

Analytic philosophy, the ancient philosopher poets and the poetics of analytic philosophy.

Catherine Rowett

1. *Plato versus Aristotle on the banishment of the poets*

We find little enthusiasm, among contemporary philosophers, or among scholars of ancient philosophy, for Plato's critique of the arts in the *Republic*. Socrates' proposal in that work, to ban drama and poetry from the ideal city, where philosophy rules, has not found favour in contemporary aesthetics, political philosophy, psychology, ethics, epistemology or metaphysics. Philosophers in the analytic tradition, we may conclude, generally consider Socrates' attitude to poetry unacceptably philistine. And since Socrates is usually taken to be the voice of Plato, presumably many such readers must come away thinking that Plato himself had no time for poetry, or the arts more generally, and could see them only as a threat to morals or to emotional stability.¹

Those with an interest in Plato's aesthetics generally take a more nuanced view.² Nevertheless, the general perception remains, among contemporary analytic philosophers and historians of philosophy: that Plato's views on poetry and its place in human life are rather unsatisfactory, and that he will need to be rescued from the surface meaning of his text, if he is to be taken seriously at all. Much effort is expended on trying to read the text in a more sympathetic light.

By contrast, in Aristotle, analytically trained philosophers tend to find views that chime better with their own values and preconceptions—and this remains true on the subject of poetry as on many other issues. Even thinkers who are highly respected for their awareness of the literary and evaluative aspects of philosophy, such as Martha Nussbaum, sometimes

¹ Most introductory works on aesthetics in the analytic tradition provide a caricature of this kind. Examples are listed below in note 5. On the habit of reading "Socrates" as Plato, see further below.

² Notable examples include: Murdoch (1977); Halliwell (2002); Halliwell (1988); Rutherford (1995); Levin (2001); Heath (2013). Some at least of these authors recognisably belong to the analytic tradition as defined in this volume, though many bring the advantages of a broader training in classical literature.

reject Plato for things that seems unfashionable— in his metaphysics or his supposed antipathy to the emotions.³ Many philosophers prefer Aristotle's *Poetics*, finding there a warmer attitude to poetry, and especially to Tragedy. They also look there for what seems like a 'healthier' acknowledgement of the role of emotion in the psyche.⁴ Indeed, the solitary mention of *catharsis* at *Poetics* 1449b27-28 is hailed by many as Aristotle's answer to Plato's failure. Despite the ambiguity of the term, and the unresolved controversy over what Aristotle meant, *catharsis* is pressed into service as a justification for valuing drama in a good society. Hence, we find many elementary surveys of ancient philosophy of literature drawing a stark contrast between Plato (bad) and Aristotle (good).⁵

Yet if we attend to the literary appreciation shown by the two authors in their own works, arguably the competitive advantage is reversed, or at least more evenly balanced. Plato's dialogues overflow with attention to poetry, discussions of literary works, examples chosen from literature, poetry and the arts, explorations of the power of the written or spoken word, investigations of the meanings of lines of poetry, and the tellings of myths and stories in the voice of Socrates or of other major figures such as Protagoras or Aristophanes.

If we want to assess Plato's attitude to poetry, we should not just look at what the character "Socrates" says, in this or that dialogue. We should rather look at what Plato himself does, how he uses and responds to literature, how much attention he gives to the wisdom of the poets and how creatively he builds on that, how he uses poetic and dramatic devices, how his works are crafted to elicit emotional responses and moral motivations, and whether he uses the various poetic techniques to good effect for developing philosophical points, or for generating real enlightenment in his readers. Plato's attitude to poetry can be seen in what he does.

³ See for example Nussbaum (1986), p. 133, 201; Nussbaum (2001), p. 356–58.

⁴ As also in Nussbaum (1986), p. 378–94.

⁵ Examples in Kristeller (2008), p. 5; Mothersill (2003), p. 93; Ribeiro (2012), p. 3. See also Barfield (2011) Chapter 2. More sensitive assessments of Aristotle's treatment can be found in Halliwell (2002) Part II; Halliwell (1986); Heath (2001); Graham (2005), p. 35–37.

2. *Plato versus Aristotle: the poetics of the philosophical text.*

One aspect of Plato's literary artistry is his ability to construct believable characters with views of their own.⁶ One of these is Socrates, and the Socrates character may sometimes express views on the value of poetry; but we should not take these views to be Plato's views, any more than we should take the character Clytaemnestra to be relaying the views of Aeschylus. As philosophers we seem to have acquired a partial blindness to Plato as playwright, leading to a tendency—especially among analytically trained philosophers—to read Socrates as if he were the voice of the author, and not a character in a play.

It is clear that Plato was moved not only by poetry, but also by the erotic aspects to the love of wisdom. In identifying philosophy as a kind of love, and a kind of madness,⁷ he is explicitly rejecting a model of philosophical enquiry as a kind of detached rationality striving for objectivity on the part of the enquirer. As I have argued elsewhere, in the *Phaedrus* Plato juxtaposes the image of a cool, detached rational approach with an alternative (and preferable) image of a subjectively engaged, morally aware, passionate approach that regards the objects of enquiry with an interested gaze.⁸ Plato recommends an approach that is truly erotic and passionate, because one cannot investigate what is good without seeing it as good, and to see it as good is to be overwhelmingly responsive to it, and to allow it to take a suitable position in one's life. There is no cool detached investigation of the best and most desirable object. If you could do that coolly, you would not have actually realised what you are handling.

So to understand Plato's approach to philosophy one must investigate the erotics of philosophy, not just the logic of the arguments in the dialogues. The standard for good philosophy will not be a ranking by how good the *arguments* are, for any old conclusion—as though what mattered above all was logical form—, but by how effectively the presentation, of

⁶ On Plato's use of characters, see also Rowe's chapter in this volume, though he is more willing to identify Plato with his Socrates character than I am.

⁷ For philosophy as a kind of love, see *Republic* 476D. Doubtless the comparison to absurd cases of indiscriminate pederasty or oenophilia is a joke, but it has a serious undercurrent. For the erotic aspects of philosophy, see Socrates's speech in the *Symposium*, and for philosophy as a madness, along with poetry, *Phaedrus* 249D.

⁸ Osborne (1999b).

whatever form, brings the reader or listener to love, to engage, to appreciate the truth and to recognise its value as something that matters in life, and not simply to *find it*.⁹

If this is a correct analysis of Plato's position, it follows that the form of a philosophical presentation should be such as to achieve just that kind of conversion and engagement of the heart. If poetry can do that, then poetry will be a fitting form and a good ally for philosophy's task. If drama is good, then one might use that. If argument is good at this, then that too is fine. But if any medium is incapable of delivering the requisite passion, alongside the discoveries (if any), then that medium is inappropriate.

It seems that analytic philosophy tends towards the reverse of those Platonic values: it prefers a cool rational detachment with no partisan interest in the results and no commitment to their value for life or for the agent. It prefers clean presentation of unadorned argument, and, for some at least, scientific models of enquiry that leave the heart and the passions out of the picture. It is suspicious of passionate enthusiasm, while not necessarily being explicit or self-aware about the fact that it is thereby endorsing some implicit values of its own— that it is placing a high value on the impartiality of the observer, cultivating insensitivity to such “distractions” as aesthetic considerations, value-laden commitments or personal moral scruples on the part of the agent— and also developing a certain poetics of its own discourse—a “poetic” of clean prose uncluttered by adornments that might draw attention to other values besides rigour and logical form.¹⁰

Turning to Aristotle, we might initially think that the surviving philosophical works are not designed to show literary merit in the way Plato's are. His methods typically start from a review of what he regards as canonical philosophical and scientific literature from Thales to Socrates and Plato. Nor do they typically include literary criticism or the kinds of analysis of a poet's teaching that we find in some of Plato's work (the *Protagoras*, for instance). Obviously, there are exceptions: Aristotle's *Poetics* is directly devoted to the systematic analysis of dramatic composition and plot, and the *Rhetoric* is specifically interested in persuasive

⁹ This claim might look too strong for Plato, who surely would not favour forms of persuasion and conversion that depend upon sophistical or rhetorical wool-pulling. But I take it that such methods would not meet the criterion I am offering here, that the philosopher must engage the listener in an honest and lucid love of the truth.

