

## THE STOICS ON THE CRAFT OF POETRY

**Abstract:** This paper analyses the Stoic theory of a craft in order to highlight the contributions made by the Stoics to ancient poetics. It argues that the Stoics set up an outline of the craft of poetry that had an important impact on the way poetry was viewed by others. In particular, the Stoics shifted attention from the poem, viewed as the product of the craft, to the author, as maker of the poem, and the hearer, as recipient of the poem. Only the author and the hearer admit of being good; the poem itself is neither good nor bad. The result is a new emphasis on reception; for it is the task of the hearer to produce a good judgment about the poem. The Stoic contribution to poetics tends to be overlooked because they did not seem to have done much literary criticism themselves. They made a deeply original contribution, however, by providing a conceptual framework that was used by others.

**Keywords:** Stoic poetics, theory of reception, Cleanthes, Philodemus, Stoic theory of the crafts

Stoicism clearly had an influence on ancient poetics. The question is: how much, and of what kind? Traditionally, it has been held that any Stoic influence was much overshadowed by Peripatetic poetics. On the side of the Stoics, some scholars have argued that Stoicism was especially hospitable to poetry.<sup>1</sup> This paper will argue for the latter position. A major complication is that we have only scattered pieces of evidence that deal directly with Stoic poetics. De Lacy offered an overview of the evidence in a pioneering article in 1948. Since that time, much new work has been done. One

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1) On the side of the Peripatetics, Grube 1965, 136–137, writes that although some Stoics made an effort to develop a theory of poetry, “[i]t was the Peripatetics who undoubtedly had the greatest influence on literary and rhetorical theory”. Porter 1994, 64 n. 5, likewise notes the “unparalleled influence of the Peripatetics on the ancient literary debate”. Halliwell 2002, 276, maintains that there is no sign of a Stoic attempt to open itself “to more liberally nuanced critical strategies” on the subject of “quasi-Platonic moralism”, as Aristotle did. In his opinion (277), “the Stoic worldview was too monolithic, and too uncompromising in its ethical requirements, to tolerate the immersion of mimetic art forms in the full multiplicity of that life whose whole truth Stoicism itself professed to know”. On behalf of the Stoics, De Lacy 1948, 241, writes: “Of all ancient philosophies Stoicism was the most favorably disposed toward poetry”. Similarly, Nussbaum 1993, 99, holds that “no other ancient school is more sympathetic to the poets”.

large body of evidence, however, has barely been touched on; and this is the Stoic view of the crafts. By providing a new framework for the craft of poetry, I suggest, it offers a new view of the importance of poetry. This view had a major impact on the development of ancient poetics.

This paper will be in two main parts. After a preliminary section on basic Stoic ethical distinctions, the first part sets out a typology of the crafts, with special attention to Zeno's influential definition. It is well known that the Stoics proposed to elevate the craftsman to the status of a wise person. This ideal is usually dismissed as another Stoic impossibility; yet it has practical consequences. It goes along with the view that what is good about a craft is the mind or activity of the craftsman, as well as the mind or activity of the user, but not the product. As an object that is external to the mind, the product is neither good nor bad. Instead, it has value as a so-called preferred indifferent, or something advantageous (εὐχρηστον). The consequence, in the case of poetry, is a new emphasis on the poet as creator and on the hearer (or reader) as user. Even though the hearer lacks the craft of the poet, he shares with the poet the responsibility of making good judgments. This is the foundation of a new theory of reception.

The second part focuses on the craft of poetry. It attempts to show what difference the general notion of a craft makes to the way the Stoics approached poetry. Ever since antiquity, the Stoics have been notorious for ransacking poems for evidence in support of their own theories. This does not mean, however, that they viewed a poem simply as a source of information. As a composite of thought and verbal expression, a poem must present suitable thought in suitable verbal form. The extant evidence shows that the Stoics gave attention to both components. With respect to thought, the hearer can make up deficiencies by adding judgments of his own. But even if a poet expresses nothing but good thoughts, he cannot simply pass on the thought that was in his mind to the hearer; the hearer must do his part to understand the meaning that is expressed by the words. As for the verbal form, we have a particularly intriguing testimony by Cleanthes: meter and melody, he held, are a means of bringing the hearer closer to the truth about divinity. Poetry serves as a kind of initiation, capable of exalting the hearer to a height that is unattainable by philosophical explanation alone. On the whole, the Stoics elevated both poet and hearer to

a recognition of the truth through a combination of rational and sensory judgment.

Despite the meagerness of our evidence, it is clear that the Stoics took an interest in poetry from the beginning. Zeno wrote a book called *Listening to Poetry*, as well as five books of *Homeric Problems*. Chrysippus wrote *On Poems* and *On how to Listen to Poems*.<sup>2</sup> The books are lost; but they point to a concern with reception. Cleanthes was himself a poet. Later, the Roman Seneca wrote both philosophical works and composed tragedies. Among the pieces of evidence, we have a fragmentary summary of a Stoic poetic theory by Philodemus, an Epicurean of the first century B.C.E., in his work *On Poems*.<sup>3</sup> Philodemus also provides some information about poetic form in *On Music*. Although the tattered text of Philodemus, a hostile witness, needs to be treated with great care, recent editions and commentaries are a great improvement. New work on Strabo, Plutarch, and other sources has also been fruitful. In general, an upsurge of interest in Stoicism in the past fifty years or so has helped to cast new light on their poetics.

What emerges from the evidence is a strong concern on the part of the Stoics to fit poetics into their system of philosophy. The influence of Peripatetic poetics remains powerful; but there really is no conflict, as I shall argue, between Stoic and Peripatetic influence. By all appearances, the Stoics did not practice much in the way of literary criticism themselves; they left it mostly to others. This has fostered the impression that they were immune to aesthetics. I dispute this view. The contribution of the Stoics lies in the creation of a theoretical framework that is hospitable to the critical work of others. Building on the contributions of Plato, Aristotle, and a long tradition of literary criticism, they produced a theory that vindicates poetry, along with all the arts, as a way of illuminating the truth in an aesthetically powerful way. What makes this theory so hospitable to poetry is that it can be modified to accommodate even the most divergent views. It serves as a template that all can use to express their own commitment to the arts.

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2) On Zeno, see SVF 1.41, 274, and 456; on Chrysippus, see SVF 2.16.

3) See n. 62 below.

*Good, Bad, and Indifferent*

The Stoics divided whatever exists into three kinds: good, bad, and indifferent. What is indifferent is neither good nor bad; it is in-between or “intermediate”.<sup>4</sup> The only thing that is good is said to be virtue (ἀρετή) or what participates in it; the only thing bad is wickedness or what participates in it.<sup>5</sup> Actions (πράξεις) and agents are listed as things that participate in virtue and wickedness.<sup>6</sup> Other kinds of things, however, are also identified as goods that are not virtues; so the category of what is good must be extended beyond virtue, actions, and agents. Listed as belonging to this wider category are: good feelings (εὐπάθειαι, such as joy), good activities (ἐνέργειαι), a category that includes mental events such as sense perception and impulse, good practices (ἐπιτηδεύματα), as exemplified by divination, and crafts (τέχναι) that have been transformed into knowledge; and similarly for what is bad.<sup>7</sup> Good activities are said to “use” virtue.<sup>8</sup>

Intermediates, or indifferents, are common to both the virtuous and the wicked. A good person uses them well, a bad person badly. They cover a very wide range. Some indifferents are said to have much value; examples are wealth, health, strength, beauty. Their opposites, as exemplified by poverty, illness, weakness, ugliness, are said to have much disvalue. The former are said to be “preferred”, the latter “dispreferred”.<sup>9</sup> The former, moreover, are called “advantages”, εὐχρηστήματα (Latin *commoda*), the latter “disadvantages”, δυσχρηστήματα (Latin *incommoda*), together with morphological variants such as εὐχρηστεῖν (to be advantageous), εὐχρηστία (an advantageous use), and εὐχρηστον (advantageous). These terms are used in contrast with ὠφέλημα (benefit) and βλάμ-

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4) SVF 3.70, 71, 118, 120.

5) SVF 3.70 and 76.

6) SVF 3.76 (= Diogenes Laertius 7.94). Actions and/or individuals are also mentioned at SVF 3.96, 97a, 107, 108, 114.

7) Good feelings are listed at SVF 3.95, 102, 111, and 113; activities, at 3.97, 104, and 113; practices, at 3.104, 105 and 111; crafts, at 3.111 (and see below, n. 25). Good perception and good impulse are listed at 3.103.

8) SVF 3.113.

9) On preferred and dispreferred things, see SVF 1.192–194; 3.122, and 125–139. Diogenes Laertius (SVF 3.126) defines preferred things as having value (simply), and dispreferred things as having disvalue (simply).

μα (harm), and variants.<sup>10</sup> The latter set of terms applies only to what is good and bad. An advantage is εὐχρηστον; only what is good is strictly useful, or “beneficial”, ὠφέλιμον.

A complication is that, in addition to applying to preferred indifferents, the term εὐχρηστον is also attested as a synonym of ὠφέλιμον.<sup>11</sup> It appears, therefore, that εὐχρηστον straddles both categories: advantages, and what is good. The term καθήκον, “appropriate”, offers a parallel: it is commonly used to refer to actions that are neither good nor bad; but, in a strict sense, what is καθήκον is perfectly καθήκον, or good. Underlying the terminology, the substantive point is clear. We normally aim for advantages and try to avoid disadvantages; but they are not goods or evils, nor useful in a strict sense. What matters is how we use them; a good person uses them well, a bad person badly.

The next step is to examine how these distinctions apply to a craft (τέχνη). As I shall argue, human craftsmen, such as a poet, aim to produce a preferred indifferent, or “advantage”, to be used well by others. Both the craftsman and the user admit of being good; the product serves as an instrument for exercising goodness.

### *The Crafts*

The basis of the discussion will be Zeno’s detailed definition of a craft, as follows:

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10) Cicero draws the contrast at SVF 3.93 (= Fin. 3.69). Apart from Zeno’s use of the term εὐχρηστον (discussed next), we have only one extant use of εὐχρηστον by an early Stoic: Chrysippus (SVF 3.738) said that school learning (ἐγκύκλια μαθήματα) is advantageous (εὐχρηστεῖν); see below, n. 32. The use of the term to refer to indifferents is well attested for later authors. Philodemus uses εὐχρηστεῖν / εὐχρηστία repeatedly in a debate with the Stoic Diogenes of Babylon to refer to the utility of music (Mus. 4, cols. 120.35, 124.32, 135.25 and 40, and 139.11 and 21 De-lattre). Epictetus uses εὐχρηστον to refer to indifferents at Dissert. 1.6.2 and 36, and 2.23.2. Alexander of Aphrodisias uses εὐχρηστον to refer to preferred indifferents at SVF 3.145. Paradoxically, as Plutarch points out (SVF 3.123), the same things are both “useless” (ἀνωφελεῖς) and “advantageous” (εὐχρηστον). There are many examples of the use of ὠφέλιμα and βλάμματα (and variants) to designate what is good and bad; see SVF 3.89, 146, etc.

