

CATHARSIS: QVOVSQVE TANDEM... ?:¹
**A Reply to G.R.F. Ferrari, “Aristotle on Musical Catharsis and the Pleasure
of a Good Story,” *Phronesis* 64 (2019), 117-171.**

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Abstract

This is a reply to a recent article by G.F.R. Ferrari, in which he proposes an umpteenth interpretation of catharsis in the final clause of the definition of tragedy in chapter 6 of Aristotle's *Poetics*, despite all the arguments that Gregory Scott and I have developed in favor of the suppression of this clause. Ferrari supports his interpretation above all on a “re-reading” of *Politics* VIII, according to which catharsis is associated here with “leisurely activity,” διαγωγή, and becomes an aesthetic experience, whereas I associate catharsis here with Aristotle's category of “amusement/relaxation” (παιδιά/ἀνάπαυσις) (that is said to function like a “healing,” ἰατρεία, at 5.1349b17) and render διαγωγή—whose goal is leisure (σχολή), understood as theoretical activity—as “intellectual past-time.” For his association, Ferrari invokes three arguments and, although all three are absolutely untenable (two are even disconcerting), they are carefully considered in this reply. Yet I cannot resist adapting the famous question of Cicero at the beginning of *The First Catilinarian Oration*: “How long, dear colleagues, will you go on abusing our patience?”

[Translator's Note: According to the author, who has Brazilian, Italian and French nationalities and publishes in the three respective languages, the expression of Cicero is of current usage in the neo-Latin countries, in particular in Italy, where it constitutes a kind way of making someone understand that he is abusing our kindness. It is therefore useless to speculate on Veloso's intention to draw a parallel between the current exegetical controversy over Aristotle and the events in the political history of ancient Rome. In any case, for English-speaking readers, I emphasize the word “adapting.”]

Key Words

Aristotle, *Poetics*, *Politics*, catharsis, (intellectual) past-time, leisure, amusement, relaxation, pleasure, imitation.

While being aware of the arguments that Gregory Scott and I have developed² in favor of suppressing the final clause from the definition of tragedy in *Poetics* 6, but without really considering them, some researchers obstinately try to make sense of the presence of catharsis in this definition and are willing to offer the most incredible interpretations. An example is the recent article by G.R.F. Ferrari, “Aristotle on Musical Catharsis and the Pleasure of a Good Story.”³

¹ The original French version is published in *Kentron* 35 (2019), pp. 235-258, and its digital version will be, or is, available at <https://journals.openedition.org/kentron>. Translated by Gregory L. Scott, January 2020 (edited 4/6/20), and available at <https://www.epspress.com/VelosoResponseToFerrariEnglish.pdf>.

² See notably Scott 2003 ; 2016b ; 2018 (2016a) ; 2019 ; Veloso 2004 (2002) ; 2007 ; 2012 ; 2018.

³ See Ferrari 2019.

Since Ferrari intends, unsurprisingly, to use the (supposed) meaning of κάθαρσις in *Politics* VIII to explain the definition of tragedy, I examine this book of the *Politics* before examining the *Poetics* itself.

***Politics* VIII**

Consider the central passage for my purpose:

[1] Since,⁴ on the one hand, we accept the division of songs (μελῶν) as some theorists make [it], establishing the “ethical,” the “practical” and “frenzied” (ἐνθουσιαστικά) ones, and, as for the nature of the melodies (ἁρμονιῶν), they establish [it] for each of these groups [of song], one by one: a suitable [melody], for a part (μέρος),⁵ another, for another—and that, on the other hand, we say that music (μουσικῆ) should not be used for a single benefit, but for more than one⁶—because [it exists] for both education and purification (παιδείας ἕνεκεν καὶ καθάρσεως) (and what we mean by purification, if now [we discuss it] without qualification (ἀπλῶς), we will explain it more accurately (σαφέστερον) in the [discourse] on the [technique] of composition (ἐν τοῖς περὶ ποιητικῆς) and, thirdly, for “past-time” (τρίτον δὲ πρὸς διαγωγὴν), for relaxation, as well as for respite after exertion (πρὸς ἀνεσίν τε καὶ πρὸς τὴν τῆς συντονίας ἀνάπαυσιν),—it is evident that we must use all melodies, but not all in the same way: for education [we must use] the most ethical [melodies], while, for listening to other performers, also⁷ the “practical” and “frenzied” melodies (*Pol.* VIII 7, 1341b 32-1342a 4).

[Translator’s note: “Past-time” is often synonymous with “relaxation” or “respite” in English, but as we see later, “past-time” for Aristotle has the coloring of an intellectual pursuit here. Also, regarding “practical”: Aristotle’s point as given in other texts, e.g. *Poetics* 1 1447a28, suggests that the music and corresponding dance that go along with this type of music pertain to imitations of action. Finally, “frenzied” is meant in the sense of “frenetic” or “extremely emotional.”]

Points in Agreement and Points in Disagreement

Ferrari 2019 (pp. 120-1) and I share two important convictions:

- a) This passage is corrupted, notably at lines 40-41 : “thirdly, for past-time (τρίτον δὲ πρὸς διαγωγὴν), for relaxation, as well as for respite after exertion (πρὸς ἀνεσίν τε καὶ πρὸς τὴν τῆς συντονίας ἀνάπαυσιν)”;
- b) In *Pol.* VIII, the image or, better, the metaphor of catharsis or purification—it is indeed a metaphor (Ferrari 2019, pp. 134 & 138)—is not meant to illustrate education for virtue.

However, our common points stop there.

⁴ All translations are mine, unless mentioned to the contrary.

⁵ With Aubonnet 1996, *ad loc.*, who understands here the term as synonymous with εἶδος, “form” or “species,” I do not adopt μέρος, as suggested by Tyrwhitt 1806, p. 138.

⁶ And not necessarily “many”; cf. Veloso 2018, p. 304.

⁷ Another possible translation: “as well those of ‘practical’ and of ‘frenzied’ melodies.” This is the translation that I adopt in Veloso 2018, p. 305, but now I realize that the one I propose in the body of the text is preferable.

Already, concerning (a), Ferrari 2019, 128 & 133, sees no problem referring to a work *περὶ ποιητικῆς* for a clarification of catharsis,⁸ whereas I find it at least suspect, since what Aristotle understood by *κάθαρσις* must already be sufficiently clear for the reading of *Pol.* VIII.⁹

Concerning (b), Ferrari 2019, 121-123 & 142, maintains that catharsis is to be associated with past-time, *διαγωγή*, and not with relaxation and respite, contrary to what I maintain. [Translator's note: Ferrari renders *διαγωγή* as "leisurely activity," and Veloso as "passe-temps," which often means in English "past-time" short and simple, although Veloso colors the term legitimately as "*intellectual* past-time." Veloso's stance is confirmed by VIII 5, 1339a25-6, when Aristotle *contrasts* *διαγωγή* with (i) education and (ii) "play/respite," as Ferrari recognizes at p. 120. However, the Northern Greek adds "thoughtfulness" (*φρόνησις*) to *διαγωγή*, so "*intellectual* leisure/*intellectual* past-time" is the implication, not just, for instance, lying on a hammock drinking wine. More on this below. For simplicity, I use "past-time" in what follows for *διαγωγή*, but the reader should bear these caveats in mind.] Yet Ferrari is not plausible: Even if we allow that "for past-time" [= "leisurely activity" for Ferrari] corresponds to "purification," the reference "to another work" for a clarification of the notion of purification becomes superfluous, especially since this is not the first occurrence of the term "purification" in *Pol.* VIII.

I will, therefore, treat above all the question of what is associated with catharsis but, in doing so, will return to the question of the reference to another work.

