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Chapter Four

Beyond Syntax and Cities at War

Doing Rhetoric's History and Theory *Alloiostrophically*

Mari Lee Mifsud

How does one make contact with difference when doing rhetoric's history and theory? Rather than being afflicted with an anxiety that John Schilb once termed *heterophobia*, what if doing the history and theory of rhetoric were healthy about *heteros*?¹ *Heteros* means "difference" but visually the word shows more than this, namely "*eros*" in "*heteros*"—love in difference.

In this chapter, I explore a love of difference in the history and theory of rhetoric. Starting from my own love of Homer that I dare express, I turn to a peculiar text about Homeric rhetoric, one not typically considered in the rhetorical tradition, [*Plutarch*] *Essay on the Life and Poetry of Homer*.² This text is peculiar, at least in part, for its unabashed expressions of praise for the genius of Homeric rhetoric. The scholarly attention this text has received has identified it as different from that which belongs in the history of ideas proper, namely for what gets described as the spuriousness and hyperbole of the text. Scholarship on this text has worked to settle the question of correct authorship—deciding at one time it was Plutarch, then later, it was not—as well as establishing the period and philosophy of the text.³ The conclusion is that most likely the text dates from the later years of the second century CE as part of the pedagogy of the Roman imperial state. That is about as far as scholarship has gotten, except that it went just a bit farther by reaching a judgment on the quality of the text: hyperbolic, spurious, untrustworthy, suspicious. "Plutarch's" notions are thought to be too outrageous in praise of Homer's genius. The text gets described as having a "bizarre level" of exaggeration.⁴ The "element of the outrageous" in the text typically is related to

“Plutarch’s” thesis that all human accomplishments can be traced to Homer, and that Homer’s was their greatest expression.⁵ In particular, the author is described as proceeding “by hook or by crook” to show the greatness of Homer.⁶ Attributing the discovery and/or formulation of the art of rhetoric to Homer—despite that art having been associated with later thinkers and culture—casts suspicion on the text.⁷ The rhetorical quality of the text with its tendency towards “eulogistic hyperbole” overwhelms the scholarly reception of the text to the effect of discrediting the ideas within. For reasons such as these, the text is cast aside as “epistemologically suspect.”⁸

Indeed, the very idea of a Homeric rhetoric, let alone one characterized by making contact with difference, is a strange one, which generates strong responses of suspicion and dismissal. The *Essay* presents Homer’s genius in grandiose terms and takes the even bolder step of calling the Homeric epic a rhetoric. This step lays the text bare to empirically studied approaches that call into question the timeline of discovery at play here, i.e., who originated what when, and whether practices can exist conceptually prior to such inventions as a technical language, or in the absence of a concept of rational order.⁹

But abandonment of the idea of Homeric rhetoric on such technical grounds as these seems unwise. Already, considerable arguments have been made that we need not exact Homer from the history and theory of rhetoric.¹⁰ I continue to rest on Henry W. Johnstone, Jr.’s sensibility that what matters is our having the word “rhetoric” and using it as we see fit, not whether Homer had the word “rhetoric.”¹¹

When doing history and theory on a technical level that privileges empirical standards of correctness, one makes contact with difference by asking, “How does difference measure up to the standard?” or “Is this thing that is different worthy of authority according to the prevailing norms of authority?” Of course, such questions do not encounter difference qua difference, only ever difference qua norm.

To have a rhetorical approach to the study of ideas seems to offer so much more than a technical approach. To have a rhetorical approach, in particular to ideas about rhetoric, is to recognize the resourcefulness of rhetoric in generating strategic swerves away from a unidirectional relation with difference that forces difference to abide by the norm. Such strategic swerves are rhetorical through and through, and are enabled by a tropical view of the possibilities of language usage.

Heinrich Lausberg characterizes all rhetorical tropes, figures, and schemes as strategic swerves away from empirical standards of correctness when measuring language usage, or (better yet) the whole of symbolic activity.¹² Empirical standards of correctness are one thing but not the only thing to consider in the whole of language usage and meaning making, including history writing.¹³ Expanding to a general economy of symbolicity, we see

that even the empirical standards cannot escape what we know from Hayden White that “discourse itself must establish the adequacy of the language used in analyzing the field to the objects that appear to occupy it. And discourse affects this adequation by a *pre*-figurative move that is more tropical than logical.”¹⁴ Rhetoric’s tropes, with their power to turn otherwise, make rhetoric rhetoric.

This turning otherwise exemplifies what Jane Sutton and I theorize as *alloiostrophic* rhetoric. We see this rhetoric as tropical and transmutational, departing from what once was a measure based solely on correctness to a different measure, a different system, a different view, a different theory. Whereas Lausberg is careful to point out that one who relies on correctness as a measure can never go astray, he is also careful to point out that one who goes astray with the tropes of discourse can do so to good ends and for good purposes.¹⁵ Moreover, Lausberg is careful to admit that the lines are blurred and the boundaries fluid, so that even correctness becomes a trope, and can therefore go astray.¹⁶ If correctness is a trope, it is one trope among many, and we can choose otherwise, and do so to good ends. We can turn via *strophē* to the other as *alloiōsis*.

I wish to explore how an *alloiostrophic* rhetorical approach to doing history and theory structures the possibility of making contact with difference otherwise. When we take this turn otherwise, we can encounter differently in the pages of the *Essay* extensive and quite detailed attention to the many rhetorical means by which language usage turns us otherwise. With an *alloiostrophic* historiography, we can see that the *Essay* offers a vision of Homeric rhetoric as offering playful and pleasant structures of differences and turns otherwise in unexpected ways.

