

**RECOVERED BEGINNINGS:  
RHETORIC'S DISAFFILIATION FROM HOMER**

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## RECOVERED BEGINNINGS: RHETORIC'S DISAFFILIATION FROM HOMER

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This dissertation presents a history of rhetoric in relation to Homer's poetry, as well as the beginning of a theoretical account of the rhetorical life of *poiesis*. Rather than recount the Socratic counter-claims on Sophistical teachings, this dissertation recovers classical theories of rhetoric as they demonstrate techniques of extrication from Homeric *epos*, the source of poetic institutions of classical Greek life.

If Homer is understood, not as a poet, but as an uninterrupted afterlife in the imaginations of rhetors, then the material of this dissertation is a grammar of attitudes that rhetors had about what they imagined to be 'Homer'. In the first chapter I attribute the continuity of Homer's afterlife (*nachleben*) to traditional and democratic forums of education, where Homer's poetry was seminal. In the second chapter, I enter into Plato's exile of Homer in *Republic* as a disaffiliation from father Homer mirroring rhetoric's extrication from the decay of patrilineal culture. In the third, I argue that Aristotle's imaginary associations of Homer as stranger (*xenos*) indicate that the philosopher never settled a difference of kind between rhetoric and poetry in the *Rhetoric*. Though he loved epic dignity, he also feared the strangeness of Homeric style, paradoxically teaching young rhetors to disambiguate epical arrangements in speech. In the fourth chapter on Longinus' *Sublime*, I read his emulation of Homer as a para-religious move

that sought to resurrect faith in the republic of letters at a time when eloquence had evidently reached its dearth. In the fifth and final chapter, I argue that the Homeric afterlife in rhetoric continues on today, as contemporary scholars carry the conceit that rhetoric was a more advanced technological form than poetry.

Treating developmentalist conceits as symptoms of change rather than inherent truisms has two implications. First, it shifts the object of study of re-covered beginnings away from formal arts, either epic poetry, or rhetoric individually; to the modes of extraction affecting the treatment of those arts as autonomous. Second, it contributes to contemporary scholarship a sequence of modes (disaffiliation, disambiguation, and emulation) in the light of which other cultural formations may be considered going forward.

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## PREFACE

A writing-research project has the effect of ingratiating an individual to countless others. So much so, writing, many agree, codifies a collective's endeavors rather than a singular's. How collective expressions miraculously synthesize into the writing of epic poems, I can only speculate. However from experience, I know that many nourished this project into its incipience. The first set of thanks goes to my courageous parents who recovered their grounds in a new world to tend to me in foreign beginnings and who sent me out into that world without fear; the second set goes to the two with whom I can count on recovering beginnings, my sister and brother.

It is one thing to research an inexhaustible topic, and another to write it well. I thank Gordon Mitchell for his gift of mentorship, having taken note of what we said at our first encounter on a napkin in a village tavern long ago. Napkin-writing, as he did, triggered in me the novel belief that urgency formed ideas, and even my ideas. Consequently, the encounter between us led to a disciplinary discovery and purpose, not only technical savvy, but also stylistic craft about pressing matters otherwise uncovered. In the years to come, I would benefit especially from the singular wit of John Lyne's turns of phrase, his insightful questions, and his consistently humane disposition. Out of 'Lyne's' cajoling pedagogical methods, I took on more theatrical roles of inquiry. Among them, the philosopher, thinker, modern scientist, and court

judge. As for critiques of modernism, they could not matter with Professor Lyne at the ship's prow.

To say that writing is a collective endeavor militates against the other notion that the craft demands a tenacious individuality. So, I now turn to affirm the tenacity engrained in my training. From the earliest days of my graduate education, John Poulakos identified tensions, struggles, *agonies*, showing me important points out of which to practice aesthetic balance. His mantra — to make space each and everyday, a space of solitude, for ideas — is to orchestrate life's formal/comic and sensual/tragic forces into play. By attending to the first principles of language, John Poulakos' keen mind and grounded character gathered around him loyal friends, many of whose paths have conjoined with mine. If I have found home in ideas it is, for example, alongside Nathan Crick, a sort of Peter Pan leading the merry procession of lost boys and belles, all of whom, once at LSU, performed from, discussed about, and asked questions of the *Iliad*.

I don't imagine that projects on ancient cultures often select for us kindred as well as contemporary scholarly counterparts. In my case, I have found both. In MariLee Mifsud for example, whose noetic life on Homeric *poiesis* delivers its voice in a chorus of ideas; Michele Kennerly for another example, whose word charm slips into the steeped concocts of scholarly argument. When I desired inspiration, I have turned to their writings, or to my impressions of them, and have found just and more so in our un/spoken dialogues. As to the daily commitment to writing, there remains my golden-hearted co-practitioner, Emily Ruppel. Together, kneading the words that might speak the rage, before pouring loud libations. In the love of Homeric Greek, spoken verse, and billiards, I recount there the encompassing generosity of Birney Young. Neither at least nor at last, I have dwelled longest in the aftermath of what to make of David Marshall's seminar on modality and John Poulakos' on aesthetics.

The life of the mind, for a long time now, has been understood to transcend the body. Of course, the body grounds the mind: offering it *terroire* or nurturing soil, terrorizing its cognitive over-drives. For nurturing and giving me the perfect conditions to feel terror: Amy, Cliff, and Chris; many a pour of coffee or water, many a break of humor, many a reminder to care less. And there at Constellation, a continuous stream of emergent affinities as I worked alongside other hunched shoulders, slumped backs, and cramped hands. In the public space of drinking coffee, one is neither a part of, nor apart from, but gratefully in between.

I end with marked gratitude to the fortitude of women-companions: already Emily but also Jennifer, the Wednesday cohort of Ellen and Chloe, Ali and Amber, and Sydney, who is superlatively caring. Apart from these, it is Cynthia who evolved and attended to me only as an intimate friend can, never letting me lose sight of the French feminine possibility in my name; Linda, who has breathed fire, especially when I could not; finally, to Linsey — to the boundless potential in her, her delicate line between humility and nobility, and to her re-beginnings. Thank you, all, for extending, pulling, and pushing me beyond my singular self.

## INTRODUCTION

Rhetoric's fate in the hands of philosophers mirrors poetry's in the hands of rhetors. Rather than re-cover the Socratic and Sophistical counter-claims on knowledge however, this dissertation shows that rhetoric can be studied for the ways that it extricated itself from Homeric institutions. In what follows, I locate the theoretical benefits of historicizing the rhetorical life of *poiesis* within a rhetorical mindset. In other words, the better semantic field from which to inquire into epic poetry may be classical rhetoric, even if the source material, like Aristotle and Plato's thoughts on the oral tradition, has been yet determined by a philosophical frame.

## THE PHILOSOPHICAL MINDSET

With very few exceptions, philosophy has not had good things to say about rhetoric. In response, rhetoric has defended and praised itself. Most histories of rhetoric are reactions to the unflattering portrait that philosophers have painted.<sup>1</sup> This dissertation does not accept the philosophical treatment of rhetoric; nor does it opt for yet another defensive or self-praising history. Rather, it proposes a rhetoric that circumvents philosophy's edicts.

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<sup>1</sup> For a line of rhetorical defensiveness wherein rhetoric is defensible insofar as it is instrumental to philosophy, see Samuel Ijsseling, *Rhetoric and Philosophy in Conflict* (The Hague: Netherlands, 1976) 4-5.

It is well known that the Greek beginnings of rhetoric's emergence as a self-conscious domain of *techné* or knack remains largely told from the perspective of philosophers. Even though Sophists like Protagoras, Gorgias, and Thrasymachus had taught rhetoric before Aristotle wrote his *Rhetoric*, their teachings were largely oral and the little of their writings that survives is in fragments. Besides their disparaging comments about the older Sophists' pedagogies, philosophers criticized the rhetorical practices, popular appeals, and styles of their contemporary rhetoricians. Centuries later, many students were instructed about rhetoric by what the philosophers had to say about it. But in pre-modern periods, students were introduced to rhetoric by what poets had to say about it, most regularly Homer.

Significantly, classical Greek philosophical tracts on rhetoric imply a culture still under the influence of Homer and other poets, even if those same tracts imply an aversion to that influence. They reference orators who were seeking, in spoken prose, to perpetuate or outclass the style and language of the poets. The same tracts also demonstrate that philosophers were seeking to downplay or altogether dispense with the Homeric authorization of mythical subject matter—it benefitted Sophists, rhapsodes and dramatists too much. However, the critical appraisals of Homer by Aristotle and Plato remain pregnant with possibilities; and it is these possibilities that this dissertation explores. True, many philosophical dismissals of Homer have over time survived, even thrived. Equally true, the philosophers' lines on Homer as an outmoded and intellectually shallow figure have been maintained. Yet, the philosophical mind would be the first one to agree with the proposition that the unexamined line is not worth maintaining. In this dissertation I contend that it is these very lines from which rhetoric has failed to extricate itself. Accordingly, I propose to begin here the project of rhetoric's self-extrication from the grip of philosophy.

It is highly ironic that philosophy, which claims not to trifle with persuasion, has been persuasive in its portraiture of rhetoric, perhaps more so than rhetoric has been in its depiction of itself. In the philosophical mindset, the actual is measured by the ideal, and speech by silent contemplation. Here too, the mind is preferred to the body, and reason crowns the rest of the mental faculties. Finally, addressing fickle or disorderly masses amounts to a vulgar necessity. When internalized over centuries, these conceits yield typified attitudes well beyond disciplinary nuances. Unsurprisingly, then, ordinary people still maintain that rhetoric is bombastic speech; instead of rhetoric, they want clean communication. Evidently, ordinary people have unwittingly internalized the philosophical mindset.

Mindsets are clusters of dispositions held together by principal values distributed across a variety of human endeavors. The philosophical mindset is one such cluster. Yet ordinary people need not necessarily be aware of the existence of the principal values around which a set of their dispositions coheres. In their learned desire for clean communication, and in their acquired aversion to eloquence and polished words, it is easy to detect the buried wish for unshakable claims to knowledge. If only someone would explain to them the *truth* of the matter, rhetoric would be unnecessary.

The philosophical valuation of the truth does not center on wisdom but on the certainty of knowledge. This means that worldliness, common sense, the reports of the senses and the insights gathered via experience do not count for knowledge. It also means that wise orators are at best purveyors of doxastic uncertainties. To compensate for their lack of certain knowledge, orators fall back on an engaging style and a forceful delivery both of which leave the audience frequently impressed but always ignorant. But such styles and deliveries are widely identified as

‘merely’ poetic in rhetorical texts. By and large, the philosophical valuation of truth implicates rhetoric’s identification with poetic practices of speech crafted and enacted.

Among the philosophical objections against rhetoric, its lack of a singular, stable definition is noteworthy. The word “rhetoric” itself shifts meanings and crosses many levels of tangibility; it blends in or stands out in the light of particular contexts, occasions and settings. Sometimes “rhetoric” signifies persuasion. In the hands of literary critics, it consists of a series of figures and tropes, a set of linguistic devices marking cognitive patterns or lending charm and ornamentation to discourse. The indicative, “*that* is rhetoric,” might praise eloquence, a speech well done; or it may denounce empty signifiers and bounced promises. Among scholars, “rhetoric” generally refers to pedagogical practices, handbooks and compendia, politically or legally informed *topoi* of symbolic action, speech manuscripts, and, for good measure, the ways in which one inquires or interprets all of the above. To the infamous *ti esti* question in the *Gorgias*, then, rhetoric has no single satisfactory answer, or rather, too many unsatisfactory ones. It produces neither material objects that it can identify nor wholly consistent effects that it can explain.

By agreeing to define “what rhetoric is” rhetoricians assent to the priority of *episteme* over *doxa*, which relegates rhetoric’s concerns e.g., beliefs, habits of action, sensory synthesis, common sense, popular appeal, good and bad speeches, provisional solutions, techniques, to the heap. Instead of owning up to these, rhetoricians react to philosophical demands for a definition, which rhetoric cannot have across time and space. Meanwhile, orators address public issues day in and day out seemingly unconcerned about the definition of rhetoric. Rather than asking what rhetoric is, in this dissertation I demonstrate what it can be. That is, rhetoric can be a grammar of dispositions, from one formal vantage point to another. Studied individually, and not from the

material of attitudes, lands us in a problem. Namely, one has to beg the question of rhetoric's formal autonomy from poetic tradition.

## NEITHER DEFENSE NOR SELF-PRAISE OF RHETORIC

My principal aim is not to critique philosophy; nor is it my aim to defend rhetoric. But telling the story of rhetoric in relation to Homer's epics, and not to philosophy, effectively brackets the role that philosophy has played in rhetoric's (mis)fortunes. If most philosophers do not know where their copy of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* is, it is time that rhetoricians open their copy of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. What they might find there is a way of thought which has been marshaled in various and, when we turn to Longinus, conflicting ways by rhetoricians of the past.

Neither defensive nor self-praising, the treatment of rhetoric here rather invests in the questions of where to begin, and why re-begin. Scholars, recently Ekaterina Haskins, have pointed out that Aristotle still claims the commonplace beginning for rhetoric.<sup>2</sup> In the encyclopedic collection, *The Rhetorical Tradition*, Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg introduce rhetoric as much: "Late in the fourth century B.C.E., Aristotle *reduced* the concerns of rhetoric to a system that thereafter served as its touchstone. To speak of classical rhetoric is thus to speak of Aristotle's system and its elaboration by Cicero and Quintilian" [emphasis mine] (2). Beside the commonplace beginning, what Bizzell and Herzberg also introduce here is that a beginning implies what should be read after it. In this case, Cicero and Quintilian follow from Aristotle

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<sup>2</sup> She suggests the situated and demonstrative texts of Isocrates as an alternative (Haskins 199).

because they elaborate his concepts, even if he reduced rhetoric's practical concerns. If this is so, then a re-beginning may approach Homer in reverse, by his aftermath and what it reduces.<sup>3</sup>

By pressing for more conscientiously selected beginnings, I am not suggesting that we can find rhetoric's more authentic beginning when historicizing it in relation to Homer. In fact, I will not shy away from Aristotle or Plato in this study, although I will abstain from making claims about Homer directly. After all, beginnings are neither pre-ordained nor to be approached as authentic; they are not origins. As such my focus in this dissertation is on concepts in motion rather than Homer as *the* beginning. As Said points out, "Beginnings inaugurate a deliberately *other* production of meaning a gentile (as opposed to a sacred) one. It is 'other' because, in writing, this gentile production claims a status alongside other works: it is another work, rather than one in a line of descent from X or Y" (Said 13). Moreover, beginnings are transitive starting points; provisional problems that want to be answered; they are necessary fictions for intended work to unfold (Said 50). In this spirit, the provisional problem I seek to answer is whether the frequent mentions of Homer in rhetorical texts might be narrated as a topic in their own right.

Following Said's lead, rhetorical theories or histories are bound to outmode themselves. Praises and defenses of rhetoric, no matter how intentionally they might channel exercises in *controversiae*, are bound to fall out of favor or in disuse. And there are so many: Vickers "praises... eloquence as a humanizing discipline in which man realizes to the full his God-given faculty, whose cultivation will benefit both society and himself" (Vickers 14); Richards begins his lectures by arguing that "there is room for a persistent, systematic, detailed inquiry into how words work that will take the place of the discredited subject which goes by the name of

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<sup>3</sup> The alternative reading would take us from Homer, Plato, Aristotle, to Longinus on one hand; and Vico, Nietzsche, and Bakhtin on the other.

Rhetoric” (Bizzell and Herzberg 1281). We cannot forget Weaver’s lament in *Language is Sermonic*, whereby society’s decline may be indexed by its attitude toward rhetoric: “There is . . . no need for wonder that, in an age that has been influenced to distrust and disregard what is characteristically human, rhetoric should be a prime target of attack” (Bizzell and Herzberg 1353). These conservationists of rhetoric seem so antiquated if only because they venerate rhetoric as something to be praised as an end in itself.<sup>4</sup>

This can be otherwise. The study of rhetoric in its relation to Homer’s epic poetry promises to articulate a new conceptualization of what an old *techne* can be. It is not a justification for why Homer should be included, but a performance of how reading the reception of Homer within rhetorical texts opens new sites of possibility. The innovation, I speculate, emerges from acknowledgment that key rhetorical doctrines did to poetry what philosophy did to rhetoric, preserving some fragments on the one hand, but rendering invisible the dispositions expressed therein toward arrested language.

## THE RHETORICAL MINDSET

As I suggest above, some histories of rhetoric seek to temper philosophy’s self-aggrandizing proclamations. That is not my task. Stated again and differently, my task is to tell a theoretically fruitful history of rhetoric that has not been told: orators took themselves as rivals of poets and rhapsodes in arch-classical times, and rhetoricians sought to sweep those conjunctions of cultural productions to the side. Despite themselves, rhetoricians left insights about their dispositions

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<sup>4</sup> Longinus extols a previous age, but not along disciplinary lines; he returns to collapsing the division between rhetoric and poetry.

from the way that they feature poetry in their writing. In this dissertation I begin outlining the reasons why such a story ought to be told. My project starts out by examining the ways in which rhetoric emerged and eventually differentiated itself from epic poetry.

The publics that I am recalling understood rhetoric as a derivative of inspired poems, not prosaic philosophical tracts. Prose came into its own as an art in the aftermath of poetic decadence. Such a view has been brought into the peripheral awareness of rhetoricians and classicists in the twentieth century by the likes of Susan C. Jarratt, Henry Johnstone Jr., John T. Kirby, Richard Martin, James I. Porter and Jeffrey Walker. More specifically, the relationship between Homeric poetry and rhetoric has found perhaps a renaissance in the works of Barbara Clayton, Mari Lee Mifsud, and Rachel Ahern Knudson. Even anachronistic studies that reach into Homeric poetry for evidence of Aristotelian concepts such as *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*<sup>5</sup> or rhetorical *topoi*<sup>6</sup> contribute to this view. What these studies promise time and again is a re-writing of which figures and concepts matter, both for rhetoric as well as to contemporary thinking or civic concerns. Middling between concepts and historicizing practices, this dissertation opts for a nascent mode of relation, between rhetoric and Homeric poetry.

I aim to contribute a way of reading traditional texts at the moments that they treat Homer as a condensed referent to rhetoric's origins (authentic and pre-determined). These textual moments hone in on the way that rhetoric's extrication from or, in Longinus' case, intrication of 'Homer' happened textually. In sum I do not only ask why Homer and rhetoric are regularly coupled in rhetoric's key texts; I also ask how to make meaning of the way that this coupling

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<sup>5</sup> For such a study, see Crick and Rhodes 327.

<sup>6</sup> For rhetorical *lexis* in Homer, see Kennedy, whose historical accounts of rhetoric consistently begin with Homer ("The Ancient Dispute," *The Art, A New History*). Yet his tone is neutral on what 'Homer' means within the handbook traditions (*The Art* 35ff).

carried and concealed Homer's uninterrupted after life. I ask, too, how condensed dispositions and emotions informed distinctions forming between the prose art from its chief poetic source. Beside my way of reading Plato, Aristotle, and Longinus then, the reader might expect to leave this work having three operating terms for how rhetoric extricated prose from Homer: by disaffiliation, disambiguation, and emulation. Each of these modes emerges at the tectonic faultlines of Homer in relation to rhetoric, from Plato's configuration of rhetoric, to Aristotle's formulae of it, and finally to Longinus' celebration of its literary generation.

For the purposes of this dissertation, rhetoric is a mindset, mindful of approach and framing, and with an eye to effectiveness and impact. Its primary material remain texts as parts allowing reification of emotions, contexts or dispositions. When its objects are events, situations or discourses, the rhetorical mindset seeks to complete them, that is, to make them meaningful. When its objects are traditions and conventions, habits and routines, in short all that is taken for granted, its goal is to reformulate them and present them as otherwise. To do so, it considers not only the efficacy but more importantly the possibilities in things, persons, or subjects of conversation. Upon reflection of what it does, the rhetorical mindset essays to tell how rhetoric itself could be otherwise. In sum, I aim to recover 'Homer' as a beginning; rather, as a re-beginning.

## 1.0 HOMERIC AFTERLIFE IN RHETORIC

The Archaic epoch of Greece spanned from 800 BCE, when people began aggregating into proto-*poleis* (city-states), to Xerxes' invasion of these in 480 BCE. It was during that epoch that the oral episodes of Troy and Ithaca were transcribed, ostensibly by Homer. At the very latest, it is agreed that a textual record of the *Iliad*, was "officially adopted" by the end of Pisistratus' reign in the 6<sup>th</sup> century for the purposes of the rhapsody competitions at either the Panathenaic Games (566 BCE, Nagy *Homeric Responses* 70) or the Delian Festival (523 BCE, Marrou 3). Even before the written record of the poems, the epics had survived for a long stretch as a vulgate, meaning that they had remained more or less fixed in oral culture. If written copies of the official rhapsodic manuscript were circulated to readers after the archaic period, it seems to have been to a few, perhaps among the members of the *Homeridae* guild itself (West 366-372) or to aristocratic patrons of poetry.

The next two chapters show that the overriding historical accounts of Homer are Platonic.<sup>7</sup> By "Platonic" I mean firstly that they follow a narrative that presumes that prose is a more rationally developed speech form than poetry. Secondly, I mean that they exhibit a scientific tone of history, like the opening paragraph of this chapter. Overcoming the Platonism of these accounts is one of the major tasks of this dissertation. In fact, Chapter Two deconstructs Plato's exile of Homer in Book X of the *Republic* as a point of departure. To get there, however,

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<sup>7</sup> Even if rhetorical scholars, I would contend, are Aristotelian about rhetoric's beginnings.

the significance of Homer to education in antiquity must be established. This chapter elaborates a historiographical note on *nachleben* so as to coordinate three historical accounts of Homer. Together, these accounts amount to a reference guide from which to articulate Homeric influence, specifically on rhetorical education in antiquity. Overall, I am arguing that this influence shifts the object of study in this dissertation from a poet or poems to what ‘Homer’ authorized within educational programs that illuminate the Greek imagination.

## 1.1 NACHLEBEN

This headlined concept, meaning ‘intellectual history,’ initially seems to be a fitting note for a historical study of Homer’s reception in rhetorical texts. Considered further, however, the resonance of *nachleben* has to do with its image-based meanings: uninterrupted afterlife and incessant movement. As late as the eighteenth century, Hume defines Homer’s true genius by reference to his afterlife:

The same Homer who pleased people at Athens and Rome two thousand years ago is still admired today in Paris and in London. All the changes of climate, government, religion, and language haven’t been able to obscure his glory. Authority or prejudice may create a temporary fashion in favour of a bad poet or orator, but his reputation won’t ever be lasting or general. When his compositions are examined by posterity or by foreigners, the enchantment disappears and his faults appear in their true colours. It is different with a real genius: the longer his works endure and the more widely they are spread, the more sincere is the admiration that he meets with. (“The Standard of Taste” 10)

Before and beyond Hume, Homer's genius has been associated with an uninterrupted afterlife, or *nachleben*. Having been fleshed out by art historians, *nachleben* is often articulated as a way of reading collective imagination in "sequence, gesture, and rupture as an interrelated way of seeing, encountering, and remembering images" (Meade 33). Insofar as mythos is imagistic, it is tempting to point out that in its oral mode, 'Homer' survived as sung iterations of stories. That Homer has enjoyed an unceasing survival is almost certain. But is 'Homer' an image because of his descriptive verses? I maintain that he was so, yet beyond his verses, in the ways in which rhetoricians imagined and appropriated his poetry in their teachings. Without elaborating this line, Homer's significance to rhetoric's history risks remaining a faint outline. After all, an image is a very elusive thing: it is arrested and then released. Recognizing it as such means that, unlike Hume, we can start reading the way that 'Homer' is not the same one from two thousand years ago.

Commonly, 'Homer' is imagined as a blind poet. However, 'Homer' is a sign infused with a lot more meaning and a lot less individual authority.<sup>8</sup> 'Homer,' the very image, acutely taxes any reason to keep its many significations separate. Consider. Both ancient and modern thinkers write 'Homer' to signify cultural origins (Struever 87), the beginning of civilization (Vico 783), cultural achievement (Plato X 606e), epic tradition, orthography and literacy (Marrou 3), moral principles (Plutarch, *Young Man* 7ff), oral ethic (Havelock, *Preface* 36), bourgeois ethic (Horkheimer and Adorno 47), artistic process (Parry and Parry 21), hegemon (Isocrates, *To Nicocles* 48-9), the source of drama (Aristotle, *Poetics* 49b18-20), genius of Greco-Roman civilization, and philosopher (Plato *Rep* 598c; cf Vico 780). Homer even directly

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<sup>8</sup> Homer did not exist until his biography as a poet was created (Graziosi, *Inventing Homer* 13-18; West 364).

configured oratory during the Hellenistic period of the first and second centuries AD, and well into the later centuries of the Roman empire. For example, Hermogenes of Tarsus, affords a glimpse into what was likely a widespread view:

What, in our opinion, Demosthenes is to practical oratory, both deliberative and judicial, and Plato is to panegyric oratory in prose, Homer is to poetry. If anyone says that poetry is panegyric in meter, I cannot say that he is mistaken...The best poetry is that of Homer, and Homer is the best of poets. I would say that he is also the best of orators and speech-writers, although perhaps this is implicit in what I have already said. Poetry is an imitation of all things. The man who best imitates, in a suitable style, both orators delivering speeches and singers singing panegyrics, such as Phemius and Demodocus and other characters engaged in every pursuit, this man is the best poet. Since this is the base, perhaps by saying that Homer is the best of poets I have made a statement that is tantamount to saying that he is also the best of orators and the best of speech-writers. He is perhaps not the best general or craftsman or other such professional...Their skill does not reside in the use of speech and words. But as for those whose business is with the use of speech, such as orators and speech-writers, the one who represents them best and describes how the best of them would speak, is surely himself the best of them. Thus of all poets and orators and speech-writers Homer is the best at using every kind of style. (II.10.389)

This passage represents a typical rhetorical line on Homer: he offers the best of all speech styles by his inimitable genius.<sup>9</sup> Beside this motif, Hermogenes admits here that poetry and prose are indistinguishable as genres before Plato, and that Homer crosses the generic divide by the sheer range of what he describes. Actually, the consciousness that prose could be a craft arose out of Homeric poetry in the first place. Indeed, rhetorical handbooks often extract techniques of speech craft from Homer's hexameter verses. Now, a *nachleben* of Homer could focus on attendant poetic and prosaic consciousness. Instead, my focus is on sketching a sequence of images of what Homer was to rhetoricians, and how they dealt with this master of speech-writing and poetry, the descriptive act of placing images before the eyes of their audiences.

*Nachleben* deflects Homer as an actual historical figure, and treats 'Homer' as a cultural topic. Freed from historical questions like, who Homer was, and setting ourselves after an imagined cultural topic, the sequences responsible for its uninterrupted survival shuttles us back to the descriptions of the images of its verses. Like opinions, collective imaginations can be arranged or mapped if treated as such. If Aby Warburg defined his use of *nachleben* as an "iconology of the interval,"<sup>10</sup> I would define my use of it, as a doxography of iterations. True, I am not studying Renaissance paintings of classical mythology as Warburg did. However, I am studying rhetorical texts as objects in and from which 'Homer' can be imagined. And in those iterations, I find overlapping clusters of operations for rhetorical education.

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<sup>9</sup> For Homer as master oratory in late classical to early Roman Greece, see Aeschines (142), Dionysius of Halicarnassus (20, 24.5ff, 2.204-5), Pseudo-Plutarch (161, 171), Quintilian (1.8.11-12; 10.1.27; 10.1.46-9), and at large the work of Menander Rhetor and Philodemus.

<sup>10</sup> Warburg uses the phrase "iconology of the interval" (*Ikonomie des Zwischenraumes*) in a draft Introduction to his Mnemosyne project (qtd. in Rampley 304). For the introduction of Warburg's *nachleben* as a historicizing principle for rhetoric's afterlife (Marshall, "The Afterlife" 339ff).

“Image” here must be defined at the perceptual level, not only by appealing to the descriptions of poetic verse, which often engage the imagination. By “image” I mean that which permits a (rhetorical) subject to separate from an (poetic) object, in this case epic poetry, or more generally poetry. But if this is so, treating ‘Homer’ as an image allows me to tap interest, desires, anxieties, and emotional dispositions that rhetoricians have had toward ‘Homer.’ Consider along with Marie-José Mondzain and Aristotle, that both image and desire share the same condition of possibility for thought to begin its course. That is, they arrange our motives toward what we do not have and yet think we can attain. Borrowing from Aristotle’s *On the Soul*, I further specify that the condition of possibility for abstract forms of thought is corporeal, an affection binding mind and body. Mondzain explains how this image-affection works:

[T]he operation of the image is to separate. When you say painting is an object, then this object you call painting *is* an image *when* it separates... It builds, constructs the gaze between subjects. The circulation of the gaze is inseparable from the question of the image. Image is a sort of empty center of circulation.

(Elkins 24)

As a whole, this dissertation uses the rhetoric’s imaging of Homer. But further, Homer’s rhetorical genius is regularly bound to images: he delivers vivid action and economic descriptions, now parsimonious now elaborate, at the right places (Bonner 244). It is known well that Aristotle identifies Homer as the unrivalled minter of metaphors, the tropical source of rhetoric and poetry. But I add that ‘Homer’ separates into a meta-textual image. The question of rhetoric’s separation from the visually descriptive verses of Homer’s epic is not merely an *ekphrastic* exercise of interpreting verses, genres, or speech modes. Rather, it is a separation licensed by the image of ‘Homer.’ It is also a construction of how antique minds imagined the

directives between the enactments and emotions of poetic and oratorical styles. Such bodily scripts were inseparable from the question of ‘Homer.’ It is for this reason that I forego basing my analysis on the epic verses unless they are part of what is being circulated in the constructed image of ‘Homer.’ Naturally, such limits help me to think about what rhetoricians codified as much as what ‘Homer’ licensed.

The term *nachleben* then, directs us to the regularity with which Homer rears in rhetorical texts; out of these we can observe *operations*, how epic poetry circulates through, and invites rhetoricians to imagine poetry. Indeed, I admit that I am borrowing a concept that art historians apply to modern media such as photography or film. However, I am not less faithful, only more constructive, about which medium I think that I am using, namely, the rhetorical arrest and release of poetry. Furthermore, I am not any less faithful to the idea that *nachleben* could short-circuit the onus on studying technological intersections marked in Homer’s verses. Indeed, I speculate that most contemporary rhetoricians have avoided a thorough study of Homeric rhetoric because the Havelockian line that a technological medium is the chief index through which to understand Homer. The theoretically fertile intersection between Homer and rhetoric is a matter of re-iterability and sequence, not oral antecedent and literary consequence. *Nachleben* allows us to dwell in that gray area of multiple technologies and media while maintaining focus on how rhetoricians imagined Homer.

As regards my focus on cultural practices and authority, I see no better entry-point for a *nachleben* than in the education of the Greeks in antiquity, where ‘Homer’ prompted a multitude of underdetermined imaginaries through pedagogical exercises. First, both private mentorships and public programs of education featured, at least in the beginning, the study of Homeric verse. In this sense, Homer lurks unnoticed in advanced courses of education or formal political

contexts. In these contexts, Homer is not only elementary to the education of a literate statesman, but to the theoretical development of the political and rhetorical arts. Second, classrooms were decentralized, neither formal nor standardized. In other words, education in antiquity affords insights into multiple and overlapping ‘Homers’ within the Greek mind. By contrast, textual allusions to Homer may give a more fixed literary frame, detached as they are from classroom exercises or audience receptions. Now, the aim of what follows is to elaborate on Homer’s primary role in reigniting the Greeks’ civic and collective imagination.

Not least, if last of all, figuring ‘Homer’ as *nachleben* enables us to elaborate its movement through proto-rhetorics. By proto-rhetorics I am alluding to the various, conscious orientations to *mythos*, the word for speech in Homer, before and beyond the formal theory of *logos* in Aristotle. Studying dispositions toward speech before and beyond Aristotle’s handbook is almost by definition a task in historiography. Accordingly, ‘Homer’ opens up a particular challenge unique to its relationship with rhetoric: where shall we go to trace the outlines of ‘Homer’ as image? In this regard, what follows invites parallel modes of reading other cultural *topoi* which have been imaged, worked separately and which have not yet worked out their embedded attitudes about a primary material. Ultimately, Homer’s value to rhetorical scholarship might come about because his poems inform the history of rhetoric. But I hope that they come about because the fluency of his afterlife provides fertile grounds for those seeking to extrapolate.

## 1.2 EDUCATION IN HOMER AND HOMER IN EDUCATION

Homer can be read as a historical record with regard to archaic education, even though his epic poems are generally understood to be artifacts, not historical treatises. For both heroic protagonists, Achilles and Odysseus, speech speaks as a major component of their training. Evidently for Achilles and Odysseus' son, education consisted of a wiser, either older or mythical, counselor instructing an adolescent into his manhood on how to speak and act courageously. For a famous example in the ninth book of the *Iliad*, heroic education directly reflects the importance of *rhetoric* alongside physical feats. Phoenix was appointed to teach Achilles, to be a speaker of words and a doer of deeds: μύθων τε ῥητήρ' ἔμεναι πρηκτῆρά τε ἔργων [emphasis mine] (*Iliad* 9.443). From this line however, we might imagine that a speakerly education was primarily for leaders of tribes, and that it aimed to train them into well-spoken counselors at *agoras* or assemblies, where the leaders of men would decide strategy and fates for their soldiers. By implication, before rhetoric was an art, it was a consciousness held by an elite few about the importance of speech. That consciousness is manifest by the representations of *paideia* within epic verses.

As the subtitle 'Education in Homer and Homer in Education' suggests however, the education depicted in and by Homeric epic is reflexively related to the educational institutions fashioned in the image of Homer. These were not restricted to a few, at least not by the early onset of the classical age. The reflexive relationship within and without the verses was furthermore, fluent. At no point does the institution of education come without reference to poetry; in fact, the traditional, pre-Sophistical elementary education, was called "poetic." In sum, what was depicted in Homer's verses instituted and enforced how education, especially of speech and physical exercise, would be structured in Hellas. Henri Marrou writes that Homer stands as

“the oldest documentary evidence of any value about education in antiquity. Moreover, the fact that he stands in the forefront of classical education encourages us to discover what precisely education can have meant for him” (3). Scholarship on what archaic education meant in Homer’s verses have multiplied, especially since clay fragments and papyrus scrolls become accessible archival material. Instead, I focus on Homer at the forefront of classical education so as to study the other side of Marrou’s coin: what Homer meant for education, specifically rhetorical pedagogy.

In the remainder of this section, I show that what Homer meant can be located in three centers, each a proper rhetorical imaginary: as moral authority, then as speech model, and lastly as paradigm. Each rhetorical imaginary gives insight into how the re-iterations of ‘Homer’ claimed didactic force in a semi-literate society. It should be clear that I am arguing here against the thesis of availability: Hesiod and other poets, like Sappho, were also available in the early classical period, but they were not re-iterated with as much consistency and flair as Homer. I am also arguing against the thesis of historical authority: many myths held historical authority, and many early Homeric critics challenged him on those grounds implying that his historical authority was not taken for granted. Although this section is a historical survey—from traditional poetic education (archaic and classical) to Sophistical education to, finally, the handbook tradition—of Homer’s importance to rhetorical education (speech and/or writing for civic aims), the logic of chronology does not inform this survey. Again, I am pointing out that the *nachleben* of Homer took its form within rhetorical forums of education, and not only by the innovations of media, the passage of time, or the formalities of political forums.

