

# Ancient Tragedy and Other Selves\*

RÉSUMÉ. — *Mon essai montre que la conception aristotélicienne d'amitié, surtout la conception d'un autre soi-même, explique non seulement pourquoi une action tragique est meilleure quand elle a lieu dans une famille, mais aussi pourquoi un protagoniste tragique souffre à cause de son action, et pourquoi nous souffrons quand nous voyons une tragédie. C'est-à-dire, pourquoi nous ressentons la pitié et la peur.*

ABSTRACT. — *My essay shows that Aristotle's conception of friendship, especially his conception of another self, explains not only why a tragic action is best when it occurs within a family, but also why a tragic protagonist suffers when he acts, and why we suffer when we view a tragedy. That is, why we feel pity and fear.*

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## I

When they read a text written in an ancient language, readers who are more accustomed to modern languages may encounter what appears from their linguistic perspective to be a paradox. If the text is a favorite one, they of course spare no effort to minimize and to explain away what they are right to argue is essentially a linguistic illusion. But we may on occasion find that a paradox resulting from a clash in the linguistic perspectives of a reader and a text is also an invitation to explore a text further and to seek a deeper understanding of it. In the present essay, I wish to discuss a linguistic paradox of this serendipitous sort and to show that the paradox in question is the source of new insights for the interpretation of Aristotle's *Poetics*.

After defining tragedy and discussing dramatic action in general, Aristotle turns to an analysis of tragic action and its specific properties of pitiableness and fearfulness. He argues that a tragic action ought to occur among friends. That is to say, an action of this sort ought to represent a person intending to harm or harming a friend. But he also argues that tragic

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action is best when it occurs within a family. For example, when a son intends to harm or harms his father, or a brother his brother. I imagine that most people who live in modern societies would find the implication that our friendships include our family relationships to be somewhat paradoxical. Our modern languages do not enable us to think with facility that our friends might include our parents or siblings.

We shall however see that those people who inhabited ancient Greek society would undoubtedly feel that their friendships do include their kinships<sup>1</sup>. Aristotle is no exception; indeed, he presents a profound philosophical analysis to show that they do. Aristotle argues that friendships arise only among those people who are other selves to one another and that parents and children or siblings are paradigmatically other selves. Both friends and kin are in one sense different from one another and in another sense the same as one another.

But we shall also see why a tragic action best occurs within a family. For Aristotle's conception of another self permits us to see why tragic protagonists suffer. Protagonists suffer because they harm those who are their other selves. Finally, we shall see why we suffer when we view a tragedy. We feel pity and fear because we see another self being harmed. Though we are not friends, a tragic audience and a tragic protagonist are other selves, too.

## II

Let us begin our own analysis by asking why a pitiable and fearful action occurs within a family. In answering this question we shall also see why our friends may include our family members. Aristotle of course argues that a pitiable and fearful action represents a person of a better sort falling from good to bad fortune because of an error on his or her part (*Poetics* 13. 1452b34-1453a12). But Aristotle also argues that an action with these qualities occurs best among members of a family. To show that it does, he uses an argument by elimination. He begins with the obvious fact that an action of this sort must occur among individuals who are either friends or enemies to one another or indifferent to one another (*Poe.* 14.1453b15-17). He simply asserts that a dramatic action is not pitiable if

1. One may consult Benveniste for a general historical account on the usage of the term « friendship » in ancient Greek. See Émile BENVENISTE, *Le vocabulaire des institutions Indo-Européennes*. Paris, Éditions de Minuit, 1969, bk. 3, ch. 4.

it occurs between those who are enemies (1453b17-18). And that an action is not pitiable if it occurs between those who are indifferent (1453b18-19). Nor is an action between persons of either type fearful, as we shall see.

Aristotle concludes that a tragic action is pitiable and fearful if it occurs between friends:

But when suffering occurs among friends, when brother kills or intends to kill brother or does some other such deed, or son father, or mother son, or son mother, these are the actions to be sought (*Poe.* 14. 1453b19-22--my translations).

