1 Aristotle's theory of katharsis in its historical and social contexts

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Few words have maintained such a hold over both theatrical practice and classical philology as Aristotle's term *katharsis* in his *Poetics*. In this article I explore five aspects of the cultural background to his brief, compressed and elliptical discussion of katharsis as an objective of tragic theatre. I argue that Aristotelian tragic katharsis, although clearly signalling a useful transformation through an aesthetic experience, must remain enigmatic since the noun had many different metaphorical resonances. Yet the abstraction of the language in which Aristotle discussed the effects of tragic theatre on the people who experienced it marks an epochal shift in the ancient understanding of what the production and consumption of tragedy entailed. This intellectual shift coincided with, and partly resulted from, the transformation of the theatre industry in the fourth century BC. In particular, it coincided with the divorce of performances from their original fifth-century home, in festivals of Dionysus at Athens, to cities all over the Greek-speaking world. Greek horizons had been significantly widened in the early fourth century when theatre was exported to south Italy and Sicily, and expanded much further east in the wake of the conquests achieved by Aristotle's pupil Alexander the Great. Aristotelian katharsis is the counterpart, in the realm of ideology, to massive changes occurring on the political and cultural levels of the ancient Mediterranean and Black Sea worlds at the very transition between 'classical' and 'Hellenistic' society.

The Greek noun katharsis is related to the basic verb *kathairein*, which means all the following: cleanse, purify, fumigate, purge, evacuate, wash off, prune (a tree), winnow (grain), clear (land of weeds), and refine (gold). These physical processes can involve the washing or fumigating of cups, statues, or wounds with a cleansing substance such as water or blood or incense; the process may however take several different forms. Pruning a tree meant removing parts of it, but it also meant *training* the remaining branches of the plant by encouraging them to grow in particular directions. Katharsis could indicate *partial* evacuation of naturally occurring substances (especially women's menstrual discharges: Aristotle uses the term with this significance more than fifty times in his biological and zoological treatises). But katharsis could also mean *selective* elimination of undesirable elements within the same basic entity (winnowing chaff from grain; removing weeds to allow desired plants to flourish in a field or flower-bed; refining ore to separate gold from base metal). Moreover, by the time of Aristotle, katharsis had just begun to be able to bear a more metaphorical and non-physical meaning. Plato can speak of men who are 'refined' or 'purified' by philosophy (*Phaedo* 114c); Epicurus the philosopher, who was forty years younger than Aristotle, called the *intellectual clarification* of scientific problems a katharsis.

It is important to bear in mind the large range of connotations of the term katharsis in ancient Greek as we approach the text to which any discussion of katharsis in tragedy must return—Aristotle's *Poetics* 1449b. Here is the most literal translation of which I am capable:

> Tragedy, therefore, is an imitation [*mimēsis*] of a serious and complete action [*praxis*] on a large scale, in language sweetened in different ways in different parts of the play—a mimesis of people doing things [*drōntōn*, an active plural present-tense participle] rather than through narration, this mimesis achieving through pity and fear the *katharsis* of emotions of that kind.[1]

One feature of this sentence forcibly strikes anyone familiar with the ancient Greek language. There is no mention of a dramatic author, an actor, or a spectator. The situation is divorced from any identifiable real-world context (for example, a theatre in a sanctuary of Dionysus). Katharsis is created, in unspecified locales, not by actors or a dramatic author, but by an abstract noun—the nonconcrete, impersonal tragic 'imitation' of people doing things. The only humans in this sentence are the people *represented* in tragic theatre—the *dramatis personae* or roles. We are offered no information about the nature of the person or people in whom the mimesis achieves "through pity and fear the katharsis of emotions of that kind." Aristotle seems reluctant to commit to a more specific account of what happens during the process of katharsis, in whom the process takes place, and in what physical and social context. It is not even clear whether he is thinking about a collective process in which many people undergo katharsis together, or an individual process taking place in a single, atomised psyche. A preference for the latter interpretation might derive support from his statement later in the *Poetics* that the tragic effect does not even need a live theatrical performance to occur (1453b):

> 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.

Just hearing the *Oedipus Tyrannus*—or perhaps even just hearing the events in it summarised in the order in which Sophocles arranges them—should, according to Aristotle, be able to arouse pity and fear in the auditor. Since Aristotle had a substantial personal library, and was working at the moment in history when Athenians were beginning to be concerned about the lack of authorised, canonical written versions of the tragedies regarded as meriting a place on the library shelf as well as in the performance repertoire of dramatic 'classics',[2] we may be expected to include the arousal of pity and fear in the *reader*, as well.

The first 'context' of Aristotelian tragic katharsis that needs investigating is the other uses of the term katharsis in the total vast corpus of Aristotle's writings and in those of other early members of the Peripatetic school of philosophy he founded. He most often uses the term in the context of menstrual discharge. If this is the underlying metaphor, then he sees tragic katharsis as controlled, judicious, and partial expulsion of elements naturally occurring in the human being and not inevitably and inherently harmful; the body itself regulates the beneficial discharge without recourse to an allopathic procedure. On the other hand, in the case of laxatives and emetics, requiring the use of pharmaceuticals to encourage elimination, the beneficial effect of the katharsis is stimulated by allopathic means—by introducing a new substance from outside.[3] Another possibility is that the term is to be understood horticulturally. Aristotle's close friend Theophrastus, the man who succeeded him as head of his school, was a brilliant botanist: he used the term in reference to pruning,[4] which meant not only cutting back the growth of a plant but also training new growth in particular directions—a suggestive image for what Aristotle may have envisaged tragic theatre's educational benefits to be. Yet, unfortunately, there are scarcely any clues in the *Poetics* as to which of the several processes elsewhere designated by katharsis Aristotle had in mind.

