Believing at Will and Responding to Fiction: Aristotle on the Real Difference between Belief and Imagination[1]

I. Introduction

Aristotle has a pair of representational states in his theory of cognition. The first he calls *doxa* (δ□ξα). We often translate this as "belief." The second he calls *phantasia* (φανταασ□α). An almost universal translation for this is "imagination." Such a translation is tempting; given our own division of representational states into (among others) belief and imagination, it is easy to think that *phantasia* for Aristotle is largely what imagination is for us.[2] I'm suspicious of this, though, for three reasons. First, Aristotle distributes *phantasia* and belief across the animal kingdoms in very different ways than we distribute belief and imagination. A large portion of the animal kingdom has *phantasia*, but only humans have beliefs.[3] It is controversial, on the other hand, whether other animals have imagination, though we have no trouble attributing beliefs to them. Also, for Aristotle, belief is parasitic on *phantasia,* not vice versa.

What I mean by this: Aristotle seems to think not that *phantasia* is belief minus some characteristic (behavior-guidance, etc.) but that belief is *phantasia* plus some characteristic. We, on the other hand, tend to characterize imagination as "belief-like," as belief minus the part where you take it seriously. In fact, it would be rather odd if, asked what belief was, someone were to respond "it's like imagination, but for real." Lastly, Aristotle gives *phantasia* a central place in his theory of cognition. It is a necessary precondition for rational thought.[4] It accounts, on some readings, for cognitive error.[5] It explains dreams and hallucinations.[6] It provides animals with an analog to belief for the purposes of behavior guidance and predicting the future.[7] In short, it has a far broader range of application than anything captured by our word "imagination."

Phantasia and belief share important characteristics, such as having truth values, representational content and, in some cases, motive force. Aristotle must think there is a danger of confusing them, because he provides no fewer than three separate arguments to distinguish them. One of these, which begins at *De Anima* 3.3.428a19 and runs to 428b10, has been a focus for scholarship and debate. I want to take a look at the first two arguments, which have received comparatively little attention. Here they are:

(1) It's clear as well that it [sc. *phantasia*] is not the same thing as supposition. For that particular affection

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1. I want to thank Victor Caston for extensive, patient and extremely helpful comments and discussion on two earlier drafts of this paper. He is not responsible for any views put forward here, or mistakes made. But he is responsible for the discussion taking such a shape that someone could tell what my views are, and what mistakes I make.
2. Schofield's excellent discussion (1992: p. 253) contains the best formulation of this point. It is not his own view, but he concedes that *De Anima* 428b14-25 deploys *phantasia* in a way so reminiscent of how we might speak of "imagination" that "there seems every reason to identify [it] with imagination."
3. Cf. *De Anima* 3.3.428a21-4, where Aristotle denies that animals have the capacity to reason, which is a necessary precondition for having beliefs.
4. Cf. *De Anima* 3.7.431a14-7, where he says that "the soul never thinks without a mental image [*phantasma*]," which is the content of an experience of *phantasia*. This passage will become important in section III.
5. The reading I have in mind, admittedly controversial, is Caston's (1996).
6. For dreams, cf. *de Insomniis* 1.459a19-23, where he says that "dreaming seems to be some mental picture [*phantasma*] in sleep, for we call the mental picture that happens during sleep a dream." For hallucinations, cf. *De Memoria et Reminiscentia* 1.451a10-4, where he says that people are "lunatics" because they "speaking of their mental images [*phantasmata*] as things that happened and as if they remembered them."
7. This is another controversial reading, for which Lorenz (2006, pp. 128-147) makes a persuasive case. This particular topic will occupy us in section III, when the particulars of what *phantasia* does for animals will become important for answering an objection to my view.

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> is up to us, whenever we want (since it's possible to put things before one's eyes, like those forming mental images and putting them into mnemonic systems), while forming a belief is not up to us: for it must be either true or false.
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> (2) Furthermore, whenever we form a belief that something is either impressive or fearsome, we are straightaway affected accordingly, and similarly if we find something encouraging. But in a similar case, except due to phantasia, we are just like those looking at something frightening or encouraging in a picture.
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> (*De Anima* 3.3.427b16-25).[8]

One can see why fewer people have been tempted to deal with these arguments; they are condensed and bizarre. Everything Aristotle says here seems to contradict something he says elsewhere.[9] Even if we take them on their own, they are rife with textual and philosophical problems.[10] One can easily read the first one, for instance, as advancing a false dichotomy. There seems to be no reason why some mental state cannot be "up to us," in the sense of its initiation and content being under our control, and also have a truth value which depends on external circumstances. This is two different senses of "up to us," and Aristotle seems at first to be equivocating between the two.

A similar problem plagues argument (2). For one, it relies on an unexplicated simile, which will not do any helpful work in distinguishing belief from *phantasia* without some interpretation. One plausible way to read (2) is as a claim that the content of *phantasia* (Aristotle calls such content a *phantasma*) does not cause an emotional response, while the content of a belief does.[11] To be blunt, that just can't be right. For there are many suggestions elsewhere in Aristotle that we can respond emotionally to fictional representations, and we do not really believe that the events depicted in the fiction are happening.[12]

Despite these difficulties, I think that the two arguments reward our attention. Formally, they are direct parallels. Both assert that *phantasia* has some characteristic that belief lacks, or vice versa. This serves to show that they are not the same kind of mental state. He also employs interesting and frustratingly under-analyzed notions to distinguish the two states. The first is the notion of a psychological state being "up to us."

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8. All translations are my own. Text largely from Janone (2002), accepting Ross's (1961) deletion of νο□σις at 18, and rejecting Rodier's (1900) deletion of □ before αυτ□. Janone follows Rodier, and reads "that imagination is neither thought nor supposition" (Jannone, 2002: p. 75). I think this reading is mistaken, for the following reason: Aristotle refers to "that particular affection" (το□το…τ□ πάθος) in his argument. He must be using this to refer to *phantasia*; if he is not, then everyone who has ever commented on this passage is mistaken. Aristotle's last explicit reference to *phantasia*, however, occurs at 427b14, behind two mentions of αισθησις, a state which is also plausibly a πασχειν τι (Cf. Hamlyn, 1959 for discussion). Aristotle needs a proximal referent for his demonstrative to avoid confusion, and the only place to put it is where Ross says.

9. These contradictions are catalogued in Freudenthal (1863, pp. 11-12) and Rodier *ad loc*. They include the following: 1) Aristotle says at *De An.* 2.5.417b24 that thinking (νο□σαι) is under our control, so being under our control is not distinctive of *phantasia*. 2) At 3.3428a3, he says that *phantasia* is also true or false, and uses exactly the same words (albeit conjugated) that he uses in the present passage, namely *alêtheuein* and *pseudesthai*. 3) Aristotle suggests at *de Insomniis* 462a14 that *phantasia* of images can provoke emotional responses, which would take away the distinction from belief that he seems to draw in the present passage. I say "seems to contradict" above because I find none of these examples probative. I provide a detailed discussion in sections II and III, below.

10. Freudenthal (1863: p. 11) argues that either the passage is not by Aristotle at all, or that it is not supposed to be where it is: "Aristoteles die Stelle…b14-24…in diesem Zusammenhang nicht geschrieben habe." Rodier takes Freudenthal to task, providing alternate readings that defuse his motivation for excising the passage. Watson (1982: p. 108) argues for the consistency of the passage, as does Wedin (1984), though he ignores the problems that Freudenthal raises. Schofield (1992: p. 256) also argues for the fundamental coherence of the passage, but concedes (253) that *phantasia* for Aristotle is a "loose-knit, family concept" and that Aristotle does not "combine his different approaches to *phantasia* with an absolutely clear head." Dorothea Frede (1992) provides an interpretation that, she argues, pulls all the threads of 3.3 together, including these two brief arguments, but remains cautious.

11. Consensus on this point is nearly universal. For detailed citations and references, see note 57.

12. Most of these suggestions occur in the *Poetics*. Cf., for example, 1449b24-8, 1452b35-6, and 1453b5-6. But see also *Politics* 1340a11-3. For detailed discussion, see Section III of the present discussion.

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The second is the notion of "*immediately* being moved in accordance" with the content of some psychological state. So the arguments, condensed as they are, can tell us what characteristics belief and *phantasia* have, as well give us some insight into those tantalizing notions on which his arguments turn. Of particular interest are the thesis that we cannot form beliefs at will, his ideas about how humans contemplate and respond emotionally to fiction, and his views on the difference between human and animal ***phantasia*** in terms of their role in an animal's cognitive economy.

A brief summary of my findings. In the first argument, the distinction between belief and *phantasia* is that the former is sensitive to reasons in a way that the latter is not. This is due to the content of the state purporting to represent an external state of affairs taken as actual and which the content can more or less accurately conform. Belief, then, is by definition subject to a kind of scrutiny, and the agent can be rationally compelled to adopt or discard a belief. *Phantasia*, on the other hand, is under no such constraints, since it is not part of the definition of the state that its content purport to represent any actual state of affairs. My analysis will show that a psychological state is "up to us" just in case it is *not* subject to this kind of scrutiny.

In the second argument, the distinction between belief and *phantasia* is that the former is sufficient t provoke responses to the content that it represents. When one forms a belief that something in one's presence is fearsome, nothing more need happen in order for one to feel fear. *Phantasia*, on the other hand, lacks this sufficiency condition. This section will also discuss how this claim is compatible with Aristotle's views about animal motivation. In particular, if response requires belief, but not ***phantasia***, then it is a question how animals can take the representation of ***phantasia*** as action-guiding, as they clearly do.

II. First Argument: Belief and What is Up To Us

Here's passage (1) again, for reference:

> (1) It's clear as well that it [sc. *phantasia*] is not the same thing as supposition. For that particular affection is up to us, whenever we want (since it's possible to produce [sc. images] before one's eyes, like those forming mental images and putting them into mnemonic systems), while forming a belief is not up to us: for it must be either true or false. (*De Anima* 3.3.427b16-20)

The argument purports to distinguish *phantasia* from belief by saying that, while *phantasia* is up to us, belief is not. Aristotle supports each of the two claims by a clause which contains the reason (premise indicator γάρ) for the claim. I have rendered the last sentence in the broadest possible way. Much will turn on how we should read Aristotle's condensed and elliptic formulation. I will discuss issues of translation as they become relevant.

In order for passage (1) to contain a valid argument, Aristotle must have a univocal reading of "up to us." That is, he needs the term to pick out the same characteristic each time he uses it in passage (1). If "up to us" picks out one characteristic for *phantasia* and a different one for belief, then we have no guarantee that it has not picked out two properties that a single mental state could possess simultaneously. If this is the case, then no matter whether both of them are, intuitively, characteristics that make a mental state "up to us," the argument does not successfully distinguish *phantasia* and belief.

We have *prima facie* reason to think that this is what's going on, because the reasons Aristotle gives for thinking that phantasia differs from belief with respect to being up to us do not seem mutually exclusive. He claims that phantasia is up to us because we can initiate it when we want to. He then claims that belief is not up to us because there is something about it that is not under our control, namely whether it is true or false. Both of these are, I think, natural ways of reading the term, given the reasons that Aristotle gives for applying or withholding the term from certain mental states. They also seem totally compatible. Some mental

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states have characteristics that are not under our control, and yet their initiation is under our control in exactly the way Aristotle suggests. Take, for example, the English notion of supposition. Suppositions have truth values: one can suppose truly or falsely. So a property of the state (namely its truth value) is not under my control, but rather depends on the way the world is. But that does not mean that we cannot suppose what we want, when we want.

I think, however, that Aristotle has a univocal reading of "up to us" that both makes his argument valid and tells us something important about the nature both of belief and *phantasia.* It is just a matter of interpreting the passage correctly. In what follows, I consider a highly intuitive reading of the passage.[13] It ultimately fails, I think, but does so in a way that points toward the correct reading. I then give my own proposal for how to read the passage.