11) SVF 3.86 and 87.

τέχνη ἐστὶ σύστημα ἐκ καταλήψεων συγγεγυμνασμένων πρὸς τι τέλος εὐχρηστον τῶν ἐν τῷ βίῳ.

A craft is a system consisting of apprehensions exercised jointly with a view to a certain advantageous goal among those that are in life.<sup>12</sup>

This definition, along with variations, had a wide circulation in antiquity.<sup>13</sup> Some formulations omit τῷ, “a certain”. One source spells out the goal as “(apprehensions) having reference to a goal that is advantageous (εὐχρηστον) for life”. Cicero renders the definition as: “(apprehensions) pertaining to a single result (*unum exitum*) that is useful (*utilem*) for life”.<sup>14</sup> Another variant likewise has ἐν, “one”, in place of τῷ.<sup>15</sup> In addition, there are shorter definitions. Zeno is also credited with the definition of a craft as ἕξις ὁδοποιητικῆ, “a condition that makes methodically”.<sup>16</sup> Cleanthes defined a craft as “a condition that accomplishes everything methodically” (ἕξις ὁδῶ πάντα ἀνούσσα).<sup>17</sup> According to Olympiodorus (In Gorgiam 12.1), Chrysippus objected to Cleanthes’ definition on the ground that it could apply also to nature; for this reason, he added “with presentations”, defining τέχνη as “a condition that proceeds methodically with presentations” (ἕξις ὁδῶ προϊούσα μετὰ φαντασιῶν).<sup>18</sup>

The short definitions all have in common the notion of a “condition” (ἕξις). The Stoics divided a “condition” into two kinds: one that admits of relaxation and intensification, and one that does not; the latter was called διάθεσις, “disposition”.<sup>19</sup> A virtue is a disposition.<sup>20</sup> The wording thus leaves open whether a craft is a virtue. All the short definitions are centered on the notion

12) SVF 1.73.

13) SVF 1.73 and 2.93–97. Isnardi Parente (1966, 287–307) offers a comprehensive survey of the evidence, though without drawing a distinction between craftsman, product, and user. This study contains a valuable analysis of the difference between wisdom and apprehension (throughout), as well as the difference between a craft (in the sense of a human craft) and nature (301–307); it gives only brief attention to Zeno’s detailed definition (287–288), or the use of the term εὐχρηστον (290).

14) SVF 1.73.

15) SVF 2.93.

16) SVF 1.72.

17) SVF 1.490.

18) This definition, which is not found in SVF, was uncovered by Mansfeld (1983).

19) SVF 2.393 and 3.525.

20) SVF 1.202; 2.393, etc.

of regularity, or method. By excluding nature, Chrysippus restricts his definition to human craftsmanship. His definition focuses on the process, while that of Cleanthes focuses on completion.

While compatible with the shorter definitions, Zeno's detailed definition provides a much more precise insight into how a craft fits into Stoic thought. I shall divide the definition into two main components: the general delineation of a craft as a cognitive system, and the description of this system as having a certain goal. The cognitive system consists of "apprehensions" (καταλήψεις), a category of cognitions consisting of judgments that are necessarily true. These cognitions have been "combined by exercise" (συγγυμαζ-) toward a certain goal. As one of our sources points out, the result of the exercise is a habit.<sup>21</sup> The goal is said to be something εὐχρηστον in life. The indefinite τὶ and the plural τῶν suggest that there is a number of possible goals, all of them related to human life.

Both components raise questions. Concerning the first, there is a difference between apprehensions simply, and apprehensions that have become so firmly fixed as to be incontrovertible (ἀμετάπρωτοι). Incontrovertible apprehensions constitute knowledge, ἐπιστήμη.<sup>22</sup> Does Zeno's definition, then, comprise both kinds: apprehensions without knowledge, and apprehensions that have become knowledge? Or does it, indeed, demand knowledge, even though not explicitly? As for the second component, what is the meaning of εὐχρηστον? And does it differ according to how one understands the first part? I shall first consider the difference between so-called "intermediate crafts" and perfect crafts (that is, crafts in the strict sense), then turn to virtue and the craftsmanship of god, and finally add some remarks on the difference between process and product. My aim is to offer a typology that makes clear the differences among craftsman, user, and product.

### (a) *Intermediate and Perfect Crafts*

There is ample evidence for taking some crafts to be types of knowledge. Among goods that are not virtues, Stobaeus lists crafts "that have been altered in a good person by virtue and have become

21) SVF 3.214.

22) 'Knowledge' is defined at SVF 1.68; 3.112, etc.

incontrovertible (ἀμεταπτότους)”; such crafts, he says, are “as though” (οἰοεῖ) virtues.<sup>23</sup> By becoming incontrovertible, these crafts have become a state of knowledge. It looks, therefore, that there are two kinds of crafts: those that have been transformed into knowledge; and those that have not been transformed in this way. What does virtue have to do with this? As we saw, any craft proceeds with regularity.<sup>24</sup> But does this happen, we may ask, without any possibility of lapses? Suppose a doctor has mastered all the principles of his craft. Still, a moral weakness – greed, let us say – may cause him to abandon or relax one or more of his medical principles. He may be negligent, for example, or may even deliberately inflict harm. If he is virtuous, on the other hand, there is no possibility that he will ever let go of the principles of his craft; his system of cognitions is incontrovertibly fixed. Virtue, therefore, is what turns a system of apprehensions into knowledge.

Further, the type of craft that has not been transformed into knowledge fits the Stoic category of “intermediate crafts” (μέσσαι τέχναι).<sup>25</sup> As the name implies, such crafts are neither good nor bad. This agrees with the fact that apprehensions, just by themselves, are neither good nor bad.<sup>26</sup> Common to both good and bad persons, intermediate crafts can be used either well or badly. In the words of Quintilian, they “cannot be praised or blamed in themselves, but they become beneficial or not according to the character of those who use them”.<sup>27</sup>

Among intermediates, moreover, crafts have a special status. Diogenes Laertius lists craft (τέχνη), simply, among preferred indifferents.<sup>28</sup> Stobaeus adds a qualification: he includes among preferred indifferents all τέχναι that can make a major contribution to a life according to nature.<sup>29</sup> The two formulations suggest that

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23) SVF 3.111: Ἐν ἕξει δὲ οὐ μόνως εἶναι τὰς ἀρετάς, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰς τέχνους τὰς ἐν τῷ σπουδαίῳ ἀνδρὶ ἀλλοιωθείσας ὑπὸ τῆς ἀρετῆς καὶ γενομένης ἀμεταπτότους, οἰοεῖ γὰρ ἀρετὰς γίνεσθαι.

24) SVF 3.516.

25) Intermediate crafts are mentioned at SVF 2.393; and 3.505, 516, 525, 623, 741, and 742. Stobaeus (SVF 3.294) identifies ordinary crafts as practices (ἐπιτηδεύματα), as distinct from ἐπιστήμαι.

26) SVF 1.60.

27) Inst. or. 2.20.1: ... *neque laudari per se nec vituperari possunt, sed utiles aut secus secundum mores utentium fiunt.*

28) SVF 3.127.

29) SVF 3.136.



there may have been a disagreement on whether all intermediate crafts qualify as preferred indifferents, or only some do. Seneca includes the liberal arts (*liberales artes*), such as music and grammar, among preferred things. He also admits low-level (*viles*) manual crafts, such as wrestling and boxing, among crafts that make a very great contribution to life.<sup>30</sup> Seneca identifies the liberal arts with those the Greeks call ἐγκύκλιοι (“making up the curriculum”).<sup>31</sup> Since Chrysippus said that curricular learning is advantageous (εὐχρηστεῖν), he, too, seems to have included it among preferred indifferents.<sup>32</sup> On the whole, one might reconcile the testimonies by supposing a range of usages: popularly, there are crafts that do not make a major contribution; these are excluded by the demand that a craft should produce something εὐχρηστον.

So far, then, we have two types of candidates for the appellation “craft”: intermediates of the special kind known as preferred indifferents; and goods, transformed by virtue into knowledge. There is need, however, of an immediate correction. An intermediate “craft” (so-called) is not, strictly speaking, a craft; it becomes so only when it has been joined by virtue. Accordingly, only a good person, or a wise person, can be a craftsman. In the words of Stobaeus, “only the wise person is a good seer, poet, speaker (ῥήτωρ), dialectician, and critic”.<sup>33</sup> Likewise, Strabo (who considered himself a Stoic) wrote: “It is impossible to become a good poet unless one has previously become a good man”.<sup>34</sup> A good craftsman, it is implied, is not merely a morally good person, but an expert craftsman – a craftsman, without qualification. Thus Strabo also claimed that “only a wise person is a poet”;<sup>35</sup> and the Stoic Mnesarchus held that “no one is a speaker (*orator*) except a wise person”.<sup>36</sup> It follows that every craft in a strict sense is a type of knowledge, as illustrated by the definition of rhetoric as “the knowledge of speaking well”.

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30) Ep. 88.20. Philo (Congress. erud. 15–18) agrees with Seneca in elevating the liberal arts to preferred status: he compares the arts of grammar, music, geometry, rhetoric, and logic to vassals through which we may become acquainted with royalty. The vassals stand for preferred things; see SVF 1.192 and 194, and 3.128.

31) Ep. 88.23.

32) SVF 3.738; see above, n. 10.

33) SVF 3.654.

34) Geogr. 1.2.5; cf. Diogenes of Babylon SVF 3.117.

35) Geogr. 1.2.3.

36) Cicero, De oratore 1.83.

Mnesarchus took over this definition from Cleanthes and Chrysippus.<sup>37</sup> Likewise, divination (μουντική) was defined as “knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) that contemplates signs from gods and demons pertaining to human life”.<sup>38</sup>

The claim that a craftsman must be a good person goes back to Plato; but the Stoics developed it in a way that had a wide impact on later thought. Thus Maximus of Tyre, a rhetorician of the second century, assigned two features to the poetry of Homer, as well as to the paintings of Polygnotus and Zeuxis: virtue, and the particular skill.<sup>39</sup> In the case of Homer’s poetry, he points out, there is both a philosophical zeal for virtue and truth, and the particular skill of shaping a myth. Along the same lines, Galen wrote an essay entitled *The Best Doctor is also a Philosopher*; in taking this position, he is not simply following a long medical tradition, but also taking account of Stoic doctrine.

