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# Homer's Music through Plato's Ears

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Homer's Music through Plato's Ears

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement  
for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Classical Studies from  
The College of William and Mary

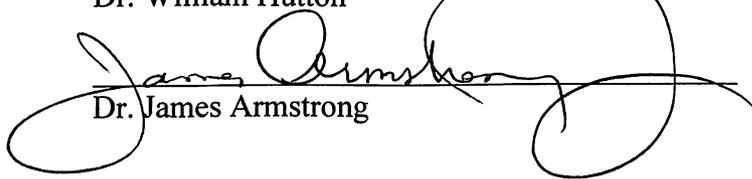
by

Dereck Wayne Basinger

Accepted for           HIGH HONORS            
(Honors, High Honors, Highest Honors)

  
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## **Table of Contents**

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| <b>Introduction</b>  | pg. 2  |
| <b>Chapter 1: Music in Plato's Dialogues</b>                 | pg. 8  |
| - 1.1 Order and Organization                                 |        |
| - 1.2 Behavioral Effect                                      |        |
| - 1.3 Education  |        |
| <b>Chapter 2: Homeric Literature Through a Platonic Lens</b> | pg. 23 |
| - 2.1 Behavioral Effect                                      |        |
| - 2.2 Education  |        |
| - 2.3 Order and Organization                                 |        |
| <b>Conclusion</b>  | pg. 62 |
| <b>Bibliography</b>  | pg. 67 |

## **Introduction: Homer's Music Through Plato's Ears**

When ancient Greeks heard a melody played on an instrument or sung by a voice, what cultural assumptions and associations did they bring to that performance? In other words, is it possible to understand an ancient Greek's perception of the music itself, independent of the context in which it is heard? Undeniably, these questions are almost immediately problematized. Of course the performative context and style of music factored greatly into a listener's perception and understanding of it. Music performed for the purpose of accompanying a sacrificial ritual or religious procession, as part of a staged drama or competition, and as a component of the convivial symposium would have been perceived in different ways. We certainly regard the music we hear in the concert hall, a religious service, or at a pop-music concert in different ways. However, the question still remains: did the ancient Greeks conceive of music as having underlying qualities, independent of style or context; was there a culturally assumed 'nature' of music?

Over the last fifty years, there has been a steady stream of scholarship that analyzes ancient Greek music on cultural, philosophical, and literary levels. Some scholars have chosen to study the ways in which music and music theory features as part of ancient Greek philosophical understanding. Of these investigations, Edward Lippman's *Musical Thought in Ancient Greece* (1964) is a seminal work that systematically presents and analyzes the reflections on music in the philosophy of ancient authors like Plato and Aristotle, as well as later writers such as Theophrastus and Aristoxenus. An example of recent scholarship investigating the

same questions is Levin's *Greek Reflections on the Nature of Music* (2009). By his own admission, Levin's book comprehensively investigates how music becomes an integral feature in the Greek understanding of philosophy, cosmology, and mathematics.

Scholars have also investigated ancient Greek music in literature. In his first volume of *Greek Musical Writings: The Musician and his Art*, Andrew Barker collects translated primary source passages which discuss or depict music, its performance, and/or musicians. While extensive, and admittedly serving as a constant point of return for my own project, Barker's survey is not a comprehensive, exhaustive catalogue of every musical reference in Greek literature. For example, there is no attention paid to the wealth of Hellenistic literature. In the second volume, Barker is concerned with the writings of the ancient Greek music theorists such as Aristoxenus, Aristides Quintilianus, and Ptolemy from the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE through the first centuries CE.

Lastly, many works illustrate the place of music in ancient Greek culture and daily life. Of these studies, M. L. West's *Ancient Greek Music* (1992) remains the gold standard, repeatedly cited by later scholars. Other books and articles engage the topic with varied levels of scope, thoroughness, and accessibility. For example, Landels' *Music in ancient Greece & Rome* (1999) serves as a general introduction of the aspects of music to the Classics student and general reader, while covering more ground through its discussion of the place of music in Rome. Conversely, Thomas Mathiesen's *Apollo's Lyre* (1999) is unparalleled in its detail, presenting the cultural presence and theoretical principles of music in both ancient Greece and the Middle

Ages. To further illustrate aspects of music in the life of ancient Greece, Anderson's *Music and Musicians in Ancient Greece* (1994) grapples with the same topics but from the perspective of the musician from our earliest evidence through the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE in Classical Athens.

Investigating questions about the nature of music requires a synthesis of previous approaches. The philosophical investigation of music most directly addresses the fundamental aspects and abilities of music. But we must ask, which of the conclusions represent a culture-wide perception and which represent the judgment of a single philosopher, or at least a philosopher who has a particular background and social standing, specific to a certain time and place?

Barker is correct when he writes, "our most valuable source of information [regarding ancient Greek music]...remains the literary material, the writings of the Greeks themselves."<sup>1</sup> Their literature is composed for enjoyment of an entire society. The emotions, expressions, ideas, and judgments made about music in literary sources are ultimately reflections of the readers or audience members themselves.<sup>2</sup> However, the varied ways in which music appears in the literature lack the specificity and focus with which the philosophers discuss music.

My thesis is a synthesis of previous inquiry and occupies what I hope to be a middle ground between the theoretical conclusions of ancient Greek philosophy and the interaction of ancient Greek literature regarding the topic of music. I argue that a basic cultural understanding of the nature of music can be found where these two disparate bodies of text meet. To achieve this, I compare the way in which Plato

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<sup>1</sup> Barker vol. 1, pg 1

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

discusses music in his dialogues, specifically his *Timaeus*, *Republic*, and *Laws*, to the ways by which music and musicians are presented in the (earlier) Homeric texts, specifically the *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, and the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*; the similarities between the texts highlight what I believe to be the underlying cultural perceptions of music shared by Ancient Greeks.

The decisions regarding the selection of the authors and texts that I compare were made for a variety of reasons. Firstly, Plato's discussion of music becomes foundational for the way in which later philosophers discuss music. For example, Aristotle's *Poetics* further develops Plato's musical conclusions, yet utilizes his analysis as a beginning. I have chosen to reference the dialogues of the *Timaeus*, *Republic*, and *Laws* because these are the works that receive the most attention from scholars like Lippman and Barker, although I note that Plato's discussion of music certainly is hardly restricted just to these three works of his extensive corpus.

Unfortunately, due to restrictions on the scope of this project, I am unable to treat these dialogues exhaustively. I have decided to analyze passages from these dialogues that reflect Plato's over-arching conclusions about music, as explicated by Lippman and Barker; for example, the censorship of poetry and the behavioral effect of music in Plato's *Republic*, the educational use of music in both his *Republic* and *Laws*, and the cosmological aspects of music in his *Timaeus*.

If poetry and literature indicate certain cultural values of a society, Homer presents a unique opportunity to understand ancient Greek society. As such an early, foundational, ubiquitous epic, Homeric poetry opens the door to investigate early Greek culture. While we see many instances of musicians and musical

performances in the epics, I analyze selected passages that exhibit particular poignancy: the performances of bards and the Sirens in the *Odyssey* as well as Achilles' lyre playing and the fate of the musician Tamyris in the *Iliad*.

In this context, my decision to include the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* may seem perplexing. While the hymns may have been originally attributed to Homer, as early as the Hellenistic era, Homeric authorship of the *Hymns* was doubted. Moreover, if the cultural importance of Homer is due in part to the antiquity of his epics, the relative dating of Hermes' hymn to the 6<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century BCE is potentially problematic. Because the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* includes an etiological myth for the creation of the lyre, I argue that the cultural weight of the hymn is significant enough to merit analysis. The later date of the Homeric Hymn also presents a unique opportunity to analyze a text that is closer to Plato's lifetime. We discern musical similarities between the hymn--predating the philosopher by at least a few generations-- and Plato's dialogues. These analogues appear to mirror each other a bit more closely and precisely than they do Homeric epic, which, in contrast, was composed orally many centuries before Plato.

The first chapter of my thesis is a summary of Plato's major arguments concerning music. I argue that the ways in which Plato discusses music falls into three main categories: music as a cause of behavioral affectation, music as a method and means of education, and music as both a cause and reflection of societal order. Moreover, the amount of regulation and censorship of music required in Plato's *Republic* and *Laws* betrays an ambiguous quality of music. It can have either a positive or negative effect on the community.

Chapter two compares Plato's arguments to the way music is featured in the Homeric texts. Because of the theoretical nature of Plato's discussion of music, I simplify and broaden his arguments to allow for parallels to be seen more easily. Ultimately, the music featured in Homer generally resembles the same categories outlined in chapter 1. Homer's presentation of music preempts the arguments made by Plato in a way that not only indicates possible cultural assumptions towards music, but also allows us to understand how Plato's philosophy participates in a larger ancient Greek culture.

This project is ambitious. It asks questions with no clear answers, compares texts vastly different in genre and intention, and analyzes passages not explicitly written with the power of music in mind. Still, parallels exist, and if music is considered in similar ways in such dissimilar pieces of literature, perhaps we can assume the comparisons that are drawn to be of special significance. It is possible, then, that they reveal broader cultural perceptions of music and its capabilities.

## **Chapter 1. Music in Plato's Dialogues**

Plato (428-347 BCE) lived as a citizen of Athens at the end Classical Era. A student of Socrates, his own philosophic output began after the death of his teacher in 399 BCE. His writings develop over time. Earlier works are thought to mirror the teachings of Socrates while later dialogues, despite presenting Socrates as an interlocutor, transmit Plato's own philosophic arguments. The three dialogues discussed in this section fall into the latter category.<sup>3</sup>

Ranging from almost historic accounts of the presence of music in Athens to highly theoretical discourses concerning the utility of music in shaping the universe, music is a subject to which Plato devotes special attention in his dialogues.<sup>4</sup> The term that Plato discusses in his dialogues, specifically the *Republic*, is μουσική (the art of the music). For Plato, this term is composed of three parts: word, melody, and rhythm.<sup>5</sup> Plato is able to discuss words and rhythms in separate discussions about poetry and dance, but it is significant that music is the combination of all three components of μουσική. Therefore he directly applies the conclusions made in previous discussions of words and rhythms onto his analysis of melody and song.<sup>6</sup> Ultimately, the effects of μουσική are what I categorize under the headings of Order and Organization, Behavioral Affectation, and Education.

Brief remarks summarizing the scope of our three dialogues are in order. The *Republic* and *Laws* are routinely discussed as a pair. At its core, the *Republic*

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<sup>3</sup> Barker vol. 1, pg. 124

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Plato, Rep. 398d

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

concerns itself with answering the question: “what does it mean to lead a good life?”<sup>7</sup> Ultimately the answer is given through designing a political state inherently devoted to philosophy and justice. The *Laws* acts as a companion to the *Republic*, and it further develops the conclusions made in the *Republic*, focusing primarily on social ethics and education.<sup>8</sup> Lastly, the *Timaeus* functions as an investigation of the material world; this includes the physical nature of sound, its place in the cosmos, and the way it is perceived.<sup>9</sup> Our study begins with the cosmological discussion in the *Timaeus*.

## 1.1 Order and Organization

As philosophers of Classical Athens, Plato and Socrates were inheritors of the musical theories of Pythagorean thinkers, who closely investigated the properties of mathematics and developed a metaphysics based upon mathematics.<sup>10</sup> Specifically, the universe was a phenomenon inherently ordered through number. For these philosophers, music created by vibrating strings represented a tangible, audible composite of the mathematical principles upon which they believed the organization of the universe was based: number, length, and proportion.<sup>11</sup> By the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE, what was once an illustration of mathematical principles had become

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<sup>7</sup> Rosen, pg. 1

<sup>8</sup> Barker vol. 1, pg. 124

<sup>9</sup> Barker vol. 2, pg. 53

<sup>10</sup> Lippman pg. 7

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. pg. 27

an entire metaphysical and cosmological framework.<sup>12</sup> In his *Timaeus*, Plato develops these ideas further; music is the means and medium of the universe's organization.

One of the topics the *Timaeus* addresses most thoroughly is the cosmology of the universe and the place of humankind within it.<sup>13</sup> According to the dialogue, the universe (κόσμος) is formed by a demiurge who brings order to chaos using a flawless system so that the κόσμος, and more specifically its soul, would be made as soundly as possible.<sup>14</sup> The divine craftsman structures the soul using bands formed by dividing the primordial mixture of the Same, Other, and Being according to the mathematical proportions: 1:2, 3:2, 4:3, and 9:8.<sup>15</sup> After shaping these structures into a sphere and compelling it to rotate, the completed soul begins "participating in both reasoning and harmony" (λογισμοῦ δὲ μετέχουσα καὶ ἁρμονίας).<sup>16</sup>

The means by which the demiurge orders the universe and fashions the universal soul is closely tied to music and its arithmetical principles. The proportions used to divide the primordial mixture of 'same', 'other', and 'being' constitute the basic musical intervals formed by altering the length of a vibrating string. Specifically, 1:2 is the octave, 3:2 is the fifth, 4:3 is the fourth, and 9:8 is the second. Not only is the completed soul able to participate in 'harmony', but the universal soul is constructed from the components of harmony. Using music to bring order to the universe displays an inherent quality of order within music itself.