So suppose we take "up to us" in a sense that makes it very natural and intuitive to apply to *phantasia*. Aristotle gives us an example of someone who is putting together a mnemonic system. This involves calling up a mental picture for the purposes of association.[14] This calling-up is an occurence of *phantasia*, and it happens when we want it to happen.[15] So initiation of the state, at least, seems to be under our mental command. We need to say more about this in order for it to make sense. *Phantasia,* like belief, is a state with representational content.[16] To imagine is to imagine something, whether a state of affairs (such as "that grass is blue") or just an object by itself (e.g. an albino tiger). So when this reading says that *phantasia* is under our mental command, it must mean, not only that we can initiate *phantasia* when we want, but also that we can initiate *phantasia* involving particular *phantasmata*, or mental pictures. What is distinctive about *phantasia* is that I can initiate an experience of a particular content whenever I want. Given this description, it is easy to see why *phantasia* is often rendered as "imagination."[17]

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13. Hicks (1907) offers a version of this reading in his commentary on the *De Anima*. Themistius offers another. Rodier proposes a solution to a difficulty that the reading gets into, but does not read the Greek in the same way. Other commentators give their own readings, but do not offer the same rich ground for debate. Philoponus, usually full of insight, is genuinely unhelpful in his declaration that "in the case of belief…either the false is shown, or the true, but *phantasia* also has the false as true" (*in De An.* 493.11-2). This minimal gloss suggests that he was almost as puzzled by the passage as we are. Averroës (Middle Commentary 265.1-5) is similarly laconic, offering what amounts to a reiteration of Aristotle's original words. Simplicius' gloss, in contrast, seems to me largely correct. I will incorporate discussion of it into my own view.
14. Rodier *ad loc*. points to Cicero's *De Orat.* 2.86, where Cicero describes the process that Aristotle probably had in mind. See also *De Mem.* 451b30-2: "And so whenever a man wants to recall something, he'll do this—he will seek to grab onto some beginning of movement, alongside which that movement (that he wants) will be." This seeking presumably involves calling up various mental pictures and seeing if any trigger the desired memory. A mnemonic is a more disciplined and systematic version of this haphazard search.
15. Cf. Hicks, 1907: p. 458: "we are free to picture this or that to ourselves in thought, whenever we please." He notes that this is consistent with *phantasia* not occuring *only when* we want it to, i.e. that we can experience *phantasia* without bringing it about by mental command. Note that this gloss implies that we have control both over when we experience *phantasia*, and also the content of that experience. Themistius makes a nearly identical claim (*in de An par.* 88.37-8): "It is possible to produce before our eyes by conscious choice (ἔστι ποιήσασθαι προελομένους) now a horse, now a dog, and now anything whatever."
16. Cf. *De Mem.* 450a27-30, where Aristotle says that we must consider "the state that comes about in the soul through perception"—given the context, he must mean *phantasia*—"as a kind of picture (ζωγράφημα)." Cf. also *De Mem* 450b25, where he compares *phantasmata* (mental pictures) to portraits. See also Caston (1998 esp. pp. 258-60 and 272-84) for the role of representations in Aristotle's psychology.
17. There must be some restriction on the range of content which we can experience via *phantasia.* I cannot imagine properties that I have never experienced before (e.g. someone born deaf has no ***phantasma*** of a French horn playing middle C), or states of affairs which I cannot comprehend (e.g. that 2+2 = 5). But all the reading under discussion requires is that, whatever the limitations on the range of potential content, we can initiate a state of *phantasia* with content from that range whenever we want.

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The hard work for this reading lies in explaining how belief is not under our command in this sense. In order to do this, I must highlight an issue with Aristotle's Greek. The reason he gives that belief is not up to us, which I translated above as "it must be either true or false," is really much more ambiguous:

> δοξάζειν δ' οὐκ ἐφ' ἡμῖν· ἀνάγκη γὰρ ἢ ψεύδεσθαι ἢ ἀληθεύειν. (*de An.* 427b20-1)

Aristotle does not specify a subject for the second sentence, and there are two plausible options about which subject to supply. One view (my own) is that the subject is "believing," the mental state itself. The reading under discussion takes the grammatical subject to be the psychological subject, i.e. the person who forms the belief.[18] Hence, someone defending this reading would render the last two clauses of argument (1) like this:

> But forming a belief is not up to us, for it is necessary [when we do so] that we either hit upon the truth or fall into error.

Grammatically, this reading is entirely plausible. The subject, had Aristotle made it explicit, would be *hêmas*, which is anaphoric with *hêmin* in the preceding clause. The two verbs rendered as "hit upon the truth" and "fall into error" also very naturally take persons as their subjects and have their natural senses.

It remains, then, to make philosophical sense of the reading. Since it turns on the idea that *phantasia* is under our mental command, a univocal reading of "up to us" requires that Aristotle deny that belief is similarly under our command. Above, we said that "mental command" amounts to the ability to initiate a state with a certain content. This is difficult to spell out precisely, but we might put the condition like this:

> MENTAL COMMAND: A psychological state ψ is under mental command iff ∀ A ∀ t ∀ p (A ψ's at t that p ◇→ A ψ's at t that not-p).

Here and throughout my discussion, A stands for an agent, t for a time, and p for the content of a mental state. '◇→' here means psychological possibility. That is, given the agent's past experience and current psychological states, it is possible for A to ψ.[19] The bi-conditional is meant to capture the flexibility of content that these kinds of states have. If the agent's current state is such that she can ψ that p, then it should also be such that she can ψ that not-p, and vice versa. If this were not so, then A would not be able to ψ whenever she wanted, contrary to Aristotle's claim in passage (1). This reading, then, proposes that a psychological state is up to us just in case it satisfies MENTAL COMMAND.

In order for belief not to be up to us, then, it must fail to satisfy MENTAL COMMAND. Someone who defends this kind of reading would argue as follows: We are not free to have a belief with a certain content anytime we want. Rather, we can only believe that p if p is not evidently false to us.[20] Belief that p

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18. Cf. (1907: p. 459): "The subject is probably τὸν δοξαζοντα." I think a more plausible guess is ἡμᾶς, which still gets the point across. Themistius gives a similar reading (88.38-40): "...but it is not possible to suppose and decide whatever we choose, but rather what seems evident compels us. For it is not possible that we not refuse what is obviously false." His formulation emphasizes constraints on agents, rather than constraints on the psychological states themselves. Wedin (1984: p. 76) makes a nearly identical claim: "No one believes known falsehoods. It is just in this sense that belief is not entirely up to us." He does not, however, cite Themistius.
19. Definitions of this kind must make some kind of assumption about the normal psychological functioning of an agent. For instance, if a person suffers from hallucinations, she may experience *phantasiai* with certain contents against her will, and be completely helpless to prevent them. Assume that A is a normally-functioning agent unless I specify otherwise. We will have an opportunity briefly to discuss non-normal agents at the end of section III.
20. Themistius and Wedin say exactly this (Note 18, above). Hicks is a bit harder to pin down 1907: p. 459: "in judging...that this is or is not so, we are fettered by facts, which we must take into account." This formulation sounds very similar to my own view, and I think he is really onto something here. His next note, however, signals that he does not distinguish the

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implies a commitment on the part of the believer to the idea that the world is such that p. Hence, the range of content for belief is constrained by the way we take the world to be.[21] *Phantasia* is not constrained in this same way. The wider range of content is what makes *phantasia* under our mental command. Since belief lacks this range of content, it is not under our command, and so is not up to us. If we take the world to be such that p, then it is not psychologically possible for us to believe that not-p. So MENTAL COMMAND does not apply to belief, and so belief is not up to us.

This reading has some appeal and preserves a univocal sense of "up to us," but I think it falls apart under close scrutinty. There are two problems with the reading that I find insuperable. The first is that, contrary to the intuitive-sounding gloss given above, this reading–depending on how one fleshes it out–is either trivial, textually insensitive, or fails altogether to distinguish belief from *phantasia*. That is, it fails to explicate why exactly belief fails to satisfy MENTAL COMMAND in a way that does not make *phantasia* fail to satisfy it as well. The second problem is that the reading runs into indissoluble textual difficulties. It makes Aristotle contradict himself within 14 lines of text. A proposed fix for this problem merely causes contradiction with yet another passage. These two problems together will be more than enough to reject the reading.

I will take the philosophical difficulties first. Insofar as the reading supplies a basis for distinguishing belief from *phantasia*, it cannot give a sustainable interpretation.[22] The difference is supposed to be that one is under mental command and the other is not. More precisely, MENTAL COMMAND is true when ψ-ing is *phantasia* and false when it is belief. But it is hard to come up with a reason why belief fails to satisfy MENTAL COMMAND that does not also apply to *phantasia*. One might try to say that, if A believes at *t* that p, and forms a belief at *t* that not-p, then A must abandon their belief that not-p. It is psychologically impossible, then, to believe contradictions.[23] Aristotle does seem to think that one

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two readings as I do: "An opinion, a judgement, a proposition must declare either what is true or what is false." Presumably, he means to emphasize the assertoric nature of belief, as I do in the main text following this note.

21. If semantic externalism is true, then the way the world actually is will restrict the content of our beliefs. But this cannot be the sense in which belief is not up to us, because that would not mark a distinction between belief and *phantasia*. I take Caston's point (1998: p. 284) that *phantasmata* are not structured like a language due to their "quasi-perceptual character." Hence, talking about "semantic externalism" with respect to *phantasia* may not be entirely apt. But we can construe externalism in a broad sense, according to which the contents of words *and* mental representations are set by causal relations with the external world. As I said in note 17, the external world does restrict the range of content for *phantasia*, because there can be no *phantasia* without perception (cf. *De An.* 427b16, 28b12-4) and perception is so restricted.

22. With respect to the first horn (failing to distinguish), my target is Wedin's (1984: p. 76) suggestion that the passage "means to underline the logical point that truth or falsity is crucial to whether we believe it in just the sense that if *a* believes *p*, then *a* believes *p* is true. No one believes known falsehoods." If all that Aristotle means to indicate by ἀνάγκη γὰρ ἢ ψεύδεσθαι ἢ ἀληθεύειν is this logical claim about belief ascription, then his argument fails to distinguish belief from *phantasia*, because the same claim is true of *phantasia*: If *a* ψs that *p*, then *a* ψs that *p* is true. To imagine something is to imagine that it is true, even if one does not *believe* that it is true. This applies just as much to the "non-paradigmatic sensory experiences" which *phantasia* plays a role in explaining. Cf. (Schofield, 1992, pp. 251-253). Though one may not endorse such experiences as the truth, they nonetheless present themselves *as* true. So the schema still applies.

23. This discussion sweeps a difficulty about *de re* belief under the rug. I may believe something about an object under a certain description and believe something contradictory of that object under a different description. For example, I might think that Mike is a really nice guy, but think that Jerkface482 (someone who harrasses me on Instant Messaging) is a jerk. Little do I know that Mike *is* Jerkface482. If I am unaware that the two intentional objects of my belief are actually only one object, then my two (contradictory) beliefs cause no psychological conflict. We need not discuss this complication, because the restriction of possible content for belief in cases which do not involve ignorance are still grounds to deny that belief is up to us. I'd like to thank Neil Mehta for bringing examples like this to my attention.

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cannot hold contradictory beliefs.[24] But this cannot be the right account of why belief is not up to us. Belief can be as I just described it and yet satisfy MENTAL COMMAND. We can still form a belief of a certain content whenever we want, according to this interpretation. That we must abandon certain other beliefs to do so is irrelevant. This analysis also causes *phantasia* not to satisfy MENTAL COMMAND. Notice that the same condition will apply to *phantasia*. If one experiences a mental image with content p, then one is not experiencing an image with content not-p, because content cannot be contradictory, for Aristotle.[25] A state cannot even *represent* content that is contradictory, let alone be a state that represents how we actually take the world to be. It seems, then, that we have to revise the formulation to restrict the contents of *new* beliefs, not merely the contents of an agent's representational states taken as a whole. This may give us an analysis that excludes belief from MENTAL COMMAND but does not also exclude ***phantasia***.

