ABSTRACT

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QUO VIRTUS?

The Concept of Propriety in Ancient Literary Criticism

The standard of propriety is frequently appealed to in ancient literary discourse, most notably in discussions of poetics, criticism of literary works and precepts for composition. Its importance derives from the audience orientation of most ancient discussions of literature: writers were interested in the ways various forms of speech and writing had to be accommodated to their audience in order to achieve particular effects. Discussion of the representation of character, for instance, explored the ways that fictional persons or oratorical speakers could be made moving and convincing: they must conform to common preconceptions about the behaviour and language suitable to their rank, sex, age, nationality, education.

This raises important questions about the concept of propriety. First, is it coherent? It seems to depend heavily on the assumption that audiences are homogeneous; in practice, however, ancient writers recognise wide disparities in readers and spectators, and are often ready to accuse certain types of audience of bad taste. The concept is thus embroiled in the general aesthetic problem of the nature of taste: can criteria for artistic excellence be found which are independent of what people happen to like, and which can therefore justify claims about what they should like? Second, where does use of the concept place ancient literary discussion in relation to various forms of modern literary theory and criticism? A large number of modern movements have held it as axiomatic that the excellence of art lies in defeating the preconceptions of the audience; does ancient criticism have any defence against such a position? Both of these points touch on further issues: the place of literature and oratory in Greek and Roman societies, and the connections between literary discourse and other types of intellectual activity, most notably philosophy (propriety is equally important in much ancient moral philosophy). I consider these points in connection with major poetic genres, rhetoric, and the question of linguistic purity.

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THE CONCEPT OF PROPRIETY IN ANCIENT LITERARY CRITICISM

1987

by

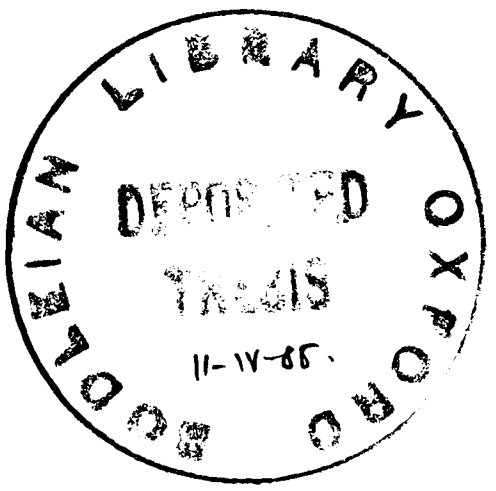
Helen DeWitt

munus et officium nil scribens ipse docebo,
unde parentur opes, quid alat formetque poetam,
quid deceat, quid non, quo virtus, quo ferat error.

Horace, Ars Poetica 306-8

Propriety, another word for nature, was (as I have hinted) her law, as it is the foundation of all true judgment.

Anna Howe
(Samuel Richardson, Clarissa, Letter 168)


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1 INTRODUCTION

i Importance of propriety in ancient literary criticism[1]

Anyone who has read any ancient criticism is likely to have come across some form of the standard of propriety. 'Longinus' speaks with enthusiasm of the battle of the gods in the Iliad, then enters a caveat: the passage must be taken allegorically to preserve τὸ πρέπου.[2] Propriety seems to require presenting the divinity of the gods in its full majesty. Several strands of this criticism are found elsewhere. First, interest in the right kind of 'moral' representation, care to avoid the shocking.[3] This shades into interest in probability. It may be both shocking and illusion-breaking to show Medea killing her children on stage;[4] disgraceful representations of gods or of heroes may be unconvincing because different from received notions of what they should be like. The latter might suggest that characters ought generally to be true to type to be convincing. Aristotle and Horace insist that characters must to some extent be typical, Plutarch argues for a kind of moral realism, in which propriety is observed if bad characters are made to do and say convincingly wicked things.[5] Second, interest in representation which does justice to the dignity of the persons concerned in the formal devices used: Aristophanes'

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1 'Ancient literary criticism' will sometimes be used to refer to the whole range of ancient discussions of literature, for want of an equally convenient and more accurate term. Literary criticism presupposes views on a) the aims and excellences of literature, and b) the means by which these may be achieved. Neither theoretical discussions of the nature of literature nor precepts for composition are themselves, strictly speaking, criticism, but these form a major part of ancient discussions of literature.

2 On the Sublime, 9.7

3 See e.g. Aristophanes' Frogs, 1043ff

4 Horace, Ars Poetica 185-8

5 Poetics 1454a22-3, Ars Poetica 156ff, De audiendis poetis 18b-d

Aeschylus thought that the different dignities of different sorts of characters should be respected in the kind of language they were given.[6] Third, the common belief that language and style should correspond, in their degrees of elevation, to the degrees of elevation of subject matter.[7] Fourth, the idea that different genres had their degrees of dignity, and that these should be preserved in the characters, emotions, subjects presented, language used.[8]

Many of these aspects of propriety appeared not only in discussions of poetry, but in precepts for a different kind of literary composition. Writers on rhetoric frequently pointed out that the most important part of eloquence, using the rules with propriety, could not be reduced to rule, then tried to provide some guidelines.[9] The speaker must take into account propriety of character, emotion, style, occasion, subject matter . . . This rhetorical kind of propriety looks both simpler and more complicated than that of poetry: more complicated in the variety of means, simpler in the end to be achieved. Propriety can be determined by reference to a fairly well-defined object, viz. persuading the audience; a work of poetry, on the other hand, especially if it is neither semi-rhetorical, like the epinikion, nor didactic, has no self-evident purpose. One cannot offer the kind of proof of success which persuasion provides for a work of oratory.

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6 Frogs 1060-61, cf. Aristotle, Rhet. 1404b14-15, 1408a25-32

7 See e.g. Aristophanes, Frogs 1059, Aristotle, Rhet. 1408a10-14, Cicero, Orator 72, Horace, Ars Poetica 89ff, 231ff.

8 See e.g. Aristotle, Poetics 1448a17-18, 54a7ff, Rhet.1404b14-15, Horace, Ars Poetica 89ff, 225ff, and pp. 160ff below on Donatus and Euanthius.

9 Cicero, Orator 70ff, Quintilian, Book 11, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, De compositione verborum 20.

provides for a work of oratory.

Since ancient critics thought of poetry, however, in terms of its effects on an audience, it seemed to share with oratory its powers to move, please, or instruct, and perhaps to have something in common with the methods of oratory as well. The importance of propriety to both is not surprising. Since both were forms of discourse in which speakers presented themselves to an audience, they encouraged interest in the ways that 'forms' of presenting were suited to one audience or another, and in a kind of etiquette governing the relations between performer(s) and audience.[10] Interest in audience reaction thus gives a common denominator to requirements of morality, of verisimilitude, of appropriateness of form to content: if the object of presenting a piece or speech was to produce a particular effect (pleasure, astonishment, conviction, powerful emotion), preconditions of this would probably be that thoughts, actions, characters, etc. not be presented in a shocking way, and that they be presented in a way that made them 'recognisable' by making properties generally assumed to belong to them perceptible.[11]

Propriety, then, taken in its most general sense, seems to have been a standard concerned with the accommodation of a work to the preconceptions of its audience, with establishing a fit, for instance, between the elements of

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10 On poetry as performance in ancient Greece. see John Herington, Poetry into Drama, Early Tragedy and the Greek Poetic Tradition (Berkeley, 1985).

11 Aristotle's account of emotions in the Rhetoric, for instance, gives them a strongly cognitive nature: one is angry at something one sees as an unjust action; if one is to react in this way, the action must be presented in such a way that one recognises it as unjust. (What counted as shocking in art might vary according to genre: comedy and the satyr play presented heroic personages differently from tragedy, but to the same audience.)

accepted hierarchies. A closer examination of the history of the standard is wanted, however; its importance in ancient criticism means that such a study should throw light on a wide area of ancient intellectual activity. Two questions of wider relevance are immediately raised, for instance, by the ancient notion of propriety. First, is the standard coherent? How far did ancient writers make allowances for diversity of audiences? Put another way, how is the standard to be determined - who is taken to be offended by improprieties? This issue has obvious connections with the place of literary discussion in Greek and Roman society, with the question of who were taken to be the audience of literary works, and who was thought competent to judge them. Second, what is the position of ancient methods of literary discussion, in applying the standard of propriety, in relation to the range of positions now available to the literary critic or theorist?

ii Coherence of the standard: who decides what is proper?

The question of whether the standard of propriety is coherent is closely connected with the issue of who decides what is proper. Criticism of various formulations of the standard, with emphasis on the problem of who decides, will be an important theme in the following chapters. What I should like to do here, instead of summarising what is to come, is sketch the kinds of problems that might be involved. I shall do this in general terms, not confining myself to ancient discussions.

Rules count as part of etiquette for reasons which have more to do with social context than with content. It might be morally wrong, or impolite, or illegal to carry a weapon; the fact that, in the history of a society, various people had said one should not carry weapons would not tell one whether all had had courtesy in mind. In each case, moreover, the existence of rules recognised as such makes possible further opportunities for disapproval: some may count the breaking of a rule as an offence against morality, etiquette, or the law even if committed to further the original objects of the system in question. Both points suggest that only certain literary faults count as breaches of propriety. Such faults must, perhaps, involve the possibility of offence - but of what kind, and to whom?

One line of argument might be to say that propriety was at issue when an Italian audience of the 1840s rejected Modena's production of Othello, outraged by the intrusion of low elements;[12] when individual critics were moved to object to Shakespeare's vulgarity, as Rymer did;[13] when Plutarch says that tyrannical remarks are appropriate to a wicked man,[14] and equally when d'Aubignac says that in 17th century France one is unwilling to believe in the wickedness

12 E. Rossi, Studi Drammatici e lettere Autobiografiche (Florence, 1885), pp. 83ff. Modena described to Rossi the reaction of the public to the opening scene, in which Roderigo and Iago call to Brabantio from the street: '. . . il pubblico cominciò a bisbigliare: Che cos' e ciò? una tragedia o una farsa? e quando Brabanzio alla fine compare sul balcone, scomposto nelle vesti ed assonnate . . . dal bisbiglio, il pubblico passò al riso ed allo zittare. Avevano letto sul cartellone, tragedia, credettero di assistere a una scena Goldoniana, o ad una fiaba del Gozzi' - and the performance ended with the first scene.

13 A Short View of Tragedy (1693), in Shakespeare, The Critical Heritage, vol. 2, 1693-1733, ed. B. Vickers (London, 1974), pp. 25ff.

14 De audiendis poetis 18d-f

of kings, so that works which portray this are unpopular.[15] One might argue that it is not at issue, on the other hand, if governmental censorship forbids unfavourable representation of monarchs; that restraints imposed by authority for its own purposes are not to count.[16]

A different moral might be drawn, however; perhaps propriety is involved even in the case of censorship, since the works suppressed are offensive to authority. Those in authority may make no pretence of reflecting the sensibilities of their time; on the other hand, it is not uncommon for democratic governments to try to impose the views of a section of the public on the whole.[17] In each case, differences of interest lead to differences in propriety, and to differences in those whose views on literature are allowed to count. A similarity can be seen, in fact, between the censor and that other literary legislator, the critic, who may consider his opinions privileged on grounds of knowledge rather than power. When Plato, or Xenophanes, or 'Longinus' objects to unsuitable presentation of gods or heroes, for instance, it is not because these are offensive to the public - Plato and 'Longinus' concede that such passages may be emotionally powerful.[18] If such passages are improper, it is because the critic, not the audience, finds

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15 La Pratique du Théâtre (Amsterdam, 1715), II 62-3

16 On the place of the 'critic' in society, in relation to the audience. see H. Duncan, 'Literature as a Social Institution', in Language and Literature in Society (Chicago, 1953).

17 See, for instance, Peter Webb, The Erotic Arts (2nd ed., London, 1983), Appendix IV, J. Miller, 'Censorship and the limits of permission', in The Influence of Pornography on Behaviour, ed. Yaffé and Nelson (London, 1982), and A. Grey, 'Pornography and free speech', ibid. See also below, p. 17, n. 37.

18 Plato, indeed, objects precisely because such works are powerful.

them so.

One might then ask whether a work is guilty of impropriety if a single critic thinks it is, and what exactly he claims in making the charge. Such a critic seems to claim more than 'This offends me'; does he perhaps imply that the standard of propriety is not simply descriptive of a match between literature and the preconceptions of the audience, but a standard to which the audience should be educated? Perhaps the audience must learn to take offence at the right things?

This might suggest that one could distinguish between propriety as a subject of legislation and of description: as the standard for what the writer finds acceptable, and thinks should be so to all audiences, and as the standard including whatever is in fact found acceptable by the public. But the latter turns out to be very hard to pin down.

The Abbé d'Aubignac argues that if a play is to be effective, it must be in conformity with the views of its audience; the fall of a tyrant was a popular subject with the democratic Athenian audience, is unpopular with the monarchical French of the 17th century.[19] This suggests

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19 Il ne faut pas oublier . . . que si le Sujet n'est conforme aux moeurs et aux sentiments des Spectateurs, il ne réussira jamais . . . car les Poèmes Dramatiques doîvent être différents selon les Peuples devant lesquels on les doît représenter: et de là vient que le succès n'en est pas toujours pareil, bien qu'ils soient toujours semblables à eux-memes. Ainsi les Atheniens se plaisaient à voir sur leur Théâtre, les cruautés et les malheurs des Rois . . . parce que l'état dans lequel ils vivaient, étant un gouvernement Populaire, ils se voulaient entretenir dans cette croyance, que la Monarchie est toujours tyrannique . . . au lieu que parmi nous le respect et l'amour que nous avons pour nos Princes, ne peut permetter que l'on donne au Public ces Spectacles pleins d'horreurs; nous ne voulons point croire que les Rois puissent être méchants, ou souffrir que leurs Sujets, quoiqu'en apparence mal traités, touchent leurs Personnes sacrées . . . Pratique du Théâtre, II 62-3.

that one could argue from the attitudes of the public to the requirements of decorum for works written at that time. One might say, in fact, that a piece preserved decorum precisely by respecting the prejudices of the public. But 1) how are works of the past to be assessed? 2) How does one account for literary change, which often seems to provoke, rather than respond to, changes in public taste? 3) What is meant by 'the public' - can one assume, for any age, a public homogeneous enough to establish rules for decorum? These problems beset many discussions of decorum which seem to aim at description as a basis for prescription.

Two sorts of problem arise from the first question. Neo-classical critics sometimes assumed that ancient classics met present standards of decorum, sometimes complained that they did not. Boileau assumes that his notions of decorum were observed by Homer: he criticises a translation of Homer, arguing that Homer must not be thought to have used vulgar language just because some of his words have only vulgar equivalents in French. P--- has debased him by using words like 'porceau' and 'cochon', and by translating 'βοῶπις ' as 'aux yeux de boeuf'. The difference in register of 'σύς' is not argued for; it is assumed that it is 'fort noble en Grec'.[20] Johnson, on the other hand, insists that Shakespeare's continued popularity is proof of his excellence, but objects to his violence and vulgarity.

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20 Réflexions Critiques IX. p. 533, in Oeuvres Complètes, Bibl. de la Pleiade, ed. F. Escal (Paris, 1966).

Of Hamlet III.i.76 he observes that '"To grunt and sweat under a weary life' is undoubtedly the true reading, but can scarcely be borne by modern ears'.[21] The blinding of Gloucester is shocking, and can be defended only by remembering the poor taste of the original audience: 'he knew what would please the audience for which he wrote'.[22] Either way the values of the critic's age seem to be paramount: either all great works observe the standards of the critic's day, or faults must be excused on the ground that the work had to accommodate an audience of inferior taste.

Changes in taste (2) present a slightly different problem. The fact that these take place is, of course, one of the reasons for difficulty in applying the standard of propriety to works of the past. But one might wonder how such changes come about in the first place. Three examples (Genette's discussion of responses to the Cid and the Princesse de Clèves, Tave's discussion of the history of English comedy, and Taine's justification of Balzac) help to illustrate the problem.

In 'Vraisemblance et Motivation' Gerard Genette discusses the controversies which arose concerning the Cid and

21 Johnson on Shakespeare, ed. A. Sherbo (New Haven, 1968), VII, 982.

22 Ibid., VII, 703. Cf. Jane Austen on the Spectator: 'Now, had the same young lady been engaged with a volume of the Spectator, instead of such a work, how proudly would she have produced the work, and told its name! though the chances must be against her being occupied by any part of that voluminous publication of which either the matter or the manner would not disgust a young person of taste . . . and their language, too, frequently so coarse as to give no very favourable idea of the age that could endure it.' (Northanger Abbey, end of Chapter 5, p. 1078 in Modern Library edition)

La Princesse de Clèves.[23] The marriage of Chimène to her father's murderer, the Princess's confession to her husband that she loved another man were criticised as being highly improbable; because these actions were shocking, they seemed unlikely in the kinds of characters the women had been made out to be. Other critics argued, however, that the works achieved striking effects by sacrificing a degree of propriety and probability, or even that they were striking precisely because of their extravagance in this respect.

Such critics assumed that there was a paradox involved in a work's pleasing despite - or perhaps because of - its extravagance in ignoring propriety and likelihood. But this is hardly surprising. The éclat of such works depends on the existence of established conventions, probabilities observed by earlier works, which make possible departures from these patterns which appear unexpected. So the same audience might appreciate proper and 'improper' works; its acquaintance with the former would make possible enjoyment of the latter.

But an 'improper' work could also set a fashion for violating particular conventions - one thinks of the flood of imitators of Tristram Shandy, who tried to meet the new taste for works which played with narrative conventions.[24] Works of literature also seem to have the power to change

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23 Figures II (Paris, 1969)

24 See Wayne Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction (2nd ed., Chicago, 1983), pp. 234ff for some examples.

standard views of what is proper, for instance by arguing for a different assessment of the types of character which demand unfavourable representation.[25] Tave, in The Amiable Humorist, shows how a delightful eccentricity came to be thought a particularly British trait, and how, in the 18th century, tolerance for eccentricity was urged as a virtue (e.g. by Fielding for Parson Adams in Joseph Andrews), while criticism, correspondingly, allowed to lapse the theory that comedy should expose faults and vices and make them ridiculous.[26]

Developments in the history of taste are likely to make propriety seem a matter of conforming to the taste of the majority. But the proprieties and probabilities observed by a work of art are generally those of a particular section of the public. La Princesse de Clèves, for instance, had to answer to the standards of aristocratic readers for acceptable behaviour. The standards of the public may change; writers may then, by breaking with conventions, backing different norms, invent new forms suited to these standards, then develop conventions to regularise their appropriateness. Yet some members of the public are likely, at any time, to dislike breaks with convention, others to find innovations exactly corresponding to tastes they

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25 See R. Tuve, Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery (Phoenix ed., Chicago, 1961), pp. 192ff, on the ways decorum can accommodate new views on the things that merit elevated presentation.

26 S. Tave, The Amiable Humorist (Chicago, 1960), especially 91ff on Humor and English Liberty, and 140ff, on Humor and Philanthropy.

hadn't known they had.[27] The validity of the new forms is not determined simply by the genius of their inventors: it may be that a different section of the public is allowed to carry weight in the judgement of literature.

This is surely the conclusion to be drawn, for instance, from H. Taine's defence of Balzac - a defence based on Balzac's suitability for his time. Taine defends Balzac against a hypothetical reader of classical tastes. The latter is imagined dipping into the sixteen volumes of the Comédie Humaine, only to be offended each time by Balzac's technical jargon, metaphysical language, or overbearing manner. He returns the books to their owner, remarking:[28]

> Quand je lis quelqu'un, c'est comme si j'admettais chez moi un homme bien élevé et sachant causer. M. de Balzac parle comme un dictionnaire des arts et métiers, comme un manuel de philosophie allemande et comme une encyclopédie des sciences naturelles. Si par hasard il oublie ces jargons, il reste de lui un ouvrier gouailleur qui polissonne et crie à la barrière. Si l'artiste enfin se dégage, je vois un homme sanguin, violent, malade, hors de qui les idées font péniblement explosion, en style chargé, tourmenté, excessif. Pas un de ces gens ne sait causer, et je n'en admets pas un dans mon salon.

Taine replies that this is to assume that one is speaking to men of the world, in the context of the salon. There one had only two duties - 'ne point déplaire (et) de plaire';

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27 See below, pp. 47ff, on Aristophanes' comparison of Aeschylus and Euripides, relying partly on the opposition between the standards of old-fashioned and modern taste.

28 Nouveaux Essais de Critique et d'Histoire (Paris, 1905), p. 36.

therefore one avoided specialist language, which might make others, especially women, feel ignorant; one avoided metaphysics, because it was not amusing; one avoided violent gestures and loud cries because enthusiasm was vulgar; one avoided putting on airs, taking a pretentious tone, because it was not polite. But Balzac's style is thoroughly suited to the 19th century, where no man above the age of 25 spends much time with women; all are specialists of one kind or another, and from rubbing shoulders with other specialists have become inured to jargon; all have picked up a smattering of all the philosophies of the world from reading the journals; all have become blasé from living in Paris, so that only striking thoughts catch their attention. 'Vous voyez bien,' he concludes, 'que Balzac a le droit d'être encyclopédiste, philosophe, violent et étrange, que ses habitudes de style conviennent à nos habitudes, et que l'écrivain est autorisé par le public.'

This suggests an answer to 3) (p. 8 above) - who is meant by 'the public', and is this homogeneous enough to provide guidelines for establishing decorum? One can, it seems, redefine propriety by redefining the reading public. On Taine's account, the public excludes frequenters of salons, and is apparently male, over 25, and Parisian. Balzac's literary manners are appropriate to a certain section of French society, out of place in others; propriety as a critical standard seems to be incompatible with a set of standards based on the expectations of 'society', since society itself is fragmented. It seems likely, then, that

any attempt to give an account of propriety based on the tastes of 'the public' is likely to depend on assumptions about whose tastes count.

Propriety is thus a fundamentally relative concept. But it is not surprising that this is played down in most literary discourse which makes use of it. The privileged status of certain sections of the public is often taken for granted.[29] Aristotle speaks, for instance, of the behaviour and language suitable to women and slaves; the possibility is not raised that women and slaves might have different views of what is proper and convincing in such characters. Yet the remarks made seem to aim at general validity. In this respect rhetorical discussions are better off: attempts are made to cope with the fact that audiences are made up of different types of people. Even here, however, attempts are made to lay down independent standards for, e.g., the features of style suited to various types of subject; the privileged status of audiences suited by these rules is again taken for granted.[30] This helps to explain how it is possible for individual wirters to complain of impropriety in works which are widely popular; a critic might argue that his own views were more refined than those of most of his contemporaries, and that a work thus lacked merit if it offended him, even if it pleased everyone else.[31]

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29 See e.g. below, 57ff on Plato.

30 This is especially striking in the various responses to 'Asianist' oratory - see e.g. below, 250ff (on Cicero), 268ff (on Dionysius of Halicarnassus).

31 Cicero accepts this for poetry but not oratory - see for instance his comment on Antimachus' preference of the good opinion of Plato to that of the crowd, Brutus 191.

iii The standard of propriety and modern literary theory

The European tradition of literary criticism and theory has seen frequent rebellions against a conventional, sometimes 'classical', standard of literary decorum - a standard which had been set down as the arbiter of correctness. The argument most commonly used seems to have been an appeal to the success of certain unconventional works, either with the public of their day or with successive generations.[32] But the argument from effectiveness may itself be elitist. We have seen that Taine's argument was unintentionally so; F.R. Leavis seems deliberately to use effectiveness for the right people as a higher standard than 'literary decorum'.[33] The advent of the avant-garde in this century, and of criticism and theory to suit modernism, has meant that opposition to the notion of 'literary decorum' has long been prominent in literary discussions; and that opposition to the claims of popular taste has been equally so.[34]

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32 See above, pp. 12ff, also Johnson's defence of Shakespeare's mixture of comic and tragic scenes, Johnson on Shakespeare, Preface (1765), VII, 66-7 (this is contrary to the rules of art, but one can always appeal to nature); Beaumarchais, 'Qu'est-ce que la décence théâtrale?', preface to Le Mariage de Figaro; Genette (op. cit.) quotes Corneille's defence of Cid on the grounds of its powerful effect and success. There is no suggestion, however, that the authors defended on these grounds had set out to break rules.

33 See his objections to Bridges, who had complained of Hopkins' breaches of literary decorum, in the essay on Hopkins in New Bearings on English Poetry (2nd ed., London, 1950), e.g. 'But to the late Dr. Bridges . . . these rules (of grammar, syntax and common usage) were ends in themselves. He complains that in Hopkins one often has to determine the grammar by the meaning, "whereas the grammar should expose and enforce the meaning, not have to be determined by the meaning." - "Should": one is reminded of les jeunes who discuss whether Mr Eliot's methods in The Waste Land are "legitimate" or not, when the only question worth discussing is, Do they work?' (pp. 162-3)

34 For similar arguments in discussion of art, see Clement Greenberg, 'Avant-garde and Kitsch', in Art and Culture: Critical Essays (Boston, 1961).

What this means is that the reason for objecting to decorum, in the sense of conventional correctness, has changed from that of earlier centuries. In earlier criticism one finds that correctness is taken, ultimately, to be determined by what works with the public, and can be revised if breaking the conventions is well received; there is no suggestion that a writer could do well who was generally offensive. Many modern critics and theorists, on the other hand, object as much to the notion of accommodation of public taste as to that of following rules for correctness; the two, indeed, are often thought to go together, and public taste is assumed to favour trite formulas. Writers as different as Q.D. Leavis and H.R. Jauss have objected to mass literature produced for popular consumption, partly for its conventional nature; it is assumed that great works have the right to make demands on their readers and audiences.[35] The best works may be those whose merits can be seen by only a few of their contemporaries, which are, aesthetically or ideologically, 'before their time', whose richness is perceptible precisely in the ways they resist understanding.[36] This attitude finds support in the works which have been, at various times, rejected by the public, who have thought that kings should be majestic, that operas should have happy endings, that indecent books should be

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35 See Fiction and the Reading Public (London, 1932); 'Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory', in Toward an Aesthetic of Reception (tr. Brighton, 1982)

36 See e.g. Q.D. Leavis, op. cit., pp. 203-4: 'The peculiar property of a good novel . . . is the series of shocks it gives to the reader's preconceptions - preconceptions, usually unconscious, of how people behave and why, what is admirable and what reprehensible:' (cf. also pp. 43-4 on the middle brow novel). See also below, pp.23ff. This obviously does not rule out the possibility that the excellence of works of genius may be recognised by perceptive contemporaries.

banned.[37]

Such objections raise an important issue. They suggest that the chief problem with the standard of propriety is not one of definition, but that by using it ancient writers did not do justice to ancient literature. Concern for propriety seems to obscure qualities recognised by the discerning critic; ancient writers on literature were apparently blind to the real nature of its excellence.

My intention here is not to attempt a direct refutation or confirmation of such views of ancient criticism. The extent to which they are valid, after all, can appear only after an examination of what ancient writers actually said, and this cannot be summarised in a few lines. Nor do I mean to assess ancient criticism in the light of every school of modern theory or criticism; it is not only that this would be an endless task, but that certain branches of modern study are (paradoxically) too different for comparisons to be interesting. A very large body of modern work is concerned with questions of interpretation and meaning (hermeneutics and psychoanalytic criticism, for example), and are in this respect remote from the concerns of most ancient discussions of literature. Instead I should like to look at aspects of modern theory or criticism which have points of contact with ancient criticism, even if only for disagreement, and consider some of the assumptions which underlie them. This should make

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37 On the censorship of 'indecent' books, see C.H. Rolph, Books in the Dock (London, 1969); Dulan Thomas, A Long Time Burning: the History of Literary Censorship in England (London, 1969); N. Perrin, Bowdler's Legacy - a History of expurgated books in England and America (London, 1970); C.H. Rolph, ed., D.H. Lawrence: the Trial of Lady Chatterley: Regina v. Penguin Books (London, 1961); A.H. Haight, Banned Books (London, 1970); A. Craig, The Banned Books of England and Other Countries (London, 1962).

it possible to 'place' ancient criticism, in particular in its use of the standard of propriety, in relation to a variety of modern approaches. This should make clear the grounds for evaluation of ancient criticism; even more important, perhaps, it should take ancient methods out of their isolation from modern discussion, and so give a clearer idea of what they are.

One response to objections to rhetorical criticism, including assessment according to propriety, is to undertake a defence of pragmatic criticism. It might be argued, for instance, that much modern work on literature is excessively preoccupied with interpretation, with the appreciation of beauties; that such work pays too little attention to literature in its political context, as discourse capable of effects on agents located within that context. Ancient criticism might then seem a useful model. Its emphasis on effects finds a champion, for instance, in Terry Eagleton, who admires in ancient rhetoric a form of political literary criticism. It was, he says, a form of discourse theory,[38]

> devoted to analysing the material effects of particular uses of language in particular social conjunctures . . . Its intention . . . was systematically to theorize the articulation of discourse and power, and to do so in the name of political practice to enrich the political effectivity of signification. (p. 101)

According to this view, an important part of literary language, of works composed using the illusions and devices of literature, is their connection with the relations between communication and power.

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38 See Walter Benjamin (London, 1981), II.2, and Literary Theory, an Introduction (Oxford, 1983), p.205.

On such an account, the kind of decorum sought by ancient works of rhetoric as a means of fitting discourse to audience, and so increasing effectiveness, would be perfectly acceptable. One might suppose, indeed, that the more explicit rhetoric was about circumstances of delivery, the type of audience to be persuaded, the objects to be accomplished by manipulation of language, the more satisfactory it would be as political criticism. The other side of the coin, for the Marxist critic, is that as reader or listener one should be versed in the strategies of persuasion to which one may be subjected, and capable of resisting them; ancient criticism also seems to offer a parallel for this. The methods of ideological criticism which Eagleton praises in feminist criticism, considers proper to the revolutionary cultural worker as critic, bear some resemblance to those of Plutarch in De audiendis poetis. Both seem to justify criticism whose primary aim is not appreciation or understanding of works of literature.

In Walter Benjamin, Eagleton argues that it is the task of the revolutionary critic [39]

> to expose the rhetorical structures by which non-socialist works produce politically undesirable effects . . . (and) to interpret such works where possible 'against the grain', so as to appropriate fnom them whatever may be valuable for socialism.

Feminist criticism undertakes both empirical and theoretical tasks; the first involves 'exposing patriarchal power within literature, examining representations of gender and retrieving repressed areas of writing'.[40] In each criticism arms the reader against attractive misrepresentations. One may

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39 p. 113

40 Ibid., p. 99

compare Plutarch's insistence that the young be taught a critical approach to texts: poets lie,[41] or may be deceived themselves;[42] they may give hints, undermining immoral passages,[43] may contradict themselves,[44] may be contradicted by other poets;[45] the boy should learn to look for alternative meanings,[46] and to invent replies himself.[47] The boy learns to appreciate literature as an imitative art, but is given techniques for deconstructing, so to speak, persuasive but undesirable passages.[48]

Reservations must be expressed, however, concerning ancient examples of political criticism. Plutarch, of course, does not have the political aspects of effective texts in mind; it is the antagonistic nature of his approach to texts which recalls Marxist technique. More important, perhaps, are points which should be made about ancient rhetoric. First, though works of rhetoric profess to deal with making discourse politically effective, their consciousness of the contemporary political situation varies. Quintilian's discussion in Book 12, for instance, presupposes the ideal orator as statesman, but is hardly

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41 De audiendis poetis 16a et seq., 17b

42 DAP 16f-17a 43 DAP 19a et seq. 44 DAP 20c et seq.

45 DAP 21d et seq. 46 DAP 22b-25c 47 DAP 25e et seq.

48 One can also find parallels with the Marxist view of realism, as accurately portraying the contradictions, at a particular moment in history, of the class conflict, using 'typical' characters to illustrate this (see G. Bisztray, Marxist Models of Literary Realism (New York, 1978)). Plutarch thinks realistic representation is an artistic virtue which will also show reality in its true moral colours (e.g. DAP 20b, see below, pp. 115ff).

suited to the political situation of his day.[49] The study of rhetoric in the Second Sophistic, again, seems in certain forms to have been divorced from political effectiveness, though sophistic declaimers had a great deal of cultural prestige.[50] A political explanation might be given for the increasing emphasis on display pieces, for content (e.g. Greek fascination with the classical Greek past), but works on rhetoric do not necessarily offer this.[51]

There is also a second limit to admiring ancient criticism for its attention to political effectiveness. One of the difficulties in defining rhetorical propriety was, in fact, that writers were not always willing to confine this to questions of effectiveness, but wanted independent criteria of excellence as well. The aesthetic criteria chosen might have, ultimately, political connotations (what is in good taste sometimes seems to be connected with the taste of privileged groups), but ancient writers are not more candid about these than are moderns.

On the other hand, it is clear that the pragmatic side of these kinds of criticism cannot be appealed to for solutions to aesthetic questions. Perhaps one should not look

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49 Oratorical skills were not needed to guide the state, though they probably did remain necessary, for instance, to municipal government. See L.A. Sussman, 'The Elder Seneca's Discussion of the Decline of Roman Eloquence', CSCA 5 (1972), 195-210, E.P. Parks, 'The Roman Rhetorical Schools as a Preparation for the Courts under the Early Empire', Johns Hopkins Univ. Studies in Historical and Political Sciences, 63.2 (1945).

50 See E.L. Bowie, 'The Sophists and Rome', YCS 27 (1982)

51 See E.L. Bowie, 'The Greeks and their Past', in Studies in Ancient Society, ed. M. Finley (London, 1974)

here for the answer to such questions; Eagleton's point is not that ancient 'political criticism' is admirable because it gets aesthetic questions right, but that it does not confine itself (like much modern criticism) to the aesthetic. But ancient criticism seems to demand some kind of assessment in connection with aesthetic matters, since these so often got tangled up with the pragmatic. Here, however, Marxist analysis is less helpful. Eagleton admits that the aesthetic has its own rules, and argues against the 'vulgar Marxism' which would equate aesthetic merit with ideological correctness.[52] He also argues, however, that aesthetic value can be properly understood only from a Marxist, materialist perspective, starting with recognition of the fact that 'value' is based on exchange.[53] This involves a radical redefinition of 'value'. It is clearly legitimate to reject common definitions of terms if one finds these incoherent; once one has done this, however, one cannot enter debates about, say, the aesthetic value of Shakespeare with people who understand 'value' in the ordinary way. What this means is that non-Marxists who question the merits of ancient criticism in aesthetic analysis will find no answer to their doubts in Marxism.

52 In Criticism and Ideology (London, 1976) Eagleton argues against a crude materialist assessment of literature, which would dismiss Shakespeare as a reactionary hack (166), and of criticism, which would take it as 'a reflex of its ideological moment' (20), rather than as a discipline with its own degree of autonomy in 'the aesthetic region of ideology'.

53 Ibid., Ch. 5, 'Marxism and Aesthetic Value', especially 166ff. For more thorough criticism of the arguments presented than is possible here, see G. Thurley, Counter-Modernism in Current Critical Theory (London, 1983), Ch. 11.

Ancient criticism, then, and use of the concept of decorum, seems to fall short, even in its most promising forms, of Marxist methods, not being pragmatic enough. Its concern for effectiveness, on the other hand, distinguishes it from modern theorists and critics who seem, at first sight, to share its general approach. The reader response criticism of the past couple of decades seems to retreat from the New Critical emphasis on the work itself to the audience orientation of the past.[54] But as Jane Tompkins argues, although such criticism claims to depart in a revolutionary way from the non-affective stance of New Critics by placing meaning in readers not texts, it retains the 20th century concern with meaning as a critical issue.[55] It tends therefore to involve analysis which re-presents the reader's experience of 'making sense' of a text, rather than one which, on the ancient model, explains the broad emotional effect of phrases, scenes, etc.

Perhaps most interesting are a number of branches of theory and criticism which emphasise the importance of resisting the expectations and preconceptions of the reader. This is rather a mixed bag; it includes, for instance, the critical remarks of Ezra Pound justifying the methods of modern poetry; the Russian Formalists, who defined the literary in terms of defamiliarization; the Leavises; Brecht; H.R. Jauss, who thought the best literature went beyond the

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54 For a collection of essays using reader response in various ways, see S. Suleiman and I. Crossman, eds., The Reader in the Text (Princeton, 1980)

55 'The Reader in History', in Reader-Response Criticism, ed. J. Tompkins (Baltimore, 1980), 201-232.

horizons of expectation of contemporaries; and perhaps certain views of Barthes, who tried to distinguish between the classical, 'lisible' text, and the modern, 'scriptible' text which did not impose a method of reading on its audience. There are obviously important differences between these writers, theorists, critics, not all of which can be considered here. One may note, however, an important difference between Jauss and the Formalists on the one hand, and various advocates of modernism on the other. Both Jauss and the Formalists thought that innovation was an essential part of all literary history: good literature had always defeated the expectations of its readers.[56] Such a view may have been shaped by modernist tastes, but does not claim that these values are applicable only to recent literature. But Pound, the Leavises, and Barthes all seem to think that literature can no longer do things it once did. Pound thinks that there have been societies with usable poetic traditions (e.g. the Provençal) -

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56 Jauss seems to think that the best work is always that which demands the greatest 'horizontal change' of its audience, op. cit. p. 25: '. . . to the degree that this distance (between work and horizon of expectation) decreases, the closer the work comes to the sphere of 'culinary' or entertainment art. This latter work can be characterized by an aesthetics of reception as . . . precisely fulfilling the expectations prescribed by a ruling standard of taste, in that it satisfies the desire for the reproduction of the familiarly beautiful; confirms familiar sentiments; sanctions wishful notions; makes unusual experiences enjoyable as 'sensations', or even raises moral problems, but only to 'solve' them in an edifying manner as predecided questions . . .' For Formalist interest in breaking conventions, see V. Shklovsky, 'Art as Device', in Russian Formalist Criticism, tr. Lemon and Reis (Lincoln/London, 1965), and also V. Erlich, Russian Formalism (3rd ed., New Haven, 1981).

it is modern society whose poetry is dead and whose language is stale.[57] Mrs. Leavis argues that the best literature was once intelligible to a wide audience; it is only with 20th century industrialisation of the book trade that works written for the general public are trash, the best shock all but a few.[58] Barthes sometimes seems to think that it was once possible to write for consumption, but is no longer.[59]

These writers seem to share, however, the assumption that the quality of literature is in some sense dependent on the reaction of an audience - someone must have expectations to be disappointed. Paradoxically they turn out to have common ground with ancient writers, despite disagreeing with them in fundamental ways on the aim of literature. Ancient literary discourse is equally concerned with the reaction of the audience, but tends to define the devices by which art produces certain predictable results - pleasure, strong emotion, etc. It seems to be assumed that the expectations a work must meet remain constant, and that the great work always satisfies these, has the same overwhelming effect. Classic works are thus taken to demonstrate successful use of devices which one would do well to imitate.

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57 ABC of Reading (London, 1951)

58 Op. cit., passim.

59 S/Z (Paris, 1970) distinguishes between classical, lisible works and modern scriptible ones - Barthes' own work, however, seems to make even classical texts by authors such as Racine and Balzac scriptible, so it is hard to say whether they really produced meaning in a way radically different from that of modern authors.

In one respect these modern movements seem to have an advantage over ancient methods: they are less embarrassed by the possibility of different kinds of literary excellence, and in particular by the phenomenon of literary change. But the advantage is less complete than it might appear, since some of the problems which faced the application of decorum still apply. Theories favouring the modern also rely on assumptions about the public: one must assume a relatively homogeneous public, which by and large accepts a certain group of literary conventions, if violation of expectations is to be characteristic of the new and good. I have argued, however, that this is a misleading way to think of 'the public'. Remarkable works are written, for instance, which might shock the 'ideal audience' of earlier books, but which come as no surprise to large numbers of the actual reading public - The Golden Notebook and The Color Purple come to mind.

Ancient criticism, then, has little part in the concerns of major branches of modern literary discourse: psychoanalytic criticism and hermeneutics are the most obvious. It has certain points of contact with various forms of modern pragmatic criticism, but cannot be explained entirely in pragmatic terms. Its strong pragmatic element, however, means that it has less in common than one might have expected with modern forms of reader-response criticism, which

concentrate on the ways readers make sense of texts and produce meaning, rather than on larger effects. It differs from the many modern schools of thought which value the innovative partly because inaccessible to the masses: universal effectiveness seems to be characteristic of great works. Like these modern schools, however, it seems to rely on unjustified assumptions about the nature of the public.

These generalisations gloss over differences within ancient discussions of literature. Ancient allegorists were interested in interpretation rather than in audience response. Plato was no friend to the work with popular appeal. It is hoped, however, that these remarks will help to place the subject under investigation in relation to modern work.

iv Methodology

At this point an objection needs to be considered. It might be argued that the standard of propriety raises the questions I have considered because it is being understood in a very broad sense, one which includes every aspect of the audience orientation of ancient criticism. Does this give an accurate account of the way early writers understood it? Why should the various ancient views mentioned, from the idea that elevated subjects called for elevated language to the idea that heroes should not be made to seem cowardly, count as applications of the same standard?

One argument is lexicographical. One can follow the example of Pohlenz, establish an area of enquiry by considering the uses to which a single word is put, and look for connections between the different uses.[60] If ancient writers use the same word in different sorts of judgements, it is likely that they took the various cases to be instances where propriety was relevant. But if one can pick out characteristic types of propriety on this basis, one must extend the range of propriety to cover similar cases where other words were used, or indeed where no expression for propriety appears.[61] This has been my method for deciding which comments ancient writers thought relevant.

I have gone beyond this, however, in two ways. First, I have tried to draw out the implications of using a concept for 'what is fitting' as a standard for art. Pohlenz has described how πρέπου reached this meaning, starting from connotations of brilliance, of pre-eminence, of conspicuousness; from these it retained the connotation of appearance, so that, e.g., qualities befitting a king were felt to be visibly becoming.[62] Its commendatory connotations could be said to be left over from the original usage, while the term drifted toward a sense equivalent to that of words like οἰκεῖον and ἁρμόττον, denoting a more neutral 'appropriateness'. But it is to take much for granted to assume that

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60 M. Pohlenz, 'Τὸ πρέπον. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des griechischen Geistes', NAG 1933, 53ff = Kleine Schriften 100ff.

61 Demetrius, for instance, speaks of πρέπον as essentially a matter of μικρὰ μικρῶς μεγάλα μεγαλῶς λέγειν; propriety is clearly involved, then, when he criticises lines for using grand language of trivial things and vice versa, even when the vocabulary of propriety is not used.

62 Op. cit., p. 53.

appropriateness is relatively neutral; this notion has, in fact, much in common with various concepts central to Greek morality and thought.

Notions such as that of δίκη and μοῖρα, important ethical concepts like that of σωφροσύνη and the notion of the mean, of καιρός,[63] bear witness to the importance in Greek thought of 1) the connection between is and ought, between, for instance, the particular nature of a man and the kinds of excellence suitable to him; 2) awareness of one's place in the scheme of things, and acting in accordance with this.[64] Πρέπον, as Pohlenz points out, was often equated with καλός, showing the 'Greek delight in proportion, in harmony of appearance with essence'; it is the kind of appearance achieved when the values implied by 1) and 2) are observed.[65] But different people, clearly, can place different values on a particular 'essence'; propriety is thus connected with an important problem of aesthetics, that of the relativity of aesthetic properties. Ancient authors sometimes speak of the propriety governing the relation between work and audience, sometimes of that matching various elements of form and content; in arguing that the latter depends on the former I sometimes go beyond what they say. It is

63 See H. Lloyd-Jones, The Justice of Zeus (Berkeley, 1971), S. Goldhill, Reading Greek Tragedy (Cambridge, 1985), 33ff, D.M. MacDowell, 'Hybris in Athens', G&R 23 (1976), 14-31, Helen North, 'Sophrosyne in Greek Literary Criticism', CP 43 (1948), 1-17; F. Pfister, 'KAIROS UND SYMMETRIE', Wurzb. Jahrb. 13 (1938), 131ff; W. Jaeger, Paideia, tr. G. Highet (Oxford, 1945), I.140ff on justice and the mean in Solon; M. Pohlenz, 'Hippokratesstudien', NAG 1937, p. 99 = KS 207. See also below, p. 39, n. 18.

64 There is thus a stronger 'moral' element than is immediately obvious in Aristotle's claim that characters should be appropriate (ἁρμόττοντα), Poetics 1454a18ff.

65 'Τὸ πρέπον', 54-7 = KS 102-3

this move which makes the problems discussed in ii above obviously relevant; it seems legitimate, however, to draw inferences from what ancient authors do say, and identify neglected sources of confusion and difficulty.[66]

A second departure from ancient views is in the range of material examined. Given the account of propriety to be found in ancient criticism, purity of language seems to be a subject which ought to have been included; ancient writers, however, explicitly put linguistic correctness in a separate category from propriety when discussing style. Since ancient discussions of correctness make it clear that it was an important part of self-presentation, and the accommodation of speaker to audience, to exclude it would be arbitrary. Modern sociolinguistics, moreover, suggests that there may be interesting reasons for silence on linguistic correctness in discussions of literary propriety.[67] The last chapter, therefore, will consider the relations between propriety and purity of language, and possible reasons for ancient separation of the two subjects.

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66 The general failure of ancient discussions of literature to raise, let alone address, the possibility of relativism in literary values might be considered simply part of the ancient way of thinking about the world, of truth, as something 'out there' which language could correctly pick out. It is interesting, though, that the question of relativism does appear in ancient philosophy - see esp. Socrates' discussion of Protagoras' 'man is the measure' in Theaetetus (152D12-162A3, 169D2-172B9, n.b. 170E8ff), and (in the sceptical tradition), J. Annas and J. Barnes, The Modes of Scepticism (Cambridge, 1985), esp. Ch. 5 (Human Variations) and Ch. 11 (Relativity). What is striking is that, though philosophy has some contacts with literary discussion (notably in connection with πρέπον itself), relativism makes no impression on the latter at all.

67 See for instance the chapter in Milroy and Milroy, Authority in Language, on the tradition of complaint literature concerning the decline of the language.

The next two chapters will deal with the standard of propriety in discussions of poetry and of rhetoric. The first will concentrate on questions of representation and of genre; since genre was a major factor in determining what counted as suitable representation, the chapter will be subdivided into 'serious' genres (tragedy and epic) and 'non-serious' (comedy). Chapter III will deal with the various aspects of propriety thought needed in rhetoric, but will pay particular attention to the history of style theory. Both of these chapters have been based on the kind of lexicographical research described above; they give an account of what ancient authors took propriety to be as well as a criticism of this. The last chapter, as I have said, goes beyond the ancient category of propriety to deal with purity of language.

2 PROPRIETY AS A CRITERION OF POETRY

Much early discussion of poetry was concerned with general questions rather than with criticism of particular works. People were interested in such questions as whether accuracy was the test of poetry, or whether its aim was simply to please; with, on the one hand, the question of kinds of truth, including the relation of a copy to its original - on the other, the question of the conditions of moving or pleasing, including, perhaps, the appearance of truthfulness. Perhaps poetry had to be probable, seem an accurate representation, if it was to move or please. Similar questions could be raised concerning the morality of poetry: should it be morally improving, or simply convincing and so moving or pleasant? Perhaps it had to be morally acceptable up to a point, if it was to convince? Horace's remark in the Ars Poetica is particularly interesting in this connection:[1]

> ne pueros coram populo Medea trucidet,
> aut humana palam coquat exta nefarius Atreus,
> aut in avem Procne vertatur, Cadmus in anguem.
> quodcumque ostendis mihi sic, incredulus odi.

Gross immorality is one kind of monstrousness, credible, it seems, only if kept off-stage.

These general questions are clearly relevant to the use of propriety as a standard for poetry. The connection between standards of propriety and of probability was close. Homer's representation of gods is offensive to Plato because the nature of divinity is such that it cannot be true; it is a short step from this to the view that, for instance, noble

1 Ars Poetica 185-8

characters should act according to received notions of nobility if a piece is to be probable.

The source of this connection between propriety and probability, then, lies in the nature of representation. In a work of literature, representation is achieved by means of narrative or dramatic dialogue purporting to be about or among characters, who are to be seen as of particular types. But little is required to establish a character as belonging to a type - the information that he is, for instance, king of Thebes might be enough. This means that it is possible for the attributes given to a character - his actions, appearance, views expressed and level of language - to meet or fail to meet preconceptions about the type to which he is taken to belong. Conformity tends to make a character seem probable; failure to conform, on the other hand, is open to misunderstanding. The correlation between kinds of people and kinds of action, language and so on is not simply a matter of observed regularity. All of these categories have members which are considered to have different degrees of value: levels of language, for instance, have different degrees of prestige. So establishing the expected match between character and the various orders of attribute implies support for the general view of the rank of the character. Breaking down expected correlations, on the other hand, can be used (as in satire and comedy) to attack and ridicule persons belonging to types thought high and important: one may be invited to see types

one had admired as contemptible.[3] But one may also be invited to see an object of affection or admiration as meriting those responses despite features generally despised or pitied.[3] This technique might be mistaken for the first. Failure to provide the expected match between object and manner of representation, in dignity, attractiveness, prestige and so on might be taken as degradation of the object; the work of literature in which this occurred might be criticised as both unconvincing and improper. Hence arguments over Euripides' beggar kings.

Representation also links probability and propriety in another way: not all representational genres aimed at probability and illusion to the same degree. Old Comedy, for instance, is fanciful and self-referential, tragedy on the whole not. What counted as an acceptable representation would depend on the conventions thought suitable to a particular genre: the standards of recognisability for a character, as well as of the match between type and mode of presentation, will differ depending on whether a likeness or caricature is wanted.[5] Grounds for moral objections might also differ according to genre: a disgraceful representation of a hero

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2 See A.B. Savile, The Test of Time (Oxford, 1982), on obscenity as 'the deliberate and seductive degradation of what are proper objects of reverence or love . . . (which) unfits them for our attachment'. (p. 261)

3 See A.C. Danto, The Transfiguration of the Commonplace (Cambridge, Mass., 1981), on Rembrandt's realistic portrayal of his wife Henrijke as Bathsheba. (pp. 194ff)

4 See S. Goldhill, Reading Greek Tragedy (Cambridge, 1986), Ch. 10, 'Genre and Transgression', p. 252, on the role of conventions in making possible 'realism' in a particular genre.

5 So it would not matter if Agathon, in Thesmophoriazusae, said things the real man would not have said.

could meet objections either because presenting such behaviour as believable and attributable to a noble figure, or because presenting it as a source of entertainment.[6]

It seems, then, that certain major genres of poetry (epic, tragedy, comedy), being representational, offered considerable scope for assessment according to the standard of propriety; other important concerns of ancient discussions of poetry (truthfulness, morality) often found expression, in connection with these genres, in observations about propriety. After a brief survey of early comments on poetry, I shall concentrate on these major genres, devoting a section to tragedy and epic and another to comedy.

Confining the discussion to representational genres in this way might make it seem that the kinds of propriety relevant to convincing representation are most important. Organising it according to genre suggests that they cannot be the only ones. Elevated language, for instance, may be both appropriate to a lofty character and the right medium for a dignified genre. It may matter more that lofty characters be suitably portrayed in certain genres - for instance to ensure that the audience is moved by their misfortunes - but it may equally be a matter of propriety that such characters should be portrayed, such misfortunes shown, in particular genres. These, however, are clearly special cases of conventions which could apply to non-representational genres - governing, for instance, level of diction, intensity of

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6 It is 'unlikely' that a god would act the way Dionysus does, but not necessarily improper to present him as Aristophanes does in Frogs. Moral objections might still be made, but differ according to genre; such caricatures might have bad effects though recognised as such.

tone, metre. Such conventions should count as aspects of propriety to the extent that breaches could be taken to be in bad taste, offensive, unpleasant.

While it is clear, however, that other genres besides epic, tragedy and comedy were governed by conventions, our chief evidence for those genres is the poems themselves; the comments on lyric poetry, for instance, are very scarce indeed in comparison with those available for the three mentioned. There may be significance in the fact that non-representational poetry was so unfruitful for ancient literary discussions (one might contrast the attraction of lyric for those applying New Critical methods);[7] given the accidents of transmission, however, I do not like to rely heavily on the argument from silence. But whatever the reasons for this silence, it justifies concentration on poetic forms and issues whose interest for ancient writers is revealed in a large body of evidence.

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7 For an attempt to account for this silence in ancient criticism, and to analyse what comments are to be had, see W.R. Johnson, The Idea of Lyric (Berkeley, 1982).

i Early views of poetry: questions of accuracy, morality, justice to occasion

The connection between probability and propriety depends on the notion of representation; this in turn seems to depend on recognising poetry as in some sense different from other forms of discourse. But in early comments on poetry, especially those made by poets themselves, such notions are lacking. One finds instead what might be considered more primitive versions of the standards of probability and propriety: worries about truthfulness rather than probability, about morality (e.g. in saying discreditable things about gods), politeness to audience, justice to occasion rather than a specifically poetic propriety. A look at some of these early views, however, may help to make sense of later developments; it might give some idea, for instance, of how far later standards of propriety depended on acceptance of categories such as 'poetry' and 'fiction'.

Homeric Epic

The authors of the Iliad and Odyssey call on the Muses partly as an aid to memory, and seem to tell of real events.[1] The poets portrayed in the Odyssey tell at least some stories that really happened;[2] Odysseus praises Demodocus for describing the Trojan War as if he had been there, or had spoken to

1 Il. 1.1ff, 2.484-494; Od. 1.1ff

2 Od. 1.326ff, 8.73ff, 489ff

someone else who had been.[3] The excellence of poetry seems to lie in its accuracy; novelty of theme makes it agreeable.[4] Propriety is called for only as it is in other forms of speech: a singer or his patron may fail in tact if the song pains some member of the audience closely affected by the events described. It is rude of Telemachus to override Penelope's request for another song in Odyssey 1, courteous of Alcinoos to bring Demodocus' song to a close at Odyssey 8.94ff. The considerations involved are much the same as those in speeches of a rhetorical nature; one might compare the tact of Odysseus in editing Agamemnon's message to Achilles,[5] or in praising the beauty of Nausicaa.[6]

Selection and order were important, however, in the narration of these stories: the Muse is asked to tell the poet some things from the mass of material available at the beginning of the Odyssey, Demodocus is said to have sung 'λίην κατὰ κόσμον'.[7] So there are hints that some ways of telling a story are better than others, and perhaps that some things deserve mention more than others. These are borne out by the practice of the authors of the Iliad and Odyssey, who, for instance, leave out some of the more barbarous aspects of myth.[8]

The step from editing the 'truth' to seeing that there

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3 Od. 8.489ff

4 Od. 1.351-2

5 Il. 9.299-300, cf. 158-61

6 Od. 6.149ff

7 Od. 8.489

8 See D.S. Robertson, 'The Food of Achilles', CR 54 (1940), 177-80; V. Magnien, 'La discrétion homérique', REG 37 (1924), 141-63; J. Griffin, 'Symbolic Scenes and Significant Objects', in Homer on Life and Death (Oxford, 1980), 19-21. On Homer's knowledge of the Judgement of Paris, see M. Davies, 'The Judgement of Paris and Iliad xxiv', JHS 101 (1981); also G. Murray, The Rise of the Greek Epic (4th ed., London, 1934), 126ff.

could be plausible fictions is a short one. The Muses in Hesiod's Theogony say they can teach either true things or things like the truth;[9] the lies of poets seem to have become a commonplace.[10] One could suppose that there might be different reasons for suspecting the veracity of poetry (apart from proven inaccuracy): one might suspect the poet of improving on the truth, or suspect him of malicious invention when his account of a hero or god failed to match one's own notions. The second kind of objection seems to lie behind the criticisms of the 6th century philosopher Xenophanes, who complained that Homer and Hesiod showed the gods doing things which were thought disgraceful in men.[11] A form of the first view is to be found in Herodotus, who thinks that Homer knew the story that Helen had gone to Egypt while her likeness went to Troy, but thought the other version better suited to epic (Homer is guided by aesthetic criteria, rather than by concern for which of the stories is true).[12]

Pindar

Pindar is aware of the dangers presented by these attitudes. Pitfalls awaited the poet who wanted his poem to be both as appropriate to the occasion and as convincing as

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9 Theogony 26ff

10 Solon 21; Hom. hymn 1.1-6; Pindar, N.7.20ff

11 11DK: *πάντα θεοῖσ' ἀνέθηκαν Ὅμηρός θ' Ἡσίοδός τε*
ὅσσα παρ' ἀνθρώποισιν ὀνείδεα καὶ ψόγος ἐστίν,
κλέπτειν μοιχεύειν τε καὶ ἀλλήλους ἀπατεύειν.
For the theology of poets contrasted with that of philosophers, see A.S. Pease on Cicero, De Natura Deorum I,42 (pp. 280-83).

12 Herodotus 2.116 . . . *δοκέει δέ μοι καὶ Ὅμηρος τὸν λόγον τοῦτον πυθέσθαι· ἀλλ' οὐ γὰρ ὁμοίως ἐς τὴν ἐποποιίην εὐπρεπὴς ἦν τῷ ἑτέρῳ τῷ περ ἐχρήσατο, μετῆκε αὐτόν, δηλώσας ὡς καὶ τοῦτον ἐπίσταιτο τὸν λόγον.*

possible: he must convince his audience that his praises are just, overcoming suspicions that they are due to the bias of the speaker, and also do justice to the occasion (if necessary by leaving out unsuitable parts of the truth). Pindar has various ways of doing this: he stresses his own truthfulness, both by contrast with the falsehood of others and absolutely;[13] he says that his eloquence is due to the material available, as at N.5.19-20,[14]

> εἰ δ'ὄλβον ἢ χειρῶν βίαν ἢ σιδαρίταν ἐπαινῆ-
> σαι πόλεμον δεδόκηται μακρά μοι
> αὐτόθεν ἅλμαθ' ὑποσκά-
> πτοι τις· ἔχω γονάτων ὁρμὰν ἐλαφράν.

where it is contrasted with his tact in not mentioning awkward circumstances:[15]

> οὔ τοι ἅπασα κερδίων
> φαίνοισα ποόσωπον ἀλάθει' ἀτρεκές·
> καὶ τὸ σιγᾶν πολλάκις ἐστὶ σοφώ-
> τατον ἀνθρώπῳ νοῆσαι. (17-18)

He sometimes seems to undercut his credentials, calling attention to the fact that the song has been paid for and must be to the point in its praise, then meets this with the claim that the victory really does merit the praise given.[16]

On the one hand, then, Pindar has various ways of forestalling charges of bias; on the other he emphasises the ways his song is appropriate to, does justice to the occasion.

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13 O.1.28f, N.7.20ff

14 Compare the topos of the ease of praise, e.g. at I.3/4 19ff (for further examples, see E.L. Bundy, Studia Pindarica II, CSCP 18 (1962), p. 64).

15 Cf. O.1.53, O.13.91

16 P.11.37-42, I.2.1-11. This, then, is another way of leading up to the claim that the victory imposes the obligation of celebrating it: cf. O.3.7, 10.8, P.8.33, 9.104 on the χρέος imposed by the victory.

He brings out its aptness sometimes by rejection of themes which are not κατὰ καιρόν,[16a] sometimes by apparent rejection of material whose pertinence becomes clear later on,[17] sometimes by pointing to his own powers of selectivity, of managing to be apt while not offending the audience by exaggeration or excessive length.[18]

Saying the right thing is, for Pindar, as much a matter of not saying the wrong, not saying too much, as of choosing particular themes. Sometimes, as in N.10, he simply suppresses disreputable aspects of myth;[19] sometimes he says explicitly that the truth is better not mentioned, as at O.9.38 (presumably the 'suppression' of unpleasant facts about the victor's ancestors is pointed out to contrast with what follows). A similar strategy is probably being used when Pindar, in saying that he will not speak ill of the gods, tells the discreditable story which is being denied.

The reasons for Pindar's objections are worth thinking about. Do they show new ideas of what is suitable for poetry? Perhaps rejection of certain versions of myth has something in common with the kind of objection made by rationalising 6th century philosophers: Xenophanes had objected to the portrayal of the gods given by Homer and Hesiod; Porphyrius,

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16a P.10.4ff, O.9.38. On *καιρός* in Pindar see E.L. Bundy, 'Studia Pindarica I', CSCP 18 (1962) (repr. Berkeley, 1986), p.18. n.4.

17 See D. Young on P.11.37ff in Three Odes of Pindar (Leiden, 1968).

18 P.9.76ff, 1.81.

19 The earlier version of the myth seems to have been that the Dioscuroi tried to abduct the brides of the Aphariadai. Pindar mentions only a quarrel about cattle, does not make clear whose it was. Cf. Scholia in Pindari Carmina, ed. Drachmann, III.178 on N.10.60(112), and see J. Frazer on Apollodorus, Bibliotheca 3.11.2, n. 4 in his translation for the Loeb Classical Library.

commenting on the Theomachy, says that Theagenes was the first to give an allegorical explanation of such passages.[20] But Pindar's views of the limits on what should be said are in some ways closer to those of Homer than to those of the critics of epic. The version of the Pelops myth rejected in Ol.1 - the story of Demeter eating the shoulder of Pelops - is the kind of story about gods which Homer, unlike Hesiod, had tended to leave out;[21] on the other hand Pindar, like Homer, finds the sexual adventures of the gods compatible with their divinity. Pythian 9, like Iliad 13, exploits the paradox of gods who have both human susceptibility and the grandeur of power over the natural world; neither the guile nor the amours of the gods are cause for embarrassment.[22] Xenophanes, on the other hand, mentions adultery and deceit as shameful things attributed to the gods by poets; the seduction of Zeus and the story of Ares and Aphrodite in the Odyssey were favourite passages for explication by allegorists.[23] Pindar is closer to Homer's critics, however, in his attitude to conflict between gods and mortals. In O.9 he denies a story that Heracles fought against the gods; the wounding of Aphrodite by Diomedes worries later commen-

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20 Cf. note 14; Porphyrius I 240, iv Schrader = 2 DK. On allegorical interpretations, see N. Richardson, 'Homeric Professors in the Age of the Sophists', PCPS 21 (1975), 65-81.

21 Cf. note 8

22 Note especially Olympian 1, where changing the story to an abduction of Pelops by Poseidon is apparently more consonant with proper respect for the gods than repeating the story that Demeter had eaten Pelops' shoulder by accident.

23 DK11. On Hera and Zeus, see e.g. ΣbT on Il. 14.347-51: *ἐμπεσὼν εἰς φορτικοῦ πράγματος διήγησιν ἐφ' ἕτερα τὸν λόγον μετήγαγε, τὰ ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς φυόμενα ἄνθη καὶ τὸ νέφος*; Plutarch, DAP 19e et seq.(against allegory); Heraclitus, Probl.Hom. 39 and ps.Plutarch, De vita et poesi Homeri 2.96 (for allegory). On Ares and Aphrodite, see Heraclitus, op.cit. 53,3 and 69; ps.Plutarch, op.cit. 2.101; Plotinus, Ennead 2,3,6.

tators on Homer.[24]

Pindar's views on what is acceptable in poetry do not differ widely, then, from those implicit in some earlier works. He differs from earlier poets, however, in calling attention to common doubts about the reliability of poets. Ostentatious editing of stories about gods or heroes is made to serve a variety of rhetorical purposes.[25] This self-conscious adaptation of material to occasion by the poet is a short step from assessment of poetry by others according to the standard of propriety.

Gorgias

Pindar tacitly concedes a great deal to the critics of poetry: their suspicions of the truthfulness of poets, for instance, are an obstacle the poet must somehow get round. The views of Gorgias were more radical.[26] He agreed that poetry aimed at persuading an audience of the truth of its propositions, but argued that its most characteristic feature was its emotional power, achieved partly by incantatory use of language. It aroused emotions in the hearer by representing events which did not directly concern him.[27] But these were terms of praise. Tragedy, he said elsewhere, was a kind of deceit in which he who deceived was juster

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24 Cf. Schol. AbT on Il.5.330, 331 (where it is explained that Diomedes pursues, not because of the goddess's cowardice, but at the order of Athena).

25 O.1, O.13, N.7

26 Assuming that he held the views put forward in the Helen.

27 11 DK, p. 290, τὴν ποίησιν ἅπασαν καὶ νομίζω καὶ ὀνομάζω λόγον ἔχοντα μέτρον· ἧς τοὺς ἀκούοντας εἰσῆλθε καὶ φρίκη περίφοβος καὶ ἔλεος πολύδακρυς καὶ πόθος φιλοπενθής, ἐπ' ἀλλοτρίων τε πραγμάτων καὶ σωμάτων εὐτυχίαις καὶ δυσπραγίαις ἴδιόν τι πάθημα διὰ τῶν λόγων ἔπαθεν ἡ ψυχή.

than he who did not, and the man who was deceived was wiser than one who was not - presumably because in each case the most successful deceit gave the most pleasure.[28]

This makes the ethical content and accuracy of a work irrelevant; though Gorgias did not follow up the implications of his remarks for poetic criticism, it is clear that propriety would depend on whether the syle, characterisation, music and so on of a work made it vivid and moving, not on whether the poem was accurate or edifying. For the first time, too, an external criterion is available for the assessment of poetic conventions, such as the status of characters, or artistic devices (such as masks) which were traditionally used. These might be unnecessary; or it might be that poetry was most effective if it kept to received ideas about the behaviour and language appropriate to certain types of people, and the kinds of event (and people affected) which deserved an emotional response, if it used only devices which were familiar, did not call attention to themselves, and so did not distract it from the actions presented.

In early comments on poetry, then, especially in the remarks of poets, poetry seems to be subject to the same requirements as other forms of discourse: being untrue, immoral, or inopportune should be avoided. Poets are sometimes defensive about possible charges on these heads. This

28 Plutarch, DAP 15D (cf. de glor. Ath. 348c), τὴν τραγῳδίαν εἶπεν ἀπάτην, ἣν ὁ τ'ἀπατήσας δικαιότερος τοῦ μὴ ἀπατήσαντος καὶ ὁ ἀπατηθεὶς σοφώτερος τοῦ μὴ ἀπατηθέντος.

straightforward position is stood on its head by Gorgias, who raises the possibility that audiences might want something different of poetry from what was wanted of other forms of discourse. This seems to me to be the important move which makes possible the various views on propriety and probability mentioned earlier, and indeed the disagreements discussed in Chapter 1 as to which members of the audience are to count as judges. I have said that standards of propriety differed according to the seriousness of the genre; I shall turn first, therefore, to critical questions related to propriety in epic and tragedy.

ii Propriety in epic and tragedy

Xenophanes had objected to Homer and Hesiod because they showed the gods doing disgraceful things. His criticism had point because poems which enjoyed a certain prestige showed gods doing things generally agreed to be disgraceful (Xenophanes was not offering, for instance, a new code of conduct which gods and men could be expected to observe).[1] One reason for bothering to criticise such works was that they had the status of institutions; Homer, in particular, seems to have been part of education already by the time of Xenophanes, and to have continued to be important in this way.[2] Poetry may have invited criticism also because of the circumstances of its performance: both tragedy and epic were performed at major Athenian religious festivals, and were thus connected with important ritual occasions.[3]

Aristophanes

The fact that certain kinds of poetry were performed at occasions celebrated by the community may have made it natural to expect them to be educational or edifying. Aristophanes uses this assumption in Frogs to praise Aeschylus at the expense of Euripides (though the contest is decided

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1 On the other hand Xenophanes is also breaking new ground, in claiming that the poets are simply wrong to suppose the gods anthropomorphic (frs. 14, 15, 16).

2 10 DK, cf. Xenophon, Symposium III,5: Nikeratos' father had had him learn the whole of Homer.

3 cf. Plato, Republic 604, Laws 800Cff: δημοσίᾳ γάρ τινα θυσίαν ὅταν ἀρχή τις θύσῃ, μετὰ ταῦτα χορὸς οὐχ εἷς ἀλλὰ πλῆθος χορῶν ἥκει, καὶ στάντες οὐ πόρρω τῶν βωμῶν ἀλλὰ παρ' αὐτοὺς ἐνίοτε, πᾶσαν βλασφημίαν τῶν ἱερῶν καταχέουσιν, ῥήμασί τε καὶ ῥυθμοῖς καὶ γοωδεστάταις ἁρμονίαις συντείνοντες τὰς τῶν ἀκροωμένων ψυχάς, καὶ ὃς ἂν δακρῦσι μάλιστα τὴν θύσασαν παραχρῆμα ποιήσῃ πόλιν, οὗτος τὰ νικητήρια φέρει.

on the basis of ability to give shrewd advice, 1420ff). But there is more to this than meets the eye: the fact that this reasoning prevails in the end does not necessarily mean that it was generally accepted, or that utilitarian criteria were the only ones by which to judge a play.

This may seem an obvious point: the main part of the agon focusses on aesthetic questions, to which Culler's remarks on various kinds of vraisemblance may usefully be applied.[4] Culler thinks of these as kinds of probability in a very extended sense: they are the various ways readers 'naturalise', make sense of works by bringing them into contact with, defining them in relation to other texts:

> First there is the socially given text, that which is taken as the 'real world'. Second, but in some cases difficult to distinguish from the first, is a general cultural text: shared knowledge which would be recognised by participants as part of culture and hence subject to correction or modification but which none the less serves as a kind of 'nature'. Third, there are the texts or conventions of a genre, a specifically literary and artificial vraisemblance. Fourth comes what might be called the natural attitude to the artificial, where the text explicitly cites and exposes vraisemblance of the third kind so as to reinforce its own authority. And finally, there is the complex vraisemblance of specific intertextualities, where one work takes another as its basis or point of departure and must be assimilated in relation to it. At each level there are ways in which the artifice of forms is motivated or justified by being given a meaning.

This shows the kind of strategy used by Aristophanes, who is clearly playing off various kinds of vraisemblance against each other. A play which obeyed conventions governing dignity of characters, diction, etc. might seem archaic, while

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4 J. Culler, Structuralist Poetics (London, 1975), p. 140

one whose vocabulary was not bizarre might seem too ordinary.[5] A tragedian can be criticised either for using devices that call attention to the artifice used, or for violating conventions concerning the dignity of the genre and so forfeiting any claim to seriousness.[6]

Conventions of the real, of culture, of genre all play a part in the audience's making sense of a play; it is possible for a play to take advantage of the fourth kind of vraisemblance, showing up the artifice of its predecessor, and thus to succeed in establishing its own claim to realism. It may nevertheless offend against the vraisemblance of the genre (the audience may admit that it is more realistic, but object that it is not tragic), while perhaps interfering with the easy 'reading' of the conventions of previous works (which might seem tragic but excessively artificial). Aristophanes makes great capital out of Euripides' tendency to neglect accepted categories in creating tragic characters - on the one hand the troubles of insignificant people might be taken

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5 A similar sort of problem seems to have faced Aristotle: on the one hand poetic diction was admirable in poetry, which had the characters and subjects to match (Rhet. 1404b12-14); on the other he seems to regard as good the gradual evolution of tragic language and metres to something closer to ordinary speech, and praises Euripides as the first to achieve impressive effects using the skilful synthesis of ordinary words (1404a29ff, b24-5).

6 Examples of the first are Aeschylus' pompous vocabulary (922ff), so obscure that no one could understand it, the dramatic use of the silent figure (911-13)- and perhaps the repetitious lyric rhythms, chosen for their beauty (1298), but possibly predictable for that reason; Euripides' lyric metres are considered both to be inappropriate to tragedy (1301f) and to make their method of composition conspicuous. On the other hand Euripides can be criticised for basing his tragedies too closely on ordinary life - his boast, that he brought οἰκεῖα πράγματα into tragedy (959) and introduced logic (973), is shown to be incongruous by Aeschylus' remarks on earlier, larger-than-life tragic heroes (1013ff). cf. also Ach. 450ff.

seriously,[7] on the other tragic heroes might in various ways be brought down to the level of everyone else.[8] The consequent incongruities could then be contrasted with the homogeneity of Aeschylus' poetry, which featured the kind of character expected in serious drama, behaving in the expected noble way, speaking with suitably elevated diction, and inculcating conventional morality.[9]

The implication seems at first to be that no tragedy could have been written which could have satisfied a contemporary audience both in its sense of the dignity of the genre and in its desire for unobtrusive conventions capable of convincing representation, of realism. This is because talking of 'the' audience glosses over the fact that any audience would have been composed of individuals, capable of differing from each other in their reactions to plays. The various kinds of vraisemblance mentioned by Culler would have had different degrees of importance for different spectators. Aristophanes presents Aeschylus and Euripides as playwrights suiting tastes associated with different generations;[10] each poet, in making the other look ridiculous to

7 This seems to be part of the absurdity of the monody at 1331ff, where a poor girl laments the theft of a cock. Cf. also 948ff, on the different sorts of people democratically given a chance to speak.

8 Euripides' ragged kings were a favourite butt - Frogs 1063-4, cf. Ach. 412ff; one might also include characters like Phaedra, who required special pleading of some kind to appear heroic.

9 See, for instance, Aeschylus' defence of his grandiose language at 1058ff, ἀνάγκη μεγάλων γνωμῶν καὶ διανοιῶν ἴσα καὶ τὰ ῥήματα τίκτειν. κἄλλως εἰκὸς τοὺς ἡμιθέους τοῖς ῥήμασι μείζοσι χρῆσθαι; his justification for presenting the morally edifying rather than the realistic at 1053ff; the martial spirit produced in the audience by his plays, 1022ff.

10 Euripides claims that Aeschylus imposed on the naivety of audiences brought up on Phrynichus, 909f; cf. Clouds 1366-7, where Pheidippides refuses to recite Aeschylus: ἐγὼ γὰρ Αἰσχύλον νομίζω πρῶτον ἐν ποηταῖς, φόφου πλέων, ἀξύστατον, στόμφακα, κρημνοποιόν. Strepsiades asks him to sing a newfangled song (τῶν νεοτέρων) which turns out to be from a shocking piece by Euripides in which a man commits incest with his sister.

Dionysus, might be thought to represent the way a certain section of the audience perceived the other poet.

In so far as each tries to make the other appear unacceptable to common taste, he appeals to a kind of aesthetic propriety, pointing out the kinds of vraisemblance which, he would have us believe, the other violates in the eyes of all the members of the audience. But the arguments used also reveal a conflict between aesthetic standards and utilitarian ones, or rather between those for whom the two are closely connected, and those for whom they are not. Aeschylus presents the moral splendour of his tragedies as both aesthetically suitable and morally improving; this splendour is closely connected with an old-fashioned view of the aesthetic qualities to be looked for in a tragedy (heroic qualities in protagonists were proper both because suited to the genre and because poetry ought to foster them). Part of the audience, then, might have found a play which questioned traditional morality aesthetically offensive, and also have thought that it was the business of plays to support that morality. Others, on the other hand, might not only have shared the sophistical interests reflected in Euripides' plays (perhaps taking a different view of questions of morality), but also have been advanced enough to think it inappropriate to apply moral standards to plays. Frogs thus illustrates in a very interesting way the impossibility of using the standard of propriety without appealing to the constitution of a particular audience.

Plato

Plato's criticism of epic and tragedy is like that of Aristophanes in one respect: it is primarily concerned with the effect of a play on an audience of male citizens. One point at issue between Aeschylus and Euripides was whether the poet helped the city by inspiring courage or by developing cleverness: either presupposes that the response of male citizens to the play is most important. Plato is particularly concerned lest spectators form false notions of the behaviour appropriate to the ἐλεύθερος , be encouraged to indulge passions which the ἐλεύθερος must suppress in other contexts. (The discussion in Republic 2 and 3 purports to be about the education suited to guardians, and so applicable to women, but in fact emphasises the education of young men, the behaviour suited to the ἐπιεικὴς ἀνήρ.[11])

But Plato differs from Aristophanes in an important respect. He is more of a literary legislator than either the Aeschylus or the Euripides of Aristophanes. In Frogs improprieties were determined by what different kinds of spectator might find offensive; what counted as moral elevation was similarly determined in accordance with the views of at least part of the audience as to the behaviour

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11 cf. Rep. 378C, we want those who are to guard the city to think it shameful to fall out among themselves; 383C, the guardians are to be θεοσεβεῖς and θεῖοι; applicable to men: 386C, the stories about Hades are neither true nor edifying τοῖς μέλλουσιν μαχίμοις ἔσεσθαι; 387B, stories about the horror of death will not be told - they are poetic, τοσούτῳ ἧττον ἀκουστέον παισὶ καὶ ἀνδράσιν, οὓς δεῖ ἐλευθέρους εἶναι, δουλείαν θανάτου μᾶλλον πεφοβημένους; 387D5, ὁ ἐπιεικὴς ἀνήρ; 388D, our young men might not think lack of self-control unworthy of them; 390D οὐ μὲν δὴ δωροδόκους γε ἑατέον εἶναι τοὺς ἄνδρας οὐδὲ φιλοχρημάτους; but also 388A, on the men and women being trained to be guardians, and 389D, on what is useful to the masses.

desirable in good citizens. Not all of Plato's objections, however, are to things which would have struck his contemporaries as improper. Arguments for the self-control of admirable men might have won assent;[12] the claim that such men ought not to consider death an evil, and therefore ought not even to regret the death of a friend, was perhaps less generally accepted. Some of Plato's criticisms of presentation of gods recall objections which had been made earlier;[13] others, such as the objection to motion or change in such beings, require demonstration for the benefit of Adeimantus, and might well not have seemed self-evident to those who did not share Plato's moral and theological views.[14] So Plato is legislating, to some extent, about what an audience ought to find improper.

A corollary of this is that he legislates about who is competent to judge. In Laws the pleasure a work gives is part of its excellence, but only if the right kind of person is pleased. If people of various ages were asked to award prizes to the works they liked best, children would choose a puppet-show, boys comedy, educated women, youths and most people tragedy, older and wiser people a recital of epic (hexameter) poetry. The best works will be those which please an educated man, particularly one outstanding in

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12 See e.g. K. Dover, Greek Popular Morality (Oxford, 1974), 167f.

13 Rep. 378B8ff: Plato objects to the battles of the gods, the vengeance of Cronus on Uranus, the binding of Hera, and Hephaestus being flung from heaven; one cannot defend them by falling back on allegory, since children will not notice that it is there.

14 380Dff

virtue. [15] Poetry is corrupted when popular taste determines its success; the judge should ignore the crowd and vote in accordance with what he knows to be right.[16] (This is supposed to be in the interests of the crowd in the long run - left to their own devices they will reward inferior works, encourage the deterioration of poetry, and spoil their own pleasure, as the Sicilians had done.[17]) The two types of legislation are obviously connected: the preferred judge will be one who does not simply share the opinions of the majority, but knows the right standards to apply. In satisfying him a work will be both morally acceptable and pleasant, at least to the right people.

This has important consequences for the assessment of tragedy and epic. Plato is most concerned with these genres, partly because of the general regard for Homer as educator of Greece,[18] partly because of the performance or recitation of such works at religious festivals, which seemed to sanction both the values they expressed and the powerful emotions they produced.[19] He is anxious to refute both claims that they are instructive, and that their excellence might be independent of this, in the degree to which

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15 Laws 657Bff, especially 658E6ff, Συγχωρῶ δὴ τό γε τοσοῦτον καὶ ἐγὼ τοῖς πολλοῖς, δεῖν τὴν μουσικὴν ἡδονῇ κρίνεσθαι, μὴ μέντοι τῶν γε ἐπιτυχόντων, ἀλλὰ σχεδὸν ἐκείνην εἶναι Μοῦσαν καλλίστην ἥτις τοὺς βελτίστους καὶ ἱκανῶς πεπαιδευμένους τέρπει, μάλιστα δὲ ἥτις ἕνα τὸν ἀρετῇ τε καὶ παιδείᾳ διαφέροντα; cf. 655D5 on why different people like different things.