¹⁰ The points I am making here turn out to be rather similar to points made by Iris Murdoch in many of her essays, such as the three essays in Murdoch (1970).

speech acts. But these are exceptions where we would expect a philosophical discussion of how poetry works.

On the other hand, if we look more closely, we can also see that Aristotle was well versed in poetry: he cites Homer and Empedocles by heart.¹¹ It is probably an accident of history that we cannot read the complete dialogues that were Aristotle's published works, and were of much more literary merit according to the ancient reports. It is clearly unfair to judge Aristotle's literary artistry on the works that were not written for publication.

Furthermore, there is an issue with reading Aristotle that is directly comparable to the problem of whether Socrates speaks for Plato. For all his superficially more prosaic style, Aristotle is really no less dialectical than Plato; and often the change of voice is less clear than it is in Plato; so when reading Aristotle it can be very hard to discern whether he is presenting the challenges to be addressed, or problematising the views of others, or offering a proposal of his own to solve the dilemma. Reading a dialectical text of the kind that Aristotle writes requires us to imagine it as a drama, so any reader who is blind to the drama, or misses the dialectical delay before we get the solution, may become confused or even draw false conclusions. We face a similar task in reading Wittgenstein, to name but one useful parallel from more recent history.

Still it remains true, that in the treatises we have, Aristotle does not, as Plato does, present his ideas through myth, fables, or poetry. There is, thus, a curious irony in the fact that the philosopher most famous nowadays for *rejecting* poetry, and contrasting it with philosophy, is the one who shows himself, in the works that we now read, so brilliantly capable of appreciating the poetic, and indeed using it, in practice, as a tool for exciting work in philosophy;¹² while Aristotle, whose attitude to tragedy has generally seemed warmer than Plato's, comes across as far less proficient than Plato at deploying literary devices to further a

¹¹ He clearly knew and could recite the whole text of Empedocles. See below note 54. I thank Matthew Duncombe for insisting on the importance of Aristotle's knowledge and love of Homer. Monro (1901), p. 429 reckons that 93 lines of Homer are quoted by Aristotle (which contrasts with 209 lines in Plato).

¹² In the biographical tradition we find it reported that Plato was both a painter and a poet before meeting Socrates, and that at the time that he became a disciple of Socrates he had intended to enter the tragic competition—but discarded his entry and gave up poetry on hearing something that Socrates was saying (presumably against poetry) outside the Theatre of Dionysus. (*Diogenes Laertius* III.5). The story may be fanciful, but it conveys a genuine perception that Plato was indeed a great poet. I thank Pavel Gregorić for reminding me of this story.

philosophical enquiry. There is little in the notion of *catharsis* to suggest that poetry or drama could *enhance* the work of philosophy, however we might understand *catharsis*.¹³

Both Plato and Aristotle note the risks that rhetorical devices may obstruct clear thought. In Plato's dialogues, Socrates often protests about highly rhetorical speeches, and warns against encomia that praise the wrong things or make bad things seem good.¹⁴ Some of Aristotle's remarks in the *Rhetoric* imply that poetic ornamentation is inappropriate in texts designed to convey information or to deliver an argument without obfuscation.¹⁵ He chides writers such as Gorgias for their florid style, even though—as he acknowledges—uneducated readers rate such stylistic ornament very highly. That kind of rhetorical prose is a relic of spoken rhetoric's archaic origins in the poetic discourse that was the default mode of deliver in ancient times, he suggests.¹⁶ Equally, Aristotle would not advise us to consult Hesiod or Homer on scientific subjects, any more than Socrates did. And while Aristotle's own predilection for taxonomy and classification surely owes something to ancient "catalogue" poetry, his choice of plain prose, not poetic discourse, for these taxonomical reviews of the literature is clearly deliberate.

Someone might say that there is a more profound difference between Aristotle's taxonomies and the ancient lists in poetry. Aristotle also seeks tools of analysis for the catalogue, such as structures of genus and species, so that the classification delivers a structured science rather than just a list. On the other hand, contrary to that thought, one might also argue, that the poetic catalogue was likewise structured to match its subject matter—for instance classifying the ships by the geographical location from which they came,¹⁷ reflecting the poet's recognition that location is the key to understanding the list, given the purpose it serves. Likewise, listing gods according to their place in a theogonical narrative respects the key motif for understanding their origin and their demise.

¹³ Nussbaum proposes to find a philosophically relevant value for tragedy by adopting a third way of understanding *catharsis* (besides purification and purgation), namely as *clarification*, see Nussbaum (1986), pp. 388–89. On 'clarity' as a value in philosophy, see Jenny Bryan's paper in this volume.

¹⁴ Relevant material occurs in the *Gorgias*, *Protagoras*, *Symposium* and *Phaedrus* for example. See also Nightingale (1995), Chapter 3; Nightingale (1993); Levin (2001), Chapter 5.

¹⁵ Aristotle *Rhetoric* III.1 1404^a20–39.

¹⁶ Aristotle *Rhetoric* III.1 1404^a20–21.

¹⁷ E.g. *Iliad* II.495–785.

Should we say that Aristotle cancelled what Socrates calls (at *Republic* 607B5–6) an “ancient quarrel between poetry and philosophy”?¹⁸

On reflection, it seems not entirely. In fact, perhaps Aristotle really has more of a quarrel with poetry than Plato does—and perhaps Plato really had no such quarrel to begin with.¹⁹

3. *The poetics of analytic philosophy*

It would be tempting to surmise that analytic philosophers find Aristotle's attitude to poetry more congenial than Plato's, partly because analytic philosophers keep their philosophy and their love of poetry in separate compartments, taking art, literature, drama, poetry, and music as modes of relaxation or emotional discharge, but not as part of the philosophical toolbox. Certainly an analytic philosopher can write philosophy *about* the fine arts (as Aristotle does, in the *Poetics*), but they are less likely than Plato is to make poetry integral to the doing of philosophy or the delivery of philosophical results. The analytic tradition is probably quite comfortable with at least a sceptical attitude towards, or if not a quarrel with, any poets, novelists, literary critics or film directors who claim to have made important philosophical contributions in their work. There are, of course, also many distinguished exceptions to this generalisation.

What is the poetics of philosophical discourse, according to Analytic Philosophy? Of course, the very ill-defined term “analytic” incorporates a very wide range of disparate types of philosophy and ways of doing it. However, it seems clear that some general norms and ambitions can be identified, using paradigm cases. For instance, in the 1970s and 1980s, Ted Honderich edited a series of volumes on the history of philosophy called “The Arguments of the Philosophers”. It was intended to provide “an essentially analytic and critical account of each of the considerable number of the great and influential philosophers”, the editor explained. “Each book will provide an ordered exposition and an examination of the contentions and doctrines of the philosopher in question,” it says. The whole set was to provide “a contemporary assessment and history of the entire course of philosophical

¹⁸ As a number of recent scholars have noted, there is no evidence of any “ancient quarrel” antedating Plato's claim. See Nightingale (1995), Chapter 2; Barfield (2011), p. 1; Most (2011). It is ironic that Plato uses literary evidence, and uses it in an obfuscatory way, to defend what is effectively *a lie* about the hostility between philosophy and poetry, attributed to a past that cannot be checked.