One plausible way to do this is to say that we cannot form beliefs that contradict what we know, or at least what we already firmly believe.[26] Anyone who claims to do so is not actually forming a belief, but rather something else, such as a supposition. This puts a restriction on our ability to form beliefs with certain contents, and so belief will fail to satisfy MENTAL COMMAND. And the same condition does not hold for *phantasia*, because we are free to form mental representations that go against what we know is true. We do this every time we consider alternate possibilities. But this rendering is still not satisfactory, because we have evidence that Aristotle does not think that recalcitrance of certain states implies that the state is not up to us. Our inability to be in a given mental state exactly when we want to (such as believing that p when we know that not-p) is not, by itself, evidence that the state is not up to us. In Book III of the *Nichomachean Ethics*, Aristotle claims that our settled states of character are up to us:

> Excellence is also up to us, and so too is defectiveness. For if it is up to us to act, then it is also up to us not to act, and also vice versa. (*Eth Nic.* 1113b6-8)

We form character only gradually through our actions. We do not become just by flipping a switch or performing a single just action, but rather through a process of habituation.[27] Habits, once acquired, are very difficult to change, since they are settled states. Yet they are still up to us. Therefore, one's being unable to form a certain belief at any time *t* because of some other psychological state (namely, knowledge or belief that p) does not imply that belief is not up to us. That cannot, therefore, be what Aristotle means when he says that belief is not up to us. And I think Aristotle has the right idea. Something can be under our command without being under our immediate and fail-safe command.

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24. Cf. *de Interpretatione* 23b30-2, where he says that holding contradictory beliefs is akin to believing a contradiction, e.g. that a man is not a man. Of course, here he does not say that such a state is impossible, but merely that anyone who does so has been deceived (διέψευσται). As before (note 19), we might say that this discussion assumes a rational agent, though we must give give an account of rationality that does not merely amount to not believing contradictions. Cf. Jones (1991: p. 184) for this point about definition. Jones also carries on a very good discussion, in dialogue with Foley (1986), about the difficulty in general of denying that agents can have contradictory beliefs.
25. Cf. *de Int.* 24b5-9, where Aristotle says that contraries cannot be true of the same thing at the same time, and that it is not possible for a true statement to have a true contrary. Cf. also *Metaphysics* 4.4.1006a10-2: "it is possible to give an indirect demonstration (ἀποδεῖξαι ἐλεγκτικῶς), even about this [*sc.* denying the principle of non-contradiction], that it is impossible, if only the one who disputes with us should say something." So if statements have meaningful content, then there are no true contradictions.
26. This is closest, I think, to Wedin's and Themistius' way of putting it: in terms of inability to believe known falsehoods (Wedin), and not being able to do anything but deny what is obviously false (τὸ φανὲν ψεῦδος) (Themistius). See note 18 for citations. Themistius' paraphrase seems to contain two different ways of construing the condition, and he uses two different words. See note 28, below.
27. Cf. *Eth. Nic.* 2.1.1103a16-8, a23-5, b1-2, 3.5.1114a9-10.

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A third way to go is to appeal to how the world can, in a certain sense, force beliefs upon us.[28] We cannot help but believe certain things. There is a certain class of evidence that it is psychologically impossible to doubt, and certain states of affairs present themselves as so obviously p that we cannot, rationally or psychologically, believe that not-p. Thus, those beliefs fail to satisfy MENTAL COMMAND, and so belief is not up to us. This reading would, presumably, claim that *phantasia* cannot be compelling in the same way. I think that this reading gets something right. I am going to forestall a full discussion of it until I introduce my own view, because I think we can only understand what is going on here with some additional machinery that it would be awkward to introduce here.

What I can do now, however, is draw attention to how much more than MENTAL COMMAND this way of taking the passage requires. In fact, it all but abandons the idea that failure to satisfy MENTAL COMMAND provides an analysis of why belief is not up to us. Rather, it explains it in terms of the strength of various kinds of evidence. So the purported sufficient condition for a state's not being up to us becomes an epiphenomenon of some deeper explanation. I aim to provide such an explanation, and it will come out sounding something like what I said in the last paragraph. But insofar as the current MENTAL COMMAND reading must appeal to my reading in order to make sense, it does not offer an alternate view.

So an analysis of "up to us" in terms of MENTAL COMMAND encounters its share of philosophical difficulty. It also, by virtue of the way it has to read the Greek, makes Aristotle contradict something he says 14 lines after passage (1). Since the reading takes Aristotle's claim to be that *agents* are under certain constraints as to when they form a belief, and about what, it must read the implicit subject of *alêtheuein ê pseudesthai* as the agent. With our beliefs, we either get at the truth or we fall into error. Since this is what distinguishes belief from *phantasia*, one would expect that getting at the truth or falling into error is not something that *phantasia* lets us do. But Aristotle claims exactly this:

> (3) If phantasia is, in fact, that whereby we say that we come to have an image (*phantasma*), and if we do not mean something metaphorical, then phantasia is one kind of capacity or state among those in accordance with which we discriminate and either hit upon the truth or fall into error. (De An. 3.3.428a1-4)[29]

Phantasia is the kind of state that makes us either hit on the truth or fall into error. The last clause of the sentence in Greek is ἢ ἀληθεύομεν ἢ ψευδόμεθα, which is exactly what the last clause of passage (1) (i.e., ἢ ψεύδεσθαι ἢ ἀληθεύειν) says if one takes the grammatical subject to be the believer. Since that is supposed to be the reason why belief is not up to us, and *phantasia* is up to us, it would not be a valid argument if we say that *phantasia* has the same characteristic. So on this reading of passage (1), Aristotle contradicts himself within half a page.[30]

Someone who defends this reading will respond that, in argument (1), Aristotle says that the believer *necessarily* either hits on the truth or falls into error. In passage (3), quoted above, there is no

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28. This picks up a thread in Themistius, about how what is evident (τὸ ενάργες) compels us to believe certain things. He does not seem to notice the distinction between this way of framing the view and his other formulation, according to which we cannot help but refuse what is apparently false. I think Themistius is onto something in this second sentence, but I do not think this is the reason that belief is not up to us. It is, though, a point that any good reading will preserve and explain.
29. Reading ἅς along with Torstrik and Ross, against ἥν, which Bekker, Rodier and Janone favor. I am aware that mine is a minority reading, but I think the grounds are solid. There is simply no other antecedent for τούτων anywhere in the sentence. One possibility is φάντασμά, but that is not plural. One possibility is to read φαντάσματα for φάντασμά τι, but such a reading does not appear in any of the manuscript traditions.
30. I am not, of course, the first person to notice this. Cf. Freudenthal (1863: p. 11).

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such modal qualification. Additionally, in passage (3) Aristotle only commits himself to saying that we hit on the truth or fall into error in accordance with, or perhaps in virtue of (the preposition he uses, *kata*, can mean all these and more) *phantasia.* This can mean all sorts of things, and so we need not read it as in conflict with argument (1).

The second response is easier to address, so I will take it up first. It purports to find a difference between the way Aristotle says we go right or wrong when we form beliefs, and the way that we go right or wrong when we experience *phantasia*. But the difference is an illusion, for the following reason. When Aristotle says in argument (1) that we either go right or wrong, he must mean that we do so in virtue of forming some belief. The sentence must make this clear in order to make any sense, either by a participle or a prepositional phrase.[31] When one takes this into account, the purported difference between the two formulations vanishes, because the plausible readings of a participle in this circumstance all give a meaning indistinguishable from that of the prepositional phrase in passage (3). So that is no way out.

The first response has more going for it. Since argument (1) says that we necessarily either go right or wrong with respect to belief, and passage (3) leaves the possibility open with respect to *phantasia*, the two passages do not in fact conflict.[32] In his *de Memoria* (450b20-1a2), Aristotle argues that we can consider any given mental image both in itself, and as a representation of something else. Here is the crucial part of the passage where he discusses this:

> (4) So must we grasp the mental image in us both as something in and of itself and as the likeness of something else. Insofar as it is something in itself, it is an object of contemplation or a mental picture, but insofar as it is [an image] of something else, it is as it were a likeness and an aid to memory (*De Mem.* 450b24-7).

The content of *phantasia*, then, can play two roles. The second role is intuitive: we can consider *phantasia* as a representation of an external object or state of affairs. The first role that Aristotle mentions is harder to frame. It seems that, even when we just consider a *phantasma* in and of itself, it must still have representational content.[33] We do not, in this case, consider the *phantasma* as meaningless patches of color, or inarticulate sound, or anything like that. It is meaningful, but not taken to represent anything in the external world.[34] Call this "non-intentional *phantasia,*" because the content of the state is not an intentional object, i.e. content which is "about" an external state of affairs. Only when we consider the

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31. Participles in Greek can supply causal, instrumental, and many other auxiliary bits of information. This is, presumably, why Hicks (1907: p. 459) takes the implicit subject to be τὸν δοξάζοντα, despite lack of anaphora. I still think ἡμᾶς is more plausible, but I take his point, and would append δοξασαντες.
32. Rodier proposes this solution in his commentary. A good summary remark from him (1900: p. ii.412): "*Ce qui ne suppose pas que l'imagination ne soit jamais vraie ou fausse, mais seulement qu'elle ne possède pas* nécessairement *ces caractères*." [And this doesn't suppose that imagine is never true or false, but just that it doesn't *necessarily* have these characteristics.] The explanation in the main text follows his account *ad loc.*
33. This is also the view of Lorenz (2006: p. 159), Everson (1997, pp. 195-196) and Caston (1998: p. 282). It is unclear whether Rodier makes this distinction, though nothing in his discussion commits him to denying it. He draws the distinction between a "phénomène subjectif" [subjective appearance] and "une representation, une image au sens propre de ces mots" [a representation, an image in the proper sense of the word] (ii.412). Presumably the "subjective appearance" would itself be the appearance of something, and therefore representational.
34. I think a perspicuous way to read the distinction that Aristotle is drawing here is in terms of Nelson Goodman's (1969, pp. 21-23) distinction between a "representation of x" and an "x-representation." The first is a two-place relation between a depiction and an external object. The second is a one-place predicate, and does not imply that there is any existing object which the depiction is supposed to represent. Hence, to take one of Goodman's examples, a picture can be a man-representation, in that it clearly depicts a man, without denoting (Goodman's term) any existing man or group of men. The *phantasma* as object of contemplation corresponds, it seems, to x-representation, because considering it in this way does not raise an expectation that there is anything in the external world that it represents.

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phantasma as a likeness (i.e. an intentional object) does the state of *phantasia* become the sort of thing that can be truth or false. Call this "intentional *phantasia.*" It is in virtue of intentional *phantasia* that agents hit on the truth or fall into error.[35] This reading, if correct, will dissolve the worry about Aristotle's contradicting himself. If belief is *necessarily* the kind of state by which agents go right or wrong, while *phantasia* is only *possibly* that kind of state (since it can be either intentional or non-intentional), then Aristotle he can say that belief is not up to us because it necessarily has this characteristic, while *phantasia* does not necessarily have it.

