδαρῇ. Ἐὰν δὲ πλείους, λέγω δὲ οἷον ἐὰν ἐκ πλειόνων πράξεων ᾗ συγκειμένη, οὐ μία,

ὥσπερ ἡ Ἰλιάς ἔχει πολλὰ τοιαῦτα μέρη καὶ ἡ Ὀδύσσεια, ἃ καὶ καθ' ἑαυτὰ ἔχει μέγεθος· καίτοι ταῦτα τὰ ποιήματα συνέστηκεν ὥς ἐνδέχεται ἄριστα, καὶ ὅτι μάλιστα μιᾶς πράξεως μίμησις ἐστίν.

Εἰ οὖν τούτοις τε διαφέρει πᾶσι καὶ ἔτι τῷ τῆς τέχνης ἔργῳ (δεῖ γὰρ οὐ τὴν τυχοῦσαν ἡδονὴν ποιεῖν αὐτὰς ἀλλὰ τὴν εἰρημένην), φανερόν ὅτι κρείττων ἂν εἴη μᾶλλον τοῦ τέλους τυγχάνουσα τῆς ἐποποιίας.

Περὶ μὲν οὖν τραγωδίας καὶ ἐποποιίας, καὶ αὐτῶν καὶ τῶν εἰδῶν καὶ τῶν μερῶν αὐτῶν, καὶ πόσα καὶ τί διαφέρει, καὶ τοῦ εὔ ἢ μὴ τίνες αἰτίαι, καὶ περὶ ἐπιτιμήσεων καὶ λύσεων εἰρήσθω τοσαῦτα.

English translation

[8] Let us here deal with Poetry, its essence and its several species, with the characteristic function of each species and the way in which plots must be constructed if the poem is to be a success; and also with the number and character of the constituent parts of a poem, and similarly with all other matters proper to this same inquiry; and let us, as nature directs, begin first with first principles.

Epic poetry, then, and the poetry of tragic drama, and, moreover, comedy and dithyrambic poetry, and most flute-playing and harp-playing, these, speaking generally, may all be said to be representations of life.

But they differ one from another in three ways: either in using means generically different or in representing different objects or in representing objects not in the same way but in a different manner.

For just as by the use both of color and form people represent many objects, making likenesses of them— [20] some having a knowledge of art and some working empirically—and just as others use the human voice; so is it also in the arts which we have mentioned, they all make their representations in rhythm and language and tune, using these means either separately or in combination.

For tune and rhythm alone are employed in flute-playing and harp-playing and in any other arts which have a similar function, as, for example, pipe-playing.

Rhythm alone without tune is employed by dancers in their representations, for by means of rhythmical gestures they represent both character and experiences and actions.

But the art which employs words either in bare prose or in metres, [1] either in one kind of metre or combining several, happens up to the present day to have no name.

For we can find no common term to apply to the mimes of Sophron and Xenarchus and to the Socratic dialogues:

nor again supposing a poet were to make his representation in iambics or elegiacs or any other such metre—

except that people attach the word poet(maker) to the name of the metre and speak of elegiac poets and of others as epic poets. Thus they do not call them poets in virtue of their representation but apply the name indiscriminately in virtue of the metre.

For if people publish medical or scientific treatises in metre the custom is to call them poets. But Homer and Empedocles have nothing in common except the metre, so that it would be proper to call the one a poet and the other not a poet but a scientist.

[20] Similarly if a man makes his representation by combining all the metres, as Chaeremon did when he wrote his rhapsody *The Centaur*, a medley of all the metres, he too should be given the name of poet. On this point the distinctions thus made may suffice.

There are certain arts which employ all the means which I have mentioned, such as rhythm and tune and metre—dithyrambic and nomic poetry, for example, and tragedy too and comedy. The difference here is that some use all these at once, others use now one now another.

These differences then in the various arts I call the means of representation.

[1] Since living persons are the objects of representation, these must necessarily be either good men or inferior—thus only are characters normally distinguished, since ethical differences depend upon vice and virtue—that is to say either better than ourselves or worse or much what we are. It is the same with painters.

Polygnotus depicted men as better than they are and Pauson worse, while Dionysius made likenesses.

Clearly each of the above mentioned arts will admit of these distinctions, and they will differ in representing objects which differ from each other in the way here described.

In painting too, and flute-playing and harp-playing, these diversities may certainly be found, and it is the same in prose and in unaccompanied verse.

For instance Homer's people are better, Cleophon's are like, while in Hegemon of Thasos, the first writer of parodies, and in Nicochares, the author of the Poltrooniad, they are worse.

It is the same in dithyrambic and nomic poetry, for instance . . . a writer might draw characters like the Cyclops as drawn by Timotheus and Philoxenus.

It is just in this respect that tragedy differs from comedy. The latter sets out to represent people as worse than they are to-day, the former as better.

A third difference in these arts is the manner in which one may represent each of these objects.

[20] For in representing the same objects by the same means it is possible to proceed either partly by narrative and partly by assuming a character other than your own—this is Homer's method—or by remaining yourself without any such change, or else to represent the characters as carrying out the whole action themselves.

These, as we said above, are the three differences which form the several species of the art of representation, the means, the objects, and the manner.

It follows that in one respect Sophocles would be the same kind of artist as Homer, for both represent good men, and in another respect he would resemble Aristophanes, for they both represent men in action and doing things. And that according to some is the reason why they are called dramas, because they present people as doing things.

And for this reason the Dorians claim as their own both tragedy and comedy—comedy is claimed both by the Megarians here in Greece, who say that it originated in the days of their democracy, and by the Megarians in Sicily, for it was from there the poet Epicharmus came, who was much earlier than Chionides and Magnes; and tragedy some of the Peloponnesians claim. Their evidence is the two names.

Their name, they say, for suburb villages is κῶμαι—the Athenians call them Demes—and comedians are so called not from κωμάζειν, to revel, but because they were turned out of the towns and went strolling round the villages(κῶμαι). [1] Their word for action, they add, is δρᾶν, whereas the Athenian word is πράττειν.

TSo much then for the differences, their number, and their nature.

Speaking generally, poetry seems to owe its origin to two particular causes, both natural.

From childhood men have an instinct for representation, and in this respect, differs from the

other animals that he is far more imitative and learns his first lessons by representing things. And then there is the enjoyment people always get from representations.

What happens in actual experience proves this, for we enjoy looking at accurate likenesses of things which are themselves painful to see, obscene beasts, for instance, and corpses.

The reason is this: Learning things gives great pleasure not only to philosophers but also in the same way to all other men, though they share this pleasure only to a small degree.

The reason why we enjoy seeing likenesses is that, as we look, we learn and infer what each is, for instance, that is so and so.

If we have never happened to see the original, our pleasure is not due to the representation as such but to the technique or the color or some other such cause.

[20] We have, then, a natural instinct for representation and for tune and rhythm—for the metres are obviously sections of rhythms—and starting with these instincts men very gradually developed them until they produced poetry out of their improvisations.

Poetry then split into two kinds according to the poet's nature. For the more serious poets represented fine doings and the doings of fine men, while those of a less exalted nature represented the actions of inferior men, at first writing satire just as the others at first wrote hymns and eulogies.

Before Homer we cannot indeed name any such poem, though there were probably many satirical poets,

but starting from Homer, there is, for instance, his *Margites* and other similar poems. For these the iambic metre was fittingly introduced and that is why it is still called iambic, because it was the metre in which they lampooned each other.

Of the ancients some wrote heroic verse and some iambic.