¹⁹ See above, [note 18](#).

thought.” Basically, what was meant here was that a contemporary, or analytic, account would be one that translated past philosophers into the idiom of analytic philosophy of the 1970s.²⁰ A distinguished band of analytically trained historians of philosophy were assigned to the task (Ralph Walker for Kant, David Hamlyn for Schopenhauer, Timothy O’Hagan for Rousseau, Justin Gosling for Plato, Barry Stroud for Hume, and so on). The title of the series conveyed the idea that philosophy is principally evaluated on arguments, not on the views that the philosopher is recommending thereby, although the more detailed description of the series did also mention “contentions and doctrines”.

However, the goal of the series was not just to detect and formalise the arguments presented by past philosophers, but also to test their premisses and assumptions according to the standards of analytic philosophy, to consider whether their edifice was built soundly on a foundation of necessary, or perhaps even analytic, truths.

The volumes in this series vary in how rigorously their authors attempt to reformulate their chosen philosopher’s work into the analytic style. Some embrace the project with more glee than others. Among the most enthusiastic is Jonathan Barnes, in his volume on *The Presocratic Philosophers* (initially published as two volumes due to the sheer quantity of material that he had to offer). By virtue of this exuberant embracing of the project, of his explicit and judgemental enthusiasm for whatever material turns out to conform comfortably to the analytic ideal, and of his barefaced contempt for what does not, his volume provides an exemplary paradigm for my project here. While conceding that Barnes is deliberately presenting something of a caricature of the genre, we should value the chance to examine such a clear specimen of an analytic treatment of ancient philosophy.²¹

Our task is to examine the approach, and the values underpinning the project. Taking a sample at random, his chapter on ‘Pythagoras and the soul’ includes a treatment of

²⁰ Someone might object that my discussion here examines only the poetic of analytic philosophy as practised in the 1970s. I would respond that my point is to consider a very austere mode of doing ancient philosophy: one that was widely practised then and is far less common now (as most of the papers in this volume testify). However, some practitioners continue that tradition: more recent examples might include, for instance, Charles (2000); Peramatzis (2011); Hanna (2004).

²¹ The example is a paradigm case of attempting to decode the Presocratics into analytic form. However, Barnes’s own prose, as Matthew Duncombe has wisely reminded me, is far more literary and indulgent than the ideal to which he holds the thinkers whom he is describing, as will be apparent from the quotations I have included below.

Alcmaeon. Barnes finds the following three propositions attributed to Alcmaeon in Diogenes Laertius and some other sources:²²

(1) *Psuchai* are always moving.

(2) *Psuchai* are like the divine heavenly bodies.

(3) *Psuchai* are immortal.

He then investigates various arguments that are constructed from these propositions in Boethus, Aristotle and Aëtius, who severally claim that Alcmaeon derived (3) from (1), (2) from (3), or (1) from (3). Barnes then adds a fourth premiss to support Plato's version of the argument:

(4) Anything that always moves is immortal.

With this premiss added, Barnes finds that the argument is explicit and valid, so that from (1) and (4) we can deduce (3). Furthermore, he reckons that premiss (4) is a necessary truth.²³ He then concludes "Since anything that has the power to cause motion is alive (above p.7), any self-mover is alive. Hence anything that is moving itself at t is alive at t , and anything in continuous self-motion is eternally alive. And to assert that is to assert (4)." QED.²⁴ Barnes concludes that, when thus formulated, the argument is comparable with Anselm's ontological argument and observes that he knows of no argument for the immortality of the soul one half so clever as Alcmaeon's, the very first argument in the field.²⁵

Alcmaeon merits this praise, it seems, because his work was amenable to this kind of decoding, in the prescribed genre, using terms and assumptions that are reducible to necessary truths or analytic in some way. "I am an animate", the finished version of the argument goes, "and hence trivially contain an animator. My animator is, by definition, a motor; for it is, *inter alia*, whatever is the source of my various locomotive efforts. The analysis of causation shows that of necessity motors move. Thus my animator moves of necessity; and hence it moves always and continuously. Now anything in autonomous movement is alive so that anything always in motion is always alive and thus immortal. *Ergo*, my animator

²² Barnes (1982), p. 117.

²³ It seems that Barnes takes the term "always" in premiss (1), redeployed in premiss (4) as if it were a logical operator with a fixed meaning.

²⁴ There is more than that (the discussion runs to a further two and a half pages in Barnes) but this sums up the main deduction.

²⁵ Barnes (1982), p. 120.

is immortal.”²⁶ Each move in this sequence has an implicit reference to analytical justifications (“trivially”, “by definition”, “the analysis shows...”). Hence Alcmaeon is commended because, his argument, though not explicit, was implicitly appealing to justifications that meet these standards of proof. Barnes respects Alcmaeon for the things for which he would respect a colleague, and ranks his arguments as “the best” as well as the first in a field that he sees as continuous with philosophical work of the present day.²⁷

Clearly this kind of reconstruction, if done well, can render valuable service to the ancient philosophers, by clarifying the meaning, bringing sound scholarship to bear, carefully disambiguating terms, or by finding a more charitable reading than the one conventionally given. Within the genre of analytic decoding, one contribution can do it better than another. But is this the best way to discern everything that is of value? Or does it sometimes ignore or conceal some kinds of excellence? Perhaps some types of ancient philosophy are less well served by focusing on analysis, rigour, and clarity? Can the analytic approach be used as an “all-purpose solvent” (as Martha Nussbaum once put it),²⁸ or are some things better not dissolved that way?

4. *The philosopher-poets*

One worry here concerns the ancient philosopher-poets. Is their poetic clothing to be regarded as mere adornment? Would it be best to strip them of that fancy dress, and lay their thought bare in stark nakedness? Perhaps doing that would make clear how far their arguments stand up to scrutiny? Thoughts such as these often lurk just above or beneath the surface in discussions of early Greek philosophical poetry.²⁹

²⁶ Barnes (1982), p. 120.

²⁷ Comparable evaluations can be found in contributions to the historiography of modern philosophy (for example in Hanna 2004). Hanna (2009), p. 2 claims ‘that every serious philosophical text is a logically governed attempt to say something comprehensive, illuminating, and necessarily (or at least universally) true about the rational human condition and our deepest values, including our relationships to each other and to the larger natural and abstract worlds that surround us, and that in order to convey this basic content it does not matter at all when the text was written or when the text is interpreted. ... everything in the history of philosophy also belongs substantively to contemporary philosophy’. I am grateful to Alberto Vanzo for referring me to Hanna’s work in this area.

²⁸ Nussbaum (1990), p. 19

²⁹ The idea that the poetic form is a kind of optional extra, added to sugar the pill, or to make the text more accessible and attractive, is explicitly formulated by Lucretius (*De rerum natura* 1.934-945 about his own use of poetic form and by Wright (1997) regarding the Early Greek poets. My response, in Osborne (1997) makes the case for a different approach.

Take Parmenides, for instance. In the second half of the twentieth century, while analytic approaches dominated anglophone ancient philosophy, the section of Parmenides' poem called *Towards Truth* was much discussed. It seemed to contain a systematic argument that could be examined and tested by the "hygienically pallid"³⁰ standards of rigour favoured by analytic philosophy, so scholars sought to identify, beneath the metaphors, a series of clear premisses and conclusions, which could be tested for validity.³¹ In such an enterprise, poetic form appears as one of many obstacles that the interpreter must get round, alongside the fragmentary text, historical distance, absence of technical or logical terminology.