There are two problems with this solution. First, the solution cannot make good sense of Aristotle's text, even if we grant that it is the right way to read passage (4) from the *de Memoria*. Second, it requires what I think is a mistaken reading of said passage. I'll start with the first problem. On this reading, intentional *phantasia* is not up to us. This is because it is a state in virtue of which we *necessarily* go right or wrong. Any state that is a) *phantasia* and b) not a state by which we go right or wrong will be non-intentional phantasia, by definition. Since it is the necessity that makes belief not up to us, and intentional *phantasia* also satisfies this condition, it follows that intentional *phantasia* is not up to us. So Aristotle must be talking about non-intentional *phantasia* in the first half of passage (1), when he says that ***phantasia*** is up to us. At least, he must be if the reading under discussion even has a chance of working. But Aristotle seems to be talking about intentional *phantasia* in passage (1). Here is his support for the claim that *phantasia* is up to us:

> For it is possible to produce [images] before one's eyes, just like those forming images and putting them into mnemonic systems (*De An.* 3.3.427b18-20)

Aristotle's example is about putting images into mnemonic systems, not constructing the systems themselves. The latter could involve non-intentional *phantasia*; the association system, which one uses as an aid to memory, need not utilize intentional objects. The objects which one wishes to remember, however, are certainly external, and any *phantasia* with content that represents them will be intentional *phantasia.* So passage (1) claims that intentional *phantasia* is up to us, which contradicts the proposed reading.

Onto the second problem: the solution is based on a misinterpretation of the *de Memoria* passage from which it purportedly draws its evidence. The reading assumes, without argument, that Aristotle is here contrasting two different kinds of *phantasia*. The states under discussion certainly involve *phantasia*, since he talks about various attitudes that we can take towards mental pictures, and you can't have mental pictures without *phantasia*. But it does not follow that the distinction is one between types of *phantasiai*, or that *phantasia* as such is Aristotle's concern in the passage. Since this passage occurs in a discussion of how one can remember what is not present, he is probably drawing a distinction between genuine memory and pseudo-memory.[36] Aristotle talks of "grasping" (λάβειν) a *phantasma* in two different ways and taking a certain attitude toward it. This implies mental operations beyond simple *phantasia*, and hence that the discussion is about a different mental state. It does not, therefore, provide evidence that Aristotle has two different conceptions of *phantasia*.

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35. Cf. Rodier (1900: p. ii.413): "It is considered as representing an exterior object, which can allow for truth and falsehood." (*elle est considérée comme representant un objet extérieur, ce qui peut donner lieu à la verité et à l'erreur*)
36. This is largely Caton's (1998, pp. 281-283) reading of the passage as well. He takes Aristotle to be making a distinction in memorial states, and if one grants that, it follows that the discussion is about mental states that are well beyond *phantasia* in the order of cognitive complexity (even though they involve experiences of *phantasia*).

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This has been a lengthy discussion, so a summary will do us good. The reading under discussion proposes that what prevents belief from being "up to us" is that it requires a commital attitude on the part of the agent, which entails a restriction on range of content about which an agent can form a belief. This reading requires taking the psychological subject as the grammatical subject at the end of passage (1). In order to avoid a contradiction with passage (3), where Aristotle uses the same language to describe *phantasia* as he uses to describe belief in passage (1), this reading must posit two distinct forms of *phantasia*: intentional and non-intentional. It must then assume that Aristotle is only saying that non-intentional *phantasia* is up to us, in order to avoid a contradiction with passage (3). But the text suggests that Aristotle has intentional *phantasia* in mind during that passage.

So the reading dissolves one problem by telling a complicated story that only ends up causing another problem. This is only natural, because there is reason to believe that the story it tells is based on a misreading of the passage in *de Memoria*. The reading also encounters philosophical trouble, because it cannot cash out the restriction on content in a way that serves Aristotle's primary purpose in passage (1), which is to distinguish belief from *phantasia*. All of this gives us good reason to look for another way to understand the passage.

That said, the reading does point us in the right direction. The criterion that it proposes for a certain state's being "up to us" captures something important. I repeat the criterion here for reference:

MENTAL COMMAND: A psychological state ψ is under mental command iff ∀ A∀ t∀ p (◇A ψ's at t that p iff ◇A ψ's at t that not-p). '◇,' again, is psychological possibility.

This is as clear a notion of a state's being under our mental command as we are likely to find. As vague as notion as "up to us" is, it seems that any satisfactory account of the term will explain of how the state is under our mental command. The reading I propose, then, should explain why *phantasia* is such a state in virtue of its being "up to us." What I reject is the idea that MENTAL COMMAND is what makes a given state "up to us" or not. The former reading took MENTAL COMMAND to be a necessary condition for a state to be "up to us." I propose that it is, at most, a sufficient one, and the result of a deeper explanation for why mental states are up to us.

Enough critique: onto my positive view. I take a different tack from the former reading. Defenders of the former reading seek an analysis of "up to us" that makes intuitive sense when applied to *phantasia*, and then look for a way to extend that sense to belief. I, on the other hand, will propose an analysis of "up to us" that makes it easy to see why we would *withhold* it from belief, and then see if it makes sense to apply it to *phantasia*. My reading will also a) explain why MENTAL COMMAND is true of *phantasia* b) explain why Aristotle makes the kind of argument he does in passage (1) and c) avoid contradiction with other passages.

I propose that we take the fought-over grammatical subject in passage (1) to be the formation of the belief, i.e. the mental state itself. In Greek, this is τὸ δοξάζειν (*to doxazein*). This very word occurs in the preceding clause, so the reading is anaphoric, and requires no sudden transition in thought. The two verbs in the last clause (ψεύδεσθαι and ἀληθεύειν), though they often take personal subjects, also take mental states and contents as subjects, especially in Aristotle.[37] So supplying the state itself as the

37. Mental states: *De An.* 428a17, *Nic. Eth.* 1127a20, 1139b13. Contents: *Top.* 129a30, *An. Pr.* passim, *De Int.* passim.

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grammatical subject is every bit as plausible as supplying the psychological subject. My proposal gives up nothing in that regard.

It also solves the textual problem that plagues the first reading. In passage (3), Aristotle explicitly makes the psychological subject of *phantasia* the subject of the two verbs. Since, on my reading, the psychological subject is not the grammatical subject in passage (1), the two passages are consistent. It is plausible that agents can go right or wrong in virtue of experiencing a state of *phantasia*. This is because *phantasia* is a constitutive part of many other mental states, including desire and memory.[38] That is, it supplies the content for many other cognitive states. If the agent goes right or wrong by having these cognitive states, then there is a sense in which the agent has gone right or wrong due to *phantasia*. But since Aristotle does not assert that the *phantasia* itself goes right or wrong, there is no conflict with passage (1).

We now need to see if we can give an analysis of "up to us" that makes it natural to withhold from belief, and also makes it plausible to ascribe to *phantasia*. As my reading of the Greek suggests, I think this is a characteristic of the state itself, rather than a characteristic of an agent's ability to initiate the state. And it must be a characteristic that follows obviously from Aristotle's claim that belief must either hit on the truth or not. I say "obviously" because Aristotle takes the implication as clear enough to require no elaboration.

My proposal is that part of what makes a mental state a belief is that it answers rationally to evidence about the world, and such evidence is often outside the agent's control to change.[39] The reason that Aristotle gives for belief not being up to us is that it must either be true or false. A belief is true or false according as the content of the belief represents some state of affairs accurately (or accurately enough). Belief just *is* a state directed at the actual world (as opposed to how we want the world to be):

> Belief implies conviction (for it is not possible for someone who forms a belief not to have conviction in what he believes)… (*De Anima* 3.3.428a20-1)

In order for a state to count as a belief, then, it must answer to some standard of evaluation. Aristotle goes on to say that belief requires a process of rational persuasion:

> Furthermore, all belief implies conviction, conviction implies having been persuaded, and persuasion implies the ability to reason. (*De Anima* 428a22-4)[40]

For any content p, there are reasons that count for and against believing that p. This evidence can vary widely in kind and strength, from manifest perceptual evidence[41] to reasoning about probability. What is

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38. That it plays a role in desire: *Mot. An.* 700b17-9, 702a17-9; *De An.* 413b23-5, 433a10-5, a20-1 and b29. That it is necessary for memory: *De Mem.* 450a13-4, a22-5. Lorenz (2006: p. 142) points out that some animals seem to have desire without *phantasia*, and concludes (142-5) that *phantasia* and self-locomotion are more intimately connected than *phantasia* and desire. Since, however, humans are animals which are capable of self-locomotion, the borderline cases Lorenz discusses (like sponges) are not relevant right now, and we can safely exclude them.
39. Simplicius seems to have something like this in mind when he comments on this passage (*in de An.* 206.32-5): "Assent comes about not only in virtue of understanding the way things happen to be, but in virtue of judging the true and the false (κατὰ τὴν τοῦ ἀληθοῦς ἢ ψεύδους διάκρισιν). But truth and falsehood inhere in agreement or divergence in relation to facts (ἐν δὲ τῇ πρὸς τὰ πράγματα συμφωνίᾳ καὶ διαφωνίᾳ), and facts are not up to us (ἐφ' ἡμῖν)." It is also very easy to read Hicks' (1907: p. 459) suggestion that belief is "fettered by facts" as gesturing at this kind of analysis. He is certainly on the right track, but does not, I think, fully distinguish this kind of reading from the one which I previously rejected.
40. Ross (1961) excises this entire passage, because line 22 is redundant with line 20. Even if this were sufficient reason to excise the entire sentence–and I do not think that it is–he is alone in doing so.
41. Aristotle thinks that certain kinds of perception, namely perception of "the proper perceptibles," is always true. "Proper perceptibles" are the perceptual qualities reception of which defines each of the five senses. So the claim seems to be that

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important is that, for any given belief, there is some justificatory account, some reasons to adopt it or not. When the evidence is manifest enough, we cannot help but form the belief that p when the evidence confronts us.[42]

This observation alone is sufficient to deny that MENTAL COMMAND applies to belief in general. A person walking down the street who sees a bus hurtling toward her simply does not have the option of believing that there is no bus hurtling towards her. That the bus is hurtling toward her is too evident to allow refusal. That is, at least, if she is in good psychological health. This is an important qualification; the compulsion operating here is rational compulsion. If a person purports to believe that p, and persists in light of evidence (acknowledged as such) that not-p, then either a) she believes p irrationally or b) she does not really believe that p, but rather is in some other psychological state. The point is that a psychological state cannot be a belief and yet answer to no standard of assessment.

One might try to take the bus example as support for the first, discredited reading of passage (1).[43] That is, it sounds like a restriction on the possible times when we can form a belief with a certain content. It does indeed involve such a restriction, and that is why MENTAL COMMAND fails for belief. That kind of restriction alone, however, does not distinguish belief from *phantasia*. For just as beliefs can force themselves on us, so too can mental pictures. Some situation or thought might prompt me to imagine something, perhaps something I would rather not imagine. It is, in fact, quite natural to speak of intrusive *phantasia*.[44] But that does not make *phantasia* any less up to us, and so the possibility of intrusion cannot be the reason why belief is not up to us. Belief is no more up to us in situations where the evidence is less literally compelling than it is in the bus case. It will still not be up to us because, even in a less obvious evidential situation, the belief must submit to a standard of evaluation in order to count as a belief. There must be reasons which would prompt us, on pain of irrationality, to adopt, abandon, weaken or strengthen the belief.

Taking this tack allows us to see why *phantasia* is up to us in spite of intrusion, while belief is not up to us even when it is not intrusive. Consider some intrusive *phantasia* with content p. There is nothing irrational about conjuring up a mental image of not-p in order to dispel the intrusive content. In fact, there are circumstances when doing so makes total sense. For instance, an alcoholic may fight off some *phantasma* of a stiff scotch (which will prepare his desire for one, a desire he cannot resist), by

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the senses are infallible within a certain, delimited sphere of content. Cf. *De Anima* 2.6.418a12-7, 3.3.427b13-4, and 428b18-9. In the last passage cited, Aristotle qualifies his assertion that proper perception is "always true, or is false to the smallest degree." On proper perception and what Aristotle means by saying that it is always true, see Everson (1997, pp. 103-138), Hamlyn (1959, pp. 7, 11-7, 13), Modrak (%Modrak, 1987, #34976@78-9), and Turnbull (1978 passim).