The Arguments of Ferrari for the Association of Catharsis with Past-time

The association of catharsis with past-time [= Ferrari's "leisurely activity"] is simply impossible: In the pages that precede [1], nothing suggests this. Yet consider the arguments of Ferrari:

The text as it stands does not suffice to make the situation clear. As Richard Kraut puts it: 'It is likely that the manuscripts do not here convey what Aristotle originally wrote.'¹⁰ Clarity can be restored, however, if we countenance an interpolation along the lines suggested by Dirlmeier and adopted by Schadewaldt,¹¹ but locate the interpolation elsewhere: not in the phrase about relaxation but rather in the phrase 'for leisurely activity' [= *διαγωγή*]. Excising or otherwise taking out of play the words *πρὸς διαγωγήν*

⁸ He writes: "As for what he means by catharsis, Aristotle tells us he will keep his explanation simple, reserving a fuller account for his work on poetics (1341b38-40). What that simpler explanation turns out to be is an explanation by analogy." (p. 128); "He recognizes, however, that, unlike education or relaxation/rest from strain, 'catharsis' is a term in need of some explanation (p. 133); and he adds: "That is, it is in need of some explanation if it is to become a term of art" (n. 34).

⁹ However, regarding Veloso 2007, it is unjust to say, as Ferrari does, 2019, 121, n. 8, that I examine this passage "only in order to argue that catharsis is already fully explicated in the *Politics*," because my passage reads: "This excursus on *Politics* 8 has shown both that the reference to a work on compositional technique to clarify *katharsis* is, to say the least, very suspect, and that there is no room for *κάθαρσις* in the definition of tragedy" (Veloso 2007, 266). In addition, contrary to what Ferrari attributes to me in what follows, I do not deny that catharsis can be an external goal of tragedy, according to Aristotle; simply that this is not the best use.

¹⁰ Kraut 1997, 209.

¹¹ Dirlmeier 1940 and Schadewaldt 1955.

from within the phrase πρὸς διαγωγὴν πρὸς ἄνεσιν τε καὶ πρὸς τὴν τῆς συντονίας ἀνάπαυσιν was the choice of some among the generation of scholars who preceded Dirlmeier and Schadewaldt. The strategy has much to be said for it, as at least one other scholar has recently seen.¹² On the one hand, it gives Dirlmeier his due: he was right to insist that, since rest and leisurely activity have been repeatedly and emphatically distinguished from each other when the uses of music came up for discussion in 8.3-5, it is impossible that they should now suddenly be lumped together, without apparent distinction. On the other hand, its solution to the problem results in a smoother train of thought for Aristotle than does Dirlmeier's proposal; for when the phrase taken out of play is πρὸς διαγωγὴν rather than πρὸς ἄνεσιν ... ἀνάπαυσιν, the resulting text anticipates precisely the order in which the chapter will address the various uses of music. Aristotle's list of uses now runs: (1) education, (2) catharsis, (3) relaxation and rest from strain. He proceeds to assign appropriate types of tune to each of these in turn: to education at 1342a2-3; to catharsis at 1342a4-18; to relaxation and rest from strain at 1342a18-28. Dirlmeier, by contrast, is led to insist that the whole passage that apparently deals in consecutive order with catharsis and with relaxation/rest from strain is in fact dealing with catharsis only. If true, this would leave unresolved the question why leisurely activity should be explicitly mentioned but not separately discussed in what follows.

As for how the phrase πρὸς διαγωγὴν crept into the text: I assume it got there in much the way that Dirlmeier supposes the phrase πρὸς ἄνεσιν ... ἀνάπαυσιν could have. It was interpolated by a copyist who, with an eye on πρὸς διαγωγὴν at 1339a25, wondered why διαγωγή now no longer appeared in the threefold classification of music's purposes. What is more, the phrase may well be thought an easier (because less creative) interpolation than the more elaborate phrase πρὸς ἄνεσιν τε καὶ πρὸς τὴν τῆς συντονίας ἀνάπαυσιν, which appears nowhere in that form in Aristotle's earlier discussion of the connections between entertainment, relaxation, and rest from strain in 8.3 and 8.5. Alternatively, and again following Dirlmeier's pattern of argument, πρὸς διαγωγὴν could be Aristotle's own gloss on catharsis, displaced in ancient times by someone who failed to appreciate the connection between catharsis and διαγωγή but did recognize that διαγωγή and ἀνάπαυσις share a connection with free time (pp. 121-122).

There are therefore three arguments for Ferrari in favor of the association of catharsis with past-time/διαγωγή:

- 1) it would remove the impression that διαγωγή is not, or no longer, treated more in *Pol.* VIII 7;
- 2) it is more probable that the interpolation resides in the expression πρὸς διαγωγὴν rather than in the more elaborated "for relaxation, as well as rest after exertion," which, in this formulation, does not appear anywhere in the preceding discussion ;
- 3) πρὸς διαγωγὴν would seem to be a gloss by Aristotle himself for purification.

These three arguments are extremely weak. Arguments 2 and 3 are even baffling, because one might maintain instead (a) that (against 2) the elaborate and original character of the expression "for relaxation, as well as for rest after exertion" is an additional mark of inauthenticity and (b)

¹² Destrée 2017.

that (against 3) this same elaborate expression can itself be a gloss on purification by Aristotle or by someone else. Besides, if it is true that, as Ferrari 2019, 120, remarks, the triple occurrence of the preposition πρὸς, “for,” at lines 40-1 is problematic, the locution τρίτον δὲ πρὸς διαγωγὴν does not itself pose any problem, because, in the pages that precede [1], διαγωγή appears always in the third position, as we will see. As for argument (1), there is no concern regarding the disappearance of διαγωγή (after Chapter 5) to dissipate: διαγωγή is not treated any longer in *Pol.* VIII because the principal object of this book is the education of the young who are destined to be future citizens of the best city, that is, the role of learning musical practice in their education—musical learning being often mingled with education in general—whereas διαγωγή concerns principally the adults.¹³

Two Obstacles to the Association of Catharsis with Past-time [διαγωγή]

Be that as it may, two insurmountable obstacles arise against the thesis of the association of catharsis with διαγωγή.

The first enters precisely at the initial mention of catharsis, in chapter 6, thus before [1], which not only does not present any reference to another work for an ulterior clarification of the notion of catharsis, contrary to its occurrence in chapter 7, but which leaves little doubt about what is associated with catharsis:

[2] It is also evident from this what type of instruments should be employed. We should not admit the *aulos* in education, nor any other professional instrument like the *kithara* or any other of this genre, but only those, which to the contrary, produce good listeners for a musical education or for all other [parts of education]. Besides, the *aulos* is not capable of producing [good] character (ἠθικόν) but is capable of excitement (ὀργιαστικόν), so that it is necessary to use for the occasions in which performance can [produce] a purification (κάθαρσιν) rather than learning. We add that this includes something contrary to education, namely, that the practice of the *aulos* prevents the use of speech (*Pol.* VIII 6, 1341a 17-25).

It need be recognized that what the term κάθαρσις designates here is respite [= Ferrari’s “relaxation”]. That is, Aristotle had already said that respite, which is the goal of play (*jeu/παιδιάν*), is a certain therapy, ἰατρεία τις, needed after work (5, 1339b 17), and the play itself had been compared to a drug, φαρμακεία (3, 1337b 40-42). The notions of catharsis and therapy are explicitly associated following [1]:

¹³ This responds to the question that Ferrari 2019, 141 n. 49 (cf. pp. 142-143), poses to Destrée 2018.

[3, continued from 1] For an emotion (πάθος)¹⁴ which, in the case of certain souls, occurs more strongly, is present in all [souls], but it differs less or more, for example, pity and fear, but also frenzy. Indeed, certain individuals are possessed (κατακώχιοι)¹⁵ by this movement,¹⁶ but we see them, because of the sacred songs, when they use the songs that excite (ἐξοργιάζουσι) the soul, to recover (καθισταμένους), as if they had received a treatment, that is to say a purification (ὡσπερ ἰατρείας τυχόντας καὶ καθάρσεως). Necessarily those who [easily] experience pity and those who are [more] subject to fear, and, in a general way, to emotion (παθητικούς), undergo the same thing, and [likewise] others to the extent that each of emotions of this kind reaches every individual; but for all there is a kind of purification (τινα κάθαρσιν) and a relief accompanied by pleasure (καὶ κουφίζεσθαι μεθ' ἡδονῆς). In the same manner, “practical” [or “purificatory”]¹⁷ songs, too, provide men with harmless joy (ἄβλαβῆ) (*Pol.* VIII 7, 1342a 4-16).