Time now to take an *alloiostrophic* turn in the history and theory of rhetoric to interface with—rather than deny and negate—“Plutarch’s” Homeric rhetoric. If *alloiostrophic* rhetorical history and theory turns towards difference, strangeness, the exceptional, the other, then the *Essay* seems the perfect text to start. Turning to a text about rhetoric that is so strange as to be nearly laughed out of the history of ideas and culture seems fitting, all the more fitting when we realize that the *Essay* dedicates a large section to the rhetorical figure of *alloiōsis*, making the case that this figure of turning otherwise characterizes Homeric rhetoric. Once the idea of Homeric rhetoric has been figured otherwise, we can see more of how this idea offers new insights into rhetoric’s history and theory. In the third movement of this chapter, I run with these insights through Aristophanes’ *Lysistrata*. *Lysistrata* embodies *alloiostrophic* rhetoric, attuned to a love of difference and offering many ways of turning otherwise for the sake of peace and loving solidarity. *Lysistrata*’s rhetoric circulates a Homeric rhetoric in its many turns toward loving difference.

II

As displayed in Table 4.1, “Plutarch” offers a wide-ranging list of tropes and figures of Homeric rhetoric. Each trope and figure gets typically one “chapter” of explanation, usually the equivalent of a few sentences. Each chapter has at least one example from the Homeric epics. “Plutarch” proceeds this way with all the tropes and figures except for a few: “Metaphor” and “Combined Figures” get two chapters, “Pleonasm” gets seven chapters,¹⁷ and “*Alloiōsis*” gets twenty-three chapters. Twenty-three chapters? What is this figure of *alloiōsis* that “Plutarch” attends to so fully in Homeric rhetoric? And what significance does it have for the history and theory of rhetoric?

Alloiōsis is presented by “Plutarch” as Homer’s rhetorical means of escaping the ordinary, escaping the order of syntax.¹⁸ A second term “Plutarch” associates with *alloiōsis* is *asyntakton*, or freedom from syntax. Such freedom from syntax signifies change, difference, that which is other than the ordinary, as well as pleasure: “Studied diction loves to escape the ordinary and thus to become more energized (*enargesteros*) and vigorous (*semnote-*

Table 4.1. Adapted from [*Plutarch*] *Essay on the Life and Poetry of Homer*, B.16–71.

<i>Tropes</i>			
B.16	Onomatopoeia	B.22	Synecdoche
B.17	Epithets	B.23	Metonymy
B.18	Catachresis	B.24	Antonomasia
B.19–20	Metaphor	B.25	Antiphrasis
B.21	Metalepsis	B.26	Emphasis
<i>Figures</i>			
B.28	Pleonasm	B.36	Ellipsis
B.29	Periphrasis	B.40	Asyndeton
B.30	Enallage	B.41–64	Alloiosis
B.31	Parembolē	B.65	Proanaphonesis
B.32	Palillogy	B.66	Prosopopoeia
B.33	Epanaphora	B.67	Diatyposis
B.34	Epanodos	B.68	Irony
B.35	Homoeoteleuton	B.69	Sarcasm
B.36–37	Combined Figures	B.70	Allegory
B.38	Paronomasia	B.71	Hyperbole

ros) and in general more pleasing.”¹⁹ Homeric rhetoric’s vigor is pleasurable energized by escaping the ordinary.

“Plutarch” identifies the figure of *alloiōsis* at work in Homeric rhetoric “where the normal syntax is changed and varied for the sake of adding *kosmos* and *xaris* to the discourse. The usual syntax appears not to follow, but rather there is a change with regard to some peculiar characteristic.”²⁰ *Kosmos* and *xaris* here are worth considering. The etymology of “*kosmos*” suggests both order, as in the universal cosmos, and ornament, as in the decorations of discourse. Whether the Greeks had a cosmically constitutive view of style, or a stylistically constitutive view of the cosmos, I suggest now only that *kosmos* can mean a stylistic order of things, and that this meaning could carry over to “Plutarch’s” considerations of the ends of *alloiōsis*. The ends of *alloiōsis* are to give a discourse a stylistic order of things we can call *kosmos*.

Xaris suggests grace, as when Athene bestows grace on Odysseus to make him appear irresistible to the young maiden Nausicaa.²¹ Homer describes *xaris* as the gift of grace from the gods, where the gods are akin to a master craftsman who overlays gold on silver, having been taught by Hephaistos and Athene in the complete art. Grace is on every work the master craftsman finishes.²² When one is given this gift of grace from the gods, one is said to have charisma (*xarisma*).

Xaris has a double meaning depending on whether a giver or receiver. On the part of the giver, *xaris* suggests graciousness, kindness, goodwill towards another. On the part of the receiver, *xaris* suggests the sense of favor felt, thankfulness, gratitude. For example, when Aristotle describes the *topoi* of the unwritten law, he does so in terms of the virtue of *xaris*, namely gratitude for a benefactor and the like.²³ Because of this virtue, one can argue exception to the written law if the written law conflicts with the unwritten law of *xaris*.