The only other instance of the term in the *Poetics* itself refers to the ritual cleansing of the pollution that Orestes had incurred by killing his own mother (1455b13–15). Aristotle recommends to aspiring playwrights that, when they are working out the episodes of the play, the episodes are to be appropriate, "like the fit of madness in the [case of?] Orestes, which led to his arrest, and the salvation through the katharsis." It is not clear to which play Aristotle is referring. The definite article could mean the tragedy entitled *Orestes*, but it could also mean 'in the case of Orestes'. Both Orestes' derangement by the Erinyes and discussion of his ritual purification either in Greece (involving the sacrifice of pigs) or Tauris in the Black Sea (with the use of sea-water) are discussed in several works familiar to Aristotle in addition to Euripides' *Orestes*, including Aeschylus' *Oresteia* and Euripides' *Iphigenia in Tauris*.[5] But the important point from our perspective is that the meaning of katharsis here is specifically *ritual* purification, which removes a toxic, harmful element corrupting both the human body and mind.[6] Orestes himself undergoes a transformation from sickness to health, and madness to sanity, by means of a ritual that has both religious and medical dimensions.

Orestes is of course a character in the tragedy, rather than an author, actor, or spectator. Aristotle here envisages katharsis as being represented within the storyline rather than as a collective process undergone by all other participants in the theatrical experience as well. But the placement of this use of the term katharsis in the *Poetics*, just a few chapters later than the famous, more abstract reference we have already cited to katharsis of the emotions as a function of tragic mimesis, may have been significant in the history of interpretations of the katharsis of the emotions. If Aristotle had discussed the ritual katharsis of Orestes' pollution *prior* to his discussion of katharsis of the emotions, the reader of the *Poetics*, with the vivid image of Orestes undergoing religious purification already in mind, might have found it more difficult to avoid envisaging katharsis of the emotions along ritual-medical lines.

Aristotle defines tragedy, as we have seen, as "a mimesis of people doing things rather than through narration, this mimesis achieving through pity and fear the katharsis of emotions of that kind." The *agent* here is no human participant, but the disembodied phenomenon of tragic mimesis itself, conceived as an abstract entity, an almost personified feminine noun, effecting katharsis of emotions. We can find Greek visual and textual representations of a personified Tragedy, *Tragōidia*, usually as a maenad attending Dionysus, dating from several decades earlier than Aristotle's *Poetics*.[7] But which person or people is his abstraction—tragic mimesis—affecting? None is specified. The only ones even mentioned, or allowed into the mental picture, are the actual characters in the play, such as Orestes. Is Aristotle expecting his reader to imagine everyone involved in the tragic experience to *share*, somehow, in the emotional journey and transformation undergone by the traumatised character within the drama? Could it be that the audience becomes released in some way from the specific emotions undergone by the 'doers'—in the case of Orestes' spectators, to be released from precisely the sort of emotions that made him kill his mother? Thomas Taylor, the great British Platonist and translator, unusually suggested in 1811 that this approach makes the best sense of Aristotelian katharsis, although Taylor used the example of Ajax rather than Orestes:

> When Aristotle says that tragedy through pity and fear effects a purification from such-like passions, his meaning is that it purifies from those perturbations which happen in the fable, and which for the most part are the cause of the peripeteia, and of the unhappy events in the fable. Thus for instance, Sophocles, through pity and terror excited by the character of Ajax, intends a purification from anger and impiety towards the gods, because through this anger and impiety those misfortunes happened to Ajax; and thus in other circumstances.[8]

It may be that we should be reading the two references to katharsis in the *Poetics* more closely in tandem than has hitherto been customary.

The second context in which we need to understand Aristotelian tragic katharsis is in that of his own career and interests. A northern Greek from the town of Stageira, Aristotle was the son of an eminent medical practitioner, Nicomachus, who was hired as court physician by the Macedonian royal family. Professions often ran in families, and Aristotle's manifest appetite for biology and medicine must have been encouraged by his father. He would have witnessed and perhaps assisted in medical procedures; because he travelled or lived in several different parts of Greece, he would have been able to compare diverse local approaches to healing and therapy. This lends particular interest to the discussion of katharsis in another text by Aristotle, his *Politics*. Here he speaks of the role of music, as experienced in certain religious rites, in the treatment of emotional people (8.7.1342a4–15):

> For any emotional excitement that affects some souls strongly also occurs to a lesser or greater degree in everyone—pity, fear, or again religious ecstasy [*enthousiasmos*]. There are some people who are particularly susceptible to this latter form of excitement and we see them, once they have made use of the most rousing melodies, put back on their feet again as a result of the sacred melodies just as if they had obtained medical treatment and katharsis. People predisposed to feeling pity or fear, or to emotions generally, necessarily undergo the same experience, as do others to the extent that they share in each of these emotions, and for all a certain katharsis and alleviation accompanied by pleasure.

This discussion constitutes crucial evidence for the acknowledged power possessed by some special sacred melodies in helping ancient Greeks handle extreme emotions. Moreover, the benefits are available to everyone insofar as nobody can ever be entirely free of emotions. The benefits are compared to those a doctor can offer through medical katharsis; they offer everyone a certain kind of katharsis that alleviates the emotions and gives pleasure.

Here Aristotle is certainly talking about emotional katharsis. Emotions pre-exist in people, but they can be stimulated by an external force in a way that makes them susceptible to katharsis. An externally applied 'treatment' (music) actually creates a *homeopathic* response within the listeners, in that the arousal of a strong emotion to which they are predisposed leads to a lessening of the grip which that emotion has on them. Most scholars have found it tempting to see Aristotle's tragic katharsis in a similar light. If, when he mentioned tragic katharsis in the *Poetics*, Aristotle had the parallel of the 'sacred melodies' in mind, then we need to imagine tragic mimesis as arousing pre-existing strong emotions in its participants, in a homeopathic process, and through the arousal not only pleasing those participants but also making them better able to cope with such emotions when the theatrical experience is over. At the risk of drawing anachronistic parallels, Aristotle could be describing an experience comparable to that, familiar today, of watching a film in the category known as 'weepies' or 'tear-jerkers', involving highly emotive scenes accompanied by a powerful musical score, and permitting oneself to 'enjoy' a good cry at the sufferings of the on-screen characters. In Britain, at least, groups of friends, usually women, even organise parties with large boxes of tissues in order to enjoy a 'weepie' together, and I can personally attest that the experience can bring about a sense of cleansing and alleviation of psychic pain, accompanied by pleasure.[9]