### 1.2.1 Moral authority

To say that Homer was the moral authority of poetic education means little without defining what kind of morality the poems authored.<sup>11</sup> Unlike contemporary notions of morality as directive principles and maxims, Homer's verses firstly are demonstrative, rarely imperative, and certainly not directive. Furthermore, a contemporary reader might be pleased to find that they are pragmatic and contingent according to the Homeric script. Related to epic pragmatism and contrary to heroic individuality, epics emplot morality. In other words, moral choices issue from the knot of exterior forces—necessity, mortal will, divine mandate—dawning on individual heroes. Mostly, the narration of epic keeps us at arm's length from piercing into the interior psychological space of characters. Let us turn to elaborating each of these three traits of Homeric moral authority as we consider how Homer educated Hellas before and beyond formal educational programs.

'Homer' was the moral authority of Greek firstly because he was re-iterable or demonstrative. What bound the moral dimension within the poems' narrative and without, in the moral climate of archaic and classical Greece, is the speech formula. Now, the "formula" is the most widely recognized concept that of 20<sup>th</sup> century Homeric scholarship. By studying the Slavic bardic tradition, Parry and Lord hypothesized that the invention of Homeric poems, characteristically a collection of oral artifacts, was possible due to stock phrases repeated throughout the poems. Song lyrics afford one contemporary analogy by which to imagine 'Homer' as reiterations. Even if the ordinary person today recalls verbally concepts and

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<sup>11</sup> In fact, modern readers may not detect any moral qualities to the poems at all, but Jaeger makes the point that Homer represented an aristocratic moral compass and Philodemus' *On the Good King According to Homer*, evidences that it was a wide compass, albeit part of the 'kingship literature' by Hellenistic times, in sum royal.

definitions with some degree of difficulty, that same person can recall musical lyrics with relative ease. Certainly, the affect and rhythm of music, aids verbal memory. However, re-iterable phrases are the basic units of poetic improvisation. But beyond poetic invention, the formula operates didactically. The Homeric formula, I imagine, is not only a basic unit of speech for bardic improvisation; it is also a basic unit of classroom exercise for memory as well as moral enforcement. Everyday circumstances in a person's life could call for an epithet, emphasis, or a line from Homer. Even without formal tutorial relationships, Homer educated Greece by circulating currencies of speech.

With the re-iterability of 'Homer' in the forefront, we can return to the images in Homer's poetry. In the poems, Homer seems to codify human experience within highly elaborated contexts and by character-archetypes. In this sense, Homer's historical authority is pragmatic, not scientific. Put otherwise, I do not mean historical in the sense that modern scholars like Heinrich Schliemann understood Homer.<sup>12</sup> Rather, I mean that one can be agnostic about the facticity of events in the poems, and yet maintain that the poems historically evidence Mycenaean life. Eric Havelok says in *The Greek Concept of Justice* that "we would expect them [formulas] to recur elsewhere in the epic if prompted by an appropriate context" (Havelock 109). Indeed, his expectations are fulfilled as he elaborates on similar contexts in which stock formulas are used. Even if his expectations were not fulfilled, the main idea is that the authority backing Homeric portrayals of human experience is historically moral, not realistic. Accordingly, the formulas were demonstrative descriptions of what to say or do in 'real life', and were not necessarily capitulated for similar contexts.

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<sup>12</sup> Schliemann took Homer's historicity seriously. So much so, he thought that he had found the ruins of Troy. This much to the criticism of philologists like Max Müller, who insisted Homer was purely "mythical," meaning for Müller absolutely not historically grounded.

Havelock's expectation that the same formulas are to be repeated across similar cases makes sense. But I am emphasizing pragmatism in lived experience rather than in poetic improvisation. In effect, the operation of 'Homer,' the re-iterability itself, entrenches sequences of words or actions, loosely unifying archaic and early classical Greeks by their gestures, words, and comportments. It is as if all characters and their affairs represent a typical set of behaviors, which recycle to educate or, more precisely, habituate self-aware persons into sophisticated Greeks. Yet hollowing Homer's pragmatism to how certain formulas resonated with certain contexts is not enough to explain the appeal of some iterations over others. Describing the scope of Homer's moral authority, which he vehemently opposes, Plato writes:

'whenever you happen upon encomiasts of Homer who tell us, that this poet educated (πεπαίδευκεν) Hellas, and that for the housekeeping (διοίκησιν) and educating (παιδείαν) of human deeds (ἀνθρωπίνων πραγμάτων) he is worthy of taking up to learn, and that about all we should live furnishing (κατασκευασάμενον) life by the guidance of this poet, we must love and salute them as doing the best they can, and concede to them that Homer is the most poetic of poets and the first of tragedians, but we must know the truth, that we can admit no poetry into our city save only hymns to the gods and the praises of good men.' (*Rep.* X 606e)

Often, historians of rhetoric use this passage to talk about Homer's influence, beginning with the domestic sphere and emanating out into the polis. Indeed, Homeric lines was used to train citizens from childhood, when a child kept to its domestic cloisters through and through, until adulthood, when one managed the household and had experienced a wider sphere of human activity. In other parts, Homer's paideutic or didactic scripts were about human action emanating

from private outward to public domains. Finally, the domestic words in this passage emphasize *furnishing*. Whether we emphasize furniture's design or function, κατασκευάζω suggests that Homer was both, and that his images were pragmatic, but not necessarily homogeneous, moral schemes. It is not a coincidence that later, he would be the basic resource for grammatical exercises. Yes Homer equipped assonant phrases already embedded in concepts simulative of life. Of course, Plato's report on Homer's moral authority reminds us of the interpenetration of iteration and pragmatism, of folk wisdom. In one's own room, so to speak, the arrangement of furniture is familiar and navigable, even in the dark. So too, in one's own life, the image of 'Homer' was a set of stock phrases that one repeated, navigable in the dark and turning the dark navigable. Homer was pragmatic also in the sense that re-iteration is interpretative by arrangement. In other words, two persons' moral expressions, both extracted from the epical objects, could be very different.

Jaeger calls Homer the encyclopedia of Greece. We turn to this line so as to connect Homer's iterability with the extension of his moral authority into all domains of human activity, including methods of how to best practice them. Across Hellas, the Greeks first identified themselves as such in the poet; he was understood as the chief educator who spoke wisdom on most topics, and cyclical motifs getting at the heart of what it means to be human. As encyclopedias do, Homer described all scenes of life, many times offering a vivid perspective on them. But he was also an encyclopedia in the sense that laws regulating human action were immanent to, rather than abstracted from the verbal descriptions of life. But if epic poems were a reference guide, the action of its myths issued from external force, that is, from necessity rather than by the alphabetic order in an encyclopedia. Jaeger writes:

Homer sees life as governed by universal laws... With the first line, the dramatic narrative of each epic begins to unfold without interruption towards its logical end... by the principle of sufficient reason. Every action has its roots in character. But Homer does not, like modern authors, see every action from within, as a phenomenon of human consciousness. In his world, nothing great happens without the aid of a divine power. (Jaeger 50; vol. 1)

There is no contradiction between the pragmatism described above and the universal law alluded to here, which is strictly aesthetic. Jaeger is following a thought from Aristotle's *Poetics*, which I investigate in Chapter Three; namely, the universal law to be found in Homer is in the inferential compactness between events in the poem, not in a strict moral code. Just as the aesthetic law of necessity regulates the images in Homer, so too in the image of 'Homer.' In other words, appealing to his moral authority seemed to offer sufficient and necessary reason. As the Greek mind developed *technai*, its attraction to 'Homer' was to a moral authority that knew more about domains of activity than any other.

Compelling in its represented external divine forces and the possibility of its principle of sufficiency, Homer's poetry was finally imagistic because it remained at the surface of action. It did not need to construct and regulate a theological or internalized conscience to enforce what was or was not right. Homeric myths mitigate psychological interiority, which implies that moral agency is located outside of one's self. As an omniperspective on human action, Homer's moral authority can be contrasted to the omniscience of the human mind in the Judeo-Christian tradition. Henry Johnstone and Mari Lee Mifsud have written about the wedge, or internal deliberation, signaled by Homer's verses. They do so to emphasize that rhetorical consciousness, if constituted by an interior psyche, does exist in the verses. I agree, but in line with Mifsud's

later writing,<sup>13</sup> we can still say that Homer purposefully veils internal deliberation. My point here only is that the exterior quality of Homer's moral authority is pronounced even if all Greeks imagined the self or conscience as an entity issuing from psychological interiority.

At the forefront of traditional archaic and early classical education, 'Homer' separated reflexively from its epic verses—what was represented in the images of the verses was often instituted without. For example, the basic marks of education in Greece were instituted first and foremost in speech and gymnastics. Now by its separation, 'Homer' was constructed as a moral authority by the re-iterability of its speech formulas as well as by its myths' cues for all domains of human activity. Whereas the re-iterability of a unit of speech, the formula, furnished the mouth with practical wisdom, the encyclopedic backing furnished the mind with technical savvy. Homer's verses are morally peculiar – they demonstrate rather than give directives on how to behave well. Indeed, Homer admits of a multiplicity of moral iterations because his verse organizes character types (associative sets of comportment), demonstrating how one could choose to respond.

### 1.2.2 Speech Model

Sophistical education represented a radical departure from traditional Homeric education. In the *Protagoras*, we receive the eponymous Sophist's elaboration on traditional poetic education (325de). Accordingly, Athenian boys received three kinds of training: writing composition (*grammata*) from writing masters, arranging poetry to music (*mousiké*) from music masters, and

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<sup>13</sup> Mifsud qualifies later that shame does not mitigate the character's self-conscious or psychological interiority (*The Gift* 40-41).

physical conditioning (*gymnastikê*) from trainers.<sup>14</sup> In these trainings, Homer's compositional form was the model for rote copying, his hexameter was a measure of music, and his epics defined the Greek glorification of warriors and athletes.<sup>15</sup> If this seems redundant, it is only because we have already shown that Homer's contribution to literacy was accompanied by the strong sense that he also was a seat of moral authority. In conjunction with that sentiment, Homer's epics seemed to be the text source testing literacy, both reading/writing, and graphic memory (326d). By the 4<sup>th</sup> century Xenophon wrote that, "The boys go to school and spend their time learning about justice. That is the purpose for which the Persians say they attend school, just as we (Athenians) say that our boys go to learn letters (*grammata*)" (1.2.6). Even after the Sophists had left their marks on rhetorical education, the traditional elementary education in literacy lives on in a moral education abstracted from direct lessons about justice. Nevertheless another image in the sequence of 'Homer' of our *nachleben* arrives with the Sophists: 'Homer' is iterated as a speech model, a rhetorical imaginary centered around the literary version of Homer. To discover what that means requires that we ask who the Sophists were, how they taught and, finally, why they were thought to be rivals of Homer.

The Sophistical movement was first documented in the alleged story of Corax and Tisias in the fifth century (480 BCE) and soon expanded by the fourth century to include the major Sophists and their nameless counterparts. The major Sophists —Protagoras, Gorgias, Hippias, Lysias, Thrasymachus, Prodicus, and Euenus— operated autonomously and, were not, strictly

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<sup>14</sup> For a recent mention of this passage from *Protagoras*, see Crick even if he seems to mistake the Sophist's recount of traditional education with what Sophistical education itself achieved (*Rhetoric and Power* 155-6).

<sup>15</sup> This consciousness is best illustrated in Pindar's odes to athletic victors, where families of victors ask him to portray the victor as descendant of Iliadic heroes and to compare the victory to mythological episodes.

speaking, a school. Many of these teachers were foreigners, whether from outside poleis, or from nearby colonies such as the burgeoning port city of Syracuse. Some took issue with each other's pedagogical approaches. See, for example, where the one Sophist ridicules Hippias for teaching his students mathematics instead of social virtue (Protagoras 318e). All roved around Greece, some followed by their student-disciples. Nevertheless, I treat them categorically here, an accepted treatment, which reminds us that however autonomous their operations, they were received collectively as a pedagogical revolution in classical antiquity. These so called sophistēs, named after figures of ancient wisdom, starting with Homer himself, aspired to educate young men.

As a whole, these educators, who aimed at cultivating ordinary people into democratic citizens and powerful statesmen, arrived to Greece starting in the fifth century. Although their subject matter ranged from semantics and poetic interpretation, rhetoric and law, to epistemology and ontology, each taught his own version of what would cultivate a young man's public reputation of virtue. Often, that included wielding words at the opportune moment and in a fashion appropriate to public gatherings (agorai). Often, a rhetorical education minimally aimed at cultivating—as the legend of Corax and Tisias told—competent advocates in courts of law and maximally, powerful leaders of poleis. So too, each sophist had his own approach to good speech. Protagoras focused on social virtue and argumentative strategies, such that students could “learn the laws and live their lives according to the pattern there laid down” (Prot 326c). Gorgias focused on persuasive techniques, Hippias on a well-rounded education, Thrasymachus on power, Prodicus on philology, and Euenus on poetry (Phaedo 61b). As is well known, Plato's corpus remains the most extensive record of the Athenian reception of these teachers, who galvanized powerful disciples on the one hand, and vitriolic critics on the other. The strongly

split reaction emerged in response to their novel methods of education. Of course, that novelty is inseparable from what some of the Sophists' treatment of Homer reflected.

In their pedagogical practices, 'Homer' was a speech model, a site of aesthetic, critical, and political opportunities in contrast to the moralist, less critical, and aristocratic imitation, which traditional poetic education seems to have instilled. To begin, sophists like Protagoras connected poetic and democratic education directly.<sup>16</sup> Perhaps it is better to put it the other way around first: democratization extended traditional poetic education in two ways. First, non-artisan classes could access education and, in fact, any citizen of Hellas could do so. Second, what emerged was the equivalent of an advanced or graduate training in political *aretē*. This occurred, in part, thanks to sophists who saw opportunity in the democratic movement of Hellas. It sent more advanced educators to pick up and carry from where poetic education left off.

Of course, the teachers of Greece capitalized on the familiarity that Homer bore on the Greek imagination. The epic about Troy had unearthed a historical sense rooted in Achaean life.<sup>17</sup> Homer was the Sophists' predecessor because he had figured Greek culture itself; he had rendered the distant past familiar, and the familiar present ornate. Within that historical sense of culture, epic figures seemed to speak directly, as an ancestor's ghost does, to contemporary moments. Achilles' shield conveyed the totality of pastoral, communal life enduring in bronze. And in the cast of its shield, Sophists bonded with Greece. To be sure, the Sophists referred to other Greek poets, philosophers, and contemporaries; but in regard to popular familiarity, Homer featured prominently.

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<sup>16</sup> For more on the Sophistical connection between literacy and civic virtue, see Wilkerson (105) and Jaeger (296; vol. 1).

<sup>17</sup> It is anachronistic to assume that Antiquity understood Homer only as a textile of gnomic prescriptions. Even when 'Homer' signified history, it was a historical sense—as Thucydides' references and qualifications to Homer show—aware of the epical mix of *mythos* and event.

Protagoras may have adapted disputation from the Eleatics, but for the craft of speech the Sophists reached to Homer.<sup>18</sup> In no poetry beside his does the ratio of direct speech to narrative tilt so significantly toward the former,<sup>19</sup> by means of long, protreptic speeches (*mythoi*) that reflect character (*ethos*), and that deliver claims supported by warrants (Martin 109). Rhetoricians insisted, and still do, that Homeric poetry exhibits several models of developed persuasive speech. Each technique, trope and figure that Pseudo-Plutarch analyzes later, he finds in Homer's epics. Contrary to our expectations of genre—Homer's epic poetry, unfolded into lyric, ode, and drama—the textual representation of direct speech remained largely immune to generic change from the centuries that separated versification of Homeric poetry up classical times. So much so, epic poetry's affinity with rhetoric became a reason for Plato to dispute that rhetoric was a distinct art (*Gorg* 465a).

Homer's epics, then, furnished the Sophists, more than any other poetry had done, with examples of speech or *mythoi*.<sup>20</sup> Presumably, individual Sophists had their tailored approaches or exercises from among these. We know, from the *Protagoras*, that interpretative or literary, and from the *Theaetetus* (152e), that allegorical or moral, debates were two marks of a polished student. We know also from the *Theaetetus* that others would have mined Homer for

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<sup>18</sup> For the Eleatic source of debate, see Marrou (52). Looser cases could be made for debate issuing from the boasts that heroes were known well to throw at each other (Wilkerson 106).

<sup>19</sup> The proportion of "direct speech" to narrative is nowhere greater in the epics than in the *Iliad*: the agora in Book I, the convoy set out to persuade Achilles in Book IX, and the reconciliation of Achilles and Priam in Book XXIV (Beck 5, 23).

<sup>20</sup> Jaeger asserts that the Sophists and their contemporaries understood Homer "naively," debating him on the moral content of his stories, not on the medium or genre of his expression. Such assertions are misleading (295; vol. 1). In the *Protagoras* for example, Simonides' poetry is not taken as grounds for moral debate so much as for logical exercise (316d). Within Jaeger's overall thesis, that the older Sophists had civic aims and taught their students to transvalue aristocracy, poetic naivety makes less sense. One would have to cultivate a double consciousness or irony to employ Homer as a way of unraveling traditional institutions of *areté*.

etymological backing for their arguments. In a stylometric vein, Homer's hexameter is most amenable to being recomposed into "short, equal clauses," the signature rhythm of Gorgias' prose (Martin 144).<sup>21</sup> Some sophists even took the re-composition of hexameter into other meters to a level that Rhys Roberts calls satirical.<sup>22</sup>

But there is more. In the *Phaedrus* it is evident that the Sophist Lysias used writing heavily in his teaching demonstrations. But the practice was not limited to Lysias, who based his fame on speaking *extempore*, when in fact he memorized his manuscripts. We can reckon that Plato is chastising orators, but also rhapsodes, for this widespread practice in impression making. Plato writes:

To Lysias and anyone else who composed speeches, and to Homer or any other who has composed poetry...: if he has composed his writings with knowledge of the truth, and is able to support them by discussion of that which he has written, and has the power to show by his own speech that the written words are of little worth, *such a man ought not to derive his title from such writings*, but from the serious pursuit which underlies them. (*Phaed* 278cd)

Socrates' *ought not* reacts to what many orators did do, and how they viewed the written epic poems. The rhetorical imaginary revising Homer's verses as speech models was a literary, but particularly here, a technologically reproductive notion. Sophists like Lysias achieved mini-canonization by disseminating to students like Phaedrus written scrolls. Beyond instructing

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<sup>21</sup> For a thorough study of the Gorgianic figures—most well known among them, antithesis, isocola, and homoioteleuton—see Robertson 30ff.

<sup>22</sup> For Roberts' comment, see Dionysius 85, fn 5.

students in compositional form, then, scrolls allowed Sophists to script their reputation for wisdom, and to “re-prompt old applause” (Ferrari, “Plato and Poetry” 147).<sup>23</sup>

Speech-memorization was not the only technological snapshot of ‘Homer’ as speech model. In Book III of Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* we learn about the Sophists’ publicity lectures (*epideixeis*). There, the theorist of rhetoric glosses a history of style: poets like Homer first gave “impulse to style;” then rhapsodes and actors developed that style on stage; and finally the Sophists “brought [style] into being” by epideictic speeches (*Rhet* 1404b). This passage receives elaboration in Chapter Three. What I want to emphasize here, however, is that the Sophists appropriated what the poets were doing in contests. Actually, some sophists even advertised their rhetorical courses at poetry festivals. As John Poulakos points out, their participation in poetic competitions often signaled their claim to have surpassed poetic education (*Toward a Sophistic* 34ff). True, their publicity lectures entailed contest; but they also exhibited a deep-rooted connection between poetry and rhetoric. And as Jeffrey Walker has argued, rhetoric originated in speeches of occasions and contexts, ultimately in poetry, and not in the juridical context for which Corax and Tisias are known (4).<sup>24</sup>

By *epideixeis*, which has been understood to mean encomiastic speeches, Aristotle means something more specific: the speeches for publicity that the Sophists delivered upon entering new towns or large pan-Hellenic events, such as athletic or poetic contests (Marrou 49). These speeches aimed to persuade people of the Sophist’s pedagogical merits. Impressive, too, were the lengths to which some Sophists went to publicize their teaching: “adopting a magisterial tone, a

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<sup>23</sup> See Ferrari’s overall argument in “Plato and Poetry,” that the philosopher seeks to overcome poetry’s authority in Book X (92-148, 120).

<sup>24</sup> Walker’s case is based primarily on Hesiod; for the controversy of Walker’s case, see Kirby (rev. “Rhetoric and Poetics” 579ff).

grave or an inspired manner, and pronouncing his decision from a throne high up in the air; sometimes, it seems, even donning the triumphal costume of the rhapsodist with his great purple robe” (Marrou 50). Once a Sophist had demonstrated his eminence by speech, students who could pay tuition signed up. In the same passage above, Aristotle specifically mentions that Gorgias capitalized on the popularity of the poetic style, and introduced the prose movement to poetic contests. By this allusion to Gorgias, we might further understand what Aristotle means by “brought into being”: once the grand style of epic poetry, our main concern here, can be achieved in prose, the style itself has been fully developed, rationalized and hence can be taught methodically by rhetoricians.<sup>25</sup>

Jaeger claims that the Sophists and their contemporaries understood Homer “naively,” debating him on the moral content of his stories, not on the medium or genre of his expression (296; vol. 1). Jaeger’s claim is one or two frames behind in my sequencing of ‘Homer’ within Sophistical education. In the *Protagoras*, for example, Simonides’ poetry is not taken as grounds for moral debate so much as for logical exercise. Within Jaeger’s overall thesis, that the older Sophists had civic aims and taught their students to transvalue aristocracy, poetic naivety makes little sense. One would have to cultivate a double consciousness or irony to employ Homer as a way of unraveling traditional institutions of *areté*. Such a view seems to emerge, if anywhere with textual backing, from the traditional readings of Homer, which assume that Homeric characters are naïve, having no interior psychological space. Even though I turn to Aristotle

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<sup>25</sup> Scholars like Jeffrey Walker (*Rhetoric and Poetics*) and John Kirby (rev. “Rhetoric and Poetics”) use this clue to explain that the concern for forensic and legislative styles of speech developed from this lineage of poetic style as evolved in the delivery of rhapsodes and actors, to epideictic style as evolved by Gorgias’ prose movement.

extensively in Chapter Three, next I want to examine Aristotle's use of poetry for rhetorical education specifically; not on what he himself imaged as Homer.

### 1.2.3 Paradigm

If Homer had been the cultural authority that the Sophists reshaped into a model for rhetorical education, by the fourth century he was carried forward as a *paradeigma*. By *paradeigma* I mean an example that sits beside a main idea, as well as an example from which we can extract the pattern for something else. In Aristotle's *Rhetoric* Homer is prevalent in the form of quotations meant to support Aristotle's precepts, sometimes as a historical witness, other times as backing for Aristotle's observations into indignation and pleasure, and still at other points as an exemplar of stylistic devices like metaphor, adornment and narrative devices. Helen North writes: "In Aristotle we find for the first time the tendency, which prevails throughout the history of rhetoric, to see in Homer the supreme master of oratory as well as poetry and the source of almost infallible instruction" (North 7).

Quotations of Homer are one indication of this tacit knowledge; cross-references to the *Poetics* are another. Aristotle's systematic handbook studies in rhetoric and poetics seems to acknowledge a special relationship between the two as productive arts. Although Aristotle treats the arts of poetry and rhetoric as separate provinces of language, rhetoric is concerned, as poetry is, with style, exciting emotions, and characteristic speech; and poetry is concerned with rhetorical likelihood in the chain of narrative action that it lays out.<sup>26</sup> It is not strange that Aristotle tacitly assumes that his reader is familiar with Homer, or that "throughout its three

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<sup>26</sup> See *Rhet* 1372a2, 1404a39, 1404b7-8, 1405a6ff, 1419b6-7; and *Poet* 1456a35ff.

books this treatise tacitly assumes that a knowledge of poetry is indispensable to the orator” (North 7). What is strange, however, is that the figure of Homer, as a master of oratory, is absent. Whereas Homer is a *persona* in Plato, or a rival for the Sophists, in Aristotle he is split: on a textual level, the poet is dispersed as quotations or authoritative backing for claims, and often, the quotations are seated in an uncomfortable; on a conceptual level, the poet makes it difficult for us to extricate rhetoric from poetics. This split is the disjunction of *paradeigma*: on the one hand, it operates as a subsidiary point working beside a main idea; on the other, we can unfold from the paradigmatic example the modal pattern which connects across ideas.

Perhaps Aristotle personalized Homer during his lectures on foot; regardless, the trend that he initiated in rhetorical handbook writing would ironically give rise to skepticism about rhetoric’s theoretical autonomy. The more Homer became a *paradeigma*, the less persuasive rhetoric’s theoretical autonomy became. The height of this trend comes to us by way of Pseudo-Plutarch’s *Essay on the Life and Poetry of Homer*, where he traces a long list of rhetorical devices, of tropes (Pseudo Plutarch B.16-21)<sup>27</sup> and figures (B.28-38), back to lines in the epic poems. The text is estimated to have been written around the first century CE. Around that same time, George Kennedy documents, epic poetry’s affinity with rhetoric gave grounds for detractors to dispute rhetoric as an art distinct from epic poetry. If examples of rhetoric flourished organically in the natural genius of Homer, then—so the thinking went—why should rhetoric command a theoretically autonomous status (Kennedy, “The Ancient Dispute” 24). Even in the arguments that turned *against* rhetorical education, Homer’s poetry as *paradeigma* was featured prominently.

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<sup>27</sup> Keaney and Lamberton put [Plutarch] in brackets rather than refer to him as “Pseudo Plutarch.” Their brackets remind us of the trivialization this pseudified author’s treatise suffered. Yet, I refer to Pseudo-Plutarch to differentiate from Plutarch, author of *Plutarch’s Lives*.

By the time orators like Lysias appeared in the fourth century, Homeric poetry had become two poems. In other words, epic poetry was being disseminated with reference to the written manuscripts of the epics. The written, or literary, Homer, as Nagy calls written epic, would thereafter furnish some continuity. In the archaic oral culture, a bard could improvise untold myths within the hexameter verse; but in a semi-literate culture, a rhapsode recited poetry, meaning its written form provided the grounds for quoting, and misquoting Homer. His poems became *canonical*, a word which can be disassociated from religious connotations but not from the self-authority that the written poems themselves held. Their authority closed off a range of responses that could be understood as innovative, and opened Hellas' imagination to the figure of Homer as author.

Later, Homer would continue to prove integral to Roman studies in rhetoric well into the fourth century CE. In the hands of the *grammatici*, epic poetry was elementary material for literacy; in the hands of the rhetoricians, it became advanced material for *exercitatio* in prose composition. Thus it would not be inaccurate to say that Homer intersected Greek commoner and aristocrat, basic literacy and advanced learning, and finally, Greek and Roman dispositions toward rhetoric. Even though histories of Greece and Rome have been criticized for focusing too much on Athens, Marrou writes, "It must be said at once that there was no strictly autonomous Roman education, any more than there was any autonomous Roman civilization" (96). Even Cribiore well known for her archaeological analysis of ephemera from late antiquity, nevertheless describes the arch-classical division of education "realistic enough to represent properly the characteristics and functions of the various levels" of educational content and difficulty (2). For our purposes, the division also shows a progression, whereby prose

composition skills relied on in-depth engagement with the poets, especially Homer.<sup>28</sup> This is not to say that Greek and Roman rhetoricians and teachers had the same views; in Chapter Four I stand apart from the absolute continuity implied by some scholars.<sup>29</sup> However, the system of education that established *progymnasmata* in Greece defined public Roman education.<sup>30</sup>

Starting with primary school at the age of six, students memorized just under thirty thousand lines—the entire *Iliad* and most of the *Odyssey*—of epic hexameter. By secondary school, the student’s exercises of composition known as *progymnasmata* included writing fables and narratives, learning the conventions of expression, and crafting compositions from the perspective of a mythical character. Students who pursued more advanced studies read rhetorical handbooks and prepared to speak publicly and teach public speaking. From this basic scheme of rhetorical education, both Greek and Roman students learned to compose the various forms of speech.

### 1.3 CONCLUSION

Homer was indispensable to rhetorical education, whether he was the *moral authority* for good speech in archaic times and early classical poetic education, or the *model* for the Sophists’ cultural aims and pedagogical exercises, or the body of *paradeigmata* for the systematization of

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<sup>28</sup> Homer is studied far more prevalently than any other poet. Among the papyri that she surveys, 58 quote Homer, 20 Euripedes, and 7 Manander Rhetor. Of course, her study covers the ephemera of Hellenized Egypt; but her argument is that it offers a window into the rest of the Hellenized world of the time Morgan (313).

<sup>29</sup> For example, Marrou: “The historical importance of Roman education is not to be found in any slight variations or additions it may have made to classical education of the Hellenistic type, but in the way it managed to spread this education through time and space” (292).

<sup>30</sup> For the changes within this system of education see Hock and O’Neil 3 and Criore 43-44.

rhetoric. Across these, Homer indexed shifts across orality, semi-literacy, and finally a rationalized literacy for philosophers. These shifts did not happen linearly or developmentally, even if the accident of chronological sequence makes it seem so. Homer himself would be received as both genesis and exception to that development. But as an index, his epics reveal an arrested development, poems which were indispensable to rhetoric's development would not enjoy later on the theoretical attention that prosaic speech did. But it still can.

The meaning of *nachleben* combines at least three meanings. First, it integrates 'uninterrupted afterlife'; second, 'imagistic sequences'; third, 'reflexive representations.' In the first we acknowledged that Homer has always been an ancient source, even to classical thinkers; we also began to look through mentions of Homer as an unceasing source, or incessantly moving one. Perhaps it is this uninterrupted fluidity that explains why he was considered the origins source of all styles. In the second case, we showed that Greek rhetors often personified, encapsulated or substituted the image of Homer himself for the images in his epic poetry. But we also showed that there is a reflexive relationship between the images in the epic poetry to the image of Homer. In each component of the definition, I attempted to anchor mentions of Homer to both individual sense perception of images as well as a cultural operation of image-making.

I have relied on this concept of *nachleben* to show what I mean that Homer had an afterlife in Greek and Roman rhetorical education as a moral authority, speech model, and paradigm. Each of these kinds of rhetorical imaginary circulating Homer's verses has a link with the components of an image enumerated above. As moral authority, Homer was re-iterable, answering the prior question of why he was an unceasing or incessant. As speech model, Homer took on a writerly persona, whose speeches were to be imitated. This explains why rhetorical texts sometimes call Homer inimitable, cueing us into the imagistic operations and limits for

imitation that he represented. Third, Homer was a compendium of quotes or illustrations that rhetors post-Aristotle used to exemplify rhetorical techniques and devices. In this last component, Homer's personification is less pronounced and the slices from his verses are longer than idiomatic expressions. Despite differences in the three rhetorical imaginaries I elaborate, they are similar; first they helped in extricating rhetoric from epic poetry and second they oriented rhetoric's relationship to epic poetry. Because these rhetorical imaginaries can be studied from the educational institution of rhetoric, pedagogy is a critical historical starting point in a study about rhetoric's reception of Homer.

In the next four chapters, I rely on the same concept to show Homer's afterlife in the hands of Plato, Aristotle, Longinus, and five contemporary lines of thinking addressing the connection between Homeric epic and rhetoric. Plato and Aristotle send mixed messages about Homer. Plato exiles Homer outright, and Aristotle treats him like a strange but dignified source of style. Much differently, Longinus outright praises Homer, and shows us what rhetorical histories could look like if philosophical texts were not the only source from which to study rhetoric's emergence from poetry. Yet Longinus imagines 'Homer' just as much as his two predecessors, and his enthusiasm signals a shift from the classical era to late antiquity. Furthermore, taken with the contemporary studies of epic in relation to rhetoric, the dissertation elaborates the incessant afterlife of Homer that rhetoric has hid in plain view.

## 2.0 PLATO'S DISAFFILIATION FROM HOMER

They are...trying in every possible way to express their sense of the godlike nature of Plato's genius; hence the name of Homer, and, more explicit still, that of God.

—Petrarca, *To Giovanni Andrea di Bologna* (282)

Ultimately, both the rivals, philosophy and rhetoric, spring (*ursprung*) from poetry, the oldest Greek *paideia*; and they cannot be understood without reference to their origin in it.

—Jaeger, *Paideia* (47, vol. III)

From the previous chapter, it would seem that Homer has a long afterlife in Sophistical education. In this chapter we find that he also had an afterlife, albeit difficult, in Plato's dialogues. Of course, a *nachleben* implies the unceasing afterlife in images. This chapter proceeds first by positioning the chapter's orientation relative to scholarly conversations. Then, it reviews the critique of Homer in Book X. It is then that the main claim, that disaffiliation is disavowal of affiliates dependent on patrilineal orders, can rest on evidential grounds: the juxtaposition of Homer's *Odyssey* (the Cyclops scene) with Plato's Book I (the Socrates-Thrasymachus exchange). Not only do both texts center around how justice works within patrilinear societies, but they also show why stealth and force can be incomplete, even violent, responses to the paternal system of authority. In the penultimate section ("Toward a Theory of Disaffiliation") I finally turn to elaborate my theory of disaffiliation.

One would have to reach further back than Jaeger to appreciate the persistence with which Platonic commentators treat rhetoric and philosophy as the offspring of Homeric culture (see Chapter One). One would have to reach even further back to apprehend how Homeric Plato's literary style seemed to the ancients. Petrarch merely attributes the analogy between Homer and Plato as a mere comparison between their principal roles among poetry and philosophers, respectively. For the most part, the *Republic* was understood by many of Plato's antique heirs to be his masterpiece on Homer.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, Jaeger and Petrarch's lines testify to the longstanding if faded receptions of Plato as much as they reflect a modern misfire of imagination on the subject. More specifically, it posits philosophy and rhetoric not only as formal arts but also consequences of a personified origin and a set of institutionalized cultural practices.

This chapter benefits from two conceits that lately have been overcome:<sup>32</sup> first, we need not begin with the onset of formal disciplines to study the two rivals in Jaeger's line,<sup>33</sup> and second, Homer is not a singular author.<sup>34</sup> As we have noted, 'Homer' is a codification of collective experiences in archaic times, and authorization of cultural practices in classical times. Beside codifying and authorizing, historical evidence has bridged the collective authorship of Homeric poems from improvised versification of singers to written Homeric verse "discovered" by rhapsodic guilds contemporary to Plato. Finally, Homer's assignation as author has been

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<sup>31</sup> For a useful survey of this trend, see North 5ff.

<sup>32</sup> Lately overcome relative to Vico's original thesis in the 1730 edition of *Scienza nuova* (873), that Homer was a disaggregated public sign for performance (see further 1744, 301-329), and relative to Parry and Lord's 1920's scientific study confirming Vico's thesis.

<sup>33</sup> For a critique of formalist studies of rhetorical beginnings, see Poulakos, "Interpreting" 221.

<sup>34</sup> For theoretical departures from individualistic conceits, see Bakker and Kahane 143-4, and Porter 60; for the same in rhetorical history, see Marshall, *Vico* 234.

overturned by assigning him as an institutional sign of speech art which would challenge rhetors justify the autonomy of their discipline.<sup>35</sup>

If imitation is a form of flattery, then Plato must have celebrated the originary source for his ideas.<sup>36</sup> Yet Plato exiles Homer, the patronymic figure<sup>37</sup> transcending the kinds of Greek art his reception authorized. He most explicitly exiles Homer in Book X of the *Republic* (606e-607a). There, Socrates proscribes the imitative arts, poetry among them foremost, from his ideal city (*Rep* 598d7). Nevertheless, many of Plato's literary interpreters have persistently argued that the philosopher manifestly bids poetry entrance, to a range of degrees, especially when they read his philosophical work as a whole.<sup>38</sup> Their persistence is understandable—after all, Socrates reports (narrates) and enacts (imitates) a dialogue enjoyed for its three main interlocutors (Socrates, Glaucon and Adeimantus) and intermittently a colorful cast of others<sup>39</sup> across ten books and countless episodes. Such persistence is paralleled by that of rhetorical scholars sifting through Plato's dialogues on rhetoric (*Gorgias*, *Protagoras*, *Phaedrus*, and *Symposium*) for his

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<sup>35</sup> For the most thorough historical account, see Kennedy, "The Ancient Dispute" (23ff). He emphasizes the sharp division that Homer's rhetoricity posed for rhetoric's legitimacy as an autonomous art.