It would be surprising that Aristotle now uses, in **[3]**, the same metaphor for past-time (διαγωγή) that he used for respite in **[2]**,¹⁸ even if one accepts the authenticity of the reference in **[1]** to another work (περὶ ποιητικῆς) for the clarification of the notion of catharsis. Purification could, at the limit, encompass play/respice and past-time, but we will see that this is not very realistic.

Regarding **[2]** still, we can also invoke an *ad hominem* argument. According to Ferrari 2019, 124-125; 128; 133, n. 35, and 140 sq., catharsis would be the concern of the citizens of the best city, so that it does not concern workers, who, in the Aristotelian vision, are excluded from citizenship but not of course from the city. In this case, listening to the *aulos* would be reserved for citizens. This is absurd. In fact, in **[2]**, catharsis is not restricted to a particular group of people. Moreover, the excitement of the *aulos* seems to concern there its listening as well as the musical performance, which excludes from the outset the past-time, διαγωγή, which consists only in the listening (*Pol.* VIII 3, 1338a 21-30).

The second major obstacle—the principal one—to the association of catharsis with past-time [διαγωγή] comes from the very characterization of the latter in *Pol.* VIII 3-5, which Ferrari

¹⁴ Or “occurrence,” “phenomenon.”

¹⁵ Ferrari 2019, 135-137, insists that this term (line 8) should be translated by “prone to possession” rather than by “possessed” (see lines 12-13: παθητικούς); but his arguments, especially the comparison with *Pol.* II 9, 1269b; X 10, 1179b 9; *HA* VI 18, 572a 32, are not constraining. In any case, he means an emotion by “movement,” not a bodily movement. See the following note.

¹⁶ Of the body; cf. *Pol.* VIII 6, 1341b 18; probably this is a reference to dance.

¹⁷ Here (line 15), the interpreters are divided between καθαρτικά, the reading of the manuscripts, preserved by Aubonnet 1996, and πρακτικά, the correction of Sauppe, adopted by Ross 1957. I lean for the correction because, with καθαρτικά, the sentence would be quite redundant (unless the sacred songs are considered a subgroup of purificatory /frenzied songs; but they cannot be completely different, *pace* Ferrari 2019, 133, 33, *sed* 146), and a resumption of “practical” songs 1342a 4 appears desirable (see **[1]**). In this case, the “practical” songs would also provide a certain treatment and relief accompanied by pleasure. However, it is also possible that the preceding sentence already refers to the “practical songs,” that is, to those that are imitative (above all) of actions: They would be actions capable of arousing emotions such as fear and pity. In this manner, our phrase would return to “frenzied,” but with the new qualification “purificatory.” In any case, this option is not essential to my general interpretation.

¹⁸ The insouciance of Ferrari, p. 128, in this regard is scandalous.

neglects. Or, rather, he does not understand it. Contrary to what he claims (p. 118; 125; 143), the pleasure of past-time/διαγωγή [= leisurely activity for him] cannot be a “pleasure of relief,” otherwise we would no longer understand the distinction between, on the one hand, past-time and, on the other hand, play/relaxation [= respite].¹⁹

The Pleasure of Past-time is not a Pleasure of Relief

At the beginning of chap. 5, Aristotle finally provides the possible answers to the question of why, in the best political constitution, children should engage in μουσική, here simply “music,” even if it includes singing (essentially choral) and dance (*Pol.* VIII 6, 1340b 20, 1341a 24-25). He then considers three reasons:

[4] Indeed, about this [i.e. music], it is not easy to determine (a) what its power is, or (b) why children should be involved, that is, if (1) [it is] with a view to play and respite (παιδιᾶς ἔνεκα καὶ ἀναπαύσεως), as in the case of sleep and drunkenness (because in itself these things are not even among the good things (σπουδαίων), but [they are] pleasant and at the same time “put an end to the cares,” as Euripides says [*Bacch.* 374-386]; this is why people arrange it [i.e. the music] and use all these things in a similar way: sleep, drunkenness, music, and among these they also insert dance); or [if] it is necessary to think rather that (2) music applies in a way to virtue (πρὸς ἀρετὴν τι τείνειν), in the belief that, as gymnastics gives a certain quality to the body, so music is able to give a certain quality to character, habituating [it] to be able to enjoy properly; or else [that] (3) it brings something to past-time and discernment (πρὸς διαγωγήν ... καὶ πρὸς φρόνησιν), as this must be stated as the third of the [goals] mentioned (*Pol.* VIII 5, 1339a 14-26).

Ferrari will agree that here, on line 25, the term φρόνησις, “discernment,” does not refer to the excellence of the practical reasoning described in *EN* VI, although this may be the case at the beginning of the discussion of the best constitution.²⁰ Associated with διαγωγή (“past-time” or “[way of] life”), this word [φρόνησις] should rather designate simply the thought.²¹ Ferrari 2019, 120, n. 6 (see pp. 142-143, *sed* p.147), however, states that “by φρόνησις here Aristotle need have in mind no more than the musical connoisseurship of adults, to which he takes youthful musical training to contribute.” Ferrari probably thinks of the passages where Aristotle associates with past-time the judgment of the quality of musical compositions in adulthood (*Pol.* VIII, 6, 1340b 20-25, 33-39, 1341a 9-17, cf. 5, 1339a 33-41; [2]). In imagining (p.121, n.8) that I ask for a higher intellectual degree for this past-time, Ferrari expects too much of me, because most of the past-

¹⁹ Certainly, Ferrari, p. 125 *sq.*, realizes to a certain extent the difficulty of his thesis but decidedly underestimates the difficulty.

²⁰ See for example *Pol.* VII 1, 1323b 22 ; but here the term can designate thought in general.

²¹ See *Met.* Lambda 7, 1072b 14 *sq.* ; *DC* II 1, 284a 31-32 ; *EE* I 4, 1215b 1-2.

time is, in my opinion, something that remains below this critical activity (I will come back to it in connection with the *Poetics*), and this point is independent of the question of knowing the part of moral judgment or, more properly, of musical technique in this critical activity.²² [Translator's note: Ferrari seemingly imagines that Veloso's conception of "past-time" is a very elaborate philosophical speculation but Veloso emphasizes that the (intellectual) past-time consists simply, or primarily, in the understanding of what is imitated. In this context the imitations are musical but they remain below the "musical culture" that can include musical criticism, the "musical connoisseurship of adults," which Ferrari seemingly grants to Veloso.] In any case, this "musical culture" to which Ferrari refers contains necessarily an intellectual dimension.²³ If it were not so, it would be difficult to differentiate the pleasure that past-time provides from the pleasure for the music that is "common to some animals as well as to a crowd of slaves and children," which pleasure should be exceeded—what the learning of musical practice, at least up to a certain level, should contribute to (*Pol.* VIII 6, 1341a 9-17, immediately before **[2]**). This common pleasure probably coincides with the "natural pleasure" shared by people "of all ages and characters" (5, 1340 2-5)—it may be the pleasure of respite (5, 1339a 18-19), or a pleasure that would be at the base of it, but, certainly, it is not that of past-time.²⁴ And if we concede the existence of an intellectual dimension, as is explicitly elsewhere (Ferrari 2019, 147), but we believe, still like Ferrari (2019, 142; 147; 149) that the past-time (or cathartic experience) is of a completely different order, which is to say, of an order fully perceptive and emotional, it will be necessary to explain why past-time and discernment constitute a single reason.²⁵ Moreover, the term φρόνησις disappears in the continuation of *Pol.* VIII, although Aristotle evokes the judgment of musical compositions in adulthood in order to justify the practice of music by children. This suggests that, even on its own, the term διαγωγή covers the notion of "musical culture." We can therefore reasonably think of a *hendiadys*,²⁶ which is why φρόνησις no longer appears afterwards next to διαγωγή. In this case, we must translate the syntagm πρὸς διαγωγήν ... καὶ πρὸς φρόνησιν

²² Cf. Ferrari 2019, 147 ; *sed* p. 149.