42. Themistius points this out (*in de An. par.* 88.3-9): "what seems evident (τὸ δοκοῦν ἐναργὲς) compels us (ἐπαναγκάσῃ)." Why, then, do I group him with the people who give the wrong reading? Because he follows the methodology that leads to the first reading, that is, taking "up to us" in a way that makes a lot of sense in the case of *phantasia* and extending that notion to cover belief as well. This leads him to an analysis in terms of constraints on psychological subjects, which leads to the problems that I discuss. Like Hicks, however, he is definitely onto something, and I give credit where it is due.
43. This paragraph completes the discussion for which I earlier issued a promissory note.
44. Aristotle's formulation in passage (1) allows for this possibility, as Hicks (Hicks, 1907: p. 458) rightly points out. Not only does he allow for the possibility, but he thinks it happens all the time. For dreams are a sort of *phantasma*, and so dreaming is an experience of *phantasia* (*De Insomniis* 459a19-20: "and the dream seems to be some kind of mental picture (φάντασμά τι), for we call the mental picture that occurs in sleep (τὸ ἐν ὕπνῳ φαντάσμα) a dream…") We do not control everything about our dreams, so it follows that some experiences of *phantasia* intrude upon us. Aristotle also thinks that perception generates experiences of *phantasiai*, and those presumably are also intrusive, in the sense that they happen without our making them happen. For evidence of this in Aristotle, cf. *De Anima* 3.3.428b11-6.

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concentrating on a *phantasma* of a hangover headache. The point is that we need not look for evidence that not-p and stoically accept the intrusive content if we don't find any. Given sufficient psychological strength, we can simply wish the content away. We cannot do this with belief, at least not insofar as we are rational. This suggests the following analysis to replace MENTAL COMMAND. Call it REASON-SENSITIVITY:

> REASON-SENSITIVITY: A psychological state ψ is reason-sensitive iff ∀ p∃ R [R is evidence that p & ∀ A∀ t(If A has access to R at t, then\[A ψ's at t that p])].[45]'\' here signifies rational necessity, i.e. A must ψ on pain of irrationality.

My proposal is that a psychological state is up to us just in case it is not reason-sensitive. The schema for REASON-SENSITIVITY leaves several questions open, such as what constitutes evidence and what having "access" to evidence amounts to. This vagueness is not, however, a point against the proposal. For one, I doubt that we could answer the question of what constitutes evidence for belief through conceptual analysis of the notion of evidence (or belief). Rather, it will vary according to the belief itself and our canons of inquiry. Similar remarks apply to the notion of access.[46]

If a state satisfies REASON-SENSITIVITY, it follows that it fails to satisfy MENTAL COMMAND. Here's how: consider a psychologically-normal agent A who has access at time *t* to some evidence R that p is the case. Assume for simplicity that there is no evidence to the contrary. By REASON-SENSITIVITY, A must believe that p. It is also psychologically possible for her to believe that p. So she satisfies one wing of the biconditional in MENTAL COMMAND. However, since she is rationally compelled to believe that p, it is not psychologically possible for A to believe that not-p.[47] So A fails to satisfy the second wing of the biconditional in MENTAL COMMAND. If follows that MENTAL COMMAND fails for belief, on the assumption that it satisfies REASON-SENSITIVITY.

My proposal, then, makes sense of why Aristotle appeals to MENTAL COMMAND when he tells us why *phantasia* is up to us and to REASON-SENSITIVITY when he tells us why belief is not up to us. Since REASON-SENSITIVITY implies failure of MENTAL COMMAND, MENTAL COMMAND implies failure of REASON-SENSITIVITY. A psychological state, on my proposal, is up to us just in case it fails to satisfy REASON-SENSITIVITY. So when

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45. This formulation brings to mind what Travis Butler (2003, pp. 335-336) calls the "reason-dependence of belief," and what Labarrière (1984, pp. 31-34) calls the "rhetorical" criterion of belief. Labarrière (31) on this notion: "*dès lors qu'il y a opinion, il y a moyen d'agir sur elle par voie de persuasion*." [Insofar as there is belief, there is a way of arriving at it by way of persuasion.] This formulation is equivalent to what Butler (2003: p. 336) calls the "weak" version of reason-dependence. According to this version, the means of persuasion need only be epistemically accessible to the agent in some way. They need not actually be why she believes as she does. Later, however (33), Labarrière says that "nothing stops us, then, from thinking that it's not conception without persuasion, and that it is precisely this that assumes, defines the capacity to reason" (*Rien n'interdit alors de penser qu'il n'est pas de conception sans persuasion, et que c'est là précisement ce qui suppose, définit le* λόγος). This sounds more like the strong version of reason dependence, according to which belief requires an actual process of persuasion (Butler, 2003: p. 335). Since the strong version implies the weak version, this is not a problem; Labarrière simply commits to the strong version. Butler acknowledges that the weak version is vague, in much the same way that REASON-SENSITIVITY is vague as to what constitutes access to evidence. Also, Sorabji (1993: p. 37) finds the weak version an unnatural reading of *De An*. 3.3.428a18-24, which is the chief source in Aristotle for the doctrine. REASON-SENSITIVITY, however, is equivalent to neither form of reason-dependence. Rather, it gives conditions for how a rational agent forms certain psychological states when actually confronted with evidence. My proposal, therefore, stands outside of the debate I just summarized.

46. Questions of epistemic access and evidence are a cottage industry in modern epistemology and philosophy of language. They become particularly pressing in the analysis of epistemic modality. For a sample of just some of the recent work on these questions, cf. DeRose, 1991, Egan, Hawthorne, & Weatherson, 2005, Gillies & von Fintel, 2007, MacFarlane, 2006 and Swanson, 2006ch. 2 for a representative sampling of different positions.

47. That is, it is not possible without forgetting R, or explaining away R by some rationalizing account of how it is not really evidence that p. The nuances can get pretty messy here, but I don't think anything in the mess detracts from my basic point.

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Aristotle claims that *phantasia* satisfies MENTAL COMMAND, it follows that it fails to satisfy REASON-SENSITIVITY. MENTAL COMMAND is a far more intuitive characteristic for trying to show that *phantasia* is up to us, because there is an obvious and compelling example to which he can appeal, namely mnemonic systems. Explaining why *phantasia* is up to us by appealing to REASON-SENSITIVITY would make for a clunky and counter-intuitive argument. In contrast, REASON-SENSITIVTY is the perfect principle to appeal to when explaining why belief is not up to us. Since MENTAL COMMAND implies failure of REASON-SENSITIVITY, which in turn implies that the state is not up to us, Aristotle commits no equivocation in his argument. Both clauses rely on an analysis of "up to us" according to which a state is up to us just in case it fails to satisfy REASON-SENSITIVITY. Aristotle's variation is purely presentational.

One may object to my proposal in at least two ways. I have appealed to the notion of a "standard of evaluation," and used that notion to distinguish belief from *phantasia*. But it seems implausible to say that *phantasia* is not subject to a standard of evaluation, for two reasons. First, Aristotle says in numerous places that states of *phantasia* have truth values.[48] Nor can I wriggle out of these attributions the way I wriggle out of his seeming attribution in passage (3). Second, it does not seem plausible to say that *phantasia* is not liable to any standard of evaluation. Aristotle says in *De Motu Animalium* (702a17-19) that *phantasia* "prepares" desire and "makes it ready," and he repeatedly cites desire's dependence on *phantasia*.[49] But desire is also subject to an evaluative standard, for there can be good or bad desires, and reasons to acquire or abandon them. Since *phantasia* supplies the content of the desire, it seems that it must also have a share in evaluability. Aristotle even seems to think that mental pictures themselves are liable to evaluation, independent of their participation in other mental states.[50] So appealing to a "standard of evaluation" seems to do little in distinguishing belief from *phantasia*.

My response to these objections will be brief and omit some details. They will not, however, omit details relevant to the responses. First things first: Aristotle does give truth values to *phantasia*. But it does not follow from this that they are subject to evaluation in virtue of their truth value. This is the way it is with belief. Whether we should hold a certain belief has a great deal to do with whether or not it is true. But there is no evidence whatsoever that Aristotle thinks that we should experience *phantasia* with certain content for the same reason. For some states, such as memory, it will be very important that the mental picture correspond to something in the real world and represent it accurately. But when it comes to desire, quite the opposite is true. I take it that the way *phantasia* "prepares" desire is by representing a state of affairs which the agent wants to bring about. Desire is the kind of state that tries to get the world to look like its own content. This is how it differs from belief, wherein the dependence runs the other way. Therefore, the state of affairs that the *phantasia* represents will be non-actual. Hence, the content of the *phantasia* will not accurately represent the world, and so will be false.[51] But this is precisely the point,

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48. Cf. *De Anima* 3.3.428a12, where he says that *phantasia* is, for the most part, false; 428a18, where he says that, as opposed to knowledge (*epistemê*), *phantasia* can also be false; and 428b18, which flatly states that *phantasia* can be true and false.
49. See note 38 for citations.
50. Cf. *Poetics* 1452b35-6, where he says that one should not (οὔτε…δεῖ) represent good men changing from good to bad fortune, because we find this abominable (μιαρόν). The verb here is φαίνεσθαι, which I render as "depict." Aristotle is giving directions on what knds of tragic plots to construct, but since he speaks in terms of the audience's response to the plot, he must think that the audience has *phantasmata* corresponding to the events depicted in the plot, which make them respond negatively to the depicted events.
51. For evidence that accurate representation of the world is the truth-condition for *phantasia*, cf. *De Anima* 3.3.428b11-30. This truth-condition is very similar to the truth-condition for other alethic states like belief and knowledge. It is no

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when it comes to desire. If evidence that not-p somehow constituted a reason not have a *phantasia* with content p, then there would be no desire, hence no motion, hence no nutrition, and all living things would die. This is, of course, absurd. *Phantasia* has truth-value in virtue of being a representational state, but this in itself implies nothing about whether its truth-value plays a role in evaluating it, if indeed *phantasia* is liable to evaluation at all.

This leads us into the second objection, that *phantasia* is indeed subject to evaluation. There seems to be a sense in which it can be right or wrong, or perhaps good or bad, to experience *phantasia* of a certain content. Two pieces of evidence for this. First, Aristotle thinks that experiencing certain representations, even ones that do not purport to represent the real world, can provoke evaluateive responses in us, such as disgust or pity. This will become very important in the next section. Second, *phantasia* is a constitutive part of desire. Aristotle clearly thinks that desire is evaluable, since he speaks of "right desire."[52] Since *phantasia* is a constitutive part of desire, it seems that it is implicated in whatever evaluative standard we subject desire to. These are two different objections, but they have the same answer: the standard of evaluation is importantly different in the case of belief, and that is what distinguishes belief from *phantasia* and desire. Aristotle makes the distinction explicit in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. There, he says that we evaluate operations of the intellect in terms of their truth and falsehood, while we evaluate desire in terms of whether it is right:

> For the theoretical faculty of discursive reason–which is neither concerned with action nor with production— the states of doing well or poorly are being true and false, for that is the characteristic activity of every reasoning faculty; but for the practical and discursive faculty it is truth which accords with right desire. (*Eth Nic.* 5.2.1139a26-30)

When we evaluate belief, we look for whether it is true or false. When we evaluate desires, we look for whether it is for the right kind of object and pursued in the right way. This explains why Aristotle ends passage (1)–"for believing necessarily is either true or false"–the way he does. This premise points out that belief is not up to us in virtue of the *kind* of evaluative standard to which we hold it, not simply because it is subject to some standard. Because belief satisfies REASON-SENSITIVITY, what we care about is whether the state is true or false. Aristotle puts the necessity in there because *any* state, in order to be a belief, must be held to the standard expressed in REASON-SENSITIVITY. If we accept this objection's claim that *phantasia* is liable to the same kind of evaluation as the state for which it serves as a constitutive part–and I find this claim a little dubious–then we see that *phantasia* will sometimes be evaluated in terms of its truth, as when it contributes to memory or rational thought. But not always, for we will evaluate it terms of rightness or fittingness when it contributes to desire, or when we experience *phantasia* in virtue of artistic representation. We could no doubt say more about all of these points, but our discussion shows that it does no damage to my proposal if Aristotle thinks that *phantasia* is subject to evaluation. In fact, this assumption shows how my proposal explains why Aristotle argues the way he does in passage (1).