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<sup>12</sup> Barker vol. 2, pg 28

<sup>13</sup> Johansen pg. 16

<sup>14</sup> Plato, *Tim.* 30a3-6

<sup>15</sup> Frede, 2013; Plato, *Tim.* 36b

<sup>16</sup> Plato, *Tim.* 37a

Rather than acting only as a framework, harmony also serves as a connection between humanity and the universal soul. For the philosopher, musical harmony is able to reorder the human soul into the structure of the universe at large. As a mirror of the movement within the essence of the universe, man is able to bring himself into order (εἰς κατακόσμησιν) and concord (συμφωνίαν) after his gracelessness and imperfections have caused him to become incongruent with the universal soul.<sup>17</sup> Music becomes not only the material by which the universe is organized, but it can also be utilized as a means of order.

Plato's *Timaeus* is preoccupied by music and order in a cosmological sense, but the *Republic* and *Laws* discuss music in terms of order in a polity. Because music is inherently ordered, it has the potential to affect organization and structure in the community. A preoccupation with societal order is pervasive throughout the *Republic*, a dialogue that constructs an ideal political organization. At its most basic level, the society of the *Republic* is comprised of citizens trained and best suited for one task of their own:

οὐκ ἂν αὐτὸν ἀρμόττειν ε φαίης τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ πολιτείᾳ, ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν διπλοῦς ἀνήρ παρ' ἡμῖν οὐδὲ πολλαπλοῦς, ἐπειδὴ ἕκαστος ἐν πράττει (therefore you might say that [a man good at multiple tasks] does not 'harmonize' with our city because there is not a man with two nor many interests since each practices their own) (Plato *Rep.* 397d).

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<sup>17</sup> Plato, *Tim.* 47d-e

Those who hold multiple professions in the community detract from efficiency and would not 'harmonize' (ἀρμόττειν)<sup>18</sup> with the parameters already set by the interlocutors: a rigidly ordered, hierarchical state.<sup>19</sup> As the dialogue progresses from a general discussion of poetry in the *Republic*, ἀρμόττειν (cognate with *harmonia* which carries with it connotations of organization and order) preempts the transition to the analysis of music in the society.

The laws governing a society are the medium by which it is organized, much like the spherical framework of supports for the universal soul. Just as the organization of the universe, the organization and effectiveness of the state is closely tied to and affected by music. According to Socrates in the *Republic*, no innovations in musical style or form should be made because "in no way are the types of music changed without affecting the greatest political laws" (οὐδαμοῦ γὰρ κινουῦνται μουσικῆς τρόποι ἄνευ πολιτικῶν νόμων τῶν μεγίστων).<sup>20</sup> Socrates continues by explaining the occurrence of small, incremental changes, which will eventually turn everything in private and public life upside down.<sup>21</sup> However, if music can be monitored and censored so that no changes are made, proper order within the community could be maintained.

The philosophical and historical environment in which Plato is writing allows us to put these conclusions into context. Damon, a philosopher of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE, put forth the idea that music can influence the stability in the state, either positively or negatively. He rose to prominence as an adviser of Pericles, and in the

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<sup>18</sup> Meaning, literally, to fit together or be in tune with.

<sup>19</sup> Barker, 1984 pg 129

<sup>20</sup> Plato, *Rep.* 424c

<sup>21</sup> πάντα ἰδίᾳ καὶ δημοσίᾳ ἀνατρέψῃ (Plato, *Rep.* 424e)

*Republic*, the ideas concerning the political power of music are attributed specifically to Damon.<sup>22</sup> This understanding and empowering of music coincides with a period of musical innovation, in which virtuosic instrumentalists were showcasing their talent and innovating techniques through which they could play their instruments.<sup>23</sup>

In many cases, these musicians were entertaining audiences by defying certain musical expectations, utilizing unexpected and sometimes newly invented musical modes (*harmoniai*). It is this type of innovation that Socrates disparages in the *Republic*, and, as Csapo argues, connections were thought to have existed between the perceived disorganization and poor efficiency of the Athenian democracy and the music that entertained the masses. This “popular music” gradually deviated from the structure and order provided by traditional styles and techniques of music. The law within a community is characterized by specific distinctions, mirroring the specific distinctions of the harmonic music system.<sup>24</sup> When traditional practices are distorted, music has the ability to cause directly the παρανομία<sup>25</sup> (transgressions of decency) that Plato wishes to avoid as he constructs an ideal state. However, the necessity of both censoring music and also correct procedure implies that a proper use and enjoyment of music is able to promote order just as improper use can cause disorder.

The *Laws* provide more detail concerning the dynamics of the effect of music on the order of a state as well as the musical innovations disparaged by Plato. The

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<sup>22</sup> ὡς φησί τε Δάμων καὶ ἐγὼ πείθομαι (as Damon says and I agree) (Plato, *Rep.* 424c)

<sup>23</sup> Csapo p. 71

<sup>24</sup> Lippman 84

<sup>25</sup> Plato, *Rep.* 424c

narrator of the *Laws* traces the current democratic disarray in Athens directly to music. Stark divisions regarding musical classes and styles characterized proper musical practice. In the past, the words and traditional melodies were reserved for different types of songs: hymn (prayer to a god), paean (song of praise to Apollo, typically, but other deities as well), dirge (funerary music), and dythramb (dedicated to Dionysus).<sup>26</sup> These strict classifications were never mixed nor deviated from. During this time, the masses were orderly (τεταγμένως).<sup>27</sup> However, with time, certain musicians and poets became frenzied (βακχεύοντες), seized by pleasure, and were both imitating the pipes with harps and mixing every type [of music] into every type (καὶ αὐλωδίας δὴ ταῖς κιθαρῶδίας μιμούμενοι καὶ πάντα εἰς πάντα ξυνάγοντες).<sup>28</sup> After this point, members of the audience were seized by lawlessness with regards to music<sup>29</sup>, leading to a rejection of all law and the opinions of better men.<sup>30</sup>

Thus far in Plato, music has a close connection to order and organization, operating both positively and negatively. It is an inherently ordered phenomenon requiring precise arithmetical proportions for each interval. As such, it forms the cosmological basis of the universal soul, and it is able to reorder humankind within the universal framework. Proceeding to the physical from the metaphysical, music

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<sup>26</sup> Landels pg. 3-4

<sup>27</sup> Plato, *Laws* 700b-d

<sup>28</sup> Plato, *Laws* 700d-e

<sup>29</sup> The dynamics of this development deserves elaboration: the audience members, after hearing the changed and innovated music began to think of themselves as proper judges of good and bad music regardless of the accepted laws governing musical performance. In Plato's words, in regards to music a Theatocracy replaced an aristocracy (701a). In this way, Plato uses music as a microcosm of the political changes in Athens. Music is the starting point of disorder, and must be among the first points addressed if an ideal state is to be formed.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. 700e-701b

can directly affect the organization of a society. Adherence to standard, accepted musical practices engenders order and organization of the state; departure from these practices leads to lawlessness and a disregard for authority. For these reasons, music must be monitored, censored, and controlled. For music, a fine line exists between order and disorder, but its effect is powerful; for Plato, this cannot be ignored.

## 1.2 Behavioral Effect

For Plato, music has a profound impact on the individual, and his ideas regarding music are rooted in the belief that emotions and actions can be initiated by music. In short, music holds a certain power over human nature.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, musicians as well as audiences are vulnerable to the effects of music. Not only are musicians divinely inspired to perform, but both instrumentalist and listener can be affected by music. In section 1.2, we shall briefly survey the different ways in which Plato asserts that music affects behavior.

In the *Ion*<sup>32</sup> Plato describes the extent to which performers are overcome and transmit their art by the direct influence of the gods. Proper epic poetry and the talents of good composers of songs are results of “being inspired and possessed” (ἐνθεοὶ ὄντες καὶ κατεχόμενοι) by the gods just as orgiastic worshipers are

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<sup>31</sup> Lippman p. 69

<sup>32</sup> Although aulos and kithara playing are mentioned alongside ῥαψωδία at the start of the exchange: Plato, *Ion* 533b.

possessed and out of their minds when they dance.<sup>33</sup> In the *Republic* Plato broadens these ideas: words that are sung must receive the same level of scrutiny as words that are spoken,<sup>34</sup> and given the cosmological weight attributed to music, an argument can be made for even more oversight. If the words being performed are a product of the gods, and the music accompanying them is a reflection of the cosmological order, a performer on a stage wields a power that is as influential as it is subtle. The extent to which the performer is affected by his performing is mirrored in the effect it can have on the audience.

This effect is characterized as the ability to bestow grace to the human soul,<sup>35</sup> when given the proper education.<sup>36</sup> The means by which music has this effect is labeled as μίμησις<sup>37</sup> (imitation) in Plato's dialogues, or as another example, when discussing Damon's philosophy regarding the effect of music on emotion and behavior, Aristides Quintilianus uses the term ὁμοιότης (representation)<sup>38</sup>. In the *Republic*, Socrates and Glaucon discuss at length the issue of imitation within the arts, asserting that it must be restricted because the events being portrayed or narrated via drama, dance, music, poetry, and even epic will come to be resembled by both the performer and the audience members.<sup>39</sup> However, this effect is not due merely to the stories told through these works.

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<sup>33</sup> Plato, *Ion* 533e

<sup>34</sup> Plato, *Republic* 3.398d

<sup>35</sup> Plato, *Republic* 3.401d-e

<sup>36</sup> See section 3.

<sup>37</sup> Plato, *Republic* 399a

<sup>38</sup> De Musica 2.14

<sup>39</sup> Lippman p. 73

While Plato censors both subject matter and diction of performances,<sup>40</sup> he addresses the sounds and songs characteristic of certain behaviors and activities.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, the process of imitation appears to be linked to the intrinsic qualities of the music itself. As a summary of the mimetic process, the sounds (φθόγγος) and songs (προσφδία) accompanying specific actions and events (religious, funerals, drinking, etc.) become a representation of those actions through the melody, words, and rhythm of the music. These aspects are then absorbed into the individual's soul due to its connection with music.<sup>42</sup>

Given this effect, specific *harmoniai*<sup>43</sup> are either forbidden or allowed in Plato's republic. For example, because dirges and lamentations are not permitted, the Mixolydian and Syntonolydian modes are automatically forbidden.<sup>44</sup> When Socrates asks Glaucon, "which of the *harmoniai* are soft and convivial?" (Τίνες οἷν μαλακαί τε καὶ συμποτικάι τῶν ἁρμονιῶν), Glaucon responds by naming the Lydian and Ionian *harmoniai*.<sup>45</sup> There is an important distinction here. The Lydian and Ionian *harmoniai* are labeled as intrinsically soft and convivial; in other words, the music receives its label due to its inherent qualities rather than by accompanying soft and convivial activities.<sup>46</sup> If the Lydian and Ionian styles are the soft and convivial ones of the *harmoniai*, then perhaps the Mixolydian and Syntonolydian can

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<sup>40</sup>A discussion of censoring subject matter in a long passage: Plato, *Republic* 377-392

<sup>41</sup> Plato, *Republic* 398d-399a

<sup>42</sup> Woerther p. 94

<sup>43</sup> Often translated to the western musical term, 'mode'. While the term mode carries with it many connotations from Western tradition of music, in later sections of my thesis I use the terms interchangeably.

<sup>44</sup> Plato, *Republic* 398e

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> The Ionian or Lydian modes might well have been standard at a symposium, but the way in which Plato describes them appears to highlight inherent qualities of the music itself.

be considered intrinsically somber and mournful, accompanying lamentations and funerary practices for that reason.

The two *harmoniai* that are permitted are the Dorian and Phrygian. The Dorian is noble because it fittingly resembles the sounds and songs (πρεπόντως ἄν μιμήσαιο φθόγγους τε καὶ προσωδίας) of a brave man who fights strongly and resolutely.<sup>47</sup> This reasoning shows a clear example of μίμησις in which the virtuous qualities of a brave individual are represented by the *harmonia*, and the assumption follows that this imitation can cause the listener to have the same behavior. The Phrygian *harmonia*, on the other hand, is allowed due to its temperance and utility when attempting to teach, persuade, or plead with another individual.<sup>48</sup> In the case of the Phrygian *harmonia*, not only is its ability to pacify and calm the performer and listener celebrated, but also is its capacity to affect other individuals.

The idea that music can be used to persuade or convince a listener of certain beliefs or actions is powerful. The words spoken during a performance certainly have an effect on an audience and can lead to emotions or actions. Similarly, the mode according to which a piece of music is composed gives Plato a tool for designing his ideal state.