And just as Homer was a supreme poet in the serious style, since he alone made his representations not only good but also dramatic, so, too, he was the first to mark out the main lines of comedy, since he made his drama not out of personal satire but out of the laughable as such. His *Margites* indeed provides an analogy: as are the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* to our tragedies, [1] so is the *Margites* to our comedies.

When tragedy and comedy came to light, poets were drawn by their natural bent towards one or the other. Some became writers of comedies instead of lampoons, the others produced tragedies instead of epics; the reason being that the former is in each case a higher kind of art and has greater value.

To consider whether tragedy is fully developed by now in all its various species or not, and to criticize it both in itself and in relation to the stage, that is another question.

At any rate it originated in improvisation—both tragedy itself and comedy. The one came from the prelude to the dithyramb and the other from the prelude to the phallic songs which still survive as institutions in many cities. Tragedy then gradually evolved as men developed each element that came to light

and after going through many changes, it stopped when it had found its own natural form.

Thus it was Aeschylus who first raised the number of the actors from one to two. He also

curtailed the chorus and gave the dialogue the leading part. Three actors and scene-painting Sophocles introduced.

Then as to magnitude. [20] Being a development of the Satyr play, it was quite late before tragedy rose from short plots and comic diction to its full dignity, and that the iambic metre was used instead of the trochaic tetrameter.

At first they used the tetrameter because its poetry suited the Satyrs and was better for dancing, but when dialogue was introduced, Nature herself discovered the proper metre. The iambic is indeed the most conversational of the metres,

and the proof is that in talking to each other we most often use iambic lines but very rarely hexameters and only when we rise above the ordinary pitch of conversation.

Then there is the number of acts. The further embellishments and the story of their introduction one by one we may take as told,

for it would probably be a long task to go through them in detail.

Comedy, as we have said, is a representation of inferior people, not indeed in the full sense of the word bad, but the laughable is a species of the base or ugly.

It consists in some blunder or ugliness that does not cause pain or disaster, an obvious example being the comic mask which is ugly and distorted but not painful.

The various stages of tragedy and the originators of each are well known, but comedy remains obscure because it was not at first treated seriously. [1] Indeed it is only quite late in its history that the archon granted a chorus for a comic poet; before that they were volunteers.

Comedy had already taken certain forms before there is any mention of those who are called its poets. Who introduced masks or prologues, the number of actors, and so on, is not known.

Plot making [Epicharmus and Phormis] originally came from Sicily,

and of the Athenian poets Crates was the first to give up the lampooning form and to generalize his dialogue and plots.

Epic poetry agreed with tragedy only in so far as it was a metrical representation of heroic action, but inasmuch as it has a single metre and is narrative in that respect they are different.

And then as regards length, tragedy tends to fall within a single revolution of the sun or slightly to exceed that, whereas epic is unlimited in point of time;

and that is another difference, although originally the practice was the same in tragedy as in epic poetry.

The constituent parts are some of them the same and some peculiar to tragedy.

Consequently any one who knows about tragedy, good and bad, knows about epics too, since tragedy has all the elements of epic poetry, though the elements of tragedy are not all present in the epic.

[20] With the representation of life in hexameter verse and with comedy we will deal later. We must now treat of tragedy after first gathering up the definition of its nature which results from what we have said already.

Tragedy is, then, a representation of an action that is heroic and complete and of a certain

magnitude—by means of language enriched with all kinds of ornament, each used separately in the different parts of the play: it represents men in action and does not use narrative, and through pity and fear it effects relief to these and similar emotions.

By language enriched I mean that which has rhythm and tune, i.e., song,

and by the kinds separately I mean that some effects are produced by verse alone and some again by song.

Since the representation is performed by living persons, it follows at once that one essential part of a tragedy is the spectacular effect, and, besides that, song-making and diction. For these are the means of the representation.

By diction I mean here the metrical arrangement of the words; and song making I use in the full, obvious sense of the word.

And since tragedy represents action and is acted by living persons, who must of necessity have certain qualities of character and thought—for it is these which determine the quality of an action; [1] indeed thought and character are the natural causes of any action and it is in virtue of these that all men succeed or fail—

it follows then that it is the plot which represents the action. By plot I mean here the arrangement of the incidents: character is that which determines the quality of the agents, and thought appears wherever in the dialogue they put forward an argument or deliver an opinion.

Necessarily then every tragedy has six constituent parts, and on these its quality depends. These are plot, character, diction, thought, spectacle, and song.

Two of these are the means of representation: one is the manner: three are the objects represented.

This list is exhaustive, and practically all the poets employ these elements, for every drama includes alike spectacle and character and plot and diction and song and thought.

The most important of these is the arrangement of the incidents, for tragedy is not a representation of men but of a piece of action, of life, of happiness and unhappiness, which come under the head of action, and the end aimed at is the representation not of qualities of character but of some action; and while character makes men what they are, [20] it's their actions and experiences that make them happy or the opposite.

They do not therefore act to represent character, but character-study is included for the sake of the action. It follows that the incidents and the plot are the end at which tragedy aims, and in everything the end aimed at is of prime importance.

Moreover, you could not have a tragedy without action, but you can have one without character-study.

Indeed the tragedies of most modern poets are without this, and, speaking generally, there are many such writers, whose case is like that of Zeuxis compared with Polygnotus. The latter was good at depicting character, but there is nothing of this in Zeuxis's painting.

A further argument is that if a man writes a series of speeches full of character and excellent in point of diction and thought, he will not achieve the proper function of tragedy nearly so well as a tragedy which, while inferior in these qualities, has a plot or arrangement of incidents.

And furthermore, two of the most important elements in the emotional effect of tragedy, reversals and discoveries, are parts of the plot.

And here is further proof: those who try to write tragedy are much sooner successful in language and character-study than in arranging the incidents. It is the same with almost all the earliest poets.

The plot then is the first principle and as it were the soul of tragedy: character comes second.

It is much the same also in painting; [1] if a man smeared a canvas with the loveliest colors at random, it would not give as much pleasure as an outline in black and white.

And it is mainly because a play is a representation of action that it also for that reason represents people.

Third comes thought. This means the ability to say what is possible and appropriate. It comes in the dialogue and is the function of the statesman's or the rhetorician's art.

The old writers made their characters talk like statesmen, the moderns like rhetoricians.

Character is that which reveals choice, shows what sort of thing a man chooses or avoids in circumstances where the choice is not obvious, so those speeches convey no character in which there is nothing whatever which the speaker chooses or avoids.

Thought you find in speeches which contain an argument that something is or is not, or a general expression of opinion.

The fourth of the literary elements is the language. By this I mean, as we said above, the expression of meaning in words, and this is essentially the same in verse and in prose.

Of the other elements which enrich tragedy the most important is song-making.

Spectacle, while highly effective, is yet quite foreign to the art and has nothing to do with poetry. Indeed the effect of tragedy does not depend on its performance by actors, and, moreover, [20] for achieving the spectacular effects the art of the costumier is more authoritative than that of the poet.

After these definitions we must next discuss the proper arrangement of the incidents since this is the first and most important thing in tragedy.

We have laid it down that tragedy is a representation of an action that is whole and complete and of a certain magnitude, since a thing may be a whole and yet have no magnitude.

A whole is what has a beginning and middle and end.

A beginning is that which is not a necessary consequent of anything else but after which something else exists or happens as a natural result.

An end on the contrary is that which is inevitably or, as a rule, the natural result of something else but from which nothing else follows;

a middle follows something else and something follows from it.

Well constructed plots must not therefore begin and end at random, but must embody the formulae we have stated.