²³ *Pol.* VIII 6, 1341b 2-8: "And what is told by the ancients about the *auloi* is reasonable: they say that Athena, after inventing the *auloi*, rejected them. It is therefore not too bad to say that the goddess did this because she was angry because of the deformation of her face, but it is more likely that it is because the study of *auloi* (ἡ παιδεία τῶν αὐλῶν) is nothing for thought (πρὸς τὴν δianoian), whereas it is to Athena that we attribute science and technique." Cf. **[2]**.

²⁴ Ferrari 2019, 124, n. 14, et 139, apparently thinks that there is a third type of pleasure. We would therefore question why it does not figure partly in the list of reasons for which children should engage in the practice of music, in **[4]**.

²⁵ At least one time, Ferrari appears to hold that past-time [= "leisurely activity"] and catharsis do not entirely coincide: "This is not to deny that the musical leisure of the educated, their διαγωγή, would not also contain a somewhat theoretical appreciation of good music and good technique, and constitute an exercise of connoisseurship. (I am speaking now of their musical appreciation as a whole, rather than isolating the cathartic, emotional response that Aristotle himself chooses to emphasize.)" (Ferrari 2019, 147).

²⁶ Thus Pellegrin 1993. Curiously, Ferrari 2019, 121, n. 8, omits this fourth reading when he attributes to Veloso 2007 the translation of διαγωγή as *intellectual pursuit* (*sic!*).

rather by “for the intellectual past-time” or “for the intellectual life.”²⁷ Of course, this does not mean that only the intellect is engaged.²⁸ Intellectual activity is rather the goal for which one engages in a past-time that also includes perceptive activity and a whole series of bodily attitudes.

Be that as it may, past-time has already been clearly distinguished from play in chapter 3, when it comes to what one does with leisure, σχολάζειν (1337b 33 sq.). It is not playing, argues Aristotle, that one must do with leisure, because play would then be the finality of life, which is impossible. It is necessary rather to use play to interrupt occupations, because those involve fatigue and stress, and the one who becomes fatigued needs repose, which is the goal of play (*Pol.* VIII 3, 1337b 36-40). This is why we must introduce play by looking for the opportune moment for its use, as if we were administering it like a medicine, φαρμακείας χάριν (40-42). One should have leisure rather in past-times, that is to say, in actions which have their finality in themselves (1338a 10), as listening to the song of the bard during banquets (1338a 21 -30). It is true, as Ferrari 2019, 124, and 149 notes, that “what activities will fill that leisure Aristotle does not specify,” but this last passage provides a good indication: listening to the bard.

In Chapter 5, Aristotle adds that intellectual past-time is not the same as the education of children; for “that which is fine is not suitable for any unfinished [being]” (1339a 29-31). In other words, what is the end for an adult—and that is leisure (3, 1337b 33)—is not suitable for a child, because leisure involves pleasure and happiness (1338a 1 sq.). That is why *Pol.* VIII, which deals mainly with the education of children, does not dwell much on the notion of intellectual past-time: here is a first indication of the weakness of the first argument of Ferrari for the association of catharsis with past-time [= “leisurely activity”]. This association does not extend to play: play and respite are never a goal in themselves (*EN* X 6, 1177b 28 sq.). The same goes for education, whose goal is virtue. Aristotle rightly disqualifies play straightaway as a possible goal of education because one does not play when learning and, on the contrary, one learns with pain (5, 1339a 27-29). Nevertheless, music also functions as a play for children learning ([5]). The practice of music by children under certain conditions can even contribute also to (intellectual) past-time. As we have seen, it helps to make them good judges of music (6, 1340b 20-25, 33-39, [2]), and its listening is part of the leisure of free men (5, 1339b 4-10). Although this contribution of musical education to intellectual past-time is not unrelated to the type of education that makes children capable of experiencing joy and sorrow and of judging properly (5, 1340a 14-18)—because it is necessary to promote the virtues that lead to leisure (*Pol.* VII 15, 1334a 16)—it is not identifiable with this education, because, with past-time, one is beyond the practical area.

²⁷ Of course, if, taken alone, the term διαγωγή can refer to games (*EN* X 6, 1176b 9-14), [but] this is obviously not the case: we would have a repetition of the first reason.

²⁸ Contrary to what Ferrari suggests 2019, 145.

We can understand that intellectual past-time has a close link with leisure, σχολή. But what is leisure, exactly? Ferrari conceives it inadequately, because he sees it (p.124, with n.16, *sed* p.140: *civic exertion*) only as “free time” and, consequently, he sees “non-leisure,” ἀσχολία, only as “work.” Certainly, the exact meaning of σχολή and its derivatives in *Pol.* VII-VIII is not always obvious, but, as I show elsewhere,²⁹ this term also designates a part of the *intellective* life of man (*Pol.* VIII 2, 1337b 14-15; see *EN* X 7). In this sense, leisure is the very exercise of theoretical thought, whereas non-leisure coincides with the exercise of practical thought, which here includes productive thought (*Pol.* VII 14, 1333a 25 *sq.* VII 3). In other words, leisure is that part of our intellective life where our thought is occupied in reasoning neither about an action to be undertaken nor about a production to be accomplished, whereas non-leisure covers the part where our thought is concerned with action and production, with production being even less leisurely than action. Thus, the past-time of [4] is what allows us to exercise our theoretical thinking.

Now we revisit *Pol.* VIII 7 ([1]). If past-time [= Ferrari’s “leisurely activity”] is a third element, education and purification are two distinct elements. At the same time, one cannot hold both past-time (if it is indeed the same past-time mentioned in [4]) and relaxation (ἄνεσις)/respice as a subdivision of purification, because there is nothing in *Pol.* VII-VIII 3-6 that makes one think of (intellectual) past-time as a purification. On the other hand, we have seen good reasons to relate purification to play and respice. The advantages in [1] should summarize the three reasons in [4]. The terms and the order in which they appear have partially changed, but these three reasons are recognizable. In [4] they are: (1) play and respice, (2) training for virtue, (3) intellectual past-time;³⁰ in [1]: (1) education, (2) purification, (3) past-time. But, in the meantime, the list had already changed: (1) education, (2) play, and (3) past-time:

[5] But our main investigation is [on the question of knowing] whether or not to include music in education and what its power is, of the three things that are in question, that is, if it [i.e. the power] concerns education, play or past-time. Reasonably, music is classed in the three [cases], that is, it [music] seems to participate [in these three things] (*Pol.* VIII 5, 1339b 11-15).

Therefore, in [1], “education” should be understood to mean “training for virtue”—which is sometimes confused with learning to practice music—and “purification” should be understood to mean “play and respice.” That is, the phrase “for relaxation, as well as for respice after exertion” can only be related to the second motive, purification (1341b 38). Or, better, “purification”

²⁹ I demonstrate it in detail in Veloso 2018, notably p. 307-317.

³⁰ Cf. *Pol.* VIII 2, 1337a 39-b 1.

rephrases “play and respite,” so that line 41 would explain what is meant by “purification” in this context. Thus, the reference to another work for the explanation of “purification” is decidedly superfluous and, therefore, suspect. Moreover, to re-emphasize, this (VIII 7) is the second time that the term κάθαρσις appears in *Pol.* VIII, and at its first occurrence ([2]: VIII 6) it does not require any clarification. In addition, Aristotle had already said that respite is a certain therapy and that games should be used as a medicine (3, 1337b 40-42), as we have seen.³¹

In the end, there is nothing in the pages that precede [1] that suggests the association of catharsis with past-time. On the contrary.