### 1.3 Education

Given the perceived power music that has over the individual, and its potential for either positive or negative effects, it should come as no surprise that

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<sup>47</sup> Plato, *Republic*, 399a-b

<sup>48</sup> Ibid. 399b-c

Plato would seek to institutionalize it in his ideal state. In both the *Republic and Laws* music is featured as a part of a program of education. As part of an educational program, any influence wielded by music could be carefully utilized to its most positive and productive capabilities. For Plato, these effects are especially related to the proper development of the individual student. If proper music has the power to order the universe and organize a society, then an educational program that institutionalizes appropriate music can ensure that a student can participate most beneficially inside that ordered society and universe.

First, a brief description of the educational practices of aristocratic, Classical Athens is necessary. To a certain extent, Plato bases his system of education on the typical, contemporary practices. There is evidence dating to the early 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE that aristocratic Athenian youth were given a formal education in gymnastics and music in order to become “fair in mind and body.”<sup>49</sup> Roughly around the death of Pericles, this traditional form of education began to be replaced by a desire to learn from wise intellectuals, a development through which Plato was able to become a pupil of Socrates. Because Plato’s system of musical education was reflective of earlier methods of Athenian education, it is interesting that Plato’s educational program in his *Republic and Laws* seems to advocate for a return to older practices.

In the *Republic*, proper development of both the mind and body are paramount. For the strength of the body Plato prescribes gymnastics and music for the mind; only the proper balance between the two will produce a proper

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<sup>49</sup> Wallace, Appendix 4a, pg. 9

philosopher. Music and gymnastics must be tuned together by being stretched and relaxed (ἐπιτεινομένω καὶ ἀνιεμένω). Furthermore, Plato asserts that the student who is able to correctly ‘tune’ music and gymnastics with one another “is the best musician and best tuned, much more than the one tuning the strings” (εἶναι τελέως μουσικώτατον καὶ εὐαρμοστότατον, πολὺ μᾶλλον ἢ τὸν τὰς χορδὰς ἀλλήλαις συνιστάντα).<sup>50</sup>

By contrast, a student who solely studies gymnastics would come to hate reason and refinement.<sup>51</sup> Without music, Plato describes the student as becoming dull (κωφὸν), blind (τυφλὸν), and weak (ἀσθενές);<sup>52</sup> although this student would devote his education to the development of the body, it is ironic that, despite this focus, he is characterized as deficient both intellectually and bodily. Similarly, a study of music to the exclusion of gymnastics leads to a lack of self-restraint. Such a student will pursue any interest to its destruction. Plato uses the analogy of hammering iron, which is heated until it melts away.<sup>53</sup> Even as an integral part of an educational program, necessary for cultivating logic and reason, music must be tempered by gymnastics.

Not only does Plato advocate for proper musical style, instruments, and study, but much of Plato’s attention, especially in the *Republic*, is devoted to defining the subject matter that is prohibited from performance. For example, Plato forbids

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<sup>50</sup> Plato, *Rep.* 412a; in note 45 on page 137 of Barker’s *Greek Musical Writings*, volume 1 it is accurately pointed out that the words stretched and relaxed (ἐπιτεινομένω καὶ ἀνιεμένω) are used to metaphorically resemble tightening and loosening the strings of an instrument, Not only is the universal soul thought of as a musical entity, but the human soul is ‘harmonized’ much like a stringed instrument.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.* 411d

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* 411a-b

certain mythical subjects and stories in which gods fight other gods or heroes commit acts of hostility.<sup>54</sup> This is done so that students, especially the youngest and thus most malleable, will begin their upbringing and education in the best possible frame of mind. Because these stories can also be told in song, Plato applies the same restrictions to ‘word’ (λογος) and music: ‘it is necessary for those words [that are sung] to be spoken in the same way we discussed’ (αὐτοῖς δεῖν τύποις λέγεσθαι οἷς ἄρτι προείπομεν).<sup>55</sup>

As we saw earlier, Plato regards musical innovation as a cause of political disorganization. The inclusion of music in a standardized program of education serves as a solution to the problem. Plato addresses the problem of innovation once again. When younger generations begin to behave and act differently from their fathers, they begin to “set their heart on different institutions and laws [from previous generations]” (ἐτέρων ἐπιτηδευμάτων καὶ νόμων ἐπιθυμῆσαι).<sup>56</sup>

Educating students with a standardized, approved curriculum limits the extent of innovation that can lead to disorder. Moreover, generational continuity appears to be a concern. Innovation is a worry, but even more crucial is that each successive generation takes part in the same educational activities.

A uniform educational program, consistent over the generations, guarantees the level of cultural continuity for which Plato is advocating. The proper practice of music, included within his program, carries over the individual a power that is potentially positive or negative. A standard educational program provides the

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<sup>54</sup> Plato *Rep.* 378c

<sup>55</sup> Plato, *Rep.* 398d

<sup>56</sup> Plato, *Laws* 798c

opportunity to dismiss the musical styles deemed dangerous or unproductive for the state and to reinforce and pass down accepted musical styles.

It cannot be denied that music can affect a listener in different ways. In the *Republic*, Plato explains why education in the arts is of the utmost importance: “because both rhythm and harmony sink most deeply into the inner parts of the soul” (ὅτι μάλιστα καταδύεται εἰς τὸ ἐντὸς τῆς ψυχῆς ὃ τε ῥυθμὸς καὶ ἀρμονία). By including music as a form of education, the influence of music, being an organizational building block of the universe and a force acting on human behavior and emotion is harnessed for the benefit of a community.

## **Chapter 2: Homeric Literature Through a Platonic Lens**

To what extent are Plato's themes of Order, Education, and Effect reflected by Ancient Greek culture at large? In this section, we investigate pre-Platonic examples of "Homeric" literature and mythology to show the possibility of a cultural precedent that preempts the way in which he discusses the characteristics of music. Plato's attitudes towards music, specifically those exhibited in his *Timaeus*, *Republic*, and *Laws*, are certainly products of his own philosophy and time period. To assert that specific features and precise subtleties of Platonic thought directly correspond with passages of Homer and other authors would be incorrect. The way in which music and musicians are featured in certain pieces of literature, however, reflects generalized aspects of Order, Education, and Effect. Through comparing Plato's philosophical musings with literary passages, we begin to disentangle attitudes toward music that may be a product of a climate specific to Classical from broader cultural perceptions.

Indeed, some properties of Plato's philosophy of music are outside the confines of a cross-section of ancient, Homeric Greek literature. For example, while the Pythagorean-based idea of a musically constructed universe may not parallel any passage in the *Odyssey*, the role of music regarding proper order, organization, and practice within a community, as discussed in Plato's *Republic* and *Laws*, finds arguable similarities in Homeric epic. Moreover, while a *Homeric Hymn* may not concern itself with the design of a society's standard program of education, music and musicians seem to be integrally related to the process of learning and teaching.

Not only are musicians the practitioners of a learned skill, but the act of passing down accepted information is also featured in *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, and *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*. Lastly, in the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, *Iliad*, and *Odyssey*, music has a distinct effect on behavior and emotion, and it also wields a potential positive or negative force for the community or the individual.

## 2.1: Behavioral Effect

As discussed earlier, for a modern reader, the effect of music on our emotions, behavior, and mood is perhaps the most readily acceptable of Plato's assertions.<sup>57</sup> Different songs, melodies, and musical styles can affect how we feel and act, from dancing and laughing to crying. It is no surprise, then, that examples from Homeric literature reflect this aspect. Furthermore, in many cases music can be seen as a cause, or at the very least, a reinforcement of certain actions taken by the characters. Figures like Penelope, Odysseus, Achilles, and Apollo are physically and emotionally affected by the music that they hear. In fact, as we shall see below, the extent to which music features as an educational and ordering force is rooted in its ability to affect the behavior of the listener, and, in some cases, the performer.

Poignant examples of the effect of music on a listener are found throughout Homeric literature. Moreover, in Homer's epics, music affects protagonists in

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<sup>57</sup> *The Emotional Power of Music* is a recent book that investigates scientific and psychological perspectives on music's capabilities to affect behavior, both emotionally and socially. Klaus Scherer, in his introduction to Ch. 9 "Emotion Elicitation," calls music "the language of the emotions." The book's chapters include recent and ongoing investigations of these questions using scientific methodology. I discuss some other sections from this book in my conclusion.

different ways, and each instance seems to occur at significant points in the narrative. For example, in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the direct participation of heroes in music accentuates important character developments and thematic elements. In terms of behavioral affectation, our analysis of Homeric epic focuses on three specific scenes where musical performance profoundly affects major characters: Achilles' performance for Patroclus in *Iliad* 9.185-191, Phemius' performance for the suitors, and Demodocus' performances for the Phaeacians in books 1 and 8 of the *Odyssey*, respectively.

After withdrawing from the Greek community in anger and shame in Book 1, Achilles returns to the narrative playing the *phorminx* inside his tent. In book 8, the Achaean forces have suffered what appears to be a devastating loss that could result in their defeat the very next morning, as Hector indicates in his address to the Trojan forces.<sup>58</sup> The stark contrast between possible defeat and Achilles' music less than two hundred lines removed would not have been lost on an ancient Greek audience, and raises key questions about the place of music in Homeric society, most of which will be addressed in the 'Order and Organization' section of this chapter. Preliminarily, however, it is important to note how Achilles' emotions and behavior are affected while he makes music.

As the embassy to Achilles (Odysseus, Phoenix, and Ajax) enters Achilles' tent, they discover an intimate scene: Achilles is playing his *phorminx*, a spoil of war, and singing for Patroclus.<sup>59</sup> In line 186, Achilles is depicted as "delighting his mind with a clear-toned *phorminx*" (φρένα τερπόμενον φόρμιγγι λιγείη). Moreover, he

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<sup>58</sup> Hector's address: *Il.*8.497-541

<sup>59</sup> *Hom. Il.* 9.188

was “delighting his heart” (θυμὸν ἔτερπεν) as he sings about the great deeds of the heroes.<sup>60</sup> Homer reveals that Achilles’ mind and body are ‘delighted’ (τερπόμενον) by the music, but to what extent is his behavior affected in the way later philosophers like Damon and Plato predict? From the reintroduction of Achilles into the epic until his musical performance is interrupted, Achilles is only described as delighting (τερπόμενον) and singing (ᾄειδε). As soon as our hero greets his visitors, we are reminded of what necessitates the embassy: Achilles’ anger (μοι σκυζομένω).<sup>61</sup> It is as if music has suspended the force driving the events of the *Iliad*, even if for just six lines. Forgetting his anger, music has affected Achilles profoundly, albeit briefly.

The *Iliad* also presents certain negative capabilities of music. In a way, Plato’s suspicions of music are preempted. The fate of Thamyris, briefly outlined as part of the *Iliad*’s Catalog of Ships, illustrates a musician as overly competitive and hubristic. Thamyris was a virtuosic musician who

“claimed, boasting, that he would win [in a competition] even if the Muses themselves would sing; the Muses, being provoked, made him maimed, and they both took away his divine singing and made him forget how to play the kithara” (στεῦτο γὰρ εὐχόμενος νικησέμεν, εἴ περ ἂν αὐταὶ Μοῦσαι ἀείδοιεν... αἱ δὲ χολωσάμεναι πηρὸν θέσαν, αὐτὰρ ἀοιδὴν θεσπεσίην ἀφέλοντο καὶ ἐκλέλαθον κιθαριστύν).<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Hom. *Il.* 9.189

<sup>61</sup> Hom. *Il.* 9.198

<sup>62</sup> Hom. *Il.* 2.597-600

In his *Republic*, Plato warns of the danger if an individual devotes too much time to the art. An expert such as Thamyris is at risk of being “roused to fight by the smallest cause...and they become passionate and quarrelsome instead of spirited” (σμικρῶν ταχὺ ἐρεθιζόμενόν... ἀκράχοι οὖν καὶ ὀργίλοι ἀντὶ θυμοειδοῦς γεγένηνται).<sup>63</sup> Plato’s *Republic* appears to explain Thamyris’ hubristic drive for competition. As a virtuosic musician, Thamyris is at risk for the detrimental effects described by Plato. His foolhardiness to challenge the gods could be explained by the quarrelsomeness and irascibility caused by music.<sup>64</sup>

While Thamyris is mentioned only briefly and Achilles acts as his own musician in the *Iliad*, musical performances are featured much more prominently in the *Odyssey*, where the music of the bards affects Penelope and Odysseus in seemingly identical ways. In book one, Homer presents what was once the proud home of Odysseus in a state of thorough discord. Besieged by suitors, they take full advantage of the luxuries of the estate, including the household singer, Phemius, who is characterized as singing under compulsion (ἀνάγκη)<sup>65</sup> when the suitors have had their fill of food and drink and turn their attention to entertainment from song and dance (μολπή τ’ ὀρχηστύς).<sup>66</sup>

As the banquet hall quiets, the bard sings of the homecoming of the Achaeans (Ἀχαιῶν νόστον).<sup>67</sup> Hearing his performance, Penelope enters the hall weeping

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<sup>63</sup> Plato, *Rep.* 411c

<sup>64</sup> The trope of a hubristic musician is common, the most ready example is the satyr Marsyas who challenges Apollo to a musical competition, loses, and meets a tragic fate.

