

On ὀρθότης τῆς ποιητικῆς and the Position of the *Poetics* in the Philosophy of Aristotle

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Aristotle says in his *Poetica*, there is not the same ὀρθότης for πολιτική and ποιητική, nor for any other τέχνη and ποιητική. We can find a clear distinction between ὀρθότης of ποιητική and that of τέχνη, because ποιητική is not concerned with any logical demonstration of the universal judgments or knowledge. But there is in ch.9 the word τὰ καθόλου(universals), which is regarded as a characteristic of ποίησις in comparison with ἱστορία. We think, “τὰ καθόλου λέγει” means not showing some universal types of the relation between ἦθος and λέγειν or πράττειν, but telling μῦθος itself, of which essential meaning is expressed by τὸ καθόλου.

What does πολιτική mean in this context? In which sense is ποιητικῆ's ὀρθότης compared with πολιτικῆ's? If they are completely different, there is no room for the problem of ὀρθότης. These two arts are in one sense very similar to each other, for they are related not only to the region of τὸ ἐνδεχόμενον ἄλλως ἔχειν, but also in a different way from τέχνη, which says always universally, they try to bring something significant for human life. πολιτικῆ as φρόνησις pursues always human goodness as practical purpose and attempts to find right(ὀρθός) way to the end, and ποιητικῆ represents human life in the form of tragedy.

Between πολιτικῆ and ποιητικῆ, however, there is an ontologically decisive difference. For ποιητικῆ exemplifies human life only in the mode of being of “οἷα ἂν γένοιτο καὶ τὰ δυνατὰ”. The poetic μίμησις has in this sense no direct relation to the historical world. Nevertheless Aristotle says, “Tragedy is μίμησις, not of ἄνθρωποι, but of πράξεις and βίος.” With what ὀρθότης can such μίμησις exemplify human life? The ὀρθότης of ποιητικῆ is just proved by the fact, that a work has deeply touched the audience. It is only a subjective fact, which is not connected with any ontological solution.

The poets attempt always to tell the story most persuasively, because there is no guarantee that they do not miss their aim(ἀμαρτάνειν). In the same reason political practice has to make an effort to obtain εὐβουλία as ὀρθότης. It is the power of imagination, that offers vivid examples of human life, and only this power can be counterbalanced with φρόνησις. But the Greek, corresponding to poetic imagination, is not found in *Poetica*, though in ch.17 there is undoubtedly its concept and in *De anima* some examples of practical imagination(φαντασία λογιστικῆ or βουλευτικῆ) .