16 Laws 659A4ff, especially B1-5: οὐ γὰρ μαθητὴς ἀλλὰ διδάσκαλος . . . θεατῶν μᾶλλον ὁ κριτὴς καθίζει, καὶ ἐναντιωσόμενος τοῖς τὴν ἡδονὴν μὴ προσηκόντως μηδὲ ὀρθῶς ἀποδιδοῦσι θεαταῖς.

17 659B5ff

18 Rep. 598DE, 606E

19 Rep. 604, Laws 800E

they generally give pleasure. His method of doing so involves a strict account of what can be considered a successful imitation; this is not so much a standard by which existing tragedies and epics might be judged, as one which discredits these forms of poetry altogether.

In both the Ion and the Republic Plato attacks the notion that certain poets, especially Homer, have something to teach. Poets would not imitate the various crafts and professions if they knew how to practise one properly;[20] the rhapsode Ion has none of the expertise to supply the kinds of things a woman would say when weaving, or a general at a crisis.[21] An expert in a particular field will always know whether something has been accurately represented better than the poet himself.[22] This means that the favourable reactions of a large audience do not guarantee that a piece has achieved propriety and probability. Ion thought himself skilful because he knew why Homer was convincing, and because he could make him moving: he could reduce an audience to tears, he knew what was appropriate for various types of people to say.[23] One of Plato's lines of arguments is to say that it is not enough for a work to convince the ignorant - it must satisfy the expert.

He elaborates on this in the Laws: insofar as something is an imitation, it is subject to objective standards of precision in its measurements, proportions, etc., and so to

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20 Rep. 599Aff 21 Ion 540B6ff 22 Rep. 602AB

23 Ion 540B3-5: ἃ πρέπει . . . ἀνδρὶ εἰπεῖν καὶ ὁποῖα γυναικί, καὶ ὁποῖα δούλῳ καὶ ὁποῖα ἐλευθέρῳ, καὶ ὁποῖα ἀρχομένῳ καὶ ὁποῖα ἄρχοντι.

informed judgements.[24] As an imitation, moreover, its characteristic excellence is to resemble its object, so that the pleasure it may give is incidental; to say that it pleases most people is beside the point. This takes care of the other half of Ion's position: a work's impact on its audience is no guarantee of its excellence.

It should be added that the powerful emotional appeal of poetry, one of the main marks of successful accommodation to a wide audience, is one of the particular objects of criticism in the Republic. Works which have this are most suited to an ignorant audience, which is not able to take in the imitation of an equable temperament; only unacceptably emotional behaviour can be represented to them comprehensibly.[25] Such works also encourage the indulgence of emotion on others' behalf, thus strengthening the emotional side of the soul on other occasions.[26] Such criticisms are more closely connected with the issue of propriety than first appears. They are comparable to objections on grounds of obscenity, bad taste or sentimentality in more recent discussions of art in this respect: the quality which the critic finds offensive in the work of art is not simply its neglect or violation of his own standards, but its capacity to provide pleasure by this violation to the less discriminating.[27]

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24 Laws 667E10-668A3

25 Rep. 604E-605A6

26 Rep. 605C10-606B8

27 See e.g. Q.D. Leavis, Fiction and the Reading Public, Ch. 10, 'Living at the novelist's expense', A. Savile, The Test of Time, Ch. 11, 'Sentimentality, Vulgarity, and Obscenity'.

A.C. Danto argues that for a representational work of art to function as such, it must be recognised as distinct from the real. This is accomplished by various devices for setting it apart, such as frames for pictures, stages for plays, and so on.[28] Plato's strategy is to attack the claim that works of art form a category distinct from that of 'real things', governed by rules of its own: emotions aroused by plays are to be judged like other emotions, statements on various subjects in a poem are to to be assessed for truth like other statements.[29] This means that a work of art, especially a serious one, is stripped of the conventions which had allowed it to be taken, for instance, as an epic or as a tragedy. The audience must, so to speak, learn to take offence at the departures from accuracy or common moral beliefs which it notices. The good judge may notice more, or different ones; what matters most is that no justification can be accepted for overlooking them. Once this principle is accepted, the philosopher can demand reform on whatever points he likes: that the good man cannot be shown to think death an evil, that divinity is incompatible with change, and so on.

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28 The Transfiguration of the Commonplace, 23-4

29 cf. Laws 668A9-B2: Ἥκιστ' ἄρα ὅταν τις μουσικὴν ἡδονῇ φῇ κρίνεσθαι, τοῦτον ἀποδεκτέον τὸν λόγον, καὶ ζητητέον ἥκιστα ταύτην ὡς σπουδαίαν, εἴ τις ἄρα που καὶ γίγνοιτο, ἀλλ' ἐκείνην τὴν ἔχουσαν τὴν ὁμοιότητα τῷ τοῦ καλοῦ μιμήματι.

Aristotle

The Poetics seems to provide some kind of response both to the criticism that tragedy and epic are unsatisfactory on moral grounds, and to the claim that such imitative works are inferior because imperfectly reproducing the object imitated. But the response is one which presupposes rather than justifies disagreement: it is assumed that poetry forms a distinct field of enquiry, that it must be considered in relation to its own objects. These are: very generally, to achieve success as imitations, this being determined, perhaps, by making possible an agreeable sense of recognition ('This is that').[30] More specifically, to use such imitations to achieve effects peculiar to particular genres. The distance from Plato's position is clear from the kinds of answer thought satisfactory for 'lyseis': objections can be met by the argument that something is true, or that it ought to be so, or that it is generally said to be (as in stories about the gods).[31] All of these are principles presumably accepted by the audience; all are ways by which something might be made to seem probable to most viewers, and so useful in accomplishing the aim of the poetry. There is no question

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30 Poetics 1448b4ff

31 1460b32ff

ought to be found unacceptable.

Standards of moral propriety also play a part, but one rather different from that given them by Plato. Aristotle concentrates on those genres which involve the portrayal of men; their object of imitation thus automatically has a moral dimension. Moreover the characteristic effect of a tragedy, for instance, depends partly on the representation of agents of a particular moral description. Such an approach is not necessarily incompatible with schemes for the moral reform of art. One might claim that no good tragedy had ever been written, since no tragedian had known what the man of imperfect virtue would be like, or had understood the kind of thing that really counted as good or bad fortune. But Aristotle obviously does not do this, since he uses existing tragedies to illustrate his points. He does the same, indeed, in his moral philosophy, where he found the tragedians useful in presenting borderline moral situations (e.g. Niobe for the *ἀκρασία* of *τιμή*, NE 1148a32-4, Neoptolemus for a case of admirable *ἀκρασία*, NE 1146a18ff): tragedy is not only not at odds with philosophy,

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33 cf. Poetics 1448a1ff (imitation of men involves portraying moral characteristics, κακίᾳ γὰρ καὶ ἀρετῇ τὰ ἤθη διαφέρουσι πάντες), 1448b24ff (an important distinction between the various genres as they developed lay in the types of character and action represented, οἱ μὲν γὰρ σεμνότεροι τὰς καλὰς ἐμιμοῦντο πράξεις καὶ τὰς τῶν τοιούτων, οἱ δὲ εὐτελέστεροι τὰς τῶν φαύλων.

34 Poetics 1452b34ff, a plot will not produce the pity and fear desirable in a tragedy if it involves a very good man going from good to bad fortune (this would be neither pitiful nor fearful, but μιαρόν), or a wicked man going from bad to good fortune, or going from good to bad fortune. Moral factors are clearly important regardless of whether the ἁμαρτία of the imperfectly virtuous man is restricted to error, or may itself have a moral dimension. For connections between ἁμαρτία and Aristotle's ethics, cf. Glanville, 'Tragic Error', CQ 1949; Armstrong and Peterson, 'Rhetorical Balance in Aristotle's Definition of the Tragic Agent', CQ 1980. cf. also Stinton, 'Hamartia in Aristotle and Greek Tragedy', CQ 1975, Moles, 'Notes on Aristotle's Poetics 13 and 14', CQ 1979, on the possibility of a moral dimension to hamartia.

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but is illuminating for philosophical investigations. To be successful, then, a tragedy must apparently present characters whom the audience will recognise as fitting a particular moral description, and so ought not to offend against current notions of goodness, and of good and bad fortune. So the standard of moral propriety, too, is used for the description of a commonly recognised genre, rather than to give a recipe for a form of art which might be acknowledged by the philosopher if it were ever realised.

It looks, then, as though Aristotle means only to describe poetry as he finds it. He seems to take existing forms of poetry, comment on the kinds of pleasure they characteristically give, and argue that it is their business precisely to give those distinctive forms of pleasure. The limits of propriety would seem to be those of the tolerance of the audience.

In fact this is true only to a certain extent. That there is a particular form of poetry, such as tragedy, is what makes it worth going beyond the general claim that imitations give pleasure through recognition, to give precise specifications for the kinds of pleasure (or other response) to be sought from a particular genre. The raw materials of the enquiry, then, are what any Athenian would consider as given. On the other hand, the move of trying to correlate a more precisely defined emotional effect to a specific form of mimesis is likely to go beyond the purely descriptive procedure outlined above. It presupposes either a) that a certain form of literature can give only a certain kind of pleasure, more or

less according to its excellence, or b) that, although it may please for many different reasons, only one is essential and is to count in determining its merits. Aristotle is clearly committed to b), and to deciding on the pleasure which is to count as essential, since it is clear that tragedies can please in a wide variety of ways.

Consider, for instance, the following possibilities: one person likes Aeschylean tragedy, with its pompous accoutrements, partly because it has a dignity and grandeur not generally found in life, and is to that extent unrealistic; another prefers Euripidean tragedy, whose pitiful effects seem to depend partly on its more naturalistic characters, language, and so on; a third person likes tragedies with a strong element of the marvellous, does not so much overlook implausibilities for the sake of other effects as take delight in those very things; a fourth might agree with Dr. Johnson, admitting that a play might be a just representation of life when it showed the destruction of the virtuous, but preferring plays in which the just were rewarded; a fifth might prefer such a play because he thought it more true to life. All are responding to the work as a representation (one could argue that the marvellous works by representing something recognised as impossible); few are likely to agree with each other. What sort of reconciliation is to be found in Aristotle's apparently descriptive methods?

Aristotle's means of settling such points derive from his own views on the sort of thing tragedy essentially is, rather than from the preferences of audiences. To take an

example, though tragedy and epic both involve the representation of serious actions, they differ very considerably in the kinds of metre and diction thought suitable to them: the heroic metre is appropriate to epic (being most grand and stately), as are all the elements of poetic diction, whereas tragedy is better served by iambics (which are closer to spoken language) and metaphors alone of the various kinds of ornament (for the same reason).[36] why should the two differ in this way, when they are alike in seriousness of subject matter?

Aristotle seems to have placed great weight on the the distinction between narrative and non-narrative forms. This distinction seems to have coincided, for instance, with a difference in the degree of illusion required of a genre: epic could include fantastic episodes like the pursuit of Hector round the walls of Troy, but tragedy had to avoid things which would be manifestly improbable when seen on stage.[37] It may also have seemed suitable for tragic characters to use a metre, a degree of ornament,

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36 1459b31ff: τὸ δὲ μέτρον τὸ ἡρωικὸν ἀπὸ τῆς πείρας ἥρμοκεν. εἰ γάρ τις ἐν ἄλλῳ τινὶ μέτρῳ διηγηματικὴν μίμησιν ποιοῖτο ἢ ἐν πολλοῖς, ἀπρεπὲς ἂν φαίνοιτο· τὸ γὰρ ἡρωικὸν στασιμώτατον καὶ ὀγκωδέστατον τῶν μέτρων ἐστίν (διὸ καὶ γλώττας καὶ μεταφορὰς δέχεται μάλιστα· περιττὴ γὰρ ἡ διηγηματικὴ μίμησις τῶν ἄλλων)...Cf. 1459a10ff: καὶ ἐν μὲν τοῖς ἡρωικοῖς ἅπαντα χρήσιμα τὰ εἰρημένα, ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἰαμβείοις διὰ τὸ ὅτι μάλιστα λέξιν μιμεῖσθαι ταῦτα ἁρμόττει τῶν ὀνομάτων ὅσοις κἂν ἐν λόγοις τις χρήσαιτο . . . τὸ κύριον καὶ μεταφορὰ καὶ κόσμος.

37 1460a11ff: δεῖ μὲν οὖν ἐν ταῖς τραγῳδίαις ποιεῖν τὸ θαυμαστόν, μᾶλλον δ'ἐνδέχεται ἐν τῇ ἐποποιίᾳ τὸ ἄλογον, δι' ὃ συμβαίνει μάλιστα τὸ θαυμαστόν, διὰ τὸ μὴ ὁρᾶν εἰς τὸν πράττοντα· ἐπεὶ τὰ περὶ τὴν Ἕκτορος δίωξιν ἐπὶ σκηνῆς ὄντα γελοῖα ἂν φανείη, οἱ μὲν ἑστῶτες καὶ οὐ διώκοντες, ὁ δὲ ἀνανεύων, ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἔπεσιν λανθάνει . . . cf. 1455a22 on the need to visualise how things will appear on stage.

which showed more artistry than ordinary spoken language, but was closer to its sound than hexameters (or tetrameters).[38] The things that strike an audience as artificial or improbable, however, depend on the artistic conventions it has come to find natural (see p.47 above on Culler's notion of vraisemblance), and cannot necessarily be inferred from the medium in which a piece is presented. But Aristotle seems to assume that the evolution of tragedy towards a particular set of conventions of representation is connected in a significant way with its nature as drama. The formal features of tragedy are governed by a tension between the need for accuracy and the need for beauty, dignity and so on;[39] using the distinguishing feature that tragedy is dramatic, Aristotle inclines towards the realistic. Euripides, for instance, is admirable because his poetry is splendid without having recourse to unusual vocabulary.[40] But this is an unsatisfactory answer to those whose taste ran to the

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38 1449a23ff: λέξεως δὲ γενομένης αὐτὴ ἡ φύσις τὸ οἰκεῖον μέτρον εὗρε· μάλιστα γὰρ λεκτικὸν τῶν μέτρων τὸ ἰαμβεῖόν ἐστιν· σημεῖον δὲ τούτου, πλεῖστα γὰρ ἰαμβεῖα λέγομεν ἐν τῇ διαλέκτῳ τῇ πρὸς ἀλλήλους, ἑξάμετρα δὲ ὀλιγάκις καὶ ἐκβαίνοντες τῆς λεκτικῆς ἁρμονίας.

39 At 1458b31ff, for instance, Ariphrades is criticised for making fun of tragedians ὅτι ἃ οὐδεὶς ἂν εἴπειεν ἐν τῇ διαλέκτῳ τούτοις χρῶνται, οἷον τὸ δωμάτων ἄπο μὴ ἀπὸ δωμάτων . . . διὰ γὰρ τὸ μὴ εἶναι ἐν τοῖς κυρίοις ποιεῖ τὸ μὴ ἰδιωτικὸν ἐν τῇ λέξει ἅπαντα τὰ τοιαῦτα. But they must be used properly - a few lines later (cf. note **36**) we are told that iambics must imitate speech as much as possible. A similar tension may be seen in the discussion of character, e.g. at 1454b8ff: ἐπεὶ δὲ μίμησίς ἐστιν ἡ τραγῳδία βελτιόνων ἢ ἡμεῖς, δεῖ μιμεῖσθαι τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς εἰκονογράφους· καὶ γὰρ ἐκεῖνοι ἀποδιδόντες τὴν ἰδίαν μορφὴν ὁμοίους ποιοῦντες καλλίους γράφουσιν· οὕτω καὶ τὸν ποιητὴν μιμούμενον καὶ ὀργίλους καὶ ῥαθύμους καὶ τἆλλα τὰ τοιαῦτα ἔχοντας ἐπὶ τῶν ἠθῶν τοιούτους ὄντας ἐπιεικεῖς ποιεῖν.

40 Rhetoric 1404b24-5

more ostentatiously poetic;[41] the fact that tragedy had happened to develop in the direction of 'realism' seems to have contributed to the importance of its being a fully mimetic genre - but its status as fully mimetic genre seems then to make 'realism' desirable by definition.

The essential nature of tragedy is used to equally good effect, with similar disregard for possible disagreement, elsewhere. Many people complained that Euripides' tragedies ended badly; works in which the good ended happily, the bad miserably were often preferred. This was a mistake. The best sort of plot was one best suited to arousing pity and fear, in which a man of imperfect virtue went from good to bad fortune. In this, at least, Euripides was the most tragic of poets, and those who favoured the kind of plot more suited to comedy did so out of weakness.[42] Similarly a tragedian might give pleasure by using visual effects not only to heighten pity and fear, but simply to astonish the audience. He would be wrong to do so, since spectacle, especially aimed at such a response, is not essential to the nature of tragedy.[43]

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41 N.b. the use of poetic language is restricted even in epic, the genre to which all resources of diction are allowed. Elaborate diction must be used where it will not obscure speeches showing ἦθος or διάνοια, 1460b2ff: τῇ δὲ λέξει δεῖ διαπονεῖν ἐν τοῖς ἀργοῖς μέρεσιν καὶ μήτε ἠθικοῖς μήτε διανοητικοῖς· ἀποκρύπτει γὰρ πάλιν ἡ λίαν λαμπρὰ λέξις τά τε ἤθη καὶ τὰς διανοίας.

42 1453a23ff. Cf. p. 61 on various reasons for preferring one type of tragedy to another. The fact that Aristotle also says that a play that unexpectedly ends well is best is beside the point: he simply changes his mind as to the type he considers best.

43 1453b1-11

In deciding on the end of tragedy, then, Aristotle in effect legislates on questions of tragic propriety. A mark of this is that 'improprieties' have varying importance: what matters is not whether members of the public are offended by the representation of Menelaus in Orestes, for instance, but whether the representation promotes the right sort of tragic effect. In the solutions offered to Homeric problems and similar objections, the aesthetic aim of a work has priority: improprieties and inconsistencies are unimportant if they make possible a greater good. This prescriptivism is not necessarily a fault; I suggested in the introduction that attempts to produce a descriptive account of artistic propriety, based on the reactions of the public, depend on assumptions about whose reactions are to count, and are thus ultimately prescriptive themselves. It is interesting, however, that the extent of the legislation should go unacknowledged by Aristotle. Generalisations are made about probability on the basis of the assumptions of certain members of the audience (e.g. that limited virtue is to be expected of women and slaves) - but they are not presented as limited generalisations. Improbabilities are acceptable if for a good end - but the end is one laid down by Aristotle.

Aristotle seems to have something in common with the modern view that good works can make demands on their audience. One might ask, then, where this leaves the Homeric Problems, which seem to have shown remarkable patience for

silly questions. Someone had raised the objection, to Iliad 2.183, that it seemed ἀπρεπές for Odysseus to run through the camp wearing only a chiton; Aristotle replies that it makes the crowd pay more attention, so that his voice will reach more men. Why is Paris portrayed so disgracefully as not only to be defeated, but to fly to bed?[44] Aristotle observes that this is an accurate picture of the psychological effect of battle.[45] An objection had been made to Homer's censure of Glaucos for foolishly exchanging gold armour for bronze; Aristotle argues that the poet does not blame him for surrendering armour that was more valuable, but for giving it up in battle when it was more serviceable - truth required him to show this.[46] Why, one might ask, did he bother?

One might start by asking how far the aim of the Homeric **Problems** fits with the principles of the Poetics. In the Poetics, the discussion of epic is subsidiary to that of tragedy. The principles which determine the excellence of the latter, however, are also applicable to epic, with a few distinctions drawn between the two genres - epic can have a greater degree of ὄγκος, more improbability, perhaps less tightly organised plot. So epic has its place in the scheme of the investigation of the nature of mimetic poetry. But there are also signs that Aristotle is taking part in a debate which is not directly relevant to the main

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44 Schol. on Il. 3.441

45 Rose III 150

46 Schol. on Il. 6.234 (Rose III 155)

thrust of the Poetics. Chapter 25, on the solution of 'problems', presupposes a teleological assessment of poetry, but is only loosely connected with the rest of the work, being chiefly concerned to classify the various sorts of response which could be made to critics of Homer. These do not necessarily invoke the principle that the artistic aim of the work is paramount, or that art is concerned with probability (principles of some importance in the rest of the work). To say, for instance, 'But X happened', or 'But people say so', does not establish that it is probable (elsewhere Aristotle implies that what has happened is not necessarily probable[47]), or that it is improbable but serves a purpose.

Lucas is probably right to suggest that, given different methods of book production, the section would have been an Appendix; it was not meant to be part of the argument of the Poetics. Its interest lies in the fact that, although Aristotle seems to have little respect for the kinds of objection possible, he thought it worth suggesting replies. The loose connection of the section with the rest of the work may suggest that discussion of such points was common enough to force itself on his attention, that it was the kind of subject on which anyone who discussed poetry

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47 1451b30, τῶν γὰρ γενομένων ἔνια οὐδὲν κωλύει τοιαῦτα εἶναι οἷα ἂν εἰκὸς γενέσθαι, cf. 1460a26-7, where he says one should prefer likely impossibilities to unlikely possibilities - the latter could presumably include things that had actually happened.

could be expected to have opinions. But Aristotle may have thought that one should consider the sensibilities of the audience, where one can, since some things might be found so offensive as to interfere with the effect a work was meant to have. It might thus be worth defusing objections to Homer, if misunderstandings were likely to prevent the work from having the right sort of response.[48]

The Poetics is in one respect extremely original: as a philosophical response to poetry. For the first time poetry is treated as a subject suitable to philosophical enquiry in its own right (rather than as an object for philosophical attack). It can be defended against objections to its truth or morality without retreating to the position that the aim of poetry is merely pleasure. It can be a subject of investigation which aims at definition and description rather than apologia. Its general principles for determining propriety in literature are exhaustive: as we come to later critics we shall find no other ways of considering the morality, decency, or factual accuracy of poetry. But Aristotle's work on poetry does not make as sharp a break with what had gone before as this suggests, nor does it completely preempt what comes after. The latter becomes clearer if we consider later developments in poetry, the former, if we consider his work in the context of Homeric scholarship.

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48 For a more thorough discussion of the relation between Aristotle's Homeric Questions and Chapter 25 of the Poetics, and of the latter as illustrating the principles of the rest of the work, see M. Carroll, Aristotle's Poetics Ch. XXV in the Light of the Homeric Scholia (Baltimore, 1885).

Comparison of Aristotle's views on 'big' genres with those of the Alexandrians

Aristotle's discussion of poetry is confined to the art of his time, to particular genres and their forms at particular times. Much of the Poetics is concerned with general principles, but these are examined with reference to historical forms of poetry, to their evolution towards and decline from excellence. The forms discussed favour a scheme of poetic evolution emphasising certain types of propriety, those determined by principles of analogy and of realism (e.g. characters of a certain elevation appearing in certain sorts of genres). Hellenistic poetry, however, introduced new possibilities, both through the writing of new kinds of poetry and through the emphasis of different characteristics.

The unAristotelian nature of Callimachus' poetic principles, for instance, has often been pointed out.[49] The difference most important for the concept of propriety is his emphasis on the virtue of being λεπτός,[50] which contrasts both with the common Greek view (shared by Aristotle) that size is a prerequisite of beauty, and with the assumption that ὄγκος, other things being equal, is a desirable quality of style (points which are related to the treatment considered appropriate to a grand or important subject).[51]

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49 Cf. R. Pfeiffer, History of Classical Scholarship (Oxford, 1968), i 136-8, K.O. Brink, 'Callimachus and Aristotle: An Inquiry into Callimachus' ΠΡΟΣ ΠΡΑΞΙΦΑΝΗΝ', CQ 40 (1946), 11-26.

50 Aetia, Pf. fr. 1.11-12, 23-4; Ep. 27.3; cf. Hymn to Apollo, 105ff.

51 Poetics 1450b34ff (τὸ γὰρ καλὸν ἐν μεγέθει καὶ τάξει ἐστίν, διὸ οὔτε πάμμικρον ἄν τι γένοιτο καλὸν ζῷον . . . οὔτε παμμέγεθες); cf. Homer, καλός τε μέγας τε (Od. 6.276), Rhet. 1407b26ff(how to achieve ὄγκος).

The opposition between the two is not clear-cut: Callimachus presumably approves of a grand style and breadth of scope where the poet can carry it off, since he seems to believe in the preeminence of Homer.[52] He differs from Aristotle in putting forward an acceptable alternative for lesser poets to aim at. But the characteristics of this alternative imply a different view of the proper relation of style to content. Going by Callimachus' poetic practice, the alternative should be λεπτός , but this might have some of the features Aristotle connected with grandeur of style (e.g. various kinds of epic diction). Why should this be? Callimachus seems to have been chiefly interested in the antithesis between poets of grand pretensions and small ability, and those with the self-knowledge to see their limitations, and attempt what they can do well; and in the antithesis between a long, grandiose, and artistically deficient work, and one which, though more restricted in scope, achieves perfection. But the artistic perfection of the small work might require a highly finished style, including the use of compound words, glosses, etc. In that case, however, such diction would be desirable, not because elevation of subject matter called for it, but because an elaborate, artificial, carefully polished style was thought of as poetic. So there is an important, if indirect, opposition between Callimachus and Aristotle.[53]

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52 Implied in Epigram 27 (on Aratus' imitation of Hesiod) and 28 (on Callimachus' hatred of the cyclic poets).

53 This shows up the way in which the Augustans could not imitate Callimachus: not having the same range of glosses available, they used a much more Peripatetic type of style (synthesis of ordinary words). A comparison of the Hecale with Ovid's Baucis and Philemon is instructive. For further discussion, cf. below on Horace, pp. 386ff.

This difference, however, leaves much unaccounted for. What did Callimachus think epic should be like? The views described so far leave open the possibility that epic was still subject to standards of appropriateness like those of Aristotle, though its position with respect to other genres might be different.

We haven't the evidence to answer this question for Callimachus. On the other hand, a fair number of comments by Alexandrian scholars survive in the Homeric scholia. Whether their views were shared by Callimachus or not, it would be interesting to know the terms of discussion. It is common to emphasise the difference between Alexandrian and earlier views of poetry; perhaps these are striking because taken from different kinds of evidence. Homeric scholarship provides a useful point for comparison, since it is an area in which there was considerable continuity: the examination of the Homeric texts, the raising and answering of objections goes back to the fifth century.[54]

It is worth looking at this kind of criticism for another reason as well: it raises interesting questions about the history of criticism and Aristotle's place in it. One might have expected Aristotle's Homeric Problems and methods of solution to finish off that branch of enquiry. Why did the genre go on, instead, from strength to strength, the same sorts of question being raised and answered? It is perplexing, in the first place, to find later Peripatetics objecting to Homeric passages on grounds of impropriety -

54 See Pfeiffer, HCS i Ch. 2 and A. Gudeman, 'Λύσεις', RE XIII.2, 2511-2529.

had they not read Chapter 25 of the Poetics?[55] The history of Alexandrian scholarship is also puzzling. Much has been made of the preoccupation of Alexandrian scholars with τὸ πρέπον. Some have taken them all to have been more or less concerned with it,[56] others have found special fault with Zenodotus (and sometimes Aristophanes), singling out Aristarchus for praise because he was less prone to alter the text on subjective grounds.[57] In either case we are offered an odd version of critical history: a) a method for dealing with certain kinds of objection is put forward, then largely ignored; b) the method is found, lost, found (Aristarchus?), and lost again (there is no lack of post-Aristarchian criticism on grounds of impropriety). What exactly were the views on propriety, then, of the Alexandrian scholars? Are they perverse unless propounded in ignorance of Aristotle?

Alexandrian Criticism of Homer

A number of difficulties beset the study of Alexandrian criticism of Homer, mainly because of the kind of evidence we have for their views. Our principal source for the opinions of Aristarchus and other Alexandrian grammarians

55 Dicearchus objects to Penelope's behaviour at Odyssey 1.332, both in appearing to drunken young men, and in showing coquetry in her apparent pains to conceal her beauty (Wehrli fr. 92); Heracleides Ponticus criticises Telemachus' speech at Od. 2.63 as badly managed - when he should have asked for help to expel the suitors, he is rude and outspoken (Wehrli fr. 174). On Peripatetic criticism in general, see A. Podlecki, 'The Peripatetics as literary critics', Phoenix 23 (1969), 114-37.

56 E.g. C.G. Cobet, 'ΑΠΡΕΠΗ Apud Homerum Pravo Alexandrinorum Iudicio', Misc. Critica (Leiden, 1876), 225-239.

57 K. Lehrs, De Aristarchi studiis Homericis (3rd ed., Leipzig, 1882), esp. 353ff on Aristarchus' restraint in conjecture; A. Roemer, Aristarchs Athetesen in der Homerkritik (Leipzig, 1912) and 'Uber die Homerrecension des Zenodot', Aud. d. Abh., K. bayer. Akad. d. Wiss. (Munich, 1885); M.H. Van der Valk, Researches on the Text and Scholia of the Iliad (Leiden, 1963,64), esp. ii.11ff on propriety as a literary criterion in general, and in particular Zenodotus' ready use of it; Textual Criticism of the Odyssey (Leiden, 1949).

is the scholia to the Venetus A manuscript of the Iliad. An announcement at the end of each book shows that the scholia include an abridged version of works by followers of Aristarchus: Didymus' περὶ τῆς Ἀριστάρχειου διορθώσεως, Aristonicus' σημεῖα , and selections from Herodian's Ἰλιακὴ προσῳδία, and Nicanor's περὶ τῆς Ὁμηρικῆς στιγμῆς.[58] It is likely, then, that a large proportion of comments are those of either Aristarchus or his opponents. But abridgement has had unfortunate effects: many comments are unattributed, and many survive in an incomplete, sometimes inaccurate or misleading form.[59] Although a large number of comments concern propriety, it seems at first sight impossible to know the source of more than a few.

The question is a little more complicated than it looks, since it may be possible to make an educated guess at the source of some comments whose source is not named. On the other hand we cannot always rely on the attributions we are given. There is a good chance that comments which mention a critical sign and then give an explanation beginning with ὅτι derive from Aristonicus' work on Aristarchus' signs, and ultimately from the ὑπομνήματα of Aristarchus.[60] There is a fair chance that comments beginning with οὕτως are an abridgement of οὕτως Ἀρίσταρχος;

58 See e.g. subscript to Book 3, Erbse I.439.

59 On the shortcomings of A, see e.g. K. Nickau, Untersuchungen zur textkritischen Methode des Zenodotos von Ephesos (Berlin, 1977), 1ff. One can sometimes see what has been distorted or left out by comparison with the bT scholia; see Van der Valk, Researches, i.558.

60 e.g. on Y180-6 (why should Aeneas fight for Priam when he stands to inherit nothing?) ἀθετοῦνται στίχοι ἑπτά, ὅτι εὐτελεῖς εἰσι τῇ κατασκευῇ καὶ τοῖς νοήμασι, καὶ οἱ λόγοι οὐ πρέποντες τῷ τοῦ Ἀχιλλέως προσώπῳ. See K. Lehrs, op. cit., p. 8, R. Langumier in Introduction à l'Iliade, ed. P. Mazon (Paris, 1942), 80-81.

those that contrast a οὕτως comment with the views of ἄλλοι are likely to be giving the views of the opponents of Aristarchus.[61] Some scholars, in their eagerness to determine the views of Aristarchus, have leant too heavily on these probabilities: the scholia received post-Hellenistic additions, such as excerpts from Porphyrius, which also refer to anonymous scholars, and must therefore be used with caution.[62] But this does not necessarily mean that they must not be used at all. I shall take as a starting point comments to which names are assigned, but shall rely on the probabilities mentioned to some extent, using scholia whose provenance from Aristarchus is likely for further cases of a particular sort of comment. Where comments do not specifically name an author this will be made clear.

The second problem concerns comments and readings to which names are given, and in particular attribution of views to Zenodotus and Aristophanes. It seems likely that neither published his reasons for making decisions concerning the texts; how reliable, then, are the reports given of the motives behind certain readings? Pfeiffer argues that reasons offered in the Scholia for Zenodotus' decisions may be pure guesswork, and that we have no grounds for thinking that he changed the text for 'subjective' reasons: Zenodotus probably had access to other manuscripts whose readings he

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61 See A. Ludwich, Aristarchs homerische Textkritik nach den Fragmenten des Didymos (Leipzig, 1884-5), I.116ff.

62 See R. Langumier, op. cit., 77ff.

preferred.[63] There are certainly enough signs of inaccuracy in the Scholia to give one pause. At Π666-83, for instance, Didymus says that Zenodotus athetised the lines, perhaps because it was odd for Apollo, τὸν ἀπενθῆ , to deal with the burial of a corpse; in Ms. T the 'perhaps' has dropped out.[64] Perhaps all the reasons offered were originally speculations as to Zenodotus' views. On the other hand, the fact that Zenodotus may have used other manuscripts does not rule out the possibility of motives of a certain kind: he may have preferred one reading over another because, for instance, it was better suited to his idea of propriety. The reports given, moreover, may not be wholly unreliable, if later scholars were able to draw on an oral tradition for Zenodotus' arguments. When we are told that Aristarchus agreed or disagreed with Zenodotus on a certain point, it is likely that the views which Aristarchus took to be those of Zenodotus were indeed held by him.[65] So evidence for Zenodotus' opinions need not be rejected out of hand, but must also be used with caution.

Discussion of Alexandrian criticism is necessarily subject, then, to a certain imprecision. But the manuscripts of divine Homer might well complain,

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63 Pfeiffer, op. cit., 108ff, 175 (reasons offered in the Scholia for Zenodotus' decisions may be pure guesswork); cf. Bolling, The Athetized Lines of the Iliad, e.g. p. 57, on Zenodotus' athetesis of A225-233. But cf. Nickau, op. cit. p. 225, on the comments on Π97-100.

64 cf. Nickau, op. cit., p. 210 and 14, n. 28

65 Nickau, 225, on comments on Π97-100

ἐξ ἡμέων γάρ φασι κακ' ἔμμεναι· οἱ δὲ καὶ αὐτοί
σφῆσιν ἀτασθαλιῇσιν ὑπὲρ μόρον ἄλγε' ἔχουσιν . . .

- the shortcomings of the evidence have been made worse than they need have been by the wilfulness of certain scholars. Roemer, for instance, argues that Aristarchus' views have been misunderstood because grossly misrepresented in the scholia, particularly in those derived from Aristonicus. He does show that in some cases T gives a more reliable report than A, but his chief reason for thinking A unreliable depends on a petitio principii. Roemer holds it as axiomatic that the scholarly probity and intelligence of Aristarchus were unimpeachable. Any comments, therefore, which seem to come from him, but fail in either respect, must be due to corruptions or misunderstanding of the subtlety of his thought, while most which display such characteristics are probably derived from him, whether he is mentioned or not.[66] It is not clear how one is to decide which comments can be used to determine the views which are characteristic of Aristarchus, in comparison with which others which are to be rejected.[67] Van der Valk, on the other hand, takes a large number of variant readings of Zenodotus' for which no justification is given, and argues that these show his propensity for the standard of propriety. The argument is based on a small number of passages in which Zenodotus' reasons are

66 A. Roemer, Aristarchs Athetesen in der Homerkritik, (Leipzig, 1912)

67 See D.M. Schenkeveld, 'Aristarchus and ΟΜΗΡΟΣ ΦΙΛΟΤΕΧΝΟΣ. Some Fundamental Ideas of Aristarchus on Homer as a Poet', Mnemosyne 23 (1970), 162-78. Aristarchus' notions of rigorous scholarship may have differed from Roemer's.

either given, or thought particularly obvious. At its best this depends very heavily on the conviction carried by the key examples. Even if this were very strong, one would hesitate to read such motivation into all variant readings,[68] and the temptation to do so is even weaker when testimonia for the views of Zenodotus must be used so cautiously.

Such aberrations deserve our attention because they are closely connected with an interest in propriety - an interest, not of the Alexandrians, but of modern scholars. Roemer devotes at least half his book to demonstrating, in considerable detail, that only Aristarchus consistently used the principle Ὅμηρον ἐξ Ὁμήρου σαφηνίζειν,[69] while almost all other scholars were misled by the prejudices of their own time and made foolish objections on grounds of propriety. Van der Valk, as I have said, seems determined to stretch the evidence further than it will go to present Zenodotus as obsessed with propriety. As Nickau points out, it seems likely that a distorted picture is being given of what the Alexandrian notion of propriety involved - one, perhaps, coloured by modern prejudice against neoclassical notions of decorum.[70]

Some recent works of scholarship have modified the frequent strictures on Alexandrian obsession with propriety.

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68 Nickau questions Van der Valk's interpretation of some of the key examples, op. cit., 193ff.

69 Pfeiffer points out that there is no evidence that this principle was put forward by Aristarchus: it seems to have been formulated by Porphyrius (HCS i 226-7).

70 op. cit. 184-5

Schenkeveld points out that Aristarchus is anxious to interpret the poet on his own terms, to arrive at what 'is fitting' within the context of the poem.[71] Nickau tries to make a similar claim for Zenodotus, examining those parts of his criticism which have been taken to show inappropriate use of the standard of propriety, and arguing for a different interpretation.[72]

Nickau is resisting attempts made to show Zenodotus as systematically changing the text on subjective grounds. These depend on 1) taking a few alterations of the text as characteristic, and 2) extrapolating to take other passages as illustrating the same principles, whether they are made explicit or not. Nickau's method is to take the passages which are used as a starting point, and try to show that propriety, in the sense of anachronistic decorum, is not at issue here. A fortiori the other cases must have been misunderstood, and the belief that Aristarchus' views were substantially different and better than Zenodotus' must collapse.

Two main types of example need to be considered: those concerning the proper representation of the divine, and those concerning the representation of heroes. The first has perhaps excited the most attention, but is, in Nickau's view, least likely to have been a concern of Zenodotus'.

Comments on the following passages - Γ423-6, Δ88-9, Z135, Π666-83, A63 - have been thought to show Zenodotus'

71 op. cit. (see n. 67)

72 op. cit. Ch. III.4

excessive and eccentric concern for propriety and piety in representation of the gods: in each a god is shown doing something apparently undignified. At Γ423-6, Zenodotus objects to Aphrodite's setting a chair for Helen; at Z135 he replaced ' Διόνυσος δὲ φοβηθείς ' with ' Διόνυσος δὲ χολωθείς ' (as better suited to a god?); at Δ88-9 he thought that it was not suitable to the divine for Athena to look for Pandarus; at Π666-83 he removes the passage where Apollo tends to the corpse of Sarpedon.

All of these are not equally convincing. At Z135 no reason is given for accepting χολωθείς, so we can only speculate; if the object was to avoid impropriety, why was Z137 not deleted? It may be that Zenodotus' aim was to avoid tautology.[73] Π666-83 is doubtful for other reasons. As far as we know, the 'theological' reason for athetesis, that it is odd for Apollo, τὸν ἀπενθῆ , to deal with such things, is only Didymus' guess as to Zenodotus' reasons.[74] So we are left with Γ423-6 and Δ88-9.

In the first of these, Zenodotus athetises Γ423-6 so that the text goes: ἀμφίπολοι μὲν ἔπειτα θοῶς ἐπὶ ἔργα τράποντο (then, 'she sat opposite god-like Alexander'); ἀπρεπὲς γὰρ αὐτῷ ἐφαίνετο τὸ τῇ Ἑλένῃ τὴν Ἀφροδίτην δίφρον βαστάζειν, someone (Aristarchus?) adds the reply: ἐπελέλησται δὲ ὅτι γραῒ εἴκασται

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73 . . . δειδιότα· κρατερὸς γὰρ ἔχε τρόμος ἀνδρὸς ὁμοκλῇ. A similar argument can be made against Van der Valk's interpretation of the athetesis of A63, that Zenodotus did not like the highest god to be associated with treacherous dreams - why should the beginning of B have been allowed to stay?

74 cf. above, p. 67

καὶ ταύτῃ τῇ μορφῇ τὰ προσήκοντα ἐπιτηδεύει. This has been taken to show a piety which finds expression in a concern for propriety in the representation of the gods: they should not be shown performing menial tasks. The objection to Δ88-9 is similar. Athena is looking for Pandarus:

> *Πάνδαρου ἀντίθεου διζημένη· τούτῳ καὶ τῷ ἑξῆς παράκειυται διπλαῖ περιεστιγμέναι, ὅτι Ζηνόδοτος τούτου μὲν τὸ ἀκροτελεύτιου οὕτως γράφει, 'εὗρε δὲ τόνδε', τὸν δὲ δεύτερου οὐδὲ γράφει δοκῶν ἀνθρώπινου τὸ ζητεῖν εἶναι. καταλέλοιπε δὲ τὸ δ ι ζ η μ έ ν η.*

The objection is made, ἀγνοεῖ δὲ ὅτι ὁμοιωθεῖσα Λαοδόκῳ ἀνάγκην εἶχεν ἀνθρώπινα ἐπιτηδεύειν. The gods, it seems, should never be shown doing things inconsistent with their divine powers.

In each case the objection strikes the modern reader as far-fetched, an arbitrary criticism of Homer according to notions of propriety not the poet's. Two questions present themselves: Is this fair? Do the replies made show a different position vis-à-vis propriety in poetry?

Nickau would say yes to the first, to the second that the two positions are not as different as they seem. He argues that Zenodotus gives different readings, not for subjective reasons, but because certain passages struck him as inconsistent with Homer's usage. In Γ 423-6, what bothers him is not so much that Aphrodite does things which thinks improper to a goddess, as that she resumes her disguise in such a casual fashion after her self-revelation at 391ff - this was unfitting in the light of Homer's

treatment of divine appearances elsewhere.[75] At Δ88-9 the problem may have been partly a linguistic one. Zenodotus may have been worried because he found no parallels for εἴ που ἐφεύροι, the phrase he replaced by εὗρε δὲ τόνδε, used in this way: he may have thought that when used elsewhere it was of a man in great need seeking help, and was therefore typical of men in the view of Homer himself.

In each case, the plausibility of this argument depends on how one takes the response made to Zenodotus' objection. For it to work, one would have to assume that the person replying to Zenodotus had only an abbreviated version of his objection - the responses are simply inadequate to objections on grounds of Homeric usage. In the first case Zenodotus' worry is not met by pointing out that Aphrodite is in the guise of an old woman. That she has gone back to this disguise with no specific mention is precisely the problem, according to Nickau.[76] In the second case, too, one would expect a different reply, e.g. 'But Homer often has gods with "human" limitations - look at the Διὸς Ἀπάτη, or the way things can

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75 Gods usually follow epiphanies by disappearing with a dramatic metamorphosis, e.g. into a bird. Nickau points out that no Alexandrian seems to have been bothered by gods' helping their favourites in mundane ways, e.g. Athena's picking up Diomedes' whip in the race, or looking after Odysseus' presents in the Odyssey. Arguments ex silentio are not completely dependable, but that drawn from the race may have some force: Zenodotus' comments in O-Ω include a large number not connected with an athetesis of Aristarchus (see Nickau, p. 21).

76 Cf. other places where Zenodotus is worried about things happening *κατὰ τὸ σιωπώμενον*, e.g. Π432 - how did Hera come to be on Ida?

be done behind Poseidon's back, while he is in Ethiopia, in the Odyssey - so he could use such a formula if he liked.'

There is also a linguistic reason to doubt Nickau's arguments about ἀπρεπές. Nickau wants to take ἀπρεπές as meaning 'unfitting' rather than 'improper', as the contrary of τὸ προσῆκον. In that sense it could be part of an observation about Homeric usage. It is less likely to have been one if it meant something stronger. Some things may have been unsuitable to a goddess in Homer because Homer thought them improper, undignified, but it would be a very strained way to say this to justify an athetesis by calling a line improper. But there is some reason to think ἀπρεπές does mean 'improper' here. If one compares the comment in the A Scholia on Γ155, one seems to find both notions of propriety and of appropriateness appealed to, ἀπρεπές being used for a violation of the first, ἀνάρμοστον for a violation of the second.[77] At Γ423-6 the point seems to be, then, not only that something is shown which is not fitted to representation of

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77 ἦκα {προς αλληλους}: ὅτι Ζηνόδοτος γράφει 'ὦκα'· εἴτε δὲ ἐπὶ τῆς Ἑλένης ἐστίν, ὅτι ὦκα ἐπορεύετο, ἀπρεπὲς ἔσται· εἴτε ἐπὶ τῶν δημογερόντων, ὅτι ὦκα διελέγοντο, ἀνάρμοστον· βραδυλόγοι γάρ εἰσιν οἱ γέροντες. Cf. also a second comment on the passage, also in A, in which the positive forms πρέπου and ἁρμόζει also seem to have slightly different connotations: of ὦκα, this time attributed to Ptolemy, it is said: πρὸς δὲ τῷ μὴ ἁρμόζειν ἐπὶ τῆς Ἑλένης τὸ δρομαίαν αὐτὴν προσέρχεσθαι, μὴ καὶ ἔτι καταλάβῃ αὐτοὺς ταῦτα διαλεγομένους, καὶ ἡ ἀρετὴ τοῦ πρέποντος ἀφαιρεῖται· τὸ γὰρ 'ἦκα' ἐπὶ πρεσβυτῶν ὡς οὐδὲν ἕτερον ἁρμόζει, καὶ μάλιστα ὅτι κάλλος γυναικὸς θαυμάσαντες τῶν ἰδίων καταφρονοῦσι κινδύνων, τοῦτο οὖν οὐκ ἦν πρέπον ἄλλου ἀκούειν. ἀμφότερα δὲ ὁ ποιητὴς ἐφύλαξεν, καὶ τὸ τῆς Ἑλένης ἐγκώμιον καὶ τὸ τοῖς πρεσβύταις πρέπον, προσθεὶς τὸ ἦ κ α.

gods, but that it is also improper because fitted to a lower rank of person.[78]

It seems likely, then, that in two passages at any rate Zenodotus was concerned about decorum, and chose one version of the text over another because of it. Does this mean that one can see evolution away from such concern in the replies made to his objections? Not entirely. In both cases the reply in effect concedes that the action in question would be improper, unsuited to a divine personage, if there were no extenuating circumstances. What one can perhaps say, however, is that, given that different actions, etc. were suited to different persons, Aristarchus is more concerned with consistency of representation. One can only speculate that the two observations mentioned above were his, but a discussion of Iris' appearance as Polites in Book 2, making similar points about consistency and appropriateness, is specifically attributed to him. Aristarchus apparently athetised B791-5 because of inconsistencies in the scene: if the news that the Greeks had been sighted was meant, not just to give information, but to exhort the Trojans to action,

78 cf. objections, not necessarily by Zenodotus, to representations of heroic personages: Y180-6, criticised because εὐτελεῖς τῇ κατασκευῇ καὶ τοῖς νοήμασι καὶ οἱ λόγοι οὐ πρέποντες τῷ τοῦ Ἀχιλλέως προσώπῳ; the combination presumably being ἀπρεπές; cf. also on Π83-96, where something which is βάσκανον ἦθος (Achilles' holding his friend back from excelling) is apparently at fault in the same way as something which is ἀπρεπές: ἀπρεπὲς δὲ καὶ τὸ παλλακίδος καὶ δώρων μεμνῆσθαι.

it ought to be given by Iris in her own person.[79] The disguise was therefore pointless. It was also unconvincing, since Iris said things which were suitable to a goddess, but out of place in a young man.[80]

The evidence suggests some differences, then, in the interests of Zenodotus and Aristarchus, but no sharp distinction in their views on propriety in the representation of gods. Other comments of Aristarchus' confirm

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79 Ven. A does not name Aristarchus, but he is named as author in Pap. Ox. 1086 = Mus. Brit. 2055, Col. II.63ff (Erbse, Scholia Graeca in Homeri Iliadem, I.169-70): *ἀθετεῖ τούτους Ἀρίσταρχος, ὅτι πρῶτον μὲν οὐδέποτε ὑπὸ Διὸς πεμπομένη ἡ Ἶρις ὁμοιοῦταί τινι, ἀλλ' αἰεὶ αὐτοπρόσωπος παραγίνεται. ἔτι δὲ καὶ ἡ ὑπόκρισις ἀπίθανος. εἰ γὰρ ἕνεκα τοῦ ψιλῶς εἰπεῖν ὅτι ἔρχονται παρῆκται ἡ Ἶρις, τοῦτο καὶ ὁ Πολίτης ἠδύνατο ποιῆσαι· εἰ δὲ πρὸς τοῦτο, ἵνα οἱ πρότερον μὴ τολμῶντες ἐξελθεῖν ἐξέλθωσιν, Ἶρις ἔστω λέγουσα ὡς καὶ παρὰ τοῦ Διὸς ἀπεσταλμένη. ὅτι δὲ Ὅμηρος, ὅταν τινὰ εἰκάζῃ τινί, καὶ τοὺς πρέποντας λόγους περιτίθησιν, δῆλον. ἡ γοῦν ἀρχὴ οὐ Πολίτου ἐστίν, ἀλλ' ὑπὲρ τοῦ Πολίτην· φησὶ γὰρ 'ὦ γέρου, αἰεί τοι μῦθοι φίλοι ἄκριτοί εἰσιν'. τοῦτο εἰ μὲν ἡ Ἶρις λέγουσα, πρεπόντως ἔχει, εἰ δὲ ὁ υἱὸς πατρί, ἀπρεπῶς . . .*

80 Aristarchus seems on the whole to be more interested in the behaviour of the god being fitted to the disguise - cf. on Γ395, where the athetesis exlained is likely to be his, from Aristonicus' work on signs: *. . . πῶς γὰρ ἡ γραῒα παλαιγένεῖ εἰκασμένη 'περικαλλέα δειρὴν' εἶχεν καὶ 'ὄμματα μαρμαίροντα' . . .; καὶ βλάσφημα παρὰ τὸ πρόσωπόν ἐστι τὰ λεγόμενα, 'ἧσο . . . πόδεσσιν'. καὶ εὐτελὴς κατὰ διάνοιαν 'μή μ'ἔρεθε, σχετλίη' . . .*(The various versions of the discussion of B791ff are also of interest because illustrating possible permutations of synonyms for appropriateness. The papyrus goes on to say, of the knowledge of the approach of the Greeks (p. 170), *ἐπίστασθαι οὖν Ἶριδι οἰκεῖον, Πολίτηι δὲ οὐ [πρέ]πον.* Ven. A remarks, of Polites' address to Hector, *καὶ τὸ '"Εκτορ, σοὶ δὲ μάλιστ' ἐπιτέλλομαι' Πολίτῃ ἀνοίκειον. μᾶλλον δὲ Ἶριδι ἁρμόζει ἐπιτάσσειν.*) The object of his attention is thus comparable to that in other divine apearances, where, for instance, he occasionally removes a line because it duplicates one more appropriate in a different context. Cf. the comments, probably his, at B27, B64; Ξ304-6 (also athetised by Zenodotus), Ξ205-7; Θ166-7; and on B160-2, where lines are athetised because better suited to the speech of Athena than that of Hera.

that he, too, supposed Homer to have intended to preserve the dignity of the gods. An entry in the Lexicon Homericum of Apollonius Sophista reports Aristarchus' objection to Apion's etymology for the epithet Σμινθεῦ for Apollo.[81] Apion (fr. 122) suggested that it was from flies, because they are called σμύνθιοι , and because in Rhodes a festival called the Σμύνθεια celebrated an occasion when flies, which were destroying the fruit on the vines, were destroyed by Dionysus and Apollo. Aristarchus, however, thought it ἀπρεπές for the god to be given an epithet by the poet which was taken from a lowly insect.[82] Several remarks, probably justifications of critical decisions by Aristarchus given in Aristonicus' work, concern a kind of propriety in divine characterisation: at Θ420-24, Iris would not have said 'κύον ἀδεές', since she has a decent character; at O166-7, Zeus' claim that Poseidon should yield because Zeus is older is criticised because seeming to show fear; O212-17, where Poseidon first accepts Zeus' order to withdraw, then adds a warning should Zeus decide to spare Troy after all, are athetised because base in composition and thought: Poseidon first concedes, then seems to change his mind; some of the gods mentioned do not belong there, but are brought in from the Theomachy.[83] Aristarchus may also have

81 143,9 s.v. Σμινθεῦ

82 . . . Ἀρίσταρχος ἀπρεπὲς ἡγεῖται ἀπὸ χαμαιπετοῦς ζῴου τὸν θεὸν ἐπιθέτῳ κεκοσμῆσθαι ὑπὸ τοῦ ποιητοῦ.

83 Θ420-4 . . . καὶ ἀποσυνίσταται ἐπιεικὲς ὂν τὸ τῆς Ἴριδος πρόσωπον· οὐ γὰρ ἂν εἶπεν, 'κυὸν ἀδεές'. O166-7, n.b. the notion that it is becoming for the lines to be added by Iris to her speech later on, but inappropriate for them to be spoken by Zeus: . . . τοὺς ὕστερον λεγομένους ὑπὸ τῆς Ἴριδος δι' ἐπιείκειαν ἐνθάδε τις μετενήνοχεν· ἀναρμόστως γὰρ ὁ Ζεὺς, ὥσπερ δεδοικὼς καὶ συλληθῆναι βουλόμενος, 'εἰξάτω μοι', φησί, 'καθόσον εἰμὶ προγενέστερος'· τὰ γὰρ τοιαῦτα τῶν δεομένων . . . O212-17 . . . εὐτελῆ τὰ κατὰ τὴν σύνθεσιν καὶ τὰ κατὰ τὴν διάνοιαν . . .

been concerned about divine morality: he is said to have athetised a passage in Book 24 in which the relentless hatred of Hera, Poseidon, and Athena for the Trojans is described, on the grounds that the gods ought not to have as much anger as Achilles.[84]

Comments relating to propriety in the representation of humans confirm the impression that there was common ground among the Alexandrian scholars, and are perhaps more conclusive in demonstrating an interest in the standard. Nevertheless, it is clear that this interest has again been exaggerated. Nickau shows here, too, that concern for propriety does not necessarily lie behind all the decisions of Zenodotus to which it has been ascribed: sometimes the grounds for athetesis are not given,[85] sometimes they are implied, but an alternative interpretation is possible. According to HMQR, for instance, Zenodotus objected in some way (*περιέγραψεν*) to γ400-1,[85a] in which Telemachus is said to share a room with Peisistratus, because the others were said to have women; this has been taken as an offence against propriety. But

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84 The question of exactly how much Aristarchus athetised is a vexed one. A commentator in the bT scholia on Ω23 speaks of Aristarchus as athetising 24-30, including the line in which Hermes is ordered to steal the corpse, on the ground that it is not proper for gods to steal with the help of Hermes: *τό τε γὰρ κλέπτειν διὰ τοῦ Ἑρμοῦ θεοῖς οὐ πρέπον . . .* Cf., however, Van der Valk (Researches II, 29-31), who points out that at Ω109, where the stealing of the body is mentioned again, no mention is made of athetesis; it is hard to see why Aristarchus whould have minded the proposal's being made at 24 if it was all right for Iris to mention it later. Cf. also Erbse ad loc.

85 E.g. at two passages of Thersites' abuse of Agamemnon, B220 and 226, 227.

85a Meaning not clear - see Nickau, p. 29.

perhaps Zenodotus was concerned for Homeric usage; in general guests don't sleep with members of the household (compare γ399, 402-3 with η345-7, which repeat them). At γ226-28 Telemachus rejects the possibility that Odysseus might return and revenge be taken, even if the gods wish it. Zenodotus is said to have altered the line to read 'unless the gods wish it', apparently to save Telemachus from blasphemy.[86] But perhaps Zenodotus was interested only in consistency of character - Telemachus elsewhere shows trust in the gods, e.g. β372, π263-5, and wishes for divine help for revenge (γ205-7).[87]

Zenodotus also athetised A225-33, the lines in which Achilles insults Agamemnon, and which had incurred the disapproval of Plato.[88] We are not told his reasons, but it is tempting to suppose them similar to those of Plato. This may cause problems, however; if Zenodotus knew of Plato's views, he must have known that Plato regarded the lines as genuine - knowledge which would probably have worked against using athetesis to express such disapproval. Ignorance seems unlikely, but perhaps Pfeiffer is right to

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86 'οὐδ' εἰ θεοὶ ὣς ἐθέλοιεν': ὑπερβολικῶς τοῦτο εἴρηκεν ἐν ἤθει: ὅπερ οὐ συνεὶς ὁ Ζηνόδοτος γράφει, 'εἰ μὴ θεοὶ ὣς ἐθέλοιεν'. The reply means 'He uses the ὑπερβολή natural to an angry young man' (so the remark is πρέπον) (cf. Ar. Rhet. 1413129ff) - the argument is thus about what is πρέπον.

87 This may be, however, to make too sharp a distinction between the demand for consistency of character and for excellence of character. Aristarchus' objections (see next page) to certain lines as base and not fitting to a heroic character imply that they are inconsistent with the character as presented elsewhere in the poem; the fact that one can find inconsistencies does not mean that the undesirability of anomalous behavious was irrelevant. Zenodotus' reasons are left too vague, however, for firm conclusions to be drawn.

88 Republic 389E12-90A5

suggest indirect influence, through manuscripts in which the offending lines had already been removed.

There is at least one clear case, however, where Zenodotus is concerned with propriety in a way that fits in with examples from later scholars. It is interesting that it is one where Aristarchus is in agreement with him. Aristarchus apparently approved of Zenodotus' athetesis of Π97-100, because the lines seemed to introduce homosexual love into the Homeric world, presenting Achilles as the lover of Patroclus:[89]

> καλῶς οὖν φησιν Ἀρίσταρχος Ζηνόδοτον ὑπωπτευκέναι, ὡς εἶεν παρεντεθέντες οἱ στίχοι ὑπὸ τῶν ἀρσενικοὺς ἔρωτας λεγόντων εἶναι παρ' Ὁμήρῳ καὶ ὑπονοούντων παιδικὰ εἶναι Ἀχιλλέως τὸν Πατρόκλον. (T)

One may feel that it was a sense of propriety which led to the view that the lines could only be spoken by a lover, and that a homosexual colouring must be seen in the passage. It is interesting, however, that one cannot be sure that the objection was simply that this was in itself improper - it may have been, at least partly, that such relationships seemed incompatible with the rest of Homer.

If the latter point was envisaged, the objection is not inconsistent with Koemer's defence of Aristarchus, who is presented as regularly applying the principle, Ὅμηρον ἐξ Ὁμήρου σαφηνίζειν. As we have seen, however, part of Koemer's argument will not stand up, since he claims that in this Aristarchus made an important advance on scholars like Zenodotus, who applied anachronistic

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89 cf. MS A, which adds καὶ ὁ Ἀχιλλεὺς οὐ τοιοῦτος, συμπαθὴς δέ.

standards of propriety to Homer. On the other hand, while Aristarchus may have based his standards for Homeric gods and heroes on Homer, there are cases where the criterion of propriety seems to have been uppermost in his mind, and sometimes to have misled him.

Other passages besides Π97-100 seem to have been suspected because giving improper representations of heroic personages. Lines are sometimes dismissed, for instance, on the grounds that they are base and also unsuited to a particular character, e.g. Y180-6 (comment probably from Aristarchus via Aristonicus):

> ἀθετοῦνται στίχοι ἑπτά, ὅτι εὐτελεῖς εἰσι τῇ κατασκευῇ καὶ τοῖς νοήμασι, καὶ οἱ λόγοι οὐ πρέποντες τῷ τοῦ Αχιλλέως προσώπῳ.

(Achilles has asked Aeneas why he fights, when he cannot expect to inherit the kingdom of Priam), or A133-4 (Agamemnon asks Achilles whether he asks that Chryseis be given back, so that he may have a prize, Agamemnon go without?):

. . . ἀθετοῦνται, ὅτι εὐτελεῖς τῇ συνθέσει καὶ τῇ διανοίᾳ, καὶ μὴ ἁρμόζουτες Ἀγαμέμνονι.[90] There seems to be a thin line between something which is unsuitable and something which is simply uncharacteristic and improbable. The latter seems to be addressed in a comment on Z433-39, where Andromache tells Hector to post men where the wall is weakest, which

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90 Cf. also (all probably by Aristarchus) on A29-31, which were athetised both because they destroyed the train of thought and the threat, and because it was ἀπρεπὲς δὲ καὶ τὸ τὸν Αγαμέμνονα τοιαῦτα λέγειν; on Θ164-6, where Hector jeers at the retreating Diomedes: three lines are athetised ὅτι εὐτελεῖς εἰσι τῇ κατασκευῇ καὶ τὸ 'πάρος τοι δαίμονα δώσω' τελείως ἐστὶν οὐ κατὰ τὸν ποιητήν. ἀνάρμοστα δὲ καὶ τὰ λεγόμενα τοῖς προσώποις. (A) and on Ω556-7, . . . ἀθετοῦνται, ὅτι ἀνάρμοστοι τῷ προσώπῳ αἱ εὐξαὶ καὶ ἐπαυτόφωρος ἡ ὑπόκρισις (A). On propriety in the representation of heroes (drawing also on the bT scholia), see M.L. von Franz, Die aesthetische Anschauungen der Iliasscholien, Diss. Zürich, 1943; for scholiastic criticism involving ἦθος and πάθος more generally (i.e. not only in connection with propriety), see N.J. Richardson, 'Literary Criticism in the Exegetical Scholia to the Iliad: A Sketch', CQ 30 (1980).

is athetised *ὅτι ἀνοίκειοι οἱ λόγοι τῇ Ἀνδρομάχῃ· ἀντιστρατηγεῖ γὰρ τῷ Ἕκτορι.*[91] Aristarchus seems also to have been interested in the behaviour suited to certain types. He suspected Iris' impersonation of Polites partly because some of the language used was unsuitable to a young man, and to a son addressing his father; at Ω130-2 , where Thetis recommends sex as a source of comfort to Achilles, he athetised because it was improper for a mother to say it to her son.[92] The line again seems to be a thin one between cases where impropriety is at issue, and those where a remark is not the kind someone with certain characteristics would say (*πρέπου* or a derivative seems to be used in both kinds of comment). At O439, for instance, where Ajax speaks of Mastorides, whom they had honoured *ἴσα φίλοισι τοκεῦσιν*, Zenodotus wrote *τέκεσσιν*; an objection is made, probably by Aristarchus, that it is not suited to their (Ajax's and Teucer's) ages.[93]

A slightly different objection is sometimes made, when a line seems not so much offensive or beneath the dignity of the speaker as mal-a-propos. Thetis' mention of Achilles' approaching death is one example; others are Θ108 , where Diomedes

91 (But cf. bT ad loc., *ἀλλ' εἰ καὶ γυναικὶ μὴ πρέπει, τῇ γε Ἀνδρομάχῃ πρέπει, ἐπεὶ καὶ οὐχ ἱπποκομεῖν γυναικός, ἡ δὲ Ἀνδρομάχη τοῖς Ἕκτορος καὶ πυρὸν παρατίθησι καὶ κεράσασα οἶνον, ὡς φίλανδρος ἐπιμελομένη καὶ τῶν φερόντων αὐτῆς τὸν ἄνδρα.*) Also on H195-9, where Ajax is to fight Hector, and first tells everyone to pray to Zeus silently, so that the Trojans cannot hear, then says he does not mind if they do. The lines are athetised, *ὅτι οὐ κατὰ τὸν Αἴαντα οἱ λόγοι καὶ ἑαυτῷ ἀνθυποφέρει γελοίως.*(also athetised by Zenodotus and Aristophanes)

92 *ὅτι ἀπρεπὲς μητέρα υἱῷ λέγειν 'ἀγαθόν ἐστι γυναικὶ μίγεσθαι'*. (It is added that this is the worst thing for men going into battle, and that it is *ἄκαιρον* to say *ὁ θάνατός σου ἐγγύς ἐστιν.*) In the T Scholia this athetesis is reported with the explanation, *ἀνοίκειοι γὰρ ἥρωϊ καὶ θεᾷ*, which might suggest either that Aristarchus had originally made both points, but that different ones had dropped out in the course of excerption, or possibly that in one or both cases the athetesis was his, but that the reasons offered are speculative. Cf. perhaps also on B192, given a critical sign to show that it should be followed by B203-5, which are out of place: *εἰσὶ γὰρ πρὸς βασιλεῖς ἁρμόζουτες, οὐ πρὸς δημότας . . .*

93 *οὐκ ἁρμόζει* is used in Ven. A, *οὐ πρέπει* in T.

explains in passing that his horses are those he took from Aeneas (it is objected that the occasion called for brevity);[94] at Ω636 Aristarchus replaced ταρπώμεθα with παυσώμεθα κουμηθέντες, apparently feeling that it was out of place to suggest that Priam might enjoy rest. At I222 he was struck by the oddness of having the ambassadors to Achilles again eat their fill, when they had enjoyed a hearty meal with Agamemnon, and thinks it would have been better if they had been said to take a taste to please their host.

I have been speaking mainly of Zenodotus and Aristarchus, since an important part of the latter's work was responding to the text of Zenodotus, and the two seemed likeliest to show differences in the use of the standard of propriety if any were to be found. Comparisons are difficult, since we have reasons for fewer of Zenodotus' decisions, and many of the comments used from Ven. A can be ascribed to Aristarchus only with probability. The main inferences to be drawn are meagre: that both were concerned with propriety, and that Aristarchus' interest was connected with a concern for what was probable.

One can add that other Alexandrian scholars seem to have shared this interest: Aristophanes, for instance, seems to have had strong views on the acquisitiveness shown by characters in the Odyssey. He athetises o19, for example, in which Athena, explaining that Telemachus should go home before Penelope marries again, adds μή νύ τι σεῦ ἀέκητι –

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94 The point is answered, in bT, by an appeal to appropriateness of characterisation: ἠθικῶς τὸν χθὲς ἀνάγει χρόνον . . .

δόμων ἐκ κτῆμα φέρηται(this is thought to show σμικρολογία). σ282, where Odysseus laughs at the gifts coaxed from the suitors by Penelope, is also criticised: εὐτελὲς τοῦτο, διὸ καὶ κεραύνιον παρέθηκεν Ἀριστοφάνης. He also seems to have objected to o88ff, where Telemachus says he wants to go home lest he perish himself, or lose precious treasure from his house, putting the ignoble concern in prominent position.[95]

Given, then, that propriety played at least some part in the criticism of Homeric scholars in Alexandria, how important was it? How new were either the uses to which it was put, or the emphasis it was given?

The remarks of Alexandrian scholars concerning propriety show that there was considerable continuity in the kinds of questions which were raised and answered with respect to poetry, especially that of Homer. This is interesting, since the points were originally brought forward by 5th and 4th century writers of various interests and/or theoretical positions. On the one hand there had been uncomplicated interest in representation of character and emotion by those who considered impressing the audience proof of excellence (in their different ways, Aristophanes and Plato's Ion, for instance); on the other, there had been examination of the moral and aesthetic implications of the simple view (e.g. Plato and Aristotle);

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95 See scholia on o91. Comparable, though anonymous, are the criticism of Arete, at η238, for asking Odysseus first about his clothes, and of Odysseus, at η225, for saying first that he longs to see his possessions, slaves, and house, rather than his wife and homeland.

and there had been sophistical discussion of 'problems' without, perhaps, much interest in theory. I have argued that appeals to propriety presuppose audience-orientation, but it is clear, from the appeals to the standard in scholarship, that there is more to be said.

The Alexandrians were primarily interested in establishing a text of Homer rather than in producing literary commentaries; apparent improprieties were discussed if connected with doubts about authenticity. Hence features of this criticism which are at first sight surprising - silences, at passages where one might have expected attempts at criticism or justification,[96] and a touch of the arbitrary in the way certain lines are selected as improper when others in the passage, similar in sentiment, are passed over:[97] improprieties may have been discussed only when lines were suspect, either because lacking in certain manuscripts, or because singled out for criticism by earlier writers. This may have had an unintended effect on later criticism: the restriction of attention to certain familiar passages may have contributed to the formation of conventions of criticism, both of kinds of points made and passages discussed (e.g. the character of a particular hero at a particular point in the Iliad). This might lead to a further result, to the view that there were literary conventions which poetry should observe,

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96 E.g. on Diomedes' murder of Dolon, or Hera's cruelty in offering to surrender three favourite cities to Zeus, or the vengefulness pointed to by Zeus' observation that she would like to eat the Trojans raw - presumably all silences are not to be explained by the incompleteness of the evidence.

97 Zenodotus prefers εὗρε δὲ τόνδε to εἴ που ἐφεύροι at Δ88-9, but does not get rid of διζημένῃ ; Aristarchus athetizes lines at Ω24ff because of references to Hermes' mission, but apparently has no objection to Ω109, where it is also mentioned (cf. note 84 above).

meeting the expectations not simply of the reader as a person of particular standards of morals and etiquette, but also as an educated man acquainted with certain rules of poetry.

I shall turn now to two authors on whom a development of this kind seems to have had an influence. Though in rather different ways, Horace and Plutarch treat literary criticism as part of general culture, with whose conventions the poet and/or educated man can be expected to be familiar; this is important in determining the kinds of propriety each is prepared to demand of literature.

Horace

At Brutus 184ff, Cicero argues that in the art of oratory, unlike other arts, winning the approval of the many is an incontrovertible mark of excellence; the expert is the final judge of music, poetry, etc., but in oratory his opinion will never be at variance with that of the multitude. He goes on to qualify this to some extent: an uneducated crowd may be persuaded or pleased by a speech which is mediocre, and which an expert would recognise

as such.[98] The claim can then be made only in a more restricted form: a popular audience will always prefer the best (the eloquence which wins the approval of the expert) when it is given the choice. Both oratory and poetry had long traditions of formal study, and large bodies of conventions associated with them by the 1st century B.C.: the reasons why Cicero could draw such a distinction may throw light on the importance of expertise and knowledge of the rules of art in Horace's views on poetry.

One implication of Cicero's argument is that one need not be educated to respond to the best oratory, though one may need this to appreciate it. Its excellence will lie in persuading in the most effective possible way: one could not, then, be unmoved by a speech which was superb, but whose excellence required knowledge of the conventions of oratory to be perceived. The conventions had value only insofar as they promoted the object of the speech, viz. persuasion. This had, in theory, consequences for the status of the rhetorical tradition for an orator: knowledge of the rules of the art had no value in itself, but only because innate ability was unlikely to suffice to produce first-rate oratory. The assistance of art was needed to make one

98 cf. Orator 8.24ff, where it is clear that some audiences have better natural taste than others: the rich diction of Asian oratory pleased the audiences of Caria and Mysia, but could never have found favour at Athens, which was distinguished by its refined taste. The passage does not rule out the possibility that an audience of vitiated taste might in fact be unable to appreciate good oratory when it heard it - the Phrygian audience might, after all, miss the sing-song delivery it was used to.

effective.

This was not necessarily the case with poetry. A layman could decide whether a poem moved him, but it could be argued that works were meant not only to produce particular effects, but to fulfil various conditions in order to belong to a particular kind. To know whether a piece was good, then, one would need to know about various genres, and the conventions associated with each; one might need familiarity with the history of a genre, with features which were necessary because found in the first examples of the genre (e.g. chorus in tragedy). If one were composing, attention to such details might be praiseworthy even if not contributing directly to emotional impact. So an inexperienced playgoer's favourable reaction to a tragedy might not guarantee its excellence as a tragedy. This line of argument was especially likely to seem cogent in the 1st century B.C., given the forms literary discussion had taken - Aristotle had used genre as one of the organising principles of the Poetics; Hellenistic scholars, drawing up canons of poets according to genre,[99] might thereby have encouraged the notion that poems could best be judged as examples of particular poetic kinds.

There had been some conflict even in Aristotle's discussion of poetry between the excellence of a work as determined by the critic, with his own notions of the demands of its genre, and its excellence in the view of

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99 cf. Radermacher, 'Kanon', RE X (1919) 1873ff and Pfeiffer, History of Classical Scholarship, i, 203ff.

the public. At first sight, Horace's emphasis on various kinds of appropriateness, with special attention to the major genres (epic, tragedy, comedy), might seem a natural development from this. In the Poetics, however, the critic decided on the aim of a genre (the kind of effect it was by nature adapted to produce), to which various technical matters contributed; he differed from the public only in the kind of effect he thought preferable. Horace, on the other hand, is interested in these genres as relatively fixed historical entities; the essential features of each are determined by reference to distinguished examples, rather than by appeal to distinct organising principles.

This has several important consequences. In the first place, it means that propriety becomes a more universal literary standard: it covers more aspects of a literary work, and observing it becomes a matter of more immediate importance. The opinion of the expert is assumed to be paramount; he is pre-eminently qualified to judge because, knowing the rules of poetry, he discerns departures from correctness. To achieve excellence, then, a work must first avoid offending such a judge by obvious errors. Breaking the rules can be offensive in itself, then (it's not just that observing them

contributes, for instance, to plausibility).[100]

Secondly, this means that kinds of propriety which had always been of interest - appropriate presentation of character, of emotion, appropriate levels of diction for character, genre, etc. - are now important on two levels. One of these is familiar: though genre may determine the type of effect to be made on the audience, any member of the audience should be capable of judging whether the means used to produce this effect are appropriate. Anyone ought to be able to tell, for instance, whether the language of a character expresses emotion convincingly, as Horace does at lines 104ff,[101] or whether various types of character are recognisable and easily distinguished from each other, as Horace says they should be at 112ff (differences of class, rank, etc.)

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100 cf. e.g. A.P. 73ff,

> res gestae regumque ducumque et tristia bella
> quo scribi possent numero, monstravit Homerus . . .
> descriptas servare vices operumque colores
> cur ego si nequeo ignoroque poeta salutor? . . .
> versibus exponi tragicis res comica non vult;
> indignatur item privatis ac prope socco
> dignis carminibus narrari cena Thyestae

and 263ff,

> non quivis videt immodulata poemata iudex,
> et data Romanis venia est indigna poetis.
> idcircone vager scribamque licenter?

Horace repeatedly emphasises that natural talent is not enough; one must study earlier models, not just as, e.g., excellent examples of characterisation, but as definitive for particular forms of poetry.

101 . . . male si mandata loqueris
aut dormitabo aut ridebo. tristia maestum
vultum verba decent, iratum plena minarum,
ludentem lasciva, severum seria dictu.

and 155ff (differences in age).[102] Horace's examples of the shockingly improbable, which, when presented on stage, disgust the spectator, are perhaps to be disapproved of because interfering with the proper emotional effect of the piece, but Horace's dislike for such spectacles seems to be presented as an instance of the ordinary viewer's reaction, rather than of the learned critic's.[103]

But even those aspects of propriety which any audience can be expected to recognise are determined by objective standards, for which rules can be provided (thus Plautus' characterisation is not good just because there was once an audience which thought it was). These are in fact of two kinds, one aesthetic, one moral.

To begin with, it is not enough that representation of character or emotion be convincing, as they are bound by restraints of genre: exceptions must be made to allow the angry Chremes to use unusually elevated language for comedy, or to point out that the wretched Telephus or

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102 In fact Horace mentions the aproval of the audience in both of the last two passages as a sign of success (though even in this most people are not infallible judges - at Ep.II.i.170ff) Horace criticises an earlier generation's tolerance for the inept characterisation of Plautus). See e.g. A.P. 153ff,

> tu quid ego et populus mecum desideret audi:
> si plosoris eges aulaea manentis et usque
> sessuri donec cantor 'vos plaudite' dicat,
> aetatis cuiusque notandi sunt tibi mores,
> mobilibusque decor naturis dandus et annis.

and also A.P. 112-13, 248-50.

103 In fact this may be a case of imposing the critic's refined taste on the public; for the suggestion that the stage is the place for wild improbabilities, cf. Livy, 5.21.9 (Sed in rebus tam antiquis se quae similia veri sint pro veris accipiantur, satis habeam: haec ad ostentationem scaenae gaudentis miraculis aptiora quam ad fidem . . .) and Ovid, Fasti 4.326 (on the legend of the Magna Mater's arrival at Rome).

Peleus will be more touching if he abandons the magniloquent diction of tragedy.[104] In a general way, types of characters are adjusted to the sort of piece in which they appear (e.g. gods and heroes in a satyr play).[105] What counts as appropriate presentation of character, moreover, has to some extent been fixed by earlier poetry: the poet who uses mythical characters must give them appropriate qualities - e.g. at 123-4, sit Medea ferox invictaque, flebilis Ino,/perfidus Ixion, Io vaga, tristis Orestes.[106] To some extent, then, what counts as appropriate presentation of character is not simply what strikes any spectator as suitable (fitting his ideas, e.g., of the divine or heroic), but what conforms to standards of probability for a person of a certain type according to the conventions of a genre. One consequence of this might be that one would have to be familiar with earlier examples of the genre, which had helped to form those conventions, if one were to recognise the language and behaviour presented as suitable or probable in context.[107]

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104 A.P. 93ff (Horace seems to agree with Aristotle on the style suited to pitiful speech, cf. Rhet. 1408a13-19)

105 A.P. 225ff

106 For this as a kind of decorum, cf. Cicero, De Officiis 1.97: 'Sed tum servare illud poetas, quod deceat, dicimus, cum id quod quaque persona dignum est, et fit et dicitur, ut si Aeacus aut Minos diceret, 'oderint dum metuant', aut 'natis sepulchro ipse est parens' indecorum videretur, quod eos fuisse iustos accepimus; at Atreo dicente plausus excitantur, est enim digna persona oratio.'

For the use of this principle in other criticism, cf. objections raised, in the Scholia to Euripides, to the presentation of Medea. His Medea is criticised for not being consistently ferocious (Medea, hypothesis 10): *μέμφονται δὲ αὐτῷ τὸ μὴ πεφυλαχέναι τὴν ὑπόκρισιν τὴν Μήδειαν, ἀλλὰ προπεσεῖν εἰς δάκρυα, ὅτε ἐπεβούλευσεν Ἰάσονι καὶ τῇ γυναικί.* Cf. on line 922, *αὕτη, τί χλωροῖς: πάλιν εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν ἔννοιαν ταῦτα. ἔδει δὲ αὐτὴν μηδὲ κλαίουσαν εἰσάγεσθαι· οὐ γὰρ οἰκεῖον τῷ προσώπῳ· ὠμὸν γὰρ εἰσῆκται τοῦτο . . .* (AB)

107 See e.g. S. Goldhill, Reading Greek Tragedy, Ch. 10.

In the second place, the behaviour appropriate to different sorts of people is not simply whatever is generally accepted as such; it is one of the subjects of moral philosophy, only to be thoroughly understood after the study of ethics. Thus at 307-8 Horace says he will teach 'unde parentur opes, quid alat formetque poetam,/quid deceat, quid non, quo virtus, quo ferat error'. Understanding the nature of various duties will give the poet skill in presenting characters appropriately:

> qui didicit patriae quid debeat et quid amicis,
> quo sit amore parens, quo frater amandus et hospes,
> quod sit conscripti, quod iudicis officium, quae
> partes in bellum missi ducis, ille profecto
> reddere personae scit convenientia cuique. (312-16)

The characters and emotions shown in poetic works may succeed, then, in moving audiences because represented in appropriate, recognisable ways; but such works count as correct because measuring up to standards not directly dependent on the audience.

Two points can be made. First, there seems no reason why works which follow the rules (of either kind) should be particularly effective with audiences. Horace seems to suggest, in the Ars Poetica at least, that the best works will be most striking and moving;[108] but an audience might find the conventions of a genre artificial, or a work in line with philosophical principles at odds with their own. Second, the two kinds of standard

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108 In Epistle II.i audiences seem to like whatever old works they have been taught are good, and to be unable to appreciate or respond to new works of merit.

(observing the conventions of poetry and following moral rules) seem to have no connection with each other, but to be urged upon the poet with equal urgency.

