

Aristotle's Theory of Comedy :

μῦθος and κάθαρσις

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1. Tragic Catharsis in *Poetics*

Aristotle, in his *Poetics*, claimed that tragedy, “through pity and fear, accomplishes the catharsis of such emotions (δι’ ἐλέου καὶ φόβου περαίνουσα τὴν τῶν τοιούτων παθημάτων κάθαρσιν.) (*Poet.* 1449b27f.)” It has been argued that the medical purgation theory of the musical catharsis in *Politics* is the key phrase for the interpretation of tragic catharsis, where he says, those who are liable to ἐνθουσιασμός are, “when they use tunes that violently arouse the soul, [...] thrown into a state as if they had received medicinal treatment and taken a catharsis (ὥσπερ ἰατρείας τυχόντας καὶ καθάρσεως) (*Pol.* 1342a9-11).” This musical catharsis is important because Aristotle did not restrict it to ἐνθουσιασμός. He continues that the same experience must come also to the “τοὺς ἐλεήμονας καὶ τοὺς φοβητικούς καὶ τοὺς ὅλως παθητικούς (a12),” and “all must undergo a catharsis (τινα κάθαρσιν) and a pleasant feeling of relief (a13-14).”

This medical catharsis (catharsis as purgation) in *Politics* is also expected in the tragic performances, as both *Poetics* and *Politics* speak of the catharsis of pity and fear and *Politics* has left the fuller explanation of the catharsis in general to *Poetics*¹. Tragic catharsis, however, cannot be reduced to the purgation of the emotions. As Aristotle put the catharsis clause at the end of the definition of tragedy, catharsis must be the final cause of making tragedies and represent the proper effect of the tragedy. The fact that the fuller discussion is left to *Poetics* also suggests that the catharsis in *Poetics* should not be restricted to the application of the musical catharsis of *Politics*.

Where, then, should we locate catharsis as the proper element of tragedy? Although many scholars have thought it as the purification of the tragic emotion itself, G. F. Else was unique in trying to place it in the composition of μῦθος². For Else, tragic catharsis is not the emotional effect of tragedy on the audience. It is rather something tragedy as imitation accomplishes throughout the action of the play. For Aristotle, the ideal tragic plot includes murder or attempted murder between φίλων, that is, between close family members. This type of μῦθος is most pitiful and fearful. But such a μῦθος might also arouse a different emotional reaction of μαρόν (moral disgust) which is fatal to the proper tragic effect. The tragic poet must avoid this μαρόν by making sure that tragic hero did not know the φιλία between himself and the victim, and that had he known the fact, he could not have done the deed. In this way, that is, by ensuring his deed is a ἀμαρτία μεγάλη, the tragic poet purifies the hero of pollution and this is what the catharsis clause means. In order to justify this interpretation, Else renders ἐλέου καὶ φόβου in the catharsis clause not as pity and fear as the emotional state of the audience, but as “events including elements of pity and fear,” that is, pitiful and fearful events, and τῶν τοιούτων παθημάτων as “those pitiful and fearful acts

which have that quality,” namely, tragic πάθος which is pitiful and fearful³. I believe Else is fully justified in considering ἔλεος and φόβος, through which tragedy accomplishes catharsis, as pitiful and fearful action, but not so in equating παθημάτων with tragic πάθος. Catharsis at the end of the definition of tragedy should indicate its final cause and should describe what tragedy “does” to the audience.

Although catharsis as the purification of tragic action is untenable as the “meaning” of the catharsis clause, and the catharsis in the definition should be the emotional effect of tragedy, this purification of action is still assumed as the presumption of this emotional effect. Tragic catharsis is derived from “pitiful and fearful action” and in order for the action to be “pitiful and fearful,” it must be purified of μαρὸν. On the other hand, catharsis as purgation of emotion is an automatic process on the side of the audience after they feel pity and fear and is not characteristic of tragic performance. We should consider the tragic catharsis in the definition as an emotional purification of some kind (of what kind it should be is not important for our present purpose). Anyway, tragic catharsis as a whole is a course of process including (a) proper arousal of pity and fear through the plot, (b) the purification of these emotions and (c) the relief felt by the purgation of such emotions, and this total process may have been discussed in the second book of the *Poetics* as the “discussion of catharsis.”