Just to sum up before we move on: my proposal explains the form of Aristotle's argument and provides an analysis of his use of "up to us" with no textual contradiction or complicated extra-textual machinery. a psychological state is up to us just in case it is not reason-sensitive. If a state fails to satisfy

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wonder, then, that Aristotle is at pains to distinguish *phantasia* from these other states.

52. Cf. *Eth. Nic.* 2.7.1107b27-30, 3.8.1116a29, 4.4.1125b7-8, 5.2.1139a30 (from which my quote comes) and 7.6.1149b6-8, among others, for examples of applying an evaluative standard to desires.

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REASON-SENSITIVITY, then it also fails to satisfy MENTAL COMMAND. This allows Aristotle to present the case of *phantasia* differently from the case of belief. His doing so does not signal two different senses of "up to us," and so his argument succeeds in distinguishing belief from *phantasia*.

III. Second Argument: Phantasia and Being Moved-Along

I think we have said enough about passage (1) and the various issues that come up as we try to make sense of it. We should move on to Aristotle's second argument. Here is passage (2) again, for reference:

> (2) Furthermore, whenever we form a belief that something is either impressive or fearsome, we are straightaway affected accordingly, and similarly if we find something encouraging. But in a similar case, except due to *phantasia*, we are just like those looking at frightening or encouraging things in a picture. (*De Anima* 3.3.427b20-25).

The argument in passage (2) purports to distinguish belief from *phantasia* by the different roles that each plays in the cognitive economy (for lack of a better word) of the agent. While the argument in passage (1) points out that belief is beholden to a standard of evaluation with respect to truth, while *phantasia* is not (at least not by virtue of being *phantasia),* the argument in passage (2) points out that belief and *phantasia* stand in different relations to an agent's motivational states.

We can start to unpack the argument by noticing that Aristotle is talking about a specific class of beliefs in passage (2). All of the examples he cites predicate something of a particular object. So Aristotle is talking about beliefs with content of the form "x is F." He also seems to have a specific kind of property in mind. His three examples are something impressive, fearsome and encouraging. These properties are all response-dependent. That is, part of what it means for an object to be fearsome is that people tend to be afraid of it. A response-dependent property is defined (at least partially) by the fact that it has a disposition to cause certain responses in certain observers.

But this cannot be exactly what Aristotle has in mind. His claim is that, when we form a belief of some x, that it is F, we are immediately affected accordingly.[53] This statement is too strong if all he thinks is that x is disposed to cause some response (call it R). For example, an Epicurean can think that death is the kind of thing that tends to make people afraid. It does not follow that she thinks that death is fearsome. In order for his claim to make sense, then, Aristotle must have something slightly different in mind. He must be presupposing that, in order for someone to believe that x is F, x must be disposed to cause the response ***in them***. To see that this is so, consider someone who says: "That movie was pretty terrifying, but it didn't scare me." It is not contradictory, as statements of the form "p, but I don't believe that p" plausibly are, but it has an air of paradox nonetheless. We assume the speaker is being ironic, or is using the term as shorthand for "terrifying for people besides myself." But that interpretation is a fallback, a device

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53. Aristotle deploys the verb he uses here (συμπάσχειν) in a variety of ways, though it not a word he uses often. It can mean that two things are affected in similar ways by a common stimulus (*Anal. Prior.* 70b16), or that something in a certain state produces a similar state something else (*De Som. et Vig.* 455a34, *Prob.* VII, *Part. An.* 690b5), and its corresponding adjective means "prone to influence" (*Part An.* 653b6). Neither of those meanings, however, are appropriate in the context of passage (2). The fearsome thing is not itself frightened, nor does the "common stimulus" reading make any sense. My sense of "affected accordingly" is a reasonable extension of the second cited meaning. It seems to be what Plato has in mind at *Rep.* 605d4, when he says that we give ourselves up to a good poet, follow along and "sympathize" with the hero's lament. It is difficult to be sure in this, however, as Plato uses the word even less than Aristotle does.

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of charity we resort to because the utterance puzzles us at first. This suggests the following necessary condition for response-dependent content:

> RESPONSE: For any agent A, representational state ψ, object x and response-dependent quality F, A ψ's that x is F only if ∃ R(R is a characteristic response to F-objects and A feels R toward x).[54]

RESPONSE, we should note, offers only a necessary condition for an agent to experience a psychological state with a certain content. But it seems to be exactly what Aristotle is claiming about belief in the first half of passage (2). If we form a belief that x is F, when F is response-dependent, then that is sufficient for us to feel the associated response.[55]

Aristotle is trying to distinguish belief from *phantasia* in this passage. We can therefore expect him to deny that a *phantasia* that represents x as F will have the same conditions. That is, ***phantasia*** simply fails to satisfy RESPONSE, so it is not the case that A has a ***phantasia*** that represents x as F only if A feels the characteristic F-response. As it happens, most interpreters of this passage, when they actually explicate the passage, take a much stronger view.[56] Most take Aristotle to be saying that experiencing ***phantasia*** that x is F is sufficient for us ***not*** to have the associated response.[57] Call this the "feel-nothing reading."

I find the feel-nothing reading bizarre, since the distinction that Aristotle is trying to draw here seems to require nothing that strong. But the interpretation does not come out of nowhere. Aristotle

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54. This formulation applies to occurrent mental states. That is, it claims that whenever one actually has the content that x is F represented to them in a belief-like way, then they feel the emotional response. We would have to revise the formulation slightly to account for non-occurrent beliefs. We need not, however, do so for the purposes of this discussion, because Aristotle is drawing his distinction in terms of occurrent states. This is evident from his use of ὅταν with the aorist subjunctive, which implies that the events in the main clause are contingent on a certain kind of event happening.
55. This is somewhat proleptic, as I am using the interpretation of "straightaway" (εὐθύς) that I develop later in this section. But I don't think this is any cause for confusion, and we will get to the topic of that adverb in due time.
56. An example of a commentator who does not really explicate the passage is Averroës in his *Middle Commentary*. Presumably puzzled by Aristotle's metaphor, he instead summarizes views Aristotle puts forward, as per Ivry (2002, pp. 197-198), at 3.7.431a16 and 3.9.432b29-32. This obscures Aristotle's point, because Averoës evidently confuses forming an opinion about something (δοξάζειν) with reasoning about something (διανοεῖσθαι, θεωρεῖν). That we do not fear something we reason about does not imply that we do not fear something that we form an opinion about. A more charitable interpretation was that he was working with sources that did not make the distinction sufficiently clear, perhaps a corrupt manuscript or an obscure translation. Passages where this distinction comes to light will occupy us in short order.
57. This reading is something of a *consensus omnium*. Themistius says in his paraphrase of this section that when animals have a φαντασία of something, they are often agitated or moved to pursue it, but when humans experience a mere φαντασία they feel nothing (89.19). Philoponus concurs: when we experience phantasia of a fearful object, "we neither fear nor are troubled, but are just as [we were] at the beginning, without being turned in any way" (493.17-8). Averroës, though he seems concerned with a different passage (see note 56), gives an interpretation that fits this unaffected-by-*phantasia* line very closely.

    The consensus continues into modern exegesis. Modern interpretations which discuss this passage at all largely follow the "no feeling from φαντασία" line. Rodier says *ad loc.*, "That is to say that we experience, then, neither encouragement nor fear," and cites Themistius. Hicks *ad loc.* puts forward exactly the same view, on the same authority. Freudenthal's objection to Aristotle's argument (12) implies that he takes a similar view. He says the argument is "invalid" (*nicht stichhaltig*), because "just as we can form an opinion about something frightening without getting scared, so can we be moved to joy or fright through the representations of *phantasia*." (*Wie wir viel Furchtbares 'meinen' können, ohne zu erschrecken, so können wir auch durch Bilder der φαντασία in Freude oder Schrecken verstetzt werden*). Frede (1992: p. 282) mentions passage (2) as an example of how φαντασία is typically non-committing, though she does not elaborate. Schofield (1992: p. 253) makes similar remarks in passing, and connects the passage to modern theories of pretense in a footnote. Sorabji (57) cites it as evidence that imagination does not provoke true emotional response because the "intellect or reasoning part of the soul gives no corresponding command," which presumably exists in the case of belief-formation. Everson is the only modern exception that I am aware of. He suggests in passing that, while belief *necessitates* some emotional reaction, *phantasia* "need not" do so (1999: 170).

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makes several remarks elsewhere in the *De Anima* which help motivate the view that *phantasia* cancels the emotional response a subject would feel if they experienced the content as part of a different kind of mental state (e.g. belief). Here are the passages I have in mind:

> (5) Perceiving is similar to mere speech and thought; but when there is something pleasant or painful, [the soul] pursues or avoids it, through, as it were, a kind of assertion or denial. (*De Anima* 3.7.431a8-10)
>
> (6) But images belong kind of like perceptions to the soul as it considers. and whenever it asserts or denies that something is good or bad, it avoids or pursues [*sc.* accordingly]. For this reason, the soul never thinks without some mental image. (*De Anima* 3.7.431a14-6)
>
> (7) But it is not the case that whenever [the soul] contemplates something of this sort, it immediately commands either pursuit or evasion. For example, it often considers something fearsome or pleasant, but does not give the order to be afraid, but still the heart is moved, or in the case of something pleasant, maybe some other part. (*De Anima* 3.9.432b29-32)[58]

Let's take a moment to unpack these texts and see whether they support the feel-nothing reading of passage (2). Passage (5) likens pursuit and avoidance behavior to assertion and denial. This establishes an analogy between affective response and belief. As we have seen, part of what distinguishes belief from other psychological states is that it makes a commitment about the world's being a certain way, which is to say that it asserts something. Passage (6) claims that thought never happens without some *phantasma*. *Phantasia* supplies the content for the thought, so thought cannot take place without it. Passage (7) claims that we can think that some x is F without having the characteristic F-response. So one might reason as follows. Thought requires *phantasia*, and F-thoughts do not cause F-responses. Therefore, a *phantasia* that represents x as F does not cause F-response. Since pursuit and avoidance require assertion, and assertion does not characteristically accompany *phantasia*, it seems that *phantasia* with a certain content does not provoke responses of this kind.

This argument does not establish that we never have an F-response when we experience *phantasia* of x as F. Rather, it shows that there is some psychological state of which *phantasia* is a constitutive part, and which need not cause emotional response. So the argument, it seems, commits a scope error. That is, rather than putting the negation out in front of RESPONSE (wide scope), this reading negates the consequent (narrow scope), and says that, if we have a *phantasia* that represents x as F, then we do no feel the response. Passages (5) through (7) do not provide evidence for such a reading, nor does Aristotle's argument require it.