Other circumstantial factors make attractive the association of this famous passage in the *Politics* with tragic katharsis. Several links between theatre and medicine are perceptible in the ancient world.[10] There are many medical metaphors in the poetry of Greek tragedy. Sophocles was said to have introduced the cult of the healing hero Asclepius into his own household. Sanctuaries of Asclepius were often built adjacent to theatres, for example at Epidauros, Corinth and Butrint in modern Albania. There is, however, a major problem in accepting unquestioningly the interpretation of tragic katharsis in the *Poetics* as a process directly parallel to the katharsis by music performed in religious rituals. Aristotle breathes no word of this in the *Poetics*. There is not a medical word or allusion in sight. Some scholars have therefore preferred to see tragic katharsis as completely metaphorical, as a process of mental enlightenment or elucidation, an intellectual process entailing cognitive work compared with—but actually far removed from—medicines and rituals and emotional frenzy.[11]

One line of argument points to an interesting passage of Aristotle's treatise on persuasive speech-making, his *Rhetoric*, in which he says that people who have already experienced great disasters become invulnerable to fear, since they feel they have already experienced every kind of horror (*Rhetoric* 2.5.1383a3–5). An important discussion of katharsis by Jonathan Lear, a philosopher much engaged with psychoanalytical theory, argues that this passage in the *Rhetoric* may hold the clue to what Aristotle really meant by tragic katharsis in the *Poetics*: perhaps he meant that we can "put ourselves in tragedy imaginatively in a position in which there is nothing further to fear."[12] This process requires a conscious mental move, an imaginative exertion, an intellectual leap, on the part of the spectator. More persuasively, other scholars stress the most important use of the metaphor of katharsis in an intellectual sense that can be identified prior to Aristotle. This occurs in Plato's dialogue *The Sophist* (230b-e). Here the Eleatic Stranger who leads the discussion describes what happens during the best (i.e. Socratic) dialectic. By cross-examination, the inconsistencies and contradictions in an interlocutor's position can cumulatively be pointed out, until he reaches a crisis point and is unable to defend the position further. He becomes angry with himself, but much gentler towards others, and is released from prejudices and harsh ideas:

> For, just as the physician knows that the body will receive no benefit from taking in food until the internal obstacles have been removed, so the purifier of the soul is conscious that his patient will receive no benefit from the application of knowledge until he is refuted, and from refutation earns modesty; he must be purged of his prejudices first … refutation is the greatest and best of purifications.

The respondent in Socratic dialectic, thrown into a state of confusion, undergoes a katharsis of his false opinions and confidence in his knowledge. The katharsis is good for him and gives pleasure to those who witness it.[13] Here the Eleatic Stranger supplies the medical analogy, in referring to katharsis, quite explicitly, which "suggests that Plato is himself transferring the word into the intellectual sphere."[14] There are obvious parallels between this situation and Aristotle's description of tragic katharsis. But this does not mean that, in Aristotle's formulation, such a marked estrangement between the somatic and the intellectual has occurred. In Plato the estrangement is marked by the duality—and implicit polarity—imposed by the formal simile. But there is no reason to assume, with, for example, Salkever, that this polarity is replicated in Aristotle.[15]

A promising recent line of argument has come from neuroscientific approaches to theatre, which allow the physiological understanding of katharsis (implied by the discussion of the curative power of music in *Politics*) to be combined with the more cerebral understanding of tragic katharsis, with its conscious *cognitive* component, in the *Poetics*. There *is* a kind of imitation that audiences demonstrably undergo when fully engaged by theatre. This may take the form of inferring the *intentions* of the actor on the stage, 'intentional attunement'. Recent studies of motor neuron systems have suggested that some neurons in the brain, 'mirror neurons', do not make any distinction between an act which the owner of the brain is carrying out and an act which the owner of the brain is witnessing.[16] Mirror neurons allow the spectator to *intuit* that the reason why the character on stage has reached for their weapon is in order to stab someone. This is a physiological *and* a cognitive process. In other scenes, the spectators' imitation of the individual impersonated by the actor may be much more direct: spectators often perceptibly respond to the emotions of stage characters by copying some of the symptoms of those emotions—by "tensing muscles, crying, breathing differently, leaning forward, smiling, or turning away… So perhaps the rehearsal of actions and feelings that this generates allows us to respond to our future experiences as if we had experienced them before, even though only a few of our neurons actually have experienced this before."[17]

The third context in which Aristotle's enigmatic statement needs placing is the evidence of earlier Greek acknowledgement of the transformative effect of tragic theatre. On one occasion in the early fifth century, the Athenian audience burst, as a body, into tears because they were so moved by what they saw enacted. It was a 'history play', now lost, which told the story of the recent defeat of the Anatolian Greek city of Miletus by the Persian Empire. The Athenian navy had participated in this action. Herodotus tells us that "the theatre (*theatron*) burst into tears" and fined the playwright, Phrynichus, a thousand drachmas "for reminding him of their domestic sufferings, and the forbade anyone to perform the play again" (6.21). The 'theatre' which burst into tears, a performance space plus actors and spectators all fused and almost personified as an individual capable of tears, was specifically the Athenian theatre of Dionysus, the place where in the fifth century most tragedies were first performed; experiences such as these will have created collective memories likely to inform audience responses subsequently.[18] Everyone who had once wept in the theatre at watching the sufferings of the Athenians and their allies in defeat at Miletus would have had memories of their own trauma to draw upon when watching heroes suffer in other tragedies. Audience reactions to tragedy are also discussed, none too seriously, in Aristophanes' comedy *Frogs*: Dionysus speaks of his delight (*charis*) at some scenes and episodes, but tragedy is also said to have a didactic function and indeed a socio-political one in that it may be able to rescue the citizens from the crisis into which military defeat would throw them (916, 1028, 1030–6, 1419). On a more negative note, respectable women are said to have committed suicide in response to watching the shameful conduct of heroines in Euripides (1050–1), as if a social group (married women) could become so distressed at the fictional representation of their counterparts in tragic theatre that they imitated their most extreme actions.