Both *kosmos* and *xaris* taken together in “Plutarch’s” definition of *alloiōsis* suggest goodness in the form of grace and gratitude that can be added to speech by way of the kind of stylistic change *alloiōsis* offers. Let’s consider this change further. “Plutarch” tells us this change is of a peculiar thing, perhaps even of a peculiar kind, and perhaps it is appropriate to call it peculiar in general. “Peculiar” here is translated from *idion*, the adjectival form of *idios*.²⁴ *Alloiōsis* turns towards the *idios*. To get at the significance of focusing a rhetoric on a turn toward the *idios*, let’s turn momentarily to the classic analogy between medicine and rhetoric: rather than looking into that which is common, whether in medicine by way of diseases and treatments in common, or in rhetoric by way of civic problems and solutions in common, *alloiōsis* turns towards that which is *idios*—peculiar and individual. This turn is taken not for the purpose of substituting the common for the individual nor the individual for the common. Rather, this turn is taken to make contact with

the individual qua individual. From this contact, haptic insight emerges, whether of the physical body or the body politic. Contemporary medicine has already made this turn to the *idios*.²⁵ Homeric rhetoric in “Plutarch’s” *Essay* can take the political where medicine has already gone, toward the *idios*.

“Plutarch” continues to relate *idios* to *alloiōsis* in another way, too: *alloiōsis* signifies idiosyncrasy. As Keaney and Lamberton note, “idiosyncrasy” here means something more than *alloiōsis* not being used elsewhere, or predominantly, as a figure. Idiosyncrasy here means as well that *alloiōsis* is irregular.²⁶ “Plutarch” displays in *alloiōsis* the idiosyncratic performances of irregularities, shifts, changes, differences of gender, number, case, and tense.

Of all these idiosyncratic ways of making sense, let’s consider one example, *alloiōsis* of gender. “Plutarch” identifies the changing genders of nouns a frequent form of *alloiōsis* in Homeric rhetoric. Customary, he tells us, among the ancients and people of Attica are changes from feminine to masculine to convey a greater sense of strength and dynamism.²⁷

Thus, the fullest expression of *alloiōsis* would be a change from masculine to feminine. Indeed, “Plutarch” tells us, “Occasional expressions [*idiotēta*] violate all the norms, however, both of dialect and of ancient custom: ‘and he holds the lofty columns that keep earth and heaven apart.’”²⁸

“Column” here (*kiōn*) changes the normative masculine “column” to feminine. “Plutarch” calls these “occasional expressions” *idiotēta*, not just “occasional,” but deriving from the *idios*, the individual, peculiar, strange, other, exceptional. Homeric *alloiōsis* violates existing rules rhetorically for the sake of *idios*—a particular, individual, exceptional sense—rather than for the sake of obeying rule-bound syntax held in common. Thus, this violation is more of a liberation, something signified by the alpha-privative in *asyntakton*. Liberated from syntax, the exceptional voice speaks its sense. *Alloiōsis* claims exception in its rhetorical performances.

Though Homeric *alloiōsis* is idiosyncratic in terminology and rhetorical performance, it is also *pollakis* (many) in its making. Throughout “Plutarch’s” account of the operations of *alloiōsis*, he suggests always that these operations are *pollakis*, meaning frequent, often, occurring many times.²⁹ Homeric rhetoric is the work of genius not only for its turns towards the peculiar, but for the many times it turns towards the peculiar, and the many ways in which it can turn toward the peculiar.

So we have in Homer not just many shifts in gender but many ways in which gender shifts: apparent shifts of gender, and gender shifts concerning sense: “Often the gender respects the sense and not the actual words.”³⁰ Combine these shifts with other shifts beyond gender—number, plural to singular, case, degree, tense, voice, person, participles for verbs, shifts of articles, shifts of prepositions, shifts of adverbs, shifts of conjunctions—and we see so many shifts and so many ways shifts shift.

Table 4.2. Adapted from the *Essay*, B41–64.

B41. <i>Asyntakton</i> or <i>alloiōsis</i> : types
B42. Shifts of gender
B43. Apparent shifts of gender
B44. Gender from sense
B45. Other shifts of gender
B46. Shifts of number
B47. Plural to singular
B48. Shifts of case
B49. Effective use in openings
B50. Genitive to nominative
B51. Archaic shifts of number
B52. e.g., dual to singular
B53. Shifts of degree; shifts of verb forms
B54. Shifts of tense
B55. Shifts of voice
B56. Shifts of number
B57. Shifts of person; apostrophe
B58. Participles substituted for verbs
B59. Shifts of articles
B60. Prepositions: one used for another
B61. Wrong case after preposition
B62. Omission of prepositions
B63. Shifts of adverbs
B64. Shifts of conjunctions

So we can see in the *Essay* a Homeric rhetoric, that is *alloiostrophic*, hence *idiōtēta* and *pollakis* as it shifts in many ways to go along (*enallassei pollakis*). What does “shifts” mean? The *Essay* mostly reveals terms for “shifts” in the semantic range of *exallagē*, meaning complete change, alteration, withdrawal, removal, being in excess of the limit, turning another way, diverting, amusing, alienating.³¹ “Plutarch’s” *alloiostrophic* Homeric rhetoric shows the generative power of always making yet another way, a way derived by the radical other, the incongruous, individual, and idiotic (being understood in the general economy of the individual, the *idios*). So characterized by the figure of *alloiōsis*, Homeric rhetoric offers another way, *allon de tropon*, or a different way, *heteron de tropon*.³² To be other (*allos*) is to be

different (*heteros*). Homeric rhetoric is characterized by turning away from the common order of syntax to the pleasure, goodness, and grace of both otherness and difference.