Strictly speaking, therefore, an intermediate “craft” (so-called) drops out from the status of a craft. The two types of craft we have considered so far reduce to a single craft: the transformation of an intermediate craft into a system of knowledge. This is a specialized type of craft, consisting of a mental disposition that is both virtuous and fully trained in the principles of a particular craft.

### (b) *Virtue and God*

There is another candidate for the title of “craft”: virtue simply, or wisdom, without specialized craft knowledge. To see how it fits in, two points need to be cleared up right away. First, one must guard against supposing that every wise person has all the crafts. Stobaeus warns against doing so: only the wise person, he reports, is a good seer, poet, speaker, and so on, “but not every [wise per-

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37) Quintilian, *Inst. or.* 2.15.35 (SVF 1.491); cf. Sextus Empiricus, *Adv. math.* 2.6 (SVF 2.294).

38) SVF 3.654; cf. 2.1018. Origen (SVF 3.741) draws a distinction between divination as an intermediate craft and divination as a craft that implies (ἐμφαίνει) the good (or, as he puts it, τὸ ἄστέιον). There was disagreement whether χρηματιστική, the craft of money-making, is something intermediate or good (SVF 3.623). Presumably, some crafts (most likely those that fall short of being preferred indifferents) were viewed as not worthy of being practiced by a good person.

39) *Dissert.* 26.5.

son], because any one of them still needs in addition to take up particular principles".<sup>40</sup> Not every wise person is any kind of craftsman at all; only a wise person who has acquired a certain type of specialized knowledge is a seer, or poet, or speaker, and so on.

What requires Stobaeus' warning is that the Stoics were notorious for claiming that every wise person, and only a wise person, is a speaker, poet, general, king, ruler, wealthy, strong, and so on.<sup>41</sup> All of this, however, is true only metaphorically. Every wise person is a poet and speaker in the same way as he is a king, wealthy, and so on: there is a radical change of meaning. What makes a wise person a ruler and a king is that, even if he lacks the instruments of rule, he is not responsible to anyone else.<sup>42</sup> Likewise, every wise person is wealthy because he is in possession of that which alone is truly valuable, the good.<sup>43</sup> In the same way, we might call every wise person a poet because he speaks with measure. This is a very different meaning from the ordinary sense of poet. In the ordinary sense, a poet or any other type of craftsman needs to have learned the principles of his particular craft.

The second point concerns Stobaeus' use of the expression "as though" (οἶονεῖ) in his explanation of transformed crafts.<sup>44</sup> In Stobaeus' view, a transformed craft is a good that is not a virtue; it is merely something like a virtue. Other authors, however, refer to it as a virtue simply. Quintilian, for example, asks: is rhetoric an intermediate craft or, as many philosophers hold, a virtue? He answers that the rhetoric he is attempting to teach is a virtue.<sup>45</sup> Along the same lines, Strabo defines rhetoric as "practical intelligence (φρόνησις) concerning speech". If rhetoric is a subdivision of φρόνησις, a virtue, then it is a virtue.<sup>46</sup> In the case of Quintilian, one may suppose that he is taking a loose view of what the Stoics

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40) SVF 3.654: οὐ πάντα δέ, διὰ τὸ προσδεῖσθαι ἔτι τινὰ τούτων καὶ θεωρημάτων τινῶν ἀναλήψεως. On the principles (θεωρήματα), see also SVF 2.954 and 3.214 (where θεωρήματα occurs as a substitute for "apprehensions" in the definition of a craft).

41) SVF 1.216; 3.655, 332, 617, 618, and 656; and Diogenes of Babylon SVF 3.117.

42) SVF 3.617 and 618.

43) SVF 3.593, 598, etc.

44) See above, n. 23.

45) Inst. or. 2.20.1–5.

46) Geogr. 1.2.5.

(among others) propose. Similarly, Strabo's definition may blur the difference between taking φρόνησις as a necessary condition of a transformed rhetoric (as Stobaeus reports) and taking it as the genus to which rhetoric belongs.

More troublesome is Cicero's summary of an argument by Mnesarchus: "Rhetoric, which consists of the knowledge of speaking well, is a certain single (*unam quandam*) virtue, and whoever has a single virtue has them all, and these are equal with each other", so that "he who is eloquent has all the virtues and indeed is wise".<sup>47</sup> It is basic Stoic doctrine that one virtue entails all the rest. But, as we have just seen, being a good speaker does not entail that a person is also a good poet, a good diviner, and so on; there is a need to acquire the principles of each particular craft. It is preferable, therefore, to take Cicero's highly compressed report as eliding a crucial distinction. True, a good speaker has virtue; and consequently he has all the virtues. But it is not by reason of his special craft that he has all the virtues; he has them by reason of the virtue that transformed his craft into knowledge. If we take Mnesarchus as identifying rhetoric as a sort of virtue, like Stobaeus, rather than strictly a virtue, then Cicero's report makes good sense. The wording *unam quandam* points in this direction: transformed by virtue, rhetoric may be taken as "a certain" virtue in the sense of being "as though" a virtue. As such, it entails all the virtues, but not all the crafts, which are merely "as though" virtues. Cicero's evidence, therefore, presents no obstacle to attributing to the Stoics the view that a craft is not strictly a virtue, but a good that participates in virtue.

With these clarifications out of the way, let us move to our new candidate: virtue itself, or wisdom. Virtue in general is said to be a craft, or (more precisely) a "craft of the whole of life".<sup>48</sup> Likewise, one of the four virtues, "intelligence" (φρόνησις), was said to be a craft of life;<sup>49</sup> and "wisdom" (σοφία), which embraces all the virtues, was identified as the craft of life.<sup>50</sup> Any of the virtues, it appears, is a craft dealing with an aspect of life as a whole.

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47) Cicero, *De oratore* 1.83.

48) SVF 3.214 and 202.

49) SVF 3.598.

50) SVF 2.117 and 3.516; and Seneca, *Ep.* 95.7–9.

How well, then, does virtue fit Zeno's definition of a craft? It is time to move to the second component of Zeno's definition: "exercised jointly with a view to a certain advantageous goal (τι τέλος εὐχρηστον) among those that are in life". How does a craft aim for "a certain advantageous goal" in life? In the case of the specialized crafts, the answer lies ready at hand: each aims to produce a single, particular advantage, such as health, wealth, and so on. But what is the aim of the virtues, or wisdom? They, too, aim for advantages, though in a different way from the specialized crafts. Instead of producing a single, specific advantage, they aim, on the whole, to obtain a balance of advantages over disadvantages; and they may, on occasion, aim for a disadvantage. In doing so, they take a synoptic view, based on experience; by contrast, the specialized crafts have in view a single goal, as prescribed by the principles of the particular craft. Virtue functions as a superordinate craft. As such, it has no need of specialized craft knowledge. What it does require, on the other hand, is the greatest possible experience, far more extensive than that of any specialized craft.<sup>51</sup> To make an appropriate judgment, it must know how to use the crafts and their products: it must have the knowledge of a user, not a maker.

It is possible that the alternative wording "with a view to a single goal" was intended as a clarification, restricting the definition to the specialized crafts.<sup>52</sup> On the other hand, it is also possible that Zeno intended his definition to include virtue. Although virtue does not produce a specific advantage, it practices its principles, on the whole, with a view to obtaining something advantageous; and this may be viewed as a unitary goal. If this is right, then Zeno's definition comprises two kinds of craft in a strict sense: specialized crafts that have been transformed by virtue; and virtue as such.

There is a further possibility. As mentioned previously, εὐχρηστον is attested as referring not only to advantages, but also to goods.<sup>53</sup> Both kinds of craft (in a strict sense) operate not only with a view to a goal that is advantageous, but also in a way that is good.

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51) Cicero, *Fin.* 3.50 (= Diogenes of Babylon *SVF* 3.41): Cicero (citing Diogenes of Babylon) here distinguishes virtue from "the rest of the crafts" (*Fin.* 3.49). Cicero also opposes virtue, or wisdom, to the "rest of the crafts" at *Fin.* 3.24 and 32.

52) See above, notes 14 and 15.

53) See above, n. 11.

They implement the ultimate goal of life, a good life, throughout the entire process. One might, therefore, stretch the meaning of “with a view to a certain εὐχρηστον goal” to have a double sense: a craft operates both with a view to a goal that is advantageous and with a view to continually implementing the goal of virtue. On this view, the term τέλος, too, is used in two senses: to refer to a subordinate goal, an advantage, and (as the term was commonly defined) to refer to the ultimate goal of life. Whether or not one accepts this interpretation, there is in fact a double utility: the advantage of the product and the virtue of the process.

There is still one glaring omission: the craftsmanship of god. Along with having the craft of virtue, god practices a special type of craft. This is the craft of natural creation, or nature simply. Viewed as one of the functions of god, nature was defined by Zeno as “a craftsmanlike (τεχνικόν) fire proceeding methodically to creation (ὁδῶ βαδίζον εἰς γένεσιν).”<sup>54</sup> It was also said to “bring to completion and hold together things that come from it in definite periods of time” and “to aim for (στοχάζεσθαι) what is useful (συμφέρον).”<sup>55</sup> These features appear compatible with Zeno’s detailed definition of a craft. In proceeding toward creation, nature aims for a goal that is advantageous, just like any human craft; for, as the Stoics supposed, god created plants and animals for the advantage of mankind.<sup>56</sup> This goal is also useful in the perfect sense in which it is in fact identical with god. Chrysippus, it seems, recognized this compatibility and so added “with presentations” to exclude nature. Zeno’s short definition of a craft as ἔξις ὁδοποιητική, “a condition that makes methodically”, suggests that he included nature.

### (c) *Process and Product*

Finally, it remains to elaborate on a point that is of fundamental importance: the difference between process and product. Cicero reports that in the other crafts the term “skillfully” (*artificiose*) applies to the result, or what comes later; this, he says, is said to be ἐπι-

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54) SVF 1.171; cf. 2.411. On nature as a function of god, see SVF 1.158, 160, and 176.

55) SVF 2.1132, cf. 1133 and 1134.

56) SVF 2.1152–1167.

γεννηματικόν (literally, “created in addition”).<sup>57</sup> Cicero also calls this the “outcome” (*effectus*). By contrast, the wise person operates “wisely” (*sapienter*) from the beginning. In other words, the craft of virtue, or wisdom, is realized fully from the beginning, whereas the other crafts are not realized fully until they have produced the intended result, or what I call the “product”. Philo draws the same contrast. Concerning the intermediate crafts, he points out, the endeavor is useless (ἀνωφελές) unless the end (πέρας) is attained; in the case of virtue, by contrast, the effort is beneficial (προσωφελῆσαι) right from the beginning.<sup>58</sup> The contrast entails two notions of utility: in a weak sense, the product of a craft is useful in the sense of being advantageous (εὐχρηστον); in a strong sense, the exercise of virtue is beneficial (ὠφέλιμον) from the beginning.