The possibility of individual spectators reacting to tragic performances by considering a connection between their individual situations and those of the suffering heroes on stage is also explored in the fragment of another comedy, the *Women at the Dionysia* by Timocles:

> The human is a creature who is born to labour, and his life brings with it many sorrows. Therefore he has contrived ways of relieving his cares, for his mind [*nous*], forgetting its own burdens, and beguiled [*psychagōgētheis*] by the misery of another, departs in a state of delight, having been educated as well. Look first at the tragedians, if you like, and see how they benefit everyone. The indigent man, for instance, learns that Telephus lived a more beggarly life than he does, and from then on can bear his poverty more easily. The man who is ill sees Alcmeon raving. If a man has diseased eyes, the sons of Phineus are blind. For a man who has lost his son, Niobe is a comfort. One is lame, and he sees Philoctetes. One elderly man meets with misfortune, but he learns the story of Oeneus. For being reminded that all his calamities, which he thought were greater than any man has borne, have actually happened to other people, he bewails his own trials less.[19]

This fascinating text describes a process of transformation occurring in the minds of individual spectators of tragic theatre. The spectator finds ‘relief’ from his cares because his mind, forgetting its own burdens, and beguiled [*psychagōgētheis*] by the misery of another, departs in a state of delight, having been educated as well. Here ‘beguiled’ is a passive past participle of a verb that can also mean ‘bewitch’, ‘enchant’, ‘persuade’ and ‘lead a soul down to the dead’.

The comic speech describes the mental transformation from sorrow and self-pity to joy, edification and increased ability to cope with life’s problems. The metaphor of beguilement is telling, because it implies the *mysterious* creation of a relationship between the spectator’s self and the experience of the sufferer he sees on stage: I would use the word ‘identification’ to translate it if ‘identification’ had not become so very loaded a term since its adoption into the Freudian psychoanalytical vocabulary. The beguiling encounter with, and personal response to the suffering of the enacted character from ancient mythology are absolutely beneficial and *alleviate* suffering in spectators.

This view was expressed in a comedy performed before the citizens of Athens, rich and poor, well-educated and scarcely literate alike. It may well reflect, albeit in a comic register, the *popular* view of the benefits and pleasures offered by tragic theatre, which at the time was performed to enormous audiences at huge public festivals. In some ways it adumbrates Aristotelian poetic theory (in envisaging the possibility that the benefits of tragic theatre vary according to the individual, for example). But it is interesting to see how the examples of suffering move from the very specific to the much more universal. The first five types of suffering are caused by poverty, ill-health, eye problems, death of offspring, and disease of the leg. The examples that are given relate specifically to spectators being ‘beguiled’ by stories of characters whose problems, although on a worse scale than their own, are of exactly the same nature. But in the last case, the reference to Oeneus, there is no further specification of the reasons for his suffering. Whose ‘miseries in old age’ could indeed equal those of Oeneus? As a prosperous elderly monarch, he suddenly suffered the anger of a goddess (Artemis), lost all seven of his sons in a war ultimately caused by his own negligence, endured the ‘natural catastrophe’ of the boar which ravaged his kingdom and the suicide of at least one of his daughters, was deposed by his nephews, temporarily reinstated, then ambushed and murdered. This is an all-encompassing group of afflictions, affecting personal and public life, caused by both bad luck and bad management, any one of which any mature adult could face at any time. The implicit point is that the transformative effect of tragic theatre is *not* confined to those who witness suffering of a nature *directly* equivalent to their own. Tragedy can benefit anyone suffering from almost any type of problem that humans are likely to face in the course of their adult lives. That is, it has something *universal* to say to *everyone* about suffering.

At approximately the same date as this charming account of the beneficial effects of tragedy was delivered as a speech in Timocles' comedy, in the quite different environment of the elite philosophical Academy, far from the world of popular theatre, Plato was refining his arguments *against* the inclusion of theatre in the ideal state. These were recorded in books 2, 3 and 10 of his *Republic*. In this text, and in some passages of his other dialogues, Plato has Socrates voice a series of objections to the effects of tragic theatre, a category in which he often includes performances of Homeric poetry. All literature and art is fundamentally problematic, so the argument goes, because it is not 'real'. Since Socrates believes that there is a realm of immaterial ideas that is only imitated in the physical world perceptible to humans, then artistic representations of the perceptible world are indeed especially fallacious, being at not one but *two* removes from the eternal ideal world. Socrates objects to the way that the arts depict gods behaving immorally, vindictively, and changing their natures during metamorphoses. He complains that the arts encourage a fear of death by painting grim pictures of the Underworld. He thinks that empathising with grief-afflicted people nourishes the very parts of the soul the guardians of the ideal republic need to repress, and encourages the very sorts of 'unmanly' and uncontrolled behaviour they need to avoid.

The most colourful and compelling Socratic argument against theatre, however, relates to its status as a mimesis performed by people (as distinct, for example, from a mimesis constituted by a painting). In a famous passage in book 3, Socrates considers, in dialogue with Adeimantos, the training of the future guardians who will rule the republic (3.395c-e):

> But if they imitate [*mimōntai*] they should from childhood up imitate [*mimeisthai*] what is appropriate to them—men, that is, who are brave, sober, pious, free and all things of that kind; but things unbecoming the free man they should neither do nor be clever at imitating, nor yet any other shameful thing, lest from the imitation [*mimesis*] they imbibe the reality. Or have you not observed that imitations, if continued from youth far into life, settle down into habits and nature in the body, the speech, and the thought?
>
> "Yes, indeed," said he.
>
> "We will not then allow our charges, whom we expect to prove good men, being men, to imitate [*mimeisthai*] a woman, young or old, reviling her husband, challenging the gods, boasting about the good fortune she enjoys, or grieving and lamenting when struck by misfortune, or ill or erotically fixated or in childbirth?"
>
> "Most certainly not!"
>
> "Nor indeed should they imitate female slaves or male slaves doing the sort of things slave do?"
>
> "No!"

> "Nor, it seems, bad and cowardly men, behaving in the opposite way from that we have described as appropriate—that is, verbally attacking one another, comically deriding and insulting one another either drunk or sober, or behaving in a depraved way towards one another either through word or deed."