III

When seeing rhetoric's history and theory *alloiostrophically* and in terms of its Homeric character, we can see *Lysistrata*, as Aristophanes tells her story. We can see *Lysistrata*'s rhetorical redemption of the *polis* by way of *alloiotic* gendered performances of gift giving. This redemption is transmutative, changing war to peace, misogyny to equality, and enmity to solidarity, ending in lots of love and dancing.

I start with a landmark passage, in which *Lysistrata* tells the magistrates how women would clean up the *polis*:

Imagine the *polis* as a fleece just shorn. First, put it in a bath and wash out all the sheep dung; spread it on a bed and beat out the riff-raff with a stick, and pluck away the parasites, those who clump and knot themselves together to snag government positions, card them out and pluck off their heads. Next, card the wool into a sewing basket of unity and goodwill, mixing in everyone. The resident aliens and any other foreigner who's your friend, and anyone who owes money to the people's treasury, mix them in there too. And oh yes, the cities that are colonies of this land: imagine them as flocks of your fleece, each one lying apart from the others. So take all these flocks and bring them together here, joining them all and making one big bobbin. And from this weave a fine new cloak for the people.³³

A home/*polis* relation flashes. The image of women weaving in the home appears alongside the image of ruling the *polis*. The interpretive norm in rhetoric's history and theory is to consider these spheres not only separate, as in the *polis* being the public sphere, the home the private, but also in order, as in the *polis* being an achievement in the ruling order beyond the structure of the home. But *Lysistrata* turns attention to the home. Hospitality rituals of the home, like creating solidarity and goodwill through gift giving, appear alongside the image of a parasite-filled *polis*.

Scholarship on the home/*polis* relation overidentifies metaphor as the governing trope in this relation, and it says nothing of the gift, which is at the heart of the matter.³⁴ The end of weaving is the gift of a finely woven robe. Human relations orchestrated by gift giving are distinct, peculiar, different from the ruling order of the *polis* in orchestrating relations. This distinction—the peculiar otherness of the gift in relation to the state—is worth considering further. Always with an eye on the rhetorical dynamics at play, let's explore the figure of metonym, different from metaphor, and the *topos* of the gift, different from that of the *polis*, as *alloiostrophic* rhetorics. These

alloiostrophic rhetorics generate persuasive appeals otherwise, which are themselves constituted otherwise by ideals and practices of gift giving, and in turn constitute social relations otherwise.

I choose to interpret the juxtaposition of home/*polis* as less metaphoric than metonymic. Metaphor is too much our norm. As Hayden White states in his critique of the tropics of discourse, metaphor forges meaning by rendering the different familiar by inserting all that is familiar into all that is different. If metaphor were our primary trope determining the meaning of the home/*polis* relation, the *polis* could co-opt the home, laying claim to the concept and practices associated, touting its own practices as if they were the virtuous practices of the home. As a metaphor for the *polis*, the home could be rendered familiar through the already familiar *polis*, annihilating the distinction of home, along with its potential to give something other to the operations of the *polis*. Let's examine this a bit further.

The *polis* is already familiar.³⁵ In the history and theory of rhetoric, for example, how the *polis* rules through speech is studied, along with how the *polis* forges cultural identity and norms through civic discourse and vice versa, how it argues and decides about the administration of the state, and how it ensures or fails to ensure justice and the good through its art of practical judgment. With the *polis*, rhetoric is already familiar. The word "*polis*" then, marks the privileged term in a home/*polis* binary, and what is already familiar in rhetorical studies.

If the home/*polis* relation were to be metaphoric, then the already familiar *polis* would be served and affirmed. For example, the *polis* could describe its rule in terms of hospitality. Indeed, wars get described through home and hospitality metaphors: the United States calls for war on account of the "homeland" having been attacked, and for such an inhospitable act, war is justified, along with a new paradigm of the militarized democratic state policed by "Homeland Security." I do not feel the hospitality of home at the airport as I am scanned and patted.³⁶ Or consider the argument made by U.S. leaders prior to the invasion of Iraq, that the U.S. would be greeted as liberators when they entered the homes of people oppressed by a tyrannical state, again warranting war.³⁷ That the United States entered the homes of Iraqi citizens with a "shock and awe" theatre of bombs does not seem an act of hospitality fitting of home culture. The home/*polis* metaphor can render persuasive in the name of hospitality those practices of the *polis* that are quite inhospitable.

From a different perspective, but with the same understanding of the interpretive constraints of metaphor, if the home/*polis* relation were inverted (as a potential interpretation of what Aristophanes is up to), then weaving would replace ruling as the privileged practice, and the home would replace the *polis* as the privileged term. Such an inversion is not without its own set of problems, because metaphor is still ruling the meaning making. When

metaphor rules, the distinction of the compared term comes to be in the service of the privileged term. If “home” were to be read via inversion of the privileged term, rather than the traditionally privileged “*polis*,” then the distinction of the *polis* would be lost for the privilege of the home. Privileging the home, however, has its own set of problems. *Lysistrata* calls for a unified people typical of a home but not a *polis*. Contemporary scholarship points out the shortcomings of such homogeneity in the orchestration of human relations: it is oppressive and antidemocratic in its demands for everybody to be the same. Moreover, change, including the correction of mistakes, becomes difficult in such a closed system.