In his conclusion he clearly implies that our friends include our family. For he specifies what suffering among friends is by citing only harmful actions within family relationships.

Aristotle thus argues that tragic action occurs best within a family, and he implies that our friends include our family members. But why would our friends include our family? We shall be able to answer this question if we examine what Aristotle conceives friendship to be and why he conceives it to be. Aristotle defines friendship as good will and good wishes, reciprocated and recognized, for the sake of another person. He expresses his definition less as one of friendship than as one of a friend:

Friends must bear good will and good wishes for one another, not without recognition, for the sake of some one of the objects discussed (*Eth.* 8. 2. 1156a3-5).

This definition states what friends ought to do, how they ought to do it, and why they ought. Friends must bear good will and good wishes for one another, they must reciprocate and recognize their good will and good wishes, and they must do so for the sake of their goodness, their usefulness, or their pleasantness. For persons with these qualities are the objects under discussion (*Eth.* 8. 2. 1155b18-19).

But Aristotle argues that only friendship for the sake of the goodness of another person is essentially friendship. Good friends love each other as an end. That is, they love one another for the sake of the other. For they are good persons and they wish what is good to each other as good persons (*Eth.* 8. 3. 1156b7-9). Good friends are thus essentially friends, for they love each other for what they are (1156b9-11).

Friendship for the sake of the usefulness or pleasantness of another is only accidentally friendship. Useful and pleasant friends love each other only as a means. That is, they love one another for the sake of some end of their own. For they wish what is good to each other only as a source

of good for themselves (*Eth.* 8. 3. 1156a10-14). Useful and pleasant friends are thus accidentally friends, for they love each other for what they receive (1156a16-19)<sup>2</sup>.

Why then do good friendships exist? Why do good friends act for the sake of each other? Aristotle appears to argue that we act for the sake of a good friend because we find a good friend and his life to be an object worthy of choice. And that we find a good friend and his life to be an object worthy of choice because a friend of this sort is another self.

Aristotle presents a tortuous argument to explain our motivation for good friendship (*Eth.* 9. 9. 1170a13-1170b14). But he does make his conclusion clear enough for present purposes. He concludes that as we find the existence of ourselves choice-worthy, so we find the existence of our friends choice-worthy:

Therefore, as to exist is itself choice-worthy for each good man, so is a friend, or nearly so (*Eth.* 9. 9. 1170b7-8).

His conclusion suggests that whatever makes our own life choice-worthy also makes the life of our friend choice-worthy.

Aristotle continues with an explanation of what makes our life choice-worthy. He argues that we find our existence choice-worthy because we enjoy the apperception of our own goodness:

To exist was choice-worthy because of our apperception of our own good. And an apperception of such sort was pleasant in itself (*Eth.* 9. 9. 1170b8-10).

He explains that when we apperceive our existence, we apperceive a good belonging to us, and that when we apperceive our own good, we are pleased:

To apperceive that one lives is one of the things pleasant in itself, for by nature life is good, and to apperceive what is good belonging to oneself is pleasant (*Eth.* 9. 9. 1170b1-3).

2. Cooper contends that all friends bear good wishes for the sake of their friends. Good friends bear good wishes for one another for the sake of essential qualities, and useful and pleasant friends do so for the sake of accidental qualities (John COPPER, « Aristotle on the Forms of Friendship », in *The Review of Metaphysics*, vol. 30, 1977, p. 631-635). But he himself concedes in effect that useful and pleasant friends do not love one another except for the sake of themselves, for he asserts they they dissolve their friendship if they no longer expect to receive anything from each other (p. 634, n. 1, p. 635-638, and p. 637, n. 14). Citing the same passages, Price agrees that Cooper severely qualifies the good wishes found in useful and pleasant friendships when he states that useful or pleasant friends must remain useful or pleasant for the friendship to continue (A. W. PRICE, *Love and Friendship in Plato and Aristotle*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1989, ch. 5, p. 150-151).