The first of these was especially important in the history of the work: its emphasis on rules was especially influential on neoclassical critics, whom Johnson, for instance, could then attack by appealing to the responses of audiences as counting for more than mere correctness. These neoclassical critics went further than Horace in defining correctness, and in some ways justify a common prejudice against poetic decorum as a barrier to innovation more than he did. But their position was like his. The subjection of art to rules may have been typical of the Hellenistic treatises, such as Neoptolemus', which Horace apparently used as sources; but Horace had special reasons for this approach which his predecessors could not have had, in the difficulties of drawing conclusions from Greek models and genres which were to be relevant to Roman writers.[109] (Neoclassical critics and poets were similarly interested in the problem of producing new examples of antique genres.) The restrictions, according to genre, on what counted as convincing representations, and the specification of various technical features, were necessary if these genres were to be reproduced in Latin. The only way to bring this about was to insist on strict adherence to conventions followed by the Greek

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109 Thus Horace tends to emphasise the need for discipline when commenting on the promising attempts of Romans to take over Greek forms, as at A.P. 285ff.

models; some of the features of poetry could not be open to question either by the public or by poets of genius. (Greater freedom was possible where the models were irrelevant - the poet should have considerable licence in using archaic words, inventing new ones, etc.,[110] very little in choice of metre, level of diction suited to his genre.)

Why should the production of works im the great Greek genres have seemed such a good idea? Horace seems quite uninterested in the forms of drama which Romans had invented for themselves, where they could have made up their own rules. Most obviously, the stature of some of the Greek works in those genres must have counted for much. Secondly, perhaps, concentrating on them made it easier to blur distinctions between different kinds of appropriateness to be aimed at, so that it would seem, for instance, that attention to technique really was essential to effectiveness. Horace's own poetry shows how important he thought technical artistry; its results, however, could not be described in terms of readily accessible categories such as character and emotion. Hard work devoted to imitation of the great Greek genres might seem likelier to win recognition in the responses of one's audience. Emphasis on these genres also blurs distinctions between different kinds of moral excellence required of the poet. The last section of the Ars Poetica

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110 A.P. 48ff, cf. Chapter 4,386ff

shows that Horace wants to connect knowledge of moral philosophy with writing good poetry, but that he also thinks of the Roman disinclination for hard work as a moral failing which has hurt their poetry. The emphasis on drama, and to some extent epic, in the first part of the poem makes the connection between the two seem less fortuitous: hard work was needed to imitate the earlier forms successfully, but the earlier works also give scope in an obvious way for moral knowledge of the kind later recommended.

By concentrating on decorum in poetry and poet one tends to overlook an equally important side of Horace's views on composition: the role played by genius, which can be forgiven minor faults for the sake of the grandeur of the whole[111] (thus showing why it is not enough simply to make sure one has followed rules[112]), and sometimes provides a perfect illustration of the decorum others try to achieve by following rules.[113] Presumably the poet of genius is capable of really difficult things, such as proprie communia dicere, for which few precepts can be given.[114] The place of originality in the work may in fact help to explain the emphasis on the diligent study of rules of various kinds. Horace would like, it seems, to see poetry as analogous to a language, in which

111 A.P. 347ff

112 A.P. 265-6

113 e.g. at 140ff the Iliad is the perfect example of a work whose parts fit harmoniously together (a virtue similar to the Panaitian decorum which was compared to the harmony of the parts of a beautiful body).

114 A.P. 128ff

brilliance and originality presuppose thorough knowledge of the grammar; he would like to think of the Romans as in this sense speaking the same language as the Greeks, but has first to convince them that poetry is the disciplined business he claims it is.

The history of criticism and scholarship before Horace, then, made it possible for him to draw on conventions concerning various genres, and to make the following of rules itself a matter of decorum. The rules are not meant, however, to be a stick with which to beat bad poets, but to encourage poets to take poetry seriously. If a poet is to do this, he must be his own strictest critic; it is for this reason that improprieties cannot be restricted to those things which offend the crowd.

Plutarch

In one respect Plutarch's de audiendis poetis is obviously different from Horace's discussions of poetry. Plutarch is not himself a poet, and has no interest in training others in the art; he writes as an educator, and the expertise to be passed on to pupils is one of knowing how to read literature, not write it. This has important consequences for his treatment of poetry. Although both Horace and Plutarch are interested in connections between poetry and philosophy, Horace concentrates on an aspect of philosophy which was only a restricted part of any ancient system, but the one most suited to aesthetic adaptation (namely that which in Stoicism fell in the category of τὰ καθήκοντα).[115] Plutarch takes in a wider range of philosophical issues (e.g. views on the divine); he is also readier to face up to the problem that the aims of poetry may conflict with other ends, and to the further problem of defining the excellences of poetry with this in mind. In considering how poetry is to be read, then, he addresses issues in a way closer to that of philosophers who had discussed the subject.[116]

In assuming that poetry is open to criticism on various philosophical grounds, Plutarch recalls in particular the kinds of attack made on it by Plato in Republic

115 For the place of τὰ καθήκοντα in Stoic philosophy, cf. D. Tsekourakis, Studies in the Terminology of Early Stoic Ethics, Hermes Einzelschriften 32 (Wiesbaden 1974), and Phillip DeLacy, 'The Four Stoic Personae', ICS II (1977), 163-72. For the question of how far Horace's interest in the roles of various characters can be assigned to any particular philosophical school, cf. 259ff , on philosophy and Cicero.

116 Chrysippus wrote a περὶ τοῦ πῶς δεῖ τῶν ποιημάτων ἀκούειν, SVF II,16,p.9; Zeno wrote a περὶ ποιητικῆς ἀκροάσεως, SVF I, 41,p.15.

2 and 3. The similarities are the more striking since Plutarch mentions many of the same kinds of error as those singled out by Plato, particularly those involving presentation of the divine or of the heroic character; his remarks are often made à propos of the same passages. Plato, for instance, had objected to poetic representations of the after-life which encouraged fear of death, including the passage where Achilles greets Odysseus in the underworld and says that even to be the slave of a poor man would be preferable to existence there;[117] Plutarch alludes to the passage, arguing that the young man who had been warned about poetic fictions will be unmoved by it.[118] Plato disapproved of the way gods were shown doing or suffering violence, behaving indecently, causing human misfortunes;[119] Plutarch mentions their sufferings as examples of things to be countered by citations of contradictory passages; mentions divine philandering as disgraceful but pointing a moral; argues that passages which blame the gods for the unhappiness of mortals can be met with other passages which proclaim

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117 Republic 3.386C5-8

118 De Audiendis Poetis, 16e. Plutarch gives three examples in this passage of false statements about the gods, daimons, or virtue; all appear in Plato. The young man who has been forewarned will also be impervious to fear lest Poseidon lay bare the underworld (Il.20.64-5 is quoted by Plato immediately after the passage from the Odyssey, Rep. 386D1-2); he will not be angry at Apollo on behalf of Achilles when Thetis reproaches the god for her son's death (two lines are given of a passage from Aeschylus, quoted more fully by Plato as an example of the unacceptable attribution of lies to a god, Rep. 383B2-9). Plutarch speaks of terrifying portrayals of the underworld at 17B (cf. Rep. 387B8ff), as instances of deliberate poetic fabrication; at 17c he turns to cases where death is portrayed as something dreadful (Il.16.856/22.362 is also quoted by Plato, Rep. 386d9-10).

119 Republic 378B8-E3; 390B6-C7; 379C2ff

their innocence and tranquillity.[120]

In one respect, then, poetry throughout the work is constantly subjected to a standard of propriety provided by philosophy. It is admitted that poetry may be pleasant and astonishing, but it may nevertheless be unacceptable to one trained in philosophy. The critic can apparently condemn a passage regardless of whether an audience finds it effective; as in the Republic, it seems, he can legislate about what ought to be found offensive. But Plutarch's status as arbiter differs in an important way from that of Plato. Unlike Plato, he is not arguing for the application of these standards; the work is addressed to a man with assumptions like his own about the importance of philosophy in education. The various possible objections to poetry which are raised are not simply revivals of the Platonic position, made in a tendentious fashion; they are the stock-in-trade of philosophical/ sophistic discussions of poetry.[121] Plutarch is giving

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120 Plutarch alludes to the throwing down of Hephaistus (DAP 20e), also mentioned by Plato; he argues that the story of Ares and Aphrodite need not be taken allegorically, since it teaches a lesson taken literally (19f-20a) (Plato objects to the story at 390C6-7); he quotes two lines from Aeschylus' Niobe (quoted by Plato, Rep. 380A3-4) as an example of a poet passing on his own false beliefs to the audience (ib. 17b); he argues that 'Zeus' should sometimes be taken to mean 'fate', as in three passages where Zeus seems to be responsible for human misery (one of these passages is that describing the urns of happy and unhappy lives set on Zeus' floor; Plutarch's version of Il. 24. 528-9 is closer to that of Plato (Rep. 379D3-4) than to that of our text of the Iliad, giving κηρῶν ἔμπλειοι, ὁ μὲν ἐσθλῶν, αὐτὰρ ὁ δειλῶν rather than δώρων οἷα δίδωσι κακῶν, ἕτερος δὲ ἐάων as the second line), DAP 24ab.

121 Cf. e.g. Epictetus' criticism of the weeping of Odysseus, Diss. 3.24.18-20; Dio's Trojan oration (11), in which it is taken to be common knowledge that Homer told all sorts of monstrous lies about the gods; the kinds of argument put forward in Heraclitus and Ps. Plutarch (De Vita et Poesi Homeri) to defend passages in Homer which, if taken literally, are admitted to be disgraceful. For the influence of Plato's criticism on later views of Homer, see S. Weinstock, 'Die Platonische Homerkritik und ihre Nachwirkung', Philologus 36 (1926), 121-53.

expression, it seems, to a kind of response to poetry which many educated people would have been taught to feel. One of the objects of the work is, precisely, to train young readers, who have not yet assimilated these standards, to take issue with their violation.

To say this, however, is to draw attention to one of the most interesting and paradoxical features of the work. One of its objects is to prevent wholehearted and unthinking emotional responses to works whose theology or morality is unreliable;[122] another is to argue that out-and-out condemnation of works of poetry is unnecessary. Works of poetry may contain the germs of philosophical truth, in a form more pleasant to the young; provided that the reader is forearmed against the false elements in poetry, the pleasure it gives can be a useful means of leading him toward philosophy. This move is not in itself unusual, since various philosophical schools tried to claim the poets for their own.[123] It was common to dismiss the apparently unacceptable by appeal to allegory (a method rejected by Plutarch[124]), but this was not invariable.[125] What is unusual is that Plutarch does not stop at arming the reader against the text by warning him not to believe everything it says; he also seems to teach a more sophisticated way of evaluating

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122 De Audiendis Poetis 16de, 17de, 25d10-26b10.

123 See Pease on Cicero, De Natura Deorum i,42 for examples.

124 De Audiendis Poetis 19e et seq. Dio mentions allegory as the standard defence for dubious passages (Or. 11,17-18).

125 cf. Cleanthes, Philodemus De Musica 202, col.xxvii (van Kr.); Seneca, Ep. 108,24ff (on using a philosophical rather than grammatical approach to literature).

texts so that crude moral condemnation can be dispensed with. This method seems to suggest that art can also be defended by appeal to its autonomy: the reader can be taught to look for a kind of aesthetic propriety which is the object of works of poetry, and whose attainment may explain apparently unsatisfactory moral features.

The fact, then, that Plutarch assumes that philosophy will look at poetry askance has two consequences. On the one hand the work teaches a series of techniques for resisting the falsehoods of poetry by reference to other poetry: these presuppose that the student, far from eschewing poetry, has been acquiring familiarity with an ever wider range of texts, but encourage him to ignore their claim to be considered as self-contained works of art.[126] On the other hand, Plutarch feels that he must sketch out a theoretical position on the nature of poetry, showing why some of the discreditable things it presents are acceptable: this position sometimes seems to show that poetry has an autonomous excellence, sometimes that good poetry does not conflict with morality after all.

The position set out is based on the argument that poetry is a kind of mimesis, whose excellence lies in accuracy of imitation. It is of interest for two reasons: because it is a new development in the history of ancient poetics, and because it raises problems when considered

126 See D.M. Schenkeveld, 'The Structure of Plutarch's de audiendis poetis', Mnemosyne 35 (1982), 60-71, for a fuller discussion of the techniques presented, and the relation between the exemplary passages of practical criticism and the theoretical sections of the work.

in relation to the rest of the work. The young man, Plutarch argues, must realise that a good painting is not one which makes all things beautiful, but one which shows beautiful things as beautiful, ugly things as ugly; in poetry, similarly, it is a merit of the poet to show wicked people behaving wickedly.[127] One proof that this is the case is that we take pleasure in faithful representations even of unattractive things, admiring the skill of the artist rather than the qualities of the object.[128] Once one sees this, however, one will not think it morally damaging if a character in a play says εἴπερ γὰρ ἀδικεῖν χρή, τυραννίδος πέρι κάλλιστον ἀδικεῖν ; the lines befit Eteocles, and are thereby discredited, as being appropriate to a base man.[129]

This passage is of interest as a development in ancient poetics, since it may well be the closest thing we have in ancient criticism to an appreciation of literary realism (the attempt to give a faithful portrayal of

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127 De Audiendis Poetis 17f et seq., e.g. 18a ἡ δὲ μίμησις, ἄν τε περὶ φαῦλον ἄν τε περὶ χρηστὸν ἐφίκηται τῆς ὁμοιότητος, ἐπαινεῖται. καὶ τοὐναντίον ἂν αἰσχροῦ σώματος εἰκόνα καλὴν παράσχῃ, τὸ πρέπον καὶ τὸ εἰκὸς οὐκ ἀπέδωκεν. Some painters show unnatural acts, like Medea's murder of her children; the young man must learn that we praise, not the thing imitated,(18b) ἀλλὰ τὴν τέχνην, εἰ μεμίμηται προσηκόντως τὸ ὑποκείμενον. ἐπεὶ τοίνυν καὶ ποιητικὴ πολλάκις ἔργα φαῦλα καὶ πάθη μοχθηρὰ καὶ ἤθη μιμητικῶς ἀπαγγέλλει, δεῖ τὸ θαυμαζόμενον ἐν τούτοις καὶ κατορθούμενον μήτ' ἀποδέχεσθαι τὸν νέον ὡς ἀληθὲς μήτε δοκιμάζειν ὡς καλόν, ἀλλ' ἐπαινεῖν μόνον ὡς ἐναρμόττον τῷ ὑποκειμένῳ προσώπῳ καὶ οἰκεῖον. Cf. 18d, οὐ γάρ ἐστι ταὐτὸ τὸ καλόν τι μιμεῖσθαι καὶ καλῶς. καλῶς γάρ ἐστι τὸ πρεπόντως καὶ οἰκείως, οἰκεῖα δὲ καὶ πρέποντα τοῖς αἰσχροῖς τὰ αἰσχρά.

128 De Audiendis Poetis 18bc

129 ibid. 18d-f (of Phoen. 524). Cf. also comments in the scholia on Phoen. 446: κάλλιστα πεποίηται τῷ τραγικῷ τὸ πρόσωπον οἷον δεῖ εἶναι ἄδικον ἄνδρα· γινώσκων γὰρ ὅτι οὐδὲν δίκαιον ἔχει λέγειν, ἐπείγει τὴν κρίσιν τὸν ἐκ τῆς δικαιολογίας κατὰ λεπτὸν γινόμενον ἔλεγχον φεύγων, on 504-6 (ἄστρων ἂν ἔλθοιμ' ἡλίου πρὸς ἀντολὰς/καὶ γῆς ἔνερθεν, δυνατὸς ὢν δράσαι τάδε): οὐκ ἐπιτιμητέον δέ· ἁρμόδια γὰρ οἱ λόγοι ἀνδρὶ πλεονεξίαν διώκοντι. (also on 507)

reality) for its own sake. The educated reader is expected to cultivate appreciation for skilful mimesis, regardless of his attitude to the 'original', to have an eye for various types and the proper way of presenting them (cf. Plutarch's praise of Menander's skill in differentiating types, again especially agreeable to the educated man.[130]) This is remarkable, since it is clearly derived from Aristotle's description of mimesis in the Poetics;[131] it has points of contact with Horace as well - why, then, should it nevertheless seem more concerned with realism than they?

Plutarch's views on the convincing representation of character differ in one important respect from those of both Aristotle and Horace: they are largely independent of the claims of genre. For Aristotle the aims of a genre help to determine the importance of convincing representation of characters and actions: these are means to a particular end (e.g. the characteristic emotions of tragedy), so not just any persons will do as subjects of imitation, but only those who contribute to that end.[132] The difference between the two is most striking when one considers Chapter 7 of de audiendis poetis, where Plutarch talks about poets' use of unexpected changes as one of their chief sources of pleasure and astonishment, and one

130 Epitome of the comparison of Aristophanes and Menander, Moralia 853Aff

131 Poetics 1448b10ff on the pleasure given by imitations of unprepossessing objects.

132 Cf. especially the discussion of the best kind of plot, Poetics 1452b28ff, and the insistence, at 1450a20ff, that the mere presentation of characters is not sufficient for a tragedy.

of the main characteristics of fiction.[133] It is because change and variety are such an important source of pleasure, similarly, that poets show even the gods as subject to violent emotions.[134] In other words, poetry can achieve the desired effects on its audience whatever the types of person who undergo these violent changes, and even, perhaps if the action is not especially plausible; whereas for Aristotle, restrictions on the kind of reversal used (and on the kind of person who could suffer them) had to be made if a work was to produce the effect suited to its genre. Plutarch was not interested in the notion of the pleasure appropriate to a kind of poetry.[135]

Plutarch's interest in appropriate representation of character is in one respect closer to Aristotle's than to Horace's: he is concerned mainly with moral types rather than, e.g., with persons of various ages and classes. He approaches Horace most nearly in his interest in the appropriate presentation of mythological characters; it is assumed that we know that Eteocles or Ixion was wicked, and therefore that successful poetry will portray them as such. But the reason for admiring such portrayal is very different. The merit of the poet lies not in having mastered the rules of his art (which

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133 De Audiendis Poetis 25d

134 ibid.

135 In this Plutarch also differs from the tragic scholia, where interest is shown in appropriateness to type of character, but also in the plots suited to the tragic genre - Euripides' Orestes, for instance, is criticised for being too comic. Cf. Aristophanis hypothesis (τὸ δρᾶμα κωμικωτέραν ἔχει τὴν καταστροφήν), also comments on 1512, 1521, 1691. A scholiast on Andromache 32 reports an objection: οἱ φαύλως ὑπομνηματισάμενοι ἐγκαλοῦσι τῷ Εὐριπίδῃ φάσκοντες ἐπὶ τραγικοῖς προσώποις κωμῳδίαν αὐτὸν διατελεῖσθαι. γυναικῶν τε γὰρ ὑπονοίας κατ' ἀλλήλων καὶ ζήλους καὶ λοιδορίας καὶ ἄλλα ὅσα εἰς κωμῳδίαν συντελεῖ, ἐνταῦθα ἁπαξάπαντα τοῦτο τὸ δρᾶμα περιειληφέναι. ἀγνοοῦσιν· ὅσα γὰρ εἰς τραγῳδίαν συντελεῖ, ταῦτα περιέχει ἐν τέλει, τὸν θάνατον τοῦ Νεοπτολέμου καὶ θρῆνον Πηλέως, ἅπερ ἐστὶ τραγικά.

involves knowing the characteristics suited to certain stock characters, knowing in which genres they can properly be presented, knowing the adaptations which must be made in a particular type depending on the level of the genre in which it appears), but simply in presenting a type of character in a form which is recognisable to the public.

The account of art, then, and particularly poetry in De Audiendis Poetis is in some ways a very simple one. It is noticeable that, though by far the greatest number of the examples used come from tragedy and epic, there is no suggestion that distinctive features of one or both genres need to be taken into account, either in describing the principal excellence of poetry, or in describing the nature of poetic imitation. Poetry aims at verisimilitude; it uses the element of surprise to intensify pleasure or astonishment; no more need be said. But Plutarch's emphasis on appropriate representation, and on verisimilitude, as virtues in themselves, raises difficulties if one tries to connect the theoretical passages with the rest of the work.

C. M. J. Sicking has discussed in some detail the problems which arise from Plutarch's eclectic use of elements of Gorgianic, Platonic, and Aristotelian views; it is therefore unnecessary to do so here.[136] What should be pointed out, however, is that, given Plutarch's agreement with Plato on the moral implications of poetry, his

136 "Plutarchus' De audiendis poetis. Literatuurtheorie als excuus voor onderwijs", Lampas XVI, 1983

attempt to take over the criteria of successful deception (from Gorgias) and of artistic autonomy (though slightly different from Aristotle's) cannot be entirely consistent. The notion of appropriate representation, that is, does not really stand up.

Plutarch's attitude to realism in poetry can usefully be compared to that of a modern student of realism, Georg Lukács. Lukács believes that it is a mark of good art to be faithful to reality, by which he understands giving a representation of the manifestations of historical determinism in the class struggle at a particular historical moment. He also believes that it is possible to find this excellence in authors whose own ideology is foreign to his own: a good artist, simply by having a genius for presenting what is there, will represent the truth in spite of himself, and in spite of whatever false interpretations he himself might be inclined to put on what he sees.[137] This is a move in some ways very similar to Plutarch's, a way of rescuing works considered to be great literature which seemed indefensible in a particular intellectual environment. For Plutarch, it is a matter of arguing that excellence in a work of art, especially poetry, is above all a matter of faithful representation. If you have been trained to put the right interpretation on reality (if you know which

137 See The Historical Novel, 1938 (Pelican translation, 1981), 58-9, 63. Cf. F. Engels' letter to Margaret Harkness, April, 1888: 'Realism, to my mind, implies, besides truth of detail, the truthful reproduction of typical characters under typical circumstances' (quoted in K. Marx and F. Engels, On Literature and Art (Moscow, 1976), p. 90); and the discussion in G. Bisztray, Marxist Models of Literary Realism (New York, 1978), pp. 17ff.

actions are mean, etc.) you will simply find it confirmed by the best works of art. A bad work, presumably, would make someone like Thersites attractive.

Lukács, however, does not try to connect the excellence of realistic works with their effect on an audience. Plutarch, on the other hand, considers the pleasure which accurate representations give a mark of their excellence. This is awkward: mimetic works please by virtue of their likeness to real things, but poetry is also defined as a kind of fiction, which pleases by inventions, since these are often more agreeable than truth.[138] Nor is fiction simply a separate source of pleasure: the strength of the pleasure depends on the inventions' being taken as true.[139]

This seems to leave two alternatives. Perhaps the excellence of mimetic poetry lies in being taken to be true - in convincing the audience that a certain sort of person would act in the way shown. Certain actions look appropriate to that sort of person, so the plot looks probable; the surprising things that happen give pleasure partly because they nevertheless seem likely. Homer's gods would be perfectly acceptable provided they were convincing. What seems convincing, however, is likely to vary according to the preconceptions of the spectators or readers of a work. One would have to define good mimesis with reference to what a reader would consider appropriate characterisation, rather than to what certain kinds of

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138 De Audiendis Poetis 16b-c, 25c-d

139 Cf. for instance De Audiendis Poetis 25b8-9

people 'actually' are like. But Plutarch thinks that some works ought not to deceive: no one should find them convincing, though in fact many people have been misled. Perhaps, then, good mimesis is <u>really</u> like the things it claims to represent, and as such is what the educated person will take to be convincing. But in that case the apparent independence of art disappears: either it fits the right preconceptions about the world, and is acceptable anyway, or it does not, and is both morally and artistically bad. Either way no room is left for fiction as an essential part of poetry and the pleasure it gives.

In the final analysis, Plutarch does not succeed in setting up an independent aesthetic standard for poetry, based on its capacity to imitate actions and men in an appropriate way. His attempt is interesting, however, for what it shows about the way the concept of propriety could function in ancient criticism. On the one hand, the reader of literature learned a set of values against which poetry could be measured - learned, for instance, the terms of discussion of poetry from a philosophical point of view.[140] On the other hand, by assimilating

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140 It is interesting to note the difference between this, and discussions which use philosophical points from an essentially rhetorical perspective. 'Longinus' and Philostratus, for instance, mention the impiety of Homer's representation of gods, but what really brings home the impropriety of this is the way he has reversed the hierarchy of men and gods: the gods are shown with human troubles and passions, the men as almost godlike (Περὶ Ὕψους 9.2; Philostratus, <u>Heroicus</u> II 19, 693, Kayser II 163,2-5). Those who criticise Homer from a philosophical perspective are less likely to make the second point: they agree in disapproving of the turbulent life of the Homeric gods, but are less impressed by the Homeric hero.

these standards he came to see the world in a certain light, so that works which failed to fit these would seem not only improper but also unconvincing.[141] Such an approach has obvious restrictions. It is clear, however, that Plutarch's notion of propriety as an excellence of art, like Horace's, is on the whole impervious to objections based on what audiences actually find most moving or effective. For each, use of the standard of propriety implies not only that works of art ought in some way to be accommodated to the sensibilities of the audience, but also that the taste of the audience must be educated to be pleased only by works which meet certain standards of correctness.

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141 Cf. Gérard Genette, 'Vraisemblance et Motivation', Figures II, for similar methods in French neo-classical criticism.

Virgilian Commentators: Servius, Servius Danielis, Tiberius Donatus

We have seen that there was a strong connection between the types of propriety stressed in the Homeric scholia and those applied to poetic criticism in the education of the young. Educated people might be expected to know the terms of such debates, though they were free to decide for themselves whether the poet had in fact committed an impropriety in particular passages. This tradition influences the use of the standard of propriety by Virgilian commentators in two ways.

One is indirect. Virgil himself seems to have had a sense of what was proper to epic similar to that put forward in the Homeric scholia, and to have shaped his imitations of Homer in certain passages in ways that are in accordance with the sense of decorum of the scholia. Homeric scholars sometimes criticised Homer, for instance, for using low material in similes. Michael Coffey has shown that Virgil's range in similes is much narrower than Homer's - he avoids unheroic people, unpoetic objects, trades other than agricultural ones, so hasn't the gossiping women, blood puddings, tanners, etc. which attracted criticism in the Homeric scholia.[142] Homer does not mind using technical words, e.g. for birds; Virgil avoids them, and is criticised when he does not.[143] Robin

142 'The Subject Matter of Vergil's Similes', BICS 8 (1961), 63-75. Cf. for instance A on Il. 20.251-5 (simile of gossiping women athetized because unworthy of heroes, and because it is a barbaric, Egyptian custom for women to come out and hurl abuse), bT on Il. 17.389-93, 13.589, 17.570, 21.12-14 (in the last four the subject matter is dismissed as ταπεινόν or εὐτελής, but Homer's poetic language is said to disguise this).

143 Cf. Servius on Aen. 4.254: AVI SIMILIS incongruum heroo credidit carmini, si mergum diceret vel, ut quidam volunt, fulicam: ut alibi (G.2.320) ciconiam per periphrasin posuit, 'candida venit avis longis invisa colubris'. 'Curculio', used at G.1.186, is criticised by Porphyrio in a comment on Horace, A.P. 47.

Schlunk has traced a large number of changes from the Homeric model to scholiastic comments - in the case of propriety, there is the respectable motivation given for Latinus' offering Lavinia to Aeneas (Homeric scholia had objected to Alcinoos' offering Nausicaa to a stranger, see P on Od. 7.311).[144] The scholia include an objection to the passage where Athena gets into the chariot with Diomedes, and the chariot groans beneath them (why should their grandeur make them heavier than other people?); Virgil modifies this in two ways (Juturna in the form of a charioteer does not tax the chariot with extra weight, 12.468ff, Aeneas makes Charon's boat heavier because he is being contrasted with the weightless dead, 6.411-14).

For our purposes, it does not much matter whether Schlunk is right to think that Virgil had read the scholia; what matters is that he should have assimilated a way of reading Homer, whether at school or through further reading, which made such standards seem natural.

Virgil's modifications of Homer in this direction, as I have said, influenced the criticism of the commentators indirectly: it left them with far less to say on the subject of impropriety. A few objections are preserved - some objected to Juno's offering a wife to a married man (1.71); to Venus' asking armour from her husband for a son conceived in adultery (8.373); to allowing the sacrilegious Mezentius a wise remark (10.861); Aeneas' proclaiming himself 'pius Aeneas' seemed to require defence (1.378); there are objections to low words.[145] But in general the

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144 The Homeric Scholia and the Aeneid (Ann Arbor, 1974), Ch. II, 'Propriety'.

145 Servius on Aen. 1.177 (avoids low word by periphrasis), 726 (uses Greek 'lychni' to avoid 'lucerna'), 3.343, 8.404, 428, 9.411, 10.483, 547, 11.914, 12.767, 775.

scholia reflect admiration for Virgil's observation of propriety. His handling of Venus' awkward request is admirable (8.373, 383, cf. Ti. Donatus ad loc.); so are his euphemistic references to Dido's affair with Aeneas (4.318, cf. TD; 4.608; 4.166, cf. TD); Dido shows a proper shame for her passion, not speaking directly (TD on 4.3, p. 356,23ff; Servius on 4.19, 4.551); Aeneas' awkward position as abandoner of Troy is passed off well (2.434 (TD, 206,3ff); 2.199 (and TD, 175,23ff); 2.13 (and TD, 148,5ff)).[146] Propriety is shown in the presentation of Aeneas (last to be frightened in the storm,[147] does not occupy himself with menial tasks); in the deference shown Anchises (3.9, 472).[148]

The complimentary remarks concerning propriety bring us to the second connection between the Homeric scholia and Virgilian commentators - the two tend to make the same kind of remark. In addition to those mentioned, there are a fair number of examples of praise of appropriate representation of types of character, of expression of emotion, recalling remarks on such subjects in the Homeric scholia.[149] There

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146 Cf. also Tiberius Donatus, proem. p. 2, where he argues that Virgil had to take pains with this to make the poem treat the ancestor of Caesar suitably.

147 1.92: servavit τὸ πρέπον, ut Aeneam ultimum territum dicat.

148 For other examples of the observance of τὸ πρέπον, cf. 1.738, 9.775, 12.443.

149 For similarities in general between Homeric and Virgilian scholia, see E. Fraenkel, review of the Harvard Servius, JRS 59 (1949).

are, for instance, several comments in the Servian scholia and in Ti. Donatus on the broken style suited to strong emotion, e.g. anger. Such a style suits the anger of Neptune, who breaks off with 'quos ego' at 1.135: 'deficit hoc loco sermo; et congrue, quasi irati et turbatae mentis ut alibi' (Servius, TD similar).[150]

The kinds of remark made in connection with appropriateness are in general very similar in the two groups of commentators: the closest one gets to a distinctively Roman touch is, e.g., Ti. Donatus' remark that the work must present Caesar's ancestor fittingly. There is consequently little of interest to report. A few points, however, may be made.

First, linguistic: 'decet' and cognates tend not to be used for such remarks. We have seen that in several cases the Greek term, τὸ πρέπον, is used; where Latin terms occur, they tend to be 'congruere' or 'convenire' and cognates (both features in line with the usage of Aelius Donatus in the Terence commentary, see below, p. 159, notes 46 and 47).[151]

Second, one can perhaps see something of a trend towards the rhetorical. Ti. Donatus' notion of decorum has the strong ethical connotations to be found in Horace, but it is above all highly rhetorical.[152] The account of the poet's observance of propriety looks like the bare essentials of Cicero's decorum: observing the rationem

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150 Cf. (in the Homeric scholia) A on Il. 9.372,375,431. For other examples of appropriate expression of emotion, cf. SD on Aen. 2.361; TD on Aen. 1.69(p.27,4f), 96(p.33,3ff); 4.310 (p.397,16-18), 314 (p.398,10ff).

151 E.g. TD on Aen. 1.208 (p.49,1), Servius on Aen. 11.351, 4.141.

152 For the ethical, cf. proem. p. 5,8: habent quod imitentur patres et filii, mariti et uxores, imperator et miles, civis optimus et patriae spectatissimus cultor, in laboribus periculisque reipublicae optimum quemque et apud suos primum fortunas et salutem suam debere contemnere . . .

personae, loci, temporis.[153] Rhetorical terminology is used in the Homeric scholia, but not to the same degree - this may show the long-term effect of the connection in ancient education between early literary studies and later study of rhetoric. One might even be able to trace a parallel development in Greek studies of Homer: Eustathius (admittedly much later) is like Ti. Donatus in consistently using rhetorical analysis on the text.[154]

Finally, the conservatism of the commentators deserves notice. Much of the material in the Servian scholia, for instance, seems to be transmitted from 1st century sources.[155] This suggests that it was acceptable to discuss Virgil in terms used shortly after his death, even after the lapse of four centuries. In the manner of Aristarchus, scholars often rebutted foolish objections, but still thought it worth talking in terms of, e.g., observance of propriety. One has thus a very striking illustration of the nature of ancient criticism, which aimed at teaching readers to understand works in traditional ways rather than at developing new and original interpretations.

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153 The three are remarked on separately in a large number of passages. For their occurrence together, see 1.80,197,313,357,520,597,661,663, 676, 2.3, 459, 3.41,53,121, 4.165, 6.512, 7.511, 8.157,372,387, 9.80,378. For their connection with the job of the orator, see for instance 1.663, 'multa conplexa servata illa parte rhetoricae disciplinae sine qua orator nihil est; nam et personarum et loci et temporis rationem tenuit . . .'

154 Cf. for instance his discussion of Δ51ff, where Hera offers to let Zeus destroy three of her favourite cities. He passes over the offer itself, and seems more interested in the rhetorical qualities of the remarks which follow than in the appropriateness of the representation of the goddess.(VdV 701,40ff)

155 See G. Goold, 'Servius and the Helen Episode', HSCP 74 (1970), 101-168, H. Jocelyn, 'Ancient Scholarship and Virgil's Use of Republican Latin Poetry, I', CQ 14 (1964), 280-295, 'II', CQ 15 (1965), 126-144, R. Lloyd, 'Republican Authors in Servius and the scholia Danielis', HSCP 65 (1961), 291-341.

Macrobius

The Saturnalia is dedicated to Macrobius' son Eustachius, and is presented as a compendium of knowledge put together for his benefit in a form which will be easy to remember. The primary object of the work helps to explain the way it is put together: the speakers in the dialogue put forward views which were not necessarily held by the historical persons on whom they are based, but which convey information which Macrobius wished to impart.[156] The claims of probability were satisfied provided that subjects were assigned to appropriate speakers (e.g. religion to Praetextatus, daring figures to Servius). The book does not always show critical views either of the dramatic date or of the date of composition; one of its uses seems to lie in preserving earlier, perhaps very early criticism of Virgil (Nettleship thinks some of the observations may be traced back to works mentioned by Suetonius[157]).

The book's chief interest, then, might seem to be that Macrobius was apparently satisfied with lines of discussion introduced by Virgil's early critics - with problems of accuracy, qualms about daring diction, doubts about his imitation of Homer (unsuccessful?

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156 Macrobius appeals to the precedent set by Plato for anachronism in dialogues, and may have thought the practice of earlier writers also justified ignoring the views of those whom one included in such a work. For discrepancies between the views of Servius in the dialogue and in the Aeneid commentary, see H. Nettleship, 'On Some of the Early Criticisms of Virgil's Poetry', in J. Conington, ed., Vergili Opera, v.1, xxxi-ii, R. Kaster, 'Macrobius and Servius', HSCP 84 (1980), pp. 255f.

157 E.g. the Aeneidomastix of Carvilius Pictor, Perellius Faustus' collection of furta (op. cit.). Cf. Sat. 1.4. on Macrobius' practice of writing down the ipsissima verba of earlier writers.

dishonest?), with the claim of rhetorical genius and impressive polymathy which had once been popular in praise of Homer. But there is more to the work than this. Like Plutarch, Macrobius uses a great deal of traditional material for examples of the kind of thing that can or should be said about a poet; both imply that part of being educated is knowing the terms of such conventional discussions. Macrobius does not, as Plutarch does, try to give a theoretical account of the nature of poetry, which would justify his application of traditional views; his use of the dialogue form, on the other hand, gives interesting indications of the value he thought these had.

Alan Cameron has argued convincingly that the Saturnalia is not an account of late 4th century society as seen by a contemporary, but an idealised representation of this, written when the misfortunes of the Christianised Empire encouraged nostalgia for civilised paganism.[158] Prominent pagans are among the characters,[159] but polemical paganism is largely absent: the emphasis of the work is on cultural heritage, on the expert knowledge required to possess it fully, on the civilised society it makes possible. Consequently the context of critical remarks

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158 'The date of Macrobius' Saturnalia', JRS 56 (1966). Cameron's arguments are shown to have epigraphical support by S. Panciera, in Tituli 4, Epigrafia e Ordine Senatorio 1 (Rome, 1982), 658-660.

159 On Praetextatus, Symmachus and Flavianus see H. Bloch, 'A New Document of the Last Pagan Revival', HTR 38 (1945) and 'The Pagan Revival in the West at the End of the 4th Century', in The Conflict between Paganism and Christianity in the 4th Century, ed. A. Momigliano (Oxford, 1963).

may be as important as their content; we can gather Macrobius' attitude to certain criticisms of Virgil by considering the type of person who is allowed to make them.

The characters in the Saturnalia can be divided into outsiders and insiders. Insiders are the host and the invited guests, some men of birth, all of learning, all knowing their places and showing respect for others' fields of expertise. Outsiders are the uninvited guests, Horus, Dysarius and especially Evangelus, who is singled out as particularly repulsive (1.7.2): everyone is appalled when he appears, though too polite not to insist that he is welcome.[160] Avienus starts as something of an outsider - he betrays his ignorance of the language by suspecting Praetextatus of error, then rudely attacks Servius for a defence based on the value of archaism. On the other hand, he behaves better as the dialogue progresses, and learns to know his own ignorance.[161] Criticism of Virgil is not confined to outsiders, but there are interesting differences in kind of criticism made, and the weight it carries, depending on who makes it.

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160 He may be meant to be a Christian, though his remarks do not have a particularly Christian flavour - at 1.11, for instance, he attacks Praetextatus' account of the origin of the Saturnalia by asking why religion should care about slaves. (If Macrobius was hostile to Christianity, he may not have troubled to acquire an accurate picture of its beliefs.)

161 Macrobius' use of this schema, and the value set on expert knowledge and knowing one's place, are discussed in R. Kaster's excellent article, 'Macrobius and Servius', HSCP 84 (1980); he does not connect this, however, with such criticism on matters of propriety as arises in the work.

The only character to make sweeping condemnations of Virgil is Evangelus. At 1.24.2 he objects to using Virgil as an authority: what did he know about religion? Virgil had countless faults, including the use of Greek and barbaric words, and bad dispositio. At 1.24.9 he is amused by the suggestion that Virgil was a súperb orator; at 5.2.1, after Eusebius has shown that Virgil was the perfect orator, with mastery of the four genera dicendi, uniting the merits of all ten Attic orators, he is sceptical - how could such a rustic have had acquaintance with Greek letters? None of these objections is allowed to stand: sooner or later all are dealt with by the pronouncement of an expert on the subject. Avienus, who is equally lacking in competence on any particular subject, is allowed to question certain oddities of diction in Virgil (6.7.4), but all points are instantly dealt with by authoritative remarks from Servius.

On the other hand, experts may themselves take exception to certain passages. Eustathius, for instance, gives a very long discussion of Virgil's imitation of Greek authors, especially Homer. Most of this is simply a list of parallel passages, possibly deriving from the Furta of Carvilius Pictor, but here adduced without comment as to Virgil's credit. But examples are added, in sections 5.13, 14, and 15, where Virgil was thought to fall short of his model. Homer has Diomedes, helped by Athena, blaze

with fire in a battle; Virgil uses this to excess, both of Turnus and of Aeneas, and inopportunely of the latter, who has not yet even entered the fight.[162] Homer introduces most of the contingents in the catalogue in the same way, and is particularly admirable in this simplicity; Virgil thinks it necessary to introduce variety, and falls short of his model.[163] When he tries to invent rather than imitate he is unsuccessful: his reason for the outbreak of the Latian war is unconvincing, since princes would not have fallen out over violence among rustics, and he is forced to add to this the furious intervention of Juno.[164] Moving away from Homer, Eustathius finds fault with Virgil's adaptation of Pindar's description of Aetna: Pindar is himself an author who has been criticised for tumidity, but Virgil outdoes him in this respect and is inaccurate as well.[165]

No one defends Virgil against these criticisms: the objections of an expert are apparently unassailable. They are introduced, however, only after the complimentary sections; the implication is, perhaps, that while certain standard objections must be accepted as valid,

162 5.13.34ff

163 5.15.14ff, esp. 16: has copias fortasse putat aliquis divinae illi simplicitati praeferendas, sed nescio quo modo Homerum repetitio illa unice decet, et est genio antiqui poetae digna enumerationique conveniens quod in loco mera nomina relaturus non incurvavit se neque minute torsit deducendo stilum per singulorum varietates . . . (17) et tamen egregie, ubi oportet, de nominibus ducum variat.

164 5.17.2ff

165 5.17.8-14

only someone who recognises most of the borrowings as admirable is capable of knowing which criticisms can stand. Other aspects of the discussion confirm this view: Eustathius occasionally mentions forms of imitation which the uneducated take as faults, but which are really cases of Virgil's meticulous imitation of Homer. He sometimes imitates Homer's'headless' lines, for instance, and some find fault imperite, not knowing the metrical irregularity goes back to Homer.[166] He sometimes produces lines no different from ordinary speech; this comes from his admiration for Homer's epic simplicity.[167]

Two further aspects of the experts' speeches deserve attention: the general lack of argument in favour of the author, and the assumptions underlying the commendations made.

Where the material used seems likely to have come from a hostile source (e.g. criticising plagiarism, daring invention of words or borrowing from other languages, daring figures), it is often assimilated into a discussion with favourable overtones with little argument to justify a change in attitude. Eustathius starts out by citing some parallels between Virgil and Homer and making a comment, showing that Virgil has

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166 5.14.1f

167 5.14.5 (hos quoque tamquam heroice incomptos adamavit)

improved on his model, then goes on to give a long list of parallels between the two without explaining why these are to Virgil's credit. It seems likely that some of these originally appeared in a work criticising Virgil for plagiarism (a critical tone can be perceived in the wording of some of them), but the criticism is not directly refuted. It is apparently enough simply to present the examples as objects of approval by an expert, without showing why they are a good thing.[168] Servius' discussion of daring figures makes much the same impression. The examples seem to derive from a work in which these met with criticism; the response, however, is not a reasoned defence, but a listing of citations with vague admiring comments. There are occasional traces of the original criticism, which meet only with the observation that the figure is well done; at 6.6.8, for instance, he remarks of 'Discolor unde auri per ramos aura refulsit', 'Quid est enim aura auri, aut quem ad modum aura refulget? Sed tamen pulchre usurpavit.'

Equally interesting are the assumptions underlying the various types of comment made, which offer a number of points of comparison with those to be found in the Homeric scholia. There is considerable similarity between the two when they are concerned with rhetorical or moral

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168 On material borrowed from disapproving or defensive sources, see H. Jocelyn, 'Ancient Scholarship and Virgil's use of Republican Latin Poetry, I', CQ 14 (1964), pp. 286ff, 'II', CQ 15 (1965).

propriety. Virgil is praised, for instance, for producing language suited to the expression of emotion - e.g. to someone speaking in anger:

> . . . oportet enim ut oratio pathetica aut ad indignationem aut ad misericordiam dirigatur, quae a Graecis οἶκτος καὶ δείνωσις appellantur. horum alterum accusatori necessarium est, alterum reo; et necesse est initium abruptum habeat (sic), quoniam satis indignantibus leniter incipere non convenit. ideo apud Vergilium sic incipit Iuno - . . . quid me alta silentia cogis/rumpere? . . . nec initium solum tale esse debet, sed omnis si fieri potest oratio videri pathetica, et brevibus sententiis et crebris figurarum mutationibus debet velut inter aestus iracundiae fluctuare. (4.2.1-4)

The interest in appropriate expression of emotion and its rhetorical application are both to be found in Iliadic scholia.[169] Virgil's mastery of the four genera dicendi (the copiosum, breve, siccum, and pingue et floridum), praised at 5.1.7ff, enables him to write in the way best suited to each character (5.1.19); this recalls early praise of Homer's presentation of the three types of oratory.[170] I have mentioned a couple of cases where Virgil was thought inferior to Homer in moral tone; Eustathius criticises him, for instance, for mentioning the judgement of Paris, which Homer ignores.[171] This reminds one of the concerns of the Alexandrian scholars: scholiasts on Il. 24 debate about whether Homer knew the story, and suggest that there was good reason not to mention it even if he did.[172]

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169 E.g. A on 9.372, 375-8, bT on 9.379-86 (anger); AbT on 16.549 (ῥητορικῶς οὖν αὔξει τὸν οἶκτον). It is interesting to compare Eustathius 441,33 on the lines where Hera offers to let Zeus destroy her favourite cities (4.51-2): he praises the portrayal of Hera's bad temper, which is in character' points out that her 'Go ahead, but we won't praise you' and his 'Do as you like' are the sort of thing one would say giving in unwillingly; observes that Zeus says Hera would sate her anger by eating the Trojans raw to show how angry she is (but makes no further comment). (Cf. also bT ad loc., and, on the presentation of anger, Eustathius 756,52 on 9.374-9, 1835,37 on Od. 18.26, 1855,54 on Od. 19.71))

170 Cf. A on Il. 2.283 (the four types of rhetoric), bT on 9.622 (the four types of orator); Quintilian 2.17.8, 12.10.64, also 10.1.46ff. See also H. North, 'The Use of Poetry in the Training of the Ancient Orator', Traditio 8 (1952), 1-33 on this method of assessing poetry.

171 5.16.10-11

172 Cf. e.g. the T scholia on Il. 24.23: it would have been absurd for Hera and Athena to quarrel over the question of their beauty, when their other claims to honour were so compelling; bT on 4.51-2: a respectable motive is given for Hera's hatred of Troy.

The most striking difference between the two lies in the attitude of critics to the poet's language. Aristotle had said that λέξις ought to be clear but not low (Poetics Ch. 22), and that this was accomplished by the use of various kinds of unusual language.[173] Of the various kinds of poetry, moreover, epic was the one in which unusual words of all kinds could be used.[174] Later commentators seem to accept this view tacitly: unusual aspects of Homer's diction, at any rate, are usually treated as calling for explanation rather than criticism. Such a view seems to have required, at the very least, considerable defence from readers of Virgil: though his practice, in using figurative expressions, archaic words, foreign words, etc. is always praised in the Saturnalia, this is often done in a manner which seems to anticipate objections. At 6.6, for instance, Caecina asks Servius to describe some of Virgil's innovations in figurative language:

> Sed nunc dicat volo Servius quae in Vergilio notaverit ab ipso figurata, non a veteribus accepta, vel ausu poetico nove quidem sed decenter usurpata.

Servius agrees, praising the graces Virgil has added to Latin; but the only comments made relate to the ways in which the phrases depart from ordinary Latin usage.

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173 1458a21ff.

174 1459a10ff, cf. p. 62 above.

The sections touching on some of the types of words mentioned by Aristotle seem to show a certain uneasiness, or perhaps simply the lack of Aristotle's assumption, that certain words are the property of the epic poet. The ground for praising Virgil's use of foreign words, or words unfamiliar to the reader, is Virgil's skill in profiting from earlier writers - his methods, in other words, are justified because they had precedents. In 6.4.45, for instance, Caecina illustrates Virgil's use of words and attributes from earlier authors, thus showing that they are not, as might have been supposed, his own invention. At 6.4.1-3 he remarks,

> Ego conabor ostendere hunc studiosissimum vatem et de singulis verbis veterum aptissime iudicasse, et inseruisse lecta operi suo verba, quae nobis nova videri facit incuria vetustatis: at ecce 'addita' pro inimica et infesta quis non aestimet poetam arbitrio suo novum verbum sibi voluisse fabricari? Sed non ita . . . (Lucilius had used it)

And similarly at the beginning of 6.5. Such precedents reduce the daring of certain lines.[175] Virgil's use of Greek and Italian dialect words is justified in the same way: in using Greek words, he follows the example of earlier Roman writers, though he uses fewer than his predecessors.[176] They used Punic and Oscan words, he uses 'uri' at G.2.374 and 'camur' at G.3.55.[177]

We are never told why it is so important to establish precedents for Virgil's language. Concern for linguistic purity might account for this to some extent;[178] I think

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175 6.5, e.g. 6.5.4, 'illud audaciae maximae videri possit quod ait in Bucolicis, "et liquidi simul ignis, . . . " pro puro vel lucido seu pro effuso et abundanti; nisi prior hoc epitheto Lucretius usus fuisset in sexto, "hac etiam fit uti de causa mobilis ille devolet in terram liquidi calor aureus ignis".

176 6.4.17-22

177 6.4.23

178 See R. Kaster, 'Servius and the Grammarian's Authority', CP 75 (1980) on the use of Virgil for instruction in the language.

it may also be, however, that artifice and artificial language seemed, prima facie, unsuited to the heroic simplicity of epic, so that they needed, on the one hand, to be particularly commended, and on the other to be proved less extensive then they first appeared. This would, at any rate, fit in with some of the other comments made, in other parts of the work, on Virgil's style. At 5.14.5 Virgil is said to imitate Homer's heroic simplicity by writing lines which differed in no way from ordinary speech; and as we have seen, Virgil is thought to fall short of the impressive simplicity of Homer by inopportune use of variation in his catalogue (5.15.15-16).

iii Propriety in comedy

We have seen that when critics discussed tragedy and epic in terms of propriety, they tended to concentrate on the appropriately moral and dignified presentation of 'high' characters, and on realistic presentation of various types of characters through faithful reflection of hierarchies of virtue, age, class and gender. It was sometimes assumed that the proprieties and probabilities of these forms were also those of life (hence Plutarch's view that imitation was appropriate if it was accurate). Comedy also used representation of characters, but was at the other end of the generic hierarchy; one might expect to find different standards of propriety applied to comedy, since audiences would have had to assimilate different conventions to accept it.

The differences of conventions fall into two classes, only one of which is, in fact, concerned with representation. In tragedy, the conventions of the genre called for convincing representation, but led to conflict: one might have to settle for either heroic heroes and a degree of artificiality, or naturalistic heroes who were less heroic. In comedy, the genre might be thought to call for either heroic characters unheroically represented, or the appropriately 'low' representation of 'low' characters (in either case one might have to accept vulgar language and obscenity as appropriate).

The second difference involves what one might call the etiquette of different types of discourse - the rules

governing the relations between drama and audience. Tragedy tended to maintain strong barriers between the world of the play and that of the audience, whereas comedy (especially 5th century comedy) tended to break these down.[1] One can give various formal features which exemplify this: mentioning members of the audience by name, addressing the audience, calling attention to the fictionality of the play (e.g. by using stage machinery and clichés as sources of jokes). That this might have a close connection with the use of vulgarity and obscenity is suggested, I think, by the following passage by Bakhtin:

> A new type of communication always creates new forms of speech or a new meaning given to the old forms. For instance, when two persons establish friendly relations, the form of their verbal intercourse also changes abruptly; they address each other informally, abusive words are used affectionately, and mutual mockery is permitted. (In formal intercourse only a third person can be mocked) . . . Verbal etiquette and discipline are relaxed and indecent words and expressions may be used.[2]

Bakhtin is talking about the free, familiar communication of people in carnival, which he associates with certain kinds of comedy. Comedy (especially Old Comedy), which insults its audience, and invites interruptions in the same spirit,[3] seems to present itself as engaging in this kind of communication; it assumes an audience willing to be treated on familiar terms.

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1 For a discussion of this distinction between tragedy and comedy, see O. Taplin, 'Tragedy and Comedy in 5th century Athens: A Synkrisis', JHS 106 (1986), 163-74.

2 M. Bakhtin, Rabelais and his World (English translation, Bloomington, 1984) p. 16.

3 See Taplin, op. cit., p.173

This suggests, though, that different features could serve to set a genre in opposition to serious ones; New and Old Comedy, for instance, might differ in this respect. Old Comedy presupposed an audience with a strong sense of the proprieties and probabilities to be expected of serious drama and of life, and derived much of its humour from violations of both. Aristophanes takes advantage of assumptions about real life (that sons do not have wayward fathers, that women belong in the home, that one cannot make a separate peace in war and get away with it) to invent the impossible plots of Wasps, Lysistrata and Ecclesiazousae, Acharnians; he exploits assumptions about tragic heroes and the language suited to them to produce paratragedy.[4] As far as conventions of representation go, then, he defies expectations about 'high' characters and serious situations, and carries the 'low' representation of 'low' characters to extremes (e.g. the Sausage-seller and Paphlagonian in Knights, Dionysus' servant in Frogs). He also breaks down the barriers between play and audience in the ways mentioned in the last paragraph,[5] and uses the vulgarity and indecency which are at home in certain kinds of familiar communication.

New Comedy, on the other hand, is chiefly distinguished from tragedy by the appropriate representation of ordinary people. Plots rely on coincidence, but are not fantastic;

4 See Rau, 'Paratragodia', Zetemata 45 (1967).

5 Mentioning members of the audience, e.g. Knights, passim; addressing or calling attention to audience, (apart from parabases), e.g. Frogs 276 ('Didn't you see the parricides he mentioned?' 'Didn't you?' 'Yes, and I see them now' (pointing to audience)); calling attention to theatricality of play, e.g. Ach. 408 (ἐκκυκλήθητ'), Peace 174 (address to μηχανοποιός).

tragic language is used less often than in Old Comedy, and not always for parody.[6] Its conventions of representation, then, differ from those of tragedy mainly by giving convincing portrayals of a different class of characters, rather than by undermining or overturning the fit between character and language of the other genre. It is also less sharply distinguished from tragedy by its relation to the audience; New Comedy breaks the barrier between play and audience far less often than Old Comedy. Apart from the direct address to the audience in prologues, there are only very occasional asides specifically addressed to the audience, and a few references to the theatricality of the action.[7] Obscenity is rare (used mainly for characterisation) - this may be a result of the greater distance between play and audience.

One might expect, then, to find differences between the kinds of propriety sought by critics concerned mainly with Old Comedy, and those sought by critics of New Comedy. One might also expect writers on New Comedy to make comparisons between the two forms, and perhaps to explain why both should count as kinds of comedy despite their obvious differences.

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6 For the use of tragic language, see e.g. Menander, Aspis 407-432, Epitrep. 1123ff, Samia 616ff, Sik. 176ff; Plautus, Casina 621-6, Miles 1239-41, Mercator 195-7. For discussion of its various purposes in New Comedy, see A. Gomme and F. Sandbach, Menander. A Commentary (Oxford, 1973) on the passages mentioned; F. Sandbach, 'Menander's Manipulation of Language for Dramatic Purposes', Entretiens Fond. Hardt 1970, 124ff; R. Hunter, The New Comedy of Greece and Rome, Ch. 5.

7 For addresses to audience (other than in prologues), see Menander, Dysk. 659,660,666; Samia 216ff,267ff,327ff (for further examples, see D. Bain, Actors and Audience (Oxford, 1977), pp. 190-191); Plautus Aul. 713ff; for attention drawn to theatricality, see Plautus, Mercator 159-61, Persa 157-60. See also the discussion by Hunter, op. cit., 73-82, and Bain, op. cit., Ch. 11.

There are great difficulties, however, in discussing this part of ancient criticism. No contemporary criticism of Old Comedy survives; the major works written during the transition to New Comedy (the second book of Aristotle's Poetics, Theophrastus' On Comedy) have been lost. Ambitious attempts have been made to reconstruct the missing links, which would, if persuasive, have important implications for the history of standards of propriety for comedy. Some space must be devoted, therefore, to considering the evidence for reconstruction. The first part of this chapter, dealing with Old Comedy, deals with the surviving evidence for the standards of propriety thought suited to it.[8] The second part of the chapter deals with the possible influence of Theophrastus on criticism of New Comedy, with attempts to reconstruct his views, and with the place of propriety in the works on New Comedy which remain.

Old Comedy

Old Comedy and fifth century audiences

I suggested in the Introduction that propriety might be determined by various means - one might appeal to the response of the general public to a work, or to the views of an elite group of critics, or to the standards imposed by official censorship. There might, then, be no consensus on the question of what was and was not acceptable. Any attempt to reconstruct the views of early critics thus

8 Richard Janko (Aristotle on Comedy, London, 1984) attempts to show that we can reconstruct the second book of the Poetics from the epitome on comedy in the Tractatus Coislinianus. I discuss two points which seem to count against this in an Appendix.

raises the question of how far they were representative of contemporary reactions to the works.

There are two kinds of evidence for this. First, there are reports of legal action taken against comedians, which suggest that the licence to be allowed them was not agreed upon by all members of the original audiences. In 426, for instance, Cleon laid a charge of 'injury to the citizens' against Aristophanes for Babylonians, because the work had ridiculed Athenian officials before representatives of the subject allies.[9] There are also reports of bans on τὸ ὀνομαστὶ κωμῳδεῖν, though it is hard to know whether these have any basis in fact; they suggest at any rate that, to a later reader, the natural interpretation of such a ban was that the people satirised were not always willing to take it in good part.[10] Aristophanes himself seems to have felt that his biting wit required justification: in Acharnians he argues that he is useful to the city because he points out its blind spots rather than tickling it with compliments.[11]

The second kind of evidence is to be found in Aristophanes' remarks on the vulgar humour which characterises other comedies (but not his own). At Peace 739ff

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9 Scholia on Ach. 378f (cf. also on Wasps 1291)

10 A scholiast on Ach. 67 speaks of a ψήφισμα which had force for three years and was annulled in the archonship of Euthymenes (cf. on Ach. 1150); a scholiast on Aristides, Ὑπὲρ τῶν Τετταρῶν, speaks of a νόμος which seems to have imposed a permanent ban on personal satire (Dindorf 444, on 117, 18; cf. Anon. Crameri, Koster, Scholia in Aristophanem, Vol. IA, XIc,29). This looks unreliable, since the writer seems unsure when the ban was passed: he states first that it took place when Cleon accused Aristophanes of ὕβρις , then that others say that Alcibiades took away the right to personal satire in the time of Eupolis.

11 Ach. 630ff

the Chorus say that the poet deserves praise for being the first not to make jokes out of rags, for dispensing with the stock gluttonous Heracles, for not going out of his way to bring in jokes about slaves and beatings. These sources of humour are called vulgar and ill-bred:

> τοιαῦτ' ἀφελῶν κακὰ καὶ φόρτον καὶ βωμολοχεύματ' ἀγεννῆ
> ἐπόησε τέχνην μεγάλην ἡμῖν . . . (748-9)

At Wasps 58ff the poet is said not to have slaves throw nuts to the audience; he does not bring on Heracles cheated of his dinner, Euripides berated lewdly, or Cleon to be made mincemeat of again; he is κωμῳδίας δὲ φορτικῆς σοφώτερον. At Clouds 537ff he claims credit for not using large phalluses and violent slapstick to get a laugh. Aristophanes seems to be bullying the audience into liking more sophisticated comedy (in the Clouds passage he blames the audience for letting him be defeated, unjustly, by vulgar men).

Taken in isolation, these passages might suggest that the poet is trying to encourage spectators to approach comedies with higher standards of decorum (and of originality) which he himself always meets. But since Aristophanes himself sometimes uses the vulgar devices criticised, and since no comedies by other authors survive to show whether there was an important difference of degree, such an interpretation is open to question. The opening scene of Frogs suggests another possibility. Xanthias comes in carrying a heavy load, and wants to take advantage of this to make some of the standard jokes

that make the audience laugh; Dionysus heads him off each time, complaining of staleness and mentioning some particularly trite ones which are to be off limits. This makes it possible both to exploit popular jokes about being hard-pressed and to affect to condemn them. In this scene, at least, criticising the vulgarity of such jokes is as much a good-natured insult to the audience as an objection to the jokes themselves. Both the insults and the vulgar jokes are examples of the familiarity with which the poet treats his audience; it may be that we should regard the passages discussed in the last paragraph in a similar light.

The second kind of evidence, then, suggests that some of the 'improprieties' of Old Comedy - its vulgarity and obscenity - were by no means offensive to spectators, but on the contrary generally popular. The first kind (reports of legislation) shows that there was at least one case of strong objection to personal satire. It is not clear, however, whether many thought Aristophanes had gone too far: Cleon's indictment in 426 is not said to have been successful.

How far, then, do the judgements of critics agree with the reactions of fifth-century audiences? On the surviving evidence, Plato and Aristotle do not seem to have been interested in the propriety or impropriety of personal satire (though Aristotle mentions invective in his description of the history of comedy, as associated with the meaner sort of poet).[12] Apology 18B-D and

12 Poetics 1448b26ff

and 19C suggest that Plato minded about its truth (Socrates says that the general, more dangerous misconceptions about him were due partly to comedy). Both Plato and Aristotle are primarily interested in the nature of humour (which derives pleasure from the faults of others), and in the vulgarity and indecency of Old Comedy. Plato's Aristophanic parody in the Symposium suggests a certain sympathy for comedy; both he and Aristotle, however, are sometimes critical of its humour, implying that it must be found wanting if judged by the standards of the well-bred man.

Plato and Aristotle

- Harmless faults and the nature of humour

Plato and Aristotle both think that defects of faults are ridiculous, but only if harmless. The similarity is a rather superficial one, however, as they mean different things by the restriction. At Philebus 49C Socrates discusses the position of the people who are ridiculous: false conceit regarding one's wealth, appearance, or virtue is funny in people who haven't the power to take revenge for one's laughter, hateful in the powerful. At 49D-E he makes the point again: delusions about one's wisdom, beauty and so on are funny when harmless to others.[13]

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13 Τὴν οὖν τῶν φίλων δοξοσοφίαν καὶ δοξοκαλίαν καὶ ὅσα νυνδὴ διήλθομεν, ἐν τρισὶν λέγοντες εἴδεσιν γίγνεσθαι, γελοῖα μὲν ὁπόσα ἀσθενῆ, μισητὰ δ' ὁπόσα ἐρρωμένα, ⟨φῶμεν⟩ ἢ μὴ φῶμεν ὅπερ εἶπον ἄρτι, τὴν τῶν φίλων ἕξιν ταύτην ὅταν ἔχῃ τις τὴν ἀβλαβῆ τοῖς ἄλλοις, γελοίαν εἶναι; (49d11-e4)

Aristotle, on the other hand, seems to have in mind faults which are harmless to the person who has them; at Poetics 1449a32ff he defines comedy as the imitation of people who are inferior through faults which are painless and undestructive.[14]

What implications might these views have for the propriety of Old Comedy? As far as the Philebus is concerned, there could be no objection to it on such grounds. Plato defines what is funny to explain the nature of our enjoyment of it, viz. that this is a mixed pleasure, since it involves amusement at the misfortunes of others, and so the 'pain' of malice. The humour of comedy is to be understood by analogy with that of laughing at our friends: it produces the same kind of mixed pleasure, rather than the unadulterated kind produced by the spectacle of our enemies' misfortunes. In a different argument the element of malice in this pleasure might have counted against it on moral grounds; here, however, Plato is interested in the nature of the pleasure rather than in the characters of those who enjoy it, or in the moral status of a comedy that produces it.

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14 μίμησις φαυλοτέρων μέν, οὐ μέντοι κατὰ πᾶσαν κακίαν, ἀλλὰ τοῦ αἰσχροῦ ⟨οὗ⟩ ἐστι τὸ γελοῖον μόριον. τὸ γὰρ γελοῖόν ἐστιν ἁμάρτημά τι καὶ αἶσχος ἀνώδυνον καὶ οὐ φθαρτικόν . . . (following Gudeman) Lucas, ad loc., cites Philebus 49D-E as a parallel, presumably because both place restrictions of some kind on comic misfortune. But Plato says nothing at all about harm to the possessor of the fault. 'ἀβλαβῆ' must mean 'harmless to others': it is both most natural to take it with 'τοῖς ἄλλοις', and impossible to give it any other meaning in a passage which emphasises that the ignorance in question is a misfortune to the person who has it. (cf. note 13)

In the case of Aristotle it is harder to say. Like Plato, he seems to aim at defining what is funny, rather than what ought to be. The definition, moreover, might seem ill-suited to a slide toward prescription: where Plato defines what Plato finds funny (the false conceit of beauty and wisdom), Aristotle seems to define what is funny to most people. But the definition does not seem to fit Old Comedy very well: Lamachus in Acharnians, Dionysus in Frogs undergo painful experiences which are funny partly because the characters' weaknesses (the braggadoccio of the first, the effeminacy of the second) have made them particularly vulnerable to such mishaps, while Kinesias' hunger for sex in Lysistrata is funny and painful. It may be that the definition is simply a bad one; but it is also possible that Aristotle means to be prescriptive, and set out what is funny to a right-thinking audience, and should be to everyone else.

Aristotle may also have disapproved of Old Comedy for other reasons. In the Nicomachean Ethics he discusses the jokes suited to the well-bred man, which observe a certain restraint: such a man will not make a joke if it would pain him to have it made of himself.[15] (He also avoids indecency - I shall come back to this later.) A distinction is made between the well-bred man and the βωμολόχος, who will do anything to get a laugh; clearly if humour is to observe propriety, being funny is not enough.[16] By this criterion,

15 NE 1128a25-32

16 NE 1128a4-7, οἱ μὲν οὖν τῷ γελοίῳ ὑπερβάλλοντες βωμολόχοι δοκοῦσιν εἶναι καὶ φορτικοί, γλιχόμενοι πάντως τοῦ γελοίου, καὶ μᾶλλον στοχαζόμενοι τοῦ γέλωτα ποιῆσαι ἢ τοῦ λέγειν εὐσχήμονα καὶ μὴ λυπεῖν τὸν σκωπτόμενον.

Old Comedy might have been thought to fall short of the humour of the well-bred man because of its use of personal satire, even if it made people laugh. One might speculate that the well-bred man would not be amused by such jokes, so that a comedy which relied on them would (as far as an audience with taste was concerned) not even count as funny.

This suggests that Aristotle might have thought the style of humour of Old Comedy lacking in ethical propriety for at least two reasons, and that Plato was not particularly interested in the question. A slight qualification must be added, however, to this account of Aristotle's views. When he describes the origins of comedy in the Poetics, the important point seems to be the way it evolved into a fully mimetic genre: personal abuse would be out of place in comedy because leaving the work insufficiently general, rather than because unsuited to the best kind of humour.[17]

Vulgarity, Indecency

Both Plato and Aristotle seem to disapprove of coarseness in comedy: it involves jokes which a well-bred man would be ashamed to make. In the Republic Plato argues that laughing at the ribald jokes of comedy encourages one to make them oneself; comedy fails to conform to the standards which a decent man sets for himself.[18] Aristotle likens the humour of Old Comedy (or rather 'old comedies') to that of the uncultivated man: the point of similarity

17 Poetics 1448b36-8, 1449b6-9, 1451b8-15

18 X, 606C

seems to be that both use indecency:

> ἔστι γάρ τινα πρέποντα τῷ τοιούτῳ λέγειν ἐν παιδιᾶς μέρει καὶ ἀκούειν, καὶ ἡ τοῦ ἐλευθερίου παιδιὰ διαφέρει τῆς τοῦ ἀνδραποδώδους, καὶ πεπαιδευμένου καὶ ἀπαιδεύτου. ἴδοι δ' ἄν τις καὶ ἐκ τῶν κωμῳδιῶν τῶν παλαιῶν καὶ τῶν καινῶν· τοῖς μὲν γὰρ ἦν γελοῖον ἡ αἰσχρολογία, τοῖς δὲ μᾶλλον ἡ ὑπόνοια· διαφέρει δ'οὐ μικρὸν ταῦτα πρὸς εὐσχημοσύνην.
> (NE 1128a19-25)

In the Politics Aristotle shows concern for the social effects of certain kinds of poetry; he recalls Plato's views, in the Republic, on the danger of injudicious talk in front of small children, and of encouraging grown men to laugh at comedies. Aristotle argues that the young should not be exposed to αἰσχρολογία, since hearing about shameful things makes one readier to do them; therefore people should be forbidden to talk about shameful things, or portray them in pictures, and the young should not be allowed to see comedies or hear iambi.[19]

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19 Richard Janko takes αἰσχρολογία to mean abusiveness in the Ethics passage, and cites Politics 1336b3 as a parallel (op. cit. 204). But 'indecency' fits both passages better. In the Ethics Aristotle had begun by saying that the buffoon is indifferent both to seemliness and to the pain he inflicts, without necessarily distinguishing the two; later, however, he seems to speak of two separate aspects of coarse humour. Old Comedy illustrates lack of seemliness in the way things are put - a different point from that which follows, viz. that the educated man should try to avoid giving pain, so avoid insult (for αἰσχρολογεῖν as speaking with unseemly explicitness, cf. Aristotle's criticism of Bryson at Rhetoric 1405b8ff). He seems, then, to be considering a different side of the development of comedy from that stressed in the Poetics, where the evolution of comedy is a matter of abandoning direct attack on particular persons. 'Indecency' is also the most plausible meaning for αἰσχρολογία in the Politics passage, where not only talking about shameful things, but looking at pictures of them is to banned. It is easier to see how talk and pictures could have indecency in common than abusiveness; presumably indecent talk would generally be with reference to particular people, and in that sense abusive, but here it seems to be its indecency that is objectionable.

I have suggested (p. 137) that there were three aspects of Old Comedy which might raise issues of propriety for critics: parody of the heroic or tragic, transgression of the boundaries between stage and audience, representation of 'low' characters in appropriately low language and actions. Neither Plato nor Aristotle pays any attention to the first (though the argument from silence is not strong for Aristotle). Only Aristotle shows any interest in the second, and that is only in the particular case of invective as a source of humour: this is relegated to a more primitive stage in the development of the genre because unsuited to a fully mimetic form. (But the assumption that comedy ought to be fully mimetic may imply that all such transgressions are out of place.) The fact that personal satire could be directly offensive to members of the audience does not seem to have been a major reason for thinking it unsuited to comedy, though it may have been a further reason for preferring newer comedies to the old ones (cf. pp. 145-6).

Both Plato and Aristotle touch upon the third aspect. The Old Comedies which survive presuppose an audience which enjoyed coarse jokes and obscenities, and the kinds of characters who could use these (e.g. the Paphlagonian and the Sausage-seller in Knights); Plato and Aristotle disapprove of this kind of humour. Disapproval is justified by an appeal to the rules which a well-bred man follows in making jokes. This suggests that the class and level of education of the spectator was as important in determining

the standards of propriety a comedy was expected to observe as it was for serious genres. Aristotle's reference to old and new comedies in the Nicomachean Ethics, in fact, implies that comedy has improved by abandoning the features which appealed to the vulgar.

Later Discussions of Old Comedy

Writers on the history of comedy tended to pick up Aristotle's point about the gradual disappearance of invective, but to present it in a much cruder fashion: the aesthetic side (more complete mimesis) disappears, and moral aspects are much more important.[20] Some, like Horace and Euanthius, thought the freedom of speech of Old Comedy was eventually carried to extremes and rightly suppressed.[21] Others, like Dio Chrysostom or some of the writers of prolegomena to Aristophanes, thought its outspokenness useful, and if they discussed its suppression attributed this to the interests of powerful men.[22] It looks as though Old Comedy's violations of propriety were incorporated into its history, and either justified as morally useful (rather than morally suspect, as originally

20 It has been suggested that Theophrastus introduced terms and approaches which were particularly suited to New Comedy, especially that of Menander; that this is what lies behind, for instance, the emphasis on characterisation of later writers on comedy. There is enough support for this view to justify treating Theophrastus together with writers on New Comedy, and dealing first with recurring themes in the criticism of Old Comedy.

21 Ars Poetica 281ff; in de fabula Euanthius says that Old Comedy used the actions of citizens rather than an invented plot, thereby improving the mores civitatis, and when things got out of hand, the authorities restrained it: sed cum poetae licentius abuti stilo et passim laedere ex libidine coepissent plures bonos, ne quisquam in alterum carmen infame componeret lata lege siluerunt.

22 Dio Chrysostom, Or. 32,6 and 33,9-10. For prolegomenists, see for instance Anonymus Crameri, Koster XI b esp 16ff.

suggested), or seen as justifying its decline. Accounts of the changes in the kinds of characters used seem to show interest in the proprieties as perceived by the original audience: first powerful men could be mocked by name, then obliquely, and then citizens were made off limits altogether, and comedians were restricted to using slaves and foreigners as their subjects.[23]

Views on Old Comedy were not always, however, as straightforward as this suggests. Aristotle apparently thought Old Comedy likely to appeal to vulgar people; Dio, who on the whole thinks its abusiveness useful, seems to agree with this. In Or. 33,9-10, for instance, he remarks that the Athenians were used to being criticised by their comedians, and compares the satire of Old Comedy to the social criticism of Socrates. He disapproves, however, of comedy's ways of producing laughter, and so softening its blows:

> ἐκεῖνοι μὲν γὰρ ὑφορώμενοι καὶ δεδιότες τὸν δῆμον ὡς δεσπότην ἐθώπευον, ῥήμα δάκνοντες καὶ μετὰ γέλωτος, ὥσπερ αἱ τίτθαι τοῖς παιδίοις, ὅταν δέῃ τι τῶν ἀηδεστέρων πιεῖν αὐτά, προσφέρουσι μέλιτι χρίσασαι τὴν κύλικα. τοιγαροῦν ἔβλαπτον οὐχ ἧττον ἥπερ ὠφέλουν, ἀγερωχίας καὶ σκωμμάτων καὶ βωμολοχίας ἀναπιμπλάντες τὴν πόλιν.

It is hard to know whether Dio actually held all the opinions expressed in Oration 2, since they are spoken by Philip and Alexander, but again it looks as though comedy, by aiming only at laughter, is suited to a fairly low audience. Alexander tells Philip why he reads only Homer, explaining that he alone is useful to a king; other genres are apparently either trivial, or offer advice more suited to common people;[24]

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23 Cf. Koster IV,11ff, XIb31ff.

24 Or. 2,3-5

. . . δοκεῖ μοι, ὦ πάτερ, οὐ πᾶσα ποίησις βασιλεῖ πρέπειν . . .
τὰ δὲ γέλωτος ἕνεκεν ἢ λοιδορίας πεποιημένα, ὥσπερ τὰ τῶν
κωμῳδοδιδασκάλων καὶ τὰ τοῦ Παρίου ποιητοῦ. ἴσως δέ τινα
αὐτῶν καὶ δημοτικὰ λέγοιτ' ἄν, συμβουλεύοντα καὶ παραινοῦντα
τοῖς πολλοῖς καὶ ἰδιώταις, καθάπερ οἶμαι τὰ Φωκυλίδου καὶ
Θεόγνιδος· ἀφ' ὧν τί ἂν ὠφεληθῆναι δύναιτο ἀνὴρ ἡμῖν ὅμοιος,
πάντων μὲν κρατεῖν ἐθέλων, πάντεσσι δ' ἀνάσσειν;

On the other hand, some writers who presumably approved of Old Comedy make no mention of its useful qualities. Those who produced the Scholia on Aristophanes, seem to have taken his characteristic features for granted, and give neither comment on nor defence of possible improprieties: obscenities are simply glossed, attacks on individuals elucidated, burlesques of gods ignored.

New Comedy

Ancient views of comedy must have undergone important changes to take into account New Comedy, and in particular Menander. The exclamation of Aristophanes of Byzantium -

'ὦ Μένανδρε καὶ βίε, πότερος ἆρ' ὑμῶν πότερον ἀπεμιμήσατο;'

shows that Menander's realism was appreciated from early on;[25] as we shall see, this appreciation ultimately took the form of interest in the convincing representation of character types and emotions. Mimesis thus remained an important part of criticism, but Aristotle's notion of the mimesis of an action was neglected.

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25 Syrianus in Hermogenem, Comm. II p. 23, 8-11 Rabe

Theophrastus

Menander's first play was performed in the year of Aristotle's death; there is no way of knowing whether Aristotle would have thought Menander's work the best kind of comedy. It is tempting, however, to suppose that the principles later applied to New Comedy had their origin in Aristotle's successor, Theophrastus, and in the adaptation of Aristotle's theories to the new form. While there is very little on poetry that can certainly be attributed to Theophrastus, a few points may support this.

First, Diogenes Laertius says that Menander was the pupil of Theophrastus (V,36 and 79), so there is an ancient tradition of a connection between the two; influence of either upon the other is possible. Theophrastus' Characters, moreover, even when not dealing with characters used by Menander, shows a strikingly similar interest in types, and the cast is drawn from the same class of 'ordinary' people. The characters also illustrate, as A. Plebe points out, the Peripatetic ethical principle of the mean: they are excesses or deficiencies from the mean, sometimes opposite extremes - αὐθάδεια/ἀδολεσχία, ὀλιγαρχία/ἀγροικία. Plebe does not commit himself on the question of whether either of the two men was reacting to the other, but thinks that Theophrastus offers, in the Characters, 'material elaborated according to the new doctrines in comic aesthetics'.[26]

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26 Armando Plebe, 'La Teoria del Comico da Aristotele a Plutarco', Università di Torino, Pubblicazioni della Facultà di Lettere e Filosofia, 1952, v. IV. See also T.B.L. Webster, An introduction to Menander (Manchester, 1974), 43ff on possible connections between the two.

It might also be possible to infer certain aspects of such doctrines, connect them with New Comedy, and attribute them to Theophrastus on the basis of the definition of comedy given by Diomedes: comedy is an ἰδιωτικῶν πραγμάτων ἀκίνδυνος περιοχή.[27] Aristotle's notion of the imitation of an action takes an odd twist: genre is essentially distinguished by level of life represented and turn of plot. The ethical dimension of Aristotle's definitions disappears; characters are not specifically mentioned, but are presumably classified as such on grounds of status, rather than possession of faults of a certain kind. Consequently it is no longer specified that these must be painless: the innocuousness is transferred to the nature of the plot, which must be a harmless reversal.

Both points, as Richard Janko observes, seem better suited to New Comedy than they do, for instance, to Aristophanes.[28] The importance of plot in New Comedy made it, one might suppose, likelier to satisfy Aristotle's notion of excellence in poetry, by making comedy in some ways more like tragedy; developments in New Comedy might have encouraged Theophrastus to give a schematic description of the genres, in which analagous accounts could be given of all three, and certain elements (plot, 'level' of action) could be assumed to have an equal importance in all three.

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27 Ars Grammatica III, I.488.4-5 Keil. The definition is not attributed to Theophrastus, but may be his: definitions are also given for epic (*περιοχὴ θείων τε καὶ ἡρωϊκῶν καὶ ἀνθρωπίνων πραγμάτων*, I.484,1-2 Keil) and tragedy (*ἡρωϊκῆς τύχης περίστασις*, I.487.11-12 Keil), the latter specifically attributed to Theophrastus. The three give the impression of trying to tidy up after Aristotle; one is reminded of the way Theophrastus tries to eliminate some of the blurred edges of the Rhetoric by distinguishing four virtues of style.