<sup>36</sup> For anthologies supporting this 'artistic optimism' reading of Plato, see Ferrari *Cambridge Companion* xvff; for one against it, see Benson, especially Rowe's chapter "Interpreting Plato" 13-24, and Janaway's "Plato and the Arts" 388-400.

<sup>37</sup> By patronymic I mean a name, like Homer's, which authorizes cultural affiliations and institutions; usually it guarantees its name's effectiveness by transferring its leadership vertically to a chosen heir among the affiliates.

<sup>38</sup> For an integrative study of such views, see Elias 208-230. For a survey of apologists arguing implicit admission, see Partee 212-213.

<sup>39</sup> For attempts to square the inconsistency between narrative and narratology, see Halliwell, *Aesthetics* 50-53, 70; to resolve these by studying characters as dramatic element in the *Republic*, see Blondell 190, O'Connor 55, and even Kauffman who resolves the inconsistency by concluding Platonic rhetoric to be "totalitarian and repressive" ("Axiological" 101), does so through careful consideration of characters, see for example his "Enactment" 125.

implicit admission of rhetoric into the philosophical order.<sup>40</sup> Whether literary or rhetorical, both modes of interpretation pick up on Platonic irony, even if they do not always elaborate what such irony would portend if we understood it theoretically, outside the textual or even Hellenic context.<sup>41</sup>

In my mind, the *Republic* stands as an artifact of rhetorical savvy, not only a literary masterpiece. By rhetorical, I mean that it is driven by conscious reasons why the literary mechanisms in the text do not align with the poetic theory articulated in its pages. Furthermore, those reasons can inform methods of articulating cultural change beyond the ‘transformation’ ascribed to Plato’s motive for featuring Homer (Nussbaum 227, Naas 5, O’Conner 72). I also mean that it combines the modes of poetry and prose, and not necessarily to privilege the latter as a doctrinaire form of philosophical inquiry.<sup>42</sup> Put otherwise, how the dialogue performs and what it narrates matter: the how reverses the what and, for its part, the what suppresses the how. My aim, then, is to find those moments of reversal and to liberate the how. Lifting the how need not help us to resolve whether Plato’s exile of Homer is in earnest. Rather, disaffiliation has an

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<sup>40</sup> For rhetoric’s admission in the *Republic* specifically, see Yunis 26 and Kastely 208-9ff; for examination of both sides of the issue, see Black 361-363; for topics of rhetoric in Plato, see Kirby 191-198; for bracketing admission in favor of effects Plato had on Sophistical rhetoric, see Marback 2-3. For the *persistent* attempts to read Plato as rhetoric’s friend refer to Benitez 224, Crick and Poulakos 3, Culp 4, Curran 70, Duffy 83-9; Erickson 178, Hunt 34, Hyland 38-44, McComiskey 215, Michelini 3-4, Murray 280, Petrucci 23, Roochnik 82, Ryan 453; Thompson 361. For antithesis, see Ramsey 248, Rendall 166-7, Werner 39, White 286.

<sup>41</sup> For an example of what irony portends for reading Plato, see Hyland “the Longer Road” 319. For the original theory of irony in Platonic interpretation, see Strauss 51. For a survey of Straussian readings of Plato, see Landy 7ff. For ‘ambiguity’ as an alternative mechanism to irony, see Empson, especially chapters 3 and 4.

<sup>42</sup> For studies on the rhetoric effect and philosophical significance of silence in Plato’s later dialogues, see Eades 245; and Rhodes 41, 541. For this view as a contrast to Strauss, see Gordon 57.

incipient theoretical principle, meaning that it could be applied outside the scope of how Plato absorbs and disavows Homer in the *Republic*.

In this chapter, I advance the argument that the *Republic* is structured as a philosophical *Odyssey*.<sup>43</sup> However strictly Homer's exile in Book X is taken, the present chapter reads this Platonic dialogue as a rhetorical feat. My main focus is on the *Republic* which represents Plato's *magnum opus* on Homer, the eye worth piercing. The tenor of this chapter issues from the strong resonances between the Thrasymachus scene in the *Republic* and that of Odysseus' retellings of his feat against the Cyclops Polyphemus in the *Odyssey*. I point my readers to these two scenes because read together, the two punctures—one of the Cyclops' eye and the other of Thrasymachus' case for clandestine injustice—signal a transfer from epic motif to dialogic form, a reversal of patrilineal generation to aristocratic affiliations, and an insight into Book X. My Cyclops-Thrasymachus juxtaposition intends a re-beginning from the future anterior, one that visits the beginning of the text from the perspective of what will have happened by the end.<sup>44</sup> As a preview, it conceives the patrilineal relationship of epic poetry in relation to Plato's philosophy, stealth to force, human cunning to divine law, and "minding one's own private affairs" to honor-lust (*epithumos*).

If we were treating the selected texts as canonically determined, I would be begging a question, or worse, asserting a genuflection. But I am beginning with the premise that Plato himself would not have understood Homer as we do, and therefore, that there is no such thing as

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<sup>43</sup> See Ferrari's *Cambridge Companion* for a collected volume of essays, especially the introduction, chapters 1-4, and 16 for arguments resonant with my claim. For a work featuring *Republic* as an epic poem of shifting the seduction of absolute freedom and arresting the tyrannical forces of democracy, see Kastely (215).

<sup>44</sup> Vitanza emphasizes this point in relation to the present them: "...what will have been done" which once determined must be re-begun, again (*Negation* 328).

a monolithic canon. Even as we begin with traditional moments, Said writes that any intention to begin a reading is arbitrary. In a world of over-abundant textual resources, beginnings are secular, sitting beside rather than issuing from the linear mandates of a sacred tradition. At the same time, Said's theory of beginnings preempts the critique of beginning elsewhere. Even though my conscious intention is to read Plato as an eccentric thinker (*ek+kentron*), enfolding 'out of a center' that is Homer, it is purposefully inconsistent with my method, which treats Plato as a reader-beside-others. In this sense, I intend to open the space of inclusivity between texts (Said 13).

My argument certainly builds on what already has been articulated as the 'philosophical Odyssey.'<sup>45</sup> The comparison between Homer's *Odyssey* and Plato's *Republic* as such can be evidenced not just by the dialogue's quotations, characters or concepts;<sup>46</sup> but at a prior level, by the dialogue's reversal (both opposition and repetition, *re+verse*), hence imaginary transfers, of epic motifs. Where I do pick up on quotations, characters, and concepts, I conceptualize my study not philologically, in terms connecting the two texts; but rhetorically, in the cultural imaginary echoing the same turns and conjunctions among terms. Insofar as words, especially in clusters, suggest cultural imaginings, the result of studying transfers from the epic poem to Plato's dialogue is more than a philological exercise and less than making claims about Plato's intended tactics.<sup>47</sup> At the same time, alternative allusions to the likes of Pythagoras,<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Howland reinforces Strauss and Nussbaum's literary interpretations, without their stylometric and catastrophic role-casting for literature and Aristophanic views of Plato's philosophy (28ff, 163).

<sup>46</sup> For these methods, respectively, see Benardete (174), O'Connor (55); for the usual attitude, even from a more literary interpreter, that the myths of the *Republic* "are not essential to the philosophical argument; they come after it and reinforce it," see Nussbaum (131).

<sup>47</sup> In order to make claims on Plato's intention, the reader has to know his intended audience and how it determined the significance of his irony (Tucker 8).

Aristophanes,<sup>49</sup> and Orpheus<sup>50</sup> only reinforce, at a secondary level, that Plato reinforces imagined cultural *topoi* derived from Homer.

Ultimately, I will have done my job well in this chapter if I portray Plato's exile of the sign of 'Homer' as a specific kind of radical revision. I call Plato's revolt around Homer's contest 'disaffiliation.' Although I show Platonic sources of 'disaffiliation' in the body of this chapter, and theoretical possibilities in the epilogue, I introduce this concept here as a claim on lineage. We have already read in Chapter One that "Homer" was a fiction created to authorize cultural practices by speakerly, writerly, and pedagogical affiliations. Plato's impulse is that of the successor refusing to inherit beside others, the one who aims to place himself in the fundamental role that patronymic significance grants. The periodic mark<sup>51</sup> of each generation—to claim, divide, and conquer what a previous generation has bequeathed it—is a great if not deadly matter, even when what is bequeathed is intangible and especially when an heir makes exclusive claims to the throne. Indeed, these are the rifts that affiliation poses: to tear siblings asunder and to divide lots once undivided.

Disaffiliation prompts us to reconsider the significance of Plato's turning-over of the fundamental sign that is 'Homer' in Book X. At issue here is more than the rejection or admission of poetry, and beyond what the Allegory of the Cave symbolizes.<sup>52</sup> What is at stake is measuring the dialogue's totem so as to mark its patrilineage. Hence 'disaffiliation' also prompts

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<sup>48</sup> See Diogenes Laertius VIII.15; see also Brann 215, 153.

<sup>49</sup> In Howland's piece, the rejoinder to Aristophanes in the *Republic* complements the *Odyssey's* transformation (13ff); see also Baracchi 170; for opposing view to *Republic* as Aristophanes' rejoinder, see Brann 51.

<sup>50</sup> See Meyer 99ff.

<sup>51</sup> For analysis of the periodic style as catastrophic, see Sutton and Mifsud xii, 4, 104.

<sup>52</sup> Famously, Hannah Arendt allegorizes Book X as a passage symbolic of politics when she identifies it as a turning-about (*periagogē*) of the Homeric world order (192).

us to circle back to the paternal figure of Cephalus in Book I of the *Republic*, to read the son's failure for its conceptual significance, and to begin shaping Plato's revolution in the figure of a circle.<sup>53</sup> The circle replays the cosmic scale of psychical regeneration in Book X.<sup>54</sup> But it is also affords us some insight into why Plato's disposal of rhetoric is so pronounced in other dialogues. Homeric poetry signified prohibitive and permitting functions governing ethics and language, functions that the Sophists had used to appeal to their students and audiences,<sup>55</sup> and that Plato reformulated into another symbolic order altogether.

In the philological kernels in this chapter, I point to words echoing resonances between the two texts in Greek, and flesh them out further if necessary, in English transliterations. Since most scholars tending to the analytic dimension in Plato's philosophy also go to the original language, it is a small-scale disaffiliation to use the same method to competing approaches. Without engagement with the Greek language, I would only be comparing the two texts when in actuality I want to portray several levels of cultural production, Plato's transfer of images, the network of words attending to such, and sometimes the arbitrary or inadequate translation of Plato's word. Studying adjacent lines of thought models itself after what Said finds "poetic" in Vico's philological method (351). Unlike strict philological methods, I use the original language

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<sup>53</sup> For the paternal motif within the *Republic*, see Barrachi, "Beyond the Comedy." For the historical and philological importance of circles to the Homeric institution of rhetoric see Marshall (233).

<sup>54</sup> The regenerative motif begins at the level of individual and state before reaching the cosmic scale. "And hence," Socrates asserts, "the state, if it once starts well, will roll on like a circle in its growth" (*Rep* 4.424a).

<sup>55</sup> For example, see an approximation of Sophistical poetic criticism in the Simonides scene in *Protagoras* (338e6—348a9). For a quantitative study of four surviving hybrid Homeric-forensic speeches from the first Sophistic, see Knudsen (2012). By the second Sophistic, these would be rediscovered as *ēthopoia* within the *progymnasmata* regimen. For studies on the rise of the first Sophistic, see Dillon and Gergel ix-xix; Gagarin 9-36; Kennedy, *New History* 30-35; Poulakos, *Sophistical* 124; de Romilly 18; Kerferd 40; Guthrie 200-208.

for semantic cues and backing of my arguments, not as direct evidence of my conceptual claims. Finally, the point is not that Plato purposefully manipulated the Homeric vulgate, and by implication, that he should have been kinder to his textual forefather.<sup>56</sup> Rather, the point is that Plato's proposition to dethrone cultural authority is belied by the level of semantic analysis, where Homeric terms appear conjoined as they are in the *Odyssey*.

## 2.1 IN THE AFTERMATH OF EPICAL BEGINNINGS

Plato's 'ancient quarrel' with Homer (*Rep* 607b)—neither the first after Heraclitus and Xenophanes,<sup>57</sup> nor the only one in Plato (cf *Laws* 967cd; *Symp* 209d)—culminates in *Republic* Book X. At this point in the dialogue, Plato amplifies his preliminary critique of poetic education in Books II & III with the metaphysical doctrines spelled out in the intervening books.<sup>58</sup> The introductory commentary on poetic imitation hinges on moral inconsistencies within the depictions of Homeric characters, as well as the effects of their depictions on character formation in education. There, only poems that narrate consistently the good conduct of gods and men are permissible (III.398a). But what starts out as a conditional rejection of poetry for its modes of narration (393bd) and means of representing objects (386ff), in the end turns into an unconditional rejection based on poetry's inability to apprehending the Forms (596e-597e). In

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<sup>56</sup> For effective capitulations of this claim, see Benardete 173, and Mifsud, *Rhetoric and the Gift* 72.

<sup>57</sup> The most infamous of which are Xenophanes and Heraclitus; also see Asmis 338-348 for a survey of these accounts. For opposing line, that Plato is inventing this quarrel, see Nightingale 60-67.

<sup>58</sup> Especially Annas leads the most extreme 'irreconcilable differences' thesis between Book III and X, and self-contradiction within Book X (336-344). Others, like Belfiore 122ff find compatibility, and even consistency across the definitions of imitation.

Book X, Plato absolutely rejects poetry based on a new triad comprised of the activities of using, making, and imitating (601b9-602c3). He also expands the poetic critique by consigning all representative art to the lowest cognitive level. Finally, he associates the effects of poetry with pleasures shameful insofar as representation overturns the rational rule of *psyche* and *polis* alike.<sup>59</sup> All visual or imitative arts, Homer their specific source in the last book, are turned away on psychological grounds (605d-606b; 612be).

The epilogue to Plato's quarrel with Homer ends with an eschatological myth resembling Odysseus' descent to Hades, the so-called *nekuia* in the *Odyssey*. Throughout, Socrates has been foreshadowing the comparison. Many scholars have speculated about the Greek religious sources<sup>60</sup> as well as the Middle Eastern and Eastern influences<sup>61</sup> in the Myth. However, the plurality of allusions suggests an attempt on Plato's part to universalize and preempt any particular religious affiliation. Indeed, the explicit mention to Er's Pamphylian origins—not only with the word play of *pan+phylon* (every+tribe),<sup>62</sup> but also with its reference to an unfamiliar region in South Anatolia—thus cue readers toward an allegorical setting of the myth. Furthermore, several allusions in the myth suggest a larger sleight of hand to be plausible: the whole dialogue has been a home-return (*nostos*), much like Odysseus'.<sup>63</sup>

To be more precise, then, the narration of Er's tale is the counter-frame to Homer's mythic world order, not just a tale with comparable details in the epic poem. Indeed, Socrates

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<sup>59</sup> For poetry's effective damages to the *polis*, see *Rep* 608b4-612a7; and to *psyche* 605b5, 608b1.

<sup>60</sup> Orphic (614c3, 617c2, 617d1-19b1, 620a4, 621a2, b2), Pythagorean (614b5, 8, c5, 616a4, b4-5, c3, 617b5-7, 617d1-19b1, 618a3), and Eleusinian (614e2, 615a4).

<sup>61</sup> Zoroastrianism (614b3), Hinduism (617d1-19b1), and Asiatic shamanism (614b8, d1-d3).

<sup>62</sup> Halliwell emphasize this point: "realms of irreducibly difficult interpretation ... Plato's text itself [consciously] does not supply the means to bring to a definitive conclusion" ("Life-and-Death" 446).

<sup>63</sup> For how Plato's Myth of Er implicitly excludes Homer's "visit to the dead," see Morgan, especially chapters 1, 2, and 6.

begins by an overview in the negative: “It is *not*... the tale to Alcinous told” that he will tell, a reference to Odysseus’ recounting to King Alcinous’ court his own descent into Hades. To be sure, comparable details abound in Er’s tale aligning with portrayals from the Homeric tradition.<sup>64</sup> But as interesting as these cues may be, stronger signs of counter-framing are indicated by Plato’s repurposing of Homeric allusions: the objectification of the main Homeric gods into the eight whorls of the *cosmos* (616d); the description of Hades as *hell* reserved for incurably bad souls and a passageway for souls on their way to reincarnation (616e5); the Sirens singing the cosmic harmony rather than eating men (617b5); bestial metempsychosis as reincarnation of unwise souls into new life, not just punishment of a goddesses’ wand (618a3); Odysseus as part of the parade of souls rather than the one watching the parade (619e6), and famously, Odysseus now as the philosophical hero who trades in the lessons of his past life for a private life of minding his own business (*ἀπράγμωνος*, 620c7). If Plato works deliberately to keep any particular religious affiliation obscure, he works equally hard to ‘turn-about’ the Homeric world order.<sup>65</sup> Unsurprisingly, many have fixated on the Myth of Er as one of the most significant structural reformulations of the *Odyssey* in the *Republic*.<sup>66</sup> The source of this fixation is epical symmetry.

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<sup>64</sup> The relationship of the soul, as a wraith, to the body (614b2, 8, 5), a rainbow’s message from the gods (616b5), and the relationship between allotment and necessity (616c4; 617c2). But looking at comparable details is insufficient for the case being made here.

<sup>65</sup> See especially Segal, who reads social extroversion in Homer’s myths, introversion in those of the dramatists, and finally synthesis of inward reflection and political deflection in Plato’s transmutation of Homer’s mythical archetypes of heroism, suffering/descent, and bestiality (333).

<sup>66</sup> Beyond Howland (33ff, 44ff, 137) and Segal (329ff), see Halliwell (*Republic* X 124, 132, 166). For full-scale treatment of Myth of Er’s performance of inexpressible axioms of Plato’s system, see Elias. For Plato’s unique preference of truth in Homeric myths, especially over Hesiodic myth, see Yamagata 76. For heroism as transmutation of Homer in Plato, see Barrachi *Of Myth* 205-6; Clay 51-61, 134; Griswold 144. For the novelty of Plato’s myth as ‘fictional story,’ and

Epical wholeness is signaled by symmetry between the first and last themes. Having seen that the descent of Er in Plato's as a counter-version of Hades, we return to the first word of the *Republic*. "I descended" (κατέβην), begins Socrates.<sup>67</sup> Upon further examination, Book I imitates at least three specific Odyssean motifs which it redacts in Book X: first, paternal descent and debt;<sup>68</sup> second, stealth and force; and third, *nostos* or home-return. Each of these motifs unfolds throughout the dialogue with similar word associations, and each touching on the two main formal conceptions of the dialogue: justice, and the ethereal pursuit of *sophia*. This last conception most radically turns away from its Odyssean undertones. Socrates' nostalgia is not for his wife's loom or earthly domain; rather, the philosopher's *nostos* is for an ethereal domain centered around a spindle of necessity. As we turn to the reception of each Odyssean motif, we, however, must not forget that both heroes (Odysseus and Socrates) descend to the depths to survive their quest onward.

## 2.2 PATERNAL DESCENT

Few would argue that justice is not one of Plato's major philosophical preoccupations. Even fewer would contend that justice is not at the front and center of the *Republic*. But most contentions focus on the Homeric sources of justice as embodied assertions of what the other is due (Havelock, *The Greek Concept of Justice* 14), or divine punishments for *hubristic* overreach

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its integration of previous myths, see Brisson 14, 44, especially chapters 6 and 7. For opposing line of thought, see Snodgrass 23ff.

<sup>67</sup> This verb is its own topic, noted by many scholars, the fullest treatment in Warnek 9-13.

<sup>68</sup> Consider in conjunction with the *Homeridai* who fabricated their paternal descent, or affiliation with Homer (West 381; *Republic* X 124).

of what one is allotted (Lloyd-Jones 135). If so, then the main lines of departure from the Homeric order in Plato's dialogues is the disembodied, hence abstracted, concept of justice on the one hand, and its secular or ideational backings on the other. If a reading of Plato's disaffiliation from poetic justice amounts to abstraction and secularization, then it leaves many loose ends, among them why justice remains undefined in the dialogue (Rosen 61),<sup>69</sup> or how the Myth of Er even fits with the dialogue *writ large* (Annas 353). A better reading of Plato's disaffiliation would take the reversal of the Cyclops scene into account. Such an interpretation could show that what scholars identify as lacking or disjointed in the *Republic* is coherent if read as social commentary on patrilinear decay.

The opening back-and-forth with aging Cephalus features justice as a settling of the ledger before it is turned over to the next generation (330d). His son Polemarchus intervenes on his father's behalf with the added caveat that the ledger of justice specifically obliges one to give friends help and enemies harm (331d). Polemarchus' addition reflects the shrewd material and pragmatic political concerns of his generation. Socrates responds to both characters' transactional notions of justice as debt (*ophelein*) with the notion of what is 'fitting' (*to prosekon*). Accordingly, justice requires one to render to another what is appropriate, not what is owed. Both of these characters' exchanges with Socrates are said to set the stage for the next violent confrontation with Thrasymachus on the topic of clandestine injustice. And they do. However *Cephalus* (literally, head) and his son, the elder resigned to religious salvation and the younger an aggressive yet ineffective interlocutor, signal regressive reproduction. The

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<sup>69</sup> Unless the definition in the Myth of Er, "minding one's own business" is the main call to action (Rosen, *Plato's Republic* 281).

sympathetic yet pathetic portrayal of father and his son may very well reflect Plato's disposition about the young generation of aristocrats who were about to take over the reins of Athens.

Cephalus and Polemarchus then perform the first act of a larger episode: the patronym as a fundamental but periodic sign<sup>70</sup> of symbolic order. Side-by-side with Cephalus and Thrasymachus, Polemarchus (literally, 'principle,' 'will,' and 'general of war') has been argued to symbolize the *epithumos* in Plato's tripartite division of the soul. Perhaps. Here I would refer to the distribution of property and identity that the household head promulgates. Generally, the proverbial *cephalus* allows a son to assert claims of right by name and identity. It does so as a sort of material continuity, which permits intergenerational wealth to accumulate, remain, or dwindle. At the same time, patrilineal conventions prohibit sons from claiming these goods until death does the father part.

This motif of paternal descent begins and ends the action of the *Odyssey*. Identity and property remain the overriding question of the *Telemachia*, the first four books in which Telemachus goes on a quest to find news of his father, and in Books 19-24 in which Odysseus returns and takes his revenge on the suitors. In terms of identity, Telemachus' striking resemblance to his father is remarkable. Indeed, a sense of anticipation picks up on the question of whether he is capable of filling the shoes of his father in the hero's absence. A lot hangs on the scales of wealth and property, too: the suitors boarding at the Ithacan palace halls of Odysseus have feasted on his stores as they await Penelope to make good on her promise to marry one among them. Seen this way, Odysseus' patronymic role seems simple at one level. It

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<sup>70</sup> By periodic, I mean that, like sentences, reproduction is marked by the death of an old generation as well as birth of a new generation; it either picks up again like a cycle, or does not. I am also thinking of Homer's non-periodic style in contrast to Aristotle's claim that the periodic style is pleasant (*katestrammenē*). For more on the catastrophe, see Sutton and Mifsud 3.

spurs Telemachus to ‘become a man,’ defending and reclaiming the expenditures of wealth that might no longer be his. At another level, Odysseus’ return is complex. The son is introduced to his father in the songs of bards long before Odysseus arrives in person. So, even if the linguistic/symbolic supersedes the visual/physical realm, the former can only take over in the actual presence of Odysseus. If this is so, then paternal lineage is fraught with the dissonance between the father in name and in actuality.

As Polemarchus “inherits” (331e) his father’s case for justice, Socrates refutes his interlocutor’s lines with semantic distinctions (e.g., uselessness and usefulness, 333e; seeming and being, 334c). Then, Socrates spins Polemarchus’ portrait of the just man by referring to what he calls Homer’s morally complacent description of Odysseus’ uncle Autolycus: “he was gifted beyond all men in thievery and perjury” (ὄς ἀνθρώπους ἐκέκαστο κλεπτοσύνη θ’ ὄρκῳ τε, 19.395). If this is the consequence of Polemarchus’ rash defense of justice, thievery and perjury seem to take us to the heart of injustice. Regardless, the line that Socrates pulls from the *Odyssey* is peculiar, given that it is a line rooted in a narrative re-told at a third remove from the actual event: Homer’s narrator describes Euryycleia’s flashback to Odysseus’ tale told to his parents. Because the touch of Odysseus’ scar triggers the flashback, we cannot go as far as to say that the re-telling represents an infinite regression of narrative representation as much as it does the limit of touch [a poetic process of tactility] in Homer. Indeed as Barbara Clayton writes, “the scar declares itself, along with Penelope’s woven story cloth...to be a rewoven narrative” (Clayton 73). By contrast, Socrates’ quote from Homer simplifies and unweaves the *narrative stance* that poetic production delivers. That reduction, however, is provisional, meant to fit Polemarchus’ simple performance of inheritance: defending his father’s argument. Given its strategic turns, the quote from Homer declares itself to be a sign in the text of Plato’s reversal.

Read this way, Plato seems to thief and reverse the paternal motif in the *Odyssey*. Odysseus' reunion with Telemachus seems simple (he meets his son and they defeat the foes) when compared to the obstacles he faces on his homeward quest. But Odysseus' paternal function in the story points toward the complex and dangerous dissonance between legacy and actuality. Even so, the hero's son manages to dispel the dissonance when he intuits and, later, witnesses Athena's favor toward both of them. However, Plato narrates the patrilineal story in reverse: what is owed to whom and how to identify the just man are complex matters; how one relates to the father (by symbolic continuity) is simply granted. At the same time, his quote from Homer reads like a scar: it marks the possibility to re-tell the narrative relating father to son within Plato's opening exchanges. What's more, the scar re-tells the possibility, now passed, of not having been scarred; the scar marks a discontinuity from the father, of passing into an age when the surface of innocence will learn that it was soft and supple. At the same time, the periodic mark of his son gives the father pleasure at his son's stealth and fear of his son's force.

In considering the processes of re-telling and interpretation, we return to Clayton's comparison of Odysseus' scar to Penelope's weaving (57ff). The woven brocades in Homer's poems are analogous to the gifts that Homeric heroines make for strangers. Although I have mentioned that the notion of the 'fitting' in Socrates' case of justice take us outside the transactional logic of exchange, I have not yet suggested what justice in excess of linear affiliations might entail. Describing that excess, Mifsud theorizes Homeric gift-giving outside the economies of exchange.<sup>71</sup> Accordingly, the gift is not only beautiful, a virtue reminding both its giver and recipient of their shared position within the cosmic balance; it also underscores a

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<sup>71</sup> For a rhetorical theory of gift-giving culture in Homer, one beyond the calculation of material exchange in the *polis*, see Mifsud, "On Rhetoric as Gift/Giving."

loose system of deferral whereby paying back is a form of ‘passing forward’ one day to some body. Such an arrangement is rooted in excess, outside the *tit-for-tat* logic of bartering. However, the departure from two-way lines of exchange, whether of debt or inheritance, requires a radical revision of justice as well as a way of recognizing moments of re-telling in Plato’s *Republic*. Often, the impulse is to respond to Socrates’ logic with retaliation or force, or even to bypass his peculiar lines with stealth.

While Polemarchus has been speaking, nameless companions have been holding Thrasymachus back: he must respect the hosts’ first shares at the banquet of speech. As soon as he barges into the dialogue, the claims of filial authority are bracketed for the sake of the related issues of violent force and stealth. I argue that both violence and clandestine injustice are signs of patrilinear decay. We turn now to elaborate the motif of stealth in contest with force, motifs that Plato riffs from the *Odyssey*.

### 2.3 STEALTH AND FORCE

He was sitting on a sort of couch with cushions and he had a chaplet on his head, for he had just finished sacrificing in the court. So we went and sat down beside him, for there were seats there disposed in a circle (κύκλω). (*Rep*, 328c)

Stealth can circumnavigate violent force: one learns to do what one wants in the blind spots of superior force. Odysseus’ *polytropic* and *polymetic* epithets are of a hero enduring the consequences of Zeus’ embodied justice. As background to the epithets’ significance, the reign of Olympus, post-Cronos, is telling: Zeus’ progeny grapple with their father’s siblings on a pecking order of power. In Odysseus’ unfortunate case, he occupies the contested and conflicted

grounds that identify him with Athena's aegis, Poseidon's wrath, Zeus' neutrality, and Helios' punishment. Many heroes occupy liminal spaces between immortal and mortal domains. But Odysseus' claim to fame is stealth. His feats are great even though he is described as physically inferior to the stature of his counterpart Achaean heroes (*Il* 24.369); his words fall as snow even though he is said to look like a mute idiot when he first wields a scepter-officiating speech (*Il* 3.215-224). The nuanced words of his stealth—great worldly knowing (εἰδότα πολλά), crafty words (δολίοις), cunning (κερδαλέος)<sup>72</sup>—betray the subsidiary but reflexive role that stealth plays compared to force. Unlike force, stealth does not subside. In sum, Odysseus represents stealth's power, that which allows a weaker agent to bide his time and pool his resources against stronger forces, like Poseidon's 'savage, lawless' son Polyphemus (*Od* 9.195-6). We go to the Cyclopes now, to see how the contest of stealth and force enlarges the *Republic's* reception of the *Odyssey*.

In his critique of poetic characters in Book III, Socrates observes that similar characters do similar things. Polyphemus and Thrasymachus are no exception. The Cyclops "sprang up and put forth his hands upon my comrades (ἑτάροις)" (9.288), snatching them and tearing them limb from limb (9.324-6). Fittingly, Odysseus reports that he and his companions were "seized with terror" (δείσαντες, 9.236), that the hearts inside them shook (9.288). Although in the dialogue, Thrasymachus "was restrained by those who sat by him who wished to hear the argument out;" he, like the cyclops, gathered "himself up like a wild beast hurled himself upon us as if he would tear us to pieces. And Polemarchus and I were frightened (δείσαντες) and fluttered apart, and he bawled out into our midst" (1.336b). So far, we can count on the presence of companions to

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<sup>72</sup> Detienne and Vernant have elaborated thoroughly into a semantic web covering the archaic Greek mind (43-8).

constrain the aggression of either antagonist, an attempt resulting in paralyzing terror. But we also note that violent force (*bia*) instigates a contest with stealth, a theme explicitly mentioned in both passages at hand (“δόλω ἢ ἐ βίηφιν?” *Od* 9.405ff; cf *Rep* 344a).

In both cases too, it is by contrast to the companions’ relative weakness and appeals to pity (ἔλεος) that the heroes’ interventions seem effective. Neither pity nor justice will do for Polyphemus. His ‘pitiless (νηλέι) heart’ makes him irresponsive to appeals to mercy (9.273; 287-289; 9.349; 9.368), and his Poseidonian breed leaves him fearless of violating the hospitality of Zeuxian law: “we Cyclopes never blink at Zeus...we’ve got more force by far” (9.309-310). Thrasymachus, too, refuses Socrates’ appeal that, “to show pity” (ἐλεεῖσθαι, 336e) would be more reasonable than “to show anger” (χαλεπαίνεσθαι, I.337a), the latter verb connoting the severe force of storms, a topic on which I will elaborate shortly. Against the claim that justice virtually distributes what each individual is due, Thrasymachus speaks of overreaching legal or conventional allotments by:

the man who has the ability to overreach (πλεονεκτεῖν) on a large scale. Consider this type of man, then, if you wish to judge how much more profitable it is to him personally to be unjust than to be just. And the easiest way of all to understand this matter will be to turn to the most consummate form of injustice which makes the man who has done the wrong most happy and those who are wronged and who would not themselves willingly do wrong most miserable. And this is tyranny, which both by stealth and by force takes away what belongs to others, both sacred and profane, both private and public, not little by little but at one swoop. (I.344a)

If companions are soft checks against violence, then the herd mentality can be circumvented in Thrasymachus' framework. In his view, overreaching may come at the expense of civic relationships—family members, neighbors, and community members—but only if they cannot be coerced, corrupted, or avoided. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine such a conglomerate not buckling under competing private interests and deep distrust. At the same time, it seems that Thrasymachus both recognizes and identifies with tyranny, making his physically aggressive entrance significant.

Of course, some differences do surface. Namely, Thrasymachus is not a strict representation of violent force as Polyphemus seems to be. Thrasymachus' speech on overreaching would employ any means necessary, stealth or force, to get more than one's share. Polyphemus is too brutish and massive for stealth. So Thrasymachus is a refined version of the troglodyte, employing, as it were, the faculty of stealth, which would outdo the lawless savage. The transfer from epical motif to dialogue, then, can apply across characters; it cannot be measured by strict character parallelisms. However, the present argument regards violent force or stealth not as parallel characteristics but as effects of the patronymic order projected by Plato onto the terministic screen of the *polis*. The civilizing constraints of the *polis* shield civic companions from the forceful and stealthily thieved individual gains that Thrasymachus' tyrant would inflict. But strength in numbers and appeals to pity are obviously insufficient. More is needed at the limits, where patrilineal descent or individual interests fail.

Now, the storm is still brewing in Polyphemus' cave and Thrasymachus' speech. The play on names in both Cephalus' and Polemarchus' cases have been mentioned, yet not that of Cyclops (literally, 'round circle'). On the Homeric side, Odysseus whittles Polyphemus' own olive-wood club to pierce (380-403) the singular round of its owner's skull (9.536-442). After

imbibing a strong wine, the Cyclops “vomited in his drunken sleep...then eerily I drew nigh, bringing the stake from the fire, and my comrades stood round me (ἀμφὶ δ’ ἑταῖροι ἴσταντ’)” (*Od* 9.379-382). Odysseus describes piercing the soft round and twisting the stake as though he were starting a fire. Hence, a powerful image: the comrades standing around the punctured eye are just the second circle within a third, the cave in which they remain trapped, the same cave around which other Cyclopes come rushing to stand (ἰστάμενοι περὶ, 9.402) in response to Polyphemus’ wailing:

“No-man [the Greek is a contraction of ‘Odysseus’] is slaying me by guile and not by force” (Οὐτίς με κτείνει δόλῳ οὐδὲ βίηφι, 9.408).<sup>73</sup> The concentric rings re-enforce borders surrounding lack: no man, the punctured eye, bleeding and singing, no access to the cave, the source of force that Odysseus taps.

Astonishingly, Socrates reiterates the same verb *istemi*, meaning to stand, to institute, to stop, and to kill.<sup>74</sup> Indeed, he uses it as he self-reportedly demolishes his aggressive interlocutor’s short-sighted conception of justice. As Socrates describes the eye of his storm, “When we had come to this point in the discussion it was apparent to everybody that his formula of justice had suffered a *reversal of form* (περιειστήκει) [emphasis mine]” (I.343a).<sup>75</sup> A more literal translation of *periistemi* would be ‘to place or stand full circle,’ suggesting that philosophical liberties have been taken at the expense of figural language in the translation ‘reversal of form.’ Figuratively, the verb *periistemi* signals this moment as the one of piercing: Thrasymachus’ doctrine came full circle on itself, revealing its central lack.

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<sup>73</sup> This is a well-known wordplay, for further discussion see Knox’s notes to the *Odyssey* (509-510).

<sup>74</sup> Liddell and Scott, s.v. *peristemi*. Nowhere does the lexicon indicate reversal of form, this is a translational liberty, which is, perhaps not wrongfully, unsupported. So I revert to the lexicon’s translation which adheres to the word’s more common and literal meaning, two principles on which to prefer it to the whimsical Platonic signifier “reversal of form” (384-5).