The outcome (“product”) is not a part of the activity. It must be distinguished from the entire duration of the activity, including its termination, as something that is external to it. The product need not be a material object, such as a house, shoe, or statue. It may be a theoretical discovery, such as the solution of a mathematical problem; or it may be an event (for example, a safe journey), a bodily condition (such as health), a mental condition (such as literacy or education), a performance (such as a dance), and so on.<sup>59</sup> An intermediate craft does not achieve its aim until it has created the product that results from the activity. The same applies to a transformed craft, although it achieves virtue from the beginning.

The product of a craft contributes to life merely, so as to make a difference to it; but it does not contribute, or make a difference, to a good life or happiness.<sup>60</sup> For example, health contributes to the preservation of life, but it makes no difference to a good life. Still,

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57) Cicero, Fin. 3.32 (SVF 3.504): *Sed in ceteris artibus cum dicitur artificiose, posterum quodam modo et consequens putandum est, quod illi ἐπιγεννηματικόν appellat; cum autem in quo sapienter dicimus, id a primo rectissime dicitur.* (“But in the other arts, when something is called ‘skilfully’, it must be thought of as later, in a sense, and consequent, which they call ἐπιγεννηματικόν. When, on the other hand, we speak of something as [done] ‘wisely’, this is said [to be done] absolutely correctly from the start.”) Cf. Fin. 3.24.

58) Philo, Sacr. Abel et Cain 115–116 (partly at SVF 3.505).

59) See SVF 3.202 for the division of crafts into theoretical and practical. On dancing (cited along with acting performances), see Cicero, Fin. 3.24. Dancing and acting performances, Cicero reports, differ from other products in that they are contained within the art, instead of being external to it.

60) SVF 1.192; and 3.118, 119, 122, 136, and 138.

craft products have a use with respect to virtue: this is to facilitate the pursuit of virtue. Thus Seneca claims that the liberal arts, as well as low-level manual arts, “contribute (*conferunt*) nothing to virtue”, but a great deal to the “instruments of life” (*instrumenta vitae*).<sup>61</sup> By equipping life with certain advantages the liberal arts “prepare” the mind for the acquisition of virtue, but do not have the motive power to advance a person to virtue; they “do not lead the mind to virtue, but remove impediments (*expediunt*)”. In Stoic technical language, they are not an efficient cause of virtue, or a “cause” in the proper sense of the term; instead, they produce favorable conditions. For example, a student might use his training in reading Homer to look for advice on how to lead his life: his schooling prepares the way for acquiring moral knowledge, but does not produce such knowledge.

Just as the use of a craft may be either theoretical or practical, so the use of a product may be of either kind. A geometrician, for example, may use a new discovery as the basis of further theoretical discoveries. A builder, on the other hand, may use a geometrical proof as the basis of a practical construction – a pyramid, for example. An audience member may use a poem, or song, or speech as a means of reflecting on virtue, or as the basis of an action. So long as the use is deliberate, the user makes a judgment about the product. The user need not be a craftsman of any sort; but he needs to judge the suitability of the product to his own aims.

To sum up the first part of the paper, it has surveyed a variety of crafts, from specialized human crafts to virtue and the craftsmanship of god. Specialized human crafts are of two types, intermediate and perfect; only the latter is a craft in a strict sense. From now on, I shall consider only the specialized human craft of poetry. It is a system of apprehensions practiced with a view to producing a poem as something advantageous, εὐχρηστων. It is a craft in a strict sense only if it is practiced by a wise person, having both moral knowledge and knowledge of the particular principles of the craft. As an advantage, a poem is a preferred indifferent. It is the responsibility of the hearer to use it well by responding with wise judgments.

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61) Ep. 88.20. See also Ep. 95.8, where it is said that the arts other than wisdom (for example, piloting a ship) deal with the “instruments” of life.



*The Craft of Poetry*

I turn now to the specific properties of the craft of poetry. How do the distinctions that have been set out apply to this craft? There are two challenges: one is that the evidence is patchy; the other is that any part of the evidence demands extensive discussion. Here, I shall build on the work of others to pursue a very limited aim: I shall merely offer a sketch of what is distinctive about poetry as a craft. This framework, I shall argue, had a profound influence on ancient poetics.

We have no text that lays out explicitly the distinctions that I have just listed. Philodemus comes closest. In the fifth book of his work *On Poems*, he chastises a Stoic (possibly Ariston of Chios) for setting up poems that are neither good nor bad over against poems that are good and bad.<sup>62</sup> Apparently, the Stoic (or Philodemus) is using the term ‘poem’ in a double sense: to refer to both the activity of the poet and the product.<sup>63</sup> Philodemus thinks the distinction is ridiculous; and it certainly is counterintuitive. The Greeks spoke of good or bad poems no less than we do. What sense does it make to transfer goodness and badness to the poet? Even if one agrees, there is the basic problem: does morality trump aesthetics? Plato had demanded that the poetic craft should be both useful and pleasing.<sup>64</sup> The Stoic demand for utility alone seems incredibly restrictive. Didn’t the Stoic recognize aesthetic qualities, or the pleasure (however they called it) of listening to poetry? Cicero said that what the Stoics wrote about rhetoric is enough

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62) Poem. 5, cols. 17.6–10 Mangoni. On the tripartition, see further Asmis 1990, 158–167. On Philodemus’ criticism as a whole, including the identity of the Stoic, see also Jensen 1923, 128–145, Ioppolo 1980, 256–278, Isnardi Parente 1987, and Porter 1994. Ioppolo accepts Jensen’s conjectural identification of the Stoic as Ariston; Isnarde Parente 1987, 97–98, rejects it, with the suggestion that he is a grammarian educated in philosophy; and Porter 1994, 64, 83–85, argues that he is closer to being a “critic” than a Stoic (see further below, n. 104). In my view, he is thoroughly Stoic, exemplifying the Stoic method of absorbing a vast range of critical methods within their system.

63) That the Stoics stretched the meaning of ‘poem’ to include the activity receives support from Seneca (Ep. 113.25): he cites intelligent verse (*prudens versus*) and intelligent speech (*prudens sermo*) as good actions.

64) Specifically, Socrates (Res publ. 607e) proposes that it should be not only pleasant (ἡδεῖα) but also useful (ὠφελίμη) with respect to governments and human life.

to make anyone mute.<sup>65</sup> One might be tempted to make a similar charge concerning poetry.

I shall address these questions in three sections. I shall first survey some basic concepts, then deal with the thought of a poem, and finally turn to the judgment of a poem as a whole.

(a) *Poet, Poem, and Hearer*

I shall begin with the definition of a poem. We have just one extant Stoic definition; and it is by Posidonius, who is known for being influenced by Plato. He distinguished between “poem” and “poetry”: a “poem” (ποίημα) is “metrical or rhythmic diction with elaboration, departing from the prosaic”; and “poetry” (ποίησις) is “a poem with meaning, containing an imitation of divine and human [things]”.<sup>66</sup> On this view, a poem is verse that need not have meaning, whereas poetry is verse that has meaning: poem is the genus, and poetry is a subdivision, characterized by meaning. This distinction arose in Hellenistic literary criticism.<sup>67</sup> There is no sign of it in Philodemus’ report about the Stoic, where the term ‘poem’ is used throughout to designate verse with meaning. Posidonius’ definition of poetry is general enough to accommodate Plato as well as the Stoics, as well as any literary critic who (despite Aristotle) continued to define poetry by reference to meter. His formulation of the subject matter not only echoes traditional views, but also has special relevance to the Stoic definition of wisdom (σοφία) as “knowledge of divine and human [things]”.<sup>68</sup> As a wise craftsman, a poet does have this knowledge, along with his special skill as an imitator.

Imitation occurs again in Strabo’s definition of the excellence of a poet as “imitating life through speech”; again, this is a very gen-

65) Fin. 4.7.

66) Diogenes Laertius 7.60 (Poseidonius fr. 44 Edelstein / Kidd): Ποίημα δέ ἐστιν . . . λέξις ἔμμετρος ἢ ἔνρυθμος μετὰ σκευῆς τὸ λογοειδὲς ἐκβεβηκυῖα . . . ποίησις δέ ἐστι σημαντικὸν ποίημα, μίμησιν περιέχον θεῶν καὶ ἀνθρωπέων.

67) See Asmis 1992, 212–215.

68) SVF 2.35. The definition also echoes Socrates’ claim at Res publ. 598d–e that, according to some, Homer and his followers know all skills and all human things (ἀνθρώπεια) with respect to virtue and vice, as well as divine things (θεῖα).

69) Geogr. 1.2.5 (μμητικὴν τοῦ βίου διὰ λόγων).

eral definition.<sup>69</sup> Strabo clearly admitted fiction; and there seems to me no evidence that earlier Stoics excluded it.<sup>70</sup> What is unique about Stoic imitation is that, since god exists as the sensible world, what one imitates is an aspect of the divine order; the object of imitation is not at a remove from god or absolute truth, as it is for Plato. Human vice, moreover, is an aspect of this order; even though humans are themselves responsible for the evil in the world, it is part of the divine plan. There is no falling off from the truth in the depiction of vice either, so long as the poet takes a correct view of how it fits into the divine plan. The Stoic Seneca puts this theory into practice in his tragedies: here he depicts the most extreme vice, together with the most outrageous successes, while issuing frequent warnings against these abominations. He breaks down in this way the boundaries for plot and character that Aristotle had set up, while fitting the whole into a Stoic worldview. Every aspect of the world, no matter how trite or vile, is suitable for representation, provided that the poet indicates what is good or bad about it. The poet imitates human and divine things at one and the same time.<sup>71</sup>

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70) One slight indicator is Zeno's alleged verdict (SVF 1.274 and 1.456) that he could find no fault with Homer: in particular, Homer does not contradict himself, for he said some things truthfully, others according to "opinion" (δόξα). Homer, Archilochus, and Antimachus are mentioned favorably in Philodemus' criticism of the Stoic (On Poems, cols. 17–18). Cleanthes, it seems, did not compose fiction; but this does not mean that he was not hospitable to it. In his *Hymn to Zeus*, he presents Zeus in fictional guise as wielding a thunderbolt. Halliwell 2002, 265–268, has argued that Posidonius and earlier Stoics may have excluded fiction; see following note.