2. The Tragic μῦθος

Another subject usually assumed in the second book of *Poetics* is the treatment of comedy. There are several reasons for this assumption: the cross reference⁴ in *Rhetorics*, the promise of the argument on comedy in 6. 49b21, the incomplete final part of the extant *Poetics* itself⁵, *Tractatus Coislinianus* which is at least influenced by Aristotle's *Poetics* and the mention of comic catharsis in Proclus and Iamblichus. These evidences speak for the existence of the argument of comedy in the second book.

In extant *Poetics*, Aristotle argues that comedy imitates “the action of men worse than ourselves.” However, not every kind of fault but only “the ridiculous, which is a species of the ugly” should be imitated in comedy (1449a32-34). This ridiculous is “a kind of mistake (ἀμαρτημά τι) which is not painful or destructive (49a34-35).” Aristotle also argues that the pleasure derived from the double construction of plot (poetic justice) belongs rather to comedy than tragedy. Such fragmentary references to comedy are based on a consistent theory of comedy and we can reconstruct the theory from them.

For this purpose, we should establish three points concerning tragedy.

- (1) The description in the second chapter that tragedy imitates “the action of superior people” is a generic specification concerning what tragedy ‘imitates’ and not a requirement concerning what tragedy ‘should imitate.’ Similarly, not only the ideal comedy, but every comedy imitates “the action of the inferior people.” The adjectives ‘inferior’ and ‘superior’, then, cannot be taken in an ethical, but rather in an aristocratic sense of the word⁶. Tragedy imitates actions of mythical heroes and heroines and comedy those of ordinary people.
- (2) The general requirements for tragic plot in the seventh and eighth chapters derive

from the fact that tragedy is the imitation of an 'action.' Tragedy is "an imitation of an action that is complete in itself, as a whole of some magnitude (1450b23-25)," and the tragic action should contain a proper "beginning, middle, and end" and should proceed in necessary or probable sequence. In addition, tragedy should have "the length which allows of the hero passing by a series of probable or necessary stages from bad fortune to good, or from good to bad (1451a12-14)," because "beauty is a matter of size and order." By describing what is necessary or probable, tragedy becomes "more philosophical than history." One of the causes that gave rise to poetry is the pleasure of learning through imitation⁸.

- (3) In the thirteenth and fourteenth chapters, it is required that tragedy should imitate pitiful and fearful action. This requirement comes from the fact that tragedy is an imitation of 'superior' action. Although Aristotle presents the 'pity and fear' as if they are independent claims, we should not understand it to mean that the requirement that tragedy should be 'pitiful and fearful' came first and then the pattern of the plot which should satisfy this claim is investigated.

The last point needs some elucidation. 'Pity and fear' are thus introduced in Chapter 9 abruptly: "tragedy, however, is an imitation not only of a complete action, but also of incidents arousing pity and fear (52a1-3)." Then in Chapter 13, Aristotle argues "it must imitate actions arousing fear and pity, since that is the distinctive function of this kind of imitation (52b32-3)." These statements give the impression that pity and fear as the proper tragic emotions need no justification for Aristotle. However, they do.

In this chapter, Aristotle goes on to classify and evaluate the possible tragic plots with a view to the moral character of the tragic hero and the direction of change of his fortune, whether it is from happiness to unhappiness or from unhappiness to happiness. These two factors would arouse different emotional effects in tragedy. The change of fortune from good to bad of a good person and bad to good of an extremely bad person are rejected as μαρόν. The destruction of a wicked person may be morally satisfactory (φιλόανθρωπον)⁹, but neither pitiful nor fearful. What is left is "the intermediate kind of personage, a man not preeminently virtuous and just, whose misfortune, however, is brought upon him not by vice and depravity but by some fault (53a8-10)." This kind of plot is pitiful and fearful. The reason why he rejected μαρόν hardly needs any explanation. As for the φιλόανθρωπον, Aristotle cites no reason. We may, however, presume that it does not lay due weight to the seriousness of the tragic πάθος, as he classifies the poetic justice which contains the fall of the bad into comic pleasure. Having made exhaustive enumeration of the possible plot patterns of 'the action of a superior man,' and rejected μαρόν and φιλόανθρωπον as not appropriate for tragedy, he could then name 'pity and fear' as the only emotions that can be justified as arousing pleasure proper to tragedy. Chapter 13 thus contains the justification of pity and fear as tragic emotions¹⁰.