Moreover, in everything that is beautiful, whether it be a living creature or any organism composed of parts, these parts must not only be orderly arranged but must also have a certain

magnitude of their own;

for beauty consists in magnitude and ordered arrangement. From which it follows that neither would a very small creature be beautiful—for our view of it is almost instantaneous and therefore confused—nor a very large one, [1] since being unable to view it all at once, we lose the effect of a single whole; for instance, suppose a creature a thousand miles long.

As then creatures and other organic structures must have a certain magnitude and yet be easily taken in by the eye, so too with plots: they must have length but must be easily taken in by the memory.

The limit of length considered in relation to competitions and production before an audience does not concern this treatise. Had it been the rule to produce a hundred tragedies, the performance would have been regulated by the water clock, as it is said they did once in other days.

But as for the natural limit of the action, the longer the better as far as magnitude goes, provided it can all be grasped at once. To give a simple definition: the magnitude which admits of a change from bad fortune to good or from good fortune to bad, in a sequence of events which follow one another either inevitably or according to probability, that is the proper limit.

A plot does not have unity, as some people think, simply because it deals with a single hero. Many and indeed innumerable things happen to an individual, some of which do not go to make up any unity, and similarly an individual is concerned in many actions which do not combine into a single piece of action.

[20] It seems therefore that all those poets are wrong who have written a Heracleid or Theseid or other such poems. They think that because Heracles was a single individual the plot must for that reason have unity.

But Homer, supreme also in all other respects, was apparently well aware of this truth either by instinct or from knowledge of his art. For in writing an *Odyssey* he did not put in all that ever happened to Odysseus, his being wounded on Parnassus, for instance, or his feigned madness when the host was gathered (these being events neither of which necessarily or probably led to the other), but he constructed his *Odyssey* round a single action in our sense of the phrase. And the *Iliad* the same.

As then in the other arts of representation a single representation means a representation of a single object, so too the plot being a representation of a piece of action must represent a single piece of action and the whole of it; and the component incidents must be so arranged that if one of them be transposed or removed, the unity of the whole is dislocated and destroyed. For if the presence or absence of a thing makes no visible difference, then it is not an integral part of the whole.

What we have said already makes it further clear that a poet's object is not to tell what actually happened but what could and would happen either probably or inevitably.

The difference between a historian and a poet is not that one writes in prose and the other in verse— [1] indeed the writings of Herodotus could be put into verse and yet would still be a kind of history, whether written in metre or not. The real difference is this, that one tells what happened and the other what might happen.

For this reason poetry is something more scientific and serious than history, because poetry tends to give general truths while history gives particular facts.

By a general truth I mean the sort of thing that a certain type of man will do or say either probably or necessarily. That is what poetry aims at in giving names to the characters. A particular fact is what Alcibiades did or what was done to him.

In the case of comedy this has now become obvious, for comedians construct their plots out of probable incidents and then put in any names that occur to them. They do not, like the iambic satirists, write about individuals.

In tragedy, on the other hand, they keep to real names. The reason is that what is possible carries conviction. If a thing has not happened, we do not yet believe in its possibility, but what has happened is obviously possible. Had it been impossible, it would not have happened.

[20] It is true that in some tragedies one or two of the names are familiar and the rest invented; indeed in some they are all invented, as for instance in Agathon's *Antheus*, where both the incidents and the names are invented and yet it is none the less a favourite.

One need not therefore endeavor invariably to keep to the traditional stories with which our tragedies deal. Indeed it would be absurd to do that, seeing that the familiar themes are familiar only to a few and yet please all.

It is clear, then, from what we have said that the poet must be a maker not of verses but of stories, since he is a poet in virtue of his representation, and what he represents is action.

Even supposing he represents what has actually happened, he is none the less a poet, for there is nothing to prevent some actual occurrences being the sort of thing that would probably or inevitably happen, and it is in virtue of that that he is their maker.

Of simple plots and actions the worst are those which are episodic. By this I mean a plot in which the episodes do not follow each other probably or inevitably.

Bad poets write such plays because they cannot help it, and good poets write them to please the actors. Writing as they do for competition, they often strain a plot beyond its capacity and are thus obliged to sacrifice continuity.

But this is bad work, [1] since tragedy represents not only a complete action but also incidents that cause fear and pity, and this happens most of all when the incidents are unexpected and yet one is a consequence of the other.

For in that way the incidents will cause more amazement than if they happened mechanically and accidentally, since the most amazing accidental occurrences are those which seem to have been providential, for instance when the statue of Mity's at Argos killed the man who caused Mity's death by falling on him at a festival. Such events do not seem to be mere accidents.

So such plots as these must necessarily be the best.

Some plots are simple and some complex, as indeed the actions represented by the plots are obviously such.

By a simple action I mean one that is single and continuous in the sense of our definition above, wherein the change of fortune occurs without reversal or discovery;

by a complex action I mean one wherein the change coincides with a discovery or reversal or

both.

These should result from the actual structure of the plot in such a way that what has already happened makes the result inevitable or probable; [20] for there is indeed a vast difference between what happens *propter hoc* and *post hoc*.

A reversal is a change of the situation into the opposite, as described above, this change being, moreover, as we are saying, probable or inevitable—

like the man in the *Oedipus* who came to cheer Oedipus and rid him of his anxiety about his mother by revealing his parentage and changed the whole situation.

In the *Lynceus*, too, there is the man led off to execution and Danaus following to kill him, and the result of what had already happened was that the latter was killed and the former escaped.

A discovery, as the term itself implies, is a change from ignorance to knowledge, producing either friendship or hatred in those who are destined for good fortune or ill.

A discovery is most effective when it coincides with reversals, such as that involved by the discovery in the *Oedipus*.

There are also other forms of discovery, for what we have described may in a sense occur in relation to inanimate and trivial objects, or one may discover whether some one has done something or not.

But the discovery which is most essentially part of the plot and part of the action is of the kind described above, for such a discovery and reversal of fortune will involve either pity or fear, [1] and it is actions such as these which, according to our hypothesis, tragedy represents; and, moreover, misfortune and good fortune are likely to turn upon such incidents.

Now since the discovery is somebody's discovery, in some scenes one character only is discovered to another, the identity of the other being obvious; but sometimes each must discover the other. Thus Iphigeneia was discovered to Orestes through the sending of the letter, but a separate discovery was needed to make him known to Iphigeneia.

We see then that two elements of the plot, reversal and discovery, turn upon these incidents. A third element is a calamity. Of these three elements we have already described reversal and discovery.

A calamity is a destructive or painful occurrence, such as a death on the stage, acute suffering and wounding and so on.

We have already spoken of the constituent parts to be used as ingredients of tragedy. The separable members into which it is quantitatively divided are these: Prologue, Episode, Exode, Choral Song,

the last being divided into Parode and Stasimon.

These are common to all tragedies; songs sung by actors on the stage and *commoi* are peculiar to certain plays.

A prologue is the whole of that part of a tragedy which precedes the entrance of the chorus.

[20] An episode is the whole of that part of a tragedy which falls between whole choral songs.

An exode is the whole of that part of a tragedy which is not followed by a song of the chorus.

A *parode* is the whole of the first utterance of the chorus.

A *stasimon* is a choral song without anapaests or trochaics.

A *commos* is a song of lament shared by the chorus and the actors on the stage.

The constituent parts to be used as ingredients of tragedy have been described above; these are the separable members into which it is quantitatively divided.

Following upon what has been said above we should next state what ought to be aimed at and what avoided in the construction of a plot, and the means by which the object of tragedy may be achieved.

Since then the structure of the best tragedy should be not simple but complex and one that represents incidents arousing fear and pity—for that is peculiar to this form of art—it is obvious to begin with that one should not show worthy men passing from good fortune to bad. That does not arouse fear or pity but shocks our feelings.