Jonathan Barnes judges Parmenides' poetry harshly: "It is hard to excuse Parmenides' choice of verse as a medium for his philosophy. The exigencies of metre and poetical style regularly produce an almost impenetrable obscurity; and the difficulty of understanding his thought is not lightened by any literary joy: the case presents no adjunct to the Muse's diadem."³² He considers the poetic form to be not only damaging to the philosophical project but also bad as poetry. The distaste for philosophy done in verse is not unique to Barnes. But that distaste then makes it very hard for the analytic interpreter to treat the text kindly. Arguably it has also led to the marginalisation of some philosophers whose message is even less easily decoded into a plain prose format.

Xenophanes, for instance, seems to have suffered in various ways. In their influential textbook, Kirk, Raven Schofield (KRS) reject the ancient tradition that makes Xenophanes the (honorary) founder of the Eleatic School.³³ Instead they treat him out of chronological sequence, classifying him as if he were a late member of the Milesian school. Their comments imply that his decision to write in verse, instead of the prose chosen by the Milesians, was retrograde and ill-advised.³⁴ Instead of examining his fascinating reflections on the limits of human knowledge, or his amusing reductio of conventional religion, they focus on his "opinions" about theology and physics, treating them as a late contribution to Milesian

³⁰ The expression is borrowed from Nussbaum (1990), p. 19.

³¹ As, e.g. Barnes (1982), Chapter IX.

³² Barnes (1982), p. 155 takes verse form to be a "choice" (here regarded as perverse). For objections to that way of thinking, see Osborne (1997); Gemelli Marciano (2008). On the possibility that Parmenides deliberately chose obscurity over clarity, see Jenny Bryan's chapter in this issue.

³³ Kirk, et al. (1983), pp. 165-66.

³⁴ Kirk, et al. (1983), p. 164.

debates about what the world is made of, and investigating possible influence on later critiques of Homer and traditional myths about the gods. His arguments about knowledge—which are surely among the most interesting contributions in the whole of Presocratic philosophy—are relegated to a final very short section of their chapter. No serious attention is given to their validity or to their significance in the history of scepticism.³⁵

In this case, we might say that Xenophanes has received *too little* notice from the analytic tradition. KRS seem to have misidentified Xenophanes as merely a source of scientific opinions about nature, missing his outstanding interest as a purveyor of *arguments* concerning theology and epistemology. In their revised edition, KRS have added a protest (in their final footnote to their chapter) against Jonathan Barnes's "exuberant discussion" of Xenophanes' arguments about scepticism, which examines what is "possible rather than probable".³⁶ Barnes offers six pages of careful analysis of Xenophanes's arguments, which compares rather favourably to the half page of dismissive denial in KRS, even though much of it is decoded by Barnes into a rather alien form.

KRS show no more sympathy than Barnes towards the poetic form in which Xenophanes is composing. Indeed, if anything, KRS seem even less attuned to it: "It has been suggested", they say, citing an article by Deichgräber of 1938, "that Xenophanes in his utterances on the shortcomings of human knowledge is developing a common poetical contrast between the comparative ignorance of the poet and the all-knowledge of the Muse whom he calls to assist him." This leads them to conclude that they are seeing "Xenophanes' revival of the traditional doctrine of human limitations, this time in a partly philosophical context...". And they then observe that it had little effect, since it failed to curb the overly dogmatic tendencies in early Greek Philosophy.³⁷

In effect, while Barnes strips Xenophanes of his poetic form and recasts him into an analytical mode of discourse, so that he can be assessed as a philosopher, KRS recast him as a poet, and offer no philosophical assessment at all. They portray Xenophanes as out of date, peddling old, dated, poetic stuff, stuff that has all been said before, stuff which failed to

³⁵ Kirk, et al. (1983), pp. 179-80

³⁶ Kirk, et al. (1983), p. 180 n. 1, referencing Barnes (1979), Chapter VIII

³⁷ Kirk, et al. (1983), p. 180

have any of its desired effect on later thinkers. They fail even to treat him to the kind of attention that Homer or other poets might justifiably expect, as poets.

What is missing in both KRS and Barnes is any attempt to assess Xenophanes' discourse as *both* poetic, *and* philosophical, in tandem, without regarding the poetic as a destructive hindrance, or an anachronistic relic.³⁸

And then there is Empedocles. I have argued elsewhere that modern literary critics have vastly under-estimated the quality of Empedocles' poetry, which was much admired in the ancient world, both Greece and Rome.³⁹ It seems odd, therefore, that Empedocles does not figure as a major poet in the Greek canon, even while other more fragmentary authors do. Empedocles seems to miss out both ways, neither treated as a good poet,⁴⁰ nor given the rigorous analytic treatment that is often applied to Parmenides—perhaps because, unlike Parmenides, he does not formulate his presentation as a deductive argument from premisses that are necessary and demonstrable. The philosopher looking for proofs of that kind is likely to be rather frustrated by what he finds in Empedocles.

Jonathan Barnes (our paradigm case) has this to say:

Poetry and reason do not always cohabit; and Empedocles has frequently been held to have lost in ratiocinative capacity what he gained in poetical talent.⁴¹

When he says “frequently”, Barnes really means that this is what he finds. However, since he also does not think very highly of Empedocles' poetical talent, he really means that Empedocles was weak in both. He does cite “a modern scholar” in support of this view, but the quoted sentiment (from Clara Millerd, writing in 1908, so not terribly “modern”) seems to be chosen to express Barnes's own personal distaste for the work of Empedocles: “Imaginative vividness took hold of him with more persuasiveness than did logical

³⁸ The situation has improved dramatically since these works were published. Xenophanes has been better served by a range of sympathetic readers, including Leshner (1992); Bryan (2011); Warren (2007); Mogyoródi (2006) and others.

³⁹ Rowett (2013a).

⁴⁰ Barnes (1982), p. 623 n.14 follows a standard misreading of Aristotle's comments in the opening section of *Poetics*, which he takes as a negative assessment of Empedocles' poetic quality. Lambridis (1976) offers a better treatment of the poetic aspects, although she too (at page 136) subscribes to the same misreading of Aristotle's remark in the *Poetics*.

⁴¹ Barnes (1982), p. 311.

consistency, and he inevitably baffles minds not constituted like his own. The important thing in understanding him is to stop thinking at the right moment.”⁴²

Barnes makes little attempt to redeem Empedocles. “Certainly, we shall look in vain for any argument in favour of Empedocles’ cycle,” he says.⁴³ “It is a construction of great ‘imaginative vividness’, but it lacks all rational support.” He is tempted to conclude that Empedocles is a “mere fantastic, a writer of versified science fiction.” But then he concedes that some of the similes contain bits of decent natural science, and that—now rather to our surprise—one or two fragments include Eleatic-style argument (which, tellingly, he postpones to a later chapter).⁴⁴ Despite these concessions, his verdict seems to be that Empedocles fatally messed up his philosophy by allowing poetic imagination to replace reasoned argument.

Arguably, more recent work on Empedocles has been much more ready to find value precisely in his vivid construction of an imaginative alternative worldview, and in the way that he questions the preconceptions of existing thought, by suggesting that things might not always be as they are now, and that the world as we know it might be only one phase of a cosmos whose *raison d'être* is quite other than what we thought. But these imaginative pictures are not the techniques of analytic philosophy, and their power cannot be explained within the value system of the analytic project. It is closer to what Wittgenstein tried to do, in showing that one might be in the grip of a picture, and that to escape from what seems to be a philosophical dilemma one must first step out of that way of thinking. In Empedocles we do not find an argument against the Eleatic picture, but rather a poetic challenge, which says: “Don’t even go there, because that argument, about the one and the many, is based on a picture you need not live with. It makes change seem impossible because there seems, from within, to be no external agent of change, and some such external agent would seem to be required. But perhaps the world is not as it seems to us from within—either because there is one or more external agent of change, of which we are subjectively unaware, or because we

⁴² Millerd (1908), p. 21.