After the tragic emotions have been established in Chapter 13, Chapter 14 can proceed to choose the pathos between close family members as the most suitable for tragedy. Even in this chapter, however, he begins the detailed analysis of this kind of pathos with the enumeration of every possible pattern of pathos, recognition, and reversal. Recognition and reversal themselves are ways for the plot to accomplish through "παρὰ τὴν δόξαν δι' ἄλληλα (52a4)"

the 'marvelous'¹¹. This marvel is needed in tragedy because it creates the pleasure of learning, which imitation should offer, most effectively. He then argues that, in tragedy, the two patterns that lack them are μαρόν, and the other two with them are best in 'arousing pity and fear,' for "the recognition will serve to astound us (54a)." As the pleasure of learning is the same for both tragic and comic imitations, this marvel would be necessary in comic plot, too.

In Chapter 14, Aristotle places the complex plots higher not simply because they arouse pity and fear, established somewhere as the tragic emotions. His argument justifies at the same time admitting only these two emotions as the basis of tragic pleasure, for other emotions aroused by the 'imitation of superior action' are either μαρόν or φιλόνηθρον and do not create pleasure proper to tragic imitation.

3. The Comic μῦθος

Aristotle divides the object of imitation into superior action and inferior action. Within the dramatic genres, comedy imitates inferior action. The proper object of comic imitation is, however, not 'every sort of fault,' but 'the ridiculous, which is a species of the ugly (49a33-34).'

From the fact that comedy is an imitation of the inferior action derives the requirement that it should represent a complete and whole action with magnitude and must have the same constitutive elements as tragedy. Among these elements, μῦθος is the most important for comedy, too. This does not mean the comic poet should pursue the various possibilities of the plot. Rather, he should stick to a certain pattern of the plot which I would like to elucidate in this chapter.

The general claim for the tragic plot made in Chapters 7 and 8 also applies to comedy. As an imitation, it has to speak somehow of 'the universal.' Comic action should also contain a proper "beginning, middle, and end," and proceed in necessary or probable sequence. As for the aesthetic claim concerning its size, although comedy should imitate the 'ridiculous' that is a part of the 'ugly,' Aristotle tells us that comic form is larger (μεῖζω) than the iambic poem. The claim for magnitude also applies to comedy. The comic plot, as well as the tragic one, must have 'a length which allows the hero to pass through a series of probable or necessary stages from bad fortune to good, or from good to bad (51a12-14),' and we cannot believe the claim of *Tractatus* that comedy is an imitation of an action which lacks magnitude is Aristotelian. The argument in Chapter 13 that the pleasure in the double plot which contains the change of fortune of the main characters is proper to comedy also corroborates our claim that the comic plot should have a proper length and that its limit is same as that of tragedy.

We can also assume the existence of the argument of 'comic' plot which corresponds to the argument made in Chapter 13 and 14 for tragedy in our extant *Poetics*. In Chapter 13, Aristotle divided the tragic plot according to the moral character of the tragic hero and the direction of the change of his fortune. That these two criteria are also valid for the comic plot is shown in his ascription of the double plot (poetic justice) to comedy. In the case of comedy, however, the plot should be 'ridiculous' instead of 'pitiful and fearful.' As pity and fear are characteristics of the tragic action, so the ridiculous is that of the action that constitutes the comic plot. We should, then, conclude that the best comic plot must be different from that of poetic justice.

Poetic justice is proper to comedy only in comparison with tragedy.

The ridiculous is defined as “a kind of error (ἀμάρτημα) neither painful nor destructive.” As Else has pointed out, tragic error (ἀμαρτία) in Chapter 13 is a concept that is synonymous with the ‘error (ἀμάρτημα)’ in *Nicomachean Ethics*, where it is defined as an injury done in ignorance (1135b12) and without bad intent (b18-19). Here in the definition of ridiculous in which Aristotle uses the same term as in *Nicomachean Ethics*, he should have intended the same meaning and this comic error is the concept that corresponds to the tragic error in Chapter 13. However, there is of course a difference between tragic and comic errors. Comic error is neither painful nor destructive (ἀνώδυνον καὶ οὐ φθαρτικόν, 49a35). This means comic error is, unlike tragic one, without πάθος, as πάθος is the “action that is destructive or painful (πράξις φθαρτικὴ ἢ ὀδυνηρά, 52b11-12).” The tragic plot should be pitiful and fearful because of the (tragic) error of the hero and the comic plot should be ridiculous through the (comic) error of the protagonist. The error becomes ridiculous in comedy and not pitiful and fearful because it is ‘neither painful nor destructive,’ that is, without ‘πάθος’.