<sup>65</sup> Hom. *Od.* 1.154

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.* 152

<sup>67</sup> Hom. *Od.* 1.326

(δακρύσσα).<sup>68</sup> Covering her face with her veil, she asks Phemius to sing another song as it “always distresses the beloved heart in [her] breast” (μοι αἰεὶ ἐνὶ στήθεσσι φίλον κῆρτεῖρι).<sup>69</sup> Phemius’ melody poignantly moves Penelope to tears. As in the case of Plato’s outlawed modes, the Mixolydian and Syntonolydian,<sup>70</sup> the listener is moved to lament and mourn. However, Telemachus disagrees with his mother’s request. He celebrates the lauded status of the bard in relation with the gods. A minstrel should be able “to give pleasure in whatever way his mind is moved” (τέρπειν ὅπῃ οἱ νόος ὄρνυται).<sup>71</sup> Moreover, it is not the singer who is to blame but Zeus, who “who gives to each as he wishes” (ὅς τε δίδωσιν...ὅπως ἐθέλησιν, ἐκάστω).<sup>72</sup> This assessment of the god’s power over performance mirrors Plato’s *Ion*: poets are inspired and possessed by the gods.<sup>73</sup>

A bard features once again in book 8 *Odyssey* at the court of the Phaeacians. As a component of Alcinous’ welcome of Odysseus in lines 43-45, Demodocus is summoned to perform for the entire gathering. The minstrel is characterized by Alcinous as the divine singer, Demodocus (θεῖον ἀοιδὸν Δημόδοκον)<sup>74</sup> and we are later told that it was the Muse who gave [him] the sweet art of singing (δίδου δ’ ἠδεῖαν ἀοιδίην) and that it is she<sup>75</sup> who moves him to sing the subject matter of his

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid. 336

<sup>69</sup> Ibid. 341

<sup>70</sup> Plato *Rep.* 398e

<sup>71</sup> Hom. *Od.* 1.347

<sup>72</sup> Ibid. 348-349

<sup>73</sup> Plato, *Ion* 533e

<sup>74</sup> Hom. *Od.* 8.43

<sup>75</sup> The Muse inspires the song opposed to Zeus in Telemachus’ speech to his mother in Book 1. However the sentiment is the same: a divine force stirs the bard.

first performance: the glories of men (μοῦσ' ἄρ' αἰδὸν ἀνῆκεν αἰδόμεναι κλέα ἀνδρῶν).<sup>76</sup>

Narrating a quarrel between Achilles and Odysseus, ignorant that the latter is a member of his audience, Demodocus moves the hero to tears much like Phemius had moved Penelope. Odysseus covers his face with his great cloak and “[pours] tears from his eyebrows” (ὑπ' ὄφρῦσι δάκρυα λείβων) as he hears the tales of the past ring through the banquet hall. Similarly, Penelope is shown “having wept” (δακρῦσασα) because of Phemius' singing.<sup>77</sup> While the Phaeacians delight in the song (ἐπεὶ τέρποντ' ἐπέεσσιν), Odysseus cries each time Demodocus resumes his singing.<sup>78</sup> The same sequence of events happens later in book 8 with one change: Odysseus acts as Muse and requests that Demodocus sings the achievement of the Trojan horse, organized by the hero himself.<sup>79</sup> Once again, the music moves Odysseus to tears,<sup>80</sup> and his outburst finally leads Alcinous to ask Odysseus' identity in line 550.

Demodocus' musical performances demonstrate both general similarities to Plato's understanding of the power of music over emotion and behavior. The listener is moved by the music. Odysseus is torn by grief of the past battles and hardships. Like Penelope, Odysseus is brought to tears just as Plato predicts a listener can be affected by the Mixolydian and Syntonolydian *harmoniai*. Despite this overarching parallel, the three bard scenes present factors that deviate from Plato's

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<sup>76</sup> Hom. *Od.* 8.73

<sup>77</sup> Ibid. 1.336

<sup>78</sup> Hom. *Od.* 8.91-92

<sup>79</sup> Ibid. 492-495

<sup>80</sup> Ibid. 531

philosophy. Where there are differences, I argue that Homer defies what we might understand as expectations regarding musical performance to underscore thematic points of the *Odyssey*.

Plato's concern for and censorship of music in his *Republic* and *Laws* is based on his assertion that certain styles of music affect not only individual listeners, but also entire audiences wholesale in predictable ways.<sup>81</sup> Apart from the subtleties of individual musical taste, it stands to reason that a solemn or sad song would induce an entire audience to sadness or grief. Likewise, we can assume that the music performed in the setting of a banquet would be pleasurable for the audience. This expectation is disappointed at both Ithaca and Scheria.

On Ithaca, the suitors are described as making merry (τέρποντο) while listening to the music accompanying their banquet,<sup>82</sup> song and dance being the crown for a proper feast.<sup>83</sup> Penelope, hearing the performance from a distance, yet also an audience member, is not affected in the same way as the suitors. The music inspires grief instead of delight. We see a similar dichotomy in book 8 where the Phaeacians are repeatedly described as taking pleasure in Demodocus' music (τέρποντ' ἐπέεσιν), but Odysseus is brought to tears. In these passages, the reactions of Penelope and Odysseus starkly contrast those of the rest of the audience. While this deviates from what might be expected in the Platonic Republic, in their reactions to the bardic performances, Penelope and Odysseus contrast their

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<sup>81</sup> Otherwise, Plato would not be able to delineate which specific *harmoniai*, instruments and subject matter are prohibited or allowed as he does: *Harmoniai*- Plat. *Rep.* 398c-399c, and for instruments 399c-e.

<sup>82</sup> Hom. *Od.* 1.422

<sup>83</sup> Ibid. 152-153

fellow audience members and parallel each other in a way that is remarkably similar. These similarities in regards to music reinforce the like-mindedness (ὁμοφρονέοντε) that they share as a married couple, which, so Odysseus declares, comprises the features of an ideal marriage.<sup>84</sup> The affirmation of Odysseus and Penelope as a proper married couple becomes a thematic fixture of Homer's *Odyssey*, especially in comparison with other married couples occupying the epic world (i.e. Agamemnon and Clytemnestra as well as between Menelaus and Helen).<sup>85</sup> The extent to which Odysseus and Penelope share a “unity of mind and feeling” (ὁμοφρονέοντε)<sup>86</sup> is made readily apparent through the way music affects their behavior.

Thus far, we have shown that Odysseus and Penelope are moved to tears by the same stimulus and in the same context. The weeping of both husband and wife, furthermore, is literally and metaphorically similar. Firstly, both protagonists weep with a covered face. Penelope's veil obscures her features, and Odysseus hides behind his cloak.<sup>87</sup> In this way, not only do Odysseus' actions parallel Penelope's, but the hero also acknowledges that his outburst is improper for a banquet of welcome. Although his tears go unnoticed by all but King Alcinous, Odysseus is described as ashamed (αἶδετο) before the Phaeacian court, and he hides his face.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> οὐ μὲν γὰρ τοῦ γε κρεῖσσον καὶ ἄρειον, ἢ ὅθ' ὁμοφρονέοντε νοήμασιν οἶκον ἔχῃτον ἀνὴρ ἠδὲ γυνή· (for nothing is greater and better than this, when a man and a woman keep a house, being completely of the same mind) Hom. *Od.* 6.182-183

<sup>85</sup> Bolmarcich, pg. 205

<sup>86</sup> Ibid. pg. 207

<sup>87</sup> Hom. *Od.* 1.336 and 8.86

<sup>88</sup> This brings up an interesting point in Plato and many literary works from the Classical era: a distrust and limitation of lamentation and mourning in the Ancient world. For example, Plato sees no need for lament in his *Republic* and outlaws certain *harmoniai* for that purpose. Moreover, in her book *Mothers in Mourning*, Nicole Loraux cites many literary examples in which lamentation is

These similarities extend to a metaphorical level. In 8.23-29, Demodocus' song brings Odysseus to tears, and Homer characterizes Odysseus' crying like a woman wailing over her fallen husband.<sup>89</sup> At first, this comparison appears anomalous and derogatory for an epic hero. However, I argue that here the author strengthens the link between the hero and his wife. The backdrop of warfare and carnage inherent in Homer's simile contrasts the experiences of Penelope on Ithaca. One suffers in the midst of violence and becomes a casualty while the other waits painfully an ocean away.

The possibility of Odysseus' death, however, puts Penelope in a generally similar position. Both Penelope and the woman in the simile have lost their spouses to warfare, and both women are either literally or metaphorically threatened with the loss of their *oikos* as they are taken unwillingly by another man; one suffers more violently on a field of battle, the other is grief-stricken in a battle that wages over the household. Through their tears, Odysseus and Penelope become one in "unity of mind and feeling."<sup>90</sup> Affected by music, Homer capitalizes on the

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restricted. While the need to limit mourning is not so much seen in the Homeric epics (the Iliad concerns itself in large part with the delay of proper mourning), does Odysseus' shame preempt the practices of late Archaic and Classical Greece regarding mourning, and lamentation?. The question is unfortunately outside the scope of this project, and for my purposes, I read Odysseus shame as embarrassment for his grief inside the context of a jovial, welcome banquet.

<sup>89</sup> "as a woman wails throwing herself on her dear husband who falls before his city and people keeping the pitiless day from his city and children; while she beholds him dying and gasping, clinging around him, she shrieks. The enemy is behind her, hitting her back and shoulders with spears. They lead her to captivity to bear work and woe"

ὡς δὲ γυνὴ κλαίῃσι φίλον πόσιν ἀμφιπεσοῦσα, ὅς τε ἔης πρόσθεν πόλιος λαῶν τε πέσῃσιν, ἄστει καὶ τεκέεσσιν ἀμύνων νηλεὲς ἦμαρ· ἠ μὲν τὸν θνήσκοντα καὶ ἀσπαίροντα ἰδοῦσα ἀμφ' αὐτῷ χυμένη λίγα κωκύει· οἱ δὲ τ' ὀπισθεκόπτοντες δούρεσσι μετάφρνον ἠδὲ καὶ ὤμουσεῖρερον εἰσανάγουσι, πόνον τ' ἐχέμεν καὶ οἰζύν· τῆς δ' ἔλεεινοτάτῳ ἄχει φθινύθουσι παρειαί

<sup>90</sup> See note 27.

opportunity to reassert his theme of ὁμοφρονέοντε<sup>91</sup>, showcasing not only the behavioral effect of music, but also its importance.

In regards to Behavioral Affectation in the *Odyssey*, we must also consider the Sirens (Book 12.181-200). After receiving instructions from Circe, Odysseus is able to listen to their song without danger. After providing his comrades wax with which they can stuff their ears, Odysseus commands his crew to bind him to the mast of their ship.<sup>92</sup> As they pass by the island, Odysseus is able to hear the Sirens' song. Their music is captivating, and like many sailors who have previously sailed by, Odysseus is strongly affected. His very heart wishes to listen, and he orders his comrades to release him.<sup>93</sup> Once the vessel passes the island, Odysseus can be released since he is affected no longer.

Circe also reveals the fate of those who listen to the Sirens unrestrained. The singers beguile<sup>94</sup> them (θέλγουσιν) and “around them is a great pile of rotting bones” (πολὺς δ’ ἀμφ’ ὀστεόφιν θιζάνδρων πυθομένων)<sup>95</sup> belonging to men who, because of the music, will not return to their homes<sup>96</sup> Interestingly, the consequences for listening to the Sirens' song seems to provide a type of mythic illustration of the consequences reserved for those who devote their lives entirely to musical pursuits, according to Plato. For example, that individual is bewitched...until

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<sup>91</sup> Hom. *Od.* 6.183

<sup>92</sup> Hom. *Od.* 12.170-180

<sup>93</sup> Ibid. 192-193

<sup>94</sup> The Sirens, and similar, magical figures in Homer's *Odyssey*, open the door for many questions regarding the fine line between music and enchantment. When does music cross the line between entertainment, ritual necessity, and magical charm? The Sirens are certainly portrayed as having more of a magical power instead of a performative one. Similarly, the enchantress Circe is first introduced as singer. Unfortunately, I am not able to address such questions in this project, but they provide fertile ground for future study.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid. 46-47

<sup>96</sup> Ibid. 41-46

he melts away his spirit (κηλῆ... ἕως ἂν ἐκτήξῃ τὸν θυμὸν).<sup>97</sup> In this way, the Sirens become a forerunner to Plato's distrust of music. For Plato, proper musical style and subject can have positive effects on an individual, but music can also be a corruptive force if pursued incorrectly or without moderation. In the *Odyssey*, the Sirens are the embodiment of the possible vices of music. The destruction of the soul, the consequence for unrestrained pursuit of music, is reflected in the pile of rotting bones surrounding the Sirens. For Homer, the effect of music is undoubtedly powerful and potentially dangerous.