No matter how we read the home/*polis* metaphor, either the home or the *polis* must die, or rather must have its difference and distinction assimilated by the privileged term and concept. Moreover, in both interpretations we are left with a failed view of Aristophanes. As Lisa Pace Vetter argues, Aristophanes’ vision of weaving as ruling voiced by *Lysistrata*’s metaphor is problematic because it creates an oppressive structure for human relations through an overidentified unification of all people, classes, races, and cultures. She describes Aristophanes’ play as a kind of failed vision of human and political relations, and she uses this failure as a way of turning towards Plato to show us how to succeed.³⁸

I would rather call metaphor a failure than Aristophanes. We have more tropes than just metaphor to figure meaning making, to bring to the interpretative table, to give texts their most generous reading, so that we resist falling into that ever-present teleological trap that anything prior to the achievements of Plato and Aristotle is in some way a rudimentary or failed version of what Plato and Aristotle would succeed in creating.

Although the *polis* could be served by co-opting the home as its governing metaphor, or the home could be served in an inverted system, *Lysistrata* seems to be doing something quite different. *Lysistrata* works to intervene in the operations of the *polis* because these operations have eventuated in war without end. Her primary means of intervention is metonymic. Whereas Hayden White believes metonymy to be a subset of metaphor, metonymy can make meaning otherwise.³⁹ Metaphor signifies relations through similarity whereas metonymy signifies relations through contiguity.⁴⁰ Hence, metaphor produces assimilation, rendering two distinct phenomena the same, whereas metonymy produces association, juxtaposing two phenomena and rendering them distinct. The movement from metaphor to metonymy and the movement of metonymy itself is *alloiostrophic*. This *alloiostrophic* turn away from the self-same signification via metaphor and dialectical resolution is a way of signifying otherwise.

When *Lysistrata*’s passage is seen within a tropical frame of metonymy and a figural frame of *alloiostrophē*, new things emerge. We can see the juxtaposition of the home as a distinct, peaceable space of living and ruling,

structured through the norms of hospitality and gift giving. The image of women's work with wool flashes alongside the *polis*, neither wool working nor *polis* working lose distinction in the other, the rub between giving rise to something new, an imagination of the gift orchestrating the *polis*. When these images are interpreted as metonymic, their juxtaposition offers something different to the *polis*: not an affirmation that the *polis* already is a kind of hospitable home, nor a conspiracy to replace the *polis* with the home. Lysistrata's mission is to save the *polis* and the home and so forge a sense of solidarity between the two; she is, after all, the theatrical version of the real Lysimaches, the priestess of the Athena Polias, who oversaw the protection of the Athenian *polis*.⁴¹

As noted above, metaphor shapes difference in the form of the self-same, whereas metonym shapes a juxtaposition of differences, complicating a simple self/other binary. Weaving does not replace ruling, rather flashes beside ruling a different set of practices and perspectives, orientations and ethics. Thus, weaving stands by the side of ruling. The two are so different from each other that there is something incommensurable about their difference, seemingly impossible to exchange, but something new is created in the contact, the rub, the haptic relation between the two. Interpreting this scene through metonym, we can see these two—the home and the *polis*—existing side-by-side in a paratactic aggregation of symbolic action orchestrating human relations.⁴² Their interaction is generative of new possibilities.

To explore these new possibilities, let's start with metonym's turn from the *polis* to the home. Metonym turns attention to an interpretive resource residing within the home, and in the home we find the gift.

In the Homeric epics, where no division between the home and the *polis* really makes sense, the Homeric home supports, enacts, and governs spaces for the performances of both private and public life. Hospitality orchestrates the Homeric home and acts as the quintessential performance of gift giving. The epics offer a multitude of gift-exchange rituals, including the speech-making therein, designed to secure and navigate relations. Whereas the gifts are exchanged between individuals and families, their performances typically make visible a public assembly suggestive of the home as an aggregation of private and public life, structured through the first principle of hospitality. Take, for example, the scene of Odysseus' arrival and stay at the palace of Alkinoos. Each detail of the scene brings forth a vision of Homeric hospitality: welcoming a stranger with guest gifts, offering to him a feast, presenting an occasion for speechmaking and storytelling to a large audience of men, preparing a splendid departure with more guest-gifts, another feast, and still more occasions for the exchange of speeches. Whereas action generally passes quickly in Homer, the story of Alkinoos' hospitality and guest-friendship that is offered to Odysseus spreads across six chapters, a remarkable dedication to the details and dynamics of hospitality.⁴³

Other less extensive scenes confirm the Homeric home's first principle being hospitality, such as when Odysseus, disguised as a beggar, is welcomed by his swineherd Eumaios;⁴⁴ or when Telemachus is received as a stranger by both Nestor and Menelaus;⁴⁵ or when Athena, disguised as the stranger Mentès, appears at the door of Odysseus' palace, and is welcomed into the home by Telemachus.⁴⁶ Each of these scenes shares the theme of strangers to the home being welcomed into the home, and welcomed in style. Telemachus is not just greeted at the shores of Pylos, he is celebrated with a feast, even as a stranger, before King Nestor even recognizes him as Odysseus' son. Scenes such as these create a vision of hospitality as the first principle of the home, and the home as the first principle of human solidarity.