⁴³ Barnes (1982), p. 311

⁴⁴ Barnes (1982), Chapter XX.

are the agents, as living minds and beings, in virtue of our changing motivations, though also subjectively unaware of this cosmic role for the most part.”⁴⁵

A flurry of recent work on Empedocles has brought many more scholars to appreciate the philosophical importance of Empedocles’ work. Some of the recent discussions are about the structure of his poetry (factual questions, e.g. whether all the fragments derive from one poem, and how they were originally arranged), but most recent work addresses the philosophical and scientific content of his doctrines without much attention to the poetic aspects.⁴⁶ There is a tendency to try to strip away the poetic and religious imagery, replacing it with reformulations in the language of prose philosophy or science.

5. *Rashed and the Byzantine scholia*

In this final section I shall divert to a closer examination of a particular debate in recent work on Empedocles. Much excitement and interest in the last twenty years has been a response to the discovery, in around 2001, of some Byzantine Scholia that purport to put exact numbers on the periods of the various stages of the cosmic cycle in Empedocles’ physics. These scholia are annotations to some works by Aristotle in the twelfth-century manuscript Codex Laur. Plut. 87.7, which were first identified and noticed by Marwan Rashed. No sooner had Rashed published a first selection of them, in a preliminary edition in 2003,⁴⁷ than they were pounced upon—with haste and unseemly enthusiasm—by a generation of Empedocles scholars in search of the philosopher’s stone. Oliver Primavesi dashed into print with a second attempt at an edition, correcting a few readings (corrections that Rashed readily endorsed in some cases).⁴⁸ At least four of the participants at a conference on Empedocles’ cosmic cycle in 2003 were already talking about this new “evidence”, which had only just then been published, and most of these were not scrutinising the credibility of the new material but

⁴⁵ I sketch here one possible way of understanding how Empedocles’ vivid alternative world-view stands as a genuinely philosophical challenge to the picture that underpins the Parmenidean *Towards Truth*. An alternative picture is Parmenides’ own *Towards Seeming*, which offers a similar challenge to the so-called Eleatic model offered in his *Towards Truth*; but Parmenides seems to think that reason requires the reader to endorse the model in *Towards Truth* and to reject the rival vision presented in *Towards Seeming*.

⁴⁶ As noted above there are important counter-examples, within which I would include some of my own work, much work by Peter Kingsley, Jean Claude Picot, Laura Gemelli Marciano, and the work done by both Hellenists and Romanists on the relation between Empedocles and the Roman poets—not only Lucretius but other poets from the Augustan age. For instance, Sedley (1989); Nelis (2004); Garani (2007).

⁴⁷ Rashed (2001b) (this volume appeared in 2003).

⁴⁸ Primavesi (2006). For Rashed’s response, see Rashed (2014).

trying to fit it into their proposals, or make their proposals fit with it.⁴⁹ Among these was Primavesi, who based a whole new doctrine of periods of the cycles on these new Scholia, and has continued that work in his more recent publications.⁵⁰ Even basic student textbooks hastened to incorporate these scholia alongside the best bits of quoted text from Empedocles' own poem.⁵¹

This was all quite odd, given that the new material comprises the marginal annotations from an anonymous Byzantine reader, reading a twelfth-century manuscript of Aristotle. They are probably his own annotations, and he reads Empedocles (and Aristotle) through the eyes of one taught in the Neoplatonic school, and through Christianity (as Rashed has shown).⁵² There is, of course, nothing wrong with being a twelfth-century Byzantine scholar, or a Neoplatonist, or a Christian. Our scholiast is perfectly entitled to write what he likes in the margin. But we would not normally treat such material as reliable evidence for reconstructing the original ideas of Empedocles. We would expect scholars to examine it with a degree of sceptical rigour.⁵³ The route from the original text to the later interpretation is not a conduit of secret truths that somehow re-emerge a thousand years after they were lost. It is more probable that its speculations are based on the very same material with which we are familiar, perhaps with just a little more access to a little more than we have—but more texts of much the same sort as we have to hand.

Why do I say that? Here is the demonstration. If the ancient or medieval interpreters had access to more of Empedocles' original text than we have, whatever extra bits of text they had clearly did not include, for example, any actual durations specified for the periods of the cycle, in places where our transmitted text lacks those details. For it is obvious that had

⁴⁹ The proceedings of that conference appeared as Pierris (2005). The publication by Rashed is referenced in the papers by Laks, Osborne, Primavesi, and Sedley, among whom only one, myself, registered the same doubts as to the authenticity of the material as Rashed had expressed in the publication, or even reported that Rashed had indicated any such doubts. See Osborne (2005), p. 299.

⁵⁰ Primavesi (2005); followed by later publications including Primavesi (2006), pp. 38-39; Primavesi (2008).

⁵¹ For instance, in Mansfeld and Primavesi (2012), pp. 494-99; McKirahan (2010), pp. 274-75, and Graham (2010), pp. 366-69 the scholia are included (either from the first edition by Rashed or from the 2006 edition of Primavesi) among the evidence for what Empedocles' views were, with little indication for the reader of their distance from Empedocles' own milieu. (For a broader critique see my discussion in Rowett (2013b)).

⁵² On the authorship of the scholia and the origin of the ideas relayed in them, see Rashed (2001b); Rashed (2014).

⁵³ Sometimes Neoplatonists preserve the relics of a less reductive or less systematised tradition than the Peripatetic sources. But it always requires critical distance. See especially Osborne (1987a); Osborne (1987b). There is relevant discussion in O'Brien (1981).

there been any such specified durations mentioned in the original text of Empedocles, then Aristotle would have known them. Aristotle knew Empedocles' poem off by heart. He and his fellows would recite the poem when drunk.⁵⁴ So when Aristotle comes to discuss, and puzzle over, the intended implications of all the obscure things that Empedocles says about the periods of love and strife—which he does at length in the *De Generatione et corruptione* for instance (itself one of the texts that the scholiast is annotating)⁵⁵—it is clear that he did not find *anywhere in Empedocles* any clear facts or unambiguous statements about the times and periods.

In fact, Aristotle's discussion in *De Generatione et corruptione* is an attempt to *deduce* what Empedocles meant from texts that are allusive rather than decisive. Aristotle specifically complains about Empedocles in the *Rhetoric* because, like the soothsayers, Empedocles can make everything seem true by speaking only in riddles that are designed to be fulfilled whatever happens, because nothing clear is said.⁵⁶ So we can be absolutely sure that *there were no clear facts* about the periodicity stated in Empedocles' poem; we can be sure that Aristotle knew exactly what Empedocles said, and that the poem contained only vague, allusive, poetic hints such as the ones that we still have—e.g. the 30,000 seasons of B115, and so on.⁵⁷

Our contemporary interpreters who long for an accurate and precise picture of the phases of the cosmic cycle are very like Aristotle. They want exact statements and precision about what happens when, and proof that it will repeat exactly in each cycle. They find the vagueness of Empedocles' words frustrating. They want numbers, regularity, invariable periods.

⁵⁴ See the references to Empedocles at *Poetics* 1447^b18, 1457^b25, 1461^a24 (there are no references to Parmenides in the poetics; Xenophanes is mentioned once at 1461^a). For the expectation that educated people know the poetry of Empedocles by heart, see Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* 1147^a20, 1147^b12.