<sup>75</sup> 3rd singular pluperfect indicative of ἴστημι contracted with περὶ, “to bring around.”

At the same time, a reversal of form has taken place, although not at the level of words uttered. At the level of argument, for example, Socrates has found the absurdity in Thrasymachus' doctrine that justice is a constraint on individual power. By implication, force has been reversed by Socrates' stealth, a stealth that Thrasymachus directly describes (337a). Furthermore at a discursive level, the burden of proof now swings to Socrates; he must defend his doctrine that justice is doing what's right, even in extreme cases, like when individuals can get away with injustice, or when enforcing justice is tantamount to social coercion. Further yet, at the level of Odyssean transfers, we are watching force, a direct outburst that fades into its periodic rest. With the vocabulary of storms and fluidity that is about to erupt, it seems that force and injustice are the two linear motions consonant with linear and simplified conceptions of paternal descent. Just as force begins and ends in rest, paternal descent seems to be reaching an end.

Twice more, the verb *istemi* appears. The second time, Thrasymachus begins to do what irate or fatigued Socratic interlocutors typically do, which is to concede to Socrates howsoever, often with bites of sarcasm. However, Thrasymachus answers more specifically than others, responding, "let-stand" (ἔστω, I.351d7) to Socrates' semantic distinctions as well as to the implication that overreaching brings about faction (στάσεις *ibid*) and internecine war. We can point to this word play as a fixation on what has taken place between the two interlocutors. As fixations normally go, this moment creates an echoing chamber; the word is repeated, and its repetition foreshadows the next nine books of the dialogue. In the aftermath of the piercing,

Socrates' *systematic* (the prefix *sun* (together)+*istemi* (to stand)) treatment of justice seems urgent enough to be taken up at the next juncture.<sup>76</sup>

Realizing that Odysseus and his companions have escaped his cave,<sup>77</sup> the Cyclops blindly lumbers toward the shore, where the surviving companions have set sail. Unable to resist the temptation, Odysseus cries out to the Cyclops: you were duped; I am not just *ou tis*, but *Odysseus!* By the infamous homophony of '*ou tis*,' Odysseus' contracted name means 'no man.' Further, in the conditional declension of 'no man,' *me tis*, equivocates to *metis*, or 'cunning intelligence' (Knox 509-510). Upon digesting this, the man-eating savage realizes that Odysseus is the man prophesied to defeat him. The storm finally comes to a head as the wounded giant issues to Poseidon storm-god the *coup de grace* prayer to curse the home-return. Even still, he grasps for a mountain top and heaves (ἔβαλεν) "it so hard the boulder landed in front of [their] dark prow and a huge swell reared up as the rock went plunging under—a tidal wave from the open sea" (*Od* 9.537-541). Even the lawless Cyclops resorts to invoking the father's name to do it vengeance. Odysseus, who thinks he has mastered symbolic deception, ultimately 'wanders the most.'<sup>78</sup>

On second reading of Thrasymachus' speech, we read an Odyssean allusion to the tempestuous nature of injustice. Socrates reports, "like a bathman (βαλανεύς)... [Thrasymachus] had poured his speech in a sudden flood over our ears... hurling (ἐμβάλών) such a doctrine at us"

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<sup>76</sup> As I elaborate below, institution and death have conjoined as the double face of the father, at this intersection of the *Republic*.

<sup>77</sup> An extreme instance of stealth which recurs in both texts (λανθανέτω), 'to escape notice' *Rep* 2.361a, 10.612c, 9.281.

<sup>78</sup> Much has been penned about the name (*le nom de père*), the prohibition (*le 'non!' de père*), and the wandering reserved to those who think they cannot be duped (*le non-dupe erres*, those who think they are not duped, wander the most). The French word play is a tragic scheme derived from mythology. Therefore it would not be an over-extension of this frame, to consider the way it orders the Cyclopes scene.

(I.344d). Mentioning the Greek from the speech mentioned previously is helpful here if only because the speech rhetorically mounts into a storm:

**And** this is tyranny, which **both** by stealth **and** by force takes away what belongs to others, **both** sacred **and** profane, **both** private **and** public, **not** little by little **but** at one swoop. (I.344a)

The last three lines are conjoined by a repetition (bolded) of *kai*, an example of what Longinus would later describe as a storm coming to its head and culminating, a rhetorical style (καταντλήσαι), which makes Plato “above all others” Homeric (Longinus 13.3, see ‘Chapter Four’). This stylistic note emphasizes the relationship drawn here between brute force and injustice, both of which conjoin and exert and culminate and exhaust, to the end. This is unlike the reflexive capacities of power and stealth. These circle back around to replenish and strengthen their sources. In effect, brute force and injustice lock tyrants into victims; the agent of violence ultimately becomes victim.

Thus far I have gradually elaborated the fluid dimension of force on the one hand, and the reflexive power of stealth on the other. Even if paternal orders are linear, legislating and prohibiting with respect to one supreme sign, Plato’s point seems to be that they are deceptively linear. In fact, paternal descent has a dynamic character. Both Polyphemus and Thrasymachus, who pose themselves as exceptions to the symbolic order of justice, appeal to those orders for cover. By appeal to his own father Poseidon, Polyphemus takes exception to being a subject to the Zeuxian code of justice; and by appeal to individual force and stealth, Thrasymachus takes exception to the conventions of order, at least in theory. The enforcement of those individualistic positions has been found more tempestuous and fluid than initially supposed.

We have now to reckon with the two-fold repercussion of such fluidity: how can Plato reverse a patronymic order that already contains its own reversal? Patronymic orders can either surpass, pass, or fall short of the previous generation in identity or property. Furthermore, in Plato's *polis*, paternal lines can even be bracketed for more individualistic or contemporary social concerns. In these cases, if the individual revolts against the social order and convention, s/he does so by appeal to force and/or stealth. Those tactics ironically have a way of re-weaving those individuals back into the social order. So why would Plato attempt to thief and radically reverse the Homeric world order if such an order admits of both progress and regress?

To answer these questions, we turn to the figural capstone of this piece—eccentricity. As we consider eccentricity, the Greek of Homer's *amphi+istemi* and Plato's *peri+istemi* give us direction. The same verb denotes several acts—to kill, to stand, and to institute. By implication, Plato's revolution has to find a way of circumscribing the beginning and end of linear affiliation in death, whether actual or symbolic. Of course, the issue of paternal descent has not been proper to the characters within the *Republic* or *Odyssey* but suggestive of what is happening at the level of Plato's relationship to 'Homer.'

## 2.4 TOWARD A THEORY OF DISAFFILIATION

Whereas Homer has Odysseus return to Ithaca, Plato has everyone return to the heavenly realm. This is evident in the third speech of the *Phaedrus*, where the philosopher is granted entrance to the best afterlife. By contrast, the chain of divine versification that Plato describes in the *Ion* is a farce. In Homer and Plato's cases both, we have a return. But Homer's takes place in this world; Plato's to another. Odysseus' return is willed and fueled by *nostos*; every person's return to the

heavens is inevitable. For Homer, worldly troubles can be overcome; for Plato, they ultimately do not matter—what matters for him is to have lived a good life (the philosophical one) so as to secure a place up there, among the gods. In all these ways, Plato sets our sights to the other-worldly. Talk about disaffiliation!

By circumstance or compulsion, every person is affiliated. Whether to family by name, to denomination by creed, or to nation and race; affiliations claim a person before there is opportunity to assent. Barring choice, disentangling one's self from these claims is a complicated affair. In some cases, complete disaffiliation does not seem to be an option: one is named, perceived, or identified as being affiliated. Or, if a person can radically denounce some affiliation, the self is nevertheless marked by its opposition to the affiliate group. Atheists who *emphasize* their non-belief sometimes voice a belief so *ardent* that it seems caught in the coattails of religion anyway. What they have achieved is a break from something against which their reaction depends. That affiliation precedes disaffiliation is implied by the impossibility of totally breaking apart from structures of affiliation.

Less marked cases are captured in this paradox just as well. To remain quietly and politely apart from that which stirs feelings of un-belonging nevertheless casts doubts in the self of whether one can, wants or is wanted to fit. Those doubts of capability and desirability are projected in current stories of victims, who having been deprived of healthy bonds of affiliation, search for belonging. What these stories imply is a rampant calculus of those who remain affiliated despite feeling mis-fitted or treated by affiliation: it is better to suffer as an affiliate in bondage than to meet one's demise apart from a group's name and capacities. Here, the stacked dynamic between individual and group serves to hold back those toeing the line. For the purposes of reformulating the commonplace of one against many, legal and social discourses

emphasize that one is not alone but joins a group better by name or power. If disaffiliation amounts to joining the auspices of another larger body, a person may wonder whether s/he is not opting for the same problems albeit in fresh forms. Once again, it seems that affiliation is prior to as well as the end result of disaffiliation.

Why, then, write a chapter on disaffiliation? There are three reasons to attempt such an endeavor. It is first and foremost the charge against which any intellect, no matter how publically engaged, must come to terms with. It is somehow both impotent and important to be allowed some space from which to record and reflect on the world. A thinker feels disaffiliated, in some capacities, from practical and productive effects of labor. She also feels that she owes it to write an apologia for disaffiliation on behalf of herself and others. Second, disaffiliation seems to be an increasingly precious commodity, even for the intellect. Unlike family, creed, or nation, the inter-networked society leaves no step uncoun­ted, no vital sign unmonitored, and no conversation unrecorded. When “going off the grid” incurs increased opportunity costs, disaffiliation is a fantasy, today’s limit as well as dream. So it seems that elaborating disaffiliation as a concept is anything but disengaged with the world. In fact, elaborating disaffiliation implies that there might be space yet into which we can disengage for the sake of better living, or at least for the sake of making sense out of life.

Third, we must write about disaffiliation because it does not amount to joining the auspices of another, larger organization. Affiliates are subsidiaries, meaning that they already are dependent on the patronage of an institution. To study Plato’s disaffiliation from Homeric poetry is the study of a particular philosophy which grounded itself on the theft and looting of idiomatic fields of expression and imagery. Those epical motifs are alive and well in Homer; to then turn around and exile them suggests just how sinister the changing of political tides can be. Yet the

political tides at this episode in history were between affiliates, semantic fields of group members associated by status, whether of the material, physical, or intellectual kind. Those group members with whom Socrates frequented, were the ones from which Plato disaffiliated. Socrates' affiliates had killed the teacher who would in turn become immortal in the paternal protagonist of Plato's dialogues. Plato never speaks before the father, who had frequented the most enduring affiliate of his day, that of aristocrats.

The affiliate that Plato depicts in his dialogues was riding on the most instituted, aristocratic families of Athens at the time.<sup>79</sup> Affiliates of aristocrats may have come from impoverished or rural backgrounds; but they accessed profound conversations about poetry, justice, and medicine. However, once disaffiliated from Socrates' affiliates, Plato had withdrawn himself totally from the public, and turned to the Academy. Perhaps it is a luxury of modern living that one can simply choose an alternative affiliate. Instead of a group of well-spoken, privileged brats, Plato opted for an intellectual republic of men who would seek the life of ideas. But in his writings, Plato's portrait of Homer is not very kind, for the poet was a reminder of the patrilineal organization to which affiliate classes were subordinate. At the same time, Plato has not just killed his symbolic father; he has first written a masterpiece, thereby mastering the symbolic order of that poetry.

If it be mastering before dispensing, disaffiliation then cannot be reduced to rejection or revolt. Indeed, it is a duplicitous movement whereby outright rejection of a larger organization has another effect, of strengthening bonds of a social sphere. Disaffiliation is different than revolt, whereby an affiliate overturns the larger body with the effect of its expulsion, destruction,

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<sup>79</sup> For the argument that rhetoric overturned the order of "political and familial law," see Havelock, *Preface to Plato* 64.

or topple. However, so-called failed revolts, in the winter after their spring, may be disaffiliations, especially if a more obstinate return to conserving governing structures overrides dissenting views. Disaffiliation is also different than reform whereby one identifies a larger body, and aims to improve its performance. Finally, disaffiliation is different too than immanent critique, or deconstruction, where the affiliate accepts the terms of a larger body so as to subvert its mission. Here, what is being strengthened is the substance of dissent within formal or institutional structures.

Scholars have read Plato's diachronic critique of Homer alternatively as revolution, reform, and immanent critique—none of these suffice. In the first case, the *Republic* is analyzed literally, as an advocacy for intellectual aristocracy and against democracy in a period of revolutionizing political forces. As for the second and third cases, the framework is ostensibly less political, more cultural, and definitely more literary than literal. In the second case, the *Republic* is a poetical rejection of poetry in the spirit of reforming poetry itself. Does not Plato invite someone to offer an account in defense of poetry in Book X? Does he not use the same literary motifs as Homer's epics do? Sub-textually or consciously perhaps, Plato identifies with poetry at some level. In the third case of immanent critique, Plato needs poetic elements, either to make poetry's exile appealing or to demonstrate that aesthetic effect need not be sacrificed in the philosophical turn toward truth, and that poetry need not be granted the role of cultural authority.

What these views do not, in my own view, transcend is the opposite responses. Interpretations can neither have the last word on Plato's intentions, nor on whether Plato's revolution was the idea that Poetic style was so pronounced, and the critique so thorough. Philosophy was already affiliated to poetry.

Clearly, the act of disaffiliation is intended, but its effect does not, I think, have to be so. At least in Plato's case, I do not rest the burden of my claims on his intentions, and although the effects may not be intended, a historical study can note the ironies between what might have been intended and how it played out over time. Here too, Plato's heavy critique of Homer arguably preserved poetic cultural authority in writing, right in the pages that Socrates would call unresponsive in the *Phaedrus*. These reservations notwithstanding, disaffiliation is a specific kind of irony, of how disavowal appears to be and how it turns out to be in cases where the disavowed body is re-entrenched. As such disaffiliation is conceptually at home in rhetorical theory, where variations of appearance, effects, and the wedge in between them continues to offer a motif recurring from Homeric poetry down to the simulacra of Baudrillard.

For example, playing devil's advocate is a role whereby engendering opposition may provoke from the initial position clarity and qualification on the one hand, or weakness and contradiction on the other. If the advocate provokes a stronger position from the interlocutor the effects of disaffiliation are eccentric. The disaffiliate may be quietly advancing a previous affiliate's mission which is squarely at odds with the supposed service to a current affiliate. In the vocabulary of military intelligence, the disaffiliate is comparable to a defector who may be in fact a double agent.

But the devil's advocate is the oldest trick in Socrates' book, and it might be too conversational, in effect binding rhetoric's social effects between two speakers. More troubling, one can be a devil's advocate in support of the wrong side of an equilibrium of power. Yet by treating disaffiliation as a theoretical principle, we can carry the concept outside of strictly communicative contexts or culturally neutral positions. Disaffiliation is found aplenty wherever an affiliate cuts ties with one body so as to serve another with a mission competing with the first.

It is not extreme to note, then, that disaffiliations are not only provocative or clarifying in the context of dialogue, but powerful and possibly dangerous in the context of institutions. The general American mood about politics –namely cynicism with respect to cross-influence between corporate, technological, and federal governance – might even offer hints about the kind of affective environment that lays the groundwork for re-entrenchment, disaffiliation's effect.

The dilemma between norms of presenting one's self and intended effects in disaffiliation makes it a rhetorical concept for three reasons. Disaffiliation is rhetorical in the sense that it represents a dilemma which casts an unanswerable question about one's integrity. Indeed, one must not announce that they are advocating for the devil, or that a performance of nonsense, neutrality, or betrayal is just a role. But whether one might be performing non-performance is a rhetorical question that leans on the side of appearances. Disaffiliation then is rhetorical in a second sense, that it is a dilemma born out of the sole access others ordinarily have, which is to the apparent self. There is presumption in what one presents as itself until there is reason to suspect a competing intention lurking in the disaffiliation.

The third rhetorical quality of disaffiliation is that it can occur in and by speech. In review, affiliation is prior to disaffiliation; disaffiliation presents itself as an extreme dispensation with affiliation; it does so with the intended effects of furthering some mission of an institution; finally, the presentation of disavowal and intention reach a dilemma when contradictions appear on the surface of disaffiliation. On this basis, the speech act of disaffiliation explicitly breaks away from a former affiliation while using that affiliation's key terms; it also is structured by the operations of adjacent and competing affiliations and implicitly uses the new mode of operations to revise and transcend the vocabulary of the former affiliation.

By its employment of old terms and new modes of operation, the speech act is received by some to be a coded affiliation, and by others as a total disavowal.

## 2.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter has approached the *Republic* in the spirit of literary interpretations of Plato, so as to avoid doctrinaire entanglements and tow the line beyond historical claims. In the case of doctrinaire entanglements, it has shown that literary interpretations add little to analytic readings of the *Republic*; in the case of historicism, it has shown that the philosopher is indebted to the literary backdrop of his time. What this chapter contributes to the chorus of poetically inclined interpreters, then, is a specification of transformation as such. That is, Plato disaffiliates from cultural productions authorized in Homer's name. 'Disaffiliation' is a species of change, a concept that might wedge itself into a technologically oriented world of increasingly rapid rate of social transformations. Even the strongest case for Plato's transformation of Homer, to be found in Charles Segal's 1978 "The Myth was Saved," does not direct itself toward a rhetorical theory of change. Even the most eloquent observation, as it is rendered here—

In its scale, in its complexity, in the inexhaustible abundance of questions that it raises, both hermeneutic and more purely philosophic – above all, in its lissom gravity, the *Republic* is the one truly successful epic to which Plato stretched himself in his lifetime. Do not remind me of the *Laws* in this connection. The *Laws* does not stand to the *Republic* as *Odyssey* to *Iliad*; it stands to the *Republic* as *Finnegans Wake* to *Ulysses*. The *Republic* is Plato's philosophic *Iliad* and *Odyssey* combined." ("Introduction," xvi)

—in Giovanni R.F. Ferrari’s writing, does not stretch us back to our lifetime. Clearly, what I have intended is a secular reading beside others. In this latter distinction, I appeal to Isocrates’ line in the *Panegyricus*, that the art of the orator is to speak on a subject as nobody else could, and hence beside what everybody else could. ‘Beside’ is theoretically and *demonstratively* rhetorical; it does not propose to disprove the doctrine of another, but rather to re-begin another’s song, perhaps improvising it better than before.

Furthermore this chapter has shown the rhetoricity of the *Republic*, specifically in its relation to the *Odyssey*. The rhetoricity I allude to need not be developed from the topical discussions on rhetoric in Plato’s works. Instead, it can issue from his discussions of poetry, or, as I have shown, any dialogue which shows a strategic disjoint between how and what it narrates. In the *Republic*, an elaborate theory of narrative unfolds in Books II, III, and X. Of course, what Socrates stipulates is inconsistent with how he argues. But this chapter has shown that those moments of inconsistency come when Plato sharply reverses the motifs that he has borrowed from Homer.

Therefore, the main task in this chapter has been to trace and flesh out how those reversals work, especially because Homeric poetry is polysemic. As Plato’s dialogues portray poetry, its meaning is in the eyes and ears of its re-tellers. One could even say that the poetic process is hence quite good at reversing his own motifs. The *Republic* not only exiles the patronym of cultural authority in Book X, it also goes further. Indeed, Plato makes exclusive claims of inheritance on Homer’s mode of writing, that he above all else can deliver its manner in writing while representing a series of exchanges on justice, doctrines which can be read as less reliant on their manner of delivery. But I further have advanced a new portrait by

considering Plato's characters as wealthy, healthy or intelligent affiliates to a system of patrilineal aristocracy in its decay.

Disaffiliation, the *Republic's* radical reversal of the *Odyssey*, consists of borrowing motifs and reconfiguring their logic so as to privilege philosophy above poetry. Reading the *Republic* for disaffiliations, however, requires a different approach. Such a perspective consists in discovering the cultural imaginings shuttled between the two texts, and re-telling their significance in relation to how Plato is figuring movement within the structure of his dialogue. In this case, the rhetoricity of the *Republic* is not only a matter of noting how the context (mood, character, or scene; Benitez 223) changes the meaning drawn from arguments otherwise treated in a vacuum. Most readers of Plato seem to accept such a definition of rhetoric anyway. Instead, the rhetoricity of the *Republic* is a matter of noting how Plato's exile of Homer cuts across all features of the dialogue—its word clusters, images, motifs, and its aspiration to radically revise social modes of inheritance beyond family allegiances, individual interests, and affiliate loyalties.<sup>80</sup>

Disaffiliation then is the radical discontinuation and circumscription of the periodic relations that would give us pleasure, that is, the ones that aim toward an end. Ultimately, these are doomed relationships, marked in their beginning and end by a pleasure-pain, pierced in their interim by a sense of lack in the light of inevitable endings. The matter of justice consists of retelling the story of what we owe to the social aggregate, whether it is in the domain of imagistic or symbolic action, and how the social aggregate can unweave our retelling of ourselves. There is no escape from the way that the cultural imagination defines our semantic

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<sup>80</sup> See Kastely 185 for additional insight on poetic affiliations as necessary alternative to the political failure of philosophy.

fields. Those who read the *Republic* as a cease and desist to image-thinking are sorely mistaken for its protagonist gives us more reason to cultivate literary sense of idioms conjoining identity, property, and affiliation. And in our day and age, affiliations between subsidiary groups and larger organizations can consolidate an awe-inspiring power.

Surely, the question of whether and which poets are exiled in Book X of the *Republic* will persist. Yet such a question, precisely by its persistence, might be radically revised. In the last words of this chapter, I begin to consider disaffiliation apart from Plato's radical reversal of Homeric poetry. The consideration is notional, what I read in Plato as the first level of philosophizing.

### 3.0 INTERCESSION: AERATING RHETORIC'S HOMERS

“Allowing a wine to ‘breathe’ is simply a process of exposing it to air for a period of time before serving. Exposing wine to air for a short time, or allowing it to oxidize, can help soften flavors and release aromas in a way similar to swirling the wine in your glass.”

— “Allowing a Wine to Breathe”<sup>81</sup>

“For men become suspicious of one whom they think to be laying a trap for them, as they are of mixed wines...Art is cleverly concealed when the speaker chooses his words from ordinary language.”

— Aristotle, *Rhetoric* (1404b17)

“The use of metaphor, like all other beauties of style, always tempts writers to excess. Indeed it is for these passages in particular that critics pull Plato to pieces, on the ground that he is often carried away by a sort of Bacchic possession in his writing into harsh and intemperate metaphors and allegorical bombast. ‘It is by no means easy to see,’ he says, ‘that a city needs mixing like a wine bowl, where the mad wine seethes as it is poured in, but is chastened by another and a sober god and finding good company makes an excellent and temperate drink.’ To

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<sup>81</sup> “Allowing a Wine to Breathe.” *Total Wine*. Total Wine, n.d. Web. 6 Jul 2015.  
<http://www.totalwine.com/eng/guide-to-wine/allowing-wine-to-breathe.cfm>

call water a 'sober god' and mixing 'chastisement,' say the critics, is the language of a poet who  
is far from sober.”

– Longinus, *On the Sublime* (32.7-8)

### 3.1 ENHANCING AROMAS

Starting with Aristotle, rhetorical handbook writers mention Homer frequently and fleetingly. A fleeting aroma, in the discourse of sommeliers, is a condensed note in wine. In discourses about rhetoric, frequent notes are not insignificant; they are condensed, often escaping us fleetingly. I respond to Socrates' gravity—"Conversation about poetry reminds me too much of the wine-parties of second-rate and commonplace people" (*Prot.* 347c)—with some levity. As I have shown in Chapter One, rhetoricians and orators often feasted on Homer. From prudential maxims for the everyday, to pronounced styles for special occasions, Homeric poetry furnished a wealth of expressions. Perhaps Homeric mentions did not need elaboration, even if some idioms were more current among scholars than others among mass audiences. What remains for us then in these Homeric idioms are cultural epitomes waiting to be recreated. At the same time, it is clear that Aristotle attempted to distinguish oratorical from poetical style, often to raise the would-be-orator's awareness of how typical audiences assess good speakers. Whether maxims or differentiating prose from poetry could explain why Homer is featured the way he is in the *Rhetoric*. Here, I am not trying to answer a question of omission—why doesn't Homer feature more prominently?—so much as a question of commission. What is condensed and already present of Homer in rhetoric handbooks?

The first epigraph above hints at my approach in this and the next chapter. If Homeric mentions were aereated, a rhetorical bouquet would soften, develop and mature. Unlike scholars who view rhetoric as a rational development of epic poetry, I let undeveloped notes about Homeric poetry in Aristotle's discussion of moderating poetic style in *Rhetoric* (Book III), and of emulating it in Longinus' *On the Sublime* (11ff; 44ff) breathe. In letting these notes breathe, I try to harmonize what otherwise seem like antithetical dispositions toward Homer. In reality, they can be keyed into the same register. In both cases, I interpret the fleeting mentions of Homer as keys, signaling rhetoric's stylistic solubility and volatility with its poetic predecessor.

Aristotle has earned the title of theorist, one who divorced rhetoric from its conventional involvements.<sup>82</sup> However, Book III of his *Rhetoric* affords us an opportunity for reading his ambivalence about that divorce, a feeling he expresses in his line that style is inessential, albeit necessary (1404a). For his part, Longinus has earned the title of literary critic, a title usually reserved for modern writers who have posed theoretical and philosophical questions regarding the means and goals of the literary arts. Like them, Longinus considers literature to be a sub species of rhetoric. Unlike most, however, he walks his talk, performing literature as he theorizes. His temporal frame, even if seemingly less pressing than Aristotle's practical "here and now," is noticeably affected by his poetic style. If Aristotle is a presentist, Longinus' is a futurist. In this and the next chapter, then, I look at these two handbook writers who theorize rhetoric's practical and civic as well as its future anterior aims, respectively. Whereas Aristotle coaches his students on speech sobriety, Longinus poses to his readers the problem of how to

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<sup>82</sup> For a recent special volume dedicated to this theme see, *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 46.2 (2013), especially Doxtader 231ff.

overcome cultural sterility. If Aristotle offers advice on rhetorical composition, Longinus begins to cultivate a literary republic for the days to come.

The two Homeric receptions to be unfolded in the next two chapters pass the nose just as we turn to the rhetorical subject of style (*lexis*). By *lexis*, both handbook writers evidently mean compositional choices at three levels of expression: word choice, arrangement, and delivery by voice and body. Poetry, whether recited or enacted, staged the best crafted versions of all three levels. Unsurprisingly, then, the terms of the *Rhetoric* and *On the Sublime* are similar and related to Homeric poetry. Both writers also treat Homeric style as generic to prosaic and poetical styles of speech. Accordingly, even when Aristotle talks of dramatists or poetic style *writ large*, he often alludes to Homer. As he writes in the *Poetics*, “Homer’s position, however, is peculiar” (1448b34ff). This statement meditates on the originary resource of the tragic and comic modes of drama, as well as crafted styles in speech and character development.<sup>83</sup> For his part, Longinus directly refers to Homer as the supreme rhetor, treating him alongside Demosthenes, the quintessential orator. But whereas Aristotle insists that style must be appropriate to the weight of the subject matter, Longinus treats it as determining the subject matter’s weight. Either way, rhetorical style sips and tips on epical idioms, and gestures, too.

Here we must correlate Bacchic frenzy with *xenos* (foreigner, stranger) within Aristotle’s text. Aristotle writes that orators must conceal poetic craft in their style, for “men become suspicious... of mixed wine” (1404b17). This line alone clues us as to why Aristotle tries to be sober about Homer. Cope traces Aristotle’s “mixed wines” metaphor to Plutarch’s *Symposium*,

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<sup>83</sup> *Mimesis*, what we commonly translate as imitation, does not mean copying or duplicating, especially in the inventional processes of Homeric cultural productions; to the Greeks it meant a creative enactment of a style or tradition of speech. In effect, Aristotle’s caution about undue imitation is a concern with tapping Homer unnecessarily.

and finds that in later texts the phrase is an idiomatic expression. Let us assume that Aristotle, although pre-dating Plutarch, was using the same idiom. And we can, for otherwise how explain what Cope cheekily calls the “curious coincidence” of exact phrasing? Moreover Longinus, as the third epigraph above suggests, jabs at Plato’s hope, and I would add Aristotle’s, to mix rhetoric and poetry. If we follow Cope’s reasoning, we have a stunning conjunction between *xenos* and the double inebriation of Homeric and oratorical styles. After all, the colloquialism connoted “a concealed *enemy*: mixed wine, the ‘mixing of liquors,’ being as was supposed of a much more intoxicating character than unmixed” (16). So too, rhetoric and poetry mixed are a concealed enemy, intoxicating audience and orator beyond control, to the point of sickness. But perhaps Longinus’ line is more prophetic than Cope’s: it is inebriation to suppose that Homer can be tempered by prose. Taking the “mixed wine” idiom as an example, rhetoric is no more insulated from strangeness than poetry.

The idiom “mixed wine” is almost lost to us because Aristotle is speaking in what he would call signature rhetorical style.<sup>84</sup> Rhetorical style, he says, expresses itself in what seems ordinary and familiar to *folks*, those who would be in a public audience. As I note in Chapter One, Homer was the iterative sum of the common expressions attributed to his vulgate. Indeed, the sum depended on what was current in a certain time frame. For example, the “mixed wine” idiom Aristotle would have been obvious to folks listening to his afternoon lectures open to the public. But what is true of Aristotle’s commonplace idiom, as well as perceptions of bodily gestures and vocal cadences, holds true with Homer: the ordinary is contingent on what is familiar to a community. In Aristotle, we feel the rumbles that ‘Homer’ is reined in. When

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<sup>84</sup> For the converse argument to mine, that poetic expressions can become ordinary, see Burkett 121.

'Homer' is quoted in Aristotle's lectures, expressions seem to carry moral or historical weight, not poetic flight. Perhaps he is demonstrating prosaic appropriations of poetic verse. In any case, the historical backing that Homer tends to offer Aristotle's insights in the *Rhetoric* runs against the mode of poetry spelled out in the *Poetics*.<sup>85</sup> Or perhaps Aristotle is being performative, consciously quoting lines in the poems unavailable to the vulgate currency. However he does it, Aristotle practices what he preaches: rhetorical style must water down the strangeness of Homeric style.

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<sup>85</sup> Here, I am giving a poetics of rhetoric, an account reversing the one that Kirby gives ("Rhetoric of Poetics" 1-22).

#### 4.0 ARISTOTLE'S DISAMBIGUATION OF HOMER

Alexander to Aristotle, greeting. Thou hast not done well to publish thy acroamatic [oral] doctrines; for in what shall I surpass other men if those doctrines wherein I have been trained are to be all men's common property? But I had rather excel in my acquaintance with the best things than in my power.

—Plutarch, *Alexander* (VII.4)

Whereas the previous chapter posits rhetoric's disaffiliation from Homeric cultural productions, this one announces the disambiguation of Homer. In Aristotle's writing we can see an attempt to keep prose from exceeding ordinary language, i.e., becoming too poetic. Poetic style lacks clarity because it typically uses open-ended images, which lead to confusion and indeterminate meanings in the minds of the listeners. Although orators aspiring to a distinctive prose must go outside the bounds of ordinary language, they always risk giving off "foreign airs," or what I call the "strangeness" of poetry, primarily Homer's.

When Aristotle writes cautionary tales about the point beyond which orators should not assimilate poetic devices into their prose, he is cueing us not only into what is "proper" rhetorical style but also how the cosmopolitan polis distinguished between welcome and unwelcome foreigners. Our cue here is the term *xenos* (stranger) and its cognates. As they apply to Aristotle's treatment of Homer in Book III of the *Rhetoric*, *xenos* and its cognates are not meant

to expel Homer from the republic of proper rhetorical prose, only to make sure that he does not overwhelm and confuse it. To put it differently, the disambiguation of Homer dictates that his archaic poeticisms be used in the language of the classical epoch only sparingly.

A certain biographical irony frames Aristotle's caution against prose *lexis* diverging too much from the ordinary. He himself had been a stranger from Stagira even if Athenian history claims him. Further, he was widely supposed to be the shoe-in as Plato's successor at helm at the Academy. Instead of Aristotle, Plato chose his nephew, who was less divergent than Aristotle from Platonic philosophy, as his successor. Meanwhile, Aristotle accepted to serve in the Macedonian court of King Philip, a move which bestowed on him great honor, and appointed in his tutelage the iconic student, Alexander the Great. Plutarch reports that by the time Alexander had overtaken Syria, "he constantly laid Homer's *Iliad*, according to the copy corrected by Aristotle, called the casket copy, with his dagger under his pillow, declaring that he esteemed it a perfect portable treasure of all military virtue and knowledge" (Plutarch, *Alexander* 8.2). That Alexander fancied himself to be Achilles is intriguing. But that Aristotle had corrected a manuscript of Homer's *Iliad*, and that Alexander treasured it in a Syrian casket from his conquest of Gaza is more intriguing. Indeed, we can suppose that Aristotle was an assiduous Homeric scholar in his own right, and if we learn from his approach in the original *Homeric Problems*.<sup>86</sup> As for the casket and its whereabouts, we have the *Rhetoric*, a sort of casket copy of the epic poems. After all, Aristotle treats Homer historically, not poetically, the animate force of the poems. The philosopher carries Homer's bones in the first two books of the *Rhetoric*. All the

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<sup>86</sup> Aristotle's original *Homeric Questions* survives in fragments. But other texts using the same interpretative format include Seneca's *Natural Questions*, Plutarch's *Platonic Questions*, and Theophrastus' *Homeric Questions*.

while in Book III, he stresses that Homeric similes are animating, energetic, and vivid (1410b34).

Five years after King Philip's death Aristotle returned to Athens. He set up a school at the Lyceum, giving lectures as he walked on foot. For that practice, he and his followers would later be called *peripatetics* (*peri* (about)+*patetic* (to walk)). With the sudden death of the conqueror Alexander in 323 BCE, right as anti-Macedonian sentiments had gripped Athens, Aristotle found himself now a suspected Macedonian sympathizer. He fled Athens, so that, in his own words, "The Athenians might not have another opportunity of sinning against philosophy as they had already done in the person of Socrates."<sup>87</sup> So it is with some more irony that Aristotle, Athens' most eminent and public philosopher, would be estranged and self-exiled from the very city that had adopted him as her own. Plato had not left his city any more tolerant for his student than it had been for his teacher. It was as if the Athenians vacillated between two attitudes: Aristotle was either a friend or a foe. This accords with the concept of *xenos*, which beside denoting "foreigner," denotes "stranger-friend who might yet be a stranger-enemy." On these same grounds, Aristotle himself circumscribes epic style now strange, then dignified, and then again foreign. It's as if he superimposed his own life-story on his treatment of poetical style. His insistence on clarity in prose style is the second indication of what disambiguation consists of.

On the question of rhetorical style, Aristotle hints that many orators followed in the footsteps of sophists who overused Homeric devices as the acme of oratorical style.<sup>88</sup> In Book III especially, where Aristotle curbs young orators' enthusiasm for hyperbolic flourishes of style,

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<sup>87</sup> I have searched to no end for a source to this quote, commonly attributed to Aristotle.

<sup>88</sup> For examples of Homeric devices, see Aristotle's cautions about grandiloquent words and heroic meter (1408b); about beautiful and vivid metaphors (1405b and 1411b); about smart and popular sayings (1410b). Among these, similes, proverbs, and approved hyperboles.

and among these, heavy-handed poetic demonstrations, the term *xenos* appears frequently.<sup>89</sup> Whether Aristotle is *xenophilic*<sup>90</sup> or *xenophobic* is not quite the point. There are moments in the text to support either disposition: he specifically identifies Gorgias and Alcidamas as Homeric imitators “too poetic,” sophists of maudlin excess and sartorial kitsch (1406b10).<sup>91</sup> Yet Aristotle also identifies Homer’s “heroic verse” as part of the dignified style, the historical authority on the rituals of political speech (1408b32-33). Nevertheless, Aristotle sounds notes of caution that mixing oratory and poetry is like mixing wines.