Even scenes where hospitality goes awry demonstrate the power of hospitality rituals in Homeric culture. The Trojan Horse, given by the Achaeans to the Trojans in the guise of a guest-gift, initiates a deeply embedded performance of hospitality, namely, acceptance of a gift being given, even if from a wartime enemy. How else could the Trojans have been so duped if not for the cultural obligation to perform a hospitality ritual? Receiving a guest-gift in appropriate fashion and showing solidarity in gift exchange mirrors the act of giving a guest-gift and showing solidarity in the giving.

If we look otherwise at these scenes of hospitality we can see the flip side of the gift, where the gift is simultaneously poison and remedy, hospitality and hostility. Of course, it is hard to feel sorry for Telemachus or Odysseus when they are "held hostage" by their "captors" and are forced to be pampered and pleased daily for days and weeks on end. But Homer gives us more literal scenes of "hostile hospitality" with the hostage taking host of Odysseus and his men, the cyclops Polyphemus.⁴⁷ Regardless of the degree of the hospitality or type, hospitality requires a host, who is the most powerful figure in the system of gift exchange. So establishes the power structure: the host has enough power to be a captor.

Perhaps the separation of home and *polis* that the arrival of democracy brought about also caused the genuineness of the hospitality of the Homeric home to atrophy in the ancient Greek political imagination. Perhaps, too, Lysistrata's metonym of weaving, eventuating in a gift to the *polis* of a finely woven robe, brings back the strength of the gift to forge solidarity—a solidarity that acts as a captor, preventing war and enslaving people in peace.

The parasite is a metonymy of the gift. Again imagine the *polis* as a fleece just shorn: full of shit and parasites, metonymically speaking, men who clump and knot themselves together to snag power, men like the magistrate and his accompanying old men who have come to arrest Lysistrata. The image of the gift of a robe finely woven flashes next to the image of a parasitic *polis*. These parasites are the old men of the chorus who are "rank and file veterans of the democracy's wars against tyrants and barbarians, but now live on state pay."⁴⁸ Athens is their host, and as parasites these men

drain her wealth with their unrelenting support of war driven by their desire for profits, despite unending war being at the expense of the people and the peaceable prosperity of panhellenic solidarity. The parasite cares nothing for solidarity in its attachment to its host; it cares only to be hosted.

The parasite marks the gift gone wrong. Something given but not replenished with at least mutual, if not escalating, generosity will die, as will the parasite. When a system of exchange is parasitic, everything dies: the host, the parasite, and the gift. The desire of the parasite is such that no energy is left for recirculation of the goods of the host. Nothing compels the parasite to expend its excess, to keep the goods of the host in circulation. The parasitic system cannot sustain itself. Death comes from the gift gone wrong.

But *Lysistrata* is a comedy, not a tragedy. The gift shall not die. Rather we shall cleanse the fleece of parasites, beating them out with a stick and plucking away their heads. The death of the parasite, in Burkean terms, allows for the comic redemption of the *polis*.

Yet, being *alloiostrophic*, we can see in this description still something other, yet another way, perhaps what Michel Serres sees in his philosophical study of the parasite, namely, that the parasite is essential and inescapable to the functioning of the system and can be cleansed only inevitably to return. The parasite is a necessary part of the system because, as Serres puts it, "systems work because they do not work. Nonfunctioning remains essential to functioning."⁴⁹ The parasite as such is the source of new patterns. Precisely because the magistrates and warmongers are parasites and irritants to the whole body politic, *Lysistrata* and her panhellenic band of women rise up to reassert the lost image of the peaceable home, the women's work of weaving therein, and the gift of giving, in an economy of exchange that somehow finds a way out of war. The parasite is a necessary and ever-present part of the system. Just as each year brings a season for shearing fleece, we know the cycle will continue, and always parasites will return, irritating the system so as to warrant fleecing. Women don't just weave from one fleece forever. These images flash perpetually. We must never become complacent in our *alloiostrophic* action.

Metonymic interpretations of the gift and the parasite help us see not just new insights into this passage on weaving and ruling, but the larger context of *Lysistrata*'s story. The sex strike can be seen as something more than just an entertaining use of sex to titillate and entertain an audience. As Bataille writes, "it should come as no surprise to us that the principle of the gift, which propels the movement of general activity, is at the basis of sexual activity."⁵⁰

Once turned otherwise to interface with these dynamics of the gift, still other dynamics of the gift emerge. *Lysistrata*'s appeal to the magistrates is partly a reproach for the lack of grateful reciprocity performed by these warring states: each state owes the other. Sparta was rescued by Athens when

an earthquake ravaged the state, and Athens was freed from tyranny with Sparta's support. Lysistrata concludes, "considering all these mutual benefactions, why prosecute the war and make more trouble? Why not make peace? What keeps you still apart?"⁵¹ The string of appeals in the text is worth highlighting for the details of this *topos* of mutual reciprocity:

Don't you remember when Pericleidas the Spartan came here once and sat at the altars as a suppliant of the Athenians, pale in his scarlet uniform, begging for troops? That time when Messenia was up in arms against you and the god was shaking you with an earthquake? And Cimon went with four thousand infantrymen and rescued all Sparta? After being treated that way by the Athenians, you're now out to ravage the country that's treated you well?⁵²

Do you think I'm going to let you Athenians off? Don't you remember how the Spartans in turn, when you were dressed in slaves' rags, came with their spears and wiped out many Thessalian fighters, many friends and allies of Hippias? That day when they were the only ones helping you to drive him out? And how they liberated you, and replaced your slaves' rags with a warm cloak, as suits a free people?⁵³

So why, after so many fine favors done, are you fighting instead of calling a halt to your misbehavior? Why not make peace? Come on, what's in the way?⁵⁴

Lysistrata's appeals to a gift-culture ethic of reciprocity and mutual benefaction flash alongside the warring relations of the polis. The difference and distinction of the home and its resources for relating become all the more prominent when we consider that from the start of her story, Lysistrata defends her activism by way of an appeal to protecting her home. She would rather be home, sitting modestly, bothering no one, stirring not a single blade of grass, but if someone annoys her and rifles her nest, they'll find a wasp inside.⁵⁵ Lysistrata speaks her love of home, a love characterized by stillness and nonviolence, a love worth defending, even if with violence (albeit slight violence, as the women only beat on the men for a minute, and the rest of their strategy does not involve physical harm, unless one considers the creation of sexual desperation a kind of physical harm).