⁵⁵ The scholia labelled *f* and *g* are annotations to *GC* 315^a3–8 (discussing the absorption of the elements into the one and their emergence from it, as implying the removal and replacement of differentiae from the elements); the scholia labelled *i* and *j* are annotations to *GC* 334^a5–9 (discussing the source of change in the cosmos for Empedocles). See the 2014 edition of the scholia, which includes the new material (*h, i, j*), in Rashed (2014) pp. 321, 24.

⁵⁶ Aristotle *Rhetoric* III.5 1407^a 32–37. See discussion in Rowett (2013a), pp. 307–309.

⁵⁷ Rashed (2018), pp. 13–14, 78 makes much of Aristotle's complaint that Empedocles gave no reason for the equal duration of the two zoogony periods (*Physics* VIII.1 252^a27–32). Certainly, it implies that Aristotle thought those periods were always equal in any one cycle, but it does *not* follow (as Rashed suggests) that Aristotle thought that they were the same length from cycle to cycle, that they had a ratio of 60:40 to the period of the Sphairos, or any of the other claims that Rashed imports, on the assumption that Aristotle had the information that the scholiast has.

With that agenda, it is understandable, but not justifiable, it seems to me, that instead of pouring critical scorn on the evidence of the Scholiast—as they would have done in the normal course of things—these hungry-for-numbers interpreters leapt upon the scholia, willing them to contain the lost secret, in a magic jar.

I am not convinced that Rashed himself intended to present the scholia as a source of secret knowledge about what Empedocles really meant, though he sometimes seems surprisingly open to the possibility that they might have some basis in the original text. In his initial publication in 2001, he speculated on two possible scenarios: first “late-antique fantasy”, or second, some kind of authentic transmission of doctrine.⁵⁸ It seems that he had been already partially persuaded, by conversations with Primavesi, that the material could be an authentic transmission of speculations based on a lost part of the genuine text of Empedocles himself.⁵⁹

Rashed (2014) offered a revised edition of the same scholia, plus a few extra ones not previously included. This corrected several things on which others had relied for their reconstructions, as well as presenting the additional, previously unpublished, scholia *h*, *i*, *j* from the same source. Primavesi (2016) was a response to this: a revised reconstruction of the cycle, to accommodate the additional scholia and the new evidence that Rashed (2014) cited concerning the antiquity of the material, particularly an additional scholion, in addition to the ten presented in the first part of Rashed (2014), here labelled scholion *k*.⁶⁰ This scholion, on Aristotle’s *De Generatione et Corruptione*, is from the same scholiast, but the note is not about Empedocles. Its relevance is for diagnosing the provenance of the scholiast’s knowledge, since it reveals knowledge of periodicity in the Nile Valley, suggesting a provenance from antiquity, most likely from Hellenistic or Late Antique Alexandria. The late antique option seems likely, given the Neoplatonic and Christian influences in the Scholiast’s material. Perhaps Rashed (2014) is right that the mere mention of Nile periodicity betrays unspoiled transmission from late antiquity and thereby rules out the otherwise plausible

⁵⁸ Rashed (2001b), p. 244. I do not deny that Empedocles’ poems may have been accompanied by oral transmission of key doctrines, especially to inner members of the philosophical circle, or indeed to rhapsodes who would deliver the poems in performance. But were that crucial for understanding the poem, we might expect it to survive via doxographical material known to Aristotle. It would be unlikely to surface only in late antiquity, let alone in the middle ages.

⁵⁹ Rashed (2001b), p. 244 He references Primavesi (2002), pp. 200-201. For a more sceptical reaction in the early days see my own first reaction in Osborne (2005) p. 299.

⁶⁰ Previously published in Rashed (2001a), p. 157.

thought that the scholia contain fantasies by the Byzantine commentator himself. Yet, on the other hand, it surely also counts against supposing that the scholia transmit things from the original text of Empedocles.

Although Rashed does not immediately conclude, from this evidence, that the scholiast's numbers are genuinely informative about what Empedocles meant, he does follow Primavesi in seeking reasons and justifications for, rather than against, that conclusion. In Rashed (2014) he suggests that the scholiast's periods of 60 and 40 units for parts of the cycle, adding up to 100 for two components, have an arithmological significance, related to the Pythagorean "Tetraktys".⁶¹ This Pythagoreanising interpretation dominates Primavesi's recent work.⁶² Rashed (2018) also uses the scholia as evidence for his own reconstruction of the cycle.

My own view is that this attempt to link the numbers with the Tetraktys is unconvincing, given that the Tetraktys is about the first four numbers (1, 2, 3, 4), making 10, not multiples of ten to compose 100, nor do the numbers in the Tetraktys include either 6 or 60 as a key component. My interest here, however, is not so much in the *truth* or otherwise of these scholars' contributions. I have traced the story more to illustrate the intensity and determination it reveals, and their ready desire to trust the material. As I see it, the enthusiastic reception of these Byzantine scholia is symptomatic of a desperate hunger on the part of a prominent section of the ancient philosophy community—a hunger for clear factual statements about what happens in the cycle, about when it happens, for replacing poetic metaphors and images with numbers and mathematical proportions, for a prose translation of the philosophical poem. As in the analytic decoding of Parmenides' *Towards Truth*, during the twentieth century, which discarded or decoded the motifs of travel, signposts, roads, to find premisses deductions, inferences, so the project of decoding Empedocles' poetry focuses on discarding the promises, oaths, agency, decisions, emotions, enmity, friendship, crime, punishment, exile, lifecycles, repentance, to yield demythologised reconstructions, measured oscillations, balanced physical forces, determinate mechanistic reversals.

⁶¹ Rashed (2014), pp. 332–35. The proposal originated with Primavesi (see Rashed 2014, n.39).

⁶² Primavesi (2017); Primavesi (2016).

The reaction to these scholia echoes, only more so, an earlier period of excitement in Empedocles studies, after the discovery of the Strasbourg papyrus in the 1980s. That document was a late copy of Empedocles from the Roman period, and desperately mangled. It was received to great acclaim, and some may have thought that it would effectively solve all the puzzles about what Empedocles really meant.⁶³ Naturally it could not do that, for the puzzles are created not so much by the gaps in our evidence as by what Empedocles says in the texts that we do have, and especially by the style of his writings. It is vain to hope that somehow there was a lost text that would resolve the puzzles, for that would imply finding a text in some other style: a text that was not enigmatic, ambiguous or oracular, or some text in which the oracular was decoded into analytic prose, presenting a precise list of numbers and lengths of periods of the cycle and a clear rationale for why the pattern works like that.

It may be objected that I have diverged from my project, which was to consider how analytic philosophy engages with the poetry. Neither Primavesi nor Rashed seem to merit the description “analytic philosophers”. They are not engaged in the *same* kind of anachronistic enterprise that Barnes was engaged in. And in shedding the poetic mantel of mystery, they even end up importing *more mystery* in the form of Pythagorean numerology.

Nevertheless, I find that their desire to impose precision, clarity and regularity on the cosmic cycle has something of the same ethos as the analytic desire for proofs. The search for mechanistic models in science and cosmology, with no role for emotions or moral responsibility in deciding the fate of the cosmos, either now or in the future, is similar. It requires us to dismiss or ignore most of the language and imagery (if it is right to call it “imagery”)⁶⁴ in the poem as we know it, from both the traditional fragments and the newer papyrus evidence. Yet this way of reading Empedocles is not at all new: it merely continues what has been the standard approach throughout the twentieth century, and derives much of its inspiration from works such as O’Brien (1969). Despite O’Brien’s professed enthusiasm for the poetic genre of the text, and his inclusion of Plutarch as a serious witness to the meaning

⁶³ Cf. Osborne (1999a), responding to Burnyeat (1999) (and further correspondence in later issues of *TLS*, in June and July 1999).