Back to Ferrari's Argument 1 for the Association of Catharsis with Past-time

Indeed, it is not in the pages that precede [1] that Ferrari believes we find elements in favor of his thesis. His first argument is based on the lines following the main body of [1]. [Translator's Note: For convenience, I remind the reader that [1] ends with the words “we must use all melodies, but not all in the same way: for education [we must use] the most ethical [melodies], while, for listening to other performers, also the “practical” and “frenzied” melodies (*Pol.* VIII 7, 1342a 2-3).] In effect, Ferrari is persuaded that the aftermath of the main body of [1] must treat separately each of the other two reasons to introduce music into the curriculum of children of *Pol.* VIII 5: first, education in 1342a 2-3 ([1]), then catharsis—associated with διαγωγῆ, according to Ferrari—in 1342a 4-18 ([3]) and relaxation/respite after exertion in 1342a18-28 ([6]). Now, we have already seen the reason why past-time is not discussed at length in *Pol.* VIII: it really only concerns adults. There is nothing,

³¹ Certainly, we can compare this passage from [1] to the two references to a text “on the technique of composition” regarding laughable things that are found in *Rhet.* I 11 and III 18, and in particular in I:

since play and all relaxation count among the pleasant things, likewise laughter, the laughable things, themselves also—men, speeches, actions—are pleasant; but laughable things have been defined separately in the study on the technique of composition (1371b 34-1372a 2).

However, assuming that these references are both authentic, it can also be said that instead of corroborating the authenticity of the reference of *Pol.* VIII 7, they are likely to constitute points of support for a glossator, especially since the reference of *Pol.* VIII 7 deals only with catharsis, not with the other two key concepts, namely education and (intellectual) past-time. And rightly so: Why would Aristotle have needed to return just to catharsis in a text on the technique of composition without returning to these two other concepts? But if, on the contrary, one persists in thinking that these references corroborate the authenticity of the reference of *Pol.* VIII 7, it must be recognized that they also suggest that Aristotle, in the study on the technique of composition, returned or intended to return to catharsis during the subject of laughable things whose imitation is comedy, and not about the definition of tragedy or its ultimate goal. Besides, the language of the dismissal of *Pol.* VIII 7 suggests that the promise consists in the specification of a general concept, as in the case of *Rhet.* III 18, about the laughable forms. But the language of the reference of *Pol.* VIII 7 could also be an additional indication of its inauthenticity, because, in the Aristotelian corpus, the only other example of opposition between ἀπλῶς and σαφέστερον is found in the *Magna Moralia* (MM I 4, 1185a 36- 39; 12, 1187b 34-36), a work which is not considered to be authentic.

therefore, to prevent the continuation of [1] treating play/respice compared to a catharsis *until* 1342a 28 (“but for education”).

I will go even further than I do elsewhere.³² It will be noted that, although in [4] there are three reasons, in [2] there are only two possibilities, namely catharsis and learning. However, in view of the construction on line 38 in [1], “with a view to both education and purification,” we can think that [1] examines only two uses, education and purification, and that the rest of the lines 38-42 constitutes one or more interpolations (“and what we mean by purification, if now [we say it] without qualification, we will say it more precisely in the [discourse] on the [technique] of composition and, thirdly, for past-time, for relaxation, as well as for respice after exertion”). In this case, past-time would not be mentioned at all in [1], just as in [2]. To tell the truth, even the phrase “with a view to both education and purification” (line 38) can be an interpolation: Aristotle can indeed limit himself to two uses (education and purification) even without specifying it.

The conviction of Ferrari in the division of the text that he exposes—in fact, a postulate—is accompanied by another conviction. By arguing that play/respice is recounted again only in lines 1342a 18-28 ([6, following 3] which is reproduced shortly below), Ferrari is also convinced that play/respice is intended only for the class of workers, as I already said. As Ferrari writes:

How does this distinction between entertainment [= play] and leisurely activity [= intellectual past-time] relate to the new classification of the uses of music in 8.7? Recall that Aristotle in this chapter has enlarged his focus from the education of the young to include the benefits of music for the city as a whole. Adults in the city, as we shall see, appreciate music mainly as members of an audience rather than as practitioners of the musical art. In 8.7, Aristotle divides this adult audience into two types: ‘the one free and educated (ἐλεύθερος καὶ πεπαιδευμένος), the other vulgar, comprising those who work with their hands, wage-earners, and others of that kind (ὁ δὲ φορτικὸς ἐκ βαναύσων καὶ θητῶν καὶ ἄλλων τοιούτων συγκείμενος)’ (1342a19-21). (‘Vulgar’ is a strong term in English, but, as will become apparent, it is a term commensurate with the disapproval Aristotle expresses of the musical taste exhibited by the uneducated.) This social distinction between those who do and those who do not have to toil for their living matches the structural distinction between entertainment, whose benefits of relaxation and rest go to those who toil, and leisurely activity, whose benefits go to those with toil-free lives—those who are at liberty to enjoy leisurely activity. Accordingly, it is for the sake of the vulgar audience that Aristotle thinks a kind of theatrical music ought to be on offer which would be ‘for the purpose of rest (πρὸς ἀνάπαυσιν [1342b23])’. By implicit contrast (to be further explained in what follows), music aimed at the educated is for the purpose of catharsis. Entertainment, then, is for the vulgar and leisurely activity for the educated; relaxation and rest are for the vulgar and catharsis is for the educated. Catharsis belongs in the conceptual realm of διαγωγή (p. 122-123 ; cf. p. 124 ; 140).

Let us examine the passage to which Ferrari refers:

³² Veloso 2018, p. 235-236.

[6, following 3] This is why necessarily such melodies and songs should be allowed to be used by those who perform (ἀγωνισταῖ)³³ theatrical music.³⁴ And since there are two [sorts] of spectators, one composed of free and educated people, the other of vulgar people, artisans, hired laborers and other such people, it is also necessary to provide such [individuals] competitions (ἀγῶνας) and shows for their respite. Just as the souls of these people have deviated from their natural state, so too are the deviant melodies and shrill songs with abnormal coloring. But what gives pleasure to everyone is what is appropriate to their nature; that is why we must give permission to those who compete in such shows to resort to music of this kind (*Pol.* VIII 7, 1342a 17-28).

If Ferrari was right to think that Aristotle reserves play/respice for the class of workers, play/respice should have been excluded from the outset of the discussion on the reasons for introducing music in the curriculum of future citizens, given that his educational program does not seem to concern future workers. When Aristotle advocates a public education “unique and the same for all” (*Pol.* VIII 1, 1337a 22-23, see *EN* X 10), it means “all citizens.” However, play/respice is not excluded from the outset. Hence, Ferrari is (probably) wrong.

In any case, Ferrari 2019, 125 (cf. page 128) reads **[6]** in an abusive manner.³⁵ Aristotle actually says that performances must be conceded to such people for respite, not that respite concerns only these people, nor does he say that these people go there only for respite.³⁶

Some remarks are needed on the set of **[1]** and its continuation (**[3]** and **[6]**). These passages are part of Aristotle's response to some people's reproach regarding musical practice by children to make them professionals (6, 1340b, 40 sq.). We must specify three views to answer them, argues Aristotle: (1) until what point those whose education aims at the virtue of the citizen must practice music; (2) what kinds of melodies and songs they should practice; and (3) what kinds of instruments they should learn to play. Aristotle first deals with (1) at 1341a 5-17, then (3) at 1341a 17-b 8 and finally, after a long preliminary recapitulation (1341b 8-18), (2) at 1341b 19 sq. It is here that **[1]** occurs, for which **[3]** provides a justification (especially of the final part), and to which **[6]** brings details. When Aristotle then affirms, in **[1]**, that it is necessary to use the three forms of songs and the three corresponding melodies, but not in the same way, he means that the three forms of songs and melodies play a role in the general education of children destined to

³³ The terms ἀγῶν and ἀγωνίζομαι do not necessarily refer to a competition but can also refer to simple performance; see *Poet.* 7, 1451a 6-9.