28 Op. cit. p. 49

It is hard to know how much more can safely be attributed to Theophrastus. Diomedes expands on the definition of comedy by giving various accounts of its origins, and by elaborating on the differences between tragedy and comedy; some of the characteristics of the latter seem especially relevant to New Comedy:

> comoedia a tragoedia differt, quod in tragoedia introducuntur heroes duces reges, in comoedia humiles atque privatae personae; in illa luctus exilia caedes, in hac amores, virginum raptus; deinde quod in illa frequenter et paene semper laetis rebus exitus tristes et liberorum fortunarumque priorum in peius adgnitio * . 488,14-18

The material used here is also found in the Scholia to Dionysius Thrax (as well as in Euanthius de fabula), minus the definitions but with the addition of a contrast between the historical subject matter of tragedy and the fictitious plots of comedy.[29] This suggests that all

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29 Scholia to Dionysius Thrax, Hilgard 306, 20ff (XVIIIb2 Koster): Δεῖ δὲ γινώσκειν, ὅτι πολλὴ διαφορὰ τῆς τραγῳδίας καὶ τῆς κωμῳδίας, ὅτι ἡ μὲν τραγῳδία περὶ ἡρωϊκῶν πραγμάτων καὶ προσώπων λέγει, ἡ δὲ κωμῳδία ἀπήλλακται τούτων· καὶ ὅτι ἡ μὲν τραγῳδία τὰ τέλη περὶ σφαγῶν καὶ φόνων ἔχει, ἡ δὲ κωμῳδία περὶ ἀναγνωρισμοῦ· καὶ ὅτι ἡ μὲν τραγῳδία ἱστορίαν καὶ ἀπαγγελίαν ἔχει πράξεων γενομένων, ἡ δὲ κωμῳδία διάπλασμα βιωτικῶν πραγμάτων· καὶ ὅτι πάλιν ἡ μὲν τραγῳδία διαλύει τὸν βίον, ἡ δὲ κωμῳδία συνίστησιν.

Euanthius, de fabula 4 . 2:

Inter tragoediam autem et comoediam cum multa tum inprimis hoc distat, quod in comoedia mediocres fortunae hominum, parvi impetus periculorum laetique sunt exitus actionum, at in tragoedia omnia contra, ingentes personae, magni timores, exitus funesti habentur; et illic prima turbulenta, tranquilla ultima, in tragoedia contrario ordine res aguntur; tum quod in tragoedia fugienda vita, in comoedia capessenda exprimitur; postremo quod omnis comoedia de fictis est argumentis, tragoedia saepe de historia fide (sic) petitur.

three had an earlier Greek source; it may be, then, that more of this goes back to Theophrastus than is explicitly attributed to him.[30]

It has also been thought that another aspect of Theophrastus' work would have been especially suitable for the criticism of New Comedy. We know that Theophrastus wrote a περὶ λέξεως which presumably dealt with topics Aristotle had raised in the Rhetoric and Poetics; since τὸ πρέπον was one of Theophrastus' four virtues of style, it may be fair to suppose that ἠθικὴ λέξις, one of the components of propriety of style according to Aristotle, received some sort of treatment. It is possible, then, that the keen interest of later writers in the appropriateness of style to character had its origin here.

There are, however, problems both in formulating a general account of Theophrastus' views on poetry, especially comedy, and in connecting these with particular developments in comedy at the time. From the Characters one might infer that Theophrastus shared Aristotle's views of comic faults - all those dealt with are not only departures from the mean, as described in the Ethics, but observe the limitation on

30 Antionetta Dosi ('Sulle Trace della Poetica di Teofrasto', Ist. Lombardo, Rend. Litt., 94, 1960) would like to connect the three-fold division in the Scholia to Dionysius Thrax (ἱστορία, πλάσμα, μῦθος) with Theophrastus' interest in the truthfulness of different kinds of discourse (he had classed poetry and rhetoric together, as directed toward the hearer rather than toward the subject matter); and thinks the division of comedy into old, middle and new may also be his. Both would imply notice taken of New Comedy: emphasis on the fictitious nature of the comic plot would fit best, she thinks, with New Comedy; Menander is mentioned as one of the authors of this kind of work.

the gravity of the fault given in the Poetics. Theophrastus seems, then, to connect ethical matters with humour. On the other hand this side of comedy is conspicuously missing in the definition of Diomedes, which concentrates on classifying characters (according to station of life) and endings. We need more of Theophrastus to know how or if these fitted together. Meanwhile one can only observe that what little we do have of Theophrastus on this subject can be recognised as his methodical reworking of Aristotle in the interests, presumably, of order; we do not need to postulate the impact of a new form of comedy to explain this.[31]

There are, moreover, reasons for hesitating to attribute much of the Byzantine treatises on comedy to Theophrastus. It seems obvious that, whether or not he himself wished to address New Comedy, later writers would have wanted to do so, perhaps applying and developing principles he had introduced without that aim in view. Additional details and examples may be consistent with what we know Theophrastus said without deriving from him.

More indirect arguments are also unreliable. A commentator on Dionysius Thrax raises and deals with an obvious objection to restricting comedy to private matters: Aristophanes has heroic characters in his comedies, such as Dionysus and Heracles in Frogs. He replies that they

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31 On Theophrastus' tendency to schematise, see Regenbogen, RE Suppl. VII, 'Theophrastus'.

occur rarely, and are made laughable when they do:

> λέγω πρὸς ταῦτα, ὅτι πρῶτον μὲν κατὰ τὸ σπάνιον, ἔπειτα ⟨δὲ⟩ καὶ ἐπὶ γέλωτι ταῦτα εἰσάγει τὰ πρόσωπα· εἰσφέρει γὰρ τὸν μὲν Διόνυσον κίναιδον, τὸν δὲ Ἡρακλέα γαστρίμαργον. [32]

This looks like an attempt to make Old Comedy fit a definition suited to New Comedy, but it is dangerous to draw conclusions from what one of Theophrastus' definitions leaves out - one could run into similar problems, after all, trying to explain the presence of gods in tragedy in the light of his definition of that genre. Theophrastus seems to have had a tendency to over-schematise his material; one cannot necessarily read significance into the fact that a particular schema does not fit all of the data.

What, then, can be said of Theophrastus' influence on later criticism of comedy? There is not enough evidence to show whether Menander had an important effect on his views, or whether the latter were specifically tailored to New Comedy. Later interest in appropriate expression of emotion and character no doubt goes back ultimately to Aristotle's παθητικὴ and ἠθικὴ λέξις, but may well have been influenced by this via Theophrastus. But Theophrastus' most influential contribution seems to have been precisely the side of his work which looks most unsatisfactory when compared with that of Aristotle. Dosi speaks of his attempt to give a more concrete and practical account of the genres as they actually were, rather than of how they ought to be; the result seems to

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32 Scholia on Dionysius Thrax, Hilgard 475,13ff (XVIIIb3 Koster)

have been a set of rules of thumb which must have been especially suitable to one important form of poetic analysis - that of teaching poetry in schools. Theophrastus' approach to poetics must have encouraged the view that appreciating or writing good poetry was largely a matter of knowing the rules for the various genres. These rules could, of course, put an end to discussion, but could also provoke it, giving the critic something to react against. We have seen how the commentator on Dionysius Thrax tried to reconcile the definition of comedy with the plays of Aristophanes. Latin writers on Terence, as we shall see, go to some trouble to account for the effectiveness of apparent breaches of rules.

Horace

The need to observe the rules of a genre if one is to write well is especially important in the Ars Poetica. At 86ff Horace says that one has no claim to be called a poet if one does not know the 'descriptas vices' and 'colores' of different kinds of work, and then goes on to discuss essential distinctions between tragedy and comedy. The most important seems to be that of style, connected with the height of the genre, the seriousness of the emotion to be expressed, and the type of character who is to speak.

The register of diction is generally overdetermined: certain characters (low in comparison with those of tragedy) are appropriate to comedy, and for the most part only plain

language and 'untragic' emotions are appropriate to such characters.[33] Exceptions are allowed, however: a comic character can adopt a loftier style when angry, a lower style suits a tragic character when stricken by grief -

> interdum tamen et vocem comoedia tollit,
> iratusque Chremes tumido delitigat ore;
> et tragicus plerumque dolet sermone pedestri
> Telephus et Peleus, cum pauper et exsul uterque
> proicit ampullas et sesquipedalia verba,
> si curat cor spectantis tetigisse querela.
> (93-98)

Though the comedy in question is clearly New Comedy, Horace is not primarily interested in the realistic characterisation which was one of its hallmarks; this is subordinated to the demands of the emotion to be expressed, which in turn is generally under restrictions of genre. The form such restrictions take is interesting: it is assumed that certain emotions are usually out of place in comedy, but that if they appear a convincing portrayal is the most appropriate. Horace ignores, for instance, the possibility that tragic language could be used for a deliberately comic effect, in speeches of mock pathos.[34]

Elsewhere skilful characterisation seems to be an intrinsic merit in an author, since Plautus' carelessness in this respect is a sign of indifference to the quality of his work.[35] Horace criticises Plautus' failure to 'look

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33 A.P. 89-91, versibus exponi tragicis res comica non vult;
indignatur item privatis ac prope socco
dignis carminibus narrari cena Thyestae.

34 This is surprising, since the use of tragic language to express either insincere emotion or emotion in excess of its object does occur in New Comedy; moments when the audience must be assured that the pathos is comic are precisely those where comic material might be set forth in 'versibus tragicis'. See note 6 for citations.

35 Epistle II.1, 170-6

after' the parts of lover, father, pimp; it is not clear whether the charge is one of inconsistency, or of an insufficiently realistic representation (perhaps unconvincing because inconsistent). In the Ars Poetica being able to present different types convincingly is required of any kind of poet.[36] This suggests, again, that Horace's notion of the requirements of propriety for dramatic genres was limited. The implication is, as it was in the case of emotion, that the poet simply picked the types suited to his genre, and then portrayed them convincingly - the possibility, for instance, of comic exaggeration is not considered. (One might contrast, for instance, Dryden's consciousness that realism might sometimes be sacrificed to comic effect.[37])

It is interesting, nevertheless, that Horace draws attention to the connection between genre and the characters and emotions to be portrayed, since this point is ignored by Quintilian, Dio and Plutarch, writers who show great enthusiasm for Menander's skill at appropriate representation. Plutarch is in some ways a special case, and deserves separate treatment; the other two had obvious reason for concentrating on skill in presenting character and emotion without reference to literary form. Quintilian is writing a work meant to describe the education of an orator; Dio's reading list is meant to promote the same

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36 A.P. 114ff, cf. 312ff

37 See the Examen of the Silent Woman in 'An Essay of Dramatic Poesie', (London, 1668), in Dramatic Essays, ed. S.H. Monk (Berkeley, 1971), p. 59, 61.

end; both in effect use Menander as a model for achieving the kind of propriety described in Book III of Aristotle's Rhetoric.

Dio is fairly brief, saying only that Menander is outstanding in his μίμησις ἅπαντος ἤθους καὶ χάριτος[38] but Quintilian goes into greater detail to show precisely why Menander is so useful to the declaimer. The characters to be adopted by the latter sound, in fact, much like the stock cast of a New Comedy:

> ita omnem vitae imaginem expressit, tanta in eo inveniendi copia et eloquendi facultas, ita est omnibus rebus personis adfectibus accommadatus. . . . Ego tamen plus adhuc quiddam conlaturum eum declamatoribus puto, quoniam his necesse est secundum condicionem controversiarum plures subire personas, patrum filiorum, ⟨caelibum⟩ maritorum, militum rusticorum, divitum pauperum, irascentium deprecantium, mitium asperorum. In quibus omnibus mire custoditur ab hoc poeta decor.
>
> (Institutio Oratoria 10.1.69-71)

Menander is thus master of both ἠθικὴ and παθητικὴ λέξις and of τὸ κατὰ τὰ συμβεβηκότα πρέπον; his genius as a comedian is irrelevant and not discussed.

The difference of emphasis between Horace on the one hand and Dio and Quintilian on the other is an important one. Ancient criticism is sometimes accused of being excessively rhetorical, but here, at least, such an accusation would be wide of the mark. Horace, who was specifically concerned with poetry, dealt with the question of appropriateness of style in a way which related it to the excellence

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38 Or. XVIII,7

of the kinds of poetry in question; the concerns of rhetoric were not allowed to intrude. These do, of course, predominate in the works of Quintilian and Dio, but as neither has made any pretence of offering a purely aesthetic discussion this seems perfectly legitimate. The fact that appropriateness of expressing character and emotion is a common denominator among the three suggests, nonetheless, that an important change of emphasis had taken place in criticism of comedy.

This change of emphasis is especially striking when one considers the kinds of propriety now demanded of comedy. The earlier concern about the relation between comedy and audience, about whether comedy invited one to laugh when one shouldn't, or whether certain kinds of comedy did so, has vanished (to reappear in Plutarch). The terms of propriety are still used - Quintilian speaks of 'decor', Plutarch, as we shall see, speaks of language that is πρέπον - but one feels that the question of propriety as a standard of morals or etiquette, is not especially important to New Comedy. Menander does not violate this, but it is his talent for appropriate representation that matters - a standard more aesthetic than moral. Old Comedy, at any rate, does not profit from the change of interest: in Plutarch's view, for instance, Aristophanes still fails by standards of decency, but is all the worse for failing to achieve appropriateness.

Plutarch

We have seen that, in de audiendis poetis, propriety in poetry was largely a matter of realistic imitation: the well-educated young man learns that art is good if it gives, for instance, a faithful representation of a bad man, showing him as bad, of ugly things by presenting them as ugly.[39] Most of the examples were drawn from tragedy and epic, but the point of view is similar to that of the Epitome of the Comparison of Aristophanes and Menander, where Menander's appropriate characterisation pleases the educated man. In the latter, however, there is a slight shift of emphasis.

Before discussing Menander, Plutarch criticises Aristophanes for his wild mixture of various kinds of diction - tragic, comic, impressive, plain, obscure, common - and for his failure even to assign these to appropriate characters:[40]

> καὶ τοσαύτας διαφορὰς ἔχουσα καὶ ἀνομοιότητας ἡ λέξις οὐδὲ τὸ πρέπον ἑκάστῳ καὶ οἰκεῖον ἀποδίδωσιν· οἷον λέγω βασιλεῖ τὸν ὄγκον, ῥήτορι τὴν δεινότητα, γυναικὶ τὸ ἁπλοῦν, ἰδιώτῃ τὸ πεζόν, ἀγοραίῳ τὸ φορτικόν· ἀλλ' ὥσπερ ἀπὸ κλήρου ἀπονέμει τοῖς προσώποις τὰ προστυχόντα τῶν ὀνομάτων, καὶ οὐκ ἂν διαγνοίης εἴθ' υἱός ἐστιν εἴτε πατὴρ εἴτε ἄγροικος εἴτε θεὸς εἴτε γραῦς εἴθ' ἥρως ὁ διαλεγόμενος.

Menander, on the other hand, excels at adapting language to character and emotion. What Plutarch emphasises, however, and seems to admire most, is Menander's approximation to ordinary speech, the way he preserves a homogeneous diction

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39 de audiendis poetis, Moralia 18a

40 Epitome, Moralia 853c19-d6

throughout the expression of diverse emotions and characters:

> ἡ δὲ Μενάνδρου φράσις οὕτω συνέξεσται καὶ συμπέπνευκε κεκραμένη πρὸς ἑαυτήν, ὥστε διὰ πολλῶν ἀγομένη παθῶν καὶ ἠθῶν καὶ προσώποις ἐφαρμόττουσα παντοδαποῖς μιά τε φαίνεσθαι καὶ τὴν ὁμοιότητα τηρεῖν ἐν τοῖς κοινοῖς καὶ συνήθεσι καὶ ὑπὸ τὴν χρείαν ὀνόμασιν. (853de)

One has the impression that Plutarch would have disliked Aristophanes' varied diction even if it had been distributed to appropriate speakers.

Plutarch may approve of Menander's use of ordinary language partly as a further example of his genius for convincing imitation, but the emphasis on language also shows him to be both original and a child of his time. He differs from the common Atticist assessment of the language of Aristophanes and Menander, which rated the latter lower as a source of pure Attic Greek.[41] The Atticists seem to have been put off Menander because his language, a century younger than Aristophanes', had more in common with the κοινή of their own day. Plutarch seems to share their preoccupation with finding a suitable model, but to have been more intelligent in his notion of what was needed of such a model: Menander's elegant imitation of an actual language would be more to the point than concoctions which bore no consistent relation to any level of language. Plutarch gives stock praise of Menander's characterisation a tendentious twist: the educated man (presumably trained to look for excellence

41 For further discussion of Atticist views of Menander, see Chapter 4 on purity of language, pp. 368ff.

of Attic Greek as a primary virtue) is particularly capable of appreciating Menander's genius for language, which is the more remarkable in view of his very adeptness in fitting expression to character.

Does the fact that Plutarch disapproved, apparently, of motley language (appropriate use being only an extenuating circumstance) make its use a breach of propriety? It seems to be presented as such, on a par with, for instance, poor characterisation; Menander's evenness of diction, on the other hand, is presented as a virtue in itself, apart from its suitability to genre or character or emotion. Purity of Greek (one of the Theophrastean virtues) thus seems to have been assimilated to propriety, and in a rather interesting way.

The implication of the passage is that excellence of language is not merely a matter of lexicography, to be determined in a fairly mechanical fashion, but requires one to consider the register of the words in question, their context, their relation to each other. Consequently, though it is language which is in question, the opposition set up is not between good words and bad words, but between qualitative differences in the way words are chosen and used, between, for instance, 'naturalness' (consistent simplicity) and undisciplined artifice. The issues involved are thus closer to those which concerned Latin writers, for whom Latinity was often part of propriety,

than to those of Plutarch's Atticist contemporaries.[42]

The excellences of Menander and the shortcomings of Aristophanes are confirmed as such by the types of audience to which they appeal. It is the educated man who is particularly able to appreciate Menander's genius for propriety;[43] Aristophanes, on the other hand, was suited to a distinctly inferior class of audience. It is not only that his miscellany of dictions is inappropriate to the speakers, but that he indulges in the silly word games which amuse vulgar people. Word play is apparently regarded as trivial in itself, and disapproved of as such, since Plutarch's examples do not, for the most part, involve rude or vulgar words - and Aristophanes uses it πολλάκις καὶ οὐκ εὐκαίρως καὶ ψυχρῶς.[44] Instead of Menander's graceful wit Aristophanes has obscene or cruel jokes which appeal to the low and malicious:

> οὐδενὶ γὰρ ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἔοικε μετρίῳ τὴν ποίησιν γεγραφέναι, ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν αἰσχρὰ καὶ ἀσελγῆ τοῖς ἀληθεστέροις, τὰ βλάσφημα δὲ καὶ πικρὰ τοῖς βασκάνοις καὶ κακοήθεσιν (854d)

The last point suggests that there was an ethical side to the proprieties violated by Aristophanes. Plutarch, like Aristotle, thought refraining from indecent or cruel humour a matter of morals, and characteristic of the

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42 Cf. e.g. Chapter 4, pp. 386ff on Horace.

43 Moralia 854b, τίνος γὰρ ἄξιον ἀληθῶς εἰς θέατρον ἐλθεῖν ἄνδρα πεπαιδευμένον ἢ Μενάνδρου ἕνεκα;

44 Ibid., 853b: τὸ φορτικόν φησιν ἐν λόγοις καὶ θυμελικὸν καὶ βάναυσον ὡς ἐστιν Ἀριστοφάνει, Μενάνδρῳ δ' οὐδαμῶς. καὶ γὰρ ὁ μὲν ἀπαίδευτος καὶ ἰδιώτης, οἷς ἐκεῖνος λέγει, ἀλίσκεται, ὁ δὲ πεπαιδευμένος δυσχεραίνει· λέγω δὲ τὰ ἀντίθετα καὶ ὁμοιόπτωτα καὶ παρωνυμίας. τούτοις γὰρ ὁ μὲν μετὰ τοῦ προσήκοντος λόγου καὶ ὀλιγάκις χρῆται ἐπιμελείας αὐτὰ ἀξιῶν, ὁ δὲ καὶ πολλάκις καὶ οὐκ εὐκαίρως καὶ ψυχρῶς.

well-bred man.[45]

A more general observation should perhaps be made at this point concerning later assessments of Old and New Comedy. I suggested earlier that Old Comedy was in more active opposition than New Comedy to the conventions of tragedy, both those relating to language used and persons represented, and those relating to dramatic illusion and to distance maintained between piece and audience. Its 'familiar' treatment of the audience seems to have been acceptable to at least some contemporaries. Later criticism of Old Comedy, such as that of Plutarch, presupposes that the distance between drama and audience must always be maintained; the 'familiarity' of Old Comedy seemed boorish because circumstances could no longer be envisaged in which insults might not be offensive.

Commentators on Terence

Latin writers on Terence seem at first sight to admire the same merits earlier critics had praised in Menander, in particular the appropriate portrayal of character and emotion. In Donatus' commentary on Terence, the most common observation involving propriety concerns the suitable representation of types of character,[46] the next most common the suitable expression of emotion.[47]

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45 Cf. Quaest. Conviv. II,1,4-13.

46 E.g. on Adelphoe 286, Eunuchus 235, Hecyra 360, 596, 729, Phormio 138, 248, 1005; (aptus) Andria 38; Eun. 584, 585, 589, 624, 685, 716; Hec. 323; Adelphoe 139, 246, 431; (congruus) Andria 72, 61 (-in); Eun. 798 (-in); Hec. 720; (decere) Eun. 459; (convenire) Eun. 116, 537, 755; (τὸ πρέπου) Andria 325, 447, 798.

47 E.g. (aptus) Ad. 324, Ph. 264; (congruus) Eun. 761, Ph. 206; (convenire) Ad. 168, 300; Eun. 179, 732; Ph. 358.

The commentary offers a little more variety, however, in its remarks on these subjects. Terence is not infallible: Eunuchus 736 is criticised, for instance, for being too witty for the character to whom it is given:

> hoc videtur sapientius et facetius dici quam ab ebrio rustico adulescentulo debuisset. hoc vitium tunc fit, cum ingenium suum poetae in personas conferunt.

On the other hand propriety is not necessarily to be achieved by portraying characters mechanically true to type. Terence is often praised not only for his skilful use of stock types, but for introducing unexpected but convincing variations, as by Donatus on Hecyra 727:[48]

> rarus hic vitae color in hac allocutione miscetur a poeta, nam meretrix loquitur et senex et, quod est admirabilius, bona meretrix, mitis senex, ut intellegas laborasse Terentium, ut et a lege comicorum recederet et in actu tamen consuetudinem retineret.

Euanthius is enthusiastic not only about Terence's attention to the age and status of his characters, but about his departures from comic types:[49]

> quin etiam solus ausus est, cum in fictis argumentis fidem veritatis assequeretur, etiam contra praescripta comica meretrices interdum non malas introducere, quibus tamen et causa, cur bonae sint, et voluptas per ipsum non defit.

While Plutarch had appreciated Menander's wit, the qualities he singled out for praise were not spoken of as specifically comic ones. Euanthius and Donatus, however, are interested in the restraints imposed by the comic genre, and the way Terence meets these. Both

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48 cf. Donatus on Eun. 446, Hec. 58, 756, 774

49 III.4

develop points touched upon by Horace - that it is necessary, for instance, not only to have characters speak appropriately, but to use the characters suited to the genre; that emotion must be suitably expressed, but also suitable to a comedy - a tragic tone must be avoided. One might say either that propriety of imitation (successful realism) is not enough, or that it is not achieved unless the object of imitation is also suited to the genre in question. This is determined by conventions governing the types of character and of event to be found in tragedy and comedy - that characters shall be of high estate in the former, be of lower status and happier fortune in the latter.[50]

As we have seen, both writers are interested in the extent to which psychological realism can produce appropriate characterisation at the expense of one of the stereotypes of the genre; on the other hand, they admire Terence's ability to portray emotion, for instance, without exceeding the limits of comedy. Euanthius remarks (de fabula 3.5):

> haec cum artificiosissima Terentius fecerit, tum illud est admirandum, quod et morem retinuit, ut comoediam scriberet, et temperavit affectum, ne in tragoediam transiliret. quod cum aliis rebus minime obtentum et a Plauto et ab Afranio et Atappio et multis fere magnis comicis invenimus. illud quoque inter Terentianas virtutes mirabile, quod eius fabulae eo sunt temperamento, ut neque extumescant ad tragicam celsitudinem neque abiciantur ad mimicam vilitatem.

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50 Cf. Euanthius, de fabula 4. 2 (note 29 above)

Donatus points out devices used, or unusual circumstances, which make tragic language acceptable: at Adelphoe 197 he remarks that whenever someone uses tragic language he is called insane. He also discusses the ways the poet deals with potentially tragic circumstances and emotions, so that they will not be obtrusive in a comedy. At Eunuchus 446, for instance, we are shown that the soldier's disappointment in losing the girl to Phaedria is not to be taken seriously, since she did not love him anyway - otherwise the piece would have had a tragic ending.

Donatus and Euanthius, then, like Horace, take into account what one might call propriety with respect to genre, as well as that of characterisation. Since the imposition of demands of genre is one of the aspects of propriety in ancient criticism most liable to misunderstanding and dislike, it is worth considering whether this regard for genre was in fact harmful.

Such an approach to genre can certainly be blamed for a notorious error in ancient criticism. Servius, in a well-known passage at the beginning of Aeneid IV, pronounced the book comic in style because of the complexities of its plot and the fact that it dealt with love:

> . . . est autem paene totus in affectione, licet in fine pathos habeat ubi abscessus Aeneae gignit dolorem. sane totus est in consiliis et subtilitatibus; nam paene comicum stilum habet; nec mirum, ubi de amore tractatur.

W. S. Anderson points out that Servius seems to have had a very limited acquaintance with earlier literature, such as the tragedies of Euripides, and to have relied to a great

extent upon his knowledge of Terence and Donatus' method of commenting on him.[51] Certainly his remarks on Aeneid IV recall some of Donatus' on Terence; one might compare, for instance, the comment on Hecyra 281, 'nimis coturni et tragici in hac scaena dolores essent, non comici, nisi adderet "ex amore"'. Propriety with respect to genre is determined, it seems, by the mechanical application of rules: love was generally important in comic plots, for instance, so its presence in a work was enough to guarantee a certain comic tone.

Standards ought not to be condemned, however, because they can be misapplied. Alistair Fowler argues persuasively that the conventions of genre are essential to the understanding of works of literature; that our reaction to a piece, for instance, depends partly on the kind of work we take it to be.[52] But this basis in convention does not mean that rules should be drawn up for various 'fixed historical kinds', every work assigned to a kind and expected to follow its rules; convention is, rather, what makes innovation possible. Far from ruling out 'contamination', the existence of recognisable kinds makes possible interesting interactions.

The resulting complexity of the literary picture leaves considerable room for critics and theorists to go wrong. They might make a small number of genres exhaust the possibilities for literature, and try to insist that all works fall in one of those categories. They might pay too little attention to groupings which made sense for contemporary works. They

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51 'Servius and the "Comic Style" of Aeneid 4', Arethusa 14 (1981), 115-25

52 Kinds of Literature (Oxford, 1982), e.g. p. 36.

might, like Servius, try to characterise a kind, or judge a work, with insufficient knowledge of the system of genres into which it fits. But a clear understanding of the conventions of a genre can illuminate the quality of a work. Fowler gives the example of Hamlet: the conventions of the revenge tragedy do not rule out the possibility of seeing a more 'psychological' dimension to Hamlet's delay; the presence of such a dimension, on the other hand, is more significant if seen as a departure from those conventions.[53]

Servius, then, and Donatus in his comment on Hecyra, are at fault not for appealing to the characteristics of certain genres, but for ignoring works which show that love is not a subject uniquely typical of comedy. Elsewhere, as we have seen, the commentators on Terence were not bound by rigid notions of 'the rules of the genre'. Some of their remarks, indeed, tend toward the intelligent flexibility recommended by Fowler. They are interested, for instance, in Terence's methods for ensuring that a work is 'taken' as a comedy, without simply repeating a familiar repertoire of comic devices.

Attention to propriety of genre, then, did not necessarily lead to flat-footed criticism. A modern reader may well find such comments unsatisfactory, however, not because they were mistaken, but because they were unambitious. Donatus' work was meant to explain individual lines, and did not offer scope for more general treatment of either plays or critical issues. As often, the form of an ancient work of criticism, as well as the inclinations of its author, made it difficult to discuss issues we now find of interest.

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53 Op. cit., p. 262.

Appendix: On the Tractatus Coislinianus and the second book of Aristotle's Poetics

In Aristotle on Comedy[1] Richard Janko argues that the Tractatus Coislinianus gives us the essence of Aristotle's views on comedy in the second book of the Poetics; that when compared with the Poetics, the structure and organisation of the Treatise, the temper of its thought are seen to be characteristically Aristotelian. As it is this characteristic turn of thought which motivates other arguments to show that the work could be derived from Aristotle, I should like to consider this claim more closely. Two points, one general, the other a matter of detail, seem to count against it.

1) The Tractatus is unsatisfactory, as a lost work of Aristotle, partly because it fails to illuminate in the way one would have expected the book on comedy to do. Though we have few remarks on comedy surviving from Aristotle's other works, it is possible from these at least to get some notion of what he disliked: the excessively particular (abuse), cruel humour, vulgarity and indecency. Old Comedy, and in particular Aristophanes - the only form of comedy which we know Aristotle was familiar with and can judge for ourselves - looks bad on all counts. We are thus left in some bewilderment: we have no surviving examples of comedy which Aristotle knew and which were likelier to be to his taste. Connected with this is another problem: it is very hard to imagine what the fuller discussion of

1 London, 1984

of comedy could have been like. The discussion of tragedy could only be ill-adapted to the kind of comedy we know; we do not know whether there was anything different enough to fulfil what we suppose were Aristotle's standards for poetry, or whether these were considerably altered for comedy (and if so how).

The Tractatus does not provide a solution to the puzzle. Its analysis of comedy seems, as Janko argues, suited to pre-Menandrean comedy, particularly Aristophanes, e.g. in its emphasis on comic diction, which, as he points out, replaces the section in the Poetics on plot and unity. This is at least prima facie a reason for supposing that it does not give Aristotle's views (especially as Chapter 9 of the Poetics strongly suggests that comedy had already gone further than tragedy in using an invented plot showing probable connections[2]). The only reason for suspending judgement is that Aristotle mentions Aristophanes in the same breath as Sophocles and Homer in the Poetics as exemplar of his genre. We cannot assume, however, on the basis of this alone, that we have misinterpreted Aristotle's other remarks on comedy and humour; that despite appearances to the contrary they are compatible with a good opinion of Aristophanes. But this is an important part of Janko's argument: differences between the Tractatus, e.g. on the importance of plot, are to be accounted for by the fact

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2 1451b11ff

that the former is dealing with quite a different form of poetry from the latter. If this is not conceded, the Aristotelian elements in the Tractatus can only strike one as points misapplied, betraying incomprehension of (or perhaps unfamiliarity with) the original.

The treatment of plot is a case in point. Janko argues that on the one hand this is of greater importance in the Tractatus than has been generally acknowledged, on the other that its lack of prominence compared with its place in the Poetics is understandable given the genre, as there are other sources of laughter than plot. One example of the importance of plot in the Tractatus is the organisation of the sources of laughter in actions: Janko believes that the first five of these involve plot, the next three character, the last dianoia. This seems a fair account of plot in the Tractatus, but unAristotelian: it assumes that the aim of comedy is the production of laughter by miscellaneous means, the nature of the work as a whole essentially irrelevant to this. This is, perhaps, what one would expect of an attempt first to translate the notion of catharsis into comic terms, then to make this relevant to Aristophanes; but we have no reason to think that Aristotle undertook to do this. Lacking confidence, moreover, in the work as a whole as plainly Aristotelian, we can only be suspicious of particular points which seem to distort or show misunderstanding of his views.

The account of the three kinds of comedy is one example of this: it seems to show the kind of pedantic misapplication of the theory of the mean which gave birth to the three-style theory. A more important example is the division of poetry into mimetic and unmimetic, which Janko tries unconvincingly to explain away.

2) The definition of poetry as a form of mimesis, and the conclusions drawn from this as to its nature and excellence, are an essential part of the originality of the Poetics: ruling out mere versifying as poetry was a brilliant and original step. Any attempt to prove the Tractatus Aristotelian must deal, therefore, with its surprising division of poetry into mimetic and unmimetic, which occupies a prominent place at the beginning of the work. Janko has two arguments to cope with this.

First, he points out that the identification of poetry with verse was at any rate a notion Aristotle was willing to work with. In denying Empedocles the title of poet, Aristotle is not simply making a statement about nomenclature, but 'sharpening the definition of the category', viz. poetry, mimetic and in verse (Plato's dialogues are only between poetry and prose, because they are mimetic but not in verse, in On Poets). When not making this particular point, Aristotle sometimes uses ποιήσεις and ποιητής in the received senses of the terms (of Solon in the Politics and Rhetoric, of Empedocles in On Poets); Empedocles is used to illustrate points about metaphor in the Poetics). But Aristotle is not specifically concerned

with the nature of poetry in these instances. The preliminary division of the Tractatus, on the other hand, is a sketchy form of definition of types of poetry; for Aristotle to have followed vulgar usage here, after giving detailed arguments against it in Book 1, would have been a much more striking inconsistency.

Janko's second argument tries to cope with this by adducing parallels for illogical division: 'the division of an entity into itself and other subdivisions looks peculiar, but is in fact an Aristotelian procedure' (p. 125). At EN VI 8, for instance, politics is subdivided into law-giving for the framework, and politics for its detailed management; at EN V 8 ἁμάρτημα is divided into ἀτύχημα (accident) and ἁμάρτημα (mistake).[3]

Comparison with these examples, however, only makes the division in the Tractatus look more unsatisfactory. EN V 8 first discusses involuntary actions involving ignorance (ἁμαρτήματα), then subdivides these into ἀτύχημα and ἁμάρτημα. Aristotle does not, however, say that ἁμαρτήματα involve ignorance, then revert to a popular notion of the concept and divide it into the kinds that do and do not involve ignorance. EN VI 8 looks a little more promising: it's not simply that politics is made a subdivision of politics, but that Aristotle seems to shift about a little on the question of whether it is a kind of practical wisdom, and that his remarks seem to be influenced by popular attitudes to φρόνησις and πολιτική. On the other hand, the passage has a somewhat speculative tone. It is

3 1141b23ff; 1135b10-19

not clear, for instance, whether politics really isn't a kind of phronesis because not concerned with a man's welfare as an individual, or whether it is because essential to this, though remote from the business of everyday life. It is true, of course, that this speculative tone, and characteristic clarifying of ideas by testing them against popular views, would have been precisely the things to escape epitome; but as far as one can tell from the opening of the Poetics there would have been no occasion for either in classification of poetry or definition of a particular kind later in the book. One's inclination to suspect the division is confirmed, moreover, because it seems to violate Aristotle's rules for definition.

In De partibus animalium Aristotle criticises division by dichotomy as a method of definition (or rather, as David Balme points out, division by one differentia at a a time, whether into two classes or more[4]). He recommends instead dividing at the beginning by many differentiae simultaneously, which may then be differentiated in turn as necessary. Though Aristotle is speaking with special reference to zoology, he argues at 643a17 that dichotomy cannot define animal species or any other kind; among the reasons for this are that dichotomy produces only one final differentia, if used correctly, and that an adequate number of differentiae can be reached only by dividing per accidens.

4 'Aristotle's Use of Differentiae in Zoology', in **ed.** Barnes, Schofield, Sorabji, Articles on Aristotle, 1. Science (London, 1975), p. 184. See also Balme, Aristotle's de partibus animalium 1 and de generatione animalium 1 (Oxford, 1972), p. 104.

Dichotomy, he argues, requires negative differentiae but makes it impossible to use them. Aristotle assumes that a privation (στέρησις) cannot be differentiated, and that the branch characterised by not-φ cannot be subdivided; consequently they can be neither general nor specific differentiae. General: used correctly, differentiae should imply all those that come above them. But this means that one cannot, for instance, divide footless animals into fishes and snakes (effectively dividing all animals not in the class of footed animals), since footless, unlike footed, does not imply being an animal: 'in itself it is empty and therefore undifferentiable'.[5] Specific: a privation cannot be qualified, so must be the same in every species lacking a particular property. But

> if we try to say that bloodless specifically differentiates both the crab and the snail, then, since bloodless cannot be differentiated as blooded can, we are saying that one and the same differentia belongs to two species - which means that it is not a specific differentia.[6]

(Whereas multiple differentiation lets one use privations, by taking them in combination with positive differentiae which are further divisible.)

The striking thing about Aristotle's remarks here is that they fit his method in the Poetics particularly well. Various differentiae of mimesis are offered (medium, object, mode), without being falsely subordinated to each other, each implying the genus (mimesis) being divided.[7] The Tractatus, on the other hand, subdivides a privative

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5. Balme, Aristotle's de partibus animalium 1 and de generatione animalium 1, on dpa 642b24-30, p. 109.

6 Ibid., on dpa 642b30-643a6, p. 110.

7 Under medium, one finds a good example of the correct use of privatives.

category *per accidens*, since dividing unmimetic into instructive and historical is like dividing footless into land creatures and water creatures. It may also imply a false hierarchy of differentiae. Janko remarks that the differentiae of mode and (by implication) object are presented in reverse order, but the latter seem also to be subordinated to the former, whereas object of imitation ought not to be a subdivision of mode.

Janko makes much of the fact that the mimetic character of poetry is important in the Tractatus, so that iambus, for instance, is very properly left out of the discussion. This supports a view that the Tractatus contains Aristotelian material. The opening division, however, shows that its author, and probably its source, failed to understand the implications of Aristotle's theory, or its structure as given in the *Poetics*. Where such contradictions are possible, the presence of Aristotelian reminiscences cannot justify us in using the work as a whole to solve puzzles about Aristotle's views on comedy.

3 PROPRIETY AS A CRITERION OF RHETORIC

Propriety was demanded of poetry chiefly in the representation of characters and in obedience to the rules for various genres. Both could be valuable either in themselves, or as means to effects of one kind or another which poetry was supposed to have on its audience. Although there is considerable continuity in the kinds of comment made on character and genre, views could vary a great deal because disagreement was possible as to the ends of poetry. In particular, while all discussion is 'audience-oriented' in the final analysis, it was possible to disagree as to whether the impression a work made on the general public was relevant to its excellence as poetry.

At first sight, this variety of possible ends seems to distinguish discussion of poetry in an important way from rhetoric, the other major component of ancient literary discourse. There is a much greater degree of consensus among writers on rhetoric on the object of oratory: the speaker aims at persuading the audience, and must command whatever means are in fact most effective in bringing an audience round to his point of view. On the other hand, much more variety is possible in the forms of propriety which must be taken into account. The arguments used, emotions expressed, subjects touched upon must be suited to the occasion, persons addressed, type of speech, type of speaker; style must be appropriate to content, to the character of the speaker, to the emotions expressed, as well as to occasion and audience.

If this distinction between discussions of rhetoric and poetry held, however, one would expect the former to include no 'legislation' about what oratory ought to be like. Questions of moral decency, of good taste, ought to be irrelevant, except insofar as these qualities could be shown to be persuasive to certain audiences. But this is not altogether the case. The question of whether certain techniques are morally acceptable, regardless of their effectiveness, is sometimes touched upon (Quintilian includes this in his discussion of <u>decorum</u>[1]). The question of whether certain types of oratory are in good taste is even more common. It is significant that it tends to be brought up in connection with comments on the undiscriminating audiences who are taken in by such oratory; its popularity does not settle the question of whether it has satisfied the demands of propriety.[2]

There seems, then, to be an important confusion surrounding the criterion of propriety in ancient rhetoric. A wide variety of types of propriety is sought for the purpose of accommodating one's speech to one's audience; but one can apparently be extremely successful and still guilty of impropriety. This suggests that the concept of propriety, as used in ancient rhetoric, was ill-defined; one question to be considered is how far ancient writers were aware of the problem.

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1 See pp. 311 ff, below.

2 This applies, for instance, to Aristotle's objections to Gorgias, and to the objections of Dionysius and others to Asianist oratory. See below, pp. 202ff, 268ff.

A second question is what ancient writers took this concept to include. If it could, in theory, cover every aspect of accommodation of speech to audience, one might suppose that it would be co-extensive with the sum of all the prescriptions of rhetoric, and so superfluous. In practice, the language of propriety (in Greek, πρέπον, οἰκεῖον, ἁρμόττον and cognates, in Latin, decens, aptus, congruens, conveniens, and cognates) seems to have been used most often in connection with matters of style. This in turn has been connected with setting boundaries on the formal properties suited to oratorical genres, and particularly in distinguishing them from poetry. An important part of rhetorical propriety, then, has close links with broader aesthetic categories. Particular attention will be given, therefore, to propriety in the history of style theory, and to the effect, on assessment of non-oratorical forms, of its strong rhetorical orientation.

While propriety of style was a fairly clearly marked category, ancient writers had a certain amount of trouble keeping it separate from other areas: on the one hand, one could not easily keep consideration of the proper form for a speech separate from that of the proper content; on the other hand, it was not always easy to decide what should count as form in the first place. These difficulties become obvious when propriety of style comes to be tied up with the matching of styles with the officia oratoris:

Latin discussions of decorum (especially Quintilian's) tend to break away from considerations of style alone. So consideration must also be given to problems raised by the form/content dichotomy.

Most attention will be given to issues of an aesthetic nature, since the notion of propriety is most often appealed to explicitly by ancient writers in this connection. Questions of ethical decorum will be considered only occasionally: where, as with Cicero, an explicit appeal to the philosophical notion of decorum justifies it, or where Quintilian includes ethical problems under his discussion of decorum, or where, as with St. Augustine, ethical and aesthetic issues are inseparable.

To summarise, then, two main kinds of material will be covered: that relating to propriety of style, and that relating to questions of ethics. Within this material, three issues will be of concern: 1) the nature of the concept of rhetorical propriety, ostensibly based on the aim of effectiveness with audiences, but in fact not always determined by this, 2) the components of stylistic propriety, including applications to non-oratorical genres, and 3) ways in which stylistic propriety overlapped with that of content. These will be recurring themes in what follows, rather than points to be dealt with in succession; this seems likelier to do justice to the complexity of the thought of the various writers dealt with.

Early discussions of rhetorical propriety

From the first, the practice of rhetoric seems to have excited interest in both its power and its moral status. The two were connected: the power of rhetoric was most obvious where someone was persuaded of something which was either untrue or against his interests.[3] Rhetoric thus seemed to have common ground with poetry, which could also arouse powerful emotions and present persuasive falsehoods. Gorgias introduces this comparison in his Helen as testimony to the irresistible power of λόγος;[4] Plato takes it up, and uses similar points against rhetoric in the Phaedrus and the Gorgias, against poetry in the Ion. The analogy between the two types of discourse could lead in several directions.

Gorgias

One direction was to the view that similar stylistic devices were appropriate to poetic and rhetorical discourse. Gorgias, for instance, seems to have thought that it justified the use of an extremely artificial prose style, in which the extensive use of parallelism and of rhyme may have been meant to have an effect similar to that of metre in poetry,[5] and in which poetic vocabulary could

3 The notion that sophists taught one to make the weaker argument the stronger seems to have been a commonplace (cf. Plato, Apology 18B8f, 19B5f , Isocrates 15.15); on arguing both sides of a case, see Dover, Aristophanes' Clouds (Oxford, 1968), xxxvii. Plato has Gorgias claim to be more persuasive than experts on medicine, politics and other subjects in their own areas of competence (Gorgias 456A7ff). Cf. also Quintilian 6.2.24: the power of the orator is shown in working up emotion in the audience at things that would not naturally excite pity, anger, etc.

4 DK 11,8ff. See J. de Romilly, 'Gorgias et le pouvoir de la poésie', JHS 93 (1973), 155-162 and W.J. Verdenius, 'Gorgias' Doctrine of Deception', in The Sophists and Their Legacy, ed. G.B. Kerferd (Wiesbaden, 1981).

5 DK 11.9, τὴν ποίησιν ἅπασαν καὶ νομίζω καὶ ὀνομάζω λόγον ἔχοντα μέτρον.

be used freely. This view was rejected more or less universally by later writers; it is interesting, therefore, to consider Gorgias' reasons for holding it, and the precise points on which he differed from those who followed him.

Gorgias may have thought that the aural features of poetry and of poetic prose style were directly connected with the incantatory powers of λόγος, and so with the strong emotional effects it could produce. But the notion that a poetic prose style was instrumental to persuasion seems, at least prima facie, to fit awkwardly with some of Gorgias' other views. It seems surprising that Gorgias' interest in the demands of καιρός should have been backed up by the use of a remarkably unvaried style (the Palamedes is less extravagant than the Helen, but the Epitaphios, presumably a serious piece, shows much the same stylistic tricks as the παιγνίον).[6] It seems unlikely that a manifestly artificial style should be helpful in the convincing creation of illusion, when the speaker is not content to have this accepted as a fiction.

These are precisely the points that worried later writers: obtrusive artifice might give the impression of deceitfulness and insincerity, and so be unpersuasive;

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6 Dionysius says that Gorgias was the first to write on the subject (DCV 12 (II,45,13-15)), but had said nothing useful; since Dionysius is particularly interested in style, this might imply that Gorgias had had little to say about it. On Gorgias and καιρός, see W. Süss, Ethos, 18ff.

failure to use a variety of styles, adapted to one's material, might at best make one less effective, at worst be in bad taste. Why did these things not bother Gorgias? Was he unaware of possible problems?

Gorgias' position is hard to make out for a number of reasons. On the one hand, the power for which Gorgias praises rhetoric lies in persuading people to courses of action: Helen is persuaded to elope, Plato's Gorgias claims to persuade patients to undergo treatment when doctors fail. On the other hand, none of our surviving pieces of Gorgianic work demonstrate this kind of persuasion: they are all display pieces of one kind or another. The kind of καιρός which interested Gorgias seems most relevant to the latter kind of piece: it seems mainly to have been concerned with praise and depreciation, rather than with urging courses of action.[7] One might be tempted, then, to set out his views as follows: a poetic style was suited to the kinds of pieces he actually wrote because these were entitled to literary dignity. It promoted the proper reception of the piece because such features gave pleasure; an audience would enjoy being convinced by praise given in such a manner.[8] Gorgias, in other words, in effect adopted the segregation of epideictic used by later writers, who did

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7 Cf. Cicero, Brut. 47, 'quod idem fecisse Gorgiam . . . quod iudicaret hoc oratoris esse maxime proprium, rem augere posse laudando vituperandoque rursus affligere'; Plato, Phaedrus 267A7. 'τά τε αὖ σμικρὰ μεγάλα καὶ τὰ μεγάλα σμικρὰ φαίνεσθαι ποιοῦσιν διὰ ῥώμην λόγου . . . (Süss thinks that the verbal parallels between this and Isocrates Paneg. 7ff show that the latter also gives Gorgias' views on καιρός). In these passages καιρός seems to be largely a matter of inventio.

8 Verdenius (op. cit.) and Segal ('Gorgias and the psychology of the logos', HSCP 66 (1962), 99-155) both emphasise the importance of formal beauties for the τέρψις which leads to persuasion.

not object to its being agreeably artificial;[9] the kind of persuasion described in the Helen is really beside the point.

This seems a little unsatisfactory. It is hard to believe that the claims of the Platonic Gorgias are wholly invented by Plato;[10] Gorgias' pupils must have wanted command of a more practical rhetoric. Dionysius, moreover, says that Gorgias brought poetic style into 'πολιτικοὺς λόγους', not that he confined it to other types of speech.[11] Perhaps another line should be followed: the Gorgias gives us some notion of what Gorgias' methods of persuasion were really like; it suggests that a principal resource was, precisely, to turn all types of speech into opportunities for magnifying and depreciating. So perhaps all speeches were treated as suitable for the Gorgianic style, and later critics were right to object to this as impractical.

There is a third possibility. Although we have only epideictic speeches by Gorgias, we have some evidence that his rhetoric was effective: Athenians first discovered his remarkable style when he made his spectacular appearance as ambassador from Leontini (and was apparently successful in his mission).[12] Ancient writers do not criticise Gorgias for being unpersuasive - they find his excesses

9 Cf. especially Isocrates' distinction between speeches which address loftier and more general subject, can use beautiful language and style, give as much pleasure as poetry, and those which must look unpretentious to succeed in the petty aims of private cases (Antidosis 46ff)

10 E.g. Meno 95C

11 De Imitatione, U-R II,215,10ff (fr. ix) Γοργίας μὲν τὴν ποιητικὴν ἑρμηνείαν μετήνεγκεν εἰς λόγους πολιτικούς, οὐκ ἀξιῶν ὅμοιον τὸν ῥήτορα τοῖς ἰδιώταις εἶναι (he goes on to contrast this with Lysias, cf. below pp. 271ff, 281.

12 Cf. Diodorus XII 53, 1ff (DK A4), Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Lysias 3 - n.b. Dionysius mentions his ποιητική τε καὶ τροπικὴ φράσις. Cf. Voit, ΔΕΙΝΟΤΗΣ, p. 12.

and those of his followers in bad taste, but some point out that he enjoyed considerable success with his notorious style. The point is, rather, that this success was due in part to the inexperience of the audience; the style came to be disagreeable later, to more sophisticated or better educated audiences.[13] This development may well have been encouraged by those who did not have these techniques, who would naturally have tried to cast suspicion on them.[14] This suggests that the kind of distinction made by later writers, between speeches aimed at pleasing and those aimed at persuading, may have been simply unnecessary for Gorgias: his methods of argument, together with his extraordinary style, pleased, and astounded, and persuaded the audiences he addressed. The distinction between poetic and prose styles was not one to which audiences were sensitive all along, and which Gorgias stupidly failed to take into account: the demands of propriety were, perhaps, different when he addressed the Athenians from what they were later.[15]

This brings us to alternative inferences which could be drawn from the similarities seen between poetry and rhetoric. One of these need not concern us here: in the Gorgias Plato seems anxious to condemn rhetoric because it has most power over the ignorant and panders to undesirable

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13 See Diodorus XII.53.4, Aristotle, Rhetoric 1404a24ff.

14 See Voit, op. cit., 12-13. For oratorical defences against suspicion of skill (not only stylistic), see e.g. Antiphon, V.5, Demosthenes, De Cor. 276, Isocrates, Antidosis 230ff.

15 Dionysius' remark, that Gorgias' methods were not entirely novel - audiences had been impressed by that sort of thing before - seems to confirm this account of Athenian taste, but it is not clear what it is based on (tragedy?).

emotions (his reasons are thus similar to those for condemning poetry in the Ion and the Republic). But other lines of thought were possible which accepted (at least provisionally) the aims which rhetoric set itself.

Plato

In the Phaedrus Socrates argues that rhetoricians are unsuccessful even on their own terms: rhetoric is a ψυχαγωγία, and therefore requires knowledge of all the different sorts of souls so that the speaker can move them as he likes.[16] This sounds a little like the kind of power which Ion claimed for himself,[17] but the methods which Socrates says are necessary show an important difference between the two. Ion, after all, recited a piece of poetry whose form was already fixed; but the essential feature of rhetoric as described by Socrates is the adaptation of speech to the particular person to be moved, with mastery of when and how various techniques are to be used.[18] Most rhetorical instruction is inadequate for this, both because it betrays lack of the necessary knowledge of souls and the truth, and because it works by means of written speeches, which are by their very nature incapable of being adapted to those who receive them.[19]

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16 261A7, 271C10ff

17 Ion 535E

18 Phdr. 271C10ff, esp. E1-272A8

19 At Phdr 274B6ff Socrates proposes to talk about τὸ δ'εὐπρεπείας δὴ γραφῆς πέρι... καὶ ἀπρεπείας; at 275D9ff, he goes on to say that the written word is unsatisfactory because it always says the same thing. ὅταν δὲ ἅπαξ γραφῇ, κυλινδεῖται μὲν πανταχοῦ πᾶς λόγος ὁμοίως παρὰ τοῖς ἐπαΐουσιν, ὡς δ' αὔτως παρ' οἷς οὐδὲν προσήκει, καὶ οὐκ ἐπίσταται λέγειν οἷς δεῖ γε καὶ μή. cf. Alcidamas, περὶ σοφιστῶν 3, and in general Friedländer, Plato I, 'The Written Word".

The analogy with poetry must be inferred here from what Plato says about it elsewhere; the subject of καιρός is discussed chiefly to point out the shortcomings of orators of a certain kind, rather than to draw a distinction between poetic and rhetorical ψυχαγωγία. It is interesting, however, that Isocrates, who criticises the sophists in much the same terms as Socrates had done, connects their ignorance of adapting speeches to καιρός with the objection that they act as if they were teaching the art of poetry.[20]

This line of argument assumes that the uses and circumstances of presentation of poetry and oratory impose important differences on the studies needed for the latter. It does not necessarily imply anything about, for instance, the extent to which prose and poetry can use the same stylistic devices. Plato says nothing about this; Isocrates and Alcidamas both address the question, with interesting differences.

Isocrates and Alcidamas

Gorgias, as we have seen, thought poetry and persuasive prose equally good; Plato seems to have thought them equally bad. Isocrates, however, recognised distinctions: he had a low opinion of forensic oratory, but thought highly of oratory which addressed wider themes. Only the latter was

20 Against the Sophists, 12-13 (cf. 16) Isocrates is amazed that people can pass themselves off as teachers, οἳ ποιητικοῦ πράγματος τεταγμένην τέχνην παράδειγμα φέροντες λελῆθασι σφᾶς αὐτούς - they act as if there were no difference between combining letters and composing speeches, τοὺς μὲν γὰρ λόγους οὐχ οἷόν τε καλῶς ἔχειν ἢν μὴ τῶν καιρῶν καὶ τοῦ πρεπόντως καὶ τοῦ καινῶς ἔχειν μετάσχωσιν, τοῖς δὲ γράμμασιν οὐδενὸς τούτων προσεδέησεν. For the view that Isocrates thinks of their composition as analogous to poetic rather than oratorical writing, cf. Süss, Ethos, 39-40.

entitled to the obvious artifice which made poetry impressive and intensely agreeable;[21] it seems to be a mark of the inferiority of forensic oratory that it cannot betray elaborate workmanship, which might arouse hostility or suspicion in an audience which was itself incapable of such efforts.[22]

This seems to imply that the taste of the audience determines which stylistic devices are acceptable, but there are other considerations as well. Isocrates also seems to recognise objective standards for the styles suited to poetry and prose. On the one hand he simply disagrees with those who, because they can write only forensic speeches themselves, think even loftier subjects should avoid an ambitious style.[23] On the other hand, he assumes that a work in prose simply is not entitled to most of the devices which make poetry so attractive, even when dealing with a poetic task such as encomium: it is the nature of prose that seems to impose this

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21 Antidosis 46-7, some have chosen to write, not speeches for private cases, ἀλλ' Ἑλληνικοὺς καὶ πολιτικοὺς καὶ πανηγυρικούς, οὓς ἅπαντες ἂν φήσειαν ὁμοιοτέρους εἶναι τοῖς μετὰ μουσικῆς καὶ ῥυθμῶν πεποιημένοις ἢ τοῖς ἐν δικαστηρίῳ λεγομένοις. καὶ γὰρ τῇ λέξει ποιητικωτέρᾳ καὶ ποικιλωτέρᾳ τὰς πράξεις δηλοῦσι, καὶ τοῖς ἐνθυμήμασιν ὀγκωδεστέροις καὶ καινοτέροις χρῆσθαι ζητοῦσιν, ἔτι δὲ ταῖς ἄλλαις ἰδέαις ἐπιφανεστέραις καὶ πλείοσιν ὅλου τοῦ λόγου διοικοῦσιν. For the power of poetic devices to please and move, cf. Ev. 9-11; cf. also Panegyricus 11, on those who wrongly suppose that all speeches should be as unpretentious as forensic ones.

22 See for instance Panegyricus 11-13, Panathenaicus 1-2 (danger of suspicion implied by the recommendation, made to many students of rhetoric, to gain an advantage over opponents by apparent simplicity).

23 Ibid. They judge ambitious oratory by the standard of private cases, ὥσπερ ὁμοίως δέου ἀμφοτέρους ἔχειν, ἀλλ' οὐ τοὺς μὲν ἀφελῶς, τοὺς δ' ἐπιδεικτικῶς . . .

limit, rather than what audiences find agreeable.[24]

Isocrates, then, thinks that an important part of rhetoric is adapting one's speech to occasion, subject, and so on, but that doing justice to the occasion is not necessarily to fit in with the taste of the audience. This suggests that attention to καιρός is not called for only for the sake of ψυχαγωγία; ; it may be just as much a matter of suiting expression to the importance of one's subject. The most admirable speech may be one which shows that much preparation has been spent on it, and so has a style and form suited to its important subject matter, rather than one produced ex tempore.[25] Taste forbids that prose should use all the devices of poetry; prose does aspire, however, to the artistic level of poetry, as much because these devices lend themselves to dignity as because they lend themselves to ψυχαγωγία .

The complexity of Isocrates' position becomes apparent when one compares it with that of Alcidamas.

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24 Cf. Evagoras 8ff. Isocrates is going to try something difficult, an encomium in prose, which cannot use the ornaments of poetry; poetry can speak of gods and men μὴ μόνον τοῖς τεταγμένοις ὀνόμασιν, ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν ξένοις, τὰ δὲ καινοῖς, τὰ δὲ μεταφοραῖς, καὶ μηδὲν παραλιπεῖν, ἀλλὰ πᾶσι τοῖς εἴδεσι διαποικῖλαι τὴν ποίησιν· (10) τοῖς δὲ περὶ τοὺς λόγους οὐδὲν ἔξεστι τῶν τοιούτων, ἀλλ' ἀποτόμως καὶ τῶν ὀνομάτων τοῖς πολιτικοῖς μόνον καὶ τῶν ἐνθυμημάτων τοῖς περὶ αὐτὰς τὰς πράξεις ἀναγκαῖόν ἐστι χρῆσθαι. . Poetry can use metre and rhythm, prose cannot.

25 Panegyricus 12-13

Alcidamas also criticised the sophists for their inability to produce speeches suited to particular occasions. He criticises them in part for their dependence on written speeches: it is not just that these are not always appropriate, but that it is easier to produce something impressive if one has unlimited time to think about it, and also that the polished works prepared in this way strike an audience as artificial and insincere, and by arousing suspicion defeat their purpose.[26]

This could be seen as a straightforward way of registering a change in the demands of propriety (determined by the responses of audiences), e.g. with the growing sophistication of the public. For Isocrates, however, there seems to be more to propriety than this; despite his predilection for the dignities of epideictic style, he has more in common with later critics of Gorgias than with Alcidamas. Later writers found Gorgias' notions of artistic prose and καιρός inadequate because audiences came to find this style too elaborate and overblown, its artifice made it unpersuasive; but they also imply, in rejecting Gorgias' methods, that it was a fault in early audiences that they were not equally offended by them. Isocrates, similarly, has independent criteria

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26 Alcidamas, Περὶ σοφιστῶν 3ff

according to which the resources suited to poetry and prose can be distinguished: it is beside the point that some audiences might like an extremely poetic prose, just as it is irrelevant that some people like works with no stylistic pretensions of any kind.

The distinctions drawn between poetry and prose thus call attention to a paradox which is particularly striking in ancient discussions of propriety of style: propriety may be determined according to the taste of the public, but the assumption that there are objective standards for appropriate style implies that taste can be good or bad. Even in rhetoric, propriety may be a matter of good taste, and good taste independent of what most people happen to like.[27] It is interesting that the paradox should appear in a fairly restricted area of discussion: propriety seems to be largely concerned with possible distinctions between forms of discourse, and above all with the question of how far oratorical prose should be assimilated to poetry.

Aristotle

This sort of conflict between the demands of effectiveness and of an objective standard is important in the Rhetoric, and on an ethical level as well as an aesthetic one.

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27 The question of whether propriety is a purely subjective standard is thus very like the familiar question, in aesthetics, concerning the nature of beauty. Hume's 'An Essay on the Standard of Taste' (London, 1757) is particularly interesting in this connection. See H. Osborne, 'Hume's Standard and the Diversity of Taste', BJA 7 (1967), 50-6, P. Kivy, 'Hume's Standard of Taste: Breaking the Circle', ibid., 57-66, and more generally R. Peacock, Criticism and Personal Taste (Oxford, 1972), Ch. 1, 'The Problem of Taste'.

The Rhetoric is meant to deal with all technical sources of persuasiveness - with good arguments, with making an audience emotionally receptive, with giving a good impression of one's character (the three πίστεις), and with suitable style and arrangement. So in a sense the work as a whole aims at giving rules for adapting speeches to circumstances (since persuasiveness is a matter of what makes an argument persuade particular people).

In his introduction, however, Aristotle criticises those who talk only about how to affect the attitudes of the audience, without considering the arguments proper to the case - in the best institutions, such as the Areopagus, such methods will be of no help because strict relevance is required; an intelligent, educated audience will be less susceptible in any case.[28] A similar point is made in Book 3: rhetoric is concerned with influencing people's opinions, and so has to use techniques of delivery and style, which have great power because of the inferiority of the audiences.[29]

Aristotle accepts, then, the view of rhetoric put forward by Gorgias and Plato, that its aim is at least partly persuasion by means other than those of rational demonstration. To create an impression, perhaps an

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28 1354a18ff

29 1403b33-5, 1404a1ff

illusion, of good character, to arouse emotion, are accepted as important sources of persuasion, especially with an ignorant audience. But how legitimate was it to use these methods? A speech which is persuasive because perfectly suited to occasion, audience, etc. is clearly appropriate in one sense. But Aristotle seems to raise the possibility of two standards of propriety, comparable to those which might apply to good manners. Just as one might, with a view to propriety, either follow one's own notions of correct behaviour, or adapt one's manners to one's company, the orator might have to choose between strict integrity in his manner of argument and adapting himself to the level of his audience. If Aristotle disapproves of some audiences, which require improper methods of persuasion, then surely he must think the orator faces issues like those raised in the Nicomachean Ethics in connection with 'social' virtues - knowing how to adapt one's behaviour to persons of different status, knowing both how to be agreeable and where to draw the line, knowing the jokes appropriate to a well-bred man (which are to be judged according to whether he says things suited to such a man, rather than whether he gives pleasure or pain).[30]

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30 cf. NE 1126b36ff, on adapting one's behaviour to persons of different status, διαφερόντως δ' ὁμιλήσει τοῖς ἐν ἀξιώμασι καὶ τοῖς τυχοῦσι, καὶ μᾶλλον ἢ ἧττον γνωρίμοις, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ κατὰ τὰς ἄλλας διαφοράς, ἑκάστοις ἀπονέμων τὸ πρέπον.
also NE 1126b28 καθόλου μὲν οὖν εἴρηται ὅτι ὡς δεῖ ὁμιλήσει, ἀναφέρων δὲ πρὸς τὸ καλὸν καὶ τὸ συμφέρον στοχάσεται τοῦ μὴ λυπεῖν ἢ συνηδύνειν.
and NE 1128a17 τοῦ δ' ἐπιδεξίου ἐστι τοιαῦτα λέγειν καὶ ἀκούειν οἷα τῷ ἐπιεικεῖ καὶ ἐλευθερίῳ ἁρμόττει· ἔστι γάρ τινα πρέποντα τῷ τοιούτῳ λέγειν ἐν παιδιᾶς μέρει καὶ ἀκούειν... πότερον οὖν τὸν εὖ σκώπτοντα ὁριστέον τῷ λέγειν μὴ ἁπρεπῆ ἐλευθερίῳ, ἢ τῷ μὴ λυπεῖν τὸν ἀκούοντα ἢ καὶ τέρπειν; ἢ καὶ τό γε τοιοῦτον ἀόριστον; ἄλλο γὰρ ἄλλῳ μισητόν τε καὶ ἡδύ.

Aristotle may well have thought this, but he does not emphasise the difficulty. He never suggests that the orator should eschew some of the methods called for to persuade a vulgar audience, perhaps because the object of the work is to set out the means of persuasion, without expressing views on whether all should be used.[31] This makes it all the more interesting that the preferences of the audience are by no means paramount in evaluating style, where strict distinctions are drawn between the devices acceptable in poetry and those acceptable in any form of prose.

In his discussion of style, Aristotle faces an aesthetic problem like that of Isocrates (should it follow 'objective' standards of excellence, or adapt to the tastes of the audience?). The questions are familiar: how far should forms of discourse other than poetry be allowed to imitate the methods of poetry? How far should they try to copy the usage of ordinary language? The problem is more acute for Aristotle, paradoxically, because he disapproves of style as a resource of rhetoric in the first place.[32]

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31 This sort of difficulty was to give much more trouble to Quintilian, whose notion of rhetorical decorum included the view that some means of persuasion, though effective, were unsuited to the good man. (see pp. 310ff).

32 G.L. Hendrickson ('The Peripatetic Mean of Style and the Three Stylistic Characters', AJP 25 (1904), p. 128) notices the oddity of condemning style as a source of persuasiveness while devoting a section to it; he concludes that the discussion is concerned with 'prose style as a work of art, absolved from the consideration of a concrete object of persuasion or dissuasion and comparable to the elaboration of language in the service of poetry . . .' What is interesting about this is that Aristotle's discussion could have come across as divorced from the aims of rhetoric, when these seem to have given rise to them in the first place. Aristotle's line of argument does indeed at times run as if style could be assessed independently of the affective properties which made it useful.

At 1404a1ff Aristotle says that style (like delivery) is important because of the inferiority of the audiences. The aim of rhetoric is to move, even by irrational means, as was that of poetry; since the poets were the first to move by stylistic devices, which had a powerful effect even though the content was slight,[33] poetic style also seemed attractive in prose at first, and the uneducated still admired it for this reason.[34] He argues, however, that such people are mistaken, since the style of a speech is different from that of poetry. He uses a slightly peculiar argument: even in poetry the tendency has been away from the poetic, for one sees tragedians abandoning poetic diction, and using the iambic trimeters instead of tetrameters because this is closer to (presumably educated) speech.[35] It would be absurd to imitate poets by using devices which even poets no longer use. Therefore only certain aspects of style are relevant; only these need be discussed.

But if poetic language, rhythm, etc. are moving, the fact that poets are making less use of such devices does not explain why orators should give them up. If even a large section of contemporary audiences still responded favourably to them, why should they not have been used? The following section of the Rhetoric, which

33 1404a20ff

34 1404a25-8

35 1404a29ff

deals with excellence of style, makes some attempt to address these points, though its arguments are not altogether convincing.

At 1404b1ff, Aristotle sets out the virtue of style: it is to be clear, and neither mean nor pretentious, but appropriate.[36] The question of style is still dominated by the attempt to clarify the position of rhetorical prose vis-à-vis poetry, but a different point is being made about the relation between the two: poetry and rhetorical prose have different degrees of dignity; linguistic features which depart from ordinary language are also taken to have dignity; so poetry is entitled to more of them.[37] This seems to be independent of the tastes and attitudes of audiences.

This may explain the apparent paradox of the previous passage - perhaps the point was that when tragedy abandoned some of its privileges, it was absurd for oratory to affect them. But this is an odd sort of point to make, when attention to style is allowed, in the first place, as a concession to inferior audiences (why not just use whatever works?).

Aristotle is not, in fact, content to settle for parcelling out the ornaments to which oratory and poetry are entitled. He also tries to show that rhetorical prose must observe these limits if it is to be persuasive,

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36 ...καὶ ὡρίσθω λέξεως ἀρετὴ σαφῆ εἶναι (σημεῖον γάρ τι ὁ λόγο ὥστ' ἐὰν μὴ δηλοῖ οὐ ποιήσει τὸ ἑαυτοῦ ἔργον), καὶ μήτε ταπεινὴν μήτε ὑπὲρ τὸ ἀξίωμα, ἀλλὰ πρέπουσαν:...

37 1404b4ff ἡ γὰρ ποιητικὴ ὅσως οὐ ταπεινή, ἀλλ' οὐ πρέπουσα λόγῳ.

because otherwise it would seem unnatural and arouse suspicion. At 1404b12ff he argues as follows: even in poetry it would be quite improper to give a slave or young man splendid language, or have it used of small things; one must compose in a way that escapes notice, making it look natural rather than artificial. This is persuasive, while the artificial makes an audience suspicious; art best conceals art if one uses the skilful composition of familiar language, as Euripides was first to do in poetry.[38]

The argument is a bit strained, but seems to be this: even a slave or unimportant subject, if appearing in poetry, must call for language with a degree of artifice (metre must be used, for instance). The use of elevated diction, however, would be fatal to illusion: the audience would find this implausible in a slave, while mere skilful composition might pass unnoticed. The implications for oratory seem to be that a) grand diction looks natural when used by important persons or of important subjects, b) that these never turn up in oratory, c) that only the natural is persuasive.

In other words, it is suggested that observing the proper degrees of dignity for the different forms of discourse is essential to persuasiveness, because

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38 (following Kassel) ἐπὶ μὲν οὖν τῶν μέτρων πολλά τε ποιεῖ τοῦτο, καὶ ἁρμόττει ἐκεῖ (πλέον γὰρ ἐξέστηκε περὶ ἃ καὶ περὶ οὓς ὁ λόγος, ἐπεὶ καὶ ἐνταῦθα, εἰ δοῦλος καλλιεπεῖτο ἢ λίαν νέος, ἀπρεπέστερον, ἢ περὶ λίαν μικρῶν, ἀλλ' ἔστι καὶ ἐν τούτοις ἐπισυστελλόμενον καὶ αὐξανόμενον τὸ πρέπον), ἐν δὲ τοῖς ψιλοῖς λόγοις πολλῷ ἐλάττοσιν· ἡ γὰρ ὑπόθεσις ἐλάττων. διὸ δεῖ λανθάνειν ποιοῦντας, καὶ μὴ δοκεῖν λέγειν πεπλασμένως ἀλλὰ πεφυκότως (τοῦτο γὰρ πιθανόν, ἐκεῖνο δὲ τοὐναντίον· ὡς γὰρ πρὸς ἐπιβουλεύοντα διαβάλλονται...)

seeming natural is persuasive, and only that seems natural. But there are problems. First, the examples from poetry were cases where an unimportant person or thing had to be presented in a medium which had independent claims to dignity; this is apparently comparable to oratory, whose ὑπόθεσις is lower, but which requires a certain degree of dignity of style to avoid baseness. But one might suppose that speakers and subjects of importance would be entitled to some dignity of style - that Gorgias, the ambassador from Leontini, discussing an important matter of state, might have the right to a certain magnificence. But it is clear that the Gorgianic style would appear artificial whatever the importance of the speaker and subject. So either observing proportion does not lead to the appearance of natural speech, or appearing natural determines what counts as proportionate, and not an independent criterion such as the relative importance of subject, speaker, or occasion. Second, as we have seen, not all audiences disliked the artificial - Aristotle criticised their bad taste. So an independent criterion of propriety, of degrees of dignity, is needed to put them in the wrong. And, as I have said, an independent criterion which overrides the appeal style actually had for some people is, in the the context, peculiar.

Why should Aristotle have used this apparently contradictory line of argument? There are several possiblities: 1) he may have been drawing a distinction between what people admire and what is persuasive. A work does not

necessarily persuade when it arouses applause[39] - but the only excuse for 'style' in prose is that the work must achieve its proper effect. 2) Aristotle may be simply be legislating on aesthetic matters. It is clear that his own taste, even in poetry, is for the relatively naturalistic. 3) He may have thought that, though style was used for effect, there was nevertheless such a thing as a mean, which was its virtue if it was used at all. All three points have some support in his work; the last was the most productive of later confusion.

1) Gorgias' oratory, at least on the occasion of his embassy, was apparently effective as well as impressive. Aristotle says that the uneducated of his own time still thought that style ἀδόλιστα, but does not say that they were actually convinced by it in action. He may have thought the stereotyped style of such speakers bad, not just because unsuited to prose, but because, being fairly inflexible, it neglected some of the sources of persuasiveness to be found in variation. He may have thought that those who considered the Gorgianic style very fine simply had not thought much about what worked.

Some such notion might lie behind the discussion of propriety at 1408a10ff, which seems to fit well with the claim that style must seem natural to have the right effect. Aristotle gives a schematic account of the ways

39 Cf. Cicero, Orator 65; St. Augustine, De Doctrina Christiana 4.xxiv. 53.14-15.

style can be convincing through appropriateness to subject and speaker: style is appropriate if it shows emotion and character and is proportionate to the subject matter.[40] τὸ ἀνάλογον is essentially a rule for avoiding awkward incongruities: one should not speak trivially of dignified subjects, nor grandly of trivial ones.[41] This gives little guidance for fitting style to content; the other two, however, fill out the claim that one should seem natural - one's style should be such as a person with a particular disposition, of a certain class, feeling a particular emotion, would use. Aristotle does not often discuss particular stylistic means to represent emotion or character;[42] when he finally gets round to specifying the times when it is all right to use compounds, epithets, and unusual expressions, these are not directly linked, as one might have expected, with particularly impressive speakers or subjects, but with the emotional state of the speaker or audience - if either or both are in the grip of strong emotion,

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40 Τὸ δὲ πρέπον ἕξει ἡ λέξις ἐὰν ᾖ παθητική τε καὶ ἠθικὴ καὶ τοῖς ὑποκειμένοις πράγμασιν ἀνάλογον.

For the meaning of ἠθική, see W. Kroll, '"Εν ἤθει', Philologus 75, 1919, 68-76.

41 Τὸ δ'ἀνάλογόν ἐστιν ἐὰν μήτε περὶ εὐόγκων αὐτοκαβδάλως λέγηται μήτε περὶ εὐτελῶν σεμνῶς, μηδ' ἐπὶ τῷ εὐτελεῖ ὀνόματι ἐπῇ κόσμος. (1408a11ff)

42 A few exceptions, mainly affecting vocabulary - ταπεινῶς 1408a19, presumably prescribes very humble diction for pitiful speeches; at 1408a30ff, the use of οἰκεῖα ὀνόματα to distinguish character is exemplified by the difference between educated and uneducated speech; at 1408b11ff poetic devices are used naturally by the angry man; 1413a29ff, the hyperbole is boyish, expressing vehemence, and should be avoided by older men (this being inconsistent with the character of the old man as described in Book II).

οὐρανόμηκες or φήμη δὲ καὶ μνήμη will not seem unnatural. This seems to bear out the hypothesis that admiration is not what is wanted: grand language matched to a grand subject might win that, but such language will be persuasive only when it seems natural.

These aspects of πρέπον pertain to what would naturally be said of a certain subject or by a certain type of person.[43] What is natural would also depend, however, on the circumstances in which the speech is given (the anger which makes high language believable, for instance, could be expressed more convincingly in a speech that is delivered than in a written one). Further interest in a connection between the natural and the persuasive, then, may lie behind Aristotle's discussion of the propriety of varying style according to genre of speech. At 1413b3ff he makes a distinction like that of Isocrates between the written speech and that which is spoken, as well as between different types of the latter, οὐ γὰρ ἡ αὐτὴ γραφικὴ καὶ ἀγωνιστικὴ, οὐδὲ δημηγορικὴ καὶ δικανική. The written speech uses the most precision, the ἀγωνιστική depends most on delivery, so that the former seems dry in court, while the devices of the latter look silly when read.[44] The three types of rhetoric are set

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43 1408a16 - παθητικὴ δέ, ἐὰν μὲν ᾖ ὕβρις, ὀργιζομένου λέξις, ἐὰν δὲ ἀσεβῆ καὶ αἰσχρά, δυσχεραίνοντος καὶ εὐλαβουμένου καὶ λέγειν... 25 καὶ ἠθικὴ δὲ αὕτη ἡ ἐκ τῶν σημείων δεῖξις, ὅτε ἀκολουθεῖ ἡ ἁρμόττουσα ἑκάστῳ γένει καὶ ἕξει. Examples are age, sex, nationality, education.

44 Isocrates seems to be Aristotle's favourite example of the γραφική, to judge by the frequency of quotation (and misquotation - φήμη καὶ μνήμη) from him. But Aristotle does not, like Isocrates, think that the written speech is the place for consummate artistry of nearly poetic magnificence to display itself.

out according to the importance in each of delivery: deliberative requires the most 'presentation' because facing the largest crowd, epideictic is the most polished and literary, as its business can be accomplished by reading, while forensic lies between the two.[45]

The discussion of adapting style to circumstances of presentation, then, could also be seen as drawing attention to distinctions which had been ignored by those who much admired the Gorgianic style. All three forms of oratory aim at persuasion, and must use unobtrusive devices to achieve this: even a written piece has a more polished style simply because this is what escapes notice in such work. A brilliant, poetic style might win admiration, and yet be quite unsuited to the various kinds of adaptation which have been described.

2) The very fact, however, that Aristotle introduces these divisions in kind of speech, yet makes so few concessions to fans of Gorgias, suggests that he is also legislating on aesthetic criteria for the genres of prose, as he had for those of poetry. The argument that elaborate, poetic language arouses suspicion is best suited to speeches meant to be delivered - but it is only for such speeches that Aristotle offers a possible justification for poetic language, in the heightened language of strong emotion. No attempt is made to

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45 1413b17 . . . ἐν τῷ ἀγῶνι ἁρμόττει· διὸ καὶ τὰ ὑποκριτικὰ ἀφῃρημένης τῆς ὑποκρίσεως οὐ ποιοῦντα τὸ αὐτῶν ἔργου φαίνεται εὐήθη, οἷον τά τε ἀσύνδετα καὶ τὸ πολλάκις τὸ αὐτὸ εἰπεῖν ἐν τῇ γραφικῇ ὀρθῶς ἀποδοκιμάζεται, ἐν δὲ ἀγωνιστικῇ οὔ, καὶ οἱ ῥήτορες χρῶνται·

accommodate unusual language in epideictic, the form which, being written, is not meant to sound just as people naturally speak. It seems clear that, even where more elaboration was possible, Aristotle preferred it to take the form of Euripidean artfulness - skilful composition which did not call attention to itself.

The effect of this legislation is most obvious in the discussion of the kinds of poetic words, at 1404b26ff. In the Poetics Aristotle allowed all kinds to epic on grounds of its dignity, metaphor to tragedy on the grounds that it was mimetic of 'real' speech. The discussion of vocabulary in the Rhetoric assumes that no genre of prose has dignity enough to justify noticeable diction. Although vocabulary is supposed to keep style from being base by being slightly unusual, all precepts for using such language are aimed at keeping it as unobtrusive as possible.

Thus, in the case of metaphor, acceptable in prose because everyone uses them,[46] one must be careful not to spoil this by violating the principle of τὸ ἀνάλογον, or otherwise making the expression blatantly poetic (half of the first discussion of metaphor, at 1405a3ff, as well as that on the ψυχρότης of metaphors at 1406b4ff, deal with this danger).[47] Poeticism seems to be the

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46 1404b34

47 Thus Euripides' line in the Telephus is obtrusive because noticeably inappropriate - τὸ δὲ ὡς ὁ Τήλεφος Εὐριπίδου φησί, 'κώπης ἀνάσσων κἀποβὰς εἰς Μυσίαν', ἀπρεπές, ὅτι μεῖζον τὸ ἀνάσσειν ἢ κατ' ἀξίαν· οὐ κέκλεπται οὖν (1405a28ff). At 1406b8ff, metaphors can be inappropriate, either because ridiculous, or διὰ τὸ σεμνὸν ἄγαν καὶ τραγικόν.

real fault even in examples criticised primarily for obscurity, like Gorgias' χλωρὰ καὶ ἄναιμα τὰ πράγματα and σὺ δὲ ταῦτα αἰσχρῶς μὲν ἔσπειρας κακῶς δὲ ἐθέρισας[48] - the first may have been obscure even in context, but the second seems to be not unclear, but poetic because of the structure of the line (cf. Cope ad loc.), and possibly because the metaphor was common enough in poetry to be associated with it. The use of metaphor, then, must preserve its air of belonging to ordinary, natural language.[49] The discussion of other kinds of poetic diction, on the other hand, in the section on the first three classes of ὀνόματα, is concerned mainly with assigning these classes decidedly to poetry,[50] and with warning that, though some are not out of place in prose, using too many will make the style conspicuously poetic. Aristotle grants that some epithets are not improper in prose, and that men commonly use certain obvious kinds of compound word (1406a14ff, 1406a35-6); but he is less interested in analysing what one can use, than in pointing out that even suitable ones can, qua epithet or compound, be inappropriate in large numbers. (Alcidamas seems to offend both by quantity and quality - οὐ γὰρ ἡδύσματι

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48 1406b8ff

49 1405b8ff τὸ ἀνάλογον is apparently not to be followed absolutely in the case of very low subject matter, either - one should avoid αἰσχρολογία.