As I observe in Chapter One, Aristotle harvested Homer for quotations as a way of backing and shoring up the character of rhetoric relative to epic performances (*paradeigma*). In this Chapter, I remain faithful to examples of stylistic devices taken from epic poetry to project the larger scale on which Homer influences Aristotle’s understanding of *lexis*. True, Aristotle refers to Homer more in Books I and II of the *Rhetoric*. Yet Homer nowhere is more present than in Book III, especially as the source *par excellence* for smart and popular sayings, which Aristotle praises for achieving a high degree of circulation. Aristotle nevertheless wants orators to take care before perpetuating its course. Aristotle’s reception of Homer is therefore very different than Plato before, and Longinus after him; for the most part, he does not personify Homer.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> For the connection between hyperbole and ethics towards Others, see Mifsud (*The Gift* 124).

<sup>90</sup> For an example of an optimistic reading of Book III, with emphasis on Homer’s ethic of *xenophilia*, see Kennerly 86, 100 (“An Alloiotrophic Addition,” *A Revolution in Tropes*, eds. Sutton and Mifsud).

<sup>91</sup> See also Burkett’s commentary on “too poetic” in conjunction with the ambiguous or unclear [*asapheis*] (120).

<sup>92</sup> For a connection between personification and Homeric mythology, see “Personification is a mode of metaphorical interpretation (a hermeneutic) that may easily lead to Homeric-style mythology, but it also allows people to speak of intelligence and motive in or behind nature. In

If Book III were our main source of the study of ‘Homer’ for rhetoric, we would index three general topics. First, Aristotle tries to maintain the center of civic discourse, which does not admit hyperbolic gestures and speech arrangements that characterize poetic performances.<sup>93</sup> Further, Aristotle effectively hints that the same authorial function of pan-Hellenic poetic imagination, arguably the most native poetry, can be an alien(ating) source of strangeness – being too remote or antique, or being caricatured by novice orators and rhapsodes. Third, what makes one strange is that his or her language does not coincide with that which is familiar and current within a community. The implication of this last topic is significant. Aristotle stakes communal identity on specific grounds: neither on its shared poetic heritage in myth, nor in its familial blood ties to the *polis*, but rather in solubility in shared idioms. Put otherwise, he bases civic integration on the capacity to stylize speech: knowing when to inflect and decline, to augment and manage, the gestures and expressions, which when changed nevertheless remained familiar as recognizable to the language of a given people.

#### 4.1 SCHOLARLY CONVERSATION

There are good reasons to observe Homer’s significance to any discussion of Aristotle’s theory of rhetoric. We could even go as far as to claim that Aristotle structures his theory on a Homeric skeleton, my metaphorical extension of Aristotle’s aforementioned ‘casket’ copy of Homer’s

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this sense, personification is appropriate for some subjects and disciplines, but is a style strictly eschewed by science” (Burkett 122).

<sup>93</sup> For hyperbole in conjunction with the strange, see Kennedy’s translation *On Rhetoric* (225n136) that which is inessential to the *polis*.

*Iliad* in Alexander's possession.<sup>94</sup> But as Mifsud writes in *Rhetoric and the Gift*, "no comprehensive study of Aristotle's use of Homer, as he theorizes a rhetoric for the *polis*, has posed the questions of why, how, and to what effect Aristotle cites and refers to Homer and to the epics in the course of his rhetorical theorizing" (19). Relative to the countless volumes dedicated to either Homer or rhetoric, there is sparse historical or theoretical substance that has been spun about the relationship between the two. Fortunately, I am contemporary to important work forwarded on this intersection. Beside Mifsud, Knudson's *Homeric Speech and the Origins of Rhetoric* contends that, "Homeric epics are the locus of the origins of rhetoric" (2).<sup>95</sup>

Of course, I am doing something distinct as well as in concert with these two scholars. Unlike them, I focus on *lexis* and I use an Aristotelian method to read Aristotle. Like them, I agree that rhetoric's poetical history has yet to be written. That such a project has been overlooked promises the possibility of tapping theoretical dimensions yet untapped. To Knudson, Homer's location at the origin of rhetoric is a determining factor of how we might write future histories of rhetoric. Her stakes are similar to those of Jeffrey Walker's *Rhetoric and Poetics in Antiquity*, which argues that forensic and juridical forms of rhetoric descended from epideictic, not the other way around; epideictic in turn, from poetry. Both Walker and Knudson want to push back the beginnings of the art to archaic times. I am not appealing for a new historical awareness of when or how epic poetry [*technē*] brought prose into being. My work more strongly resonates with Mifsud's, issuing a theoretical invitation to witness "a Homeric rhetoric

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<sup>94</sup> See Mifsud, *The Gift* 67-75, especially ch. 4 "Homeric Givens" for an insightful analysis of this trend.

<sup>95</sup> Look out for James Porter anticipated book volume elaborating his 2002 article, "Homer, the Very Idea."

... prior to and in excess of' Aristotle's conceptualization of rhetoric as a *technē* (Mifsud 54).<sup>96</sup> Given this orientation, the conclusion that Homeric poetry is aware of persuasive technique is less important than asking what the cyclical poet demonstrates about speech itself. In this respect, Homer offers a way of speech in excess of technical prescriptions. Such a possibility is more than historical because it makes no claims on how epic poetry was experienced historically. My focus, in other words, is on how Aristotle disambiguates Homer in *Rhetoric*, Book III.

In this chapter I present a close textual reading of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* as part of my inquiry into rhetoric's disambiguation of the spoken and compositional practices of poetry issuing from the Homeric tradition, a collective institution of Homeric imaginaries. To do so, I observe *xenos* as its own motif in Book III and from it, construct a problem. Supposedly, Aristotle understands rhetoric and poetry to be arts different in kind. Yet, his discussion of *lexis* (style) shows us a theorist ambivalent about splitting practice from theory, about rhetoric's poetical affiliations, and about how to extricate rhetorical style from poetry's. Riding that ambivalence, Book III mostly yields differences of degree, at least as pertains to the two styles. I take the familiar line, that rhetorical theory finds ways to strengthen weaker arguments, as my principle for finding a solution. And I proceed by importing a paradigmatic passage from Aristotle's *Poetics* so as to draw a stronger dividing line between poetic and rhetorical styles. All along, I think through the strange (ξένος) as a category to answer the problem posed.

My method of constructing a problem and solution is itself steeped in the Aristotelian reception history of Homer. The *Problēmata* is a treatise collecting nine-hundred interpretative problems in Homer written in a question-answer format. For example, the following textual riddle: Homer writes, "The mules and swift-footed hounds he first beset with his arrows."

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<sup>96</sup> Cf Doxtader 232, Vivian 21, and Haskins 199.

(Apollo is sending plague upon the Greek army.) The problem Aristotle constructs: "Why should he [Apollo] first attack the mules?" Solution: "The word may here mean 'sentinels'" (*Poet* 1461a; fn 2). This treatise assembled by Theophrastus, Aristotle's successor at the Lyceum, collected Aristotle's constructed problems in Homer as well as his answers, which sought out stylistic solutions. Now, the last book of Aristotle's *Poetics* gives us a glimpse into Aristotle's interpretive method collected in the *Problēmata*:

With regard to problems, and the various solutions of them, how many kinds there are, and the nature of each kind, all will be clear if we look at them like this. Since the poet represents life, as a painter does or any other maker of likenesses, he must always represent one of three things—either things as they were or are; or things as they are said and seem to be; or things as they should be. These are expressed in diction with or without rare words and metaphors, there being many modifications of diction, all of which we allow the poet to use. (1460b6)

Here, I am borrowing Aristotle's method in the *Poetics* to interpret Aristotle's *Rhetoric* poetically. First, I look at what Aristotle is expressing in diction, and use those observations to construct a problem, as well as what a solution could be. Second, I show that reading Aristotle poetically is not a historical question but a theoretical one. Third, I show that rhetorical problems about dialect, excess, and irony are compositional problems, most of which may be resolved by reference to lexis (*Poet* 1461a9).<sup>97</sup> Finally, I am invested in showing that this problem

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<sup>97</sup> See Mifsud whose work of re-circulating Pseudo-Plutarch as a legitimate historical resource points out how the arbitrary conceits with which we select texts. If Homer, for example, was a collective of authors, then texts by Pseudo-Aristotle or his peripatetic followers are crucial insights into the authorial function of Aristotle.

construction allows us to aereate the *Rhetoric*, all too often presented as the asphyxiation of animate rhetorical practices; not even Aristotle can eclipse lived practice with abstract theory.

I consciously divest from proving that Aristotelian concepts, as if essential to all rhetorics, circulate in Homer's verses. Knudson may belabor this ground for arguing that Homeric verses are conscious of employing enthymemes, the very characteristic of rhetoric that Aristotle would later theorize at the heart of the *antistrophos* to dialectic (*Rhet* 1354a). Similarly, Crick and Rhodes trace the three well-known rhetorical *pisteis* in a passage from the *Iliad* (327ff). True, these kinds of studies may push against the lines of Cole and Schiappa, both of whom argue that Plato introduces rhetoric to the Greek mind. But the push does not always go far.<sup>98</sup> Mostly, finding Aristotle's version of rhetorical arguments in archaic poems presume that rhetoric itself is not contingent on different cultural processes. By contrast, I trace Homeric *nachleben* at a second degree remove from Homer's poetry. In other words, I am studying Homeric textual receptions of a cultural sequence, and a concept of 'Homer,' which did not remain stagnant (see Chapter One). Put otherwise, Homer is for Aristotle's rhetoric a necessary resource, albeit one whose remainder is in excess of civic exchanges proper to the *polis*. As a necessity, Homer is part of the cultural discourse of Aristotle's time. However, Homer is beyond the necessary; in Aristotle's treatises, 'Homer' is no longer a persona as he was in Plato's dialogues. Instead, he is a dignified style of speech; and in Book III of the *Rhetoric*, Homer can

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<sup>98</sup> In fact, Aristotelian structures can be found in Homer and a scholar can still be working in the footsteps of Cole or Schiappa. For example, it is clear that Crick agrees with Cole's thesis in his footnotes on *Rhetoric and Power*, especially ch. 1 on Homer. Like Mifsud and somewhat like Knudsen, I am conscientiously pushing against a thesis that settles on historicizing a primitive rhetorical consciousness in Homer's poetry.

be read as the stylistic ambiguity suspended between engendering wonder in and alienating an audience.<sup>99</sup>

In the next section, I hone in on *lexis* in Book III of the *Rhetoric*. First I clarify some of the differences that Aristotle stipulates between rhetorical/prosaic and poetical *lexis*. Second, I speculate on why Aristotle might have been so ambivalent—communicating admiration as well as managerial prescription on how much poetical style an orator should fold into the mix of his speech. Third, I trace historical shadows attached to Aristotle’s on style. *Xenos* is of course featured throughout all these observations. Concluding this section, I show that Aristotle is trying to set up a difference of kind between the two styles.

## 4.2 FOREIGN AIRS AND STRANGE STYLES

In his discussion of style, Aristotle leaves no questions on what he means by rhetorical and poetic *lexeis*. In Book III, he cautions his readers about compositional choices at the levels of diction and arrangement, as well as choices of comportment—delivering forth one’s voice and body with emotion. As for concealing far-fetched diction, he advises orators to avoid choosing whimsical words – foreign and, literally, sophisticated words on the one hand, or archaic and Homeric words on the other. On either account, it seems that many of his contemporaries were using far-fetched language, that is, language remote in time or space from current idioms. Apparently, it was common rhetorical practice, before and after Aristotle, to signal the rhetorical speech by dressing it in the distinctions of poetry. Actually, before Aristotle, the distinction

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<sup>99</sup> For more on the hyperbolic, see Mifsud, *The Gift* 122ff.

between rhetoric and poetry does not exist. As such it is rhetoric's identification with ordinary speech in the hands of Aristotle that categorizes the foreign with the poetical.

At the level of arrangement, Aristotle permits more liberties. Indeed, a rhetor may not use too many poetic words; for by using ordinary words, one's intelligence is demonstrated by the strength of their order. In arrangement, too, one can get carried away, certainly on the level of phrasing. For example, by giving their sentences dense members, the overall composition turns out to be a disproportioned organism. Hence, disproportionate senses of style do harm, eclipsing any effectiveness that arguments might have, even when those arguments are well-reasoned (*Rhet* 1406a). Even in these brief mentions, we get a full view of why "how something is said" in practice turns out to be more important than "what must be said," if only because the one has the power to thwart the effects of the other.

At the level of delivery, Aristotle is most flexible in his stylistics. With voice and body, the orator can even get away with emotional excess and enthusiasm. Aristotle writes that the audience has sympathies for hyperbolic emotion, what Aristotle calls enthusiasm, especially in climactic moments in the speech. However, emotional expression can tax those sympathies if it seems manufactured. When emotion and manner are coordinated by assonance, the expression seems contrived, for example, a rage delivered in fricative assonances, or in an outburst of tears. The audience is not likely to buy into the speaker's embodied emotions when the word choice and arrangement coincide with emotional performance. But if speakers want to deliver emotions dramatically, then the audience might forgive the manufactured enthusiasm if speakers rebuke themselves ahead of the climactic moment (*Rhet* 1408b). In this sense, too, delivery is least subject to Aristotle's caution. It is as if the body and the voice are grounds on which the extraction of prosaic from poetic style is impossible.

Across all three components of style, Aristotle riddles his ambivalence. First, he begins Book III by declaring that style to the theory of rhetoric is inessential, *albeit necessary* (*Rhet* 1404a). On the one hand, how a thing is said counts for more than what is said. On the other hand, how a thing is said is not properly a rhetorical concern. Put otherwise, Aristotle is ambivalent because he considers style to be a poetic concern. If orators study it inordinately, they do so for second-rate audiences, those whose passions are more mutable than their minds. In this same spirit, Aristotle's *Rhetoric* can be striking for how granular many of his quotes from Homer are. Historians often read this as a sign of his admiration of Homer. Indeed, it is but one still wonders whether Aristotle consciously selected idioms and quotes from Homer by what was *not* popularly referenced in the Homeric vulgate. Indeed, at the end of 1412b Aristotle lists several lines as examples of vivid language (e.g., "[the spears] were buried in the ground, longing to take their fill of flesh"). Immediately after, he specifies, "in his popular similes also [Homer] proceeds in the same manner" (*Rhet* 1412a7). Aristotle, in other words, demonstrates that one could quote Homer in more erudite or more popular and current ways. My intuition aside, what is true is that Aristotle was skeptical on what resonated with Athen's *demos*, especially when it came to style.

In Aristotle's lectures, style represents the least important on a list of rhetorical practices. Ideally, if audiences are rational and well-informed, style should not be chief concern. Nevertheless, Aristotle concedes to practicalities, for which style remains necessary, if only to engage cognitively deficient audiences placed before the orator by a politically bankrupt system (*Rhet* 1404a5). In this vacillating treatment of style, the orator is pulled in several directions, impelled to find a balance by remaining faithful to the virtues of sober speech. Aristotle's second ambivalence, then, is that poetic style is necessary, albeit inessential, specifically for prose. If

tactful, an orator can conceal the craft of oratorical style, allowing ordinary dialect to give the impression of spontaneity (*Rhet* 1404b19). Still, there is room for something uniquely tasteful in this ordinary dialect, something which “simultaneously calls attention to its distinct nature. As such in its listeners, rhetoric provokes wonder” (*Rhet* 1404b17). Aristotle retracts once again: too much distinction short-circuits wonder because the audience’s attention wanders into the oratorical additives to style. If the orator’s art calls attention to itself, it turns out unpersuasive, without an frenzied over-estimation of the orator, barring thus even the most valid arguments.<sup>100</sup>

Homer’s claim on style may have given Aristotle serious pause lest poetry be too closely associated with prose. Even after Aristotle’s time, the difference in kind between poetic and rhetorical techniques was controversial. George Kennedy contours the controversy that Homer’s poems represented to defenders of rhetoric a century later than Aristotle (“The Ancient Dispute” 24). Yet, fast-forwarding to it adds a plausible reason for Aristotle’s shiftiness in Book III. Many Hellenistic philosophers asked: if oratorical speeches were already preserved in Homer, could prose craft or rhetoric even be considered an autonomous subject matter? Was it not fully expressed in epic poetry? For their part, commentators and handbook writers furiously defended the autonomy of their art against the idea that it was a species of poetry (*The Art of Persuasion* 323). Because style is a subject properly attributed to poetry, Aristotle himself was treading carefully to keep rhetoric separate, even though their separation was likely widely recognized after the first Sophistical movement. One century before or after found the opposite cultural instinct.

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<sup>100</sup> Orators in command of style Aristotle writes, “have greater influence on the stage than the poets, it is the same in political contests [law courts and public assemblies]” (*Rhet* 1403b20).

Having examined Aristotle's ambivalences, we must now turn to the historical shadows riding his heels. It seems likely that Aristotle's ambivalences had something to do with the political instabilities that he witnessed in his time. The following example keeps us within the discourse of style and emphasizes the motif of strangeness. In the preceding century, which separated Aristotle's lectures in the Academy from Gorgias' embassy speech to the Athenian assembly, encomiastic and political speeches imitating the Gorgianic style had proliferated. Against the misperception that Gorgianic pizzazz an orator makes, Aristotle begins Book III with a piece of doxography:

The poets, as was natural, were the first to give an *impulse* to style... although their utterances were devoid of sense, [the poets] appeared to have gained their reputation through their style, [and so] it was a poetical style that first came into being, *as that of Gorgias*. Even now the majority of the uneducated think that such persons express themselves most beautifully, whereas this is not the case, for **the style of prose is not the same as poetry** (ἑτέρα λόγου καὶ ποιήσεως λέξις ἔστιν) [emphasis mine]. (1404a24ff)<sup>101</sup>

The impulses of poetic recitations were elaborated by dramatic productions on stage and were finally rationalized, and thereby brought into being by Gorgias. The historical details of Gorgias' modernist art movement are discussed below. In this passage, Aristotle opens Book III by associating the foreigner, the strange and poetic style. Generally, nature or the mere chronology of events do not coincide with art, e.g., in the opening of Book I, where people are mistaken to think that natural endowments make a good rhetor. Here in Book III, historical and theoretical

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<sup>101</sup> Gorgias delivered the speech in 427 BC, and Aristotle reportedly developed his thoughts on *Rhetoric* for his lectures to Plato's Academy (from 367 to 347 BC) as well as for his Lyceum (335 to 322 BC).

developments do coincide. I argue that Gorgias' style, which blended poetic devices into unmetred prose, was distinct because he was a foreigner.

After all, Gorgias had devised a significant stylistic innovation on Homeric grounds. The Leontinian participated (read: crashed!) poetry contests to perform prose as a kind of modernist style of poetry. In effect, he forced the issue that the sound of prose—whimsical diction, semicolonic arrangement, and dramatic delivery—was powerful, powerful enough to beat traditional poetry beyond its own verse. Furthermore, he showed that strict adherence to traditional poetic meter to be necessary for the development of rhetorical cadence, albeit inessential. In more concrete terms, Gorgias claimed that his manner of speech had started a new movement in poetry. But its innovation was to rationalize poetry such that poetic devices could be extracted and made available for crafting prose. By implication, he had tapped an economy of poetic idioms and gestures, employed them in prose, and hence, the realm of everyday life. While we cannot know the gestures that Gorgias had tapped, we can look at words in Aristotle's observations on style, and pick up words which seem condensed or awry. And hopefully, they may blossom and settle with an assembly of signs to which they have not yet been connected. In any case, Gorgias' modernist poetry blurred the boundaries between prose and poetry.

A piece of doxography after Aristotle affords us the awareness that Gorgias' modernist poetry was associated with the sense of exotic beauty. In describing the Sicilian Embassy to Athens, Diodorus offers insights into how the strange can come from a remote place only to have the effect of novelty. Diodorus narrates:

Now when Gorgias had arrived in Athens and been introduced to the people in assembly, he discoursed to them upon the subject of the alliance, and by the novelty (τῷ ξενίζοντι) of his speech he filled the Athenians, who are by

nature clever and fond of dialect, with wonder. For he was the first to use the rather unusual and carefully devised structures of speech... all of which at that time was enthusiastically received because the device was exotic (ξένον), but is now looked upon as laboured and to be ridiculed when employed too frequently and tediously. (12.53)<sup>102</sup>

A few points are worth mentioning. First, Diodorus is sharper than Aristotle on the life-cycle of civic discursive practices. Usually, definitive statements come into being after the dust of a happening has settled. In this passage, I read that Gorgianic style, once novel for its poetical words and prose-rhythms, had passed from vogue. It was no longer foreign precisely because the character of its distinctiveness had been absorbed and assimilated by many orators; in modernizing style, Gorgias drove a wedge, so to speak, between stylistic devices and the material of language. If poetry could be free verse, and rhetoric was “poetry without meter” (*Gorg* 502a6-c12), in effect, style had been relegated secondary to meaning in the experience of language. Now Aristotle did not want to reverse the separation; he wanted to check against stylistic devices overriding the appropriate context of speech. What Diodorus’ passage shows is that the Aristotle had not been the only skeptic in Athens with regard to Gorgianic decadence.

At the poetic level, Diodorus’ doxography complements Aristotle’s mentions of the ‘foreign’ in style. As it turns out ξένος – the same word in novelty (ξενίζονται) and exotic (ξένον) appears fourteen times in Book III, and several times, in relation to Homer. That it appears in this

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<sup>102</sup> For the Greek: “οὗτος οὖν κατανήσας εἰς τὰς Ἀθήνας καὶ παραχθὲς εἰς τὸν δῆμον διελέχθη τοῖς Ἀθηναίοις περὶ τῆς συμμαχίας, καὶ τῷ ξενίζονται τῆς λέξεως ἐξέπληξε τοὺς Ἀθηναίους ὄντας εὐφυεῖς καὶ φιλολόγους. πρῶτος γὰρ ἐχρήσατο τοῖς τῆς λέξεως σχηματισμοῖς περιττοτέροις καὶ τῇ φιλοτεχνίᾳ διαφέρουσιν, ἀντιθέτοις καὶ ἰσοκώλοις καὶ παρίσοις καὶ ὁμοιοτελεύτοις καὶ τισὶν ἑτέροις τοιοῦτοις, ἃ τότε μὲν διὰ τὸ ξένον τῆς κατασκευῆς ἀποδοχῆς ἠξιοῦτο, νῦν δὲ περιεργίαν ἔχειν δοκεῖ καὶ φαίνεται καταγέλαστα πλεονάκις καὶ κατακόρως τιθέμενα [emphasis mine] (12.53).

passage again makes me wonder about Diodorus and Aristotle's word choices. We know that Gorgias came from Leontini, Sicily and therefore was remote and novel to the Athenians by virtue of geographical distance. We also know that Aristotle thinks that remote and novel styles, if done well, engender wonder. When we finally note that he uses "wonder" and "stranger" when describing stylistic devices specific to the Homeric tradition, arguably the role that Homer and Gorgias were conjoined in Aristotle's imaginary; they were both moving styles who needed to be clarified and refined. It could be that Homer was becoming foreign to the Athenians or estranged in Aristotle's writing, not of course in space, but by virtue of time.

With regard to the foreign and the novel, Aristotle and Diodorus hint that calling a style sophisticated requires social awareness. If style is, as Hariman puts it, "mastering in discourse the fundamental conditions of language," sounding extraordinary to an audience requires a remaking, a *poiesis*, of the spoken vernacular (*Political Style* 186). When recreated, the "fundamental rules," again Hariman, are discretely broken, and as such distinguish the speaker as extraordinary or unaware of linguistic correctness. Conversely, adhering strictly to the new rules once the new devices have become familiar, marks the speaker's language as overwrought. What the line from Diodorus Siculus finally reminds us is that taste in language is too fluid to arrest, and style, being closely tied to the taste of an audience, does not lend itself to technical formulas, as do other components of good speech, e.g., *pisteis*, enthymemes, or common topics.

Thus far we have seen that Aristotle's differentiations between prosaic and poetical style, in particular his ambivalence on the importance of style to rhetoric, signal that he is laboring to crack a tough nut. Essentially, Aristotle exhibits the awareness that he is dealing with a topic that has not yet been, and may never be, entirely rationalized. We have also seen that style has a life cycle, which suggests that lexical innovations happen so subtly and frequently that one could not

call stylistics a science, at least in Aristotle's *organon*. Instead, *lexis* is a rider attached to other arts. Yet if this is so, then it makes sense that Aristotle is ambivalent about the role to assign style and further, whether poetic and rhetorical styles can be differentiated in kind even if they are attached to two autonomous arts separated accordingly by kind.

In the next section, we will see another level of Aristotle's ambivalence come to light. More specifically, we will see his attempt to establish a difference in kind between rhetorical and poetic styles *writ large*. Aristotle comes closest to when he names perspicuity and propriety as the virtues of prosaic style. Even though we are shifting to poetic style, the next section maintains hold of Homer by way of Aristotle's allusions to him. Specifically, the line that speakers must conceal, if not constrain, the poetic elements of rhetorical style.

### 4.3 CONCEALING, IF NOT CONSTRAINING THE STRANGE

So far I have suggested that Gorgias and Homer cast historical shadows on *xenos*, that it has a diachronic history before it entered Aristotle's Book III. I have also suggested that *xenos* is an important *topos* within Book III. Below, I quote Aristotle at length because the following discussion depends on the implicit premise that Aristotle is making connections between *xenos* and *lexis*:

In regard to style, one of its chief merits may be defined as perspicuity. This is shown by the fact that the speech, if it does not make the meaning clear, will not perform its proper function; neither must it be mean, nor above the dignity of the subject, but appropriate to it; for the poetic style may be is not mean, but it is not appropriate to prose. Of nouns and verbs it is the proper ones that make style

perspicuous; all the others which have been spoken of in the *Poetics* elevate and make it ornate; for departure from the ordinary makes it appear more dignified. In this respect men feel the same in regard to style as in regard to foreigners (ξένους) and fellow-citizens. Wherefore we should give our language a “foreign air” (διὸ δεῖ ποιεῖν ξένην τὴν διάλεκτον); for men admire what is remote (ἀπόντων), and that which excites admiration is pleasant. In poetry many things conduce to this and there it is appropriate; for the subjects and persons spoken of are more out of the common. But in prose such methods are appropriate in much fewer instances, for the subject is less elevated; and even in poetry, if fine language were used by a slave or a very young man, or about quite unimportant matters, it would be hardly becoming; for even here due proportion consists in contraction and amplification as the subject requires. Wherefore those who practice this artifice must conceal it and avoid the appearance of speaking artificially instead of naturally; for that which is natural persuades, but the artificial does not. For men become suspicious of one whom they think to be laying a trap for them, as they are of mixed wines. Such was the case with the voice of Theodorus as contrasted with that of the rest of the actors; for his seemed to be the voice of the speaker, that of the others the voice of someone else.<sup>103</sup> Art is cleverly concealed when the speaker chooses his words from ordinary language and puts them together like Euripides, who was the first to show the way. (1404b)

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<sup>103</sup> This is Aristotle’s definition of mode or manner (*Poet* 1447a), the third component of poetry’s definition; it is in mode that I later stake a resolution to the problem that I am constructing in Book III.

In this section I argue that if the poetic style is not appropriate to prose, it is unclear what differentiates the two. Indeed, the topic of *xenos* gives us reason to suspect that prosaic *lexis* cannot altogether be extricated from poetry if only because a sophisticated rhetorical style is a condensed note, fleeting and airy. On that sense, Aristotle insists that any stylistic device borrowed from poetry, “may be used [only] to a certain extent, since it utterly changes the style from the ordinary and gives a ‘foreign air’ (εξαλλάττει γὰρ τὸ εἰωθὸς ἐξαλλάττει γὰρ τὸ εἰωθὸς καὶ ξενικὴν ποιεῖ τὴν λέξιν)” (1406a). At times, then, Aristotle welcomes the foreign, if and only if, it is subtle and fleeting, not obvious and wrought. Yet he defines the warmth and animation of rhetorical style by “a happy mixture of ordinary and ‘foreign’ words” (1414a), but only if the orator maintains clarity while effecting pleasure or wonder. Otherwise, the orator effects distrust and alienation. If not an air of perfume then, the strange is the very animating color of speech. Aristotle’s re-iteration of “foreign” gives us a clue that he cannot spell out for us: that to be a stylist of language, one need take up the perspective of a non-native or foreigner, a conscientiously innocent speaker of a particular dialect. *Xenos* and *lexis* correlate in Aristotle’s semantic field because tapping into the extraordinary in language requires a perspective that takes no idiom for granted.

Having traced *xenos* from a Sicilian reader of Homer to his innovation on the Athenian style of speech, we must take one last step. Otherwise, it seems that my interpretation of Book III depends largely on the binaries “familiar/strange” or “native/foreigner.” But before the classical *polis* identified foreigners entering its domain, *philoxenia* or “friendship to, love of, the stranger” was an ethic inherent to Homeric mythology.<sup>104</sup> This ethic mandated that rituals of hospitality

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<sup>104</sup> For commentary on *metaphora* in Aristotle as transfer, see Burkett 79ff.

unconditionally be extended to strangers, as though they could be gods in disguise.<sup>105</sup> In fact, *theoxenia* (*theos* (god) + *xenos* (stranger)) was a synonym for *philoxenia*. The mandate for hospitality was believed to come from *Zeus Xenios* himself. At the same time, this ethic put hosts at a double-risk. On the one hand, hosts or guests who did not abide by *xenia* (guest-friendship) could risk offending a deity disguised as a mortal; on the other, the guest-friend could always be an enemy, mortal or divine.<sup>106</sup> The ethic also put guests at risk. Odysseus' home-return is emplotted by his negotiation of whether hosts abide by Zeus' law, the ethic of hospitality. The Cyclops' exemption from the law sets Odysseus' journey back. But the risks incumbent on either host or stranger emphasize that an ethic of honoring strangers is managed by how a stranger appears and how a host intuits. This delicate balance of strangerly care and *lexis* makes them analogs for each other, both tending to the "vulgar" as well as "appearances" (1404a5).

Little wonder, then, that Aristotle's use of *xenos* points to his reservations. At all times, prosaic style is an issue of disguise, and any slip calling attention to that disguise endangers the ethic holding orator and audience together. If one has to wonder about the strangeness in a speech, the orator has likely strayed and the audience may decide against the trustworthiness of speaker. Otherwise, speakers "reveal the art and make it evident that it is poetry" (1406a11). In this vein, the tension between the Cyclops' inhospitality and the consequences of Odysseus' revealed identity is doubly analogous. So, too, orators delay their own homecoming when they show forth the poetic basis of their style. Yet Aristotle cannot disaffiliate completely from the

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<sup>105</sup> See both ethic, and religious code in Odysseus' exclamation: "Odysseus awoke, and sat up, and thus he pondered in mind and heart: "Woe is me! To the land of what mortals am I now come? Are they cruel, and wild, and unjust? Or do they love strangers and fear the gods in their thoughts?/ ὦ μοι ἐγὼ, τέων αὖτε βροτῶν ἐς γαῖαν ἰκάνω; ἦ ῥ' οἷ γ' ὑβρισταὶ τε καὶ ἄγριοι οὐδὲ δίκαιοι, ἦε φιλόξενοι καὶ σφιν νόος ἐστὶ θεουδής" (*Od* 6.119ff).

<sup>106</sup> See Mifsud, "Gift/Giving" 91.

strangerly ethic of *lexis*. Following the same poem, Odysseus' trials as a stranger strewn across the Mediterranean begin with an exception of *philoxenia* that works against him. But the poem dedicated to him ends with an exception in his favor. Athena disguises Odysseus as a weathered beggar upon his arrival home. In effect, he is granted the insight of the gods in order to test the loyalty of family and piety of guests. So, too, an orator who minds his style "departs from the ordinary (διὸ δεῖ ποιεῖν ξένην τὴν διάλεκτον)" (1404b) so as to give his speech dignity,<sup>107</sup> as Aristotle writes, but also to give a community insight into its own relationships. Indeed, poetry can grant orators the power to penetrate an idiolectical group, whether in the *polis* or elsewhere.

It is not only the case that strangers are indeterminate in ethical situations. The indeterminacy is a red thread throughout Book III. Where *xenos* is mentioned, there is much ado about its fleeting meaning. Whereas *xenos* clearly denotes "foreign" in general, within the subject of style the word is more than a metaphor, which would transfer the meaning opposing "native"; it is rather an idiom, meaning "style" changes how we would translate/inflect the word in English. Freese flags his frustration with the task of translating the idiom: "It is impossible to find a satisfactory English equivalent... 'foreign' does not really convey the idea, which is rather that of something opposed to 'home-like.' Jebb suggests distinctive" (350-1). Freese goes with Jebb's suggestion. Meanwhile Kirby idiomatically references the phrase *poiein xenēn* as a "metaphor for strangeness" (*Rhet* 1404b10; cf "Aristotle on Metaphor" 541), suggesting that the idiom for style still circulates as a metaphor for the *polis*, marking what is foreign or strange. Additionally, Aristotle rather mentions "foreign words" literally too (1408b12). So commentaries on *xenos* reflect, fittingly, a "strangeness" that does not translate into English. As I see it, this is

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<sup>107</sup> Homer exemplifies the dignified style, which competes with the ordinary style: "Of the different rhythms the heroic is dignified, but lacking the harmony of ordinary conversation" (*Rhet* 1408b).

exciting: expressions whose full meaning escapes us are fertile grounds to stir theoretical reflection. So whether strange, distinctive, or foreign, Book III revolves around *xenos*—which devices make a speech, often reduced down to its bare instrumentality, wonderful, and how much artifice reifies a speech, imbuing it with spatial dimensions. At all these levels—historical, textual, and conceptual—our attention goes back to the ambiguity of Homer’s place in rhetoric, an ambiguity from which Aristotle aims for disambiguation.

Turning to Book III for examples of constraints, if not concealments, of strangeness, we note two trends in the text. First, Aristotle identifies lexical excess, literally “hyperbole,” as breaches of propriety in prose style. Furthermore, these breaches are often attributed to imitating poetry too much.<sup>108</sup> As antidote to poetical inebriation, Aristotle cautions orators to “aim at the mean (μετρίου), for ... excess is vicious.”<sup>109</sup> Without moderation in poetic imports, speakers cool audience rapport, literally making their prose style “frigid” by “compounding poetical appearances” (1406a7ff). Second, Aristotle preaches meting out poetical improprieties during rhetorical delivery, and he practices textually what he preaches by repeating the double negative conjunction *méte...méte* (“neither... nor”) throughout Book III. What emerges out of these indicators is that Aristotelian ambivalence borders on the anxiety that students will mistake the intersection between poetic and prosaic *lexeis* as an opportunity to use a “seasoning” as a “regular dish” (1406a22). What comes into focus throughout is the constructed problem in Book III. By emphasizing restrictions of the art at hand, Aristotle reveals that rhetorical style actually turns out to be different, not in kind, but in degree, from poetry.

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<sup>108</sup> For an assiduous treatment of Aristotle’s disparagement of hyperbole, see Mifsud, *The Gift* 122-4.

<sup>109</sup> For other mentions see *Rhet* 1406a11ff; cf *Poet* 1458b3.

First, it seems that hyperbole qualifies the use of every stylistic device, and that every hyperbole is attributed to poetic imitation. For example, epithets must be not too crowded like Homer's,<sup>110</sup> verbiage must not pour unclear or cloudy like the poets' (ἄσαφες; 1368a32, 1406a35), delivery not too deliberate like the actors', and metaphors left alone where things can be signified by proper, common names. For referents without names, the prosaic style dictates that metaphors must be faithful to the familial valence of words, or to "what is akin and of the same kind" to what the word would be (1405a5ff). The importance of this line is that oratorical style must seem clear because topics of deliberation are on issues or events which are not altogether so. Not only metaphors, but any device turns hyperbolic whenever it is far-fetched. Finally, the prosaic style must not exhibit a madness for speech, a mantic element which some Greeks associated with the divine versification of poetry. Aristotle's concern with avoiding hyperbole is really at every turn a disambiguation of poetical style.