71) Seneca (Ep. 65.2–14) and Philo (Ebriet. 89–90, cited in part at SVF 3.301) provide some additional evidence on imitation. Taking a broad view of mimesis, Seneca claims that "every craft is an imitation of nature" (*omnis ars naturae imitatio est*). (This view has a long and complex history; see Parente 1966, 76–96, on Aristotle.) Then he cites sculpture as an example that illustrates how, on the Stoic view, there is only one cause – the efficient cause (existing as the craft in the mind of the craftsman), which makes an imprint on the material. Philo likewise cites sculpture to show how a "perfect craft" (τελεία τέχνη), which he calls an "imitation and likeness (μίμημα καὶ ἀπεικόνισμα) of nature", makes an imprint on matter. "Perfect craft" is a reference to the Stoic notion of a human craft (in the strict sense) as a form of wisdom. Halliwell 2002, 265–266, interprets Philo as offering a glimpse of Stoic mimesis as some sort of correct picture of reality. What accounts for this correctness, in my view, is that the perfect human craftsman (exemplified by Pheidias in Philo's text) has the same degree of wisdom as god (or nature), while making likenesses (such as a statue of a human being or god) of things that exist by nature (such as a real human being or god as he really is).

Philodemus' Stoic opponent divided a poem into two components: thought (διάνοια) and verbal composition (σύνθεσις).<sup>72</sup> The term σύνθεσις is short for σύνθεσις τῶν λέξεων, "composition of diction", and is sometimes simply called λέξις, "diction". As De Lacy showed, the twofold division fits Stoic linguistic theory.<sup>73</sup> Diogenes of Babylon is said to have defined diction (λέξις) as vocal sound (φωνή) that is articulated in letter sound. Further, diction is either with or without meaning; if it has meaning, it is called λόγος. Accordingly, Diogenes defined λόγος as "meaningful (σημαντικός) vocal sound, sent from the mind (διάνοια)".<sup>74</sup> In Stoic theory, meaningful vocal sound is a signifier (σημαῖνον), and what is signified (σημαινόμενον) is an incorporeal entity called λεκτόν ("sayable").<sup>75</sup>

Importantly, there is an ambiguity in the use of the word 'thought'. It can be used to refer either to the thought in the mind of the poet or to the meaning that attaches to the verbal sound. In his report, Philodemus does not distinguish between these two uses. There is, however, a fundamental difference. The thought in the mind of a poet is a mental activity, and it is the source of the meaning of a word. The meaning itself is not a mental activity; it is an incorporeal entity that attaches to a word.<sup>76</sup> We generally expect a correspondence between the thought of the poet and the meaning of the words that make up a poem. There may be a gap, however, caused by the resistance of materials external to the mind. The voice may crack, or the papyrus may break, or the ink may blot, resulting in a discontinuity. The words afford a means of inferring the thought in the mind of the poet; but they do not give direct access to it.

The judgment of a poem must be distinguished from the impact that a poem makes. Very briefly, the Stoics distinguished between "presentation", φαντασία, and "assent", συγκατάθεσις. Zeno called a presentation a τύπωσις, "imprint", in the soul.<sup>77</sup> In

72) Poem. 5, cols. 17.11–14, 21.2–4 Mangoni, and passim.

73) De Lacy (1948), however, fails to distinguish between the meaning of the text and the thought in the mind of the poet.

74) Diogenes of Babylon SVF 3.20 (= Diogenes Laertius 7.56–57); cf. SVF 2.52. See further De Lacy 1948, 243–245.

75) SVF 2.166.

76) See Long 1971, 79–84.

77) SVF 1.58. Chrysippus (SVF 2.55 and 56) sought to correct Zeno's view by calling it an "alteration".

the case of humans, a presentation has a rational content (λεκτόν, as just mentioned); propositions are one type of content. A presentation is experienced passively; but when we assent to a presentation, we initiate an activity that is in our power. By assenting to a presentation with a propositional content, we judge the proposition to be true. Among presentations, there is a subdivision that shows an action to be done; this kind of presentation is said to be “impulsive” (“hormetic”).<sup>78</sup> It comes with a proposition that initiates an action as soon as a person assents.

Gorgias’ use of the verb τυπόω, “shape” or “imprint”, provides a striking illustration of how he differed from the Stoics. Gorgias said that persuasive speech “shapes” (ἐτυπόσατο) the soul however it wants; likewise, the soul is “shaped” through sight.<sup>79</sup> There is a sense in which the Stoics agree; but there is also a fundamental difference. According to Gorgias, what is shaped are opinions and emotions. According to the Stoics, what is shaped is a φαντασία, not an opinion or emotion. We ourselves shape our judgments (including emotions) by either assenting or withholding assent. Gorgias, in effect, elides the intermediate status of a poem (or any other text) as a product to be used by the hearer. There is no question of the hearer using a poem; instead, the poet uses the hearer.

As is well recognized, the Stoic demand for judgment offers a response to Plato’s expulsion of traditional poetry.<sup>80</sup> The hearer has the ability to avoid corruption by adding a judgment of his own. As a rational being, he will in any case add judgments of his own. He can (and will) add false judgments; but his goal is to develop his rational capacity in such a way as to add only correct judgments.

Epictetus, who was especially concerned with the right use of presentations, illustrates their misuse in poetry. The starting point of any action, he points out, is a φαινόμενον. Likewise, Homer’s *Iliad* is “nothing but φαντασία and the use (χρησις) of φαντασία”. For example, it “appeared” (ἐφάνη) to Menelaus that he should pursue Paris, who carried off his wife. Menelaus followed this appearance; but it would have been much better, Epictetus comments, if Menelaus had followed the appearance that it is a gain to be rid

78) SVF 3.169 and 171; see Inwood 1985, 59–66.

79) Encom. Hel. 13 and 15.

80) See especially Nussbaum 1993, 136–146.

of such a wife.<sup>81</sup> Similarly, Epictetus claims that every tragedy is a φαινόμενον; the reason is that its starting point is a φαινόμενον, which the characters follow indiscriminately. The characters are madmen, he says, and so are we.<sup>82</sup> The analogy throws light on the mimetic function of poems: they present characters just like us, thus holding up a kind of mirror to who we are.

On the surface, Epictetus appears to agree with Plato in taking a negative view of Homeric epic and the tragedies that sprung from it. Upon closer view, I suggest, his use of the term φαινόμενον as a substitute for Stoic φαντασία offers a response to Plato. A poem, as he points out, is not simply a φαντασία, but the use of φαντασίαι. Just like the characters in a poem, so we use φαντασίαι. To go one step further, a poem is among the φαντασίαι that we use. Like all other φαντασίαι, we use them badly. We have the power, however, to use them well.<sup>83</sup> They do not corrupt in themselves, but insofar as they are used badly. In effect, Epictetus absorbs poems within human experience as something that we must learn to put to good use.

(b) *Judging the Thought of a Poem*

We have a wealth of evidence about how the Stoics proposed to use the thought of a poem, though very little about how to use a poem as a composite of thought and verbal form. This makes it look as though the Stoics were interested in poems primarily as a source of information. As philosophers, the Stoics did indeed have a special interest in mining poems for materials that could serve as a basis for philosophical investigation. They also showed, however, how anyone at all could derive a benefit from the thought of a poem and (as shall be discussed in the next section) from its full existence as a composite of thought and words.

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81) Dissert. 1.28.10–13; cf. 3.22.26.

82) Dissert. 1.28.30–33.

83) At Dissert. 1.6.12–22, Epictetus points out that humans differ from irrational animals in not merely using φαντασίαι, but using them with understanding (παρακολούθησις). See also 1.7.33; 1.12.34, and 2.1.4 on the correct use of φαντασίαι. At 3.1.25, Epictetus offers his own definition of a human being as “a mortal animal using φαντασίαι rationally”.

More than prose or other kinds of records, poetry provides an especially rich fund of information, showing what people have been thinking and doing over a long period of time. It is therefore especially useful to the philosopher as a starting-point for discovering truths about the world. Chrysippus was particularly notorious for ransacking the poets for this purpose. He is said to have excerpted Euripides' *Medea* so exhaustively in one of his works that it came to be known as "the *Medea* of Chrysippus".<sup>84</sup> His aim, it was alleged, was to find evidence in support of Stoic theory. Galen was utterly scathing about Chrysippus' procedure: he faults him for ignoring contrary evidence and failing to supply proof.<sup>85</sup> The Epicureans accused Chrysippus of making even the oldest poets – Orpheus, Musaeus, Hesiod and Homer –, who had no inkling of this, look like Stoics.<sup>86</sup> This, I suggest, is to turn Chrysippus' intention upside down. More than any previous philosopher, he looked toward poetry as a repository of information that might serve as the basis of new insights. His intention was to scour the world for all the evidence there is, not to bolster preconceived ideas.

This does not mean that the Stoics looked upon poems merely as professional tools, serving as a means for building up theories. Poems have an educational function, whether used by philosophers or others. Strabo is commonly quoted as evidence for this function. Citing the Stoic view that only a wise person is a poet, he points out that "the cities of the Greeks teach children first of all through poetry", doing so "not for the sake of mere enchantment, but for the sake of good sense (σωφρονισμός)".<sup>87</sup> Extending the educational function to adults, Strabo draws on Homer to illustrate how a poet educates through both factual and fictional content.<sup>88</sup> Philodemus provides further evidence for the educational function of poems. As he reports, his Stoic opponent held that poems have good thought whenever they display good thoughts and actions or "aim for education".<sup>89</sup> This leaves open the possibility that poems may contain bad thoughts or actions, provided they are presented

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84) Diogenes Laertius 7.180.

85) See esp. Galen, de Hipp. Plat. dogm. 3.2–7, including SVF 2.884, 899, 900–905.

86) Cicero, Nat. deorum 1.41.

87) Geogr. 1.2.3.

88) Geogr. 1.2.8–13; see Halliwell 2002, 268–273.

89) Poem. 5, col. 17.14–31, cf. col. 20.1–3 Mangoni.

in a way that is educational – that is, as bad. Philodemus also reports that educational thought includes the “discovery of explanations”, as made by the poet Antimachus (a fifth century poet, who was reportedly much admired by Plato).

To perfect its educational function, a poem needs to engage the judgment of the hearer. If the thought issues from a wise poet, it is up to the hearer to adopt it as his own. If it is deficient, the hearer needs to correct it. For this task, the hearer may draw on the vast repertoire of interpretative methods developed by literary critics. The Stoics themselves drew on these methods. I shall not attempt an exhaustive analysis. Instead, I shall focus on the methods attributed explicitly to the Stoics. They may be divided roughly into three categories: broadening the meaning; rewriting the text; and supplying a hidden meaning, or allegory.