The imitation of other people behaving in ways unsuitable to guardians must not be allowed. The reason is that, sooner or later, the imitators internalise the imitated behaviours and their own fundamental natures are transformed. The first specified undesirable behaviours are all designed to remind the reader of famous tragic heroines—Medea, Niobe, and Phaedra, for example; in a notorious tragedy by Euripides, Auge had actually given birth in a temple, her labour screams being heard by the audience ringing out from backstage.[20] The other behaviours are explicitly said to include 'comic' attacks on other people and are designed to make readers think of comic theatre. Socrates is arguing that if the guardians 'imitate' inappropriate behaviours in the way that 'imitation' takes place in either tragic or comic theatre, they will start to display those behaviours outside the theatre as well.

Yet the language in which Socrates discusses this dangerous process of (theatrical) imitation is ambiguous. It is not at all clear what the guardians are doing. Are they actually to be envisaged as actors, taking the leading parts in tragedies and comedies themselves? This is how the passage is often (mis)translated. But very few individuals in classical Athens ever became actors. Socrates is *not* saying that the future guardians would be hurt by being trained to act in speaking roles in Greek tragedy, because such an idea had no relation to any reality ever experienced in classical Athens. In fact, he is by no means being so grammatically specific. He means that the future guardians would be damaged by *any* form of participation in theatrical performances at all. Socrates throughout uses a verb, *mimeisthai*, which should *not* be translated as 'to act the role of', but 'to *participate* in an imitation of'. The guardians are envisaged as *participating*, in a vague and unspecified way, in a collective theatrical imitation of people doing things inappropriate to the ruling class. This non-specific mode of participation can theoretically include writing the role, making the costumes, performing in the chorus, and spectating as well as performing individual roles. Everyone present in a theatre at a performance is involved together in the collective activity of imitating indicated by the verb *mimeisthai*.

There is a technical, linguistic obstacle that impedes our understanding of the process Socrates and Plato's readers were envisaging. The fourth context in which we need to think about tragic katharsis is therefore in terms of comparative linguistics. The crucial verb *mimeisthai* here is a verb in the ancient Greek 'middle voice'. The Greeks used agential forms of verbs—the active voice (I hit him) and the passive voice (he is hit [by me]). But they also used a third, middle voice which does not exist in most modern languages today, and certainly not in either English or German. The label 'middle' implies an intermediate status between active and passive, but the signification of 'in-between-ness' is misleading. It is a result of what Peradotto called "our own unreflective linguistic habits," which lead us "to think of active and passive voice as the most fundamental pair that exhausts the category of voice" and thence "to impoverished readings."[21] In archaic and classical Greek, 'doer' and 'done to' sometimes become inadequate categories, drawing a sharp line, legislating a boundary, where none is felt: the name *Odysseus*, for example, comes from a middle-voice verb and signifies that this hero may cause trouble to others but is also troubled. His presence signifies an enveloping situation of potential trouble for all concerned.[22]

Historically speaking, in Indo-European, the most ancient binary opposition was probably not between active and passive, but between active and *middle*. "The active verb was used to present an activity proceeding from a subject outwards; when the event took place within the subject or reflected on the subject, the middle voice was used."[23] The classicist J.-P. Vernant summed up what this meant for classical scholars' attitudes to early Greek civilization in a famous essay on Benveniste's *Nom d'action et nom d'agent dans les langues indo-européennes*. When responding to the active and the middle voices as they are presented in Benveniste's work, Vernant wrote,

> We see two cases, one in which the action is ascribed to the agent like an attribute to a subject, and another in which the action envelopes the agent and the agent remains immersed in the action—that is the case of the middle voice. The psychological conclusion that Benveniste doesn't draw, because he is not a psychologist, is that in thought as expressed in ancient Greek or ancient Indo-European there is no idea of the agent being the *source* of his action.[24]

The middle voice of verbs which also have active forms, and the substantial group of verbs which are inherently 'middle voice' and have no active forms, can have a wide variety of meanings, but they fall into certain identifiable categories. Just about the only thing they do *not* signify is an action beginning in an individual agent and which has a direct effect on an object external to that agent, as do active transitive verbs, as in 'I hit him.'

For example, the middle voice can imply a *collective* motion: 'the assembly gathers'. Here the gathering of the collective is "a single action carried out jointly by a group of individuals in which the individuals are completely dependent upon one another if the action is to succeed."[25] Similarly, the middle voice can imply reciprocity between two or more entities: 'to fight with missiles'; 'to contend in wit', 'to enter a competition'. The Greek verb meaning 'to participate in a competition,' *agōnizesthai*, indeed, was the nearest thing the language possessed to our verb *to perform*, for example at a festival competition in performances of drama, since performance was regarded as an activity necessarily involving other participants. Verbs of perceptual experience are also often in the middle voice, such as *derkesthai* (see) and *akroasthai* (listen). These middle forms relate "to events in which an animate subject perceives an object through one of the sensory organs. The perceiver is mentally affected by the perception. The subject can, therefore, be considered an *experiencer*."[26] The process of undergoing a mental or emotional experience is also usually described in the middle voice: I am angry, I am afraid, I am mistaken, I am distressed. It is not a requirement in statements such as these that there is specificity as to the source of the emotion—it may be emanating from the subject of the sentence, or from an outside entity, or there may be a complex reciprocal emotional transaction going on.[27] Perhaps it is better to think of a situation, involving more than one individual, which is characterised by anger, or fear, or misconception, or distress: these emotions envelop the whole encounter and there may be little to be gained in distinguishing between what we would call 'agent' and 'patient.'[28] Before Aristotle recast tragic mimesis in abstract *nouns*, it was discussed in middle-voice *verbs* that implied a situation in which numerous parties were enveloped by the activity of creating an imitation, rather than one in which agents and patients were arbitrarily distinguished.

There is also an identifiable category of middle verbs denoting speech-acts involving a subject who is both the agent of the verb and in some way the beneficiary of the speak act it denotes, such as 'speak in defence', 'lament', "engage in a question-and-answer process."[29] One of the most important verbs here is the middle verb *hupokrinomai*, which, fascinatingly, gave rise to the basic Greek word for 'actor', *hupokritēs* (really meaning 'interlocutor'). Indeed, the different activities involved in the whole process of making and consuming theatre, collectively and whether as an actor or a spectator—perceiving, acting in a way that is self-beneficial, experiencing mental processes or emotions together, performing or listening to speech-acts—share a profound tendency to be expressed in classical Greek in the middle voice.