As comedy should pursue the ridiculous and the ridiculous is defined as a kind of ‘error,’ it follows that an ‘error’ plays a central role both in tragic and comic plots. Tragic poets, imitating a superior action, should create an error that is serious and with pathos. On the other hand, comic poets, being the imitators of inferior action, should create one that is not serious and without pathos. The absence of pathos is the characteristic that distinguishes the comic plot from the tragic.

The argument in Chapter 14 also has an equivalent in the argument on comic plot. As we have seen, recognition and reversal must be fundamental constitutive elements for the comic plot as well. Then, in the case of comedy, as well as that of tragedy, the two patterns with these two elements should be better than those without them. In other words, the best plots for Aristotle are: (1) the protagonist does mischief without knowing to whom he is doing harm and is informed and punished after the deed, and (2) the protagonist almost accomplishes mischief because of an error of some kind, but in the nick of the time, recognition occurs and the deed is avoided. The comic mischief, however, lacks pathos and can be ridiculous. The recognition and reversal with pathos constitute the tragic and those without pathos constitute the comic plot.

These two types of plot are typical in New Comedy. We can recognize them in Menander but not in Aristophanes. Most of Aristophanes’ comedies, for Aristotle, do not deal with the ridiculous but with ψόγος. This causes hardly any problem if we take account of the fact that *Poetics* treats comedy very coldly from the historical point of view. Aristotle states that at first, “the meaner sort of poets imitated the actions of the ignoble (48b27-28),” and comedy was not taken seriously in the earlier stages of its development (49b1). He recounts that “the movement of tragedy stopped on its attaining to its natural form (49a14-15),” but no such allusion exists for comedy. For Aristotle, Aristophanes still belongs to the early form of comedy and does not achieve the ridiculous, the proper end of its genre. In this regard, Peter von Möllendorff recognizes the influence of Aristotelian *Poetics* on Menander’s comedies¹². Menander, as a student of the Peripatetic school, might have known Aristotelian *Poetics*, including the lost book. Menanderian comedy might well have constituted an answer to the

Aristotelian censure of the comic genre in earlier period. Within the Peripatetic tradition, a scholium on Dionysius Trax states that the end of comedy relates to recognition and this may have something to do with the lost book.

4. The Comic Catharsis

We have found three types of tragic catharsis in Aristotle's theory of tragedy. We can find these three types in comic imitation, too. It is clear from Proclus and Iamblichus that catharsis as emotional purgation holds good for the comic laughter that comes from the ridiculous in comedy. According to Proclus, Aristotle thought that both tragedy and comedy can "satisfy the emotions in due measure (*Comm. in Plat. Remp.* 1. 49)." Iamblichus claimed that "both in tragedy and comedy, by looking at the emotions of others we are able to appease our own emotions and make them more moderate and clear them away (*ἀποκαθαίρομεν*) (*De Mysteriis*, 1. 11)."

This type of catharsis, namely, the purgation of emotion caused by comic laughter, however, cannot exhaust comic catharsis as a whole. If comic catharsis does exist as the proper effect of comedy, it must inhabit the comic emotion created by the comic plot, as it did in the case of tragic catharsis. In tragedy, catharsis of tragic emotions (pity and fear) assumes the catharsis of tragic pathos. For tragedy to arouse proper tragic emotions and then to purify them, tragic action must be purified from bad intent and demonstrated to be a result of the hamartia. We can find the corresponding concept of the comic catharsis of action in the argument concerning the distinction between the invective (*ψόγος*) and the ridiculous.

Aristotle writes that among earlier poets, "the graver. . . would represent noble actions, and those of noble personages; and the meaner sort the actions of the ignoble. The latter class produced invectives at first, just as others did hymns and panegyrics (48b26-27)." Homeric *Margites* stands for this type of invective (*ψόγος*). On the other hand, he also states that "also was he [Homer] the first to outline for us the general forms of comedy by producing not a dramatic picture of invective (*ψόγος*), but that of the ridiculous (*γελοῖον*) (48b36-38)." Although these two sentences seem to contradict each other, they do not. *LSJ* recognizes three different meanings of the *ψόγος*, namely (1) blamable fault, blemish flaw, (2) blame, censure and (3) (in plural) lampoons¹³. In 48b37, where Aristotle put the *ψόγος* alongside with the *γελοῖον*, it means neither the invective as an act nor the lampoon as a literary genre. It must be an object of the early comic imitation and mean a blamable fault, as *γελοῖον* is the proper object of the comic imitation and a kind of 'error.' Then, Homer wrote *Margites* and *Margites* was a kind of lampoon that does not make the blamable fault but the ridiculous error of the protagonist its proper object of imitation.