Plutarch’s *On how a Young Person Should Listen to Poems* is our main source for the first two kinds. There has been some debate on how strongly his text is influenced by the Stoics. It is plausible that Plutarch draws on Stoic techniques much more extensively than he acknowledges.<sup>90</sup> Regardless of specific techniques, however, what he most owes to the Stoics is his general view of the hearer as an interpreter, adding judgments of his own. To add correct judgments, it is in the interest of the hearer to use the guidance of someone who is further along; this applies not merely to children, who are in the process of learning to use their rational faculty, but to anyone who is not already wise. Non-Stoics, too, can use his method. As a Platonist, Plutarch adds a mentor in order to save traditional poetry, against the strictures of Plato, for the education of young people. Analogously, the Epicurean Philodemus provides philosophical guidance to adult readers of Homer in *On the Good King according to Homer*. Both authors put Stoic theory to their own use, depending on their philosophical persuasions. What both have in common is a new view of the hearer as an interpreter, and this, I suggest, they owe to the Stoics.

Concerning the first category, Plutarch gives an example of how Chrysippus proposed to extend the scope of what is said.

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90) Blank 2011, 239, argues that “the techniques Plutarch recommends ... were largely those of Chrysippus”. Hunter and Russell 2011, 12, take the view that “the suspicion of Stoic sources or influences must often remain at the level merely of possibility”.



Hesiod's saying (at *Works and Days* 348) "not even an ox would perish but for a bad neighbor" may be extended to similar things, such as a dog or ass, and indeed all things that are perishable.<sup>91</sup> Anyone at all (including the young people that Plutarch has in mind) can use this method; the philosopher uses it to build up universal truths. Another way of broadening the meaning is to consider the range of meanings associated with a term. Thus Chrysippus interpreted the name "Zeus" in Homer's verse "the will of Zeus was accomplished" as signifying fate and the nature of the world as a whole.<sup>92</sup> This particular interpretation is in agreement with Stoic theory.

Second, one may correct the meaning of a verse (or verses) by re-writing the words. Plutarch traces this method to Antisthenes and assigns it to both Zeno and Cleanthes.<sup>93</sup> The Stoics, it seems, were especially partial to this type of interpretation, in effect turning the hearer into an author. Zeno, for example, re-wrote Sophocles' verse "whoever comes to do business with a king is slave to him, however free he comes" by substituting "... is not a slave if only free he comes". This is a "parallel correction" (παραδιόρθωσις, 33c), consisting of a parallel text.<sup>94</sup> More generally, it is a method of correcting a text (ἐπανορθούμενος, 33d). This is the correction of a falsehood; and it must be distinguished from textual emendation, which was also called "correction" (ἐπανόρθωσις).<sup>95</sup> Re-writing leaves the original text as it is, so as to offer a response to it. Zeno practiced both kinds. One needs to establish the correct text first; then one judges the text by re-writing it in one's own mind (and possibly producing an alternative, externally accessible poem of one's own). When the words are spoken by a character, as in Sophocles' text, the hearer may simply be correcting the views of the character, not the author. Just like other methods of inter-

91) Plut. Aud. poem. 34b–35a.

92) Plut. Stoic. repug. 1050b. Plutarch also mentions substituting "fate" for "Zeus" in Aud. poem. 23d, but without naming any Stoic.

93) Aud. poem. 33c–d. In addition, Plutarch (Stoic. repug. 1039f) mentions Chrysippus' ἐπανόρθωσις of a verse of Theognis. Zeno also changed the order of a pair of Hesiodic verses to reverse the order of importance (SVF 2.235).

94) I owe this point to Blank 2011, 256–258.

95) Philodemus uses the term ἐπανόρθωσις in the same sense of correcting a falsehood in *On the Good King according to Homer*: he concludes this treatise by referring to the "starting points for correction (ἀφορμῶν ... εἰς ἐπανόρθωσιν) that it is possible to take from Homer" (col. 43.16–18 Dorandi). Zeno also rewrote verses by reversing their order (SVF 1.235).

pretation, re-writing is something one can do continuously while listening to a text.<sup>96</sup>

Third, the Stoics gave new impetus to etymological and allegorical interpretation. The leading early Stoics – Zeno, Cleanthes, and Chrysippus – were all eager to unlock insights concealed in the names and stories that were handed down about the gods.<sup>97</sup> Their opponents ridiculed them, especially Chrysippus, for their ingenuity.<sup>98</sup> For a long time, it was assumed that the early Stoics imputed deliberate allegory to Homer, Hesiod, and other poets. In recent decades, scholars have swung to the view that the early Stoics supplied allegorical interpretations of their own to the poems that were available to them.<sup>99</sup> In my view, the question comes down to this: how did the Stoics view the role of the hearer? By making the hearer responsible for using his own judgment, the Stoics could derive truths from falsehoods. As Cicero reports, the early Stoics argued in detail that the poets covered up truths about the physical world with false stories.<sup>100</sup> The hearer can retrieve the original truths, even if the poet has no inkling of them. This does not imply that the early Stoics did not admit the possibility that some poets may have had some allegorical insight. Instead, it appears that they were more concerned to supply correct interpretations themselves than to recover what the poet himself thought. By the first century C. E., a change had occurred. The Stoic Cornutus affirmed that the “ancients” did offer deliberate allegories.<sup>101</sup> His interest was in saving the author, not merely the text.

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96) As Nussbaum 1993, 139, puts it, the spectator is encouraged to “provide a running commentary” on a work.

97) Cicero, *Nat. deorum* 2.63–71; Strabo 10.3.23; and Cornutus 26.6–31.17, cf. 76.2–5 Lang.

98) For the attacks, see Cicero, *Nat. deorum* 3.62–63; Plutarch, *Aud. poem.* 31e (on Cleanthes and Chrysippus); and Seneca, *Ben.* 1.3.8–1.4 (on Chrysippus). See also SVF 2.908 and 909 on Chrysippus.

99) Long 1992 initiated this change of view. Boys-Stones 2003 agrees with Long on the early Stoics, but argues that later Stoics, such as Cornutus, did impute deliberate allegory to the earliest thinkers. Struck 2004, 113, expresses doubts about Long’s position.

100) Cicero, *Nat. deorum* 2.63–64, 70.

101) I follow Boys-Stones 2003, 209, on this point, against Long (1992, 56). Most (1989, 2020–2025) also takes Cornutus to attribute deliberate allegory to the ancients, including Homer and Hesiod. Both Most and Boys-Stones associate Cornutus’ position with Posidonius’ claim that there were philosophers among the first humans.

This still leaves a huge gap: what did the Stoics think about the aesthetic properties of the subject matter of a poem as a certain kind of arrangement, having plot, showing character, revealing the thought of a character, and so? This was the focus of Aristotle; and the Stoics may well seem insensitive to what seems essentially important about the greatest poetry. I suggest that one needs to take into account the overall aim of the Stoics: they sought to provide a framework that can accommodate all genres of poetry – from large-scale epic and tragedy to the shortest epigrams. As far as we know, they did not deal in detail with the requirements of each genre, but left this to others. What they thought essentially important about poetry as a whole is that it has the power to bring the hearer especially close to the truth, through a combination of both thought and verbal form. This will be the subject of the next section.

*(c) Judging a Poem as a Composite of Thought and Verbal Form*

A poem must be judged not merely as a collection of thoughts, but as a combination of thought and verbal expression (“composition”, σύνθεσις). Concerning the verbal expression, Philodemus reports that his Stoic opponent demanded euphony along with thought and many other qualities, and that he assigned the judgment of verbal expression to experienced hearing, not reason.<sup>102</sup> Although Philodemus does not say so explicitly, it appears that, according to the Stoic, a poem is judged by a combination of reason (for the thought) and experienced hearing (for the verbal form). Even though the hearer, as such, lacks the knowledge of composing a poem, he may attain the knowledge of judging it; this is the knowledge of a critic, and it consists of a combination of rational and sensory understanding.

Philodemus thinks it makes no sense to separate out sensory judgment, which he considers irrational, from rational judgment; for words express meaning and so cannot be judged without reason. This objection looks tendentious. The so-called “critics” (a group of literary critics whom Philodemus cites as the source of the

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<sup>102</sup> Poem. 5, cols. 21.7–17 and 23.23–33 (incl. τῆ τριβῆ τῆς ἀ[κοῆ]ς at 23.32–33) Mangoni.

Stoic's demand for euphony) held that what makes a poem good is nothing but euphony. At the same time, they demanded a recognition of the meaning. As a leading "critic", Crates of Pergamum proposed that what must be judged is the sound, not the thoughts (τὰ νοούμενα), but the sound must be judged "not without the thoughts".<sup>103</sup> In other words, the sound must be judged in relation to the thought; and this is judged by the hearing, not by reason. Recognizing the thought that is expressed is a prerequisite; but the hearing does not judge the thought – that is the job of reason. Philodemus' Stoic agrees that one must recognize the thought in order to judge the sound. By contrast with the "critics", however, he held that there is need of both reason (to judge the thought) and of hearing (to judge the way that the verbal sound fits the thought).<sup>104</sup>

For the rest, Philodemus offers further evidence in *On Music*. This work throws light on Stoic views of poetry, partly through an extended criticism of the Stoic Diogenes of Babylon, and partly through a well-preserved section of text on Cleanthes. Diogenes requires a much more detailed treatment than I can provide here; but what Philodemus attributes to him seems to me consistent with Stoic orthodoxy. On the subject of the crafts, Philodemus repeatedly cites Diogenes as using the Stoic technical term εὐχρηστεῖν / εὐχρηστία with reference to music.<sup>105</sup> He also assigns to Diogenes the view that the crafts are useful (χρησιμεύειν) for "many parts of life", together with the claim that love of a craft (φιλοτεχνία) "disposes [the mind] in a way that is appropriate (οἰκείως) to several, or rather all, virtues".<sup>106</sup> All of this fits the Stoic view of the crafts: the crafts make a contribution to life, as well as prepare the mind for the acquisition of virtue.

Where Philodemus' wording seems to depart from Stoic orthodoxy is that he says that the various genres of music "contribute" to various virtues, such as temperance, erotic virtue, sym-

103) Poem. 5, col. 28.24–29 Mangoni; see further Asmis 1991, 159–160.

104) Against this view, Porter (1994, 83–85) proposes that Philodemus' Stoic takes the point of view of the "critics" in judging a poem by its sound, not the thought: the ear "astonishingly" ends up judging the quality of a poem (83). According to Porter, the mind does not have to take in the thoughts; they "need only be virtually in hand".

105) See n. 10 above.