Second, if one cannot constrain imports from poetry into prose composition, Aristotle shows how to conceal the craft of poetry under the surface of prose. He writes: "whenever one has gone too far, the remedy may be found in the common piece of advice—that he should rebuke himself in advance; then the excess seems true because the orator is obviously aware of what he is doing" (*Rhet* 1408b1). This is a unique moment in the text. Elsewhere, Aristotle advocates for moderation so that audiences are clear on what is being said or so that audiences don't feel the frigidity of poetical excess. Here, speakers are told to rebuke or qualify their emotional delivery so as to avoid appearing unaware of their exaggerations. Furthermore, it is by scapegoating the poetic style that speaker and audience overcome the alienating effect that poetic

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<sup>110</sup> The example of frigidity in this passage, "white milk" is a well-recognized epithet from Homer (*ibid*). For more on Homeric epithets, see Burkett 92.

delivery can have on audiences. Though not an exile of Homer per se, Aristotle's chastisement of poetic style is similar to Plato's.<sup>111</sup>

Aristotle metes poetic stylistic devices—either by restraint or concealment—in rhetorical composition and delivery. As regard restraint, Aristotle's "neither...nor" conjunction pair shows up regularly, suggesting a double limit. Accordingly, rhetorical speech must sound "neither metrical" like Homeric meter, "nor without rhythm" like mean prose (*Rhet* 1408b21); its sentences must be "neither short nor too long" (*Rhet* 1409b17). By repeating the conjunctions, *méte...méte* (neither... nor), Aristotle outlines how orators can conceal the craft of making language strange anew. In effect, on the grammatical level, Aristotle constructs poetic style as the extreme. As regard concealment, Aristotle attempts to teach a rhetorical aptitude for knowing when to blend the contours of poetic style in ordinary language.

The "neither...nor" conjunction pair throughout his Book III indicates serious retractions on Aristotle's claim that poetry and rhetoric are different in kind. Aristotle's prescription of stylistic differences between the styles of poetry and prose unravel into distinctions of degree, not kind. It would be easier to refute my claim had Aristotle simply polarized the two styles: whereas a poet can choose whimsical words, an orator must stick to ordinary ones (*Rhet* 1404b17ff); whereas a poet stops phrases short with meter, an orator rests only where complete sense and breath coincide (1409b1ff); and, whereas a rhapsode or actor delivers inspired speeches, driven frequently to ecstasy, an orator only reaches enthusiastic peaks in delivery if the peaks seem spontaneous, natural, and unscripted (1408b25). Were it so, the differences between rhetorical and poetical styles, would obtain as though by simple arithmetic. But Aristotle goes further, collapsing the two styles into magnitudes of the same principle of due measure, or

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<sup>111</sup> See the third epigraph of the "Interlude."

*metriou*. What he says is this: rhetoric better “*not [be] too much like poetry*” [emphasis added] (*Rhet* 1406b11)! In effect, rhetoric marks the local, familiar, and ordinary space prior to or more essential than the excesses of poetical style.

Likewise, Aristotle asserts *metriou* as a principle for language production, the principle helping orators to avoid the excesses of poetic speech and the banalities of prosaic speech. Indeed, we could map *metriou* throughout Book III, by rhetorical precepts ordered by the double negative conjunction neither/nor (*meté...meté*). Oratorical style *neither* must be mean like vernacular prose, *nor* above the subject’s dignity like poetry (*Rhet* 1404b10). The style must be proportionate, *neither* offhand to weighty subjects, *nor* weighty to offhand subjects (1407b35). Rhetorical diction should be neither metrical (*enmetriou*), *nor* without rhythm (1408b25). Besides these three examples, we can go to: neither long, nor short periods (1410a1), neither strange, nor superficial (1410b25), neither famous, nor worthless, but obscure (1414a35), neither must it be rough, nor overly polished (*Rhet* 1414a15). What “*meté...meté*” suggest is that style raises a dilemma between the excessively pedestrian (vulgar) and dignified (Homeric).

Aristotle specifically identifies clarity and propriety as the two virtues moderating stylistic excesses, two virtues proper to rhetoric. According to the first, the orator must choose, wherever they are available, ordinary words. If I may in less ordinary words, the orator’s goblet must contain a clear hue without a poetic “cloud of verbiage” (*Rhet* 1406a35). Yet, clarity is not just a matter of ordinary words, but carefully arranged ones, which, when chosen from ordinary language, conceals the art in rhetoric.<sup>112</sup> It is likewise a matter of issuing crafted speech as if it naturally and clearly pours out of the orator’s character (1404b). Even clarity is crafted, that

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<sup>112</sup> Aristotle writes that Euripides was the first dramatist to use ordinary language in meticulously crafted speech structures (1404b22).

which might be misconstrued otherwise as the pure expression of language, and hence devoid of style. Clarity is a style. As to the second virtue, propriety, the subject matter's weight determines the "contraction and amplification" of style. Whereas clarity in speech factors in audience comprehension; the second, propriety factors in the formality of subject matters, the more formal or epideictic of which call for more poetic style than not. But no matter how ample the subject's weight might recommend poetic devices, the orator still must conceal the poetic resource, seeking ways to make the old new and the ordinary extraordinary. Both rhetorical virtues play out as cautionary qualifications guiding the orator toward the *metriou* (moderate or measured) (*Rhet* 1406a15; 1404b13).

If poetic style represents one vicious extreme, Aristotle waffles on what rhetorical style must otherwise avoid.<sup>113</sup> In one place he points out that perspicuous language can "neither be lowly, nor above that which the subject matter is thought worthy (μήτε ταπεινήν μήτε ὑπὲρ τὸ ἄξιωμα)." But elsewhere he is not concerned with the use of vulgar or crass language. In effect, he mostly directs orators, not between low (mean, poor) and dignified speech but between ordinary dialect (διαλέκτου) and poetical speech. Accordingly, perspicuity and propriety really are rhetoric's one-sided restriction on poetic excess. For Aristotle, rhetorical style risks tipping into only one extremity, and styles engendering wonder by foreign airs are one step closer to hyperbolic displays alienating speaker and audience.

Like *xenos*, *metriou* is a word at home first in Homeric poetry, the quintessential language-in-measure (*emmetron*). But poetic style is characterized by virtue of numeric meter, rather than measured moderation. In Homeric poetry the meter is strictly numerical, meaning that

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<sup>113</sup> Cf Longinus 3.4, where timidity is the empty or depraved version of sublimity, and then arid language as the opposite. Aristotle does the opposite: he sets up vulgar language as the depraved version of plain style, and then bombastic language as the opposite.

its caesura falls often before a thought is complete. But this numerical style, what Aristotle calls the non-periodic, running style opens up a lot of opportunities for invention and improvisation. It does so by memorializing verse by the mnemonic of song, rather than meaning (1409b5). In effect, poetry “sets [the hearer’s attention] on the watch for the recurrence of such and such a cadence; just as, when the public criers ask, ‘Whom does the emancipated choose for his patron?’ the children shout ‘Cleon’” (1408b16)! Instead, prosaic style abides loosely by numeric measure (rhythm), completing its periods only when the sense has been completed, and yet crafting periods measured by the orator’s breath (1409b15). Furthermore, it strictly abides by stylistic moderation; and essentially by the enthymeme, which functions as an argumentative cadence, engaging the hearer’s attention on the watch to supply the missing premise. Yet the heart of rhetoric, the enthymeme, operates like meter or cadence, albeit less automatically and more cognitively.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Starting here the collective work of Jane Sutton and MariLee Mifsud on *alloiōsis* bears heavily, for they show how various meanings, and aggregative inferences are lost in the abstract dictates that Aristotle imposes on epic poetry’s excess. If Aristotle thinks that the meter of poetry is *strictly or merely* about number, Mifsud points out that Pseudo-Plutarch’s measure of Homer’s grammar opens hermeneutic possibilities. The rhetoricians’ collective work is the grammatical and tropological version of other feminist interpretations of Homer, wherein Parry and Lord’s oral theory of meter allows re-interpretations of a simplified, literary Homer. We must also note Agamben’s work on the caesura, which explains how voice conserves itself in the rifts, or exceptions, of poetry. The potential for Mifsud and Sutton’s work to foil Agamben’s parallelism between the meter and sense in the caesura, by rhetoric’s development of the period could be fruitful. See Sutton and Mifsud, “*Alloioiostrophic Rhetoric*” 222-3; *ibid.*, *Revolution* 117; Clayton 43; Agamben, *Prose* 40, 52.

#### 4.4 DISAMBIGUATING POETRY'S STRANGENESS

Having looked at Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, Book III for his insight that "the style of prose is not the same as poetry" (1404a24ff), I now turn to his *Poetics* in order to discern how he treats the same insight but from a different direction. In Book III we have seen that clearest line between prose and poetry staked in the virtues of propriety and perspicuity. These virtues are meant to restrict, or at least conceal, the poetic craft in rhetorical style.

In the *Poetics* Aristotle argues that poetical style, too, should be perspicuous and appropriate. In so doing, he ascribes to poetic style the same virtues that apply to prosaic style. Further, he grounds his claims of virtuous poetic style on the trends of theatrical performance. Specifically, he reasons that poetic diction has moved on from being whimsical, as it had been in Euripides' tragedies.<sup>115</sup> In poetry, too, characters must speak appropriately. Women and slaves, for example, should not philosophize too much, as Euripides sometimes casts them. As for contemporary poets, Aristotle observes that they need not follow meter as faithfully as the older poets had done. In this regard, he addresses poets thus: "One needs, then, a certain blend...A major contribution to clarity and unusualness of diction is made by... modifications of words (*dia men gar to allōs*, elaborated below): contrast with the standard, and divergence from the usual, will create an out-of-the-ordinary impression; but the presence of usual forms will preserve clarity" (*Poet* 1458b). Not incidentally, the key words in this passage match those in the *Rhetoric* addressing style's strangeness – modification, distinction, and perspicuity. Obviously, the same criteria apply to both poetic and rhetorical *lexeis*.

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<sup>115</sup> For Aristotle's criticism of Euripides, see *Poet* 1453a.

Now, this passage on diverging from the usual without adhering to incidental traditions like meter strikes me as unusual. First, Aristotle writes off meter based on stylistic trends. Usually he makes distinctions between essentials and inessentials based on theoretical or practical concerns, not popular trends. He reserves doxographies to set up how wrong-headed his ancestors or contemporaries have been. Here however, he admits that even contemporary poets unwittingly have moved away from meter, a sign that it is incidental, not essential, to poetry and its style. Furthermore, the passage is unusual because Aristotle repeats what he prescribes for prosaic style in the *Rhetoric*. Finally, from a contemporary retrospect, it does seem strange that Aristotle, who extols poetic style most wholeheartedly for images, chiefly Homeric metaphors, is here emphasizing modification of ordinary words. The three departures from Aristotle's normal way of philosophizing I attribute to a heretofore unstated premise: that Aristotle may be revealing that, in practice unlike theory, modification is not merely a difference of degree. So unlike his more scientific disciplines, rhetoric and poetic are theories of speech modification.

This premise unfolds further down in the *Poetics*. In *Poetics* 1451b, especially, poetry is defined as a mode in contrast to history so as to overturn the misconception that a characteristic of poetry, namely its metered verse, is essential, even to poetry. Here Aristotle declares that the characteristic mark of poetry is not meter. Rather, poetry is characterized by relating possibilities, and he defines those in contradistinction to actuality. I quote Aristotle here at length:

it is not the poet's function to relate *actual occurrences*, but the kinds of things that *might happen* (ἄν γένοιτο) and are possible in terms of probability or necessity (καὶ τὰ δυνατὰ κατὰ τὸ εἰκὸς ἢ τὸ ἀναγκαῖον). The difference between the historian and the poet is not that between using verse or prose... No,

the real difference is this: that the one relates *actual events*, the other the *kinds of things that might occur*. For this reason, poetry is something more philosophic and more serious (φιλοσοφώτερον καὶ σπουδαιότερον) than history, because poetry tends to give general truths (καθόλου; alt. trans. “universals”) while history gives particular facts (ἕκαστον λέγει).<sup>116</sup> By a ‘general truth’ I mean the sort of thing that a certain type of man will do or say either probably or necessarily (κατὰ τὸ εἰκὸς ἢ τὸ ἀναγκαῖον) (1451b).

Poetry, Aristotle writes, primarily is defined and depends on *sequencing* the actions of plot, and secondarily, “finishing them off with language” (1455a22).<sup>117</sup> Even when it does feature actual particulars, like historical personae, those names matter second to the tight fit between events. Without plausible sequencing, a story seems implausible; at the same time, likelihood issues from what we presume about types or ideas. Where there is a tight fit, that which otherwise seems mythical, starts to assume the dignity of plausibility. In effect, poetry has the power to pronounce previously inconceivable possibilities. By contrast, history is defined by and depends on a sequence of time – what came first, second, third, etc. On this basis, history can relate particulars, even implausible turns of events; it is not responsible for likelihoods.

Clearly, the proper task of the poet is to conjoin episodes, or order acts befalling a character in such a way that they *seem* necessary. Explained this way, the differences between historical and poetic discourse seem clearer than Aristotle’s differentiation between poetic and rhetorical styles. It is important here to note the three dimensions alluded to in the above passage

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<sup>116</sup> Cf *Rhet* 1355b42: “ἔστω δέ ἡ ῥητορικὴ δύναμις περὶ ἕκαστον τοῦ θεωρῆσαι τὸ ἐνδεχόμενον πιθανόν” (rhetoric is the capacity to see about each case the possible means of persuasion).

<sup>117</sup> Notice that representations themselves matter less than that which conjoins and indexes them; Aristotle anticipates the early modern primacy of tropes are the proper domain of poetics not the dignified style of its speech style.

for they afford a sharp contrast to the tenuousness of the tipping point from rhetorical to poetical style. The differentiation that Aristotle makes here hinges on units of reference (occurrences and types of occurrences), degrees removed from reality (actuals and possibles) as well as areas of cognitive tasks (representing facts and making inferences). Beyond these three dimensions, this passage is critical to understanding the function of rhetorical style, by virtue of the phrase *κατὰ τὸ εἰκός* (accents and breathing needed here). This phrase refers to that which is plausible but also to persuasion. So when a few lines down Aristotle writes that what is plausible is possible, something related to history and poetry looms large. That something, I submit, is rhetoric.

Rhetoric partakes of both history and poetry, or occupies the space between them. Effectively, then, rhetoric, like poetry, deals with possibility even if in a slightly different way. These two arts are adjacent economies of signs; both imitate human action, and both enact. True, poetry does so without direct intervention but, equally true, it has some impact on the course of human actions. Further, poetry admits of possibilities like re-enactments, suspending and reformulating the timing between mythical frames. True, rhetoric can create opportunities, but those opportunities are beholden to the historical passage of time. By constituting its own idiolect of urgency in action, and of reality in re-enactment, poetry walks with its feet on the ground of human action. And the *Poetics* grounds modal categories according to different dimensions than the *Rhetoric*, which is more practically bound to concrete urgency.

This is not to say that poetry negates Homer's historical authority. Indeed, poetry's indifference to actual events, if nested within a cultural hermeneutic, engenders its own made-up history. Homeric authority, what Homericists love referring to, illustrates how culturally salient a modal history can be. In Homer's epics, classical poets tapped an idiolect, an economy of historical lineages, a tightly bound hexameter, and a paratactic grammar, all of which left

undetermined what might have happened between episodes. Most importantly, Homeric authority constituted a wishful guarantee for playful and fateful inferences— subsequent poets wrote prequels, sequels, in *medias res*, and atemporal references to Troy.

*Poetics* 1451b returns us better equipped to digest the few degrees separating the strange and the familiar in *Rhetoric* Book III, as well as Aristotle’s delicate management between them. As quoted previously, Aristotle writes: “A major contribution to clarity and unusualness of diction is made by... modifications of words (*dia men [y]γar to allōs*): contrast with the standard, and divergence from the usual, [which] will create an out-of-the-ordinary impression; but the presence of usual forms will preserve clarity” (1458b). What seems to be an insignificant lexical change, the modification of words (*dia men [y]γar to allōs*), connects us to the distinctions of the poetic, historical, and rhetorical modes, what is elaborated in *Poetics* 1451b. By modifying words to give an out-of-the-ordinary impression, we can direct rhetorical style toward poetic possibilities, namely inferential truths. On the other hand, by moderating the strange to give a clearer impression, we can direct the audience’s attention to historical actualities. By this modal record, epideictic rhetoric turns more poetical than political and legislative rhetoric, which, in turn, turn more poetic than judicial and forensic rhetoric. Rhetorical style engages in either mode by means of alteration, or literally, *modification*.<sup>118</sup>

To see how this is so, I turn to a line with Homeric gravity, from the first century handbook writer, Dionysius of Halicarnassus. In *On Literary Composition*, Dionysius mentions

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<sup>118</sup> Modification is how I have conceived the topic of Sutton and Mifsud. In *Revolution*, they resuscitate the trope *alloiōsis* from a large list of unmastered tropes. *Alloiōsis* they define as a trope of turning toward others. On a paradigmatic scale, I have agreed with their project. However, I have previously attended to the *paradeugmatic* scale of the trope, turning me to Aristotle’s *Physics*, where *alloiōsis* is described as physiological modifications which leave the essence of an organism undisturbed or which cannot be said to have a *telos*. However, I had not connected the physiological notion of the concept to rhetorical style.

that rhetoricians teach their students prosaic style by asking them to copy lines of poetry and to modify them into clear and concrete prose. He writes that the exercise is, “to be likened to the Homeric Athena, who with a touch of her magic wand could make the same Odysseus resemble either a beggar or a gallant prince” (Dionysius 93). Although Athena touches her wand on Odysseus several times in the *Odyssey*, nowhere does the parallelism to the handbook exercise seem so critical as in Book 18:

With this, Athena touched him with her golden wand. A well-washed cloak and a tunic she first of all cast about his breast, and she increased his stature and his youthful bloom. Once more he grew dark of color, and his cheeks filled out, and dark grew the beard about his chin. Then, when she had wrought thus, she departed, but Odysseus went into the hut. And his dear son marvelled, and, seized with fear, turned his eyes aside, lest it should be a god. And he spoke, and addressed him with winged words: **“Of another sort thou seemest to me now, stranger, (ἄλλοῖός μοι, ξεῖνε)** than awhile ago, and other are the garments thou hast on, and thy color is no more the same. Verily thou art a god, one of those who hold broad heaven. Nay then, be gracious, that we may offer to thee acceptable sacrifices and golden gifts, finely wrought; but do thou spare us.”

(Homer 175-185)

Athena’s wand does not change Odysseus in kind—he remains Odysseus. But it is because of this difference in degree that the possibility of divinity is ushered into the scene. It is in the modification from old beggar to man in his prime that incites Telemachus’ “*alloiōs moi, xeîne!*” (How different you seem to me, stranger, yet how recognizably the same!) For Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Odysseus’ transformation explains the lexical exercises of rhetorical education.

Telemachus' exclamation explains how modification of poetical to prose style can create a radically different impression.

#### 4.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter we have looked at key passages in Book III of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* as well as selective passages in his *Poetics* on our way to discern how he disambiguates Homer. What we have seen is that Aristotle treats Homer as a *xenos* (foreigner, stranger), that is, someone who must be received now in the spirit of hospitality, now with the caution characteristic of the skeptical mind. We have also seen that this twofold disposition informs much of Aristotle's discussion on the distinction between rhetoric and poetry by reference to the *topoi* of style, arrangement and delivery. The passages from the *Rhetoric* suggest that Aristotle gives priority to communal standards of ordinary prose allowing all along some poeticisms, provided that they not be too excessive. Supported by Aristotle's own practice of quoting Homer in his *Rhetoric*, this view affords epic poetry a limited role in rhetorical discourse. As for the passages from his *Poetics*, they suggest that dramatic poetry, its difference from its epic counterpart aside, is spacious enough to include all that Homer has to offer. Further, they suggest that insofar as dramatic poetry overlaps with rhetoric at the levels of thought, character, diction and spectacle, it is not altogether a stranger to the goal of persuasion. Finally, they suggest that insofar as poetry is more philosophical than history, it resembles rhetoric: both poetry and rhetoric concern themselves with possibility. Read together, the passages the *Rhetoric* and the *Poetics* disambiguate Homer by reference to three *technai*. Whereas history is the repository of Homeric

texts and performances, dramatic poetry is the hospitable host of epic verse, and rhetoric the cautious importer of Homeric poeticisms.

If we agree with Harold Bloom that “one mark of originality that can win canonical status for a literary work is a strangeness that we can never altogether assimilate, or that becomes such a given that we are blinded to its idiosyncrasies,” then Aristotle’s readings of Homer in the *Rhetoric* confronts just that exotic, near magical component that lends the Homeric poems their peculiar allure (*The Western Canon* 4). After him modern writers would continue to treat the magical in Homer as the most important characteristic of the poems. Yet it becomes clear that rhetoric’s formal art was built on the concealment and constraint of the stranger Homer.

## 5.0 LONGINUS' ZEAL FOR HOMER

I have previously alluded to Longinus' treatment of Homer as a counterpart to Aristotle's ambivalent dispositions about and disambiguation of Homeric stylistics. In the "Interlude," I mention that Longinus encourages young rhetors (writers studying prosaic and poetic literature) to get drunk with Homer; there is no need, he tells them, to conceal or to sober up poetic fervor in writing of any kind. In this way, Longinus' treatise is about intoxication in style, a far cry from Aristotle's advice to exercise sober judgment when including poeticisms in rhetorical prose. Longinus' counter-position also extends to his goal for rhetoric, which is "not to persuade the audience but rather to transport them" (1.4), another marked difference from Aristotle's focus on persuasion. At the very least, Longinus holds style in higher esteem than Aristotle does.

In Chapter Two, we saw Plato's project of disaffiliation from Homer. In this chapter the task is to show the key terms of Longinus' re-affiliation with Homer. We have reached finally a rhetorician who thinks, eloquence, the generational distinctiveness among orators and writer depends on emulating Homer the "great-natured" author, the genius of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. As we turn to Longinus we must be conscious rhetoric's cultural and political terrain has changed. Since Plato and Aristotle's day, an entire civilization, imperial and Christian, sprawling from Iran to Ireland, has experienced a period of "transformation, discontinuity, rupture and

decay” (Croke 573).<sup>119</sup> Indeed, if disaffiliation was a distancing from the dis/order of aristocratic families and their affiliates, re-affiliation is a zeal/jealousy of (*zelōsis*) of the virtues of ancients’ writings, Homer chiefly among them.

## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

Even though the date and authorship of Longinus’ *Peri Hypsous* (literally, “On Height,” but so-called *On the Sublime*) remains unknown, scholarly consensus dates the text roughly to the second or third centuries AD.<sup>120</sup> Historiographically speaking, one could emphasize the continuities of Longinus’ Rome with Greek antiquity, or one could opt for the discontinuities. Both choices have their risks. On the side of continuity, we would risk making classical culture seem a stale and ossified Greek inheritance, passively accepted by the Romans; but late antiquity was both a period of imperial decline.<sup>121</sup> On the side of discontinuity, we would feature urbane, religious, legal and political developments which departed significantly from the order of Greek civilization.<sup>122</sup> The parameters of this chapter provide warrant for both views: continuities in the light of Homeric sources of education, especially in grammatical and rhetorical pedagogical exercises; and decay, if not discontinuity, from a performed epic tradition to a literary and pedagogical epic source. Indeed, Longinus’ spiritualism about Homer seems uncanny,

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<sup>119</sup> For discontinuity in “late antiquity,” see Croke 571ff, especially the sub-section titled, “The End of Greco-Roman Historiography.”

<sup>120</sup> For a yet unknown authorship, see Mazzucchi xxvii-xxxiv; for a third century Longinus, see Grube, “Introduction” xxii (Longinus), and for a textual reconstruction of lacunae in the text, see Heath, “Longinus” 320-1.

<sup>121</sup> For such a treatment, see Gibbon xlv-vi.

<sup>122</sup> For such a treatment, see Brown 34.

foreshadowing the language of Christian empire that had<sup>123</sup> Divinities, as we know, pose the possibility that human activity is observed from an exterior perspective— from a high, distant place, the heavens; or a transcendental frame of time, the very title *Peri Hypsous* begins to suggest such a possibility. However, I maintain that Longinus’ notion of emulation, i.e. the path of striving toward sublime writing, is secular; that it is an emotional discipline.

The integral role that transport, or *ecstasis*, plays in Longinus’ understanding of rhetoric hints at the literary experience of rhetoric, not just epic, relative to the two previous chapters. As I mention in Chapter Two, contact with language lifts the *psyche* to a divine place in Plato’s *Phaedrus*.<sup>124</sup> Like Plato, Longinus offers a theory of language that defines the power of language by its contact. For both, too, contact is necessary but insufficient. But whereas Plato’s psychagogic function of rhetoric depends on the interaction between types of souls and types of discourses, for Longinus thought provocation comes from action condensed in prose. After all, he is addressing rhetors who, in writing, address disaggregated, literary audiences or readers. Those readers, in turn, are probably reading him to improve their own writing. In sum, “audience” likely implies “reader-writers” in Longinus’ tract. Furthermore, Longinus conjoins writing-thinking: he instructs young rhetors to emulate great writers and directs them to aim for the kind of speech that, “like a bolt of lightning... reveal the full power of the speaker in a single stroke” (1.4). Longinus is not prescribing a magical or medicinal linguistic formula to

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<sup>123</sup> For the “uncanny” of cultural productions between Greece and Rome, see Mansfield 160. Yet as she also demonstrates, the uncanny similarities do not mean that there was continuity, strictly speaking. Also note Lamberton, that Homer was treated as a theologian in neo-platonist allegorical readings (22).

<sup>124</sup> For more on the drugging effect that rhetoric has, see Rinella 210.

supplement the work of reason in deficient audiences.<sup>125</sup> He is rather asking that rhetors develop the capacity to condense the dynamics of human action into imagistic lines.

Longinus' conception of sublimity (in rhetoric) is fundamentally one of sensorial contact made possible by a characteristic of Homeric poetry: the dense sequencing of action in imagery. In this regard, the literary criticism that Longinus offers us is unique. Yet it is not the only Homeric reception among late antiquity handbooks on rhetoric. So I turn first to a brief historical survey to place Longinus in context. Then I continue by discussing two main axes along which Longinus interprets Homer—the poet's own divinity and the disposition that rhetors should cultivate with regard to his poems, namely emulation, or literally zeal (*zelos*). With respect to zeal, I show how Longinus re-affiliates Plato with Homer and, by extension, rhetoric with poetry. Although Longinus was not the first to associate Homer with his arch-antagonist, in no other text does this theme feature so prominently. The chapter concludes with the way in which zeal is a dispositional aspect of the rhetorical discipline and the writing process. Throughout, I contend that the Longinian reception of Homer revolves around zeal.

## 5.2 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

From the decline of the Panathenaic *poleis* to late imperial Rome, handbooks and epideictic speeches referring to Homer were abundant. If not by sheer volume, then one could study in-

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<sup>125</sup> Halliwell emphasizes this line of argument when he writes, “it is indispensable for the Longinian sublime that it should activate and stimulate, the unrestricted, self-generative possibilities of the mind, rather than bringing it to an awareness of its own limits, as in some eighteenth-century (and more recent) versions of the concept” (*Ecstasy* 342).

depth receptions, pointing out late antique works such as Quintus' *Posthomerica*,<sup>126</sup> a sequel epic poem to the *Iliad* and a prequel to the *Odyssey*; it replicated to the utmost lexical detail the two Greek epic poems. The *Posthomerica* was excavated as a volume between the two original epics.<sup>127</sup> Such a discovery keeps us in line with the concept of *nachleben* I mention in Chapter One: the epic cycle continued on, in Homeric Greek, but this time in the literary imagination of Rome. Generally, the *Posthomerica* reminds us that Homer had remained integral to rhetorical education, the original grounds on which I argued the fluidity of Homeric afterlife. In this section, I skim some developments within familiar categories (style and grammar) imported from the Greek handbooks into late antiquity, and an unfamiliar category within Homer's reception, namely juridical authority.

Authors in late antiquity, specifically, continued to treat Homer as a compendium of examples for stylistic devices. Sometimes, their lines echoed Aristotle's ambivalence about whether to treat Homeric poetry, in these contexts a synecdoche for poetry *writ large*, as akin or foreign to the prosaic style of rhetoric.<sup>128</sup> Other times we get the sense that the classical way of modifying Homeric poetry for prose had passed from vogue.<sup>129</sup> For example, in *On Style*<sup>130</sup> Demetrius writes: "In style the periods should be brought to a definite point at the end. The periodic form is forcible, while looseness of structure is more naïve and betokens an innocent

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<sup>126</sup> For the Homeric reception of Quintus' text, see Maciver 4, 7-12.

<sup>127</sup> For the importance of "tight verbal imitation" to the intertextuality of this poem, see MacIver 11.

<sup>128</sup> In one of the significant surviving handbooks *On Composition*, Dionysius of Halicarnassus reiterates that poetry hides in rhetoric: "prose cannot become like metrical and lyrical writing, unless it contains meters and rhythms unobtrusively introduced into it" (25.5ff).

<sup>129</sup> Most of the time, this never passed from vogue in grammatical education. And, Quintilian reports that Sulpicius made students of rhetoric redact poetry, adding *oratorium robur* to Homer's *sententiae* as well as supplying deficiencies (10.5.5).

<sup>130</sup> The dating on Demetrius' *On Style* is a bit tricky, ranging anywhere from 300 BCE to 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD (311-312).

nature. This is true of all old-fashioned style, the ancients being distinguished by naïveté” (20).<sup>131</sup> Here, Aristotle’s stylistic prescription to modify poetic meter into a looser cadence had been passed over as naive. Instead, the periodic style defined the clean modern lines of Attic prose. Even though poetic florid styles of oratory had fallen out of favor, texts like the *Posthomerica* re-authorized Homer, whose verse was thought to echo a pure, arch-classical style.

Homer transcended stylistic categories probably because he was considered in Roman grammar schools, to be the source of pure Greek. Up until the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, the *grammatici* were usually Greeks, and the staple texts were Homer’s epics. So important were the epics to elementary education that even after the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, when Livius Andronicus Latinized the *Iliad*, the epics remained staple texts for teaching enunciation and literacy in grammar schools. From the first days, the opening lines of the *Iliad* were memorized by heart, and used to teach parts of speech, the accentuation and meaning of words, etymology, inflection, and all kinds of grammatical lore (Quintilian 1.8.11-12; 12.4.1; 5.11.17). At more intermediate levels of education, rhetoricians devised speech exercises, like turning verse into prose, or discussing how Homeric speeches reflected heroic characters. Absent formal legal education, finally, Homeric scenes featured prominently in even advanced stages of rhetorical training: declamations often portrayed fictitious situations from the poetic tradition. Beyond grammar, then, Homer was a master key to the discourses of self-cultivation emerging from the first century rhetors like Seneca, Epictetus, Plutarch, Galen, and Marcus Aurelius.

In textual practice, the fictional parameters which cultivated literary selves for professional, public lives mean that Homeric quotes often circulated in handbooks as quasi-

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<sup>131</sup> This seems to have been a major concern insemated by Aristotle’s Book III; see Cicero’s mention of Theophrastus’ eloquence in terms of meter and cadence (*De Oratore* 3.184-5).

logical and historical backing for arguments. Often, these references served to prove one's own erudition. Ironically, they rendered the epic medium incidental to the propositional content or the allegorical meaning of the lines. Second Sophistic rhetors like Aelius Aristides, taught students to employ Homeric quotes as logical refutations demonstrating the insufficiency of arguments in court. To those who thought it strange that religious cults emerged around Homer's immoral lines, it might have been doubly strange to watch the poetry religiously employed, this time for techniques of logical rebuffs. In fact, deliberative as well as juridical orations on Homeric themes developed into some of the fundamental exercises of advanced training in rhetoric during the period of the Roman Empire. Longinus, then, was not alone in re-forging the Homeric sense that poetry and rhetoric were indeed impenetrable. To put it in modern terms, Longinus treated speech as though its outer surface and inner thought were fused. We see a trend in late antiquity toward trans-generic treatments of speech and writing as well as poetry and rhetoric, all under the category of "rhetoric." In effect, Homeric references were widely applied at this time, suggesting that Homer was inimitable, as Horace writes, and that the law revised older classical contacts with Homeric poetry.

Meanwhile, much of Greek eloquence and stylistics were belittled as antique tastes or foreign prescriptions. Still, Homer thrived as a *vir*-source of literature, on which the Greek rhetors only held secondary standing. Specifically, he stood in as the trans-generic source for all speech arts and characteristics of ancient Greek life. Even in handbooks on epistolary style in the imperial period, Homer's status as "the divine poet who taught us everything" was commonplace (Menander 434.11-18). For Dionysius of Halicarnassus, the divinity of Homer takes both a high stature and a fluid dimension: "Now he who towers conspicuous above them all, 'Out of whose fullness all rivers, and every sea, have birth, and all up leaping fountains,' is, we must admit,

Homer” (24.11). Comments such as this one locate him prior to, and during the Atticist and Asiatic debate of the post-classical, Hellenistic and early Roman periods. Like his contemporaries, Longinus was aware of the divine poet as an after-effect of his legacy, rather than the ancient epithet for inspired versification.

Unlike his contemporaries, however, Longinus is meta-discursive about rhetorical practices in relation to Homer. Throughout his treatise, he has Homer circulate as an unsurpassable writer deserving of wonder, but a para-religious divinity nevertheless, activating scholarly engagement with his eloquence. As Longinus puts it: “in matters of elevation and emotion Nature for the most part knows no law, yet it is not the way of Nature to work at random and wholly without system” (1.2). Here, “Nature” and “law” return us to Aristotle’s opening justification for the study of rhetoric as art. However here, the art is great writing. This justification, in turn, brings attention to Longinus’ assessment of the rhetorical productions of his time: technically adept orators without a lick of eloquence. The augmented scope of rhetoric furthermore categorizes the greatest ancient rhetors (poets, rhetors, and prose writers) transgenerically, into a class of “heroes” (35.2), suggesting that a writer must be penetrated by poetic imagination, from the vantage point of Homer’s characters. In this regard, Longinus is meta-discursive about rhetoric’s relationship to Homer; he doesn’t just refer to Homer’s verses but claims that imitating his heroes allows one to surpass the poet.

Given how Homer was re-iterated in late antiquity, *On the Sublime* is a unique text if we attend to the way in which it performs the stylistics it observes. Specifically, Longinus establishes a practice common to literary criticism, connecting the granular level of a text to its greater whole. However, he does not stop at the greater whole, the structural form, of Homer’s poems. Rather, he moves from microscopic details of style, e.g., how one syllable matters for

sublimity (39.4), to a cosmic perspective, e.g., how great writers aspire to become divine (35). Along the way, he is careful to demonstrate sublimity by his own writing and often with references to poets, chiefly Homer. In this vein, Gilby's gem is *a propos*: "Longinus writes about words; he cites and writes about citing" (n.p). In contrast to Aristotle, then, Longinus does not describe poetic eloquence with a voice which tries to render its own prose inartificial or invisible.