50 The point is emphasised at the end of the passage when particular types of word are mentioned as suited to particular types of poetry, e.g. compounds to dithyrambs, glosses to epic (1406b1)

χρῆται ἀλλ' ὡς ἐδέσματι τοῖς ἐπιθέτοις, τοῖς οὕτω πυκνοῖς . . .)

3) Aristotle's concern that prose should seem natural, then, is in part the result of a view that poeticisms here would be in bad taste. Although style was attended to for its affective properties, he may also have thought that its excellence simply was a mean which, like that of ethical virtue, could be determined independently (i.e. that the excess and deficiency from the mean which were baseness and 'pretentiousness' were not dependent on what offended or pleased an audience), but that the mean, once achieved, just would be agreeable. This may be implied by the claim that style which is appropriate will thereby be pleasant as well. It seems, then, that propriety is meant to reconcile the claims of subject and audience.

Aristotle and Theophrastus' virtues of style

I think that the third alternative is that to which Aristotle instinctively inclined, and that this can explain a great deal both about his notion of excellence of style for prose, and about the developments which were possible from this. The unity of Aristotle's virtue had been commonly used as an important argument against tracing a three-style theory either to him or to his follower Theophrastus;[51] less commonly against

51 J. Stroux, De Theophrasti virtutibus dicendi (Leipzig, 1912), G.L. Hendrickson, 'The Peripatetic Mean of Style and the Three Stylistic Characters', AJP 25 (1904), 125-146, F. Quadlbauer, 'Die genera dicendi bis auf Plinius d.j.', WS 71 (1958), 55-111; G. Grube, 'Thrasymachus, Theophrastus, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus', AJP 73 (1952), 251-67.

attributing to Theophrastus a theory of four virtues of style.[52] This argument is based on an analogy from the Nicomachean Ethics, where virtue is a mean between extremes, comparable to propriety in the Rhetoric: where one has a virtue of the right form, it may seem hard to multiply entities. Aristotle rules this out, moreover, when he rejects the suggestion that style should be μεγαλοπρεπής and ἡδεῖα.[53]

I should like to argue that remarks in the Rhetoric and Nicomachean Ethics encourage attempts to subdivide virtue; that both Aristotle's attitude to ornament of style in the Rhetoric and his discussion of μεγαλοπρέπεια in the Nicomachean Ethics show why people familiar with his work should have thought it reasonable to import that particular virtue into style; that Aristotle's remarks on ordinary and extreme virtues in the Ethics can explain why he should have been unwilling to admit μεγαλοπρέπεια into the Rhetoric. All these should then show why the four Theophrastean virtues might have been chosen, and why they should have developed into the necessary and additional ones of later rhetoric, as well as showing that a three-style theory need not have been a preposterous development.

The best place to start is back with the relative status of poetry and prose. A liberal supply of grand

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52 M. Tullii Ciceronis Orator, ed. W. Kroll (Berlin, 1913, repr. 1958), p. 80; G. Grube, op. cit.

53 1414a18ff τὸ δὲ προσδιαιρεῖσθαι τὴν λέξιν, ὅτι ἡδεῖαν δεῖ εἶναι καὶ μεγαλοπρεπῆ, περίεργον· τί γὰρ μᾶλλον ἢ σώφρονα καὶ ἐλευθέριον καὶ εἴ τις ἄλλη ἤθους ἀρετή; τὸ δὲ ἡδεῖαν εἶναι ποιήσει δῆλον ὅτι τὰ εἰρημένα . . . τίνος γὰρ ἕνεκα δεῖ σαφῆ καὶ μὴ ταπεινὴν εἶναι ἀλλὰ πρέπουσαν;

diction is the prerogative of important subjects and forms, and poetry is allowed more than prose.[54] The difference in status is especially clear if one contrasts the account of stylistic virtue in the Poetics, where it is simply pointed out that, though κύρια ὀνόματα are clear, they are base, so unusual language must be used to avoid this (all poeticisms allowed) - and in the Rhetoric, where poeticisms are mentioned as a possible defence against baseness, but are not suited to prose.[55] The structure of this comparison is very like that of two hierarchies of virtues set out in the Ethics, where Aristotle deals with the pairs ἐλευθεριότης/μεγαλοπρέπεια and μεγαλοψυχία and the virtue of seeking an appropriate but moderate amount of honour.[56] Liberality deals with the proper outlay of money, magnificence with the proper outlay of large amounts of money on big projects; magnanimity concerns seeking large honours when entitled to them, the nameless virtue (τὸ φιλοτίμον) concerns seeking the honours due one whatever their size. You can be μεγαλοπρεπής only if you have a lot of money and spend it properly on a big object - on a modest income you can spend generously on suitable objects, which makes you liberal but not

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54 1404b12ff

55 Poetics 1458a18 Λέξεως δὲ ἀρετὴ σαφῆ καὶ μὴ ταπεινὴν εἶναι. σαφεστάτη μὲν οὖν ἐστιν ἡ ἐκ τῶν κυρίων ὀνομάτων, ἀλλὰ ταπεινή· . . . σεμνὴ δὲ καὶ ἐξαλλάττουσα τὸ ἰδιωτικὸν ἡ τοῖς ξενικοῖς κεχρημένη· . . . Rh.1404b1ff . . . ὡρίσθω λέξεως ἀρετὴ σαφῆ εἶναι . . . καὶ μήτε ταπεινὴν μήτε ὑπὲρ τὸ ἀξίωμα, ἀλλὰ πρέπουσαν· ἡ γὰρ ποιητικὴ ἴσως οὐ ταπεινή, ἀλλ' οὐ πρέπουσα λόγῳ.

56 IV.1 and 2, 3 and 4. cf. 1125b4ff: ἄμφω γὰρ αὗται (the more moderate virtues) τοῦ μεγάλου ἀφεστᾶσι, περὶ δὲ τὰ μέτρια καὶ μικρὰ διατεθέασιν ἡμᾶς ὡς δεῖ . . .

magnificent.[57] In the case of each of these large virtues Aristotle is at some pains to insist that the man who practises them is still acting in a mean, that this behaviour, extravagant or pompous in a poorer or less virtuous man, is simply appropriate to one of this man's resources or virtues; πρέπον and cognates occur ten times in the three-page discussion of magnificence, out of a total of thirteen in the entire book. Returning to style, then, prose is clearly in the class of modest things which cannot claim extreme virtue, while poetry is in the class of things whose virtue is not only appropriate but splendid.

The similarity, however, is not just one of structure in the case of magnificence: Aristotle's description of the virtue is one which could be transferred easily to style. Magnificence is one of the few ethical virtues where proper behaviour has a quantitative measure: there is a correlation between the important objects of expenditure, the large amount of money called for, and the man of status and income who can spend appropriately on such objects. The man who is μεγαλοπρεπής achieves the mean, spending appropriately with respect to object, because he neither spends too much on the wrong things, like the βάναυσος, nor too little on the right things, like the μικροπρεπής ; he spends lavishly and appropriately, ὥστε τὸ μὲν ἔργον τῆς δαπάνης ἄξιον δεῖ εἶναι, τὴν δὲ δαπάνην τοῦ ἔργου, ἢ καὶ ὑπερβάλλειν (NE 1122b4-6). But his expenditure is

57 1122a20-23, 26-39; 1122b26ff

also in a mean with respect to the kind of person he is, neither too little for one of his resources, nor too much, as it would be for a poor man: Aristotle goes into some detail on the kinds of people who can be big spenders with propriety.[58] The βάναυσος man, on the other hand, is extravagant on trivial things - giving a club dinner on the scale of a wedding feast, dressing a comic chorus in purple - and does it to show off his wealth, not to do things handsomely - while the μικροπρεπής never does justice to worthy objects of expenditure.

All of this recalls the restrictions in the Rhetoric on the kinds of people who can use fine language, and especially on the kinds of subjects which deserve it; poetry can use very large quantities of exotic vocabulary, prose must be more restrained.[59] It is a fault in Gorgias and his followers to have used too much poetic vocabulary for their subject and form: in their disregard for proportion, they remind one of the vulgar man who imitates, unsuccessfully, the magnificent one.[60]

There are obvious problems with the analogy.

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58 NE 1122b25 (expenditure must be appropriate to means) καὶ μὴ μόνον τῷ ἔργῳ ἀλλὰ καὶ τῷ ποιοῦντι πρέπειν. διὸ πένης μὲν οὐκ ἂν εἴη μεγαλοπρεπής· οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν ἀφ' ὧν πολλὰ δαπανήσει πρεπόντως· ὁ δ' ἐπιχειρῶν ἠλίθιος· παρὰ τὴν ἀξίαν γὰρ καὶ τὸ δέον, κατ' ἀρετὴν δὲ τὸ ὀρθῶς. πρέπει δὲ οἷς τοιαῦτα προϋπάρχει δι' αὐτῶν ἢ τῶν προγόνων ἢ ὧν αὐτοῖς μέτεστιν, καὶ τοῖς εὐγένεσι καὶ τοῖς ἐνδόξοις καὶ ὅσα τοιαῦτα· πάντα γὰρ ταῦτα μέγεθος ἔχει καὶ ἀξίωμα.

59 e.g. 1404b28 τούτων (τῶν ὀνομάτων) γλώτταις μὲν καὶ διπλοῖς ὀνόμασι καὶ πεποιημένοις ὀλιγάκις καὶ ὀλιγαχοῦ χρηστέον (ὅπου δὲ, ὕστερον ἐροῦμεν, τό τε διὰ τί εἴρηται· ἐπὶ τὸ μεῖζον γὰρ ἐξαλλάττει τοῦ πρέποντος) . . . 1406a10ff, 1406b35-7.

60 1406a18ff, 1406b6ff; 1405b35-6a6

Provided that one has a scale of priorities for things requiring money, one can judge the appropriateness of how much is spent, comparing the quantity spent on one thing with that spent on another. But since poetic words, figures, and so on are not simply units of fixed value, counting up how many have been used can be only a rough guide to the style of a passage - one can never be quite sure how much was spent. The analogy also fails in a more important way. The account of magnificence in the Nicomachean Ethics depends on the fact that there is a connection between the importance of a project and how much it costs - the big occasions and services to the state mentioned as suitable for the attention of the μεγαλοπρεπής man really are very expensive. But the same kind of proportion does not necessarily hold between an important subject and the grandeur of language required to do it justice, even supposing that a satisfactory solution had been found to the first problem.

While there are good reasons to be cautious about the analogy, however, Aristotle is not in a good position to reject it, since it is he who introduced the notion of correlating dignity of style and subject along a scale of quantities of unusual vocabulary. The examples of other ethical virtues which might be required are red herrings: liberality would cover exactly the same ground as propriety, and temperance does not have the same capacity

for quantitative description.[61]

Readers of Aristotle, moreover, might well look for further specification of stylistic virtue. While propriety is divided into three aspects (ἠθική, παθητική, πρὸς τὰ πράγματα), all three are apparently to be satisfied by hitting the mean with respect to a single scale - the stretch between baseness and pretentiousness. They might well have wanted a virtue which combined the three in an intelligible way. In the last section, moreover, I spoke of the difficulty in justifying the exclusion of the upper reaches of grandeur from prose style when it pleased an audience. It seems to me that the other requirement rejected by Aristotle - pleasantness - might have seemed to go very naturally with a plea for allowing magnificence, the 'heroic' virtue of style, to prose: prose could be magnificent, it might be argued, and not merely pretentious, when its use of large numbers of ornaments was pleasant. Aristotle deals with this by putting the two in different categories: one is irrelevant, the other will be achieved if style is appropriate. (It is thus eliminated as a way of justifying, as appropriate, a highly poetic, magnificent style.)

I do not think that these points can yield conclusive arguments for the views of Theophrastus on style; the Theophrastean fragments on the subject are too few for that to

61 I assume that one should try to apply μεγαλοπρέπεια in a fairly literal way to style, since Aristotle's objection could not even get off the ground if μεγαλοπρεπής was taken to mean only something vaguely reminiscent of the ethical quality, e.g. 'dignified' or 'splendid'.

be possible. On the other hand, it is generally assumed that Theophrastus' account must have been largely Aristotelian; if we accept this, we can infer from these points that certain lines of thought would not have been incompatible with Theophrastus' position. I shall say something about these lines of thought below.

Cicero names four qualities of style listed by Theophrastus: the plain style will have purity of Latin, clarity, propriety, but will lack the fourth listed by Theophrastus, abundant and pleasant ornamentation.[62] The recurrence of the same four at De Oratore 3.37 (though without the name of Theophrastus) confirms the impression that a list of four was a commonplace. Cicero is generally understood to refer to four virtues of style. Why should Theophrastus have subdivided Aristotle's single virtue? And why should he have restricted himself to four virtues if he did? If this is indeed a spelling out of all that was contained in the original virtue, what precisely is the fourth, ornament?

Grube argues that the four cannot have been virtues, both because this would have been false to Aristotle's original notion of a single, unified virtue, and because it would have been arbitrary to fix the number at four.

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62 Sermo purus erit et Latinus, dilucide planeque dicetur, quid deceat circumspicietur, unum aberit, quod quartum numerat Theophrastus in orationis laudibus: ornatum illud suave et affluens. (Orator 79).

De Oratore 3.37 makes it likely, however, that a package of four was commonly recognised, and Orator 79 makes it very likely that the package was first brought out by Theophrastus. Is this unAristotelian? No, for several reasons. Mere subdivision of virtue cannot be, when the original virtue was essentially the mean: the mean characterises ethical excellence as well, but various virtues can be specified. Theophrastus may have thought that Aristotle touched upon qualities which were in fact virtues in this sense, and that it was useful to make this explicit. One can also account for the four chosen: Aristotle's description of stylistic excellence is based on the tension between ordinary and extraordinary language, so it is perfectly reasonable for an unpacking of this to involve only the qualities directly relevant to this tension.[63] Moreover, the Rhetoric itself seems to sketch such a division: means are discussed for achieving good Greek **and** clarity (III.5), ὄγκος (6), and propriety (7), (the order of topics is the same as that in De Oratore 3[64]). It would be natural to take this as marking out important qualities of style. What is a little odd, however, is the way propriety is simply listed as one virtue among others: surely if all virtues are qualities displayed in a mean, then they are all in some sense governed by propriety? And on the other hand if propriety is the mean, it cannot itself lie in a mean like the rest, so one cannot suppose four virtues all equally governed by the mean.

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63 For trade-offs between good Greek and stylish language cf. Chapter 4, pp. 348ff, 352ff.

64 De Oratore 3.37ff

One possibility is that the list is, indeed, composed of members of slightly different kinds, but that this is an incongruity with parallels in the work of Aristotle. Perhaps propriety is both a virtue with specific content, including the matching of style to subject, speaker and emotion, and the standard which governs all the other qualities. It might be a little like the ethical virtue of temperance, to which Aristotle gives a particular domain (enjoying physical pleasures in the proper degree), but which seems to have wider application (since he says that the whole of virtue is concerned with feeling pleasure and pain in the right degree, at the right actions;[65] or like the virtue of justice, which is both a particular virtue, and a general one governing all our dealings with other people.[66] Perhaps the biggest question this raises is not why propriety was listed along with other virtues, but why it was listed along with ornament: in Aristotle, propriety complements clarity and good Greek, but it includes the distinguished language needed to avoid baseness. Why, then, is the list not either clarity, Greek, and ornament, or clarity, Greek and propriety? One reason might be simply that Aristotle had included a chapter on ὄγκος in Rhetoric 3 (see above, p.217). I suspect that another reason is to be found in Aristotle's treatment of extraordinary virtues.

I pointed out earlier that Aristotle, in his discussion of ornamental kinds of diction, is mainly concerned to put the most striking kinds off limits for prose, with a few exceptions. Prose is to be made attractive,

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65 See W. Hardie, Aristotle's Ethical Theory (2nd ed., Oxford, 1980), p. 138 on E.N. VII.9.

66 E.N. V.1.15ff. Compare also the treatment of the essential characteristics of plot in the Poetics, where probable or necessary connection is dealt with separately (1451a36ff), but also enters into the specifications of the other three (an orderly whole, 1450b26ff, the right size, 1451a11ff, unity, 1451a24ff).

preferably, by skilful synthesis like that of Euripides; strictly speaking, there is very little room for a virtue, an admirable quality, consisting of ornamentation. In Cicero's account of the fourth virtue, on the other hand, it is clear that it is the splendid, striking use of ornament which he has in mind. It is not that the plain style uses absolutely no artifice to make itself attractive - it can use concinnitas sparingly, it can use metaphors of the most ordinary kind.[67] What it abjures is the regular and plentiful use of ornament in a way that is agreeably brilliant. I suggest that this is because the Theophrastean virtue of ornament united the pair of qualities dismissed by Aristotle (μεγαλοπρέπεια and τὸ ἡδύ), and was not simply that of using ornament to the proper (sometimes negligible) degree, but of using splendid language appropriately, i.e. when subject, circumstances, etc. warranted it.[68]

This interpretation depends on several factors. It makes most sense if Theophrastus actually transferred the term μεγαλοπρέπεια, with the restrictions on those capable of displaying it, from the ethical sphere. We know that he did use the term of style, though none of the occurrences can be pinned to a virtue;[69] on the other hand, pace Stroux, Cicero's 'affluens' is unlikely

67 Orator 83, 81-2. That Cicero's notion of metaphor includes words which were part of normal usage, and is to that extent inadequate, may suggest that the plain style has a degree of 'ornament' through confusion (on the misnomer 'dead metaphor' see M.S. Silk, Interaction in Poetic Imagery (Cambridge, 1974), pp. 27-9). What matters is that Cicero thought there were connections between features of the plain style, and devices which adorned the middle and grand styles.

68 Cf. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Isocr. 3, where he says that Theophrastus distinguished three sources of τὸ μέγα καὶ σεμνὸν καὶ περιττὸν ἐν λέξει.

69 Cf. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, DCV Ch. 16; it occurs in the Ammonius fragment, though as Grube points out this does not necessarily mean that Theophrastus used it - the use of the term ἰδέαι points to the danger of anachronism. On this subject, see D.C. Innes, 'Theophrastus and the Theory of Style', in Theophrastus of Eresus, Rutgers Univ. Stud. in Class. Hum. 2 (1985), ed. W.F. Fortenbaugh, 251-67.

as a direct translation of this word. If μεγαλοπρέπεια was in the original and strict translation was wanted, Latin writers were perfectly happy with 'magnificentia' and 'magnificus'.[70] I suppose, then, that Cicero was not worrying about strict translation, but used a word with roughly the right connotations (n.b. the notion of abundance, which need not be stretched much to apply to style, is in fact very important in the original, ethical virtue of magnificence - the English word distorts this a little in drifting toward the brilliant and splendid). On the other hand, there may be some confirmation that μεγαλοπρέπεια was in the background in the fact that Cicero does use 'magnificentia' in this context, later in the Orator passage; and that it appears in a similar discussion in De opt. gen. oratorum.[71] (Both of these also bear out the idea that ornatus as a virtue is connected, not with the proper use of any amount of ornament, but with its splendid use in the right place.)

The main problem with this line is that it depends heavily on Cicero, who had his own reasons for being interested in heroic virtues, especially if they involved copia and abundantia. How do we know that the fuller account of ornatus in Orator does not distort

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70 Quintilian explicitly equates the two, 4.2.61; cf. Cicero, Brutus 261; De Opt. Gen. 12 (possibly not by Cicero, see A. Dihle, 'Ein Spurium unter den rhetorischen Werken Ciceros', Hermes 83 (1955), 303-314); Q. 6.1.52; and OLD entries under magnificus and magnificentia.

71 Orator 83-4 on the use of *σχηματα*: nam sic ut in epularum apparatu a magnificentia recedens non se parcum solum sed etiam elegantem videri volet, et eliget quibus utatur. De Opt. Gen. 12, sin autem intellegentiam ponunt in audiendi fastidio neque eos quicquam excelsum magnificumque delectat, dicant se quiddam subtile et politum velle, grande ornatumque contemnere . . .

Theophrastus? We cannot be completely sure, but I think there are some reasons to think that he does not. First, as I have said, such a virtue is a departure from Aristotle, but an intelligible development of his views. It is also consistent with the account of rhetorical style given in the Ammonius fragment, where Theophrastus is said to have spoken of both poetry and rhetoric as forms of discourse aimed at the audience rather than at the subject.[72] The fact that Theophrastus accepts a parallel which Aristotle had severely restricted may make it more likely that he should also have permitted to prose the 'heroic' virtue which Aristotle had thought beyond its means and dignity. This seems a fair assumption even if one is cautious about attributing all the views in the passage to Theophrastus. It is strengthened, of course, if the remarks on unusual language and those on the object of such language - to please and astound and forcefully persuade - derive from Theophrastus,[73] but it seems clear that Theophrastus cannot have thought

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72 Διττῆς γὰρ οὔσης τῆς τοῦ λόγου σχέσεως, καθὸ διώρισεν ὁ φιλόσοφος Θεόφραστος, τῆς τε πρὸς τοὺς ἀκροωμένους, οἷς καὶ σημαίνει τι, καὶ τῆς πρὸς τὰ πράγματα, ὑπὲρ ὧν ὁ λέγων πεῖσαι προτίθεται τοὺς ἀκροωμένους, περὶ μὲν τὴν σχέσιν αὐτοῦ τὴν πρὸς τοὺς ἀκροατὰς κατατίνουται ποιητικὴ καὶ ῥητορική . . . Ammonius in Aristotelis De Interpr. IV,5 (p.65,31). For a similar parallel between poetry and prose, cf. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, DCV 16 (II,66,11ff): Theophrastus distinguished words which are naturally beautiful, ὧν συντιθεμένων καλὴν οἴεται καὶ μεγαλοπρεπῆ γενήσεσθαι τὴν φράσιν, καὶ αὖθις ἕτερα μικρὰ καὶ ταπεινά, ἐξ ὧν οὔτε ποίημα χρηστὸν ἔσεσθαί φησιν οὔτε λόγον.

73 (ῥητορική,) διόπερ ἔργου αὐταῖς ἐκλέγεσθαί τε τὰ σεμνότερα τῶν ὀνομάτων, ἀλλὰ μὴ τὰ κοινὰ καὶ δεδημευμένα . . . ἥσαί τε τὸν ἀκροατὴν καὶ ἐκπλῆξαι καὶ πρὸς τὴν πειθὼ χειρωθέντα ἔχειν . . .

that all rhetorical prose should be like this.[74] The fact that he restricted the artifice permissible to deliberative oratory, however, need not mean that he was not readier than Aristotle to allow it to other forms; his interest in impressive style (Isocr. 3) suggests that he must have been.[75]

It may also count in favour of this interpretation that it makes the four Theophrastean virtues fit more intelligibly with views of critics other than Cicero. This account of Theophrastus' fourth virtue makes it a more likely precursor, for instance, of Demetrius' μεγαλοπρεπὴς χαρακτήρ (for whose neighbouring fault, ψυχρότης, an ethical parallel is provided[76]). The four virtues of Theophrastus also show a distinction like that mentioned by Dionysius between necessary and

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74 Grube lays great weight on Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Lys. 14, where Theophrastus criticises excessively poetic language in a prose writer, and claims that excessive use of Gorgianic figures is ill-suited to a serious purpose and destroys emotion: *φαίνεται γὰρ ἁπρεπὲς σπουδάζοντα τοῖς πράγμασι τοῖς ὀνόμασι παίζειν καὶ τὸ πάθος τῇ λέξει περιαιρεῖν· ἐκλύει γὰρ τὸν ἀκροατήν* (AJP 1952). Cf. Quintilian 3.7.1, in which Theophrastus is said to have thought that epideictic had nothing to do with pragmatic oratory, but was concerned only with entertaining the audience, also 3.8.62, where limits are placed on the use of artifice in deliberative oratory.

75 *καθόλου δὲ τριῶν ὄντων, ὥς φησι Θεόφραστος, ἐξ ὧν γίνεται τὸ μέγα καὶ σεμνὸν καὶ περιττὸν ἐν λέξει . . .*

76 The fault is not that mentioned by Aristotle in connection with magnificence. On the other hand, the description of *ψυχρότης* is perfectly in accord with Aristotle's description of the man who spends a great deal on the wrong objects. Theophrastus' definition of *ψυχρότης* (Demetrius, On Style 114), *τὸ ὑπερβάλλου τὴν οἰκείαν ἀπαγγελίαν*, would, of course, fit any departure from propriety in the direction of excess, but such a fault would be peculiarly apt to occur in those who aimed at, and failed to achieve, the extraordinary virtue of splendid ornament.

additional virtues;[77] this account of them makes it easier to understand how such a division might originally have worked. In the Rhetoric, of course, it is admitted that mere clarity is not enough, and implied that some sacrifices of clarity and good Greek may have to be made for the sake of stylistic dignity. What is hard to understand in the later scheme is how certain virtues can be 'necessary', so presumably indispensable, when the merit of the finest writers may lie precisely in overriding their claims. The division makes more sense, however, if ornament was originally not an additional virtue but an extraordinary one, suited to the greatest speakers and subjects, and requiring less in the way of ordinary virtues.

Demetrius

Demetrius' On Style shows particularly interesting developments of this Aristotelian and early Peripatetic material.[78] Both the organisation and scope of the work invite attention.

Organisation

The four 'characters' of style give propriety a different place in the system from that which it had in the

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77 Thuc. 22 (I,358,19-22), 23 (I,360,2-12), Ad Pomp. 3 (II,239,5ff), cf. also Lys. 13 (I,23,5ff) and note 163, p. 274.

78 The author is certainly not Demetrius of Phaleron, to whom the manuscript ascribes it, and it is likely that the whole is not the work of a single man, given what look like additions and inconsistencies; I accept the arguments of D.C. Innes, however, for thinking the main date of composition early first century B.C. (Introduction and Commentary on The περὶ ἑρμηνείας ascribed to Demetrius of Phaleron, Diss. Oxon. 1967), and shall call the author Demetrius for the sake of convenience.

Rhetoric:[79] there are four acceptable types of writing, plus possible mixtures, each consisting of certain qualities used in the proper place, to the proper degree. D.C. Innes points out that the four characteres are not merely kinds of style, since subject matter is also said to contribute to the relevant effect; the only aspect of this which is discussed, however, is propriety, a quality generally associated with discussions of style.[80] This makes sense if Demetrius is trying to subdivide Aristotle's single excellence of style: one would expect him to specify, for each set of stylistic features, the subjects and circumstances where they could be used well.

This distorts the theory that the excellence of style lies in a mean, but not unfairly. Aristotle took it for granted that any particular mean might not be able to unite all desirable qualities (it is not particularly worrying that a man cannot exhibit all moral virtues at the same time);[81] one might choose, however, to describe the different means available rather than speaking of only one. Demetrius tries, moreover, to remain faithful to earlier tradition, stating, for instance, that only the grand and plain characteres are incompatible.[82] The faults

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79 I use character (pl. characteres) when the word has its Demetrian sense.

80 Op. cit. pp. 25-6. See for instance 75, 190, 163 in On Style.

81 Even in Aristotle's system there are incompatible types of style, e.g. the γραφική and the ἀγωνιστική, each fulfilling his criterion of good style if used appropriately.

82 μίγνυνται δὲ οὐ πᾶς παντί, ἀλλ' ὁ γλαφυρὸς μὲν καὶ τῷ ἰσχνῷ καὶ τῷ μεγαλοπρεπεῖ, καὶ ὁ δεινὸς δὲ ὁμοίως ἀμφοτέροις· μόνος δὲ ὁ μεγαλοπρεπὴς τῷ ἰσχνῷ οὐ μίγνυται, ἀλλ' ὥσπερ ἀνθέστατον καὶ ἀντίκειτθον ἐναντιωτάτῳ. (36)

connected with this pair are also reasonable extrapolations from the Aristotelian position that propriety lies between excess and deficiency, these determined as too much or too little in the way of unusual vocabulary, etc. for a given subject. One form of frigidity, for instance, is to use excessively grand language, i.e. language which, in certain circumstances, would belong to the grand character, when inappropriate. Aridity, the fault connected with the plain style, has a similar form: one finds it when one uses features of style belonging to the plain character, but of a subject which deserves better.[83]

There are problems, however, if one looks at the relation of the second pair of characteres and faults to the first. The faults are meant to show features of desirable styles carried to excess, or poorly executed; in fact, as Schenkeveld points out, both are to some extent varieties of ἀπρεπές.[84] But an important way in which impropriety could occur is completely neglected; the scheme of neighbouring faults cannot capture some of the things that can go wrong. One of the dangers of the forceful style is that one might stray into obvious, elaborate artistry inopportunely and destroy emotion: Demetrius warns against producing grandeur when it is not wanted (since the grand character shares many of the same devices), and

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83 Cf. Aristotle on the ethical fault neighbouring magnificence on the side of excess: it is not spending too much on grand objects, but spending too much on the wrong things, EN 1122a29ff: τῆς τοιαύτης δ' ἕξεως . . . ἡ δ' ὑπερβολὴ βαναυσία καὶ ἀπειροκαλία καὶ ὅσαι τοιαῦται, οὐχ ὑπερβάλλουσαι τῷ μεγέθει περὶ ἃ δεῖ, ἀλλ' ἐν οἷς οὐ δεῖ καὶ ὡς οὐ δεῖ λαμπρυνόμεναι.

84 Studies in Demetrius on Style (Amsterdam, 1964), p. 81. Cf. On Style, 188, 237, 304.

the danger at 300 seems to be that one might use some of the features of the graceful character out of place.[85] In Aristotle this would have been impropriety of style pure and simple: grand language, for instance, is permissible only when not 'noticeable', e.g. when emotion makes it look natural, so mistakes on this score are offences against propriety.[86] In Demetrius it is more complicated: grandeur has its place in prose style, as does a smooth and symmetrical composition, but these may be out of place if one wishes to arouse emotion.[87]

This is simply to say that shortcomings which Demetrius actually recognises do not necessarily fit into the scheme. On the other hand, his attempt at specifying various types of good style brings out disparities in Aristotle's notion of stylistic propriety. Aristotle's scheme, as we have seen, tried to unite 'objective' standards and 'psychological' ones. It seemed intuitively plausible that 'similarity' between style and subject or speaker would be appropriate; it also seemed plausible that whatever gave offence, or even failed to persuade, must be inappropriate, and perhaps conversely that whatever achieved the right effect on an audience must show propriety. One could try to connect the two aspects in a causal relation, saying that whatever observed proportion would strike the audience as suited to subject, speaker, emotion.

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85 Cf. 247, where the use of antitheses and paromoia produces ὀγκος (characteristic of the μεγαλοπρεπής character), or even ψυχρότης: an example from Theopompus is not forceful, since the hearer is distracted by artifice and forgets to be angry. Cf. also 27 on the simplicity of anger, 28 on ἦθος and πάθος, 252 (periods of many members produce beauty not force), 274 (on the beauty, and lack of force, of detailed comparisons).

86 Cf. Rhet. 1408b10ff.

87 Cf. e.g. 57, where καί seems to put παθητικῶς in disjunction with μεγαλοπρέπεια.

There are various ways, however, in which language could be used to good effect without conforming to the scale of dignity of subject. These fit awkwardly into a system based on propriety determined according to τὸ ἀνάλογον, but find a place in Demetrius. It is primarily in the grand/plain pair that one finds interest in the straightforward relation between worth of subject and height of style.[88] These two characteres lie on Aristotle's scale from abundance to scarceness of unusual diction and other sources of dignity, with abundance and avoidance matched to elevated or common subjects. The second pair, graceful/forceful, emphasises what could roughly be called the affective side of types of writing, and might at first sight be thought to subvert the 'straight' notion of propriety. The forceful type deals with ways of using language to produce violent effects; rough, unpolished language may be suitable for an important subject which deserves powerful responses, where excessive

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88 See for example 75, where Demetrius argues that it is not enough to talk about a grand subject to speak grandly, since one might speak in a way that was inappropriate to the subject: what counts is apparently matching a grand style to a suitably grand subject. *δεῖ γὰρ οὐ τὰ λεγόμενα σκοπεῖν, ἀλλὰ πῶς λέγεται· ἔστι γὰρ καὶ μεγάλα μικρῶς λέγουτα ἀπρεπὲς ποιεῖν τῷ πράγματι*; 83-4 on suitable and unsuitable metaphors, 114 (quoting Theophrastus), on the grand style used of trivial objects: *ψυχρόν ἐστι τὸ ὑπερβάλλου τὴυ οἰκείαυ ἀπαγγελίαυ, οἷου 'ἀπυυδάκωτος οὐ τραπεζοῦται κύλιξ' ἀυτὶ τοῦ ἀπύθμενος ἐπὶ τραπέζης κύλιξ οὐ τίθεται. τὸ γὰρ πρᾶγμα σμικρὸυ ὂυ οὐ δέχεται ὄγκου τοσοῦτου λέξεως*; 120, which admits that it is sometimes all right to use grand language of little things as a joke (cf. Rhet. 1406b14ff), *τὸ δὲ πρέπου ἐυ παυτὶ πράγματι φυλακτέου, τοῦτ' ἔστι προσφόρως ἑρμηυευτέου, τὰ μὲυ μικρὰ μικρῶς, τὰ μεγάλα δὲ μεγαλῶς*; 121 (an example), 122-4 (exceptions); also 190 (on the *ἰσχυός* character), 230-1 (epistolary style and subjects), 223ff; 237 (on *τὸ ξηρόυ*, which can occur when one uses undistinguished language of a lofty subject), 238.

artistry would trivialise.[89] The graceful type includes examples of effective use of incongruity; this clearly depends on the 'straight' hierarchy of subject and language, but does not work by seeking harmony between the two.[90]

One might expect, then, to find a fairly radical redescription of propriety in Demetrius - one more in line, perhaps, with the kind of decorum which R. Tuve describes as recognised by English Renaissance poets and theorists.[91] Tuve argues against the notion that the Elizabethans and Jacobeans thought there was such a thing as the 'literary' or 'poetic' image; what mattered was that the image be suitable. This meant not only that, e.g., 'low' language would be suitable to low objects and people, but that what was suitable might also depend on purpose: it was not indecorous to use images to deflate the importance of something. A breach of decorum occurs only when you 'abase your thing or matter by ignorance or error in choice of word' - then you have not meiosis but tapeinosis. She points out that 'all writing with an overt or hidden satirical purpose does . . . juxtapose the grand and trivial in order to bring out the triviality of the trivial'.[92]

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89 Thus we are told at 242 of psychological stances vis-à-vis audience or opponent to which δεινός devices are not suited: δεινότερον γὰρ τὸ βραχὺ καὶ ἐπιτακτικόν, τὸ μακρηγορεῖν δὲ τῷ ἱκετεύειν πρέπει καὶ αἰτεῖν (cf. 7,27,28); of figures, periods, which do or do not give the right impression of a speaker under the influence of emotion (250,251); smooth synthesis, similarly, takes away the impression of emotion, 300 - καὶ γὰρ τὸ ἀφρόντιστον αὐτὸ καὶ τὸ ὥσπερ αὐτοφυὲς δεινότητα παραστήσει τινά, μάλιστα ἐπὰν ὀργιζομένους ἐμφαίνωμεν αὐτοὺς ἢ ἠδικημένους. ἡ δὲ περὶ τὴν λειότητα καὶ ἁρμονίαν φροντὶς οὐκ ὀργιζομένου, ἀλλὰ παίζοντός ἐστι καὶ ἐπιδεικνυμένου μᾶλλον.

90 See below, pp. 230-31.

91 Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery (Phoenix ed., Chicago, 1961), Ch. IX.

92 Op. cit. p. 215.

In other words, decorum depends on certain assumptions about which things and words have dignity - but one's purpose determines whether the two are to be bound together in composition.[93]

Demetrius' individual comments do seem to presuppose such a view of propriety; his general account, however, does not altogether spell this out.

At 120 Demetrius takes issue with those who think one should use grand language of little things, as a proof of extraordinary power. He has no objection to jokes, but thinks that propriety must always be observed:

> τὸ δὲ πρέπον ἐν παντὶ πράγματι φυλακτέον, τοῦτ' ἐστι προσφόρως ἑρμηνευτέον, τὰ μὲν μικρὰ μικρῶς, τὰ μεγάλα δὲ μεγαλῶς.

At 122 his remarks recall Tuve's account of decorum: it is also possible to magnify small things without violating propriety, as when one wants to praise a general who has had a small success as if he had had a great triumph; similarly (123) it can often be useful to depreciate what is great. The general impression given, however, is that the phrase ' τὰ μὲν μικρὰ μικρῶς, τὰ μεγάλα δὲ μεγαλῶς ' captures the core of propriety; that jokes, while acceptable, are not really part of this; that other examples of propriety, while acceptable as instances of adapting speech to purpose, are to be recognised as departures from the fundamental notion. Connected with this is the fact that nothing is said about genre, though one might suppose, for instance,

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93 Tuve makes the connected point that authors who seem to violate decorum may question which things are worthy of honour; they will not necessarily question that it is those which do deserve honour which merit privileged language and imagery.

that it would be proper to ridicule grand things in a comedy.

Individual comments, on the other hand, especially on the graceful and forceful characteres, suggest that purpose and genre are most important. In the former wit and humour, often relying on incongruity, can be used appropriately for a number of purposes. At 130, the Cyclops' joke about Noman is the detail which most clearly shows the grimness of the monster. Xenophon's joke about Aglaitadas (134) is praised because it finds material for wit in an unprepossessing subject. It is pointed out at 160 that comparisons can be charming through incongruity, as when one compares a cock to a Mede because of its crest, or to the Persian king because of its bright feathers; the fact that the Persian king is grander than the cock is clearly a source of amusement, not impropriety. Other examples also suggest that the degree of elevation of one's imagery depends on the effect aimed at, not just on the dignity of the object of comparison.[94]

It is also clear that the genre in which a phrase is used helps to determine whether it is suitable, as much as the elevation of the subject does. In the section on the graceful style, for instance, humour may be used in comedies and satyr drama, not in tragedies, while charm may be used in tragedy.[95] Jokes are sometimes mentioned,

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94 Cf. 146, where Sappho describes the man who stands out among his fellows as pre-eminent, like the Lesbian bard among foreigners; the result is charming, whereas if she had spoken of the superiority of the sun or moon over other heavenly bodies she would have had grandeur. In the discussion of the forceful style, a metaphor is considered in which the city is said to be no longer the naval warrior of old, but an old crone (285) - the second image is the source of the forcefulness of the lines, obviously not improper because of the dignity of the city.

95 169

then restricted to comedy.[96] Rough jokes, like Lysias' about the old woman's teeth, are said to be particularly useful to orators.[97]

The importance of context and purpose is underlined in another way, by criticisms made of passages which fail to be forceful. Such passages sometimes fail through over-elaborate symmetry, which spoils the emotion, and makes it look as though one is not serious. The features criticised, e.g. at 247, 250, are similar to those which win praise at 154: there, Demetrius praises the symmetrical construction of a sentence of Aristotle's (I went from Athens to Stagira on account of the great King, and from Stagira to Athens on account of the great storm'), which is essential to its charm. In other words, an author does not always want to be altogether serious, and this is perfectly acceptable; his 'content' is not taken to determine how serious he must be.

These views, as we have seen, are not fully set out in Demetrius' account of propriety. One reason for this may be the way his scheme deals with faults. We have seen that the faults do not cover, e.g., the case where someone tries to use the graceful style in the wrong place; a corollary of this seems to be that the appropriate use of incongruity is not an integral part of Demetrius' notion of propriety.

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96 Cf.143, dithyrambic compounds are suited to comedy and satyric poetry, 161, hyperbole is charming, suited to comedy (cf. also 126); 151, certain jokes are μιμικώτερα and αἰσχρά.

97 262

Scope

In addition to its differences of organisation, On Style differs from the Rhetoric and Poetics in giving an account of style which covers all forms of literary discourse, (poetry and prose, oratorical and non-oratorical). In this it may be following the example of Theophrastus' which seems to have had a similarly broad scope. We have seen that, for Aristotle, appropriateness of style to genre was an important part of propriety, and that this aspect was one which gave difficulty when, in the Rhetoric, propriety was presented as determined by effectiveness. Demetrius keeps certain connections between effectiveness and appropriateness: obvious artifice is out of place, for instance, in passages which aim at forcefulness, since the speaker seems insincere and cannot arouse emotion in his audience. Since the characteres are not confined to oratory, however, one might suppose that the relation between taste and effectiveness, and the means for placing oratory in relation to other genres, would have to be sorted out.

This is not exactly what happens. In general, Demetrius avoids any focus on distinction of genre, though we can disentangle some patterns. The forceful character is most suited to forensic oratory (24 out of the 44 examples are taken from practical orators).[98] A polished version of

98 On Demetrius' use of examples, see Schenkeveld, Studies, p. 65. Connections between the forceful character and practical oratory are also suggested by the fact that Demetrius includes advice in this section which is useful to the orator though not necessarily conducive to forcefulness (e.g. how to be tactful with touchy rulers, 293f).

the plain character is said to be suited to letters;[99] a mixture of examples is used in the section, but as the character is said to be particularly persuasive, this may suggest that it too is suited to oratory.[100] In the grand character, on the other hand, nearly all the examples cited are from the historians, Plato, or Homer.[101] See also above, 230-31, where certain devices discussed under the graceful character are said to be particularly suited to comedy.

While distinctions between genres can be discerned, however, the justification for assigning features of style remains unclear. Aristotle had tried to connect the right to extraordinary language with dignity of genre and subject (prose genres were generally lower), and this hierarchy in turn with persuasiveness. Demetrius' position is less easily stated.

Certain passages suggest that, where rhetorical aims do not call for concealing art, a poetic air need not be cause for reproach. At 51, for instance, Plato is praised for effective composition, achieved in a sentence where the most striking and poetic word is put in a prominent position.

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99 223ff

100 208, τὴν δὲ ἐνάργειαν καὶ τὸ πιθανὸν μάλιστα ὁ χαρακτὴρ οὗτος ἐπιδέξεται. Since persuasiveness is said to lie above all in clarity and the use of ordinary language (221), this may suggest that it is not, on the whole, a feature of the grand character.

101 Only two examples from practical oratory are given for the grand character, 23 from other prose, 20 from poetry. For connections between this character and ancient views on historiography, see D.C. Innes, Introduction, Introd. p. 29, pp. 89-90 on 75, 168f on 112-13.

There are hints that Demetrius allows more licence to the prose writer than Aristotle had done: Thucydides is praised for using a Homeric word in a different sense, rather than for making it unobtrusive in prose.[102] In the graceful style examples are taken from lyric poetry, epic, drama, and Xenophon; beautiful words such as ῥοδόχροον and ἀνθοφόρου χρόας are mentioned as a source of charm without restriction on genre.[103] This could perhaps be connected with the extension of the principle of τὸ ἁρμόττον to cover subjects outside the province of oratory: certain subjects are mentioned as particularly suited to the graceful style, and Demetrius touches on subjects traditionally thought elevated, and often connected with history in his discussions of the grand style.[104]

On the other hand, Demetrius maintains very persistently Aristotle's discrimination between features which are acceptable in poetry and in prose, and makes far fewer concessions to non-rhetorical prose than one might have expected. It is significant that the neighbouring fault of the grand character, frigidity, makes use of Aristotle's account of frigidity of diction, an account originally

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102 113, of Thucydides' use of περίῤῥυτος. Homer had used it to show the size of Crete, Thucydides uses it to emphasise the unity of Sicily.

103 174 (though ῥοδόχροον perhaps specifies its genre by its uncontracted form; χρόα on the other hand is decidedly Attic).

104 For the graceful style, see 132, 163: Διαφέρουσι δὲ τὸ γελοῖον καὶ εὔχαρι πρῶτα μὲν τῇ ὕλῃ· χαρίτων μὲν γὰρ ὕλη νυμφαῖοι κῆποι, ἔρωτες, ἅπερ οὐ γελᾶται, γέλωτος δὲ Ἶρος καὶ Θερσίτης. For the grand, see 75 (cf. Cicero Orator 66, where he associates history with accounts of countries and battles, and distinguishes the style suited to history from that suited to oratory; Lucian, De Historia Conscribenda 45).

meant to deal with rhetorical prose.[105] Thus at 78 he warns that we must not use metaphors too thickly together, or we shall be writing dithyrambs, not prose.[106] At 89 he remarks of two comparisons, one in Xenophon, one in another writer, that they are too elaborate: not similes, but παραβολαὶ ποιητικαί. He adds at 90 that such comparisons can be used in prose only with great caution.[107] At 91 he discusses compound words: dithyrambic ones like θεοτεράτους πλάνας and ἄστρων δορύπυρον στρατόν should not be used, but those in common use.[108] Prose is not really allowed the resources of poetry: it is just that the grand and forceful styles can use compounds in ordinary use, while the plain character cannot even use those.[109] I have mentioned Demetrius' praise of Thucydides for making his poetic borrowings his own; the other side of this coin is that considerable care must be taken to avoid crude borrowing. A touch of the poetic adds grandeur, but some, like Herodotus, are undiscriminating.[110]

These restrictions are surprising because some characteres

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105 Cf. 80, where Plato's use of metaphor rather than simile is considered a risky feature of his style. For the relation between Demetrius' views on the long poetic simile and Aristotle's on the simile, see D.C. Innes, Introduction, p. 121. For other criticisms of Plato's use of metaphor, cf. 'Longinus', 32.7, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Dem. 5. (Cf. Ar. Rhet. 1406b24-5 on the poetic simile, Seneca, Ep. 59.6 on metaphor)

106 Cf. also 116, 188, 143; also Aristotle Rhet. 1406a35ff.

107 τὰς δὲ παραβολὰς ταύτας οὔτε ῥᾳδίως ἐν τοῖς πεζοῖς λόγοις τιθέναι δεῖ, οὔτε ἄνευ πλείστης φυλακῆς.

108 91, 275

109 112. For other warnings to avoid the poetic, cf. 42 (the heroic rhythm not suited to prose) and 118 (frigidity can arise from writing too metrically.

110 112, Τὸ δὲ ποιητικὸν ἐν λόγοις ὅτι μὲν μεγαλοπρεπές, καὶ τυφλῷ δῆλόν φασι, πλὴν οἱ μὲν γυμνῇ πάνυ χρῶνται τῇ μιμήσει τῶν ποιητῶν, μᾶλλον δὲ οὐ μιμήσει, ἀλλὰ μεταθέσει, καθάπερ Ἡρόδοτος.

are independent, to some degree, of the demands of persuasiveness. It seems to be implied, however, that a) dignity might call for unusual language, b) this should be modified when one wants to be persuasive, c) oratory may not be the most 'dignified' form (so again the unusual might be out of place), but d) no subject treated in prose can merit the degree of splendour allowed, in terms of unusual language, to poetry. It is d) which is a little odd, for two reasons. First, the grand character seems to be suitable to history, a genre which deals with subjects as dignified as those of epic (so if dignity were the criterion, one would expect no restrictions on vocabulary, rhythm, etc.).[111] Second, it is not only lofty types of poetry which can be poetic: at 143 certain compounds are witty, but should be restricted to comedy and satyric poems (and all such poems are, obviously, in metre).

Aristotle's formulation of the proprieties of prose was not, as we have seen, free of problems. Some of Demetrius' problems may be inherited. But some must be the result of his own system. The scheme of four characteres seems to be his own invention, a mark of his disagreement with those who think there are only two kinds of writing.[112] One of the results of his subdivision is to make powerful emotional effects to some extent separate from the use of

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111 75, cf. p. 234 above. For the notion that history was closer to poetry than oratorical prose was, see Quintilian 10.1.31, D.H. Thuc. 51 (I,411,7-12), and (against) Lucian, Hist. Conscr. 22. For the dignity of war as a subject in poetry, see Virgil, Ecl. 6.1-9, Horace, Od.4.15, Prop. 3.1-13, Ovid, Amores 1.1.1-2.

112 36. The fact that no one has discussed elegant composition (179), so that Demetrius must tackle the problem himself, also suggests that the scheme is his own idea.

extraordinary language - the latter need not be justified simply by a capacity for the former. This suggests that subject matter is all the more important in determining dignity, hence register, where emotion is not in question - but as we have seen, that leaves the prose/poetry division unjustified. Why is it bad to write poetic prose, even if people like it?

One reason may be the fact that one aspect of propriety, the discrimination between the styles of poetry and prose, received attention at first because of particular developments in Greek literature: Aristotle tried to deal with the poeticisms of Gorgias and the naturalism of Euripides in order to find a prose style suited to audiences of his own day. While his account of propriety is not entirely satisfactory, its main problem is that it works better for the taste of his own time than as a standard for all works, at any time, whatever the taste of contemporary audiences might have been. Demetrius, however, simply inherits this as a traditional, generally applicable account of propriety; this seems to rule out thinking about whether the taste of his own day in fact called for anything different. This means, first, that earlier material may be divided up differently without necessarily entailing different conclusions in the realm of practical criticism - the aim of the new system is to arrange traditional precepts more methodically, not to generate different conclusions. Second, it means that the traditional rationale for, e.g., distinguishing the registers of various forms of discourse must also

be kept: something is needed, and the question of how Demetrius' contemporaries might respond is not opened.

This in turn may explain why Demetrius does not develop the implication of certain points made in connection with the distinction between prose and poetry. His observation that certain extraordinary language is suited to comedy suggests that 'height' is not the only use for this. The fact that all poetry, even comic poetry, is written in metre and has licence as to diction shows that quantity of poeticisms does not altogether match splendor of subject. It could therefore be extremely misleading to consider the dignity of a subject for a work in prose, allow some elevation through diction and rhythm, but imagine that the restrictions have to do with limits in the dignity of either subject or genre (as was implied by the system as Aristotle set it up). The distinction demands other kinds of justification: either (determining propriety by audience) by the fact that audiences were sensitive to distinctive properties of the two forms of discourse, and likely to be offended by transgressions of boundaries, or (if the writer is legislating about taste) by the claim that the distinction is important, and one to which trained taste is sensitive. Despite the wide range of literature considered by Demetrius, an important point seems to escape notice: that the most elevated subject conceivable, if treated in prose, still does not call for approximations to verse to do justice to its importance.

Latin rhetoric: Ad Herennium

The preceding sections have emphasised the aspect of rhetorical propriety which was concerned with the distinction between the style of rhetorical prose and that of other forms of discourse. The preoccupation with this kind of propriety in discussions of style is curious: one might have expected Aristotle's second and third aspects of stylistic propriety (character and emotion) to be more important, as contributing more to effectiveness. A reason immediately suggests itself: it is harder to treat these aspects as a feature of style separable from the propriety of content - but the right things to say had been discussed by Aristotle in Book 2.

On the other hand, it is Aristotle's three-fold division of invention into proofs, character and emotion which seems to have given formal recognition to factors conducive to stylistic variation. This made the effect on style of other classifications, e.g. of the three types of oratory according to aim and audience, a matter of greater interest and complexity than it would have been if subject had been the only consideration. The use of propriety as a standard of style owed much to the articulation of the relevant aspects of content and circumstance - its importance depended largely on the recognition of the irrational as a powerful part of persuasion.[113]

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113 Cf. J. Stroux, De Theophrasti virtutibus dicendi (Leipzig, 1912), p. 17: 'Haec autem decori ratio est atque natura, ut certis praeceptis oratores doceat vaiandi copiis pro varia occasione temperare. Sequitur, ut omnes variandi et loci et instrumenta in πρεπουτος caput cadere possint. Quae innumerabilia fere sunt. Inprimis autem varia dicendi genera huc pertinent.

The Auctor ad Herennium offers a kind of negative illustration: the work is not organised round affective oratory, or the deployment of the devices of rhetoric in ways adapted to particular audiences; propriety of style is not especially important. The three types of oratory are mentioned,[114] and a three-style theory is offered, in which degrees of stylistic dignity seem to correspond to dignity of subject;[115] propriety is even mentioned occasionally. The author's remarks on the proem, for instance, touch on some aspects of πρέπον,[116] and his definition of style could be said to be given in terms of it: 'Elocutio est idoneorum verborum et sententiarum ad inventionem adcommodatio.'[117] But propriety is not included in the list of virtues of style given at 4.12. Its inclusion might seem unnecessary, since the others are apparently subordinated to it: 'Quae maxime admodum oratori adcommodata est, tres res in se debet

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114 Ad Herennium, 1.2.2

115 Ibid. 4.8.11ff

116 Ibid., 1.7.11, Exordienda causa servandum est, ut lenis sit sermo et usitata verborum consuetudo, ut non adparata videatur oratio esse. Vitiosum exordium est, quod in plures causas potest adcommodari, quod vulgare dicitur. . . . Item vitiosum est, quod nimium apparatis verbis conpositum est, aut nimium longum est; et quod non ex ipsa causa natum videatur ut proprie cohaereat cum narratione . . .

The author seems to consider faults of style and of logical connection as more or less on a par: but the former look like the kind of lapse from propriety in which the speaker, by using obviously artificial language, appears insincere and so makes the audience suspicious rather than receptive. They would thus defeat the purpose of the exordium in a rather different way from that of failure to suit introduction to the following arguments.

117 1.2.3

habere: elegantiam, conpositionem, dignitatem',[118] but the effect is to leave propriety out of the discussion altogether. The virtues are discussed individually, with no attempt to show how they concern the task of relating style to inventio. Similarly, though the degrees of grandeur in the three styles presuppose some kind of correlation of style with subject matter, this is mentioned specifically only once:

> gravis oratio saepe inperitis videtur ea quae turget et inflata est, cum aut novis aut priscis verbis aut duriter aliunde translatis aut gravioribus quam res postulat aliquid dicitur, . . . (4.10.10-15)

When the author discusses the three styles, he tends to describe their characteristics rather than explain their uses; when he urges the use of all three in the course of a speech, he seems less interested in the use of each in its proper place than in the variety to be achieved by changing from one to another.[119]

This somewhat arbitrary approach to variations in style may be a symptom of the author's approach to content, which is based primarily on the stasis theory of Hermagoras . The discussion of inventio is concerned mainly with types of cases, the kinds of argument and supporting statements suited to each, the parts of a

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118 The absence of propriety as a significant standard of style is the more striking since the other virtues seem to derive ultimately from those of Theophrastus: elegantia includes Latinitas and explanatio, equivalents for ἑλληνισμός and σαφήνεια; conpositio and dignitas represent two of the three aspects of κατασκευή (ἁρμονία and σχήματα) (thus leaving out ἐκλογὴ ὀνομάτων as a specific topic for discussion).

119 4.11.16, Sed figuram in dicendo commutare oportet, ut gravem mediocris, mediocrem excipiat attenuata, deinde identidem commutentur, ut facile satietas varietate vitetur.

speech and how they can be adapted to the case being made. There is no place in all this for close consideration of the affective aspects of oratory. Concern for propriety only makes sense, however, if one sees these aspects as an important part of the subject, and finds it necessary to take into account whatever can make a speech please or offend, bore or overwhelm its audience; without this attention to the reaction of the audience even the correlation of style and subject matter lacks urgency.

The unimportance of propriety in the ad Herennium, then, is not surprising. On the other hand, if this line of thought is correct, one would expect Cicero, who places considerable weight on the importance of affective oratory, to be particularly interested in propriety.[120]

Cicero

This expectation is borne out to varying degrees by Cicero's rhetorical works. Before looking at these in detail, however, I should like to go back to a point made a few pages back, concerning the emphasis in various writers on proportion, and the prose/poetry distinction, as the core of stylistic propriety. We have seen that these notions were closely connected with a tension between different ways of determining propriety: should the taste of the critic or of the audience to be persuaded have the deciding vote? There was an implication, too, that

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120 For further discussion of Cicero's views on affective oratory, see F. Solsmen, 'Aristotle and Cicero on the Orator's Playing upon the Feelings', CP 33 (1938), 390-404 = Kleine Schriften (Darmstadt, 1968), 216-230.

the demands of effectiveness - e.g. to give convincing representations of emotion or character - might take precedence over, say, the apparent requirements of importance of subject. In other words, conflict on an aesthetic level is allowed to surface: there are hints of the problems in deciding whether oratory is in a separate category, in which aesthetic rules may be suspended.

In the case of propriety of character and emotion, however, the categories are likely to be ethical rather than aesthetic, though the form of the conflict is the same: is effectiveness the sole criterion for a piece of oratory? The speaker might have to decide whether to act in a way appropriate to his character as he saw it, or in such a way as to make decency and sincere emotion evident to an inferior audience. Aristotle touches on this, but the issue is on the whole skirted. Observing rhetorical propriety, then, raises questions of moral philosophy. Cicero, who not only took philosophy seriously, but was also a superb orator, well able to sense what would work with a particular audience and to exploit an instinct for rhetorical propriety, is in some ways more interesting on the subject.

Three issues deserve special attention. First, there is the striking difference between <u>De oratore</u> and <u>Orator</u>: the former gives a flexible, practical account of propriety, not particularly confined to style; the latter is not only more rigid and dogmatic, but seems to restrict

itself rather more to an aesthetic propriety. Second, there is the ethical colouring which aesthetic issues take on in Orator. It is not enough, as it was in De oratore, that style should be varied according to purpose; it must be justified in a further sense. The orator must present himself as part of mainstream, acceptable culture, justify an aesthetic preference for certain types of style so that they seem acceptably virile, inheritors of the best Greek, classical. A sense for the proper categories of discourse is directly relevant to giving a decent impression of one's character. Finally, there is the relation between Cicero's notion of rhetorical decorum and the philosophical concept of decorum which he describes, in De officiis, as part of Panaetius' account of virtue. I shall look at these issues in turn.

De Oratore: propriety of style

Cicero assumes that effectiveness is the ultimate criterion for oratory, and hence that the popularity of a speaker is an infallible guide to his ability.[121] This means that the methods most useful to an orator can be determined by roughly statistical means: the most desirable techniques are those which convince most people, in most cases. Hence the power of making an audience favourable to one, and even more that of overwhelming it with an irresistible appeal to

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121 See for instance Brutus 184

emotion (two of the three officia oratoris in De Oratore[122]) may be the most important ones an orator can possess. These, particularly that of rousing emotion, are likelier to carry conviction than is care for legal precision;[123] mere academic knowledge of the principles of rhetoric is no help - one should be working on the audience throughout the speech. Knowing how to do this, adapt to the audience, is a matter of flair.

Mastery of style as a separate sphere is not especially important. Although the mark of the orator is said, several times, to be ornate et copiose dicere, this seems to include treatment of content - being able to develop subjects fully, in an artistic manner.[124] In Book 3, moreover, where Crassus is to discuss style, he starts off by arguing at some length that a distinction between style and content does not really work. One cannot have an attractive style if one does not have good ideas, nor an impressive thought without attractive language:

> neque verborum ornatum inveniri posse non partis expressisque sententiis, neque esse ullam sententiam inlustrem sine luce verborum (3.24)

He claims at first that if you have been properly educated, you will know naturally how to put words together, and has to be forced to explain - in a perfunctory way - the technical points of style.

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122 Docere, conciliare, concitare (2.128). The particular officia chosen may vary according to Cicero's attitude to his own oratory: in Orator (69) the officia are probare, delectare, flectere, the second probably changed to fit more closely with the account given of the middle style.

123 De oratore 2.178

124 E.g. 3.19

Before embarking on his argument against separating style and content, Crassus lists the four virtues of style (probably following Peripatetic models - the order in which the topics of style are discussed follows Aristotle's). He discusses propriety after the digression, in a way which shows why he should be impatient with the 'aesthetic' side of the question. Essentially, the proper use of style depends on all the variables a speaker has to take into account anyway when thinking of what to say. Styles of speech must be adapted to case, audience, speaker, time,

> nam et causae capitis alium quendam verborum sonum requirunt, alium rerum privatarum atque parvarum; et aliud dicendi genus deliberationes, aliud laudationes, aliud iudicia, aliud sermones, aliud consolatio, aliud obiurgatio, aliud disputatio, aliud historia desiderat. Refert enim qui audiant, senatus an populus an iudices: frequentes an pauci an singuli, et quales: ipsique oratores qua sint aetate, honore, auctoritate, debet videri; tempus, pacis an belli, festinationis an oti. 3.211

His conclusion is that the only precepts which can be given are that one should use one of the three types of style, full, slight, middle according to subject, varying the amount of ornamentation.

Crassus does not explicitly connect the achievement of proper style, by attention to these points, with the officia oratoris. Antonius (Book 2) discusses the importance of winning over an audience and working on its emotions, Crassus covers propriety of style. It seems fair to assume, however, that Crassus is to be supposed to accept Antonius' views, since Antonius describes

Crassus as capable of precisely this kind of oratory (2.188); Crassus recognises the merits of Antonius' vigorous manner of speaking (3.32), and speaks, in passing, of these officia as useful things to accomplish, while discussing the uses of morum ac vitae imitatio (3.204). Presumably, then, it is the value of accomplishing these officia which makes the infinite pains to consider circumstances, type of case, hearer, speaker, occasion, and choose style accordingly, so important.

One sees the impossibility of restricting these circumstances to propriety of style when one considers Antonius' defence of Norbanus, put forward as a great triumph of eloquence. Norbanus, during his tribunate of 103, had successfully prosecuted Caepio for his disastrous campaign against the Cimbri in 105, and has been accused of maiestas by Sulpicius. Since the defendant was clearly guilty (he had overridden by force the intercession of his fellow-tribune Didius), one of the main difficulties of the defence was that it might be considered improper even to have accepted such a case, and arguments be dismissed out of hand. Antonius' opponent was regarded as pleading on behalf of the state 'summa cum dignitate', 'ego, homo censorius, vix satis honeste viderer seditiosum civem et in hominis consularis calamitate crudelem posse defendere'(2.198).

We are given two accounts of his conduct of the case, one from Antonius, one from his appreciative opponent Sulpicius. Antonius explains that he had started by listing historical precedents for acting lawlessly in a way that proved beneficial to the state; had then gone on to inflame the judges against Caepio, who had been responsible for the deaths of friends, and had finally aroused sympathy for himself, showing that nothing could have been more disgraceful or painful than to have been unable to defend his comrade:

> me pro meo sodali, qui mihi in liberum loco more maiorum esse deberet, et pro mea omni fama prope fortunisque decernere; nihil mihi ad existimationem turpius, nihil ad dolorem acerbius accidere posse, quam si is, qui saepe alienissimis a me, sed meis tamen civibus saluti existimarer fuisse sodali meo auxilium ferre non potuissem. (2.200)

Sulpicius' description of the case places even more emphasis on Antonius' precarious position at the beginning: Antonius had started by being hesitant, apologetic, seeming to want, at most, to excuse himself for defending an obviously guilty man, and had gradually worked up to a powerful defence of his client:

> Ut tu illud initio, quod tibi unum ad ignoscendum homines dabant, tenuisti, te pro homine pernecessario, quaestore tuo, dicere!. . . Ecce autem, cum te nihil aliud profecisse arbitrarer, nisi ut homines tibi civem improbum defendenti ignoscendum propter necessitudinem arbitrarentur, serpere occulte coepisti . . . (2.202-3)

Presumably the style of the speech was varied according to the emotional tone of the various passages; the genius of the speaker, however, lay in seeing how his undertaking the case could be made acceptable to the

audience in the first place, and in knowing when it was possible to make claims for himself and his client which would have been ludicrous and offensive earlier, before his position had been established.

Orator

When we come to the Orator, we find a much greater emphasis on propriety of style as the key to rhetorical effectiveness, and to successful use of the irrational means of persuasion. Three officia oratoris (this time probare, delectare, and flectere) are assigned to three types of style (the subtile, modicum, and vehemens), and the appropriate use of each is said to be the most difficult part of oratory, requiring the speaker to take into account his subject, his own status and character, and the type of audience being addressed.[125] Though precepts are not offered for the adaptation of style to suit the countless relevant circumstances of any case, the demands of propriety are described more fully and precisely than they were in De Oratore: some of the features which make a style appropriate to a particular level of subject matter are listed (use of or abstention from figures and tropes, elaborate or ordinary diction, etc.). The propriety of oratorical style is also refined to some degree by the

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125 Orator 69: Sed quot officia oratoris, tot sunt genera dicendi: subtile in probando, modicum in delectando, vehemens in flectendo; in quo uno vis omnis oratoris est. Magni igitur iudici, summae etiam facultatis esse debebit moderator ille et quasi temperator huius tripertitae varietatis; . . . Non enim omnis fortuna, non omnis honos, non omnis auctoritas, non omnis aetas nec vero locus aut tempus aut auditor omnis eodem aut verborum genere tractandus est aut sententiarum semperque in omni parte orationis ut vitae quid deceat est considerandum; quod et in re de qua agitur positum est et in personis et eorum qui dicunt et eorum qui audiunt . . . Quam enim indecorum est, de stillicidiis cum apud unum iudicem dicas, amplissimis verbis et locis uti communibus, de maiestate populi Romani summisse et subtiliter!

introduction of various kinds of style not suited to oratory, though acceptable in other genres of prose literature.

These developments in Cicero's treatment of propriety are symptoms of changes and developments in his treatment of rhetoric in general, which seem to have been meant as a response to criticism of his own type of oratory. It is misleading to begin discussing problems with his new version of propriety, as though he had become dissatisfied with the earlier one; the more schematic, less flexible account of propriety is a result of changes made, for defensive reasons, in areas which are only indirectly connected with propriety. One aspect of Cicero's quarrel with his critics raises a more general issue; I shall consider this before looking more closely at the three-style theory and less flexible propriety of Orator.

Ethical overtones of aesthetic choices

Cicero's general aim, in Orator, seems to have been to discredit the standards of the Roman Atticists, and at the same time to claim Greek precedents for, and otherwise vindicate, every aspect of his own oratory. Though one probably cannot take everything he says about Atticist oratory at face value (other sources suggest that Calvus, for instance, could be vigorous when he chose[126]), it

126 Catullus 53, Seneca, Controversiae 7.4.6ff. Seneca remarks, 'usque eo violentus actor et concitatus fuit, ut in media eius actione surgeret Vatinius reus et exclamaret, rogo vos, iudices: num, si iste disertus est, ideo me damnari opportet?', and compares his oratory with that of Demosthenes (7.4.8): 'nihil in illa placidum, nihil lene est, omnia excitata et fluctuantia'.

seems fair to assume that they sought a certain elegance and restraint of style.[127] Their criticism of Cicero, according to Quintilian, picked out various kinds of excess, calling him

> tumidiorem et Asianum et redundantem et in repetitionibus nimium et in salibus aliquando frigidum et in compositione fractum, exultantem ac paene, quod procul sit, viro molliorem . . .[128]

One result of the Atticist search for elegance seems to have been to revise, in effect, the demands of decorum. In a purely aesthetic sense, what is to count as excess is redefined; by appeal to the familiar principle, 'Style is the man', it is given an ethical dimension as well, and Cicero's style is made to seem uncivilised and almost indecent. The greater emphasis on style, then, is understandable in terms of the preoccupations of De Oratore. The orator must give a good impression of his character; if there is a chance that the aesthetic qualities of some of his most powerful weapons (e.g. a fuller style in emotional passages) may be given bad ethical connotations, he must try to make his aesthetic preferences respectable. Even in the Brutus, there are hints of how the aesthetic properties of style might be fitting or unfitting to one's character - Hortensius' exuberant style won indulgence when he wasa young man, was less attractive in one of age and dignity. In Orator, Cicero finds it necessary to defend certain styles against associations

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127 Cf. Brutus 285, where 'polita', 'urbana' and 'elegans' sound like Atticist catchwords; Orator 28 and 29 (Lysias apparently admired for being tenuis and inornatus); Quintilian 12.10.21.

128 12.10.12

with despised groups such as Asian foreigners and women. Hence two ploys used in Orator: on the one hand to find large numbers of classical precedents for Cicero's style, on the other to admit that some features might not be desirable in large quantities, but to associate this concentration with acceptable models of non-oratorical genres (poetry, history, philosophy).

Propriety, effectiveness, and the three-style theory

Cicero's response to the Atticists invokes the apparently commonsense notions of effectiveness and appropriateness. It would not have done, however, to bring these forward in the somewhat indefinite form they had had in De Oratore, or the Atticists could have claimed to satisfy them. Cicero is thus obliged to be more precise, but again, apparently in a way that common sense will endorse. On the one hand styles actually used by Cicero - especially his rich, flowing style and his passionate style, vulnerable to accusations of Asianism on such grounds as bombast, use of rhythmic clausulae, excessive use of certain sentence structures - must be shown to be essential to effective oratory. Each of the officia oratoris must therefore require its own style, and their deployment must be governed by the orator's sense of propriety. (Delectare replaces the conciliare of De Oratore as an officium, as having some of the same effects, but being connected, as well, with epideictic oratory, and particularly with Isocrates,

whose style is a respectable forebear for the middle style.) On the other hand the officia do not necessarily lead to a clear idea of the characteristics of their appropriate styles. Perhaps the most readily understandable way of distinguishing types of style is as members of a hierarchy; since the officia have been ranked according to importance and persuasive power, they are easily matched with styles in ascending degrees of magnificence.

It remains the case, nevertheless, that these correlations lack intuitive appeal. There seems to be no reason why magnificence should go with stirring oratory, rather less magnificence with the merely pleasant, and so on. Perhaps for this reason, when Cicero has repeated, at 98ff, the argument that one can get by with the middle or plain style, but not with the grand style alone, and that the greatest orator should be master of all three, he speaks of proficiency at all three styles as a matter of matching style to importance of content (a much more obvious kind of appropriateness): (101) 'Is erit igitur eloquens . . . qui poterit parva summisse, modica temperate, magna graviter dicere.'

The result, however, of combining the various justifications for diversity of style, is to make propriety of style particularly hard to pin down. The provision of three fairly well-defined types of style which apparently exhaust the possibilities for oratory makes it difficult,

to begin with, to see how the claims of officium and of subject matter, not to mention all the other relevant circumstances, can be reconciled; the fact that kinds of officium and of subject matter have both been paired off with kinds of style leaves little room for manoeuvring. The claims of subject and officium, indeed, sometimes seem to conflict; the system can only manage even to seem workable because ornatus is so loosely defined.

To take an example: Cicero seems to agree with Aristotle that stylistic artifice gives pleasure, and consequently the middle style is allowed almost unlimited use of such resources. It is allowed all figures of speech, and it can have the kind of conspicuous use of rhythm which the grand style can show only in perorations, when the audience has already been swept off its feet and is in no mood to criticise.[129] But the middle style is also appropriate to dealing with subjects of medium importance; a mark of this is its place in the stylistic hierarchy, as having less ornatus than the grand style (91, it is 'quam illud ornatum copiosumque summissius'). So apparently the style suited to giving pleasure should also be one suited to subjects of middling importance, or there ought to be a coincidence of subjects of middling importance and those suited to giving pleasure.

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129 Orator 95; 208 (the periodic style of Isocrates would make an audience suspicious if used in forensic oratory, and destroy the impression of sincerity); 210: such a rhythmical style may be used 'si aut laudandum est aliquid ornatius . . . aut exponenda narratio, quae plus dignitatis desiderat quam doloris . . . . . .' It works in perorations, 'cum is qui audit ab oratore iam obsessus est ac tenetur. Non enim id agit ut insidietur et observet, sed iam favet processumque vult dicendique vim admirans non anquirit quid reprehendat.'

It is unlikely, however, that this will always be the case. If we take ornatus as the unit of stylistic value without distinguishing kinds, we might argue that the subject of a laudatio, for instance, may be as important as that of an appeal to emotion, and so have equal claim to ornatus; the speaker might nevertheless forgo some of the figures of thought to which he was entitled out of regard for the conventions governing the occasion, the impression he wished to make, etc. Similarly the dignity of a subject might call for a high degree of ornatus, yet a simple style prove to stir the emotions of an audience more powerfully. Moreover the fact that a subject is prima facie low and suited to plain style need not mean, as the doctrine of officia-related styles might suggest, that it could not be used to move, perhaps overpower an audience. One might accept Cicero's premisses - that overwhelming oratory is an orator's greatest source of power; that the orator must have other techniques at his command - without necessarily accepting such hierarchies as a basis for propriety of style.

This account has ignored an important point, however. Cicero distinguishes different kinds of ornatus: the middle style uses fewer figures of thought than the grand, while the latter, as I have said, restricts conspicuous use of rhythm to the most highly emotional passages (the middle style can use it more freely). The grand style is not necessarily more elaborate than the middle. These distinctions are helpful in assigning suitable features of style

to various oratorical aims, but they make nonsense of the notion of ornatus as something present in style in increasing concentration according to the place of the style in a hierarchy. One might feel, indeed, that the concept of ornatus is too broad for the term to be useful, including, as it does, not only the sources of elevated diction, but also general propositions, amplification (Or. 125), the 'morum ac vitae imitatio vel in personis vel sine illis' (De Or. 3.204), and indeed almost anything that can be done with language. This looseness of definition is to be found in De Oratore as well, and so cannot be blamed on the particular needs of Orator; it is clearly essential, however, to the project of making the highly elaborate middle style look as though it falls between the plain and the grand.

The need to defend Cicero's kind of oratory, leading to the schematic treatment of style of the Orator, means that propriety is a much less accommodating concept than it was in De Oratore; it is further from the sum of compromises represented by the πρέπον of the Rhetoric. We find some of the same problems that appeared in the Rhetoric: the possible conflict between the objective criterion of analogy (between dignity of style and of content) and subjective criteria (what will, for instance, give an impression of sincerity, of strong emotion); the difficulty of taking the concentration, in style, of features which are unusual in ordinary language as an invariable concomitant of dignity of content, speaker, etc.

The introduction of a fully-developed theory of three styles, however, makes it much more difficult to deal with these. As we have seen, if the different things said about the styles are taken seriously irreconcilable conflict can hardly be avoided. The association of the officia oratoris with characteristic styles, moreover, contributes to the impression that various ways of affecting an audience are, as far as style goes, mutually exclusive (whereas in the Rhetoric, for instance, pleasing and moving an audience may sometimes be incompatible aims, but style can presumably sometimes achieve both to some degree) and leaves little scope for the numerous adjustments to circumstance which propriety is supposed to entail. The result is that the work in some ways does less than justice to Cicero's own talent for making style appropriate to individual cases; by reducing at least some aspects of propriety to fairly mechanical rules, it obscures the skill required of an orator in adapting himself to a particular occasion. One might say, then, that it shows a transition from propriety as a kind of universal appropriateness, to propriety as decorum; what is appropriate is still a matter for concern, but it is taken into account by referring to somewhat rigid conventions.

The ethics of rhetorical propriety

The case of Antonius' defence of Norbanus makes it clear that there were some ethical constraints on the use of eloquence. Using it in favour of a guilty man, for instance, was something that called for justification, and might be frowned upon if this were not provided. Some of the possible justifications appear in De Oratore. Fulfilling obligations to close connections, which might include defending them in court, was one. Another was the obligation one had to anyone one had accepted as a client: for Crassus, it should go without saying that it is disgraceful to harm one's client.[130] On the other hand, Crassus argues in Book 3 that eloquence is a virtus, one of the most important, and that it would therefore be appalling if a bad man could command its techniques. It also seems as though conflicts are admitted between the demands of strict morality (e.g. as laid down by moral philosophy) and those of eloquence: Antonius points out that many of the most useful expedients would be ruled out by many schools of philosophy.

Antonius' line is that one works with the morality

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130 2.297, illud vero improbi esse hominis et perfidiosi, dicere quod alienum esset et noceret ei pro quo quisque diceret; quare non sibi eum disertum qui id non faceret videri sed improbum, qui faceret.

shared by the audience, rather than with some academic philosophy. But could there not be more to Crassus' claim? There seems, above all, to be a connection between the way he speaks of the virtue of eloquence (it is perceptible virtue) and the virtue of decorum as described in Orator. There decorum is distinguished from rectum as being what is right in relation to persons, time, etc., and is connected with Panaetius' πρέπον, which is characterised in De Officiis as perceptible virtue.[131]

It is worth considering, then, whether Cicero's study of moral philosophy had any influence on the standard of propriety as it appears in the rhetorical works, and whether it might have seemed to resolve the ethical puzzle created by satisfying rhetorical propriety.

Debts to philosophy?

The description of propriety in De Oratore is in some ways like the πρέπον of Aristotle's Rhetoric: though not presented as a mean between extremes, it is to be determined by suiting style to circumstances which are, for the most part, those which would fix the mean and extremes for πρέπον. This is true, with some qualifications, of Orator as well. The three-style theory puts arbitrary restrictions on the possible ways of achieving propriety, and thus puts practical difficulties in the way of hitting the mean as described in the Rhetoric;[132] but

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131 Cf. Orator 70: Sed est eloquentiae sicut reliquarum rerum fundamentum sapientia. Ut enim in vita sic in oratione nihil est difficilius quam quid deceat videre. πρέπον appellant hoc Graeci, nos dicamus sane decorum . . . (72) Itaque hunc locum longe et late patentem philosophi solent in officiis tractare - non cum de recto ipso disputant, nam id quidem unum est - grammatici in poetis, eloquentes in omni et genere et parte causarum.

132 Cf. pp. 201ff above.

it does not imply misunderstanding of the concept of πρέπον as a mean, as some Greek theories of style did. (The middle style is not, for instance, taken to be better than the other two because embodying a mixture of the features of two extremes.[133]) In Aristotelian terms, each style could be said to be the mean when used in the right circumstances - the three-fold classification is an attempt to characterise the mean in different cases. Since Cicero clearly thinks of propriety as the quality which is one of the four virtues of Theophrastus,[134] one might assume that its features are wholly explicable in terms of the Peripatetic rhetorical tradition. But when Cicero compares stylistic propriety to the πρέπον of moral philosophy in Orator, he seems to have in mind a specific kind of philosophy: the attention to decorum, as well as to what is rectum,[135] is one of the innovations of the Stoicism of Panaetius. Since it is possible that Cicero thought that characteristically Stoic features of decorum could be seen in the rhetorical concept, Panaetius' views on decorum will bear investigation.

Most of what we know about Panaetius' doctrine of decorum comes from Cicero's De Officiis. Though Books 1 and 2 probably give, for the most part, a faithful account of what Panaetius thought, we cannot be sure how much is

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133 As it was, for example, by Dionysius of Halicarnassus (e.g. at Dem. 15 (I,161,22-162,2).

134 Cf. De Or. 3.37: Quinam igitur dicendi est modus melior, nam de actione post videro, quam ut Latine, ut plane, ut ornate, ut ad id, quodcumque agetur, apte congruenterque dicamus?' and Orator 79, of the plain style: 'Sermo purus erit et Latinus, dilucide planeque dicetur, quid deceat circumspicietur. Unum aberit quod quartum numerat Theophrastus in orationis laudibus: ornatum illus suave et affluens.

135 Orator 70. Cf. 74: ' . . . oportere enim perfectionem declarat offici, quo et semper utendum est et omnibus, decere quasi aptum esse consentaneumque tempori et personae . . .'

Cicero's contribution. Some of the things said, for instance, about the manners, dress, etc. to be expected of different types of people may well have been added by Cicero. It seems almost certain, however, that at least the definition of decorum is owed to Panætius,[136] and in any case Cicero's account of Panaetius' philosophy is unlikely to be misleading about its influence on Cicero, even if it departs occasionally from the original. I shall give a short description of the decorum of De Officiis, then consider possible connections with that of rhetoric.