He does not explain why the apperception of a good belonging to us is pleasant. But we surely are aware of this pleasure when we act well under trying circumstances.

Aristotle explains finally that we find our life and the life of a good friend choice-worthy in the same way. For he argues that a good man is to himself as he is to his friend:

Now the virtuous man has the same relationship with himself and with a friend, for a friend is another self (*Eth.* 9. 9. 1170b5-7).

This explanation introduces Aristotle's conception of another self into the argument. This conception appears to suggest that we have the same relationship with ourself as with our friend, for our friend is somehow another self. The explanation thus implies that as we apperceive our own life, so we may apperceive the life of our friend. For the apperception of our life is the relationship with ourself under discussion. It also implies that as we take pleasure in the apperception of our own good, so we take pleasure in apperceiving the good of our friend<sup>3</sup>.

Aristotle thus explains why we find our friends choice-worthy. We take pleasure in the apperception of the life of another self. But what is another self? Unfortunately Aristotle never defines this term explicitly. Yet we can see that another self appears to be in one sense different than we are and in another sense the same as we are. Obviously another self is different than we are, for another self is an individual numerically different from us. But another self also appears to be the same as we are, for another self is an individual morally the same as us. Both we and he are good persons.

Could family members be other selves? If so, we would then be able to assert that our friends may include our family. Though he does not define

3. Some modern commentators and scholars with different analyses agree with this conclusion. Grant argues that our sense of our own existence is nearly the same as our sympathetic consciousness of the existence of a friend (Alexander GRANT, *The Ethics of Aristotle*, 4th ed., London, Longmans, Green and Co., 1885, vol. 2, p. 301). Burnet concludes that our sympathy depends upon a self that distinguishes itself from its thoughts and sensations and can relate itself to its own thoughts and sensations and to the thoughts and sensations of another in the same way (John BURNET, *The Ethics of Aristotle*, London, Methuen and Co., 1909, p. 430). Robin argues that a friend sympathizes intellectually with the joys and pains of another. Self-love, which is an accord of thought with itself in action, is the true principle of friendship, which is an exteriorization of self-love (Léon ROBIN, *Aristote*, Paris, PUF, 1944, pt. 6, p. 242-243).

However, some contemporary scholars disagree. Fraisse rightly asserts that as we find our existence desirable, so we find the existence of a friend desirable. Unfortunately, he argues that our existence is desirable because we have a consciousness of our existence and that this

the conception, Aristotle does in fact confirm our conjecture about what another self is when he discusses parenthood. He explains that parents and children love one another because parents reproduce their children (*Eth.* 8. 12. 1161b16-19). And apparently because of reproduction parents and children are other, or different, selves:

Parents therefore love their children as themselves, for their issue are like different selves in being separate. And children love their parents as being from them by nature (*Eth.* 8. 12. 1161b27-30).

He thus indicates that other selves are different from one another in one sense and yet identical to one another in another sense. Parents and children are obviously different, for they are different individuals. Yet parents and children are also identical, for they have very similar natural qualities.

Though they are primarily natural other selves, parents and children are also what we might call cultural other selves to one another. Aristotle argues that parents are the cause not only of the existence of their children but also of their upbringing and education:

consciousness is desirable in itself. And so our consciousness of the life of a friend is also desirable. The motive for friendship is thus to apperceive an identity that we share with a friend (Jean-Claude FRAISSE, *Philia*, Paris, Vrin, 1984, pt. 2, p. 241-245). But Aristotle does not claim that we enter a friendship because we find the apperception of the life of our friend desirable, nor that we wish to live because we find the apperception of our own life desirable. What he argues is that we find the apperception of the life of a friend to be pleasant, and that our pleasant apperception tells us that his life is choice-worthy. The apperception of his life as of our own life yields only an adventitious pleasure (see *Eth.* 10. 4. 1174b31-33). And to enter a friendship for the sake of our apperception would be to reduce good friendship to useful or pleasant friendship. Cooper attempts to argue that the motive for good friendship is to be better able to know ourselves (John COOPER, « Friendship and the Good in Aristotle », in *The Philosophical Review*, vol. 86, 1977, p. 295-296). He claims that we know intuitively that we have the same character as another, and that we know objectively what character we have through friendship with another (p. 298-299). But what Aristotle argues is not that through friendship we know ourselves better, but that through knowing ourselves we are better able to enter a friendship. For knowledge includes apperception, apperception being intuition. Price expresses reservations about Cooper's claim that we intuitively know what character a friend has. He argues that we do not have to guess about his character, but we can learn who he is simply by doing things with him (PRICE, ch. 4, p. 122-124). Yet Price maintains that we can gain self-knowledge through friendship. He argues that we have to achieve an understanding of our own activities through a friend. When we act by ourselves, we are less aware of our activities than of their objects. But when we cooperate with another, we become conscious of his activities and so of our own (p. 120-122). Thus, Cooper and Price also appear to reduce good friendship to useful and pleasant friendship. If we enter them for self-knowledge, we enter our friendships for the sake of our own interest.

The friendship of children to parents, and of men to gods, is a relationship to them as to something good and superior. For parents have rightly done the most things, being the cause of the existence and the upbringing and also the education of their children (*Eth.* 8. 12. 1162a4-7).

He argues that children love their parents not merely as the source of their existence but also as the source of their moral and intellectual development. And he implies that parents act for the sake of the moral and intellectual virtues and activities of their children.

So we again see that parents and children are in one sense different from one another, for they are different individuals. But parents and children again are in another sense the same as one another, for they have very similar moral and intellectual qualities.

Aristotle confirms this definition of another self when he explains that siblings are other selves, too. He argues that brothers have similar natural qualities because they have the same parents. They are identical with each other because they are identical with their parents (*Eth.* 8. 12. 1161b30-32). Literally, they are « the same thing in different individuals » (1161b32-33). He also appears to imply that brothers have similar cultural qualities. Besides natural similarities due to similarity of age, brothers have similar habits because of their common upbringing (1161b33-1162a1)<sup>4</sup>.

We thus conclude that our friendships may include kinships. Good friendships may include family relationships, for family members are other selves to one another. And because they are other selves to one another, family members often find that the lives of each other are choice-worthy<sup>5</sup>.

4. Price agrees that a child is a copy of its parents, and he implies that a child is both a biological and a moral copy (PRICE, ch. 6, p. 164-165). He also recognizes that brothers have a biological and a moral identity based on the family ties (p. 165-166). But he appears to overlook the fact that parents and children as well as brothers may share an intellectual identity, too. Fraisse argues that the family serves as a model to show how friendship accommodates itself to natural differences (FRAISSE, pt. 2, p. 205-206). Beyond their differences, family members also have a more intimate relationship that rests on a sense of their humanity (p. 206-207). I would argue that a family does not have an identity in their common humanity but rather in their more specific similarities of character—their natural and cultural qualities. And Fraisse does observe that parents and children have a more intense and agreeable friendship because of their shared life (p. 207-208).

5. Many modern commentators on the *Poetics* recognize that Aristotle offers a conception of friendship wider than the modern conception, though they do not attempt any analysis of it. Twinning, for example, notes that Aristotle's conception of friendship includes relatives, and he even cites *Ethics* 8. 1 and 7. (Thomas TWINNING, *Aristotle's Treatise on Poetry*, 1789 ed., New York, Garland Publishing, Inc., 1971, p. 90, n. 9, and n. 102, p. 319). Though he cites the same relationships, Gudeman argues that Aristotle offers us a narrow conception of friendship. He states that Aristotle's conception includes blood relationships, marriage relationships, and any other ties to a family (ARISTOTLE, *Peri Poiêtikês*, Alfred Gudeman (ed.).