106) Mus. 4, cols. 49.13–20 and 137.38–138.4 Delattre.

otic virtue, and nobility of character.<sup>107</sup> He also says that music contributes to wars, reconciliation, worship of the gods, love, “an education for a good life”, and so on; these are merely aspects of life.<sup>108</sup> Philodemus commingles the two kinds of goal: contributing to virtue (or the good life), and contributing to life (merely). Seneca says outright that none of the liberal arts (which include music) makes any contribution to virtue; they merely prepare the mind for the acquisition of virtue.<sup>109</sup> In general, as we saw, the specialized crafts have a goal that is “advantageous” (εὐχρηστον) in life; they do not aim for virtue. Philodemus blurs this distinction. He provides no reason, however, for supposing that Diogenes himself did not draw a strict distinction between the two kinds of contribution. True, music makes an irrational impact that can be conducive to the acquisition of virtue; but this does not mean that Diogenes rejected the orthodox Stoic view that an irrational impact must be joined by a rational act of judgment in order for a person to advance to virtue. There is no evidence anywhere in our sources that Diogenes departed so radically from Stoic orthodoxy. Music “contributes” to virtue in the broad sense in which an irrational impact can predispose (but not impel) the mind to make the right kind of judgment.<sup>110</sup>

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107) Examples are at Mus. 4, col. 121.6–15 Delattre (music contributes to nobility, temperance, and good order); col. 129.8–19 (melody contributes to right conduct in love, or erotic virtue); and col. 130.1–13 (music contributes not only to erotic, but also to sympotic virtue).

108) Examples are at Mus. 4, col. 120.26–29 Delattre (music contributes to wars); cols. 133.12–134.16 (melody stops strife); col. 118.11–30 (music contributes to religious ritual and honor of the gods); and col. 112.33–40 (an understanding of what is harmonious and rhythmical, or not, contributes to an education toward a good life), cf. 119.13–15 (on education). Col. 117.10–23 (melody awakens and leads to a natural disposition in one’s character, as well as calms a person) is ambiguous between a moral and non-moral interpretation.

109) See n. 61 above.

110) Nussbaum 1993, 115–121, has argued that Diogenes anticipates Posidonius in taking a non-cognitive view of the emotions as irrational forces. On this view, music and poetry shape the emotions (and virtue in general) by means of an irrational impact. In common with others, Nussbaum assigns a cognitive view to mainstream Stoicism, according to which the emotions are judgments or follow on judgments. Correspondingly, Nussbaum distinguishes between two Stoic views of poetry: a mainstream view, according to which the hearer modifies his emotions rationally by making judgments; and a non-cognitive view, according to which the impact of a poem modifies the emotions irrationally. Previously, Posidonius had

According to Philodemus, Diogenes thought that “melody naturally has something that stirs and disposes to actions”.<sup>111</sup> Philodemus objects that “to dispose to actions” is to “impel and choose”, and “it is not thought” that melody can “implant choices”.<sup>112</sup> The objection, as I understand it, is that Diogenes is trapped in an absurdity: his claim that melody “stirs” to action commits him to the view that the stimulus is a choice; but neither he nor anyone else thinks that melody can produce choice (a prerequisite of action). It is entirely open to Diogenes to extricate himself from the absurdity by denying the identity of stimulus and choice (in agreement with basic Stoic doctrine). Elsewhere in his criticism, Philodemus offers a more accurate description of the alleged impact of music by saying that “certain melodies awaken and focus the mind on companionship and a fitting deportment”.<sup>113</sup> This is a clear example of how music was thought to move the rational mind.<sup>114</sup> Music intensifies the attention of the mind, without determining judgment.

Music has a special relationship to virtue, according to Diogenes, because it imitates, or has a similarity to, various types of virtue or character.<sup>115</sup> (Philodemus objects that it is no more imitative than cookery.) This view goes back to Plato and earlier.<sup>116</sup> Again, it does not imply that Diogenes thought it possible to attain virtue without making judgments. Although music can reconfigure the soul to make it more receptive to virtue, the mind cannot receive virtue unless it adds the right judgments. Philodemus again offers an accurate description of Diogenes’ position when he objects that musical sound (which is irrational) cannot “contribute

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long been viewed as following Plato in taking a non-cognitive view of the emotions. In recent decades, however, scholars have argued that Posidonius, too, agreed with orthodox Stoicism in taking a cognitive view; see Fillion-Lahille 1984 and Cooper 1998. I agree with these scholars. It follows that there is just one Stoic view of poetry: like any type of presentation, poems make an irrational impact on the mind, but this impact must be joined by judgment to make a difference to one’s emotions or moral condition.

111) Mus. 4, col. 121.24–27 Delattre (almost the same as at col. 41.18–20): φύσει τὸ μέλος ἔχειν τι κινή/τικὸν καὶ παραστατικὸν / πρὸς τὰς πράξεις.

112) Mus. 4, col. 121.36–41 Delattre.

113) Mus. 4, col. 126.6–11 Delattre.

114) Cf. col. 123.40 Delattre.

115) Mus. 4, col. 117.23–35; cf. cols. 91 and 136.27–32 Delattre.

116) See especially Res publ. 398d–400e.

anything toward a disposition of the soul that contemplates what is useful and useless”.<sup>117</sup> On Diogenes’ view, music contributes irrationally to the mental disposition that entertains a presentation, but does not determine assent. Philodemus also objects that melody cannot make any poem (such as the poem of Crexus) appear more solemn: it makes no difference whatsoever to “solemnity and a rational appearance (ἔ[μ]φασιν)”, but can only add acoustic pleasure.<sup>118</sup> In his view, music makes no moral contribution whatsoever, whether by acting on a disposition or presentation, or directly on one’s power of judgment; if there is a contribution, it lies in the thoughts that are expressed in a song.<sup>119</sup>

Philodemus’ criticism of Diogenes contains a passage that sets out the position of the early Stoic, Cleanthes:

[Cleanthes says] that ... philosophical discourse can report (ἐξαγγέλειν) divine and human affairs adequately, but plain prose does not have diction that is appropriate to divine greatness; [instead] meters, melodies, and rhythms approach (προσικνεῖσθαι) as closely as possible to the truth of the contemplation (θεωρίας) of divine things (θείων). (It is not easy to find anything more ridiculous than this!) It is not the case [he said] that thoughts do not benefit; but when they are put into music, there is a stimulus (παρόρμησις) from both sides. For there is no slight stimulus from the thoughts themselves, but it is greater with melodies.<sup>120</sup>

Surprisingly, Cleanthes claims that philosophical prose falls short of bringing a person close to a recognition of divinity. It can make an adequate report; but it does not bring the listener as close as possible to the “truth of the contemplation of divine things”. There is an implicit contrast between reporting from a distance and having a close-up view: however full the philosopher’s report (as signified by the prefix ἐξ-), it cannot bring a person into the closest possible

117) Mus. 4, col. 138.12–17 Delattre.

118) Col. 124.1–19 Delattre.

119) Col. 134.11–14; cf. 120.2–5 Delattre.

120) Col. 142.5–22 Delattre: ... τοῦ λόγου τοῦ τῆς φιλοσοφίας ἰκανῶς μὲν ἐξαγγέλλειν δυναμένου τὰ θεῖα καὶ / ἀνθ[ρ]ώ[πι]ν[α], μὴ ἔχοντος δὲ / ψεῖλου τῶν θείων μεγεθῶν / λέξεις οἰκείας, τὰ μέτρα καὶ / τὰ μέλη καὶ τοὺς ῥυθμοὺς / ὡς μάλιστα προσικνεῖσθαι / πρὸς τὴν ἀλήθειαν τῆς τῶν / θείων θεωρίας. οὐ καταγελαστότερον οὐ ράδιον εὐρεῖν· οὔτε γὰρ αἱ διάνοιαι μὲν οὐ/κ ὠφελοῦ[σ]ιν, ὅταν δὲ μελω/δηθῶσιν, ἐξ ἀμφοτέρων ἢ / παρόρμησις [γί]νεται – καὶ γὰρ / ὑπὸ διανοη[μ]άτων αὐτῶν / γίνετ’ οὐ μετρία –, μετὰ δὲ / τῶν μελῶν μ[ε]ρίζων. On Cleanthes’ position, see further Asmis 1990, 194–195.

proximity of the truth. Meter and melody have the power to do so by adding a stimulus of their own. The passage supports Diogenes' position by showing how melody and rhythm can stir the mind to a contemplation of what is useful.

Philodemus thinks this is totally ridiculous. He continues immediately after the quoted text:

On the contrary, if a person is accommodating, he will say that [the stimulus] is equal; but if one is strictly truthful, he will say that it becomes lax because of the pleasure and the distraction produced by it and the loudness and distinctiveness of the sounds, and because the diction is uttered continuously and contrary to nature, and because of the places and times at which we listen, and for numerous other reasons.<sup>121</sup>

Far from intensifying the thought, the addition of meter and melody makes it lax.

Although the term *θεωρία* had long been used to signify philosophical contemplation, it has a special meaning here. As Philodemus points out elsewhere in his treatise, the term was widely assumed to have the same root as words signifying divinity.<sup>122</sup> Cleanthes alludes to this etymology by conjoining *θεωρία* with *θείων*: the contemplation is of divine things. There is no closer (in a literal sense) contemplation of this sort than the ritual vision (*ἐποπτεία*) of sacred objects in a religious initiation. This connotation is strengthened by *προσικνεῖσθαι*, a term used to refer to the approach of a suppliant. Meter and melody, it is implied, bring about a kind of initiation.<sup>123</sup>

Philodemus' report about Cleanthes focuses on musical sound, as befits the topic of his treatise. Seneca shows that Cleanthes' view extends to poems as a whole, whether put into song or not. Accord-

121) Col. 142.22–35 Delattre (slightly revised): ἀλλ' ἂν / μὲν ἐπιε[ι]κῆς ἦ τις, ἐρεῖ / τὴν ἴσην. ἂν δ' ἀποτόμως / ἀλη[θ]ῆς, ἀνιμεμένην καὶ / διὰ τὴν ἡδονὴν καὶ διὰ / τὸν περισπα[σ]μὸν τὸν ὑπὸ / ταύτης κα[ί] τοῦ μεγέθους / τῶν φωνῶν καὶ τῶν ἰδι / στήτων καὶ διὰ τὸ συνεχῶς / μηδὲ κατ[ἄ] φύσιν τὰς λέξεις / ἐκφέρεσ[θαι] καὶ διὰ τοὺς / τόπους [κ]αὶ [τ]οῦς καιροὺς ἐν / οἷς ἀκρόω[με]θα καὶ δι' ἄλ / λας πλ[ε]ίο[σ]ους αἰτίας. Cf. col. 59.3–12.