Nor again wicked people passing from bad fortune to good. That is the most untragic of all, having none of the requisite qualities, since it does not satisfy our feelings or arouse pity or fear.

[1] Nor again the passing of a thoroughly bad man from good fortune to bad fortune. Such a structure might satisfy our feelings but it arouses neither pity nor fear, the one being for the man who does not deserve his misfortune and the other for the man who is like ourselves—pity for the undeserved misfortune, fear for the man like ourselves—so that the result will arouse neither pity nor fear.

There remains then the mean between these. This is the sort of man who is not pre-eminently virtuous and just, and yet it is through no badness or villainy of his own that he falls into the fortune, but rather through some flaw in him, he being one of those who are in high station and good fortune, like Oedipus and Thyestes and the famous men of such families as those.

The successful plot must then have a single and not, as some say, a double issue; and the change must be not to good fortune from bad but, on the contrary, from good to bad fortune, and it must not be due to villainy but to some great flaw in such a man as we have described, or of one who is better rather than worse.

This can be seen also in actual practice. For at first poets accepted any plots, but to-day the best tragedies are written about a few families— [20] Alcmaeon for instance and Oedipus and Orestes and Meleager and Thyestes and Telephus and all the others whom it befell to suffer or inflict terrible disasters.

Judged then by the theory of the art, the best tragedy is of this construction.

Those critics are therefore wrong who charge Euripides with doing this in his tragedies, and say that many of his end in misfortune.

That is, as we have shown, correct. And there is very good evidence of this, for on the stage and in competitions such plays appear the most tragic of all, if they are successful, and even if Euripides is in other respects a bad manager, yet he is certainly the most tragic of the poets.

Next in order comes the structure which some put first, that which has a double issue, like the *Odyssey*, and ends in opposite ways for the good characters and the bad.

It is the sentimentality of the audience which makes this seem the best form; for the poets

follow the wish of the spectators.

But this is not the true tragic pleasure but rather characteristic of comedy, where those who are bitter enemies in the story, Orestes and Aegisthus, for instance, go off at the end, having made friends, and nobody kills anybody.

[1] Fear and pity sometimes result from the spectacle and are sometimes aroused by the actual arrangement of the incidents, which is preferable and the mark of a better poet.

The plot should be so constructed that even without seeing the play anyone hearing of the incidents happening thrills with fear and pity as a result of what occurs. So would anyone feel who heard the story of Oedipus.

To produce this effect by means of an appeal to the eye is inartistic and needs adventitious aid, while those who by such means produce an effect which is not fearful but merely monstrous have nothing in common with tragedy. For one should not seek from tragedy all kinds of pleasure but that which is peculiar to tragedy,

and since the poet must by representation produce the pleasure which comes from feeling pity and fear, obviously this quality must be embodied in the incidents.

We must now decide what incidents seem dreadful or rather pitiable. Such must necessarily be the actions of friends to each other or of enemies or of people that are neither.

Now if an enemy does it to an enemy, there is nothing pitiable either in the deed or the intention,

except so far as the actual calamity goes.

Nor would there be if they were neither friends nor enemies. But when these calamities happen among friends, [20] when for instance brother kills brother, or son father, or mother son, or son mother—either kills or intends to kill, or does something of the kind, that is what we must look for.

Now it is not right to break up the traditional stories, I mean, for instance, Clytaemnestra being killed by Orestes and Eriphyle by Alcmaeon,

but the poet must show invention and make a skilful use of the tradition.

But we must state more clearly what is meant by skilful.

The action may happen in the way in which the old dramatists made their characters act—consciously and knowing the facts, as Euripides also made his Medea kill her children.

Or they may do the deed but without realizing the horror of it and then discover the relationship afterwards, like Oedipus in Sophocles. That indeed lies outside the play, but an example of this in the tragedy itself is the Alcmaeon of Astydamas or Telegonus in the Wounded Odysseus.

A third alternative is to intend to do some irremediable action in ignorance and to discover the truth before doing it.

Besides these there is no other way, for they must either do the deed or not, either knowing or unknowing.

The worst of these is to intend the action with full knowledge and not to perform it. That outrages the feelings and is not tragic, for there is no calamity. [1] So nobody does that, except

occasionally, as, for instance, Haemon and Creon in the *Antigone*.

Next comes the doing of the deed.

It is better to act in ignorance and discover afterwards. Our feelings are not outraged and the discovery is startling.

Best of all is the last; in the *Cresphontes*, for instance, Merope intends to kill her son and does not kill him but discovers; and in the *Iphigeneia* the case of the sister and brother; and in the *Helle* the son discovers just as he is on the point of giving up his mother.

So this is the reason, as was said above, why tragedies are about a few families. For in their experiments it was from no technical knowledge but purely by chance that they found out how to produce such an effect in their stories. So they are obliged to have recourse to those families in which such calamities befell.

Now concerning the structure of the incidents and the proper character of the plots enough has been said.

Concerning character there are four points to aim at. The first and most important is that the character should be good.

The play will show character if, as we said above, either the dialogue or the actions reveal some choice; and the character will be good, if the choice is good.

[20] But this is relative to each class of people. Even a woman is good and so is a slave, although it may be said that a woman is an inferior thing and a slave beneath consideration.

The second point is that the characters should be appropriate. A character may be manly, but it is not appropriate for a woman to be manly or clever.

Thirdly, it should be like. This is different from making the character good and from making it appropriate in the sense of the word as used above.

Fourthly, it should be consistent. Even if the original be inconsistent and offers such a character to the poet for representation, still he must be consistently inconsistent.

An example of unnecessary badness of character is Menelaos in the *Orestes*;

of character that is unfitting and inappropriate the lament of Odysseus in the *Scylla* and Melanippe's speech;

of inconsistent character Iphigeneia in *Aulis*, for the suppliant Iphigeneia is not at all like her later character.

In character-drawing just as much as in the arrangement of the incidents one should always seek what is inevitable or probable, so as to make it inevitable or probable that such and such a person should say or do such and such; and inevitable or probable that one thing should follow another.

Clearly therefore the denouement of each play should also be the result of the plot itself and not produced mechanically as in the *Medea* and the incident of the embarkation in the *Iliad*. [1]

The god in the car should only be used to explain what lies outside the play, either what happened earlier and is therefore beyond human knowledge, or what happens later and needs to be foretold in a proclamation. For we ascribe to the gods the power of seeing everything.

There must, however, be nothing inexplicable in the incidents, or, if there is, it must lie outside the tragedy. There is an example in Sophocles' Oedipus.

Since tragedy is a representation of men better than ourselves we must copy the good portrait-painters who, while rendering the distinctive form and making a likeness, yet paint people better than they are. It is the same with the poet. When representing people who are hot-tempered or lazy, or have other such traits of character, he should make them such, yet men of worth [an example of hardness]; take the way in which Agathon and Homer portray Achilles.

Keep, then, a careful eye on these rules and also on the appeal to the eye which is necessarily bound up with the poet's business; for that offers many opportunities of going wrong. But this subject has been adequately discussed in the published treatises.

What a Discovery is has been already stated. [20] As for kinds of Discovery, first comes the least artistic kind, which is largely used owing to incompetence—discovery by tokens.

These may be congenital, like the spear the Earth-born bear or stars, like those which Carcinus uses in his Thyestes;

or they may be acquired and these may be on the body, for instance, wounds, or external things like necklaces, and in the Tyro the discovery by means of the boat.

There is a better and a worse way of using these tokens; for instance Odysseus, by means of his wound, was discovered in one way by the nurse and in another way by the swine-herds.