To this *ψόγος* as a characteristic of lesser action corresponds the second *ψόγος* as censure on the side of the audience. Aristotle, in *Nicomachean Ethics*, tells about this second *ψόγος* that "it is only voluntary feelings and actions (*ἐπὶ μὲν τοῖς ἐκουσίοις*) for which praise and blame (*ψόγων*) are given (1109b31-32).¹⁴" *ψόγος* in *Poetics* is a characteristic of a voluntary harm and corresponds to the tragic *μαρὸν* on the side of the comedy. As in tragedy the plot with *ἀμαρτία* is purified of *μαρὸν* and arouses pity and fear, so in comedy the plot with

ἀμάρτημα is purified of ψόγος and becomes ridiculous. Comic catharsis of action is catharsis from ψόγος.

Having established this point, we become prepared to deal with our most important subject, the catharsis of comic emotion. It has been argued that Aristotle's defense of poetry should be read in relation with the Platonic criticism of poetry. At least, the theory of tragic catharsis is targeted at the Platonic attack of poetry in the Book 10 of *Republic*. One may, then, argue that the Aristotelian theory of comic catharsis might be an answer to the Platonic censure of comedy. In *Philebus*, Plato understands pleasure of the comedy as the mixture of pleasure and pain (48A). Ignorance is said to be 'ridiculous' when it is "possessed in its harmless form by any of our friends (49E)." We laugh at the ignorance of our friends when they are weak and do not cause any harm to us. As ignorance is in itself a bad thing (κακόν), we feel pleasure in the misfortune of our friends when we laugh at them. It is envy (φθόνος) that "causes pleasure in the misfortunes of friends (50A)." Plato does not criticize comedy simply because it makes laughter out of the misfortunes of the weak, but because it makes our own friends the target of our laughter. This is the reason a painful element (envy) has some share in comic laughter. There may hardly be any doubt that Plato has Aristophanes and his contemporaries in mind when he criticizes comedy.

Aristotle answers this criticism by emphasizing the universality of comic plot. Aristotle does not admit the envy in comedy. For Aristotle, "it is only when their plot is already made up of probable incidents that they (comic poets) give it a basis of proper names, choosing for the purpose any names that may occur to them (51b13-15)." The distinction between the comic and the iambic poets lies precisely in the fact that the latter wrote about particular persons, while the former deal with the universal. In other words, the ridiculous in comedy which contains a universal plot arouses in the audience the purified emotion of the same name that does not have the painful element of envy.

There is a textual support to this idea of catharsis as 'purification of emotion from the envy.' Although Aristotle does not mention envy in extant *Poetics*, fragments from *On Poems* of Philodemus which is, according to M. L. Nardelli, based on the poetic theory of Aristotle gives some key to the interpretation of comic catharsis¹⁵. As Richard Janko has pointed out, in these fragments, after a mention of the 'tragic catharsis of pity (*PHerc.* 1581 fr. IVb Nardelli),' comes the fragment that speaks about 'the catharsis of the error (fr. IIIbis).' Then appear two larger fragments, separated by lacuna. ". . . Folly is present in the wisest of souls, and intemperance in the most temperate. Likewise there are fears in brave souls and envy (φθόνοι) in magnanimous ones. . . (fr. II)." ". . . a poet represents a complete action. It must be understood that poetry is useful with regard to virtue, purifying, as we said, the part. . . (fr. I)." In these fragments, Philodemus (following the argument of Aristotle) cites envy as one of the objects of poetic purification¹⁶. These fragments constitute a textual corroboration of our thesis that in comedy, the comic ridiculous as an emotion is purified of envy because it speaks of the universal and does not deal with the particular fault of our companions.

Janko claims that comic catharsis is useful in order to achieve the 'middle' as virtue. This middle is achieved through catharsis as purgation of the comic emotion. *Nicomachean Ethics* cites two types of vice concerning the ridiculous. Buffoons, "who itch to have their joke at all

costs, and are more concerned to raise a laugh than to keep within the bounds of decorum and avoid giving pain to the object of their raillery (1128a6-7),” go to excess in ridicule and the boorish and morose “who never by any chance say anything funny themselves and take offence at those who do (28a7-9),” are deficient in this respect. The ‘middle’ between these two excesses is the witty or versatile, “who jest with good taste (28a9-10).” This middle is explained, for example, as the person who will say and allow others to say to him “only the sort of things that are suitable to a virtuous man and a gentleman.” Comedy, by purging and relieving the comic laughter, will serve as a means to the achievement of the middle concerning the ridiculous.