Proceeding from epic poetry, let us turn to the etiology of music itself: the mythological invention of the lyre in the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*. The instrument was ubiquitous in ancient Greek society, giving musical accompaniment to occasions varying from ritual sacrifice to performance (both dramatic and competitive), entertainment at a symposium, and many other instances.<sup>98</sup> Although Greek listeners heard many types of stringed instruments, special attention to the lyre's creation is warranted, as it is the famed instrument of Apollo and Orpheus and is structurally similar to other stringed instruments of ancient Greece (kithara, barbiton, etc.). As Barker expresses in his discussion of the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, the author's mention of other instruments, such as the phorminx or kithara, can be thought of as direct synonyms for the lyre, the invention of which features prominently in the hymn.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Plato, *Republic* 411b

<sup>98</sup> The most helpful volumes on ancient Greek musical practice for this project have been West's thorough book: *Ancient Greek Music* (1992) and Landels' slightly more introductory *Music in Ancient Greece & Rome* (1999).

<sup>99</sup> Barker, p 45, note 27

The *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* narrates the exploits of the god just moments after his birth. The son of Zeus and Maia, Hermes is one of the last to join the Olympic Pantheon, and he wastes no time before he makes an impact as a god. Upon wandering out of the cave in which he was born, he comes across a tortoise that he reasons “could sing very beautifully” (μάλα καλὸν ἀείδοις).<sup>100</sup> After fashioning a crossbar and weaving ox-hide and strings of sinew over the shell, the new invention is harmonious (συμφώνους).<sup>101</sup> Hermes then first sings about his own birth, the significance of which will be discussed the following section on Education.

For his next exploit, Hermes manages to steal a number of cattle from Apollo, who discovers the crime and threatens the culprit with death, saying: “seizing you, I will hurl you into murky Tartarus, into the doomed darkness and without help” (ῥίψω γάρ σε λαβὼν ἐς Τάρταρον ἠερόεντα, ἐς ζόφον αἰνόμορον καὶ ἀμήχανον).<sup>102</sup> To establish the truth and settle the dispute, Apollo and Hermes come to Zeus where the two give testimony before the scales of justice (τάλαντα δίκης).<sup>103</sup> Addressing Zeus, Hermes seems to employ rhetorical strategy in an effort to persuade and convince him of his innocence.<sup>104</sup> For example, he uses the sophistic tactic of self-representation to showcase himself as a newborn, incapable of the crimes of which Apollo has accused him.<sup>105</sup>

However, his rhetorical skill fails him during the trial, and Apollo’s accusations prove persuasive. If Hermes is to escape the oblivion Apollo has

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<sup>100</sup> HH 4. 38

<sup>101</sup> Ibid. 51

<sup>102</sup> HH 4.256-257

<sup>103</sup> Ibid. 324

<sup>104</sup> Knudsen, p 341

<sup>105</sup> Ibid. 342

promised,<sup>106</sup> he must use a new method. Taking up the lyre, Hermes easily mollifies (ῥεῖα μάλ' ἐπρήϋεν) Apollo, who, nonetheless, remains strong (κρατερόν περ ἑόντα).<sup>107</sup> As the sound invades Apollo's senses, his anger is forgotten, and the god envisions a peaceful solution rather than conflict.<sup>108</sup> While the music pacifies Apollo, Hermes appears to be strengthened. Although threatened with Tartarus' prison, and knowing that he must act quickly after losing the trial, Hermes becomes strengthened as he plays: λύρῃ δ' ἐρατὸν καθαρίζων... θαρσήσας (playing delightfully on the lyre, [he was] of good courage).<sup>109</sup>

This scene features the first performance of the lyre for an audience. As such, the effect of music on both musician and listener becomes apparent. Apollo, originally enraged at the theft of his cattle, is enraptured by the melody he hears he is mollified; Apollo is now willing to compromise. Where rhetorical persuasion has failed (neither Apollo nor Zeus were convinced by Hermes' arguments), musical persuasion has succeeded. While the lyre does not convince Apollo of Hermes' innocence, the music nonetheless seems to bring about a change of mind regarding the consequences of Hermes' actions. At the same time, Hermes is steadied by the music he plays.

It is interesting that the phenomena of persuasion and strength are the results of Plato's sanctioned *harmoniai*: the Dorian and Phrygian modes, respectively. In the *Republic* 3.399 a - b, Socrates retains the two 'modes' as they

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<sup>106</sup> Apollo issues yet another threat in line 289, promising Hermes the last and final sleep: πύματόν τε καὶ ὕστατον ὕπνον

<sup>107</sup> HH 4.417-18

<sup>108</sup> ἡσυχίως καὶ ἔπειτα διακρινέεσθαι ὄω (and I think, then, that we can depart peacefully)

<sup>109</sup> HH 4.423-424

affect an individual's behavior in ways that are suitable for a state. As the Dorian *harmonia* reflects the sounds and melodies suitable for a man who is brave (ὄντος ἀνδρείου) in the face of wounds (τραύματα) or death (θανάτους),<sup>110</sup> Hermes steadies himself with his music in the face of a vengeful Apollo. Moreover, according to Plato, the Phrygian 'mode' is best used for persuading (πείθοντός) or changing someone's mind (μεταπείθοντι).<sup>111</sup> Where rhetorical strategy has failed, incapable of mollifying Apollo's anger, much less convincing him of Hermes' innocence, music has succeeded.

These similarities are subtle. It would be incorrect to say that Plato develops his philosophy based on the events of the etiology and mythical first performance of the lyre. However, the parallels should not be dismissed. While the events of the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* do not match Plato's highly theoretical philosophies of μίμησις<sup>112</sup>, the parts of the composite whole are present. For example, according to Plato, the effects of the different *harmoniai* are specific to each: the Dorian promotes bravery despite hardship and the Phrygian enables persuasion, teaching, or advising. In this instance, both results seem to originate from Hermes' one performance. The musician is emboldened, while the listener is pacified and prepared for negotiation.

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<sup>110</sup> Plato, *Republic*, 3.399a-b

<sup>111</sup> Ibid. 399b

<sup>112</sup> Interestingly, the argument can be made for a type of musical μίμησις at work within *Hymn to Hermes*. As Hermes sings for Apollo, his song takes the form of a theogony, which narrates the creation of the cosmos, birth of each god, and summarizes each honor dedicated to them (line 428). On page 9 of his *The Homeric Hymn to Hermes: Introduction, Text and Commentary*, Vergados explains that Hermes' theogony introduces a 'paradoxical duplication.' Through which, by narrating the birth and chosen portions of each god, Hermes must narrate the events of the Hymn itself: Hermes' own birth and the future dedication of lyre and cattle to Apollo and Hermes, respectively (p.12). If this is the case, the events of the hymn, following the song, are a direct μίμησις of what was previously sung.

Even though the circumstances in the Homeric Hymn do not match Plato's philosophy precisely, the hymn showcases the broader cultural perception of music to affect behavior, preempting the philosophy of his dialogues. As an etiological myth narrating the creation and first performances of the lyre, the hymn reflects and propagates certain assumptions about music. Detailing the effect of music on both a musician and listener, and written during the generations preceding Plato, the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* helps define the foundation from which Plato's philosophy is written.<sup>113</sup> His insights regarding the effect of music on behavior do not emerge from a vacuum; Plato permits *harmoniai* that bolster and persuade. Both of these effects occur from the lyre's first performance.

Delighting the spirit, overwhelming the heart with grief, mollifying anger, and directing the soul to oblivion, music has the ability to affect the listener in many ways. In the literature of Homer, our heroes may take on armies, monsters, forces of nature, and even other gods, but each are poignantly affected by the music to which they listen.

## 2.2 Education

With music as part of an educational system, it is then possible to harness its power over behavior to the benefit of the individual and the community. As discussed in Chapter 1, Plato's ideal educational program is founded on the proper instruction of gymnastics (γυμναστική) for the body and "the arts of the Muses"

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<sup>113</sup> Knudsen, p. 341

(μουσική) for the soul.<sup>114</sup> In Plato's utopia, it is paramount both that the student learn proper information and that his very soul is tempered by musical instruction. Much as we saw in section 2.1, the theoretical, philosophical ideas must be generalized to a certain extent to find their parallels in Homeric literature. To do this, we must ask what it is that Plato accomplishes by setting up a standardized educational system in the first place?

In his *Republic* and *Laws*, Plato has constructed a formal curriculum for the students of his ideal society. In short, he selects certain pieces of information and certain practices and excludes others, and those preferences are passed down over time to successive generations of students. Thus, a curriculum becomes much more than the specific information organized and evaluated between a student and teacher. The curriculum becomes a framework of ideas, stories, and institutional practices through which the principles regarding the events of the past, the practices of the present, and desires for the future are standardized across a society and culture.<sup>115</sup> In the case of Plato's *Republic*, the philosopher constructs a collective memory of the past by censoring the events of mythic stories, and he standardizes contemporary activity by establishing proper musical and athletic practices, all of which perpetuate and codify the ideals of organization, efficiency, and philosophic virtue embodied by his ideal state.

In section 2.2, we focus on this idea of crafting a collective, communal memory of an education through by music. Plato places special importance on the educating power of music: "education is first from the Muses and Apollo" (παιδείαν

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<sup>114</sup> Plato, *Republic* 376e

<sup>115</sup> Popkewitz pg. 182

εἶναι πρώτην διὰ Μουσῶν τε καὶ Ἀπόλλωνος),<sup>116</sup> and moreover, “since [music] is praised especially over other representations, there is more need for caution than all the other representations” (γὰρ ὑμνεῖται περὶ αὐτὴν διαφερόντως ἢ τὰς ἄλλας εἰκόνας, εὐλαβείας δὴ δεῖται πλείστης πασῶν εἰκόνων).<sup>117</sup> To achieve this for his utopia, Plato censors the arts of words and stories (τῆς μουσικῆς τὸ περὶ λόγους τε καὶ μύθους)<sup>118</sup> because they can stamp whatever character one might wish upon each individual (ἐνδύεται τύπος ὃν ἂν τις βούληται ἐνσημήνασθαι ἐκάστῳ).<sup>119</sup> Subsequently, Plato applies the principles of spoken myths and stories onto the stories that make up song lyrics.<sup>120</sup> In short these narratives, either spoken or sung, construct the traditional values that shape the character of each generation; values that he tends to perpetuate by not allowing his prescribed system of musical and gymnastic education to innovate (ὃ μὴ νεωτερίζειν περὶ γυμναστικὴν τε καὶ μουσικὴν παρὰ τὴν τάξιν).<sup>121</sup> By constructing an unchanging, censored corpus of myths, stories, and narratives about past deeds and events, Plato establishes a communal memory, which, for his purposes, reinforces the principles of his ideal state.

In Homeric society, it is primarily song that constructs a communal memory with which the heroes interact. Bards and singers are capable of immortalizing heroic deeds, and thereby codify and formalize information. Music, and by extension

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<sup>116</sup> Plato, *Laws* 654a

<sup>117</sup> Ibid, 669b

<sup>118</sup> Plato, *Rep.* 398b

<sup>119</sup> Ibid. 377a

<sup>120</sup> Plato, *Republic* 398c

<sup>121</sup> Ibid, 424b

the epic tradition,<sup>122</sup> is depicted as one of the only ways for a society to transmit and perpetuate past events. In Homer, music, although not explicitly censored, codifies the past much like Plato's educational program. Singers preserve heroic events, and through their performances examples of heroic virtue are reflected in the listeners; through the narratives as well as the melodies, "dispositions are ordered and made like" those examples.<sup>123</sup> In the *Odyssey*, *Iliad*, and the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* music is shown as constructing communal, societal memory and seems preoccupied with general features of education in subtle ways. Much like in the case of Behavioral Affectation, the Homeric texts<sup>124</sup> become a foundation out of which Plato's philosophy can later be developed.

Let us first turn to the *Iliad*, the most direct example of this educational phenomenon. Similar to what we observed above in section 2.1, Achilles withdraws from battle after Agamemnon's insult. To placate himself, he picks up the lyre and plays for Patroclus. As they arrive, the embassy of Ajax, Odysseus, and Phoenix hear Achilles as "he sang he glorious deeds of men" (ἄειδε δ' ἄρα κλέα ἀνδρῶν).<sup>125</sup> Just as Hermes commemorates himself through his own lyric performance, Achilles' performance is likewise memorializing. In heroic society κλέος (glory) is guaranteed

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<sup>122</sup> First argued by Albert Lord and supported by West in *Ancient Greek Music* (pg. 328) is the idea that ancient Greek epic would have originally been sung or chanted.

<sup>123</sup> Barker 1994, pgs. 175-176

<sup>124</sup> It must be noted that multiple examples from Hesiod demonstrate this educational aspect as well, and in some cases, more explicitly than in Homer. For example, in Hes. *Theogony* 81-90, a king is considered learned, wise, and able to quell disagreement between his subjects if he is a servant of the Muses. More generally, as Barker rightfully argues, the *Theogony* and *Works and Days*, either through a divine genealogy or a catalogue of the metallic ages, illustrate a historical narrative that serves "to explain to us our own nature and situation" (173).