Discovery scenes constructed to prove the point are inartistic and so are all such scenes, but those are better which arise out of a reversal scene, as, for instance, in The Washing.

In the second place come those which are manufactured by the poet and are therefore inartistic. For instance, in the Iphigeneia Orestes revealed himself. She was revealed to him through the letter,

but Orestes says himself what the poet wants and not what the plot requires. So this comes near to the fault already mentioned, for he might just as well have actually brought some tokens. And there is the voice of the shuttle In Sophocles' Tereus.

The third kind is due to memory, to showing distress on seeing something. [1] An example of this is the scene in the Cyprians by Dicaeogenes; on seeing the picture he burst into tears: and again in the Tale of Alcinous, hearing the minstrel he remembered and burst into tears; and thus they were recognized.

The fourth kind results from an inference; for instance, in the Choephoroe Someone like me has come; but nobody is like me except Orestes; therefore he has come. And there is Polyidus's idea about Iphigeneia, for it is likely enough that Orestes should make an inference that, whereas his sister was sacrificed, here is the same thing happening to him. And in Theodectes' Tydeus that having come to find a son, he is perishing himself. And the scene in the Phineidae, where on seeing the spot the women inferred their fate, that they were meant to die there for it was there that they had been exposed.

There is also a kind of fictitious discovery which depends on a false inference on the part of the audience, for instance in Odysseus the False Messenger, he said he would recognize the bow, which as a matter of fact he had not seen, but to assume that he really would reveal himself by

this means is a false inference.

Best of all is the discovery which is brought about directly by the incidents, the surprise being produced by means of what is likely—take the scene in Sophocles' Oedipus or in the Iphigeneia—for it is likely enough that she should want to send a letter. These are the only discovery scenes which dispense with artificial tokens, like necklaces.

[20] In the second place come those that are the result of inference.

In constructing plots and completing the effect by the help of dialogue the poet should, as far as possible, keep the scene before his eyes. Only thus by getting the picture as clear as if he were present at the actual event, will he find what is fitting and detect contradictions.

The censure upon Carcinus is evidence of this. Amphiaraios was made to rise from a temple. The poet did not visualize the scene and therefore this escaped his notice, but on the stage it was a failure since the audience objected.

The poet should also, as far as possible, complete the effect by using the gestures. For, if their natural powers are equal, those who are actually in the emotions are the most convincing; he who is agitated blusters and the angry man rages with the maximum of conviction.

And that is why poetry needs either a sympathetic nature or a madman, the former being impressionable and the latter inspired.

The stories, whether they are traditional or whether you make them up yourself, [1] should first be sketched in outline and then expanded by putting in episodes.

I mean that one might look at the general outline, say of the Iphigeneia, like this: A certain maiden has been sacrificed, and has disappeared beyond the ken of those who sacrificed her and has been established in another country, where it is a custom to sacrifice strangers to the goddess; and this priesthood she holds. Some time afterwards it happens that the brother of the priestess arrives there—the fact that the god told him to go there, and why, and the object of his journey, lie outside the outline-plot. He arrives, is seized, and is on the point of being sacrificed, when he reveals his identity either by Euripides' method or according to Polyidos, by making the very natural remark that after all it is not only his sister who was born to be sacrificed but himself too; and thus he is saved.

Not until this has been done should you put in names and insert the episodes;

and you must mind that the episodes are appropriate, as, for instance, in the case of Orestes the madness that led to his capture and his escape by means of the purification.

Now in drama the episodes are short, but it is by them that the epic gains its length.

The story of the Odyssey is quite short. A man is for many years away from home and his footsteps are dogged by Poseidon and he is all alone. Moreover, [20] affairs at home are in such a state that his estate is being wasted by suitors and a plot laid against his son, but after being storm-tossed he arrives himself, reveals who he is, and attacks them, with the result that he is saved and destroys his enemies.

That is the essence, the rest is episodes.

In every tragedy there is a complication and a denouement. The incidents outside the plot and some of those in it usually form the complication, the rest is the denouement.

I mean this, that the complication is the part from the beginning up to the point which immediately precedes the occurrence of a change from bad to good fortune or from good fortune to bad; the denouement is from the beginning of the change down to the end.

For instance, in the *Lynceus* of Theodectes the complication is the preceding events, and the seizure of the boy, and then their own seizure; and the denouement is from the capital charge to the end.

Tragedies should properly be classed as the same or different mainly in virtue of the plot, that is to say those that have the same entanglement and denouement. Many who entangle well are bad at the denouement. Both should always be mastered.

There are four varieties of tragedy—the same as the number given for the elements—

first the complex kind, which all turns on reversal and discovery;

the calamity play like the stories of Ajax and Ixion;

the character play like the Phthian Women and the Peleus.

[1] The fourth element is spectacle, like the Phorcydes and Prometheus, and all scenes laid in Hades.

One should ideally try to include all these elements or, failing that, the most important and as many as possible, especially since it is the modern fashion to carp at poets, and, because there have been good poets in each style, to demand that a single author should surpass the peculiar merits of each.

One must remember, as we have often said, not to make a tragedy an epic structure:

by epic I mean made up of many stories—suppose, for instance, one were to dramatize the *Iliad* as a whole.

The length of the *Iliad* allows to the parts their proper size, but in plays the result is full of disappointment.

And the proof is that all who have dramatized the Sack of Troy as a whole, and not, like Euripides, piecemeal, or the Niobe story as a whole and not like Aeschylus, either fail or fare badly in competition. Indeed even Agathon failed in this point alone.

In reversals, however, and in simple stories too, [20] they admirably achieve their end, which is a tragic effect that also satisfies your feelings.

This is achieved when the wise man, who is, however, unscrupulous, is deceived—like Sisyphus—and the man who is brave but wicked is worsted.

And this, as Agathon says, is a likely result, since it is likely that many quite unlikely things should happen.

The chorus too must be regarded as one of the actors. It must be part of the whole and share in the action, not as in Euripides but as in Sophocles.

In the others the choral odes have no more to do with the plot than with any other tragedy. And so they sing interludes, a practice begun by Agathon. And yet to sing interludes is quite as bad as transferring a whole speech or scene from one play to another.

The other factors have been already discussed. It remains to speak of Diction and Thought.

All that concerns Thought may be left to the treatise on Rhetoric, for the subject is more proper to that inquiry.

Under the head of Thought come all the effects to be produced by the language.

Some of these are proof and refutation, [1] the arousing of feelings like pity, fear, anger, and so on, and then again exaggeration and depreciation.

It is clear that in the case of the incidents, too, one should work on the same principles, when effects of pity or terror or exaggeration or probability have to be produced.

There is just this difference, that some effects must be clear without explanation, whereas others are produced in the speeches by the speaker and are due to the speeches. For what would be the use of a speaker, if the required effect were likely to be felt without the aid of the speeches?

Under the head of Diction one subject of inquiry is the various modes of speech, the knowledge of which is proper to elocution or to the man who knows the master art—I mean for instance, what is a command, a prayer, a statement, a threat, question, answer, and so on.

The knowledge or ignorance of such matters brings upon the poet no censure worth serious consideration. For who could suppose that there is any fault in the passage which Protagoras censures, because Homer, intending to utter a prayer, gives a command when he says, Sing, goddess, the wrath? To order something to be done or not is, he points out, a command.

So we may leave this topic as one that belongs not to poetry but to another art.

[20] Diction as a whole is made up of these parts: letter, syllable, conjunction, joint, noun, verb, case, phrase.

A letter is an indivisible sound, not every such sound but one of which an intelligible sound can be formed. Animals utter indivisible sounds but none that I should call a letter.