But we can also explain why a tragic action occurs best within a family. For we can now see why a protagonist suffers when he harms a friend. We must however observe that only an action of a protagonist is properly pitiable and fearful. That is, only the intention or the execution of an action has these qualities. For Aristotle argues that the action of a protagonist need not be pitiable either in its intention or in its execution, even though the suffering of an antagonist may be pitiable (*Poe.* 14. 1453b17-19; also see *Poe.* 11. 1452b10-13)<sup>6</sup>.

Why then does a protagonist suffer when he intends to harm or does harm a friend? A protagonist appears to suffer because his action harms another self. Aristotle argues that good friends enjoy the apperception of the lives of each other, as we saw. He also argues that because of this enjoyment they seek to do things together:

The activity of apperception arises in living together. And so they naturally aim at this. And that which existence may be for individuals, that for the sake of which they choose to live, in that they wish to spend their lives with their friends (*Eth.* 9. 12. 1171b35-1172a3).

Now if they enjoy sharing activities, would not friends also feel painful emotions when they could not share activities? And if through an error one harmed another, would not the one friend suffer because of the harm inflicted on the other?

When he discusses the origin of friendship, Aristotle does assert that one friend grieves and rejoices with another (*Eth.* 9. 4. 1166a7-9). He also argues that someone who is a friend with himself grieves and rejoices with himself (1166a27-29). But Aristotle is most explicit in the *Rhetoric*. After

Berlin, Walter de Gruyter and Co., 1934, p. 255. Else similarly remarks that Aristotle refers not to mere friends but to close blood relatives (Gerald F. ELSE, *Aristotle's Poetics*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1957, p. 414-415). Dupont-Roc and Lallot make a similar observation about family ties, and they include hospitality. Yet they deny that these relationships are affective. They assert that the relationships are objective relationships which are socially recognized. And that within these relationships any violence constitutes a scandal (ARISTOTE, *La Poétique*, Roselyne Dupont-Roc and Jean Lallot, ed. and trans., Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1980, ch. 14, n. 4, p. 254-255).

6. Margoliouth recognizes that what is pitiable is the action of the protagonist not the suffering of the antagonist. He argues that the action is pitiable because the protagonist harms a relation who is identical with himself. But he offers no analysis of Aristotle's conception of another self (D. S. MARGOLIOUTH, *The Poetics of Aristotle*, New York, Hodder and Stoughton, 1911, p. 182). Referring to *Poe.* 11. 1452b11-13, Gudeman also agrees that only the action itself is pitiable (GUDEMAN, p. 255 and 256-257).



stating his definition of friendship, Aristotle asserts that friends share in the pleasures and the pains of one another:

From our assumption it is necessary that the one friend share the pleasure in the good of the other and the pain in the suffering of the other. And that he do so not for the sake of anything else but for the sake of the other (*Rhet.* 2. 4. 1381a3-5).

We thus see that we pass from good to bad fortune when we harm a member of our family. For our family members often are among our friends because we and they are other selves. And we harm ourselves when we harm a friend, for we suffer with our friends.

### III

We now ask why do we feel pity and fear when we hear or see a tragedy? In other words, why do we suffer when we observe a tragic protagonist harming a friend? Pity and fear are after all painful emotions. We shall see that what causes us to feel these emotions is the fact that we and a tragic protagonist are other selves. We share the pleasures and pains of a protagonist, as he shares the pleasures and pains of his friend.

Aristotle argues by elimination that a tragic action represents a good person falling from good to bad fortune because of an error. He implies that a protagonist ought not to rise from bad to good fortune. For he argues that a bad character ought not to go from bad fortune to good. An action of this type is the most untragic of all (*Poe.* 13. 1452b36-1453a1). And he implies that a good character also ought not to rise from bad to good fortune when he argues that an action with a double ending is more appropriate for comedy. He cites the example of the *Odyssey* (*Poe.* 13. 1453a30-39; see also *Poe.* 17. 1455b15-23).