In the light of the above, the theoretical upshot of studying Longinus is a re-affiliation of rhetoric with Homeric imagination by imitative writing practices. Generally, discussions of Longinus take the beaten path of retrospection from the perspective of modern aesthetics committing us to the notion of terror as a feeling that destabilizes the subject (Burke)<sup>132</sup> or the negative pleasure experienced as perceptual imagination reaches its limits relative to analytic reason (Kant). Accordingly, rhetorical scholars go to Longinus for insight on subject formation, or the aesthetic grounding of rhetoric.<sup>133</sup> Against Kantian readings of Longinus, I resonate with Carson, who conceives sublimity as a getting the self out of the way, which negates rather than submits to reason (45). Counter-Burke, I see merit in Lyotard's emphasis on the status of the sublime writer: "he becomes, in so far as he [sic] is a genius, the involuntary addressee of an

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<sup>132</sup> I quote Edmund Burke *On the Sublime and Beautiful* at length because his etymological profile of the pleasure of terror unconsciously raises the connection between Homeric song (*aidos*) and sublimity: "Indeed terror is in all cases whatsoever, either more openly or latently, the ruling principle of the sublime. Several languages bear a strong testimony to the affinity of these ideas. They frequently use the same word to signify indifferently the modes of astonishment or admiration and those of terror. *Thámbo*s is in Greek either fear or wonder; *deinós* is terrible or respectable; *aidéo* to reverence or to fear. *Vereor* in Latin is what *aidéo* is in Greece. The Romans used the verb *stupeo*, a term which strongly marks the state of an astonished mind, to express the effect either of simple, fear or of astonishment; the word a *attonitus* (thunderstruck) is equally expressive of the alliance of these ideas; and do not the France *étonnement*, and the English astonishment and amazement, point out as clearly the kindred emotions which attend fear and wonder? They who have a more general knowledge of languages, could produce, I make no doubt, many other and equally striking examples." (4.3-6; n.1)

<sup>133</sup> For example of the former, see Gunn and Beard 275; of the latter, O'Gorman 72.

inspiration come to him [sic] from an ‘I know not what.’ The public no longer judges according to the criteria of a taste ruled by the tradition of shared pleasure...” (96). This *je ne sais quoi* alluded to here bears mention because Longinus, in reading the poets, has been characterized both as a Greco-orthodox and a “Romantic revolutionary.”<sup>134</sup> In principle, emulation is a jealousy of tradition, a jealousy that becomes productive in so far as it awakens in us an accountability to the geniuses yet to come.

The sublime writer, even if not lonely, has reason to walk on the path of discipline. History may still send the artist companions, who, looking back at this present from a future point in time, desire to step into the moving stream of writing. No discipline—and I mean this word in auto-didactic as well as institutionalized forms—can stay energetic without this kind of para-religious faith. Briefly, I assert here what unfolds from the discussion of divinity and emulation below: emulating Homer, for the love of him, is a writerly process defined by three components—selective imitation, emotional discipline, and temporal humility. All three describe the purpose of rhetoric’s involvements with a secular divine, or sublimity.

### 5.3 TWO THEMES: DIVINITY AND EMULATION

There is a connection between sublimity, inspiration and inebriation. This connection appears wherever Longinus’ mentions zeal or its derivatives, where he quotes Homer and Sappho as exempla of great writers. Just as Longinus praises Homer and Sappho for the density of the senses they activate within their verses (9.13; 10.1), he also notes that the sublime awakens

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<sup>134</sup> For the former, see Walker elaborating on Longinus’ nostalgia of yesteryear’s eloquence (94); the latter, Bloom, *The Anatomy* 16-25.

opposing emotions within one organic whole, just as Euripides does with madness and love in his tragic form (15.3). What I mean by “textual density,” then, refers to the rare skill of putting concatenous action, sensory stimuli, and emotions (or all of the above) into compact lines, even syllables. The effect of such density on the reader is an inspiration akin to inebriation, and an intimate contact between writer and reader. What’s more by Longinus’ logic, inspiration de-individuates the audience-oriented self so that it becomes more receptive of its connection to the emotions of a rhetorly Other. Put otherwise, de-individuation mitigates the social scripts that block the sharing of experience between speaker and listener or writer and reader.

For a further elaboration of Longinus’ understanding of the ways in which sublimity is connected to inspiration and inebriation, we turn to his comparison of Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey* as well as Homer with other writers. These comparisons focus on what I call a “textual density,” the concatenation of image, action, emotion or language. To begin with, he asserts that the *Iliad* remains the undiminished crown of Homer’s writing. In battle scenes, Homer’s writing “stormily raves...outpouring of the passions [*pathê*] crowding one another” (9.11). In other words, the reader’s body mirrors that density with a manifest intensity of emotions. By contrast, the *Odyssey* is not as sublime, even if we get some action-packed scenes in the storm and Cyclopes. Longinus writes that Homer’s usual “flood of moving incidents in quick succession, the versatile rapidity and actuality, dense with images drawn from real life” is missing in the second poem (9.13). Apparently, he concludes, Homer wrote the *Iliad* at the acme of his genius, for it is “lively with dramatic action,” whereas the *Odyssey*, where “narrative predominates,”

bespeaks of Homer's old age.<sup>135</sup> At Homer's dusk, Longinus ends: "So in the *Odyssey* one may liken Homer to the setting sun; the grandeur remains without the intensity" (9.13).

Longinus' second contrast between the two epic poems explains another element of what makes the sublime such a stirring experience. Indeed, the later date of the *Odyssey* has much to do with its descriptive focus on scenes, not action, but also of its focus on *fictional* scenes not of realistic action. Longinus writes: "It is rather as though the Ocean had retreated into itself and lay quiet within its own confines. Henceforth we see the ebbing tide of Homer's greatness, as he wanders in the realm of the fabulous and incredible" (9.13). Textual density alone is not enough: it must be of realistic actions and emotions, like the gore of the battlefield in the *Iliad*, which functions as a springboard from which zealous rhetors can launch their dense phrases. When "the mythical element predominates over the real," the sublimity of poetic imagery cannot take a hold (9.14). And if the real does not take hold, emotions are comically disengaged from the text: "Odysseus' household" has the effect of constituting "a sort of comedy of character" (9.15). Texts can be well-written or amusing; but to be sublime, they must dis-possess readers of their readerly selves, or where their world ends and the textual one begins.

From macro-descriptions portraying realistic action in rapid succession, Homer's sublime moves to the consonance between mood and the minutiae of diction. For an illustration, we go to

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<sup>135</sup> Later on, Vico turns Longinus' portrayal of the ageing Homer into a collective insight: "Thus Homer composed the *Iliad* in his youth, that is, when Greece was young and consequently seething with sublime passion, such as pride, wrath, and lust for vengeance, passions which do not tolerate dissimulation but which love magnanimity; and hence Greece admired Achilles, the hero of violence. But he wrote the *Odyssey* in his old age, that is, when the spirits of Greece had been somewhat cooled by reflection, which is the mother of prudence, so that it admired his theory of historical cycles (*corso* and *ricorso*)...poetry [of the first men] was at first divine, because ... they imagined [*immaginavano*] the causes of things they felt and wondered [*sentivano ed ammiravano*] at to be gods" (322-25). With Longinus however, notice that the "magical fiction" is associated with a later period, not of an earlier, primitive one. So he may reverse Vico.

Longinus' contrast between Homer and lesser writers' descriptions of the ocean: "[Aratus] has demeaned the idea and made it pretty instead of awe-inspiring...Homer, on the other hand, instead of dismissing the danger once and for all, depicts the sailors as being all the time, again and again, with every wave on the brink of death. Moreover, by forcing into an abnormal union prepositions not usually compounded, he has tortured his language into conformity with the impending disaster" (10.6). Here we are reminded of how Longinus differs from Aristotle, who maintains that assonance and arrangement must not be too reflective of the mood being delivered. By contrast, Longinus finds sublimity in the writer beating, kneading, and churning words to conformity with the mood.

The consonance between density and mood implies that the sublime eloquence arises out of something extra to the language itself. Indeed, Homeric density refers not only to linear sweeps of sequential action but also to layers of representation, thus exceeding the propositional function of language. Longinus even turns to discuss Homer's great nature (*megalophuia*, see 13.2 below), whose sublimity even echoes out of silence. A rhetor need not always represent speech to bear testimony to the great nature of his character. Longinus writes: "How grand, for instance, is the silence of Ajax in the Summoning of the Ghosts,<sup>136</sup> more sublime than any speech [καὶ παντὸς ὑψηλότερον λόγου]" (9.3). Now, Longinus refers to Ajax's character elsewhere.<sup>137</sup> When he does so, Longinus specifies that the hero himself has a great nature, leaving ambiguous how the poet gives life to the hero:<sup>138</sup> Does Homer lend his great nature to his characters, or did Homer's great nature unfurl because he came into contact with great natures

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<sup>136</sup> For this scene commonly referred to as the "*nekuia*," see *Od* 11.543-67.

<sup>137</sup> See below (142).

<sup>138</sup> True, I have said that 'Homer' is an image and not a poet; but Longinus treats Homer as an individual genius, the image of a poet overseeing from on high all creation.

such as Ajax? The circularity implied by Longinus' silence, raises the question of how a reader participates in a sublime moment of (textual) silence: Is the reader to reduce sublimity to the character's silence, or in relation to the character's speeches overall, or to the writer's representation of silence itself? The questions raised, I argue, lead us to conclude one thing: that sublimity cuts across the divide separating rhetor, text, and reader, binding their bodily experiences by affective intensities. As such, the question of how rhetoric moves its audience does not grant answers if we are in search sure-fire mechanisms.<sup>139</sup>

Affective intensity between reader and character/poet arguably could be treated as the extra-linguistic source of sublimity. At least so for rhetorical education, which Longinus directly specifies as students inhaling their monumental rhetorical predecessors. In chapter 13, where Longinus discusses Plato's emulation of Homer, the notion of pneumatic inhalation gives us an alternative metaphor to the "magnetic rings" transmitting poetic versification in the *Ion* (534eff). For Plato divine inspiration travels from the muse through Homer to the rhapsode, and finally to the audience, in a chain of language. Longinus' metaphor (pneumatic inhalations), by contrast, does not focus on the linear directionality of inspiration, and it does not adhere to the sensory level of smell; rather, it relates inspiration to the lung tissues' inhalation and digestion of smoke:

This is the aim, dear friend; let us hold to it with all our might. For many are *carried away* by the inspiration of another, just as the story runs that the Pythian

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<sup>139</sup> Contrast this idea with the more explicit narrating voice in Apollonius' *Argonautica*, which I argue shows the stylistic division of Aristotle. Hunger writes that, "There is... a far greater prominence for the poet's person, the narrating ego, than is found in Homer... Different too is the poet's explicit inclusion of himself in general statements and *gnomai* in the first person..." (261). These observations lead Hunter to conclude that in the *Argonautica*, "very strict stylistic distinctions between the two modes [narrative and direct speech] are no longer valid" and "the Homeric division between the lexicon of speech and that of narrative is blurred and weakened, but not entirely abandoned" (262).

priestess on approaching the tripod where there is, they say, a rift in the earth, exhaling vapour, [and she] thereby becomes impregnated with the divine power and is at once inspired to utter oracles; so, too, from the natural genius [*megalophuia*, literally ‘great natures’] of those old writers there flows into the hearts of their admirers [*zêlountes*, literally ‘zealots’] as it were an emanation from those holy mouths. [emphasis mine] (13.2)

Clearly, Plato got carried away, moved by Homer; and his poetic education allowed him to approach the rift in the earth. The genius transfers itself onto the reader/writer by *stirring all the emotions at once*, into a storm, an emotional intensity described pneumatically. For her part, whatever it is that the oracle inhales, it reaches her heart, the throne of all senses, suggesting that sublimity is attached to the sense prior or common to individuated senses. Furthermore, the artistic genius of the writer is parallel to divine power and admirers are literally zealots, albeit of great literature and not religion. Because it relies on intensity and not one sensory register or emotion in particular, sublime poetry is diachronic in its effects; it has the power of making direct contact with readers (or listeners) no matter how much time passes. Whereas the force of Plato’s magnetic rings diminishes as it travels a linear circuit, divine power remains just as potent, taking its Bacchanalians directly to the source of sublimity. But the important point is that zeal enters through various senses, giving rise to the aesthetic experience that sublimity effects: concatenated senses layered densely in textual bursts (10.1). If the ensuing discussion on selective imitation is plausible, then the contrast with Plato’s imagery is an important clue to Longinus’ re-affiliation of rhetoric and poetry.

So far, the sublime has been treated as equivalent to the intensities that great writers can stir in their readers. But the sublime furthermore gives a volumetric dimension to the Greek

classical notion of *mimesis*, which dictated that students of rhetoric imitate and alter the verses of Homer's poetry into prose. To be sure, Longinus agrees that prose imitation of poetry is integral to the rhetorical education: "We who want sublimity should likewise to Plato or Homer ask, 'How might Homer have said this same thing, how would Plato or Demosthenes or (in history) Thucydides have made it sublime?'" (14.1). However, his notion of emulation pre-selects what is worth imitating based on collective judgment. In fact, students of rhetoric should cultivate their literary tastes by imitating monumental literature. This is important because it does not leave open the Platonic question, whether imitation's numbs us to the bad qualities of originals we are imitating and thereby internalizing. Rather it opens a Longinian conception of tradition: what have the secondary writers of the past indicated to be cultural artifacts worth imitating in the first place?

After Longinus depicts the oracle inhaling divine vapors, he sums Plato's rhetorical method as a written exercise of "*zelōsis* and *mimesis*" (13.2) The concept of *zelōsis* (ζήλωσις) I have located in Longinus is usually featured in histories of Pauline theology, not rhetorical or philosophical studies. The seminal passage follows:

Here is an author [Plato] who shows us, if we will condescend to see, that there is another road [other than linguistic devices]... which leads to sublimity. What and what manner of road is this? Zealous imitation (μίμησις τε καὶ ζήλωσις, literally "of imitation and zeal") of the great prose writers and poets of the past. 13.2

In the most recent (2015) commentary of Longinus' text, Doran hyphenates the concept as "*zelōsis-mimesis*" (64). His move, which is to qualify imitation by zeal (a zealous or fervent imitation), follows Kennedy's reading of Longinus line "*mimesis te kai zelōsis*" (13.2) by treating *zelōsis* as "an aspect of imitation" (*On Rhetoric* 161). In English both of these translators

prefer to treat what are two nouns in the original language as an adjective qualifying the noun “imitation.” I argue that zealousness is neither qualifier, nor aspect; but rather a distinct state of writerly work, whereby a writer is not imitating, but emulating-coveting, the eloquence of a great writer. In other words, I would even argue to subordinate the oft-repeated Platonic term *mimesis* to the former *zelōsis*: elevated writing cannot occur without emulation, a selective imitation of great language. In other words, what I have introduced is *zelōsis*, the extra-moral rather than problematic connotation of *mimesis*.

Emulation suggests that rhetors do not imitate unselectively or individually. That being said, emulation also implies, in contrast to imitation, that one does not aim to imitate the form, but rather the eloquence of another’s writing. If emulation seems uncomfortable because it demands a certain allegiance to a tradition of writing, perhaps the affective object of emulation rather than the formal object of imitation helps to fracture what one might imagine tradition to be: a tortuous monolith of notions. True, Longinus invests emotional discipline in the recommendations that a republic of letters makes. Whether that emotional discipline should be invested in particular texts is arguable; however, the point remains that *zelōsis* features an emotional discipline as the source of cultural regeneration. Here, secondary writers’ zeal for particular thinkers helps to student-rhetor away from works of mere eloquence.

Zeal conceptually checks against passive admiration or emulation of ancient if only because it contains a counter-position, namely its etymological descendent “jealousy.” Zeal, then, is not a resigned disposition of awe toward a piece of writing from the divine past; it is a heroic jealousy, that another writer from generations ago can surpass my own. Longinus’ rhetorical education is neither neutral nor individual about its selective imitations, and jealousy foils our inclination to understand *zelōsis* as a naïve imitation for great writing. Ultimately, even

the collective selections matter less and less as a student of rhetoric develops a taste and aesthetic responsibility. Presumably, a heretofore undiscovered piece of sublime writing can move a rhetor—this, a sufficient condition for *zelōsis*.<sup>140</sup>

The interpenetration of jealousy and emulation, as well as collective and individual selections of what should be imitated, point to rhetoric as a discipline founded in heroic attitudes. The heroic ethic in Longinus' text offers a secular version of religious fervor, one aimed at claiming an eloquence that no other writer has mastered. Several cues seem to confirm this para-religious notion as one reads Longinus further. First, the listener and speaker share an intersubjective space thanks to what epic poetry bestows, an imagistic notion of language. Longinus writes,

strong and timely emotion and genuine sublimity...positively demand bold imagery as essential to their effect, and do not give the hearer time to examine how many metaphors there are, because he shares the excitement of the speaker (32.4).

The manic heights of excitement are an effect of the image, which gets the readerly-self out of the way and, besides, recalls the importance of images to a long afterlife (*nachleben*). The second cue confirming *zelōsis* as a para-religious notion is that Longinus doubles down on the aggregative function of eloquence. For example, Longinus finds Herodotus to be sublime when he “compresses the number of separate individuals into a unified whole,” in order to create a sense of solidarity. Both compression and unification imply the problem that Longinus thinks

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<sup>140</sup> This point finds support from Longinus' uses the *theomachia* of *Iliad* 20.64ff as an example of sublimity (9.7), the same passage which Plato twice removes from the *Republic* (2.378bd; 3.386d). If so, Longinus can be said to have been responding to Plato's disaffiliation from Homer.

*zelōsis* trains students of rhetoric to overcome—social atomization. Elsewhere Longinus lets slip the divine *ethos* that each rhetor must cultivate, “combined with factual arguments [visualization] not only convinces an audience, it positively masters them” (15.9).

If *zelōsis* is a para-religious state of study, then it makes sense to aim high. Sublime writers begin by measuring their own work *against* the highest watermarks of written achievements. Readerly zeal is an incipient act of writerly criticism; the intensive discipline from insemination to labor is the source of continuity. But we need not think of *zelōsis* as a line from reading to writing. For example, Longinus re-directs the path of *zelōsis* as he “loots” (13.4) quotes from Homer, what Carson calls Longinus’ signature “documentary technique” (96). It is as though objectively representing Homer’s verse on a page implies that the sublime can cut through texts; quotations are streams of sublimity interspersed where the rhetor cannot surpass a certain predecessor. So it is also a reflexive gesture, working bidirectionally, from writing back toward reading, a line that epitomizes the eloquence a rhetor would like to work into prose. Longinus finally short-circuits the shuttle between reading-as-incipient writing and vice versa, when he writes:

We, too, then, when we are working at some passage that demands sublimity of thought and expression, should do well to form in our hearts the question, ‘How might Homer have said this same thing, how would Plato or Demosthenes or (in history) Thucydides have made it sublime?’ Emulation (ζῆλον) will bring those great characters before our eyes, and their shining presence will lead our thoughts to the ideal standards of perfection. (14.1)

Arguably, Longinus’ signature documentary technique is emulation, then. Emulating the spirit or aura of how we imagine a perfect writer to be. If this is so, then Longinus’ *On the Sublime* is a

literary version of heroic ethopoetic exercise in *progymnasmata*. Instead of prompting the student of rhetoric to consider how a hero might deliver a speech in court however, the student imaginatively deifies past writers. In this way, *zelōsis* finally turns out to work by a halo effect. Intimacy with the sublime need not only make us feel like we share a world with the writer or character, but also that we ourselves can achieve cultural distinctions.

Longinus would have rhetors aspiring to sublimity work on two things. First, he would have them master, via zealous imitation, the poetry or prose of the masters. Then, and only then, will they be able to ask the question in the above quotation. And when they do, their writing will not be theirs because they will be striving to do justice to the style of the masters. In effect, their voice will be speaking words as others would. Alternatively, they will be speaking their own words but as learned from and in the spirit of the masters. In this sense, *mimesis* is not an inauthentic or fraudulent practice, as Plato had thought. Rather, it is a practice that, if practiced extensively and with zeal, will lead to the internalization of the master's voice. Such an internalization, Longinus seems to say, is necessary for two reasons: first, it will perpetuate the afterlife of the divine Homer in the words of others; and second, it will provide the conditions of possibility for a future Homer. Homer as *nachleben*, then, unfolds as a process toward sublimity, a process which consequently ushers readers into an intersubjective space with rhetors.

But who contests with Homer? Who lets emotions of contestation carry them through their writerly tasks? Read one way, Longinus' emotional discipline bespeaks of individual self-care, that one must allow fervor to fuel work. But his temporal orientation does not allow for self-interest. Across many audiences, greatness can be achieved in the lifespan of an author. Sublimity, however, is posthumous; its futurity is not beholden to the author's personal aims. On the topic of immortality in Homer's epics, Longinus writes: "Homer has done his best to make

the men in the *Iliad* gods and the gods men” (9.7). Death, in other words, is an artistic check against immortality and immortal suffering. A willed struggle is beautiful; an unchosen one tragic. So despite his mortality, a hero as sublime as Ajax does not pray to Zeus for life but “a burial worthy of his courage” (9.11). Heroic virtues such as nobility or courage, certainly orient rhetors to aim for something beyond self-interest, something that might leave behind traces worthy of awe. Finally, Longinus’ discussion of immortals suggests that zealotry is not so much self-interested as it is desirous of ideals unattainable in one’s lifetime.

Zealous imitation of the great writers is a form of contest. This contest is the first step toward sublimity. If sublimity is in fact achieved by the aspiring orator, it will be recognized in the future, after the orator’s death. On these grounds, Longinus, re-affiliates Plato with Homer:

[Plato’s] borrowing [from Homer] is no theft; it is rather like the reproduction of good character by sculptures or other works of art... nor would he have entered so often into the subjects and language of poetry, had he not striven, with heart and soul, to contest the [first] prize with Homer, like a young antagonist with one who had already won his spurs, perhaps in too keen emulation, longing [for strife] ... yet always to good purpose; for, as Hesiod says, ‘Good is this strife (*eris*) for mankind.’ (13.4; cf 9.4)

Longinus’ point here is unmistakable: Plato’s pronounced contest with Homer is an effect of his zeal for Homer’s sublimity. For him, *zelōsis* shows us the “road” toward sublimity (13.3). At the same time, Plato’s contest with Homer is cause for his elaborate imagery, an observation which had been made as early as Ammonius.<sup>141</sup> Both an effect and a cause of sublimity, zeal amounts to a disposition toward the discipline of rhetoric. As dispositions go, zeal consists of passion,

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<sup>141</sup> See Longinus 213; fn 59.

seriousness, earnestness, and diligence. It effectively keeps alive a youthful fire for what is otherwise an aesthetic task easily quit.

Therefore, by temporal humility, I mean the awareness that one is insignificant within the larger scheme of history. To overview why Longinus apposes humility with zeal, I begin with a passage that touches on both. Incidentally, this passage is the first mention of *zelos* in the treatise; Longinus writes:

To speak generally, you should consider that to be beautifully and truly sublime which pleases all people at all times. For when men who differ in their pursuits, their lives, their tastes (ζήλων, literally admirations), their ages, their languages, all agree together in holding one and the same view about the same writings, then the unanimous verdict, as it were, of such discordant judges makes our faith in the admired passage strong and indisputable. (7.4)

My argument, that zeal commands a central location in rhetoric's relation to the sublime, could inhere in this passage alone. First, individual admirations, or tastes, are not equal (yet) to sublime literature. Individual tastes first direct one to imitate and wrestle with the object of zeal. The democratic notion of sublimity in the above passage requires more aeration. Over time, it is as though educated reader-writers cast votes on written works, suggesting literature as a diffuse forum, but an arena nevertheless where more particular political, national, or disciplinary separations play out generically. Altogether, the voice of the educated, over time, manifests its jurisdiction on the question of a writer's divine status, a status which Longinus grants Homer as evidenced by the several chapters which Longinus dedicates to him.

Elsewhere, Longinus stresses the historical expanse in the above passage to define zeal by its negative. In particular, he observes that "cheap affectation" (*kakózelos*) occurs often, when

“writers ...behave as if they were drunk and give way to outbursts of emotion which the subject no longer warrants, but which are private” (3.1). Yet Longinus does not assign blame on the drunken, emotional performance so much as he does on the rhetor’s inability to share what remains “private... while they are in ecstasy, the audience is not.” The quick wear-off; it does not perdure! By contrast, true sublimity is shared, not only between reader and writer but also, again, across time (13.3). This firstly suggests that the success of zeal without the rule of art can only be verified by its effects, so that in emotional or stylistic excess, the ecstasy of the speaker may be an emotional invitation to the audience (4.1). Such a line secondly suggests that sublime writing can only be identified by an intergenerational zeal, proving its worth by the test of time.

An object worthy of zeal perdures over time because many genius writers have spent so much time imitating it: “Was Herodotus alone Homeric in the highest degree? No, there was Stesichorus at a still earlier date and Archilochus too, and above all others Plato, who drew off for his own use ten thousand runnels from the great Homeric spring” (13.3). Having reached such a high status, the sublime object attracts the admiration not of any beholders but the best ones. This association between Homer and other monumental figures points back to Longinus’ stipulation that sublimity is collective, binding the rhetor to his images and to the reader. In effect, a cross-pollination mechanized by imitation or commentary takes place, and just as Homer has been immortalized by his readers, his readers depend on their acknowledgement (in either word or deed) of Homer. Admiration contains really a double tendency, on the one hand to imitate, and on the other, to exceed. In other words, zeal is a passion informing artistic practice, if we are to follow Longinus’ cues.

The question driving this section is: how can we tell that which is sublime, especially a time when there is a decline in eloquence? The misery attributed to rhetoric in imperial Rome,

Todorov loots from a line by Tacitus—“Our age above all, barren and stripped of the glory of eloquence, scarcely retains the very name of ‘orator,’ although earlier periods bloomed with the renowned talents of so many distinguished orators” (60). Longinus detects the same barrenness several centuries later. Yet Longinus counter-poses tragic resignation or nostalgia about the past, relying instead on *zelōsis* as the antidote.

#### 5.4 CONCLUSION

Although Longinus’ treatise is about rhetoric, most contemporary rhetoricians bypass it. Perhaps that is because Longinus’ definition of rhetoric is ecstatic, based on the transport outside of the body, rather than on more analytic modes of persuasion (1.4). Such a basis for rhetoric implies an irrational or demiurgic source for rhetoric; but this chapter has shown that those mentions frequently overturn religious associations with poetic language. Furthermore, Dionysiac connotations of ecstasy that come into fruition later with Nietzsche have no place in Longinus, who understands reason and emotion as fully consummated with one another. In that conception, zeal is a disciplinary practice that begins with the dispositions toward art and life. It begins with social and physiological evaluations of what is worth reading; it then continues with the life-nourishing intuition which leads rhetors to make art only of those things which stir feelings; and it concludes with the humility of thinking of writerly work as collective heritage. But if emulation is the center of Longinus’ rhetorical theory, some speculative remarks are in order.

Historically, Longinus allows us to treat Homer’s “divine” epics as secular, or at least parareligious, literary accomplishments. Even if Homer is more than the sum of his parts, quoting and analyzing lines from Homer, as Longinus does in *Peri Hypsous*, secularizes what is

otherwise “inimitable” in the versification of his epic poems. Longinus’ singular achievement, then, is to make the immortal Homer mortal again. Whereas Aristotle, Plato, as well as Longinus’ contemporaries cast Homer as a self-congealed originary figure of Greek literary history, Longinus demonstrates that revisiting Homer, being meta-discursive about his lines, or directly coming into contact with what is otherwise a distant literary episode outside of history’s linear sweep, is the impossible demand of rhetorical study. Meeting that demand promises to re-affiliate poetry with rhetoric and produce a history of rhetoric that has yet to be written.

Critically, Longinus explains why young writers emulate, and well they should, something as ancient as Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. If his understanding of the competitive spirit of emulation is taken seriously, it might overturn Aristotle’s cautionary notes of using rhetoric’s poetic resources sparsely. Ironically, Aristotle’s own view of emulation (it is “felt by the young and by persons of lofty disposition;” “We also feel it about anything for which our ancestors . . . were honored, looking upon that thing as really our own. . . .”) [*Rhet*, 1388b 1, 9]) provides some push-back to his own advice. The concept of zealous emulation also furnishes grounds on which to argue for the liberal temper of rhetoric, a temper that does not forget its beginnings, and, in fact, uses them to the advantage of its own clarification and purpose. Finally, because Longinus asks that rhetoricians imitate the best writers of the past, he offers rhetoric a diachronic status among the other liberal arts and frees it from the tyranny of relevance.

## 6.0 THE AFTERLIFE OF HOMER IN CONTEMPORARY RHETORICAL STUDIES

Contemporary rhetoricians are generally quiet about Homer. At a time when classicists are importing other disciplinary sensibilities (e.g., like media literacy,<sup>142</sup> linguistic anthropology,<sup>143</sup> Peircian semiotics,<sup>144</sup> and Lacanian psychoanalysis<sup>145</sup>) in their discussions of Homer, rhetoricians have been missing from those conversations. Perhaps Bakhtin's line in *The Dialogic Imagination* that epic is moribund because it is a "world of fathers," and "valorized temporal categories" suffices to explain the absence (15). But Bakhtin admits that the facts of epical experience and events matter little compared to "a commonly held evaluation and points of view—and which therefore displays a profound piety toward the subject described" (16-17). Perhaps, then, Plato and Aristotle's interest in Homer has left an indelible mark on Bakhtin himself. What's more, I argue that Aristotle's disambiguation of Homer, more than Plato and Longinus, has left an indelible mark on rhetoricians, who tend to treat epic as a primitive form of speech, and rhetoric as a related and evolved form.

True, there was a glimmer of interest in Homer mid-twentieth century among those who tended to the transition from epical to rhetorical delivery.<sup>146</sup> However, rhetorical historians may

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<sup>142</sup> For the forerunner of such an approach, see Ong 5, 53.

<sup>143</sup> See Heath, *Talking* 27ff. Web.

<sup>144</sup> See Ghione 187.

<sup>145</sup> See Gana 156.

<sup>146</sup> See North 54.

have alienated scholars whose questions about contemporary relevance were left unanswered.<sup>147</sup> For the most part, then, the bridges between rhetoric and Homer's poetry in this section have been culled from classicists, philologists, and philosophers. Their interest in rhetoric and poetics were fueled by questions of text and textuality, which postmodern discourses brought to their disciplinary doors.

In part, Chapter One, on the role of Homer in classical rhetorical education, helps us to avoid facile models of development by calling attention to overlapping practices. Specifically, it locates rhetoric's contact with Homeric poetry primarily in pedagogical practices so as to help us to discriminate between different 'Homers' by some tangible parameters typically reserved for studies in the history of education. In other part, Chapter One helps us to detect hasty generalizations as they arise in the five lines of thought that I discuss in this chapter.

Together, the last three chapters show that the ancients produced a variously toned crop of testimony suggesting that rhetoric emerged from Homer. Neither *rhetoriké* nor *poiesis* exist in Homeric Greek. But the existence of a word does not indicate whether a verbal art is practiced among a given people (Poulakos, 1990; Johnstone, 1996, 439). What matters here is that classical antiquity approached the epic poems as resources for teaching and theoretical formulations of linguistic devices.<sup>148</sup> This approach suggests several points of contact between Homer and rhetoric. Even foregoing a discussion of modernist receptions,<sup>149</sup> this study stands to

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<sup>147</sup> See Kennedy, "The Ancient Dispute" 23-35.

<sup>148</sup> The words *poiêsis*, *poiêtês*, and *rhetor* do not appear until the fifth century B.C., and the words *poëitikhê*, *poiêma*, and *rhêtorikhê* famously appear in Plato's *Gorgias*. In Homer's world, the words for song (*aoidê*, *hymnoi*), singer (*aoidos*), rhythmic words (*epos*), long authoritative speech (*mythos*), and eloquent speaker (*basileus*) are instead used (Martin 18; Hainsworth 8).

<sup>149</sup> A project which might argue that politics and science took after philosophy in disaffiliating from rhetoric.

enrich criticism of contemporary scholarly conversations on the contact between Homer and rhetoric.

## 6.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I introduce five lines of thought organized along lines of ‘development’ as a topic. ‘Developmentalism,’ as I am calling it, reverberates Aristotle’s notion of teleology, which treats each being’s function (striving) and moral state (flourishing) as one and the same. As regards history, ‘developmentalism’ belies a fallacious presumption. Historicism is a fallacy of imagination whereby a thinker equates progression of time with cultural advancement. Accordingly, later historical periods are presumed to be more intellectually or culturally advanced than earlier ones. The previous four chapters have demonstrated complex registers by which rhetorical education availed itself of Homeric poetry. That complexity bears on this chapter. As such I have purposely avoided connecting Homer’s poetry to rhetoric topically—from oral to written, mythos to logos, from natural to artistic expression, implicit awareness to explicit consciousness. Such a treatment often formalizes the interaction of poetry and prose, which must have been an uneven process.

It has been commonplace to presume that poetry is “naturally eloquent,” whereas rhetoric is a more consciously crafted form of speech. As a result, what connects the following lines of thought is how they replicate or respond to that commonplace. They are, in order: that a proto-rhetoric exists in Homeric epics; that developed rhetorical structures in Homer exist independent of rhetoric’s subsequent definitions; that on a thematic level, the poetry of Homer constituted rhetoric’s subsequent definitions; that on a thematic level, the poetry of Homer constituted rhetoric’s theoretical terms; that rhetoric’s theoretical terms constituted a language for poetics;

finally, that given contemporary theories of rhetoric, Homer helps to push conversations about rhetoric forward. Whereas the first four lines of thought come to historical conclusions, the last one aims to contribute to theories about speech. And while each of these lines of thought can claim advantages and limits, I aim to integrate the merits of all five so as to try to contribute to rhetorical theory.

Now, schematizing commonplace presumptions follows the rhetorical practice of topical arrangement. Presumptions about progress often camouflage evaluative claims couched in chronological claims. As I have pointed out, the topic emerging from the scholarship on the Homer in relation to rhetoric is developmentalism. But progress is complex: evaluative claims about progress are contingent, and a step forward can take us three steps back. Inquiring into contingent contexts calls us to appreciate an impasse that puts us in the position of speculation: classical rhetoricians probably did not have reason or incentive to explain how rhetoric relates to Homer's poetry. As a subject of study, symbolic forms and their relationships, did not concern scholars until recently.<sup>150</sup> Second, progress is a matter of interpretation. As we will see, two scholars can interpret the same passages from Homer as evidence of primitive or fully developed speech forms. Finally, complications arise when we consider our own awareness, or ignorance, about reading the complex chronologies latent in Homeric epic and rhetoric. They present an interdependent dynamics between a present (reading words), an ongoing present (reading texts *as* poems, speeches, or handbooks), perfect pasts (authored texts), and imperfect pasts (possible worlds, words, deeds networked in the texts).<sup>151</sup> Chronology, of course, is not unique to these subjects: an anterior future colors any reading of any text. What I am suggesting here is that

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<sup>150</sup> Symbolic interactionists would represent the most pronounced movement of this way of thinking.

<sup>151</sup> For more on the temporality of Homer's epics, see Bakker, *Poetry* 166.

Homeric poetry is an idiomatic language that depends on tapping into rhetorical imaginaries preserved in pedagogical exercise, the handbook tradition, and a theoretical lens that searches for extra-textual experiences of public speech. Again, I am not evading the question of whether rhetorical consciousness is more advanced than the one associated with oral practices of poetry. But I am also not making the reverse claim, namely that poetry is more advanced by virtue of its implicit riddles. Finally, I am saying that development is not the virtue by which I issue my judgments.

## **6.2 FIVE LINES OF THOUGHT**

In what follows, I aim to furnish a representative layout of the terrain of scholarship connecting rhetoric to Homer. Even though my map is specific to contemporary thought, readers may note the historical longevity of some of these lines. Perhaps this scheme even may lend itself to an intellectual history. Second, I configure my map according to where scholars locate development across epic poetry and rhetoric. Because of epic poetry's oral and mythic dimensions, it is typically understood as a symbolic form that falls short of, exceeds, or at least challenges the written and philosophical formulation of rhetoric. Of course, whether epic does these things depends on which dispositions sustain these ways of thinking.