Such sounds may be subdivided into vowel, semi-vowel, and mute. A vowel is that which without any addition has an audible sound; a semivowel needs the addition of another letter to give it audible sound, for instance S and R; a mute is that which with addition has no sound of its own but becomes audible when combined with some of the letters which have a sound. Examples of mutes are G and D.

Letters differ according to the shape of the mouth and the place at which they are sounded; in being with or without aspiration; in being long and short; and lastly in having an acute, grave, or intermediate accent. But the detailed study of these matters properly concerns students of metre.

A syllable is a sound without meaning, composed of a mute and a letter that has a sound. GR, for example, without A is a syllable just as much as GRA with an A. But these distinctions also belong to the theory of metre.

A conjunction is a sound without meaning, [1] which neither hinders nor causes the formation of a single significant sound or phrase out of several sounds, and which, if the phrase stands by itself, cannot properly stand at the beginning of it, e.g. μέν, δή, τοί, δέ; or else it is a sound without meaning capable of forming one significant sound or phrase out of several sounds having each a meaning of their own, e.g. ἀμφί, περί.

A joint is a sound without meaning which marks the beginning or end of a phrase or a division in it, and naturally stands at either end or in the middle.

A noun is a composite sound with a meaning, not indicative of time, no part of which has a meaning by itself; for in compounds we do not use each part as having a meaning of its own, for instance, in Theodorus, there is no meaning of δῶρον (gift).

A verb is a composite sound with a meaning, indicative of time, no part of which has a meaning by itself—just as in nouns. Man or white does not signify time, but walks and has walked connote present and past time respectively.

A case (or inflection) of a noun or verb is that which signifies either of or to a thing and the like; [20] or gives the sense of one or many e.g. men and man; or else it may depend on the delivery, for example question and command. Walked? and Walk! are verbal cases of this kind.

A phrase is a composite sound with a meaning, some parts of which mean something by themselves.

It is not true to say that every phrase is made up of nouns and verbs, e.g. the definition of man; but although it is possible to have a phrase without verbs, yet some part of it will always have a meaning of its own, for example, Cleon in Cleon walks.

A phrase may be a unit in two ways; either it signifies one thing or it is a combination of several phrases. The unity of the Iliad, for instance, is due to such combination, but the definition of man is one phrase because it signifies one thing.

Nouns are of two kinds. There is the simple noun, by which I mean one made up of parts that have no meaning, like γῆ, and there is the compound noun.

These may be made up either of a part which has no meaning and a part which has a meaning—though it does not have its meaning in the compound—or of two parts both having a meaning.

A compound noun may be triple and quadruple and multiple, e.g. many of the bombastic names like Hermocairoxanthus. [1] . . .

Every noun is either ordinary or rare or metaphorical or ornamental or invented or lengthened or curtailed or altered.

An ordinary word is one used by everybody, a rare word one used by some;

so that a word may obviously be both ordinary and rare, but not in relation to the same people. οἶνον, for instance, is to the Cypriots an ordinary word but to us a rare one.

Metaphor is the application of a strange term either transferred from the genus and applied to the species or from the species and applied to the genus, or from one species to another or else by analogy.

An example of a term transferred from genus to species is Here stands my ship. Riding at anchor is a species of standing.

An example of transference from species to genus is Indeed ten thousand noble things Odysseus did, for ten thousand, which is a species of many, is here used instead of the word many.

An example of transference from one species to another is Drawing off his life with the bronze

and Severing with the tireless bronze, where drawing off is used for severing and severing for drawing off, both being species of removing.

Metaphor by analogy means this: when B is to A as D is to C, then instead of B the poet will say D and B instead of D.

And sometimes they add that to which the term supplanted by the metaphor is relative. [20] For instance, a cup is to Dionysus what a shield is to Ares; so he will call the cup Dionysus's shield and the shield Ares' cup.

Or old age is to life as evening is to day; so he will call the evening day's old-age or use Empedocles' phrase; and old age he will call the evening of life or life's setting sun.

Sometimes there is no word for some of the terms of the analogy but the metaphor can be used all the same. For instance, to scatter seed is to sow, but there is no word for the action of the sun in scattering its fire. Yet this has to the sunshine the same relation as sowing has to the seed, and so you have the phrase sowing the god-created fire.

Besides this another way of employing metaphor is to call a thing by the strange name and then to deny it some attribute of that name.

For instance, suppose you call the shield not Ares' cup but a "wineless cup." . . .

An invented word is one not used at all by any people and coined by the poet. There seem to be such words, eg. sprouters for horns and pray-er for priest.

A word is lengthened or curtailed, [1] the former when use is made of a longer vowel than usual or a syllable inserted, and the latter when part of the word is curtailed.

An example of a lengthened word is πόλῃος for πολέως and Πηληιάδεω for Πηλείδου; and of a curtailed word κρῖ and δῶ, and e.g. μία γίνεται ἀμφοτέρων ὄψ.

A word is altered when the poet coins part of the word and leaves the rest unchanged, e.g. δεξιτερόν κατὰ μαζόν instead of δεξιόν.

Of the nouns themselves, some are masculine, some feminine, and some neuter.

Masculine are all that end in N and P and Σ and in the two compounds of Σ, Ψ and Ξ.

Feminine are all that end in those of the vowels that are always long, for instance Η and Ω, and in Α among vowels that can be lengthened.

The result is that the number of masculine and feminine terminations is the same, for Ψ and Ξ are the same as Σ.

No noun ends in a mute or in a short vowel.

Only three end in Ι, μέλι, κόμμι, and πέπερι. Five end in Υ. The neuters end in these letters and in Ν and Σ.

The merit of diction is to be clear and not commonplace. The clearest diction is that made up of ordinary words, but it is commonplace.

[20] An example is the poetry of Cleophon and of Sthenelus.

That which employs unfamiliar words is dignified and outside the common usage. By unfamiliar I mean a rare word, a metaphor, a lengthening, and anything beyond the ordinary use.

But if a poet writes entirely in such words, the result will be either a riddle or jargon; if made up of metaphors, a riddle and if of rare words, jargon.

The essence of a riddle consists in describing a fact by an impossible combination of words. By merely combining the ordinary names of things this cannot be done, but it is made possible by combining metaphors. For instance, I saw a man weld bronze upon a man with fire, and so on.

A medley of rare words is jargon.

We need then a sort of mixture of the two. For the one kind will save the diction from being prosaic and commonplace, the rare word, for example, and the metaphor and the ornament, whereas the ordinary words give clarity.

[1] A considerable aid to clarity and distinction are the lengthening and abbreviation and alteration of words. Being otherwise than in the ordinary form and thus unusual, these will produce the effect of distinction, and clarity will be preserved by retaining part of the usual form.

Those critics are therefore wrong who censure this manner of idiom and poke fun at the poet, as did the elder Eucleides who said it was easy to write poetry, granted the right to lengthen syllables at will. He had made a burlesque in this very style: scansion here and in the next quotation not captured in original file; GRC May 1, 2026; captured the scansion

Ἐπιχῶ|ρην εἶδον Μαῖα|θωνάδε | βαδι|ζόντα

οὐκ ἄν | γ' ἑρᾶμενος τῶν | ἐκείνου ἑλλέβορον.

Now to make an obtrusive use of this licence is ridiculous;

but moderation is a requisite common to all kinds of writing. The same effect could be got by using metaphors and rare words and the rest unsuitably for the express purpose of raising a laugh.

What a difference is made by the proper use of such licence may be seen in epic poetry, if you substitute in the verse the ordinary forms.