According to Panaetius, decorum is the perceptible aspect of honestas: moral goodness is not only the one true good, but capable of being perceived to be fitting, appropriate, by men. The two are separable only conceptually, as beauty is from health.[137] There are two kinds of decorum: a general decorum, by which actions show appropriateness to man's nature as a rational being, and a decorum subordinate to this, present in all the virtues but most obviously in temperantia, which involves the harmonious arrangement of the virtues in a man's life.[138]

136 Though perhaps suffering in places from abridgement and minor misunderstandings. See L. Labowsky, Die Ethik des Panaitius (Leipzig, 1934), Ch. 1.

137 De Off. 1.94: Quicquid est enim, quod deceat, id tum apparet, cum antegressa est honestas. . . . Ut venustas et pulchritudo corporis secerni non potest a valetudine, sic hoc, de quo loquimur, decorum totum illud quidem est cum virtute confusum, sed mente et cogitatione distinguitur.

138 De Off. 1.96: Est autem eius descriptio duplex; nam et generale quoddam decorum intellegimus, quod in omni honestate versatur, et aliud huic subiectum, quod pertinet ad singulas partes honestatis. Atque illud superius sic fere definire solet, decorum id esse, quod consentaneum sit hominis excellentiae in eo, in quo natura eius a reliquis animantibus differat. Quae autem pars subiecta generi est, eam sic definiunt, ut id decorum velint esse, quod ita naturae consentaneum sit, ut in eo moderatio et temperantia appareat cum specie quadam liberali. (Cf. also 1.98, n. 135 below).

The general kind, however, is achieved by attending, not merely to one's nature as a rational animal, but to one's particular characteristics and abilities; for these are also part of one's nature, and if one is to live in accordance with nature one must not fight against certain aspects of it.[139] Finally, in determining propriety of conduct, one must take into account one's circumstances (birth, wealth, position etc.) and the kind of life one means to lead.[140] When decorum in all these respects is preserved, one's life will be consistent and harmonious in even the smallest details, such as dress, language, manner of walking.[141]

The particular value of decorum lies in its attractiveness - man, alone of the animals, is capable of perceiving such qualities as harmony and beauty, hence of being attracted to virtue by the perceptible beauty of appropriate action. Decorum is thus particularly relevant to man as a member of society. It is characteristic of virtue to make others favourably disposed to us; this happens partly because, when we act virtuously, our behaviour is perceptibly harmonious and appropriate.[142] L. Labowsky considers the union of subjective and objective to be one of the most important features of the Panaetian concept of

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139 De Off. 1.107f; 110: Admodum autem tenenda sunt sua cuique, non vitiosa, sed tamen propria, quo facilius decorum illud, quod quaerimus, retineatur.

140 Ibid., 1.115

141 Ibid., 1.126-32

142 Ibid., 2.17; 1.98: Ut enim pulchritudo corporis apta compositione membrorum movet oculos et delectat hoc ipso, quod inter se omnes partes cum quodem lepore consentiunt, sic hoc decorum, quod elucet in vita, movet adprobationem eorum, quibuscum vivitur, ordine et constantia et moderatione dictorum omnium atque factorum.

decorum: as the perceptible side of moral goodness, it makes virtue attractive to men, so capable of influencing action; but this attractiveness is based on, and inseparable from, qualities whose value may be established by independent reasoning.

In a fairly general way, the Panaetian ethics could be taken to justify the kind of oratory Cicero recommends as earlier Stoic doctrine could not. Earlier Stoics had held that rhetoric was a branch of dialectic, concerned with proof, and the demonstration of the truth; for this such matters as suiting style to content and audience would have been irrelevant.[143] Panaetius, on the other hand, apparently concerned himself with the language and style appropriate to oratory and conversation,[144] and even admitted that it was permissible to defend a guilty man (presenting the veri simile rather than the verum). His treatment of τὰ καθήκοντα , moreover, grants some significance to the appearance of moral actions, hence to the impression a man makes on others. This would presumably have been irrelevant for earlier Stoics, not only because all but perfect actions were equally wrong, but because even if an action were perfect the thing that made it so - the virtuous state of mind of the sage - would not be perceptible.[145] Finally, the concern for harmonious

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143 See e.g. DL 7.42-3, but see also Plutarch, De Stoicorum Repug. 1034b, c5, on Chrysippus' concessions to public speaking.

144 De Off. 1.132 and 134 speaks of the different styles of speech suited to public speaking and to private conversation.

145 But see DeLacy, 'The Four Stoic Personae', ICS 2 (1977), 167-8, on the antecedents of Panaetius' four personae, and earlier interest in real people in real situations, as well as with the sage.

behaviour, suited both to character and circumstances, and extending even to trivial matters of appearance, clearly has much in common with the orator's concern for propriety. Since many of the elements of harmonious behaviour are not obviously moral, the fact that many of the things considered by the orator are not moral is no obstacle to seeing a close connection between the two. Perhaps the analogy is closer than it first appeared, and the orator's accommodation of speech and manner to audience, character, circumstances is simply a special case of men's efforts to act properly and so win the approval of others.

It is easy to feel that this analogy is only a superficial one. Cicero himself does not try to push it too far - eloquence is an excellence, but it must be allied with other virtues, such as honesty and wisdom, and must not be abused. It is not clear how far this excellence is thought to be ethical in any case, since the notion of virtus does not exactly correspond to our 'virtue' in this respect. Moreover there are two main objections to taking the content of rhetorical decorum as substantially that of the decorum of Panaetian ethics.

In the first place, preserving rhetorical propriety cannot be a way of practising Panaetian ethics except at one remove (e.g. it may be appropriate for a man to practise oratory and do whatever is necessary to win his case). Even things Panaetius might have disapproved of,

such as the rousing of violent emotion, might be morally justified, and appropriate in the moral sense, in certain circumstances, e.g. in defending an innocent man or attacking a wicked one; but they would be so only because they were appropriate to the desired end, viz. winning the case.[146] There are extensive parallels between ethical and rhetorical propriety simply because both work with the same materials. Since the subject of appropriate behaviour had been thoroughly discussed in a philosophical context, the comparison was both apt and an economical way of indicating the complexity of rhetorical propriety.

In the second place, though an analogy with ethics is suggested (omnique in re posse quid deceat facere artis et naturae est, scire quid quandoque deceat prudentiae), the points mentioned are not offered primarily as guidance to giving an appearance of ethical (or 'social') propriety. No doubt the orator must generally appear to comply with accepted standards of socially correct behaviour, to know his place and not go beyond it, to act with moderation and restraint - in short to have the attractive manner described by Antonius at 2.182. But he must also know when a higher, more forceful manner, apparently at odds with these rules, will be most effective. The orator who knows quid deceat has, then, the equivalent of an instinct for getting second order moral questions right (knowing when modesty, polite-

146 On the desirability of keeping passions under control, see e.g. De Off. 1.101ff, 1.136.20-4: 'Sed quo modo in omni vita rectissime praecipitur ut perturbationes fugiamus, id est motus animi nimios rationi non obtemperantes, sic eius modi motibus sermo debet vacare'. Cf. also 1.36.27ff on the occasional need for obiurgatio, and for appearing angry: 'Obiurgationes etiam nonnumquam incidunt necessariae, in quibus utendum est fortasse et vocis contentione maiore et verborum gravitate acriore, id agendum etiam, ut ea facere videamur irati. Sed ut ad urendum et secandum, sic ad hoc genus castigandi raro invitique veniemus, nec unquam nisi necessario, si nulla reperietur alia medicina, sed tamen ira absit . . .'

ness, and so on are to be set aside). The analogy with ethics lies in the relationship between this knowledge and the first order principles it governs, and since the orator is for the most part not dealing with moral principles the propriety which concerns him is not an ethical standard (as the first-order kind of propriety would have been even in an oratorical context). Since rhetorical propriety was important, then, as a means of ensuring effectiveness, it had to be the case that quod decet and quod expedit were always in agreement (the latter understood in the sense of 'helping to win the case' rather than, e.g., 'preserving one's good character'); there was no place for an ethical decorum which might prove obstructive.

One might feel, then, that Cicero did not mean his ethical analogy to apply very closely; that the ethical connotations of propriety were simply meant to put the rhetorical concept in an attractive light, much as the vaguely Platonic language early in the Orator gives a certain grandeur to the notion of the ideal orator. But I think that there is more to it than this. What this leaves out is Cicero's own attitude to oratory. Crassus' account of the virtue of eloquence at De Or. 3.55 seems to have Panaetian echoes;[147] it also expresses something

147 Est enim eloquentia una quaedam de summis virtutibus; quamquam sunt omnes virtutes aequales et pares, sed tamen est specie alia magis alia formosa et inlustris, sicut haec vis, quae scientiam complexa rerum sensa mentis et consilia sic verbis explicat, ut eos, qui audiant, quocumque incubuerit, possit impellere . . .

Cicero seems to have thought true and important about oratory. Perhaps because Cicero had such remarkable mastery of his medium, the notion of a match between the orator's material and the form given it, such that his audience perceived it as he wished, seemed to him aesthetically and ethically valuable. The effectiveness of the perfect orator depended on the mastery, by a man of natural talents, of all fields of knowledge - but this learning had particular value because of the orator's ability to deploy it, to accomplish particular objects through the use of these resources. Panaetius' account of decorum as something which is not only good but visibly so, whose goodness arises from the fitting of form to content, may not cover some the issues raised by rhetorical decorum; but it corresponds much more closely than does Aristotle's notion of propriety to what Cicero saw as the nobility of his calling.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus

Classicism and the standard of propriety

We have seen in previous sections that a concern for propriety could be fuelled by dislikes for particular forms of impropriety. Aristotle's concept of propriety was in part a response to the obtrusive poeticisms of Gorgias and his followers, while Cicero's was part of a defence against those who disliked the exuberance of his own style. The introduction to Dionysius' work on

ancient orators implies a strong sense of propriety offended by a certain type of writing: Dionysius deplores the bad taste of Asian oratory and commends those who have the good taste to despise it. Dionysius also proposes to show what is good about a selection of classical orators. All wrote before the death of Alexander, the date which for Dionysius marks the decline of oratory; one expects to find that propriety, constituted by good taste, was a particularly important quality in their work.

Dionysius' classicism, however, sits a little uneasily with the sense of propriety suggested by the introduction. Comparison with Cicero makes this especially clear. Dionysius and Cicero have some important points in common: admiration for Demosthenes as master of all styles and particularly of the resources of affective oratory; interest in determining which models are unsuitable for orators (e.g. Isocrates, Thucydides); preference for the virtues of the outstanding orator. Cicero's argument, however, is that the classics are good because they have the qualities which contribute to effective oratory; the mark of this is simply success. The fact that some audiences have better taste than others is admitted, but played down. Dionysius, on the other hand, puts this in a prominent position: orators have begun to mend their ways, abandoning the tasteless Asian style, and it is in part the standards of modern audiences, especially Roman ones, which have forced them to do so. One expects an explanation, then, not merely

of why ancient orators were successful, but of why they were successful with audiences of good taste.

I shall look at the way Dionysius uses propriety in more detail later on; what is surprising, however, is that a major factor in determining propriety turns out to be effectiveness with one's audience. Demosthenes, for instance, surpasses Isocrates, Plato and Thucydides by greater observance of propriety. Sometimes it seems that his style is more appropriate to subject: he treats a lofty subject in a way more truly noble than does Isocrates or Plato.[148] But the emphasis is on his rhetorical effectiveness: he uses forms of style more suited than theirs to practical oratory, and can use different styles at the right time.[149] What this means, however, is that he sees that exotic language, for instance, is suited to an educated audience, plain language to an audience of workmen, and adapts style accordingly.[150] This suggests that propriety lies in accommodating oneself to one's audience, rather than in speaking at all times in accordance with educated taste. In the introduction, however, one of the sore points was the success of the Asian orators, who were extremely popular, took in the ignorant mob, and won honours and

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148 Dem. 21 (I,175,22ff); 32 (201,12-19) (Demosthenes is better than Plato at figurative language as well as at practical oratory), cf. 25 on the way every reader is conscious of the way Plato has destroyed the dignity of a passage.

149 Dem. 18 (I,166,8ff), 20 (esp. 170,12-15) (Isocrates unsuited to practical oratory), 32 (200,21ff) (Demosthenes superior to Plato as a model for oratory), 10 (149,3-9) (Demosthenes does not go to the excesses of Thucydides, as his aim is to do what is useful for his case).

150 Compare also his view of Lysias, whose genius for propriety displayed itself in a talent for seeming to speak naturally, and so being persuasive to the ordinary man.

political positions.[151] If the chief mark of a genius for propriety is effectiveness with every kind of audience, it seems unfair to find fault with the means of Asian orators who achieved success.

Two things may have contributed to this. 1) The body of Dionysius' work on ancient orators depends largely on earlier rhetorical theory as a framework for its criticism; his virtues of style, for instance, can be traced back to earlier accounts.[152] Although these did not necessarily assume that good taste and rhetorical effectiveness would not conflict, neither did they present possible tensions as requiring resolution by the rhetorician. The most natural application of earlier theory would have been simply to show how the merits of the various orators contributed to persuasiveness. Such an approach would have left the popular bad taste of Asian oratory to one side.

2) It is also possible that Dionysius' dislike for Asian oratory made itself felt in the use he made of earlier theory. The kinds of propriety emphasised may in fact be opposed to various Asianist traits; though Dionysius may have disliked these primarily for their bad taste, he may have wanted to suggest that rejecting them is really most effective in practical oratory.

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151 Introduction, Ch. 1 (I,3,15-4,4).

152 On Dionysius' use of earlier rhetorical theory, see S. Bonner, Dionysius of Halicarnassus (Cambridge, 1939), e.g. p. 18.

Propriety and effectiveness: the influence of earlier theory

Before we can reach a decision about the second possibility, we need to see how far the influence of earlier tradition can account for Dionysius' views on propriety. One might expect that a great deal could be explained in this way, given his attachment to the Peripatetic tradition.[153] First, however, it will be helpful to take a closer look at his views on propriety, and at the ways they were shaped by a concern for effectiveness.

The opposition between the natural and the artificial is an important one for Dionysius. Lysias' effectiveness depends, in the last analysis, on being able to appear natural at all times while still adapting to subject and circumstances. He avoids the poeticisms of Gorgias, the ostentatious professionalism of Isaeus, and is persuasive

153 Dionysius calls πρέπον the most important virtue of all at Lys. 9 (I,16,17ff) and ad Pomp. II,240,10-11; Demosthenes is said to have brought it to its peak, Dem. 34 (I,205,1-2); this might have connections with the Peripatetic doctrine of the mean, for which Aristotle is cited as authority at dcv 24 (II,120,15-19) (see below, pp 278ff). He cites Theophrastus as thinking Thrasymachus the first to invent a third, mixed style (Dem. 3,I,132,3-7), criticising Lysias' frigid use of figures (Lys. 14,I,23,16ff), naming three sources of grandeur of style (Isoc. 3,I,58,4-7). For his use of Peripatetic theory, see also G. Hendrickson, 'The Peripatetic Mean of Style and the Three Stylistic Characters', AJP 25 (1904), 125-146; S. Bonner, 'Dionysius of Halicarnassus and the Peripatetic Mean of Style', CP 33 (1938), 257-66; G. Grube, 'Thrasymachus, Theophrastus, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus', AJP 73 (1952), 251-67. (I am not convinced that the mixed λέξις is confined to ἐκλογή, since Dionysius does not confine himself to this when comparing Demosthenes with exemplars of each type of λέξις. At Dem. 9 (I,145,17-24), structure and word order are at least as important as the words chosen; it is begging the question to say, as Grube does, that composition and selection are to some extent inseparable, when he is trying to prove that selection was treated by Dionysius as a self-contained category.)

by seeming to say nothing at all extraordinary.[154] His talent for propriety, moreover, seems to depend on this ability to appear natural. Propriety demands adapting a speech to audience, speaker, and case.[155] Suiting it to speaker means varying according to age, background, status; doing this consistently seems to rule out using any but ordinary language, according to the account given of characterisation.[156] One must also vary style according to the importance of the case; this might have been incompatible with the first requirement, but fortunately Lysias can do justice to even grand subjects by skilful arrangement of ordinary words.[157] It is because one aims at persuasion that this natural style is called for: Isocrates, despite lapses into Gorgianic frigidity, gives an impression of nobility, but is unsuited to oratory because he always aims at beauty; Plato's lucid style is acceptable, his poetic style is censured; Thucydides' excessive use of extraordinary language is not to be imitated.[158]

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154 Lys. 3 (I,10,7ff), De Im. fr. ix (II,215,10ff); Isaeus 10-12 (I,104,4ff), 16 (I,114,7-19). Cf. Isaeus 4 (I,97,109): Demosthenes and Isaeus can make even good cases look suspicious, whereas Lysias and Isocrates give the impression of being ἐλεύθεροι καὶ ἀφελεῖς. Cf. also Dem. 15 (I,160,20ff) on the ordinary man's suspicion of an elaborate style.

155 Lys. 9 (I,16,17ff)

156 Lys. 9 (I,16,22-17,2), cf. Lys. 8 (I,15,16-22) on his ability to present the moral character of the speaker favourably, while suiting style to type: ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν λέξιν ἀποδίδωσι τοῖς ἤθεσιν οἰκείαν, ἣ πέφυκεν αὐτὰ ἑαυτῶν κράτιστα δηλοῦσθαι, τὴν σαφῆ καὶ κυρίαν καὶ κοινὴν καὶ πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις συνηθεστάτην· ὁ γὰρ ὄγκος καὶ τὸ ξένου καὶ τὸ ἐξ ἐπιτηδεύσεως ἅπαν ἀνηθοποίητου. καὶ συντίθησί γε αὐτὴν ἀφελῶς πάνυ καὶ ἁπλῶς . . .

157 Lys. 3 (I,10,11-13), he is to be praised, not only because he avoids using tropes, ἀλλ' ὅτι καὶ σεμνὰ καὶ περιττὰ καὶ μεγάλα φαίνεσθαι τὰ πράγματα ποιεῖ τοῖς κοινοτάτοις χρώμενος ὀνόμασι καὶ ποιητικῆς οὐχ ἁπτόμενος κατασκευῆς. Cf. Isaeus 16 (I,114, 9-13) on the artfulness of his simplicity.

158 Isoc. 3 (I,59,14ff), Dem. 18 (I,166,3ff); Dem. 5(I,136,15ff); Thuc. 49-50 (I,408ff), Dem. 10 (I,148,20ff)

On the other hand, it is clear that Dionysius greatly admires style which is remarkable and calls attention to its artfulness. Looking natural means seeming to be no better than anybody else, and necessarily rules out displaying the powers of art; but presumably there must be such a thing as having a command of the resources of technique which enables one to do justice to important themes in ways beyond the ability of ordinary people. Despite his persuasiveness, Lysias is unsatisfactory, since there is nothing grand or striking about his style; Isocrates has faults which make him unsuitable for oratory, but he is superior to Lysias in grandeur of style.[159] Historians before Thucydides had the necessary virtues (clarity, ordinary language, purity of language, brevity); Thucydides has virtues which display the power of the writer. It is presumably these which are required to do justice to important subjects, since it is Demosthenes' adaptation of Thucydides' style which produces his extraordinary, elaborately-wrought language, suited not to private cases but to debates and public law-suits.[160]

So far the problem looks like the one which appeared in the Rhetoric, that the imposing language which suits an important subject may not be persuasive. Lysias is said not to show the power of his art, but it is precisely because Isaeus does that he is less plausible than Lysias.[161]

159 Lys. 13 (I,23,5ff), ὑψηλὴ δὲ καὶ μεγαλοπρεπὴς οὐκ ἔστιν ἡ Λυσίου λέξις οὐδὲ καταπληκτικὴ μὰ Δία καὶ θαυμαστὴ οὐδὲ τὸ πικρὸν ἢ τὸ δεινὸν ἢ τὸ φοβερὸν ἐπιφαίνουσα . . .; Isocr. 3 (I,59,14ff).

160 Thuc. 23 (I,360,2ff); Dem. 56 (I,249,15-250,3); cf. Dem. 9 and 10, where Demosthenes' Thucydidean style is connected with public speeches.

161 Lys. 13 (I,23,13ff), οὐκ ἐπὶ τοσοῦτον ἰσχὺν ἱκανὴ δηλῶσαι τέχνης . . ., Isaeus 3 (I,95,7-96,4) and 4 (I,96,13-97,9), and esp. 11 (I,106,8-9): Lysias' speech looks natural, Isaeus' is ἀπόγραφόν τινα καὶ οὐ λανθάνουτα ὅτι πέπλασται ῥητορικῇ τέχνῃ.

Isocrates has a lofty style, but is better suited to epideictic than to court cases.[162] Two solutions seem to have been available in the Peripatetic tradition: Aristotle thought one could use grand language if emotion made it seem natural, and the introduction of ornatus to a scheme of virtues implied that extraordinary dignity of style could sometimes be appropriate in oratory, and contribute to its affective qualities. Dionysius uses these to come up with a slightly different answer.

The additional virtues fall into categories, being concerned either with grandeur, with power, or with charm.[163] Those with power are connected with the arousing of emotion, and are particularly suited to oratory: Thucydides has the emotional power which is an important part of δεινότης, Herodotus, who has all the other additional virtues, lacks emotion and is unsuited to political speaking.[164] Dionysius considers the power to excite emotion important to an orator (Lysias and Isocrates lack it, Demosthenes has it to an extraordinary degree); one can give the intuitive explanation that an orator who could overwhelm an audience would be more effective than one who simply looked plausible, though if he failed he would be worse because caught trying to manipulate.[165] But Dionysius also connects this

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162 De Imitatione, II,211,21ff; Dem. 4 (I,136,7-9); Isoc. 2 (I,57,15-18)

163 Thuc. 23 (I,360,8-12), Lys. 13 (I,23,5ff), Ad Pomp. 3 (II,240,1-9). See F. Quadlbauer, 'Die Genera Dicendi bis auf Plinius d.j.', WS 71 (1958), p. 96, D.C. Innes, Diss. Oxon. 1967, p. 41 (grandeur and forcefulness), 'Theophrastus and the Theory of Style', in Theophrastus of Eresos, ed. W.F. Fortenbaugh (1985), 251-67, D. Schenkeveld, Studies in Demetrius (Amsterdam, 1964), p. 74, K. Pohl, Die Lehre von den drei Wortfügungsarten, Diss. Tübingen, 1968, p. 13 for the relation of these virtues to ancient style theory.

164 Thuc. 24 (363,12-15), 23 (I,360,9ff) (cf. de im. II,207,13-14 Ad Pomp. 3 (II,239,19ff), 19 (II, 240,3-6) and 20 (II,240,12-16) - Thucydides is good at πάθη, Herodotus at ἤθη).

165 Lys. 13 (I,23,6-14), Isocr. 2 (57,15-19), Dem. 21,22,34,55,58

emotional, overwhelming quality of style with importance of audience, subject and occasion. The extraordinary language of the Thucydidean style is both emotionally powerful, and suited to the importance of assemblies and public cases.

I suspect that the point was not so much that an important subject might call for exotic language, and that one might get away with treating it properly by using emotion to make artifice look natural, as that the important subject calls for strong emotion and striking effects, which are produced partly by the use of extraordinary language. Thus devices which produce beautiful style but are unmoving, like the elaborate symmetry and smooth composition of Isocrates, are not just suited to grand subject but unpersuasive: in an oratorical context, the treatment which does justice to an important issue must have emotional power.[166]

Such a style could count as doing justice to its subject only when it actually had a certain emotional effect - one could not call it stirring because it used certain devices if it left an audience unmoved. So it called for awareness of the sensibilities of the audience, both to know what would come across as a style of high emotional pitch, and to know when such a style should not be attempted. Dionysius, like Cicero, finds this kind of sense of propriety in Demosthenes, who can use the three styles of oratory as called for. He can assume, when he likes, the plain, artless manner of Lysias; his restrained

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166 On δεινότης and παθητικὴ λέξις, see Voit, ΔΕΙΝΟΤΗΣ, p. 33.

use, in the private speeches, of rhythm and unusual vocabulary is commented on (he uses them rarely; when used, they are inconspicuous).[167] He is better at the beautiful style which Isocrates had used, and his superiority rests largely on differences which make his style more useful to oratory - he avoids figures which Isocrates had used to excess, and above all gives it energy and emotion.[168] Even his δεινότης (said in Isaeus to cause suspicion) is contrasted with that of Thucydides, as being suited to circumstances, preserving the clarity which is the first requirement of persuasiveness.[169]

How far, then, is the connection between propriety and effectiveness due to the influence of earlier tradition? The account of Demosthenes' excellence makes the question especially pressing: part of it is sensing what will work with different types of audience. Some audiences are composed of more sophisticated, better educated men, and style of higher pretensions can be used - but the orator would violate propriety if he used such a style before a different sort of audience, observes

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167 Dem. 13 (I,157,1ff, 158,5ff), 56 (I,249,18ff).

168 Dem. 21 (I,176,2-7), ἰσχύϊ τε πλείονι κέχρηται καὶ τόνοις ἐμβριθεστέροις καὶ πέφευγε τὰ ψυχρὰ καὶ μειρακιώδη σχήματα, οἷς ἐκείνη καλλωπίζεται περὰ τοῦ μετρίου· μάλιστα δὲ κατὰ τὸ δραστήριον καὶ ἐναγώνιον καὶ ἐμπαθὲς ὅλῳ καὶ τῷ παντὶ κρεῖττον ἔχει ἐκείνης.

169 Dem. 10 (I,149,6-9). The notion of δεινότης in fact undergoes a change, roughly from what is covered by Hermogenes' false δεινότης to that of his real kind. In Hermogenes, the former involves obvious cleverness and panache, the latter using the various ἰδέαι where called for. The connections between this kind of δεινότης and πρέπον have been discussed by D. Hagedorn, Zur Ideenlehre des Hermogenes, Hypomnemata 8 (Göttingen, 1964), p. 33, and by I.C. Rutherford, Diss. Oxon. 1985, 132ff, esp. 143-4.

propriety if he uses a more moderate style in front of simpler men. As I said at the beginning of the section, there is no hint that good taste might be distinguished from accommodating oneself to one's audience.

It is hard to come to a decision on this point, but I suspect the position is roughly this: Dionysius' emphasis on effectiveness as a mark of propriety is only partly to be explained in terms of earlier theory. The real starting point is his own strong response to Demosthenes; the theory is there to justify calling Demosthenes supreme on the basis of his ability to arouse this kind of response. This is suggested, above all, by the uses to which Dionysius puts two components of traditional theory, the system of necessary and additional virtues and the theory of three styles.

The system of virtues seems to have been well established - Dionysius speaks of it as a subject which others have often dealt with before.[170] What must be new, however, is his application of the system to the criticism of ancient orators. He says that the project of investigating the good points of ancient writers had not, as far as he knows, been undertaken before;[171] this means that he must have decided for himself which writers possessed particular virtues, which missed them by erring in the direction of excess or deficiency, and how the system could be used to justify a particular hierarchy of writers. As we have seen, he decides to use the system, above all, to commend Demosthenes' genius for effectiveness.

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170 Thuc. 22 (I,358,19-27). cf. Ad Pomp. 3 (II,239,14-16)

171 On Ancient Orators, Introduction 4 (I,6,20-7,3)

Dionysius' modification of style theory is even more striking, since the contradictions in his account make sense only as part of a praise of Demosthenes. Dionysius sometimes assumes that the right audience and subject for a particular style will go together, and that mastery of these different kinds of style will ensure using the right one in the right place; it then suffices to show that Demosthenes can use the three types of style and of composition, improving on the archetype. But he sometimes admits the possibility of a heterogeneous audience; style cannot then be correlated in so straightforward a way with status of subject or class of audience, and Demosthenes is then praised for a single 'Demosthenic' style which combines all opposites (a style which Dionysius tries to identify with the middle style).[172]

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172 At Dem. 44ff (I,228,8ff) Demosthenes is said to vary his synthesis according to the kind of audience addressed (some meant to be beguiled, others to be instructed) and (45) according to the subjects treated: dignity and impressive language are best suited to political oratory, charm and devices that give pleasure to forensic oratory. In the former he uses the austere style of composition, in the latter the polished style. But both are possible manifestations of the mixed style, which lies in a mean between the two and is best. At 15 Dionysius seems to suggest that it would be possible to have an audience for which a perfectly plain, Lysianic speech would be best, or one for which the Thucydidean style would be suitable (I,161,10-14, *οἳ δὲ πολιτικοί τε καὶ ἀπ' ἀγορᾶς καὶ διὰ τῆς ἐγκυκλίου παιδείας ἐληλυθότες, οἷς οὐκ ἔνι τὸν αὐτὸν ὕπερ ἐκείνοις διαλέγεσθαι τρόπον, ἀλλὰ δεῖ τὴν ἐγκατάσκευον καὶ περιττὴν καὶ ξένην διάλεκτον τούτοις προσφέρειν*), but since in practice an audience is likely to include both types, a speech aimed at both, blending both types of style, will work best. At both Dem. 8ff (I,143ff) and 33-4 (I,202,9ff) he first ascribes to Demosthenes a single flexible, Protean, supremely eloquent style, then analyses this into the ability to use appropriately each of the three styles - the comparisons with Thucydides and the rest, for instance, beginning at 9, are preceded by 8 (I,143,16ff) on the Demosthenic style: *ἐξ ἁπάντων δ' αὐτῶν ὅσα κράτιστα καὶ χρησιμώτατα ἦν, ἐκλεγόμενος συνύφαινε καὶ μίαν ἐκ πολλῶν διάλεκτον ἀπετέλει, μεταλοπρεπῆ λιτήν, περιττὴν ἀπέριττον, ἐξηλλαγμένην συνήθη, παυηγυρικὴν ἀληθίνην, αὐστηρὰν ἱλαράν, σύντονον ἀνειμένην, ἡδεῖαν πικράν, ἠθικὴν παθητικήν* . . .

This suggests, then, that Dionysius' connection of propriety and effectiveness cannot be explained entirely in terms of earlier tradition. His powerful response to Demosthenes is given universal application, through modifications in traditional theory; what he suggests is not that every audience would have found Demosthenes in good taste, but that every audience would have been overwhelmed by him. This might provide support, then, for the second alternative: that Dionysius wanted to suggest that the tasteless methods of Asian orators were actually less effective.

Responses to Asianism?

Dionysius never says precisely which features of Asianic oratory he finds objectionable. Moreover, in his works on ancient orators, on the historians, and in the literary letters, the writers who come in for criticism are people like Gorgias, Plato and Thucydides - Asianic orators tend not to be mentioned at all. So if there is a connection between his discussion of classical orators in On Ancient Orators, and his prefatory objections to decadent post-classical oratory - if, as I have suggested, he meant to imply that the latter were actually less effective - a certain amount of guesswork is required to work out which points might be aimed at the decadent moderns. This section will try to determine what Dionysius' objections to Asianic oratory might have been, and whether, despite his complaints about their undeserved popularity, the

object might be in part to show that classical orators had been even more effective.

Hegesias, whom Dionysius singles out for criticism in de compositione verborum, was notorious as the originator of the Asianic style, or at least one variety of this.[173] Dionysius does not say that he considers Hegesias' oratory an example of the tasteless, Asian kind, and does not say precisely what is objectionable about the rhythms in the passage he quotes.[174] But the passage shows features which, according to Cicero, Asianist oratory owed to Hegesias, being broken up into short, jerky sentences; the fact that certain clausulae are dactylic may also contribute to making the lines what Cicero called 'versiculorum simillimum'.[175] The passage also includes a large number of double trochees, the excessive use of which is, again according to Cicero, characteristic of Asianist oratory.[176] So it seems fair to infer that the passage does exemplify some of the things Dionysius disliked in such oratory, and that the features mentioned above were at least some of those to which he objected.

Dionysius' general criticism of the passage is that its rhythms are totally unsuited to the recounting of a terrible event, the death of a barbarian soldier on the orders of Alexander. The story ought to be a moving one,

173 See Strabo, Geography 14.1.41, Cicero, Orator 230 (Hegesias was followed by all those who cut up the period as if into little verses).

174 DCV 18 (II,79,9ff) Cf. also 4 (II,19,3ff), where he rearranges a sentence by Herodotus and says the new word order, which is μικρόκομψου, ἀτευνές, μαλθακόν, is Hegesianic.

175 E.g. II,81,13 (τῶν μὲν ἰδόντων), 81,17 (καὶ βλοσυρωπόν), 82,6 ((σολοι)κισμὸς ἐποίει)

176 Orator 212-13. Cf. 231 on the monotony of Asianic clausulae: the double trochee is not mentioned, but one might infer from the earlier passage that this is the clausula which is constantly repeated.

but Hegesias has spoiled this through his tasteless composition; Homer's account of the dragging of Hector is immensely superior. It is assumed that both accounts should be aiming at the same effect, and that anyone can see which works best. He is not talking about oratorical effectiveness here (a passage from Demosthenes, quoted shortly before, is praised for the nobility of its rhythms, rather than, e.g., for their contribution to persuasiveness),[177] but that is obviously concerned in a discussion of the means for being properly moving. His emphasis on variety as an important part of propriety in rhythm, both in de compositione verborum and in the essay on Demosthenes, and on the effectiveness of rhythm adapted to the various aims of the orator, may thus be meant partly to show that Demosthenic oratory, e.g., works better than that in the Asianic style.

Dionysius' account of the persuasiveness of Lysias and of Demosthenes may also be meant to show up the inferiority of Asianic oratory. To take Lysias first, we have seen that he won approval for his artful simplicity, which was said to be the source of his persuasiveness. The use of ostentatious artifice, of poetic language, seems to have been characteristic of Asianic oratory;[178] Dionysius may have wanted to show that abstention from these was particularly persuasive. His dislike of poeticisms appears in criticisms of Plato,

177 II.79.2 (the ἁρμονία is καλή). 79.4ff (it is not that Demosthenes never uses 'ἀτενυεστέροις ῥυθμοῖς', but that he conceals them well.

178 See E. Norden, Die Antike Kunstprosa (Leipzig and Berlin, 1909), I.141-5 for the inscription to Antiochus of Commagene (e.g. 9, p. 143, ὀπισθοπαρεῖς ἀνάγκαι), also p. 138 on Hegesias.

rather than of Asian orators, and the argument that a simple style is more persuasive than an ornate one occurs in a comparison of Lysias with Gorgias; perhaps, however, it is the bad taste of the more recent past which prompts him to urge the effectiveness of simplicity.[179]

Dionysius' praise of Demosthenes may also be connected with a desire to show Asian oratory ineffective. Approval of Lysias was perhaps an obvious course for someone offended by Asianic excess (it was at any rate taken by Caecilius, who shared Dionysius' dislike for poeticisms in the prose of Plato[180]). What was to be done, however, about orators who did have pretensions to power, grandeur, stylistic artifice? Apparently unlike Caecilius, Dionysius wants to present Demosthenes as supreme. The forms of three style theory used may be an attempt to set Demosthenes decidedly apart from the bombastic excesses of Asianic oratory. Not only is he better at the plain style than Lysias, but he improves on styles which, in imperfect form, have features which we have seen to be associated with Asianic style. Isocrates' symmetry and frigid figures recall one of the types of Asianic oratory described by Cicero; the powerful style of Thucydides, with its extra-ordinary vocabulary, recalls the other; each of these is an exemplar of a style which Demosthenes takes over and

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179 Dem. 5 (I,137,7ff, = Ad Pomp. 2, II,227,18ff); De Im., fr. ix, II,215,10ff

180 On the Sublime, 32.8

renders eminently fit for oratorical use.[181] In each case it is Demosthenes' sense of the appropriate, of the right degree and occasion, which enables him to use these styles effectively. It may be, then, that Dionysius' presentation of Demosthenes, which we have seen to be central to his adaptation of earlier theory, is shaped partly by a desire to show that tasteless oratory is in fact ineffective; despite its apparent success with the crowd, Asianic oratory is cast in the shade by the overwhelming persuasiveness of Demosthenes.

We set out to account for an apparent contradiction between the introduction and the body of Dionysius' work on ancient orators: the former seemed to object to tastelessness despite its success with audiences, the latter implied that effectiveness was the final criterion for an orator. Dependence on earlier tradition does not seem to be the answer, since Dionysius modifies this to suit

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181 On the monotony of Isocrates, Dem. 20 (I,171,8ff); on the superiority of Demosthenes, in nobility and dignity of treatment and in avoiding Isocrates' faults (use of juvenile and frigid figures, lack of energy and emotion), Dem. 21 (I,175,22ff). Dem. 10 (I, 148,19ff) - both Demosthenes and Thucydides use striking, unusual language; they do not differ in this, τῷ δὲ πόσῳ καὶ ἔτι μᾶλλον τοῖς καιροῖς. ὁ μὲν γὰρ ἀταμιεύτως τῇ κατασκευῇ κέχρηται καὶ ἄγεται μᾶλλον ὑπ' αὐτῆς ἢ αὐτὸς ἄγει καὶ οὐδὲ τὸν καιρὸν αὐτῆς ἐπίσταται λαβεῖν δεξιῶς, ἀλλὰ καὶ παρὰ τοῦτον πολλάκις ἁμαρτάνει. καθ' ὃ ἡ μὲν ἀμετρία τῆς ἐξαλλαγῆς ἀσαφῆ ποιεῖ τὴν λέξιν αὐτοῦ, τὸ δὲ μὴ κρατεῖν τῶν καιρῶν ἀηδῆ. (whereas Demosthenes always pays attention to the occasion) Cf. also Thuc. 53 (I,412,26-13,6) - Demosthenes imitates some aspects of the style, such as its emotional power, but avoids bizarre language and figures verging on solecism. For a more detailed discussion of Dionysius' views on Thucydides' language, see Chapter 4, pp. 352ff. Cf. also Dem. 56 (I,249,18ff), where Demosthenes' use of extraordinary language is defended: he did not use it in forensic oratory.

his own purposes. There do, however, seem to be cases where he might have thought that he could show that bad taste was less effective than good. Dionysius may, therefore, have seen no need to go into the reasons why oratory might be condemned which seemed to please its audience, or to explain in what sense, if any, bad taste in such oratory could be taken to offend against propriety. But this method of dealing with the problem of taste is not entirely satisfactory. Its drawbacks become obvious as soon as Dionysius tries to deal with non-oratorical literature.

Non-oratorical literature: misuses of the standard of propriety

The conflict between propriety of style as what will be acceptable to or persuasive for a particular audience, and what is suited to a particular subject or set of circumstances, was resolved by appealing to the genius of Demosthenes, who could use ambitious levels of style in an emotionally overpowering, rhetorically effective way. Questions about the propriety of certain kinds of rhythm, diction, figures, and so on were easy to answer: if the style was rhetorically effective, it must be appropriate. This solution offers little guidance, however, for judging prose which is not primarily meant to be persuasive. In the work on the ancient orators, in the literary letters, and in his essay on Thucydides, Dionysius often applies a rhetorical standard of propriety to other forms of

literature in an unfair way.

One can see why this should be so in the work on the ancient orators: one of Dionysius' methods is to point out the ways that non-oratorical prose of various kinds is unsuitable for the tasks of oratory. The fact that the orator's sense of propriety must discern aspects of other forms unsuited to his task - e.g. a higher tolerance of poetic diction - seems to diminish the value of the other works, as if they had proved unsuitable for their own tasks as well.

Since Demosthenes did in fact intend to persuade his audience, criticism which presupposes such an aim is not likely to be misleading; in the case of Plato, however, or Thucydides, the shortcomings of this approach are obvious. It encourages the critic to concentrate on passages which may readily be compared with oratory, such as the funeral speech in the Menexenus or the speeches in Thucydides, and to judge these chiefly by rhetorical standards, to the neglect of the function of the passage in its context. It may also lead to lack of sympathy for the aspects of an author's work which are patently unsuited to oratory.

To take the second point first, Dionysius is willing to admit Plato's mastery of the plain, lucid style, but is extremely hostile to the figured, metaphorical style used in grander passages.[182] It is obviously impossible to be dogmatic about the merits of, for instance, the 'dithyrambic' passages in the Phaedrus - the nuances of

182 Dem. 5 (I,136,15ff) = Ad Pomp. 2 (II,227,5ff)

the language as used at the time of writing seem particularly relevant, and particularly hard to recapture - but it is fair to say that Dionysius makes no effort to appreciate the style on its own terms. In the letter to Pompeius, for instance, it is criticised for excessive use of poetic devices, far-fetched metaphors, and failure to observe the mean;[183] Dionysius seems to be influenced partly by a dislike for figures and conceits similar to that of Dr. Johnson, partly by a conservative view of the kind of style suited to philosophical writing.

Emphasis on apparently rhetorical passages also created problems. It was, of course, unfair of Dionysius to compare the funeral speech in the Menexenus with one of the most powerful passages in Demosthenes; on the other hand this was probably the best that could be done if there was to be any basis for comparison. Dionysius does not seem to have considered the possibility that the speech could be an ironic example of the genre; it had to be treated as a serious attempt to handle a traditional theme, using figures and diction which simply failed to do the job.

The attempt to apply the standard of propriety to Thucydides' speeches also leads to oversimplification, though of a different kind. Criticisms of style often show preoccupation with the concerns of oratorical prose.

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183 Ad Pomp. 2 (II,228,9ff) = Dem. 5 (I,137,17ff), πολλὴ μὲν γὰρ ἐν τοῖς ἐπιθέτοις, ἄκαιρος δ' ἐν ταῖς μετωνυμίαις, σκληρὰ δὲ καὶ οὐ σῴζουσα τὴν ἀναλογίαν ἐν ταῖς μεταφοραῖς γίγνεται, ἀλληγορίας τε περιβάλλεται μακρὰς καὶ πολλὰς οὔτε μέτρον ἐχούσας οὔτε καιρόν, σχήμασί τε ποιητικοῖς ἐσχάτην προσβάλλουσιν ἀηδίαν, καὶ μάλιστα τοῖς Γοργείοις ἀκαίρως καὶ μειρακιωδῶς ἐναβρύνεται. Cf. also Ad Pomp. 230,14-231,5 on Plato's dithyrambic diction.

Thucydides' narrative style is to be preferred as a model to the difficult style frequently used in the speeches,[184] but Dionysius does not try to explain why Thucydides sometimes chose to use the latter; lucidity, a primary requirement for the narrative portion of a speech, is apparently to be the chief criterion for all non-oratorical sections of the history.[185] Dionysius allows Thucydides less liberty than he had allowed Demosthenes: the suggestion that Thucydides was not writing for popular audiences, but for a select group of well-educated men, is raised only to be dismissed, apparently on the ground that this denies most people a useful area of study.[186]

Dionysius' criticism of content also presupposes standards of propriety developed in rhetorical theory, but an attempt is made to adapt these to the requirements of history as an independent genre. Pericles' speech in Book 2 is criticised for its rhetorical ineptness - Pericles should not praise himself in a speech designed to conciliate an angry crowd; this is a fault in the history because it is inconsistent with what we know of Pericles, who was a superb orator. There was nothing wrong with Thucydides' praising Pericles' ability as a statesman, but he should not have put this praise in the mouth of Pericles himself

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184 Thuc. 27 (I,371ff), 33 (I,381,1-7), 49 (I,408,4ff)

185 For Dionysius' preference for clarity, see 28 (I,372,10), 30 (I, 376,11-12), 31 (I,376,18-19, 377,6-10, 377,13), 32 (I,379,2ff) and especially 33 (I,379,15-17). Cf. also 51 (I,411,7-11): history should have a poetic flavour, but should not depart too far from custom.

186 Thuc. 50-51. Contrast Dem. 15 (I,161,10ff), which suggests that, if one were addressing an audience of cultivated men, a style which was ἐγκατάσκευον καὶ περιττὴν καὶ ξένην should be used.

in adverse circumstances.[187] Proportion should be observed in the historian's treatment of his material; it is therefore unbecoming when he sometimes treats disasters as they deserve, sometimes trivially, or has the finest orator in Greece speak at the funeral of a few men who died in an unimportant engagement, but passes over the honours paid to those who fell in greater numbers, in a great victory or defeat.[188] It is the business of the historian to tell the truth, or, when he has no direct information, the plausible. The Melian dialogue is offensive, then, because Thucydides, having apparently no evidence of what took place, had Athenian generals express sentiments which were unbecoming and inappropriate to their status and city, hence unconvincing - and gave the Melians noble arguments ill-suited to the insignificance of the island.[189]

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187 E.g. Thuc. 45 (I,401,24-402,4), ἐχρῆν δέ γε αὐτὸν μὲν ὅ τι βούλεται περὶ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἀποφαίνεσθαι, τῷ δὲ κινδυνεύοντι τοὺς ταπεινοὺς καὶ παραιτητικοὺς τῆς ὀργῆς ἀποδοῦναι λόγους· τοῦτο γὰρ ἦν πρέπον τῷ μιμεῖσθαι βουλομένῳ συγγραφεῖ τὴν ἀλήθειαν. For the requirement of characterisation in history, cf. De Im. on Xenophon (II,208,11) ἀλλ' οὐδὲ τοῦ πρέποντος τοῖς προσώποις πολλάκις ἐστοχάσατο, περιτιθεὶς ἀνδράσιν ἰδιώταις καὶ βαρβάροις ἔσθ' ὅτι λόγους φιλοσόφους, λέξει χρώμενος διαλόγοις πρεπούσῃ μᾶλλον ἢ στρατιωτικοῖς κατορθώμασι.

188 Thuc. 13, 15, 18.

189 Thuc. 37ff, e.g. 39 (I,391,12ff) on 5.91f (the powerful take what they can and the weak yield what they must . . .) βασιλεῦσι γὰρ βαρβάροις ταῦτα πρὸς Ἕλληνας ἥρμοττε λέγειν· . . . Ἀθηναίοις δὲ πρὸς τοὺς Ἕλληνας, οὓς ἠλευθέρωσαν ἀπὸ τῶν Μήδων, οὐκ ἦν προσήκοντα εἰρῆσθαι . . . Cf. also 40 (I,393,12ff), on 5.103, and 41 (I,395,17ff): It is clear from 4.104-8 that Thucydides was not there, and had not talked to someone who had been, Λείπεται δὴ σκοπεῖν, εἰ τοῖς τε πράγμασι προσήκοντα καὶ τοῖς συνελθοῦσιν εἰς τὸν σύλλογον προσώποις ἁρμόττοντα πέπλακε τὸν διάλογον . . . and cf. Ad Pomp. 3 (II,232,19ff) on inappropriate choice of subject matter (the disasters of the Athenians), and (234,23) on inappropriate treatment: Thucydides' way of presenting the war is not suited to an Athenian.

In each case, though Dionysius tries to apply standards appropriate specifically to history, he misses the mark through assuming 1) that the historian's purpose in, e.g., writing a speech is always the same (convincing imitation, for instance)[190] and 2) that the purpose of history is fairly straightforward, so that its success may be judged by its conformity to received ideas. He therefore allows very little licence for varieties of emphasis, for effects achieved by the placing of speeches and set pieces, for the deliberately shocking, and is most at ease with passages of uncomplicated narrative, or speeches which lend themselves to conventional rhetorical analysis.

De Compositione Verborum

In Dionysius' other works, three aspects of propriety predominate. One concerns observing hierarchies of dignity of subject, audience, etc. in one's style (e.g. Isocrates' ability to treat lofty topics suitably); another involves realistic imitation (manifested, e.g., in Lysias' genius for suiting style to various sorts of people); the third is a general standard, achieved when style is adapted to all relevant aspects of a speech, which is particularly connected with skill in varying style as needed (e.g. Demosthenes' ability to use all three styles as needed).

These appear in de compositione verborum, with certain differences, but their relation to each other is hard to work out. There is, first of all, a point to which

190 Dionysius prided himself on the composition of political speeches in his own history; cf. Roman Antiquities for his notion of what these should be like.

Dionysius gives considerable importance: the capacity of composition to give beauty to style even when low subjects are treated, to some extent circumventing the hierarchy of style imposed on choice of vocabulary. Propriety is obviously relevant, but the term πρέπον is not mentioned. Second, there is the aspect which Dionysius specifically assigns to πρέπον, when he describes it as the standard which is the fourth requirement for beauty and charm of style: that of realistic imitation, whether of the speaker's emotions, or of the things he observes. Finally, there is something that looks fundamental: the property of hitting the mean which characterises the middle ἁρμονία, which involves varying composition according to circumstances and subject. This seems to be connected with καιρός rather than with πρέπον. One is likely to feel that the rhetorical standard of πρέπον is really involved, however, since Aristotle's mean is invoked (a standard connected with propriety in the Rhetoric); Karin Pohl thinks that πρέπον is what characterises the middle ἁρμονία above all else.[191] The first is the most interesting of these; the second fairly straightforward; the third most problematic.

One reason why it is hard to work out the relations between these aspects is that Dionysius does not try to give a complete account of πρέπον. At 11 it is the fourth source of beauty and pleasure, and seems to govern the

191 Die Lehre von den drei Wortfügungsarten, Diss. Tübingen 1968, 116ff, cf 28, 30ff.

other three (music, rhythm, variety):[192]

> ἐξ ὧν δ' οἶμαι γενήσεσθαι λέξιν ἡδεῖαν καὶ καλήν, τέτταρά ἐστι ταῦτα τὰ κυριώτατα καὶ τὰ κράτιστα, μέλος καὶ ῥυθμὸς καὶ μεταβολὴ καὶ τὸ παρακολουθοῦν τοῖς τρισὶ τούτοις πρέπον.

At 20, however, where Dionysius defines it as being suitable to subject and character, he says he will not try to cover the entire topic, **and** only mentions two forms of realistic imitation. This seems too narrow to do the job propriety was originally said to do. Can one assume that the other two aspects are covered by πρέπον ? It would be interesting, for instance, if Dionysius turned out to associate the realistic side of propriety with πρέπον , the side connected with 'getting things right' with some other term (e.g. καιρός); can one make assumptions about the things he would have included under πρέπον if he had been trying to be exhaustive?

Although certainty may be impossible, I think one can assume this. The indeterminacy of the text arises, I suspect, from Dionysius' attempt not to repeat himself too often. Closer inspection of the kinds of propriety dealt with should bear this out.

In de compositione verborum 3 Dionysius talks about the power of good composition to confer beauty on style without relying on other sources of ornament. Its value is not simply an appearance of nature, but that it permits an attractive style even when decorum forbids the use of elevated vocabulary. On the one hand, many writers have

192 II,37,9-12. Cf. also 20 (II,88,2-5), where it is said that the other ornaments of speech must be accompanied by πρέπον. καὶ γὰρ τοῖς ἄλλοις χρήμασιν ἅπασι παρεῖναι δεῖ τὸ πρέπον, καὶ εἴ τι ἄλλο ἔργον ἀτυχεῖ τούτου τοῦ μέρους, καὶ εἰ μὴ τοῦ παντός, τοῦ κρατίστου γε ἀτυχεῖ.

chosen beautiful expressions which were suited to their subject matter, but spoiled the effect through careless composition - on the other, people have used humble words, and by good arrangement have produced writing of great beauty.[193] Homer's description of Eumaeus' recognition of Odysseus, for instance, uses very simple language but is beautiful through the arrangement of the words; Herodotus' story of Gyges and Candaules is attractive for the same reason, despite the fact that it deals with a disgraceful subject.[194]

The Herodotus example is interesting because Dionysius does not reject the matching of big words to big things as a source of propriety. It is not just that the source of its attractiveness is not the diction: finer words not only would not have improved the story, but would not have been suitable.[195] While accepting this standard of propriety, however, he deprives it of much of its power: the hierarchy of dignity of style according to importance of content rules out splendid diction for some pieces, but allows distinguished composition to all.

The propriety connected with hierarchies of style is interesting because it fills an important gap in ancient

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193 III,11(9,2ff) πολλοὶ γοῦν καὶ ποιηταὶ καὶ συγγραφεῖς φιλόσοφοί τε καὶ ῥήτορες λέξεις πάνυ καλὰς καὶ πρεπούσας τοῖς ὑποκειμένοις ἐκλέξαντες ἐπιμελῶς, ἁρμονίαν δὲ αὐταῖς ἀποδόντες εἰκαίαν τινὰ καὶ ἄμουσον οὐδὲν χρηστὸν ἀπέλαυσαν ἐκείνου τοῦ πόνου. ἕτεροι δ' εὐκαταφρόνητα καὶ ταπεινὰ λαβόντες ὀνόματα, συνθέντες δ' αὐτὰ ἡδέως καὶ περιττῶς πολλὴν τὴν ἀφροδίτην τῷ λόγῳ περιέθηκαν.

194 III,14-15(11,9ff) The words are εὐτελέστατα and ταπεινότατα, such as a farmer, sailor, or artisan might use; there are no metaphors, or tropes, or glosses, or foreign words, or coinages - the beauty must be due to the synthesis. Cf. 3,20(II,14,9) on the story of Gyges and Candaules.

195 (14,12) οὐδὲ γὰρ ἤρμοττεν ἴσως κρείττοσι χρήσασθαι ἑτέροις. ἀνάγκη δὲ δή που, ὅταν τοῖς κυριωτάτοις τε καὶ προσεχεστάτοις ὀνόμασιν ἐκφέρηται, τὰ νοήματα μηδὲν σεμνότερ' εἶναι, ἢ οἷά ἐστιν . . .

criticism. Discussions of propriety of style have tended, so far, to dwell on matching register of vocabulary to dignity of content (with concessions made to the demands of persuasiveness, such as the need to appear natural). Aristotle observed that Euripides achieved propriety by using ordinary language and distinguished composition, and Dionysius, as we have seen, praised Lysias for the same skill, but the point of these examples was that this kind of style looked perfectly natural. The question of whether ornament was the main source of distinction in style received little attention.

Dionysius has reason, then, to think this an important aspect of propriety in composition. In the discussion of the four sources of beauty and charm it comes up again. The unimportance of vocabulary reappears: one ought not to hesitate to use the most common and everyday words, if one needs them (though shameful ones should be avoided), but trust to composition to arrange them attractively.[196] The discussion of rhythm, moreover, centres largely on the capacity of composition to confer or destroy attractiveness of style, depending on whether it is suited to content. Though it is never possible to say of composition, as one might of vocabulary, that it was too distinguished for the subject, it is possible for composition to be too base.

196 12(II,46,17ff) δυσωπεῖσθαι δ' οὐδὲν οἶομαι δεῖν οὔτε ὄνομα οὔτε ῥῆμα, ὅ τι καὶ τέτριπται, μὴ σὺν αἰσχύνῃ λέγεσθαι μέλλον· οὐδὲν γὰρ οὕτω ταπεινὸν ἢ ῥυπαρὸν ἢ ἄλλην τινὰ δυσχέρειαν ἔχον ἔσεσθαί φημι λόγου μόριον, ᾧ σημαίνεταί τι σῶμα ἢ πρᾶγμα, ὃ μηδεμίαν ἕξει χώραν ἐπιτηδείαν ἐν λόγοις. παρακελεύομαι δὲ τῇ συνθέσει πιστεύοντας ἀνδρείως πάνυ . . . αὐτὰ ἐνφέρειν Ὁμήρῳ τε παραδείγματι χρωμένους . . .

It is interesting that the last examples chosen, the noble rhythms of Thucydides and the disgraceful ones of Hegesias, are not concerned primarily with doing justice to a lofty subject: the hierarchy is one of emotional intensity, with stirring subjects calling for noble rhythm. Hegesias uses a monotonous rhythm and broken-up sentences to describe a terrible incident; Homer uses noble rhythm to describe the mutilation of Hector.[197]

These points are all clearly connected with being suitable to character and content. Since he had touched on them several times already, it is not surprising that Dionysius had little to say about them when he got round to discussing propriety. In 20, he points out that emotion affects the way one puts words together; one speaks differently under the influence of various emotions, and composition can be suited to a particular state of mind in being what would come naturally to one so affected. One can also imitate things by the way one puts words together - one is especially likely to do this in the case of something one has seen for oneself. Composition 'similar' to the thing spoken of it also suited to it. Odysseus, describing the stone of Sisyphus, gives an impression first of laborious slowness, as the stone goes uphill, then of impetuous hurry as it bounds down again. The first point touches upon the kind of impropriety found in Hegesias; both cover ground gone over in Chapters

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197 Saying that a work shows propriety implies that it conforms to the standards of a particular group, with which the speaker identifies himself. Dionysius' criticism of Hegesias makes this unusually clear: Hegesias describes the torture of the foreign officer at the orders of Alexander in a way suited only to women or effeminate men. 18(II,83,16ff)

15 and 16 , where Dionysius talks about the imitative possibilities of combining letters with different properties.[198]

On the other hand, the section does fill a couple of gaps. Comparison with 15 and 16 suggests that realistic imitation is common to both types of propriety. There, though he speaks sometimes of the sounds suited to certain emotions (15.60,6ff; 61,5ff), sometimes of imitating things (16 .61,20), sometimes of both (63,14ff),[199] examples do not strictly correspond to the distinction.[200] Dionysius seems to regard them as interchangeable; the common denominator seems to be the vividness of the impression produced, achieved by use of a medium which exactly reproduces the quality of an incident. But the earlier chapters are concerned only with the effects of certain combinations of letters, whereas the example in Ch. 20 relies partly on rhythm for its effect; since propriety is supposed to cover both aspects (11), the later passage is helpful in showing how it does so. The section devoted to rhythm, moreover, concentrated on propriety as a way of 'doing justice' to a subject, and did not include anything on the use of rhythm to produce realistic effects - so from this point of view as well the section on propriety is a useful supplement. One might argue, in fact, that this is all it could be. Presumably no use of 'music' or rhythm, for instance, will be good unless also appropriate,

198 Pohl points out the similarities between these sections, op. cit. p. 117.

199 The varying combinations of letters and syllables reveal τά τε ἤθη καὶ τὰ πάθη καὶ αἱ διαθέσεις καὶ τὰ ἔργα τῶν προσώπων.

200 E.g. after 60,6 examples include both the roar of the sea and that of the wounded Cyclops.

so any discussion of particular good aspects will exhaust certain aspects of propriety: in the case of μέλος, the imitative powers of combining letters, in the case of rhythm, the power of noble rhythms to do justice to stirring subjects.

This still leaves the kind of propriety which becomes so important in the discussion of the three kinds of ἁρμονία - that concerned with varying composition, so that elements of the different extremes of composition are used as called for. Pohl, as I have said, argues that propriety is the defining characteristic of the middle ἁρμονία ; yet the term for propriety is not mentioned, and the notion of the mean does not come up in the section devoted to propriety. Why should this be?

One possibility is that the propriety discussed at 20 is a restricted kind, applicable only to the particular objects of beauty and charm. One might have expected something of the kind, since Dionysius makes a point of distinguishing the qualities of beauty and charm: describing propriety which contributed to one or the other might not cover all the ways it could be achieved in composition. But this does not really fit Dionysius' examples.[201] Both at 15-16 and at 20, Homer's skill at appropriate and imitative composition is seen partly in varying between smooth and difficult arrangements of words as needed: the very thing for which he is praised at 24 as a model of the middle ἁρμονία . In this respect, at any rate, Dionysius

201 As Pohl points out (117ff). though her claim that propriety is only possible where the qualities of the middle *ἁρμονία* are present is not convincing.

is speaking in very general terms at 20, and talks about the ways composition can be appropriate without trying to tie them to beauty and charm.

It seems likelier, then, that he associated propriety with the excellence of the middle type of composition, but did not want to anticipate a complicated subject which required introduction of the other two types before it could be considered. This seems all the more likely since certain difficulties beset Dionysius' description of the mean in which is found the middle form of composition; it may have seemed easiest to deal first with more straightforward forms of propriety.

Dionysius' account of the middle ἁρμονία is especially interesting because of its use of the Aristotelian mean: it is an important weapon in the armoury of those who would like to argue that the three-style theory in the work on orators, as well as the theory of three types of composition, does not depart radically from Aristotle's notion of virtue of style. Bonner, for instance, argues that it was an understandable development to see the extremes as good qualities carried to excess, and the mean as picking out what was potentially good in the extremes.[202] It is the indeterminacy of the middle type which makes this possible: it is not characterised as the extremes are. But the arguments for Dionysius' grasp of the notion of the mean do not really work. They rest on his emphasis on varying composition as needed, but do not take in

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202 'Dionysius of Halicarnassus and the Peripatetic Mean of Style', CP 1938, 261ff

his treatment of the extremes.

Describing the αὐστηρός and γλαφυρός types of composition, Dionysius simply gives them certain characteristics: one is rough, difficult, apparently artless, the other smooth, pleasant, carefully put together. Although different from each other, neither is really an extreme in an Aristotelian sense. Difficult, artless composition has to be good to count as αὐστηρός: one of the problems, if you try to write this way, is that you must avoid sounding positively unpleasant.[203] A poem of Sappho's is quoted as an example of smooth composition; the point of the example is that this type of composition is used to superb effect.[204] If one combines this with the description of the middle type of composition, one comes up with a very odd conclusion: that someone can count as using one of the other two only if he or she sometimes uses it inopportunely. The middle type does not necessarily mean that one varies between harsh and smooth in a single work - Demosthenes might use a composition that was predominately one or the other, depending on his audience.[205] If this counts as the middle type, it cannot be for avoiding characteristics of, say, the smooth type which would make one's style excessively even: Sappho did that and is said to use the smooth type.

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203 Dem. 38(211,16ff) πολλῆς δέ τινος ἐνταῦθα δεῖ τῆς τεχνήσεως, ἵνα μὴ κακόφωνοι μηδὲ ἀηδεῖς μηδ' ἄλλην τινὰ ὄχλησιν ἐπενεγκάμεναι ταῖς ἀκοαῖς λάθωσιν αἱ τοιαῦται συζυγίαι, ἀλλ' ἐπανθῇ τις αὐταῖς χνοῦς ἀρχαιοπινὴς καὶ χάρις ἀβίαστος. Cf. 40(217,6ff) on the smooth style, whose figures give a certain attractiveness when used in moderation, not used in such quantities as to be disagreeable - καλλωπίζεται γὰρ καὶ τέθηλε τούτοις, ἂν ἄχρι τοῦ μὴ λυπῆσαι τὰς ἀκοὰς προβαίνοι.

204 Ch. 23

205 Dem. 44 (I,228,14-16), οὔτε δὴ τὸν ἐν δικαστηρίοις λόγον ᾤετο δεῖν κωτίλλειν καὶ λιγαίνειν, οὔτε τὸν ἐπιδεικτικὸν αὐχμοῦ μεστὸν εἶναι καὶ πίνου. Cf. 46 (231,3ff).

So one's composition falls in an extreme only if one uses a certain type in all one's works, whether called for or not. This version of the middle is certainly different from that implied by the three-style theory, in which Dionysius sometimes conceives of three distinct acceptable styles, but it cannot be said to improve on it much as an attempt to use Aristotle's notion of the mean.

'Longinus'

Sublimity, propriety and classicism

We have seen that accommodating style and subject matter to various forms of discourse was an important part of propriety. Classicism made it more so. For ancient writers, this meant looking at earlier works as possible models for imitation: one decided not only on the virtues of a writer, but on the extent to which these were qualities chiefly suited to his genre. Cicero assesses the qualities of non-rhetorical types of prose, but rejects these as models for the orator. Dionysius has views on what history and philosophy should be like, and criticises Plato and Thucydides on this basis, but also on whether their styles are suited to oratory. De imitatione, an aid to rhetorical writing, is organised according to the genres of the writers considered (including works of poetry, history, etc.), and sometimes comments on their suitability to oratory. Other genres may be useful for the presentation of character and emotion, but in matters of style the most important distinctions are that between prose and poetry and between rhetorical and non-rhetorical

prose.[206] As we have seen, Dionysius is particularly interested in fixing on the precise ways in which language can be made most fit for oratory, whether by eschewing all extraordinary usages, like Lysias, or by gauging what degree of unusual language is justified by circumstances and subject, like Demosthenes. The connection between rhetorical effectiveness and propriety meant that Demosthenes' excellence had to rest, not simply on his characteristically powerful oratory, but on an ability to use all types of speech as appropriate.

There are certain similarities between this kind of analysis of classical works and that of 'Longinus'. Like Dionysius, 'Longinus' praises the extraordinary effect of Demosthenes on the reader, and seems to regard such power as particularly characteristic of his oratory.[207] He also uses Demosthenes to illustrate the importance of καιρός in the use of metaphor, which might seem to show one aspect of the sense of occasion Dionysius had admired.[208] The distinction between poetry and oratorical prose comes up: a sense of καιρός must also govern the use of φαντασία, which must be employed in a more restrained way by the orator.[209]

A change of emphasis in περὶ ὕψους, however, gives

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206 Aeschylus is praised for propriety in representation of characters and emotions, Euripides criticised for falling short of this (De imitatione II.206,3ff); Xenophon does not represent various characters appropriately, Herodotus is very good at it (II.208,10ff, 207,13). Differentiation of character was one of Lysias' rhetorical strengths; communication of emotion made Thucydides especially suited to oratory; it is never suggested that too much of either could be a bad thing in oratory. We have seen, on the other hand, the kinds of restrictions placed on unusual language (though Aeschylus' language is admirable in the poet). On this point Quintilian's comment on Lucan (10.1.90) is unusual: 'magis oratoribus quam poetis imitandus' is not meant to be complimentary.

207 Περὶ ὕψους 34.4 208 32.1ff 209 15.8

rise to some important differences. Achieving sublimity is recognised as desirable, becomes sufficient evidence of supreme ability. Dionysius had connected the irresistible nature of Demosthenes' oratory with preeminence in every kind of speaking, made possible by a genius for what was appropriate. 'Longinus', on the other hand, can maintain the superiority of Demosthenes without making implausible claims on his behalf: the orator's forcefulness, when circumstances allow it, far outweighs his shortcomings in the correct use of other rhetorical techniques.[210] The fact that such a speaker may fall short in other respects simply proves the inadequacy of counting up good points as a way of determining merit. Hyperides, who has an infallible sense of propriety and all-round competence like that for which Dionysius had praised Demosthenes, comes second, not first, in everything.[211]

This change of emphasis leads to a corresponding shift in the relative importance of different aspects of propriety. While achieving appropriateness on all occasions, for instance, is useful, it implies a kind of attention to detail which seems mean when compared with the splendid rightness of the sublime. The management of styles and subjects incapable of sublimity is consequently of little interest. The view of imitation, as a source of literary excellence, becomes similarly one-sided: the value of an author as a model depends on his power to provide inspiration, rather than on his mastery of a particular method of writing, or skill at putting

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210 34.3-4

211 34.1ff, e.g. 34.2, καὶ γὰρ λαλεῖ μετὰ ἀφελείας ἔνθα χρή, καὶ οὐ πάντα ἐξῆς μονοτόνως ὡς ὁ Δημοσθένης λέγει· τό τε ἠθικὸν ἔχει μετὰ γλυκύτητος, λιτῶς ἐφηδυνόμενον . . .

to use all the resources of rhetoric. Moreover, though the doctrine of imitation (as well as the inferences drawn from the sublimity of a work to the character of its author) strengthened the connection between way of writing and moral character, it played down the aspects of morality which, bordering on etiquette, gave some dignity to even modest forms of expression: ὕψος is a mark of heroic virtue. Finally, because the common factor in great writing, its sublimity, was the most interesting thing about it, differences of genre were on the whole neglected. The distinction between prose and poetry is sometimes drawn, but Homer is simply put forward, without qualification, as a model of Herodotus and Plato. Sublimity in rhetorical and non-rhetorical prose is essentially the same in its overpowering effect, so that Plato and Demosthenes could be compared without restrictions on the style of philosophy. Compared with Dionysius, 'Longinus' is striking in his lack of bias against forms other than practical oratory; such forms may, indeed, have had potential for kinds of sublimity not open to oratory, particularly those connected with lofty thoughts but which were not necessarily emotionally powerful.[212]

Noble Errors

It might be argued that these differences amount to making the traditional critical standard of propriety less important. The comparison of genius and flawless mediocrity might suggest that propriety will simply be of secondary importance when an author is capable of sublimity. Even

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212 cf. 8.3, παρά γε μὴν τοῖς ῥήτορσι τὰ ἐγκώμια καὶ τὰ πομπικὰ καὶ ἐπιδεικτικὰ τὸν μὲν ὄγκον καὶ τὸ ὑψηλὸν ἐξ ἅπαντος περιέχει, πάθους δὲ χηρεύει κατὰ τὸ πλεῖστον, ὅθεν ἥκιστα τῶν ῥητόρων οἱ περιπαθεῖς ἐγκωμιαστικοὶ ἢ ἔμπαλιν οἱ ἐπαινετικοὶ περιπαθεῖς.

if Lysias were as faultless as Caecilius supposes him to be, he could not be rated above a genius like Plato: the emotional impact of sublimity cancels out many mistakes, and the risks run by an author who tries to achieve it contribute to its effect. A mediocre work is correct because it takes no chances, but cannot compel our admiration as even a failed attempt at grandeur may do.[213]

The impression that propriety is a minor consideration is misleading. Genius can afford not to be perfectly correct, but it is essential that propriety of circumstances, subject matter, and so on be observed if an attempt at sublimity is to be successful; failure may come as easily from lack of sensitivity on such points as from lack of courage to try. This is implied by the remarks in Chapter 2 of περὶ ὕψους, on the importance of art as a guide to nature;[214] the point is developed in passages on faults connected with ὕψος . In chapter 3 'Longinus' points out that the principle of noble error can lead those who rely on it to a swollen style, and that an audience will remain unmoved by the speaker who works up emotions inappropriate to his subject matter;[215] in chapter 15 he distinguishes φαντασία in poetry (meant to astonish) from that in oratory (which must operate in the world of the sane to be credible), criticising orators whose visualisations approach the ravings of madness, and

213 32.8; 33.2-5; 36.1ff. N.b. 33.2: ⟨τὸ⟩ γὰρ ἐν παντὶ ἀκριβὲς κίνδυνος μικρότητος, ἐν δὲ τοῖς μεγέθεσιν, ὥσπερ ἐν τοῖς ἄγαν πλούτοις, εἶναί τι χρὴ καὶ παρολιγωρούμενον . . .

214 2.2.25, art provides τὰς δὲ ποσότητας καὶ τὸν ἐφ' ἑκάστου καιρὸν ἐτὶ δὲ τὴν ἁπλανεστάτην ἄσκησίν τε καὶ χρῆσιν . . . καὶ ὡς ἐπικινδυνότερα αὐτὰ ἐφ' αὑτῶν δίχα ἐπιστήμης ἀστήρικτα καὶ ἀνερμάτιστα τὰ μεγάλα, ἐπὶ μόνῃ τῇ φορᾷ καὶ ἀμαθεῖ τολμῇ λειπόμενα· δεῖ γὰρ αὐτοῖς ὡς κέντρου πολλάκις οὕτω δὲ καὶ χαλινοῦ.

215 3.3-4, 3.5

illustrating consummate use of the device not only from Demosthenes, but from Hyperides as well.[216]

The speaker or writer who achieves sublimity is thus one who, at his best, deals with grand or moving subjects as they deserve. The sense of proportion this requires involves both a kind of tact (the match between style and content must be determined according to what is acceptable to the audience, since emotional effect on an audience is one of the marks of sublimity[217]) and a correct set of priorities (since sublimity is a sign of the writer's nobility of mind, of his capacity to recognise and respond to what is truly great).

'Longinus' and tradition

At this point one might start to wonder whether, apart from a difference of emphasis, 'Longinus' has anything new to offer. Are the elements of sublimity not in the tradition already, in the familiar correlation of lofty matter and style? A closer look at 'Longinus' seems at first to bear this out.

First, 'Longinus' is generally conservative in his choice of subjects considered appropriate to sublimity. Cosmology,[218] extraordinary feats of heroes (piling Ossa on Pelion, etc.)[219], the subjects of encomia,[220] and

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216 15.8ff

217 e.g. 35.2ff, 7.1ff

218 35.3-5

219 8.2

220 8.3

perhaps certain stories about the gods[221] seem to be examples of τὸ περὶ τὰς νοήσεις ἀδρεπήβολον; certain lowly emotions (οἷόν τοι λῦπαι φόβοι) are excluded from τὸ σφόδρον καὶ ἐνθουσιαστικὸν πάθος.[222] He apparently agrees with standard views on presentation of the divine and the heroic: the battle of the gods is overwhelming, but not πρέπον **unless** taken allegorically.[223] His views on the proper treatment of such subjects is also, at times, conservative: Theopompus is to be censured for including mean words in his description of embassies sent to the King, and so degrading the whole.[224]

'Longinus' seems, however, to have been more subtle than most ancient critics in his notion of what might count as doing justice to a lofty subject. His praise of the author of Genesis is well-known: the lines 'And God said "Let there be light", **and** there was light' are praised, in contrast to the Iliad, for presenting the divine as suitably divine.[225] As Boileau later pointed out, the passage owes much of its sublimity to its style: the sublime <u>style</u> of 'le souverain Arbitre de la Nature d'une seule parole forma la lumière' does not produce a sublime passage, because it contains nothing extraordinary.[226]

A sceptic might object that this gives 'Longinus' credit for more than he deserves: the passage is an example of sublimity achieved by lofty <u>thought</u>, and

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221 9.5.16ff (though the section also discusses powerful emotional effect)

222 8.4 223 9.7

224 43.3-4, cf. also 30.1-2: ὅτι μὲν τοίνυν ἡ τῶν κυρίων καὶ μεγαλοπρεπῶν ὀνομάτων ἐκλογὴ θαυμαστῶς ἄγει καὶ κατακηλεῖ τοὺς ἀκούοντας . . . φῶς γὰρ τῷ ὄντι ἴδιον τοῦ νοῦ τὰ καλὰ ὀνόματα. ὁ μέντοι γε ὄγκος αὐτῶν οὐ πάντη χρειώδης, ἐπεὶ τοῖς μικροῖς πραγματίοις περιτιθέναι μεγάλα καὶ σεμνὰ ὀνόματα ταὐτὸν ἂν φαίνοιτο ὡς εἴ τις τραγικὸν προσωπεῖον μέγα παιδὶ περιθείη νηπίῳ . . .

225 9.9

226 <u>Réflexion</u> X, <u>Oeuvres</u>, Ed. de la Pleiade, p. 544.

cannot be used as evidence that 'Longinus' did not share the common view that a grand style, including extraordinary language and striking figures, is most appropriate to grand subjects. But I am not sure that this argument works. The examples which 'Longinus' gives of failures to achieve sublimity are often cases where the expression of a thought misfires, either through exaggeration or triviality: the danger of a tempest-tossed ship, for instance, is capable of sublimity, but to express it by 'a little plank wards off Hades' is simply silly.[227] In such a case, however, it would probably not be possible to say that the writer had shown sublimity of thought. If a passage is cited, on the other hand, as showing sublimity of thought, this seems to presuppose that appropriate expression has been used - expression, that is, suited to sublimity.

'Longinus' also seems largely traditional, at first sight, in the ways he thinks works should be suited to audience. The sublimity of a work was to be judged partly by its effect on an audience.[228] This is achieved by some familiar methods. Sublimity is subject, for instance, to the same need to conceal artifice which other rhetorical writers had emphasised. 'Longinus' objects to arbitrary limits on the number of metaphors to be used in a particular passage: Demosthenes is to be taken as an example, in whose oratory strong emotions bring with them a flood of metaphors.[229]

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227 10.6

228 cf. note 210

229 32.1

Both metaphors and figures, in fact, are said to be best suited to emotional passages, because the audience is too overwhelmed to notice them.[230] They are said to share the enthusiasm of the speaker,[231] which may also imply that the excitement of the latter makes extraordinary language seem natural and uncontrived. Both aspects (feelings of speaker and audience) are also discussed in the section on figures, where the sublimity of figures is primarily explained in terms of emotions which the speaker appears to feel, or arouses in his hearers.[232]

There is more, however, to the accommodation of work to audience than the usual precepts for avoiding the unconvincing and offensive. The proof of sublimity is the power of a work or passage to move a man of education repeatedly, and to please different kinds of people at different times.[233] The implication is that the kind of propriety which guarantees sublimity (fit between subject and treatment) is a more objective standard than that usually achieved by appeal to audience reaction: that a work does not just have sublimity if addressed to the right audience at the right time. In this respect 'Longinus' makes an important departure from

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230 32.4.20-2 231 32.4.21-2

232 See especially the introduction to the section on figures at 17.1ff, where sublimity and emotion are praised as means of avoiding suspicion. Cf. 18.2 on the appearance of genuine emotion in the self-directed question, 22.1 on hyperbaton as a mark of emotion, etc.

233 7.3-4

Dionysius, for instance, who thought that ambitious language could be used only on important occasions, before an educated audience. The move is a familiar one from discussions of aesthetics: that the beautiful, for instance, is whatever satisfies universal laws for producing certain reactions in observers, independent of the accidents of time and circumstance. On such a view, the person of cultivated taste is one who can see that a work is such as to satisfy these laws - in other words, there is no conflict between the reactions of ordinary people, on average, and that of the educated man.[234]

This move is, I think, one of the main reasons the work strikes one as original despite its large debt to rhetorical tradition. D. A. Russell, in Criticism in Antiquity, speaks of an unfortunate tendency in ancient rhetors to assume that they addressed an audience less intelligent than themselves, which could be manipulated. Cicero's notion of the agreement of the verdict of the expert with that of crowd doesn't really break with this: such an expert would be perfectly capable, for instance, of appreciating the way a consummate orator had adapted his emotional appeals to the prejudices of the audience addressed. 'Longinus', on the other hand, despite remarks on concealing artifice by emotion, is essentially ruling out any kind of deceit. Sublimity is by definition genuine - the expression of a noble mind (perhaps one inspired by the works of noble writers of the past), which

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234 Cf. D. Hume, An Essay on the Standard of Taste (London, 1757).

appears as such to its audience; anything that is not truly this will be exposed either by the examination of the educated man or by comparison of reactions of various publics. The work is, as we have seen, full of conventional notions of the form this expression is likely to take. Its assumption, however, that general audiences wil be capable of perceiving and appreciating it is extremely refreshing.

Quintilian

Ethical virtue, rhetorical propriety

'Longinus' thought a man had to have a certain nobility of character to be an orator, and that this nobility, if it found perfect expression, would have a powerful effect on all sorts of different people. He was interested, however, only in a particular kind of effect, and in people's response to an appeal to the highest part of their nature. Quintilian holds it as axiomatic that the orator must be a good man,[235] but the connections between this goodness and effectiveness are more complex.

Quintilian realises that his claim must seem implausible to many, since rhetorical effectiveness may require all kinds of questionable expedients, and the orator may have to defend a guilty man. In Book 12 he tries to make his case: it is not that the orator is in a different ethical category, with lower standards, but that morality may require one to defend a guilty man, and to use lies if necessary to get him off.[236] At the same the good man has a useful aid in such matters in his own good characters, which makes his lies likelier to be believed.

This line of argument is not much at odds with the kind of attitude we have seen in Cicero. In Book 11, however, the matter is more difficult. Quintilian has

235 12.1.3

236 12.1.11-12, 12.2.39ff

started on a discussion of how to make style appropriate, apparently thinking mainly of appropriateness to subject and aim (conciliare, docere, movere). At 1.8, however, he observes that one cannot speak appropriately unless one has considered, not only what is expedient, but what is becoming to say (quid deceat). One might have supposed that only ethically impeccable oratory could be effective, since the orator must be a good man, but Quintilian acknowledges that this is not always the case: sometimes the most persuasive methods cannot be used by a man of character.[237] He takes the example of Socrates, who refused to be deferential to his judges, or refute the charges against him, since such behaviour would have been unworthy of his past life; who turned down the speech prepared for him by Lysias, excellent though it was, because it was unsuitable to his character.[238]

In approving of various men of noble characters as orators, Quintilian parts company with Cicero (who had a poor opinion of those who introduced philosophical austerity into court[239]), and commits himself to several paradoxes. In particular, his view has the interesting implication that, in some areas at least, elitist standards of oratory are acceptable after all: the orator is justified in thinking

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237 11.1.9

238 11.1.9, Nam quis nescit, nihil magis profuturum ad absolutionem Socrati fuisse, quam si esset usus illo iudiciali genere defensionis et oratione summissa conciliasset iudicum animos sibi crimenque ipsum sollicite redarguisset? Verum id eum minime decebat . . . (11) Itaque quamvis Lysias, qui tum in dicendo praestantissimus habebatur, defensionem illi scriptam optulisset, uti ea noluit, cum bonam quidem sed parum sibi convenientem iudicavisset. Quo vel solo patet non persuadendi sed bene dicendi finem in oratore servandum, cum interim persuadere deforme sit.