⁶⁴ The term “imagery” might imply that a plain message is *illustrated* using imagery. Empedocles’ images are not just illustrations: e.g. he is not picturing the elements “as if” they were gods. They *are* gods. See further in Rowett (2016).

of the cycle,⁶⁵—which was indeed a key move in the direction of a more authentic account of the nature of Empedocles' thinking—his work was still pursuing the same kind of decoding that had characterised the work of his predecessors, and which now colours the work of those thinkers, such as Primavesi and Rashed, who look back to O'Brien's work of the 1960s as their inspiration (rather than looking to more recent thinkers who have substantially challenged that approach and taken the next steps in the progression towards rehabilitation of the ancient non-Aristotelian tradition).⁶⁶

More generally, I lament the way that the search for new papyri and scholia has come to dominate Empedoclean scholarship of the last decade or so, as though those discoveries could yield the clue to *solve* the enigmas in Empedocles' thought once and for all. This obsession has spawned an industry, not only seeking novel material, but also re-editing and revising the conjectures to fill the lacunae of the new texts, always attempting to find there, in the novel material discovered by oneself or by others, the hidden answer *to everything*. This “pursuit of the new” risks replacing the longstanding tradition of attending carefully to the existing text as a whole, and working on sensitive reconstructions, in the light of the wealth of primary and secondary evidence already available. Thankfully, there is still plenty of such work continuing, even while the pursuit of “the new” tends to occupy most of the limelight.

6. Conclusion

My suggestion is that each style of philosophy has its own “poetic”. Some approaches maintain that their own poetic is the best, or the only, way to write or talk about philosophy; others are more pluralistic. If philosophy's poetic values remain unreflective and go unchallenged, then we may find that they are deployed without due sensitivity, for interpreting a tradition whose poetic is quite different. Then the interpreter may come in with a hammer and chisel, to convert thinkers who express themselves in another poetic, knocking it into a form that they can handle, discarding the bits that seem to be irrelevant, smashing the bits

⁶⁵ On his intellectual trajectory, see O'Brien (2005), pp. xii–xvi

⁶⁶ As O'Brien notes, Martin and Primavesi (1999) considered three models of the cosmic cycle as the options to choose from: those of Hölscher (1965), Bollack (1965-9), and a view shared by Panzerbeiter (1844); Bignone (1916); O'Brien (1969). Yet all these were already things of the past by the late 1990s when Martin and Primavesi were writing. The subject had moved on with important work by Peter Kingsley, Friedrich Solmsen, Catherine Osborne, David Sedley, and Rosemary Wright, besides Nicolaas van der Ben, whose work they do mention but without exploring its legacy in other thinkers.

that get in the way or make it seem confusing. Arguably this can amount to a kind of cultural imperialism, and it not only stands in the way of genuine understanding, but also hinders our chances of appreciating thinkers such as the Presocratics for their contribution *as poets* in the canon of major poets.

My point has been to suggest that certain trends in recent philosophy (some clearly in the analytic tradition, some in a more scientific tradition) are somewhat misaligned with the poetic of the ancient philosophical poets. The poets typically do philosophy in an allusive, even anti-analytic way—in a way that involves hinting rather than stating, describing and narrating rather than arguing, picturing rather than stating. That poetic presupposes that the reader will engage with ideas and with hints of ideas in a much more active way: not just coming to believe the conclusions of proofs, but having to reach a conclusion on their own behalf. This is to do philosophy in a way that involves considerable personal intellectual and imaginative work on the part of the reader.⁶⁷ By contrast, scholars whose philosophical poetic aligns with the analytic tradition may try to recast the vagueness into precision and the metaphors into arguments. They may try to settle what was left in intriguing obscurity, and to foreclose what was designed to make an opening.

My second observation is that this attitude on the part of interpreters seems analogous to the rejection of poetry in Plato's ideal state. Despite the indignant complaints from the analytic tradition against Plato's exclusion of the poets from the ideal philosophical state, scholars in the analytic tradition find it hard to welcome poets into the philosophical clique with their poetry intact. They manifest the same suspicion of poetic techniques, the same preference for a simple mode of delivery of the truth without ornament.

My own evaluation is the reverse. It seems to me that poetry is a rather good medium for certain kinds of philosophical work: for inviting the reader to consider an alternative world-picture, for re-imagining how the cosmos is or how it might one day be, when everything has changed. It is a fine medium for engaging the attention and for engineering a change of heart, such as may be needed (for instance) to turn the world from strife to love.

⁶⁷ For this idea, see also the chapter by Jenny Bryan in this issue.

- Barfield, Raymond (2011): *The Ancient Quarrel between Philosophy and Poetry*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Barnes, Jonathan (1979): *The Presocratic Philosophers*. Volume 1, London: Routledge.
- Barnes, Jonathan (1982): *The Presocratic Philosophers*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Bignone, Ettore (1916): *Empedocle: Studio critico, traduzione e commento delle testimonianze e dei frammenti*. Il pensiero greco Turin: Fratelli Bocca
- Bollack, Jean (1965-9): *Empédocle*. 3 vols Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit.
- Bryan, Jenny (2011): *Likeness and Likelihood in the Presocratics and Plato*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Burnyeat, M (1999): "Of Love and Strife: Startling new light on the pre-Socratic universe". Review of Alain Martin and Oliver Primavesi *L'Empédocle de Strasbourg*. *Times Literary Supplement*, May 28, p7–8.
- Charles, David (2000): *Aristotle on Meaning and Essence*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Garani, Myrto (2007): *Empedocles Redivivus: Poetry and analogy in Lucretius*. London: Routledge.
- Gemelli Marciano, M. Laura (2008): "Images and Experience: at the roots of Parmenides' *Altheia*". *Ancient Philosophy* 28: pp. 21–48.
- Graham, Daniel (2010): *The Texts of Early Greek Philosophy*. 2 vols Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Graham, Gordon (2005): *Philosophy of the Arts*. Third edition ed. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Halliwel, Stephen (1986): *Aristotle's Poetics*. London: Duckworth.
- Halliwel, Stephen (1988): *Plato Republic X*. Warminster: Aris and Phillips.
- Halliwel, Stephen (2002): *The Aesthetics of Mimesis: ancient texts and modern problems*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Hanna, Robert (2004): *Kant and the Foundations of Analytic Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hanna, Robert (2009): "Back to Kant: Teaching the First Critique as Contemporary Philosophy",. *APA Newsletter on Teaching Philosophy* 8, no. 2: pp. 2–6.
- Heath, Malcolm (2001): "Aristotle and the pleasure of tragedy". In: Anderson, Ø and J Haarberg (eds.): *Making sense of Aristotle: Essays in Poetics*. London: Duckworth pp. 7–23.
- Heath, Malcolm (2013): *Ancient Philosophical Poetics*. Key Themes in Ancient Philosophy, edited by Ferrari, G.R.F. and Catherine Osborne, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hölscher, Uvo (1965): "Weltzeiten und Lebenszyklus. Eine Nachprüfung der Empedokles-Doxographie". *Hermes* 93: pp. 7–33.
- Kirk, Geoffrey S; Raven, John E.; and Schofield, Malcolm (1983): *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kristeller, Paul Oskar (2008): "Introduction". In: Steven M. Cahn and Aaron Meskin (eds.): *Aesthetics: a comprehensive anthology*, Malden: Blackwell, pp. 3–15.
- Lambridis, Helle (1976): *Empedocles: a philosophical investigation*. Studies in the Humanities. Alabama: University of Alabama Press.
- Leshner, James H. (1992): *Xenophanes of Colophon: Fragments: A Text and Translation with Commentary*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Levin, Susan (2001): *The Ancient Quarrel between Philosophy and Poetry Revisited*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Mansfeld, Jaap, and Primavesi, Oliver (eds.) (2012): *Die Vorsokratiker Griechisch/Deutsch*. Stuttgart: Reclam.
- Martin, Alain; Primavesi, Oliver (1999): *L'Empédocle de Strasbourg: Introduction, édition et commentaire*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- McKirahan, Richard (2010): *Philosophy before Socrates*. Second ed. Indianapolis: Hackett.
- Millerd, Clara E. (1908): *On the Interpretation of Empedocles*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Mogyoródi, Emese (2006): "Xenophanes' epistemology and Parmenides' quest for knowledge". In: Maria M Sassi (ed.) *La costruzione del discorso filosofico nell'età dei Presocratici*, Pisa: Ed. della Scuola Normale, pp. 123–60.
- Monro, David Binning (1901): *Homer's Odyssey, Books 13–24*. Vol. II, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