Take a rare word or metaphor or any of the others and substitute the ordinary word; the truth of our contention will then be obvious. [20] For instance, Aeschylus and Euripides wrote the same iambic line with the change of one word only, a rare word in place of one made ordinary by custom, yet the one line seems beautiful and the other trivial. Aeschylus in the *Philoctetes* wrote,

The ulcer eats the flesh of this my foot,

and Euripides instead of eats put feasts upon. Or take

I that am small, of no account nor goodly;

suppose one were to read the line substituting the ordinary words,

I that am little and weak and ugly.

Or compare

He set a stool unseemly and a table small.

with

He set a shabby stool and a little table,

or the sea-shore is roaring with the sea-shore is shrieking.

Arphrades again made fun of the tragedians because they employ phrases which no one would use in conversation, like δωμάτων ἄπο instead of ἀπὸ δωμάτων and their σέθεν and ἐγὼ δέ νιν and Ἀχιλλέως πέρι for περὶ Ἀχιλλέως, and so on.

[1] All that sort of thing, not being in the ordinary form, gives distinction to the diction, which was what he failed to understand.

It is a great thing to make a proper use of each of the elements mentioned, and of double words and rare words too, but by far the greatest thing is the use of metaphor.

That alone cannot be learnt; it is the token of genius. For the right use of metaphor means an eye for resemblances.

Of the various kinds of words the double forms are most suited for dithyrambs, rare words for heroic verse and metaphors for iambics.

And indeed in heroic verse they are all useful; but since iambic verse is largely an imitation of speech, only those nouns are suitable which might be used in talking. These are the ordinary word, metaphor, and ornament.

Now concerning tragedy and the art of representing life in action, what we have said already must suffice.

We come now to the art of representation which is narrative and in metre. Clearly the story must be constructed as in tragedy, dramatically, round a single piece of action, whole and complete in itself, [20] with a beginning, middle and end, so that like a single living organism it may produce its own peculiar form of pleasure.

It must not be such as we normally find in history, where what is required is an exposition not of a single piece of action but of a single period of time, showing all that within the period befell one or more persons, events that have a merely casual relation to each other.

For just as the battle of Salamis occurred at the same time as the Carthaginian battle in Sicily, but they do not converge to the same result; so, too, in any sequence of time one event may follow another and yet they may not issue in any one result.

Yet most of the poets do this.

So in this respect, too, compared with all other poets Homer may seem, as we have already said, divinely inspired, in that even with the Trojan war, which has a beginning and an end, he did not endeavor to dramatize it as a whole, since it would have been either too long to be taken in all at once or, if he had moderated the length, he would have complicated it by the variety of incident. As it is, he takes one part of the story only and uses many incidents from other parts, such as the Catalogue of Ships and other incidents with which he diversifies his poetry.

The others, on the contrary, all write about a single hero or about a single period or about a single action with a great many parts, the authors, [1] for example, of the Cypria and the Little Iliad.

The result is that out of an Iliad or an Odyssey only one tragedy can be made, or two at most, whereas several have been made out of the Cypria, and out of the Little Iliad more than eight, e.g. The Award of Arms, Philoctetes, Neoptolemus, Eurypylos, The Begging, The Laconian

Women, The Sack of Troy, and Sailing of the Fleet, and Sinon, too, and The Trojan Women.

The next point is that there must be the same varieties of epic as of tragedy: an epic must be simple or complex, or else turn on character or on calamity.

The constituent parts, too, are the same with the exception of song and spectacle. Epic needs reversals and discoveries and calamities, and the thought and diction too must be good.

All these were used by Homer for the first time, and used well. Of his poems he made the one, the Iliad, a simple story turning on calamity, and the Odyssey a complex story—it is full of discoveries—turning on character. Besides this they surpass all other poems in diction and thought.

Epic differs from tragedy in the length of the composition and in metre.

The limit of length already given will suffice—it must be possible to embrace the beginning and the end in one view, [20] which would be the case if the compositions were shorter than the ancient epics but reached to the length of the tragedies presented at a single entertainment.

Epic has a special advantage which enables the length to be increased, because in tragedy it is not possible to represent several parts of the story as going on simultaneously, but only to show what is on the stage, that part of the story which the actors are performing; whereas, in the epic, because it is narrative, several parts can be portrayed as being enacted at the same time.

If these incidents are relevant, they increase the bulk of the poem, and this increase gives the epic a great advantage in richness as well as the variety due to the diverse incidents; for it is monotony which, soon satiating the audience, makes tragedies fail.

Experience has shown that the heroic hexameter is the right metre. Were anyone to write a narrative poem in any other metre or in several metres, the effect would be wrong.

The hexameter is the most sedate and stately of all metres and therefore admits of rare words and metaphors more than others, and narrative poetry is itself elaborate above all others.

The iambic and the trochaic tetrameter are lively, the latter suits dancing and the former suits real life.

[1] Still more unsuitable is it to use several metres as Chaeremon did.

So no one has composed a long poem in any metre other than the heroic hexameter. As we said above, Nature shows that this is the right metre to choose.

Homer deserves praise for many things and especially for this, that alone of all poets he does not fail to understand what he ought to do himself.

The poet should speak as seldom as possible in his own character, since he is not representing the story in that sense. Now the other poets play a part themselves throughout the poem and only occasionally represent a few things dramatically, but Homer after a brief prelude at once brings in a man or a woman or some other character, never without character, but all having character of their own.

Now the marvellous should certainly be portrayed in tragedy, but epic affords greater scope for the inexplicable(which is the chief element in what is marvellous), because we do not actually see the persons of the story.

The incident of Hector's pursuit would look ridiculous on the stage, the people standing still and

not pursuing and Achilles waving them back, but in epic that is not noticed.

But that the marvellous causes pleasure is shown by the fact that people always tell a piece of news with additions by way of being agreeable.

Above all, Homer has taught the others the proper way of telling lies, [20] that is, by using a fallacy. When B is true if A is true, or B happens if A happens, people think that if B is true A must be true or happen. But that is false. Consequently if A be untrue but there be something else, B, which is necessarily true or happens if A is true, the proper thing to do is to posit B, for, knowing B to be true, our mind falsely infers that A is true also. This is an example from the *Washing*.

What is convincing though impossible should always be preferred to what is possible and unconvincing.

Stories should not be made up of inexplicable details; so far as possible there should be nothing inexplicable, or, if there is, it should lie outside the story—as, for instance, Oedipus not knowing how Laius died—and not in the play; for example, in the *Electra* the news of the Pythian games, or in the *Mysians* the man who came from Tegea to Mysia without speaking.

To say that the plot would otherwise have been ruined is ridiculous. One should not in the first instance construct such a plot, and if a poet does write thus, and there seems to be a more reasonable way of treating the incident, then it is positively absurd.

Even in the *Odyssey* the inexplicable elements in the story of his landing would obviously have been intolerable, had they been written by an inferior poet. [1] As it is, Homer conceals the absurdity by the charm of all his other merits.

The diction should be elaborated only in the idle parts which do not reveal character or thought. Too brilliant diction frustrates its own object by diverting attention from the portrayal of character and thought.

With regard to problems, and the various solutions of them, how many kinds there are, and the nature of each kind, all will be clear if we look at them like this.

Since the poet represents life, as a painter does or any other maker of likenesses, he must always represent one of three things—either things as they were or are; or things as they are said and seem to be; or things as they should be.

These are expressed in diction with or without rare words and metaphors, there being many modifications of diction, all of which we allow the poet to use.

Moreover, the standard of what is correct is not the same in the art of poetry as it is in the art of social conduct or any other art.