The idea of 'theatre in the middle voice' is perhaps about to find a new champion in the neuroscientific study of performance that we have already mentioned briefly. There are now recognised, as we have seen, certain neurons in the brain that *don't* discriminate between an act the owner of the brain is carrying out and an act the owner of the brain is witnessing.[30] When Socrates describes tragic mimesis, using the middle-voice verb *mimeisthai*, he makes no clear distinction between the actor and the spectator participating in the experience—doing and witnessing are parts of the whole process. Whether neuroscientifically or linguistically speaking, observing can actually be the *same* thing as doing.

But there are other shadings to the middle voice that might be helpful in allowing us to understand what Socrates' verb 'to imitate' actually meant in ancient Greek. The one point on which Socrates and Aristotle agree is that the imitation that goes on in tragic theatre has a *transformative* effect on those who experience it; what these philosophers disagree on is whether the effect is harmful or beneficial. The middle voice frequently describes processes in which the subject of the verb undergoes some kind of change. The verb may just be reflexive and the agent may perform a transforming procedure on themselves: 'to anoint oneself' or 'to adorn oneself' would be in the middle voice. But so would a verb in which the transformation takes place in someone or something *other* than the agent but still *to the benefit of* the agent: to heal, to cure, to repair, to mend.

In Plato's terminology in this and other parts of the *Republic*, the agents involved in the harmful imitation that is experienced in tragic theatre are not (to modern analysts, at least) satisfactorily discriminated. When he says that the future guardians should "not be allowed to imitate" people such as complaining women or cowardly men, he seems to mean something like 'participate in the collective tragic imitation' of such inferior people, whether as author, the character within the text, performer or spectator.[31] All those involved in this collective process are at risk of experiencing a change for the worse, since they will carry on reproducing the imitated behaviours in their lives outside the theatres. Plato's theatre is still in the middle voice, the collective ritual performances of tragedy, enacted by the community for the community, at the Athenian festivals of Dionysus. But, for Plato, this middle-voice experience is a negative one for the experiencers.

Plato's Socrates, although admitting that he is reluctant to take such an extreme step, concludes that the only option is to exclude all mimetic poetry, including tragic theatre, from his republic. But he makes the concession of challenging those who disagree with him to formulate a defence (10.607d6–9):

> We should allow the champions of poetry—men who do not practise the art themselves, but are lovers of it—to offer a prose defence on its behalf, showing that poetry is a source not only of pleasure, but also of benefit to civic communities.

Plato is believed to have written the *Republic* between 380 and 360 BC. From 366 onwards, one of his best students at the Academy in Athens was Aristotle. One way of thinking about Aristotle's *Poetics*, probably not written until his residence in Athens between 335 BC and his death in 322, is as a direct response to his teacher's challenge.

For the *Poetics* is a 'prose defence' of poetry, which shows how the pleasure it affords is also of benefit to civic communities. Aristotle's theory of katharsis—whatever the procedure metaphorically underlying it—is a component, probably an important one, of his *defence* of tragic theatre. Moreover, in formulating the new defence that tragic mimesis could produce emotional katharsis, Aristotle may cleverly be appropriating ritual and medical ideas that had been given at least embryonic formulation elsewhere in his teacher's *oeuvre*. In Plato's *Laws*, for example, there is a brief discussion of the curative rites of the women officers in the ecstatic cult of the Corybantes, who can calm pre-existing turmoil in the sufferers attending the rites; they do so by applying additional (i.e. homeopathic) turmoil to agitate them further (7.790d–791a). Earlier in the *Laws*, the Athenian Stranger has already discussed with approval the deliberate production of disorder, through wine-drinking at carefully controlled communal symposia, in souls who are deficient in fire (for example those of the elderly). The goal is to use allopathic wine in order to produce an initial, temporary disorder leading to the recalibration of psychological balance. On just one occasion, therefore, Plato had indeed considered welcoming "anti-rational emotion as a beneficial and necessary element in the human soul."[32]

But the four or five decades between Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Poetics* had seen a huge transformation in the production and consumption of theatre in the ancient world.[33] The fifth and most important context in which we need to locate and read Aristotelian katharsis is in the epochal shifts in politics, society and all dimensions of culture that had occurred in the middle decades of the fifth century BC. A hundred years before Aristotle wrote his *Poetics*, almost all tragedy was composed and first produced in Athens, in the context of drama competitions held at community festivals of Dionysus, as part of an important act of worship by the Athenian citizen body. By the time Plato wrote his *Republic*, however, theatres had mushroomed all over the Greek mainland, as well as in Greek colonies in south Italy, Sicily, and even the Black Sea.[34]

The really profound transformation was to come in 338 BCE, at the battle of Chaeronea, when Philip of Macedon defeated the venerable city-states of Athens and Thebes. The Macedonian Empire had arrived. Two years later Philip ordered the invasion of Asia; in 330, the entire Persian Empire fell to Alexander the Great. Wherever the Macedonians went, deep into Asia, they built new cities with theatres. They needed new plays, as well as the works of the star fourth-century tragedians such as Astydamas, and old favourites of the classical repertoire, written in the fifth century BC by Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides. The world needed a new theory of tragedy to match the new circumstances of tragic performance, and to bridge the ideological gap between the requirements of civic tragedies produced at Dionysiac festivals by the Athenian democracy, and tragedies produced under autocratic new regimes in new Hellenistic theatres.[35] Performances now took place on all kinds of occasions besides Dionysiac festivals (at festivals for other gods, for deified monarchs, at funerals, at banquets and in military camp theatricals); they featured star travelling professional actors,[36] performing under Macedonian autocracies across the massively and rapidly expanding Greek-speaking world. The man who provided this new theory had, in 343, been appointed Alexander's personal tutor: Aristotle of Stageira himself. He almost certainly wrote his *Poetics* after his return to Athens in 335, where he had once studied with Plato. This was just after the Greek world had become Macedonian and at the time when the young Alexander was looking ever further eastward.