<sup>125</sup> Hom. *Il.* 9.189

by poetry and song.<sup>126</sup> Because κλέος is an immortalizing force, the singing of glorious deeds perpetuates them within the context of communal memory. As long as the deeds continue to be sung, they cannot and will not fade into obscurity. As long as the glories are remembered, successive generations can learn from them.

These notions of *kleos*, memory, and song are present in the *Odyssey* as well. As Odysseus hears the Demodocus' songs, he comes face to face with his past. As we saw above in section 2.1, Odysseus is physically and emotionally affected while he hears the bard tell of his own exploits during the Trojan War. In this instance, Odysseus encounters the songs that a hero desperately tries to outpace; such performances relegate a hero's respective deeds to memory as compensation for their mortality, as such there is an inherent expectation of the hero's death.<sup>127</sup> Homeric heroes are typically not present to hear their commemorative songs. When Phemius entertains the suitors by singing of the returns of Achaean heroes from Troy. As these events are narrated, two processes occur. First, the information in the songs is validated and formalized since Zeus inspires them.<sup>128</sup> Second, as the heroic deeds are shared with an audience, the actions and events become a part of a communal memory that commemorates and perpetuates the glory of the heroes by transmitting the information to posterity. In short, once the homecomings (νόστοι) are performed in song, they become codified within a larger historical narrative of the community. Music turns recent events into historical events worth remembering.

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<sup>126</sup> Biles, pg. 191

<sup>127</sup> Biles, pg. 201

<sup>128</sup> Hom. *Od.* 348-349

We now turn to Demodocus, who unknowingly performs songs to an audience that includes his protagonist. Through this dramatic irony, tension is created between past and present when the two are so closely juxtaposed since immortalizing glory (κλέος), typically awarded through a commemorating song, becomes a heroes' compensation for death.<sup>129</sup> Aside from being emotionally affected by the music he hears, the pathos which Odysseus experiences is partly due to the conflict between the celebration of Odysseus' past deeds of the Trojan War and the hope that these will not be the only actions worth glorifying; Odysseus hopes that his total contribution to the historical narrative will be both his exploits at Troy and his successful νόστος.

In this educational context, it is significant that, as his own bard, Odysseus himself contributes to the communal memory. After his emotional outburst which sparks King Alcinous to inquire into his guest's identity,<sup>130</sup> Odysseus begins to narrate his own wanderings, unknown to this point, over the course of the next four books. Recounting his encounters with Polyphemus, Circe, Scylla, and others Odysseus becomes his own bard,<sup>131</sup> and he validates and formalizes the course of his travels for the Phaeacians in particular and the audience as a whole in general. On a meta-poetic level, the fact that Odysseus' narration is a musical event makes his performance even more participatory within this commemorative, educational aspect of musical performance; Odysseus' voice becomes that of the bard

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<sup>129</sup> Biles, pg 201

<sup>130</sup> Hom. *Od.* 8.850: εἴπ' ὄνομ' ὅττι σε κεῖθι κάλεον μήτηρ τε πατήρ τε (tell me the name that your mother and father called you there [at home])

<sup>131</sup> Biles, pg. 205

performing the *Odyssey*, who at least originally sang his epic poetry.<sup>132</sup> The *Odyssey* not only demonstrates the educational tendencies of music to construct a formalized, historical narrative but its protagonist becomes the means by which communal memory is augmented.

The *Odyssey* presents examples of music's negative capabilities as well. For Plato, the threats posed by music, if not controlled, necessitate the strict censorship of musical subject matter and *harmoniai* in his ideal society. In his *Republic* he deliberately bans musical techniques and material that is corruptive. In his *Laws* he advocates for wise individuals to discern proper, beneficent musical performance on behalf of the masses. For Plato, music is crucial for proper education and development of character and virtue, but without a certain amount of policing, it can be full of danger.<sup>133</sup> In the *Odyssey*, the Sirens reinforce these threatening capabilities of music.

Tethered to his mast, as Odysseus approaches the islands of the Sirens and begins to be affected by their song, it is not the beauty or skill with which they sing that compels him to strain against his ropes, but their knowledge. The Sirens do not tempt Odysseus with a life of endless pleasure and musical entertainment, but with information: the one who hears their song "goes away knowing more; for we know everything the Greeks and Trojans endured in wide Troy by the will of the gods and we know all that happens on the fertile earth" (νεῖται καὶ πλείονα εἰδῶς. ἴδμεν γάρ

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<sup>132</sup> see note 62

<sup>133</sup> Barker 1994, pg. 172

τοι πάνθ' ὅσ' ἐνὶ Τροίῃ εὐρείῃ Ἀργεῖοι Τρῶές τε θεῶν ἰότητι μόγησαν, ἴδμεν δ', ὅσσα γένηται ἐπὶ χθονὶ πουλυβοτείρῃ'.<sup>134</sup>

This passage details the extent to which the educational, informational aspect of musical performance can be dangerous. If the promise of boundless knowledge can lead unsuspecting sailors to oblivion, Plato almost seems justified in creating such a regimented and censored educational program regarding μουσική. As in section 2.1, the Sirens become an exemplar of Plato's apparent distrust of music in his dialogues. Homer's epics continue to set precedent for his philosophy regarding music, either as a benevolent or destructive force.

While Odysseus participates in the process by which musical performance creates a type of transmitted, historical narrative, Hermes utilizes it for his own gain. Moreover, the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* illustrates what I argue to be aspects of education in a more general sense. Firstly, Hermes names Mnemosyne (Memory) as the mother of the Muses, which elaborates on the ability of music to establish a communal memory, as we saw earlier in the section. Secondly, as he bestows the lyre to Apollo, Hermes essentially is giving one of the first music lessons. Illustrating the validation and codification of information as well as these more general aspects of education, the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* becomes a lens through which we can see the cultural foundation that supports Plato's philosophical ideas.

The youngest of the Olympian gods, Hermes faces the challenge of establishing his place in the divine hierarchy. However, just as Zeus challenged and overcame his father to establish himself, or as Apollo was able to kill the Python,

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<sup>134</sup> Hom. *Od.* 12.188-191

Hermes is able to validate and immortalize himself as an Olympian god in the same way that Homeric heroes are immortalized through song. Immediately after inventing the lyre, Hermes “sings beautifully...about both Zeus son of Kronos and Maia...proclaiming his own renowned birth” (θεὸς δ’ ὑπὸ καλὸν ἄειδεν...ἀμφὶ Δία Κρονίδην καὶ Μαϊάδα...τ’ αὐτοῦ γενεὴν ὀνομάκλυτον ἐξονομάζων).<sup>135</sup> By singing this song, Hermes inserts himself into the historical narrative, which as we saw previously, becomes the communal memory passed down and learned from generation after generation.

It is significant that, even after Hermes has completed noteworthy deeds, only his lyre successfully positions him as an equal among the Olympian gods.<sup>136</sup> Rustling Apollo’s sacred cattle is a remarkable undertaking, especially for an infant, but that action only leads Hermes to conflict, and ultimately an unsuccessful trial. In contrast, Hermes’ performance on the lyre and gifting the instrument to his older brother not only pacifies Apollo’s anger but also constructs the mythological narrative, which becomes an example of educational stories Plato censors in his dialogues.

During his performance for Apollo, the Theogony sung by Hermes further develops the new Olympian’s historical narrative, this time as a commemorative song for all of the deities that are mentioned.<sup>137</sup> Interestingly, Hermes’ Theogony pays particular attention to the genealogy of the Muses. He honors Mnemosyne first, mother of the Muses (Μνημοσύνην μὲν πρῶτα θεῶν ἐγέραιρεν ἀοιδῆμιττέρα

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<sup>135</sup> HH 4.54-59

<sup>136</sup> Vergados pg. 6

<sup>137</sup> Vergados pg. 6

Μουσάων).<sup>138</sup> On a practical level, the attention paid to the Muses is a product of poetic tradition established by Hesiod;<sup>139</sup> however, highlighting Memory as the origin of the Muses is reflective of the process of constructing communal memory through performing arts. Since Memory exists as the source of the arts, it is right that artists should perpetuate it.

To finish the discussion of the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, let us close by looking at one scene, which, I argue, becomes an illustration of the educational aspects that are integral in music. After instructing Apollo to accompany the banquet, Hermes explains, “for those having learned to play with skill and wisdom, she having sounded teaches every beautiful thing to the mind...but if someone, being inexperienced, he plays her roughly, he places discordant, thoughtless things” (ὄς τις ἂν αὐτήν τέχνηι καὶ σοφίηι δεδαημένος ἐξερεΐνηι, φθεγγομένη παντοῖα νόωι χαρίεντα διδάσκει... νῆϊς ἔων τὸ πρῶτον ἐπιζαφελῶς ἐρεΐνηι, μὰ ψ αὐτῶς κεν ἔπειτα μετήορά τε θρυλίζοι).<sup>140</sup> In order for the lyre to play beautifully and fruitfully, the musician must be skilled and wise.

In many ways, it is obvious that playing proper music demands formal instruction in an instrument. However, I argue that this creates yet another connection between music and education. Music constructs the cultural narrative of prioritized information, which ultimately educates subsequent generations, it is as well a learned skill that necessitates education. In this regard music and education are inexorably linked. Plato’s preoccupation with music as an educating force now

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<sup>138</sup> HH 4.429-430

<sup>139</sup> Barker 1994, pg, 172-173

<sup>140</sup> HH 4.482-488

becomes a feature that is rooted in cultural convention applicable to ancient Greece across hundreds of years, not only the educational practices of Classical Athens.

### 2.3 Order and Organization

In Plato's dialogues, melody resounds from the framework of the universe to the roads, homes, and meeting places of the community. We have discussed the way in which Plato claims that both the cosmos and polis are ordered and regulated through music, but are these ideas reflected in Homeric literature? As above, we must first take the time to summarize Plato's arguments and contextualize them beyond the abstract if we are to render any comparison.

Let us begin with the organization of the cosmos. As we saw in Section 1.1, Plato adopts a Pythagorean understanding of the universe and its musical underpinnings. For example, the universe participates in harmony after the creator sets it in motion.<sup>141</sup> The material used in its construction, furthermore, is inherently musical: the length of each support beam corresponds to the ratio of a musical interval (1:2, 3:2 etc.).<sup>142</sup> However, in Homeric society, the cosmos is organized not on the basis of music, but on a combination of both the spheres influence allocated to each god as well as an overarching idea of fate.

In Book 1 of the *Odyssey*, Zeus bemoans the assumptions made by humankind regarding the nature of the universe; specifically, that humankind believes that the

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<sup>141</sup> Plato, *Tim.* 37a; see pg. 2 (above).

<sup>142</sup> Plato *Tim.* 36b

gods are the sole arbiters of the course of events.<sup>143</sup> Zeus states that, in reality, the actions of men contribute their respective misfortunes “beyond what is destined” (ὕπὲρ μόρον).<sup>144</sup> Zeus’ statement illustrates the fact that human actions contribute to the consequences with which they must grapple, and it underscores the presence of an all-encompassing fate (μόρον). The events of the *Odyssey* seem to corroborate both man’s assumption of divine agency as well as Zeus’ assertion that universal events are the result of mortal actions: Odysseus is fated to return home after he was originally delayed by Athena in divine retribution for violating her shrine—his *nostos* was further delayed owing to his actions taken during his conflict with Polyphemus, Poseidon’s son. Odysseus’ trials occur in the context of a cosmos that is ordered by the gods and destiny, a cosmos also affected by human deeds.

In the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, Hermes’ lyric performance contributes to the organization of this Homeric cosmos. As we saw earlier, Hermes establishes himself as an Olympian through the performance of a Theogony that celebrates all of the gods and their respective attributes, validates Hermes, and inserts the god in the historical narrative. In a more literal sense, Hermes’ song also succeeds in inserting himself into the cosmological order. In a Theogony that narrates “how the gods came about and how each obtained their lot” (ὡς τὰ πρῶτα γέγοντο καὶ ὡς λάχε μοῖραν ἕκαστος), Hermes catalogues the deities that have come before him.<sup>145</sup> However, if his Theogony celebrates all the gods, his performance must also preempt his own achievements and eventual admission into the Olympian

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<sup>143</sup> Hom. *Od.* 1.32

<sup>144</sup> Ibid 34

<sup>145</sup> HH 4.428

community.<sup>146</sup> As the last Olympian, Hermes organizes the Homeric cosmos one final time through his song. His lyric performance makes room for yet another deity to whom a certain sphere of influence is devoted. Therefore, while music may not metaphysically construct Homer's universe, it has the power to order and organize a cosmos founded on a delicate balance between the respective spheres of the gods and the inescapable confines of fate.