122) Cols. 38.13–22 and 118.39–119.12 Delattre.

123) What makes a religious interpretation all the more plausible is that Cleanthes (SVF 1.538) is said to have called the world a place of initiation (μυστήριον), where the gods are initiatory shapes (μυστικά σχήματα) and sacred appellations (κλήσεις ἱεράς), the sun is a torch-bearer, and all who are possessed by divine things are initiates (τελεστάς).



ing to Seneca, Cleanthes compared the sound of a poem to that of a trumpet (Ep. 108.10):

... For, as Cleanthes said, just as our breath produces a clearer sound when, after passing through the narrow confines of a long channel, it has just been emitted by the trumpet from the wider opening at the end, so the constraint of song makes our perceptions clearer (*sensus ... clariores*). The same things are heard more carelessly and strike us less for as long as they are spoken in prose. When rhythm is added and precise metrical feet have compressed an exalted sense, the same opinion is hurled as though with a fuller throw.<sup>124</sup>

Just like the sound of a trumpet, so meter impresses an “exalted” message more forcefully on the mind, so as to make our perceptions clearer. As a result, Seneca says, “even the worst scoundrel” applauds morally fine sayings in the theater. That is why philosophers should mix verses with their precepts: the same precepts sink more efficaciously into the mind of the listener.<sup>125</sup>

Just as Philodemus’ excerpt indicates, the addition of meter makes a difference to the impact of a thought on the hearer. It makes the presentation (*φαντασία*) clearer and more forceful, so as to make us more attentive. The double impact must be distinguished from assent, or judgment. Although the presentation is especially clear and forceful, it cannot compel assent; that is up to the listener.

The type of presentation produced by poetry or song is not mentioned in ancient classifications of Stoic *φαντασία*; nor has it received any attention in modern discussions of Stoic epistemology. It may be put in the general category of persuasive presentations, which are said to produce a smooth motion in the soul.<sup>126</sup> It must be distinguished, on the other hand, from the category of “apprehensive” (“kataleptic”) presentations, which are necessarily true and are joined by a judgment called “apprehension”. A kataleptic presentation is imprinted in such a way as to show all the

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124) Ep. 108.10: *Nam, ut dicebat Cleanthes, quemadmodum spiritus noster clariorem sonum reddit cum illum tuba per longi canalis angustias tractum patentiore novissime exitu effudit, sic sensus nostros clariores carminis arta necessitas efficit. Eadem neglegentius audiuntur minusque percutiunt quamdiu soluta oratione dicuntur: ubi accedere numeri et egregium sensum adstrinxere certi pedes, eadem illa sententia velut lacerto excussioe torquetur.*

125) Ep. 108.9–10.

126) SVF 2.65.

distinctive properties of an object in a clear, precise way.<sup>127</sup> It is also said to be “striking” (πληκτικός).<sup>128</sup> The presentations produced by a poem or song also have clarity and forcefulness. But this type of clarity and force is due to the type of sound, not the inherent truthfulness of the presentation. If suitable sound is added to a kataleptic impression, the clarity of a necessary truth (as recognized by reason) is reinforced by perceptual clarity (as recognized by the hearing).

What accounts for this reinforcement? Michael Frede has argued that presentations (“impressions”) come with a certain “coloring”, which reflects “the beliefs, habits, and attitudes of the particular mind” that has the presentation.<sup>129</sup> On the whole, “there is more to our impressions than their propositional content”.<sup>130</sup> As a result, we think of one and the same proposition in different ways; and when we assent to a proposition, we accept not merely the proposition but also the presentation with all its coloring. Frede’s key piece of evidence lies in the difference between kataleptic and non-kataleptic presentations; here, the same proposition attaches to different presentations.<sup>131</sup> By way of illustration, Frede proposes that one may think of ‘Socrates is pale’ either with or without fear, depending on whether or not one thinks of paleness as a sign of a bad thing, death. Further, Frede points out, one thinks of ‘the light is green’ differently when having a direct perceptual presentation and when inferring that this is the case.<sup>132</sup>

Frede’s proposal has been highly controversial. It has been objected, rightly I think, that an emotion, as understood by the Stoics, is not merely a way of thinking about a proposition but requires an act of assent to a certain type of proposition.<sup>133</sup> Still, the basic insight seems to me correct. Take the proposition: ‘God is provident’. It is thought of in different ways depending not only on one’s previous set of beliefs, but also on the present circum-

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127) SVF 2.53 and 65.

128) Sextus Empiricus, *Adv. math.* 7.257–258, cf. 403.

129) Frede 2011, 38. In general, see Frede 1986, 102–107, and 2011, 38–42; cf. Long and Sedley 1987, vol. 1, 202.

130) Frede 2011, 41.

131) Frede 1986, 104.

132) For the examples, see Frede 1986, 104–106.

133) See Brennan 1998, 44–52; cf. Graver 2007, 41. I am much indebted to Brennan (by correspondence) for helping me to clarify my thoughts on this topic.

stances under which the presentation is produced. An auditory presentation, for example, differs from a visual presentation, and each kind is subject to countless variations. Cleanthes gives an example of how a certain kind of diction can stimulate us to think differently about god: suitable meter or melody adds an element of immediacy. The proposition that corresponds to the words is the same; but the auditory quality mimics, as it were, the kind of proximity that we experience at an initiation.

There is nothing new about the general idea that rhythm and melody make a difference to the thought of a poem. Apart from the Platonic-Aristotelian tradition, it was commonly agreed among literary theorists that certain meters (such as hexameter) are suitable to elevated thought, others to low thought, and that, in general, meter and melody must be suited to the content; the result was an elaborate system of genres, defined partly by meter. The Stoics fitted this idea to their own theoretical assumptions. On their view, rhythm and melody are especially suitable to the celebration of god; for the Stoic god is not merely an object of rational inference, but something we experience directly at every moment of our lives, both from without (as the world in which we live) and from within (as a force that impels toward union with god). A poem conveys this sensory immediacy partly through meter and melody, as Cleanthes points out.

There is vastly more to the aesthetic features of a poem than rhythm or melody. Philodemus' Stoic himself said that there is a lot more to verbal form than just euphony or thought. We don't know what all the Stoics required under euphony. But they did posit a special affinity between sound and reality; for they held that the earliest words were formed naturally as imitations of things.<sup>134</sup> Given this relationship, it is plausible that, not just rhythm and melody, but the artistic configuration of verbal sounds in general was viewed by the Stoics as a means of recapturing, through craft, the natural capacity of sounds to imitate things. That still leaves many aesthetic features unaccounted for: there is the choice of words and their arrangement, including figures of speech, just as there is the choice of thoughts and their arrangement, along with figures of thought. This does not mean that the Stoics ignored

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134) SVF 2.146.

them. Their focus, as I have been arguing, was on constructing a theoretical framework that could accommodate a vast expanse of details.

There remains the problem of aesthetic pleasure. The Stoics repudiated so-called “pleasure” (ἡδονή) as an irrational emotion (πάθος) on the ground that it is based on a false judgment about what is good. They did, however, accept joy (χαρά) as a rational emotion (called εὐπάθεια); for it is based on a knowledge of what is good.<sup>135</sup> A wise poet feels joy, as does a wise hearer. Pseudo-Longinus’ *On the Sublime* contains an echo of this doctrine. The author opposes “low” emotions, such as “lamentations, sorrows, fears”, to the “noble emotion” (γενναῖον πάθος) associated with sublimity.<sup>136</sup> Using Stoic language, he describes the right kind of emotion as follows:

By nature our soul is somehow uplifted by true sublimity and, assuming an exultant height, is filled with joy (χαρά) and pride, as having created itself what it has heard.<sup>137</sup>

Joy was defined by the Stoics as a rational uplifting (ἔπαρσις).<sup>138</sup> The Stoic hearer, moreover, is a kind of creator, fashioning a response of his own to what he has heard. In Stoicism, too, there is a kind of sublimity: poet and hearer are uplifted to a vision of the divine order of the world. Despite basic differences, there is a continuity between Stoicism and *On the Sublime*. Pseudo-Longinus mentions that his predecessor, Caecilius, omitted some sources of the sublime, including emotion (πάθος); Pseudo-Longinus himself recognized emotion as a source, along with thought, figures of thought and speech, diction, and composition.<sup>139</sup> Caecilius may well have been influenced by Stoic doctrine. Pseudo-Longinus himself, however, is not without a debt to the Stoics: a noble type of emotion, in particular joy, is wholly admissible within a Stoic poetics.

135) See SVF 3.431–434.

136) Subl. 8.2 and 4; see Innes 1995 on this opposition.

137) Subl. 7.2: φύσει γάρ πως ὑπὸ τάληθους ὕψους ἐπαίρεται τε ἡμῶν ἡ ψυχὴ καὶ γὰρ ὄν τι ἀνάστημα λαμβάνουσα πληροῦται χαρᾶς καὶ μεγαλαυχίας, ὡς αὐτὴ γεννήσασα ὅπερ ἤκουσεν.

138) See above, n. 135.

139) Subl. 8.

*Conclusion*

This paper has sought to show the contribution of Stoic poetics by placing it in the context of the general Stoic conception of a craft. Like other crafts, the craft of poetry has a maker, product, and user of the product. The quality of goodness lies in the maker or user, not the product. As maker, the poet must have both the moral and technical knowledge to create well; as user, the hearer must bring his own moral and critical abilities to judge well. As the product of a craft, a poem is advantageous; in particular, as a combination of thought and verbal form, it is useful as a means of preparing the way to an understanding that is mediated by sense perception. The poem by itself cannot produce this understanding; its impact must be joined by the judgment of the hearer. In shifting attention from the poem to the mind of both poet and hearer, the Stoics elevated both to the possibility of a wisdom that is like that of god. They also laid the foundation of a new theory of reception. As an imitator, the poet (along with any other artist) comes especially close to the truth because what he imitates – sensible reality as ordered by god – is an aspect of god; the hearer shares in this proximity.

The Stoic demand for wisdom on the part of both poet and hearer is so extreme that one might dismiss their poetics as another pipe dream. Viewed as goals, however, their demands offer practical guidance. The Stoics constructed a theoretical framework that others could and did modify to suit their own aims. The framework itself is rather bare. It can be used, however, to accommodate a vast range of philosophical trends and literary insights. This use exemplifies the Stoics' own theory of reception. They produced a theory that prompted a wealth of new interpretations of the role of poetry. The theory is exceptionally hospitable to poetry as a set of guidelines that could be used by the most diverse recipients to generate insights on how poetry can fit within their lives.<sup>140</sup>

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Elizabeth Asmis