³⁴ If, on line 1342a 18, we need keep the word θεατρικῆν, which is suspicious, in any case, we should not think only of scenic shows, namely tragic and comic: the thymelic competitions also took place in the theater. [Translator's note: The thymele was the little altar in the middle of the orchestra, around which the chorus sang and danced. The actors *per se* were on the stage (*skènè*).]

³⁵ “Accordingly, it is for the sake of the vulgar audience that Aristotle thinks a kind of theatrical music ought to be on offer which would be ‘for the purpose of rest (πρὸς ἀνάπαυσιν, 1342b23 [in reality, 1341b23]).’”

³⁶ Incidentally, according to Ferrari, p. 155, this distinction would curiously not be relevant to the *Poetics*.

become citizens of the best constitution,³⁷ education which rightly must take account of the three stated aims. For example, the practice of music by children contributes, as we have seen, to the intellectual past-time of their adulthood, although the latter resides in listening. Therefore, when Aristotle claims that the most “ethical” melodies for education are to be used, “education” must be understood to mean musical education, *περὶ τὴν μουσικὴν παιδεία*,³⁸ practical musical learning. As I said before, education and practical music learning tend to be confused in *Pol.* VIII, whence at least one ambivalence in [1]; likewise, in the continuation of chapter 7, in 1342a 28, where the expression “but for education” indicates that all that has just been said in [3] and [6] concerns play/respice. In fact, the different use of music that Aristotle recommends there is not based on the distinction between children and adults but on the distinction between practice and listening: the most “ethical” for practice; “practical” and “frenzied” for listening to other performers.³⁹ That said, it is also possible to envisage a different use of different songs and different melodies according to the age difference between children and adults or in combination, a distinction to which can be added the social distinction between citizens and non-citizens.

Anyway, *Pol.* VIII 7 does not establish a one-to-one correspondence between, on the one hand, the three forms of singing and the three melodies and, on the other hand, the three reasons why children would participate in music. [Translator’s note: As explained above, those three reasons are moral improvement, play, and (intellectual) past-time, *not* catharsis.] Even if one can favor a particular form of song and melody for one of the three goals, the same form of singing and melody can serve different purposes. For example, why could listening to the most “ethical” songs not be used for intellectual past-time for adults, as minimally gratifying as these songs are for this purpose because of their supposed simplicity? At the same time, the listening of “practical” songs or, at least, of some of these songs could be used both for intellectual past-time and for education, if only for the subsequent moral improvement of adults. And similarly, some could listen to “practical” songs for respice. Also, in [6], in which are evoked the “theatrical” music and the vulgar public, composed of workers—thus non-citizens in the best constitution—who would go to the shows (especially) for respice, Aristotle can well have in mind “frenzied” songs or “purificatory” ones as well as “practical” songs, perhaps even “ethical” ones, if only “deviant” forms. In addition, even adult citizens need respice, because political action is also, in a sense, non-leisure.

³⁷ Pace Ferrari, p. 123-124 ; 142.

³⁸ For this expression, see *Pol.* VIII 6, 1341b 29 (*cf.* 20-22: πρὸς παιδείαν, two times); 7, 1342a 32.

³⁹ The prohibition of the use of *auloi* (6, 1341a 18 ff.) and “practical” and “frenzied” songs (7, 1342a 28 ff.) in music education is limited to the practice of music by children.

The Distinction between Past-time/Leisure and Play/Respite

Ferrari confuses past-time/leisure and play/respite. Aristotle himself denounces the confusion between play and past-time, because of pleasure:

[7] For play (παιδιά) is for respite (χάριν ἀναπαύσεως), and respite is necessarily pleasant (it is indeed a certain therapy for pain caused by working), and, by mutual agreement, [intellectual] past-time must include not only the noble (καλόν), but also pleasure, because the happy being consists of these two things. Now, we all say that music is one of the most pleasing things, both [music] devoid of [singing] and singing; Musaeus, too, says that “to sing for mortals is something very pleasant.” That is why it is rightly admitted in parties as well as in [intellectual] past-times, since it is capable of giving joy (εὐφραίνειν), so that from here too it can be assumed that younger ones must be educated in music. Indeed, all pleasant things that are harmless (ἄβλαβῆ) are suitable not only for the goal (τέλος), but also for respite (ἀνάπαυσιν). Since it happens to men rarely to live according to their purpose, but often they relax (ἀναπαύονται), that is to say (καί) that they play even without any other reason than pleasure (οὐχ ὅσον ἐπὶ πλεον ἄλλὰ καὶ διὰ τὴν ἡδονήν), it may be useful to find respite (διαναπαύειν) in the pleasures that one derives from music. It has happened, however, that men make play a goal (τέλος); probably because the end also has a certain pleasure, but not just any; and, seeking this pleasure, they take that one for this one, because of the fact that it has a certain similarity (ὁμοιωμά τι) with the goal of the actions. Indeed, the goal is not chosen (αἰρετόν) for anything to come, and such pleasures are not in sight of anything to come, but past things, like, for example, exertion and pain (*Pol.* VIII 5, 1339b 15-38).

Aristotle suggests a definition of play by its intrinsic though not immanent purpose: respite.⁴⁰

[Translator’s note: Veloso explains this point in private correspondence. Since the respite in question defines play, respite comprises part of its nature (respite is therefore an intrinsic goal). However, respite stays exterior to play. In this sense, once the respite is fully attained, we do not play more (therefore respite is not an immanent goal of play).]

In this respect, people are wrong. Because they do not choose play for something to come and use it “even for no other reason than pleasure,”⁴¹ they think—wrongly—that play has no purpose

⁴⁰ For Chauvier 2007, p. 112, to say that one plays to relax is empirically false, if one understands by that the reason for which one plays, because one can play for money or obligation. Indeed, Chauvier, p. 14, distinguishes between play as amusement and play as action-structure. That could make us think that something is play in itself, whatever the state of mind of one who plays: the one who plays his life in chess or the one who is entertained by playing it would play the same game. Now, even though this distinction is correct, it is not enough. There is indeed a homonymy around the word “play”: it can designate a series of bodily movements as well as a state of mind, but strictly speaking we use this word to designate a given series of bodily movements *when we are convinced that it is determined by a certain state of mind*, or to designate a given state of mind *when one is convinced that it determines a certain series of bodily movements*. And that state of mind is in turn determined by relaxation. Admittedly, one can continue to use the word “play” to indicate a series of bodily movements of this same type even when this series is no longer determined by this state of mind, but one has there an inappropriate use or an extension of the word.

⁴¹ Cf. *EN* X 6, 1176b 8 sq.

beyond itself and that it is itself the goal of their actions. Note also that when Aristotle says that “it happens that men live rarely according to their purpose, but that they often relax, which is to say that they use even play without any other motive than pleasure,” he does not limit himself to workers.

The purpose of our actions, the noble [=“the good”], is pleasant and is not desired in view of a future thing, but the pleasure of play is the pleasure of respite. Later, Aristotle also speaks of a “relief with pleasure” in association with “a certain purification” (*Pol.* VIII 7, 1342a 14-15). Play “puts an end to worries,” that is, makes us forget past perceptions and (concomitantly) unpleasant thoughts. However, respite is not the purpose of our actions, but one thing that often fits into our actions: respite is in view of past painful events—so, play too—and (conditionally) necessary to painful future events. In this sense, play is not a good thing simply, nor simply useful, but it is there *for those* who find themselves in stress, just like drugs, φαρμακεία, and the operations are there for the sick (*EE* VII 2, 1235b 30 *sq.*, 1237a 12-15, *EN* III 6, 1113a 25-27). It is neither play nor respite that one wishes in the end, just as, in the case of a drug, it is not the fact of taking the medicine itself or the cure that one wishes, but health (*EE* VII 2, 1238b 8-9). On the contrary, the intrinsic purpose of past-time coincides with the end of our actions, the noble, which is also pleasant.