But he also contends that a protagonist with extreme virtue or vice ought not to fall from good fortune to bad. He argues that an extremely good character ought not to pass from good to bad fortune. An action of this kind would be neither pitiable nor fearful but foul (*Poe.* 13. 1452b34-36). He also argues that an extremely bad character ought not to pass from good to bad fortune. An action of this sort is neither pitiable nor fearful, though it does raise philanthropic emotion (1453a1-4).

Aristotle concludes that a tragic action represents someone of an intermediate sort falling from good fortune to bad because of an error:

There remains a man, not distinguished in virtue or justice, who falls into bad fortune, not because of vice or depravity, but because of some error, and who is from a family of great fame and fortune (*Poe.* 13. 1453a7-10).

He of course cites the examples of *Œdipus* and *Thyestes* (1453a11-12).

We thus ask why do we feel pity and fear for someone who falls into bad fortune because of an error. That is, for someone who suffers because he mistakenly harms a friend. Aristotle gives us only one clue about why a tragic action is pitiable and fearful. When he eliminates the extremely bad protagonist, he explains what qualities are pitiable and fearful. Literally he states that pity is for undeservedly falling into bad fortune, and that fear is for likeness:

The one emotion concerns the undeserved falling into bad fortune, and the other emotion concerns the likeness. Pity concerns the undeservedness, and fear concerns the likeness (*Poe.* 13. 1453a4-6).

He appears to mean that pity is for someone who undeservedly falls into bad fortune, and fear is for someone who bears a likeness, presumably, to ourselves.

Aristotle's forlorn clue about pity and fear suggests that his conception of another self might be applicable. The fact that fear concerns a likeness suggests that a protagonist might be morally similar to us. But what similarity might he have? Our fear would appear to concern the capacity of the protagonist for error. For what distinguishes the protagonist of a tragedy from other characters inappropriate for tragedy is his error. Could pity concern the fact that the protagonist is numerically dissimilar to us? If so, our pity would concern the fact that undeserved suffering happens to another<sup>7</sup>.

If we consider the *Rhetoric*, we can indeed see that Aristotle defines pity in a such way as to suggest that this emotion concerns not merely undeserved suffering but rather undeserved suffering in another person. For

7. Dupont-Roc and Lallot would also appear to imply that we do find a point of identity in the fallibility of the protagonist. Though they do not explicitly draw this conclusion, they argue that an extremely virtuous protagonist represents a perfection too high for the audience to see any resemblance in him, and that a fallible protagonist contributes to the rationality of the arrangement of actions, which in turn ought to give birth to pity and fear (DUPONT-ROC and LALLOT, ch. 13. n. 2, p. 241-242, and n. 3, p. 244-245).

he states that we feel pity for an evil which happens to someone undeservedly but which also might happen to us:

Pity is a certain pain felt for the appearance of an evil which is destructive and painful, which occurs to someone who does not deserve it, and which we ourselves might expect to suffer, or someone of ours (*Rhet.* 2. 8. 1385b13-15).

Pity thus appears to concern suffering in another person, for it does not concern suffering in ourselves or in our friends. We only expect that the suffering could happen to us and ours (also see *Rhet.* 2. 8. 1385b16-19).

Aristotle also discusses fear in the *Rhet.* But unfortunately he defines fear in such a way as to suggest that we feel fear for ourselves. He asserts that fear concerns a destructive and painful evil:

Fear is a certain pain or disorder from the appearance of an impending evil which is both destructive and painful (*Rhet.* 2. 5. 1382a21-22).

And he implies that we feel fear for ourselves when he argues that we fear only evils which are near:

Evils which are far off are not very much feared. For everyone knows that he will die, but because it is not at hand, no one gives any practical thought to death (*Rhet.* 2. 5. 1382a25-27).

In fact, he asserts in general that whatever causes fear when it happens to us, causes pity when it happens to others:

Generally in these matters one ought to bear in mind that whatever they fear for themselves people pity when it happens to another (*Rhet.* 2. 8. 1386a27-29; also *Rhet.* 2. 5. 1382b24-26).

He would thus appear to suggest rather strongly that we feel pity for another and fear for ourselves.