One may object that this misses the point of the feel-nothing reading. We might give a stronger argument in its favor: in passage (6), Aristotle says that the soul asserts and denies. This cannot be taken literally, and comes with the standard Aristotelian warning against metonymy.[59] He means rather that the

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58. The last clause of passage (7) creates interesting complications, because it claims that, even though A does not feel R, he still might experience a physiological reaction that is characteristic of R. Sorabji does a little too much with it when he claims (57) that "the mere imagining of terrible things, for example, does not provoke fear in humans." Passage (7) is not evidence for this, except in a roundabout way. There is, however, good evidence that Aristotle would not consider the merely physiological response an emotional reaction. See Fortenbaugh (2006 esp. chs. 1 and 4) for a good discussion of the cognitive component in Aristotle's theory of emotion. Cf. also *De An.* 403b6-9, where he says that a true understanding of emotion requires inquiry into both the physiological and cognitive processes thereof.
59. Cf. *De Anima* 1.4.408b13-5, where he says that it is better to say that man moves or feels by means of his soul than to say that the soul moves or feels. But that does not mean we cannot speak that way as a sort of shorthand, as Aristotle does in passage

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agent asserts and denies. The important point is that this differs from his way of speaking in passage (5), where he compares pursuit and avoidance metaphorically to assertion and denial. In (6), Aristotle is talking about the act of taking some content to represent the actual world. He is talking, in short, about belief-formation, since this is what it is to come to believe something. Belief is action-guiding; since the believer takes the content of the belief to represent the actual world, she uses it to navigate her environment (provided she is rational). In passage (4), however, Aristotle distinguishes *phantasia* from belief. He does not even mention any other state of which *phantasia* is a constitutive part. All he says is "in a similar case, except due to *phantasia*." What he is emphasizing is a state that is non-commital, as opposed to a belief, which involves commitment.[60]

So the claim is that, if the agent does not take the content of some representation as actual, she will not have the characteristic response to it. This vindicates the narrow scope negation that the feel-nothing reading commits to. If the agent does not have a *belief* such that x is F (for some response-dependent F), then it hardly makes sense that she would have some response toward x. After all, she does not think x is even real.[61] The narrow-scope reading, therefore, is justified.

I think this reading, though more reasonable than it seems at first, is mistaken. It commits Aristotle to the claim that we cannot respond emotionally to content which we do not take to be actual. This implies that we do not respond emotionally to fictional representations unless we mistake them as factual. I am reluctant to condemn Aristotle to such an implausible view. We should, then, look for positive evidence that Aristotle thinks an agent can respond emotionally to content which she does not take as actual. This will repudiate the feel-nothing reading. Once that is out of the way, we can finish up with my own proposal.

Evidence that Aristotle believes that we can respond emotionally to fiction comes from the *Poetics*. In that work, Aristotle develops a theory of tragedy that presupposes our ability to respond emotionally to depictions of events that we know are fictional. He does not develop a full psychology of fiction. That is, he does not explain the psychological differences between responding to a fiction and responding to a fact. All my objection requires, however, is that Aristotle allow for emotional response to fiction. Our first piece of evidence is Aristotle's definition of tragedy. It is a kind of representation, intimately connected with certain emotional responses:

> (8) Tragedy, then, is the representation (*mimêsis*) of an action which is solemn and, having magnitude, complete; [enacted] by means of pleasant speech, each of the forms separate in the parts [of the work]; acted out and not merely read; and such that it, by means of pity and fear, accomplishes the *katharsis* of emotions of that sort. (*Poetics* 1449b24-8)

Tragedy is the representation of a sequence of events that brings about a certain psychological process "by means of pity and fear." He calls this process *katharsis*, and what exactly is supposed to happen during *katharsis* is puzzling. My analysis, however, requires no substantive view of the nature of *katharsis*. I grant that passage (8) does not say explicitly that the representation arouses pity and fear. But the process of

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(6).

60. So say Frede (1992: 282) and Schofield (1992: 253).

61. For the sake of brevity, I will pass over a complication about responses to future contingent events. Certain emotional responses, such as apprehension, seem inherently future-directed. Future states of affairs are not yet actual. But beliefs about the future are still beliefs about actuality in a broad sense: they represent the world as being a certain way, namely as being such that p will be true at some point. So such cases do not affect the present debate. For fiction represents events that never happened or ever could happen. Whether the events are *possible,* in some sense, should not affect our ability to respond to them as fiction. Cf. *Poetics* 1460a27: "It is right to prefer a likely impossibility to an implausible possibility [in tragic plots]."

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katharsis is brought about by means of such emotions, and such a claim could mean little else but that the emotions are actually aroused. Aristotle might mean "by representations of situations that normally evoke pity or fear," but such a reading is a terribly strain on the Greek. Far more likely, he means that *katharsis* takes place through arousal of the emotions themselves. It follows that tragic representations (and therefore fictions) can be the object of emotional response.

A question remains, however, about how exactly fictional representation causes the emotional response. Passage (8) has nothing to say about the role of *phantasia* in our experience of artistic representation. If Aristotle does not say that *phantasia* plays an essential role in our response to tragedy, then the feel-nothing reading remains credible. If our response to tragedy involves forming various beliefs, then it is plausible that *phantasia*, in and of itself, does not bring about emotional response. The answer is that the emotional arousal does involve belief, but not in a way that confirms the feel-nothing reading. To see why, consider this passage from the *Poetics*. Here, Aristotle claims that artistic representations can bring about emotional arousal simply in virtue of their content:

> (9) It is possible that the fearful and pitiable come about through the presentation, and also through the very combination of events, which is the primary way and that of the superior craftsman. For the story must hang together without being seen [i.e. on stage] in such a way that the person who hears what the events were both frets and feels pity from what happens, which is how someone would be affected when he heard the story of Oedipus. (*Poetics* 1453b1-6)

A tragic representation can move us by virtue of how it is presented, literally by the sight (*opsis*) of it. But it can also—and this is much better—move us just by our hearing about it. A proper tragic plot is so constituted as to arouse pity and fear if someone so much as hears about it. That is, what moves the subject is the *content* of the representation, and not any of the external trappings.[62] The emotional response is not due to the intonation of the speaker's voice, or some other presentational aspect of communication.[63] Therefore, the agent must process the aural information and interpret it in order to be moved. To do this, the agent must represent the states of affairs to herself. My support for this is Aristotle's view that all contemplation and thought require a representation of the contents of the thought, i.e. a *phantasma*.[64]

Phantasia is the faculty by which we experience *phantasmata*. It follows that, when the agent contemplates the events of a tragedy, she has experiences of *phantasia* with content such as to represent those events. Passage (9) tells us that such representations result in an emotional response. The process of contemplation, presumably, results in such experiences, towards which we take a certain attitude, which is pity and fear in the case of tragic representations. Therefore, states of *phantasia* can bring about emotional arousal. What arouses the emotion is a representation of some x as F, where F is some response-dependent quality. The agent does not *believe* that x is F, because that presupposes that she takes x to be actual, which she does not. This repudiates the feel-nothing reading, because it is a case of *phantasia* which results in emotional response.

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62. *Cf.* also *Politics* 1340a11-3, where Aristotle claims that those who listen to a fictional representation (μιμήσις) become accordingly-moved (συμπαθής), "independent both of the rhythm and musical setting."
63. Both, of course, are genuine ways to be moved. Mozart's *Don Giovanni* pulls my heart this way and that whenever I hear it, even though I have no idea what the people are saying, and therefore cannot attribute my affection to the content of their speech. The reader can no doubt supply examples from their own relationship with art.
64. Just two examples: 1) *De Anima* 3.7.431a8-10 (passage 5), where Aristotle says that *phantasmata* take the place of perception when the agent engages in discursive reasoning; 2) *De Memoria* 450a1-4, where he claims that, whenever we contemplate, we set before our eyes a mental picture with determinate characteristics, even if the precise characteristics are irrelevant to our contemplation.

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At this point, a defender of the feel-nothing reading will object and say that the emotional arousal does come about due to belief. Indeed, it must, because Aristotle thinks that the content of an artistic representation is not something that the agent can comprehend through a faculty like *phantasia*:

> (10) It's clear from what's been said that the work of the poet is not to say things that happened, but to say the kinds of things that might happen, and what is possible in virtue of probability or necessity. [...] For poetry speaks more of universals, and history of particulars. A universal is whatever falls to whatever sort of man to say or do... (Poetics 1451a36-8, b6-9).

Fictional representations, on Aristotle's view, represent what people of a certain kind say or do, not what particular people said or did. If emotional response to fiction is emotional response to content, as passage (9) indicates, then the response is to events of certain kinds, and not particular events. *Phantasia* cannot represent universals, but only particulars. Therefore, whatever cognitive process results in emotional arousal from contemplating fictional representations, it is not *phantasia.* The only likely candidate left that can cause the emotional response is belief. So belief—namely belief that a certain type of situation is fearful or pitiful—still has a role to play in our emotional response to fiction. So goes the objection. My response is that, though this is true, and is something which any positive account must make room for, it does no good for the feel-nothing reading. In fact, if anything, it provides more evidence for the view that *phantasia* evokes an emotional response.

To see why, let's work passage (10) into the interpretation. The idea from passage (10) is supposed to be that our response to fiction involves beliefs about kinds of events. When we contemplate some fiction, then, we form a belief that events of the kind depicted have some response-dependent quality F. By RESPONSE, forming the belief that events of a certain sort are F is sufficient to have the associated F-response toward events of that sort. This, again, is all true, but it is not enough. For this belief cannot, *by itself*, bring about any emotional response. The person contemplating the fiction has a certain belief, namely a belief that all events of type G are also F, where F is some response-dependent quality. So anytime this person recognizes some event as a G-event, she will immediately believe it to be F, and so feel the associated response. But if she does not witness any events that strike her as G, then she will never feel the F-response, regardless of the relation that she believes holds between the kinds G and F.[65] So forming this belief about kinds will not by itself explain the emotional response to fiction.

As we saw in our previous discussion, contemplation of fictional content requires *phantasia* of the depicted events. The content of the *phantasia*, then, represents an instance of a G event, which then evokes the F-response.[66] This seems to me to be the right thing to say, but it also repudiates the feel-nothing reading. It is not enough for the feel-nothing reading that belief is involved at some step in the process of response to the content of the fiction. The comparison in passage (2) (*De An.* 425b20-25) is

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65. Aristotle is well aware of these kinds of failures of recognition and thinks that they are of epistemic import. *Cf.* for instance, *Eth. Nic.* 1141b18-20, where he notes that someone who knows that meat of a certain kind has healing properties, but who doesn't know which meat is of that kind, will not be able to put it to use; and *An. Post.* 71a19-24, where he argues that knowing certain universal things about a kind (his example here is a triangle containing two right angles) doesn't mean that we recognize instances of that kind. We need different cognitive machinery for that. For further discussion about recognition of particulars and its role in Aristotle's epistemology, see my paper "Plato and Aristotle on the Epistemology of Competence" [DRAFT].
66. We get even more evidence for this when we consider Aristotle's view that any contemplation of a kind involves contemplation of some instance of that kind. *Cf. De Mem.* 450a1-4, cited above in 64. Aristotle's example in that passage is a triangle, and according to him, we cannot just contemplate TRIANGLE as such. We must put before our eyes a particular triangle. Whether or not we pay attention to all of the attributes of this triangle (the length of its sides, etc.) is another matter, and we often don't.

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between having a belief with a certain content (that x is F) and having a *phantasia* with that same content. In order for the feel-nothing reading to justify its narrow-scope denial of RESPONSE, it must commit to the view that, if an agent does not take the content of a state to represent the actual world, then she will not feel any associated response. Yet someone contemplating fictional content does respond emotionally on occasion, even though she does not take the content of the fiction as representing the actual world. Whether this response involves some more general belief seems to me irrelevant to the argument. This discussion is enough, I think, to put the feel-nothing reading beyond repair, consensus or no.

So we know what Aristotle is *not* saying. All well and good. We still, though, need to figure out what he is saying. I think the proposal I outlined at the beginning of our discussion stands. Belief satisfies RESPONSE. That is, forming a belief with representational content that x is F is sufficient to have the characteristic F-response toward x. I noted that, if Aristotle's purpose is to distinguish belief from *phantasia*, it would be sufficient for him to deny that *phantasia* satisfies RESPONSE. That is, it is not the case that A has a *phantasia* that represents x as F only if A feels a characteristic F-response toward x. So my positive proposal is, in essence, a wide-scope negation of RESPONSE with respect to *phantasia*. This proposal makes sense given the kind of argument Aristotle is trying to make. Passage (2) is a further attempt to distinguish belief from *phantasia*, so it is natural that he would deny that *phantasia* has a characteristic that he attributes to belief.