In all rigor, respite is not even really agreeable.⁴² A therapy that relieves us of past pain is enjoyable only by accident (*EN* VII 13, 1152b 31 *sq.*, 15, 1154a 28 *sq.*),⁴³ likewise learning (*Pol.* VIII 5, 1339a; *EN* X 7, 1177a 26-27). Everything that brings us back to a natural disposition is agreeable by accident, in the sense that pleasure is not for the recovery itself but for the healthy state.⁴⁴ By itself, pleasure is something that *supervenes* on an activity of the soul (X 3, 1174a 14 *sq.*, 4, 1174b 34), especially a cognitive activity, perception and intellection (4, 1174a 14 *sq.*; 2, 1173b 20 *sq.*). This is why pleasure itself is not the work of any technique (*EN* VII 13, 1153a 23). However, past-time involves an *activity* or, better, the joint exercise of *two activities*, intellection and perception, whereas a purification—religious, medical or other—would be rather a *movement*, which does not have its end in itself (*Met.* Theta 6, 1048b 18 *sq.*);⁴⁵ the same lack of end in itself goes for learning.⁴⁶ Thus, pleasant as it is, past-time is not at all respite or relaxation, as could be relief,

⁴² The same thing is simply good and simply enjoyable (*EE* VII 2, 1236b 26-27).

⁴³ See also *Pol.* VIII 5, 1340a 1.

⁴⁴ Cf. *Rhet.* I 11, 1369b 33-1370a 3.

⁴⁵ Cf. *Met.* Delta 1; *Phys.* II 3; III 1. Of course, this is the immediate purpose, insofar as Aristotle does not deny that, for example, vision can be the means of another goal, see *Met.* Alpha 1, 980a 22-26; *EN* I 4, 1096b 16-19; *DA* III 12, 434b 3-8. In any event, the ultimate goal is activity.

⁴⁶ At most, it is an improvement (*EN* II 1; *Phys.* VII 3, 246a 13-16).

therapy or purification.⁴⁷ Catharsis thus offers “an excellent metaphor” for play/respice, but it is completely inappropriate for past-time, *pace* Ferrari 2019, 164.

In Ferrari's interpretation, the distinction between past-time and play becomes in effect incomprehensible:

In the introduction to this article I described the pleasure of catharsis as a pleasure of relief—relief of the tension created in the audience by the action of the play. But I have just now described the pleasure people get from entertainment [= ‘play’, παιδιά] too as a pleasure of relief—relief from the strain of toil. It should come as no surprise, then, that Aristotle speaks of both entertainment and catharsis in the terminology of medication and healing, as we shall see. As leisurely activity [διαγωγή] goes, audience experience leading to catharsis does indeed have more in common with entertainment than do activities at the more rarefied and intellectual end of the spectrum indicated by that capacious term, διαγωγή. What nevertheless maintains a gulf between entertainment and catharsis in *Politics* 8 is that the strain of toil precedes its relief through musical entertainment, whereas cathartic music is itself the source of the agitation that it also relieves (Ferrari 2019, 125 ; cf. p. 119 ; 122-124 ; 138-140).

On the one hand, Ferrari is not aware of the impossibility of making the pleasure of past-time a pleasure of relief like that of play/respice. On the other hand, the “structural distinction” (p. 143) that he believes he finds there (between an external pre-existing tension and an internal tension) is quite illusory.⁴⁸ Moreover, the fact that the word κάθαρσις can at the limit designate both play and respice does not make them one single thing. It is true that Aristotle does not really explain how play provides respice, and the fact that he puts play in the same category as sleep can deceive us. Play is not rest! This is an analogy.⁴⁹ What Ferrari 2019, 137, argues for with respect to catharsis, namely that “in catharsis the emotion is, as it were, both the sickness and its cure,” applies perfectly to play and respice. Indeed, play is exciting. And it allows a respice of the *constraints* on emotional reactions, constraints that we are subject to by “non-leisure.”⁵⁰ And it

⁴⁷ See *Rhet.* I 11, 1370b 34-1371a 8.

⁴⁸ Ferrari is largely inspired by the sexual model of catharsis of Yates 1998, as he recognizes, p. 119 n. 4; cf. p. 137; 150: excitement, climax, relief; or excitement and relief without climax, see p. 146.

⁴⁹ For example, sleep is the relaxation that preserves the ability to stay awake (*SV* 3, 458a 25-32).

⁵⁰ On this point, Elias and Dunning 1994 (1986), p. 125 ff., are right, although they are mistaken on many other aspects concerning the catharsis of Aristotle. Moreover, I do not share their Freudian conception of the emotions and of the “civilizing” process. This responds to a relevant remark from Halliwell 2011, p. 264 (second point of V¹), regarding Veloso 2007: “Moreover, in its immediate context at 1341a 23 the use of the term catharsis is very hard to understand as rest, relaxation, or amusement, since it is linked to the use of the *aulos* as an ‘intensely emotional’ (*orgiastikon*) instrument. Relatedly, why would Aristotle count as rest or relaxation what is, on Veloso’s own reading of *Pol.* 8.7 (263), a matter of ‘giving free vent’ to one’s natural emotional tendencies?”.

is in this sense that play relaxes. And, *pace* Ferrari 2019, 137 and 139, this therapy is “homeopathic” only in appearance: in reality, it is “allopathic.”⁵¹

The idea of Ferrari 2019, 140-144, that catharsis only concerns music itself is not enough to characterize past-time. The autotelism of the latter concerns the cognitive activity—perceptive or intellectual—of the auditor-viewer-reader himself. In addition, what Ferrari holds 2019, 144, namely that “such engagement is aesthetic not only because it is achieved through art but because it is achieved only through art,” is absolutely false, beyond the use—questionable enough—that he makes of the terms “aesthetic” and “art” in his article.⁵² Such emotional catharsis is for any play, especially for sport, where we even find suspense.⁵³ [Translator’s note: Ferrari places great emphasis on suspense, especially as is found in detective fiction, in his account.] One should therefore wonder why Aristotle was not interested in sports as well as in “musical” activities.⁵⁴ Now, if Aristotle turned to the theater rather than precisely to the stadium or to the race-track, it was because he saw there, much more than at the stadium or at the race-track, the occasion of intellectual past-time. As I show elsewhere [in *Pourquoi*, 2018] this explains the *Poetics*.

***Poetics* 6**

Let us examine finally the definition of tragedy:

But let us speak of tragedy by taking up (ἀναλαμβάντες) [*or* by isolating (ἀπολαμβάντες)] the definition of its essence which follows from what has been said: tragedy is, therefore, an imitation of a serious and complete action having magnitude, in “seasoned” (ἡδυσμένῳ) language, of which each form [is used] separately by the parties, [performed] by persons acting and not by means of narration [N.B. I do not translate the following sentence] δι’ ἐλέου καὶ φόβου περιβαίνουσα τὴν τῶν τοιούτων παθημάτων κάθαρσιν (*Poet.* 6, 1449b 22-28).

The translation of Ferrari (2019, 117; 156 and 159 ff.) of the final clause—which he had already proposed, almost identically, in a previous work⁵⁵—is very improbable, if not impossible: “by means of pity and fear carrying through the purge that such emotions bring on” (27-28). He reads the genitive of the expression τῶν τοιούτων παθημάτων as subjective, which would already be

⁵¹ Therapies and punishments are effected by opposites (*EN* II 2, 1104b 13-18; VII 15, 1154a 27 sq.; *EE* II 1, 1220a 35-37).

⁵² For example, Ferrari, p. 142, speaks of “the disinterestedness of leisurely activity,” an unacceptable mixture of Aristotle and Kant; on the immense distance between the two authors in this matter, see Veloso 2018, p. 230-242. Moreover, Ferrari muddles “aesthetic” and “emotional”; see also p. 145-146.

⁵³ Cf. Ferrari, p. 118-119; 147; 151-154.

⁵⁴ I pose this question and respond to it in Veloso 2018, p. 33-59.