So Aristotle's defence of tragic mimesis as producing a beneficial transformation through katharsis of emotions, however we are to understand it, was produced at a time when tragedy had divorced itself from the political system of democracy, as well as from the religious context of the civic festival of Dionysus, and had become a mass-market export consumed by audiences in colonies and new civic Macedonian foundations far afield. A corollary of the growth and geopolitical metastasis of the Greek-speaking world, which took its favourite performance media with it everywhere, was the first serious attempt to write all the canonical plays of the major tragedians down in 'master' copies and place them in special collections. These were soon to be developed into the massive libraries such as that in Ptolemaic Alexandria that were such a hallmark of the Hellenistic Greek world.[37] Tragedy could be read quite as much as performed; it could be studied and edited by scholars alone or in small, learned groups; papyrus copies of the great masterpieces were regarded as some of the finest treasures of ancient book collections.

It is in these contexts that we need to understand the lack of emphasis on the performance context of ancient tragedy—whether the festival competitions, or the material aspects of the production such as the nature of the performance space, the costumes, masks, scenery and music. It is in these contexts that we need to understand Aristotle's avoidance of the political content of Greek tragedy and apparent insistence on ethical rather than religious issues.[38] It is in these contexts that we need to understand the conflicting dynamic in his account of the emotional effect of tragedy, which reads as though he is envisaging the newly autonomous entity *Tragōidia* effecting her constructive transformation of each individual consumer's capacity to deal with his inborn emotions by arousing those emotions in a controlled and pleasurable manner. For Aristotle, tragedy had ceased to be a verb in the plural middle voice and had become a singular abstract entity in its own right, which could produce an emotional transformation in another entity in any theatre—or library—in the Greek-speaking world. Fundamentally, it took very real transformations in the real world, and in the relationship between tragic theatre and the real world, to produce Aristotle's profound but infuriatingly enigmatic theory of the transformative power of tragic theatre.

Yet the enigma surrounding precisely what Aristotle meant by the katharsis of emotions produced by tragic mimesis has in hindsight exerted a paradoxically *beneficial* influence on the subsequent history of theatre. Most importantly, it was Aristotle who championed the capacity of tragic theatre to acknowledge emotions and handle them constructively, even though his theory is marked by such significant gaps. In one sense, the gaps may have been his "greatest contribution, since all subsequent theorizing arose within and in response to them."[39] The rediscovery of his *Poetics* by western Europeans in the Renaissance brought Aristotle's ill-defined theory of katharsis to attention. It immediately stimulated great creative minds and theatrical experiments. I have argued elsewhere that his avoidance of any detailed discussion of tragic metaphysics, and lack of recommendations to the playwright about how to treat them, have actually helped tragic theatre to spring up and speak to all kinds of religious and philosophical traditions.[40] Similarly, Aristotle's *lack* of prescriptive detail about how to produce katharsis has surely been an asset rather than a disadvantage. In inventing beneficial tragic katharsis, Aristotle successfully refuted the Socratic argument that tragic imitation was harmful. This idea, however little we may understand it, has been crucial to the history of theatre because it defined a positive effect of tragedy that people have probably always intuitively felt, and also created an aspiration in all subsequent tragedians to make a theatre about suffering that, however the katharsis actually worked, was indeed useful to the community.

Notes

1 ἔστιν οὖν τραγῳδία μίμησις πράξεως σπουδαίας καὶ τελείας μέγεθος ἐχούσης, ἡδυσμένῳ λόγῳ χωρὶς ἑκάστῳ τῶν εἰδῶν ἐν τοῖς μορίοις, δρώντων καὶ οὐ δι᾽ ἀπαγγελίας, δι᾽ ἐλέου καὶ φόβου περαίνουσα τὴν τῶν τοιούτων παθημάτων **κάθαρσιν**.

2 On the creation of written 'master' copies of the canonical tragedians in late fourth-century Athens, see Edith Hall, *The Theatrical Cast of Athens: Interactions between Ancient Greek Drama and Society* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), ch. 2; Edith Hall, "The Pronomos Vase and Tragic Theatre: Demetrios' Rolls and Dionysus' Other Woman," in *The Pronomos Vase*, ed. Oliver Taplin and Rosie Wyles (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 159–79.

3 See further Velvet Yates, "A Sexual Model of Catharsis," *Apeiron: A Journal for Ancient Philosophy and Science* 31 (1998): 35–57.

4 Cf. James Highland, "Transformative Katharsis: The Significance of Theophrastus's Botanical Works for Interpretations of Dramatic Catharsis," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 63 (2005): 155–63.

5 Cf. Edith Hall, *Adventures with Iphigenia in Tauris: Euripides' Black Sea Tragedy* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), ch. 4.

6 On pollution (*miasma*) see the outstanding study by Robert Parker, *Miasma: Pollution and Purification in Early Greek Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983).

7 Cf. Edith Hall, "Tragedy Personified," in *Visualizing the Tragic: Drama, Myth & Ritual in Greek Art & Literature*, ed. Chris Kraus et al. (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 221–56.

8 Thomas Taylor's "Note on Catharsis" (1811), reproduced in Elder Olson, ed., *Aristotle's "Poetics" and English Literature* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 79.

9 The phenomenon of the pleasure and psychological strength derived from watching 'tearjerkers' has been the subject of recent research by academics in the US: see especially Silvia Knobloch-Westerwick et al., "Tragedy Viewers Count Their Blessings: Feeling Low on Fiction Leads to Feeling High on Life," *Communication Research* 40 (2013): 747–66.

10 Cf. Robin Mitchell-Boyask, *Plague and the Athenian Imagination: Drama, History, and the Cult of Asclepius* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2008).

11 For one amongst several influential expositors of this interpretation, see Leon Golden, "Catharsis," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 93 (1962): 51–60 and Leon Golden, "Mimesis and Katharsis," *Classical Philology*, 64 (1969): 145–53. Other important discussions and interpretations include and are cited in Gerald Frank Else, *Aristotle's Poetics: The Argument* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), 225–6, n.14; Donald W. Lucas, *Aristotle's Poetics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 272–90; Donald Keesey, "On Some Recent Interpretations of Catharsis," *The Classical World* 72 (1978–79): 193–205; Richard Janko, *Aristotle on Comedy* (Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984), 139–42; Stephen Halliwell, *Aristotle's Poetics* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1984) 184–201; Sheila Murnaghan, "Sucking the Juice without Biting the Rind: Aristotle and Tragic Mimēsis," *New Literary History* 26 (1995): 755–73.