The participation of music within the macrocosm of the universe is discussed at length in Plato's *Timaeus*, but his *Republic* and *Laws* take up the topic of music as it relates to the community. Thus far we have seen how Plato regulates music on the grounds of its power to affect behavior and educate the community either to its detriment or benefit. Rooted in the ability of music to affect changes in individual behavior rests its capability to affect proper conduct within the community. Once again, Plato's aversion to musical innovation is evident when he says that changes in music cause changes in the laws of a city.<sup>147</sup> Specifically, a change made to music "settling itself in a small way, gently infiltrates both the customs and habits...[and from there] goes against the laws and constitutions" (κατὰ μικρὸν εἰσοικισαμένη ἡρέμα ὑπορρεῖ πρὸς τὰ ἥθη τε καὶ τὰ ἐπιτηδεύματα...ἔρχεται ἐπὶ τοὺς νόμους καὶ πολιτείας).<sup>148</sup> Therefore, music has the ability to change the order and organization of a state's laws, and thereby the state itself.

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<sup>146</sup> Vergados pg. 12

<sup>147</sup> Plato, *Rep.* 424c; see pg. 4

<sup>148</sup> Plato, *Rep.* 424d-e

Proper musical practice, however, has the ability to reinforce proper societal conduct. As already noted in Chapter 1,<sup>149</sup> the music that is acceptable to Plato is inherently ordered. Melodies and texts reserved for specific gods or events are not mingled<sup>150</sup> with the result that the masses adhere to communal laws and societal expectation. For Plato's purposes, these expectations are that "the populace of the city state wishes to be ruled by the laws" (ἤθελεν ἄρχεσθαι τῶν πολιτῶν τὸ πλῆθος).<sup>151</sup> Conversely, if proper music is not maintained and composers, for example, begin "mixing threnody, hymn, paeon, and dithyramb" (κεραννύντες δὲ θρήνους τε ὕμνοις καὶ παίωνας διθυράμβοις)<sup>152</sup> then lawlessness (παρανομίαν) arises.<sup>153</sup>

For the rigidly ordered, hierarchical societies that Plato is constructing in his *Republic* and *Laws*, adherence to the laws, regulations, and authority with which Plato has organized his state is paramount. In this case, music is given a tremendous power when it is equally capable of reaffirming these societal expectations or subverting them. In short music can either create or dismantle the customs around which a community is organized. Plato's ideal state is ordered by strict legislation. To compare these ideals to the Homeric epics, we must first ask what are the traditions and institutions in which Homer's heroes are expected to participate?

Narrating the war that has ravaged Trojan land for ten long years, the *Iliad* is preoccupied with outlining the expectations and customs of warriors and

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<sup>149</sup> See pg. 5

<sup>150</sup> Plato *Laws* 700b

<sup>151</sup> Ibid, 700d

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid, 700e

communities at war. During the age of heroes, warriors grappled with a society tenuously built on the combined expectations of self-interested competition, respect for authority, and service to the community; the events of the *Iliad* present a narrative in which these principles crumble, the community becomes disordered, and, after the ransom of Hector, society regains its order as communal expectations are once again followed. I argue that the *Iliad* affirms Plato's characterization of music as a force capable of either buttressing or dismantling societal organization. Music is poignantly present when Achilles is most removed from societal expectations of him as a warrior. However, the depiction of music on the Shield of Achilles indicates that music has an organizational place within the society of the *Iliad*; music helps delineate between a community at war and at peace.

Achilles' rage, the epic's driving force, is provoked after Agamemnon, forced to relinquish his war prize Chryseis, confiscates Achilles' Briseis in order to preserve his own reputation. This altercation showcases the paradox inherent in the Homeric community between societal expectations of competition between warriors, respect for authority and a need to work collectively for the benefit of the army.<sup>154</sup> Firstly, Agamemnon's expropriation of Briseis clearly exemplifies how competition over the allocation of honor (τιμή) at the expense of another warrior problematizes the social cohesion needed to effectively fight a war.<sup>155</sup>

Moreover, this altercation is made more bitter since it has occurred between two men of relatively equal standing. In his speech to Achilles, however, Nestor remarks that "although [Achilles] is stronger and a goddess mother gave birth to

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<sup>154</sup> Zanker, pg 73

<sup>155</sup> Zanker, pg 77

[him], Agamemnon is still best, since he is lord over more men” (εἰ δὲ σὺ καρτερός ἐσσι, θεὰ δέ σε γείνατο μήτηρ, ἀλλ’ ὄδε φέρτερός ἐστιν, ἐπεὶ πλεόνεσσι ἀνάσσει).<sup>156</sup> After the public insult, Achilles refuses to adhere to this hierarchy any longer and he withdraws from the community in which he is expected to participate.

Significantly, the next time the Achilles enters the narrative after the events of Book 1, the hero has a lyre in his hand.<sup>157</sup> There is little question that an ancient Greek audience would have seen this as out of place. Wartime was often described in Greek literature as ‘lyreless.’<sup>158</sup> In this case, the image of the premier warrior of ancient Greek mythology playing a lyre, bemusing himself in the middle of war, is a contradiction. Moreover, Achilles is described as singing about the glories of men.<sup>159</sup> This is ironic: Achilles should not be commemorating deeds of other heroes, but he should be achieving glory for himself. Therefore, music starkly characterizes Achilles as operating outside of community and contradictory to the expectations placed upon him. His performance of music draws him further outside the order imposed by the customs and expectations of the Homeric warrior culture.

Homer devotes a great amount of attention to the lyre itself, specifically to its origin. Achilles “took it from the spoils, having destroyed the city of Eëtion” (τὴν ἄρετ’ ἐξ ἐνάρων πόλιν Ἡετίωνος ὀλέσσας).<sup>160</sup> As a prize taken from Cilician Thebe, the circumstances surrounding Achilles’ withdrawal from the community are made quite obvious to the audience. Firstly, Eëtion is the polis from where Briseis was

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<sup>156</sup> Hom. *Od.* 1.280-281

<sup>157</sup> Hom. *Il.* 9.186; see description on page 4

<sup>158</sup> West, pg 13; see Aesch. *Supp.* 681

<sup>159</sup> Hom. *Il.* 9.189

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.* 9.188

taken. Instantly this toponym evokes why Achilles refuses to contribute to the war.<sup>161</sup> Secondly, the audience is reminded of Achilles' exploit before Agamemnon's insult, and the lyre itself foreshadows Achilles' actions after negotiating with Priam.<sup>162</sup>

Before isolating himself from the community, Achilles is unparalleled in battle as "he completely destroyed the well-populated city of the Cicilians, high walled Thebe" (δέ πόλιν πέρσεν Κιλίκων ἐὺ ναιετάουσαν, (Θήβην ὑψίπυλον).<sup>163</sup> After killing king Eëtion, Achilles acts according to the social morals of Homeric society by granting a proper burial to the king's body. The hero "did not strip him, for he was wary of his spirit, and indeed he burned him in his embellished armor" (οὐδέ μιν ἐξενάριξε, σεβάσσατο γὰρ τό γε θυμῷ, ἀλλ' ἄρα μιν κατέκρηε σὺν ἔντεσι δαιδαλέοισιν).<sup>164</sup> In this way, the lyre becomes a juxtaposition of proper and improper practice. The lyre becomes the lens through which the warrior, who successfully conquered Thebe, is contrasted with the one who does nothing in spite of the battle surrounding him. Moreover, the audience is forced to consider Achilles' treatment of Eëtion's body in comparison to the way in which the Greek hero will deal with Hector.

The fact that Homer incorporates a lyre and musical performance into such a poignant and nuanced scene certainly speaks to the power of music. This episode, however, appears to validate Plato's fears that music has the potential to contribute to disorder within a society. While the lyre may not directly cause Homer's Achilles

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<sup>161</sup> Anderson, pg. 41

<sup>162</sup> Zarker, pg. 111

<sup>163</sup> Hom. *Od.* 6.414-416

<sup>164</sup> Ibid. 417-418

to renounce the societal expectations of the *Iliad*, music is certainly present, and it successfully illustrates the level to which Achilles has withdrawn from the community. While it may not serve as a stimulus for the disorder, Homer decides that it will serve as an effective mirror.

It would be wrong to assume that music is completely subversive in the *Iliad*. On the contrary, its presence on the Shield of Achilles as part of the ‘peaceful city’ shows that music both has an acceptable place and contributes the delineation between what is expected of a community at war versus a community at peace. Music appears as part of the very first scene of the city at peace. In the context of a wedding celebration, “the loud song arises and young men were whirling as dancers and with them the auloi and the lyres were making a loud sound” (πολὺς δ’ ὑμέναιος ὀρώρει.κοῦροι δ’ ὀρχηστῆρες ἐδίνεον, ἐν δ’ ἄρα τοῖσιν αὐλοὶ φόρμιγγές τε βοῆν ἔχον).<sup>165</sup> As a fixture the first scene depicting the city at peace, it is quite clear that music has a constructive role in a peaceful community.

I finish my analysis of the *Iliad* with this digression: the depiction of the lyre and aulos together as part of a well ordered proper society seems to contrast with Plato’s philosophy. For example, in Plato’s *Republic*, the aulos is strictly prohibited from the ideal state.<sup>166</sup> This discrepancy between Homer and Plato seems to validate the arguments made by Richard Martin in “The Pipes are Brawling:” that a small, Athenian minority opposed the aulos on theoretical grounds. Using both literary and iconographical evidence he shows how rejection of the aulos was philosophical and intellectual. Literary examples, such as Pindar and iconography such as Panathenaic

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<sup>165</sup> Hom. *Il.* 18.493-495

<sup>166</sup> Hom. *Rep.* 400d

amphorae indicate that the aversion to the aulos was far from ubiquitous; there was a particularly strong and well documented bias, especially in Classical Athens.

The ancient Greek custom of *xenia* (ξενία) is integral in the *Odyssey*, an epic focused on travel. In Homeric society, *xenia* dictates that an aristocratic guest is welcomed into a home, bathed, fed, and allowed to rest before being asked his identity or intention. Moreover, *xenia* establishes expectations that are inherently reciprocal: the host assumes similar treatment from his guest during his own travels.<sup>167</sup> For Greek noblemen of the Homeric age, the reciprocal relationship of guest and host is a vital institution that provides order when a man is at his most vulnerable, traveling through unfamiliar land, far away from familiar faces. Throughout the *Odyssey*, music is present at both successful and unsuccessful instances of *xenia*. And this illustrates the way in which music provides, at the very least, accompaniment for both ordered and subverted communities analogous to the philosophy of Plato.

The Phaeacian court provides the quintessential example of *xenia*.<sup>168</sup> In the presence of the assembled Phaeacians, Alcinous welcomes Odysseus and instructs his subjects to “prepare for a feast...for [the king] will provide well for everyone...so that [they] might welcome a guest in their halls” (ἀλεγύνετε δαῖτα... ἐγὼ δ’ ἐὺ πᾶσι παρέξω... ὄφρα ξεῖνον ἐνὶ μεγάροισι φιλέωμεν).<sup>169</sup> Alcinous’ instructions make clear the societal expectation of a banquet celebrating a guest. The ideal of *xenia* demands hospitality in the context of a feast, especially one that includes music. Odysseus

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<sup>167</sup> Dougherty, pg 44

<sup>168</sup> Ibid, pg. 58-59

<sup>169</sup> Hom. *Od.* 8.42

remarks that there is no event more beautiful than when “delight holds the people all together, and the guests listen to a singer” (τέλος χαριέστερον εἶναι ἢ ὅτ’ ἐυφροσύνη μὲν ἔχη κατά δῆμον ἅπαντα, δαιτυμόνες... ἀκούάζονται ἀοιδοῦ).<sup>170</sup> Because Odysseus’ statement follows Demodocus’ songs, it is clear that the bard’s performance correctly follows the custom of *xenia*. His music directly contributes the perception of Phaeacian society as an ordered, utopian community. Their strict adherence to the ancient Greek laws of hospitality is reflected in the presence of music, being at its proper convivial setting of a banquet.<sup>171</sup>

A further example of music accompanying proper *xenia* is referenced as part of the welcome that Odysseus and his men receive from Aeolus. The hero is hosted in a divine kingdom, walled in bronze and ruled by the keeper of the winds. Just as the welcome by the Phaeacians, the travellers’ arrival is received with banquets and other such displays of hospitality: “by day the house, full of the smell of food, echoes all over in the courtyard” (δέ τε δῶμα περιστεναχίζεται ἀλύῃ ἡματα).<sup>172</sup> In short, the feast described is one that “resounds.” While the verb *περιστεναχίζεται* does not explicitly describe a melodious sound, I argue that in the context of a feast of welcome, we can assume that the sound that is echoing around the palace is both the din of the banqueters as well as some musical accompaniment. For example, Odysseus has just claimed a feast is incomplete without music in *Odyssey* 9.5-7, and Alcinous labels the lyre as “the companion to the rich banquet” (φόρμιγγός θ’, ἢ

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<sup>170</sup> Ibid. 9.5-7

<sup>171</sup> The Homeric Hymn to Hermes names the lyre, and thereby music in general, as the companion for a feast: HH4 480-481

<sup>172</sup> Ibid. 10.10-11

δαιτὶ συνήορός ἐστι θαλείη).<sup>173</sup> While not as overtly as on Scheria, music is at least subtly referenced as part of Aeolus' proper execution of *xenia*.<sup>174</sup>

As with the Phaeacian court, music features prominently on Ithaca where it also accompanies what is apparently proper *xenia*.<sup>175</sup> After receiving permission from Zeus, Athena travels to Odysseus' home to meet with his son Telemachus. As soon as Telemachus sees the goddess at the gate in the guise of Odysseus' comrade Mentos, as a proper host he welcomes her, saying: "greetings stranger, you will be welcome for my part, and after having eaten, you shall say whatever you need" (χαῖρε, ξεῖνε, παρ' ἄμμι φιλήσεται· αὐτὰρ ἔπειταδείπνου πασσάμενος μυθήσεται ὅττεό σε χρή).<sup>176</sup> As one of the first scenes of the epic, Telemachus' reaction to Mentos sets the expectations for *xenia*, which will be met to both greater and lesser extents throughout the *Odyssey*.