239 Cf. Antonius' remarks on Rutilius, whose Socratic imperturbability is praised by Quintilian (De Or. 1.227ff).

a certain kind of oratory best, as being appropriate to himself, even if it is ill-suited to the judges, and every member of the audience disapproves. The point of his very striking examples, however, is that such cases are extremely rare. Most men, presumably, are not of such extraordinary grandeur of character that adaptation to an audience will be unbecoming; most cases do not involve the kind of political oppression that would require such recalcitrance of more ordinary men.

Ethics and aesthetics

Quintilian's examples of decorum interfering with persuasiveness are concerned chiefly with content rather than style. The passage thus bears out Quintilian's assertion, in the previous paragraph, that propriety of language cannot be thought of separately from content, which contributes at least as much to the impression made on the hearer.[240] The discussion of propriety treats rhetorical performance as a unity, every aspect of which may be well or ill-suited to producing the right effect on an audience.[241] The familiar elements of propriety of style (as suitable to character, expressive of sincere emotion, etc.) are only some of the means by which an orator may make an audience friendly or hostile, and as such cannot be put in a different category from what he says.

Many of the examples of obstructive indecorum, in fact, which follow those of obstructive decorum, suggest the difficulty of saying, in many cases, whether the lack of decorum

240 11.1.7

241 E.g. propriety of delivery, 11.3.30ff, 45, 57

is one of style or content: the difference between, e.g., boasting and a modest reminder of one's merits, between base flattery and deference, between obscenity and raciness is likely to involve both. A violent, irritable manner is likely to offend both in style and content. On the other hand suiting style to character,[242] case,[243] judges,[244] opponents,[245] urgency of occasion,[246] and giving a useful impression of decent behaviour by this means, cannot be entirely divorced from content. The philosopher who inappropriately uses figures which appeal to the emotions[247] is presumably not only using apostrophe, for instance, but saying the kind of thing that stirs emotion. There may, of course, be extreme cases where the style fits speaker, audience, occasion, but what is said is improper (e.g. accusing someone else of a fault one has oneself, without extenuating circumstances[248]), or where what is said is right for the case, but diction, rhythm and so on are hopelessly inappropriate (as in the case of the man tried on a capital charge,

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242 11.1.31ff, different styles suited to young and old, soldiers, philosophers, statesmen; 42, style varied according to character of client.

243 11.1.44

244 11.1.43,45, Quis vero nesciat quanto aliud dicendi genus poscat gravitas senatoria, aliud aura popularis? cum etiam singulis iudicantibus non idem apud gravis viros quod leviores, non idem apud eruditum quod militarem ac rusticum deceat, sitque nonnumquam summittenda et contrahenda oratio, ne iudex eam vel intellegere vel capere non possit.

245 11.1.57ff

246 11.1.49ff

247 11.1.33-4, Philosophiam ex professo, ut quidam faciunt, ostentantibus parum decori sunt plerique orationis ornatus maximeque ex adfectibus, quos illi vitia dicunt. Verba quoque exquisitiora et compositio numerosa tali proposito diversa. Non enim sola illa laetiora, qualia a Cicerone dicuntur 'saxa atque solitudines voci respondent', sed etiam illa, quamquam plena sanguinis, 'vos etiam iam, Albani tumuli atque luci, vos, inquam, inploro atque testor, vosque Albanorum obrutae arae, sacrorum populi Romani sociae et aequales', non conveniant barbae illi atque tristitiae. (For the style suited to the philosopher, see also Seneca, Ep. 100)

248 11.1.78ff

whose elaborate language gives an impression of ill-timed self-satisfaction[249]). In such cases impropriety of style can easily be distinguished conceptually, but the justification for treating both as means of making or avoiding the same kind of effect on an audience is particularly clear.

What this means is that the various ways of suiting style to content, including the use of elevated diction for an important subject, or emotional figures for one of urgency, have strong ethical connotations as well as aesthetic ones. The good man skilled at speaking not only knows the rules for adapting style to matter, but by mastery of these never comes across as, for instance, someone excessively concerned with working up his style.[250] There seems to be a similarity with those writers of noble character who are capable of true sublimity: the good man, one might suppose, will always be able to present himself and his case as he would like them to be perceived.

Propriety and the public

We have seen, however, that this is not entirely the case in the ethical sphere: the orator who speaks as is becoming may sometimes be ill-suited to addressing an ignorant crowd in the most effective way. One might imagine that a similar problem might arise in the

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249 11.1.49ff

250 See 8.Pr.23ff, 28

aesthetic sphere, since Quintilian, like Dionysius, thinks some audiences have worse taste than others. Dionysius concentrated on the effectiveness of the orator who adapted his style to different audiences; Quintilian could be expected to address the issue.

Quintilian generally agrees with Cicero that the approval of the audience is the mark of good oratory.[251] An obvious consequence of this would be that, as fashion and public taste change, the characteristics of good oratory would change: making style appropriate to audience would involve different devices. Quintilian sometimes seems to recognise this. It is hard, he remarks, to find anything lacking in Cicero's style, but one might perhaps use a few more of the striking reflections which have become popular since his time.[252]

He can, however, be quite severe on the bad taste of the public; it is by no means the case that whatever is liked is right. He explains the difference in quality of the Attic and Asianic styles, for instance, by contrasting the good taste of the Athenians with the bad taste of the Asians.[253] Does this mean, then, that the best (most effective) oratory might sometimes be in bad taste? Apparently not. At 12.10.73ff, Quintilian argues that people are wrong to think corrupt style best suited to win popularity, not because its meretricious devices

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251 12.10.72

252 12.10.46

253 12.10.17

do not please many people, but because such oratory is shown up when seen beside the real thing: many approve of bad things, none disapprove of good. This only seems to work, however, because Quintilian has allowed to be good styles which perhaps he ought not to. Like Dionysius, he assumes that a different style will suit a frivolous, popular audience from that which suits one of educated politicians.[254] The discrimination which was absent in 'Longinus' is very much in evidence. What this suggests, however, is that certain kinds of style are sometimes appropriate only because that suited to an educated audience would not be appreciated.

Classicism and contemporary taste

This tension appears in another form in Quintilian's account of imitation. One consequence of the view outlined above is that the notion of the 'classic' becomes extremely important. If one believes, not only that bad works can please some audiences, but they will not be preferred to good ones when these are available, one will naturally place great value on the work which pleases universally. As long as the approval of the audience is not a sufficient guarantee of excellence, imitation of works of proven excellence will seem a much more reliable road to success. But since the orator will be addressing his speech to an audience of a particular age and background, close

254 11.1.45

imitation is likely to lead to impropriety, especially if the model is from a fairly distant time or dissimilar culture.

Imitation of classical models, then, may be subject to the standard of propriety. The imitator may succeed, to some extent, in capturing the excellence of his model, but do so in an inappropriate context - the Atticists are an obvious example. Cicero and Quintilian both use the ad hominem argument that there are any number of Attic orators with qualities Lysias did not have; its cogency, however, comes from the fact that Lysias' style was not suited to all the things needed for successful oratory. Quintilian criticises in a general way those who imitate a single style,[255] and also warns against taking as one's model a work in a different genre.[256] But if one takes seriously Quintilian's remarks on Asian and Athenian audiences, the notion of adapting one's original might give one pause. What if contemporary taste is debased? Perhaps one should stick as closely as possible to the model, the product of an age of superior taste, on the assumption that its excellence will be recognised now as well. On the other hand, if this is not effective, perhaps one should use this as evidence against Quintilian: why assume that it is only inessentials that will need to be changed to make Cicero a suitable model for an Imperial

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255 10.2.23

256 10.2.21

orator? Perhaps a public which expects a striking reflection at the end of every sentence, and finds Cicero a little bland, is proof that the best is not invariably preferred when it is available.[237]

Propriety and the three style theory

At the beginning of Book 8 Quintilian twice speaks of four basic qualities which style must show. Though the two passages offer slightly different lists, each bears some resemblance to the four virtues of Theophrastus: at Pr. 31, words should be 'Latina, significantia, ornata, apte collocata', at 1.1 they should be 'Latina, perspicua, ornata, ad id quod efficere volumus accommodata' (with additional qualities to be looked for in groups of words). I shall discuss Quintilian's use of virtues of style in more detail in the chapter on purity of language; for the present, what is interesting is the casual treatment of appropriateness. One has the impression that Quintilian thinks some kind of appropriateness belongs in a list of this sort, but has no fixed idea of what it should cover. In Book 11, as we have seen, he sets out to discuss propriety of style more thoroughly, and ends by discussing matters which are as much concerned with saying suitable things as with saying things suitably.

One reason for this may be that Book 11 concentrates on the aspects of propriety covered by Aristotle's ἠθικὴ and παθητικὴ λέξις. Observing proportion between importance of subject and ornamentation of style seems to be

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237 For concessions to the taste of the audiences of his day, including the taste for sententiae, see 12.10.45ff.

discussed in connection with ornatus instead. One mark of this is that ornatus is what characterises any style which avoids baseness; even a plain style, properly written, has a kind of ornatus from its very simplicity.

Like most earlier writers, Quintilian pays considerable attention to distinguishing the devices suitable to poetry from those allowable in oratorical prose.[257] He also has a rough hierarchy for what can be used in various types of oratory. A great deal of obvious artifice is permissible when the object is simply to please the audience.[258] When serious matters are at stake, however, excessive use of figures can only be offensive; a less obviously laboured style, a certain simplicity, seem to be marks of genuine emotion.[259]

This account sits a little uneasily with the description of types of style given in Book 12. Quintilian for the most part follows Cicero in the kinds of style he considers to be available for adaptation to content, person, etc. Three styles are linked to the three officia oratoris, so that (12.10.59ff):

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257 See e.g. 8,6,17-20, 24-5, 27, 29-30, 40.

258 8.3.11, Illud observatione dignius, quod hic ipse honestus ornatus materiae genere decidit variatus. Atque . . . non idem demonstrativis et deliberativis et iudicialibus causis conveniet. Namque illud genus ostentationi compositum solam petit audientium voluptatem, ideoque omnes dicendi artes aperit ornatumque orationis exponit, ut quod non insidietur nec ad victoriam sed ad solum finem laudis et gloriae tendat.

259 8.3.13, 'At ubi res agitur et vera dimicatio est, ultimus sit famae locus. Praeterea ne decet quidem, ubi maxima rerum momenta versantur, de verbis esse sollicitum' - ornament must be more severe, less obvious, 'praecipue materiae accommodatus'. Cf. 11.1.49ff.

> Itaque illo subtili praecipue ratio narrandi probandique consistet, estque id etiam detractis ceteris virtutibus suo genere plenum. (60) Medius hic modus et tralationibus crebrior et figuris erit iucundior, egressionibus amoenus, compositione aptus, sententiis dulcis, lenior tamquam amnis et lucidus quidem sed virentibus utrimque ripis inumbratus. At ille qui saxa devolvat . . . multus et torrens iudicem vel nitentem contra feret, cogetque ire qua rapiet.

This schema, combined with a belief in the principle of analogy between stylistic pretensions and importance of subject,[260] presents the familiar problem of requiring importance of subject, emotional pitch, and concentration of stylistic devices to coincide and yet not to coincide. Working with this theory, for instance, it is fairly difficult to reconcile the claims of the dignity of a capital case with the claims of appropriately expressed emotion in a case of such urgency.[261]

The chief problem with this account is the awkwardness of the relation proposed between the characteristics of the three kinds of style. The middle style, while emotionally less intense than the grand, is not necessarily less elaborate or rich. The latter uses more figures of thought, and more violent ones, but the former may well have a more conspicuous display of other kinds of ornament: its sphere seems to be that of the self-consciously splendid style of Book 8, which used many more figures and so on than an emotional, earnest style could do. Quintilian's suggestion that there are really not just three styles, but any number, each style itself intermediate between two extremes less remote from it than

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260 Cf. e.g. 8.3.48 on *ταπείνωσις*, and the opposite fault of using terms which carry great weight for insignificant things.

261 Cf. 11.1.49f.

three styles, but any number, each style itself intermediate between two extremes less remote from it than the two other main styles, is well-intentioned but not helpful; it could work only if the middle style really were between the other two. It is interesting, however, that he tries to make the three style theory less rigid. Cicero's version made it a little puzzling to see how all the different aspects of propriety could be reflected in style. Quintilian's may be meant to allow these to modify the three kinds of style: a young man, for instance, might use a slightly more exuberant version of the plain style in his arguments; an older, more dignified man might use a restrained kind of middle style in praising his client, and so on.[262]

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262 cf. 11.1.31ff: a full style less suitable to an old man, a rich, slightly risky style suitable to a young one, etc.

St. Augustine

The first three books of de doctrina Christiana, dealing with the interpretation of Scripture, are followed by a fourth on effective means of presentation. Though sapientia is by far the most important thing a Christian speaker can have, he will be of even more use to his audience if he can speak with eloquence (iv.7-8); it would be absurd to allow the methods of persuasion only to those arguing what was false, while denying them to the Christian (ii.3). Much of the book is concerned with 1) showing how works of religious importance to Christians (the Bible, Christian Fathers) use the methods of rhetoric, sometimes without knowing it, and 2) showing the relevance of Cicero's three officia oratoris and three styles to the aims of the Christian speaker.

H. I. Marrou thinks de doctrina Christiana is especially remarkable for its utter rejection of the sophistic, declamatory rhetoric of the time.[263] The radical nature of this departure from the taste of the day is, he argues, to be seen not only in Augustine's return to the principles of Cicero, but in his putting forward the literature of Christianity as models for imitation. Simplicity, lack of ostentation, the attempt to communicate spiritual truth rather than display virtuosity of technique - the eloquence of the texts quoted by Augustine involves these virtues, and these are to be sought by the Christian speaker.[264]

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263 Saint Augustin et la fin de la culture antique (Paris, 1938), 526ff. Cf. also C.S. Baldwin, 'St. Augustine as follower of Cicero', in Medieval Rhetoric and Poetic (New York, 1928).

264 Op. cit. p. 526.

> Vouloir ramener le style à la simplicité, à la sobriété, borner l'expression à n'être qu'un moyen étroitement subordonné à l'action efficace qu'elle peut avoir sur l'esprit du public, lutter contre l'abus complaisant des effets de la recherche, n'était-ce pas aller contre le goût du jour, protester contre la vogue de l'éloquence d'apparat et du style sophistique?

Certainly Marrou's examples of the sophistic style show how restrained and sober even impassioned writings of Paul or Jeremiah must have seemed to Augustine. Marrou quotes, for instance, the opening lines of a letter from Maximus of Madaura to Augustine:[265]

> Avens crebro tuis affatibus laetificari, et instinctu tui sermonis, quo me paulo ante iucundissime salva caritate pulsasti, paria redhibere non destiti, ne silentium meum paenitudinem appellares . . . (Ep. 16,1)

and the introduction to a Wedding at Cana, whose author was probably an African contemporary of Augustine's:[266]

> Inter aestuosa et ripis tumentia flumina quibus avida terrarum viscera fecundantur siccus noster palpitat sensus.

Compared with this kind of writing, St. Paul's use of climax at Rom. 5,3-5 is strikingly unpretentious.[267]

Augustine also makes occasional remarks which seem to allude to, and dismiss, the methods of popular preachers and declaimers, who win applause by empty ingenuity. At 31 he says that a serious audience will dislike not only the pleasant presentation of wicked things, but the elaborate treatment of trivial subjects,[268] and goes on to praise Cyprian for showing that he is capable of a florid style, but eschewing it, thus

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265 Patrologia Latina XXXIII, c. 81 (Marrou, p. 527)

266 op. cit. p. 528

267 (quoted at 11) Gloriamur in tribulationibus, scientes quia tribulatio patientiam operatur, patientia autem probationem, probatio vero spem, spes autem non confundit; quia caritas dei diffusa est in cordibus nostris per spiritum sanctum qui datus est nobis.

268 In populo autem gravi . . . nec illa suavitas delectabilis est qua non quidem iniqua dicuntur, sed exigua et fragilia bona spumeo verborum ambitu ornantur, quali nec magna atque stabilia decenter et graviter ornarentur.

proving that the sobriety of style he usually displays is a matter of choice. At vii.14-5 he remarks that he could easily have given other examples showing "our authors'" mastery of figures; it had been necessary to show that they were wrongly despised as uneloquent when they were merely unostentatious. At xxiv.53, speaking of the effects of the grand style, he remarks that he knows he has accomplished something not by the audience's applause, but by its tears. Rejection of sophistic aims is probably behind Augustine's uneasiness about the second officium oratoris, delectare, and the mixed style that goes with it. He is particularly careful to define their uses for the Christian speaker (pleasing is needed to hold the attention, so essential to accomplishing further, 'spiritual' ends; the Christian will use a restrained version of the mixed style, and be fairly sparing in the use of ornament):[269]

> persuadet in genere temperato pulchre ornateque se dicere: quo fine nobis quid opus est? Appetant eum, qui lingua gloriantur, et se in panegyricis talibusque dictionibus iactent, ubi nec docendus nec ad aliquid agendum movendus, sed tantummodo est delectandus auditor. Nos vero istum finem referamus ad alterum finem, . . . id est, ut bona morum diligantur vel devitentur mala . . . Ita fit, ut etiam temperati generis ornatu non iactanter, sed prudenter utamur, non eius fine contenti, quo tantummodo delectatur auditor, sed hoc potius agentes, ut etiam ipso ad bonum, quod persuadere volumus, adiuvetur. (55)

There is good reason, then, to accept Marrou's basic thesis, that Augustine's standards for Christian eloquence were strongly opposed to those of self-consciously brilliant declamation, and probably to agree with his view that the classical principle of ethos was consequently transformed. The new standards were not to be observed so that the speaker might seem morally admirable and so plausible, but because a morally upright speaker ought to hold the aims and use the

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269 cf. also 57: Illa quoque eloquentia generis temperati apud eloquentem ecclesiasticum nec inornata relinquitur nec indecenter ornatur nec solum hoc appetit, ut delectet, quod solum apud alios profitetur, verum etiam in his quae laudat sive vituperat, istis appetendis vel firmius tenendis, illis autem devitandis vel respuendis vult utique oboedienter audiri.

methods described. It is clear that the overtly moral religious purpose of Christian speaking made propriety, as a standard of expression, more powerful than ever (I shall look at some of its applications presently).

Marrou's description of Augustine's precepts, however, distorts them in a couple of important ways. Preoccupied with the rejection of sophistic, he insists that, for Augustine, the primary duty of the Christian speaker was teaching the contents of the Scriptures, and that in all speaking clarity was the only virtue of manner. This does Augustine an injustice: his account of the aims of speaking and qualities of eloquence is both less austere and more interesting than this suggests. Marrou also, I think, oversimplifies a little in his discussion of Augustine's striking innovation, the introduction of Scriptural and Christian texts as models. Both Augustine's praise of the eloquence of such texts, and the fact that he quotes only these as examples, confirm that they were meant to be taken as models; but the relevance of these texts to their imitators is not entirely straightforward.

To take the second point first. Though Augustine emphasises that imitation of the right kind of author is the best way to achieve Christian eloquence, he seems at first sight to rule out, as models, the particular texts he selects for approval: his praise makes their eloquence sound sui generis. He argues that the canonical authors have not only <u>sapientia</u> but eloquence - the kind of eloquence suited to such men. Just as different styles suit the young and old, so a particular style is suited to men of divine inspiration and authority. No other style would have suited them, nor would theirs

have suited others - they rose above others in substance as much as they are thought to fall short of them in dignity.[270] Given that most preachers presumably were not to take themselves as on a par with, say, the Apostles in divine authority, this seems to make the canonical writers inappropriate as models, not because they were uneloquent, but because their eloquence was peculiarly suited to men of their exalted status.[271] Yet there are clear signs that the passages quoted quoted by Augustine were meant as models for imitation. At 22 these examples of Scriptural style, taken as illustrations of its eloquence, are distinguished from obscure passages which are <u>not</u> suitable for imitation.[272]

There are several possible explanations for this. First, the connection between the canonical authors and their imitators seems to rest on a suppressed a fortiori argument. Because it was slightly paradoxical to praise a very simple, modest style as supremely suited to the most important of writers and subjects, it may not have occurred to Augustine that 'nec ipsos decet alia nec alios

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270 9: Sicut est enim quaedam eloquentia, quae magis aetatem iuvenilem decet, est quae senilem, nec iam dicenda est eloquentia, si personae non congruit eloquentis, ita est quaedam, quae viros summa auctoritate dignissimos planeque divinos decet. Hac illi locuti sunt nec ipsos decet alia nec alios ipsa; ipsis enim congruit; alios autem, quanto videtur humilior, tanto altius non ventositate, sed soliditate transcendit.

271 vii.21 confirms the impression: Quapropter et eloquentes quidem non solum sapientes, canonicos nostros auctores doctoresque fateamur tali eloquentia, qualis personis eiusmodi congruebat (since one is likely to take 'eiusmodi' to refer to the noble qualities mentioned above, n. 270, rather than to moral and religious orthodoxy).

272 Sed nos etsi de litteris eorum, quae sine difficultate intelleguntur, nonnulla sumimus elocutionis exempla, nequaquam tamen putare debemus imitandos nobis eos esse in his, quae ad exercendas et elimandas quodammodo mentes legentium et ad rumpenda fastidia atque acuenda studia discere volentium, celandos quoque, sive ut ad pietatem convertantur, sive ut a mysteriis secludantur, animos impiorum, utili ac salubri obscuritate dixerunt. (viii.22)

ipsa' could restrict such a style to authors of such grandeur (e.g. as having the authority and material not to need elaborate dressing). Presumably he thought that it was enough to show that the style was eloquent, and did not disgrace the extraordinary men who had used it: if it did them no discredit, how much less could it be unworthy of lesser men who shared, however, the faith and aims of the originals. The fact that none of this needed spelling out tells us something about Augustine's preconceptions: it was clearly a commonplace for him that propriety involved matching dignity of style with that of speaker and subject, and that dignity of style increased with its elaborateness. The paradoxical premisses of the argument sketched above must have seemed so obvious as to need no remark.

Differences between canonical authors and their followers may have seemed unimportant for other reasons as well. The speaker was advised to make his style suitable to a doctor of the church, but when actually speaking to rely on the words God provided.[272] In a sense, then, he was to invite divine assistance in the same way that the Apostles and early Fathers had done, and to the extent that God did help, the speaker would in fact be on the same level as the others. The principal difference between

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272 xv.32: Ac per hoc discat quidem omnia, quae docenda sunt, qui et nosse vult et docere, facultatemque dicendi, ut decet virum ecclesiasticum, comparet; ad horam vero ipsius dictionis, illud potius bonae menti cogitet convenire, quod dominus ait:

> Nolite cogitare, quomodo aut quid loquamini; dabitur enim vobis in illa hora, quid loquamini; non enim vos estis, qui loquimini, sed spiritus patris vestri, qui loquitur in vobis.

them would be, presumably, that one could be perfectly sure that God was the source of everything said in the Scriptures. But it would be absurd for a speaker to work on a suitable style (when uninspired) which differed strikingly from that which came to him as a result of divine inspiration. Secondly, imitation of canonical authors was in some ways rather different from the kind of imitation prescribed by traditional rhetoric. While Augustine emphasises the eminence of these writers, their methods also represent a lowest common denominator of decency in Christian speaking - insofar as their style is a sign of moral choice (of aims and means), later writers have no choice but to imitate it as faithfully as they can. Though the appropriateness of canonical authors' style is presented in terms of the rhetorical notion of propriety to person, its claim to be a model depends mainly on other reasons: not on the fact that a later writer will automatically achieve, by imitation, a style appropriate to himself, but that such imitation will bring him closer to the kind of person and speaker he ought to be. This is closer to the rather mystical kind of imitation of 'Longinus' than to the kind most recommended by Latin rhetoricians.

The introduction of canonical authors, then, as objects of imitation does involve a rejection of the standards of sophistic rhetoric; but the substitution requires

some modification of the classical principles of imitation.

I have spoken of the moral slant of this change. An important part of this, as Marrou points out, is Augustine's emphasis on lucidity: the modern author is denied even the canonical author's sources of grandeur, since he is forbidden to copy impressive obscurity. The latter sometimes shows,[274] and Augustine insists that all is to be sacrificed to clarity - even Latinitas if necessary.[275] Marrou connects this with what he sees as the primary function of the speaker - the elucidation of the Bible. Though moral exhortation is occasionally required of the speaker, urging the audience to do what they know should be done, turning them against what they should avoid, this is a 'domaine assez étroite', and it is only here that the experience of pagan philosophers etc. is useful. Consequently the position of the Christian speaker is markedly different from that of, e.g., the pagan orator, since his task is to be strictly at the service of the sacred word.

Though partly true, this is a little misleading as a characterisation of Book iv of de doctrina Christiana. Since the use of clarity alone as aesthetic criterion would have important consequences for the standard of propriety, it will be useful to correct this account. St. Augustine organises a great deal of his exposition around

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274 Cf. note 272.

275 x.24

Cicero's three officia oratoris (docere, delectare, flectere), and their corresponding styles (humile, temperatum, grande). There is some hint that teaching and moving are more fundamental tasks (some things are taught that need only to be believed, some need to be acted upon, and appropriate methods must be used for each), whereas, as we have seen, a special defence for pleasing and the mixed style was thought necessary, showing that pleasure served further ends. But there is no suggestion in the text that exhortation to action was a 'domaine assez étroite'. At one point, indeed, Augustine says a speaker cannot be said to have persuaded, however well he speaks, unless the audience acts on what he has said.

In general, moreover, the presentation of the three officia and their styles is remarkably balanced, giving no special preference to any. But unless clarity could be shown to be sufficient for the aims of all these categories, it is unlikely that Augustine would have made it the sole criterion of writing or speaking. In fact he does nothing of the kind. Clarity is certainly the only aspect of expression that need be considered in teaching; at 27 Augustine observes that being understood is all that matters for docere, whereas for the other two aims manner is also important. After warning that the obscurity of some Scriptural passages is not to be imitated, Augustine explains that the 'doctor' who undertakes to explain such passages

must himself take care to be perfectly clear and intelligible.[275] But there is no sign that, where teaching is not the only concern, it is sufficient to achieve clarity of expression. This is obviously a necessary condition of more ambitious effects - it would be impossible to move an audience, or to please it, if one failed to make oneself understood.[276] But it is clear that other qualities of expression, such as ornament, are also called for.[277] On the other hand, there is no systematic account of the qualities of the various styles, for instance along the lines of the Theophrastean virtues - presumably the student was to learn the further requirements of a successful grand or mixed style by attention to good examples.

The view, then, that Christian eloquence should be sober, modest and restrained does not lead to the principle that clarity of exposition is the only virtue of expression to be sought, others being superfluous and hardly respectable. Nonetheless Augustine's adaptation of rhetoric to Christian aims does involve important changes in what decorum is thought to require of a speaker. Augustine's departures

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276 viii.22

277 cf. for instance 57, on the genus temperatum: 'Si autem non auditur intellegenter nec libenter potest', and 58, on the genus grande: 'Iam vero ubi movere et flectere grandi genere opus est auditorem . . . dicendum est procul dubio granditer. Sed quis movetur, si nescit, quod dicitur?' Clarity is important in a preacher partly as a courtesy to the audience, who cannot ask questions if they do not understand: 'ubi autem omnes tacent, ut audiatur unus, et in eum intenta ora convertunt, ibi ut requirat quisque, quod non intellexerit, nec moris est nec decoris; ac per hoc debet maxime tacenti subvenire cura dicentis'.(x.25)

278 Implied at 42, where the grand style is distinguished from the mixed as requiring no ornaments, relying on violence of emotion: 'Grande autem dicendi genus hoc maxime distat ab isto genere temperato, quod non tam verborum ornatibus comptum est, quam violentum animi affectibus'. Augustine also relaxes the rule that the plain style has only to be intelligible (56): 'Volumus enim fastidiri, etiam quod submisse dicimus; ac per hoc volumus non solum intellegenter, verum etiam libenter audiri. . . .'

from the rhetorical precepts of Cicero are especially interesting because, though meant to be relevant only to Christian eloquence, they dispose of some of the most awkward aspects of the three-style theory for any speaker.

I mentioned earlier that the idea that propriety required dignity of style to match subject and speaker seemed to be a commonplace for Augustine. In his account of the relation between the three styles and aims of the speaker, however, he explicitly rejects some aspects of this principle. Cicero had said that great things ought to be spoken of in a grand style, small things in a low style, but this was not a precept the Christian speaker could follow. There were two reasons for this. First, it was impossible to differentiate his subject matter according to degrees of importance: everything, even apparently trivial subjects, was of the highest grandeur and importance which related to man's eternal salvation. Even financial matters, considered in this light, could not be dismissed as petty; Cicero's scheme, according to which 'small' things included financial affairs, 'grand' capital charges, and other things fell in between, could not be applied or imitated.[279] But a second consideration

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279 35: In istis autem nostris, quandoquidem omnia, maxime quae de loco superiore populis dicimus, ad hominum salutem, nec temporariam sed aeternam, referre debemus, ubi etiam cavendus est aeternus interitus, omnia sunt magna, quae dicimus, usque adeo, ut nec de ipsis pecuniariis rebus vel acquirendis vel amittendis parva videri debeant, quae doctor ecclesiasticus dicit, sive sit illa magna sive parva pecunia . . . Quod ergo minimum est, minimum est, sed in minimo fidelem esse magnum est.

Augustine does not entirely dispense with the notion of matching height of style with that of content - secular subjects may call for a plain style: 'Sane si moneremus homines quemadmodum ipsa negotia saecularia vel pro se vel pro suis apud ecclesiasticos iudices agere deberent, recte admoneremus, ut agerent tamquam parva submisse . . .'(37); a plain style may be used to emphasise the apparent insignificance of a trifling object:' . . .

made it out of the question to do justice to all such subjects in the logical way (treating all in the grand style), namely the fact that to do so would interfere with accomplishing the aims of the speaker. Consequently the purpose of the speaker, rather than the status of his subject, was to determine the type of style used. Depending on whether one wanted to instruct, please, or move to action, one would, for instance, treat a 'grand' subject in a plain, mixed, or grand style.[280] One might speak of the same thing grandly or plainly; Nothing is greater than God, for instance, but one needs to teach the nature of the Trinity,[281] while on the other hand if one is praising God any amount of splendid diction will be to the purpose.[282]

Since Augustine concentrates on the relation between a style and the effect it is meant to produce, he is able to give a more plausible account of the nature of each

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cum vero de illius viri disseramus eloquio, quem volumus earum rerum esse doctorem, quibus liberamur ab aeternis malis . . . ubicumque agantur haec . . . magna sunt. Nisi forte quoniam calix aquae frigidae res minima atqua vilissima est, ideo minimum aliquid atque vilissum dominus ait, quod eum, qui dederit discipulo eius, non perdet mercedem suam; aut vero quando iste doctor in ecclesia facit inde sermonem, parvum aliquid debet existimare se dicere et ideo non temperate, non granditer, sed submisse sibi esse dicendum' (37 continued).

280 38: Et tamen cum doctor iste debeat rerum dictor esse magnarum, non semper eas debet granditer dicere, sed submisse, cum aliquid docetur; temperate, cum aliquid vituperatur sive laudatur; cum vero aliquid agendum est et ad eos loquimur, qui hoc agere debent nec tamen volunt, tunc ea quae magna sunt dicenda sunt granditer et ad flectendos animos congruenter.

281 46: Sanctus quoque Ambrosius cum agat rem magnam de spiritu sancto, ut eum patri et filio demonstret aequalem, submisso tamen dicendi genere utitur, quoniam res suscepta non ornamenta verborum aut ad flectendos animos commotionis affectum, sed rerum documenta desiderat. cf. 48 (on Ambros., de virg. 2.1,7-8) Haec autem propterea in exemplo huius temperati generis posui, quia non hic agit, ut virginitatem voveant, quae nondum voverunt; sed quales esse debeant, quae iam votae sunt. Nam ut aggrediatur animus tantum ac tale propositum, grandi utique dicendi genere debet excitari et accendi.

282 38: . . . cum laudatur deus sive de se ipso, sive de operibus suis, quanta facies pulchrae ac splendidae dictionis oboritur ei, qui potest quantum potest laudare, quem nemo convenienter laudat, nemo quomodocumque non laudat.

style: the characteristics of the three are not predetermined according to a mechanical scale of ascending degrees of elaborateness. At 42, for instance, Augustine points out that the grand style is characterised chiefly by violence of emotion, rather than by 'verborum ornatus'; though it uses most of these, it can do without them:

> Grande autem dicendi genus hoc maxime distat ab isto genere temperato, quod non tam verborum ornatibus comptum est, quam violentum animi affectibus. Nam capit etiam illa ornamenta paene omnia; sed ea si non habuerit, non requirit. Fertur quippe impetu suo et elocutionis pulchritudinem, si occurrerit, vi rerum rapit, non cura decoris adsumit. Satis enim est ei propter quod agitur, ut verba congruentia, non oris eligantur industria, sed pectoris sequantur ardorem.

Augustine thus abandons what had been an important way of deciding by objective aesthetic means what style was proper. This means that propriety as a stylistic standard becomes, in some respects, much less important: the result is a fruitful lack of dogmatism about ways of achieving one's purpose. This can be seen most clearly in the variations played on the three officia and three styles once their basic connection has been established.

Style is not meant primarily to reflect dignity of content; but its relation to a particular oratorical aim is also flexible, determined by what will be most effective. Consequently variations of style are in themselves desirable. By intermingling the styles one avoids boring the audience (and attention is essential to all the aims of speaking), and one may make particular sections in grand or mixed

style stand out, if one sometimes refrains from using the grand or mixed style in a passage where one might.[283] Even when one is keeping up the link between style and purpose, frequent variations may be called for since most passages do not do the same thing all the time - a section aimed at moving the audience, for instance, may nonetheless have parts involving argument and explanation, or praise and vituperation.[284] It is interesting that Augustine does not use Cicero's chief argument for mastering all three styles rather than just the grand style. He remarks that the grand style ought almost always to be preceded by the mixed style (52), but the points mentioned above are the only reasons given. There is no suggestion that the speaker who failed to work up to the style gradually might seem either insincere, or mad.

Augustine's use of the three-style theory and of imitation as a means to excellence seems at first sight simply to make available to the Christian speaker some of the resources of classical rhetoric. The modifications made to both, however, to suit them to Christian purposes, produce some important differences from the principles of the rhetorical tradition. On the one hand propriety as a moral standard carries much more weight, while differing from the 'moral propriety' of earlier rhetoric in having little to do with mere appearances. The virtuous life of the speaker may be as convincing as his eloquence (61).

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283 52

284 Ibid.

Using a restrained and modest style, refraining from vain display, are moral requirements: the man who ignores them is neglecting his business, viz. speaking convincingly to accomplish the aims of the 'orator', and so promote the spiritual welfare of his audience. This moral preoccupation leads Augustine to dismiss the merely aesthetic aspects of propriety. These cannot easily be made to apply to Christian subject matter, and attempts to do so would not, in any case, increase the effectiveness (the restraint of canonical writers, contrasted with the style of sophistic speakers, is not praised on <u>aesthetic</u> grounds). These innovations, though introduced for specifically Christian reasons, remove some of the problems which had dogged classical rhetorical theory. The latter had tried to combine both aesthetic and 'practical' standards - e.g. objective principles governing what was proper, and principles derived from audience reaction, useful in increasing effectiveness; it aimed at oratory which was both good as persuasion and good as literature, and never managed to reconcile the two. Moral reasons force Augustine to keep only one of these aims. Freed from the need to support preachers in their literary pretensions, he was able to produce a far more consistent account of the sources of eloquence.

4 PROPRIETY AND PURITY OF LANGUAGE

In the last two chapters I discussed aspects of propriety which were recognised as such by ancient writers. While I did not confine myself to comments whose relevance had been guaranteed by the use of key words, such words had provided a way of identifying relevant areas of investigation; I accepted, on the whole, the categories which ancient writers had set up. This method has the merit of giving a fairly good picture of what ancient writers thought they thought - of the scope of the subject as they saw it. It runs the risk, however, of accepting their categories uncritically, and so merely repeating confusions and false distinctions.

Purity of language strikes me as an area where such confusions are particularly prominent. Since ancient writers regularly distinguished this standard from that of stylistic propriety, terminology provides no direct justification for including it in a discussion of propriety. But a discussion of propriety would, I think, be incomplete without it. There are two reasons for this. First, there is indirect support from terminology. Once we have identified the main criteria for stylistic propriety, using key words for propriety as a starting point, we are surely entitled to notice their relevance elsewhere; if there are substantial overlaps with the standards for correctness, it is fair to argue that the categories of propriety and correctness are ill-defined, and that correctness should be included in the inquiry. One could argue, then, that analysis of the concept of propriety would be incomplete

if false limits placed on it were not pointed out.

The second reason is more interesting. Modern sociolinguistics encourages the view that people have a command of various linguistic repertoires, which are suited to various social contexts, and that it is misleading to use a notion of correctness as a set of rules for good usage which everyone ought to follow.[1] It is often pointed out that the norm proposed is in fact generally based on the usage of a particular social group, and that its prestige derives from the power and prestige of the group (often supported, as in the case of standard English, by the authority of dictionaries, grammars, instruction in schools, official use).[2] This suggests that the ancient notion of linguistic correctness does not simply overlap with that of propriety because of the incompetence of ancient writers, who were unable to distinguish two concepts which ought to be kept apart: it is concerned in some of the most important issues raised by the criterion of propriety. The various categories of decorum were, as we have seen, determined partly by writers' assumptions about class, gender, nationality; such assumptions are at least equally important in the area of linguistic correctness.

This parallel between the two standards suggests a further point. One should not be content to deal with confusions with the familiar observation that the ancients had not grasped the distinction between the prescriptive

1 See e.g. David Crystal, A dictionary of linguistics and phonetics, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1985) under such headings as 'norm', 'correctness', 'prescriptive', 'standard'.

2 See J. and L. Milroy, Authority in Language (London, 1985), R. St. Clair, 'From social history to language attitudes', in Attitudes towards Language Variation, ed. E. Ryan and H. Giles (London, 1982), p. 169, M. Stubbs, Language and Literacy: The Sociolinguistics of Reading and Writing (London, 1980).

and the descriptive; it may be significant that such assumptions are not made explicit in connection with linguistic correctness - that writers often wished to take this value for granted.[3] When the attempt is made, for instance, to describe correct speech, and to say that it is what a certain group of people naturally speak anyway, one senses the upgrading of that group in a particularly unanswerable way: it is not open to a speaker to observe decorum, e.g. in a formal context, and preserve his identity by speaking a marked provincial variant. Variants may also be ignored, and the ideal of correct language upheld, in the interests of national identity.[4] There may be more, then, to ancient attempts to define correctness than misconceptions about the nature of language; the reasons for their confusions may bear a closer look.

These issues are of particular interest for a study which covers both Greek and Roman authors. Earlier chapters have dealt with the development of literary and rhetorical standards; while Roman writers often develop Greek ideas, it is usually hard to identify a specifically Roman direction to such developments. The question of purity of language, on the other hand, seems to make important differences unavoidable, especially given the Romans' acute consciousness of the merits of the Greek language, and ambivalent attitude toward their own.

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3 See G. F. Drake, The role of prescriptivism in American linguistics, 1820-70 (Amsterdam, 1977)

4 See R. Y. Bourhis, 'Le monde de la francophonie', in Attitudes towards Language Variation, ed. E. Ryan and H. Giles (London, 1982), 36ff

Correctness, linguistics, literary theory

The points made so far concern connections between ancient notions of linguistic purity and literary propriety, seen in the light of modern linguistics. A further question might be asked: how do these concerns relate to those of modern literary theory? This question can be answered more easily when the range of ancient views on purity of language has been set out, but a couple of observations can be made.

The subject is one which falls squarely in the centre of modern controversy over the place of linguistics in the study of literature. Although linguistic theory has been extremely influential on many strands of modern literary theory, this has been less through the application of linguistic techniques to literary language, than through the attractions of the linguistic model as a basis for research. Saussure's distinctions between diachronic and synchronic description, between langue and parole, for instance, have been adopted by other areas of discourse (most obviously by structuralists).[5] Culler's notion of literary competence, mentioned in Chapter 2, is one example of this kind of borrowing; Culler himself argues that the linguistic analogy may be suggestive, but that linguistics itself is of limited use to literary study.[6]

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5 See R. Fowler, 'Linguistics and, and versus, poetics', in Literature as 'Social Discourse' pp 162-179; J. Culler, Structuralist Poetics, Chs.1-5; F. Jameson, The Prison House of Language (Princeton, 1972)

6 Op. cit. Chapter 5

Despite this development, linguistics itself was generally assumed to be concerned with non-literary language; stylistic phenomena, for instance, were taken to lie outside its scope. T. J. Taylor argues that this was a result of the need to make linguistics scientific: aspects of an utterance which were context-bound, whose meaning depended partly on the person speaking, or the assumptions of the person addressed, could not be part of meaning proper. He suggests that the way the scope of linguistics was defined had radical consequences for the study of style, which was then restricted to aspects of language excluded from the linguistic model. So the development of linguistics led to, e.g., projects like that of the Russian Formalists, concerned with identifying the 'literary' or 'poetic' as a separate area of inquiry. In a sense, then, certain modern studies of poetic language have parallels with ancient ones - they share the assumption that ordinary language is the domain of, e.g., students of grammar, while the something extra of poetic language is the object of literary studies.[7]

What is most striking about these developments is the way literary studies are carved up as a result. Theories which try to connect literature with ideological analysis have tended to steer clear of linguistic analysis, though

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7 T.J. Taylor, Linguistic Theory and Structural Stylistics (Oxford, 1981) See also S. Fish, 'What is Stylistics and Why Are They Saying Such Terrible Things About It?', in Is There a Text in This Class? (Cambridge, Mass., 1980). This trend has met with resistance from linguists more recently; they have argued either that literary language is made up of the same stuff as ordinary language, and analysed it as such, or that it is different, but that its differences can be described with precision only through linguistic analysis. See e.g. Essays on Style and Language, ed. R. Fowler (London, 1966).

sometimes using the linguistic model.[8] Studies of language, whether ordinary or poetic, have tended to look at their subjects as self-sufficient, context-free systems: hence e.g., Jakobson's emphasis on repetition of equivalents within a poem, New Critical interest in 'the poem itself', and such features as unity and tension, Riffaterre's interest in unexpected features of language which call attention to other artifice.

This division of labour is particularly surprising when one takes into account social aspects of language such as those mentioned above. Parallel objections have been made, recently, in the spheres of linguistics and of literary studies. In the case of linguistics, it has been argued that abstract notions such as Saussure's 'langue' and Chomsky's 'competence' presuppose a standard language, which written language represents. But the question of whether certain usages are 'well-formed' in a certain language, or count as 'sub-standard', is influenced by, e.g., the prestige which speakers attach to written language, the extent to which a certain group of speakers regard their own practice as having no acceptable alternative.[9]

This, in turn, has implications for literary language. What counts as poetic is also socially determined; literary or poetic language may, e.g., be one among other repertoires in written language; it may coincide very closely with a particular standard variety, or presuppose that variety in

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8 It is striking, for instance, that the issues of Critical Inquiry devoted to feminism, the politics of interpretation and race include very little discussion of linguistic issues.

9 It is, e.g., as much a social fact as a linguistic truth about English grammar that 'He's white' is an acceptable alternative for 'He is white', while 'He white' is not.

the liberties it takes. Certain literary works, e.g. realistic novels, may present themselves as if a transparent linguistic medium through which the world may be seen; their stance may be most obvious in representations of non-standard speakers.[10] The question of, e.g., which registers are 'stylistic', which unacceptable, 'dialectal' variants of a language can hardly be divorced from the consideration of social groups and contexts.[11]

This has implications for an inquiry into purity of language in ancient discussions of literature. Certain modern critics (I think of Roger Fowler in particular) have shown that the social dimension of language embraces both grammar and style, and that literary criticism and theory have suffered by ignoring this fact. Such arguments are plainly relevant to the analysis of ancient criticism and theory. But we are in the unusual position of finding no body of modern research showing what the ancients might have done. Modern theory can throw little light on the questions which will concern me in this chapter, because little work has been done on the issues raised here.

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10 See e.g. N.F. Blake, Non-standard Language in English Literature (London, 1981), R. Chapman, The Treatment of Sounds in Language and Literature (Oxford, 1984); also R. Barthes, Le degré zéro de l'écriture (Paris, 1953), p. 49, on the formal signs of the realistic novel.

11 See e.g. R. Fowler, Literature as Social Discourse (London, 1981).

Early discussions of correctness and of purity

The earliest discussions of correctness of language appear in the inquiries by various sophists into the nature and origin of language. The term 'ὀρθοέπεια', and cognate terms like 'ὀρθότης ὀνομάτων', occur repeatedly. Protagoras seems to have concerned himself with correctness in the form of words, and wanted, for instance, to reform usage so that certain words would have the right grammatical gender.[12] Prodicus carried out researches in drawing precise distinctions between words which were close in meaning.[13] Plato's Cratylus suggests that Cratylus thought that all things had names by nature, which were the correct ones, and were the same both for Greeks and for barbarians;[14] this position is contrasted with the view that names are established by convention.[15]

These discussions have connections with various later lines of inquiry. First, they establish the relation of correct language to reality as a field for philosophical investigation: the Peripatetics were concerned with correct

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12 Phaedrus agrees with Socrates that Protagoras had talked about 'ὀρθοέπειά γε τις' (Phaedrus 267CD); cf. Ar. Rhet. 1407b6, and on Protagoras' views on the correct gender for μῆνις and πήληξ, Soph. el. 173b17. Sophistic views on correctness of language are discussed by Pfeiffer, History of Classical Scholarship, I 37ff; see also his Excursus, pp 280-1, on the ὀρθοέπεια of Protagoras. The beginning of Greek grammatical theory is discussed by R. H. Robins, Ancient and Mediaeval Grammatical Theory (London, 1931), 6ff.

13 The phrase 'ὀρθότης ὀνομάτων' is connected with him at Euthydemus 277E and Cratylus 384B; for distinctions between words, see Prot. 340Bff.

14 Crat. 383A4-B1 (ὀνόματος ὀρθότητα)

15 Crat. 384C10-D1: οὐ δύναμαι πεισθῆναι ὡς ἄλλη τις ὀρθότης ὀνόματος ἢ συνθήκη καὶ ὁμολογία.

speech, the Stoics had views on the right relation of language to the world.[16] Such investigations often presuppose tension between precision and disreputable sources of variation (e.g. aiming at stylistic effect); such tension may have been present when Gorgias first set out the claims of prose to adopt the forms of poetry.

Second, they suggest that ordinary usage may not be correct. Correctness might require one to depart from 'natural' usage.

Third, they raise the question of the status of linguistic variants: of dialects in comparison with Attic,[17] of foreign languages in comparison with Greek.[18]

There is little so far to suggest that these studies fall within the scope of ancient concern for propriety. Such hints come, in the first instance, from early evidence for popular attitudes to language. Aristophanes' use of dialect, foreign language, and bad or peculiar Greek suggests that Athenians were conscious of language variation as a source of amusement and a way of identifying

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16 See Robins, op. cit., 16, 26f; M. Pohlenz, Die Stoa, I, 2nd ed. (Göttingen, 1959), 40ff; K. Barwick, Probleme der stoischen Sprachlehre und Rhetorik, Abh. d. Sächs. Ak. d. Wiss. z. Leipz. 49,3 (1957), Ch. 2 (29ff).

17 At Prot. 341C Prodicus joins in Socrates' joke about taking χαλεπόν to mean κακόν in the dialect of Pittacus, and suggests that Simonides was reproaching Pittacus for not distinguishing words correctly, 'ἅτε Λέσβιος ὢν καὶ ἐν φωνῇ βαρβάρῳ τεθραμμένος'. Cf. the Cratylus, where Aeolic and Doric words are referred to as ξενικά (401C, 419A)

18 See e.g. Cratylus 383B; 385d7ff (Hermogenes thinks language conventional because he sees that Greeks differ among themselves in the words they use, and also differ from barbarians); 390A; 409E4ff (if one were to try to demonstrate the fitness of words of foreign derivation, using the principles of the Greek language, one would have problems).

natives; that attempts to tinker with Attic Greek itself were perceived as affectations.[19] There are also hints that speaking good Attic was associated with one's identity as an Athenian citizen. In the 6th century, Solon had spoken of bringing back to Athens Athenians who no longer spoke pure Attic.[20] The Old Oligarch complains about recent corruptions of the Athenian language (2.8); an anecdote is told of Theophrastus, who was recognised as a foreigner because his Attic was too correct.[21] Most interestingly, in a 4th century case a man's citizen status was challenged because his father spoke in a foreign way (ἐξένυσεν) - it had to be shown that his father had been taken prisoner in war and had lived abroad for many years.[22] In all of these cases, it is obvious that speaking a particular dialect is closely connected with the kind of self-presentation of speaker, with the audience's perception of the speaker as belonging to a certain category, which was an important part of stylistic propriety.[23]

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19 He invents foreign-sounding nonsense for the 'Persian envoy' to speak in Acharnians (100,104), and gives the Scythian archer in Thesmo. broken Greek (e.g. 1001,1002,1005,1007); the Spartans in Lysistrata, the Megarian in Acharnians speak distinctive dialects (e.g. Lys. 81f, 1157, 1162; Ach. 729ff, 736ff). In Clouds Strepsiades' instruction includes a lesson on the correct gender for various objects, which is made to seem absurd (658ff); cf. also Knights 1378ff, where young men are shown inventing words with the fashionable -ικός ending to describe the oratory of Phaiax.

20 36.8-12

21 Quintilian 8.1.2

22 Dem. 57.18. Cf. also 45,30, where it is supposed that the audience may take Phormio (the real target of the speech) to be barbarian and contemptible because of his bad Greek: 'ὑμεῖς δ' ἴσως αὐτὸν ὑπειλήφατε, ὅτι σολοικίζει τῇ φωνῇ, βάρβαρου καὶ εὐκαταφρόνητου εἶναι', and 81, where Phormio's foreign background is jeered at; at 37,52 and 55 the speaker apologises for his speech.

23 For the history of views on solecism (originally not confined to language, but applied to other aspects of foreignness as well), see G. Schepps, de Soloecismo (Diss. Strassburg, 1875).

Philosophy and Rhetoric: Distinguishing Style from Mistakes

These two areas of interest in language (philosophical enquiry, popular attitudes) raise problems for rhetorical discussion, e.g. of style. Philosophical enquiry had concentrated on a) precision in the literal meaning of words, and b) the correct forms of words for a single dialect, viz. Attic. Both might encourage the view that the heightened language of, e.g., poetry (and so to some extent rhetorical prose) was in some sense not correct. But even ordinary, non-poetic language might be in need of reform. Popular attitudes, on the other hand, suggest that it would be important for anyone who had to appear in court to avoid certain kinds of variant, and seem to speak the same language as his audience. It might be important not only to avoid sounding foreign, but to avoid affectation or apparent mistakes. These might curb, not only 'stylistic' extravagances, but linguistic reform: in Soph. El. 173b17 Aristotle points out that if Protagoras is right, it is possible both to seem to commit a solecism while speaking correctly, and to seem to speak correctly while in fact committing a solecism.[24]

It is perhaps a little surprising, then, that Aristotle never discusses any of these aspects of correctness in the Rhetoric. Correct Greek is treated simply as a presupposition of style: ἔστι δ'ἀρχὴ τῆς λέξεως τὸ ἑλληνίζειν;[25]

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24 ἔστι δὲ (sc. σολοικισμός) τοῦτο καὶ ποιεῖν καὶ μὴ ποιοῦντα φαίνεσθαι καὶ ποιοῦντα μὴ δοκεῖν, καθάπερ ὁ Πρωταγόρας ἔλεγεν, εἰ 'ὁ μῆνις' καὶ 'ὁ πήληξ' ἄρρενα ἐστίν. ὁ μὲν γὰρ λέγων 'οὐλομένην' σολοικίζει μὲν κατ' ἐκεῖνον, οὐ φαίνεται δὲ τοῖς ἄλλοις, ὁ δὲ 'οὐλόμενον' φαίνεται μέν, ἀλλ' οὐ σολοικίζει.

25 1407a19ff

features listed as characteristic of good Greek are also mentioned as contributing to clarity.[26] In the case of clarity, it is admitted that propriety may require matching 'departures' from the norm with the right register of content: propriety is thought of as a tension between the need to be lucid and to avoid lowness. In the case of good Greek, things are more complicated. The possibility of departures is not admitted; but given Aristotle's account of correctness, style seems to end up being in effect a departure from the correct.

This is because both style and incorrectness are thought of as departures from ordinary language. Aristotle gives five features of correct Greek: 1) the proper use of connectives (using the right ones in conjunction, not delaying the second of a pair too long); 2) the use of the right words, those that 'belong' to the thing spoken of (ἰδίους ὀνόμασι); 3) avoidance of ambiguity (ἀμφιβόλους); 4) correct use of gender; 5) correct use of number.[27] But postponing a particle, avoiding the literal expression, using ambiguity are obvious cases where departure from normal usage may not be 'incorrect', but features of style. (Even mismatched genders and numbers are regarded by Dionysius of Halicarnassus as features of the style of Thucydides, see below, pp. 353ff).

The difficulty is especially obvious with use of 'the right words' as a kind of correctness. Aristotle seems to

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26 1404b6 (use of *κύρια ὀνόματα*), 1407a30-31 (use of *ἴδια ὀνόματα* part of correctness) - in each case, the fundamental notion is of words 'belonging' to a thing; 140720-30 (use of connecting particles essential to correctness and clarity); 1407a30-b6 (*ἀμφίβολα* to be avoided unless for oracular effect, i.e. for a degree of deliberate obscurity); 1407b17-25 (zeugma may produce both solecism and lack of clarity).

27 1407a20-b11

mean by this something like 'the ordinary, literal word for a thing', with ἴδια ὀνόματα roughly equivalent to κύρια ὀνόματα; but the words which can elevate style are precisely not these, but e.g. glosses, coinages and metaphors.[28] The description of their effect, indeed, implies that they are not ordinary good Greek: they are said to improve style by giving it a 'foreign' flavour.[29] The distinction between attractively exotic and non-Greek seems to be a matter of quantity: the neutral (or even positive) term ξενικόν is used when such words appear in moderate numbers, but in the Poetics we are told that too many poeticisms would produce βαρβαρισμός.[30] The upshot of this is that an appropriately elevated style will by definition not invariably show the features said to be those of good Greek.[31]

28 Rhetoric 1404b28ff, cf. Poetics 1458a18-23.

29 Rhetoric 1404b8-12, b36, 1405a8, cf. Poetics 1458a22f

30 1458a23ff (from too many glosses)

31 The question of which dialect was a) the ordinary spoken one, and b) standard for prose is relevant here. Though Aristotle does not mention the fact, a major difference between high poetry and 4th century prose was that the former was most unlikely to be written in the Attic dialect. One might wonder, then, at what stage correctness came to be connected with a particular dialect; as R. Browning points out (Medieval and Modern Greek, London, 1969), by the 4th century Attic was the normal language for literary prose, used not only by Athenians, but also by men from other parts (Aristotle, Aeneas of Stymphalos, Deinarchos of Corinth, Theophrastus of Eresos, etc.) (p. 29). This was perhaps a consequence of the dominance of Attic prose literature in the 5th century, perhaps also of the growth of Athens as political power and cultural centre in that century). Browning (op. cit.) and Palmer (The Greek Language, London, 1980) point out that the cultural prestige of Athens led Philip II to make Attic his official language, so that it became the basis for the κοινή which was used throughout the areas conquered by Alexander; this in turn would have confirmed the prestige of the language spoken by native Athenians, and of works written in that dialect, in the eyes of those who spoke it in a derived form.

The confusion arises, I think, for two reasons, both connected with the problem of 'affective' language. First, the discussion seems to presuppose the kind of debate about correctness which had been carried on in sophistic circles, which centred on words as instruments for picking out bits of reality - there was the idea that, whether naturally or by convention, a word was matched to the thing it named, and that on the other hand a thing hdd a word with a correct form for singling it out. So words which couldn't be exhausted by such a description, e.g. because connotations of register were part of their significance, or because they communicated through interaction, like metaphor, would seem outside the proper business of language. One sees this attitude surface in the Poetics, where Aristotle describes the result of poeticisms and their excessive use: metaphors as well as glosses give a 'foreign' touch, which can deteriorate into obscurity in the case of the former, barbarism in the case of the latter.[32]

Second, correctness is identified with the normal usage of a certain group of people in certain contexts (essentially conversational or instructive). It is as if, because this is the most common, it therefore comes closest to embodying the system of words with literal meanings presupposed by the notion of ὀρθοέπεια. Consequently the possibility that different contexts might be associated with distinctive linguistic repertoires, differing from each other but equally acceptable in their respective contexts, is not

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32 Poetics 1458a23ff. On the pitfalls attendant on use of the notion of 'ordinary language', from which literary language is in some way deviant, see S. Fish, 'How Ordinary is Ordinary Language?', in Is There a Text in This Class? (Cambridge, Mass., 1980).

taken to be relevant to the criterion of correctness, though it obviously is to that of propriety. It seems likely that both problems were aggravated by the fact that Aristotle and his predecessors knew only one language (though several dialects of it).

Aristotle, then, shows the kind of confusion of categories which, I have argued, is one justification for taking correctness as relevant to propriety. Though correctness is offered as a separate quality presupposed by stylistic propriety, his definition makes it impossible to maintain the separation. Evidence of contemporary and earlier attitudes to language, moreover, shows that in fact normal use of a particular dialect could be an important component of the kind of self-presentation involved in propriety of style as he describes this. So we also find some of the sociolinguistic material which I have suggested makes the connection between the two standards an important one.

Since the Peripatetic tradition was influential in ancient rhetoric, there was considerable opportunity for the confusion of categories to be perpetuated; Theophrastus' scheme of four virtues was no doubt particularly helpful in this respect.[33] I shall look at a few further examples of the encroachments of propriety on purity, since attempts to deal with the confusion raise some interesting issues. I shall then turn to a largely sociolinguistic phenomenon, the rise of linguistic Atticism, an area where little theoretical work on rhetoric is relevant. Latin authors sometimes raise

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33 See Orator 79, and also my discussion of the Theophrastean virtues above, 209ff . Cicero, e.g., accepts the notion that correctness is a presupposition of style; cf. de Or. 3.38, neque enim conamur docere eum dicere qui loqui nesciat, nec sperare qui Latine non possit hunc ornate esse dicturum.

similar issues, so I shall sometimes anticipate myself and draw on them for purposes of comparison; in general, however, they will be discussed separately, since the question of purity is complicated by attitudes to the Latin language in comparison with Greek.

Further difficulties in distinguishing purity from propriety

We have seen that, at least on some points, a clear line could not be drawn between features of language that are grammatically wrong, and those which are devices of style. Aristotle ran into trouble chiefly in the area of lexical departures from the ordinary, and never acknowledged that there was any room for confusion. But later writers admit that it is not always easy to distinguish between mistakes and style, and offer possible methods: favourite candidates are rhetorical effectiveness, intention (sometimes guaranteed by citation of a respectable model), and context.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus, using a system of essential and additional virtues, speaks of good Greek as the first of virtues, which Herodotus and Thucydides have to the same degree in different dialects.[34] But he tacitly admits, in the essay on Thucydides, that correctness may be sacrificed to more spectacular effects. As in Aristotle, it turns out to be a matter of more or less, like clarity. Thucydides' forceful style is contrasted with the style of the historians who had preceded him, who (apart from Herodotus) had resembled

34 De imitatione, II,207,8-10, Ad Pomp. 16, II,239,5-10

each other in having great clarity and purity of language, and in fact all the necessary virtues, but none of those in which the orator's power is most evident.[35] Thucydides has the latter to a remarkable degree. The detailed description of his method of composition, however, in which there is often mismatching of gender or number, passive verbs are used actively and vice versa, and so on, makes it look as though Thucydides misses the essential virtues of clarity and Greek.[36]

Dionysius makes the conflict between brilliance and correctness explicit, by observing that some of Thucydides' usages look like solecisms:[37]

> πλεῖστα δ'ἄν τις ⟨εὕροι⟩ παρ' αὐτῷ σχήματα προσώπων τε ἀποστροφαῖς καὶ χρόνων ἐναλλαγαῖς καὶ τροπικῶν σημειώσεων μεταφοραῖς ἐξηλλαγμένα τῶν συνήθων καὶ σολοικισμῶν λαμβάνοντα φαντασίας.

Apparently these usages are not actually solecisms, though they look like them. Dionysius disapproves of this feature of Thucydides' style - it is the easiest part for second-raters to imitate, Demosthenes' Thucydidean style is better than the original because it lacks this feature.[38] The point is, though, that the two writers achieve their distinctive quality by exactly the same route, viz. by striking departure from ordinary language; it seems to be the case that, because Thucydides achieved this contorted language by aiming at a kind of style, even excesses don't

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35 Thuc. 5 (I,331,11-15), 23 (I,360,2-12)

36 I,361,19-362,16. In fact Dionysius says that Thucydides sometimes goes to such extremes that he lacks the 'first virtues', at Thuc. 28 (I,372,2ff).

37 Thuc. 24 (I,362,13-16 and 424,2-6). For examples of Thucydides' departures from ordinary usage, see Ad Amm.II 3ff, esp. 9, I,428, 19ff (singular for plural), 10, I,429,18ff (interchange of genders), 11, I,430,12ff (odd use of cases), 12, I,431,16ff (neglect of consistency of tense).

38 Din. I,307,25ff, cf. Thuc., 24 (I,363,24-64,2).

count as mistakes.

I shall return to Dionysius' views on purity in connection with Atticism. For the moment, it must be added that he does not seem to apply the distinction drawn above consistently - correctness is perhaps as much a matter of emotional reaction as of grammar. Plato's poetic style, for instance, which Dionysius dislikes, is criticised for not being Greek,[39] κάκιον ἑλληνίζουσα.

Another way of coping with the problem was to appeal to intention. Quintilian admits the difficulty of defining solecisms and barbarisms which are to be condemned (one problem with his definition is that something can count as falling in one of these categories which is part of usage - more on this later). It is sometimes difficult to distinguish them from figures:

> Prima barbarismi ac soloecismi foeditas absit. Sed quia interim excusantur haec vitia aut consuetudine aut auctoritate aut vetustate aut denique vicinitate virtutum (nam saepe a figuris ea separare difficile est). . . (1.5.5)

At 1.5.53 it appears that one of the means of distinguishing the two is by appeal to intention:[40]

> sed hic quoque quod schema vocatur, si ab aliquo per inprudentiam factum erit, soloecismi vitio non carebit.

Pliny, according to Servius, took a similar line (with the

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39 Dem. 5, I,137,10.

40 For a discussion of this point in connection with ancient grammar, see F. Charpin, 'La Notion de Solécisme', in Varron, grammaire antique et stylistique Latine, receuil offert à Jean Collart (Paris, 1978). Charpin points out that this way of distinguishing mistake from figure was used by grammarians, e.g. Servius, GLK IV,447,5 and Pompeius, GLK V,292,13.

addition that a proof of good intention is having a precedent in a respectable author for an unusual expression):[41]

> Quidquid ergo scientes facimus novitatis cupidi, quod tamen idoneorum auctorum firmatur exemplis, figura dicitur. Quidquid autem ignorantes ponimus, vitium putatur. Nam sicut superius diximus, si sciens quis dicat 'pars in frusta secant' et causa varietatis hoc dicat, figuram facit; si autem nescius, cum aliud velit dicere, incongrue inter se numeros iunxerit, soloecismum fecisse iudicatur. (GLK IV 447,8-13)

That it is primarily intention, rather than precedent, which is the determining factor, is shown by the discussion in the grammarian Pompeius; he uses it to deal with the awkward question of how one is to justify oddities in the author who provides the precedent:[42]

> nefas est autem de isto tanto viro credere per inperitiam hoc fecisse, non per scientiam adfectasse novitatem. ergo sola discretio inter vitium et virtutem scientia erit.

Quintilian and Pliny do not limit the places where such liberties count as figures rather than mistakes. Quintilian does, of course, discuss the uses and abuses of figurative language elsewhere.[43] His attitude seems to be that the intentional use of, e.g., a strange word or construction is necessarily some form of ornatus, but that the latter is subject to the rules of propriety.

One could approach the matter differently, however, and make context decisive. Donatus, for instance, seems

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41 Apud Servium, comm. on Donatus, Mai. 658,3. This fits rather oddly with another distinction Pliny is said to have drawn, between natural mistakes (barbarisms) and artificial ones (solecisms): Quid est barbarismus? Quod non dicitur per naturam. Quid est soloecismus? Quod male per artem dicitur. (GLK V, 283, 18-20)

42 GLK V 292,22

43 9.3ff

have taken a stricter view on what was acceptable in prose. Rather than call certain liberties improper, as Quintilian had done, he includes them in his definitions of 'solecism' and 'barbarism'. At Mai. 653,2ff he says of the latter: 'Barbarismus est una pars orationis vitiosa in communi sermone. In poemate metaplasmus'. And at 658,3 he says that a solecism occurs in prose, 'in poemate schema nominatur'. In other words, the incorrectness lies not necessarily in its being inadvertent, but in its occurring in a particular kind of work. Propriety thus seems to determine what counts as Latinity in various contexts.[44]

Atticism

The views discussed so far have assumed that the language commonly spoken is correct, and that departures from it must be motivated by demands of style. But the rise of linguistic Atticism offered a radically different relationship between the 'correct' and the 'ornamental'. In principle, at least, the movement suggested that literary language had to differ regularly from the spoken, and that strict limits should be placed on departures from the canons of correct Attic in case one strayed into common usage.[45] How thoroughgoing this suppression of ordinary, spoken language had to be is a matter of debate; it is at any rate possible that, because the literary language as a whole was opposed to the spoken, differences within the literary language itself became muted (as happened later, for instance, in the works of Himerius and Themistius).

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44 The same point is made by other grammarians: Charisius, GLK I,265,7; Diomedes, GLK I,455,37; Sergius GLK IV,564,24; Pompeius, GLK V,288, 37-289,6; cf. also Marius Plotius Sacerdos, GLK VI,451,1, who distinguishes between 'nobis', for whom certain usages would be wrong, and poets and orators, for whom they are acceptable stylistic devices.

45 One might compare Barthes' comment on the passé simple of written French, which has semiotic value, stating, 'This is literature'.

Origins of Atticism

Linguistic Atticism seems to have had several sources. Alexandrian philology, working with the language of texts of earlier date, developed glossography, lexicography, interest in the characteristics of dialects.[46] Perhaps as a result of this, scientific grammar was developed, which might have tended to canonise a particular Greek based on models.[47] At the same time there is evidence of a strong tradition of imitation as a pedagogic device, encouraging belief in the stylistic supremacy of models: papyri preserve imitations of classical authors, for instance, and the σύγκρισις of Isocrates and Demosthenes attributed to Cleochares may belong in this tradition.[48] Imitation seems to have been important in higher spheres: Charisius claimed to be a follower of Lysias, Hegesias a follower of Lysias and Charisius.[49]

When did the two strands, one of documenting the usage of ancient texts, the other of imitating models, produce the notion that ancient linguistic usage was to be copied? It is tempting to look in the 1st century B.C.: Caecilius seems to

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46 Eratosthenes may have used linguistic evidence to identify works which were not genuinely Attic; Schol. θ on Frogs 1263 says of the word λογιοῦμαι, Ἐρατοσθένης δὲ τῶν ψευδαττικῶν τινὰς γράφειν φησί, τὼ ψήφω λαβών. ἵνα καὶ τὰ πεπλασμένα δράματα, ἐν οἷς τὸ παράπαν τοῦτο ἠγνόηται, δοκῇ μὴ σεσολοικίσθαι.(Schol. Graeca in Aristophanem, ed. F. Dübner, Paris, 1843) The scholar Aristophanes seems to have included a section on περὶ τῶν ὑποπτευομένων μὴ εἰρῆσθαι τοῖς παλαιοῖς in his work on Λέξεις (see L. Cohn, 'περὶ τῶν ὑποπτευομένων μὴ εἰρῆσθαι τοῖς παλαιοῖς', in 'De Aristophane Byzantio et Suetonio Tranquillo Eustathio Auctoribus', Jahrbücher f. class. Philol. Suppl. Bd. 12 (1881)). (Pfeiffer, HCS i 198, argues that there is no need to take this work as Atticist in intention, as Wilamowitz had done.)

47 See Wilamowitz, 'Asianismus and Attizismus', Hermes 35 (1900), 1-99, and A. Dihle, 'Analogie und Attizismus', Hermes 85 (1957), 170-205.

48 See Hibeh Papyri I, ed. B. Grenfell and A. Hunt (London, 1906), 31ff, also K. Jander, ed., Oratorum et Rhetorum Graecorum Fragmenta Nuper Reperta, Kleine Texte 118 (Bonn, 1913), 31ff for an early rhetorical exercise in imitation. For Cleochares, see Phot. bibl. cod. 176, also 'Kleochares', RE Suppl. XI 672f.

49 Cicero, Brutus 286, Orator 226

have compiled the first Atticist lexicon, as well as stylistic treatises.[50] The problem is that we do not know enough about this lexicon to be sure of its purpose. Moreover Caecilius' contemporary, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, whom we are in a better position to judge, seems to have been chiefly interested in the stylistic merits of the Attic prose writers. W. Schmid argued that there is a sharp contrast between the humanistic classicism of Dionysius, and the linguistic Atticism of the 2nd century A.D.; the latter, he thought, only really got going with the advent of Herodes Atticus.[51] Dionysius' language has been shown to have certain Atticising features, but it has generally been agreed that in his criticism, at least, he shows little interest in linguistic Atticism.[52]

I think that there is more to be said on the subject, however. It is a little surprising that linguistic imitation should have been part of Dionysius' literary practice, but passed over in the critical works.

The main reasons for thinking linguistic Atticism irrelevant to Dionysius are: 1) that he speaks of the virtue of good Greek (ἑλληνισμός) rather than of Attic. Both Herodotus and Thucydides are said to have this virtue, but the first is a κανών for the Ionic dialect, the second for the Attic;[53] 2) that his interests seem

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50 See W. Rhys Roberts, 'Caecilius of Calacte', AJP 18 (1897), 304-5.

51 Der Atticismus in seinen Hauptvertretern, v. 1 (Stuttgart, 1887)

52 See e.g. G. Anlauf, Standard Late Greek oder Attizismus? (Diss. Köln 1960) p. 113 on Dionysius' use of the optative, K. Eriksson, Der Präsens Historicum (Lund, 1943) on his classical use of the historic present; B. Reardon, Courants littéraires Grecs des IIe et IIIe Siècles Après J.-C. (Paris, 1971), p. 85.

53 Ad Pomp. II,239,5-10.

to be stylistic. The work on ancient orators is in part a response to the pernicious style of Asian oratory; there is no reason to think that it was the use of κοινή rather than classical Attic which aroused his disapproval.[54] His criticism of various classical writers again suggests interest in stylistic issues. Thucydides, e.g., is severely criticised, in spite of being a κανών of the Attic dialect; Isocrates has remarkable purity, but is criticised for his tasteless use of figures.[55]

Both of these points are clearly compatible with linguistic classicism. The first could be taken simply as distinguishing types of model for imitation. The two might be suitable in different contexts; Dionysius sometimes imitates the language of Herodotus in his Roman Antiquities.[56] As for the second point, there is no reason why Dionysius should not have approved of linguistic imitation even if it was not directly concerned in his disapproval of pernicious types of style. On the other hand, there are, I think, points which lead beyond these negative arguments.

There can be no question about the emphasis of Dionysius' work: he is chiefly interested in the various excellences of the works of the past (in style, content, structure), not in precise renditions of their dialect.

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54 On Ancient Orators, pr. 1-2, e.g. I,5,11-14.

55 On Isocrates, see Lys. 2 (I,9,16-22), Isocr. 2 (I,56,13-16), Isocr. 3 (I,58,10ff). On Thucydides, see Thuc. I,363,20ff.

56 See S. Ek, Herodotismen in der Archäologie des Dionys von Halikarnass (Diss. Lund, 1942)

But good Greek is included among the virtues of style, which are identified in the various classical writers partly to encourage imitation. Lysias has impeccable purity and use of the Attic dialect, and so is recommended as an object of imitation for anyone who wants to excel in purity of language:[57]

> μίαν μὲν δὴ ταύτην ἀρετὴν ἀξίαν ζήλου καὶ μιμήσεως εὑρίσκω παρὰ τῷ ῥήτορι καὶ παρακελευσαίμην ἂν τοῖς βουλομένοις καθαρῶς γράφειν ἢ λέγειν ἐκεῖνον τὸν ἄνδρα ποιεῖσθαι παράδειγμα ταύτης τῆς ἀρετῆς.

Dionysius sometimes speaks of purity and precision of dialect as separate items in a list, and sometimes gives the impression that purity is partly a matter of using ordinary language and avoiding poeticisms;[58] that the two qualities are essentially inseparable, however, is established by ad Pomp. 3, where they are lumped together as the 'first virtue', which Herodotus and Thucydides have equally.[59]

Dionysius' recognition of Herodotus as a 'canon' for Ionic obviously distinguishes him from later Atticists, who either excluded non-Attic writers, or used ancient writers of various dialects as sources indiscriminately.[60] If his own practice is anything to go by, he may have observed the longstanding Greek convention associating certain dialects with certain genres (so that Herodotus, e.g.,

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57 Lys. 2 (I,9,22-10,3)

58 Lys. 13 (I,22,16-17), Isocr. 2 (I,56.14-16) and 11 (I,70,15-19); Dem. 5 (I,136,15ff), perhaps Isocr. 2 (I,56,17f)

59 II,239,5-10

60 See below, pp. 367ff.

would be wanted at least as a linguistic influence for history). But by Dionysius' time Attic was the dialect associated with prose oratory; as far as an orator was concerned, then, the virtue of good Greek would presumably have to be sought by imitating an Attic model. So his attitude to the language of ancient texts is closer to that of later Atticists than has sometimes been supposed.

Some aspects of linguistic Atticism

An important difference between Dionysius and later Atticists lies in his attitude to vocabulary. Although purity involves vocabulary (writers are said to be precise in their words, 'ὀνόματα'),[61] this means that they used the ordinary language of their day;[62] Dionysius is more interested in avoiding poeticisms than in excluding the normal usage of his own day. There is no suggestion that one should attend to the vocabulary of Lysias in order to avoid common Hellenistic terms. Later Atticists, on the other hand, have become notorious for demanding ancient authority for every word; the Atticist lexica give words to avoid as well as the correct Attic alternative.[63]

Three aspects of linguistic Atticism are particularly relevant to propriety. The first is the extent to which command of Attic usage was required as part of the equipment of an educated man. The second, connected with this, is the kinds of arguments which were carried on as to what exactly Atticism required - how strict did one have to be? The third is whether this archaism in favour of Attic correctness was so extensive that other nuances of register could no longer be distinguished or used (e.g. differences between the language of poetry and of prose, use of forms from other dialects).

It has been pointed out by modern students of sociolinguistics that the forms of language used by prestigious social groups acquire prestige themselves, and are taken over by other groups. This seems to have been the case

61 Lys. 13 (I,22,16-17), De Im. II,207,8-9.

62 Isocr. 2 (I,56,14ff), Dem. 13 (155,20ff)

63 See e.g. Phrynichus, Ecloge, p. 2.

with linguistic Atticism. G. Anlauf has shown that the use of the optative increased dramatically in literary contexts, beginning with Dionysius; in texts with a closer connection with the popular language, it was very low in the first century B.C., but was established again in the second century A.D.[64] Use of the dative also seems to have acquired prestige. J. Humbert points out that from the 1st century, certain classical uses of the dative tend to decrease in the texts closest to ordinary language (e.g. personal letters on papyrus).[65] εἰς with the accusative, for instance, tends to replace ἐν with the dative even when no notion of motion towards is intended.[66] In official documents, on the other hand, one finds hypercorrection - ἐν with the dative even where εἰς with the accusative would have been correct. Certain parallel passages from the Gospels are particularly interesting: Mark sometimes uses εἰς with the accusative 'incorrectly', and is corrected by Matthew and Luke, who have more pretensions to literary education.[67]

The importance of these examples is that they suggest, first, that the principle of linguistic Atticism was not confined to a small circle of specialists, and second, that command of these forms had cultural prestige. Evidence of another kind can be found in Galen, who remarks, à propos

64 Standard Late Greek oder Attizismus?, 122ff

65 J. Humbert, La disparition du Datif en Grec (du 1er au Xe siècle) (Paris, 1930). He points out that all documents were produced by people who had had some contact with school - people who knew nothing would not have dealt with their own correspondence. The proportion of mistakes made is thus not a direct reflection of the state of the spoken language of the time. (p. 11)

66 Op. cit. 76ff

67 Op. cit. p. 71 (the passages are Mark, 13,16, Matth. 24,18, Luke 17,31; Mark 13,9, Matth. 10,17; compare also Mark 1,12, Matth. 4,1 Luke 4,1, where Luke corrects through hyperAtticism)

of Attic words, that he disagrees with those who think that everyone should Atticise - doctors, philosophers, geometricians, musicians, lawyers, even those who are just rich or even well-to-do.[68] Those with whom he disagrees seem to have extended the requirement of Atticism beyond those whose profession called for the trappings of literary culture (e.g. schoolteachers, sophists), to everyone who could be expected to have had a certain amount of education. (There is perhaps the implication that any group which has prestige for some other reason, such as wealth or training, ought also to have command of the most acceptable forms of language.)

The views Galen opposes are extreme in another respect. They seem to imply that people who can be expected to Atticise should do so in all contexts - that ordinary spoken language ought to be Attic. This is suggested by the demand that everyone Atticise 'τῇ φωνῇ', as well as by the fact that some of the types mentioned, e.g. those who are wealthy, are not especially likely to have to undertake literary composition. This sounds, then, like an attempt to make Attic the standard language, that regularly used by the educated. But other views were possible. Galen himself thinks context important: a doctor should try to avoid solecisms when dealing with an educated patient.[69]

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68 περὶ τῆς τάξεως τῶν ἰδίων βιβλίων, Kühn XIX, 60-61.
οὐ γὰρ δὴ τοῦτο ἀξιοῦμεν ἡμεῖς ὅπερ ἔνιοι τῶν νῦν κελεύουσιν, ἅπαντας ἀττικίζειν τῇ φωνῇ, κἂν ἰατροὶ τυγχάνωσιν ὄντες ἢ φιλόσοφοι καὶ γεωμετρικοὶ καὶ μουσικοὶ καὶ νομικοὶ κἂν μηδὲν τούτων, ἀλλ' ἁπλῶς ἤτοι πλουτοῦσί τινες ἢ μόνον εὔποροι· τοἰναντίον γὰρ ἀναξιῶ μηδενὶ μέμεσθαι τῶν σολοικιζόντων τῇ φωνῇ μηδ' ἐπιτιμᾶν· ἄμεινον γάρ ἐστι τῇ φωνῇ μᾶλλον ἢ τῷ βίῳ σολοικίζειν τε καὶ βαρβαρίζειν . . .