In the actual art of poetry there are two kinds of errors, essential and accidental.

If a man meant to represent something and failed through incapacity, that is an essential error. But if his error is due to his original conception being wrong and his portraying, for example, a horse advancing both its right legs, that is then a technical error in some special branch of knowledge, [20] in medicine, say, or whatever it may be; or else some sort of impossibility has been portrayed, but that is not an essential error.

These considerations must, then, be kept in view in meeting the charges contained in these objections.

Let us first take the charges against the art of poetry itself. If an impossibility has been portrayed, an error has been made.

But it is justifiable if the poet thus achieves the object of poetry—what that is has been already stated—and makes that part or some other part of the poem more striking. The pursuit of Hector is an example of this.

If, however, the object could have been achieved better or just as well without sacrifice of technical accuracy, then it is not justifiable, for, if possible, there should be no error at all in any part of the poem.

Again one must ask of which kind is the error, is it an error in poetic art or a chance error in some other field? It is less of an error not to know that a female stag has no horns than to make a picture that is unrecognizable.

Next, supposing the charge is That is not true, one can meet it by saying But perhaps it ought to be, just as Sophocles said that he portrayed people as they ought to be and Euripides portrayed them as they are.

If neither of these will do, then say, Such is the tale; for instance, tales about gods.

Very likely there is no advantage in telling them, and they are not true either, but may well be what Xenophanes declared—all the same such is the tale.

[1] In another case, perhaps, there is no advantage but such was the fact, e.g. the case of the arms, Their spears erect on butt-spikes stood, for that was then the custom, as it still is in Illyria.

As to the question whether anything that has been said or done is morally good or bad, this must be answered not merely by seeing whether what has actually been done or said is noble or base, but by taking into consideration also the man who did or said it, and seeing to whom he did or said it, and when and for whom and for what reason; for example, to secure a greater good or to avoid a greater evil.

Some objections may be met by reference to the diction, for example, by pleading rare word, e.g. οὐρῆας μὲν πρῶτον, for perhaps he means not mules but sentinels. And Dolon, One that was verily evil of form, it may be not his deformed body but his ugly face, for the Cretans use fair-formed for fair-featured. And again Livelier mix it may mean not undiluted as for drunkards but quicker.

Other expressions are metaphorical, for example:

Then all the other immortals and men lay all night in slumber,
while yet he says:

Yea, when indeed he gazed at the Trojan plain Agamemnon

Marvelled at voices of flutes . . .

[20] All is used instead of many metaphorically, all being a species of many. And again, Alone unsharing is metaphorical; the best known is called the only one.

By intonation also; for example, the solutions of Hippias of Thasos, his δίδομεν δέ οἱ and τὸ μὲν οὔ καταπύθεται ὄμβρῳ;

and by punctuation; for example, the lines of Empedocles:

Soon mortal grow they that aforetime learnt

Immortal ways, and pure erstwhile commingled.

Or again by ambiguity, e.g. παρώχηκεν δὲ πλέω νύξ, where πλείω is ambiguous.

Others according to the habitual use of the phrase, e.g. wine and water is called wine so you get the phrase greaves of new-wrought tin; or workers in iron are called braziers, and so Ganymede is said to pour wine for Zeus, though they do not drink wine. This last might however be metaphorical.

Whenever a word seems to involve a contradiction, one should consider how many different meanings it might bear in the passage, e.g. in There the bronzen shaft was stayed, we should ask in how many ways being stayed might be taken,

interpreting the passage in this sense or in that,

and keeping as far as possible from the attitude which Glaucon describes [1] when he says that people make some unwarrantable presupposition and having themselves given an adverse verdict proceed to argue from it, and if what they think the poet has said does not agree with their own preconceived ideas, they censure him, as if that was what he had said.

This is what has happened in the case of Icarius. They assume that he was a Spartan and therefore find it odd that when Telemachus went to Sparta he did not meet him. But the truth may be, as the Cephallenians say, that Odysseus married a wife from their country and that the name was not Icarius but Icadius. So the objection is probably due to a mistake.

In general any impossibility may be defended by reference to the poetic effect or to the ideal or to current opinion.

For poetic effect a convincing impossibility is preferable to that which is unconvincing though possible.

It may be impossible that there should be such people as Zeuxis used to paint, but it would be better if there were; for the type should improve on the actual.

Popular tradition may be used to defend what seems irrational, and you can also say that sometimes it is not irrational, for it is likely that unlikely things should happen.

Contradictions in terms must be examined in the same way as an opponent's refutations in argument, to see whether the poet refers to the same thing in the same relation and in the same sense, and has contradicted either what he expressly says himself or what an intelligent person would take to be his meaning.

It is right, however, to censure both improbability and depravity where there is no necessity and no use is made of the improbability. [20] An example is Euripides' introduction of Aegeus or (of depravity) the character of Menelaus in the Orestes.

The censures they bring are of five kinds; that things are either impossible or irrational or harmful or inconsistent or contrary to artistic correctness. The solutions must be studied under the heads specified above, twelve in number.

The question may be raised whether the epic or the tragic form of representation is the better.

If the better is the less vulgar and the less vulgar is always that which appeals to the better audience, then obviously the art which makes its appeal to everybody is eminently vulgar.

And indeed actors think the audience do not understand unless they put in something of their own, and so they strike all sorts of attitudes, as you see bad flute-players whirling about if they have to do the Discus, or mauling the leader of the chorus when they are playing the Scylla.

So tragedy is something like what the older school of actors thought of their successors, for Mynniscus used to call Callippides the monkey, because he overacted, and the same was said of Pindarus.

[1] The whole tragic art, then, is to epic poetry what these later actors were compared to their predecessors, since according to this view epic appeals to a cultivated audience which has no need of actor's poses, while tragedy appeals to a lower class. If then it is vulgar, it must obviously be inferior.

First of all, this is not a criticism of poetry but of acting: even in reciting a minstrel can overdo his gestures, as Sosistratus did, or in a singing competition, like Mnasiheus of Opus.

Besides it is not all attitudinizing that ought to be barred any more than all dancing, but only the attitudes of inferior people. That was the objection to Callippides; and modern actors are similarly criticized for representing women who are not ladies.

Moreover, tragedy fulfils its function even without acting, just as much as epic, and its quality can be gauged by reading aloud. So, if it is in other respects superior, this disadvantage is not necessarily inherent.

Secondly, tragedy has all the elements of the epic

—it can even use the hexameter—and in addition a considerable element of its own in the spectacle and the music, which make the pleasure all the more vivid;

and this vividness can be felt whether it is read or acted.

[1] Another point is that it attains its end with greater economy of length. What is concentrated is always more effective than what is spread over a long period; suppose, for example, Sophocles' Oedipus were to be turned into as many lines as there are in the Iliad.

Again, the art of the epic has less unity, as is shown by the fact that any one epic makes several tragedies. The result is that, if the epic poet takes a single plot, either it is set forth so briefly as to seem curtailed, or if it conforms to the limit of length it seems thin and diluted.

In saying that epic has less unity I mean an epic made up of several separate actions.

The Iliad has many such parts and so has the Odyssey, and each by itself has a certain magnitude. And yet the composition of these poems is as perfect as can be and each of them is—as far as an epic may be—a representation of a single action.

If then tragedy is superior in these respects and also in fulfilling its artistic function—for tragedies and epics should produce not any form of pleasure but the pleasure we have described—then obviously, since it attains its object better than the epic, the better of the two is tragedy.

This must suffice for our treatment of tragedy and epic, their characteristics, their species, their constituent parts, and their number and attributes; for the causes of success and failure; and for critical problems and their solutions. . . .