Let's walk through this proposal to see its moving parts. The interpretation of the passage, I think, is going to turn on the adverb that Aristotle uses to qualify the first half of passage (2). He does not just say that we are affected when we form the right kind of belief, but that we are affected ***immediately***:

> Furthermore, whenever we form a belief that something is either impressive or fearsome, we are *straightaway* affected accordingly, and similarly if we find something encouraging. (*De An.* 427b20-22)

Getting the right reading on this adverb (*euthus* in Greek) is key to understanding the passage. Its most intuitive meaning is temporal. Taken in this sense, the claim would be that there is no relevant intervening event between our forming the belief and having the characteristic response. But this cannot be the right way to take it. On this interpretation, the difference between belief and *phantasia* is that *phantasia* brings an emotional response about more slowly than belief does. For one, this claim is almost too bizarre to make any sense of. Also, it conflicts with passages (6) and (7), for the following reason. Passage (6), we recall, claims that thought requires *phantasia* to supply its content. Passage (7) observes that we can think of something F without feeling an F-response. It follows from this that it is possible for someone to experience *phantasia* that x is F without feeling an F-response at all. So if we try to read Aristotle as claiming in passage (2) that the response is merely slower coming with respect to *phantasia*, we seem to miss the point.

But that is not the only way to take the adverb *euthus*. There are many instances where Aristotle uses the phrase in much broader sense, of which the temporal sense can be seen as a specific interpretation. I will give a few examples, and then unpack them:

> 1) *Cat.* 9b35-6: Aristotle says that "qualities" are those things present in birth immediately (*euthus*) from certain affections or states of the person.
>
> 2) *An. Pr.* 63b15-8: Aristotle offers a proof that the probative method of deduction reduces to the ad impossibile form of deduction. His proof rests on the claim that, if one takes the negation of the conclusion as a premise, the form of the deduction immediately (*euthus*)

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becomes identical to the *ad impossibile* form.

3) *Mot. An.*, 701a12-5: Aristotle talks about how the conclusions of syllogisms can be actions. Coming to believe the propositions "All agents in situation S should do x" and "I am in situation S" causes agents immediately (*euthus*), on Aristotle's view, to do x.

In example (1), a person need only be in the states or affections in order to have the quality. In example (2), performing the logical transformation is all one needs to do to obtain the different form of deduction. In example (3), forming those two beliefs are all that one needs to perform the action: no other ingredient is necessary. *Euthus*, then, seems to be a sufficiency relation. It signifies that the group of conditions from which the qualified outcome emerges constitute a set of sufficient conditions for the outcome. The several different interpretations of the adverb—causal, logical, temporal—are all specific applications of this general sense of the term.

If we apply this conclusion to passage (2), we get the following reading. If we form a belief that some object x has some response-dependent quality F, then that is all we need to have the associated emotional response. But if we are in an analogous state (***hôsautôs***, literally "likewise") except that the state with the representational content is *phantasia* rather than belief, then it is unclear whether we will have the associated emotional response or not. In short, belief is a sufficient condition to have an emotional response to some content, whereas *phantasia* is not. This is, more or less, the claim that *phantasia*, on its own, fails to satisfy RESPONSE. This does not commit Aristotle to the claim that *phantasia* does not cause emotional response. It simply claims that *phantasia* with a certain representational content does not by itself (*euthus*) lead to the response.

This reading makes sense of why Aristotle uses the simile that he does in the second half of passage (2). He claims that experiencing content by *phantasia* is like looking at something frightening or encouraging in a picture. Merely witnessing a certain content will not, by itself, move us in any particular way. There are situations where we contemplate some response-dependent content and do not feel the associated response. Aristotle discusses such a case in passage (7). We can contemplate something fearful in thought, and yet feel no fear (though we may have associated physiological reactions). But we can also, as per passage (9), contemplate something fearful and actually feel afraid, as when we have an emotional response to some fictional content. Each of these exercises involve a complex mental state of which *phantasia* is some part.[67] But it is not *phantasia* which does the motivational work; what makes the difference is the rest of the mental ingredients.

My reading faces a seeming difficulty when we try to integrate it the numerous roles that Aristotle gives to *phantasia* in his psychology and zoology. My reading seems committed to the claim that something other than *phantasia* must be present in the psychology of an agent in order for the agent to be put into various motivational states as a result of certain stimuli. It is not enough that some fearful content get presented; the agent must take a certain attitude toward it, accept it as actual. Animals cannot form beliefs, and so are incapable of doing this.[68] It would seem to follow that animals are not capable of being put into motivational states by the content of their mental states. But this is absurd; animals can get

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67. Thanks to Victor Caston for suggestions about how best to phrase this proposal.
68. *Cf. De An.* 428a17-24, where Aristotle argues that 1) belief requires conviction, 2) no animal can be convinced, 3) many animals have *phantasia* and so therefore 4) belief and *phantasia* are not the same.

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around with their perception and *phantasia* as well as we can with our beliefs.[69] If my reading says that they can't, or cannot make sense of how they can, then so much the worse for my reading.

The objection, I think, fails due to irrelevance. In passage (2), Aristotle contrasts belief with an instance of *phantasia* which, in and of itself, is non-committal: looking at a picture. But if animals have only the faculties of perception and *phantasia* to get around their environment, then it follows that they are incapable of taking a non-committal attitude to the content of their mental states. Being able to do this would require some other faculty that "monitors" the content of the states and commits to them or not. Animals have no such faculty.[70] So passage (2) is restricted to discussion of humans. It says nothing about the roles that *phantasia* does and does not play in animal motion and motivation.

We need to say more about this. For the *phantasia* which humans have is not radically different in kind from the *phantasia* which animals have. Aristotle uses the fact that animals have *phantasia* and not belief in a later argument (*De An.* 428a17-24) to show that those two are distinct kinds of mental state. If human *phantasia* were something completely different from animal *phantasia*, this would be a bad move on his part. But I do not mean to say that human *phantasia* is something *sui generis*, and therefore nothing that Aristotle says about animals matters in our consideration of passage (2). I mean rather that the argument in passage (2) seems to presuppose that there is an extra faculty humans have which allow them to take a non-committal stance toward the content of certain mental states. Animals do not have this additional faculty. But it does not follow from this that animals are incapable of taking the contents of their mental states as actual and therefore action-guiding. Rather, it means that they are *incapable* of taking the contents of their representational states as *non-actual*. There are no skeptical animals.

If this response is true to Aristotle's views on animal psychology, then we would expect him to draw attention to interaction between the two human faculties, and to do some thinking about what happens when one of them goes awry. And so he does. He often mentions that, when a human's reasoning capacity breaks down, he acts on *phantasia:*

> (11) Through their [mental images] remaining and resembling sensations, living things do many things in accordance with them, some due to not having judgment, e.g. beasts, and others due to their judgment being covered up by emotion or sickness or sleep, e.g. men. (*De An.* 429a5-8)
>
> (12) Animals often appear on the walls to those suffering from fever, due to the slight resemblance of the lines [to animals] when they are put together. And these sometimes are of like intensity to the sickness, so that if they are not very sick, it does not escape them that they are false, but if the sickness is greater, then they are also moved along with them. The reason for this happening is that the authoritative faculty and that by which *phantasmata* come to be do not judge in accordance with the same ability. *(De Insom.* 460b11-7)
>
> (13) On the whole, the ruling principle declares the [information] of each sense, unless something more authoritative contradicts it. Something appears in all cases, but what appears does not seem correct in all

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69. *Cf.* Lorenz (2006, pp. 150-159), who makes a case that *phantasia* allows animals to replicate many of the activities that humans perform in virtue of having beliefs, e.g. envisioning the future and navigating their environment. I think this must be correct, but I will not discuss the details.
70. Aristotle makes this point when he says in the context of showing that *phantasia* can cause movement (*De An.* 433a12-4): "for they [i.e. humans] often follow their *phantasiai* contrary to knowledge, and in other animals there is no thought or reasons, but rather *phantasia*." Aristotle also compares humans and animals in this regard at 429a5-8, where he says that both humans and animals do many things in accordance with *phantasia*, the one because they lack a faculty of judgment (*nous*) altogether, and the other when their reason is clouded by sickness.

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> cases, but rather when the thing that decides is held back or not being moved with respect to its proper movement. (*De Insom.* 461b3-7)

In these passages, we have discussion of a "ruling principle," or some faculty that evaluates content and decides whether to consider it actual or not. This faculty is prey to various affections and illness: in passages (11) and (12), Aristotle describes scenarios wherein the faculty stops functioning properly. In passage (11), he compares this behavior explicitly to what animals do all the time. When the committing faculty breaks down, there is nothing to do but take all presentations at face value. This is the situation that animals and the crazy/sick find themselves in.

Passages (11)-(13) have an important implication for the objection to my reading, and my response to it. They suggest, I think, that the discussion Aristotle conducts in passage (2) occur in the context of a cognitive economy that includes a faculty of commitment. As I said before, the presence of this faculty in an animal's cognition does not allow for commitment, in the sense that, without it, the animal does not take anything as actual. The passages I just quoted demonstrate that this is not what Aristotle has in mind. Rather, the faculty allows the animal to refrain from committing to some experience of *phantasia*. So the objection does indeed fail due to irrelevance, as I said before. Passage (2) is implicitly restricted to a context dealing with animals that can refrain from taking certain mental contents as representing the actual world. That is, he is talking about humans. The fact that mere *phantasia* is not sufficient to evoke a response from a normally-functioning human says nothing about whether it is sufficient to evoke a response from an animal. The two cases are importantly different.

This discussion allows us to explicate Aristotle's picture-gazing simile even further. When we look at a pictorial representation of something with a response-dependent quality, several things might happen: we might have the response, if we are contemplating it as a fiction. We might have no full-blown response, as when we are considering it in the abstract. We might also, if our committing faculty is out of whack, react as if it were something real, because the faculty that lets us tell the difference is not working right. Aristotle thinks that people whose committing faculty is malfunctioning react to unreal representations as if they were real. So we have reason to think that he has cases like this in mind during passage (2). In comparison, when we form a belief that something has some response-dependent quality, we have only one option: be affected accordingly. So Aristotle's comparison, while condensed and mysterious at first, allows him to pack a whole lot of doctrine into very little space.

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IV. Conclusion

I don't think I have too much more to say. I hope to have shown that the arguments contained in passage (1) and (2), though hard to approach, turn out to yield rich veins of information about Aristotle's characterization of belief, *phantasia*, and what makes them differ from each other. One cannot form beliefs at will, because a state must be answerable to a standard of evaluation in order to count as a belief. *Phantasia* is under our mental command, which entails that it is not reason-sensitive. Belief is also sufficient to cause emotional response to content, for certain qualities. But it is not, as most interpreters have assumed, necessary. Rather, *phantasia* is capable of evoking a response, as when we appreciate fiction. Aristotle's important point is that we cannot tell from the mere presence of *phantasia* whether the agent's mental state can motivate such a response. The substantive results that emerge from my reading point to an interesting conclusion, namely that assent (*sunkatathêsis*), though not a part of Aristotle's philosophical vocabulary, nevertheless plays a large role in his theory of cognition. Recall that the notion of taking some content to represent the actual world accounted both for the reason-sensitivity of belief and for its role in evoking emotional response.

I also hope to have shown that careful attention to various aspects of the arguments, both their content and the strategy they exemplify, allows us to make sense of them in light of Aristotle's other express views on the relevant subjects. The interpretive tradition surrounding these short passages has been one of puzzlement and harsh judgment. When scholars condemn Aristotle to an inconsistent view of *phantasia*, these passages inevitably come up. My readings, however, make sense of the arguments both on their own merits and in the larger context of Aristotle's philosophical psychology. This is a much better outcome, both for Aristotle as a thinker and for future inquiry into this tightly-knit family of concepts.

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