⁵⁵ Ferrari 1999, p. 197.

unusual for *κάθαρσις*, as he himself acknowledges.⁵⁶ He thinks he can do it by invoking the metaphorical nature of the use of the term, but he seems unaware that the very use of a metaphor in a definition is problematic, given the recommendations of *Topics* VI 2 on the matter. So he could justify a license in the syntax (only) with great difficulty. Moreover, reading the genitive as subjective makes the production of catharsis double: it would be caused by “emotions of this kind,” but it would also be accomplished by imitation (line 24). Basically, it is as if one translates twice the participle *περαίνουσα*, in a different way and with two different subjects. In fact, Ferrari's interpretation requires that the final clause say something like “that provokes emotions of this kind that accomplish purification [of the public],” but that is not the text we have; besides, it would accord badly with the locution “by means of pity and fear.”

Whatever the translation we adopt of the final clause and whatever the meaning we give here to the word *κάθαρσις*, there remains the problem of the silence of *Poetics* on this notion, apart from, obviously, the definition of tragedy in chapter 6.

As for *Poet.* 1-5 [Translator's note: What Aristotle must be referring to when he says he will “take up” the definition **from what has been said.**], Ferrari 2019, 157 *sq.* considers two argumentative strategies, incompatible with each other, but supposedly satisfactory if taken individually.

The first is to refuse that catharsis is not anticipated. Ferrari invokes *Poet.* 4, 1448b 8-19, where Aristotle speaks of the pleasure we experience in contemplating the image of unpleasant things, such as corpses:⁵⁷

The catharsis of pity and fear, also, is a case in which art transforms pain into pleasure—the emotions of pity and fear, painful in real life, are aroused by the drama in such a way that they yield pleasure in the audience (pleasure of catharsis) (p. 157).

Now, far from being based on the idea of a “mimetic alchemy,” which would transform the painful into a pleasant one, *Poet.* 4 forbids any such interpretation, inasmuch as Aristotle does not suggest

⁵⁶ The parallel offered by Ferrari, p. 159 n. 78, with τὴν τῶν τοιοῦτων ἡδέων ἦρταν καὶ αἰσθησιν, “the domination and the sensitivity of pleasant things of this kind,” in *EE* III 2, 1230b 18, is not pertinent. In effect, these are *pleasant things*, not pleasures. Like the majority of translators, Ferrari reads παθήματα in the definition of tragedy as “emotions,” but this does not correspond to the only other occurrence of the word in the *Poetics*, where it signifies instead “events,” as I demonstrate in Veloso 2007, pp. 269-270, and 2018, pp. 346-347. Furthermore, if the genitive is governed by the two nouns, it will be subjective for ἦρταν (“domination by”) but objective for αἰσθησιν.

⁵⁷ Despite some inaccuracies in his reading of the passage, Afeissa 2018, p. 358 *sq.*, is right to suggest that these are putrefying corpses. But Aristotle does not seem to think of two types of corpses, namely those of beasts (carrion) and those of humans. Indeed, when he writes that “we are delighted to look at the most careful images, for example, the configurations of absolutely ignoble beasts and corpses as well,” οἷον θηρίων τε μορφῆς τῶν ἀτιμοτάτων καὶ νεκρῶν (1448 b 10-12), maybe we need to give a strong meaning to τε... καὶ and read this last phrase as a single example [of] double or multiple [objects]: (human) corpses gnawed by worms.

at all that the pain, of a perceptive order, ceases with the pleasure of the recognition of the object of imitation.⁵⁸

Ferrari's other argumentative strategy is much more acceptable.⁵⁹ It consists in saying that, despite the reference to the preceding, the definition could bring together already treated elements and new elements. Moreover, catharsis is not the only novelty; there is also “complete,” “seasoned” and the couplet “pity” and “fear.” However, Ferrari avoids mentioning that these novelties will be explicitly treated precisely afterwards, in contradistinction to catharsis. In addition, he relies, p. 158-159, on a rapprochement with another occurrence of λέγωμὲν ἀναλαβόντες, “let's talk by resuming,” in *EN I 2*, 1095a 14-16, which is nevertheless gratuitous, because, here, it is a new beginning of the process of identifying the highest good, which constitutes the goal of politics, namely happiness, and not the presentation of the definition of happiness, which will be provided only from 6, 1097b 22, and without the difficulties posed by the final clause of the definition of tragedy. What is more, the presence of ἀναλαβόντες in *Poet.* 6, 1449b 23 is due to a correction: the manuscript tradition has ἀπολαβόντες, “isolating.”⁶⁰

As for the silence on catharsis in the rest of the *Poetics*—much more serious than the previous silence—Ferrari's attitude is quite incongruous.

On the one hand, in a total denial of reality, Ferrari writes to justify the reference of *Pol.* VIII 7:

The distinction between simple and complex tragedy should help us appreciate why it takes Aristotle a good deal longer to explain the pattern of tension and release in dramatic catharsis than was the case with musical catharsis. [...] The arc of dramatic catharsis is a new and unusual topic for his audience, and it takes him most of the *Poetics* to explain (Ferrari 2019, 155 ; cf. p. 159).

On the other hand, by accepting the reality of this silence, Ferrari is only proposing on several occasions the argument—well known to the interpreters—that catharsis was already known to its readers:

[...] I take it that catharsis is so intimately connected to the emotional nexus of pity and fear that is implied in the extensive discussion of the topic in subsequent chapters (Ferrari 2019, 156 ; cf. p. 157).

“[...] it seems reasonable to assume that the material in the *Poetics* would have been presented to its audience subsequently to the material in the *Politics*. If so, Aristotle

⁵⁸ Cf. *Pol.* VIII 5, 1340a 23-28, with Veloso 2018, p. 198-200. Moreover, what Ferrari says here is incompatible with what he says himself, at p. 144, about *Pol.* VIII 5.

⁵⁹ I adopt it myself in Veloso 2007, p. 271, and 2018, p. 350.

⁶⁰ This is a conjecture by Bernays, accepted by Kassel 1965 and followed by Tarán and Gutas 2012. I defend the reading of the manuscripts in Veloso 2018, p. 335 n. 4.

could take catharsis for a known quantity among his students, at least in outline, before going on to explain, in detail, how the familiar pattern of catharsis plays out in tragedy (Ferrari 2019, 162 ; cf. p. 163).

These students could know without being told that what tragic audience experiences in such terms is the catharsis that was mentioned in the definition of tragedy (Ferrari 2019, 164).

However, Ferrari forgets that the rest of chapter 6 is devoted to the elucidation of the terms of the definition. Aristotle will even take pains to point out that the meaning of *μελοποιία*—literally “composition of song”—which does not even appear in the definition, is quite clear (6, 1449b 35-36), whereas on catharsis not even a word!

Beyond all these problems, what is most striking about Ferrari is his neglect of the central concept of the *Poetics*, a concept that already appears in *Pol.* VIII 5, 1340a 12-b 10, namely imitation.⁶¹ And yet, towards the end of his article (p.161 *sq.*), Ferrari insists on the idea of a desire/pleasure of a good story. Now, a story, *μῦθος*, is an imitation of the action (*Poet.* 6, 1450a 3-4). And if nowhere else in the *Poetics* Aristotle talks about catharsis,⁶² he speaks a lot from beginning to end of imitation. In *Poet.* 4, we find valuable remarks on the pleasure from imitations, that is to say, the pleasure that one feels with the recognition of the object of the imitation starting from the perception of its means. It is a pleasure of an intellectual order, which is realized even when the perception is painful, as in the case of corpses. This pleasure of an intellectual order therefore does not coincide with the pleasure that can be experienced in the mere perception of the means of imitation—and which thus would deserve the title of aesthetics—nor with the purely intellectual pleasure which would result from the critical appreciation of the work, as Aristotle clearly says (*Poet.* 4, 1448b 17-19). This recognition is what constitutes most of the intellectual past-time of which *Pol.* VIII speaks.

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⁶¹ See notably Ferrari, p. 157 n. 75.

⁶² There is certainly a second occurrence of the term (17, 1455b 15), where it refers to a ritual practice, but this in no way helps give a sense of the instance of the term in the definition of tragedy.

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