Appeals to mutual benefaction, even competitive generosity—figured through a home/*polis* metonymy—succeed. A party ensues, with feasting, friendship, lovemaking, and much dancing. The story closes when the Spartan ambassador says, after the Athenian ambassador calls for a dance, that this story will be carried as far as "where the heavenly dancers leap and shout . . . beat your feet throughout the land, help the dancers make some noise, sing a song of joyous praise . . .!"⁵⁶

The home is a poetic gift to the rhetoric of the *polis*. It offers a poetic praxis of competitive generosity and reciprocity that is characteristic of poet-

ic gift culture, prior to the formalization of the state apparatus called the *polis*. Just as Homer put forward the principal rituals of the pre-*polis* world as those that reinforce competitively generous inter-familial reciprocity (e.g., supplication, guest-friendship, guest-gifts), so too Lysistrata appeals to the principal rituals of *polis* culture as those that would reinforce competitively generous interstate reciprocity (e.g., rituals of mutual benefaction), rather than generously competitive interstate war (e.g., rituals of mutual destruction).

Perhaps Burke had *Lysistrata* in mind when he theorized that comedic redemption lies in its hopefulness. As he writes at the end of his introduction to *Attitudes Toward History*, “basically this book would accept the Aristophanic assumptions, which equate tragedy with war and comedy with peace.”⁵⁷ Comedy has a way of redeeming the hopefulness of human relations, so that we might recognize another not as an evil enemy but as a mistaken friend. The legacy of the poetic gift culture as we see it in the metonymy of home/*polis* and in Lysistrata’s arguments of mutual benefaction is itself a gift to the *polis*, offering the *polis* comedic redemption.

IV

The contributions that arise from exploring *alloiostrophic* rhetoric in/as Homeric rhetoric via “Plutarch” and Lysistrata appear as an idiosyncratic rhetorical style of making many ways to go along. Always with another trope, we go along. Does this suggest we are amenable to going along with whatever is put before us? No. We have more wise ends than these. “Plutarch” tells another story, one he says Aristotle used to tell.⁵⁸ When Homer was just a baby, the leaders of his city, under pressure from a war, announced they were leaving, and invited anyone to come with them who wished to go along. A baby called Melesignes expressed his wish to go along and from that day forward he was called Homer: *Homerein*, to go along.⁵⁹ In a Homeric rhetoric, “to go along” is to find another trope, to make a new way, beyond syntax and cities at war.

NOTES

1. John Schilb, “Future Historiographies of Rhetoric and the Present Age of Anxiety,” in *Writing Histories of Rhetoric*, ed. Victor Vitanza (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1994), 135.

2. J. J. Keaney and Robert Lamberton, ed. and trans. [*Plutarch*] *Essay on the Life and Poetry of Homer* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1996) hereafter cited as *Essay*. Citations of this text follow 54A and 54B in the ancient Greek text, *Peri Homerou*, or *About Homer*, included in the Keaney and Lamberton edition. Keaney and Lamberton include both essays 54A and 54B under the same title, but refer to 54A as “The Shorter Life,” and 54B as “The Essay on the Life,” proper.