After Mentos is provided with food, the singer Phemios enters the hall and begins "playing the lyre as he lifts his voice to sing" (ὃ φορμίζων ἀνεβάλλετο καλὸν ἀείδειν).<sup>177</sup> Once again, music is present when *xenia* is correctly observed. Music accompanies and becomes a part of a traditional custom that provides order to the community. Furthermore, Athena's visit provides an opportunity for Telemachus to

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<sup>173</sup> Ibid. 8.99

<sup>174</sup> There are a few different reasons for why Homer glosses over the presence of music in Aeolus' welcome. Firstly, Homer devotes quite a bit more attention to the events on Scheria in Books 8 and 9, while the Aeolus episode is just a small portion of Book 10. Because of the relatively short length of the passage, less attention can be devoted to the entertainment given to the guests. The key aspect of Aeolus' welcome is the guest-gift: the bag of winds. Secondly, it is important to note that 'Homer' is not the narrator of Book 10. Odysseus tells the Aeolus narrative to a Phaeacian audience, and for that reason, the current narrator no longer shares the Homeric sympathy to bards and musical performers.

<sup>175</sup> The *Odyssey* features examples of improper *xenia* as well. Catastrophe befalls Odysseus and his men upon meeting the Laestrygonians and Polyphemus, It is important to note that no mention of music is made.

<sup>176</sup> Hom. *Od.* 1.123-124

<sup>177</sup> Ibid, 155

begin the process of restoring order to the household. The goddess advises him to “speak his word to everyone, having called all the Achaean heroes into an assembly” (εἰς ἀγορὴν καλέσας ἥρωας Ἀχαιοῦς μῦθον πέφραδε πᾶσι) and to “order the suitors to disperse” (μνηστῆρας... σκίδνασθαι ἄνωχθι).<sup>178</sup>

Phemius’ song presents Telemachus with the opportunity to return his household to order. As Penelope interrupts the music, asking for a change in subject, Telemachus seizes the opportunity to assert his authority in the household, eventually saying that “men celebrate the song more that comes newest to the ears” (τὴν γὰρ αἰοιδὴν μᾶλλον ἐπικλείουσ’ ἄνθρωποι, ἢ τις ἀκούοντες σι νεωτάτη ἀμφιπέληται).<sup>179</sup> This presents an interesting contrast to Plato. Homer does not seem to share the philosopher’s aversion to musical innovation. Plato argues that one way in which music presents danger to the community is through innovation. Turmoil threatens the state whenever music undergoes change.<sup>180</sup> In stark contrast, Telemachus celebrates new songs. Whether Telemachus means ‘new’ concerning lyrics or melody, Plato strictly regulates and censors all aspects of music to ensure that no changes will threaten the order of the state. If Homer does not share Plato’s distrust of musical innovation, are there aspects specific to Classical Athens that could provide a reason for Plato’s view?

Musical styles and techniques underwent a great amount of change during the Classical period in the generations preceding Plato, resulting in a genre labeled by scholars as “New Music”. These changes were characterized by variety,

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<sup>178</sup> Hom. *Od.* 1.272-274

<sup>179</sup> Hom. *Od.* 1.351-352

<sup>180</sup> Plato, *Rep.* 424c; see page 5

versatility, and theatricality in comparison with established musical practices. As these novelties were introduced, crowds became more and more disorderly at city sponsored performance events.<sup>181</sup> The changes varied from the introduction of new modes, new melodies, and a departure from older, traditional models of composition. For example, the melodic lines of the voice and accompanying instrument were no longer in unison.<sup>182</sup> Moreover, in New Music, the aulos featured prominently. It was a favorite of innovative composers due to its versatility and capacity for excitement.<sup>183</sup>

For the elite intellectuals, such as Plato and his predecessors, New Music began to represent all the shortcomings of democracy: inefficiency and inclusivity. Moreover, the wealth and fame that was showered on musicians directly threatened the social superiority of the elite, a superiority that could still be maintained by labeling ‘good’ and ‘bad’ music. In this way, I argue that Plato’s obvious distrust of musical innovation is less an example of a deeper cultural assumption, but a product of his own time and circumstance.

Returning to Homer, we see that in the attempt to exercise authority, Telemachus seizes the opportunity to assert his power in the household, eventually stating that “authoritative words<sup>184</sup> will be a care for all men, and especially for me, since mine is the power in the house” (μῦθος δ’ ἀνδρεσσι μελήσειπᾶσι, μάλιστα δ’

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<sup>181</sup> Csapo, pg. 71

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid. 79-80

<sup>184</sup> The argument for this definition of the word μῦθος is made in Clark’s “Was Telemachus Rude to His Mother? *Odyssey*” 1.356-59.” He argues that the word most frequently used for ‘simple speech’ or ‘word’ is ἔπος while μῦθος has a much more layered meaning, including an air of authority.

έμοί· τοῦ γὰρ κράτος ἔστ' ἐνὶ οἴκῳ).<sup>185</sup> Having asserted himself with regard to his position in the household, he asks the suitors to go to the assembly “so that [he] can bluntly proclaim the word [to the suitors] to cast them out from the great halls” (ἴν' ὕμιν μῦθον ἀπηλεγέως ἀποείπω, ἐξιέναι μεγάρων).<sup>186</sup>

Ultimately, Telemachus' boldness is not successful in correcting the suitor's conduct. It is interesting, however, that *xenia*, and the music that accompanies it, provides the initial impulse to begin the process of establishing order. For Plato, music serves as a catalyst for adherence to the laws and therefore participates directly in ordering the state. In Homer's *Odyssey*, the laws that organize the society of the heroic age take their form from cultural expectations and customs. In this way, music can be thought of as even more integral when ordering a community. It becomes more than a force that affects how a law, otherwise understood as a societal expectation or custom, is received and followed; music becomes an integral component of the law itself.

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<sup>185</sup> Hom. Od. 1.358-359

<sup>186</sup> Ibid. 373-374

### **Chapter 3: Conclusion**

Discussion of music and its capabilities as an affective force is not a topic restricted to ancient literature and philosophy. The effect of music on the individual and the community is a topic of modern scholarship both in the humanities and the sciences. The edited volume, *The Emotional Power of Music*, outlines many studies of the power of music over emotion and how it has been used to create social control throughout history. The two chapters that provide the best illustrations of some of the ideas discussed in this project are Penelope Gouk's "Music as a Means of Social Control in Early Modern Europe" and Jenifer Robinson's "Three Theories of Emotion".

Gouk's primary example of European social control through music is 16<sup>th</sup> century France. The Huguenots, despite being a persecuted minority, would, as a community, frequently sing psalms publically.<sup>187</sup> Not only did music enable a minority community to organize and gather, the singing reinforced Huguenot Protestant theology, since psalm singing came to be associated with a Protestant lifestyle.<sup>188</sup> Already we see certain similarities with the ability of music to order and educate as expressed in Plato and alluded to by Homer. In an attempt to further marginalize the Huguenots, King Henri II banned the public singing of psalms after labeling them insurrectionary,<sup>189</sup> an almost Platonic example of musical censorship. Furthermore, Charles IX recognized music as an educational force and supported

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<sup>187</sup> Gouk pg. 309

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

the foundation of an academy for music in 1570 for the purpose “that the music current and used in the country should be retained under certain laws, for the minds of most men are formed and their behavior influenced by its character.”<sup>190</sup> The founder patterned his academy on the models provided by ancient Greek academies, the ideal program being Plato’s *Republic*.<sup>191</sup>

Robinson’s chapter features an enlightening catalogue of scientific and psychological studies on how different types of music effect the emotions and bodies of individuals. One study demonstrated that listening to music labeled as ‘sad’, ‘happy’, ‘calm’, or ‘excited’ caused statistically significant differences in cardiorespiratory activity.<sup>192</sup> During the course of a different study, babies were physiologically shown to have calmed down after listening to their mother’s singing.<sup>193</sup> We have seen similar effects in Plato’s Phrygian harmonia as well in Apollo’s reaction to Hermes’ lyre-playing. The features of music that appear in the poetry of Homer and the philosophy of Plato have received historical and scientific validation.

Ultimately, what I hope to have shown in this analysis is that according to the ancient Greek understanding, music wields a certain integral power over both the individual listener and the community as a whole. Moreover, I have tried to clarify the cultural assumptions made by ancient Greek listeners in regard to the music they heard by comparing Plato’s philosophical writings to Homer’s poetry.

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<sup>190</sup> Gouk, pg. 310 (a quotation from the academy’s Letters Patent)

<sup>191</sup> Ibid.

<sup>192</sup> Robinson pg. 163; study: Nyklicek *et al.* 1997

<sup>193</sup> Ibid. study: Trehub 2003

In Plato's philosophy, the power of music is present from the cosmic to the individual level. Music, at the same time, constructs the very universe and can cause an audience member to be emboldened or pacified. While the *Timaeus* demonstrates music's cosmic, macroscopic scope, the *Republic* and *Laws* utilize censorship to focus its intrinsic power to create an idealized state. However the necessity for censorship and regulation betrays the possibility for music to affect people in ways that are in the best interests neither of the individual nor of the community. Plato regulates and prohibits aspects of music in order to make it the most beneficial. Where these musical conclusions intersect with Homer's poetry enable us to understand what points are simply a result of Plato's own philosophic musings and what may be reflective of broader, ancient Greek cultural assumptions concerning music.

As the poetic foundation for ancient Greek literature and as universally performed and well-known poem(s), Homeric epic constitutes a cultural foundation for ancient Greece as well. As a product of an oral tradition spanning generations before being put to text, moreover, the episodes and stories in this poetry grant access to still deeper cultural undercurrents. The fact that music poignantly appears in scenes of thematic importance indicates a certain level of respect and reverence for music and recognition of its visceral, emotional effects. For example, Phemius' music prominently accompanies Penelope's first appearance to the audience of the *Odyssey* as well as Telemachus' first, although unsuccessful, attempts at establishing his authority. Achilles is shown playing the lyre immediately after an almost crippling defeat of the Achaean forces by the Trojans and directly prior to a desperate attempt to bring him back into the fold of Greek warrior society. In his

eponymous *Homeric Hymn*, the lyre is Hermes' first exploit, and it is only through the lyre that he both successfully survives his altercation with Apollo and immortalize himself as part of the divine hierarchy.

Not only is music important in Homeric poetry, but it is also powerful. Music causes both Penelope and Odysseus to weep in a display of ὁμοφροσύνη. Music lures sailors to oblivion, causes Odysseus to thrash against his restraints, and restructures the cosmos in order to allow Hermes' participation in the Olympian Pantheon. Thus we can understand the agency of music in Homer as similar to its role in Plato; music can affect individuals and groups positively and negatively.

We've seen that Plato categorizes the power of music in three major ways: behavioral effect, education, and order/organization. Specific modes and instruments can cause listeners to behave in certain ways, proper musical instruction is used to strengthen the mind and engender a passion for inquiry, and lastly, proper musical performance can either reinforce or subvert the laws of a community. The fact that the appearances of music in Homer are at least related to these general categories validates Plato's philosophy, to a certain extent. The theoreticism of Plato, including such processes as mimesis or a dependence on Pythagorean and Damonic philosophy prevents these comparisons from being entirely parallel. Once Plato's assertions are simplified or generalized, however, certain comparisons become apparent. Specifically, in both Plato and Homer, music possesses the ability to affect behavior, act as an educating force that prioritizes and commemorates events and information that is then passed down and learned from. In Homer and Plato, music is also a component, or at least a reflection, of order and

organization in terms of communal laws, customs, or societal expectation. The points where the poet and philosopher meet can be thought of as broader cultural assumption, and the places where Homer and Plato diverge (i.e. musical innovation and distrust of the aulos) can be understood as conclusions specific to Plato's own setting and perspective as an aristocrat of Classical Athens.

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