### **6.2.1 A Proto-Rhetoric Exists in Homeric Epics.**

A proto-rhetoric is a primitive awareness of speech, an awareness attributed to eloquent expressions of language, and the attendant consciousness of those expressions. Rhetoricians have

often felt the draw of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The epics' verses embody a tightly woven fabric of eloquence. But if the more the toil the sweeter the soil, the fabric has fascinated by the comprehensive world it weaves. Given the admiring comments of numerous rhetoricians—beside Plato and Aristotle, Isocrates, the likes of Menander Rhetor, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Quintilian and Cicero—like George Kennedy who writes, “The characteristics of rhetoric which eventually monopolized the ancient mind are implicit in the Homeric poems: the power of speech, the resources of the speaker, and the aesthetic and practical significance of his task” (*The Art* 39). Here, the notion of “implied characteristics” taps into a large motif of 19<sup>th</sup>-century Homeric scholarship: epic poetry represents a “native eloquence.”

What sustains this line of thinking is that there is no rhetorical theory in Homer. But this claim makes sense only if one first posits what rhetorical theory is. Given, then, that rhetorical theory came long after Homer, in Aristotle's treatise, it is a mistake to count any omission of Aristotelian terms against epical consciousness. This is not any different than the line of thought that treats *mythos* as the primitive version of *logos*, orality as that of literacy, formulaic production as that of critical reception. It is widely accepted that literacy has enabled more critical and reflective considerations about language. But then again, it is orality that has enabled those kinds of considerations, their inventions and opportunities. It is a mistake, then, to ride teleology's value claim of progress quietly, and for too far. The notion that prior events determine consequences is overtaxed when scholars use it as a premise for stipulating evaluations of intelligence. Often, recognition colors what we identify as a higher form of intelligence.

Ironically, rhetoricians would lose out by their own measures of intelligence. Those who treat epic poetry as reflecting a native awareness of speech, employ the same logic driving the

typical derision for rhetoric as *mere* speech as the inferior counter-part to dialectic. The logic of hierarchies—that a theoretical faculty of rhetoric is more essential than enacted prose, which in turn, is more essential than poetry—has weak defenses against epistemological critiques.<sup>152</sup> Despite its faults, however, this line of thought can be recommended for its strong and clear claim. Often, such clarity is needed to catalyze impressive rejoinders; and it is against that way of thinking that one of the most seminal works about poetic sophistication has been shaped.<sup>153</sup> The deep search into cunning intelligence *per se* by the likes of Marcel Detienne and Jean-Paul Vernant has demonstrated the keen edge of repossessing the terms of foreclosed presumptions, and how those repossessions enrich avenues for articulating rhetorical know-how.

### **6.2.2 A Fully Developed Rhetoric Exists in Homeric Epics.**

In contrast to the idea that a proto-rhetoric exists in Homer, a recently articulated line of thought posits that a fully developed rhetorical consciousness is to be found in Homer. Initially, this line sounds like an antidote to the previous way of thinking, only its claims often are supported by anachronism, and the proof is always in Aristotle's pudding. We are asked to consider that Homeric culture already employed rhetorical devices including, *logos, pathos, and ethos*,<sup>154</sup> common topics (*koinoi topoi*), sophisticated enthymemes, and compositional structures,<sup>155</sup> etc. What Kennedy above calls "implicit," then, is rather elaborated, even if it was incidentally spelled out later on. In effect, rhetoric's beginnings are to be found neither in the technical

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<sup>152</sup> Snell emphasizes this point, "Thus the early Greeks did not, either in their language or in their visual arts, grasp the body as a unit" (7).

<sup>153</sup> See Marcel Detienne and Vernant 314ff.

<sup>154</sup> See Martin 147-8; Crick and Rhodes, "Death and Eloquence" 330.

<sup>155</sup> See Knudsen, *Homeric Speech* 136.

handbooks, as some more literal minded textual searches have insisted, nor in democratic forums—the courtroom and legislative assemblies—that presided over public speech, as the common story goes.<sup>156</sup> Instead, rhetoric or speech with the aim of persuasion, is an archaic phenomenon.

Using Aristotelian criticism against its own hierarchy of speech forms has merit by virtue of calculative analysis. Homer's poetry exemplifies each rhetorical device. The calculation insists that subtractive models of rhetoric and epic poetry, which assume the philosopher's rhetorical formulation, don't offer much to subtract after all. Perhaps the resort to this kind of calculation implies its audience: a coterie of Aristotelian thinkers. This kind of thinking certainly does not forward a theoretical perspective, which needs to accompany even the most comprehensive defenses like Achilles' shield. Moreover, it is a false start. Even if Aristotle's terms could be found alive and well in Homeric culture, this line of thought admits of considerable *hubris*—it says that speech has been recognizably the same throughout the centuries.

Despite its contrarian motive—for it implies that sophistication in epic speech stands in for rhetorical theory, or even that it is more sophisticated than rhetorical theory—this line of thought still works backwards. Even though both Homer and Aristotle show a sophisticated awareness of speech, Aristotle's grammar for connecting rhetorical terms, and more generally the arts, is not Homer's. In fact, histories designed this way grant little insight into the practices of speaking, either rhetorically or poetically. Whereas the previous line of thought *compares* Aristotelian theory with Homeric poetry, here the theory is *projected* backwards onto the poetry.

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<sup>156</sup> For the view that it did start in juridical contexts, see Bizzell and Herzberg (xx); for the view that it started in epideictic forums, see Walker (xx).

Even so, such a projection allows us to appreciate that speech practices in oral poetry were not haphazard.

It is important to note that many of the examples used to support this line of thought could also support the first line. For example, Kennedy locates *logos*, *pathos*, and *ethos* in the speeches of Homer. For him, this is evidence of a rhetoric yet to emerge. For Martin, however, these three modes of persuasion do not suggest primitivism so much as a highly developed awareness of speech. Despite its attitudinal merits then, this line of thought may not effectively respond to the theoretical scaffolding that enables the native displacement of Homeric speech. To be responsive, a different theoretical framework would direct our attention to either less anachronistic examples or to better explanations of previous examples.

Yet, there is merit to the attitude latent in this line of thought: saying that a fully developed rhetoric exists in the Homeric epics aligns with a particular view of rhetoric, one that complicates the facile evaluation of teleological progress. Rather than a philosophically formulated theory of speech, rhetoric exists wherever language is in use. In the *Rhetoric of Motives*, Kenneth Burke writes: “Wherever there is persuasion, there is rhetoric. And wherever there is ‘meaning,’ there is ‘persuasion’ (172). It should not be a surprise, then, when earlier in the book he writes that his augmented view of rhetoric, ““permits the application of rhetorical terms to purely poetic structures; the study of lyrical devices might be classed under the head of rhetoric, when these devices are considered for their power to induce or communicate states of mind to readers, even though the kinds of assent evoked have no overt, practical outcome”” (50). Of course, Burke’s move from a *grammar* to a *rhetoric* achieves in broad strokes what I have attempted to show in this dissertation, that poetic structures can open up to rhetorical theory.

### 6.2.3 A Theorized Study of Rhetoric Developed in the Light of Homer.

The third line of thought treats epic poetry as formative of rhetoric's theoretical formulation.<sup>157</sup> At the level of thematics, Homeric poetry generally is understood to be "a forerunner of, if not an influence on, later explicitly philosophic formulations of theories of persuasion (in particular, those of Plato and Aristotle)" (Karp, 1994, 34). This is significantly different from the first line of thought (a proto-rhetoric exists in Homeric poetry). As Karp puts it, 'influence' and 'forerunner' are different, the latter is stronger than the former.<sup>158</sup> By "thematic" I mean a regularity with which some theme arises across Homer's poetry, and by theme, I mean the drama or dilemma that arises when two or more notions are equally emphasized. True, many passages in Homer illustrate unique themes; equally true, some themes carry across many passages. But when some of Homer's thematics are adopted by rhetoric, these are identified as rhetorical issues developed in the light of Homer.

Homer's epics attempt to depict action on a cosmic scale, in its totality. The verses allow one to see a world in its entirety, with its incommensurable spheres of activity: of *moira* (fate), immortals, mortals, and animate life.<sup>159</sup> In each of those spheres, themes carry across, but they are addressed according to different economies. Whereas Sophistical practices introduced young

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<sup>157</sup> Of course, Aristotle's *Poetics* is also a study of the dramatic art of tragedy. Indeed, I agree with Padel's thesis that we should not treat Homer as the ultimate literary source by which to make assumptions about other forms of poetry, like lyrical (108ff).

<sup>158</sup> What's more, his statement recycles two other modes of "moral authority" and "speech model" which I argue in Chapter One.

<sup>159</sup> Jaeger emphasizes this point in *Volume I*: "What Homer's epic has in common with Greek philosophy is the fact that they both present the structure of reality in its entirety, though philosophy presents it in the rational form where the *epos* shows it in mythical form. In Homer the theme of the 'position of man in the universe,' which is the classical theme of Greek philosophy, is already present at every moment, and Homer never loses sight of it. See the description of the shield of Achilles... which is a perfect illustration of this universality and completeness of Homer's view of human life and *arête*" (429; fn 34).

aristocrats to critically engaging those themes, Aristotle's disambiguation of rhetoric theorized them. By this, I mean that rhetorical theory emerged from a digestion of Homeric themes; but only a fraction of the available epic themes made it. Even the selections that rhetorical theory did manage to digest do not necessarily represent the sum total of possibilities still awaiting in those poetic thematics.

The benefit of situating critical concepts in rhetoric's theoretical development out of poetic themes could be reduced to practicality. Rather than comparing the two arts to come to conclusions about history, this scheme allows one to consider how competing terms (e.g., *bia* v. *peitho*) behave differently according to varying contexts, one mythical and archaic, the other classical and political.<sup>160</sup> Such a treatment, which finds continuity in related notions, and discontinuity in suggested historical contexts, could be emphasized as *classic*. It offers ample room for readers to identify the shifting parameters that ground their present situations, and to do so based on how those existing notions are still called upon in relation to one another.

It should not escape our notice that scholars who look at poetic themes imported into rhetorical theory often study how those themes have fared in philosophy. Philosophy, like rhetoric, has transmogrified poetic themes such as *peitho* (persuasion), *bia* (force), and *dikē* (justice). The coincidence of their prominence in Athenian rhetoric and philosophy, can be studied as competing claims with respect to which brands of thought deals with these poetic thematics better. For example, rhetoric has dealt with the realm of persuasive possibilities given the dilemma of force; on one hand it works to displace words, and on the other, to enforce the civic laws constituting room for words. Philosophy, as one might recall from Plato's satires of

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<sup>160</sup> For the example of *ethos* in Homeric poetry in contrast to that working Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, see Frobish 19.

the Sophists, has built itself on a slightly different grammar of the same themes. Platonic philosophy calls a world where unbridled passions must not get in the way of reasoned persuasion, and where justice would be a cognitive, individual endeavor in the case that social conditions do not prove amenable, and mostly, the human barnyard does not. Whereas persuasion is flanked by two forms of force—one brutish, and the other constructed by juridical norms—philosophy opts to mitigate both force and persuasion to achieve justice.

The benefit specifically related to the integration of philosophy within this line of thought is that it dramatically shifts the terms on what otherwise remain subjects framed by Plato's reaction to Sophistical rhetoric. In effect, scholars who advance this line of thought can offer an additional dimension to what may be worn-out dyadic relationships. Triangulating philosophy and rhetoric with Homeric poetry offers to nuance and exceed the old quarrels that rhetoricians regularly revisit to define the theoretical domain of their art. The Pythagorean shaping, as it were, disrupts the shuttle between rhetoric and philosophy as antagonists; in effect, it grants rhetoricians the position not as defendants in a system of ideals, but as interlocutors capable of demonstrating what liberties they have taken with poetry and the grounds thereof. Jaeger's idea that "philosophy and rhetoric both sprung out of poetry" equalizes some grounds by connecting two arts back to an originating symbolic form or social practice.

#### **6.2.4 Poetics Developed in the Light of Rhetorical Theory.**

Whereas the previous line of thought makes connections among the sister arts at the thematic level of poetry, this one does so at the level of conceptual layout of poetics and rhetorical theory. In other words, it has leap frogged the raw material of poetics (poetry) and that of rhetoric (oratory). And although it returns to the looking glass of rhetoric, it suspends rhetoric's

theoretical formulations as an exception to the general rule, namely that epic poetry and rhetoric are really poetical and rhetorical modes of language. Ironically, it is by rhetoric's vocabulary, which enables the methodical analysis of epic poetry, that poetics<sup>161</sup> later would appropriate rhetorical terminology as analytical tools of interpretation. In other words, we can thank Aristotle's theoretical formulation of rhetoric for giving us our modern notions of poetry and rhetoric in terms of styles of speech, rather than speech practices.

Before Aristotle, distinctions between the two speech forms seem underdetermined in the oral practices of epic poetry or those of Sophistical oratory. Afterwards, they collapse again, this time in literary periods of education where the differences between rhetorical and poetical study hardly seem separate. This is not to say rhetoric and poetry were interrelated in the same way before and after Aristotle's treatises on these two productive arts. But it is to say that the literary reception of rhetoric and poetics eventually distanced itself from the oral practices grounding epic poetry, and presumably emptied the two arts of their practical as well as theoretical distinctions.

Despite his careful distinctions, Aristotle ironically flattens the surface textures of poetry and rhetoric by identifying linguistic devices common to both. As John Kirby notes, "the same conceptual framework is structuring both systems. Aristotle's approach to the poetics of tragedy is . . . in very essence *rhetorical*" ("Aristotle's *Poetics*" 198). Here, Jeffrey Walker has noted the historical irony: in aiming to distinguish, and sometimes forcing distinctions, the theoretical domains of rhetoric and poetics by reference to a single conceptual layout, the great systematizer

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<sup>161</sup> I would not deny that Aristotle's *Poetics* is more so a poetics of tragedy. At the same time, he treats the dramatic form as the apex which evolved out of Homer's verses. More substantively, his definition of tragedy is a sum of constituent parts, which for the most part constitute epic poetry. Given its originary role and intersectional traits, it is not a radical claim to acknowledge the importance of analyzing epic poetry for Aristotle's *Poetics*.

enables the modern confusion between poetry and rhetoric. In describing poetical and oratorical devices, Aristotle himself sometimes asserts differences of kind where there are only differences of degree. By implication, his writing can be said to foreshadow rhetoric's frail reincarnation as a poetic genre of prose, and its appropriation by poetical institutions. Although Walker overstates Aristotle's role in this history, the main idea remains intact for both scholars: Aristotle writes in a rhetorical register the theoretical formulation of poetry ("Rhetoric and Poetics" 580). For backing, one need look no further than the prevalence of rhetorical vocabulary in Homeric *scholia*.

What sustains this line of thought is both a Homeric and a contemporary sensibility—poetry and rhetoric are not so much arts as they are modes of language. Language speaks poetically as well as rhetorically, with similar impact, no matter how different the two modes of articulation. By the time Kant considered poetry to be the finest and freest of the arts, he was thinking of rhetoric and poetry as literary arts; their embodiment in archaic performances had long been forgotten.<sup>162</sup> In their modern manifestations, poetry and rhetoric can be said to have overturned people's sense of place in the world. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century, poetic structures would come to signify histories embedded in the figural and tropical levels of language, a substratum that could tap us into a collective consciousness. Bracketing those vast differences, the vision of this line of thought stretches ambitiously from Homeric practices to modernist developments in poetics.

For better or worse, a classical poetic vocabulary did not exist to analyze rhetoric; a rhetorical vocabulary, however, did exist to analyze poetry. And even though there are concepts that admit of a bilateral treatment, where poetics fed rhetorical theory, that claim has its limits.

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<sup>162</sup> See Kant 206-207.

The most obvious support for this line of thinking appears in Book III of the *Rhetoric*. There Aristotle starts his discussion of metaphor by saying: “Now what each kind of word is and how many species of metaphor there are and that metaphor has very great effect both in poetry and speeches has been said, as noted above, in the *Poetics*” (*Rhet* 1405a3-6). Relying on this passage, some scholars have argued that Aristotle wrote the *Poetics* first and, therefore, shaped his rhetorical concepts from poetical materials. However, this claim has been countered<sup>163</sup> on the grounds that simple chronology cannot be supposed—both treatises underwent revisions.

Concepts that demonstrate the shuffle between poetics and rhetoric, suggest that there are devices that belong neither to poetics, nor to rhetoric, returning us to the first line of thought. Metaphor, for example, participates in both, and it can be understood as a poetic device because it names things by an operation of transference or because the first evidence of its use is in poetry.<sup>164</sup> But, as later theorists point out, language is nothing but a host of metaphors, and we have come to this insight by studying both poetry and oratory. Nevertheless, it is ironic that “modern notions of ‘poetry’ and poetics have typically appropriated ‘rhetoric’ as a name for figurality, or metaphor” (Walker viii). Whether metaphor belongs to the one domain or the other, metaphor has come to represent rhetoric’s relationship to poetry.

One of the merits of this line of thought can be found in the recognition that art—poetics and later aesthetics—availed itself of rhetoric’s civic vocabulary.<sup>165</sup> Here, it serves to controvert strict divisions between practical and productive arts. Indeed, Brian Vickers shows that the *Poetics*, along with Cicero’s *De Oratore*, transported rhetorical terms earlier than the *Rhetoric*

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<sup>163</sup> To return to an example from the previous section, Aristotle historicizes poetic style as having “come into being” in the light of Gorgias’ epideictic speech.

<sup>164</sup> Isocrates argues that poets have it easy because they don’t need to name things; orators do.

<sup>165</sup> Vickers argues that the rhetorical vocabulary in the *Poetics* gave rise to three Renaissance arts – sculpture (351), music (371), painting (341), and architecture (342).

did, giving rise to the development of three Renaissance fine arts—painting, music, and architecture. In effect, this line of thought opens up ways of inquiring into the merger of civic and aesthetic spheres, a merger increasingly attractive in interdisciplinary studies today.

### **6.2.5 Homer Advances the History and Theory of Rhetoric.**

I have already suggested that there remains a mutual elision in the classical study of Homer and rhetoric. If rhetoric has been salvaged by its rational modes of deliberation, it has been salvaged for redemption by those who discredit canonical texts for what they have yet to teach about voice, body, and affect. If Plato exiled Homer from the *polis*, the exile configured the philosopher's position on the Sophists as well. So it remains troubling, if not unsurprising, that scholars of rhetoric have touched epic poetry only in the service of history. From the disciplinary vector of classical studies, the interrelationship of Homer and rhetoric serves historical, and philological ends. So much so, Homeric classicists hardly need to circulate the terms and treatises of rhetoric beyond footnotes from Aristotle. Those who sense rhetorical possibilities directly in Homer are a rather small group.

One member of this group who has contributed to rhetorical theory in the light of her own reading of Homer is MariLee Mifsud. First, she has modified and situated Henry Johnstone's concept of the "rhetorical wedge"<sup>166</sup> ("Reflexive Rhetoric"). Second, she has revised the historical observations about Homeric gift culture into both theory and criticism ("Gift/Giving"

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<sup>166</sup> Mifsud follows Johnstone Jr. in defining a reflexive rhetoric by "manifest operations" of deliberation, not by the formalized institutions, effects, content, or techniques of rhetoric ("Reflexive" 44). A theoretical lineage for the term reflexivity is to be found in Hegel's philosophy of identity in differences, and in that philosophy's modification by continental thinkers, glossed by Mifsud as "unity in multiplicity" ("Reflexive" 43). Johnstone and continental thinkers are the most particular and general levels of this concept.

and *The Gift*). Third with Jane Sutton,<sup>167</sup> she has theorized *alloiōsis* as a trope exemplified in the Homeric lexicon (*Revolution of Tropes*). In these three ways, she has tried to shake Homer's tree, investing in the poet's purchase power on contemporary questions about ethics. More than anything else what sustains her line of thought is her conviction that contemporary ways of thought need to be refracted through a rhetorical history, albeit an alternative one. I turn to her first two ways of reading in what follows.

Adopted from her conversations with Henry Johnstone Jr. on the rhetorical wedge, Mifsud sets out to answer a question posed before by classicists Snell and Padel; namely, given that there is no lexicon for the "self" or "ego" in Homer's epics, does the poetry record schizoid characters, and would those characters reflect a schizoid consciousness of that oral culture?<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> In her individual work alongside Jane Sutton, Mifsud finds a syntactical congruence between metaphor and the practice of deliberation: that one (word or persons) represents and displaces another. In search for a solution, they discover radical deliberative potential in a metonymic trope called *alloiōsis*. At the heart of metonymic rejoinder, Mifsud uniquely elaborates on Pseudo-Plutarch's hyperbolic, non-periodic love of Homer in association with Plutarch's demonstration that the poet was master of *alloiōsis* ("Beyond Syntax" 68). Mifsud argues that *alloiōsis* alters the alternatives of representation and displacement operant by metaphor; the metonymic trope violates syntactical expectations, casting light on the very operations – by language or practical affairs – taken for granted. In a metaphoric frame the declensions and grammar rules that Homer violates can be seen as mistakes; in an metonymic frame those mistakes aggregate theoretical possibilities; specifically, *alloiōsis* demonstrates that breaking, modifying, and changing rules of number and gender is salient for democratic spaces so often faithful to the letter of civility, proceduralism and legislative votes. To put it in one more way, turning speech otherwise translates on a greater scale to turning toward the other as someone that matters.

<sup>168</sup> This problematic has been paralleled in what has been coined as the "third Sophistic movement" by Vitanza ("Some More" 117). Among these so called neo-Sophists, Edward Schiappa found thorny reception for his argument that absence of the word *rhetoriké* implies lack in classical awareness, and therefore that histories of rhetoric originate in Aristotle; for his original argument, see Schiappa 458. John Poulakos, whose work on both the Sophists and Nietzsche's historiography have lambasted the divide between rhetorical histories and theories rejoined: in this case, that the absence of one word is not absence of lexicon; and even without a lexicon, that language shows reflexive awareness for speech effects by the wit of its expressions, not primarily by explicit speech concepts ("Interpreting" 221). It is consistent that Johnstone saw

Mifsud finds reflexive recourse in the deliberative expressions of language. In the *Odyssey* where, by narration or direct speech, Odysseus' internal deliberation finds voice (*Od.* 5.355ff; 6.141ff; 18.90ff; 20.9ff); there is both a manifest self emergent as well as a self that considers solutions to a set of questions or problems. In those moments of deliberation rhetoric manifests itself by the operation of decision making. Beyond rhetoric as a wedge which directs one's attention to an object and ways of overcoming it as a problem, rhetoric activates when the self is split for what to do. Even without a lexicon for the self then, both rhetoric and the self operate in reflexive thought.

Beyond historical cues into human speech and thought, Mifsud theorizes Homer. In both her tropic as well as theoretical readings, "Homer is not a savior. Rather, exploring Homeric ... rhetoric offers an experience of alterity" (Mifsud, "Gift/Giving" 91). For example, Homeric gift-giving culture offers sharp contrast to the exchange economy of the *polis*. Although rhetoric's theoretical formulations are situated in the latter, the agonistic qualities of public speech resonate with the cycles of "obligatory reciprocity" found in the former. Here, Homer figures for Mifsud as an incommensurate alternative which the logic of a *political economy* can neither shrug off, nor understand. Yet Homer is not a solution to the abstractions of exchange that immediate transactions make possible; not even the "intimacy" which gift cultures facilitate can overcome calculations of "return," a calculation which Odysseus often manipulates in his home return. But by posing a Homeric "calculation of return" as a fricative to the "calculation of savings" found in the Classical *polis*, Mifsud initiates the possibility for gift giving outside economic exchanges altogether: "Rhetoric as giving goes beyond meaning that is known or that can be understood,

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distinct glimmers of interior psychological deliberation in epic verse alongside Poulakos's anti-developmental stance. See Johnstone 440.

readily translated, commodified, and exchanged... for the sake of liberal expenditure. A hospitable rhetor becomes then, a producer of possibilities rather than a judge of meaning” (“Gift/Giving” 105).

Mifsud is not the only one in search of theories yet to be found in Homer’s verses. There are lessons yet to be learned from select classicists and philologists who have broken past the traditional hierarchies which relegate poetry and rhetoric to a notch at the bottom of a post. In some part, their advancement can be attributed to the “oral theory” which Parry put forth three generations ago, and which Lord elaborated. The theory breaks through what Bakhtin calls the self-congealed world of epic experience. Consequently, classicists approached Homer’s verses so as to decode their implicit poetics. In the domain of classics, Stephen Halliwell has been a paragon scholar, further arguing that an implied poetics need not be completely systematized or apparent in poetry. Rhetoricians searching for the theories of language in Homer and other poets like Pindar or Sappho would benefit from Halliwell’s scholarship. True, there cannot be a systematized coherent account of rhetoric or speech in the poems, but there are numerous examples of how speech is received by the characters, how the narrative voice in the poems understands speech, and how Homer uses certain words to designate specific speech contexts. These clues offer theoretical insight in a Homeric rhetoric.

If Mifsud and Halliwell’s separate but resonant work is any guide, Homer’s poetry must be approached in moments where the epic verses are ‘self-aware’ or, put another way, metadiscursive about the kinds of speech that they are featuring. Collobert emphasizes this point when she writes, “the way to arrive at the most fruitful and also the most complete philosophical interpretation of Homer is to ground it in **his** conception of poetry” [emphasis mine] (146). To her observation, we can add Homer’s conception of rhetoric. This does not necessarily take us to

the heroes' speeches *per se*, although it can. Rather, it takes us to the almost imperceptible pedagogical cues that the poetic narrator slips to its audience. By way of illustrating a method toward Homer's implied theories of poetry as well as rhetoric, we could turn to the Odysseus-Demodocus (*Od* 8.87-104),<sup>169</sup> Phemius-Penelope-Telemachus (*Od* 2.374-419),<sup>170</sup> or Achilles-Embassy scene (*Il* 9.230),<sup>171</sup> each which would lend itself to describing the aesthetic and practical significance of poetic verse juxtaposed with speech. In each of these scenes, the rhetorical awareness in Homer's epic poetry can take us to a juxtaposition of speech and sung verse, mentions of character deliberation, or the emotional reactions to the performance. Audience reactions especially are meta-discursive insofar as they cue us into the epical culture, which taught its audiences through verse how they could receive and recapitulate various modes of speech.

Of all the other lines of thought, I think this way of thinking is most life-giving; it expands contemporary horizons to an alternative way of being in the world. Yet, I have avoided this line of thought. I have sought in this dissertation to avoid approaching Homer directly so as

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<sup>169</sup> Odysseus listens to Demodocus, whom "the Muse inspired... to sing the famous deeds of fighting heroes – of the song whose fame had reached the skies those days: The Strife Between Odysseus and Achilles... That was the song the famous harper sang but Odysseus, clutching his flaring sea-blue cape in both powerful hands, drew it over his head... ashamed his hosts might see him shedding tears" (*Od* 8.87-104). Halliwell analyzes this scene, arguing that the epic doubles itself – that is, it self-references poetry and poetic effects in the action of its own verses – the characters likewise act doubly (*Ecstasy* 38).

<sup>170</sup> She, like Odysseus, weeps in response to the poetry, and delivers her *mythos*: "...break off this song – the unendurable song that always rends the heart inside me.... the unforgettable grief, it wounds me most of all!" (*Od* 392-4). Mifsud analyzes this scene, focusing on Telemachus' subsequent harsh response to his mother's weeping and his line, "I hold the reins of power in this house... You [suitors] must leave my palace" (*Od* 400-430).

<sup>171</sup> The scene opens to Achilles, who sings the *epos* of heroes to himself: "Achilles was lifting his spirits with [the lyre] now,/ singing the famous deeds of fighting heroes .../ Across from him Patroclus sat alone, in silence,/ waiting for Aeacus' son to finish with his song" (*Il* 9.230). It ends with the three infamous heroic speeches, which have been understood as the three *genus dicendi* of plain, middle, and grand styles of speech.

to study the image of ‘Homer’ from the goggles that rhetorical texts have left to their disciplinary inheritors. What I am suggesting is that the ethical question properly belonging to rhetorical histories is where rhetoric itself has turned down other ways of being in the world. Rhetorical imaginaries recapitulating ‘Homer’ then, can only advance and supplement this fifth line of thought. If Homer is being sought out solely for his relevance to contemporary relationships, we risk missing out how previous generations anticipated, perhaps the same passages, to better, ineffective, or worse ends.

### 6.3 CONCLUSION

It would help us at this point to emphasize a difference between the first two and the next three lines of thought. The first two lines collapse a multidimensional, gradual process into a conceit which I called “developmentalism” in the Introduction. True, there were developments *across*, from poetry to rhetoric, from *mythos* to *logos*. But exclusively focusing on these treats poetry and rhetoric as two events separated in cognitive complexity as well as time. The next two lines of thought complicate that facile progress across rhetoric and poetry. The third adds developments across poetic themes to both rhetoric and philosophy. It breaks past the historicism of poetry and rhetoric and opts instead for studying how those concepts did change. The fourth hints at developments *within* poetry and rhetoric. Accordingly, the two following lines of thought are more sensitive to the concerns that media theory raises (Havelock, “Orality and Literacy” 87ff). First, they do not grant that a shift from orality to literacy is necessarily a development toward heightened consciousness. Second, they treat oral speech, both oratory and sung poetry, as having an underdetermined relationship: rhetoric handbooks and canonized poetry, the literary

developments of Greek speech, can be compared. Third, they do not treat poetry as guilty for having omitted a theoretical account of its own strategies. Looking ahead, this dissertation is disposed more toward the following lines of thought than the previous; however, my aim is to develop ideas latent in what rhetoricians have suggested as intersections between rhetoric and epic poetry.

A lot of water has passed under the bridge since antiquity. Yet a lot of rhetorical scholars continue, unwittingly perhaps, to re-iterate small, condensed notes of Homer. This chapter supposes that the touch-and-go treatment of Homer within contemporary histories of rhetoric shows traces of Aristotle's disposition of Homer. For those few scholars who study Homer's relationship to rhetoric in a more elaborate way, this chapter has attempted to organize a central disposition that their work may take toward the history of rhetoric as an ancient technology and cultural production, which shared many affinities with epical experiences. Even where scholars have elaborated on the technological developments connecting Homeric poetry or poetics and oratory or rhetoric, they too have adopted an Aristotelian conceit. It is a conceit which the previous chapters have sought delicately deconstruct. The imagistic afterlife of Homer is itself a starting point to re-covering the beginnings of rhetoric's disaffiliation from Homer.

## CONCLUSION: WIPING RHETORIC'S EYES AND CLEARING ITS NOSE

“Rhetoric is the greatest barrier between us and our ancestors,” for “nearly all our older poetry was written by men [sic] to whom the distinction between poetry and rhetoric, in its modern form, would have been meaningless”; moreover, “If ever the passion for formal rhetoric returns, the whole story will have to be rewritten and many judgments may be reversed” —C.S. Lewis, *Oxford History of English Literature* (3:60-61)

What new sites of possibility have emerged by reading rhetoricians read Homer? First we have bracketed the philosophical mindset, or the defensive and self-praising reaction to it. Second we have re-covered a beginning that is often not told. Third, we have devised a set of concepts, which promise to help going forward as the dissertation stretches its appendages into inquiries about modern historical justifications of constituting nation-states on mythological grounds of heritage. Finally, we have shown that the study of rhetoric can spill outside of its formal parameters, and into the costs that the formality imposed on rhetorical consciousness about the voice, body, and poetry.

In the hands of Plato, Homer was dismissed from the ideal republic right before Socrates goes on to narrate a tale counter to the one told in the *Odyssey*. The tension between what is said and how it is narrated stakes ample grounds from which to argue that Homer's exile was ironic. I argue however, that it was a rhetorical move. Plato refines the technique of disaffiliation, which expresses discursive disavowal and absorption at the same time. With Aristotle, rhetoric was mapped on theoretically autonomous grounds apart from poetry. However, the style of rhetoric

could only be achieved by constraining and concealing stylistic devices mined from Homer. Plato disaffiliated from the "father" Homer; Aristotle disambiguated from the "stranger" Homer. By the time prose and poetry were again conjoined in Longinus' *Peri Hypsous*, rhetoric was prepared to affiliate with Homer again, albeit a new, "divine" Homer. Even though two of the five readings in the dissertation focus on philosophical texts, the approach to Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Rhetoric* has been driven by the rhetorical mindset.

In this dissertation, 'Homer' represents the process of an uninterrupted sequence of images construed variously by the Sophistical movement in education, two philosophers, a literary critic, and a host of academic scholars. Together, all five of these constructions amount to an afterlife (*nachleben*) that is undeniable. Even though 'Homer' has been written all over rhetoric's history, oftentimes those mentions are sparse and without the reflexive consciousness of 'Homer's' use. In this dissertation I have argued that much of rhetoric's defensiveness and self-praise would disappear if it looked at its relationship to Homeric poetry. Because most of that relationship is preserved in sparse notes, re-covering rhetoric's beginnings calls for a theoretically inflected method of interpretation. Such a method would justify which sparse notes to elaborate, how they relate to other terms within a given semantic field, and finally how the grammar belies the rhetorical imaginary of Homer. To a certain extent, I have initiated applying such a method, but this is only a beginning.

Of course, Homer has many other afterlives, the totality of which is beyond the scope of this dissertation.<sup>172</sup> For example, the distance between Longinus and the contemporary scene of rhetoric includes Vico's *New Science*, Nietzsche's "Homer's Contest," and James Joyce's *Ulysses*, to name a few. As these titles suggest, the distance is not only in time, but in

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<sup>172</sup> See Graziosi and Haubold 9.

space too. European national identities, especially those based on romantic notions of heritage, often made reference to epic poetry, if not translating it into their respective languages. Such a project is worthwhile not only to study a European imaginary of poetry, but also to study countries in the Middle East and North Africa. Lebanon, for example, translated the *Iliad* right around the time that it disaffiliated from Greater Syria. In these cases, the concepts which have emerged from the rhetorical-epical relationship promise to provide a foundation for how I read a modern, and cosmopolitan landscape.

Disaffiliation, disambiguation, and zeal have gestated into concepts worth revising, at least. A history of rhetoric that is inspired by changes issuing against Homer will be one that is aware of its own beginnings rather than borrowing beginnings from philosophers. Its awareness would "reverse judgments" made about formal rhetoric. Those judgments have evaluated rhetoric chiefly according to its claims on knowledge. Where those claims have been less than certain, rhetoricians themselves have tried to re-arrange rhetoric within a system of philosophical claims. We are still living the intellectual repercussions of these judgments, which have included treating human affiliations, emotion, style, and poetry as though they were inessential to speaking well. Yet rhetoric's self-identity must begin with how it disposed itself toward those elements of speech and human relations, and specifically why it disposed itself toward those elements at the time it finally gained theoretical acknowledgment in Aristotle's hands. At a time when many scholars are searching to re-vocalize and animate rhetoric, the answer I think is to read rhetoric's relationship with its key texts, and to read them from a third degree removed.

From a third degree remove, we acknowledge no first-hand experience with the epical consciousness, nor with that of classical rhetoric. When we read receptions of epic within rhetorical texts, we read them for attitudes hinting at imaginaries, of what 'Homer' represented to

rhetors. I have thought that in my own lived experience, 'rhetoric' might help people to be more sophisticated about their disagreements. At third degree removed, from the lived experience of my dissertation, I have found that rhetorical texts have left hints of how to extricate ones self out of an affiliation that has reached its limit, how to coolly render strange what people are most carried away with, and when and why to absorb those opposing elements into one's own disciplinary intensity. With each concept—disaffiliation, disambiguation, and zeal—I think I have found the forgotten children that rhetoric's divorce from poetry left behind. Not only do these concepts represent discursive dispositions for us today, but they also are critical tools. They could hint, for example, at a tamed hostility or quiet anxiety of influence arising out of our nearly imperceptible cultural conditions.

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