3. I use quotations around the author's name, "Plutarch," to indicate this unknown.
4. Lamberton, "Introduction," in *Essay*, 13.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*, 18.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Carol Poster, "Being, Time, and Definition: Towards a Semiotics of Figural Rhetoric," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 32, no. 2 (2000): 127.
9. See Thomas Cole, *The Origins of Rhetoric* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991); Edward Schiappa, *The Beginnings of Rhetorical Theory in Classical Greece*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).
10. George Kennedy, *A New History of Classical Rhetoric* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 3–15; Henry W. Johnstone, Jr., "On Schiappa Versus Poulakos," *Rhetoric Review* 14, no. 2 (1996): 438–40; Mari Lee Mifsud, "On the Idea of Reflexive Rhetoric in Homer," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 31, no. 1 (1998): 41–54.
11. Johnstone, "On Schiappa Versus Poulakos," 438.
12. Heinrich Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric: A Foundation for Literary Study*, trans. Matthew T. Bliss, Annemiek Jansen, and David E. Orton, ed. David E. Orton and R. Dean Anderson (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 1998), 222–3.
13. *Ibid.*, 223.
14. Hayden White, *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 1–2; see, on "general economy," Georges Bataille, *The Accursed Share*, vol. I (New York: Urzone, 1988), 19–44.
15. Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric*, 222–4.
16. *Ibid.*, 222–3.
17. Pleonasm ranges from B.28–B.34.
18. By the time the *Essay* was circulating, *alloiōsis* signified a range of meaning. From Liddell, Scott, and Jones we learn the following meanings and sources for *alloiōsis*: *difference* (from Plato's *Republic* 454c) and *alteration* (from Plato's *Theaetetus* 181, 380–381; Aristotle's *Physics* 226a.26 and from Aristotle's student Aristoxenus' *Elementa Harmonica*, p.74). In addition, Liddell, Scott, and Jones reveal meanings and sources of related works, like *alloiōtikos*, the meaning of which ranges from *transformative* (from Aristotle's *On Sense and the Sensible* 441b.21 and *Physics* 247a24); to *something dynamic*, in particular a *dynamis*, of digestion (as in Galenus, *De Usu Partium* 4.7); and *alteration*, like the *pharmakon*, or medicinal drugs (as again in Galenus, 11.380). For a paratactic display of meanings and possibilities of *alloiōsis*, see Hobeika's chapter 3 of this volume.
19. *Essay*, B.15.
20. *Essay*, B.41.
21. Homer, *Odyssey* 6.235, Richmond Lattimore, trans. (New York: Harper Perennial, 1991) 5. The Greek is from the Murray translation.
22. *Ibid.*, 6.232–234.
23. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1374a21–25.
24. *Essay*, B.41.
25. Sutton and Mifsud, "Towards an *Alloioistropic* Rhetoric," 29.
26. Keaney and Lamberton, *Essay*, 109, n. 2.
27. *Essay*, B.42.
28. *Ibid.*, B.43. "Plutarch" includes the citation of *Od.* 1.53–54.
29. *Ibid.*, B.42, 44, 46, 53, 55, 59.
30. *Ibid.*, B.44.
31. For semantic range see Liddell, et. al.; for citations of "shifts" in the *Essay*, see, for example, B.46, 48, 53, 59, 63, 64.
32. *Essay*, B.45, 57.
33. Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*, trans. Jeffrey Henderson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 574–86.
34. See, for example, Lisa Pace Vetter, *Women's Work as Political Art: Weaving and Dialectical Politics in Homer, Aristophanes, and Plato* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2005), 63–79; Jeffrey Henderson, "'Lysistrata': The Play and Its Themes," in *Aristophanes: Essays in*

Interpretation, ed. Jeffrey Henderson, Yale Classical Studies, vVol. 26 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 170–80.

35. Whereas the attention to the *polis* in the history and theory of rhetoric seems a commonplace, consider as a sign of the *polis*' prominence in rhetorical studies the thirtieth anniversary of the Rhetoric Society of America Conference being commemorated with a volume of selected papers, *Rhetoric, the Polis, and the Global Village*, edited by C. Jan Swearingen and David Pruett (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1999). To my knowledge rhetoric associations have yet to hold a conference on rhetoric and home, let alone one that celebrates thirty years of scholarship on the theme.

36. See the story of Giorgio Agamben's cancellation of his visit to New York University and UCLA in protest against U.S. policies of photographing and fingerprinting foreign visitors: Standard Schaefer, "What the NYTs Choose Not to Mention: Italian Philosopher Giorgio Agamben Protests US Policies," *Counterpunch*, January 23, 2003. <http://www.counterpunch.org/2003/01/23/italian-philosopher-giorgio-agamben-protests-us-travel-policies/>.

37. U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney, interviewed by Tim Russert on the then forthcoming U.S. invasion of Iraq post-9/11: "I really do think we will be greeted as liberators. I've talked with a lot of Iraqis in the last several months myself, had them to the White House . . . The read we get on the people of Iraq is there is no question but what they want is to get rid of Saddam Hussein and they will welcome as liberators the United States when we come to do that." *Meet the Press*, "Interview with Vice-President Dick Cheney," NBC, 3/16/03. For a thorough account of liberation as a warrant for the Iraq war, see Joel Wing, "'We Will Be Greeted As Liberators,' Why the Bush Administration Saw Iraq as a War of Liberation," *Musings on Iraq: Iraq News, Politics, Economics, Society*, Tuesday, February 19, 2013. <http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com/2013/02/we-will-be-greeted-as-liberators-why.html>.

38. See Pace Vetter, *Women's Work as Political Art*.

39. White, *Tropics of Discourse*, 5–6; For critique of positioning metonymy only ever as subset of metaphor, see Sutton and Mifsud, "Figuring Rhetoric."

40. Roman Jakobson, "The Metaphoric and Metonymic Poles," 227.

41. See Pace Vetter, *Women's Work as Political Art*, 63–79.

42. See "paratactic aggregates," Paul Feyerabend, *Against Method* (London: Verso, 1973), 169–75, 177–86, 199–202.

43. *Od.* 8–13.

44. *Ibid.*, 14.

45. *Ibid.*, 3–4.

46. *Ibid.*, 1.122–124.

47. *Ibid.*, 9.

48. Jeffrey Henderson, "Introductory Note," in Aristophanes, *Lysistrata* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 258.

49. Michel Serres, *The Parasite*, trans. Lawrence Schehr (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2007), 114.

50. Bataille, *The Accursed Share*, vol. I, 24.

51. Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*, 1139–1161.

52. *Ibid.*, 1137–1146

53. *Ibid.*, 1149–1156.

54. *Ibid.*, 1161.

55. *Ibid.*, 1143–475.

56. *Ibid.*, 1305–1320.

57. Kenneth Burke, *Attitudes Toward History* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Davis Press, 1984), 4.

58. *Essay*, A.3.

59. *Ibid.*