To sum up, three kinds of comic catharsis can be located in the Aristotelian theory of comedy, each of which corresponds to the tragic one. The comic catharsis of action is a catharsis from ψόγος. It ensures that the object of the comic action is an ‘error’, purified of the bad intent that ψόγος contains. This error thus becomes ridiculous. The comic ridiculous aroused in this way is purified of φθόνος because comedy speaks of the universal and does not make invectives of particular persons. It does not have painful element mixed with its pleasure. Finally, this ridiculous aroused in the audience in the theatre is purged by the comic laughter. This arousal and purgation of the ridiculous in comedy is useful for the realization of the mean in relation to the ridiculous¹⁷.

1 cf. 1341b38-40

2 cf. Gerald F. Else, *Aristotle's Poetics: The Argument*, Cambridge, Mass., 1957, 224-232, 425-452.

3 In 1459b11, Aristotle calls the three elements of complex plot as reversal, recognition and παθημάτων, instead of πάθος, but in other places (1455a31, 56a38), he even calls tragic emotions as πάθος and the theory that it means tragic action throughout *Poetics* does not hold.

4 We cannot trust Aristotelian cross references completely. For this point, cf. A. P. MacMahon, “On the Second Book of Aristotle's *Poetics* and the Source of Theophrastus' Definition of Tragedy,” *HSCP* 28 (1917), 9-19.

5 “περὶ δε ἰάμβων καὶ κωμωδίας...” (1462b18)

6 cf. Elizabeth S. Belfiore, *Tragic Pleasures: Aristotle on Plot and Emotion*, Princeton, New Jersey, 1992, 100-103, Else (1957), 73-78.

7 I used Bywater's translation of *Poetics* in this paper as far as possible, but added minor modifications that are necessary for my argument. cf. Ingram Bywater, *Aristotle on the Art of Poetry*, Oxford, 1909.

8 cf. 1448b8-17

9 For this interpretation of φιλόανθρωπον, cf. Wolfgang Schadewaldt, “Furcht und Mitleid? Zur Deutung des Aristotelischen Tragödiensatzes,” in *Hellas und Hesperien* vol.1 2nd ed., Zürich 1970, 194-236.

10 cf. Masahiro Kitano “Tragic Character in Aristotle's *Poetics*,” in *Bulletin of Gunma Prefectural Women's University*. 20 (1999).

11 cf. *Rhet.* I, 1371b10-12.

12 cf. Peter von Möllendorff, “Menanders *Samia* und die Aristotelische *Poetik*,” in *Orchestra: Drama-Mythos-Bühne, Festschrift für Hellmut Flashar anlässlich seines 65. Geburtstages*, ed. Anton Bierl and Peter von Möllendorff, Stuttgart und Leipzig, 1994, 300-317.

13 cf. *LSJ.* s. v. ψόγος.

- 14 Similar expression is also found, for instance, in *Magna Moralia*, 1187a19-21.
- 15 cf. M. L. Nardelli, "La Catarsi Poetica Nel *Pherc* 1581," *Cronache Ercolanesi* 8 (1978), 96-103. As for the order of the fragments, we follow Richard Janko and reverse that of Nardelli. cf. Richard Janko, "From Catharsis to the Aristotelian Mean," in *Essays on Aristotle's Poetics*, ed. Amélie Oksenberg Rorty, Princeton, 341-58.
- 16 cf. *ibid.* 349
- 17 We did not treat the place and importance of *Tractatus Coislinianus* in this paper. This short treatise is viewed by Cooper and Janko as the key to the reconstruction of the Second Book of Aristotle's *Poetics*. cf. Lane Cooper, *An Aristotelian Theory of Comedy*, New York, 1922, 10-15 and Richard Janko, *Aristotle on Comedy*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1984, 52-90. Bernays, however, denies the importance of this treatise for the understanding of Aristotelian theory of comedy and considers it to be a poor pastiche of extant *Poetics*. cf. J. Bernays, *Zwei Abhandlungen über die aristotelische Theorie des Dramas*, Berlin, 1880, 145. We should rather follow Touzu and recognize *Tractatus* an independent value as a testimony of an ancient theory of comedy that should be placed somewhere in the Peripatetic tradition. cf. Takehiko Touzu, *Arisutoteresu Shigaku no Kenkyu (A study of Aristotle's Poetics)* 1, Osaka, 1999, 385-475.