But perhaps we ought to ask what we would feel for someone who is another self? Would we not feel both pity and fear? When he discusses our emotions, Aristotle does not discuss a person of this sort. But his argument appears to imply that we would feel both emotions. We would appear to feel pity for another self when viewed as another. That is, as numerically dissimilar. And we would appear to feel fear for another self when viewed as a self. That is, as morally similar.

Aristotle does indeed argue that we feel fear for someone very similar to ourselves. For he explains that fear concerns others who are suffering

undeservedly if they are sufficiently similar to us. If someone pitiable is too close to us, then we feel fear:

People pity those whom they know if they are not very close relatives. They feel for close relatives as if they themselves were in danger (*Rhet.* 2. 8. 1386a18-20).

And he cites the example of Psammenitus, though he refers to him as Amasis<sup>8</sup>. Psammenitus apparently felt fear when he saw someone very close to him suffering, but when he saw someone not so close to him suffering, he felt pity. He felt fear when he saw his son being led to his death and when he saw his daughter being led into slavery. But when he saw his friend begging, he felt pity and cried (*Rhet.* 2. 8. 1386a20-22)<sup>9</sup>.

We may thus feel both pity and fear for another self. For we feel pity for another self as being different from us, and we feel fear for another self as being the same as us.

But we now face an objection concerning the example of Psammenitus. We were careful to show that both family members and friends are other selves. Because of this fact we were able to include our family among our friends. We also suggested that we feel both pity and fear for other selves. Yet our example seems to suggest that we feel only fear for some other selves, and that we feel only pity for some other selves. For Psammenitus felt fear for members of his family, but he felt pity for a friend.

We would answer this objection by distinguishing what similarities other selves might have in common. For some other selves have more in common, some have less (see *Eth.* 8. 7). Psammenitus would obviously have many natural and cultural similarities with his son and daughter. He would thus have a very close relationship with his children. But he obviously could not have as many similarities with any friend. And this

8. On the misnomer, see Cope (Edward Meredith COPE, *The Rhetoric of Aristotle*, Cambridge, The University Press, 1877, vol. 2, p. 103).

9. Most modern commentators appear to agree that fear requires an identification of some sort with the protagonist. If they offer an explanation of this fact, they usually appeal to a feeling such as sympathy or empathy. Bywater, for example, argues that we take a sympathetic interest in the fortunes of the hero because of his similarity to ourselves. And that our fear for him is possible because of his ethical similarity (ARISTOTLE, *On the Art of Poetry*, Ingram Bywater (ed.), 1909 ed., New York, Garland Publishing, Inc., 1980, p. 210-213). Butcher argues that fear is a sympathetic shudder felt for the hero who has a character which resembles our own. Our sympathy depends on a resemblance of moral character (Samuel Henry BUTCHER, *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art*, 4th ed., London, MacMillan and Co. Ltd., 1927, p. 258-259). Halliwell argues that fear for others and their suffering has a prerequisite in strong sympathy (Stephan HALLIWELL, *Aristotle's Poetics*, London, Gerald Duckworth and Co. Ltd., 1986, p. 175-176).

friend who was begging may not have fallen into bad fortune because of an error. His fall may have been occasioned by the war between the Persians and the Egyptians. He thus appears to feel fear for another self who is very close to him and to feel pity for another self who is probably less close (see Herodotus 3. 14.).

This objection also explains further why we feel both pity and fear for a protagonist of a tragedy. We would appear to share a resemblance of an intermediate sort with a protagonist. We have neither a very strong similarity to a protagonist nor a very weak similarity to him. Neither are we kin to him nor is he very distinguished in virtue or vice. But both we and he are liable to commit serious errors in our relationships with those close to us<sup>10</sup>.