- Most, Glenn W. (2011): "What ancient quarrel between philosophy and poetry?". In: Pierre Destrée and Fritz-Gregor Herrmann (eds.): *Plato and the Poets*. Leiden: Brill, pp. 1–20
- Mothersill, Mary (2003): "Make-believe morality and fictional worlds". In: Bermúdez, J and J Gardner, eds. *Art and Morality*. London and New York: Routledge 4 4, pp. 74–94.
- Murdoch, Iris (1970): *The Sovereignty of Good*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Murdoch, Iris (1977): *The fire and the sun: why Plato banished the artists*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Nelis, Damien (2004): "Georgics 2. 458–542: Virgil, Aratus and Empedocles". *Dictynna [En ligne]* 1. Published electronically 25 novembre 2010. <http://dictynna.revues.org/161>.
- Nightingale, Andrea Wilson (1993): "The Folly of Praise: Plato's Critique of Encomiastic Discourse in the *Lysis* and *Symposium*", *The Classical Quarterly* 43, no. 1, pp. 112–30.
- Nightingale, Andrea Wilson (1995): *Genres in Dialogue: Plato and the Construct of Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nussbaum, Martha C. (1986): *The Fragility of Goodness: luck and ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nussbaum, Martha C. (1990): "Form and Content: Philosophy and Literature". In: Martha C. Nussbaum (eds.): *Love's Knowledge*. Oxford: Oxford ; New York : Oxford University Press, pp. 3–53.
- Nussbaum, Martha C (2001): *Upheavals of thought: the intelligence of emotions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- O'Brien, Denis (1969): *Empedocles' Cosmic Cycle: A reconstruction from the fragments and secondary sources*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- O'Brien, Denis (1981): *Pour interpreter Empédocle*. Leiden: Brill.
- O'Brien, Denis (2005): "Apologia pro vita sua". In: John Dillon and Monique Dixsaut (eds.): *Agonistes; Essays in Honour of Denis O'Brien*. Aldershot: Ashgate, pp. ix–xli.
- Osborne, Catherine (1987a): "Empedocles Recycled". *Classical Quarterly* 37, pp. 23–50.
- Osborne, Catherine (1987b): *Rethinking Early Greek Philosophy*. London: Duckworth.
- Osborne, Catherine (1997): "Was Verse the Default Form for Presocratic Philosophy?". In Catherine Atherton (eds.): *Form and Content in Didactic Poetry*, Bari: Levante Editori, pp. 23–35.
- Osborne, Catherine (1999a): "Letter to the editor". *Times Literary Supplement*, June 4.
- Osborne, Catherine (1999b): "'No' means 'Yes': the seduction of the word in Plato's *Phaedrus*". *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy* 15: p. 263–81.
- Osborne, Catherine (2005): "Sin and Moral Responsibility in Empedocles's Cosmic Cycle". In: Apostolos L. Pierris (eds.) *The Empedoclean Κόσμος: Structure, Process and the Question of Cyclicity*. Patras: Institute for Philosophical Research Patras, pp. 283–308.
- Panzerbeiter, Friedrich (1844): *Beiträge zur Kritik und Erklärung des Empedokles (diss.)*. Einladungs-Programm des Gymnasium Bernhardin in Meiningen Meiningen.
- Peramatzis, Michail (2011): *Priority in Aristotle's Metaphysics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Pierris, Apostolos L. (eds.) (2005): *The Empedoclean Κόσμος: Structure, Process and the Question of Cyclicity*. Patras: Institute for Philosophical Research Patras.
- Primavesi, Oliver (2002): "Lecteurs antiques et byzantins d'Empédocle de Zenon à Tzértzès". In: André Laks and Claire Louguet (eds.): *Qu'est-ce que la Philosophie Présocratique*, Cahiers de Philologie, vol. 20. Villeneuve d'Ascq: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion.
- Primavesi, Oliver (2005): "The Structure of Empedocles' Cosmic Cycle". In: Apostolos L. Pierris (ed.): *The Empedoclean Κόσμος: Structure, Process and the Question of Cyclicity*, Patras: Institute for Philosophical Research Patras, pp. 245–64.
- Primavesi, Oliver (2006): "Empedokles in Florentiner Aristoteles-Scholien". *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 157, pp. 27–40.
- Primavesi, Oliver (2008): *Empedokles Physika I: eine Rekonstruktion des zentralen Gedankengangs*. Archiv für Papyrusforschung Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Primavesi, Oliver (2016): "Empedocles' Cosmic Cycle and the Pythagorean *Tetractys*". *Rhizomata* 4, pp. 5–29.

- Primavesi, Oliver (2017): "Tetraktys und Göttereid bei Empedokles: Der pythagoreische Zeitplan des kosmischen Zyklus". In Friedrich Kittler *et al.*, (eds.): *Götter und Schriften rund ums Mittelmeer*, Paderborn: Verlag Wilhelm Fink, pp. 229–316.
- Rashed, Marwan (2001a): *Die Überlieferungsgeschichte der aristotelischen Schrift De Generatione et Corruptione*. Wiesbaden: Dr Ludwig Reichert Verlag.
- Rashed, Marwan (2001b): "La Chronographie du Systeme d'Empédocle: documents Byzantin inédits". *Aevum Antiquum* 1, pp. 237–59.
- Rashed, Marwan (2014): "La Chronographie du Système d'Empédocle: addenda et corrigenda". *Les Études Philosophiques* 3/2014, no. 110, pp. 315–42.
- Rashed, Marwan (2018): *La Jeune Fille et la Sphère: études sur Empédocle*. Paris: Presses de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne.
- Ribeiro, Anna Christina (eds.) (2012): *The Continuum Companion to Aesthetics*. London: Continuum.
- Rowett, Catherine (2013a): "Literary genres and judgements of taste: some remarks on Aristotle's remarks about the poetry of Empedocles". In: Michael Erler (eds.) *Literarische Form und Argument in antiker Philosophie*, Berlin: De Gruyter, pp. 305–14.
- Rowett, Catherine (2013b): "A Portable Presocratics Primer?". Review of Daniel Graham *The Texts of Early Greek Philosophy*, *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 21, no. 4, pp. 791–97.
- Rowett, Catherine (2016): "Love, Sex and the Gods: Which things have divine names in Empedocles and why?" *Rhizomata* 4, pp. 80–110.
- Rutherford, Richard (1995): *The art of Plato*. London: Duckworth.
- Sedley, David (1989): "The proems of Empedocles and Lucretius". *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 30, pp. 269–96.
- Warren, James (2007): *Presocratics*. Stocksfield: Acumen.
- Wright, M. R. (1997): "Philosopher poets: Parmenides and Empedocles". In: Catherine Atherton (eds.): *Form and Content in Didactic Poetry*, Bari: Levante Editori, pp. 1–22.