69 XVII.2.148K

He may also think that one should Atticise when writing, as his own works are careful in this respect. Philostratus' criticism of the letters of Herodes Atticus also suggests that Atticism was more appropriate to some contexts than others: he claims that in a letter one ought to use language more Attic than ordinary speech, but more ordinary than Atticism:

> ῥητόρων δὲ ἄριστα μὲν Ἡρώδης ὁ Ἀθηναῖος ἐπέστελλεν, ὑπεραττικίζων δὲ καὶ ὑπερλαλῶν ἐκπίπτει πολλαχοῦ τοῦ πρέποντος ἐπιστολῇ χαραϰτῆρος. δεῖ γὰρ φαίνεσθαι τῶν ἐπιστολῶν τὴν ἰδέαν ἀττικωτέραν μὲν συνηθείας, συνηθεστέραν δὲ ἀττικίσεως καὶ συγκεῖσθαι μὲν πολιτικῶς, τοῦ δὲ ἀβροῦ μὴ ἀπᾴδειν . . . Kayser II,258,5ff

The evidence does not suggest, then, that everyone thought that everyone should speak Attic in all contexts. It does suggest, though, that Attic was fairly generally recognised as carrying prestige: the best-educated people would know what was correct and be sensitive to solecisms; most people would try to be as Attic as they could. The fact that Galen wrote a work against those who criticised people for committing solecisms is significant: the prejudice must have been reasonably common to be worth attacking.[70] Attic might not be suitable to all contexts, but those where it was at home seem to have been the most ambitious literary or rhetorical works (it is presumably these 'high' connotations which made departures from Attic desirable in a familiar form such as a letter).

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70 Kühn XIX,61. Galen argues that the composition of this work proves that he is far from thinking Atticism part of culture (παιδεία); his compilation of 48 books on Attic usage is for the benefit of doctors and philosophers, who are constantly inventing new terminology, and so need to know the meanings of old words. But this does not mean that Galen, who has knowledge of Attic usage, will not take advantage of it.

In the case of ambitious rhetorical pieces, then, a speaker might have felt that he ought to give his work as strong an Attic flavour as possible. Lucian's Lexiphanes and Rhetorum Praeceptor bear this out. In the former, Lexiphanes is ridiculed because he is only interested in getting the words right, not in genuine imitation of classical authors; he thinks of the words before he thinks of the thought to be expressed.[71] In the latter, a teacher of rhetoric gives advice for impressing the audience: the speaker should get up fifteen, or at most twenty, Attic phrases, and sprinkle them throughout the speech; if he commits a solecism or barbarism, he should invent an obscure authority for it.[72] On no account should he actually read Plato, Isocrates, or Demosthenes. These sketches form an interesting contrast to Galen: while the main objection is that Lexiphanes and the teacher do not appreciate the real value of ancient authors, their linguistic mistakes are not overlooked. Lexiphanes makes mistakes a child would not; the man who defends a solecism by inventing an authority presumably ought to know better than to make such mistakes.[73] The observations of the teacher of rhetoric, moreover, throw light on the object of it all: they suggest that linguistic archaism is expected by the audience.

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71 Lexiphanes 22 (on the right kind of imitation), 24 on using words before he knows whether they are needed.

72 Rhetor. Praec. 16, 17.

73 Lexiphanes 25. Lucian's objection in each case is partly to the obscurity produced - which is not to say that one could not be Attic without obscurity.

The essays by Lucian touch upon the second aspect of linguistic Atticism mentioned above, the question of how strict Atticism had to be. Both Lexiphanes and the teacher of rhetoric accept the principle that one should be able to cite an authority for the words one uses. Athenaeus' Deipnosophistae include a character called Keitoukeitos, who wanted an authority for every word.[74] Other evidence suggests that this is not mere comic exaggeration. Philagros used an unusual word when he lost his temper with one of Herodes' followers, and was asked for his authority: 'παρὰ τύνι τῶν ἑλλογίμων,' ἔφη, 'τοῦτο εἴρηται;' καὶ ὅς, 'παρὰ Φιλάγρῳ,' ἔφη .[75] Plutarch says that he is not concerned to have an authority for every word, which implies that this might have been expected.[76]

It is the Atticist lexica, however, which give one the strongest impression of a mania for rejecting contemporary language, searching out archaic expressions, and discriminating between the sources for these. Judging by these, one might suppose that anyone who wanted to achieve a respectable appearance as a sophist, or indeed in literary composition , would have had to be extremely selective in his vocabulary, and in the authors from whom this could be drawn - or at any rate that the important people to whom the lexica are dedicated must have taken a special interest in such matters.[77] Schmid thought

74 Athenaeus 1.1d-e (on Ulpian of Tyre)
75 Philostratus, VS II,83,24ff (Kayser)
76 De Rat. Aud. 42d-e, one should attend to the substance of what is being said in a lecture, not insist on the λέξις being Attic.
77 Phrynichus, in the dedicatory address at the beginning of the Ecloge, remarks that if one seriously cares about culture, one will want only the best authors: *ἡμεῖς δὲ οὐ πρὸς τὰ διημαρτημένα ἀφορῶμεν, ἀλλὰ πρὸς τὰ δοκιμώτατα τῶν ἀρχαίων*. For dedications to important people, cf. Phrynichus, Ecl. 55, 475 (s.v. *πρόσωπα*), 482 (*χρέως*), 492 (*σύσσημου*); Phot. cod. 158 (the Soph. Prop. dedicated to Commodus), Pollux, Onomasticon, ad init. (also to Commodus), and see Schmid, op. cit., I,70.

that linguistic Atticism was the interest of a small, educated coterie who were opposed to Asian oratory;[78] more recently it has been pointed out that Asian orators also archaised, that this form of Atticism was part of a wider practice of imitating ancient writers and drawing on the Greek past.[79] Boulanger has suggested, in fact, that the strictly linguistic Atticism was largely the triumph of grammarians and teachers.[80]

What this leaves out is the situation implied by the lexica themselves, in particular by disagreements between them, and by the types of explanation given for the benefit of the reader. Phrynichus prides himself on selecting words from only the best authors; the book seems aimed, in fact, at the less discriminating work of his contemporary, Pollux.[81] He means his readers to achieve successful recreation of what was once correct Greek, and wants to recapture, in particular, the Attic dialect as suited to oratory (Homer is rejected for being a poet, not πολιτικός, Herodotus for being Ionian[82]). Pollux seems to have been,

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78 Op. cit., I,21-2

79 See e.g. B. Reardon, Courants Littéraires, E.L. Bowie, 'The Greeks and Their Past in the Second Sophistic', in Studies in Ancient Society, ed. M. Finley (London, 1974).

80 Aelius Aristide et la sophistique dans la province d'Asie au 2e siècle de notre ère, Bibl. des Écoles francaises d'Athènes et de Rome, fasc. 126 (Paris, 1923), p. 108.

81 See M. Naechster, De Pollucis et Phrynici Controversiis (Leipzig, 1908)

82 138 Rutherford; cf. 223R where one is told not to use a word from Homer, but to follow Aristophanes, Cratinus, Eupolis instead. Phrynichus may have thought that the Old Comedians reproduced everyday speech of 5th century Athens just as Menander did that of a later day. For criticism of Herodotus as a source, see 338R:

'Ανέκαθεν· φυλακτέον ἐπὶ χρόνου λέγειν . . . εἰ δέ τις φαίη ἐπὶ χρόνου παρ' Ἡροδότῳ εἰρῆσθαι τοὔνομα, ἀληθῆ μὲν φήσει· εἴρηται γάρ. οὐ μὴν τῷ ὑφ' Ἡροδότου εἰρῆσθαι τὸ δόκιμον τῆς χρήσεως παρέχεται. οὐ γὰρ Ἰωνικῶν καὶ Δωρικῶν ἐξέτασίς ἐστιν ὀνομάτων ἀλλ' Ἀττικῶν. (Cf. Naechster, pp. 14-16 for other instances)

to begin with, half-hearted in his search for good Attic: he starts off, like Phrynichus, by preferring Old Comedy as an authority to Menander,[83] but sometimes introduces a word and says it is acceptable even though used by Herodotus or Homer (one Ionian, the other a poet).[84] Naechster argues that this flexibility later becomes a parti pris, in Book Ten, which is a response to Phrynichus, and in which Pollux makes exceptions of a kind not made even in the earlier books.[85] Moeris is even stricter than Phrynichus: he accepts the same authorities, but rejects the tragedians. The Antiatticist, writing somewhat later, extends the range of sources again, including Homer, Pindar, the tragedians, and New Comedy.[86]

Phrynichus seems to have aimed at producing the kind of book which would enable a modern student to produce a satisfactory prose composition: the 'basic language' of the orator was to be what it had been for a speaker of 4th century Athens. A particular view of language is perhaps presupposed - that those men had had purity of diction, and that the virtue was to be achieved by imitation of their language. Pollux claims, of course, to be interested in purity - this may have been de rigueur - but in fact seems

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83 I 79, τῶν δὲ οἴκων πρόδομος καὶ δῶμα καὶ δωμάτιον καὶ κοιτών εἰ γὰρ καὶ Μένανδρος αὐτὸ βαρβαρικὸν οἴεται, ἀλλ' Ἀριστοφάνης ὁ κωμῳδοδιδάσκαλος τὰ τοιαῦτα πιστότερος αὐτοῦ . . .
III 29, οἱ δ'ἐκ τῶν ἀνεψιαδῶν ἀλλήλοις ἐξανέψιού τε καὶ ἐξανέψιαι. τούτῳ δὲ τῷ ὀνόματι οὐ πάνυ τετριμμένῳ κέχρηται Μένανδρος, ᾧ ἀεὶ μὲν οὐ χρηστέον ὡς οὐκ ἀκριβῶς Ἑλληνικῷ, ἐπὶ δὲ τῶν ἀκατονομάστων πιστευτέον. ὧν γὰρ γενῶν ἢ πραγμάτων ἢ κτημάτων ὀνόματα παρ' ἄλλοις οὐκ ἔστι, ταῦτα ἀγαπητὸν ἂν εἴη καὶ παρὰ τούτου λαβεῖν;
and cf. Naechster, pp 5,6 for other examples.

84 E.g. VIII,76; II,8. See Naechster, p. 17.

85 Op. cit., p. 29ff

86 See Schmid, op. cit., I,207-8. While the Antiatticist cannot count, strictly speaking, as an Atticist lexicon, it may suggest that such works could be used as sources of archaisms rather than simply of Attic.

to be interested in classical literature generally as a source of glosses. The aim seems to have been the creation of a literary language recognisably different from the spoken, rather than the scrupulous recreation of Attic as the literary language. Pollux is not, after all, less conscious of the source of words than Phrynichus (if he were, he would not be aware of making allowances); it makes sense, then, to suppose he wants them for a different purpose. One may imagine that the aims of Moeris and of the Anti-atticist were similarly different.

What this suggests is that the nature and aims of 'Atticism' were matters for disagreement among those who specialised in this kind of research. The range of authors one drew upon, the reasons considered valid for selecting such authors, were matters of taste. Phrynichus' remarks to the addressee of the Ekloge imply that the area of inquiry was one which would be of interest, but show clearly that he does not assume agreement on all points. His objection to Menander is particularly interesting in this connection, and is worth quoting in full:

> 492 Rutherford: Σύσσημον: οὐχ ὁρῶ μὰ τὸν Ἡρακλέα τί πάσχουσιν οἱ τὸν Μένανδρον μέγαν ἄγοντες καὶ αἴροντες ὑπὲρ τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν ἅπαν. Διὰ τί δὲ θαυμάσας ἔχω; ὅτι τὰ ἄκρα τῶν Ἑλλήνων ὁρῶ μανικῶς περὶ τὸν κωμῳδοποιὸν τοῦτον σπουδάζοντα πρώτιστον μέν ἐν παιδείᾳ μέγιστον ἀξίωμα ἁπάντων ἔχοντά σε καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἐκ προκρίτων ἀποφανθέντα ὑπὸ τῶν βασιλέων ἐπιστολέα αὐτῶν, ἔπειτα δευτέρᾳ τιμῇ λειπόμενον πολὺ τῆς σῆς παρασκευῆς, ἐξεταζόμενον δ' ἐν τοῖς Ἕλλησι, Βάλβον τὸν ἀπὸ Τράλλεων, ὃς εἰς τοῦτο προθυμίας καὶ θαύματος ἦκει Μενάνδρου, ὥστε καὶ Δημοσθένους ἀμείνω ἐγχειρεῖν ἀποφαίνειν τὸν λέγοντα μ ε σ ο π ο ρ ε ῖ ν καὶ γ ῦ ρ ο ς καὶ λ ή θ α ρ γ ο ς καὶ σ ύ σ σ η μ ο ν καὶ π ο ρ ν ο κ ό π ο ς καὶ ὀ ψ ω ν ι α σ μ ὸ ς καὶ ὀ ψ ώ ν ι ο ν καὶ δ ύ σ ρ ι γ ο ς καὶ ἄλλα κίβδηλα ἀναρίθμητα ἀμαθῆ. τὰ αὐτὰ δέ σοι καὶ Βάλβῳ πεπονθότα καὶ Γαγιανὸν τὸν Σμυρναῖον ῥήτορα, ἄνδρα ζηλωτὴν καὶ ἐραστὴν τῆς σῆς ἐν παιδείᾳ φιλοκαλίας. Ἄγε οὖν ὅπως λύσῃς μου τὴν ἐν τῇ τοιᾷδε δυσχερείᾳ τῶν ὤτων ἀπορίαν. οὐ γὰρ περιόψεσθαί σε ἡγοῦμαι ἐρήμως ὀφλόντα σου τὰ παιδικὰ Μένανδρον.

The passage shows, first of all, that Plutarch's admiration for the language of Menander was by no means uncommon even in an Atticising age, despite the rulings of many of the lexica. More importantly, it suggests something about the status of these lexica. No doubt some were simply lists of acceptable and unacceptable words, without sources or explanations, to be accepted as authoritative for use in schools. But where a work is dedicated to someone with claims to culture, and justifications are given for the decisions made, the pronouncements cannot claim such authority; they seem to be aimed rather at persuading the reader that the rationale used is the right one. The reader, with his own standards of taste, his own ways of responding to earlier texts, can use the information given to make up his own mind. This presupposes, of course, that the reader already has an extensive acquaintance with classical works; for such a reader, at any rate, the fact that a lexicon was stricter than his own practice need not have meant that it lacked interest. This in turn may imply that the values underlying such a lexicon were not so different from, say, Lucian's after all: the work is aimed, not at someone who needs to use it mechanically, but at someone who can use it intelligently on the basis of his own knowledge. Strictness may be a sign of culture; it is the culture itself (including, e.g., ability to defend one's choices, and presumably other things besides decisions about vocabulary) which is most important.

There remains the question of how far different registers could be distinguished within a linguistic medium which was itself largely archaic. Wilamowitz thought that the eclecticism of Pollux was one sign of a blunting of sensitivity to the register of words: as Atticism gathered strength, writers were less ready to use the ξένα , ἰδιωτικά , and πεποιημένα which had once been resources of high style, but were much freer in the use of poeticisms, and perhaps chiefly interested in being able to vouch for the presence of such words in good authors.[87] He inferred this partly on the basis of a chronology of lexica, in which Caecilius admitted only orators, Phrynichus more authors, and Pollux more still, whereas Naechster makes it seem plausible that Phrynichus wrote in response to Pollux; but the question remains a valid one.

The question has in fact two aspects: one is whether the sensitivity of writers themselves was blunted, the other is whether audiences were capable of distinguishing the registers of archaic words. We have seen, for instance, that Pollux was perfectly able to recognise that a word from Herodotus was not in the Attic dialect, that Homer was not a writer of prose. In admitting them, then, he is perhaps being realistic about the way an audience will perceive various archaisms; perhaps a word from Homer could not function as a poeticism in a generally archaic context. On the other hand, it is not clear that the

87 'Asianismus und Attizismus', pp. 40-41 = KS 261-2.

language of Atticising writers must have sounded entirely archaic; and it is possible that writers distinguished registers for their own benefit, regardless of whether the audience could take this in. Evidence both for and against these points can be drawn from Aristides. On the one hand, Atticism seems to have been a kind of 'ornament' of style, which, like other departures from usage, was more suited to some forms than others. Consequently Aristides wrote speeches of different degrees of Atticism: the concentration of Attic words, like that of other elements of vocabulary (poetic, κοινή, inventions), varies according to the type of speech.[88] On the other hand, Aristides seems to have been aware himself of the different registers of diction available from ancient texts, and goes out of his way to make these perceptible to his audience: poetic words are used as ornament, sometimes apologised for.[89] It is possible that these would have been particularly striking in any case; Boulanger argues that Aristides Atticised mainly by purging his language of non-Attic words, so poeticisms might well have stood out even in their artificially pure and Attic context.[90]

The usage of Aristides, then, is discriminating, but compatible with the possibility that audiences were not always able to distinguish registers. This suggests that the requirements of propriety in Atticism would not

88 See Boulanger, Aelius Aristide, p. 399.

89 Boulanger gives the following examples (397): ὥστε λέγουσιν οἱ ποιηταί, XVII 3K (cf. XVII 5K, XXVII 15K (ποιητὴς ἄν εἴποι τις), XLV 24K, XIII 91.9-10, p.150D, XLVI 238.14-15, p.312D); τοῦτο δὴ τὸ ποιητικόν, XXX 10K; εἰ δὲ θέλεις τραγικώτερον εἰπεῖν, XLII 4K.

90 See Boulanger, 396-7

necessarily have been determined only by appeal to the taste of the audience; in some respects, a speaker might have been guided by his own taste in refinements in linguistic usage. One cannot even say that propriety would have been determined according to the consensus of experts, since there is no reason, as we have seen, to think that such a thing existed; experts might be expected, however, to recognise the choices made. This obviously left considerable scope for individual variation, which can be seen, for instance, in the statistics compiled by Schmid. His observations on Dio, for example, are only partly in agreement with the argument of Wilamowitz. On the one hand, though Dio sometimes uses neologisms, they do not seem to be for stylistic effect; on the other hand, most of the poetic expressions occur only once or twice in the whole of his work, which suggests that they are used for stylistic effect, not simply to fill gaps in a vaguely archaic vocabulary.[91]

Linguistic Atticism seems to have developed a new relation between correctness and propriety, and in doing so to have changed the requirements of propriety considerably. Earlier, ordinary language had been taken for granted as that spoken by speaker and audience, something to be departed from where the subject justified taking risks. The merit of the basic language was that it did not call attention to itself. In the case of Atticism, however, the relation between correctness and propriety could not be put the same

91 Schmid, op. cit., 165f (neologisms), 148-54 (poeticisms)

way, since 'correctness' was not the starting point, but the object of departure from the ordinary. This made reconciling propriety and Atticism difficult in certain circumstances. Atticism was both a feature of elevated, formal prose and essential to correctness ('solecism' means 'mistake in Attic' in Galen and Lucian, for instance); forms such as the familiar letter were thus left with the task of striking a fine line between the pretentious and the incorrect.

Roman views on Latin and Latinity

The Latin language presented writers with a problem for which there was no parallel in Greek: the decision to write in Latin was itself a matter of decorum. In the third to first centuries B.C. especially both the social status of the writer and the genre of the work helped to determine the language used. Those who decided to write in Latin, moreover, confronted the problem of producing an acceptable literary language; the spheres of decorum and of correctness overlapped to a particularly great extent in assessments of this enterprise. Roman writers also had to deal with issues raised above in connection with Greek. They had to find a place for purity of language in rhetorical theory, taking into account developments in the science of grammar. They were faced with the existence of strong linguistic prejudices, which had to be considered in any attempt to accommodate speech or writing to an audience. From the time of Cicero on, they had to decide to what extent imitation of earlier writers entailed linguistic imitation to achieve correctness.

These issues receive very unequal treatment in works which can in any sense count as being about literature (whether critical, theoretical or prescriptive). There is, for instance, no discussion of the factors governing choice of language in any of the works of this kind which discuss Latin and Latinity. We know that this was an issue only from, e.g., the distribution of works in the two languages, occasional comments in works mainly about other things,

introductory apologies by authors who have chosen Latin, external evidence about attitudes to use of the two languages in non-literary contexts. The position is similar, though less extreme, for the issue of unacceptable variants of Latin. But it is partly these attitudes to Latin which make it clear that Latinity was closely connected with propriety: that use of Latin, and Latin of a particular kind, was an aspect of self-presentation comparable in aim to those explicitly acknowledged as part of propriety. They thus have a direct bearing on the theoretical place of correctness and the nature of literary language, issues which received a large amount of attention in literary discussions. In what follows, therefore, issues which seem relevant will be examined even if neglected by works on rhetoric, the Ars Poetica, and other obvious sources.

Romans and the Greek language

We have seen that decorum was a matter of adapting oneself to one's audience. The language one chooses to speak or write is obviously a fundamental part of this: one might expect a speaker, if he could, to use the language of his audience; the language chosen by a writer who knows more than one says something about what he takes his audience to be. In fact strong conventions seem to have governed the language used when Greeks and Romans came together, as well as that used by Romans when writing.

Romans seem to have had knowledge of Greek from the early third century. Although Postumius' Greek was laughed at for its mistakes in 282, in a speech made at Tarentum,

two years later Pyrrhus' envoy Cineas was able to address the Senate without an interpreter.[92] But restrictions seem to have grown up governing the contexts in which Greek could be used. In 155, for instance, the embassy of three philosophers was obliged to address the Senate through an interpreter.[93] Dubuisson suggests that this was not because the audience had an imperfect command of Greek, but part of a Roman trend to protect Roman dignity by ruling out the use of Greek in official contexts.[94] Even philhellenes whose competence was not in question did not use Greek in such contexts; Aemilius Paulus used Greek to speak to the captured Perseus, but Latin to announce the fate of Macedonia at Amphipolis;[95] a herald, not Flamininus, proclaimed the liberty of Greece in Greek at the Isthmian games.[96] In the first century, Cicero used Greek to address the Senate in Syracuse, and was taken aside afterward by the praetor Metellus for a scolding.[97]

The connection between preserving Roman dignity and refusing to deal with Greeks in their own language is made explicit by Valerius Maximus, who speaks of an ancient practice among Roman magistrates of giving responses to Greeks only in Latin, as well as forcing them so speak through an interpreter, not only in Rome, but even in Greece and Asia.[98]

92 Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Ant. Rom. 19.5, Appian, Samn. 7; Plutarch, Pyrrhus 18. See P. Boyancé, 'La connaissance du grec à Rome', REL 34 (1956), 111-131, M. Dubuisson, Problèmes du Bilinguisme Romain , Les Études Classiques 49 (1981), 27-45, N. Petrochilus, Roman Attitudes to the Greeks (Athens, 1974).

93 Aulus Gellius 6.14.9

94 Op. cit., 37f

95 Livy 45.8; 45.29. In 191 Cato had addressed the Athenians in Latin, 'ἐμμένων τοῖς πατρίοις' (Plutarch, Cato Mai. 12.5)

96 Polybius 18.46.4, Livy 33.32.5, Valerius Maximus 4.8.5 (to be inferred from the fact that the audience immediately understood the proclamation).

97 Verr.2.4.147. Dubuisson thnks that Cicero's self-defence shows that he knew he was on weak ground. He takes the cases where Romans used Greek on public occasions to be exceptions, mentioned because they were unusual ('Problèmes', p.41): e.g. Crassus (cos. 131), sent on a mission to Asia, who spoke five dialects of Greek (Q.11.2.50,V.Max.8.7.6); Ti. Sempronius Gracchus, who addressed the Rhodians in Greek (Cic. Brut. 79).

98 2.2.2: . . . illud quoque magna cum perseverantia custodiebant ne Graecis umquam nisi Latine responsa darent. Quin etiam ipsos linguae volubilitate, qua plurimum valent, excussa per interpretem loqui cogebant non in urbe tantum nostra, sed etiam in Graecia et Asia, qua scilicet Latinae vocis honos per omnes gentes venerabilior diffunderetur.

Dubuisson argues that these restrictions are connected with the sense of inferiority felt by Romans, and in particular the Roman upper classes, when confronted by Greek culture. Intellectual culture was, in antiquity, the monopoly of the leisured classes, those in charge of things; their attitude to another language thus manifested itself through official channels.[99] What is striking is the way that use of a particular language is tied up in various ways with the status of a certain class of individuals: on the one hand, in certain contexts members of that class must be addressed in their own language, and on the other they themselves are not free to take advantage of their bilingualism in certain contexts, but must stick to Latin.

Conventions also surrounded the language to be used in various literary genres. Works of law, a native form, were written in Latin; dramatic and narrative poetry were first written in Latin by foreigners and slaves (Livius Andronicus produced the first epic in Latin when he translated the Odyssey for his school in the 3rd century).[100] History was first written by upper class Romans, in Greek.

It is worth dwelling for a moment on the development of this genre, which is of considerable interest. Various reasons have been suggested for the use of Greek for the first histories - desire to present Rome favourably to the Greek world, the fact that Greek was the language of the

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99 Op. cit., p. 37; Dubuisson argues elsewhere that the development of the phrase 'utraque lingua' also reflects Roman attempts to establish Latin on a par with a language perceived to have prestige ('Utraque lingua', Antiquité Classique 50 (1981)).

100 See J. Kaimio, The Romans and the Greek Language, Comm. Hum. Litt. 64 (1979), 212-14, 261-2 (and, on the general question of the language used for various genres at various times, Sec. 52, 'Roman Authors Writing in Greek', pp. 207-271); also A. Opelt, 'La coscienza linguistica dei Romani', A&R 14 (1969), 21-37.

educated, like French in 18th century Germany, the close influence of Hellenistic practitioners of the genre, the poverty of the Latin language.[101] The convention was largely brought to an end by Cato, who mocked Postumius Albinus for introducing his history with a plea for indulgence for faults in Greek: no one had forced him to write Greek.[102] But Greek must have seemed the obvious language in which to write; Postumius' apology, on the other hand, was perhaps one way of affirming Roman identity while using another language, comparable to the deliberate mistakes which Lucullus later included in his history of the Mithridatic War.[103] If later writers were able to write in Latin, this may have been due in part to the extensive efforts of Cato himself, whose works set the ground for some kind of Latin prose.[104] It seems clear, however, that writers of history were in an awkward position: the wish to address a wide audience might indicate Greek as a suitable language, the wish to seem solidly Roman might make undue proficiency seem undesirable. While most Roman historians after Cato used Latin,[105] the wish to reach a wider audience sometimes prevailed: one might hire a Greek to write about one's achievements, or, like Cicero, write about them oneself.[106]

101 See H. Haffter, 'Patrii sermonis egestas bei den frühesten römischen Geschichtsschreibern', in Latinität und alte Kirche, Festschrift Hanslik, WS Beiheft 8 (1977), 101-8.

102 Polybius 39.1; Plutarch, Cato Maior, 12,6; Gellius 11,8; Macr. Sat. 1, praef. 13-16.

103 For the apology, see Gellius 11.8.3: 'sum homo Romanus, natus in Latio, Graeca oratio a nobis alienissima est'. For Lucullus, Ad Att. 1.19.10: ' . . . non dicam quod tibi, ut opinor, Panhormi Lucullus de suis historiis dixerat, se, quo facilius illas probaret Romani hominis esse, idcirco barbara quaedam et soloeca dispersisse'.

104 See Haffter, op. cit. pp. 105ff.

105 See H. Peter, Historicorum Romanorum Reliquiae (Leipzig, 1914)

106 On wider audience for Greek, Pro Archia 10.23; on Cicero, Ad Att. 1.19.10 and 1.20.6; for other historians in Greek, cf. Cicero, TD 5.112, also Peter, HRR 1,ccxl-xli (Cn. Aufidius, in Cicero's youth); Athen. 4,168d (Rutilius, exiled 93 B.C.); Plutarch, Lucullus 1.7-8.

One implication of the development traced above is that if one wrote in Latin one addressed one's fellow Romans alone. In philosophy, however, there seems to have been a peculiar situation in which Romans themselves were likely to ignore anything written in their language. Those who were interested in philosophy were used to reading it in Greek, if not in writing it, so that Cicero thinks it necessary to defend himself for writing an original work in Latin on the subject.[107]

Considerations of decorum, then, governed choice of language. Greek had the attractions of literary tradition in the prestigious genres; Latin was attractive for nationalistic reasons. If one decided to write in Latin, however, one faced a further problem: Greek gave an impressive model of what a literary language should be like, and suggested that Latin needed to be brought up to scratch. The means for doing this seem to have been themselves subject to decorum.

Development of Latin Literary Language

When Greek forms were taken up in Latin, this could mean that the author was under pressure to improve the Latin language in some way or other. The first attempts to render Greek poems in Latin, and to produce similar Latin poetry using Greek verse forms, had to struggle with the distinctive phonetic properties of Latin. Deficiencies in Latin vocabulary were revealed both by these efforts, and by later attempts to discuss technical subjects native to Greece (e.g. grammar, rhetoric, philosophy).[108]

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107 De finibus 1.1ff

108 On the problems of technical language, see e.g. De fin. 3.4-5, 3.15, Seneca, Ep. 58.1, Lucretius, 1.832.

As far as vocabulary was concerned, there were two possibilities: one might borrow Greek words, or one might try to find a Latin equivalent, perhaps drawing on archaisms or dialect forms to achieve certain registers. The degree of resistance to borrowing varied. It was characteristic of early Latin epic to avoid recourse to Greek words, aiming instead at the creation of a literary Latin - Livius Andronicus uses 'Camena' instead of 'Musa', for instance.[109] Writers in less serious genres, on the other hand, seem to have been less concerned - Plautus borrows Greek words quite unselfconsciously.[110] In the first century, certain writers show considerable interest in purity, at least in formal or literary contexts: Cicero uses Greek words freely in his letters, tries to avoid them in his philosophy, and uses them only rarely in the speeches.[111] Augustus likewise was much more liberal with Greek in letters than in published work.[112] Horace criticises Lucilius for strewing his language with Greek, and avoids this himself.[113]

On the other hand, writers who tried to avoid borrowing from Greek tried other expedients. The early writers of epic experimented with archaisms and neologisms, especially compounds;[114] Cicero tried to work out Latin equivalents

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109 Gellius 18.9.5. See J. Marouzeau, Traité de stylistique latine (2nd ed., Paris, 1946), 171, Kaimio, op.cit., 303ff.

110 See A. Meillet, Esquisse d'une Histoire de la Langue Latine (Paris, 1966), 109ff, 178ff, 193ff on the free use of Greek by Plautus, avoidance of Greek in serious genres, and 187ff on the greater restraint of Terence, who uses Greek either when no Latin term is available, or for characterisation.

111 On Cicero's use of Greek, see H. Rose, 'The Greek of Cicero', JHS 41 (1921), L. Laurand, Études sur le style des discours de Cicéron, pp. 70-71, P. Oksala, Die griechischen Lehnwörter in den Prosaschriften Ciceros (Helsinki, 1953).

112 See H. Bardon, Les empereurs et les lettres latines (2nd ed., Paris, 1968), 39-40, and Quintilian, 1.6.19.

113 Horace, Sat. 1.10.20ff

114 See L. Palmer, The Latin Language (London, 1954), 97ff.

for Greek philosophical terms;[115] Horace argues for innovations of language by the poet.[116] The last two connect such inventions with enrichment of the language.[116a]

The comments of Horace and Cicero on this subject overlap, to some extent, with another issue: the relation between theories of grammar, of correctness of language, and rhetorical studies, and in particular the relation between the concepts of correctness and propriety. It will be convenient to discuss them here, however, with the proviso that all cannot yet be said.

Cicero

Cicero's technical works, especially the philosophical ones, force him to address the problem of concepts for which no Latin words are available - a problem made evident, often, because words were available in Greek. In both de finibus and Academica the question is raised: how are abstruse philosophical concepts to be expressed in Latin? Three solutions are offered: one could borrow Greek words, or invent Latin words to translate them, or use periphrasis. The first two are most economical, but less palatable, imposing the use of unfamiliar words. The first is least acceptable (the speaker is given the right to use Greek words if he needs them, but says he will try not to use any except those already part of Latin).[117] This is understandable, since homogeneity of language seems to have become an issue by Cicero's day;[118] in de officiis it is used as an analogue

115 On his attempts to find suitable equivalents, see ad Att. 13,21,3, Ac. Post. 2,5-6 and see Palmer, op. cit., 128.

116 Ep. II.2.115ff (including revivals), A.P. 48ff.

116a Cicero, Academica 1.26, Horace, Ep. II.2.120-1, A.P. 55-7

117 Ac. Post. 1,25; de fin. 3,15-16 (cf. 3,3-4)

118 See Kaimio, op. cit., 307-8

for the consistency to one's nature which is ethical decorum.[119] But invented words also need defence. At Ac. Post. 1.26 Varro is assured that he will do well by his countrymen if he enriches their vocabulary, but particular inventions call for apology: 'qualitas', coined at 1.25 to translate the Greek 'ποιότης', is then used self-consciously several times to make it familiar to his hearers.[120] Cicero seems to be working out the diction appropriate to a new (Latin) genre. At De Fin. 3.3-4 he points out that all specialised subjects, even agriculture, are allowed their own terminology. Philosophy is in the same position: because of its specialised aims, it cannot be confined to ordinary language, but he would like it to violate custom as little as possible.

In a technical subject, then, or at least in a new one, the claims of custom must be taken into account. Ordinary usage is the first standard applied; it is this, for instance, which makes Greek terms like rhetorica acceptable. But in the final analysis the needs of the specialist are allowed to have priority.

This fits with Cicero's discussion of the various arts at the beginning of De Oratore. In most subjects, the opinion of the expert carries most weight; only in oratory

119 (1,111) Omnino si quicquam est decorum, nihil est profecto magis quam aequabilitas universae vitae, tum singularum actionum, quam conservare non possis, si aliorum naturam imitans omittas tuam. Ut enim sermone eo debemus uti, qui innatus est nobis, ne ut quidam Graeca verba inculcantes iure optimo rideamur, sic in actiones omnemque vitam nullam discrepantiam conferre debemus. Cf. also TD1,15 (M. offers to give an aphorism of Epicharmus' in Latin): Dicam, si potero, Latine. Scis enim me Graece loqui in Latino sermone non plus solere quam in Graeco Latine. A.: Et recte quidem.

120 One option which is not mentioned is the possibility of using a common Latin word, but giving it a technical meaning - something Cicero himself does, e.g. with 'decorum' itself, and with 'inhibere' and 'sustinere' as possible equivalents for ἐποχή (Ad Att. 13.31.3).

must the aim of the speaker be, above all, to win the approval of the public.[121] Cicero is making a point about oratory in general rather than about the use of language in particular, but the passage explains a great deal about his views on correctness of language in different contexts. This can be summed up as follows: correctness is a matter of following custom (consuetudo), or rather that of educated men, unless there is a particular object to be gained in departing from it. In philosophy, precision counts as such an object; in oratory, departures can be only for stylistic purposes.[122]

I shall return to Cicero's views on the nature of correctness in oratory later on, when dealing with the place of correctness in Roman rhetoric. For the moment, it should be noted that Cicero thinks it acceptable to remedy the 'patrii sermonis egestas' only in certain contexts: one does not do this in oratory, just as one does not, generally, use Greek words.[123] In oratory, departures from ordinary usage are used to achieve effects such as the elevation of language, and the types of departure are comparable to those suitable to poetry, though they must be used in moderation: words which were unusual or were common but used with unusual meaning (e.g. neologism,

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121 1.3.12: dicendi autem omnis ratio in medio posita communi quodam in usu atque in hominum ore et sermone versatur, ut in ceteris id maxime excellat, quod longissime sit ab imperitorum intellegentia sensuque disiunctum, in dicendo autem vitium vel maximum sit a vulgari genere orationis atque a consuetudine communis sensus abhorrere.

122 οἴχεται is used in a Plautine quotation at In Pisonem 61 (putatively to the senate), but the circumstances were unusual. Laurand points out that 'l'orateur ne cite pas ce vers lui-même, mais prétend rapporter une réflexion faite par un secrétaire public au service de Pison, et cette réflexion, c'est Pison qui est censé la raconter' (op. cit., 1.71). Cf. also Nisbet ad loc.

123 One might compare Varro, who thinks that the public should reform usage to be more analogical, but that orators, who must conform to the public, must follow custom. Poets, who can get away with more, can be stricter analogists. (DLL 9.17)

metaphor).[124] This means that the claims of Latinity cannot call for 'unmotivated' features of style, e.g. unusual words whose unusualness is not there for effect, but as a side effect of an attempt at correctness or precision.

Horace

Horace has something in common with this view: he accepts, as Cicero does, the traditional view that poetry can be allowed unusual words for the sake of heightening diction. The satyr play, for instance, will neither be too commonplace, using only ordinary language, nor too ornate:[125]

> non ego inornata et dominantia nomina solum
> verbaque, Pisones, Satyrorum scriptor amabo:
> nec sic enitar tragico differre colori,
> ut nihil intersit Davusne loquatur an heros . . .

But his treatment of poetic language is more complex, because involving several issues: the fact that excellent poetry may be produced by the use of ordinary words;[126] the nature of languages generally, which are subject to change, custom or usage determining what counts as correct at any given time;[127] the possibility of directing this change, if one is a poet, by trying to control the words added or neglected on aesthetic principles.[128] In the two passages where Horace pays most attention to language, the important point seems to be that the poet will enrich

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124 Orator 80, De Oratore 3.149ff.

125 A.P. 234ff. Horace follows his own precepts here: dominantia is itself a calque for κύρια, and tragico and heros are straight transliterations of Greek words.

126 A.P. 46ff: in verbis etiam tenuis cautusque serendis
dixeris egregie notum si callida verbum
reddiderit iunctura novum . . .

127 A.P. 60ff, perhaps Epistle II,2,119.

128 Epistle II,2,120ff.

the language by the invention or revival of words.[129] The 'unusual' words are not valuable because unusual, and so conferring a poetic tone, but because they fill a gap - supply names, e.g., for unnamed concepts - or have an intrinsic beauty which makes them not just suitable to poetry but desirable more generally as part of common usage. The poet, then, uses poetic licence to reform language. Horace's point is rather like that made by Varro, who had said that everyone ought to reform custom; the orator could not get away with it, poets could.[130]

This raises some interesting points. First, this view of the poet's treatment of language fits a little oddly with the standard account of propriety of diction, according to which strange words are characteristically 'poetic' and meant to be separate from ordinary language. The notion that poetic effect, or beautiful diction, could be achieved by the skilful combination of ordinary words, was not new, and had often been mentioned by Greek writers who also believed in the uses of elevated diction.[131] But this had gone with a synchronic view of language, in which the important factors determining the effect of vocabulary, in particular the words which were common or unusual to a particular poet or audience, were the only ones which needed to be considered. Horace adds to this a diachronic view of language: unusual words may be

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129 Epistle II,2,120ff, A.P. 48ff, 55-9:

> ego cur, acquirere pauca
> si possum, invideor, cum lingua Catonis et Enni
> sermonem patrium ditaverit et nova rerum
> nomina protulerit?

130 de lingua Latina 9.5-6 and 115-16

131 Ar. Rhet. 1404b18-25; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, dcv 3, UR II,9, 6-9; 'Longinus' 40,2ff.

added to the general pool. In other words, while the poet may use exotic vocabulary for its poetic connotations, he may also use unusual words, in the interests of refining the language, as an extension of the task of skilful composition of ordinary words. It looks as if unusual words need not always be 'ornamental diction'.

This attitude to language and diction is closely bound up with Horace's position as a Latin poet; it is both distinctively Latin and distinctively Horatian. An important theme in both the Ars Poetica and Epistle to Augustus is the need for hard work to make poetry good, and in the latter, especially, the notion that Latin poets had been less conscientious in this than Greeks.[132] Horace criticises the carelessness of earlier Latin poets; presumably they had not achieved the skilful composition he wants. The modern poet has not got the resource of good models in his own language, is forced to set his own standards; this is, in a sense, true of the language in which he works as well. The language used is not something that can be taken for granted unless special ornament is called for: the basic stuff of composition needs to be improved. The poet is not to accept as 'ordinary language' what is actually spoken: custom, usage may be improved on if more beautiful, or useful, words are added to it, 'bad' ones got rid of: hard work is needed to make a 'middle' register suited to literature. Carrying this out, the poet is essentially coping with the state of Latin, still rough compared with Greek, not yet

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132 Epistle 2.1.167ff, A.P. 285ff

tamed to civilised uses, which had been most striking in early poetic attempts.

This suits not only the state of Latin literature, but the kinds of poetry which interest Horace. These were not easily fitted into categories of diction most often applied to drama and epic; his treatment of these major genres accepts traditional proprieties (of character, etc.), but in discussions of language he betrays his own concerns. These are idiosyncratic. Horace might be said to follow 'Callimachean' or 'Alexandrian' principles in disapproving of high flights and bombast, in considering it a dangerous business to attempt the major genres. **The** style he prefers, however, is quite different from those of the Alexandrians. The philological studies of the latter had encouraged preciosity, and the development of extremely self-conscious literary diction. Horace, on the hand, is anxious that unusual words not stand out; that the poet's language be distinguished from common usage chiefly by the artful use made of it. Horace's originality lies in combining this with a subtler view of the constitution of ordinary language, and in particular with the idea that the poet need not be restricted to the language actually in use to achieve this elegant synthesis. Unusual words need not connote the poetical.

Though elegance of Latin has connections with propriety in both Cicero and Horace, there are important differences between their views on the subject. To begin with the most obvious point, Cicero does not mind purple diction in poetry; he is happy to admit considerable licence to poets in the

direction of archaisms, coinages, etc. (In fact this is unsurprising, since some of his favourite poets are those with whom Horace finds fault.) But it is precisely the right to gorgeous diction that Horace restricts. Horace, on the other hand, thinks that the apt revival of words or invention of new ones need not be inconsistent with observing ordinary usage, that these need not be the usual poetic decoration but a contribution of the language. Cicero would probably have resisted this: enrichment of the language was reserved for, e.g., philosophical writing, was not something an orator could indulge in without drawing unwanted attention to himself. In the context of oratory, unusual words ought to keep 'poetic' connotations so as to be an occasional resource for heightened diction.[133] In this respect Horace faces the problems raised by the Latin language in a way that Cicero does not. He comes to grips with the question of how an adequate literary language is to be found which does not, by its refinements, strike the hearer as simply exotic, literary, poetic.

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133 Cicero sometimes says that the orator might be brave (in his use of language), but in practice he shrinks from it. See Laurand, op. cit., 1.51, 68-9, 91.

While one cannot be sure how representative Cicero and Horace were, there are anecdotes which suggest continuing preoccupation with the degree and kind of correctness to be expected of literary language, and with the words that made it up. Augustus objected to Tiberius' archaisms and to Maecenas' neologisms, and avoided both himself.[134] Asinius Pollio criticised Sallust's archaisms, and blamed them on the collaboration of his teacher, L. Ateius Philologus. Suetonius finds this surprising, since the grammarian himself had told Pollio to stick to ordinary language and avoid the excesses of Sallust:

> Quo magis miror Asinium credidisse, antiqua eum verba et figuras solitum esse colligere Sallustio, cum sibi sciat nihil aliud suadere quam ut noto civilique et proprio sermone utatur, vitetque maxime obscuritatem Sallustii et audaciam in translationibus. (De Gramm. 10)

Pollio was apparently free with the use of 'base' ordinary words,[135] and may have objected to archaism as an extreme heightening of diction - an illegitimate attempt to give history some of the resources of poetry. What these stories suggest, however, is lack of consensus about the effect of using words of a certain sort, rather than about the kind of context or content which could justify them.

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134 Suetonius, Augustus 86

135 Seneca, Contr. 7, pr. 3

Seneca

Seneca shows the same unease about odd words, and the extent to which one ought to use this means of departure from usage. He thinks both that correctness in a language is determined by custom, which varies with time (so that one ought not to differ from it too much), and that one should not follow this too slavishly.[136] He criticises both those who use only an antique vocabulary, and those who use only common words:

> multi ex alieno saeculo petunt verba . . . quidam contra, dum nihil nisi tritum et usitatum volunt, in sordes incidunt. utrumque diverso genere corruptum est, tam mehercules quam nolle nisi splendidis uti ac sonantibus et poeticis, necessaria atque in usu posita vitare. (114,13-14)

Despite the precedent set by Cicero, he is also surprisingly touchy about the invention of philosophical terms:

> Quanta verborum nobis paupertas, immo egestas sit, numquam magis quam hodierno die intellexi. Mille res inciderunt, cum forte de Platone loqueremur, quae nomina desiderarent nec haberent, quaedam vero ⟨quae⟩ cum habuissent fastidio nostro perdidissent . . . (58,1)

He decides to use the word 'essentia', using Cicero as authority, but pretends, at least, to fear resistance from his correspondent.[137] Seneca, like Cicero, finds departures from usage easiest to criticise as aspects of style: when words are invented to supply the deficiencies of a technical subject rather than with style in view, there was the danger that the style that came as side product might be unpleasant.

Archaisms and neologisms which were meant to be striking were more straightforward. For Seneca, older words were no

136 Epistle 114.13-14

137 Cf. de tranqu. 2,3 on tranquillitas

better than others, since usage changes and makes different words correct at different times. Literary language ought, on the whole, to be made up of the latter, with some additions. He criticises the recherché language of those who turned to archaisms, among other devices, because willing to do anything to avoid common usage: the implication is that these ignore certain facts about what language is like, what determines correctness, by so completely avoiding the ordinary usage which is in fact currently right.[138]

These writers, however, were clearly raising the question of what literary language ought to be like: one possible answer was, simply, unlike what is spoken. This would be a view of propriety of diction comparable to that of Greek Atticists, with the difference that the merit of earlier authors could not be urged as motivation for using their vocabulary. Such a view was capable of variations. It might be thought, for instance, that earlier Latin was purer, so that archaic forms would be sought for their correctness. Or, again, a writer might think it his task, like that of the poet in the Ars Poetica, to reform language, looking always for exactly the right word, resisting the temptation to accept the first common one to come to mind.

All of these views imply different assumptions about the relation between correctness of language and propriety of diction. The first assumes that what is current may be correct but is uninteresting, the second that correctness is

138 Cf. Quintilian, 10.2.13.

important to suitable literary style and that it is a matter of specialist knowledge, the third that correctness is in some way a matter of good taste, and that refinement of language is proper to literary works.

Grammar and rhetoric: correctness and propriety

We have seen that the contexts in which Latin was used were governed by propriety, and that this standard also governed the adaptation of the language to purposes first suggested by Greek literature. Another important component in Roman attitudes to Latin was the status given to variant forms of the language (attitudes to, e.g., unusual accents, words and forms); this would include reactions to attempts to reform the language, either by remedying shortcomings of vocabulary (see above), or by adopting certain usages in accordance with a theory of grammatical correctness. Roman works on rhetoric, however, gave more attention to such attitudes than Greek ones had done, so it will be more convenient to discuss them in connection with the question of correctness in rhetoric.

Questions of Grammar

When Aristotle had written on rhetoric, there was as yet no scientific grammar (Aristotle himself was one of the first to set out principles of grammar).[139] By the time Roman rhetorics came to be written, some including the Theophrastean virtue of purity of language as a desideratum of style, grammar was not only scientific but a subject of controversy. Aristarchus had argued that language was governed by analogy in its inflections (these included derivatives); Crates had argued that usage also showed certain anomalies for which no rule could be given. It seems

139 See R. Robins, Ancient and Mediaeval Grammatical Theory (London, 1931)

likely that the issue would have been known in Rome, since Crates visited the city in 168, and his pupil Panaetius was associated with Scipio Aemilianus. There is also evidence of early interest in Rome in correctness of language, though it is not clear whether this is to be thought of in the context of the grammatical controversy. Accius and Lucilius seem to have been interested in questions of grammar and orthography; Scipio is said to have used unusual forms, such as 'potestur', and 'reque eapse' instead of 'reque ipsa'; Terence prides himself on his purity of language.[140]

There were thus various possible influences on the rhetorical concept of Latinitas, which might turn out to have connections with decorum. Three possibilities are most important. First, the analogy/anomaly controversy might be taken to involve prescriptions for language. Originally a debate about which description of language was correct, the opposition between observed regularities and anomalous usage could degenerate into arguments about what language ought to be like.[141] An analogist might then face the Protagorean dilemma: should he speak incorrectly, or seem to do so to the uneducated?

Second, arguments about prescriptivism could be given an ethical turn by connecting this with Stoic views on language and rhetoric. Certain scholars have been very

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140 Lucilius, Book 9; Varro DLL 10.70 (Accius began restoring Greek endings to words which, though borrowed, had been given Latin ones); Festus 277, 362; Terence, Heautont. 46 (and cf. Suetonius, Life of Terence, V, quoting an epigram in which Caesar calls the poet 'puri sermonis amator').

141 On the debate, see F. Colson, 'The Analogist and Anomalist Controversy', CQ 13 (1919), 24-36; H. Steinthal, Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft bei den Griechen und Römern (2nd ed., Berlin, 1890, repr. 1961), II.127-61. That analogists were not originally prescriptive is perhaps suggested by the fact that they claimed that the anomalist examples were not anomalies (not that they were wrong). For later examples of analogist prescriptivism, see p.168.

struck by the connection between grammar and rhetoric in Stoicism, and have thought that, if grammar was to have influence on Roman rhetoric, the origin of this influence must have been in Stoic doctrine. Smiley, for instance, thinks that Stoic grammar and rhetoric influenced a series of Roman speakers, whose care for *elegantia* arose from Stoic principles, and in particular from the belief that the virtues of style were to make language properly 'expressive' and 'communicative'.[142] A. Dihle has suggested that the earliest purists could have been neither analogists nor anomalists as such, lacking the body of material used by the one, the well-defined usage appealed to by the other; that Stoic grammar more generally, however, may have lain behind the interest in purity, and eventually have been connected with the history of those who practised the *genus tenue*.[143] Such theories imply that a certain notion of the nature of language, and of linguistic correctness, imposes renunciation of certain affective usages; and that this in turn, being founded in Stoic teaching, implies an ethical ruling on the way language can be used. It has been suggested, for instance, that this very close attention to correctness of language went with Stoic disapproval of artifice and care for perspicuity, and that both, in turn, played an important part in the Roman Atticist movement.[144]

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142 Smiley, 'Latinitas and Ἑλληνισμός', Bull. U. Wisc. 1906

143 A. Dihle, 'Analogie und Atticismus', Hermes 1957, 180-186.

144 For the relevance of propriety to this movement, see Chapter 3.

Third, these attempts to identify solecisms and barbarisms to refine the language by rejecting certain variant forms, might be seen as part of an attempt at standardisation. They might be seen as expressions of a desire for there to be such a thing as good usage, and to mark off its domain, for future use by the literate, cultivated Roman citizen.

The first and third possibilities seem to me to have had importance for later rhetoric (though, with regard to the first, it is hard to know precisely _when_ grammar made its presence felt). They will therefore be discussed at relevant points in the following section on rhetoric. The second seems much less likely. The connection between _elegantia_ and Stoicism is hard to demonstrate. Cicero does not tell us enough about the speakers characterised in the _Brutus_ by _elegantia_ to make it clear whether they even aimed at this on principle. Moreover rhetoric seems to have been able to accommodate Stoic grammar without also taking over its views of language and style: the auctor ad Herennium shows Stoic influence in his definition of _elegantia_, but fits the products of Stoic grammar into a system where Theophrastus' virtue of ornament also has an important place. Since the Theophrastean virtues included clarity and correctness of language, attention to these cannot be used to show Stoic influence without, for instance, some sign that they were sought to the exclusion of other qualities. (Hence, later, Quintilian's interest in _perspicuitas_ is not by itself enough to show Stoic views of language.)

Connections between grammar and rhetoric

One can find hints of early connections between attention to language and the aims of oratory in the Brutus, where Cicero gives a history of Roman speakers. Of particularinterest is the account of the place of Latinity in eloquence which is given to Atticus at 258ff. Latinity is said to be the necessary basis for eloquence.[145] Earlier speakers were almost all notable for the purity of their Latin, though innocent of grammar; their excellence arose from following the good usage they heard around them.[146] More recently, however, usage has been corrupted by the influx of speakers from outside ('multi inquinate loquentes ex diversis locis'); therefore the language must be purged, by the use of theory, which is less changeable than usage:

> expurgandus est sermo et adhibenda tamquam obrussa ratio, quae mutari non potest, nec utendum pravissima consuetudinis regula. (258)

But importing grammatical theory into oratory is made to seem dangerous. An anecdote is told at the expense of Sisenna, who had rationalised ordinary language to the extent of inventing queer new words, and drew ridicule upon himself in court by using the invention 'sputatilica':

> Maximi risus; sed ille tamen familiaris meus recte loqui putabat esse inusitate loqui. (260)

What is wanted, then, is the method of Caesar, which did not lead to oddities: he used theory to correct bad

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145 Brutus 258

146 Ibid.

usage by good.[147]

Two points are worth noting. First, the attitude to linguistic change: when for the worse, this is the fault of people not native to the city. It is the business of grammatical theory to prevent such changes. Second, the attitude to correction by rule: this must not produce oddities.

These points appear elsewhere in Cicero's rhetorica, sometimes with modifications; the view of language implied is not an entirely coherent one. If earlier writers used pure Latin, and the language has since been corrupted, one might expect that correctness would involve return to earlier forms - but Cicero rejects this as a form of imitation.[148] If what is accepted as good usage can change, on the other hand, new forms should not be considered incorrect; but Cicero says that, though he has come to say 'pulcher' instead of 'pulcer', according to common usage, he knows what is correct.[149]

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147 Brutus 261, Caesar autem rationem adhibens consuetudinem vitiosam et corruptam pura et incorrupta consuetudine emendat. Cf. Varro, de lingua Latina 9,17. In fact Caesar produced a few oddities - gen. diē, dat. senatu - but Cicero is being polite.

148 de oratore 3,39, Sunt enim illi veteres, qui ornare nondum poterant ea quae dicebant, omnes prope praeclare locuti; quorum sermone adsuefacti qui erunt, ne cupientes quidem poterunt loqui nisi Latine. Neque tamen erit utendum verbis eis quibus iam consuetudo nostra non utitur, nisi quando ornandi causa parce, quod ostendam . . .

149 Certain forms are agreed to be correct, whether by analogy or authority, but the speaker is justified in ignoring this if custom is on his side, and admits a more agreeable or intelligible effect. For the correct opposed to the ancient and customary usage, see Orator 155; for the correct opposed to the customary, 156, 157; for the use of the ancients opposed to custom, 160: Quin ego ipse, cum scirem ita maiores locutos esse, ut nusquam nisi in vocali aspiratione uterentur, loquebar sic, ut pulcros, Cetegos, triumpos, Cartaginem dicerem; aliquando, idque sero, convicio aurium cum extorta mihi veritas esset, usum loquendi populo concessi, scientiam mihi reservavi.

Both the nature and importance of correctness are determined, to a large extent, by decorum. This is especially clear in two cases: the reasons for avoiding 'inusitata verba' and the reasons for wanting command of the right kind of Latin.

The strong resistance to inusitata verba, to be found in Caesar and Varro as well, is closely connected with a sense for the demands of oratory. On the one hand, these writers seem to have thought that one should speak in a way that is acceptable to one's audience. Caesar's de analogia, which presented Latinity as the foundation of eloquence, included the warning to avoid unusual words 'tamquam scopulum'.[150] Varro thinks that language ought to be more analogical, but that the orator must follow the usage of the public; poets, who are allowed more licence, can revise language.[151] Sisenna's eccentric use of theory was particularly unfortunate because it gave an opponent an opportunity for ridicule; this was presumably the danger one ran in following analogy or other theory consistently. On the other hand, if theory led one to invent forms and revive old ones, this might leave the stylistic register of one's language indeterminate. Cicero thinks such words should be used sparingly in oratory (though they can be used more freely in poetry), and 'ornandi causa'.[152] Two dangers were perhaps

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150 Gellius 1.10.4

151 DLL 9.5-6, Itaque populus universus debet in omnibus verbis uti analogia et, si perperam est consuetus, corrigere se ipsum, cum orator non debeat in omnibus uti, quod sine offensione non potest facere, cum poeta transilire lineas impune possit. Cf. 9.114-15.

152 See note 129. For devices allowed freely to poets, with restrictions to orators, see De Or. 3.153, Or. 68.

envisaged: that unusual words might be used without regard to the fact that their oddness would have stylistic connotations; and that indiscriminate use of such words might diminish the power of unusual diction, used selectively, to heighten style.

The reasons for the importance of purity emerge more clearly in Roman works than they had done in Greek ones. Good usage is specifically identified with that to be found at Rome, and includes even such nuances as accent.[153] Theory thus accommodates the fact that command of this prestigious dialect was an important part of a speaker's self-presentation; use of it puts the speaker on the right side of prejudices against foreigners and provincials, in favour of the past and the mos maiorum.[154] The assumption is that rhetoric is being learnt to be put to use in the assemblies and courts of Rome; it is with the audiences to be found there that the speaker's usage must coincide.

We have now seen three areas where the standards of Latinity required definition, and where decorum seemed to play an important part in determining it: in the extent to which it was compatible with use of Greek; in the kinds of invention which could remedy gaps in vocabulary; in the relation between theoretical grammar and customary usage of a prestigious form.

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153 Quintilian 8.1.2-3, (3) Et in Tito Livio... putat inesse Pollio Asinius quandam Patavinitatem. Quare, si fieri potest, et verba omnia et vox huius alumnum urbis oleant, ut oratio Romana plane videatur, non civitate donata. Cicero, De Or. 3,44.

154 See J.P.V.D. Balsdon, Romans and Aliens (London, 1979), 128ff.

In each case, circumstances and genre help to determine what standard of correctness should be aimed at. Oratory, for instance, cannot aim at the precision of terminology of philosophy: this would involve an undesirable use of neologisms. It is perhaps a little surprising, then, that the question of the constitution of the language enters so little into Cicero's discussions of decorum. Matters of style and language are considered within Theophrastus' scheme of four virtues, in which purity of language is independent of propriety and ornament. Crassus' claim that one must be able to speak Latine before one can do so ornate is a recognisable descendant of Aristotle's view, that good Greek was a presupposition of style; but since the standards for cultivated speech seem still to have been a matter for debate, it is a little surprising to find the subject, apparently, something to have been dispatched at school.

It may be that Cicero thought correctness irrelevant to questions of decorum, and therefore mentioned no connections between the two. But I suspect that something more interesting has happened. We have seen that correctness was not the unproblematic standard Crassus seems to suggest. By ignoring this, Cicero may be trying to put Latin rhetoric on a par with Greek, as a discipline which can take rudiments for granted; such an approach

treats the Latin language as one susceptible of use by the virtuoso.[155] That is to say, Cicero's account of correctness, its relation to propriety of style and to the various techniques of the orator, is superficially very like Greek accounts because he wanted it to be like them. Issues where Latin seems to be at a disadvantage are avoided.

Quintilian

The Institutio Oratoria is meant to cover the entire training of the speaker, not just the advanced stages; consequently the elementary subject of Latinity receives more detailed discussion than Cicero had given it. Latinity and decorum have several points of contact in the work. Quintilian's detailed discussion of correctness shows some of confusions over categories which were mentioned at the beginning of this chapter: though correctness is meant to be kept separate from propriety, Quintilian has trouble keeping it that way. Giving an account of ornatus, for instance, within the scheme of correct language, gives him difficulties. The reasons why Latinity is important, moreover, involve the accommodation of the speaker to the attitudes of the audience which is, in Quintilian's own view, part of decorum. Some of the linguistic prejudices which we have seen before reappear:

155 Whether good Greek was actually unproblematic when Aristotle wrote is, as we have seen, another matter.

the speaker should not sound pedantic (so grammatical theory should be kept in its place), if he makes innovations in vocabulary he must keep them from being too obtrusive, he should not use substandard variants (e.g. sound rustic or foreign).

Quintilian's virtues of style, given in various forms, are correctness, clarity, and ornament; propriety is most important but can be classed under ornament.[156] Ornament is chiefly contrasted with clarity: in the case of individual words, the latter uses propria verba, the former translata.[157] Correctness presumably covers both: sketching grammar in Book 1, Quintilian engages to discuss single words, and will deal with kinds from both categories.[158] But lists of the virtues given elsewhere suggest that the main division is between 'neutral' language and departures from this, correctness being on the whole part of the former. Latinity seems to be interchangeable with the use of propria verba, the words which, so to speak, really belong to the things they designate.[159]

This view of Latinity as 'neutral' helps to explain the discussion of single words in Book 1, which is a little puzzling as an account of correctness. We are given

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156 I.O. 1.5.1

157 8.3.15

158 1.5.3

159 Compare 8.pr.26, 'quasi vero sit ulla verborum nisi rei cohaerentium virtus; quae ut propria sint et dilucida et ornata et apte conlocentur, si tota vita laborandum est, omnis studiorum fructus amissus est.' with 8.pr. 31, 'Nam cum Latina, significantia, ornata, cum apte sunt conlocata, quid amplius laboremus?'

examples of words which it is wrong, strictly speaking, to use, but which are still acceptable usage, and of others which are not precisely wrong but are inadvisable. On the one hand there are the simplest failures of correctness, barbarisms and solecisms. Certain forms which should strictly be included among these are not counted, either because they are customary (so presumably not perceptible as departures from the 'neutral' base),[160] or because they are either used by poets or intentional, and so classed as figures (counting as stylistic departures rather than as mistakes).[161] Correct language, on the other hand, is organised into pairs of oppositions between a primary kind of word - native, simple, 'proper' (propria),[162] common - and one differing or departing from this - foreign, compound, metaphor, invented.[163] Quintilian talks about the ways the departures are incorporated into correct Latin, e.g. in declining words of Greek origin;[164] certain departures, such as compound words and

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160 Prima barbarismi ac soloecismi foeditas absit. Sed quia interim excusantur haec vitia aut consuetudine aut auctoritate aut vetustate aut denique vicinitate virtutum (nam saepe a figuris ea separare difficile est). . . (1.5.5). Cf. 1.5.13, and (justification by antiquity) 1.5.52.

161 1.5.53-54, cf. 1.5.5, 1.5.11.

162 There is no satisfactory English equivalent for 'propria'; it seems to mean something like 'the word which belongs to a thing'.

163 1.5.3

164 1.5.59-64: to be strictly correct, one should use Latin terminations, but there are certain words where either Latin or Greek endings can be used: 'In ceteris, quae poterunt utroque modo non indecenter efferri, qui Graecam figuram sequi malet, non Latine quidem sed tamen citra reprehensionem loquetur'.

inventions, are perfectly correct but not always acceptable. Compounds do not suit Latin as well as Greek;[165] inventing words is dangerous, since they are either accepted into usage, so that one loses the credit, or one is made to look ridiculous.[166]

What this suggests is that the real value of Latinity is meant to lie in approximating to normal educated usage. In this it resembles Aristotle's notion of good Greek; unlike Aristotle, however, Quintilian recognises that there are words which fall outside this which nevertheless are part of the resources of the language, and are drawn on for ornatus.[167] But this means that an account of correct Latin must include constant qualifications about context: certain expressions look like solecisms but are acceptable in poetry, propria verba include archaisms, but these must only be used when ornatus is wanted.[168] What counts as good Latin is thus determined partly by criteria of propriety.

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165 1.5.70: Sed res tota magis Graecos decet, nobis minus succedit: nec id fieri natura puto, sed alienis favemus, ideoque cum κυρταύχενα mirati sumus, incurvicervicum vix a risu defendimus.

166 1.5.71

167 Quintilian sometimes seems uncomfortable with this position, however; in Book 8, for instance, he gives the impression of thinking that propria are the only words which are really Latin, so that anything which is acceptable must fall in that category. Thus even though propria were contrasted with translata in Book 1, and are again in 8, at one point we are told that one form of proprietas is that of a really apt metaphor (8.2.11). Moreover, while propria are said to contribute to clarity, translata to ornatus (8.3.15), Quintilian immediately qualifies this: 'sciamus nihil ornatum esse quod sit inproprium'. (!)

168 8.3.24: propriis dignitatem dat antiquitas (and see in general 1.6.39-41).

Grammar and pedantry

Propriety plays an important part in determining how far grammatical theory can be taken in working out correctness. Correctness is judged according to criteria developed in grammatical theory: 'Sermo constat ratione vetustate, auctoritate, consuetudine' (1.6.1).[169] One needs iudicium, however, to apply these; one should try to follow consuetudo, but in particular that of educated men (which brings one back to iudicium). Attempts to follow any theory consistently lead to absurdities. Strict analogy can lead to perverse violations of custom:[170]

> Idem 'centum milia nummum' et 'fidem deum' ostendant duplices quoque soloecismos esse, quando et casum mutant et numerum; nesciebamus enim ac non consuetudini et decori serviebamus . . .

Good usage is probably conservative,[171] but some scholars carry the preservation of early forms to extremes, even inventing forms whose a priori correctness they have inferred by analogy.[172] Quintilian sometimes argues that such men can be refuted by analogy; sometimes, however, he admits that they are right in theory, but claims that certain forms should be rejected on other grounds. An expression may be grammatically correct, but pedantic, contrary to what is generally accepted, 'Quare mihi non invenuste dici videtur, aliud esse Latine aliud grammatice

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169 These go back at least as far as Varro. Cf. Diomedes, GLK 1,439,15: Latinitas est incorrupte loquendi observatio secundum Romanam linguam. constat autem, ut adserit Varro, his quattuor, natura, analogia, consuetudine, auctoritate. See Dahlmann, 'Varro', RE Suppl. VI, 1200ff.

170 1.6.18 171 1.6.20 172 1.6.21ff

loqui'.[173]

This is the other side of the view mentioned above, that unusual words must be justified by context: no theory can require their use, and departure from 'neutral', normal usage, simply for the sake of correctness. Certain approaches to language are thus ruled out: correctness cannot be a matter of expert knowledge; it is not to be achieved by being scrupulously selective and refining usage. One must avoid the fault criticised in Book 8, of being too fastidious about words:

> Quibusdam tamen nullus est finis calumniandi se et cum singulis paene syllabis commorandi, qui etiam cum optima sunt reperta quaerunt aliquid quod sit magis antiquum remotum inopinatum, nec intellegunt iacere sensus in oratione in qua verba laudantur. (8.Pr.31)

Excessive use of theory would presumably lead to the fault 'a vulgari genere orationis atque a consuetudine communis sensus abhorrere'.[174] Language seems to be yet another area in which the speaker must accommodate himself to the assumptions of his audience.

Sub-standard variants

This is in fact true only up to a point. It is true that many of the cautions against deviant usage seem to be aimed at forms against which prejudice might be felt. Boys should be started on Greek before Latin, since they will learn the latter naturally, but care should be taken lest they start pronouncing their Latin with a Greek accent.[175] Command of Latinity involves more than mere correctness - one must avoid sounding unRoman. Quintilian sounds at first more tolerant than Lucilius, who had attacked

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173 1.6.27 174 8.Pr.25 175 1.1.12-14

Vettius for using Tuscan, Sabine, Praenestine words, or Pollio, who had criticised Livy's Patavinitas: he counts words from the Italian provinces as native.[176] But in Book 8 he advises that one should try to avoid sounding foreign or provincial: 'hic non alienum est admonere ut sint quam minime peregrina et externa'.[177] One should try to avoid sounding unRoman:

> Quare, si fieri potest, et verba omnia et vox huius alumnum urbis oleant, ut oratio Romana plane videatur, non civitate donata. (8.1.3)

This can perhaps be connected with the observation made at 1.5.33, that there are sounds connected with particular nations which are generally found objectionable:

> Sunt etiam proprii quidam et inenarrabiles soni, quibus nonnumquam nationes deprehendimus.

While one is to avoid certain forms, however, against which one's audience might be prejudiced, this does not mean that there is to be no difference between one's own language and that of the audience. The orator is to follow usage, but this is not defined as 'the way most people speak'. The majority may make popular bad habits which should not be followed: 'sic in loquendo non si quid vitiose multis insederit, pro regula sermonis accipiendum erit'.[178] It is the usage of the educated which is to be aimed at; the uneducated, the crowd, may commit all kinds of barbarisms.[179]

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176 1.5.57, licet omnia Italica pro Romanis habeam.

177 8.1.2

178 1.6.44. N.b. (in connection with decorum) that this is on the analogy of avoiding effeminate practices, such as taking too many baths, which have won popularity.

179 1.6.45

Latin Archaism

Marache distinguishes two kinds of attitude to antiquity in the history of Roman rhetoric: one which associated it with natural, unelaborated speech, another which used archaisms as one kind of ornament for speech with stylistic pretensions.[180] Quintilian, as we have seen, had to resist both. Fronto, Marache thinks, was influenced by the second: the tendency in rhetoric of the day was toward the striking, antique words were a good way for someone who was also a purist about language to achieve this. Fronto looks just like the kind of over-fastidious orator criticised by Quintilian: he says it is important to find the right word, but obviously likes it best if this is one that has taken some finding and shows it.[181] The orator must not be satisfied with a good word that comes to mind, but look for the best.[182]

Marache thinks Fronto's emphasis on traditional values like suitability, clarity, and so on is in conflict with his real tastes, to some extent mere lip service to

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180 R. Marache, Critique littéraire de langue latine (Rennes, 1952).

181 iv.3.4 (vdH 57.21ff). One does not find 'insperata atque inopinata verba, quae non nisi cum studio atque cura atque vigilantia atque multa veterum carminum memoria indagantur' in Cicero - but such words are those for which, if they were taken away, no substitute could be found: 'insperatum autem atque inopinatum vero appello, quod praeter spem atque opinionem audientium aut legentium promitur, ita ut, si subtrahas atque eum, qui legat, quaerere ipsum iubeas, aut nullum aut non ita significando adcommodatum verbum aliud reperiat. Cf. also iii.1 (vdH 36), where he praises Marcus for not using out-of-the-way words in the Senate.

182 i.2 (vdH 92.4-6), Praecipue autem gaudeo te verba non obvia arripere, sed optima quaerere. Hoc enim distat summus orator a mediocribus, quod ceteri facile contenti sunt verbis bonis, summus orator non est bonis contentus, si sint ulla meliora.

classical notions of decorum. But this is not the whole story, either for Fronto or his age. Marache's distinction between what Fronto says and what he really cared about is a little misleading.

The correspondence of Fronto and Marcus Aurelius does indeed show great interest in the selection of individual words, in elegantia, in the recondite. Fronto combines some of the three attitudes to ancient vocabulary mentioned in connection with Seneca (above, p. 393). Old or curious words are an attractive part of style - Cicero's speeches, admirable in other ways, show lack of diligence in searching these out (the letters are better).[183] Taking care over words is also a way of refining speech - like Horace's poet, one wants to improve on language. Acquaintance with antiquity is also desirable because assuring correctness: using the right forms, with authors to back them, is possible only to the learned man.[184] Marache thinks there is a tension between this and Fronto's ostensible interest above all in appropriateness, lucidity, etc.[185] But the latter is an essential part of Fronto's attitude to language.

The points mentioned above have this in common, that mastery is only open to an expert, like Fronto, or to someone trained by one: considerable learning is required. But Fronto's taste for the products of such researches is

183 iv.3.4 (vdH 57); iii,10 (vdH 107-8)

184 Cf. the demonstrations of Fronto's wider reading and greater learning in Gellius, Noctes Atticae 19,8; 19,10; 19,13.

185 For Fronto's interest in clarity, see vdH 57-8: Quam ob rem te magno opere conlaudo, quod ei rei curam industriamque adhibes, ut verbum ex alto eruas et ad significandum adcommodes. Verum, ut initio dixi, magnum in ea re periculum est, ne minus apte aut parum dilucide aut non satis decore, ut a semidocto, conlocetur . . . and de or. 17,13 (vdH 154) (criticism of periphrases): Revertere potius ad verba apta et propria et suo suco imbuta . . . verbum aliquod adquiras non fictum a te, nam id quidem absurdum est, sed usurpatum concinnius aut congruentius aut accommodatius.

not at odds with his professed interest in clarity: it is a part of being an expert that one can use one's learning to further those traditional oratorical ends. Archaism may have begun as a trend in Fronto's time - he says that when he was Marcus' age he had hardly skimmed ancient literature, which suggests that they were not then part of the standard curriculum[186] - like many who help to set a fashion, Fronto is by no means anxious to endorse everyone who shares his taste. Anyone could root out a few words from Plautus; such semidocti, he thinks, would do better to stick to vulgar language and make themselves understood.[187] In other words, it is by subscribing to traditional notions of clarity and appropriateness that Fronto can preserve archaism for an elite. Despite its specialism, this device is presented, at least, as discriminating not against the ignorant public, but against other speakers.

Quintilian's contemporaries expected sententiae; Fronto's seem to have expected a certain archaic flavour. This is suggested by Gellius' anecdotes about people who carry it to excess,[188] and references to possible criticisms of earlier authors: some think Seneca mean because without elegant or antique diction,[189] some may prefer

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186 i.9 (vdH 18), cf. Champlin, Fronto and Antonine Rome, 52

187 iv.3 (vdH 58) (One wants to avoid using words unclearly or inappropriately, like the semidoctus), namque multo satius est volgaribus et usitatis quam remotis et requisitis uti, si parum significet.

188 N.A. 1,10; 11,7

189 N.A. 12,2

earlier writers to Cicero as having an agreeable simplicity and antiquity.[190] Pace Marache, who connects the trend with the excesses of declamation, Gellius' anecdotes suggest a fairly general liking for the antique for its own sake. The young man criticised in 1,10 claims to be an admirer of ancient sobriety; stories centring on the learned Fronto show interest in antiquarianism; Gellius himself, like the critics of Seneca, seems to like old turns of phrase as a way of avoiding the commonplace.

Gellius (like Fronto but with better success) wants to combine fashion with good taste. He has nothing but ridicule for the young man who thinks to imitate ancient mores by using their decent, sober vocabulary, and uses so many archaisms that he cannot be understood.[191] At 11,7 excessive archaism is said to be the fault of those who have acquired a little learning late: a story is told about an old man who discovered Plautus late in life, and produced first incomprehension, then hilarity in his audience. Such a person uses his learning indiscriminately:

> quod numquam didiceris, diu ignoraveris, cum id scire aliquando coeperis, magni facias quo in loco cumque et quacumque in re dicere.

These people cannot use what they know properly - it is a fault of taste, a sign of bad education to produce obscurity. Gellius goes further than Fronto in the

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190 N.A. 10,3

191 N.A. 1,10: Curius and Fabricius and Coruncanius spoke 'plane ac dilucide cum suis' in the language of their day, 'tu autem, proinde quasi cum matre Evandri nunc loquare, sermone abhinc multis annis iam desito uteris, quod scire atque intellegere neminem vis, quae dicas.'

direction of limiting archaism: he argues, against those who cannot appreciate Cicero because he is not antique enough, that Cato was dissatisfied with the eloquence of his time, and would have spoken better if he could.[192]

Gellius may seem to be inconsistent - how can he justify going through old authors for what may come in handy, when the archaist of 1,10 is criticised for ignoring custom, on the grounds that the ancients spoke the language of their time, and so should we? Elsewhere Gellius sometimes relies on ancient usage as an argument for the correctness of an expression, against vulgar usage.[193] His confusion may not be as great as it seems. Where he speaks of the attraction of older usages, he sometimes presents them not as right in contrast to current usage, but as elegant variations on the commonplace. At 18,12,1, for instance, he points out that the ancients had an elegant way of using the active for the passive or vice versa.[194] In some cases, then, there is no question of current usage not being right - but an older one may be more interesting. Gellius goes through Q. Claudius, for instance, and finds attractive antiquity in various phrases: "'Sole occaso' non insuavi vetustate est, si quis aurem habeat

192 N.A. 12,2

193 N.A. 6,9,2; 19,13,2ff; 19,10,10;19,8; 17,2,15; 17,2,10; 13,17,2; 10,24,4; 9,1,8; 19,7,3ff.

194 Cf. 11,1,6: It is both usus and mos now, and was in the past, to say 'multam dixit' and 'multa dicta est', but interesting that Cato said 'multam facit': 'Potest autem videri consulta elegantia mutasse verbum, cum in castris et in exercitu multa fieret, non in comitio, nec ad populum diceretur.'

non sordidam nec proculcatam."[195]

What this suggests is that ancient authors were useful for justifying departures from custom which might otherwise have been thought simply incorrect.[196] They did not necessarily mean that custom was wrong, though sometimes one might want to correct 'vulgar' usage by reference to a text. In any case these idioms would not have the obscurity criticised in the young archaiser: they would obviously be perfectly comprehensible, if unusual. One does not know what the rare words collected were like, but these too may have been ones whose meaning was clear (though Gellius 19.7, on Laevius, is a collection of oddities). Gellius thus shares Fronto's taste for the early quaint, his belief that correct use of the language calls for knowledge of such works, and that such material may, properly used, raise one's work above the commonplace.

This shows up an important difference between Greek Atticism and Roman archaism. The former was, to a greater or lesser degree, a characteristic prose; the learning of the speaker determined how completely he reproduced Attic Greek. That is to say, once one had decided which models were acceptable, one used them as well as one could; as far as we can tell, at least, concessions to the audience do not seem to have restrained erudition. Roman archaism differed not only in the ways models were chosen

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195 17,2,10, cf. 17,2,12 and 17,2,22-3

196 For analogist arguments against the authority of ancient usage, see Varro, DLL 9.13, 20, 21, 22. At 10.73 Varro distinguishes three categories of usage, that which the ancients used and which we have now abandoned, that which we now use and that which the poets use.

(not usually 'classical' writers, though Cicero may have been a source for word lists[197]), but in the way they were to be used. The fact that a word was found in an ancient author might not justify its use. This looks rather like a return, of a kind, to propriety of diction as conceived by Aristotle, only with more licence as to the use of old words in prose. One might suppose that Latin literary language was not in a condition where 'common usage' was well-fixed as a point of departure. But this treatment of language takes a peculiarly Roman form: self-consciousness about the constitution of Latin prevails to the end. Gellius and Fronto and the students of the Noctes Atticae are concerned not only about style (with ancient texts a good source of variants on usage) but about correctness. Custom determined what was correct, but one might want to justify it by appeal to antiquity as well, or dismiss it as vulgar and call a rarer form correct, or have a way of justifying in grammatical terms departures from the ordinary made for the sake of style. Taste - which one might think of as one aspect of a sense of decorum - governed not only the appropriate use of archaisms as an ornament of style, but one's view of what counted as correct ordinary language. The orator was of course to use this as his starting point, but in fact used a version of it revised up to leave out the vulgar.

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197 See J.E.G. Zetzel, 'Statilius Maximus and Ciceronian Studies in the Antonine Age', BICS 1974, 107ff

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

ABBREVIATIONS

I have followed the system of abbreviations used by Année Philologique. The following abbreviations have been used for frequently cited works:

DAP Plutarch, De Audiendis Poetis

DCV Dionysius of Halicarnassus, De Compositione Verborum

DK H. Diels-W. Kranz, Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker, 6th ed.

DLL Varro, De Lingua Latina

HCS R. Pfeiffer, History of Classical Scholarship

LSJ Liddell-Scott-Jones, Greek-English Lexicon

OLD Oxford Latin Dictionary

RE Pauly-Wissowa, Realenzyklopädie der Klassischen Altertumswissenschaft

TD Tiberius Donatus, Interpretationes Vergilianae

UR Usener-Radermacher, Dionysius of Halicarnassus Opuscula

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I have used the most recent Oxford Classical Text unless otherwise indicated.

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