12 Jonathan Lear, "Katharsis," in *Essays on Aristotle's Poetics*, ed. Amélie O. Rorty (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 335.

13 See the analysis of David Blank, "The Arousal of Emotion in Plato's Dialogues," *Classical Quarterly* 43 (1993): 433–4.

14 Ibid., 434.

15 Cf. Stephen G. Salkever, "Tragedy and the Education of the Demos: Aristotle's Response to Plato," in *Greek Tragedy and Political Theory*, ed. J. Peter Euben (Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986), 274–303.

16 Cf. Amy Cook, *Shakespearean Neuroplay* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 135.

17 Ibid., 136.

18 See Bruce McConachie, *Engaging Audiences: A Cognitive Approach to Spectating in the Theatre* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 131, quoting J. E. Malpas: "Theatres, like places for worship and spectator sports, hold memories of the past in addition to providing a practical and cognitive framework for performance." Herodotus' use of the singular noun 'the theatre' here was regarded as a profoundly moving instance of the rhetorical figure of singular-for-plural ('theatre' for 'spectators') by the Greek literary theorist Longinus (*On The Sublime* 24.1).

19 Fragment 6.5–19 in *Poetae Comici Graeci*, Vol. VII, ed. R. Kassell & C. Austin (Berlin: de Gruyter 1989).

20 Cf. Hall, *The Theatrical Cast of Athens,* ch. 3.

21 John Peradotto, *Man in the Middle Voice: Name and Narration in the Odyssey* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 132–4.

22 Cf. ibid. 132–4.

23 Leonard R. Palmer, *The Greek Language* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1980), 292.

24 J.-P. Vernant, cited in Roland Barthes "To Write: Intransitive Verb? – Barthes-Todorov Discussion," in *The Languages of Criticism and the Science of Man*, ed. Richard Macksey and Eugenio Donato (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1970), 152.

25 Rutger J. Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek: A Study in Polysemy* (Amsterdam: Brill Academic, 2003), 83.

26 Ibid., 95–101.

27 Cf. Eduard Schwyzer, *Griechische Grammatik, vol. 2* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1938), 228–9, 232, 236–7.

28 Peradotto, *Man in the Middle Voice,* 134.

29 Rutger J. Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 105–12.

30 Cf. Cook, *Shakespearean Neuroplay*, 135.

31 Such distinctions, although important to modern narratological literary theorists, were rarely made so sharply by ancient critics and consumers of literature. For

the complex relationship between author and narrator in later ancient Greek writing, and for salutary warnings against making negative judgements of ancient critics for employing concepts and criteria that differ from our own, see Tim Whitmarsh, "An I for an I: Reading Fictional Autobiography," in id. *Beyond the Second Sophistic* (Berkeley/Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2013), 63–74.

32 Eleonora Belfiore, "Wine and Catharsis of the Emotions in Plato's *Laws*," *Classical Quarterly* 36 (1986): 437.

33 The bibliography on the transformations in fourth-century tragic theatre is large and growing. Most important contributions will be found through careful consultation of: Pat Easterling, "The End of an Era? Tragedy in the Fourth Century," in *Tragedy, Comedy, and the Polis*, ed. Alan H. Sommerstein et al. (Bari: Levante editori, 1993), 559–69; Oliver Taplin, *Pots and Plays: Interactions between Tragedy and Greek Vase-Painting of the Fourth Century BC* (Los Angeles, CA: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2007); Eric Csapo et al., *Greek Theatre in the Fourth Century BC* (Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter, 2014).

34 See Kathryn Bosher, ed., *Theater outside Athens: Drama in Greek Sicily and South Italy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Edith Hall, "Greek Tragedy 430–380 BCE," in *Debating the Athenian Cultural Revolution*, ed. Robin Osborne (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 264–87; Hall, *Adventures with Iphigenia in Tauris,* ch. 3; David Braund and Edith Hall, "Theatre in the Fourth-Century Black Sea," in *Greek Theatre in the Fourth Century BC,* ed. Eric Csapo et al. (Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter, 2014), 371–91, and David Braund and Edith Hall, "Gender, Role and Performer in Athenian Theatre Iconography: A Masked Tragic Chorus with *Kalos* and *Kale* Captions from Olbia," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 134 (2014): 1–11.

35 See Page duBois, "Ancient Tragedy and the Metaphor of Katharsis," *Theatre Journal* 54 (2002): 19–24, for an articulate statement of the unorthodox argument, informed by Foucault, that Aristotle's theory of tragedy shifts its focus from the democratic collective to the individual, and exemplifies "a disciplining of the social body" and "a view of theatre and catharsis from the point of view of power, administration, and management of the population. He assumes a gaze from above, looking with an almost panoptic eye at society."

36 Cf. Edith Hall, "The Singing Actors of Antiquity," in *Greek & Roman Actors: Aspects of an Ancient Profession*, ed. Pat Easterling and Edith Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 3–38; Edith Hall, "Rhetorical Actors and Other Versatile Hellenistic Vocalists," in *Hellenistic Oratory*, ed. Christos Kremmydas and Kathryn Tempest (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013b), 109–36.

37 Cf. Edith Hall, *Introducing the Ancient Greeks: From Bronze Age Seafarers to Navigators of the Western Mind* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2014), ch. 8.

38 Cf. Edith Hall, "Is There a Polis in Aristotle's Poetics?" in *Tragedy and the Tragic*, ed. Michael Silk (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 294–309.

39 Neal Oxenhandler, "The Changing Concept of Literary Emotion: A Selective History," *New Literary History* 20 (1988): 107; see also e.g. John Gassner, "Catharsis and the Modern Theater," in Elder Olson, *Aristotle's "Poetics" and English Literature* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 108–13.

40 Cf. Edith Hall, "Trojan Suffering, Tragic Gods, and Transhistorical Metaphysics," in *Tragedy in Transition,* ed. Sarah A. Brown and Catherine Silverstone (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2007), 16–33 and Edith Hall, "Medea als Mysterium im Global Village," in *Medeamorphosen*, ed. Nike Bätzner et al. (Berlin: Fink, 2010), 19–33.

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