10. Many modern scholars would agree with the facts recognized in our analysis. But they do not realize that these facts rest on Aristotle's conception of another self. Bywater argues that both pity and fear require that the protagonist have some similarity to us. But he does not recognize that similarity may be of different degrees. He implies that fear aroused by rhetoric is only interested, and he argues that fear caused by poetics is disinterested. He appears to overlook *Rhet.* 2. 8. 1386a18-22 (BYWATER, p. 210-213 and 215). Butcher also recognizes that both pity and fear require some similarity (BUTCHER, p. 260, n. 1). And he recognizes that pity and fear require similarity of different degrees. Pity requires a distant likeness, for we pity in another what might happen to us. Fear requires a near likeness, for pity may turn into fear (p. 255-256). He takes *Rhet.* 2. 8. 1386a18-22 into account (p. 256, n. 3, and p. 265, n. 3). But he argues that the likeness of the protagonist is of a general sort. We identify with the general human nature of the protagonist and with the general course of the action (p. 260-263). That is, we identify with humanity at large (p. 265-266). Else too notes that pity and fear require similarity in different degrees. For he asserts that we pity those who have some connection or affiliation with us, if they are not too close to us. He thus implies that fear requires a close connection. He cites *Rhet.* 2. 8. 1386a18-22 as well as *Eth.* 8. 1. 1155a16-21 (ELSE, p. 373, n. 31). He also indicates that this similarity is not general but rather specific. For he asserts that fear concerns the protagonist because he is one of us (p. 372). Halliwell argues that pity requires a certain distance between the protagonist and the audience, and he implies that fear requires an identification (HALLIWELL, p. 177-178). He cites not only *Rhet.* 2. 8. 1386a18-22 but also *Rhet.* 2. 4. 1381a3-6 and *Eud. Eth.* 7. 5. 1240a33-39 and 7. 12. 1246a15-25 (p. 177, n. 12, and p. 178, n. 13). He argues that pity and fear both require likeness, and he supposes that both emotions require innocence. He also argues that pity and fear require that the protagonist and the audience have an affinity which is not too close, and he suggests that characters who are better than us as well as like us fit the bill (p. 178-179). Dupont-Roc and Lallot argue the pity implies an awareness of the suffering of the protagonist, but that it at the same time implies a certain distance. They cite *Rhet.* 2. 8. 1386a18-20. They also argue that fear above all supposes an analogy relating the suffering of the protagonist and its causes to ourselves. And they cite *Rhet.* 2. 8. 1382b24-26 (DUPONT-ROC and LALLOT, ch. 13, n. 2, p. 239).

Gudeman however disagrees with these facts. He cites *Rhet.* 2. 5. 1383a8-12 to suggest that we feel fear for ourselves because we see someone who is better than us or similar to us suffering a misfortune. And he quotes *Rhet.* 2. 8. 1386a24-27 to show that fear does not concern likeness (GUDEMAN, p. 240). He too appears to overlook *Rhet.* 2. 8. 1386a18-20. He also argues that we do not fear for the protagonist because we cannot identify with a tragic

We thus appear to feel pity when we view a tragic protagonist as another. For we may view a protagonist as sufficiently dissimilar to us so that we feel for him as another individual. And we feel fear when we view a protagonist as ourself. Because of his error we may view a protagonist as sufficiently similar to us so that we feel for him as we do for ourself.

## IV

We thus see that paradox resulting from a modern linguistic perspective that we may bring to the *Poetics* need not be a source of dismay for us. We may rather take delight in our new insights into the *Poetics*, the *Ethics*, and the *Rhetoric*. For we see that tragic protagonists suffer when they harm family members because they and their family are other selves. And that we suffer when we watch or listen to a tragedy because we and a protagonist are also other selves.

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character. That we could even feel fear as disguised pity, he argues, is absurd. He explains by example that we cannot identify with Oedipus because we cannot in some way unknowingly murder our father or marry our mother (p. 240). He would thus appear to demand too specific a similarity to explain how one might fear for another. But he does appear to think that we feel pity for the protagonist because he suffers undeservedly. And apparently to show how pity and fear relate to one another, he quotes both *Rhet.* 2. 5. 1382b24-26 and *Rhet.* 2. 8. 1386a28-29 (p. 162-163 and 240).